

KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE
IN THE WORK OF MICHEL FOUCAULT

by

© Gregory Ostrander

A thesis submitted to
Faculty of Graduate Studies
and Research in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Political Science
McGill University
Montréal, Canada
August 1985

© Gregory Ostrander, 1985

Abstract

Michel Foucault has been charged by some critics with advancing an irrationalist account of power and, by others, with advancing a hyper-rationalist or positivist account. Jurgen Habermas has attributed an aesthetically-based anti-modernism to Foucault. This results in the lack of any normative basis in Foucault's analytics of power, according to Habermas. This thesis attempts to clarify this debate by examining two little known aspects of Foucault's thought - his reliance upon Nietzsche's concept of the will to knowledge and Georges Bataille's concept of the limit experience.

Résumé

Certains critiques prétendent que Michel Foucault met de l'avant une conception irrationaliste du pouvoir, alors que d'autres l'accusent d'avoir une approche hyper-rationaliste. Jurgen Habermas attribue à Foucault un antimodernisme axé sur l'esthétique. Selon Habermas, il en résulte un manque de tout fondement normatif dans l'analytique foucauldienne du pouvoir. Ce mémoire tente de clarifier ce débat, en examinant deux aspects peu connus de la pensée de Foucault - le fait qu'il s'inspire de la notion nietzschéenne de la volonté de savoir et du concept de l'expérience-limite chez Georges Bataille.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements.....	
Preface.....	
I. Introduction.....	1
II. The Will to Truth in Nietzsche.....	11
III. The Limit Experience of Georges Bataille.....	48
IV. Reason and Its Other in Foucault.....	85
V. Language and the Unthought in the Thought of Michel Foucault.....	126
VI. Processes of Individualization and the Body in Foucault.....	143
VII. Jurgen Habermas' Critique of the Anti-Modernists.....	165
VIII. Foucault and Critical Theory.....	199
IX. Conclusion.....	221
Appendix I: "Nietzsche and Communism" by Georges Bataille.....	227
Appendix II: "Nietzsche, Freud, Marx," by Michel Foucault.....	237
Appendix III: "The Genealogical Writing Of History" by Jurgen Habermas.....	265
Selected Bibliography.....	281

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my supervisor, Professor Charles Taylor, and Professor James Tully for their many insights into the work of Michel Foucault. For their conversation and support, I would like to express my gratitude to Darius Rejali, Maya Berbery, Remi Roy and Guy Laforest. Finally, for the gift of her company, my thanks go to Suzanne K. Bellrichard.

PREFACE

This thesis attempts to demonstrate that there is, indeed, a kind of subterranean subjectivity (as opposed to a transcendental subject) at work throughout Foucault's *oeuvre*. This notion of subjectivity derives from Foucault's reading of Nietzsche in the early fifties. Now, Foucault came to a Nietzsche that had been refracted in the work of the prominent French writer and philosopher, Georges Bataille. Bataille had developed a powerful application of Nietzsche's thought beginning in the twenties. Very early on, Foucault adopted, I believe, an essentially Bataillean interpretation of Nietzsche - one based upon Bataille's concept of the limit experience. This concept can be seen in operation throughout Foucault's work.

Political theory, today, seems to be divided into two great antagonistic currents: a thought which is humanist, pro-modernity and foundationalist confronts one which is anti-humanist, anti-modernity and anti-foundationalist. The first views itself as continuing the finer, more humane aspects of the Western tradition and looks back to Aristotle or Marx or Mill for its inspiration. The second appears to

advocate a complete break with Western tradition and sees its major precursor in Nietzsche.

Nietzsche, thus, becomes a major focus in the critical confrontation between the two currents. For some (of whom Jurgen Habermas is the most prominent), Nietzsche becomes the source of a very dangerous denial of the progressive side of the Enlightenment project and the advocate of a return to a pre-modern barbaric social order based upon myths.¹ Foucault is, in turn, tarred with this same brush by Habermas² because he accepts Nietzsche's attack on the Enlightenment's notion of truth. Habermas and other members of what we may call - for simplicity's sake - the Habermasian school are also quick to lay blame at the feet of Nietzsche for whatever faults they detect in Foucault's work. Thus, Taylor (1984), Fraser (1981), Philp (1983) and Said (1978) criticize the lack of a normative perspective in Foucault's political theory. He is unable to project an alternative political program because of his acceptance of Nietzsche's relativism. Even his own perspective cannot be grounded and must simply be accepted as one possible fiction, or myth among others. This was the aporia, of course, whose first and most notorious victim was Nietzsche, according to these critics.

Similarly, any specific failings of Foucault's notion of power are often immediately traced back to Nietzsche. Walzer (1983), Connolly (1983), and Dews (1984) take Foucault to task for not allowing any authentic opposition to the micro-powers of the disciplinary society. Any resistance to power itself is merely another power and, thus, they argue,

for Foucault, no escape from the circle of power is possible. This belief in the omnipresence of power, they claim, also derives from Foucault's overly sympathetic position vis-a-vis Nietzsche. The negative political consequence of this, according to this view, is an attitude of resignation or despair.

And, finally, all of the Habermasian tendency joins in a critique of Foucault's anti-subjectivism. For them, some type of subject (even if no longer transcendental) must be retained to ground one's theory of politics. Foucault is said to follow Nietzsche such too closely in denying any constitutive role to the subject.

Among supporters in the opposing camp, it is ironical to note many of the same arguments presented above but this time simply accompanied by a different sign. Thus, Foucault's attack on the notion of Truth or the subject becomes a positive achievement. And his failure to depict possible futures and, its corollary, his downgrading of the universal intellectual, is praised instead of condemned. This is fundamentally the position of Rorty (1981), Hacking (1981) and Dreyfus/Rabinow (1982). It is also argued that Foucault does provide a positive and radical critique of contemporary society and, thus, avoids the charge of nihilism. These thinkers would tend to agree with the opposing school in tracing the origins of the central lines of Foucault's position to Nietzsche. Fraser (1981) also seems to grant that Foucault's attack on modernity is normatively substantive and not merely relativistic.

Notwithstanding their agreement concerning the strength of the Foucault/Nietzsche linkage, very few of the above thinkers go on to describe thoroughly Foucault's debt to Nietzsche. It is inevitably mentioned but never discussed in detail - the name of Nietzsche often serves as something like a code-word that can simply be taken for granted. This is in spite of the fact that Foucault declared himself to have always been a Nietzschean.³ This is also the case in most of the other secondary literature on Foucault - Nietzsche's name is mentioned and then dropped. Of the books devoted to Foucault only those of Dreyfus/Rabinow (1982) and Sheridan (1980) have even the most elementary discussion of Foucault's Nietzschean lineage. Major-Poetzl's study (1983) has only a brief discussion of the similarities between Nietzsche's genealogy and Foucault's archaeology. Lemert and Gillan (1982) discuss Nietzsche's will to power and the Overman in connection with Foucault but the analysis is very superficial. Racevskis (1983) simply states that as opposed to Baudrillard, Foucault developed the more affirmative aspects of Nietzsche's thought. This is the only reference to Nietzsche in the entire book. Even the very few articles devoted to Foucault and Nietzsche do not go in any depth into the substance and nature of their connection. This is the case for the studies by Bov¹ (1981), Giddens (1982) and Rajchman (1978). Needless to say, many of the more important works on Foucault completely pass over his relation to Nietzsche. In Lentricchia (1982), Gordon (1980), White (1973) and Lecourt (1975), for example, there is no mention at all of Nietzsche.

This lacuna, of course, can partly be blamed on Foucault himself. Generally, he has always denied the value of detailing the 'influences' on any author and given⁴ his anti-subjective perspective has even denied the existence of authors per se.⁵ Specifically, he has refused to clarify his relation to Nietzsche and has argued that it would be impossible (for him) to be precise about his debt to Nietzsche. However, in several of his interviews,⁶ he goes on to state that Nietzsche had an exceedingly profound influence upon him and that up until his reading of Nietzsche, he was a historicist and a Hegelian. He states that it was his reading of Bataille that introduced him to Nietzsche's subversive thought. It was Nietzsche who assisted his intellectual breakthrough as a young man. In the same interview, he argues that Nietzsche set the tone for all modern thought - Nietzsche was the first to point out that the task of philosophy was to "diagnose the present"⁷ and not to discourse on the totality. In later interviews, Foucault notes the ever-growing importance of Nietzsche⁸ and points out that it was Nietzsche who first specified the power relation as the focus of philosophical discourse as opposed to the production relation in Marx.⁹ Elsewhere, he opposes what he refers to as "Nietzsche's hypothesis" about power to Reich's or the repressive hypothesis.¹⁰ Therefore, one may say that there is a powerful connection between Nietzsche and Foucault, a connection which is mediated by Bataille and which remains relatively unexplored.

The role of Bataille has been similarly underplayed in

the secondary literature on Foucault. Most reviewers make no mention of Foucault's Bataillean heritage. Such is the case, for example, of the studies by Dreyfus/Rabinow (1982) and Racevskis (1983). Others mention the importance of Bataille but offer little in terms of an understanding of the link between Foucault and Bataille. This limitation characterizes the works of Gordon (1980), Major-Poetzl (1983) and Lemert and Gillian (1982). There is no article in the secondary literature devoted to the question of Foucault's relationship to Bataille. Part of the motivation for this thesis, therefore, is provided by a desire to sketch in some of the aspects of Bataille's philosophy which were absorbed by Foucault. Another aim of the thesis is to reveal the role of Bataille and Nietzsche in the recent debate between Foucault and the critical theorists, specifically, Jurgen Habermas. Habermas has concentrated on the dangerous aestheticism underpinning Foucault's analytics of power - a weakness, in Habermas' view whose lineage goes back primarily to aspects of the thought of Nietzsche and Bataille. Finally, I hope to show that Foucault has developed a variety of critical thought "grounded" in a Bataillean and Nietzschean notion of subjectivity.

The thesis, therefore, consists of an introductory chapter indicating the place of Nietzsche and Bataille in his early development as a historian of science. Chapter two discusses Nietzsche's very important notion of the will to truth which was of central importance to Foucault's anti-epistemology. In chapter three, I present an overview of

Bataille's philosophical and sociological system - a form of thought essentially unknown in the Anglo-Saxon academic world. The central theme of this chapter is Bataille's concepts of sovereignty and the limit experience - concepts which made a great contribution to Foucault's early intellectual evolution. Chapter four, five and six examine several aspects of Foucault's thought including his notion of truth and his account of a politics of the body. Jurgen Habermas' recent critique of the French Nietzscheans and of Foucault, in particular, is the subject of chapter seven. Finally, Foucault's response to the Frankfurt critique as well as certain aspects of his account of power will be discussed in chapter eight. An appendix to the thesis will include three previously untranslated documents: an article by Bataille on the relationship between Nietzsche and communism (1953); Foucault's key lecture on Nietzsche, Freud and Marx (1964); and Habermas' recent critique of Foucault (1984).

FOOTNOTES

¹Jurgen Habermas, "Modernity versus Postmodernity," New German Critique 22 (Winter 1981): 3-14.

²Ibid., p. 13.

³Michel Foucault, "Le retour de la morale," Les Nouvelles (June 28, 1984): 40.

⁴See Michel Foucault, "What is an Author?" in Language, Counter-Memory Practice: Selected Essays And Interviews, ed. Donald Bouchard (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977): 113-38.

⁵Paolo Caruso, interviewer, "Conversazione un Michel Foucault," in Coversazioni un Claude Lévi-Strauss Michel Foucault, Jacques Lacan, by Paolo Caruso (Milan: Mursia, 1969), pp. 91-131. See also, Michel Foucault, "Le retour de la morale," pp. 37-41.

⁶Ibid., p. 103.

⁷Michel Foucault, Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1979. Edited, with a preface, by Colin Gordon. Translated by Colin Gordon, Leo Marshall, John Nephew, and Kate Soper. (Brighton, Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1980), p. 53.

⁸Ibid., p. 54.

⁹Ibid., p. 91.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 91.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Foucault has stressed the tentative nature of his archaeological investigation. He has not sought to formulate a system or general method that should then be adopted by others. His method has changed as he has studied and deconstructed various objects - madness, crime, sexuality, etc. Each book is, in fact, merely a tool - a tool for understanding a given object as well as for changing himself. Thus, he refuses to force this tool upon others. The first thinkers who profoundly struck him were those non-philosophers writing outside of the university who threw into question his own academic education in the classics of the time - Plato, Kant and Hegel. These anti-institutional thinkers (Nietzsche, Bataille, Blanchot and Klossowski) were concerned with concrete personal experience rather than the construction of philosophical systems.

The other dominant theoretical school during the late forties in France was phenomenology as developed by Sartre and Merleau-Ponty on the basis of Husserl's phenomenological investigations. This phenomenology was basically an attempt to grasp the meaning of the lived experience, of everyday life

in its transitory form. Nietzsche and Bataille, on the contrary, wanted to grasp experience at that point in life that is the closest possible to the impossibility of living - the "limit" of life. In this way, one could maximize the intensity of life at the same time as its impossibility. The task of phenomenology was, on the other hand, to manifest the entire field of possibilities related to everyday existence. Besides which, phenomenology sought to grasp the significance of this existence by re-affirming the foundational character of the subject, the ego, and of its transcendental functions. Experience, for Bataille and Nietzsche, however, should strip the subject from itself, making it completely other than itself and, consequently, bring about its dissolution. Foucault learned about this de-subjectifying task and its corollary, the idea of a limit experience from Nietzsche and Bataille. All of his studies have been, despite their erudition, types of direct experiences through which he sought to break free of his old self. This, no doubt, partially serves to explain the discontinuity that has been observed in his development by many critics.

Hegelianism was also a dominant force in French universities during this period following the great renaissance of Hegel studies led by Kojève and continued by Jean Wahl and Hyppolite. This was an existentialist and phenomenological reading of Hegel that focused on the concept of the "unhappy consciousness." Hegelianism presented itself as a rational method for grasping the tragedy of Nazism, World War II, Stalinism, and the collapse of French resistance

to Hitler. Thinkers such as Merleau-Ponty combined the Hegelian notion of the intelligibility of the real ("the real is rational") with existentialist themes developed by Sartre. The choice faced by the young Foucault, thus, was either to become a systematic Hegelian philosopher within the university or follow the existentialist path that dominated the intellectual scene outside of the university. It was his reading of Bataille and then Nietzsche that revealed to him a way out of these pre-given options. The lesson they taught was the need to put into question the category of the subject and its primacy. And, following from this, they gave Foucault the conviction that this questioning should not merely be speculative or philosophical but should involve the testing of the subject in a practice which might threaten its very existence, a practice that could possibly transform it into something completely "other."

The radicalism of this project appealed to young intellectuals of Foucault's generation (those in their early twenties right after the war) who had just witnessed the tragedy of the war and were now faced with the dispiriting choice between Truman and Stalin. Bourgeois society which had given in to Hitler and had, later, prostituted itself to De Gaulle also seemed unworthy of acceptance. A massive social change was clearly required as well as a change in personal relations, a change of the self. The Hegelians, however, wanted to continue the rational aspects of the past and insisted on a model of continuous intelligibility. The existentialists, on the other hand, insisted on maintaining

the primacy of an a priori subject and refused to consider the possibility of a radical break with this notion. In Nietzsche, one could find a discontinuous concept of history as well as the announcement of a new subject, the superman, who would transvalue the older man. And in Bataille, Foucault discovered the theme of the limit-experience in which the subject achieves his own decomposition and exists for himself at the limits of his own impossibility. With the help of these two thinkers (despised by both academics and the orthodox left), Foucault had found a path of escape from the traditional philosophical systems.

His early political experiences were an attempt to put into practice some of these ideas. They would hopefully represent a limit-experience à la Nietzsche or à la Bataille. Thus, despite the hostility of communist theoreticians to Nietzsche (with only minor exceptions, e.g. Henri Lefebvre), Foucault joined the party as a Nietzschean-Communist in 1950 with the encouragement of the young professor, Louis Althusser. This, of course, did not mean the acceptance of the communists' linear notion of history but was precisely the opposite - the belief that communism might represent the complete "other" of bourgeois society. Joining the C.P. was simply the most radical possibility open to a young intellectual of the early fifties. Needless to say, life in the communist party soon revealed itself to be just "more of the same" and, by early 1953, Foucault had become disillusioned and entered into a prolonged political retirement. The immediate source of this

development were the events around the so-called "Jewish doctors" conspiracy against St. . . . The French communists had insisted there had been such a conspiracy until after Stalin's death, when they admitted that it had been a hoax. No explanation for this shift in line was thought necessary. This easygoing attitude towards the truth was unacceptable to Foucault.

Foucault's initial theoretical interest was in an area quite foreign to the concerns of Bataille and Nietzsche. During his university years, the history of science held a central position (led by Canguilhem and Bachelard). There was an interrogation of the foundations of science, its rationality and history. This was carried out on two fronts. On the one hand, there were the Husserl-influenced phenomenologists who questioned the bases and objectivity of knowledge. On the other, there were the Marxists who claimed that Marxism provided a theory which could distinguish between ideology and science and give a scientific account of economic development as well as of the growth of mathematics and physics.

Bataille and Nietzsche could provide a different slant on this nexus of problems. They led one to ask, to what extent could the history of science lead to the questioning of its own rationality, could it introduce external elements into science, thereby limiting and transforming it? Can one have a rational history of science? What are the historical contingencies that operate within science? Under the influence of Nietzsche, Foucault realized that what was needed

was not so much a history of rationality, but a history of the truth itself. That is, rather than asking of a science the extent to which its history had brought it closer to the truth (or has impeded its movement towards the truth), would it not be more useful to recognise that truth consists in a certain relation that discourse or knowledge has with itself? And does not this question itself have a history? The striking aspect of Nietzsche's thought is that, for him, the rationality of a science or a discourse cannot be measured in terms of the truth that it is capable of producing. Rather, the truth itself is part of the history of discourse and is, to a certain extent, an effect internal to discourse or to a practice. Bataille's notion of a limit-experience (an experience that transforms) also can be integrated into the study of the history of the sciences. Science can be conceived itself as an experience, that is, as a particular relation that is established in such a way as to alter the subject of this experience. In other words, science constitutes subjects of knowledge at the same time as objects of knowledge. Science, then, can be understood as a product of this reciprocal genesis of subjects and objects. One must, then, ask what truth-effect is created by this interaction? A corollary of this question is that there is no single truth. This is not to say that science is irrational or an illusion, but rather that the history of science is real and intelligible on the basis of a system of precise rules and rational experiences in which the subject and object are constituted. This process could be studied, thought Foucault,

7

in sciences that had not attained a high degree of scientificity and were, thus, closer to the initial collective experience that had brought them forth. This was the case for the science of madness that had appeared only recently, in the eighteenth century. It was possible to see quite clearly that the appearance of the object "madness" was contemporaneous with the appearance of a subject judged capable of understanding it. This comprehension of the experience that constituted madness as an object should not be understood as an apologia for madness nor as the affirmation of a history of irrationalism. This experience, rather, can only be understood in relation to certain historical processes: the birth of a particular normalising society related to exclusionary practices that were, in turn, connected to a precise economic situation, to processes of urbanization and to the existence of a growing population. The problem was to make the most rational possible analysis of the constitution of this new knowledge that one may call the "truth of madness." This is not to imply, of course, that, via this discourse on madness, madness in its truth was in fact uncovered. Instead, a new experience emerged, that of the truth of madness, with its accompanying subject and object.

This notion of the limit-experience also helps to clarify Foucault's key, yet enigmatic, distinction between savoir and connaissance, both translated as "knowledge" in English translations of his work. Savoir is the process through which the subject finds itself modified by that which it knows, or rather, in the work it carries out in order to

know. Connaissance, on the other hand, is the process that permits the multiplication of knowable objects, to develop their intelligibility by maintaining, in a fixed position, the subject who investigates them.

In this way, we may better grasp the idea of an archaeology of savoir. The archaeology entails understanding the formation of a connaissance, that is, of a relation between a determinate field of objects and a determinate subject and to grasp it in its historical root, in the movement of savoir that rendered it possible. All of Foucault's studies can be seen as concerned with the way in which men in Western society have undergone experiences such as to engage themselves in a process of knowledge of a determinate, objective ensemble while, at the same time, constituting themselves as determinate and fixed subjects. For example, madness was known by constituting one's self as a rational subject, the economy by constituting one's self as a subject who works, and law by constituting one's self as a subject who had a relation to law (and hence was capable of breaking it).

Thus, there is always a commitment of the self within its own savoir. Man has reduced to objects certain of his limit-experiences - madness, death, sex and crime. This is an application of one of Bataille's major themes to the collective dimension of Western humanity's development of knowledge. Hence, Foucault's archaeology represents an original articulation of Nietzsche's history of the truth with Bataille's limit-experience. In the next chapter, an account

will be given of Nietzsche's contribution to the undermining of the classical occidental view of epistemology.

FOOTNOTES

¹In French, connaissance usually refers to individual bodies of knowledge such as physics, chemistry, etc., whereas savoir refers to the ensemble of all knowledge. Foucault's archaeology gives the savoir - connaissance distinction a vertical dimension. Savoir exists under the layer of specific knowledges. "By connaissance, I mean the relation of the subject to the object and the formal rules that govern it. Savoir refers to the conditions that are necessary in a particular period for this or that type of object to be given to connaissance and for this or that enunciation to be formulated." Michel Foucault, The Archaeology of Knowledge, trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Random House, 1970), p. 15.

CHAPTER II

THE WILL TO TRUTH IN NIETZSCHE

Nietzsche suffered a major emotional crisis in 1876 following his break with Richard Wagner. Too often scholars refer to this collapse because they have the intention of writing its true interpretation or a "truer" interpretation than others have written. It is not, however, our intention to decide its final "clinical" meaning (if there is one, if this expression has any meaning vis-à-vis Nietzsche's case especially given that his whole effort involved the subverting of this kind of category) of the Nietzschean experience. Within the philosophical perspective that we are assuming here it is something else which is of interest. It is important to reveal a connection that, without pretending to "explain" Nietzsche's collapse, can nevertheless open the road to a more profound comprehension of certain problems that confronted Nietzsche throughout his life and which seem to be of considerable importance to us today. The connection is that which concerns the problem of language and the experience that Nietzsche had of it during the two turning points mentioned above. The second turning point could only, it seems, result in fact (though it was not a logical consequence) in madness.

The theme of language does not appear very often on the surface of Nietzsche's texts. It does however appear as a deep and constant current in his thought. It is not possible here to give an exhaustive proof of this statement. It must suffice to give a few rapid indications of this concern in Nietzsche.

Let us begin with the "genealogical method" which is often assigned to Nietzsche's second phase (beginning precisely with the emotional crisis of 1876 following his break with Wagner) and which in fact is already present in The Birth of Tragedy of 1872 and in other minor writings of this period. It is present in the sense that it is already at work in these writings. Our thesis is that: (1) the force of the genealogical method pierces the Schopenhauerian-Wagnerian skin of the young Nietzsche and brings to light that more internal skin which Rohde can no longer recognize as Nietzschean; (2) that such a genealogical method has an intimate and essential relationship with the problem of language as this is the supposed location of the manifestation of truth.

In the third chapter of The Birth of Tragedy, the anteliterary statement of the genealogical method (understood here as "destruction") opens with these words: "...it becomes necessary to level the artistic structure of the Apollonian culture, as it were, stone by stone, till the foundations on which it rests become visible."² At the end of this destruction he can claim that: "Now it is as if the Olympian magic mountain had opened before us and revealed its roots to

us."3

What are these roots? It is not necessary here to repeat the well known and complex question of the relation between the Apollonian and the Dionysian, categories to which Nietzsche himself will significantly return in his last months as a thinker. What is of interest here is to quickly grasp the effective discovery contained in the inclusion-contraposition of the Apollonian and the Dionysian. Nietzsche himself clearly indicated this in his "Attempt at a Self-Criticism" written in 1886 for the new edition of The Birth of Tragedy:

And science itself, our science - indeed, what is the significance of all science, viewed as a symptom of life? For what - worse yet, whence - all science? How now? Is the resolve to be so scientific about everything perhaps a kind of fear of, an escape from, pessimism? A subtle last resort against truth? And, morally speaking, a sort of cowardice and falseness? Amorally speaking, a ruse? O Socrates, Socrates was that perhaps your secret? O enigmatic ironist, was that perhaps your - irony? [...] What I then got hold of, something frightful and dangerous, a problem with horns but not necessarily a bull, in any case a new problem - today I should say that it was the problem of science itself, science considered for the first time as problematic, as questionable."4

It is impossible to understand what Nietzsche means here by the word "science" (which for him includes, among other things, the entire metaphysical tradition from Plato to today), if one does not refer to a series of works and fragments which date from the creative period of The Birth of Tragedy. Especially significant are the second untimely meditation entitled The Use and Abuse of History5; the fragment on Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks6; the essay "On Truth and Lies in an extra-moral sense"7; the notes for a never

completed meditation "We Philologists"⁸; and finally the notes for a course on rhetoric from the winter of 1872 - 1873.⁹

It is not possible to cover this complex path; it must suffice to touch on some of the essential points beginning above all with the central text here, The Birth of Tragedy.

Here Nietzsche sees, as is well known, Socrates as representing the birth of the scientific spirit, not only for Greek civilisation, but for the entire history of the world. Socrates is the exemplar of the theoretical man. Such a man has reduced the Apollonian to logic and the Dionysian to the "passions". The passions are that which must be dominated and controlled by logos, by rationality. Here we see the origin of the Platonic and then Christian dualism between reason and sensibility, spirit and body. From here derives the great philosophical problem of knowledge understood as an intellectual and conceptual problem. At the basis of the theoretical ideal, one therefore finds a characteristic optimism: "The unshakable faith that thought, using the thread of causality, can penetrate the deepest abysses of being, and that thought is capable not only of knowing being but even of correcting it."¹⁰ All of this is for Nietzsche a "profound illusion"¹¹, a "sublime metaphysical illusion"¹². In its work of excavation, science never manages to attain this goal; it resolves itself then into "research". A life without this search is not worthy of being lived according to Socrates and Lessing, the "most honest theoretical man"¹³, declared that he cared more for the search for truth than for truth itself. With this statement, the "fundamental secret"¹⁴ of science is

revealed. Science always tends towards its own limits and there where the rational becomes exhausted and denies itself, it rediscovers art and mythical thought. This latter is really that from which it emerged and which always, in hidden fashion, sustained it.

Nevertheless, the birth of the theoretical man marked a great and profound turning point. The universality of thought, with Socrates, spread a "common net" over the entire planet which claims to even grasp the solar system within its laws. Thus when we contemplate "the amazingly high pyramid of knowledge in our time - we cannot fail to see in Socrates the one turning point and vortex of so-called world history." With Socrates, mythical history ends and historical civilisation begins. This is the history of the Occident which coincides with the history of metaphysics and, hence, with the history of science and technique. This total overturning of human interests, an overturning that in the nineteenth century came to involve the entire planet in virtue of the diffusion and imposition of industrial capitalism, is the mode of universal history, in a way that Nietzsche will himself see increasingly clearly in his successive works.

In The Birth of Tragedy, Nietzsche does not merely denounce the roots of the Western scientific-historical world - he also announces its decline. It is precisely in the light of the decline that its roots are revealed. Science, writes Nietzsche, "Spurred by its powerful illusion, speeds irresistably towards its limits where its optimism, concealed in the essence of logic, suffers shipwreck." The man of today

is horrified when he comes to the limit of science and sees how "logic coils up at these boundaries and finally bites its own tail."¹⁸ The Alexandrian man, like Euripides, the student of Socrates, and finally modern man, have believed in their own *deus ex machina*. Nietzsche argues that their *deus ex machina* is an "early consonance", rather than a "metaphysical comfort". It is "the god of machines and crucibles, that is, the powers of the spirits of nature recognized and employed in the service of a higher egoism."¹⁹ They believed (and believe) in the correction of the world by means of knowledge, a life guided by science. The theoretical man casts ever wider the net of Alexandrian culture, continually in the service of science that is, as we would say today, conditioned by the myth of technology. However, this soon reaches its limits and presents its own dangers. Thus Nietzsche warns:

We must not be alarmed if the fruits of this optimism ripen - if society, leavened to the very lowest strata by this kind of culture, gradually begins to tremble with wanton agitations and desires, if the belief in the earthly happiness of all, if the belief in the possibility of such a general intellectual culture changes into the threatening demand for such an Alexandrian earthly happiness, into the conjuring up of a Euripidean *deus ex machina*. Let us mark this well: the Alexandrian culture to be able to exist permanently, requires a slave class, but with its optimistic view of life it denies the necessity of such a class, and consequently, when its beautifully seductive and tranquilizing utterances about the "dignity of man" and the "dignity of labor" are no longer effective, it gradually drifts toward a dreadful destruction. There is nothing more terrible than a class of barbaric slaves who have learned to regard their existence as an injustice, and now prepare to avenge, not only themselves, but all generations.²⁰

This "disaster" or "malady" that is hidden within the heart of science is on the verge of exploding. The sign of

this is the fact that

"...the theoretical man, alarmed and dissatisfied at his own consequences, no longer dares entrust himself to the terrible icy current of existence: he runs timidly up and down the bank. So thoroughly has he been pampered by his optimistic views that he no longer wants to have anything whole, with all of nature's cruelty attaching to it. Besides, he feels that a culture based on the principles of science must be destroyed when it begins to grow illogical, that is, to retreat before its own consequences."¹

The solution of the crisis of the "theoretical man" that Nietzsche delineates in The Birth of Tragedy (the "aesthetic" solution inspired by Wagner) does not interest us here, especially inasmuch as he abandoned and repudiated it as of 1876. Very interesting, on the contrary, is the contraposition of the antique culture (pre-Socratic) and modern culture that Nietzsche formulates in Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks (Spring, 1873). The theme of language emerges as central in this contraposition. Philosophical language, before its scientific degeneration in Plato/Socrates (the dialectic) refused the intellect that calculated and measured and proceeded, by way of subtle distinctions, and a wary concern with the solidity of its theoretical supports. The philosophical language, with its global grasp and its quick intuition of equality and analogy, always ignores these fine distinctions. Pre-Socratic philosophy, with agile steps, throws rocks in order to ford the river and gains the shore with rapid leaps even as its rocks sink immediately behind it. Such a way of proceeding is undoubtedly without firm foundations, but this is not so much a defect as a virtue. This is especially so because of the impulsive force it

exercises on culture and life. And also because its task is not the truth at any price but the discovery of value, the things that are worth knowing. It is in this way that pre-Socratic philosophy keeps in check the impulse to know, conferring on it a unitary form and goal. The "pathos to know" is here one and the same as the aesthetic pathos. The impulse to know is contained within the cultural complex; it must pursue an enlivening and fecundating activity. It aims at a beautiful harmony of life and culture - this is its 'truth'. Otherwise science would clamp down on the world in its blind desire to know "at any price."²² Philosophy says that "this is great" and thus raises man to the blind drive for knowledge. But the idea of greatness imposes a limit to this instinct: "In its own way, philosophical thinking is as valid as scientific thinking, but the former appeals to great things and concerns. Greatness, however, is a changeable concept, partly aesthetic and partly moral. Philosophical thinking is a mastery of the knowledge drive. This is its significance for culture."²³ This entails, as a necessary consequence, the metaphorical character of philosophical language - it is a completely unfaithful metaphorical transposition. ²⁴

Nietzsche analyzes the consequence of this in his lecture notes for a course on rhetoric given at Basel in the summer of 1874.²⁵ Rhetoric, the Greek art par excellence, allows a profound insight not only into the Greek man but also into the human phenomenon in general. Rhetoric is a techné, not a science, but it is that which renders the language of science possible. It furnishes science with its implicit

contents, unnoticed and forgotten. Each language contains hidden within it a philosophical mythology. And before being a ~~teaching~~, rhetoric is a dynamis, a force, or more exactly, a persuasive force²⁶:

There is obviously no unrhetorical "naturalness" of language to which one could appeal; the language itself is the result of audible rhetorical acts. The power to discover and to make operative that which works and impresses, with respect to each thing, a power which Aristotle calls rhetoric, is, at the same time, the essence of language; the latter is based just as little as rhetoric is upon that which is true, upon the essence of things. Language does not desire to instruct, but to convey to others a subjective impulse and its acceptance.²⁷

Language did not emerge as a function of the truth or with the goal to clarify the truth. It derives from the originary rhetorical force, a force which aims at persuasion (and is thus value-relative) and not the truth. On the other hand, man himself (whose most intimate nature and essence coincides with the metaphorical instinct of language) was not made for knowledge according to the early Nietzsche. Science is illusory because its concepts are names, names of masked gods, names of lost and forgotten divinities. Science is an unrecognised allegory and is allegorical itself inasmuch as it is precisely science, a female divinity - perhaps the industrious Athena who springs, already armed, from the head of Zeus.

Such analyses lead to the putting into question of the very foundation upon which The Birth of Tragedy was erected. Rhetoric and language are not in fact particular aspects of human beings, but, as we have already indicated, that which constitutes man in an originary way. That which characterizes

man is knowledge "transference" (*Übertragung*): similarities are discovered by means of metaphors which are then forgotten to be such. The representation then consists of concepts which petrify sense impressions, "killing, skinning, mummifying and preserving"²⁰ them. Representation (*Vorstellung*) is itself a transference, an infinite referral. Language is based upon an originary gap that it attempts to overcome by identifying the non-identical, by imposing analogies. Similarly with the written language there is a gap between two heterogeneous levels, that of the sound and the written sign.

It is important to realize here that the above analysis does not simply concern conceptual language or scientific-dialectical language, but language in its entirety. The originary language, in general all spoken language, is an abstraction and a forgetting. This makes the relations between art and philosophy, myth and science, much more nuanced. Philosophy and science now appear as abstractions, delimited within the sphere of rhetorical-mythical language. But in its essence language (whether mythical or scientific) is rhetorical, that is, analogical, metaphorical, and mythological. In a word, it is aesthetic. But the poets, as Hesiod says, lie too much. Art itself therefore, as Dionysian wisdom, involves lies and illusion. Hence the metaphysics of art, expressed in The Birth of Tragedy, is metaphysics of illusion²¹ and Wagner, the greatest 'actor' who is its incarnation, is a dangerous persuasive force, a rhetorician. Up until then, Nietzsche had struggled desperately, at first unconsciously and then, as of 1876, consciously against the

Wagnerian (and Schopenhauerian) siren. Later he was to write that he had survived his encounter with Wagner only with the greatest difficulty. Heidegger, in his Holzwege, has argued that Nietzsche's struggle with Wagner constitutes a decisive turning point in the history of modern thought and also in the history of man in general.³⁰

The problem of language in relation to truth re-emerges in the essay of the summer of 1873, "On Truth and Lies in an Extra-moral Sense." Our reference to this essay will conclude our brief discussion of the years that led to the crisis of 1876. Nietzsche's analysis in this study concerns above all the nature of the intellect and the value of knowledge. "As a means for the preserving of the individual, the intellect unfolds its principle powers in dissimulation, which is the means by which weaker, less robust individuals preserve themselves - since they have been denied the chance to wage the battle for existence with horns or with the sharp teeth of beasts of prey."³¹ In general, Nietzsche moves towards a complete devaluation of the sphere of consciousness which is understood as a phantasmagoria, an illusory dream. Consciousness is a realm of appearances, of visions (in dreams as well as wakefulness), a deceptive zone of light that hides the real and profound life. Man confines himself in the prison-house of consciousness, "aloof from the coils of the bowels, the rapid flow of the blood stream, and the intricate quivering of the fibers."³² Man thus is ignorant of himself, of his physiological reality and the passionate basis of his being:

Nature threw away the key. And woe to that fatal curiosity which might one day have the power to peer out and down through a crack in the chamber of consciousness and then suspect that man is sustained in the indifference of his ignorance by that which is pitiless, greedy, insatiable, and murderous - as if hanging on the back of a tiger."³³

If, therefore, the intellect is at the service of survival and not the truth, how then does the pretense of the truth emerge? Does it derive from an honest and objective impulse? The intellect rather is a means of conservation, a trick whereby individuals attempt to avoid being dominated by others. Man uses it to avoid a total war of all against all. The intellect brings into being an agreement in which "that which shall count as 'truth' from now on is established. That is to say, a uniformly valid and binding designation is invented for things, and this legislation of language likewise establishes the first laws of truth. For the contrast between truth and lies arises here for the first time."³⁴

On the one hand, therefore, truth and lies are social values; they are not a matter of pure knowledge but rather they reflect the practical need to avoid being dominated by one's fellow men. On the other hand, truth and lies are a matter of the correct use of linguistic conventions, themselves a product not of knowledge but of the need for social accord.

What therefore is it that we call "truth"? According to Nietzsche it is:

A movable host of metaphors, metonymies, and anthropomorphisms: in short, a sum of human relations which have been poetically and rhetorically intensified, transferred, and embellished, and which, after long usage, seem to a people to be fixed, canonical, and binding. Truths are illusions which we have forgotten are illusions; they are metaphors that have become worn

out and have been drained of sensuous force, coins which have lost their embossing and are now considered a metal and no longer coins. We still do not yet know where the drive for truth comes from. For so far we have heard only of the duty which society imposes in order to exist: to be truthful means to employ the usual metaphors. Thus to express it morally, this is the duty to lie according to a fixed convention, to lie with the herd and in a manner binding upon everyone.³⁵

It is on the basis of this social obligation that man, as distinct from the animals, constructs his conceptual structures. These are extraordinary and admirable, yet they are not for this reason 'true'. The concept is merely "the residue of a metaphor"³⁶. It is the product of man's unique ability to "volatilize perceptual metaphors in a schema, and thus to dissolve an image into a concept"³⁷. The image itself is a product of an artistic transformation of nervous stimuli. The concept is therefore a poiein, a 'making' (in general, an abstraction) and not a knowledge. This making is characterized as a metamorphosis of the world into man, a humanization of the world, an attempt to understand the world as something human.

Similar to the way in which astrologers considered the stars to be in man's service and connected with his happiness and sorrow, such an investigation considers the entire universe in connection with man: the entire universe as the infinitely fractured echo of one original sound - man; the entire universe as the infinitely multiplied copy of one original picture - man.³⁸

If speech in its most original substance is a cry, a passionate-musical sound, already this cry is a poetic metaphor which tends to anthropomorphically assimilate the world. This is the source of the initial error: man believes, in the process which goes from the cry to articulated speech and the concept, to be confronted immediately with pure objects; he

forgets, however, that the original metaphors of intuition are always precisely metaphors and takes them to be the things themselves.

All of human history is seen then as an aesthetic creation. Man is a creative artistic subject who, however, is unaware of this fact.

In this way Nietzsche had already opened up the path he was to pursue in Human, all-too-Human, where he writes that man has lived unconsciously up to now, like animal or a plant. In his various civilisations, he has developed unconsciously and by chance. Thus he will invoke a new philosophy, a new "chemistry of concepts and feelings."³⁹ He will 'destroy' history and reveal the roots of historicity itself. This is the clear expression of the genealogical method that had been implicitly sketched in The Birth of Tragedy. The genealogy has among its particular themes, the problem of truth and language. The apparent reversal of Nietzsche's perspective in 1876, the 'changing of skins' which struck his friends as incomprehensible or even as a betrayal (of his Schopenhauerian and Wagnerian roots), obeyed, in reality, a development that had been underway for several years. However, it was only by the late seventies that Nietzsche became fully aware of this process.

It is not possible to discuss here the works of Nietzsche's so-called 'positivist' phase. It is important, however, to examine certain aspects of Beyond Good and Evil, the work that Nietzsche sub-titled "Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future"⁴⁰ and a work which constitutes a fully realized

expression of his mature thought. Nietzsche believed that this book constituted the key to his life insofar as it had one. It was the book one should read first in order to understand his thought.

It is now known that this book originates in the Fall of 1881, before, that is, the creative explosion of Zarathustra. It is also known that Nietzsche considered working on a re-elaboration of Human, all-too-Human in the Spring and Summer of 1885 and that he subsequently abandoned this project as Beyond Good and Evil began to take on an autonomous shape. The book became much more than the mere revision he had initially planned. As Nietzsche mentions in the preface to the work, it consisted of a series of notes written during pauses on the work for Zarathustra.

What appears very evidently upon first reading Beyond Good and Evil is that the genealogical project (the "chemistry of ideas and instincts") is carried out, if not to its extreme limit, at least to the point where it reveals its most essential consequences. There is the same unmasking of scientificity as founded in metaphysics which we see in the first aphorism of Human, all-too-Human:

"...how can something arise from its opposite - for example, reason from unreason, sensation from the lifeless, logic from the illogical, disinterested contemplation from covetous desire, altruism from egoism, truth from error? Until now, metaphysical philosophy has overcome this difficulty by denying the origin of one from the other, and by assuming for the more highly valued things some miraculous origin, directly from out of the heart and essence of the "thing in itself." Historical philosophy, on the other hand, the very youngest of all philosophical methods, which can no longer be even conceived of as separate from the natural sciences, has determined in isolated cases (and

will probably conclude in all of them) that they are not opposites, only exaggerated to be so by the popular or metaphysical view, and that this opposition is based on an error of reason. As historical philosophy explains it, there exists, strictly considered, neither a selfless act nor a completely disinterested observation: both are merely sublimations.*1

Historical philosophizing unmasks science in two ways. On the one hand, it shows that the metaphysical questions originate with the men of the last four thousand years: a very short period if one considers the length of man's existence on the planet (what Nietzsche calls the longer history of man). During the past four thousand years, man has not really changed significantly - his real evolution occurred during the previous eons of which we know more or less nothing. The historical philosopher is thus more exactly a pre-historical philosopher who excavates the roots of the very recent historical man.*2 On the other hand, historical philosophizing eliminates what there is of the 'human, all-too-human' in the metaphysical attitude: the will to illusion, the Socratic-logical optimism, the need to sublimate and rationally justify that which Nietzsche will later call the will to power. Historical philosophizing, therefore, entails a process of dis-humanisation.

An essential moment of this process is the criticism of language and its pretention to be scientific. The first illusion of metaphysics is contained in language: the illusion of the power, by means of language, to raise the world from its hinges and to master it:

To the extent that he believed over long periods of time in the concepts and names of things as if they were aeternae veritates, man has acquired that pride by which he has raised himself above the animals: he really did believe that in language he had knowledge of the world.

The shaper of language was not so modest as to think that he was only giving things labels; rather, he imagined that he was expressing the highest knowledge of things with words; and in fact, language is the first stage of scientific effort. Here too, it is the belief in found truth from which the mightiest sources of strength have flowed. Very belatedly (only now) is it dawning on men that in their belief in language, they have propagated a monstrous error. Fortunately, it is too late to be able to revoke the development of reason, which rests on that belief.*3

But how is this theme articulated in Beyond Good and Evil? What is the basis of every metaphysics and of every dogmatic philosophy?

Speaking seriously, there are good reasons why all philosophical dogmatizing, however solemn and definitive its airs used to be, may nevertheless have been no more than a noble childishness and tyronism. And perhaps the time is at hand when it will be comprehended again and again how little used to be sufficient to furnish the cornerstone for such sublime and unconditional philosopher's edifices as the dogmatists have built so far: any old popular superstition from time immemorial (like the soul superstition which, in the form of the subject and ego superstition, has not even yet ceased to do mischief); some play on words perhaps, a seduction by grammar, or an audacious generalization of very narrow, very personal, very human, all too human, facts.*4

One finds the same argument in the thoughts on "the philosophy of grammar" in aphorism 20 or those on the "superstitions of the logicians" in aphorism 17 where the link between language and the superstition of the subject is clarified. It is not the I, the subject who speaks; rather it is an it that thinks or, rather, is thought. But even the it, "contains an interpretation of the process, and does not belong to the process itself. One infers here according to the grammatical habit: 'Thinking is an activity; every activity requires an agent; consequently ---'.*5

It is in this way, which we can only mention briefly,

that Nietzsche advanced towards the major questions of his courageous study. At the center of his study appears that series of contradictory and difficult problems that Nietzsche designated by the term "will to truth." We have seen that the roots of such problems go back almost to the beginnings of his thought. It is sufficient to recall, for example, the figure of Silenus, the companion of Dionysus, who hesitates to answer Midas' question about the most desirable thing in the world. Silenus asks why this miserable human race forces him to reveal a truth that it would be much more expedient not to know.* In other words, of what use is knowledge and why should one know? Very significantly, it is precisely with this question that Beyond Good and Evil commences:

The will to truth which will still tempt us to many a venture, that famous truthfulness of which all philosophers so far have spoken with respect - what questions has this will to truth not laid before us! What strange, wicked, questionable questions! That is a long story even now - and yet it seems as if it had scarcely begun. Is it any wonder that we should finally become suspicious, lose patience, and turn away impatiently? that we should finally learn from this Sphinx to ask questions, too? Who is it really that puts questions to us here? What in us really wants 'truth'?

Indeed we came to a long halt at the question about the cause of this will - until we finally came to a complete stop before a still more basic question. We asked about the value of this will. Suppose we want truth: why not rather untruth? and uncertainty? even ignorance?

The problem of the value truth came before us - or was it we who came before the problem? Who of us is Oedipus here? Who the Sphinx? It is a rendezvous, it seems, of questions and question marks. [[and though it scarcely seems credible, it finally almost seems to us as if the problem had never even been put so far - as if we were the first to see it, fix it with our eyes, and risk it. For it does involve a risk, and perhaps there is not that is greater.*]

Who is Oedipus? And who is the Sphinx? The question returns in the intense 278th aphorism of which we also have three rough drafts. Here Nietzsche asks the 'wanderer' (that is, Nietzsche himself) who he is: Oedipus or the Sphinx? The wanderer is the man "without scorn, without love" but one who knows and experiments with souls. He is like a sounding lead that has sunk into the depths and always emerges unsatisfied. He returns from this abyss with an indecipherable expression, "a breast that does not sigh, with a lip that conceals its disgust." When offered rest and relaxation he simply makes the request for, "Another mask! A second mask!"**

The famous theme of the mask continually intertwines with the problem of the will to truth and involves, as we will see, the problem of language itself and of interpretation. In Aphorism 40, Nietzsche states that: "Whatever is profound loves masks."** But what is meant by 'profound'? To what foundation, or rather, to what foundation without foundation, does Nietzsche allude to? On the one hand, the mask hides a 'virtue': the virtue of the man of knowledge, of the experimenter; it hides a dangerous curiosity, a versatility and an art of disguise which emerges from the most secret tendencies of the will to knowledge itself. But is this properly a virtue? Is it not rather a 'faith' that is the ultimate expression of a decadent world based upon moral values, of that philistine tranquil consciousness, of that Socratic-Apollonian metaphysics of which the Dionysian Nietzsche never ceased to demand the destruction and the 'transvaluation'. On the other hand, therefore (and Nietzsche

is quite conscious of this), the mask hides an ambiguity and a contradiction: is not the will to destroy all masks itself another mask? And what type of mask? That of Oedipus or that of the Sphinx? That of Apollo or of Dionysus? "In all desire to know there is a drop of cruelty."⁵⁰

There is cruelty against the multiform spirit of life, against the desire of the mind to sometimes deceive itself and against the great variety of masks and the enjoyment and security contained therein.

This will to appearance and masks is attacked:

by that sublime inclination of the seeker after knowledge who insists on profundity, multiplicity, and thoroughness, with a will which is a kind of cruelty of the intellectual conscience and taste. Every courageous thinker will recognize this in himself, assuming only that, as fit, he has hardened and sharpened his eye for himself long enough and that he is used to severe discipline, as well as severe words. He will say: 'there is something cruel in the inclination of my spirit'; let the virtuous and kindly try to talk him out of that!⁵¹

Knowledge is thus, according to Nietzsche, a cruel and difficult task. He who undertakes this task must warn himself as well as his friends. Such a man becomes a problem. The other problem of course is why undertake such a challenge? "Why did we choose this insane task? Or, putting it differently: 'why have knowledge at all?' Everybody will ask us that. And we, pressed this way, we who have put this question to ourselves a hundred times, we have found and find no better answer ---."⁵²

It is at this point that the will to truth itself is struck by a paralyzing suspicion. What is it that it really wishes? "I do not believe that a 'drive to knowledge' is the

father of philosophy; but rather that another drive has, here as elsewhere, employed understanding (and misunderstanding) as a mere instrument."⁵³

The will to know of the history of philosophy and of science has grown up on the basis of a much more powerful will, the will not to know, the will to uncertainty and of non-truth. Because he has understood this necessity, the new philosopher must avoid martyrdom. He must beware of

...suffering 'for the truth's sake'! [...] The martyrdom of the philosopher, his 'sacrifice for the sake of the truth', forces into the light whatever of the agitator and actor lurks in him; and if one has so far contemplated him only with artistic curiosity, with regard to many a philosopher it is easy to understand the dangerous desire to see him also in his degeneration (degenerated into a 'martyr', into a stage - and platform-bawler). Only, that it is necessary with such a desire to be clear what spectacle one will see in any case - merely a satyr play, merely an epilogue farce, merely the continued proof that the long, real tragedy is at an end, assuming that every philosophy was in its genesis a long tragedy."⁵⁴

In aphorism 34, Nietzsche explains how he came to see beyond the above-mentioned tragedy of knowledge and now stresses the duty of the philosopher to be suspicious, to have a bad character:

Forgive me the joke of this gloomy grimace and trope; for I myself have learned long ago to think differently, to estimate differently with regard to deceiving and being deceived, and I keep in reserve at least a couple of jostles for the blind rage with which the philosophers resist being deceived. Why not? It is no more than a moral prejudice that truth is worth more than mere appearance; it is even the worst proved assumption there is in the world. Let at least this much be admitted: there would be no life at all if not on the basis of perspective estimates and appearances; and if, with the virtuous enthusiasm and clumsiness of some philosophers, one wanted to abolish the 'apparent world' altogether - well, supposing you could do that, at least nothing would be left of your 'truth' either. Indeed, what forces us at all to suppose that there is an essential

opposition of 'true' and 'false'? Is it not sufficient to assume degrees of apparentness...."⁵⁵

Nietzsche recognizes that few would consider a doctrine true because it makes people happy or virtuous. However, people forget that the fact that a doctrine makes one unhappy is no argument against it:

Something might be true while being harmful and dangerous in the highest degree. Indeed, it might be a basic characteristic of existence that those who know it completely would perish, in which case the strength of the 'spirit' should be measured according to how much of the 'truth' one could still barely endure - or to put it more clearly, to what degree one would require it to be thinned down, shrouded, sweetened, blunted, falsified."⁵⁶

Thus the exaltation of knowledge, the 'love' of knowledge, is merely the ultimate trap of morality in its decadent negation of life. In the 152nd sentence, Nietzsche expresses this deception in the form of a parable: "'Where the tree of knowledge stands, there is always Paradise': thus speakest the oldest and the youngest of serpents."⁵⁷

All of this oscillating research and questioning seems to lead to a double result. The will to truth has two faces: On the one hand, as 'cruelty' against itself and against countless masks of life, it is only another aspect of the great metaphysical and moral illusion, born with Plato, continued in Christianity and culminating in contemporary decadence and nihilism. But, on the other hand, inasmuch as it rests on non-truth, on the will to non-knowledge, it is a creation of new masks and accordingly of new values. The true philosopher is a creator of values. Nietzsche explains the difference between these genuine philosophers (such as the pre-Socratics and himself) and the Kant-Hegel type in the following aphorism:

These philosophical laborers after the noble model of Kant and Hegel have to determine and press into formulas, whether in the realm of logic or political (moral) thought or art, some great data of valuations - that is, former positings of values, creations of value which have become dominant and are for a time called 'truths'. [...] Genuine philosophers, however, are commanders and legislators: they say, 'thus it shall be!''

After finishing Beyond Good and Evil and the Prefaces to the re-edition of his works (Summer of 1886), Nietzsche composed the fifth book "We Fearless Ones" (Winter 1886-87) to The Gay Science. The theme of the will to truth again appears at the center of his interests. Again and again he attempts to unveil the central problem that is hidden within this theme. We see this clearly in aphorism 344 of The Gay Science:

The question whether truth is needed must not only have been affirmed in advance, but affirmed to such a degree that the principle, the faith, the conviction finds expression: 'Nothing is needed more than truth, and in relation to it everything else has only second-rate value.' This unconditional will to truth - what is it? Is it the will not to allow oneself to be deceived? Or is it the will not to deceive? For the will to truth could be interpreted in the second way, too - if only the special case 'I do not want to deceive myself' is subsumed under the generalization 'I do not want to deceive'. But why not deceive? But why not allow oneself to be deceived? [...] What do you know in advance of the character of existence to be able to decide whether the greater advantage is on the side of the unconditionally mistrustful or of the unconditionally trusting? [...] 'I will not deceive, not even myself'; and with that we stand on moral ground. For you only have to ask yourself carefully, 'Why do you not want to deceive?' especially if it should seem - and it does seem! - as if life aimed at semblance, meaning error, deception, simulation, delusion, self-delusion, and when the great sweep of life has actually always shown itself to be on the side of the most unscrupulous polytropoi. Charitably interpreted, such a resolve might perhaps be a quixotism, a minor slightly mad enthusiasm; but it might also be something more serious, namely, a principle that is hostile to life and destructive. - 'Will to truth' - that might be a concealed will to death. [...] But you will have gathered what I am

driving at, namely, that it is still a metaphysical faith upon which our faith in science rests - that even we seekers after knowledge today, we godless anti-metaphysicians still take our fire, too, from the flame lit by a faith that is thousands of years old, that Christian faith which was also the faith of Plato, that God is the truth, that truth is divine. - But what if this should become more incredible, if nothing should prove to be divine any more unless it were error, blindness, the lie - if God himself should prove to be our most enduring lie? ---"

The will to truth, therefore, is really a hidden will to death. Just this and nothing more. Nietzsche, as we have seen, oscillated between several possibilities. One asks again, what is the origin of our concept of knowledge? Is not the deep cause of our need to know the desire to reduce the unknown to the known, the unusual and problematic to that which is familiar and habitual? And thus, is it not our instinct of fear⁸⁰ which guides our will to know? But what meaning can this instinct have if error is the presupposition of knowledge? How is any kind of truth possible given the fundamentally false character of knowledge? Nietzsche responds in The Will to Power that the will to truth is only a means of the will to power. Even the contest with morality itself seems to be surpassed: "All the drives and powers that morality praises seem to me to be essentially the same as those it defames and rejects: e.g., justice as will to power, will to truth as a tool of the will to power."⁸¹ Thus, all of the multiform masks seem to lead back to the will to power.

But what is of interest is the fact that this evolution assumes the acceptance of an infinite hermeneutics, of an infinite interpretation of which language (the linguistic sign) is the vehicle. According to Nietzsche, knowledge can only be

interpretation, not explanation. We see this strongly argued in a draft to the fifth book of The Gay Science:

Whether the origin of our apparent 'knowledge' is not to be sought solely in older evaluations which have become so much part of us that they belong to our basic constitution? So that what really happens is only that newer needs grapple with the results of the oldest needs? The world seen, felt, interpreted as thus and thus so that organic life may preserve itself in this perspective of interpretation. Man is not only a single individual but one particular line of the total living organic world. That he endures proves that a species of interpretation (even though accretions are still being added) has also endured, that the system of interpretation has not changed. 'Adaption'. Our 'dissatisfaction', our 'ideal', etc., is perhaps the consequence of this incorporated piece of interpretation, of our perspective point of view.⁶²

In aphorism 374 of The Gay Science, Nietzsche draws from this the conclusion that the world has again become 'infinite' for us because we must consider the possibility that it includes an infinity of interpretations.⁶³ But what about the 'facts' that science so insists upon:

Against positivism, which halts at phenomena - "There are only facts" - I would say: No, facts is precisely what there is not, only interpretations. We cannot establish any fact 'in itself': perhaps it is folly to want to do such a thing. 'Everything is subjective', you say; but even this is interpretation. The 'subject' is not something given, it is something added and invented and projected behind what there is. - Finally, is it necessary to posit an interpreter behind the interpretation? Even this is invention, hypothesis. In so far as the word 'knowledge' has any meaning, the world is knowable; but it is interpretable otherwise, it has no meaning behind it, but countless meanings. - 'Perspectivism'. It is our needs that interpret the world; our drives and their For and Against. Every drive is a kind of lust to rule; each one has its perspective that it would like to compel all the other drives to accept as a norm.⁶⁴

Thus one could say that the will to truth has arrived at its ultimate truth: that every truth is a perspective, an interpretation, a sign. Philosophy (as well as art and

religion, etc.) is the language of this necessary lie. Man himself is this language - he writes books precisely to conceal his real opinions. In fact behind every one of the philosopher's caves, there is another richer and deeper cave. There is, "an abysmally deep ground behind every ground, under every attempt to furnish 'grounds'". "Every philosophy is a foreground philosophy - that is a hermit's judgement: 'There is something arbitrary in his stopping here to look back and look around, in his not digging deeper here but laying his spade aside; there is also something suspicious about it'. Every philosophy also conceals a philosophy; every opinion is also a hideout, every word is also a mask."*

The philosopher's attachment to truth is satirized in some of the songs of Prince Vogelfrei:

"Up north - embarrassing to tell -
I loved a creepy ancient belle:
The name of this old hag was Truth."*

In these poems, the dull truth - or the search for truth - is abandoned in favour of the free Dionysian play that was first praised in the writings of the 1870s.** The first poem, "To Goethe," of Prince Vogelfrei in fact deals with the concept of play although with a very different spirit than that of the more exuberant young Nietzsche:

"World game, the ruling force,
blends false and true:
the eternally fooling force
blends us in too."*

The vision of the game does not redeem or save. On the contrary, it assumes the fearlessness of he who dares to consider it. The threat of this vision is powerfully

delineated in the following aphorism from Beyond Good and Evil:

Independence is for the very few; it is a privilege of the strong. And whoever attempts it even with the best right but without inner constraint proves that he is probably not only strong, but also daring to the point of recklessness. He enters into a labyrinth, he multiplies a thousandfold the dangers which life brings with it in any case, not the least of which is that no one can see how and where he loses his way, becomes lonely, and is torn piecemeal by some minotaur of conscience. Supposing one like that comes to grief, this happens so far from the comprehension of men that they neither feel it nor sympathize. And he cannot go back any longer. Nor can he go back to the pity of men
---, 70

The same concern is reiterated in Sentence 146: "Whoever fights monsters should see to it that in the process he does not become a monster. And when you look long into an abyss, the abyss also looks into you."⁷¹

The philosopher then is that bizarre individual who constantly experiences the strangest things - who is struck by these things as if they came from without. He is, "alas, a being that often runs away from itself, often is afraid of itself - but too inquisitive not to 'come to' again - always back to himself."⁷²

And then? What happens next? What is the 'abyss' of the last years? Nietzsche suggests we know little of ourselves or of the spirit that guides us. Similarly, we do not know how many spirits are hidden within us and what they might be called.⁷³ The late Nietzsche returns constantly, as we have seen, to Dionysus - but how many interpretations, how many masks does this spirit have? Of course, it is a spirit of negation and subversion just as it is a laughing spirit. But what terror that laughter creates! At the same time, this spirit is

motivated by a systematic will whose task we inherit from Nietzsche. In a powerful fragment from the Spring of 1887, Nietzsche describes the paradox of thinking:

Must all philosophy not ultimately bring to light the preconditions upon which the process of reason depends? - our belief in the 'ego' as a substance, as the sole reality from which we ascribe reality to things in general? The oldest 'realism' at last comes to light: at the same time that the entire religious history of mankind is recognized as the history of the soul superstition. Here we come to a limit: our thinking itself involves this belief (with its distinction of substance, accident; deed, doer, etc); to let it go means: being no longer able to think.⁷⁴

The contradiction, the labyrinth, the trap of the will to truth, always held Nietzsche and hid the vision of the future that Zarathustra had prophesized. How did Nietzsche confront the limit mentioned in the above quotation? He did it especially by radicalizing his task as an excavator of presuppositions and a discoverer of sublimations. In this way, he displayed his talent as a parodist of world history and a buffoon of God.⁷⁵ This is a task that achieves its paradoxical realization in The Anti-Christ and Ecce Homo in which we see a man who has discovered the impossibility of continuing to think. With the last, fatal masks, Nietzsche loses at the same time the freedom of 'distance'. The 'critical' margin of reason becomes always more restricted; but it is Nietzsche himself who destroys with rapid hammerblows the edge of earth that is still supporting him. There is thus a falling 'into' the masks which claim a devotion that is almost personal, an incarnation without return (or as the previously quoted passage from Beyond Good and Evil had it, no return is possible, not even to the compassion of men).

Was this the great task which Nietzsche referred to many times during his last year? For example, in the letter of November 12, 1887 to Overbeck: "I have a task which forbids me to think of myself much. [...] This task has made me sick; it will make me well again...."⁷⁶ To Gersdorff on December 20, 1887, he writes:

My life has just reached high noon: one door is closing, another opening. In the last few years all I did was settle accounts, balance the ledger; I've gradually come to terms with it all and have arrived at a fresh page. Who and what should still accompany me, now that I must move on (have been condemned to move on) to the real essentials of my existence, is a major problem.⁷⁷

To Overbeck on February 3, 1888, he writes

I am hard at work too; and the outlines of an unquestionably immense task before me are emerging more and more clearly from the mists. There were dark moments meanwhile, whole days and nights when I did not know any longer how to go on living and when a black despair attacked me, worse than I have every known before. Nevertheless, I know that "I cannot escape by going backward or to the right or to the left; I have no choice."⁷⁸

By the later part of the month, he was overcoming his earlier melancholy. Perhaps it is here that we can speak of a second 'recovery'. In Aphorism 295 of Beyond Good and Evil, he spoke of the possibility of one day offering to his friends a few tastes of the philosophy of Dionysus.⁷⁹ Perhaps he was arriving at that day. In the Autumn of 1888 in Turin, he spoke of feeling better than ever before. He even felt joy and periods of euphoria. But in writing Ecce Homo, he seemed to recall what he had noted in Aphorism 270 of Beyond Good and Evil, where he states that sometimes, "foolishness is the mask for an unblessed all-too-certain

knowledge.""" In Ecce Homo, he expresses a similar thought: "Not doubt, certainty is what drives one insane. - But one must be profound, an abyss, a philosopher to feel that way. - We are all afraid of truth.""

What certainty? What truth? Was it the thought of a world that includes infinite interpretations within itself? Was this impossible thought the intolerable truth that Nietzsche had uncovered by continually digging into the roots of the will to truth and of language? He had excavated the roots of metaphysical language but is there a non-metaphysical language, one that is independent of grammar? Was it the thought of a limit - a limit beyond which one could no longer think? Or was it the thought of the eternal return, as one could deduce from various passages? But the eternal return of what? Of the Dionysian game of language, of signs, of interpretations? This is one possible hypothesis - and it too is an interpretation.

But what is more important is the following question: after Nietzsche's experience and his ambiguous defeat, can we still think? And how and at what price?

FOOTNOTES

¹Nietzsche writes that we must demolish (abtragen) stone by stone the edifice (Gebäude) of the Apollonian-aesthetic culture.

²Friedrich Nietzsche, The Birth of Tragedy (Random House: Toronto, 1967), p. 41 (hereafter cited as Nietzsche, Birth).

³Ibid., p. 42

⁴Ibid., p. 18

⁵Idem, The Use and Abuse of History, trans. Adrian Collins (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1957) (hereafter cited as Nietzsche, History).

⁶Idem, Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks, trans. with an introduction by Marianne Cowan (Chicago: Regnery, 1962) (hereafter cited as Nietzsche, Greeks).

⁷Idem, Philosophy and Truth: Selections from Nietzsche's Notebooks of the Early 1870's, trans. and ed. Daniel Breazeale (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1979) (hereafter cited as Nietzsche, Philosophy).

⁸Ibid.

⁹Idem, "Lecture Notes on Rhetoric," trans. Carol Blair, Philosophy and Rhetoric 16:2 (1983), pp. 94-129.

¹⁰Nietzsche, Birth, p. 95.

¹¹Ibid.

12Ibid.

13Ibid.

14Ibid.

15Ibid., p. 96.

16Ibid.

17Ibid.

18Ibid., p. 98.

19Ibid., p. 109.

20Ibid., p. 111.

21Ibid., p. 113

22Idem, *Philosophy*, p. 12.

23Ibid., p. 56.

24Ibid., p. 50.

25Idem, "Rhetoric."

26Ibid., p. 100

27Ibid., pp. 106-107.

28Ibid., p. 50.

29 Nietzsche reconstructs the origin of tragedy via a double process of projection: first of all the dithyrambic chorus of revelers are "transformed" and become by "magic" identified with satyrs, with the faithful of Dionysus. They,

thus, consider themselves and one another transformed. These first aesthetic experiences create the original distancing from the real. In the second instance, the member of the chorus sees himself as a satyr and, therefore, sees Dionysus (represented by an actor):

But now we realize that the scene, complete with the action, was basically and originally thought of merely as a vision: the chorus is the only 'reality' and generates the vision, speaking of it with the entire symbolism of dance, tone, and words. In its vision the chorus beholds its lord and master Dionysus and is therefore eternally the serving chorus: it sees how the god suffers and glorifies himself and therefore does not itself act. But while its attitude toward the god is wholly one of service, it is nevertheless the highest, namely the Dionysian, expression of nature and therefore pronounces in its rapture, as nature does, oracles and wise sayings: sharing his suffering it also shares something of his wisdom and proclaims the truth from the heart of the world. (Nietzsche, Birth, p. 65.)

Bearing this in mind, is it not possible to argue that the illusory character of every aesthetic metaphysics is not already inherent in tragic art? Isn't tragedy itself already an interpretation of life, a perspective on life? And doesn't tragedy, by rendering Dionysus visible, by transfiguring him into an Apollonian mask (- that of the actor), begin, at least embryonically, the decadence that will become fully manifest in the Platonic-Socratic philosophy?

To understand fully this point, it is necessary to refer to Heidegger's essay of 1942 entitled, "Plato's Doctrine of Truth." According to Heidegger, in Plato, one sees the shift in the concept of truth from aletheia to veritas. Plato, that is, no longer thinks the aletheia as the movement of unveiling, of being no longer hidden, of the entity, but understands it as Idea, that is, as the vision of the already unveiled entity. Truth as idea, as vision gives birth to the question of knowledge, of the subject-object relation, of the 'exact' adequacy between the seeing and the seen, between man and the world, which is the point of departure not only of technical-scientific-metaphysical thought but also of 'humanism'. The Greeks themselves thought of truth (aletheia) as the basis of lethe, of that which is hidden and does not manifest itself. It seems, according to Heidegger, that the Greeks believed that in speaking, in moving from the non-manifest to the manifest, there was inherent an act of violence. Man was violent in uncovering that which was covered. Logos or speech is an essential aspect of this violence: man is the animal who speaks and who in speaking reveals entities. This is his 'destiny'. This need to unveil and interpret can be seen as a dangerous fate characterizing man as such. In The Question Concerning Technology of 1953, Heidegger observed that the problem of technique was one with

that of aletheia and, precisely for this reason, it embodied a grave danger for man. See Martin Heidegger, The Question Concerning Technology, trans. William Lovitt (New York: Harper and Row, 1977).

²⁰Nietzsche opposed Wagner (the Wagner of Bayreuth and Parsifal) because he saw in such a cultural orientation an attempt at historical compromise between paganism and Christianity, between Hegelian historicism and post-Hegelian materialism (Feuerbach) on the one side and idealistic spiritualism on the other. Nietzschean genealogy, to the contrary, moves beyond both mythical-ideological materialism and the old mystifying spiritualism as well as their artificial and obsolete 'synthesis'. That Nietzsche's courageous operation has been denounced as irrationalist seems to constitute one of the major blindnesses of our age. Future centuries will no doubt attempt to explain "historiographically" this blindness. The task will be perhaps similar to the effort we must still make today to understand how the Scholastics could denounce Galileo as irrationalist.

²¹Nietzsche, Philosophy, p. 80.

²²Ibid.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Ibid., p. 81.

²⁵Ibid., p. 84.

²⁶Ibid., p. 85.

²⁷Ibid., p. 84

²⁸Ibid., p. 86.

²⁹Idea, Human, all too human: a book for free spirits, trans. Marion Faber (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984) Aphorism 1, p. 13 (hereafter cited as Nietzsche, Human).

³⁰Idea, Beyond Good and Evil, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Random House, 1966) (hereafter cited as Nietzsche, Beyond).

*Idem, HUMAN, Aphorism 1, p. 13.

*Already in The Birth of Tragedy, Nietzsche believes that the Socratic age of the decadence of tragedy is preceded by many earlier ages. Even the epoch of Homer is not an origin but rather the result of a long evolution.

*Nietzsche, HUMAN, Aphorism 11, p. 19.

*Idem, Beyond, p. 2

*Ibid., p. 24.

*Idem, Birth, p. 42.

*Idem, Beyond, p. 9. One recalls the already cited 'extreme danger' referred to in Heidegger's essay on technology. One could ask, what does the man of the age of science and technology want? Who wishes in him and via him? What is hidden and what expresses itself in his will?

*Ibid., Aphorism 278, p. 224.

*Ibid., Aphorism 40, p. 50.

*Ibid., Aphorism 229, p. 159.

*Ibid., Aphorism 230, p. 161.

*Ibid., p. 162.

*Ibid., Aphorism 6, p. 13.

*Ibid., Aphorism 25, pp. 36-37.

*Ibid., Aphorism 34, p. 46.

*Ibid., Aphorism 39, p. 49.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 90.

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹Ibid., Aphorism 344, pp. 281-283.

⁶⁰Ibid., Aphorism 355, p. 301.

⁶¹Idem, The Will to Power, ed. Walter Kaufmann, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R.J. Hollingdale (New York: Random House, 1967) Aphorism 375, p. 202 (hereafter cited as Nietzsche, Will).

⁶²Ibid., Aphorism 678, pp. 359-360.

⁶³Idem, The Gay Science, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Random House, 1974) Aphorism 374, p. 336 (hereafter cited as Nietzsche, Science).

⁶⁴Idem, Will, Aphorism 481, p. 267.

⁶⁵Idem, Beyond, Aphorism 289, p. 229.

⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷Idem, Science, p. 357.

⁶⁸See especially the discussion of Zeus, the divine child in the interpretation of Heraclitus in Friedrich Nietzsche, Greeks.

⁶⁹Nietzsche, Science, p. 351.

⁷⁰Idem, Beyond, pp. 41-42.

⁷¹Ibid., p. 88.

⁷²Ibid., Aphorism 292, p. 230.

73Ibid., p. 156.

74Idem, Will, Aphorism 487, p. 269.

75See Nietzsche, Beyond, Aphorism 223, p. 150.

76Idem, Selected Letters of Friedrich Nietzsche, ed. and trans. Christopher Middleton (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), p. 276 (hereafter cited as Nietzsche, Selected Letters).

77Idem, Nietzsche: A Self-Portrait from His Letters, ed. Peter Fuss and Henry Shapiro (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971), p. 105.

78Idem, Selected Letters, p. 282.

79Idem, Beyond, Aphorism 295, p. 235.

80Ibid., Aphorism 270, p. 221.

81Ecce Homo, p. 246.

CHAPTER III

THE LIMIT EXPERIENCE OF GEORGES BATAILLE

This chapter will treat of the theories of the philosopher and pornographer Georges Bataille (1898-1962). The focus will be on Bataille's later theoretical writings of the forties and fifties. These are the writings that I believe had the greatest impact on the young Foucault. Attention will be primarily concentrated on those notions, such as the interior experience (or limit experience) and transgression, which most influenced Foucault. Also discussed will be the relationship between these experiences and discursive knowledge in Bataille's thought. Finally, the chapter will conclude with an account of the very significant debate between Bataille and Jean-Paul Sartre which occurred during the late forties and early fifties. This encounter, no doubt, played a role in hardening Foucault's antagonism to the Sartrean form of existentialism.

Bataille's thought, like Foucault's, represents an unusual combination of themes derived from science and art. In Bataille's case, the social sciences contributed two fundamental notions: that of gift-giving and waste ("~~deposits~~") from Marcel Mauss' anthropology, and that of the

sacred and transgression from Emile Durkheim's sociology.²

Marcel Mauss read the anthropological evidence of Indian tribes (e.g., those of British Columbia) in terms of his desire to re-establish the practice of gift-giving in modern society. In archaic societies, he discovered many forms of gift-exchange which, according to him, provided an outlet for the tension that would have otherwise resulted in war. Bataille was especially struck by Mauss' account of the institution of the potlach. This is, in fact, a type of gift-exchange (although a "monstrous" one) in which wealth is destroyed in order to achieve social rank. Now, Bataille was most interested in the violent, wasteful aspects of the potlach rather than the potlach's functionality for social hierarchy. Typically, in the potlach, wealthy individuals take turns trying to outdo one another in the destruction of valuables. Accordingly, a close ^{up} game must be maintained on how much each participant has destroyed. Also, the gift-giving is not actually free because each participant is constrained to stay in the game. Bataille modified Mauss' account by de-emphasizing these functional aspects to focus on the pure "~~deposse~~" that he believed was implicit within the potlach - for him, the ideal would be a potlach that was not reciprocated. Potlachs then could be seen as part of a wasteful "general economy" beyond the instrumental realm of the "restricted economy":

Exchanges, at least in primitive societies, are not subject to laws other than those of ~~deposse~~. Even in contemporary societies, ~~deposse~~ plays a decisive role. It is true that if "need" were defined as the petty preservation of life, economics could limit itself to

the study of modes of acquisition and production. But need, in fact, consists in a continued release of vital forces, in an immense destruction of lives and riches - a juggernaut that suspends life at the limit of anguish and nausea, or carries it to the point of trance and orgiastic excess.³

Bataille saw in the existence of waste in primitive societies an implicit critique of bourgeois and Marxian economic themes in which man is conceived to be an utilitarian egoist by nature. As was the case with Mauss, he used his findings to advocate a return to the gift institution - a return which would heal the fragmentation of the modern subject. Not only is economics not the basic level of human existence for Bataille, but the notion of depense calls into question the individual self. The potlach is ultimately self-sacrificial within it, one tries to "to project oneself, and something of oneself, beyond the self...which in certain instances can have no other result than death."

Bataille's concept of depense is thus an elaboration and extension of Mauss' findings. Eventually, however, he came to recognise that depense only takes place in a very limited fashion within the potlach. Basically, the primitive potlach or sacrifice is part of a more fixed system of symbols or social utilities (à la Lévi-Strauss). He also realized that any theory of depense would be very problematic. To try to give an account of it would be to attribute motives to social actors explaining why they engaged in the sacrifice or ritual. This, of course, would reduce it to a kind of instrumental action, an action no different from that dominant in contemporary society. Depense, however, is not a project, but

rather an instantaneous happening:

In fact, accumulation must be situated in relation to the instant at which it will be resolved as pure depense. But herein lies the difficult moment. Consciousness is opposed to it to the extent that it seeks to obtain some object of acquisition, some thing, rather than the nothing of pure depense. It is a matter of attaining the moment when consciousness ceases to be the consciousness of some thing. In other words, to become aware that the decisive meaning of an instant where acquisition will resolve itself in pure depense, is precisely the consciousness-of-self, which is to say, consciousness which no longer has a thing as its object.⁵

Bataille undertakes a radicalization of the thought of Emile Durkheim that is similar to his approach to Marcel Mauss. Both of these thinkers were very popular amongst the political and artistic avant-gardes of the twenties and thirties in France. Both pointed to aspects of primitive society which could be used to ground criticism of contemporary bourgeois society. Bataille was attracted to Durkheim's distinction between the profane and the sacred which he eventually assimilated to his own distinction between the homogeneous and the heterogeneous. The sacred represented the primordial unifying force in every society according to Durkheim. The leftist artists and writers hoped that through a revival of the sacred, a unified intentional community-life could be restored. Durkheim's method, however, was positivistic, excluding considerations of psychology and meaning. Social facts were to be treated as things. And for Durkheim, sacred things and profane things were utterly different:

For our definition of the sacred is that it is something added to and above the real....In fact, we have seen that if collective life awakens religious thought on reaching a certain degree of intensity, it is because it brings about a state of effervescence which changes the

conditions of psychic activity. Vital energies are over-excited, passions more active, sensations stronger; there are even some which are produced only at this moment. A man does not recognise himself; he feels transformed and consequently he transforms the environment which surrounds him.*

For Bataille, however, Durkheim tended to overemphasize the homogeneous character of the sacred - the sacred as counterposed to the profane as the pure to the impure. Bataille sought to bring to light the ambivalence of the sacred as revealed in the etymology of the word "sacer" itself which denotes, during the Middle Ages, both the sacred and the syphilitic. This profound ambivalence can be seen in all human experiences, especially the interlinked experiences of death, sexuality and God. Man feels a strong attraction to, as well as abhorrence, of death and sexuality. These are "sacred" phenomena dominated by the game of prohibition and transgression, homogeneity and heterogeneity, even in our own time.

With the decline of objective institutions of the sacred such as sacrifice (human or animal) or potlach, the sacred has entered the more limited field of subjective experience. "God" still exists, for Bataille, as an interdit that constantly incites transgression. Nietzsche's "death of God" does not represent for him the expression of a complacent atheism but rather the repeated horror of having killed God. By killing God, we are allowed momentary access to the sovereign, to what Bataille refers to as the "impossible." But since the order of the world (the homogeneous) must always be restored, the dead God inevitably revives in the next moment.

Related to the sacred is the sacrifice of self that Bataille believed to be an essential component of eroticism. Sexuality was violently heterogeneous, attracting and repelling, and to be fully experienced, it must be taken to the limit of death (*la petite mort* of the orgasm). In the act of sexuality, the self dissolved, establishing a transient unity with the others ("communication" in Bataille's terms). Sexuality was intrinsically transgressive and yet, in modern society, it had been seized by the realm of the homogeneous: "Our sexuality has been absorbed by the universe of language, denaturalized by it, and placed in a void where it establishes its sovereignty and ceaselessly imposes itself as the law of limits that it transgresses."

But within this world of discourse, sexuality continues its work of transgression. Only now language itself must be transgressed - thus Bataille's attempt to find a new language for the experience of eroticism in his literary efforts. This transgression (or deconstruction) of the order of language is a corollary of the transgression of God. For Foucault, these projects first came together during a specific historical period - specifically the early nineteenth century as witnessed in the works of de Sade: "The speech given to sexuality is contemporaneous, both in time and structure, with that through which we announced to ourselves that God is dead." The irony here, again, is that because sexuality is transgression, Bataille makes it clear that he does not want to see prohibitions or taboos removed. He is very critical of the modern world's attempt to rationalise the violence of sexuality

by integrating it into the world of consumption, to turn it into a mere commodity. Sexual freedom is an illusory goal. Prohibitions cannot simply be legislated out of existence on the ground that they are obsolete and anachronistic. Thus, Bataille, the "pornographer," defends existing prohibitions: "In this instance, in spite of appearances, I am opposed to the tendency that seems to prevail today. I am not among those who see in the rejection of sexual taboos a solution. I actually think that human potential depends on them."

Bataille's name has been clearly associated with the concept of transgression. Transgression, however, does not exist "in itself" and thus to think it demands a new type of language. The odd thing about transgression is that the prohibition and the transgression continually refer to one another, continually affirm each other. In this meaningless game, the prohibition, no doubt, comes first (in the form of the taboo on the violence of death and sexuality) but the prohibition also is the pre-condition and even to a certain extent the cause of the transgression. The transgression itself always refers back to the prohibition for its "justification." The transgression, therefore, does not negate the prohibition but rather acts to maintain it: [Transgression is] an operation of a Hegelian sort...which corresponds to the dialectical phase described by the untranslatable German *Aufheben*: to transcend without suppressing."¹⁰ Transgression involves what Foucault has called a "non-positive affirmation"

- the prohibition affirms as much as challenges the interdit. The dance of transgression has been well described by Foucault in his essay on Bataille, "Preface to Transgression":

The limit and transgression depend on each other for whatever density of being they possess: a limit could not exist if it were absolutely uncrossable and, reciprocally, transgression would be pointless if it merely crossed a limit composed of illusions and shadows. But can the limit have a life of its own outside of the act that gloriously passes through it and negates it?...For its part, does transgression not exhaust its nature when it crosses the limit, knowing no other life beyond this point in time?¹¹

The notion of the limit then assumes the relativity of value of good and evil. The prohibition forbids evil and yet constantly incites its performance. It creates value at the same time as it brings desire and temptation into the world. The limit is two-faced: on the one hand, it generates terror (the fear of breaking the taboo) and, on the other, it inevitably generates the desire, the need to try to transgress the taboo. Bataille accepts Mauss' conclusion: taboos are made, socially, to be broken - there are no such things as unbreakable laws.¹² But the laws also miraculously survive all transgressions. For, as Foucault has argued in the above quotation, the transgression takes place in a flashing moment. The 'no' is a moment of heterogeneity or ~~dephense~~, a brief leap out of the realm of the homogeneous. It is a moment that can neither be integrated into a broader project, nor grasped by any discursive theory.

Bataille gives the name 'sovereignty' to this other reason. Sovereignty is the "affirmative reduction of sense,"¹³ in the words of Jacques Derrida, not the position of non-sense.

Unknownledge is neither scientism nor mysticism because both of these are foundationalist discourses dependent upon an arche or first principle. Sovereign writing must break with that which precedes it in order to be sovereign. It "seeks neither to be applied nor propagated, neither to last nor instruct."¹⁴ Sovereignty exceeds or transgresses the subject and all previous historical discourses. It takes seriously Hegel's claim to have united history and knowledge but, at the same time, refuses this unity. Bataille does not claim to return to a pre-Hegelian notion of substance that would be like a night in which all cows are gray. In his Methodes de meditation, he indicates his acceptance of Hegel's attack on Schelling:

The criticisms addressed by Hegel to Schelling (in the preface to the Phenomenology) is no less decisive. The preliminary efforts of the operation are not within reach of an unprepared intelligence (as Hegel says: it would be similarly senseless, if one were not a shoemaker, to make a shoe). These efforts, through the mode of application which belongs to them, nevertheless inhibit the sovereign operation (the being which goes as far as it possibly can). Sovereign behaviour precisely demands a refusal to submit to its operation, to the conditions of preliminaries. The operation does become urgent, it is no longer time to undertake efforts whose essence is to be subordinate to ends exterior to them, whose essence is not be ends themselves.¹⁵

Sovereignty is the meaningless moment of waste that any economy requires in order to rid itself of excess energy. Bataille refers to the science of this economy as a "general economy" in order to distinguish it from the "restricted economy," the economy of the merely commercial use of values. The general economy, it must be noted is not a theory of deparasse or sovereignty. To attempt to fully grasp these within a rational structure would be merely to repeat the Hegelian

gesture. The general economy does not describe sovereignty but rather it is the relation to sovereignty. Sovereignty destroys meaning, truth and so by definition, the discourse. This is because sovereignty "is not, it is this loss [of meaning]."16
 - The General economy must, therefore, always be distanced from sovereignty. "In sum, it would be impossible to speak of knowledge, while we can speak of its effects."17

Jacques Derrida has indicated Bataille's profound reliance upon and acceptance of Hegel's account of human existence:

"The unity of seriousness, meaning, work, servility, discourse, etc., the unity of man, slave and God - such, in Bataille's eyes, is the profound content of (Hegelian) philosophy."18 Given this Hegelian point of departure (which is derived from Kojève's interpretation of Hegel as representing the culmination of thought), Bataille can only attempt to confront Hegel with his other: "In this my efforts recommence and undo Hegel's Phenomenology. Hegel's construction of a philosophy of work, of the 'project'. Hegelian man - Being and God - is fulfilled in the adequation of the project...the slave...after many meanders, accedes to the summit of the universal. The only obstacle to this way of thinking (which is moreover, of an unequalled, and in some way inaccessible, profundity) is that man is irreducible to the project: nondiscursive existence, laughter, ecstasy."19

That the interior or sovereign experience is part of man's nature does not entail that Bataille believes in a voluntaristic subjectivity. Rather, he is attempting to evoke

the de-mystifying moment of human nature. Sovereign experiences cannot be consciously pursued:

And it does not even suffice to say: one cannot speak of the sovereign moment without altering it, without altering it insofar as it is truly sovereign. To the same extent as to speak of it, to ~~seek~~ these movements is contradictory. At the moment when we seek something, whatever it is, we do not live in sovereign fashion, we subordinate the present moment to a future moment that will follow it. Perhaps we attain the sovereign moment following our effort, and, in effect, it is possible that an effort is necessary, but between the time of the effort and sovereign time there is necessarily a cut-off, and, one could even say, an abyss.²⁰

The interior experience, then, should not be defined as being interior to a subject. It is not an experience of something but the experience of the impossible, of the limit. It is interior only in the sense that it is not exterior - it is not related to something external to itself such as a higher essence or reason. Hence, it is related to no plenitude, it is neither a mystical surrender to something other nor does it remain on the level of discursive knowledge. Bataille stress that it is an experience beyond both scientism (or rationalism) and mysticism. Bataille, in his critique of Hegel and Kojève, advocates a type of "conscious" mysticism opposed to the classical variety:

The atheistic mystic, conscious of himself, conscious of having to die and to disappear, would live, as Hegel says, evidently about himself, in 'absolute rending'; but for Hegel, it was only a question of a phase: as opposed to Hegel, the atheist mystic would never emerge from it, "contemplating the negative quite directly," but never able to transpose it into Being, refusing to do so and maintaining himself in ambiguity.²¹

Hegel believed that the subject could attain absolute knowledge through the continual recuperation of its alienations. Nothing ultimately would remain outside this

subject as the unknown was eventually returned to the known via the labor of the concept. For Bataille, however, there is a negative defined as finitude or imperfection which always remains beyond the grasp of the subject as knower. The project of absolute knowledge reveals its own contradiction when, at the end of his life, a depressed Hegel asks "Why must I exist in this form? In what way is it necessary?"²² Was the depression the result of the anticipation of his own imminent death or his own terror at the thought of being God?

The experience of limits or excess is a non-knowledge. It is the joyous acceptance of the failure of knowledge to comprehend this experience followed immediately by the decision to live to the limit of the possible even if this entails putting into question one's rational self. This, Bataille emphasizes, does not entail the return to a lost animality. It is rather a constant placing into question of nature, the realization that no discursive structure (Reason or morality) can definitively control "la part maudite." Both the claim to theoretically subsume nature and the return to nature are equally constricting.

Although the experience of the limit takes the form of ecstasy, it cannot be defined as a mystical ecstasy. Bataille's ecstasy is not an ascetic effort to reach final rest in God or in Being. Far from the enjoyment of an inner peace, non-knowledge is a continual, excessive questioning within a non-spiritual world. It is not an experience of love or indeed of hate. It attributes no positive value to the experience of excess or sovereignty in the manner of nihilism. Rather than

the nihilist re-ification of nothingness, non-knowledge, in fact, has no object. It is the experience of the heterogeneous realm in which subject and object are dissolved.

But how can one write, using the servile tools of language, about the experience of non-knowledge? How does Bataille escape the *aporia* of writing about something which is impossible to write about? Bataille is conscious of this paradox and attempts to respond to it in his "Lectures on Non-knowledge" of 1952. Here, he states that the experience of limits cannot be spoken of, must be undergone in silence, but that its effects can be known. These would include sacrifice, laughter, and revolts.²³ The sacrifice on which he focuses is not the Christian but that of the ritual sacrifice of the Aztecs. It represents the satisfaction of an urge to destroy or waste. The laugh, so important for Bataille, is the break in the continuity of the known or in philosophy. It is that which destroys the Hegelian system, that which destroys Hegel's pretension to completeness. And finally, the revolt is that which frees man "from the engagement of the slave."²⁴ It is the opposite of the determined revolt of Hegel's slave who only manages to establish another hierarchy and dialectically continues the history of reason. Sovereign revolt must go to the very end of its revolt, for its own sake, not for the sake of destroying a specific opponent.²⁵

The excessive experience of sovereignty or the negative continues and deepens the Hegelian notion of objectification (externalization) by refusing the return to identity or the reconciliation of spirit with itself. Bataille opposes the

Hegelian "Aufhebung" in which the conflict between the positive and the negative, the identical and the non-identical are finally re-united in the moral spirit that is certain of itself.²⁶ A process that results in a return to self (in sich selbst nehmen) and in the recognition of the moments of non-identity as, in fact, belonging to identity, cannot be regarded, according to Bataille, as serious. If externalization is only a moment in which spirit fails to recognise itself in its opposite, can it be compared to the profound seriousness of tragic conflict? The negative is only a moment of the positive and the spirit conquers its truth only on the condition of finding itself in absolute dispersion. According to Hegel:

Spirit is alone Reality. It is the inner being of the world, that which essentially is, and is not as: it assumes objective, determinate form, and enters into relations with itself - it is externality (otherness), and exists for self; yet, in this determination, and in its otherness, it is still one with itself - it is self-contained and self-complete, in itself and for itself all at once.²⁷

Has such a spirit really come to terms with the infinitely various experiences of modernity of which Hegel speaks?

Bataille intends to continue Hegel's work of conserving the work of death and looking the negative in the face but he also believes that the final reconciliation of Hegel's absolute knowledge "may rightly be considered comical."²⁸ In Hegel, the experience of dissolution, of dispersion, is simply an incident on the road to the positive. According to Bataille: "in Hegel's thought disorder is an order that hides itself, this night is the mask of day."²⁹

The movement of externalization is connected to historical experience - where there is no negativity, there is not future. It is, thus, both in the world of animality and that of absolute knowledge. For Bataille, man is opposed to the animal since the latter remains identical to itself. Man is always becoming other than himself, becoming a stranger to himself. Absolute knowledge would put an end to history as well as to the heterogeneity within society - nothing would ever be new. Only by radicalizing the negative does Bataille believe it is possible to guarantee the existence of the future and of novelty. For Bataille, only the experience of death can finally guarantee the continuance of history. Without death, history would have no motive, no fundamental conflict. Bataille agrees with Kojève, whose lectures he followed throughout the late thirties, that Hegel's philosophy is an illusion because it is a philosophy of death. In Hegel, the institution of the labor relation implies a struggle for life and death; it is maintained by fear of the master and by the negation of the natural identity. Culture begins with the disaggregation into which the simple consciousness is thrown by the economic blackmail for physical survival, continues with the principle of the general equivalent and finishes with the meaningless death of the terror. However, for Hegel, culture and labor have a positive, reconciling moment. The work of the slave contributes to his education and his individuality. Culture itself is a precondition of knowledge. Bataille, hence, believes these are merely means of avoiding death; they are ways of creating the illusion that one has escaped the

terror of death. The Hegelian account of the life and death struggle of the master to obtain recognition strikes Bataille as being an insufficient account of death. This type of military mastery (which is too beholden to practical, physical needs) is contrasted by Bataille with a religious sovereignty characterized by a closer relationship to death.

From his point of view, the slave maintains a relation of flight and repulsion vis-à-vis death. The slave is constituted precisely by his preference of work to death. The reduction of the slave to a tool, is not really the same as the experience of death. In fact, the meaning of the tool is that it constantly refers to the future, an identity to come which justifies the labor of the present. The slave will realize himself, will enjoy his product, in the future. The horror of death for the slave is the result also of his fear that precisely this future enjoyment will be denied him.

Besides, it is not true, according to Bataille, that the relation of the slave with nature denies the identity of the latter. The negative relation to nature, for Bataille, is the consumption, and not the production, of values. The transformation of nature which is the fundamental consequence of labor, does not imply any identity of the transformed object and death. Rather, by transforming the object into an instrument and deferring its consumption, it is implicated in the servile world which attempts to elude death. Even the master is implicated in this positivity because he is in charge of the labor of the slave. And when the slave overcomes the master and becomes self-conscious, he merely enters into the

broader servile and homogeneous world of bourgeois society.

The entire calculative world of labor is founded upon the fear of death and the repression of the experience of death. The three moments of culture in Hegel's *Phenomenology* (pure culture, utility, and terror) are developments of labor. The term *Bildung* clearly reveals its positive character related to instrumental labor and the effort to escape death. For Hegel, there is no labor without thought and vice versa. Thought is fundamentally instrumental for labor in Hegel's philosophy.

The inversion of all identities into their opposite, which in the eyes of Hegel was the proof of the negative nature of pure culture is, for Bataille, only the homogenized world of commerce. The result is only reification, not the experience of conflict depicted by Hegel.

Similarly, Bataille denies that utility (where each thing grounds its being in the reference to the other) constitutes an experience of the negative. For Bataille, on the contrary, utility and negativity (death) are mutually exclusive. The utilitarian reference to the other thing does not rupture identity because the reference is merely to the general equivalent of money. The negative is precisely the useless, according to Bataille - it cannot contribute in a positive way to the utile.

Bataille also reconsiders Hegel's analysis of the relationship between faith and the spirit of the Enlightenment. Whereas Hegel sees a close link between utility and faith, Bataille accepts Max Weber's view of the

split between morality and the economic sphere brought about by the Calvinists. By purifying the realm of religion, the reformers destroyed the sacred and delivered man into the world of rational productivity.³⁰

The third form of culture defined by Hegel, the revolutionary terror, also does not constitute an experience of death, but rather dissolves into a positivity even more homogeneous than that preceding it. The revolutionaries destroyed the sovereign aspect in order to "save" the revolution. Bataille takes the example of Stalinism which, far from realizing the sovereign, introduces a rapid process of industrialization. Following Isaac Deutscher's perspective³¹, Bataille believes that the communists carried out the productive task that the bourgeoisie had failed to accomplish. Their action was cruel and terroristic as is all action that suppresses present enjoyment for the sake of a future goal.

The opposition between Stalinism and the bourgeois world is not as radical as their supporters claim because both systems share the same economic foundation; the only difference is that Stalinism is much more rigorous in its homogenizing efforts. In fact, it tends to reduce to zero the element of sovereignty that the bourgeoisie had inherited from feudal society. The bourgeois still, at times, is capable of enjoying a kind of sovereignty on the basis of his private wealth. This equivocation is eliminated (at least tendentially) by the communists. The bourgeois, thus, comically vacillates between utility and sovereignty.³²

Thus, work and culture are not really the experience of

negativity and death. Rather, this latter is subordinated to economic utility and identity in Hegel. The fear of death, of the future, is dissolved in absolute knowledge. The real experience of death is attained only by those who can look it in the face without fear - those who do not expect from the future either the confirmation for their fears or the realization of their projects. The sovereign life is aware of the alterity of the future, the impossibility of calculating its course. Ironically, only this life can pass into the future as opposed to the servile life which subordinates the present to the future.

As was the case with Hegel, Bataille never ceased to confront the philosophy of Nietzsche. Again we see him accepting certain of Nietzsche's contributions while rejecting others over a meditation that lasted forty years. The various stages of Bataille's Nietzsche-reception are traced by Alan Stoekel in "The Death of Acapahle and the Will to Change: Nietzsche in the Text of Bataille."³³ Initially, Bataille interprets Nietzsche, in a way similar to the surrealists, as the spokesman of a divine, dionysian 'other'. It is believed that Zarathustra and the Overman are harbingers of a new ecstatic religion which will permit a definitive escape not only from the world of bourgeois labor but from labor itself. Accordingly, Bataille establishes a secret society (with Klossowski, Waldberg and Ambrosino) with the goal of instituting a new religion. Bataille admires the dionysian

(the heterogeneous) moment in Nietzsche's thought but remains wary of its homogeneous aspect, its relation to a telos. Bataille expresses his disapproval of the homogenizing tendency in Nietzsche with the following passage from Sur Nietzsche:

The weakness of Nietzsche: he criticizes in the name of moving values whose origin and end - evidently - he could not grasp. To grasp isolated possibility, having a particular end, which is only for itself an end, is not this in the end to risk oneself. It might be that the interest of the operation is in the risk, not in the chosen end. The narrow end is lacking? Risk will nonetheless order one's values. The superman or Borgia sides are limited, vainly defined, in the face of possibilities having their essence in the going beyond [depassement] of oneself. (This takes nothing from the upheaval, the great wind, upsetting all the old satisfactions.³⁴

Bataille also becomes increasingly critical of the medieval nostalgia in Nietzsche for a society of masters and slaves. The overman in Nietzsche, although living the life of the aristocratic artist, remains dependent on the continued servility of the masses. In fact, the new elite are defined by Nietzsche precisely by the distance they maintain between themselves and the mass. In this way, of course, the aristocracy loses its heterogeneous, subversive nature for Bataille. It becomes a fixed stratum in opposition to the rest of humanity, forever trapped in the world of commerce and labor. But this aristocratism is also rejected by Bataille (absorbing here themes from the political and aesthetic avant-garde of the thirties) as it refuses to see that heterogeneous forces in society have their origin in the lower, outcast classes of society. Any cultural Nietzscheanism would, therefore, have to find a way to make political contact with the working classes. Bataille criticized the surrealists for

believing that such a cultural-aesthetic leap ("the Icarian adventure"³⁵) outside the limits of bourgeois culture was possible. The other dilemma of trying to establish a new Nietzschean religion had also become clear to Bataille by 1940. This is the recurrent paradox, so central to Bataille's thought, of transforming the heterogeneous into a project. The sect had become so intent on establishing and institutionalizing the sacred, that it was destroyed in the process. The sacred experience is inevitably fleeting - it cannot be made the object of a political or religious program.

Bataille, however, had always greatly admired Nietzsche's violent attack on the conventions of bourgeois society - an attack carried to the limits of madness. In his mature reflection on Nietzsche, beginning with his Sur Nietzsche written during the mid-forties, Bataille focuses on this negative, heterogeneous aspect of Nietzsche's thought. Nietzsche, in other words, is turned against Nietzsche, transformed into a hyper-Nietzsche with whom Bataille actually identifies.³⁶ Nietzsche's doctrine of the overman and the will to power are here taken to be, in fact, myths - ironic tools for the subverting of bourgeois culture, not for the positing of any particular social or political ends. Nietzsche is the ever-present antagonist of homogeneous society, surviving even in the nearly static communist society.

It could be argued, however, that by reducing Nietzsche's will to power to a "will to chance," Bataille fails to appreciate an important aspect of Nietzsche's thought. This is Nietzsche's attempt to posit a force that would

transcend the dichotomy between the homogeneous and the heterogeneous and the other dichotomies of Bataille's philosophy. For example, Bataille's ideas about culture are not, in effect, terribly revolutionary. The general economy that Bataille opposes to the restricted economy is only in appearance a radical alternative to this latter. The work-pleasure, accumulation-waste dichotomies remain within a conception of the economy understood as the production of values and never reach the theory of the economy as the exchange of values which do not exist independently of this latter. The original and natural character of the restricted economy is accepted; the negative only retains a small area within this domain (the potlach, the ostentatious destruction of wealth, etc.)

The conception of culture as the non-utile finishes by re-affirming the definitive separation between the cultural "values" with a negative sign and the reality of the political and economic world without furnishing or indicating a solution that would somehow go beyond both utopian idealism and political realism. In fact, by considering evil as impossible, Bataille attributes to it the same status that moralism attributes to good: the total separation from reality. In his perspective, sovereignty and power mutually exclude one another. Power is without sovereignty, entirely subordinate to the servility of the project and of expectation. And inversely, sovereignty is free of all power, absolutely innovative with regard to the trajectory of real history.

Nietzsche's attempt to transcend the splits between

moralism and historical thought, poetry and politics, sovereignty and power, via the hypothesis of an opposing force, a real force irreducible to identity and intrinsically related to becoming, remained completely misunderstood by Bataille. He characterized Nietzsche's project as an "hypertrophy of the impossible."²⁷ For Bataille, it is impossible to escape the contradictory opposition between sovereignty and reality, between the impossible and the possible. He not only refuses Hegel's attempt to surpass (*aufheben*) the contradiction by positing a dialectical unity, but also that of Nietzsche to overcome (*überwinden*) the contradiction via the intuition of an excessive opposite that would be beyond inversion. For Bataille, the idea of a real opposition, more important than the contradiction is without meaning. Possible and impossible, good and evil, identity and opposite are constituted as such through their contradiction: "The impossible is only attained via the possible, without the possible there would be no impossible...Man is not God...he must first posit the possible."²⁸ Thus, there is no place for a "gay science," nor a "beyond good and evil." One can only make fun of science and attempt to violate the good. The greatest opposite, according to Bataille, is the negative; there is no reason for an affirmative opposite as in Nietzsche.

Although Bataille devoted an entire book to the study of Nietzsche's thought,²⁹ the latter's project remained very foreign to him. His effort to transform the philosophy of the will to power into that of the negative (although justified by his concern to save Nietzsche from the various "positive" uses

to which the Nazis were putting him) implies a radical failure to understand the originality of Nietzsche's thought. Nietzsche attempted to formulate a force that would not be power, an opposition that would win.⁴⁰

But this horizon of Nietzsche's is closely related to an overturning of perspective, a "transvaluation of values" (*Umwertung*) which considers the identical, metaphysics, the good, law, etc., in relation to the opposite. These latter would all be merely reactions, expression of resentment against the original and fundamental action of the opposite. Bataille, on the contrary, could be said to have always remained a prisoner of the Hegelian system which assigns a primary function to the positive (identity) and only thinks the opposite as a contradictory negative. Even the concept of externalization (*Entausserung*) is relative to the point of view of identity and implies precisely the movement through which the identical becomes other to itself. Externalization, then, cannot adequately account for the movement through which the opposite overcomes all metaphysical determinations (contrary, contradictory) and affirms itself in its excessive dimension. The will to power, on the other hand, is capable of overcoming the metaphysical dichotomies.

The reference to the totality is implicit in the concept of externalization: whether the identical finds itself within this totality (as in Hegel's system) or remains outside and lost to itself (as in Bataille) matters little in the final analysis. For even in Bataille's thought, it fails to fulfill a radical role - it simply remains marginal to the whole, a

lost identity without force.

For Hegel, the workers, intellectuals and revolutionaries represent the motor of history. They acquire power through the process of history and are eventually recognised by the spirit as moments of its path towards absolute knowledge. For Bataille, to the contrary, the bearers of conflict are the protagonists of waste and unknowledge. The real revolutionaries are therefore those who are excluded from work and culture: the unemployed, the mad, the criminal, the poets. Bearers of the negative, expressed through the laugh, they remain foreign to all systems of power. This is why they remained isolated in a marginality that derives its pleasures from sources other than power. They represent that which is heterogeneous to the "total" man of Hegelian humanism. By their closeness with death, they embody an absolute more radical than that of Hegel.

One must, however, question the radicality of this opposition between the marginal and the rational, power-oriented man. Is not this to simply accept the social division of labor of existing society? A kind of stasis results as both sides (the Hegelian man and the Bataillean man) both blindly regard themselves as the bearers of change and innovation in history. No overcoming of the dichotomy is suggested by Bataille. A self-satisfied closure results, therefore, which could be considered to be as oppressive as that advocated by Hegel. The marginal are trapped outside of history but, in recompense, Bataille promises them a perpetual joy and ecstasy based precisely upon this marginalization. The

quietism of this perspective reveals it to be more a mirror-image of Hegel's philosopher than its true subvertor.

Most interpretations of Bataille, whether critical or approbative, have attempted to bring his thought of the limiting experience back within the fold of a positive experience in fundamental accord with the world.⁴¹ This is the case with the famous attack by Sartre on Bataille's philosophy⁴², as it is, as we shall see, with Habermas' recent critique. In his major essay entitled "A New Mystic,"⁴³ Sartre criticizes the notion of the interior experience as it is developed in the Somme Atheologique.⁴⁴ Sartre identifies Bataille's work with the poetic-erotic efforts of the Parisian bohemians of the mid-twenties. It is useless except as a revelation of Bataille's own subjectivity, "his sumptuous and bitter soul, his neurotic pride, his self-hatred, his eroticism, his often magnificent eloquence masking the incoherence of thought, his impassioned bad faith, his vain quest for an impossible escape."⁴⁵ According to Sartre, Bataille falls back into the realm of mysticism understood in the sense of the eradication of selfhood in order to obtain a type of intuitive enjoyment of the transcendental. Even though Bataille insists upon his opposition to the transcendent and believes that his thought is based upon the full acceptance of his own finitude and immanence, Sartre sees in these affirmations examples of Bataille's bad faith. Bataille is really attempting to return to God and the totality. Bataille

would then be in the tradition of negative theology in which the only correct attitude before God is one of silence. And yet, instead of maintaining this attitude, Bataille writes thousands and thousands of pages, pages which represent, no doubt, a deep personal experience but are without value as a consistent, intellectual project.

Sartre believes that Bataille fetishizes the agony of the interior experience, gratuitously advocating suffering as the only route to the transcendent. Bataille and his colleagues in the thirties (members of the "College de sociologie" such as Klossowski, Leiris, Wahl, etc.) were foolishly attempting to revive Dionysian rituals. All of these efforts only revealed their hatred for the human project and human subjectivity. Sartre's antagonism to the notions of waste and sacrifice is profound:

In this useless and painful sacrifice of self, M. Bataille sees the extreme of generosity: it is a disinterested gift. And, precisely because it is gratuitous, it could not be accomplished a *fold*; it appears as the culmination of a Bacchic *nebriation*. Sociology once more provides us with the appropriate images: what we perceived behind the icy exhortations of this solitary figure is the nostalgia for one of those primitive festivals where an entire tribe is entranced, laughs and dances and couples off randomly; one of those festivals that are consumption and consumption, and where each one, in the frenzy of the *anok*, in joy, mutilates himself, gaily destroying a year's worth of patiently amassed riches and where one loses oneself, tearing apart like a piece of cloth, slowly sacrificing oneself and singing, without God, without hope, stimulated by wine and cries of rutting in the extreme of generosity, kills oneself for nothing. Whence the refusal of asceticism....In order for sacrifice to be complete, it must entail the consumption of the total man, with his laughter, passions, and sexual excesses.**

Sartre seems to adopt a very limited, narrow-minded approach to Bataille's effort to evoke the extreme negative experience beyond the traps of Satanism and nihilism. Bataille, in reality, refuses the terrain of traditional mysticism, both Eastern and Western, precisely because he refuses to subordinate the sovereign experiences of ecstasy or revolt (although he admits these same experiences are typical of mysticism) to political dogma or spiritual promises of salvation. Mysticism, for him, on the contrary, is the means by which the world of labor and the utile traditionally attempt to recuperate the sovereign moments. Whereas, mysticism, as Sartre recognises, promises a kind of earthly or heavenly happiness, Bataille's unknowledge "only brings with it a fairly happy loss of self...it deprives of meaning everything which is beyond, intellectual or moral, substance, God, immutable order or salvation."¹⁷ This dispossession is not, as Sartre insinuates, a trick to transmute nothingness into everything and take back surreptitiously with one hand what has been rejected by the other. It is rather a means of escaping the instrumental intelligence of the economy of politics. To then accuse Bataille of being incoherent and insincere because he continues to live is to support the defenders of the status quo who always assimilate revolt to suicide. Although, for mysticism, silence represents the impossibility for the faulty language of men to discuss the good, for unknowledge, silence is a response to the impossibility of discussing evil without thereby translating it into good. The first, therefore, faults language for its negativity, the second faults it for its

inevitable positivity which instantly transforms experiences into values. Thus, the true opposition, for Bataille, is not that between rationalism and mysticism, as Sartre suggests, but between, on the one hand, rationalism and mysticism, and on the other, unknowledge. Both rationalism and mysticism carry out a defense of the positive.

For Sartre, unknowledge is a variety of "black pantheism," an inverse theology that replaces the good with the evil, presence with absence, by hypostasizing nothingness and attributing to it the characteristics of the transcendent. But Bataille, as we have seen, considers nihilism to be a trap held out by discursive knowledge. Hence, in his "Conferences on Unknowledge," he argued that unknowledge can only be known via its effects. In his "Response to Jean- Paul Sartre,"⁴⁰ he explicitly points out the impossibility of substantializing the sovereign experience:

What I tried to describe in The Interior Experience is this movement by which by losing all possibility of stopping, falls easily under the attack of a critique that thinks to stop it from outside since the critique, itself, is not taken up in the movement. My dizzying fall and the experience that it introduces into the spirit cannot be grasped by he who has not had the experience himself: in this way one can, like Sartre, successively accuse me of ending in God or in the void! These contradictory reproaches support my affirmation: I never come to an end!⁴¹

Discursive thought, on the other hand, is static - it wants to establish definitive truths where there is only ecstasy and drunkenness. Even in his own defense against Sartre, Bataille feels it marked by the inadequacy of discursive thought. Chance plays a greater role in the expression of thought than lucidity: "Thought ought to simultaneously clarify itself

totally and dissolve itself....It should, in the same being, construct itself and ravage itself."⁵⁰

According to Sartre, Bataille's so-called mysticism is based on a conception of the interior experience that accompanies the errors of heuristic realism. The human condition is grasped outside itself, from an external point of view: this is why it appears to Bataille to be absurd and impossible. For Sartre, however, this absurdity becomes the basis for a new humanism because, in accordance with idealism, he makes the conscious realization of this absurdity the act which makes him responsible for the entire world, the invention of meaning. Bataille, by refusing to see this situation from a human point of view, allows an opening for the transcendent. Thus, for the existentialists, death is translated into a decision, into being-for-death, into an existential possibility, whereas, for Bataille, it remains an external possibility, a natural fact incommensurable with human discourse which continues to insist upon human immortality. This is why, in Sartre's view, Bataille's thought is contaminated by a nineteenth century positivism that affirms the anteriority of nature with regard to the subject and by a Durkheimian sociology that treats social facts as things instead of as meanings. These would explain Bataille's tendency to consider the human individual as a thing.

Sartre, then, poses the following question: are the negative, the impossible, unknowledge concepts drawn from epistemological realism, from scientific or sociological notions of man? It seems to me that Bataille's thought cannot

be reduced to this hypothesis. Unknowledge is not, in fact, the consideration of man as a natural object like other natural objects, but that which is essentially other, incommensurable with not only discursive thought but with the positivist laws of the natural sciences. The laws of nature constitute, for Bataille, instead the first oppression and are opposed to sovereignty. Sartre's opposition between positivism and idealism, between the object and subject, are typical of pre-Hegelian thought, whereas unknowledge transgresses this latter by means of a "negative without employment." Sociology is based upon explanatory laws for the realm of the homogeneous - it cannot pretend to grasp the heterogeneous. The heterogeneous as desire and revolt have been at the root of history. Sartre's thought, by reducing everything to the project, re-installs the transcendence of ends vis-à-vis means, of the ought-to-be vis-à-vis being. Thus, Bataille considers Sartre to be advocating a variety of bourgeois humanism which is only an elaboration of theology.⁵¹ Sartre satirically compares unknowledge to those foolish joys such as drinking an alcoholic beverage or tanning in the sun and contrasts them with the serious existential attempt to engage in projects thus participating in a humanity which continues to surpass itself towards new goals. Bataille responds to this as follows: "What one can expect of us is to go as far as possible and not to come to an end. What remains humanly criticisable is, to the contrary, an enterprise which only has meaning when related to the moment when it comes to completion."⁵²

For Bataille, the major danger is that caused by methods

which, being useful only for the conclusions of knowledge, result in a mutilated and fragmentary existence for those whom they limit.²² Only an experience and a thought for which the essential is to exist without delay can attempt to go beyond theology and its anthropological successors.

FOOTNOTES

¹Marcel Mauss, The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies, trans. I. Cunnison (New York: Norton, 1967).

²Emile Durkheim, Elementary Forms of Religious Life trans J.W. Swain (New York: The Free Press, 1965).

³Georges Bataille, Complete Works, cited in Michele H. Richman, Reading Georges Bataille (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982), p. 18.

⁴Ibid., p. 34

⁵Ibid., p. 38

⁶Emile Durkheim, cited in Richman, pp. 47-48.

⁷Georges Bataille, cited in Richman, p. 48.

⁸Michel Foucault, Language, Counter-Memory, Practices: Selected Essays and Interviews, ed. with an introduction by Donald Bouchard, trans. Donald Bouchard and Sherry Simon (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), pp. 30-31.

⁹Georges Bataille, Complete Works, cited in Richman, pp. 81-82.

¹⁰Idem, L'Eroticisme, cited in Richman, p. 71.

¹¹Foucault, p. 34.

¹²Bataille, L'Eroticisme, cited in Richman, p. 70.

¹³Jacques Derrida, "From Restricted to General Economy: A Hegelianism without Reserve," in Writing and Difference, trans. with an introduction by Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), p. 269.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Georges Bataille, cited in Derrida, p. 269.

¹⁶Derrida, p. 270.

¹⁷Georges Bataille, cited in Derrida, p. 270.

¹⁸Derrida, p. 335.

¹⁹Bataille, cited in Derrida, p. 335.

²⁰Ibid., p. 336.

²¹Georges Bataille, "Hegel, la mort, et le sacrifice," Diacalicon No. 5, Etude Hegeliennes (1955), p. 37 (hereafter cited as Bataille, "Hegel").

²²Idem, Complete Works, Volume V: La Sonne Athéologique I: L'Expérience intérieure. Méthode de méditation. Post-scriptum, 1953. Le Coupable. L'Alleluiah, ed. Paule Leduc (Paris: Gallimard, 1973), pp. 128-131.

²³Idem, Complete Works, Volume VIII: L'Histoire de l'éroticisme. Le surréalisme au jour le jour. Conférences 1951-1953. Souveraineté, ed. Thadée Klossowski (Paris: Gallimard, 1976) p. 185.

²⁴Idem, Complete Works, VIII:210.

²⁵Idem, Complete Works, VIII:212.

²⁶See G. W. F. Hegel, The Phenomenology of Mind, trans. J. B. Baillie (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), pp. 611-679.

²⁷Hegel, pp. 85-86.

²⁸Bataille, "Hegel," p. 25.

²⁹Idem, "L'au-delà du sérieux," in La Nouvelle Revue Française 26 (February 1955): 242.

³⁰Idem, Complete Works, Volume VII: L'Economie à la mesure de l'univers, La Part maudite, La Limite de utile (fragments, Théorie de la religion, Conférences, 1947-1948), ed. Thadée Klossowski (Paris: Gallimard, 1976), p. 122.

³¹Isaac Deutscher, Stalin (London: Penguin Books, 1964).

³²Bataille, Complete Works, VIII:39.

³³Alan Stoekel, "The Death of Acephale and The Will to Chance: Nietzsche in the Text of Bataille," Glyph 6 (1979): 42-67.

³⁴Georges Bataille, cited in Stoekel, p. 58.

³⁵Georges Bataille, Complete Works, Volume II: Ecrits posthumes, 1922-1940, ed. Denis Hollier (Paris: Gallimard, 1970), p. 99.

³⁶See Bataille's "Nietzsche and Communism" (Appendix I, p. 230) where he makes the famous claim to actually "be Nietzsche.")

³⁷Georges Bataille, Complete Works, Volume VI: La Somme athéologique II: Sur Nietzsche, Mémoires, Annexes, ed. Henri Ronse and Jean-Michel Rey (Paris: Gallimard, 1973), p. 312.

³⁸Ibid., p. 313

³⁹See Somme athéologique (II), in Georges Bataille, Complete Works, VI.

⁴⁰D. Hollier has argued that Bataille was more interested in Nietzsche's personal vicissitudes than in his thought. He was more concerned to attack the Nazi appropriation of Nietzsche than to discuss his position's achievements. According to Hollier, Hegel, in fact, occupies a much larger role in Bataille's theory. See D. Hollier "De L'au-delà de Hegel à l'absence de Nietzsche," in Cerisy Colloquium, Bataille Collection 10/18 (Paris: U.G.E., 1973).

⁴¹For examples of apologetic readings of Bataille of this nature see P. Klossowski, Sade mon prochain (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1947) in which it is argued that in Bataille we have an authentic experience of the negative, of evil, which refers, by antithesis, to the positive or the good. Through this reference to evil and its subsequent expiation, Bataille, according to Klossowski seems to restore traditional values. Bataille's method would then consist of "taking the mask of atheism in order to combat atheism" (Ibid., p. 85, my translation). Jacques Derrida, in his brilliant discussion and defense of Bataille cited above, carries out a similar reduction. For Derrida, Bataille's concern is, above all, with textuality. Unknowledge is not so much an original experience as a meditation on Hegel's philosophy. For Derrida, all of Bataille's concepts are Hegelian but with a "difference." Bataille's concept of sovereign is really analogous to Hegel's concept of domination of which it is the same and the other. Domination is part of a dialectical movement in which the negative is suppressed and conserved at the same time. Sovereignty is, rather, the experience of the negative as that which suppresses the possibility of meaning and history - it is, in fact, non-meaning. Despite this recognition, Derrida attempts to bring unknowledge back into a "new" science. This science will, of course, break with all of the classical dichotomies of the old science but in other respects will, indeed, be a science. The source of this paradox is in a new type of writing, advocated by Derrida, which refuses all signification. This writing, as the play of signifiers, is the object of Derrida's grammatology. For Derrida, then, it is this type of textuality, constantly at play with itself, that opposes the centred writing of traditional discourse. For Bataille, however, discourse is not countered by the play of the signifier, but rather by the "play" of sovereignty.

⁴²For a clear exposition of Sartre's critique of Bataille and Bataille's response, Richman, pp. 112-137.

⁴³Jean-Paul Sartre, "Un Nouveau Mystique," In Situations, Vol. I. (Paris: Gallimard, 1947).

⁴⁴See Somme Athéologique (II), in Georges Bataille,

Complete Works, VI.

*⁵Jean-Paul Sartre, cited in Richman, p. 112.

*⁶Ibid., p. 116.

*⁷Georges Bataille, Complete Works, Volume I: Premiers Ecrits, 1922-1940: Histoire de l'oeil, L'Anus solaire, Sacrifices, Articles, ed. Denis Hollier (Paris: Gallimard, 1970), p. 554.

*⁸Bataille, Complete Works, VI: 195.

*⁹Ibid., p. 199.

*¹⁰Ibid., p. 250.

*¹¹The difference can be seen in Bataille's discussion of Sartre's inability to give up the notion of the other:

The cogito, for Sartre, is the inviolable, atemporal, irreducible foundation....For me, it exists only within a relation...it is a network of communications, existing within time. The atom refers to a wave: to language, words exchanged, books written and read. Sartre reduces a book to the intentions of an author, the author. If, as it appears to me, a book is communication, the author is only a link among many different readings (Georges Bataille, cited in Richman, p. 130).

*¹²Georges Bataille, Complete Works, VI:200-201.

*¹³Ibid., p. 201.

CHAPTER IV

REASON AND ITS OTHER IN FOUCAULT

Foucault shares with Bataille, Nietzsche and Heidegger a fascination with the theme of truth and with the related theme of language. With Foucault, these are translated into an investigation of the *a priori* of history and reason. The following chapter will examine two of these realms (the interior experiences of the dream and of madness) which Foucault studied during the mid-fifties. The second part of this chapter will elaborate upon Foucault's notion of the will to truth.

It is certainly not an accident that Foucault, after basing his first works much more on these themes than on the problem of a new epistemology (more or less connected to the structuralist method¹), returned, in 1970, to reflect on the problematic of truth, connected to what he called "procedures of exclusion." These are procedures, as we will see, on which is founded Foucault's theme of an historical *a priori* - in the place where before appeared the historical reason of the West and its associated will to truth in their formulations.

In a passage on dreams written in 1954, Foucault writes,

It is not that the dream is the truth of history, but by engendering that which is most irreducible to history, it shows better than anything the meaning that history can assume for a freedom that has not yet attained, in an objective expression, the moment of its universality. For this reason, the primacy of the dream is absolute for the anthropological knowledge of the concrete man."²

The dream, therefore, in as much as it is the realm of the imaginary, is the radically other of history, or of reason and subjectivity, and, at the same time, is the condition of their manifestation. This is to indicate an original cleavage, a place, a matrice of difference. This theme, transcendental and empirical at the same time, constitutes, one may say, the ~~leitmotiv~~ of Foucault's investigations. It is to its two faces, to the double border of the same break that the above noted ambiguous or contradictory expression, the "historical a priori,"³ refers.

The theme is also ambiguous precisely because it is connected to the problem of truth. In our example, the problem is not the truth of the dream but rather the truth via the dream; what truth, that is, or what kind of truth, the dream renders possible. Right from the introduction to Binswanger's study, Foucault reveals his critical attitude vis-a-vis Freudian anthropology and the phenomenological method. Both of these approaches pretend to examine the dream and its contents from the point of view of reason and of the subject. The psychoanalytic method claims to be a rational hermeneutic capable of grasping the hidden and "true" meaning of oneiric contents, beyond the distortions which the unconscious imagination undergoes at the hands of the conscious censorship.⁴ The phenomenological method analyzes the lived

reality and searches for its meaning within its constitutive eidetic structures. Both of the methods, despite their respective merits, present the shortcoming of applying a rational appraisal to the domain of the imaginary (or the dream which forms a part of it). By reducing, in this way, the imaginary and the dream to reason and the subject, one forgets, according to Foucault, that they constitute an essentially pre-rational and pre-subjective space or dimension.

In the first place, reason is a unit of measurement heterogeneous to this dimension (it negates or misunderstands the specificity of the experience of the imaginary)⁵. In the second place, reason is temporally successive to this dimension. In the third place, it is logically successive to this dimension: it depends on it, it finds in it the conditions of its own possibility. Therefore, reason cannot say that which is true or non-true of the dream, but it can affirm it on the basis of the dream, on the basis of the moment in which the experience of the imaginary is precisely assumed as (or assumes the significance of) the experience of the fantastic, of the non-real, of the oneiric and, in this sense, of the non-true. The theme of the dream and of the imaginary represents, thus, the first of Foucault's "historical a prioris," with its two faces - empirical and transcendental - joined together. It is transcendental because it constitutes the terrain on which arises (as its specific and determined "other") that "positivity" that is the world of reason and human history. It is empirical because the space of the dream (in relation to which, as its difference or moment of

separation, is constituted the anthropological-rational space of historical man) is not untemporal or super-temporal form, but is a concrete universe of experience, temporally determined and subject as such to transformation or decline. With the appearance of the rational and historical man, the domain of the imaginary, which is its condition, is overpowered and shifted to the boundaries of conscious life, reduced to a marginal shadow, an indeterminate background and, thus, modified in its structures and its modes of existence. Nevertheless, it still contains, in pure and in a blurred and evanescent form, the truth of the appearance of reason - the transfigured and almost silent trace of that original and archaic event that was the coming of rational and historical man. In fact, man has asked and continues to interrogate himself on the basis of dreams, to ask of those symbols - in a crude form as in an old popular and poetic tradition, but also in a refined and scientific form - the meaning of his truth and his destiny.

The theme of the constitutive exclusion or of an originary space of difference as the foundation of reason and its truth, is placed at the basis of the long and complex investigation carried out in Madness and Civilisation of 1961.

In this book, the binomial reason-unreason is studied from the Renaissance period, across what Foucault calls the classical period, up to the commencement of the modern period that he places at the end of the eighteenth century. Madness and Civilisation is, as its author argues and we will further clarify later on, a history of limiting situations, a

history of "limits."⁶ The recuperation of what Foucault calls limiting experiences (experiences that later provide the historical-empirical contents to the so-called concrete a priori) involves either the renunciation of "the convenience of terminal truths,"⁷ or the suspension of the horizontal schema that would express the progressive becoming of reason.⁸ There emerges, instead, a constant verticality of time, that is, the infinitely varied and multiplied repetition of that original confrontation whence the possibility of determinate horizontal becoming and of a determinate "historical" reason arose. In this text, we see the historical becoming of the confrontation between reason and unreason analogously to the confrontation that was posited between the imagination and reality in the earlier text on dreams.

There is an originary gesture that is placed at the zero degree of the history of madness: "a not yet divided experience of division itself."⁹ Foucault thinks it is essential to speak of "those actions re-examined in history, leaving in abeyance all that may figure as a conclusion, as a refuge in truth."¹⁰ The "sovereign act,"¹¹ in which reason expells non-reason and condemns it as nonsense and the non-true, is the act in which reason "permanently establishes itself in the realm of truth."¹² But, in its first appearance, the act is still beyond difference. Only in the moment following its appearance, in its manifestation, does it succeed in distinguishing and separating, and imposing silence with its voice, with its discourse. Here, we have "a monologue of reason about madness."¹³ A voice that can speak on the basis of

the imposition of silence upon the other (the language of madness, thereby, falls or is thrust into oblivion) defined as foolishness and non-reason. It is a voice that refuses an original possibility or that contains a refusal in its choice.

Poucault's intention, therefore, is not to write a history of psychiatric language (the modern monology of reason on madness), but to create an "archaeology" of the silence of non-reason.¹⁴ It is a matter of a constitutive silence, constitutive precisely (by exclusion) of historical reason and its truth. The discourse of the mad is, from the beginning (from the moment it is qualified as unreason) and always, something which in its becoming is inescapably less than history - it is an "absence of work" that accompanies "the great work of history in the world."¹⁵ Accompanying history (the history of reason) as that refusal that, as originally constitutive and omnipresently constitutive (intemporally constitutive) of historical temporality, the silence of the anonymous speech of madness is the absence of subjectivity and of meaning that renders the world of history possible:

The plenitude of history is only possible in the space, simultaneously empty and occupied, of all of these words without language wherein can be heard the quiet noise of the underpart of history, the obstinate murmur of a language that would speak all alone, without a speaking subject and without an interlocutor, huddled in on itself, knotted at the throat, collapsing before having attained any formulation and quietly returning to the silence which it had never really escaped. It is the burnt root of meaning.¹⁶

History, in other words, is only possible on the basis of an absence of history.¹⁷ In its original formulation, historical time is identical to the gesture that imposes silence. The

original voice in which reason and unreason were "confusedly implicated: inseparable from the moment when they do not yet exist, and existing for one another, the one in relation to the other, in the exchange which separates them."¹⁸ It is from this pure origin that historical language, through an act of forgetting will develop its stable syntax and its stable vocabulary. On the other hand, the silence is present, but in a "modified form (by history), so that we can no longer apprehend it except "within the context of the empty, the vain, the nothing."¹⁹ It is equivocal - a pure origin but also a "last residue, a sterile beach of words, a sand traversed and soon forgotten only preserving, in its passivity, the trace of lost figures."²⁰ In this way, the other pole of the alternative - the unreason with respect to reason - cannot be grasped by us in its genuine originality, but only via an "historical" modification. In this sense precisely, we may then speak of an "history" of madness. The constitutive act itself of the historical time of reason (and of unreason as its exclusion) is ungraspable outside of history. It is in the historical reflection of reason that the gesture re-emerges from its silence.

How does it re-emerge? In the form of "objective spirit": juridical institutions, objectified documents and monuments of human action. Foucault explains this as follows:

To write the history of madness will therefore mean: to make a structural study of the historical ensemble -- notions, institutions, juridical and police measures, scientific concepts -- which holds captive a madness whose savage state can never itself be recovered; but lacking this inaccessible primitive purity, the structural study must return to the decision which both

links and separates reason and madness; it must attempt to discover the perpetual exchange, the obscure common root, the original confrontation which gives meaning to the unity as well as to the opposition of meaning and the meaningless. Thus, the flashing decision, heterogeneous to the time of history, but inaccessible outside of it, which separates this quiet murmur of insects from the language of reason and from the promises of time will be able to reappear.²¹

Foucault, thus, seeks to recuperate this structure of the experience of madness which is of the essence of history on the one hand and is on its confines where history is determined on the other.²²

Unreason, madness are not, therefore, constitutive of history and of the history of reason because of their intrinsic value, because they bring to history some determinant content. We know to the contrary, that unreason is silence, the "absence of work." Its contents are false contents: that which reason does not say - not that which it, unreason, is. Unreason and madness are instead constitutive insofar as they incarnate a typical structure of refusal, a form of separation. "The necessity of madness throughout the history of the Occident is related to this decisive gesture which detaches from the subterranean noise and its continual monotony a signifying language which is transmitted and accomplished in time; briefly, it is related to the possibility of history."²³

Also related to the possibility of history are the other forms of refusal and separation including the above-noted dreams and the imaginary. They belong, with the history of madness, to that more general history of limits that Foucault specifies in the following passage:

One could write a history of limits -- of these obscure gestures, necessarily forgotten as soon as accomplished, by which a culture rejects something which will be for it an outside; and, throughout its history, this hollowed out void, this white space by which it isolates itself, designates it just as much as its values. For these values are received and maintained in the continuity of history; but in this region of which we desire to speak, a culture exercises its essential choices, it makes the division which gives it the face of its positivity; this is the site of the originary thickness in which it is formed.²⁴ To interrogate a culture about its limit experiences is to question it at the confines of history, on a laceration which is the birth of its history. Thus the temporal continuity of a dialectical analysis and the revelation, at the gates of time, of a tragic structure found themselves confronted with one another.²⁵

The movement of separation and positivity, that movement whence originates the "density of history, is, thus, related to its ultimate horizon where dialectics and tragedy confront each other. The dialectic, as already reason as opposed to unreason, speaks of the tragic, posits the tragic as its experience or moment and precisely, in this way, it drives it out of its own horizon. The inclusion of the tragic experience in the dialectic is equivalent to the submission of such an experience to the categories of an already constituted (precisely by this, submission) historical reason. This inclusion implies, therefore, the "historical" distortion of this experience, reduced to a negative transient moment of the teleological impulse of resolution. But, to be able to include the tragic as its negative moment (just as reason includes unreason among its experiences of pathological deviancy, that is, as a scientific-rational object), dialectical thought must already have carried out the split, the original lacerations within which the anonymous positivity of the tragic experience

was eclipsed and on the basis of which it continues to irradiate its conditioning force as the "exterior"²⁶ and the radical other (not the dialectical other, the Platonic ~~eternum~~). This originary tension involves the constant verticality of the "exterior" combined with the horizontality of the time that flows as the radical negation of the exterior. In this tension, reason is "ranged by its own derangement."²⁷ The "exterior" is the presence "at the gates of time"²⁸ of a relation that is forgotten and negated in the present of historically constituted time. It is the mute figure (reduced to silence like the dream), an impassive enigmatic testimony, upon which stands the dialectical self-knowledge of historical reason.

To this emergence of the tragic as the limiting experience of the Western world, several important consequences for historical thought are related. The consequences, argues Foucault, have been demonstrated primarily by Nietzsche:

Nietzsche had shown that the tragic structure which forms the basis of the history of the Occidental world is nothing other than the refusal, the forgetting and the silent fall of history. Around this latter, which is central because it links the tragic to the dialectic of history in the refusal of tragedy itself by history, many other experiences gravitate. Each one, at the frontiers of our culture, traces a limit which signifies, at the same time, an originary division.²⁹

These above-noted "other experiences" are, thus, indicated as other possible objects of a long study that, "under the sun, of the great Nietzschean investigation, wishes to confront the dialectics of history with the immobile structures of the tragic."³⁰ These will be a successive series of "histories of separation": the separation of Western ratio

from the East (the East being defined as that which the West is not although the West must continually seek its truth in this limit). The East is a "night of beginning," "dreamed as the dizzying point from where nostalgias and promises of return are born."³¹ Foucault also foresees a history of the tragic division of the happy world of desire that will include the history of sexual taboos, intolerance and repression.³² Also projected is a history of the division of the luminous unity of appearance into the world of reality and the derisory world of the dream (the imaginary is made into the shameful world of the oneiric - a world, nevertheless, in which reason still seeks its truth).³³ These studies of the division, between reason and unreason, normality and deviancy, pose the problem of the limits rather than of the identity of a culture. The archaeology of madness is the first intervention into this ambiguous terrain. There is no guarantee of access to this region which "is neither the history of knowledge, nor history ~~per se~~, which is neither commanded by the teleology of the truth, nor by the rational connection of causes, which only have value and meaning beyond the division."³⁴

However, immediately after Madness and Civilisation, Foucault ceased to pursue this study of the limits of our culture in which the dialectics of history was to be confronted with the immobile structures of the tragic.³⁵ In 1963, he published The Birth of the Clinic³⁶ in which the archaeology theme remained but in which the problem of the relation between tragedy and history, reason and unreason, truth and non-truth, was replaced with that of the constitution of the human

sciences. This problem was also to dominate his next study, The Order of Things, published in 1965.

The "dialectical" character of the Foucauldian historical a priori deserves closer attention. We have seen that in the so-called "limiting experiences" and in the connected "structures of exclusion," precisely that which is excluded, is, at the same time, constitutive (constitutive of a science, of a whole culture, of a determinate spiritual attitude, etc.) The outside, in other words, is presented as the explanation of the inside. Unreason is our "outside" and is, thus, the explanation of reason as our "inside." By saying that which we are not, we determine that which we truly are.

If one stops at these explicit formulations, one could legitimately conclude that the Foucauldian a priori rests on a dialectical perspective not dissimilar to that tradition that has its source in Plato's Sophist and its more noted and complex modern developments in Hegel and Marx. This, however, is not the case. What characterizes Foucault's thought is the non-homogeneous location of the thesis and the antithesis (or of that which, in his analyses, would be able to assume these roles): they do not rest on the same plane, they are not engaged in an ideal movement of reciprocal determination. Furthermore, the lack of a common terrain means that no synthesis is possible. It is in the light of these considerations that Foucault's concepts of "displacement" and "decentering" can be understood.

Displacement with respect to what? One must re-animate,

in this regard, the concept of an original dimension, a "morning language"³⁷ - it is only in this mythical dimension that the opposites exist on the same plane. And they do so really insofar as they do not yet quite exist as opposites. In this morning world in which science and ratio, the truth of knowledge, are not yet born, "madness and non-madness, reason and unreason are confusedly implicated: inseparable from the moment when they do not yet exist, and existing for one another, the one in relation to the other, in the exchange which separates them."³⁸ The dimension of the originary, therefore, is conceived as an identity in which difference is merely possible - the possibility of an event, of an act that was not yet accomplished or is not accomplished. Now, it is precisely the gesture that effects the "displacement" with respect to the originary dimension. The new dimension rendered possible by the act, by the effected separation, finds its opposites on two diverse and heterogeneous planes. It is the gesture, according to Foucault, that creates the "Other," the "Alien," the "external," the "Strange" - something that is human is placed in a realm beyond the human. In this case, the "human" is placed on a plane of radical difference, of forgetting and refusal. The "Other" is the absent with which there is no confrontation except insofar as it is the presence of an absence. It is with the emptiness³⁹ of this absent presence that one deals with, not the fullness of its effective presence that is instead relegated to the mythical dimension of an unrecuperated origin.

We can no longer say, therefore, that the positive pole

finds its truth in the negative pole. Reason does not consist, in truth, in the distinction of reason and non-reason or of its reciprocally delimited specific contents. Neither is the truth of the real found in a positive relation to the imagination and the dream. The positive pole, in Foucault, acquires "positivity" precisely, as we have seen, insofar as something (the Other) is reduced to silence, is misunderstood and excluded. Which means, at the same time, to assume the Other, within the "positive" point of view, as conquered, historicizing its contents (according to a characteristic "modification"). The positive pole itself acquires an historical dimension or perspective in this act of exclusion/inclusion - something is excluded and pushed back into an original Eden (and, thus, any possibility of access to this realm is eliminated) and, at the same time, it is included as the modified other of which and on which one speaks, that which is named. It is from this moment that something becomes "dream," "imagination," "nonsense" and "madness," or again, "East" and "West" - that is, an object of the triumphant historical reason.

Because of this, however: (1) the positive pole does not recognize its truth in the Other (it is no longer found in the relation to the other, in the exchange that separates them and, at the same time, engenders them, as Foucault has said); (2) it is imposed as a positivity precisely in virtue of such a non-recognition; (3) consequently, it is subtracted from its generative center or its founding terrain. It is, therefore, "decentered" or "displaced" with respect to its truth. That

which it says of itself and that which it says about the Other exist beyond the moment of separation outside of the plane of the original laceration (and not on the plane that breaks and separates itself). In this sense, what it says is no longer the testimony of a verum, but the simple and indirect testimony (or better: the sign or a symptom) of a factum, of an event. The "no," the structure of exclusion that accompanies the positive pole that has emerged from the originary laceration, does not constitute a positive truth of it. It is not, for example, in its concrete and specific content, as we have noted, that unreason is constitutive of reason (as, for instance, the serf is the truth of the lord in Hegel). This content is precisely the originary truth, that which the gesture that instituted reason has excluded and which, therefore, reason can neither recognize nor re-animate. Any attempt to grasp unreason in its original essence lead us to that which reason, knowledge and science say about it - that is to the modifications that have been carried out by reason itself, or leads us to silence, to the "absence of the work," and, thus, again to the "no" of the gesture that excludes. Reason, therefore, does not find its truth in unreason. Rather, it finds there itself, as the structure of historical exclusion. Neither, reversing points of view, does unreason find its truth in reason because it finds there only an historical reason that, in its originary essence is the denial and repudiation of unreason. Historical knowledge is decentered with respect to the originary truth since it repeats indefinitely the act, the factum of the exclusion, and not the

years of that which was excluded. Historical knowledge and science, still speak of reason and, on the basis of reason. The science, thus instituted, one could say, is the truth of all that which is historical except of the historical truth, or reason is the reason of everything except of itself. It is found confronted with the problem of its "definition," completely deprived of "measure." Its measure, in fact, is in the relation with an External to which it is no longer related, although on it (or on this lack of relation) is based and rooted its "positivity."

One will understand, therefore, why Foucault refers so insistently to those cultural positions that theorize the decentering of the subject and why he considers them to be of decisive importance for modern thought. Already, in an interview in 1966, referring to the work of Jacques Lacan, he noted how, in the study of neuroses, the place of the subject was being more and more replaced by structures and systems. It is not the subject that speaks in neuroses, but rather the neuroses themselves that speak via the subjects. Meaning and significance (that which psychoanalysis refers to as "rationalizations") are only superficial effects, a glittering or froth on the surface. At the limit, they are symptoms that must be referred back to a particular linguistic system - this typical system or structuration of language must not be seen as the true subject of neuroses.⁴¹ In 1968, Foucault returned to the same theme: "However, since the beginning of this century, psychoanalytical, linguistic, and then ethnological research has dispossessed the subject of the laws of its desire, the

forms of its speech, the rules of its action, and the systems of its mythical discourses."² One year later, in The Archaeology of Knowledge, we see a similar reference to Lacan, Saussure and Levi-Strauss:

Lastly, more recently, when the researchers of psychoanalysis, linguistics, and ethnology have decentered the subject in relation to the laws of his desire, the forms of his language, the rules of his action, or the games of his mythical or fabulous discourse, when it became clear that man himself, questioned as to what he was, could not account for his sexuality and his unconscious, the systematic forms of his language, or the regularities of his fictions....³

But prior to this more recent revolution that includes the sector of structuralist studies, Foucault sees two very important earlier premises - the decentering carried out by Marx via the historical analysis of the class struggle and the relations of production and the decentering carried out by the Nietzschean genealogy.⁴

In this way, the sovereignty of the subject is profoundly shaken: "Man cannot posit himself in the immediate and sovereign transparency of a cogito...."⁵ It is known that Foucault attaches to this conclusion certain theses which have been interpreted by some to imply the negation of history but that, in reality, only negate a certain type of history - that characterized by the concepts of "continuum," "totalization" and the "realization of consciousness." It is within this complex thematic that Foucault's extended epistemological researches have been carried out. It is perhaps opportune, now, to discuss the more characteristic and disquieting results of these studies. Above all, one must take note of the well-known thesis, according to which man is a "figure," an

epistemological object, of recent formulation: "Before the end of the eighteenth century, man did not exist - any more than the potency of life, the fecundity of labor, or the historical density of language."⁴⁶ Man is a fold of knowledge, of that knowledge that is given as the domination of that curious object that is man.⁴⁷ This object appeared two centuries ago and today is proceeding towards its own eclipse, its own decline. This is an event that is predictable and desirable, according to Foucault. The actual fragility of man as an epistemological object is that of all of anthropological-transcendental thought, a fragility that is evermore obvious today but yet still produces a scandal.⁴⁸ For a long time, we have been in crisis:

...the crisis in which we have been involved for so long, and which is constantly growing more serious: a crisis that concerns that transcendental reflexion with which philosophy since Kant has identified itself; which concerns that theme of the origin, that promise of the return, by which we avoid the difference of our present; which concerns an anthropological thought that orders all these questions around the question of man's being, and allows us to avoid an analysis of practice; which concerns all humanist ideologies; which, above all, concerns the status of the subject.⁴⁹

If the crisis of the subject, if the end of the sovereignty of anthropological thought and of the centrality of man as an epistemological object constitutes the first important conclusion of Foucault's researches, a second conclusion concerns the emergence, in the place of man, of a dimension of alterity and difference, of a horizon of originary estrangement that can, in a preliminary and somewhat superficial way, be articulated in the diverse praxes of labour, life, and language and in their complex historical

mediations.⁵⁰ It is in these praxes (and in others that can be specified later) that the truth of the subject and the terrain of his founding will be sought. It is in reference to this terrain, and not in any other way, that the question of man's being is posed. As Foucault says

Man is governed by labour, life, and language: his concrete existence finds its determinations in them; it is possible to have access to him only through his words, his organism, the objects he makes - as though it is they who possess the truth in the first place (and they alone perhaps); and he, as soon as he thinks, merely unveils himself to his own eyes in the form of a being who is already, in a necessarily subjacent density, in an irreducible anteriority, a living being, an instrument of production, a vehicle for words which exist before him. All these contents that his knowledge reveals to him as exterior to himself, and older than his own birth, anticipate him, overhang him with all their solidity, and traverse him as though he were merely an object of nature, a face doomed to be erased in the course of history.⁵¹

The question, therefore, is that of the recuperation of an "exteriority" characterized by its own laws and structural modalities, of which man is merely the function and the decentered manifestation: "modern thought is advancing towards that region where man's Other must become the Same as himself."⁵² But the Other of man is, in its root, the External of time, of history, of historical rationality (naturally, we are speaking of the man of the Western ratio which is obviously quite different than real or possible man). So that the task of recuperating the Other to the Same "implies the calling into question of everything that resides within its mobile element, in such a way as to make visible that rent, devoid of chronology and history, from which time issued."⁵³ The third important result of Foucault's epistemological

analysis is precisely the problem of the relation to the origin which "characterizes both man's mode of being and the reflection addressed to him...."⁵⁴ This problem, starting, according to Foucault, with Hegel's Phenomenology of the Mind, traverses all of modern thought. Today, since we are, it seems, at the conclusion of this thought, we understand that the necessity of thinking the origin (or even of thinking in an original way) and of determining there the historical being of man, does not entail the ingenuous search for a dimension of the Same in which "the dispersion of the Other has not yet come into play,"⁵⁵ (as a sort of Schellingian absolute or an Erfahrungswelt à la William James): "the original in man is that which articulates him from the very outset upon something other than himself."⁵⁶ This something other is always and everywhere his already formed historicity, an history of already sedimental complex mediations, belonging to the history of labour, of life, and of language. Three practices that "belong to a time that has neither the same standards of measurement nor the same foundations as his."⁵⁷ The original, for man, is not at all the beginning, "a sort of dawn of history from which his ulterior acquisitions would have accumulated."⁵⁸ Paradoxically and almost unthinkably, "the original, in man, does not herald the time of his birth, or the most ancient kernel of his experience: it links him to that which does not have the same time as himself."⁵⁹ This is to say that it links him to the discontinuum of a multi-stratified materiality (where each stratum, with its temporality, is discontinuous with respect to the other strata). It links him

in the sense that the original, "introduces into his experience contents and forms older than him, which he cannot master; it is that which, by binding him to multiple, intersecting, often mutually irreducible chronologies, scatters him through time and pinions him at the centre of the duration of things."¹⁰

Thus man is a being without origin, a being whose genesis is not accessible because it never took place: "...amid all the things that are born in time and no doubt die in time, he, cut off from all origin, is already there."¹¹

To be able to think man in this paradoxical position is to be able to think him as related to an External, that is, at the same time, Internal to him. One must not, therefore, think him in the way of the dialectical antithesis or within the shelter of a possible synthesis. In other words, one must leave behind historical-dialectical reason (a la Hegel) and its transcendental foundation (a la Husserl). Is this a way to go beyond the confines of modern thought, confines that Foucault judges, as we have seen, to have been created and completely delineated by Hegel's phenomenology? In brief, is this a way of going beyond Hegel? At the end of his inaugural lecture delivered at the College de France, Foucault, remembering his teacher, Jean Hyppolite, observed that:

...our age, whether through logic or epistemology, whether through Marx or through Nietzsche, is attempting to flee Hegel: and what I was attempting to say earlier concerning discourse was pretty disloyal to Hegel. But truly to escape Hegel involves an exact appreciation of the price we have to pay to detach ourselves from him. It assumes that we are aware of the extent to which Hegel, insidiously, perhaps, is close to us; it implies a knowledge, in that which permits us to think against Hegel, of that which remains Hegelian. We have to determine the extent to which our anti-Hegelianism is

possibly one of his tricks directed against us, at the end of which he stands, motionless, waiting for us.⁶²

And a little later, discussing Hyppolite's central questions, Foucault asks: "Can one still philosophize where Hegel is no longer possible? Can any philosophy continue to exist that is no longer Hegelian? Are the non-Hegelian elements in our thought necessarily non-philosophical? Is that which is anti-philosophical necessarily non-Hegelian?"⁶³

However, before such questions and before studies aimed at the recovery of man's Other within the Same (which involves, as we have seen, the solution of the problem of the original in its double decentering: a spatial decentering in that the Same and the Other are in different places, and a temporal decentering in that the beginning is never a determined time, but rather, an infinite postponement⁶⁴), the problem of the meaning of truth is posed. Especially important is the problem of the truth content of the researches into the Other as well as of the epistemological techniques (the discursive formations, the statements, etc.) that Foucault himself uses. On the one hand, as Foucault recognises, the knowledge of these practices of labor, life and language find in themselves their own limit. This knowledge is "limited, diagonal, partial, since it is surrounded on all sides by an immense region of shadow in which labour, life and language conceal their truth (and their own origin) from those very beings who speak, who exist, and who are at work."⁶⁵ On the other hand, it is

precisely the archaeological inquiry, that is, the fulcrum of the Foucauldian historical epistemology, which poses the problem of its location among the discourses that it, itself a discourse, claims to judge. The archaeological project, in fact, is itself, an historical appearance, an event. It emerges today into consciousness by means of Foucault's work and by means of his "discourse." And since, as Foucault says, not anything can be said at any time, the fact that the archaeological project can be said in our time appears as significant not primarily because of its various contents and the solutions it proposes, but rather it indicates something important about the time in which we live and speak, probably (Foucault would say, inevitably) unaware of the decentering that characterizes us as historical-rational subjects. The archaeological project (and Foucault himself, as we will see, reveals it) works in a "privileged" region:

At once close to us, and different from our present existence, it is the border of time that surrounds our presence, which overhangs it, and which indicates it in its otherness; it is that which outside ourselves, delimits us. The description of the archive deploys its possibilities (and, the mastery of its possibilities) on the basis of the very discourses that have just ceased to be ours; its threshold of existence is established by the discontinuity that separates us from what we can no longer say, and from that which falls outside our discursive practice; it begins with the outside of our own language; its locus is the gap between our own discursive practices. In this sense, it is valid for our diagnosis.**

Now, it is true that every diagnosis not only indicates the illness of the patient, to which it gives a name, but it also indicates the knowledge of the doctor and reveals the directions and foundations of this knowledge. The patient and

doctor are located on a the plane of a common "knowledge" (in Foucault's sense of the word), within the confines of the same epistemological threshold. They exist in the same network of practices and discourses that constitute their historically and temporally determined "grid." But how can the diagnosis, thus enunciated, refer to other times and other patients and announce their truth? In what sense is this truth theirs and not, rather, ours - the truth of our "difference." Or further, how can it be their truth and ours? We have here "purely hermeneutic questions" (of the type that Gadamer has attempted to resolve or clarify with his concept of the "horizon") to which Foucault does not seem disposed or prepared to respond. It seems as though he has not sufficiently grasped the consequences of the infinite reference of language and of the sign and the hermeneutic character of the location of every human 'practice' and 'knowledge' as the problem is presented in the Heideggerian-Gadamerian interrogation. In more superficial terms, one may ask (as has, in fact, been asked), what is the Foucauldian archaeology: a historiographical technique, a philosophy or a science? This is a question that Foucault believes is invalid because it is based upon a misunderstanding of the problem that founds the Archaeological project, namely, the problem of our radical and constitutive decentering with respect to the terrain of anonymous and unconscious practices that support and sustain us. Since to ask Foucault to give an account of the place from which he speaks (to ask him, that is, to define the "white space" that renders his discourse and, all others that we speak today, possible) is equivalent to

pretending that the archaeology allows us "to draw up a table of our distinctive features, and to sketch out in advance the face that they will have in the future."⁶⁷ This is precisely what the archaeology, by definition, cannot do since it is founded on the decentering of the subject vis-a-vis the underlying terrain that the archaeology manifests and theorizes. And yet, the question cannot, as Foucault seems to wish, go without a response - the 'truth' of his discourse hangs in the balance.

In what sense is the archaeological discourse 'true'? In what sense is it 'truer' than another discourse (for example, the formalized discourse of science or of philosophy insofar as it attempts to ground the constituted sciences)? And we must also pose a more upsetting and perhaps malicious question: if the archaeology is, as we have seen a history of limits, a research of the limiting experiences of a culture, precisely as an history and as a research, does not the archaeology remain within our culture, whose differentiating characteristic seems to be precisely the centrality of the problem of the historical-rational self-comprehension? As we have mentioned, was it not Socrates (or at least Plato's Socrates) who argued that the life without research was not worth living? How can one research the limit of our culture if it is, in its essence, a researching culture?

To avoid entrapment by the Medusa of doubt and paradox, Foucault has, subsequently, attempted to give a positive reply to such a question (although, in his recent writings, this effort seems to have been postponed). In

The Discourse on Language, he recuperates the these of the "procedures of exclusion" and the "history of separations" that he had projected during the time of Madness and Civilisation. Naturally, the terrain of the study is no longer the ambiguous and generic one of "originary experiences" (irrevocable by definition), but is the much more mature terrain of discursive practices that Foucault has had the merit to reveal and explore for more than ten years. Within this terrain, Foucault discovers three types of interdiction or exclusion. This is an interdiction that either allows the mastering of the discursive event or the appropriation of the right to manage certain types of discourse. A first type of interdiction concerns the discursive practices of sexuality and politics. A second type of interdiction concerns the opposition between reason and madness. Finally, a third type of interdiction has to do with the opposition between the true and the false. This third system of exclusion (or power as Foucault will later call it) does not seem prima facie to be similar to the previous two: "How could one reasonably compare the constraints of truth with those other divisions, arbitrary in origin or at least developing out of historical contingencies - not merely modifiable but in a state of continual flux, supported by a system of institutions imposing and manipulating them, acting not without constraint, nor without an element, at least, of violence?"

Besides, from the point of view of the proposition structure, there is nothing arbitrary, non-violent, or historically based in the distinctions between the true and the

false (the true statement and the false statement). And yet, if we assume a different point of view:

Putting the question in different terms, however - asking what has been, what still is, throughout our discourse, this will to truth which has survived throughout so many centuries of our history; or if we ask what is, in its very general form, the kind of division governing our will to knowledge - then we may well discern something like a system of exclusion (historical, modifiable, institutionally constraining) in the process of development.⁶⁶

In fact, this will to truth is similar to the other systems of exclusion:

...this will to truth, like the other systems of exclusion relies on institutional support: it is both reinforced and accompanied by whole strata of practices such as pedagogy, naturally, the book system, publishing, libraries, such as the learned societies in the past, and laboratories today. But it is probably even more profoundly accompanied by the manner in which knowledge is employed in a society, the way in which it is exploited, divided and, in some ways, attributed.⁷⁰

And, like every other institutionally organized practice, the will to knowledge has a historically determined birth:

Between Hesiod and Plato, a division was established that separated true discourse from false discourse; it was a new division for, henceforth, true discourse was no longer considered precious and desirable, since it had ceased to be discourse linked to the exercise of power. And so the Sophists were routed.⁷¹

According to Foucault, from this moment, discourse lost its ritual status which rendered it 'true' by the type of 'reality' that it engendered (the practices that it induced), and became instead true inasmuch as it had a significance. The truth shifted from being a ritualized act that was just and potent in itself, to something that had a meaning and a relation to an object. In this new form, the will to truth has

accompanied and activated all the historical discourses of Western culture, manifesting itself in successive forms of knowledge (of the will to knowledge) via the major scientific mutations. In this way:

Everything seems to have occurred as though from the time of the great Platonic division onwards, the will to truth had its own history, which is not at all that of the constraining truths: the history of a range of subjects to be learned, the history of the knowing subject, the history of material, technical and instrumental investment in knowledge.⁷²

It is not the same will to knowledge that functions in our century that operates in earlier centuries. The fields of objects, the techniques (of verification, commentary or calculation, etc.), the theoretical practices (to use Husserl's term), all change. Nevertheless, it is not only a question of historical mutations of a will whose object (knowledge and the truth) is born from an original separation and whose propulsive force seems to characterize more and more decisively our culture. At the limit, even the two separations of desire and power seem to be always more involved in the status of truth as their justification and ultimate foundation. The discourse of power and that of desire are legitimate, not because they are based on rituals and statutes themselves worthy of acceptance and obedience, but because and to the extent that they incarnate a discourse of truth, true discourse. 'True', naturally, in the sense of the modern institutional criteria that produce, valorize and impose the dominant practices - above all, today, those of the technical-objective sciences.

We, thus, begin to suspect that the will to truth,

referring back to the movement of its original separation, hides that very truth of which it speaks. As Nietzsche had earlier intuited, the will to truth itself is manifested as a mask of the will to power. To take account of this, it is necessary to assume a perspective external to the historical-rational discourse that characterizes our culture whereby our culture considers itself, on the basis of the Platonic and, especially, Aristotelian philosophy and science, the culmination of the progressive, technical arts and the fulfillment of the essence of man as well as of god and the cosmos. Within such a historical-rational discourse, we no longer find any traces of the original division, of the laceration of the will. This allows the discourse to present itself in the form of a triumphant, loquacious truth: As though the will to truth and its vicissitudes were masked by truth itself and its necessary unfolding."⁷³ It is at this point, in fact, that the ultimate and most radical decentering is manifested: that of the truth (with its correlates of "objective" rational necessity and the historically "meaningful" teleological development) with respect to the will (to truth in appearance, to power in reality) that is its basis. The truth hides itself we might say: "True discourse, liberated by the nature of its form from desire and power is incapable of recognizing the will to truth which pervades it; and the will to truth, having imposed itself upon us for so long, is such that the truth it seeks to reveal cannot fail to mask it."⁷⁴

What truth? What is at stake in the will to truth if

not precisely desire and power? What is behind this truth if not a will to separate and oppress, a "prodigious machinery of the will to truth, with its vocation of exclusion."⁷⁵ And should we not remember that Oedipus' blindness commences precisely when he believes he has rationally resolved the riddle of man? And what better characterizes our culture than the eschatological pretension to have produced, at the termination of a discourse that strives to be rationally grounded and necessary, the "truth" about man?

The reply to these questions, the specification of their meaning, constitute difficult and disquieting problems. Foucault believes he can answer these questions via analyses of discursive practices and by confronting in a more subtle and detailed way the practices of power. More generally, he thinks it possible "to question our will to truth" and "to restore to discourse its character as an event."⁷⁶ It is in this event, therefore, (an event that European culture has never ceased to silence and cancel) that the origin of every successive decentering is to be sought. In this way, then, Foucault's proposal would be to show the meaning of the birth of meaning by seeking its genesis in the event of discourse. A proposal of this sort, however, continues to locate the problem of truth on the side of meaning and not on the side of the event. Foucault, that is, does not seem able to think the event (and, in particular, the event of discourse) with the necessary radicality.⁷⁷ One must add, however, that Foucault, in his later writings, seems to be aware of this difficulty. In his writings and interviews collected in Power/Knowledge,⁷⁸ he

refutes analyses of the symbolic field, of the domination of signifying structures. He denies dialectics, on the one hand, and semiology, on the other, because they conceal the essential, that is, the event. And the event, for him, is not the gesture that excludes and represses, that says no and reduces things to silence. This purely negative qualification of events is here considered to be insufficient and superficial. It is necessary, on the contrary, to grasp the event as a positive and creative instance, that is, as an instance of 'power'. The great model of language and of signs is, thus, in a certain sense, stepped over. To grasp the event, one must pose to discourse the question of power. But what is to be understood by the word 'power'. Foucault argues that one must not understand this power as:

A phenomenon of one individual's consolidated and homogeneous domination over others, or that of one group or class over others. What, by contrast, should always be kept in mind is that power, if we do not take too distant a view of it, is not that which makes the difference between those who exclusively possess and retain it, and those who do not have it and submit to it. Power must be analysed as something which circulates, or rather, as something which only functions in the form of a chain. It is never localised here or there, never in anybody's hands, never appropriated as a commodity or a piece of wealth. Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organisation. And not only do individuals circulate between its threads; they are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power. They are not only its intent or consenting target; they are always also the elements of its articulation. In other words, individuals are the vehicles of power, not its points of application. The individual is not to be conceived as a sort of elementary nucleus, a primitive atom, a multiple and inert material on which power comes to fasten or against which it happens to strike, and in so doing subdues or crushes individuals. In fact, it is already one of the prime effects of power that certain bodies, certain gestures, certain discourses, certain desires, come to be identified and constituted as individuals. The

individual, that is, is not the vis-a-vis of power; it is, I believe, one of its prime effects. The individual is an effect of power, and at the same time, or precisely to the extent to which it is that effect, it is the element of its articulation. The individual which power has constituted is at the same time its vehicle.⁷⁰

It is very clear from the above quotation that Foucault has arrived at a conception of the individual as a product of a certain field of forces. But it is also clear that his conception of power is theoretically based on the Nietzschean concept of the 'will to power', especially if, as Heidegger suggests, we do not consider this Nietzschean expression as something that is obviously known and easily defined. A way of rendering it problematic, we believe, is to connect it with the theme of the infinity of interpretations. Foucault himself seems to move in this direction when he recognises that power cannot be exercised unless it "evolves, organises and puts into circulation a knowledge, or rather, apparatuses of knowledge."⁷¹ This can be clearly seen in the following passage:

"The important thing here, I believe, is that truth isn't outside power, or lacking in power: contrary to a myth whose history and functions would repay further study, truth isn't the reward of free spirits, the child of protracted solitude, nor the privilege of those who have succeeded in liberating themselves. Truth is a thing of this world: it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it induces regular effects of power. Each society has its regime of truth, its 'general politics' of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes functions as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true."⁷²

The object of his analysis is therefore:

the ensemble of rules according to which the true and the false are separated and specific effects of power attached to the true, it being understood also that it's not a matter of a battle 'on behalf' of the truth, but of a battle about the status of truth and the economic and political role it plays....The political question, to sum up, is not error, illusion, alienated consciousness or ideology; it is truth itself. Hence the importance of Nietzsche.²²

FOOTNOTES

¹One knows that today, Foucault refutes very strongly any link with structuralism:

Throughout this book, you have been at great pains to diassociate yourself from "structuralism," or at least from what is ordinarily understood by that term. You have tried to show that you used neither the methods nor the concepts of structuralism; that you made no reference to its procedures of linguistic description; that you are not concerned with formalization. (Michel Foucault, The Archaeology of Knowledge, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Random House, 1970), p. 199 (hereafter cited as Foucault, Archaeology); See also also Idea, "Response au Cercle d'épistémologie," Cahiers pour l'analyse 9 (Summer 1968): 9-40.

In his first works, however, Foucault seemed to wish to qualify himself as a follower of a type of structuralist research. For example, in L'histoire de la folie, we read that the intention of the book is to unveil "the structure of the experience of madness" (Michel Foucault, L'histoire de la folie à l'âge classique, with two appendices: "Mon corps, ce papier, ce feu" and "La folie, l'absence d'oeuvre" (Paris: Gallimard, 1972), p. vi (hereafter cited as Foucault, L'histoire)) and in The Birth of the Clinic, he speaks expressly of his book being a "structural study" (Michel Foucault, The Birth of the Clinic, trans. A.M. Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1973), p. xix (hereafter cited as Foucault, Clinic)). It is only in The Archaeology of Knowledge, by way of the theorization of the statement and its event-like status, that the similarities and differences of structuralist and archaeological studies are clearly discussed. See Foucault, Archaeology, p. 16, where Foucault observes that in The Birth of the Clinic, "the frequent recourse to structural analysis threatened to bypass the specificity of the problem presented, and the level proper to archaeology."

²Michel Foucault, Introduction and notes to Ludwig Binswanger, Le Rêve et l'Existence, trans. from the German by Jacqueline Verdeaux (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1954), p. 126 (hereafter cited as Foucault, Le Rêve).

³On the subject of the term 'historical a priori', Foucault writes:

Juxtaposed these two words produce a rather startling effect; what I mean by the term is an a priori that is not a condition of validity of judgements, but a condition of reality for statements. It is not a question of rediscovering what might legitimize an assertion, but of freeing the conditions of emergence of statements, the law of their coexistence with others, the specific form of their mode of being, the principles according to which they survive, become transformed, and disappear. An a priori not of truths that might never be said, or really given experience; but the a priori of a history that is given, since it is that of things actually said. (Foucault, Archaeology, p. 127).

The theme and the problem of statements had not, however, assumed a central importance for Foucault before The Order of Things.

⁴In L'histoire de la folie, the historical contribution of psychoanalysis, the convergence of all psychiatry of the nineteenth century toward Freud, is explained with considerable clarity in relation to the point of view of Foucauldian archaeology.

⁵The polemical target here is certainly the Sartrean phenomenological psychology of L'Imagination of 1936 and L'imaginaire of 1940. Several years afterwards, Foucault and Sartre entered into a direct polemic. See "Foucault répond à Sartre," La Quinzaine littéraire 46 (1968): 20-22.

⁶Michel Foucault, Madness and Civilization: The History of Madness in the Age of Reason, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Mentor Books, 1965), p. xi (hereafter cited as Foucault, Madness).

⁷Ibid., p. ix.

⁸Ibid., p. xi. The renunciation of terminal truths involves the suspension of the categories of science in a way similar to that of the Husserlian epoché. The "knowledge" and the "epistemological grid" that Foucault's archaeology places into relief examines, in fact, discursive practice (and the non-discursive practices to which it is joined) at a pre-categorical as well as a pre-subjective level. In Husserlian terms, one would speak of anonymous actions on the plane of the Lebenswelt. However, even this anonymous action

of pre-categorical operations finds a meaning in Husserl because of the phenomenological reflections which is the re-animating taking of consciousness of an originary meaning or one that has been originally hidden in the founding operations. In Foucault, on the contrary, precisely the subject and consciousness depend for their meaning and their historical figuration on the anonymous discursive practices which, so to say, speak in them. For Foucault, meaning is, thus, a superficial effect, a froth. For the rest, he has always bitterly condemned the two typically phenomenological themes of the founding subject and of the originary experience.

*Ibid., p. ix.

¹⁰Ibid., p. x.

¹¹Ibid., p. ix.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid., p. xi.

¹⁴For the concept of "archaeology" in connection with those of "archive" and "monument," see Michel Foucault, "Réponse à une question," *Esprit* 371 (May 1968): 850-874 (hereafter cited as Foucault, "Question").

¹⁵Foucault, *L'histoire*, p. vi which was not translated in *Madness and Civilization*. See also, Michel Foucault, "La folie, l'absence d'oeuvre," in *La Table Ronde* (May 1964): 11-21.

¹⁶Ibid., p. vi.

¹⁷Ibid., p. v.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 11.

¹⁹Ibid., p. v.

²⁰Ibid., p. vi.

²¹Ibid., p. vii.

²²Ibid., pp. vi-vii. The insistence on experience and especially originary experience indicates the great extent to which Foucault is here under the influence of Georges Bataille. Later, after having discovered the role of discursive practices and their regularities, Foucault will indicate the ambiguity engendered by these categories: "Generally speaking, Madness and Civilization accorded far too great a place, and a very enigmatic one too, to what I called "experience," thus showing to what extent one was still close to admitting an anonymous and general subject of history" (Foucault, Archaeology, p. 16 (translation corrected)).

²³Ibid., p. vi.

²⁴In the "Preface" to The Birth of the Clinic, Foucault states that he wishes to decipher the conditions of history in the density of history itself and that "what counts in these things said by men is not so much what they may have thought or the extent to which these things represent their thoughts, as that un-thought which systematizes them from the outset, thus making them thereafter endlessly accessible to new discourses and open to the task of transforming them" (Foucault, Clinic, p. xix (translation corrected)).

²⁵Foucault, L'histoire, pp. iv-v.

²⁶Ibid., p. 111.

²⁷Idea, Madness, p. xi.

²⁸Idea, L'histoire, p. iv.

²⁹Ibid., pp. iii-iv See also Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," in Michel Foucault, Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews, ed. Donald Bouchard (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977): 139-164 and compare with G. Deleuze, Différence et répétition (Paris: P.U.F., 1968).

³⁰Ibid., p. v.

³¹Ibid., p. iv.

³²Ibid.

³³Ibid.

³⁴Ibid., p. iii.

³⁵Ibid., p. v.

³⁶The Birth of the Clinic was subtitled "Une archeologie du regard medical." The theme of the gaze and of experience were later judged to be inadequate by Foucault. They are both replaced, in The Order of Things and later works, by the systematic analysis of enunciative functions and discursive practices.

³⁷Ibid., p. 11.

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Compare with the empty/full dialectic as exhibited in Lacan's notion of the "lack," of "satisfaction" and of the object of desire as being radically excentric with regard to consciousness. Jacques Lacan, Ecrits (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1975).

⁴⁰In Hegel's sense of the word when he speaks of the positivity of Christian religion, that is, of a religion that is overturning the original message of Jesus is founded upon an authority, an authority, we could say, that imposes silence. This theme is related to that of alienation which, in Hegel, characterizes the mode of man's being in the world.

⁴¹M. Chapsal, interviewer, "Interview with Michel Foucault," La Quinzaine littéraire 5 (May 16, 1966): 15. 5 (May 16, 1966): 15.

⁴²Michel Foucault, "On the Archaeology of the Sciences," Theoretical Practice 3-4 (1971): 112.

⁴³Ibid., Archaeology, p. 13.

⁴⁴Ibid., pp. 12-13. See also Michel Foucault, The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences.

trans. Alan Sheridan Smith (New York: Random House, 1970), p. 298 (hereafter cited as Foucault, *Order*) where he states "the first book of *Das Kapital* is an exegesis of 'value'; all Nietzsche is an exegesis of a few Greek words; Freud, the exegesis of all those unspoken phrases that support and at the same time undermine our apparent discourse, our fantasies, our dreams, our bodies. Philology, as the analysis of what is said in the depth of discourse, has become the modern form of criticism.

*⁵Foucault, *Order*, p. 322. Here, the target is Husserl to whom Foucault often refers. The more thorough discussion is contained in Chapter IX, "The Empirical and the Transcendental," (Foucault, *Order*, p. 322) where phenomenology is interpreted as the mediation between positivity and eschatology, that is, in reference to Comte and Marx.

*⁶Ibid., p. 308.

*⁷Idem, "Question"

*⁸Idem, *Order*, p. 322, where he states:

...if such a contestation [of positivism and eschatology] could be made, it would be from the starting-point of a question which may well seem aberrant, so opposed is it to what has rendered the whole of our thought historically possible. This question would be: Does man really exist? To imagine, for an instant, what the world and thought and truth might be if man did not exist, is considered to be merely indulging in paradox. This is because we are so blinded by the recent manifestation of man that we can no longer remember a time - and it is not so long ago - when the world, its order, and human beings existed, but man did not. It is easy to see why Nietzsche's thought should have had, and still has for us, such a disturbing power when it is introduced in the form of an imminent event, the Promise-Threat, the notion that man would soon be no more - but would be replaced by the superman; in a philosophy of the return, this meant that man had long since disappeared and would continue to disappear, and that our modern thought about man, our concern for him, our humanism, were all sleeping serenely over the threatening rumble of his non-existence. Ought we not to remind ourselves - we who believe ourselves bound to a finitude which belongs only to us, and which opens up the truth of the world to us by means of our cognition - ought we not to remind ourselves that we are bound to the back of a tiger?"

The image of being tied to a tiger comes, as we know, from Nietzsche's Zarathustra.

**Foucault, Archaeology, p. 204. The "various practices" to which Foucault refers exist within diverse discursive formations.

s^oI^odem, Order, p. 331.

s¹I^obid., p. 313.

s²I^obid., p. 328.

s³I^obid., p. 332.

s⁴I^obid., p. 328.

s⁵I^obid., p. 331.

s⁶I^obid.

s⁷I^obid., p. 330.

s⁸I^obid.

s⁹I^obid., p. 331.

s¹⁰I^obid.

s¹¹I^obid., p. 332.

s¹²Orders of Discourse, p. 22.

s¹³I^obid.

**See Foucault, Order, p. 330. "It is always against a background of the already begun that man is able to reflect on what may serve him as origin."

⁶⁵Foucault, Order, p. 331.

⁶⁶Ibid., Archaeology, pp. 130-131.

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 131.

⁶⁸The Discourse on Language, p. 4. mod. trans.

⁶⁹Ibid.

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 5.

⁷¹Ibid., p. 4.

⁷²Ibid., p. 5.

⁷³Ibid., p. 6.

⁷⁴Ibid. This passage reminds one strongly of Heidegger's studies which, as we have seen, Foucault never explicitly discusses despite his obvious debts to Heidegger. Jacques Derrida seems much more forthright on this point. In general, it seems that Foucault considers the Heideggerian position to be still a prisoner (notwithstanding Heidegger's criticisms of Husserl's transcendental phenomenology) of anthropological thought. Foucault's position here seems quite unusual and, in any case, Foucault cannot hope to liquidate Heidegger's thought with a few quick comments.

⁷⁵Ibid.

⁷⁶Ibid., p. 15.

⁷⁷According to Derrida, Foucault remains the prisoner of logocentric thought (that is, a thought based on a specific dialectic of the signified). See Jacques Derrida, Of Grammatology, trans. Gayatri Spivak (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975) for the difference between a science of writing (a grammatology) and archaeology.

⁷⁸See Michel Foucault, Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977, ed. with an

introduction by Colin Gordon, trans. Colin Gordon, Leo
Marshall, John Nephew and Kate Soper (Brighton, Sussex: The
Harvester Press, 1980).

*Ibid., p. 98.

**Ibid., p. 102.

**Ibid., p. 131.

**Ibid., pp. 132-33.

CHAPTER V

LANGUAGE AND THE UNTHOUGHT
IN THE THOUGHT OF MICHEL FOUCAULT

In The Order of Things, Foucault states that all of modern thought is traversed by the laws of thinking the unthought. Born on the same archaeological terrain that saw the birth of anthropology, this eternal counter-figure of knowledge, the unthought has been investigated in all its alterity only since the discoveries of Freud:

This is why one must be fair to Freud. Between the Five Psychoanalyses and the careful investigation into Psychological Medications, there is more than the thickness of a discovery; there is the sovereign violence of a return. Janet enumerated the elements of a division, took an inventory, annexed here and there, perhaps conquered. Freud grasped madness at the level of its language, reconstituting one of the essential elements of an experience reduced to silence by positivism. He did not add a major contribution to the list of psychological treatments of madness; he returned to medical thought the possibility of a dialogue with unreason. Let us not be astonished that the most "psychological" of medications met its slope so quickly. Psychology is not at all the subject of psychoanalysis. Its subject is rather an experience of unreason which psychology in the modern world has always attempted to mask.¹

In The Order of Things, Foucault explains that although no more than any other human science achieving a scientific status, psychoanalysis represents the principle of criticism and

contestation within the modern 'episteme':

Psychoanalysis stands as close as possible, in fact, to that critical function which, as we have seen, exists within all the human sciences. In setting itself the task of making the discourse of the unconscious speak through consciousness, psychoanalysis is advancing in the direction of that fundamental region in which relations of representation and finitude come into play. Whereas all the human sciences advance towards the unconscious only with their back to it, waiting for it to unveil itself as fast as consciousness is analysed, as it were backwards, psychoanalysis - on the other hand, points directly towards it, with a deliberate purpose - not towards that which must be rendered gradually more explicit by the progressive illumination of the implicit, but towards what is there and yet is hidden, towards what exists with the mute solidity of a thing, of a text closed in upon itself, or of a blank space in a visible text, and uses that quality to define itself...by following the same path as the human sciences, but with its gaze turned the other way, psychoanalysis moves towards the moment - by definition inaccessible to any theoretical knowledge of man, to any continuous apprehension in terms of signification, conflict or function - at which the contents of consciousness articulate themselves, or rather stand gaping, upon man's finitude.²

Madness is non-sense, the experience of the non-conscious. The unthought is the desire which "reigns in the wild state"³ - a desire that is within thought and constitutes its condition of possibility but that precisely for this reason cannot be grasped within a system of representation.

Another unthought is death that also makes up "the finitude upon the basis of which we are, and think, and know...."⁴ Combined, these finitudes of Death and Desire form the figure of the schizophrenic - that madness par excellence that constitutes the dangerous, unthinkable heart of our existence. Foucault has given us, scattered in various texts, the elements which indicate how it is possible to think the

unthought. The "I speak" is the basis of modern thought - the aporia that announces the dissolution of the subject.⁵ "I speak" - that is to say "I say that I speak" which is again to say "I speak" and so on, infinitely. If the "I think" constituted the triumph of subjectivity, the "I speak," on the contrary makes it sink into a void in which only language can speak and exist. The "thought of the outside" is the thought of this disappearance. Foucault discusses the work of the critic and novelist Maurice Blanchot as an example of this type of thought in an essay in 1966:

The breakthrough towards a language from which the subject is excluded, the revelation of a fundamental incompatibility between the appearance of language in its being and self-consciousness in its identity, is an experience which today announces itself at many different points of culture: in the very gesture of writing, as in the attempts to formalize language, in the study of myths and in psychoanalysis, also in the search for this Logos which forms the birthplace of all western reason. Thus we find ourselves confronted with an abyss which has for a long time remained invisible to us: the being of language only appears for itself in the disappearance of the subject. How to obtain access to this strange relation? Perhaps via a form of thought whose still uncertain possibility occidental culture has sketched in its margins. This thought, which remains outside of all subjectivity, in order to make its limits arise from the exterior, in order to make its dispersion scintillate and grasp only its invincible absence, and which at any same time remains on the threshold of all positivity, not so much as to seize its foundation or justification, but to discover the space in which it is deployed, the void which serves as this space, the distance in which it is constituted and in which its immediate certitudes are sketched as soon as one looks in that direction - this thought, in relation to the interiority of our philosophical reflection and in relation to the positivity of our knowledge, constitutes what one may call the "thought of the outside."⁶

This thought from outside is above all the thought of desire. We see this explode in de Sade in whose repetitive monologue only naked desire speaks. Here, desire is seen in

the Lacanian sense of language. There is also the thought of the absence of God from Holderlin to Nietzsche or the thought of the divorce of language from that which names in Mallarmé. The dissolving of the subject into the violence of the body and the scream of Artaud would be another example. In this context, Foucault refers to Bataille's thought of the limit and transgression. Foucault explains in the following terms the importance of this experience:

Transgression is an action which involves the limit, that narrow zone of a line where it displays the flash of its passage, but perhaps also its entire trajectory, even its origin; it is likely that transgression has its entire space in the line that it crosses. The play of limits and transgression seems to be regulated by a simple obstinacy: transgression incessantly crosses and recrosses a line which closes up behind it in a wave of extremely short duration, and thus it is made to return once more right to the horizon of the uncrossable. But this relationship is considerably more complex: these elements are situated in an uncertain context, in certainties which are immediately upset so that thought is ineffectual as soon as it attempts to seize them.⁷

Transgression, thus, posits assiduously its own limit. Its space is that which was opened by the death of God. It is a space that lives in sensuality characterized by the fall of the Unlimited which limited us and its replacement by the unlimited reign of the limit. Formerly, the language of sexuality was intrinsically tied to the discourse on God and divine love. Foucault emphasizes the openness and naturalness of the erotic discourse of the medieval period as early as his essay of 1962 on Bataille.⁸ Unlike in most orthodox interpretations, it is not the absence of repression which distinguishes the current period for Foucault:

What characterizes modern sexuality from Sade to Freud is not its having found the language of its logic or of its natural process, but rather, through the violence done by such languages, its having been "denatured" - cast into an empty zone where it achieves whatever meager form is bestowed upon it by the establishment of its limits. Sexuality points to nothing beyond itself, no prolongation, except in a frenzy which disrupts it. We have not in the least liberated sexuality, though we have, to be exact, carried it to its limits: the limit of consciousness, because it ultimately dictates the only possible reading of our unconscious; the limit of the law, since it seems the sole substance of universal taboos; the limit of language, since it traces that line of foam showing just how far speech may advance upon the sands of silence. Thus it is not through sexuality that we communicate with the orderly and pleasing profane world of animals; rather, sexuality is a fissure - not one which surrounds us as the basis of our isolation or individuality, but on which marks the limit within us and designates us as a limit.⁹

The thought of the outside allows, "a profanation that is empty and turned inward upon itself and whose instruments are brought to bear on nothing but each other."¹⁰ An outside is created when the limit, the finitude that we are is posited and made to emerge by transgression. Thus, transgression is an affirmative experience - affirmative in a very particular way because, in reality, there is nothing positive about it.

Transgression contains nothing negative, but affirms limited being - affirms the limitlessness into which it leaps as it opens this zone to existence for the first time. But correspondingly, this affirmation contains nothing positive: no content can bind it, since by definition, no limit can possibly restrict it. Perhaps it is simply an affirmation of division; but only insofar as division is not understood to mean a cutting gesture, or the establishment of a separation or the measuring of a distance, only retaining that in it which may designate the existence of difference.¹¹

The limit is posited only so that it may be broken and within this constant breaking and affirmation the possibility of the thought of the outside, the thought of the unthought is born. The dialectic cannot account for this experience for two

reasons. Firstly, it is always vitiated by anthropology, always attempting to re-integrate the outside into the interiority of consciousness and, secondly, because it is the language of contradiction and, thus, of the negative. But it is not a matter of finding a language that can be for the transgressive what the dialectic is for contradiction. Rather, for Foucault, there is no form of discourse or representation to which we may refer in order to capture the thought of the limit. Kant's anthropological attempt to think the limits of reason and Hegel's dialectical attempt must both be transcended. These discursive languages have been broken by the non-discursive accounts in Nietzsche of the death of God, the eternal return, Dionysus and the Superman.¹² This language of the outside also speaks in the erotic writings of Sade and Bataille - a language that does not claim to speak a "truth." In the face of transgression, these discursive languages are reduced to near silence and instead of seeking such a reductive language for transgression, Foucault has argued that "our efforts are undoubtedly better spent in trying to speak of this experience and in making it speak from the depths where its language fails, from precisely the place where words escape it, where the subject who speaks has just vanished...."¹³ The locus of this continuous attempt, of this assiduous excavation of language is literature. Nietzsche was the first to pose the question of language's being when he asked, "Who speaks?" Since Nietzsche, literary figures have, according to Foucault, most intensely carried out language's questioning of itself. Foucault sympathizes especially with surrealists or writers

close to surrealism such as Bataille, Foucault refers to the writings of Artaud and Roussel in the following account of literature from the concluding pages of The Order of Things.

However, at the other extremity of our culture, the question of language is entrusted to that form of speech which has no doubt never cease to pose it, but which is now, for the first time, posing it to itself. That literature in our day is fascinated by the being of language is neither the sign of an imminent end nor proof of a radicalization: it is a phenomenon whose necessity has its roots in a vast configuration in which the whole structure of our thought and our knowledge is traced. But if the question of formal languages gives prominence to the possibility or impossibility of structuring positive contents, a literature dedicated to language gives prominence, in all their empirical vivacity, to the fundamental forms of finitude. From within language, experienced and traversed as language, in the play of its possibilities extended to their furthest point, what emerges is that man has "come to an end," and that, by reaching the summit of all possible speech, he arrives not at the very heart of himself but at the brink of that which limits him; in that region where death prowls, where thought is extinguished, where the promise of the origin interminably recedes.¹⁴

Literature, in the above strong sense, is a recent discovery dating back to Mallarmé. The non-thought posits itself here, in this language that speaks without indicating "who" speaks except perhaps language itself, in this simultaneous dissolution of the categories of author and work. The unthought emerges in the disintegration of philosophical subjectivity and of dialectics. The modern philosopher discovers that he does not

...inhabit the whole of his language like a secret and perfectly fluent god. Next to himself, he discovers the existence of another language that also speaks and that he is unable to dominate, one that strives, fails and falls silent and that he cannot manipulate, the language he spoke at one time and that has now separated itself from him, now gravitating in a space increasingly silent. Most of all, he discovers that he is not always lodged in his language in the same fashion and that in

the location from which a subject had traditionally spoken in philosophy - one whose obvious and garrulous identity has remained unexamined from Plato to Nietzsche - a void has been hollowed out in which a multiplicity of speaking subjects are joined and severed, combined and excluded. From the lessons on Homer to the cries of a madman in the streets of Turin, who can be said to have spoken this continuous language, so obstinately the same? Was it the Wanderer or his shadow? The philosopher or the first of the nonphilosophers? Zarathustra, his monkey, or already the Superman? Dionysus, Christ, their reconciled figures, or finally this man right here?¹⁵

The experience of limit, of death, and of an origin continually receding suggest that the thought of the outside is suspended over an abyss and Foucault is aware of this. The emergence of sexuality, the transgression and even the infinite text of the imprisoned Sade (whose language claims to tell all not simply in the breaking of all prohibitions but by "seeking the limits of the possible"¹⁶) are all related to the ontological void that the death of God opens up. The thought of the outside is unearthed and created by this void - it is merely the outside of this void. On the other hand, this does not signal the end of ontology just as the disintegration of philosophical subjectivity means the end of the philosopher but not of philosophy. Ontology is reduced to language - only language exists. In the same way that we have an experience of the limit in transgression, we are driven back to an unlocatable immediate in the "I speak." For this reason, the origin seems to be a pure outside, it is separated utterly from us, lost as we are in the paradoxes of language. But death, in the same way, cannot be apprehended - it is also an "outside." In the following passage from his essay on the critical theory of Blanchot, Foucault shows the way in which both origin and death

collapse into each other in language:

In its waiting and forgetful being, in this power of dissimulation which effaces every determined signification and even the existence of he who speaks, in this gray neutrality which forms the essential hiding place of all being and which, thus, liberates the space of the image, language is neither the truth nor time, neither eternity, nor man, but the always undone form of the outside. It allows the communication of the origin and of death, or rather allows their perception in the light of their indefinite oscillation. It allows the perception of their instantaneous contact within a measureless space. The pure outside of the origin, if it is indeed it which language is attentive to receive, is never fixed in an immobile and penetrable positivity; and the always recommenced outside of death, if it is carried towards the light by the forgetfulness essential to language, never posits the limit on the basis of which the truth would finally be delineated. The one immediately tips over into the other; the origin has the transparency of that which has no end, death opens indefinitely only the repetition of the beginning. And what language is (not what it means, not the form in which it says it), what it is in its being, is this very fine voice, this very imperceptible retreat, this weakness inside and around everything and every face which bathes with the same natural light - both night and day - the late effort of the origin and the early erosion of death.¹⁷

Several years later, in an essay on Nietzsche, Foucault reiterates the above notion: "History also teaches how to laugh at the solemnities of the origin." This origin is not the place of an undefiled truth, it is not an absolute ground. Foucault quotes Nietzsche to the effect that this identification of the origin and truth is a type of superstition, it is simply "a metaphysical extension which arises from the belief that things are most precious and essential at the moment of truth."¹⁸

The sources of Foucault's archaeology can undoubtedly be seen in his distinction between the search for a mystifying Ursprung and the critical value of the delineation of the

descent or Herkunft of an institution. This Herkunft does not claim to reveal the Truth underlying the appearances of history but, on the contrary, reveals the vicissitudes of history which underly the various truths which have hardened throughout our past:

An examination of descent also permits the discovery, under the unique aspect of a trait or a concept, of the myriad events through which - thanks to which, against which - they were formed. Genealogy does not pretend to go back in time to restore an unbroken continuity that operates beyond the dispersion of forgotten things; its duty is not to demonstrate that the past actively exists in the present, that it continues secretly to animate the present, having imposed a predetermined form to all its vicissitudes. Genealogy does not resemble the evolution of a species and does not map the destiny of a people. On the contrary, to follow the complex course of descent is to maintain passing events in their proper dispersion; it is to identify the accidents, the minute deviations - or conversely, the complete reversals - the errors, the false appraisals, and the faulty calculations that gave birth to those things that continue to exist and have value for us; it is to discover that truth or being do not lie at the root of what we know and what we are, but the exteriority of accidents.¹⁹

It is not sufficient to free ourselves of the chimera of a positive origin to absorb it into a genealogy which disperses it. We will still not be completely free of it. Similarly, an archaeology that treats its materials as monuments to uncover rather than as documents to interpret is not enough because history still sees the emergence of the restlessness of the unthought. The unthought is not a silent object, waiting to be exhumed in order to speak. It is not a pure outside or a night that must be illuminated by a lamp. Archaeology investigates discursive formations at the level of their positivity and every positivity has its immediate elements. These are the statements and relations among statements, their structurations

in various discourses. They are the autonomous events that must be returned from the obscurity in which they lie. Foucault describes this archaeological project in the Archaeology of Knowledge in terms reminiscent of his earlier literary criticism of the early sixties:

To describe a group of statements not as the closed, plethoric totality of meaning, but as an incomplete, fragmented figure; to describe a group of statements not with reference to the interiority of an intention, a thought, or a subject, but in accordance with the dispersion of an exteriority; to describe a group of statements, in order to rediscover not the moment or the trace of their origin, but the specific forms of an accumulation; is certainly not to uncover an interpretation, to discover a foundation, or to free constituent acts; nor is it to decide on a rationality, or to embrace a teleology. It is to establish what I am quite willing to call a positivity. To analyse a discursive formation therefore is to deal with a group of verbal performances at the level of the statements and of the form of positivity that characterizes them; or, more briefly, it is to define the type of positivity of a discourse. If, by 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 accumulation for the quest of the origin, one is a positivist, then I am quite happy to be one.²⁰

Thus, Foucault is willing to recognize only one positivity - that of speech. In speech, the lack of the origin is revived as if with oxygen: the unthought of Foucault is all here. In the ontological void that the discovery of language opens, it is precisely the latter that determines the rules of the game. To discover in the "I speak" the force that drives us back into the void only means to discover the mediation that each of us is. But, for Foucault, the medium of language is the sign itself of the dispersion that we are. This renders possible and radical the liquidation of anthropology (the subject is only the subject-function), but does not help in the effort to

think the unthought. The unthought is, in fact, in itself mediated and does not favor any "reduction," even to that medium which is language. The philosophy of the ontological void leaves it to its oblivion, even if with the promise to illuminate it.

We have abandoned the "anthropological reduction" and yet we find ourselves again cast into a new reductio ad unum. A subtle form of ontology has returned, even if only from the void into it was pushed. The Foucault of The Archaeology of Knowledge (under the influence of the structuralist temper of the late sixties) has focused on language at the expense of the near exclusion of the other. This was probably also conditioned by his attack on the myth of the Ursprung. Not that it is unimportant to have focused on the eruption of language at the place where anthropology collapsed - desire is language, transgression is language. But if they are only language, neither desire nor transgression open the possibility of thinking the unthought. Desire and transgression are affirmative. They can even lose their object, like desire in the case of madness or be without object by definition, like transgression - they still remain affirmative. They carry the memory of the finger that indicates.

Foucault's concept of the other can be usefully compared to that of Adorno who insists upon the need to posit a radical unthought that yet remains somehow accessible to a negative dialectic. The unthought, according to Adorno,²¹ is the inexpressible non-said that, as such, accompanies every speech

act and overturns it with the power of the negative. One lives the experience of death in the continual possibility of the inversion of speech - a death that does not have to do with limit and is not an outside but something which lives and works assiduously within us.²² Here the dialectic operates the contestation of language with itself - it is a particular form of language that takes the part of the negative. The unthought here is that which can only be said and thought negatively. The unthought can only be thought and said negatively in utopia which is not, as is often said, a place in which a blocked praxis may hide, but is really the effort to think the unthinkable. Besides, the unthought, for Adorno, is never absolutely unthought - it is the immanent difference of thought which thought refuses to see. Utopia pulls the unthought out of the silence in which it lies and forces thought to gaze upon it.²³

This does not signify re-opening the door to anthropology. The effort to think the unthought reveals the subject as the location of continual conflict and inversion, broken by the line of flight of utopia. The negative dialectic does not return the unthought to the interiority of consciousness, but rather posits it as a force of subversion of subjective consciousness. Adorno's conception of the necessary struggle within consciousness as it attempts to grasp the unthought can be seen in the following quotation from Negative Dialectics:

Theory and mental experience need to interact. Theory does not contain answers to everything; it reacts to the world, which is faulty to the core. What would be free from the spell of the world is not under theory's jurisdiction. Mobility is of the essence of consciousness; it is no accidental feature. It means a doubled mode of conduct: an inner one, the immanent process which is the properly dialectical one, and a free, unbound one like a stepping out of dialectics. Yet the two are not merely disparate. The unregimented thought has an elective affinity to dialectics, which as criticism of the system recalls what would be outside the system; and the force that liberates the dialectical movement in cognition is the very same that rebels against the system. Both attitudes of consciousness are linked by criticizing one another, not by compromising.²⁴

Precisely for this reason, it is authorized to speak of the unthought. This it can do better than literature which, as Foucault knows, can only structure itself around an author-function. Utopia, on the contrary, exists on the side of the object, inscribes itself in bodies, not, as with desire, in the subject-function of he who speaks. In the next chapter, we will examine Foucault's route from language back to the body.

FOOTNOTES

¹Michel Foucault, Folie et de raison: Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique (Paris: Plon, 1961), p. 360 (translation mine).

²*Idem*, The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences, trans. Alan Sheridan Smith (New York: Random House, 1970), p. 374 (hereafter cited as Foucault, *Things*).

³*Ibid.*, p. 375.

⁴*Ibid.*

⁵This is not an aporia like the "I die" of the Cretan which can be resolved logically. The "I speak" and "I say I speak" are both plainly true and, thus, not paradoxical in the same way as the Cretan's proposition. The deeper problem is that the "I speak" must refer to a pre-existing discourse for its meaning. But there is no such discourse for language exists only in an infinite transitivity - it is not grounded either in a pre-existing subject or in pre-existing values. Language is not a communication of meaning but pure and infinite exteriority in which the subject, the "I" is dispersed and becomes lost. See Michel Foucault, "La pensée du dehors" in *Critique* 229 (June 1966): 523 (hereafter cited as Foucault, "La pensée").

⁶Foucault, "La pensée," pp. 525-526.

⁷*Idem*, "Preface to Transgression," in Michel Foucault, Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews, ed. Donald Bouchard (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), pp. 33-34 (hereafter cited as Foucault, "Transgression").

⁸See Foucault, "Transgression."

⁹Ibid., p. 29-30.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 30.

¹¹Ibid., pp. 35-36.

¹²Ibid., p. 38.

¹³Ibid., p. 40.

¹⁴Idem, Things, p. 383.

¹⁵Idem, "Transgression," pp. 41-42.

¹⁶Idem, "Language to Infinity," in Michel Foucault, Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews, ed. Donald Bouchard (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), p. 61.

¹⁷Foucault, "La pens¹e," pp. 545-6.

¹⁸Nietzsche, The Wanderer and His Shadow, cited in Michel Foucault "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," in Michel Foucault, Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews, ed. Donald Bouchard (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), p. 143 (hereafter cited as Foucault, "Nietzsche").

¹⁹Foucault, "Nietzsche," p. 146.

²⁰Idem, The Archaeology of Knowledge, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Random House, 1970), p. 125.

²¹For the essentially flawed nature of concepts, see Theodor Adorno, "Thing, Language, History" in Theodor Adorno, Negative Dialectics, trans. E.B. Ashton (New York: Seabury Press, 1973), p. 52-3.

²²"Death as such, or as primal biological phenomenon, is not to be extracted from the convolutions of history; for that, the individual as the carrier of the experience of death is far too much of a historical category. The statement that

death is always the same is as abstract as it is untrue. The manner of people's coming to terms with death varies all the way into their physical side, along with the concrete conditions of their dying." Adorno, p. 371.

23 "The cognitive utopia would be to use concepts to unseal the non-conceptual with concepts, without making it their equal." Adorno, p. 10.

24 Adorno, p. 31.

CHAPTER VI

PROCESSES OF INDIVIDUALIZATION AND THE BODY
IN FOUCAULT

In the folds of the reduction to language, Foucault's thought discovers the body although this discovery is not at all stamped with the problematic of origin:

The body is the inscribed surface of events (traced by language and dissolved by ideas), the locus of a dissociated Self (adopting the illusion of substantial unity), and a volume in disintegration. Genealogy, as an analysis of descent, is thus situated within the articulation of the body and history. Its task is to expose a body totally imprinted by history and the process of history's destruction of the body.¹

History has thus destroyed the body. Certainly one day which, with Foucault, has perhaps arrived, in asking about our bodies and how they have been formed, we will discover how very little we know of them. Secular philosophies of the soul, related in this to a "positivism" of the body, have conspired to limit knowledge of the history of the body. If the body was not considered to be the despised prison of the soul, it was considered to be a sort of residual datum in which immediacy was deposited. There can be, within this positivism, a powerful de-mystifying tendency. Feuerbach's critique of Hegel's sense consciousness as originating inevitably in the

body or the reduction, by the young Marx of Hegel's theory of sovereignty to the body of the sovereign are two examples of this. But the history of the body - how it became what it became, not biologically, but politically; how it moves in this way rather than another way; why it enjoys in this way rather than another - this history has only begun to be written and it bears the name of Foucault.

Foucault teaches us that the soul is the prison of the body, an historical reality and the effect of relations of power. The soul is not, merely a religious illusion but rather it is a "reality-reference" on which diverse concepts and fields of research have been engraved - the so-called human sciences:

This is the historical reality of this soul, which, unlike the soul represented by Christian theology, is not born in sin and subject to punishment, but is born rather out of methods of punishment, supervision and constraint. This real, non-corporeal soul is not a substance; it is the element in which are articulated the effects of a certain type of power and the reference of a certain type of knowledge, the machinery by which the power relations give rise to a possible corpus of knowledge and knowledge extends and reinforces the effects of this power. On this reality-reference, various concepts have been constructed and domains of analysis carved out: psyche, subjectivity, personality, consciousness, etc; on it have been built scientific techniques and discourses, and the moral claims of humanism. But let there be no misunderstanding: it is not that a real man, the object of knowledge, philosophical reflection or technical intervention, has been substituted for the soul, the illusion of the theologians. The man described for us, whom we are invited to free, is already in himself the effect of a subjection much more profound than himself. A 'soul' inhabits him and brings him to existence, which is itself a factor in the mastery that power exercises over the body. The soul is the effect and the instrument of a political anatomy; the soul is the prison of the body."

Foucault discovers in his investigation of disciplinary power, the arcane history of the body, the reasons for why such a history has not previously been possible. The third part of Discipline and Punish on "Discipline" from the Man-the-machine of Lattre to the Panopticon of Bentham is a powerful essay on the politics of details and bodies. It demonstrates the possible meaning of a microphysics of power and what it might mean to manufacture an individual.* Foucault examines here the evolution from the invention of the spy-glass to the development of new techniques of surveillance based on the model of the military camp.* And, as suggested by the telescope, the trick is to see without being seen:

The exercise of discipline presupposes a mechanism that coerces by means of observation; an apparatus in which the techniques that make it possible to see induce effects of power, and in which, conversely, the means of coercion make those on whom they are applied clearly visible. Slowly, in the course of the classical age, we see the construction of those 'observatories' of human multiplicity about which the history of the sciences has so little good to say. Side by side with the major technology of the telescope, the lens and the light beam, which were an integral part of the new physics and cosmology, there were the minor techniques of multiple and intersecting observations, of eyes that see without being seen; using techniques of subjection and methods of exploitation of an obscure art of light and the visible was secretly preparing a new knowledge of man.*

It was probably inevitable that Foucault, after investigating first madness, then that master of life and death, the medical gaze, and finally the prison, would find himself confronted with that astute production of bodies and of codified reciprocity that is discipline. The mad individual, the ill, the prisoner but also the soldier, the student and the worker, are all entangled in a network of diffuse and anonymous

micropowers. We must ask ourselves whether, with the discovery of the significance of discipline, we have not found the historical ground of the dialectic of recognition - a ground that is located outside the existentialist mythologies and consisting of the technology of bodies, not the labor of the spirit. We must also ask whether or not Marxism intentionally neglected the importance of these corporeal powers and if this has compromised any liberation struggles. But Marx, as Foucault notes, insisted in several places on the analogy that exists between the problems of the division of labour and those of military tactics.' This is the disciplinary red thread that connects the oppression in the factory with that within the army. According to Foucault, Marx was also aware of the importance of surveillance as a power mechanism.' With these traditional references and his strong praise for the "great work" Punishment and Social Structures by Frankfurt Marxists Rusche and Kirchheimer, Foucault seems to be attempting to defuse anticipated Marxist criticism of his perspective. He fails to note that Marx only examined these techniques (surveillance, discipline, etc.) as they were applied to capital. The problem of the inter-relation of the abstract domination of capital, which is based on the creation of the commodity, labor power, and the fine texture of individuated micropowers remains open. Without referring to these micropowers, it seems we certainly cannot account for the imprisonment of the mad whose chains appear not in the night of the medieval ages but rather at the dawn of an age that supposedly saw the breaking of man's chains. Neither can we

account for the passage from the glorious tortures of an earlier age to the planned surveillance of today's prisons. These and other relations of power are simply not reducible to the capital-labor relationship.

It is obvious that in the process of unearthing these micropowers, Foucault has consciously condemned the traditional theory of power which saw the latter focussed exclusively on the concept of the state. Foucault's new concept means that power can no longer be seen as a property but rather must be now viewed as a strategy. Its model is that of

a perpetual battle rather than a contract regulating a transaction or the conquest of a territory. In short, this power is exercised rather than possessed; it is not the "privilege," acquired or preserved, of the dominant class, but the overall effect of its strategic positions - an effect that is manifested and sometimes extended by the position of those who are dominated. Furthermore, this power is not exercised simply as an obligation or a prohibition on those who "do not have it"; it invests them, is transmitted by them and through them; it exerts pressure upon them, just as they themselves, in their struggle against it, resist the grip it has on them.¹⁰

Foucault's microphysics considers the state to be a point in the strategy of power, certainly an important point, but not the most important. It is not the organ of power par excellence precisely because such an organ does not exist. Beneath and surrounding the state operate a thousand techniques for ranking bodies. This type of approach is especially valuable today as a counter to the new forms of statolatry characteristic of such modern political theory. (Witness, for example, neo-Marxism's absorption in new theories of the state.) Politics, the regulating Technique, the supreme Jacobin "ratio", has its domain continually eroded by the

micropowers. Its autonomy is seen to be quite 'relative' with Foucault's theory. Even if the substantiality of the state is radically put into question, it is very difficult to finally eliminate that current of political thought that has always worshipped its power. The state is revived in some radical theories (especially, Leninist theory) as the model of a pure will to power to which even the party itself must adapt. Foucault has furnished tools that allow us to criticize this false autonomy of the state and explore the zone in which the political interweaves with the social to achieve domination. Foucault's approach is a micropolitical one that bases itself upon all of the recent work in the field of anti-psychiatry. However, unlike certain current of the latter, he avoids any temptation of embarking on a cure of the soul.

The political investment of the body, which characterizes disciplinary society, involves a total inversion of the processes of individuation:

In certain societies, of which the feudal regime is only one example, it may be said that individualization is greatest where sovereignty is exercised and in the higher echelons of power. The more one possesses power or privilege, the more one is marked as an individual, by rituals, written accounts or visual reproductions. The 'name' and the genealogy that situate one within a kinship group, the performance of deeds that demonstrate superior strength and which are immortalized in literary accounts, the ceremonies, that mark the power relations in their very ordering, the monuments or donations that bring survival after death, the ostentation and excess of expenditure, the multiple, intersecting links of allegiance and suzerainty, all these are procedures of an 'ascending' individualization. In a disciplinary regime, on the other hand, individualization is "descending": as power becomes more anonymous and more functional, those on whom it is exercised tend to be more strongly individualized."

This means that, for Foucault, the individual is not simply an ideological production - that atom which is at the base of political theory of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The individual is also a reality fabricated by disciplinary power. This new power uses the ritual of the examination as the means to achieve "the pinning down of each individual in his own particularity."¹² In this new system, "the individual receives as his status his own individuality...and is linked by his status to the features, the measurements, the gaps, the 'marks' that characterize him and make him a 'case.'"¹³

The new theory of the individual is an important result of Foucault's investigations. It leads to a different status being conferred on the individual and it throws new light on the anthropological disciplines that make of the individual their proper object of research. Foucault also contributes to the liberation of research from the somewhat ingenuous separation of ideology and science - as if ideology was the chaff and science the wheat - that characterizes the human sciences. Foucault shows that not only the theoretical choices but also the very object of study of these sciences are products of power. In a Nietzschean fashion, power produces truth - power is always power/knowledge and no knowledge can flourish outside of power.

For Adorno, on the contrary, utopia would be precisely an anti-power truth which for this reason abides in a state of ineffectuality.¹⁴ Utopia cannot survive within the relation of power/knowledge. Utopia, for Adorno, remains committed to the

idea of objective truth - it flees the vice of instrumental reason and forms the point of escape from power relations. Foucault, however, believes that this escape or utopia does not exist or only existed as the goal of the socialisms of the nineteenth century. The counter-attack against existing institutions must, today, base itself on experience. Perhaps, Foucault argues, a new society is delineated in the experiences of drugs, sexuality and community life. He himself stresses the experiential bases of his own theoretical innovations: his early experiences as a mental health worker in France, his experience of the "non-repressive" welfare-state of Sweden and of the overtly repressive society of Poland. Especially important, he argues was his encounter with the students of Tunisia during the mid-sixties who attempted to formulate a radically new political ethic despite their nominal adhesion to Marxism. This, much more than May '68 in France, March '68 in Tunisia, marked a decisive turning point in his intellectual/practical career. One also, of course, thinks of his work in the prisoners' rights movement in France (his founding of the G.I.P. and its theoretical effects: Discipline and Punish).

The source of new experiences, Foucault believes, will never be those who benefit from a given system of governmentality. Rather, new heterogeneous practices are always thrown up from below, from the plebs. In this, he agrees with Bataille against the more romantic notions deriving from Nietzsche, notions Bataille believed infected the surrealist movement of his own time. This romanticism resulted

in an idealist longing for a "reconstruction of the foundation of humanity before human nature was enslaved by the necessity for technical work...or tied to ends dictated by exclusively material conditions."¹⁵ The surrealists sought an idealistic overcoming of society in the sacred realm of "surreal" art or in a very restricted concept of surreal activity. They did not realize that heterogeneity, art or the sacred simply are a part of society. Bataille owed his understanding of this to his reading of Durkheim on the elementary forms of religious life. Even the surrealists' self-proclaimed materialism failed to come to grips with the actual links between art and life and, thus, earned Bataille's contempt: "If one determined under the name of materialism an offensive emanation of human life poisoned by its own moral system, a recourse, to all that is shocking, impossible to destroy and even abject - all that debases and ridicules the human spirit - it would be possible to determine at the same time surrealism as an infantile disease of this base materialism."¹⁶ For Foucault, the linkage between these experiences of resistance and politics must always remain rather mysterious since the truth, for him, is always completely absorbed in power/knowledge and, thus, the movement against present-day power is prevented from generating clear social and political perspectives.

Just as he refutes the notion of utopia, Foucault suspects that of ideology because this always involves the reference to something which poses as the truth as opposed to error. Archaeology, on the other hand, realizes that it is the discursive practices which constitute the channels within

which we necessarily speak and think. Genealogy merely claims to bring to light the knowledges deposited in these practices. There are only limited references in Foucault to something that might subterraneously determine the outcome - discourse itself is the first and last level on which the genealogist installs himself. Or as Foucault stated in his inaugural address to the College de France in 1970:

It is as though discourse, far from being a transparent, neutral element, allowing us to disarm sexuality and to pacify politics, were one of those privileged areas in which they exercised some of their more awesome powers. In appearance, discourse may well be of little account, but the prohibitions surrounding it soon reveal its links with desire and power. This should not be very surprising, for psychoanalysis has already shown us that discourse is not merely the medium which manifests - or disassembles - desire; it is also the object of desire. Similarly, historians have constantly impressed upon us that discourse is no mere verbalisation of conflicts and systems of domination, but that it is the very object of man's conflicts.¹⁷

Foucault knows how to carry out a profound analysis of unconscious ideologies (that is, ideologies that are not ordered around a subject but, rather, are prior to any subject), seizing their quality of being merely circulating discourses.¹⁸ However, in eliminating the concept of ideology, Foucault loses the nexus appearance/reality - a loss which has the ideology of the primacy of discourse as its correlate. Discourses only retain the reality side of this nexus. They are dense realities, charged with power/knowledge - positivities or monuments which can be exhumed from time which has concealed them. Now, then, can they be criticized? To this question, Foucault gives no response. The critique of ideology, as developed, for instance, by the Frankfurt School,

has always attempted to demonstrate the non-correspondence of reality with its concept and, consequently, revealing the character of socially necessary appearance that the latter assumes is false consciousness. This means that ideology has real social force. This is often forgotten in certain vulgar tendencies within Marxist theory. Foucault has completely broken with this (not innocent) neglect and has turned his attention on those discourses which, although presenting themselves as sciences, nevertheless engage themselves within a network of powers. This is the case, for example, of discipline; a subtle discourse involving the technology of bodies and the formation of subjects (that is, of the subjugated). Discipline is an unconscious ideology, which despite its lack of recognition remains, nonetheless, terribly efficacious.

An analysis, however, which insistently remains at the level of the positivity of a discourse, risks only attaining its object in part. Discipline is a necessary connection that produces subjects and of which subjects act as supports - it operates a continuous totalization. An ideological analysis would not only reveal the whole that disciplinary power constitutes, it would also indicate the space from which the possibility of breaking through this whole may emerge. The analyses of Foucault, by remaining at the level of the exhumed positivities, are prevented from seeing the internal possibilities of change. This is without a doubt imputable to the panic that Foucault (similarly to Deleuze) feels for any theory of liberation - a theory that, for him, must always

involve a new counter-productive totalization. Thus, Foucault's microphysics has a kind of fore-shortened perspective and is proud of it. The abandonment of the concept of ideology is, consequently, a sign of his disgust with utopia - the point of escape for radical theories.

The philosophy of desire remains more committed to the survival of the subject despite its efforts to disperse it. Whether desire is pre-formed à la Lacan or not, the subject remains tossed in the current of desire. This philosophy tells us nothing about the subject in its impact with the body. Thus, in both of its extreme forms (Lacan's pre-formed desire or originary desire), desire is hypostatized in the effort to demolish the hypostatization of the subject. A desire liberated from the subject is a 'quid pro quo' that can flourish perhaps in a mythological vision of madness. Desire springs up together with the subject of which it constitutes the other face. A dispersion occurs only insofar as a totalization was first posited. Desire is grafted in the political investment of the body. And the body, which is not merely a linguistic element, is irreducible. Its sufferings and enjoyments are not simply a matter of signs but rather of nerves and muscles. Since Foucault draws all of the implicit consequences from the archaeological finding of the body, from the discovery that the body itself is pre-formed, the result is a profound change in the orientation of his thought. The first aspect to be eliminated is the reduction to language. To be precise, Foucault refuses to align himself with the philosophy of desire (despite his admiration for Deleuze) and his barely

commenced research on sexuality proves this. His study is focused on bodies and their pleasures rather than on desire. He seeks to study the 'apparatus of sexuality' as a field of micropowers rather than sex as a desirable object:

It is the agency of sex that we must break away from, if we aim - through a tactical reversal of the various mechanisms of sexuality - to counter the grips of power with the claims of bodies, pleasures and knowledges, in their multiplicity and their possibility of resistance. The rallying point for the counterattack against the deployment of sexuality ought not to be sex-desire, but bodies and pleasures.¹⁹

However, in his 1963 "Preface to Transgression," we see the reduction to language at work:

Sexuality is only decisive for our culture as spoken, and to the degree it is spoken: not that it is our language which has been eroticized now for nearly two centuries. Rather, since Sade and the death of God, the universe has absorbed our sexuality, denatured it, placed it in a void where it establishes its sovereignty and where it incessantly sets up as the Law the limits it transgresses. In this sense, the appearance of sexuality as a fundamental problem marks the transformation of a philosophy of man as worker to a philosophy based on a being who speaks.²⁰

Six years later, when his historical research dragged behind it only the wreckage of a problematic compromised by ontology, Foucault described the work of the sexual archaeologist in the following terms:

...instead of studying the sexual behaviour of men at a given period (by seeking its law in a social structure, in a collective unconscious, or in a certain moral attitude), instead of describing what men thought of sexuality (what religious interpretation they gave it, to what extent they approved or disapproved of it, what conflicts of opinion or morality it gave rise to), one would ask oneself whether, in this behaviour, as in these representations, a whole discursive practice is not at work; whether sexuality quite apart from any orientation towards a scientific discourse, is not a group of objects that can be talked about (or that it is forbidden to talk about), a field of possible enunciations (whether in lyrical or legal language), a

group of concepts (which can no doubt be presented in the elementary form of notions or themes), a set of choices (which may appear in the coherence of behaviour or in systems of prescription). Such an archaeology would show, if it succeeded in its task, how the prohibitions, exclusions, limitations, values, freedoms and transgressions of sexuality, all its manifestations, verbal or otherwise, are linked to a particular discursive practice. It would reveal, not of course as the ultimate truth of sexuality, but as one of the dimensions in accordance with which one can describe it, a certain "way of speaking"; and one would show how this way of speaking is invested not in scientific discourses, but in a system of prohibitions and values.²⁰

As we can observe from the above passage, Foucault in 1969 believes that discourse is one among several possible ways of approaching sexuality. By 1976, however, and the first volume of The History of Sexuality, this becomes the approach ~~par excellence~~ to the study of sexuality. In this study, sexuality appears exclusively insofar as it is put into discourse or spoken by an insatiable will to know. From medieval Christianity, with its technique of meticulous confession, through Les Bijoux Indiscrets, to modern psychoanalysis (in which sexuality itself speaks), sexuality constitutes the field of an insense discourse and the object of a continual enjoyment via the discourse which is its basis. The transgression of the system of prohibitions defined by the discourse on sexuality is possible within this same discourse. The prohibition is posited in language as is the transgression - the prohibition incites the transgression and, consequently, the resultant pleasure. Thus, to demonstrate the way in which bodies revolt and engage in a strategic struggle against the moves of the dominant power, Foucault takes the example of auto-eroticism:

The restrictions on masturbation hardly start in Europe until the eighteenth century. Suddenly, a panic theme appears: an appalling sickness develops in the Western world. Children masturbate. Via the medium of families, though not at their initiative, a system of control of sexuality, an objectivisation of sexuality, through thus becoming an object of analysis and concern, surveillance and control, engenders at the same time an intensification of each individual's desire, for, in and over his body. The body thus became the issue of a conflict between parents and children, the child and the instances of control. The revolt of the sexual body is the reverse effect of this encroachment.²²

Foucault's discourse maintains within itself an interesting duplicity - if sexuality is a discourse, it is a discourse traversed by conflicts. This undoubtedly represents something which was not present in his writings on literature. The will to know, which provides the impulse for discourse, is completely involved in a Nietzschean fashion, with power. A power/enjoyment corresponds to the power/knowledge. Power and pleasure do not contradict one another but rather support one another. Where there is desire there is already present a relation of power. Even perversions are continually solicited by discourse which itself induces these transgressions. Unlike Marcuse's concept of the polymorphously perverse, sexuality is not a free zone but, instead, constitutes part of the power/pleasure complex. This is important because it indicates the elimination of the traditional concept of repression in Foucault's perspective. Sexuality consists of a network of micropowers, analogous to the disciplinary powers that, far from repressing the individual, permits and encourages his pleasures. The concept of repression, for Foucault, cannot avoid (as in Reich or Marcuse) making reference to a certain uncontaminated 'humanity' to which each individual will some

fine day have to return. Foucault, who in Madness and Civilization was very much influenced by this concept, breaks with it in Discipline and Punish.

In his research on the history of sexuality, the break with the notion of repression is very marked, especially in his new concept of "power over life."²³ This is a power that channels but also provokes life - a power which compels us to live. This new "bio-power"²⁴ replaces the earlier right of life and death of the sovereign over the subject (the right to kill or to allow to live) and signifies the beginning of a positive political investment of life and the body. Sexuality, as an apparatus, can, thus, only be grasped against the background of this power. Power presents sex as desirable and even more than desirable. Power links sex very intimately with death which remained the 'outside' in Foucault's earlier work. The death instinct that traverses sex is an historically determined fact - it is entangled in the contemporary apparatus of sexuality. Foucault describes this employment of 'sex' as strategic ideal used in the domination of bodies in a concluding passage of The History of Sexuality:

It is through sex - in fact, an imaginary point determined by the deployment of sexuality - that each individual has to pass in order to have access to his own intelligibility (seeing that it is both the hidden aspect and the generative principle of meaning), to the whole of his body (since it is a real and threatened part of it, while symbolically constituting the whole), to his identity (since it joins the force of a drive to the singularity of a history). Through a reversal that doubtless had its surreptitious beginnings long ago - it was already making itself felt at the time of the Christian pastoral of the flesh - we have arrived at the point where we expect our intelligibility to come from what was for many centuries thought of as madness; the plenitude of our body from what was long considered its

stigma and likened to a wound; our identity from what was perceived as an obscure and nameless urge. Hence the importance we ascribe to it, the reverential fear with which we surround it, the care we take to know it. Hence, the fact that over the centuries it has become more important than our soul, more important almost than our life; and so it is that all the world's enigmas appear frivolous to us compared to this secret, miniscule in each of us, but of a density that makes it more serious than any other. The Faustian pact, whose temptation has been instilled in us by the deployment of sexuality, is now as follows: to exchange life in its entirety for sex itself, for the truth and the sovereignty of Sex. Sex is worth dying for. It is in this (strictly historical) sense that sex is indeed imbued with the death instinct. When a long while ago the West discovered love, it bestowed on it a value high enough to make death acceptable; nowadays it is sex that claims this equivalence, the highest of all. And while the deployment of sexuality permits the techniques of power to invest life, the fictitious point of sex, itself marked by that deployment, exerts enough charm on everyone for them to accept hearing the grumble of death within it.^{2*}

Thus, the circle within Foucault's work is closed. That which was initially the ontological experience of death and origin (and of their collapsing one into the other in an eternal recurrence), is now the experience of a power that seizes us. The Other of desire is now the Same of discourse.

To locate the unthought in a pure outside means to abandon it, finally, to the web of micropowers. For a long time, these micropowers have occupied what seemed to be an outside and have, thus, made nonsense of ontology. Origin, death, desire, transgression - all are not at all outside but rather inside these networks. The theory that wishes to forget this runs headlong into them. This is no cause for despair, however. It simply means that contradiction must be conceived immanently although this, of course, is no panacea. That bodies appear in Foucault only as subjugated is due to the fact

that they really are such, rather than due to the reduction to discourse carried out by him. This reduction illustrates a reality but, because it prohibits the radical questioning of this reality, it remains to a considerable extent politically impotent. Discourse, thus, becomes the monologue of power or rather, the chorus of the micropowers. The radical challenging of reality would involve the question, in what way is it possible to think, always negatively, the breaking of this network of power that holds bodies? Perhaps it will be necessary to start with the negative experience of the difference that opens in every enjoyment between the enjoyment itself and the totality that surrounds it. Perhaps, we could locate at this point, the possibility of an 'unhappy consciousness' of the body. We do not yet know. All we know - and the later work of Foucault has taught us this - is that the 'liberation' has already taken place. We must now liberate ourselves from liberation.

FOOTNOTES

¹Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," in Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews, ed. Donald Bouchard (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), p. 148.

²Idea, Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison, (New York: Pantheon, 1977), p. 29-30 (hereafter cited as Foucault, Discipline).

³Ibid., pp. 135-228.

⁴One thinks of the case of President Schreber who was the subject of a famous study by Freud which revealed the pathogenic effects of the disciplinary machines invented by Schreber's father.

⁵Foucault quotes from "Rules for the Prussian Infantry" (1743) to show how the new power of the gaze reshaped these initial observatories:

In the parade ground, five lines are drawn up, the first is sixteen feet from the second; the others are eight feet from one another; and the last is eight feet from the arms depots. The arms depots are ten feet from the tents of the junior officers, immediately opposite the first tent-pole. A company street is fifty-one feet wide....All tents are two feet from one another. The tents of the subalterns are eight feet from the last soldiers' tent and the gate is opposite the captains' tent....The captains' tents are erected opposite the streets of their companies. The entrance is opposite the companies themselves.

Foucault then goes on to explain the functioning of this new alert, discrete source of power:

The camp is the diagram of a power that acts by means of a general visibility. For a long time, this model of the camp or at least its underlying principle was found in urban development, in the construction of working-class housing estates, hospitals, asylums, prisons, schools: the spatial "nesting" of hierarchized surveillance. The principle was one of "embedding" ("encastrement"). The camp was to the rather shameful art of surveillance what the camera obscura was to the great science of optics." (translation corrected; Foucault, *Discipline*, pp. 172-173.

*Foucault, *Discipline*, p. 171.

*In Foucault, *Discipline*, pp. 163-164, Foucault quotes several passages including the following passage from *Capital*, Vol. I:

Just as the offensive power of a squadron of cavalry, or the defensive power of a regiment of infantry, is essentially different from the sum of the offensive or defensive powers of the individual cavalry or infantry soldiers taken separately, so the sum total of the mechanical forces exerted by isolated workmen differs from the social force that is developed, when many hands take part simultaneously in one and the same undivided operation.

*See Foucault, *Discipline*, p. 175 for this passage from *Capital*, Vol. I: "The work of directing, superintending and adjusting becomes one of the functions of capital, from the moment the labor under the control of capital, becomes cooperative. Once a function of capital, it requires special characteristics."

*Foucault, *Discipline*, p. 24 and p. 54.

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 26-27.

¹¹Ibid., pp. 192-193.

¹²Ibid., p. 192.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Theodor Adorno, Negative Dialectics, trans. E.B. Ashton (New York: Seabury Press, 1973).

¹⁵ Georges Bataille, Complete Works, Volume VII: L'Economie à la mesure de l'univers, La Part maudite, La Limite de l'utile (fragments), Théorie de la religion, Conférences, 1947-1948, ed. Thadée Klossowski (Paris: Gallimard, 1976), p. 386

¹⁶Idem, Complete Works, Volume II: Ecrits posthumes, 1922-1940, ed. Denis Hollier (Paris: Gallimard, 1970), p. 93.

¹⁷Michel Foucault, "Orders of Discourse," Social Science Information, 10:2 (April 1971): 2-3 (translation corrected).

¹⁸There is no doubt that Marxism has for too long neglected the critical exploration of unconscious ideologies. It has too long lingered on the analysis of intellectuals as producers of ideology and consensus and, consequently, on the analysis of those ideologies which have attained a certain level of conceptual systematization. These ideologies can be conceived of as being the product of subjects and of being, at least apparently, a matter of free choice. The inverse is the case of unconscious ideologies which circulate without even allowing the questions of 'believing' in them or consensus around them to be posed.

¹⁹Michel Foucault, The History of Sexuality, Volume I: An Introduction, trans. David Hurley (New York: Pantheon, 1976), p. 157 (hereafter cited as Foucault, Sexuality).

²⁰Idem, "A Preface to Transgression," in Language, Counter-Memory, Practices: Selected Essays And Interviews, ed. Donald Bouchard (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), p. 50.

²¹Idem, The Archaeology of Knowledge, trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Random House, 1970), p. 193.

²²Idem, Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977, ed. with a preface by Colin Gordon, trans. Colin Gordon, Leo Marshall, John Mepham, and Kate Soper (Brighton, Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1980), pp. 56-57.

²³See Foucault, Sexuality, pp. 133-159.

*Ibid., p. 143.

**Ibid., pp. 155-156.

CHAPTER VII

JURGEN HABERMAS' CRITIQUE OF THE ANTI-MODERNISTS

Jurgen Habermas, one of the major spokesmen for the German tradition of dialectical social criticism has recently attempted to confront the work of Michel Foucault. This has occurred in a rather indirect way in three articles published during the early eighties. These are "Modernity versus Postmodernity,"¹ first given as a lecture in 1980; "The Entwinement of Myth and Enlightenment: Re-Reading Dialectic of Enlightenment,"² a lecture of 1982; and "The French Path to Postmodernity: Bataille between Eroticism and General Economics,"³ a lecture of 1984. As we shall see, all of these essays, beneath their manifest subject, reveal an attempt to come to terms with Foucault's thought.

The first essay tries to locate Foucault on the political spectrum, making the very controversial claim that he is a young conservative. The key passage in this essay is as follows:

The Young Conservatives recapitulate basic experience of aesthetic modernity. They claim as their own the revelations of a decentred subjectivity, emancipated from the imperatives of work and usefulness, and with this experience they step outside the modern world. On the basis of modernistic attitudes, they justify an irreconcilable anti-modernism. They remove into the

sphere of the far away and the archaic the spontaneous powers of imagination, of self-experience and of emotionality. To instrumental reason, they juxtapose in manichean fashion a principle only accessible through evocation, be it the will to power or sovereignty, Being or the dionysiac force of the poetical. In France this line leads from Bataille via Foucault to Derrida.⁴

In this essay, Foucault is assimilated to other forms of conservatism (e.g., "Old Conservatives" represented by Leo Strauss and "New Conservatives" represented by Daniel Bell), all of which are characterized by varying forms of an anti-modernist attitude. Foucault's own anti-modernism is traced to a mistaken understanding of aesthetic modernism - a mistake which he shares with Bataille and the surrealists.

In the second essay, "The Entwinement of Myth and Enlightenment," Habermas traces the troubled relationship between critical theory and Nietzsche. Through a discussion of Adorno and Horkheimer's Dialectic of Enlightenment, it is shown how these theorists narrowly avoided falling into the aporias of the Nietzschean critique of ideology. The unspoken implication is, of course, that Nietzsche's current followers have failed to escape this trap.

The third essay, then, returns to one of the founding figures of aesthetic modernity, Georges Bataille. This is a substantial dissection of Bataille's social thought, a thought that Habermas considers to be at the root of the Foucauldian enterprise.

Finally, I will discuss the only direct confrontation between Habermas and Foucault that is available to us. This is the lecture delivered in 1984 under the title, "The Genealogical Writing of History: On Some Aporias in Foucault's

Theory of Power."⁵ This lecture brings together the themes of the earlier studies to lead to the conclusion that Foucault's genealogy fails because it is not explicit about the normative values that it does, in fact, embody. In the following section, Habermas' discussion of post-modernity (i.e. that it is, in fact, pre-modernity or anti-modernity) will be examined as it unfolds in the above four essays. The focus will be on his critique of the thought of Nietzsche and Bataille.

Habermas begins "Modernity and Postmodernity," by defining the aesthetic notion of modernity as it was developed in the mid-nineteenth century. Prior to this time, the modern had always been defined in reference to a previous historical period defined as "old." This is the case of the Renaissance, of the seventeenth century French debate between "the ancients and the moderns," and of many others. This changes with the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century. Here, one no longer looks to the past but to the infinite horizons of the future opened up by modern science and technology. Finally, with Baudelaire, we have the development of a concept of the modern which centers in an abstract division between history and the modern. The modern is that which is simply new or different - novelty ~~has~~ ~~is~~ becomes the ideal in art. For Habermas, however, this dangerous pursuit of the new by the artistic "vanguards" of the twentieth century ironically expresses a longing for a stable present."⁶ The modernist temper does not reject history tout court, but rather seeks in history the discontinuous moments of barbarism and decadence with which it identifies. In this way, the surrealists could negate the

standards of morality and utility, usually evident in continualist historiography. Habermas cites here Walter Benjamin's Surrealist-influenced notion of the ephemeral but revelatory "~~Zeitgeist~~" that appears in history.'

Now, according to Habermas, this radical temper and its new Bergsonian time-consciousness has become so generalized that it has ceased to perform the critical role that it did during the early years of Dada and Surrealism. Neo-conservatives, such as Daniel Bell, believe that aesthetic modernism has penetrated the rest of society to such an extent as to seriously undermine the work ethic and moral norms. Bell blames the hedonism, the emphasis on free expression and creativity of the "adversary culture" for the decline of social discipline. For Habermas, the neo-conservatives have overestimated the autonomous role of cultural modernity. He would rather relate the tendencies described by Bell to broader changes in the process of social modernization that have occurred during the last century. This process is related to the economic and technological growth and the corollary expansion of the state. This event has led to "the subordination of the life-worlds under system's imperatives" which has resulted, in turn, in the disturbance of the communicative infrastructure of everyday life. Habermas grants that cultural modernity develops its own aporias, but to fully understand the former, they must be related to the underlying process of social modernization.

Habermas derives his notion of cultural modernity from Max Weber's discussion of the decomposition of substantive

reason, which prior to the eighteenth century had been based upon traditional religious and metaphysical worldviews. With the coming of enlightenment, this substantive reason divides into three relatively autonomous fields. These are the sphere of science based on truth claims, the moral-practical sphere based on claims of justice and rightness, and the sphere of art based on claims of authenticity and beauty. Each sphere developed its own theories and institutions (science, jurisprudence and art criticism) which were regulated by expert in their respective fields. However, throughout the nineteenth century, as each sphere became increasingly rationalised and independent, a gap opened between the culture of the experts and that of the public. The gains made in each sphere were no longer funneled back into the life-world of everyday praxis. They no longer, therefore, contributed to the happiness and growth of moral learning of the population. The life-world, accordingly, has become increasingly impoverished in the twentieth century as the optimistic belief in the ability of these spheres to contribute to human happiness has collapsed. This increased alienation of the cultural spheres has given rise to efforts to negate the culture of experts and to re-establish contact between science, morality, and art and the hermeneutics of everyday life.*

The major attempt to recreate the link between the various spheres of modern rationality and the life-world has occurred in the realm of art and aesthetics. This effort, Habermas believes, has unfortunately led to the development of new aporias. In order to understand this aesthetic effort,

Habermas retraces the history of aesthetic modernity from its birth in the eighteenth century. At this time, the concept of beauty (which had first appeared during the Renaissance) is expressed in institutions (e.g., literature, fine arts, music) free from the control of feudal and religious authorities. By the mid-nineteenth century, the autonomy of art has grown to the point where the artist is intentionally expressing his own creative personality independently of the other social spheres. This is the moment of the "art for art's sake" movement characterized by an increasing formalism and a correlative denial of the importance of content or ~~mimesis~~ in works of art. This gap, or rather antagonism, between art and society (as in the writings of Baudelaire and Flaubert) was all the more intense because art still claimed to be able to resolve social problems - it still made its traditional "~~promesse de bonheur~~." The Surrealist movement represent a violent attempt to break through the wall that the nineteenth century artistic elite had built between art and the wider society.

For Habermas, however, this attempt was doomed from the start primarily because the surrealists focused on only one of the reified spheres of modernity - that of art. To really eliminate the reification of modern life, the surrealists would have had to return to the initial unified perspective of the eighteenth century enlighteners. In other words, all of the three spheres should be brought back into contact with each other as well as with the life-world. In this way, there can be a give and take between, for example, the normative practices of the life-world and the cognitive and aesthetic

claims of art. A mutual enlightening can then take place as was hinted at in some of the artistic/political experiments of Bertolt Brecht or Peter Weiss.¹⁰

The surrealists, however, failed to make these links. Aesthetic modernity, then, can be faulted with at least three errors according to Habermas. The first is the above-mentioned mistaken time-consciousness of the surrealists and the Dadaists. Artists of the twentieth century have visualized themselves as an avant-garde, rejecting the coils of the past, forever seeking out the new and the dangerous. To Habermas, this cult of the new and of the unpredictability of the future, in fact, represents an "exaltation of the present."¹¹ The new time-consciousness exaggerates the actual experiences of discontinuity and mobility in the modern world. The aesthetic attitude is fundamentally paradoxical: "The new value placed on the transitory, the elusive, and the ephemeral, the very celebration of dynamism, discloses the longing for an undefiled, an immaculate and stable present."¹² The surrealists fetishized the moments of "~~Zeitgeist~~" embedded in the past without realizing their mediation by the broader currents of history.

The second error of the surrealists lay in the very project of destroying the boundaries between art and life. The radical experiments designed to prove that everyone was an artist and that everything was art backfired. The concentrated artistic effort to realize this project, the repeated and pleasurable war against conventional values, ironically acted to re-instate the older artistic and ethical norms. The

surrealists were trapped between their delight at smashing values and the immediate recognition of the uselessness of each new outrage. The surrealists, finally, were engaged in a nonsensical experiment that only served to emphasize the autonomy of art.

The third error was their failure to realize that if the boundaries of art are broken down and artistic meaning is dispersed, art loses its emancipatory potential. In order to address the needs of the life-world, art, as the Enlighteners correctly understood, had to maintain a critical distance, an autonomy vis-a-vis society. For the above reasons, Habermas believes that the surrealists were engaging in a "false negation of culture."¹³ Instead of negating art, we should seek to heal the split between art (and science and ethics) and the hermeneutics of everyday communication. We should "try to hold on to the intentions of the Enlightenment,"¹⁴ even if the chances of doing so are almost non-existent.

On the basis of his dissection of aesthetic modernism, Habermas develops a critique of negators of Enlightenment modernism: the Young Conservatives, the Old Conservatives and the New Conservatives. The first, of which Foucault and Bataille are exponents, is based upon the mere repetition of the experience of aesthetic modernity. They claim to be able to escape the modern world through the imaginative expressions of their own decentered subjectivities. To the instrumental bourgeois world, they counterpose in a manichean way, their experience of sovereignty (Bataille) or the will to power (Nietzsche). They, therefore, represent a rather ferocious

anti-modernism.¹⁵

The older Conservatives, on the contrary, retreat to a position of pre-modernity because they disagreed even with the partial autonomization of science, morality and art, developed during the Enlightenment. They wish to return to the undifferentiated substantive reason of the classical world. Representative here would be the neo-Aristoteleanism of Leo Strauss and certain contemporary ecologists who call for a return to a cosmological ethic.

The Neo-Conservatives represent a type of post-modernism. These thinkers simply accept the great autonomy of the spheres of art, science and morality and, rather than trying to re-unite them with the life-world as Habermas desires, are quite happy to see this autonomy develop as far as possible. For these thinkers, the life-world no longer has anything to say to the three cultural spheres. Modern science, for example, has no need to be adjudicated by the life-world (as in the early Wittgenstein). Art has become simply a matter of individual taste (the later Gottfried Benn) and politics should be simply a matter for expert decisions (as with Carl Schmitt). All of these realms would henceforth be beyond the need for normative evaluation. This would entail the collapse of the modern project, a catastrophic event Habermas believes is being hastened into existence by a contemporary alliance of the now dominant postmodern neo-conservatives with the premodern old conservatives.¹⁶

Habermas has always enjoyed a rather vexed relationship with Nietzsche. His major previous encounter with Nietzsche

occurred in the form of an extremely unsympathetic ten page concluding section to the last chapter of Knowledge and Human Interests which deals with Freud's epistemology. In this supplementary section, Nietzsche's refusal to carry out a rational reflection on reason is unfavourably contrasted with Freud's rational critique of reason. Briefly, Freud, according to Habermas, carried out a scientific theorization of the unconscious motives of reason. Although he stressed the great role of the unconscious and of illusion in human life, he did not deny the rational character of his own thought, the cognitive substance of his account of the unconscious. Nietzsche, however, lapses into positivism; he is "so rooted in basic positivist beliefs that he cannot systematically take cognizance of the cognitive function of self-reflection from which he writes as a philosophical writer."¹⁷ Knowledge may not criticize itself, for Nietzsche, because it is an illusion, simply a reflection of our will and affects. This being the case, he cogently concludes that his own finding concerning the illusory character of knowledge must also be an illusion - simply one more perspective among others. He is, thus, for Habermas, "a virtuoso of reflection that denies itself."¹⁸ The second positivist assumption in Nietzsche is his narrow conceptualization of science in terms of technical, instrumental interests. Only the empirical natural science that increases human power vis-a-vis nature is truly science. Thus, although the growth of this science has smashed religious and metaphysical tradition, it can have no value in orienting present-day human practice. Nietzsche, therefore,

shares with Max Weber an objectivistic understanding (or better, misunderstanding) of science.¹⁹

Ten years later, in "The Entwinement of Myth and Enlightenment," Habermas will offer a much more subtle, less forced interpretation of Nietzsche. In this essay, Habermas wishes to dissociate the reading of Nietzsche developed by Horkheimer and Adorno in the Dialectic of Enlightenment from the similar interpretation (indeed, apparently the "spitting image"²⁰) developed by Foucault. "It is the confusion of the two attitudes that I wish to avoid."²¹ The similarity is due to the very harsh critique of Enlightenment advanced by Horkheimer and Adorno. As is well known, they believe that Enlightenment, in its struggle against myth and for human self-preservation, has led to the repression not only of external nature but also of man's internal nature. This instrumental interest has become completely dominant in our own society leading to an ever-increasing and meaningless expansion of productive forces. Now, given that technical reason has completely displaced the earlier substantive reason (even in the realms of art and morality which no longer make knowledge claims), how may reason engage in self-reflection or a criticism of itself? Since science no longer makes validity claims but merely justifies itself in terms of its promise of greater power, a critique of ideology seems impossible. The traditional Marxist critique of ideology has also become impossible because the critical gap between bourgeois ideas (of justice, freedom, etc.) and bourgeois practice that was the basis for the Marxist critique, has disappeared. Horkheimer and Adorno, thus, adopt an extreme

pessimism with regard to American society in the mid-forties. All artistic, cultural, and philosophical products in this society have become simply that - products or commodities. They no longer embody a latent rationality which could be employed in the critique of society. The critical faculty has been finally destroyed in modern society. Now, as Horkheimer and Adorno are aware, this position embodies a "performative paradox"²² inasmuch as the critique of reason must employ the tools of reason itself.

Horkheimer and Adorno's attitude towards Nietzsche was ambivalent. On the one hand, they praise him for being, with Hegel, one of the first to recognize the dialectic of Enlightenment,²³ and, on the other hand, Nietzsche's aristocratic philosophy of power falls too easily into the hands of the Nazis.²⁴ Habermas advances the hypothesis that their failure to realize the rational content still implicit in the spheres of art and morality is due to their acceptance of an aesthetically-based criticism of reason. The aesthetic avant-garde completely denies the dependence of art on any discursively redeemable normative claims (authenticity, rightness, etc.) Horkheimer and Adorno agree "point for point"²⁵ with Nietzsche's history of subjectivity. Reason is seen as the result of the sublimation and repression of man's natural instincts. Both morality and knowledge are merely projections of the drive for power. At this point, however, Nietzsche parts with Adorno and Horkheimer and attempts to make explicit the perspective upon which he is grounding his critique of reason. Nietzsche attacked the degraded, reactive

will to power (a power that had turned in upon itself) in terms of the values of the aesthetic fragment. Nietzsche, in the eyes of Habermas, was the

...first to develop the concepts of aesthetic modernity even before the avant-garde consciousness actually materialized in the literature, painting and music of the 20th century. The heightened appreciation of the transitory, the celebration of dynamism and the glorification of this spontaneity of the moment and the new - these are all expression of an aesthetically motivated sense of time and the longing for an immaculate, suspended presence. The anarchical intention of the Surrealists to explode the continuum of history is already effective in Nietzsche.²⁰

Nietzsche uses art to resist the world of science and morality. Christ and Socrates are accused of negating aesthetic values and all cognitive and moral propositions are reduced to their hidden aesthetic content. Value judgements are held, by Nietzsche, to be merely manifestations of power and aesthetic taste. Taste and value themselves are not amenable to intersubjectively constituted norms because it is the artist who posits value due to his great power. This is the source, in Habermas' estimation, of the performative contradiction in Nietzsche. If all value judgements are simply expressions of taste and power, then Nietzsche has no basis upon which to mount an attack on the current system of power (that characterized by the domination of science and Christian morality).

In order to ground and justify his practical program for cultural change, Nietzsche must transform the totalized critique of ideology into a genealogical critique. Since he has given up the distinction between myth and Enlightenment, he can only attack scientific culture in terms of a particular

aspect of mythical thinking. To ground his value distinctions (i.e. his critique of contemporary values), he relies upon a genealogical reading of history. Thus, for Nietzsche, the old, more originary values are superior to the more recent, merely reactive values. Present-day mass society represents a falling away from the noble society of earlier times. The revival of nobility, the coming of the superman, represents a real, although slight, possibility.

To conclude, for Habermas, Nietzsche and Horkheimer and Adorno have both carried out a self-reflective critique of reason. Nietzsche's option is to escape the paradoxicality of such a critique by fleeing into a genealogy of power. This, however, represents a collapse into the mythical pre-modern world in which the distinction between reason and power does not exist. As in the work of Foucault, in this pre-modern world, all theories are completely entwined with power so as to eliminate any possibility of normativity distinguishing among them. Societies too are simply different complexes of power/knowledge and can only be differentiated in terms of their "style and intensity."²⁷ In reading Nietzsche and Foucault, we experience no illumination but merely the shock effect of seeing all our cognitive and moral categories collapse.²⁸ Habermas expresses an interest in the structure of Nietzsche's argument but seems somewhat annoyed by the way in which "the educated among those contemptuous of society continue to demonstrate an unusual interest"²⁹ in his attack on modernity.

Rather than succumb to the temptations of pre-modernity

(as did Nietzsche and, one might add, Foucault), Horkheimer and Adorno resolved to remain within the performative contradiction of the totalizing critique of ideology. They, thus, abandoned theory and developed the practice of *ad hoc* determinate negation. Habermas recognises this as a courageous option - to fight the hopeless fight. Habermas, though, believes a way out of the aporia is possible. The solution is to "go back"³⁰ to the original intentions of the Enlightenment. Horkheimer and Adorno (following in the tracks of Nietzsche) were so blinded by the experience of aesthetic modernity that they failed to perceive the remnants of substantive or, in Habermas' terms, communicative rationality still embedded in art and morality. In explaining this blindness, he suggests that the critical theorists were still trapped in a kind of ontological thinking. They dreamed of a possible separation of theory from power in which a pure truth would become visible. Habermas thinks, on the contrary, that the admission of the inevitable entwinement of power and reason is the necessary precondition of any theoretical effort to distinguish them. Ironically, it is precisely because of this impurity that the assumption of an ideal speech situation is necessary. For reason to escape myth, it is necessary for one to "assume that in the inescapable pragmatic presuppositions of rational discourse only the non-coercive coercion of the better argument gets a chance."³¹ With this odd assumption that one "must" make, Habermas believes an escape from myth is "perhaps" possible.³²

In the third article by Habermas, "The French Path to Postmodernity: Bataille between Eroticism and General

Economics," Habermas moves one step closer to the tacit object of his critique of post-modernity - the work of Michel Foucault. Although Foucault is barely mentioned in this critical assault on Bataille, it is clear that Habermas totally assimilates the thought of Foucault to that of Bataille. What then are Habermas' main concerns in this very detailed and substantial discussion of Bataille's contribution?

Essentially, Habermas attempts to demonstrate that Bataille's project gets caught up in the paradoxes of self-referential reason in a manner very similar to that of Nietzsche and Horkheimer and Adorno. The difference is that, whereas Horkheimer and Adorno courageously choose to practice the art of critique within the paradox of self-referentiality, Nietzsche and Bataille seek a pre-modern escape. Nietzsche, as was seen above, escapes into the world of myth and power. Bataille, on the other hand, will find a different avenue of escape, according to Habermas - that of mysticism.³³ In order to back up this charge, Habermas discusses Bataille's theory of fascism (developed during the early thirties) with regard to his concepts of homogeneity and heterogeneity and concludes with an account of his historical account of the rise of Stalinism (worked out in the early fifties).³⁴

Bataille developed the concept of heterogeneity during his early surrealist period. It is, for Habermas, an aesthetically derived concept celebrating the dream-like ecstasy that results from the shock created when conventional categories are smashed. "Heterogeneity" was the name given by Bataille, "to all those elements that resist assimilation to

the bourgeois form of life and to the routines of everyday life, just as they evade the methodical grasp of the sciences."³⁵

Habermas points to similarities between Bataille and Heidegger both of whom sought to overcome subjectivism and its corollary objectification of the world, its transformation of the world into manipulable goods. Bataille, however, does not attack the ontological foundations of the subject/object dichotomy but, in a Weberian manner, criticizes the growth of ethical rationalization, the instrumentalization of modern reason. Whereas Heidegger sought the deeper ontological roots of modern subjectivity (in a notion of Being), Bataille seeks to deconstruct the monadic subject, thus putting it back into contact with life. Both thinkers, nevertheless, share the same desire to liquidate the transcendental subject.³⁶

Instead of returning to our source in Being (in the manner of Heidegger), Bataille suggests that true sovereignty (beyond the monadic subject) can be achieved by opening the subject up to prohibited drives. This entails a kind of Nietzschean revolt against God and all other authority. This superhuman assertion of the will against interdicts is fundamentally empty for Bataille because "God is dead." Profanation of the sacred, thus, turns in upon itself in an act of repeated self-transgression: "Bataille posits an intrinsic link between the sexual horizon of experience and the death of God."³⁷

In Bataille's "The Psychological Structure of Fascism" (1933), Habermas detects a suspicious ambivalence in Bataille's

attitude towards fascism. Against the instrumentalist, homogeneous world of the bourgeoisie fascism unleashes the forces of the sacred:

The affect stream that connects the Fuhrer with his followers in the form of moral identification...is a function of a common awareness of mounting energies, growing violently into a state without measure or standard, which are accumulating and becoming available without limit in the person of the Fuhrer.³⁰

Bataille refuses the Marxian move of reducing these psychological forces to the status of mere functions of the capitalist economy. He also differs with Freudian inspired interpretations which trace fascism to unconscious drives which are amenable to analysis. He adopts, instead, Durkheim's distinction between the sacred and the profane. These realms are so totally split off from one another in Durkheim that the sacred, by its very nature, escapes any attempt to grasp it within the profane terms of discourse. The heterogeneous is a matter of excess, "from refuse and excrement, through dreams, erotic temptations and perversions, to contaminating subversive ideas; from palpable luxury to exuberantly electrifying hopes and transcendences."³¹ Hitler embodies this violent, excessive force but fuses it with authoritarian demands for work, discipline, etc.

Bataille's analysis of fascism can usefully be compared to that of Horkheimer and Adorno. Both concentrate on the psychological aspect of the fascist phenomenon and both see fascism as an instrumental employment of natural, subjective forces which had been suppressed by capitalism. Horkheimer and Adorno had seen in the mass festivals of fascism, "the false

counterfeit of frightened mimesis."⁴⁰ These archaic mimetic impulses, despite their abuse by fascism, retain, for the critical theorist, a promise of "happiness without power;"⁴¹ whereas, for Bataille, happiness and violence are fused in the sacred. Even Walter Benjamin, who came very close to advocating a type of fascistic politics of "pure means" based upon Sorel's myth of the general strike, insists on a necessary relation to a norm of rational, non-violent agreement. It is this element of non-violence which is absent in Bataille's advocacy of sovereignty. Bataille dreams of using the forces of excess as part of a revolutionary project. His problem is that, because the sovereign is itself a violent excessive force, it is impossible for him to distinguish between this force and the Nazi employment of it. He, eventually, is forced to realize the impossibility of drawing this distinction and tries to develop, in its stead, a new science ("heterology") which would describe the ambivalent affective forces within modern society and be, thus, capable of using them in an anti-fascist direction.

Habermas next turns to Bataille's "Manichaean" philosophy of history.⁴² He makes a rigid distinction (drawn from Durkheim) between consumption oriented to life and the reproduction of labor power and that wasteful consumption of luxuries characteristic of sovereignty and authenticity. Marx also spoke of a sphere of freedom counterposed to a necessary sphere of production. Bataille, however, feels that, in Marx, both of these spheres operate according to a notion of fixed human essence that realizes itself in terms of its externalized

products. There seems to be no room for the wasteful expenditure of the intoxicated, unlimited self as expressed in wars, games, perverse sexuality, etc.⁴³

Bataille's history is similar to that of Weber's (and, consequently, of Lukacs' and the critical theorists) account of the disenchanting rise of instrumental reason. Sovereignty is opposed to the constantly growing realm of instrumental labor. However, unlike in Lukacs' theory of reification, the hedging-in of sovereignty goes back to the beginnings of labor in archaic society. Sacrifice, as in Aztec society, is the closest example we have of a sovereign experience but even sacrifice (or the potlatch) had a "purpose." As Bataille realized, it functioned to establish a rank ordering in primitive societies. With the first object torn from nature, man himself became an object and lost his sovereignty - it can be won back only momentarily in religious or sexual ecstasy.

From the beginning of human history, sovereignty has been mixed with power - witness the priesthood and military leaders.⁴⁴ Bourgeois politicians retain a limited sovereign quality but, in communist society, it is eliminated to be replaced with the objectivity of power in the service of rational expenditure - sovereignty is no longer necessary. Paradoxically, it is only when the social sphere has been purged of sovereignty that sovereignty can make a comeback. This can happen inasmuch as in the fully rationalised society (i.e. communism), the fact that sovereignty is a human need independent of instrumental activity becomes apparent. But how, asks Habermas, do these realms of reason and unreason come

together in the post-communist society if Bataille does not recognise a dialectic of reason?⁴⁵

Since Bataille admits that sovereignty (e.g. the potlach) and power have always been integrated, he needs a theory to explain why the sacred is increasingly excluded by instrumental labor. Why has the profane sphere grown? An economic explanation will not suffice because Marxists only examine changes within instrumental labor, not the clash between the economy and excessive violence which precedes production. Bataille adapts Weber's account of religious rationalisation within capitalism in three steps:

Firstly, human beings are said to be constituted by labor and prohibitions (sexual shame, the knowledge of mortality). Taboos against incest and murder are universal. Death and eros are boundless, wasteful forces of nature which must be limited through the individuation of the human animal. The excess of nature must, then, be limited in the name of human preservation.

However, in a second step, Bataille argues that prohibitions are not simply functional for human survival. As in Durkheim's analysis, prohibitions owe their force to the sacred - an aspect of existence which both terrifies and fascinates. The power of norms is derived from transgression and sacrilege. This view of the sacred is, in fact, an extrapolation of the modern aesthetic experience.⁴⁶ Prohibitions, therefore, are not laws of reason, although rational activity takes place within their limits. Religious and erotic experience are interdependent, according to

Bataille:

The inner experience of eroticism requires of the one undergoing it a no less great sensitivity toward the anxiety that establishes the prohibition than toward the desire that leads to its transgression. It is the religious sensitivity that continuously connects desire and terror, intense pleasure and anxiety with one another.⁴⁷

In his third step, Bataille adopts Weber's account of the rationalization of religion in capitalist society. The God of Protestantism becomes increasingly individualized. God is further abstracted from man, entering an idealized "beyond." The sacred emotions of terror and desire become attenuated with the ejection of the Devil and the condemnation of the erotic as sinful. The bourgeois individual develops an abstract moral consciousness independent of the experiences of excess that once provided the grounding for prohibitions. In this way, the economic realm is finally split off from the forces of sovereignty. Economics becomes free of the claims of religious experience and vice versa. Stalinism, for Bataille, represents the completion of this process.⁴⁸

Habermas believes the above history of the differentiation of the sacred and the profane may be of some value but Bataille fails to explain how it may be overcome in a post-communist society. As this point, he calls in his theory of "General Economics." According to this theory (a metaphysical theory in Habermas' estimation⁴⁹) life itself has the tendency to waste surplus energy. In this "cosmic Lebensphilosophie,"⁵⁰ the great new productive forces of communist society must either be destroyed by depenance, sacrifice, etc., or in catastrophic ways, e.g., by war,

pollution, or imperialistic adventures.

Bataille basically is faced with the same problem that confronted Nietzsche's critique of ideology. It is self-contradictory (an "impossible" project for Habermas⁵¹) to formulate a theory of sovereignty if sovereignty is the other reason, if reason is founded precisely upon the violent act of excluding this sacred force. The subject disperses when he comes into contact with the sacred and hence cannot "know" it. The momentary ecstatic experiences of the subject (or better, at this point, the non-subject) cannot be grasped by theory. Bataille attempts to exit from this dilemma (of which he is very aware) by suggesting the idea of a non-objective science in which the subject could retrieve a knowledge of the non-rational. Bataille toys with the notion of the dialectic of enlightenment when he contemplates ways of practically altering our relation to sovereignty via a greater knowledge of it, but even here, he remains trapped in the paradox of a totalized critique. In Bataille's words, "We cannot penetrate to the ultimate object of knowledge that reduces people to subordinate and useful things....No one can know and at the same time preserve himself from annihilation."⁵²

Towards the end of his life, Bataille, according to Habermas, gave up on discursive knowledge and sought the sacred in silence and in mysticism. He also thought that erotic literature could be used to poetically allude to the sacred with its combination of desire and disgust. And yet, this, of course, represents the abandonment of the project of developing a theoretical critique of reason.⁵³

In his most recent article, "The Genealogical Writing of History: On Some Aporias in Foucault's Theory of Power,"⁵⁴ Habermas elaborates on his critical concept of pre-modernity. Again, as we shall see in his Foucault critique, Habermas' main targets of preference are Nietzsche and Bataille. These thinkers are, ultimately, at the root of Foucault's contradictions - contradictions which Habermas admits were productive and enlightening.⁵⁵

Habermas believes that, despite Foucault's claim to be a "happy positivist,"⁵⁶ to be developing an objective, value-free theory of power, when he attempts to put this into practice, he is inevitably forced to contradict himself. Practices are understood, by Foucault, not as a result of the self-understanding of actors and their relation to background traditions but, rather, objectivistically, as sheer manifestations of power, meaningless in themselves. Yet, when we examine Foucault's method, we see that, in fact, his approach is present-oriented, relativistic, and biased.⁵⁷ Habermas traces the first two qualities to the influence of Nietzsche in Foucault's thought and the last one to the influence of Bataille.

The first quality, Foucault's "presentism," is revealed by the way in which he subsumes all of the historical periods analysed by him, the Renaissance, the Classical period, the Modern period, under the category of bio-power and discipline. Foucault admits that these are specifically modern inventions and yet applies them indifferently to various past epochs and institutions. This is the method of the hermeneutically

oriented historian with which Foucault has supposedly broken. Foucault's ethnological objectivism, thus, finally ends up in a "melody of an avowed irrationalism"⁵⁵ which can clearly be seen in his reading of Nietzsche's concept of the will to knowledge:

In appearance, or rather, according to the mark it bears, historical consciousness is neutral, devoid of passions and committed solely to the truth. But if it examines itself and if, more generally, it interrogates the various forms of scientific consciousness in history, it finds that all these forms and transformations are aspects of the will to knowledge: instinct, passion, the inquisitor's devotion, cruel subtlety, and malice. It discovers the violence of a position that sides against those who are happy in their ignorance....The historical analysis of this rancorous will to knowledge reveals that all knowledge rests upon injustice (that there is no right, not even in the act of knowing, to truth or a foundation for truth).⁵⁶

Foucault's allegedly objectivistic account of power formations is also belied by his relativism.⁵⁷ Since validity claims in Foucault's theory are reduced to effects of power, he cannot prove the superiority of the genealogical discourse over other discourses (e.g. those of the human sciences). Foucault attempts to escape this aporia by applying the genealogical analysis to itself. This is a similar move to that undertaken by Nietzsche to escape the aporia of his totalized critique of ideology. As was noted above, Habermas believes Nietzsche tried to exit from this particular circle by seeking a grounding in the supposedly superior values of the past. According to Foucault, the superiority of his method rests on its ability to retrieve the lost and subjugated knowledges of past struggles. These plebeian "knowledges" are beneath the threshold of scientificity; they are actually embodied in the resistances of the mad, the sick, criminals, etc. In

combination with Foucault's erudite, archival knowledge, these knowledges are superior to the traditional discourses of the human sciences. They form a counter-discourse, to a certain degree, outside of the relations of power.

However, in terms of his own methodological principle of the ineluctable entwinement of discourses and power, Foucault cannot logically claim a superiority for his own approach. Since all knowledges are expressions of power, any superiority of Foucault's discourse would, in fact, be simply the product of its superior power. Foucault, finally, owns up to this relativistic self-denial in the context of his discussion of Nietzsche's perspectivism:

- "Historians take unusual pains to erase the elements in their work which reveal this grounding in a particular time and place, their preference in a controversy - the unavoidable obstacles of their passion. Nietzsche's version of historical sense is explicit in its perspective and acknowledges its system of injustice. Its perception is slanted, being a deliberate appraisal, affirmation, or negation; it reaches the lingering and poisonous traces in order to prescribe the best antidote."¹

Foucault's final aporia lies in what Habermas refers to as his "crypto-normativism."² Foucault ostensibly rejects value judgements, claiming to develop objective genealogies of discourses within which ethical judgements can occur. Neither does he suggest that power is to be understood as "immoral" as compared to the "moral" struggles of the plebs. And yet, there is evident, in Foucault's style and political activities, a clear normative bias. This normativity is not grounded in a critique of ideology, of the Marxian variety. Foucault does not, as Marx did, pretend to be criticizing bourgeois society

in terms of its own inadequately realised ideals of justice, freedom and equality. Foucault, as Habermas repeatedly drives home, does not wish to radicalize the Enlightenment but rather to reject it (in an undialectical fashion) altogether.⁶³ Enlightenment ideals, in fact, have combined with modern disciplinary forms of power to form power/knowledge structures immune to humanist critique. Opposition to existing forms of power (which are not grounded in humanist ideals but rather employ them as a mask) can only take the form of a tactic of resistance, not a critique. Local struggles, instead of employing the humanist discourse, must undermine it from without. Only in this way are they justified. Foucault, however, cannot explain, in terms of his theory of power, why power should be resisted. Since oppositional discourses are themselves forms of power, why should they be supported in their struggle against existing forms of power? Why are the disciplines and bio-power objectionable to Foucault?

The only way out of this dilemma is for Foucault to call upon the experience of aesthetic modernity, especially as represented in the work of Georges Bataille. This aestheticism can be seen in two areas of Foucault's theory of power. The first is in the very notion of bio-power or science of sexuality dividing, marking and torturing the human body. This can be derived from a residual life-philosophical vitalism in Foucault; it is the body that always⁶⁴ resists the imposition of bio-power. Aestheticism can also be seen in Foucault's belief that we may move beyond the present conjuncture of sovereignty and the disciplines into a "different economy of bodies and

pleasures."⁴⁴ Foucault also shares with Bataille this utopian vision. Foucault, thus, is really advancing a normative theory, although one that is hidden. And yet, in a final self-contradiction, Foucault denies he is positing an "other" of reason, a pre-discursive grounding for his political practice. This would be to make the error of naturalism:

What you call naturalism refers, I believe, to two things. A certain theory, the idea that under power with its acts of violence and its artifice, we should be able to rediscover the things themselves in their primitive vivacity: behind the asylum walls, the spontaneity of madness; through the penal system, the generous fever of delinquency; under the sexual interdict, the freshness of desire.⁴⁵

In denying this Bataillean naturalism,⁴⁶ Foucault as much as admits that his account of power is without any normative foundations.

FOOTNOTES

¹Jurgen Habermas, "Modernity versus Postmodernity," New German Critique 22 (Winter 1981): 3-14 (hereafter cited as Habermas, "Modernity.")

²Idem, "The Entwinement of Myth and Enlightenment: Re-Reading Dialectic of Enlightenment," New German Critique 26 (Spring 1982): 12-30 (hereafter cited as Habermas, "Entwinement.")

³Idem, "The French Path to Postmodernity: Bataille Between Eroticism and General Economics," New German Critique 33 (Fall 1984): 79-102 (hereafter cited as Habermas, "Path.")

⁴Idem, "Modernity," p. 13.

⁵Idem, "The Genealogical Writing of History: On Some Aporias in Foucault's Theory of Power," Merkur 429 (October 1984): 46-62 (henceforth cited as Habermas, "Foucault.") This text is translated in Appendix III.

⁶Habermas, "Modernity," p. 5.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid., p. 7.

⁹Ibid., p. 9.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 12.

¹¹Ibid., p. 5.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid., p. 11.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 9.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 13.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 14.

¹⁷Idem, Knowledge and Human Interests, trans. Jeremy J. Shapiro (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971), p. 299.

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 299-300.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 292.

²⁰Idem, "Entwinement", p. 12.

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid., p. 22.

²³Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, Dialectic of Enlightenment, trans. John Cumming (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972), p. 44.

²⁴Ibid., p. 101.

²⁵Habermas, "Entwinement," p. 24.

²⁶Ibid., p. 25.

²⁷Ibid., p. 29.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Ibid., p. 28.

³⁰Ibid., p. 29.

³¹Ibid., p. 30.

³²Ibid.

³³Idem, "Path," p. 83.

³⁴See Appendix I, "Nietzsche and Communism."

³⁵Habermas, "Path," p. 80.

³⁶Ibid., p. 84.

³⁷Ibid., p. 82.

³⁸Bataille, cited in Habermas, "Path," p. 84.

³⁹Habermas, "Path," p. 85.

⁴⁰Max Horkheimer, The Eclipse of Reason, cited in Habermas, "Path," p. 86.

⁴¹Adorno and Horkheimer, p. 87.

⁴²Habermas, "Path," p. 88.

⁴³Ibid., p. 89.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 92.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 95.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 97.

⁴⁷Bataille, cited in Habermas, "Path," p. 97.

⁴⁴Habermas seems to be creating something of a red herring here. It is not the case that communist society completely eliminates the sovereign aspect of existence. Thus, Bataille is not faced with the problem of explaining the leap from a totally re-ified communist society into the post-communist recomposition of sovereignty and equality. For Bataille, Stalinism has not managed to eliminate residual forms of sovereignty - forms which continue to ground the remaining status differences in the Soviet Union. See, for example, Georges Bataille, Complete Works, 9 Vols. ed. Thadée Klossowski, Denis Hollier, and Paule Leduc (Paris: Gallimard, 1970-1976), VIII: 333-353.

Also Bataille does not adhere to the kind of unilinear concept of history attributed to him by Habermas. Bataille does not believe that communist society is historically superior to capitalist society or that the former is a necessary precondition for further social evolution.

Finally, as can be seen in Appendix I, "Nietzsche and Communism," Bataille thinks that sovereign forces (embodied here in the figure of Nietzsche) constitute an ever present aspect of human existence. No bureaucracy, no matter how rigid, could definitively snuff them out. Resistances will always occur.

⁴⁵Habermas, "Path," p. 101.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 100.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 79.

⁴⁸Bataille, cited in Habermas, "Path," p. 101.

⁴⁹Habermas, "Path," p. 102.

⁵⁰Habermas, "Genealogische Geschichtsschreibung: Über einige Aporien im machttheoretischen Denken Foucaults," Markus 429 (October 1984). The original German text is cited hereafter as Habermas, "Geschichtsschreibung." The text is translated in Appendix III. Unless specified otherwise, references are to this appendix.

⁵¹Habermas, "Geschichtsschreibung," p. 245.

⁵²Appendix III, p. 265.

⁵³Ibid., p. 265-266.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 268.

⁵¹Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," cited in Appendix III, p. 268.

⁵²Appendix III, p. 269-270.

⁵³Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," cited in Appendix III, p. 273.

⁵⁴Appendix III, p. 273.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 274-275.

⁵⁶Foucault, cited in Appendix III, p. 278.

⁵⁷Appendix III, p. 279.

⁵⁸In defense of Bataille, it should be noted that he would deny this attribution of "naturalism" to his thought. For Bataille, no return to nature is possible given that human existence itself is constituted by the creation of prohibitions. Similarly, as we have seen, he shares Foucault's opposition to the elimination of erotic prohibitions. Neither theorist advocates a return to an originary desire or non-reason. This is precisely why Foucault calls for a different economy of bodies and pleasures, not a freeing of bodies and pleasures. Thus, there is a Bataillean moment in Foucault's thought, but it is not naturalistic.

CHAPTER VIII

FOUCAULT AND CRITICAL THEORY

The Frankfurt school had very little impact in French intellectual circles prior to the May revolt during which students took up some of the political themes of Horkheimer and Marcuse. These themes included those of the "great refusal" of everyday life in bourgeois society and the Freudian-Marxian critique of repression. During his early years as a student (1945-53), Foucault reports that the work of these thinkers was completely ignored despite the fact that France was their first home after the flight from Nazi Germany. He later became somewhat familiar with several of the essays of Horkheimer whose philosophical problematic he found very foreign and whose acceptance of traditional historical analyses he found questionable. He also read with great interest the work of Otto Kirchheimer, the Frankfurt theorist who wrote a major study of the evolution of prisons and punishment in capitalist society.

These later studies led to the realization that the critical theorists had been covering much the same ground as certain French researchers - specifically, the problems surrounding the relation between power and the type of reason

that had developed in the West commencing in the seventeenth century. All of the economic and cultural developments characterizing the modernization of the West were, in fact, linked to a type of rationality. The promise of the "Aufklärung" had backfired and had, in certain ways, actually restricted rather than widened the realm of liberty. For Foucault, Horkheimer was among the first theorists to raise this concern and also to relate it to the radical questioning of the emancipatory tendencies within Marxism.

Despite these shared concerns, Foucault believes there are fundamental differences of perspective between his own work and that of the Frankfurt school. Primarily, there is the difference with regard to the conception of the subject. Foucault believes that the critical theorists maintained a traditional, philosophical notion of the subject, a notion derivative from the humanism of the young Marx. This Marxist humanism was then articulated within certain Freudian notions such as repression (related to the Marxist concept of alienation) and liberation (entailing the elimination of alienation and exploitation). For the Frankfurt school, the goal was always, on the basis of the above premises to restore our "lost" identity and to free our lost "true" nature. Foucault, following Nietzsche and Bataille, considered this identity precisely the entity to be escaped rather than reconstituted. The Frankfurt school could be summarized under the slogan "man produces man." Man should produce himself in a way identical to himself, in accordance with this human essence. Whereas, for Foucault, the task was to produce

something new, something that we did not know and that was, thus, unpredictable. One should not "produce" something, like one would produce some economic or culture product but, on the contrary, destroy that which we are and create something totally new.

When he spoke of the death of man in The Order of Things, Foucault's intention was not to announce a prophetic completion of the human project. He wished, rather, to make two points. The first and less significant was that the various human sciences had not succeeded in locating a human nature. In fact, the human sciences were only possible via the construction of a new subjectivity carried out through the reduction of the human subject to an object of knowledge. Thus, the modern period sees the birth of a radically new "scientific subject" instead of achieving the hoped for discovery of the human essence. His second aim, which became somewhat confused with the first, was to argue that, in the course of history, men have never ceased constructing themselves, that is, they continually shifted the level of their subjectivity, developed multiple subjectivities without ever reaching an end that one would be able to label "man." Man is an experiencing animal engaged in an infinite process in which he constantly defines new objects and, hence, redefines and transfigures himself as subject. It is his approval of this constantly making himself other that distinguishes Foucault from the Frankfurt school.

Foucault also rejects the Frankfurt school's focus on reason, its bifurcation and eclipse, as explanatory of the

shifts in modern forms of power. It is not a matter of putting reason on trial, to condemn it as with the irrationalists, or to find it fundamentally innocent, as is the case with Habermas. Reason is not some objectified entity that would be the opposite of another objectified entity called unreason. And what of the concept of rationalization developed by Max Weber and adopted by the critical theorists. Although Foucault speaks highly of their work,¹ he finds that the concept of the rationalization of culture is too abstract to grasp the specific rationalities that have developed as responses to the basic experiences of crime, sexuality, madness, etc. These various political technologies also must be traced back much further in our history - much further than the *Aufklärung* to which the Frankfurt school traces the origin of the process of rationalization. This is not to deny the partial validity of the notion of a global rationalization but, rather, to stress aspects of political existence that it fails to apprehend.²

In the context of his discussion of Sartre's biographical studies of Baudelaire and Flaubert, Foucault argued that Sartre's methodology was overly centered on an ideal notion of subjectivity. Sartre interpreted the works of these artists as expressions of an authentic self. For Foucault, however, a more acceptable approach would be to view the 'I' as a product of actions, that is, to examine an artist's relation to his self in terms of his creative activity and not vice versa. In the same way, when examining political

questions, we should not place ourselves within the perspective of a pre-existing 'we' in order to pose these questions and assert principles. The 'we' should rather be the unpredictable result of our questioning. Pre-existing subjectivities will always be challenged by any radical genealogical investigation. Thus, Foucault claims to be always surprised by the results of his own studies. His books themselves, in their pain and pleasure, embody some of the qualities of a limit experience.³

Experiences address certain questions to politics. One should not attempt to immediately re-inscribe them into a given political theory. The valuable aspect of the May revolt was that many new experiences came to the fore, leading to new questions being directed to politics. The gauchistes, according to Foucault, desperately attempted to answer them in terms of traditional Marxist doctrines. However, the problems were posed by the experiences themselves rather than by the existing political theories which quickly demonstrated their inefficacy. Foucault does not feel he can be fairly placed anywhere on the existing political chessboard and is amused to have himself located by critics on just about all of the sixty four squares.⁴ He has been denounced as being everything, from a KGB agent to a left wing terrorist. This is ironic because his project has not been to analyze society in terms of a present-to-hand perspective nor to work towards a presupposed political eschaton:

This is doubtless what people mean when they reproach me for not presenting an overall theory. But I believe precisely that the forms of totalization offered by politics are always, in fact, very limited. I am attempting, to the contrary, apart from any totalization - which would be at once abstract and limiting - to open up problems that are as concrete and general as possible, problems that approach politics from behind and cut across societies on the diagonal, problems that are at once constituents of our history and constituted by that history: for example, the problem of the relation between sanity and insanity; the question of illness, of crime, or of sexuality. And it has been necessary to try to raise them both as present-day questions and as historical ones, as moral, epistemological, and political problems.⁵

This effort to problematize power and politics has also led him to interrogate the assumption of normative political theory as represented, for example, in the work of Arendt and Habermas. In his discussion with Rabinow, et al. of April 1983, a question is asked about the possibility of a consensus-based politics. Does not Foucault's apparent emphasis on the inescapability of domination dogmatically rule out the notion of consensus as expressed in Arendt (politics as consensus) or Habermas (legitimate power as grounded on a rational consensus)? Foucault argues that he does not wish to deny the possibility of a consensual discipline or even that such a discipline might be better in some sense to a non-consensual form. This is quite possible. To argue, however, that it is inevitably better and that only a society based on consensual power is morally acceptable is to impose a premature closure onto the problem of politics. Consensual disciplines, for example, can be used (and quite commonly are so used in modern society) within an overall process of domination. Each individual case must be examined - a theory

that suggests the inevitable superiority of consensus would be uncritical. Nevertheless, he is willing to grant to his questioner that the notion of consensus could be used as a critical concept in a specific context. As a practical matter, "one could ask oneself what proportion of non-consensuality is implied in such a power relation, and whether that degree of non-consensuality is necessary or not, and then one may question every power relation to that extent. The farthest I would go is to say that perhaps one must not be for consensuality, but one must be against non-consensuality."⁶ Consensus is, thus, a goal that one might pursue. To conclude, he argues that he is not saying that power is always and everywhere dominative. To the contrary, it can take many forms. It is simply the case that he has been more interested in one form: the modern disciplinary form that characterizes "total" institutions such as prisons, asylums, hospitals, etc.⁷ Foucault has expressed his preference for an open, experimental notion of politics. Political ideas must be combined with life and practice to form an ethos of politics:

I have always been concerned with linking together as tightly as possible the historical and theoretical analysis of power relations, institutions, and knowledge, to the movements, critiques, and experiences that call them into question in reality. If I have insisted on all this 'practice', it has not been in order to 'apply' ideas, but in order to put them to the test and modify them.⁸

To understand power relations, one should not begin with theories which attempt to give an account of power as a whole. One must rather look to the resistances to the prison, the mental hospital, etc. in order to locate the contemporary

mechanisms of power:

To use another metaphor, it consists of using this resistance as a chemical catalyst so as to bring to light power relations, locate their position, find out their point of application and the methods used. Rather than analyzing power from the point of view of its internal rationality, it consists of analyzing power relations through the antagonism of strategies.⁹

Power, in other words, is not an ontological entity with a capital 'P'. It does not rest at the top of the social pyramid but only exists when exercised, in the practices which permeate the entire social structure. It can be observed only in the struggles that occur within the power relations. For example, in his study of the birth of the prison, which examined the period from 1760-1840, Foucault describes the struggles that occurred between the people and the notables, between the juridical system and the new administrative technocrats as well as those between the newly defined "delinquents" and the working class. These were all instances of power relations which then had to be linked with the relations of exploitation (between classes) and relations of knowledge (the new sciences such as criminology that complemented the relations of power). The fact that these multitudinous relations are constantly forming the new 'global' strategic pictures reveals the mutable and tentative character of power. It is not simply a sovereign authority overlooking the struggle from some position of superstructural isolation. It is intermixed with social practices, constantly combining with other relations of knowledge and exploitation, in order to achieve a temporary control over resistances via the formation of "blocks."¹⁰ This control, however, is very tenuous because

power is not simply opposed to resistances. Resistance is a pre-condition of power and resistance struggles themselves are manifestations of power. Power does not crush freedom from above but rather:

When one defines the exercise of power as a mode of action upon the actions of others, when one characterizes these actions by the government of men by other men - in the broadest sense of the term - one includes an important element; freedom. Power is exercised only over free subjects, and only insofar as they are free. By this we mean individual or collective subjects who are faced with a field of possibilities in which several ways of behaving, several reactions and diverse comportments may be realized. Where the determining factors saturate the whole there is not relationship of power; slavery is not a power relationship when man is in chains. (In this case, it is a question of a physical relationship of constraint.)¹¹

Power relations are agonistic - at their heart, constantly provoking and inciting them are will and freedom.¹² Because of this fundamental agonism, power cannot be reduced to mere violence on the one hand or consent on the other. In power relations, one does not voluntarily give up or transfer one's rights and powers as in Locke or Rousseau. Power may be the result of a prior consent or dependent upon consent, but it is not in itself characterized by consensus.¹³

The economy or distribution of power at a given moment, the strategies or blocks of power that momentarily solidify, the institutions of power, such as the army, police, administration, etc., must be distinguished from the agonistic swirl of power relations which, in a manner of speaking, underlay them. The power relations, thus, seem to share the same traits as the limit experience. They cannot be completely controlled or grasped by fixed political theories or political

institutions. To the contrary, these latter are constantly being thrown up as responses, however, to the problems posed by political experience. Foucault believes, however, that the political experiences and struggles of the twentieth century have posed problems to which humanist and Marxist theories have been unable to respond. Power has appeared in new forms (e.g. bio-power and disciplinary power) that have been ignored by these theories. Foucault does not attempt to present a true theory of these experiences but on the basis of these present resistances, struggles, etc., he turns to an investigation of the past. When he examines the birth of the prison, for example, he bases his interpretation upon a meticulous study of the various discourses produced around the question of punishment in the early nineteenth century. Thus, in a way, critics who accuse him of simply reproducing the real are quite correct - he wishes to carry out an archaeological recovery of what actually was said at the time. And he claims that his account is a true one (against those who accuse him of merely fictionalizing or writing fables). He is not fighting the battle 'for truth' but rather one 'around truth' - around the way rules which determine the way in which the true and false are separated and specific power effects are attached to the true. On a deeper level, though, he is making a certain interpretation that generates certain truth effects. The interpretation of the birth of the prison reveals many fault lines and gaps, the resistances that appeared, in the structure of power at the time. These truth-effects can then be used as tools to indicate possible struggles and experiences. The

tools are designed to be employed or destroyed by those who might take them up. The one who writes the books or creates the tools cannot pretend to tell people how they must be used. The task of the theorist is different from that of the citizen. He can no longer assume the mantle of the universal intellectual who

spoke and was acknowledged the right of speaking in the capacity of mastery of truth and justice. He was heard, or purported to make himself heard, as the spokesman of the universal. To be an intellectual meant something like being the consciousness/conscience of us all. I think we have here an idea transposed from Marxism, from a faded Marxism indeed. Just as the proletariat, by the necessity of its historical situation, is the bearer of the universal (but its immediate, unreflected bearer, barely conscious of itself as such), so the intellectual, through his moral, theoretical and political choice aspires to be the bearer of this universality in its conscious, elaborated form. The intellectual is thus taken as the clear, individual figure of a universality whose obscure, collective form is embodied in the proletariat.¹⁴

I do not believe that the philosophical debate between Habermas and Foucault can be settled in an unarbitrary way. Certainly the discussion between the two theorists within the relatively unconstrained atmosphere of the university has failed to result in consensus.¹⁵ The tension between the two thinkers (Habermas' antagonism towards Foucault is often overtly expressed) is all the more unusual given the substantial areas of agreement they share with one another. Politically, they both speak from an essentially center-left perspective. Both have been confronted with the problem of developing a critical perspective on a society in which the working class seems to have lost most of its previous

emancipatory potential. Politically, again, they share a suspicion of some of the 'easy' solutions popular among the new left; the ideals of the movement for sexual liberation, the anti-nuclear and ecological movements are severely questioned by both philosophers.¹⁶ Ironically, however, their principal audience consists of younger radicalized academics influenced by the counter-cultural movements of the sixties and seventies.

Philosophically, also, both thinkers stress a notion of subjectivity or agency as opposed to the focus on synchrony and static structures which has tended to characterize much recent social thought. Habermas has developed a critical method designed to aid the self in its efforts to free itself from hypostasized power, "to determine when theoretical statements grasp invariant regularities of social action as such and when they express ideologically frozen relations of dependence that can in principle be transformed."¹⁷ Foucault has recently described the goal of his genealogical method in terms remarkably familiar to those employed by Habermas:

I would like to say something about the function of any diagnosis concerning the nature of the present. It does not consist in a simple characterization of what we are but, instead - by following lines of fragility in the present - in managing to grasp why and how that-which-is might no longer be that-which-is. In this sense, any description must always be made in accordance with these kinds of virtual fracture which open up the space of freedom understood as a space of concrete freedom, i.e., of possible transformation.¹⁸

Given the fact that both philosophers seem to privilege the notion of subjectivity, can we perhaps differentiate their thought in terms of their respective views of human subjectivity? I think this approach will allow us to draw out

a certain difference of emphasis in their social theories.

Habermas, as we have seen, accuses Foucault of harbouring an illusion concerning the modernity of the aesthetic experience.¹⁹ By this, Habermas seems to mean two things. Firstly, the surrealist avant-garde of the thirties was precisely a modern movement. It owed its relative autonomy to the differentiation of cultural spheres (science, morality and art) which occurred during the Enlightenment. It made aesthetic claims (i.e. to authenticity) and moral claims (i.e. to sincerity) typical of the other superstructural spheres of bourgeois society. Secondly, by pretending to radically break with its bourgeois environment and universalize the aesthetic fragment, it merely succeeded in negating any emancipatory force it might have otherwise had. Habermas is much more critical of the surrealist experiment ("hopeless revolts" in his view²⁰) than were the representatives of the previous generation of the Frankfurt school. At most, he is prepared to grudgingly recognize that "such aesthetic experiences do have ~~some~~ somewhat of an illuminating effect or at least provide an instructive contrast."²¹ In his article on "Modernity versus Postmodernity," he reiterates this critique by suggesting that Foucault and other anti-modernists (Nietzsche, Bataille, Derrida) have opposed in a "manichean fashion,"²² the sovereign or the poetical to reason. The implication is that, while Habermas has attempted to struggle through the internal conflicts of Western reason, Foucault and company have simply given up and abandoned ship.

It must be said that this charge of aestheticism

receives some strong corroboration in statements made by Foucault just before his death. The clearest statement of this tendency comes in an interview "On the Genealogy of Ethics" with Dreyfus and Rabinow.²³ In distinguishing his position on subjectivity from that of Sartre, Foucault specifically argues against grounding the self in a notion of authenticity. For Habermas, of course, the norm of authenticity is precisely that which should (in the best of worlds) guide aesthetic production. In the following passage, Foucault offers a Nietzschean concept of the self based upon the idea of the need to give a style to one's life:

I think that from the theoretical point of view, Sartre avoids the idea of the self as something which is given to us, but through the moral notion of authenticity, he turns back to the idea that we have to be ourselves - to be truly our true self. I think that the only acceptable practical consequence of what Sartre has said is to link his theoretical insight to the practice of creativity - and not of authenticity. From the idea that the self is not given to us, I think that there is only one practical consequence: we have to create ourselves as a work of art.²⁴

Foucault's evident sympathy for the avant-garde figures such as Bataille, Roussel, Artaud, Flaubert, etc. would also seem to confirm Habermas' attribution of aestheticism to Foucault. It is true that in questioning the apparatuses of power/knowledge, Foucault has drawn on experiences which one could characterize as being aesthetic. These experiences (of the body, madness, eros) do provide the perpetual counter-stroke to the discourses. In the terms we have used in this thesis, they represent the "Other" of power and, thus, in a sense, Habermas is quite accurate in his attribution to Foucault of a variety of Manicheanism. This is perhaps why Foucault considers the

task of philosophizing to be, somewhat paradoxically, that of limiting the domains of knowledge.²⁵ Foucault believes the imperial tendency of the will to knowledge to subsume the Other must be countered. Precisely in this way, one can open the space of "concrete freedom" of which he speaks in "The Genealogy of Ethics." This is, indeed, an eternal battle in which Foucault seems to have placed himself in the camp of the children of darkness. Foucault, in Habermas' words, may perhaps be considered one of the "dark writers" of the bourgeoisie along with de Sade and Nietzsche.

Although Foucault never had the opportunity to respond in detail to Habermas' critique, I believe that certain of his lines of defense may be reconstructed from statements throughout his last essays and interviews. His primary response would, no doubt, take the form of indicating to Habermas the genealogical origin of the modern subject. This truth-oriented, confessing subject is a recent creation, the product of the interaction of various powers and discourses. This self-identical subject is always threatened by its other; other powers, affects and experiences are constantly encroaching upon its parameters. Habermas, however, identifies these forces with the mythical realm from which, he believes, Enlightenment must escape. Thus, Foucault's criticism of Sartre's retention of a concept of a "true self" seems to apply with equal force to Habermas. In his positing of three (and only three) quasi-transcendental human interests, the technical, the practical and the emancipatory, Habermas is clearly advocating a concept of the true self. This self has

worked through various stages of moral evolution but once it has reached the seventh stage (not the sixth or the eighth), one can speak, in a Hegelian manner, of its realization of its true identity. For Habermas, it is language, the only thing we can know which in its structure posits for us autonomy and responsibility.²⁷ Discourse allows us to escape the realm of myth and power:

Discourse therefore requires the virtualization of constraints on action. This is intended to render inoperative all motives except solely that of a cooperative readiness to arrive at an understanding, and further requires that conditions of validity be separated from those of genesis. Discourse thereby renders possible the virtualization of claims to validity; this consists in our announcing with respect to the objects of communicative action (things and events, persons and utterances) a reservation concerning their existence and conceiving of facts as well as of norms from the viewpoint of possible existence. To speak, as Husserl does, in discourse we bracket the general thesis.²⁸

Thus, for Habermas, it is language and its necessary tendencies towards autonomy and responsibility (as realized in the "ideal speech situation") which grounds the emancipatory interest. And, as can be seen in the above quotation, although these qualities are structurally embedded in language, they can only be realized by virtualizing or abstracting from the actual empirical world of constrained communication. In other words, in order for the emancipatory energy of language to be released, the other must be strictly fenced out. Through imagining an ideal speech situation, we can make and test counter-factual assumptions, thus undermining unnecessary forms of repression. This is what Habermas means by the process of reflection or self-reflection.

In claiming to describe the world simply as it is, Habermas seems to share a tendency which he himself has attributed to positivism. This conceptual schema may also be criticized for its rigidity and dichotomous quality. He sharply distinguishes between a technical world of work and hermeneutic world of social interaction. Nature, in this way, is abandoned to the technical-instrumental interest of science and technology; the possibility of a Marcusean move towards overcoming this division is strongly denied. Similarly, Habermas insists upon the transcendental tendency embodied in language. The emancipatory interest is again sharply distinguished from the technical and practical interests. One could, therefore, see a type of Manicheanism in Habermas similar to the one that he detects in Foucault. In Habermas, we see the struggle between man's emancipatory interest and existing social forms as well as that between the sphere of social interaction and the runaway world of instrumental rationality. With Habermas, of course, the battle takes place between conflicting tendencies within reason, whereas Foucault appears to want to challenge reason from without.

In defense of Habermas, it should be pointed out that he is not at all certain of the extent of the transcendentality of the three cognitive interests. As Richard Bernstein has demonstrated, there is "a deep unresolved conflict in Habermas between the transcendental pole of his thinking which emphasizes the a priori categorical distinctions, and more pragmatic tendencies that emphasize continuity and overlapping similarities and differences in all forms of rational

inquiry."²⁹ The more pragmatic Habermas not only understands the overlap between categories such as the practical and technical cognitive interests, he also seems to recognize that the emancipatory act of reflection is itself very much entwined with the empirical world of power and myth. The ideal speech situation, within this more pragmatic perspective, would not, in fact, be embedded in language, but would rather represent an assumption that we must make in order to clarify our understanding of social reality. In this case, it becomes a necessary fiction, not a transcendental quality of human nature. Insofar as Habermas is willing to accept this overlap or undecidability in human existence, an alliance with Foucault, based upon a mutual recognition of differences, becomes possible.

Many students of the Habermas-Foucault debate have characterized it in terms of "risk." Should we question our humanist standards in the name of some future unknown revolution? As Nancy Fraser argues, in the absence of any viable alternative standards offered by Foucault, why should we question our existing standards? Unless Foucault can demonstrate that his resistances will lead to a better social order (according to anyone's standards), we must remain skeptical.³⁰ Similarly, Peter Dews argues that Foucault's identification of subjection and subjugation and his refusal of existing norms of justice and autonomy present a threat to any coherent political practice. Foucault's account of power brings with it the dual risks of irrationalist spontaneism and passive resignation.³¹ Dews believes that a Habermasian

normative political theory offers clearer directions for political practice. This, in spite of Habermas' rather Foucauldian insistence on the autonomy of the spheres of reflection, processes of enlightenment and political strategy and tactics. For Habermas, it is clear that the risk represented by thinkers of the other as diverse as Nietzsche, Heidegger and Foucault is the risk of irrationalism exemplified in its most horrific form in German fascism. As Habermas accurately points out, Bataille was quite hard-pressed to specify the difference between Hitler's use of sovereign forces and those sovereign forces in themselves. This is why, for him, one dare not abandon Enlightenment but rather one must continue to work toward the realization of its ideals. I think it is undeniable that Foucault's thinking does present several serious risks. Irrationalism is perhaps a possible consequence of Foucault's thought of the limit - when old forms of selfhood are questioned, the result cannot be predicted with any certainty. And yet, the major thinkers of critical theory were evidently very much in debt to the dark thinkers of modernity. Adorno, Horkheimer and Benjamin were willing to accept the risk that the other presented to reason. Whether or not Habermas' attempt to exclude the experience of the other, to ostracize Nietzsche, Bataille and Foucault, represents a lesser risk, remains to be seen.

FOOTNOTES

¹Herbert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982), p. 210.

²Ibid.

³Michel Foucault, The Foucault Reader, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), p. 339.

⁴Ibid., p. 376.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid., p. 379.

⁷Ibid., p. 380.

⁸Ibid., p. 379.

⁹Ibid., p. 211.

¹⁰Dreyfus and Rabinow, p. 218.

¹¹Ibid., p. 221.

¹²Ibid., p. 222.

¹³Ibid., p. 219-20.

¹⁴Michel Foucault, Power/Knowledge: Selected

Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977, ed. with an introduction by Colin Gordon, trans. Colin Gordon, Leo Marshall, John Mepham, and Kate Soper (Brighton, Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1980), p. 126.

¹⁶Foucault and Habermas did manage to get together for discussions in Paris during the early eighties. See Foucault's account of their meeting in Foucault, The Foucault Reader, pp. 373-374.

¹⁶See Jurgen Habermas, "Psychic Thermidor and Rebirth of Rebellious Subjectivity," Berkeley Journal of Sociology 25 (1980): 22-40 and on Foucault's political disagreements with the new left see Alan Sheridan "Diary" London Review of Books (19 July - 1 August 1984): 21

¹⁷Jurgen Habermas, Knowledge and Human Interests, trans. Jeremy J. Shapiro (Boston: Beacon Press, 1970), p.310 (hereafter cited as Habermas, Knowledge).

¹⁸Michel Foucault, "Structuralism and Post-Structuralism," Telos 55 (Spring 1983): 206.

¹⁹See, for example, Jurgen Habermas, "A Philosophico-Political Profile," New Left Review 151 (May-June 1985): 75-105.

²⁰Jurgen Habermas, "Modernity versus Postmodernity," New German Critique 22 (Winter 1981): 12 (hereafter cited as Habermas, "Modernity").

²¹Jurgen Habermas, "The Entwinement of Myth and Enlightenment: Re-Reading the Dialectic of Enlightenment," New German Critique 26 (Spring 1982), p. 18 (hereafter cited as Habermas, "Myth").

²²Habermas, "Modernity," p. 13.

²³Dreyfus and Rabinow, pp. 229-252.

²⁴Ibid., p. 237.

²⁵Michel Foucault, "Le retour de la morale," Les Nouvelles (June 28, 1984): 41.

²⁶Habermas, "Myth," p. 13

²⁷Idea, Knowledge, p. 314.

²⁸Idea, Theory and Practice, trans. John Viertel
(Boston: Beacon Press, 1973), pp. 18-19.

²⁹Richard Bernstein, The Restructuring of Social and
Political Theory (Philadelphia: The University of
Pennsylvania Press, 1976), p. 223.

³⁰Nancy Fraser, "Foucault's Body-Language: A
Post-Humanist Political Rhetoric?" Salmagundi (Spring 1983):
18-19.

³¹Peter Dews, "Power and Subjectivity in Foucault,"
New Left Review 144 (April/May 1984): 94-95.

CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSION

During the last years of his life, Foucault spent long periods in the United States. From New York University to Berkeley, masses of students followed his conferences and his name had become as well-known among North American intellectual audiences as it had been on the European continent. In fact, amongst many of his American students, Foucault had acquired the status of a guru. However, if one attempts to localize a characteristic theme that might explain this popularity, that would clearly delineate the nature of his thought, the difficulties immediately multiply. Not even the force of his recent American fame has been able to reduce and simplify the ambiguity of a thought which has based its interest and emblematic character vis-a-vis contemporary culture on precisely this ambiguity.

In general, Foucault is seen by North American students to be inheriting the spirit of May '68 and its revolt against authoritarian culture. But, if one excludes his specifically political positions, his struggle against the carceral system and everything that it involves for the culture of our society as a whole, it is quite difficult to perceive a

straightforwardly 'emancipating' valence in his theories. In fact, he seems to advance an extreme form of skepticism which is primarily concerned to limit the claims of knowledge. This paradoxically leads to a great re-activation of thought - a thought, however, which intentionally restricts itself to the interrogation of existing limits. Thought, for Foucault, is always a thought about present dangers.¹ It must ask the Kantian question "what are we now?" rather than those other famous Kantian questions: "Who are we?" and "what ought we to do?" The first Kantian question must perpetually be renewed and unlike the latter two, promises no secure harbour for knowledge. Given this constant study of present dangers, Foucault has characterized his thought as a "hyper- and pessimistic activism."²

Recall that in an early essay from the sixties, Foucault put together the names of Nietzsche, Marx and Freud by considering them all to be great demystifiers of the repressive and authoritarian character of Western culture. In this, Foucault anticipated the identification of these three thinkers that would be made somewhat later by the contestatory counter-culture of the late sixties. However, contrary to this culture, Foucault did not see in them the prophets of a knowledge that was no longer mystified, free from the veils of the ideology of sublimation. Rather, they were masters of an "infinite interpretation" destined to suspend our assent to the system of constituted values but without introducing us to a more fundamental ground.

If one reflects upon this essay,³ which for that matter

has a very clear programmatic function in Foucault's work, one can attempt to characterize his thought as that of a culture which has left behind the old critique of ideology and which is searching for an alternative position.

In diverse ways, but with the same basic inspiration, Nietzsche, Marx and Freud are considered by Foucault to be precisely the thinkers of suspicion, who teach us to see the hidden bases (will to power, sexual drives, class egoism) of culture, of forms of knowledge, of systems of values, of institutions, in sum, of ideology. If, however, one believes, that, with Foucault, that interpretation, that is, the unmasking of ideologies, is an infinite process and that it is precisely this infinity of the process which the three thinkers taught us, then one is beyond the critique of ideology and even the concept of ideology itself.

This post-ideological position has characterized European thought for the last three decades. Structuralism, the movement that dominated the sixties and with which Foucault is often associated, is one of the paths that thought has pursued in this post-ideological period. Here, structure is no longer understood in the classical Marxist sense (the underlying economic structure as the 'true' base of the superstructure), but rather as a mechanism which has meaning insofar as it has rules of functioning. There is nothing to unmask, but, rather, there are only mechanisms and structures to describe. Even the pretense to be able to attain a true ground behind the superstructure is an ideological pretense, a false belief, that Nietzsche, especially, has taught us to

recognize as such.

The works of Foucault on the history or the archaeology, as he would prefer to call it, of modern European civilization can all be read in this key. Thus, Madness and Civilization (1963) in which he reconstructs the origins of the modern psychiatric clinic, both scientifically and theoretically, and in terms of disciplines (the birth of the insane asylum) is the reconstruction of one of the constitutive mechanisms of modern society in as much as it is by defining what is 'inside' and what is 'outside' of the norm that a society defines itself. Note, however, that Foucault never states what would be more just or better or truer -- to treat madness in a different way or not to treat it at all, not to discipline it. This is the case despite the fact that many of Foucault's followers simply assume he has taken the latter option.

The same thing applies for the other "archaeological" works of Foucault such as The Order of Things (a massive inter-disciplinary study of modern forms of knowledge published in 1966) and The History of Sexuality of which only the first three volumes were published before Foucault's death.

In these volumes, Foucault states that it is true, in recent centuries, that sex, whether in everyday discourse or, especially, in the discourse of psychoanalysis, has acquired a central role. However, this, instead of having emancipatory consequences, has constituted a form of discipline: that which enters discourse assumes a form and, thus, is integrated

into an order and is subjected to rules. As in the case of madness, it is not argued nor thought that the process of disciplining and formalization is simply an evil, a 'repression' from which one ought to liberate oneself.

It is true that by reconstructing the archaeology of this order, that is, by seeing it as an historical event, men will no longer consider it a natural given and, in this, there is certainly an element of emancipation. This is the same liberating element which Nietzsche very problematically referred to when he said that his nihilistic philosophy, that is, the revelation of the historical-cultural character of all values, had a selective impact. Once we had understood that the values in which we believe are not eternal and immutable, our experience changes; we must take decisions and make choices. This must be done via the re-thinking of the significance of institutions, orders and rules, beyond any logic which posits an ingenuous opposition between 'nature' (drives, interests, spontaneity) and 'forms' (social bonds, symbolizations). The richness and the open problematicity of Foucault's thought was probably due to this fundamental quality: in his having abandoned the tranquil security of the critique of ideology for the open sea of the infinity of interpretation.

FOOTNOTES

¹Herbert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982), p. 216.

²Ibid., p. 232.

³See Appendix II.

APPENDIX I

Nietzsche and Communism

Georges Bataille

1. The Apparent Disproportion between Nietzsche and Communism

From the start, one is struck by a disproportion between Nietzsche and communism.

Quite generally, Nietzsche's work exercises an irresistible seduction, but this seduction is without consequence. These dazzling books are like alcohol; they excite and illuminate but they leave an elementary way of thinking intact.

Compared to an inconsequential tragedy, the problems of communism have an incomparable importance. It does not matter if the tragedy puts into play something whose value is greater according to me. I still cannot forget that it is only communism that has posed the general question.

Communism insists upon the right to live of each human individual, a right which the existing juridical system

partially denies. Around me, the interest of the mass is at stake. Even if it is so to a lesser extent than it was for the proletariat of Marx's time or for the disfavoured nations of today (such as India or China), I recognise the importance of the forces which communism puts into play. Also, communism, represented by major powers in the world, contests the right to live of those who benefit from the advantages of bourgeois society, who benefit from them, for example, in order to write. Thus, communism is the problem which is posed, from the base, to each of us, whether he accepts or refuses it. It asks him a question of life or death. Its militants not only have a body of coherent doctrine, whose foundation is the lucid thought of Marx, but also an active organization to which discipline has given its exemplary efficacy. From each militant, blind doctrinaire submission, devotion up to and including death, and the abandonment of the individual will are expected without any promise of an equivalent recompense for these sacrifices (the "recompense" might even be, to a certain extent, the destruction of one another which follows great revolutions). This is because, the cause, being given, nothing counts for more, first of all for the partisan, but finally for whomever enters into the communist society. The personal engagement of the partisan flows from an obligation held by all men. However, this obligation is not created by the engagement. Indifference or hostility does not change anything: nothing is more important in the world, both for the enemy and the neutral, than the communist enterprise. For all men, the conviction of the

militants gives to it the exclusive value. This conviction has put the fate of the world at stake; there is nothing that remains outside.

I am free to believe or to say of Nietzsche's thought that, in reality, it is not less important or is more important, than communism. But I ought then to recognize that, in being misunderstood in this way, this thought might as well not exist. The inconsequence of those who notice it with interest is the most ordinary attitude. I do not speak of those who dedicate qualified studies to it, who openly get rid of it. The life of Nietzsche is seen as a tale, evidently tragic. The naive nostalgia of a living mythology gives, without difficulty, a meaning to this tale. But this mythology is just as distant from the actual world as are the myths of the ancient world. The worst interpretation is that given by men who wish to use this thought (whose essence is to be irreducible to usefulness) to attain their own goals. Nietzsche's thought is sovereign. It was easy for them not to take account of Nietzsche's prior refusal. They did it all the more impertinently because Nietzsche died without posterity. His mobile, concrete thought, related to historical conditions, entirely disappeared with him. He found commentators, but they treated him as dead, stretched out on a dissecting table.

2. The Identity of Nietzsche's Doctrine and of That Which Is Explained in LA PART MAUDITE.

I am the only one to claim to be, not a commentator on Nietzsche, but to be Nietzsche himself. Not that my thought is always faithful to his: it is often different, especially when I envisage the detailed developments of theory.¹ But this thought places itself in the same conditions in which Nietzsche's placed itself. There was nothing sovereign that the historical world gave to Nietzsche that he could recognise. He refused the reign of the thing and science could not, according to him, be the limit and the end of man since, assumed as such, it assured the subordination of the spirit to the object. He was forced to attempt to find the lost sovereignty. These several principles reveal at the same time the situation upon which Nietzsche depended and that which La Part maudite perceives as a starting principle.

The communists are opposed to that which seems to them to be sovereign. But, for Nietzsche, a world deprived of what I call the sovereign would be intolerable. With regard to traditional sovereignty, he had the same attitude as the communists. But he could not accept a world in which man - in which each man - would be the means and not the end of some common enterprise. Hence, the insulting irony with which he addresses the precursors of national-socialism and his striking refusal, but without contempt, of the social democracy of his time, from which communism derives. The refusal to serve (to be utile) is the principle of Nietzsche's

thought, as it is of this work. What separated Nietzsche from God or from morality was not a personal desire for pleasure [jouissance], but a protest which addressed itself at the same time to the moralising (enslaving) sovereignty trapped in Christianity, and to the order of things where reason, envisaged as an end in itself, encloses the subjective life and thought.

In my long study, the thought of Nietzsche (identified with the position of sovereignty independent of its oppressive forms) ceases to appear, in relation to communism, as an unfortunate excitation. And, in the world today, there are only two acceptable positions. Communism, reducing each man to the object (rejecting in this manner the deceptive appearances that the subject had assumed), and the attitude of Nietzsche - similar to that which is evident in this work - freeing the subject at the same time from the limits imposed upon him by the past and from the objectivity of the present.

3. Nietzsche's Thought, That of Hegel, and My Own.

Without doubt, the isolation of two thoughts from the ensemble of the thoughts of men is bizarre and unfortunate. It seems to be more of a provocation than of an inevitable position. Nietzsche and I are, in principle, two men among others, two "thinkers" held in a mass which congests the history of thought in the bourgeois world. It is common to attribute to Nietzsche a major importance but this importance, is, so to speak, suspended, it is related to nothing, if not, sometimes to reactionary, nationalist forms of violence.

Nevertheless, it seems arbitrary to affirm that only two positions coincide. Other men affirm their independence, the sovereignty of their thought in a world where, generally, values are put into play. It is banal to observe that the "absolute knowledge" of Hegel substitutes itself for God and that "absolute knowledge" does not differ from Hegel.

At the risk of seeming narrow, even when other questions are posed, I will speak only of Marx's master.

The essence of my intention is given in the will to autonomy of Hegel (for Hegel, it is a matter of the autonomy of thought, but it is impossible for Hegel to separate thought from the other contents of this world). The philosopher, associated with the dominant forms, in the same way as the spirit with the body, and in the same unity, without contestation, attains, according to Hegel, the autonomy that the master (or in Hegel's language, the sovereign) does not attain. In the final analysis, the philosopher, in effect, can will nothing which is not the dominant reality, and the latter can effectuate nothing which does not correspond with

the thought of the philosopher. The difference between my dialectical thought and that of Hegel is difficult to formulate since the contradiction can link, ceaselessly, the development of one and the other.² There is nothing that I do not follow in the ensemble of the movement which Hegel's thought represents to my eyes. But the autonomy of Hegel's "absolute knowledge" is that of discourse developing in time. Hegel situates subjectively not in the disappearance (always recommenced) of the object, but in the identity that the subject and object attain in discourse. But, in the end, the "absolute knowledge," the discourse in which subject and object are identified, dissolves itself into the nothing of non-knowledge. And the disappearing thought of non-knowledge is, itself, in the instant. On the one side, there is the identity of absolute knowledge and of this disappearing thought; on the other, this identity is not found in life. "Absolute knowledge" closes, while the movement of which I spoke, opens. Departing from "absolute knowledge," Hegel could not prevent discourse from disappearing, but it disappears in sleep.³ The disappearing thought of which I speak is the awakening and not the sleep of thought. It is found in an equality - and in communication - with the sovereign movements of all men, to the extent that the latter do not wish to take them for things.⁴

It is found especially in the moments preceded by the consciousness or the thought of non-knowledge.⁵ I speak of the discourse which enters into the night, where clarity itself plunges into the night (night - it is the definitive silence).

I speak of the discourse where thought carried to the limit of thought demands the sacrifice, or the death, of thought. This is, according to me, the meaning of the work and the life of Nietzsche. One must mark in the labyrinth of thought the paths which lead, in movements of violent gaiety, to this place of death where excessive beauty summons excessive suffering, where finally are mixed all of the cries which will never be heard, and whose impotence, in awakening, is our secret magnificence.

The cry of Nietzsche recalls the very loud cry we make in dreaming which we know, in our terror, will emit no sound. It is nevertheless a cry of joy. It is the cry of a happy subjectivity that the world of objects will no longer abuse and which knows itself reduced to nothing. It proceeds from, in the midst of an apparent despair, an unexpected movement of malice (it is the wisdom to which we can pretend). Nietzsche in himself linked the intelligible and the sensible and there is nothing else that he gave as the end of his thought than the sovereign moments which give to humanity its face. No cause, no engagement, flows from an empty generosity to which is linked no expectation. But Nietzsche is on the side of those who give, and his thought cannot be isolated from the movement that attempts to oppose to the bourgeoisie, who accumulate, the recommencement of life in the instant. Hegel was at first carried away by romanticism but he repudiated it and his break led him ultimately to support the bourgeois state (he did not break in this way with the revolutionary ideal of his youth since he supported the bourgeois state, the

functionaries of the bourgeois spirit, not the feudal state). Nietzsche himself fought romanticism, but the hatred of Wagner led him in this direction: he refused its exaggeration and its lack of rigor. He combined the dryness of the intellect and the profundity of sensible life but he remained completely on the side where calculation is ignored. The gift of Nietzsche is the gift that nothing limits. It is the sovereign gift, that of subjectivity.*

FOOTNOTES

¹If I expressed myself too long on the will to power, my thought would only appear as a detour in the prolongation of Nietzsche's thought. Nietzsche's mistake is precisely, according to me, to have poorly understood the opposition between sovereignty and power.

²I can recover myself by developing the thought of Hegel on a point. It is still not mine (that is to say, I do not have the right to oppose this thought, as another thought, to that of Hegel). Thus Alexandre Kojève does not develop another thought from that of Hegel.

³In a sense, in the sleep of action which, in comparisons to the awakening of which I speak, differs little from the physiological sleep or death.

⁴That is to say, to a certain extent, but never, no doubt, in an absolute manner.

⁵The passage from knowledge to non-knowledge is not a moment of composition; it is a decomposition of thought, departing either from the classical idea of God, or from that of "absolute knowledge." It is atheism, opposing the blind confidence in God, but without the compensation of a confidence given to things in a limited manner or the sentiment of the identity of "absolute knowledge" and of nothing: Nietzsche alone described it in the "death of God." (The Gay Science, para. 125.)

⁶Others than Nietzsche have made, impersonally, an identitical sovereign gift; thinkers who did so in equally necessary movement. They did not have any less than him the strength to insure the sovereignty of their gift. Others even, better than he, knew how to hold their breath. The only privilege of Nietzsche, which from the narrow perspective where I am placed, is essentially important, is that he linked knowledge to subjectivity and that, for this reason, his thought is irreconcilable with those who control the world (the fascist vulgarity not withstanding).

APPENDIX II

Nietzsche, Freud, Marx

Michel Foucault

This 'round table' project, when it was proposed to me, appeared to be very interesting, but also quite embarrassing. I suggest a slant: some themes concerning the interpretive techniques of Marx, Nietzsche and Freud.

In reality, behind these themes, there is a dream; this would be to make a kind of general corpus or Encyclopedia of all of the interpretive techniques that have been developed from the Greek grammarians up to our own times. Only the first few chapters of this great corpus, I believe, have been written so far.

It seems to me that one could say this as a general introduction to this idea of a history of the techniques of interpretation: that language, at any rate language in the Indo-European cultures, has always given birth to two types of suspicions:

Firstly, the suspicion that language does not always exactly say what it says. The meaning that one grasps, and

which is immediately manifested, is only perhaps in reality a lesser meaning that protects, encloses and, nevertheless, transmits another meaning; this latter would be the strongest and simultaneously the meaning 'from below'. It is what the Greeks called allegoria and hypnoia.

Secondly, language gives birth to this other suspicion: that it, in some sense, overwhelms its specifically verbal form and that there are many other things in the world that speak and are not language. After all, it is possible that nature, the sea, the rustling of trees, animals, faces, masks and crossed knives, etc., speak; perhaps there is a language that articulates itself without being verbal. This would be, if you like, very crudely, the semnion of the Greeks.

These two suspicions, that we see appear with the Greeks, have not disappeared and they are still with us since we have begun again to believe, precisely since the nineteenth century, that silent gestures, illnesses, that all of the tumult surrounding us can also speak. And more than ever we are listening to this possible language, trying to seize under words a discourse which would be more essential.

I believe that each culture, I mean each cultural form in Western civilization, has had its interpretive system, its techniques, its methods, its own ways of suspecting the language which means something other than what it says and of suspecting that there is language elsewhere than language. It would seem then that one could attempt to begin to construct the system or the tableau, as they said in the seventeenth century, of all of these interpretive systems.

In order to understand what interpretive system the nineteenth century founded and consequently what system we today still belong to, it seems to me that we must make a more distant reference to a kind of technique such as could exist, for example, in the sixteenth century. During this époque, it was resemblance which gave a place to interpretation, that was simultaneously its general site and the minimal unity that the interpretation had to deal with. Where things resembled one another, where ~~that~~ resembled something, something wanted to be said and could be deciphered; one knows very well the role played by resemblance and its satellite notions in the cosmology, the botany, the zoology and the philosophy of the sixteenth century. To our eyes, of course, all of this network of similitudes is quite confused and tangled. In fact, this corpus of resemblance in the sixteenth century was perfectly organised. There were at least five perfectly defined notions:

-The notion of suitability, conventia, which is adjustment (for example, of the soul to the body, or of animal series to the vegetable series).

-The notion of sympatheia, the sympathy which is the identity of the accidents in distinct substances.

-The notion of emulatio which is the very curious parallelism of attributes in substances or in distinct beings in such a way that the attributes are like reflections of one another in one substance and in the other. (Thus, Porta explains that the human face is, with the seven parts that he distinguishes, the emulation of the heavens with its seven

planets.)

-The notion of signatura, signature which is the image of an invisible and hidden property among the visible properties of an individual.

-And finally, of course, the notion of analogia which is the identity of the relations between two or several distinct substances.

The theory of the sign and the interpretive techniques during this epoque, rested on a perfectly clear definition of all of the possible types of resemblance and they grounded two perfectly distinct types of knowledge: the cogito which was, in a manner of speaking, the lateral passage from one resemblance to another; and the divinatio which was knowledge in depth, going from a superficial to a more profound resemblance. All of these resemblances manifest the consensus of the world that founds them. They are opposed to the simulacrum, the bad resemblance that rests on the dissension between God and the Devil.

If these interpretive techniques of the sixteenth century have been left in suspense by the evolution of Western thought in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, if the Baconian and Cartesian critiques of resemblance played a large role in putting it into suspense, the nineteenth century, and especially Marx, Nietzsche and Freud, has confronted us with a new possibility of interpretation. They have founded once more the possibility of a hermeneutics.

The first volume of Capital, texts such as The Birth of Tragedy and The Genealogy of Morals, the

Traumdeutung, put us back into the presence of interpretive techniques. And the shock effect, the kind of wound provoked in Western thought by these works probably derives from the fact that they have reconstituted before our eyes something that Marx himself referred to as 'hieroglyphs'. This has put us into an uncomfortable position since these interpretive techniques concern ourselves, since we interpreters, have used these techniques to interpret ourselves. In return, it is with these techniques that we must question these interpreters Freud, Nietzsche and Marx, so that we are continually returned to a perpetual play of mirrors.

Freud says somewhere that there are three great narcissistic wounds in Western culture: the wound imposed by Copernicus; that made by Darwin when he discovered that Man was descended from the ape; and the wound made by Freud himself when he discovered that consciousness rested on unconsciousness. I wonder if one could not say that Freud, Nietzsche and Marx, in enveloping us in a task of interpretation, which always reflects upon itself, have not constituted around us, and for us, these mirrors from which we receive the images whose unhealable wounds form our narcissism today. In any case, and it is on this point that I wish to make several suggestions, it seems to me that Marx, Nietzsche and Freud have not, in a certain way, multiplied the signs in the Western world. They have not given a new meaning to things which did not have any meaning. They have, in reality, changed the nature of the sign and modified the way in which the sign in general can be interpreted.

The first question that I want to pose is as follows: have not Marx, Freud and Nietzsche profoundly modified the space of division in which signs can be signs?

During the epoque which I took as a point of departure in the sixteenth century, signs were disposed in a homogeneous way in a space which itself was homogeneous in every direction. The signs of the earth referred to the heavens, but they also referred to the subterranean world, they referred from man to animal, from animal to plant, and reciprocally. Beginning with the nineteenth century, with Freud, Marx and Nietzsche, signs arranged themselves in a much more differentiated space, according to a dimension that one may call that of depth, on the condition of not understanding interiority by this, but, on the contrary, exteriority.

I am thinking, in particular, of the long debate that Nietzsche never ceased to conduct with depth. There is in Nietzsche a critique of ideal depth, of the depth of consciousness which he denounces as an invention of the philosophers; this depth would be the pure and interior search for the truth. Nietzsche shows how it implies resignation, hypocrisy and mask. Thus, the interpreter must, when he travels through signs in order to denounce them, descend along the vertical line and show that this depth of interiority is, in reality, something other than it says. It is necessary consequently that the interpreter descends, that he be, as he says, "the good excavator of the underworld."

But one can, in reality, only traverse this descending line, when one interprets, in order to restore the sparkling

exteriority which has been buried and masked. This is because, if the interpreter must himself go to the bottom, like an excavator, the movement of interpretation is, to the contrary, that of a more and more elevated overhang, which always allows the depth to spread out below it in a more and more visible way. And the depth is now restored as an absolutely superficial secret, in such a way that the flight of the eagle, the ascent of the mountain, all of this very important verticality in Zarathustra, is in the strict sense, the reversal of depth, the discovery that depth is only a game and a superficial fold. Accordingly, as the world becomes more profound under the gaze, one perceives that everything that has exercised the depth of man was only a child's game.

This spatiality, this game of Nietzsche's with depth, I wonder if they may be compared with the apparently different game that Marx played with platitude. The concept of 'platitude' is very important in Marx. At the beginning of *Capital*, he explains how, unlike Perseus, he must plunge into the mist in order to show that, in fact, there are no monsters or profound enigmas because everything that is profound in the bourgeois conception of money, capital and value, etc., is, in reality, mere platitude.

And, of course, one must remember the interpretive space constituted by Freud, not only in the famous topology of the consciousness and the unconscious, but equally in the rules which he formulated for the psychoanalytic consideration and the decipherment by the analyst of what is said during the course of the spoken 'chain'. One must remember the very

material spatiality, which the patient displays under the overhanging gaze of the psychoanalyst.

The second theme which I wish to propose to you, and which is besides somewhat related to the above, is that, beginning with the three men whom we have been discussing, interpretation has finally become an infinite task.

In fact, it was already infinite in the sixteenth century, but signs referred to one another simply because resemblance can only be limited. Beginning in the nineteenth century, signs linked up into an inexhaustible network, itself also infinite, not because they rested upon a resemblance without border, but because there is an irreducible gap and opening.

The incompleteness of interpretation, the fact that it is always torn apart, and that it remains suspended on the edge itself, is found, I believe, in a quite analogous way, in Marx, Nietzsche and Freud, under the form of the refusal of beginning. Refusal of the "Robinsonade" in Marx; the very important distinction in Nietzsche between the beginning and the origin; and the always unfinished character of Freud's regressive and analytic method. It is especially with Nietzsche and Freud, but to a lesser extent in Marx, that one sees the appearance of this experience, so important I believe for modern hermeneutics, that the further one goes in the interpretation, the more at the same time one approaches an absolutely dangerous region where not only will the interpretation find its point of turning back, but where it will disappear as interpretation, perhaps dragging the

interpreter with it. The always approached existence of the absolute point of interpretation would be at the same time that of a point of rupture.

In Freud, one knows very well how the discovery of the structurally open, structurally gaping character of interpretation was made. It was first made in a very allusive, very self-veiled manner in the *Traumdeutung*, when Freud analysed his own dreams and when he invoked reason of modesty or of the non-revelation of personal secret in order to interrupt himself.

In the analysis of Dora, one sees the appearance of the idea that interpretation must stop, cannot go right to the end because of something which several years later will be called the *transference*. And then the inexhaustibility of the analysis is affirmed through all of the study of the transference, in the infinite and infinitely problematic character of the relation of the analysand to the analyst, a relation which is obviously constitutive for psychoanalysis and which opens the space in which it does not cease deploying itself, without ever being able to reach a terminus.

In Nietzsche, also, it is evident that interpretation is always incomplete. What is philosophy for him, if not a type of philology that is always in suspense, a philology without end, always unfolded further, a philology which can never be absolutely fixed? Why? Because, as he states in *Beyond Good and Evil*, "to perish by absolute knowledge might be part of the foundation of being."² And yet, in *Ecce Homo*, he showed how close he was to this knowledge which is part of

the foundation of being. And again, in the Autumn of 1888 in Turin.

If one deciphers in the correspondance of Freud his perpetual worries from the moment at which he discovered psychoanalysis, one may wonder if Freud's experience was not basically very similar to Nietzsche's. What is in question in the point of rupture of interpretation, in this convergence of interpretation towards a point which renders it impossible, may well be something like the experience of madness.

An experience against which Nietzsche struggled and which fascinated him. An experience against which Freud himself fought all his life, not without anguish. This experience of madness would be the sanction of an interpretive movement which approaches the infinity of its center and which collapses, burned to a crisp.

This essential incompleteness of interpretation, I believe is linked to two other principles, also fundamental, and which, with the two above-mentioned principles, would constitute the premises of modern hermeneutics. Firstly, this one: if interpretation can never finish, it is simply because there is nothing to interpret. There is absolutely nothing original to interpret because, basically, everything is already interpretation, each sign is, in itself, not the thing that offers itself to interpretation, but the interpretation of other signs.

There is never, if you wish, an interpretandum which is not already an interpretans, so that it is a relationship of violence as much as of elucidation which is established in

interpretation. In effect, the interpretation does not clarify a matter to be interpreted, that offers itself passively; it can only grasp, and violently, an interpretation that is already there. An interpretation which it must upset, turn around and shatter with hammer blows.

One sees this already with Marx, who does not interpret the history of the relations of production, but who interprets a relation presenting itself already as an interpretation, since it presents itself as natural. In the same way, Freud does not interpret signs but interpretations. What is it, in effect, that Freud discovers under the symptoms? He does not discover, as is said, "traumatism"; he reveals phantasms, with their burden of anguish, that is to say, a kernel which is already essentially an interpretation. Anorexia, for example, does not refer back to the weaning, like a signifier referring back to a signified; rather, anorexia as a sign, a symptom to interpret, refers to the phantasms of the bad maternal breast which is itself an interpretation, a speaking body. This is why Freud is able to interpret in the language of his patients what they offer to him in the way of symptoms. His interpretation is the interpretation of an interpretation in the terms in which this interpretation is given. Thus, it is well known that Freud invented the "superego" the day when a patient said to him: "I feel a dog on myself."

It is in the same way that Nietzsche seizes interpretations which have already been seized by other interpretations. For Nietzsche, there is no original

signified. Words themselves are merely interpretations, throughout their history they interpret before being signs, and they finally only signify because they are essential interpretations. As witness the famous etymology of *agathos*.³ This is also what Nietzsche says when he states that words have been invented by the higher classes; they did not indicate a signified, they impose an interpretation. Consequently it is not because there are original and enigmatic signs that we are now dedicated to the task of interpretation, but because there are interpretations, because there is always a great tissue of violent interpretations beneath everything that speaks. It is for this reason that there are signs, signs which prescribe the interpretation of their interpretation, signs which tell us to overturn them as signs. In this sense, one can say that allegory, hyponoia, are at the root of language and before it, not something that has slid under words after the fact, in order to displace them and make them vibrate, but rather, that which gives birth to words, which makes them scintillate with a splendour that is never fixed. This is why the interpreter, for Nietzsche, is the "veridical." He is the "true," not because he seizes a sleeping truth in order to alter it, but because he pronounces the interpretation that every truth has the function of concealing. Perhaps this primacy of interpretation vis-a-vis signs is the most decisive aspect of modern hermeneutics.

The idea that the interpretation precedes the sign implies that the sign is not a simple and benevolent being as was still the case in the sixteenth century where the plethora

of signs, the fact that things resemble one another, simply proved the benevolence of God, and separated, merely by a transparent veil, the sign from the signified. On the contrary, beginning with Freud, Marx and Nietzsche, it seems to me that the sign becomes malevolent; I mean that in the sign there is a vision and will that is ambiguous and somewhat shady. And this, to the extent that the sign is already an interpretation which does not present itself as such. Signs are interpretations that try to justify themselves, and not the reverse.

This the the way money functions as it is defined in The Critique of Political Economy and especially in the first volume of Capital. It is thus that symptoms function in Freud. And, in Nietzsche's words; justice, the binary classification of good and evil, and consequently signs, are masks. In acquiring this new function of hiding the interpretation, the sign loses its simple signifying aspect that it possessed during the Renaissance. Its own thickness seems to open and can thus precipitate into the opening all of the negative concepts which had up until then remained foreign to the theory of the sign. This theory only knew the transparent and scarcely negative moment of the veil. Now, within the sign, a complete play of negative concepts, contradictions and oppositions, in short, the ensemble of this game of reactive forces that Deleuze has analysed so well in his book on Nietzsche, will be organised.

"To place the dialectic on its feet" - if this expression has a meaning, would it not be to have placed

within the thickness of the sign, in this open space without end, gaping, in this space without a real content or reconciliation, this entire play of negativity that the sign had de-activated by giving it a positive meaning?

Finally, the last trait of hermeneutics: interpretation finds itself confronted with the obligation to interpret itself ~~ad infinitum~~: to always recommence. Whence two important consequences. The first is that interpretation will be henceforth always interpretation by the "who"? One does not interpret what there is in the signified, but rather one interprets in depth: ~~who~~ posited the interpretation. The principle of the interpretation is just the interpreter, and this is perhaps the meaning that Nietzsche gave to the word "psychology." The second consequence is that interpretation has to always interpret itself and cannot avoid returning onto itself. In opposition to the time of signs, which is a time of expiration, and in opposition to the time of the dialectic which is in spite of everything linear, one has a time of interpretation which is circular. This time is obliged to pass again where it has already passed which makes the only danger faced by interpretation, a supreme danger, one that is caused paradoxically by signs. The death of interpretation is to believe that there are signs, signs that exist originally, really, primordially like coherent, systematic and pertinent marks.

The life of interpretation, on the contrary is to believe that there are only interpretations. It seems to me that it is necessary to understanding something that too many

of our contemporaries forget, that is, that hermeneutics and semiology are two ferocious enemies. A

hermeneutics that is based upon a semiology believes in the absolute existence of signs: it abandons the violence, the incompleteness, the infinity of interpretations in order to install the terror of the index and make language suspect. We recognise here Marxism as it developed after Marx. On the contrary, a hermeneutic which reflects upon itself, enters the domain of languages which do not cease to implicate themselves, this intermediate region of madness and pure language. It is here that we recognise Nietzsche.

FOOTNOTES

¹See Daybreak, Aphorism 446.

²See Beyond Good and Evil, Aphorism 39.

³See The Genealogy of Morals, Section 1, Paragraph 4
and 5.

DISCUSSION

Mr. Boshu: You have shown that, in Nietzsche, interpretation never stops and constitutes the stuff of reality itself. And more, to ~~interpret~~ the world and change it are not two different things for Nietzsche. But is it the same for Marx? In a famous text, he opposes change of the world and interpretation of the world.

Mr. Foucault: I expected that this phrase of Marx would be raised against me. All the same, if you refer to the political economy, you notice that Marx always treats it as a way of interpreting. The text on interpretation concerns philosophy and the end of philosophy. But cannot political economy, such as Marx understands it, constitute an interpretation which would not be condemned because it would be able to account for the change of the world and internalize it to a certain extent?

Mr. Boshu: Another question: Is not the essential, for Marx,

Nietzsche and Freud, the idea of a self-mystification of consciousness? Is not this the new idea which only appears in the nineteenth century and whose source is in Hegel?

Mr. Foucault: It is somewhat lax on my part to tell you that it is precisely this question that I did not wish to raise. I wished to discuss interpretation as such. Why did one begin to interpret? Was it under the influence of Hegel?

One thing that is certain is that the importance of the sign, in any case, a certain change in the importance and the value that are accorded to the sign, occurred at the end of the eighteenth century or the beginning of the nineteenth century, for reasons which are very numerous. For example, the discovery of philology in the classic sense of the term, the organisation of the network of Indo-European languages, the fact that the classificatory methods had lost their utility, all of this probably entirely re-organised our cultural world of signs. Things like the philosophy of nature, understood in a very broad sense, not only in Hegel, are without doubt the proof of this alteration in the regime of signs which occurred at this time.

Mr. Taubes: Is not M. Foucault's analysis incomplete? It did not take account of the techniques of religious exegesis which played a decisive role. And it did not follow the true historical articulation. Despite what M. Foucault has just said, it seems to me that interpretation in the nineteenth century begins with Hegel.

Mr. Foucault: I did not speak of religious interpretation, which did indeed have a great importance, because in the very brief history that I retraced, I placed myself on the side of signs and not of meaning. With regards to the break of the nineteenth century, one can quite well put it under the name of Hegel. But in the history of signs, taken in the widest sense, the discovery of the Indo-European languages, the disappearance of general grammar, the substitution of the concept of organism for that of character, are no less 'important' than Hegelian philosophy. One must not confuse the history of philosophy and the archeology of thought.

Mr. Vattimo: If I understand you correctly, Marx should be

amongst the thinkers, who like Nietzsche, discovered the infinity of interpretation. I am perfectly in accord with you with respect to Nietzsche. But with Marx, is there not necessarily a point of arrival? What does the infrastructure mean if not something that ought to be considered as the basis?

Mr. Foucault: With regard to Marx, I hardly developed my idea; I am even afraid of not being able to demonstrate it. But take, for example, The Eighteenth Brumaire: Marx never presents his interpretation as the final one. He well knows, and he says it, that one could interpret on a more profound level or on a more general level, and that there is no explanation which is absolutely basic.

Mr. Nahl: I believe that there is a war between Nietzsche and Marx, and between Nietzsche and Freud, although there are analogies. If Marx is correct, Nietzsche must be interpreted as a phenomenon of the bourgeoisie of his epoch. If Freud is correct, one must know the unconscious of Nietzsche. And thus I see a kind of war between Nietzsche and the two others.

Is it not true that we have too many interpretations. We are "ill of interpretation." No

doubt one must always interpret. But is there not also something to interpret? And I ask again: who interprets? And finally: we are mystified, but by whom? There is a deceiver, but who is this deceiver? There is always a plurality of interpretations: Marx, Freud, Nietzsche and also Gobineau... There is Marxism, psychoanalysis, and also, let us say, racial interpretations...

Mr. Foucault: The problem of the plurality of interpretations, is, I believe, rendered structurally possible by the definition itself of interpretation carried out to infinity, without the existence of an absolute point on the basis of which it is judged and decided. In such a way that this, the fact that we are condemned to be interpreted at the moment itself that we interpret, must be known by each interpreter. This plethora of interpretations is certainly a characteristic that profoundly marks Western culture at the present time.

Mr. Wahl: There are, all the same, people who are not

interpreters.

Mr. Foucault: At that moment, they repeat, they repeat the language itself.

Mr. Wahl: Why? Why say that? One could naturally interpret Claudel in several ways, in a Marxist way, a Freudian way, but despite this, the important thing is that, in any case, it is Claudel's work. With Nietzsche's work, it is more difficult to say. In relation to Marxist and Freudian interpretations, he threatens to succumb...

Mr. Foucault: Oh, I would not say that he succumbed. It is certain that in Nietzsche's interpretive techniques, there is something that is radically different, and that, consequently, one cannot inscribe him in the constituted bodies represented today by the communists on one side and the psychoanalysts on the other. The Nietzscheans do not have with regard to what they interpret...

Mr. Wahl: Are there Nietzscheans? One doubted it this morning!

Mr. Baroni: I would like to ask you if you do not think that among Nietzsche, Freud and Marx, the parallel could be the following: Nietzsche, in his interpretation seeks to analyze good sentiments and to show what they hide in reality (for example, in The Genealogy of Morals). Freud, in psychoanalysis, attempts to unveil the latent content; and here also the interpretation will be quite catastrophic for good sentiments. Finally, Marx will attack the good conscience of the bourgeoisie and will show what is at its root. So, the three interpretations appear to be dominated by the idea that there are signs to be translated, whose significance must be discovered, even if this translation is not simple and must be made by stages, perhaps to infinity.

But, there is, it seems to me, another form of interpretation in psychology which is completely opposed and which links us to the sixteenth century of which you spoke. It is that of Jung, who denounced the deprecatory poison precisely in the Freudian type of interpretation. Jung opposes the symbol to the sign,

the sign being that which must be translated in its latent content, while the symbol speaks for itself. Although I just said that Nietzsche appeared to me to be close to Freud and Marx, in fact, I believe that, here, Nietzsche can also be reconciled with Jung. For Nietzsche, as for Jung, there is an opposition between the 'ego' and the 'self'; between the small and the great reason. Nietzsche is an extremely acute and even cruel interpreter, but in him, there is a certain manner of listening to the "great reason" which associates him with Jung.

Mr. FONGAULT: You are no doubt correct.

Miss BARNONX: I wish to return to an earlier point: why have you not spoken of the role of religious exegesis? It seems to me that basically each translator of the Bible says that he speaks the meaning of God and that, consequently, he must place therein an infinite consciousness. Finally, translations evolve over time and something is revealed via this evolution of translations. It is a very complex question...

And also, before hearing you, I reflected upon the possible relations between Nietzsche and Freud. If you take the index of the complete works of Freud as

well as Jones' book, you discover very little. All of a sudden, I said to myself: the problem is the reverse. Why did Freud remain silent about Nietzsche?

Now here, there are two points. The first is that in 1908, I believe, the students of Freud, i.e., Rank and Adler, took as the subject of one of their conferences the resemblances or analogies between the theses of Nietzsche (in particular, The Genealogy of Morals) and the theses of Freud. Freud maintained an extreme reserve towards the conference, and, I believe, he said something to this effect: Nietzsche brings too many ideas at one time.

The other point is that, beginning in 1910, Freud entered into relations with Lou Salome; he no doubt made a sketch or a didactic analysis of Lou Salome. Consequently, there must have been via Lou Salome a kind of medical relation between Freud and Nietzsche. Now he would not speak of it. What is only certain is that everything that Lou Salome published later, basically, constitutes part of his interminable analysis. One must read it in this perspective. Finally, we find Freud's Moses and Monotheism, where there is a dialogue between Freud and Nietzsche of The Genealogy of Morals - you see, I am submitting problems, do you know anything more about them?

Mr. Foucault: No, I know absolutely no more about them. I was struck by the astonishing silence of Freud on Nietzsche, except for one or two phrases, even in the correspondence. It is quite enigmatic. The explanation by the analysis of Lou Salome, the fact that he could not say any more about it...

Miss Rannoux: He did not want to say any more.

Mr. Demonyes: With regard to Nietzsche, you said that the experience of madness was the closest point to absolute knowledge. May I ask you, to what extent do you think Nietzsche had the experience of madness? If you had the time, it would be interesting to pose the same question with regard to other geniuses, whether poets or writers such as Holderlin, Nerval or Maupassant, or even musicians such as Schumann, Henri Duparc or Maurice Ravel. But let us remain with Nietzsche. Have I understood you correctly? For you did certainly speak of the experience of madness. Is that really what you wanted to say?

Mr. Foucault: Yes.

Mr. Demonbynes: You did not wish to say "consciousness" or presentiment of madness. Do you really believe that one can have...that great thinkers like Nietzsche can have "the experience of madness"?

Mr. Foucault: I would say to you: yes, yes.

Mr. Demonbynes: I do not understand what that means because I am not a great genius!

Mr. Kekel: My question will be very brief, it will deal with what you call "interpretive techniques," in which you seem to see, I would not say a substitute, but in any case, a successor, a possible succession to philosophy. Do you not believe that techniques for the interpretation of the world are above all therapeutic techniques, techniques for healing in the large sense of the world: of society in Marx, of the individual in

Freud and of humanity in Nietzsche.

Mr. Foucault: I think, in effect, that the meaning of interpretation, in the nineteenth century, is certainly similar to what you understand by therapeutic. In the sixteenth century, interpretation found its meaning in revelation, salvation. I will simply cite a historian named Garcia who in 1860 said the following: "In our time, health has replaced salvation."

APPENDIX III

The Genealogical Writing of History:
On Some Aporias in Foucault's Theory of Power

Jurgen Habermas

Foucault saw himself as a 'happy positivist' because he made three reductions which have major methodological consequences. The understanding of meaning by an interpreter participating in discourses is reduced in the opinion of the ethnological observer, to the explanation of discourses. Validity claims are functionalistically reduced to effects of power. 'Ought' is naturalistically reduced to 'is'. I speak of reductions because the internal aspects of meaning, truthfulness and value can in no way be completely dissolved into the externally grasped aspects of power practices. The concealed and repressed return and assert their own right -- first of all on the metaphysical level. Foucault falls into aporias as soon as he wants to explain how one should understand what the genealogical historian does. The so-called objectivity of knowledge is then precisely put into question by the presentism of a writing of history which

remains hermeneutically restricted to its starting situation; by the relativism of a present-connected analysis which can understand itself only as a context-dependent practical enterprise; and by the partiality of a critique whose normative basis cannot be demonstrated. Although Foucault is of course honest enough to confess these inconsequences, he certainly draws no consequences from them.

Foucault wants to eliminate the hermeneutical problematic and with it all self-relatedness, which comes into play with a meaning-understanding approach to the object domain. The genealogical historian should not proceed as the hermeneuticist. He should not try to understand what actors respectively do and think within a context of traditionality which is intimately linked to their self-understanding. He ought rather to explain the horizon within which such expressions can appear as especially meaningful, on the basis of grounding practices. So, for example, he will not relate the prohibition of gladiatorial contests in late Rome to the humanizing influx of Christianity, but rather to the supersession of one power formation by another.¹ In the horizon of the new power complex of post-Constantinian Rome it is, for example, very natural that the ruler no longer treats the people as a flock of protected sheep, but rather like a troop of children requiring education -- and one ought never to cruelly abandon children. The discourses by which the establishment or abolition of the gladiatorial contests were grounded, thus count only as objectifications of an

unconsciously grounded praxis of domination. As the source of all meaning such practices are themselves meaningless. The historian must approach them from outside in order to grasp them in their structure. For this one does not need any hermeneutical understanding but rather only the concept of history as a meaningless kaleidoscopic transformation of the form of the discursive totalities. These totalities have nothing in common with one another except this determination -- that they are above all protuberances of power.

Contrary to this objectivistic self-understanding, the first look in any of Foucault's books shows that the radical historicist, too, can only explain technologies of power and practices of domination in comparison with one another and in no way as totalities in themselves. Nevertheless, the viewpoints under which he makes comparisons are inevitably combined with his own hermeneutical starting point. This is shown, inter alia, in the fact that Foucault himself cannot evade the compulsion towards the implicit 'present-relatedness' of the classification of epochs. Now whether it is the history of madness, of sexuality, or of punishment, the power formations of the Renaissance, of the middle ages, and of the classical age refers always to the disciplinary power, to the bio-politics that Foucault takes to be the fate of our present time. In the conclusion of The Archaeology of Knowledge, he himself makes this objection, only indeed to avoid it. "This is because, for the moment, and as far ahead as I can see, my discourse, far from

determining the locus within which it speaks, is avoiding the ground on which it could find support".² Foucault himself is conscious of the aporia of a process which wants to be objectivistic and must remain diagnostical of its time, but he does not give any answer to it.

Foucault only yields to the melody of an avowed irrationalism in the context of his interpretation of Nietzsche. Here, namely, the self-extinguishing or the "sacrifice of the subject of knowledge", which the radical historicist must insist upon only because of the objectivity of the pure structural analysis, to the contrary experiences an ironically different interpretation: "In appearance, or rather, according to the mark it bears, historical consciousness is neutral, devoid of passions, and committed solely to the truth. But if it examines itself and if, more generally, it interrogates the various forms of scientific consciousness in history, it finds that all these forms and transformations are aspects of the will to knowledge: instinct, passion, the inquisitor's devotion, cruel subtlety, and malice. It discovers the violence of a position that sides against those who are happy in their ignorance... The historical analysis of this rancorous will to knowledge reveals that all knowledge rests upon injustice (that there is no right, not even in the act of knowing, to truth or a foundation for the truth)."³ This effort to explain the discursive and power formations under the remorseless, objectivizing look of a distant analyst with no native

understanding, but only out of itself, turns into its opposite. The exposure of the objectivistic illusion of every will to knowledge leads to the agreement with a writing of history narcissistically aligned with the viewpoint of historian, which instrumentalizes the view of the past for the needs of the present: "effective history composes a genealogy of history as the vertical projection of its position."

Foucault's history must lead to an acute presentism as well as to relativism. His research gets caught in exactly this self-relatedness which he wants to eliminate by a naturalistic treatment of the problematic of validity. The genealogical writing of history is supposed to make accessible to an empirical analysis practices of power precisely in their discourse-constituting capacity. From this perspective the truth claims are not only limited to the discourses in which they respectively show up. They exhaust their meaning in the functional contribution they make to the self-assertion of a specific discourse-totality. The meaning of validity claims, therefore, lies within the effects of power which they have. On the other hand, this basic assumption of power is self-referring; it must, if it is valid, destroy the foundation of validity of the research which it inspires. But if now the truth claim which Foucault himself links with his genealogy of knowledge really were illusory and reduced to the effects which this theory has among its adherents, then the whole enterprise of a critical exposure of the human sciences would be pointless.

Yet Foucault still pursues the genealogical writing of history with the serious intention of creating a science which is superior to the obsolete human sciences. If its superiority could not express itself in such a way that something more convincing replaces the convicted pseudo-sciences; if its superiority would only express itself with the effect of the actual replacement of the hitherto dominant discourses -- then Foucault's theory would exhaust itself in a politics of theory, and indeed in a theory-political goal which would overwhelm the strength of a one-man enterprise no matter how heroic. Foucault is aware of this. Therefore he wishes to distinguish the genealogy from all other human sciences in a way which is compatible with the assumptions of his own theory. To this end he applies the genealogical writing of history to itself; in its own history of emergence, the difference, which would prove its merit vis-a-vis all of the other human sciences, should be revealed.

The genealogy of knowledge has to make use of the disqualified kinds of knowledge from which the established sciences demarcate themselves. It offers the medium for the revolt of the subjugated sciences. Therein Foucault does not see the sediment of scholarly knowledge which is simultaneously veiled and present, but rather the never sufficiently articulated experiences and the unofficial knowledges of the subordinated groups. It is the implicit knowledge of the 'people' which forms the sediment in a system of power. It is they who experience in their own bodies a

technology of power, be it as sufferers or as officials of the machinery of suffering. For example, the knowledge of those in mental hospitals and their nurses, delinquents and wardens, concentration camp inmates and guards, blacks and homosexuals, women and witches, vagabonds, children and the mad. The genealogy does its digging in the dark ground of this local, marginal and alternative knowledge which "obtains its strength only out of the hardness with which it resists everything which surrounds it." This repertory of knowledge is normally disqualified as "not appropriate or sufficiently articulated: naive kinds of knowledge at the bottom of the hierarchy ranging below the necessary level of knowledge and scientificity."⁵ In the repertory sleeps the "historical knowledge of the struggles". The genealogy which lifts these local memories to the level of "erudite knowledge" takes the side of those who resist the specific practices of power. From this position of counter-power it gains a perspective which is supposed to over-reach the perspective of the rulers. From this perspective it is supposed to transcend all validity claims which are constituted within the magic circle of power. The connection with the disqualified knowledge of the people is supposed to give superiority to the reconstruction work of the "genealogist," which gave the essential strength to the critique which has been practiced by the discourses over the last 15 years."

This reminds one of an argument of the early Lukacs: according to him, Marxist theory owes its ideological

impartiality to the privileged possibility of knowledge of an experiential perspective which was formed on the basis of the position of the wage-laborers in the production process. However, the argument was only valid in the framework of an historical philosophy which wanted to find the common interest in the proletarian interest and the self-consciousness of the species in the class consciousness of the proletariat. Foucault's concept of power does not allow for such a historical-philosophical, knowledge-privileged concept of counter-power. Each counter-power moves within the horizon of the power which it attacks, and transforms itself as soon as it is victorious into a complex of power which provokes a new counter-power. The genealogy of knowledge cannot break this cycle while it supports the revolt of the disqualified knowledges and mobilizes the subjugated knowledge against "the constraint of a theoretical, unified, formal and scientific discourse." Whoever defeats the theoretical avant garde of today and overcomes the existing hierarchy of knowledge will be the theoretical avant garde of tomorrow and will erect a new hierarchy of knowledge. In any case he cannot maintain any superiority for his knowledge on the basis of truth claims which would transcend local agreements.

The attempt to spare genealogical history a relativistic self-denial with its own means fails. When the genealogy becomes aware of its own descent out of the alliance of erudite knowledge with disqualified knowledge, it only finds confirmed that the validity of counter-discourses counts

neither more nor less than the ones of the ruling discourses -- they too are nothing but the effects of power which they cause. Foucault sees this dilemma but he again avoids an answer. He again he confesses to a militant perspectivism only in the context of his Nietzsche reception: "Historians take unusual pains to erase the elements in their work which reveal this grounding in a particular time and place, their preferences in a controversy -- the unavoidable obstacles of their passion. Nietzsche's version of historical sense is explicit in its perspective and acknowledges its system of injustice. Its perception is slanted, being a deliberate appraisal, affirmation, or negation; it reaches the lingering and poisonous traces in order to prescribe the best antidote." ("Nietzsche, Genealogy, History").

Finally we have to examine if Foucault succeeds in avoiding the crypto-normativism of which, according to him, the human sciences which insist on being value free are guilty. The genealogical writing of history should, in a strictly descriptive attitude, reach back behind the totalities of discourse within which alone there is a dispute over norms and values. It leaves out normative validity claims as well as claims of propositional truth and it abstains from the question of whether some discourses and power formations could be more justified than others. Foucault opposes the invitation to take sides; in the interview "Power and Sex" he derides the "leftist dogma" of understanding power as evil, ugly, sterile and dead -- and

"what power is exercised upon as right, good and rich". For there is no "right side". Behind this is the conviction that politics, which since 1789 has been under the sign of revolution, has reached the end, that theories which have worked through the relation of theory and praxis are outdated. Now even this proof of value freedom of a second degree is by no means value free. Foucault sees himself as a dissident who resists modern thinking and the humanistically-disguised disciplinary powers. Commitment marks his his learned essays also in style and diction; the critical gesture governs the theory no less than the self-definition of the whole work.

Thereby Foucault distinguishes himself from the committed positivism of Max Weber who wishes to separate a decisionistically chosen and openly declared value basis from a value free analysis. Foucault's critique is based (according to an observation of Nancy Fraser) more on a post-modern rhetoric of representation than on the post-modern assumptions of his theory. On the other hand, Foucault distinguishes himself also from the critique of ideology of Marx who exposes the humanistic self-understanding of modernity by asking for the normative content of bourgeois ideals. Foucault does not intend to continue this counter-discourse which modernity has led with itself since its beginnings; he does not want to refine and turn against the pathology of modernity, the language game of modern political theory (with its basic concepts of autonomy and heteronomy, morality and legality, emancipation and repression) -- he

wants to transcend modernity along with its language game. His resistance is not supposed to be justified as the mirror of the existing power. For Foucault, "resistance must be like power: just as inventive, as mobile and as productive. It must be organized and stabilized like power is. It must, like power, come from below and be strategically distributed."

The dissidence draws its only justification from the fact that it sets out traps to the humanistic discourse, without engaging it; Foucault derives this strategical self-understanding from the properties of the modern power formations themselves. This disciplinary power, whose local, steady, productive and all-penetrating, capillary-like character he describes, settles down more into bodies than heads. It has the shape of a bio-power which takes possession more of bodies than of spirits and which subjugates the body to a remorseless, normalizing constraint -- without needing a normative basis. The disciplinary power functions without a detour through a necessarily false consciousness that would have been formed in humanistic discourses and would, therefore, be exposed to the criticism of counter-discourses. The discourses of the human sciences fuse with the practices of their application to form an opaque complex of power which makes any critique of ideology rebound. The humanistic critique as in Marx or Freud, which bases itself on the obsolete contrast between legitimate and illegitimate power, conscious and unconscious motives, and fights against instances of exploitation, suppression, repression, etc.,

rather is in danger of reinforcing the humanism that has been brought from heaven down to earth and has congealed into a normalizing force.

Now this argument might suffice to conceptualize genealogical history no longer as a critique, but as a tactic, a means of conducting a war against a normatively invulnerable formation of power. If the only concern is the mobilization of counter-power, tricky struggles and confrontations, the question arises why we should resist this ever-present power which circulates through the body of modern society instead of submitting to it. Then the means of struggle of the genealogy would also be superfluous. It is evident that the value-free analysis of strong and weak points of the enemy is useful for he who wishes to fight, but why fight?: "Why is struggle preferable to submission? Why ought domination to be resisted? Only with the introduction of normative notions could he begin tell us what is wrong with the modern power/knowledge regime and why we ought to oppose it."

Once, in an interview, Foucault could not evade the question; on this one occasion he gave a vague reference to post-modern criteria of justice: "In order to advance against the disciplines, in the fight with the disciplinary powers, one should not take the direction of the old right of sovereignty, but rather ought to move towards a new right which would be liberated not only from disciplines but at the same time from the principle of sovereignty."

Despite the fact that moral and right conceptions have been developed in connection with Kant, which no longer serve to justify the sovereignty of a power-monopolizing state, Foucault himself does not address this theme. Yet if one tries to obtain the implicitly used standards out of the indictments against the disciplinary powers, one encounters known determinations from the explicitly rejected normativistic language game. The asymmetrical relation between rulers and ruled as well as the reifying power technologies which damage the moral and bodily integrity of subjects unable to speak and act are also objectionable to Foucault. Nancy Fraser has proposed an interpretation which does not show a way out of this dilemma but explains where the crypto-normativism of this history, which declares itself value-free, comes from.⁶

Nietzsche's concept of will to power and Bataille's concept of sovereignty take in more or less openly the normative content of the experience of aesthetic modernity. In contrast, Foucault takes his concept of power from the empiricist tradition; he has stripped it of its quality of being a simultaneously frightening and charming object from which the aesthetic avant-garde from Baudelaire to the surrealists have drawn. Nevertheless, power, in the hands of Foucault maintains a literally aesthetic relation to bodily perception, to the painful experience of the tortured body. This moment becomes determining for power formations, which owe the name of bio-power to the fact that it penetrates deep

into the reified body and occupies the whole organism in the subtle ways of scientific objectification thus creating a subjectivity through truth technologies. This form of socialization, which eliminates all naturalness and transforms creaturely life as a whole into a substrate of the power process, is called bio-power. The normatively relevant asymmetry that Foucault finds expressed in power complexes, is not between the ruling will and forced submission, but between the power processes and those bodies which are ground up in them. It is always the body which is tortured and which is the scene of the revenge of the sovereign; which is seized by drill, broken up into a field of mechanical forces and manipulated; which is objectified and controlled by the human sciences and at the same time stimulated in its covetousness and exposed. If Foucault's concept of power maintains a remnant of aesthetic content then it owes it to the vitalistic life-philosophical version of the self-experience of the body. At the end of the first volume of The History of Sexuality one finds the unusual phrase: "We need to consider the possibility that one day, perhaps, in a different economy of bodies and of pleasures, people will no longer quite understand how the ruses of sexuality, and the power that sustains its organization, were able to subject us to that austere monarchy of sex."

This other economy of bodies and pleasures of which we can in the meantime only dream -- with Bataille -- would not again be an economy of power but a post-modern theory which

could render account of the standards of critique which implicitly have always already been used. Until then the resistance can take its motive but not its justification from the signals of body language, from the non-verbalized language of the tortured body that refuses to be sublimated into discourse.'

Foucault, however, may not make this interpretation, which surely finds support in some of his obvious feelings, his own. Otherwise he would have to give, like Bataille, a status to the other of reason which, since Madness and Civilization, he has refused to do -- and with good reason. He defends himself against a naturalistic metaphysics which idealizes counter-power into a pre-discursive referent. In response to Bernard-Henri Levy in 1977 he states: "What you call naturalism refers, I believe, to two things. A certain theory, the idea that under power with its acts of violence and its artifice, we should be able to rediscover the things themselves in their primitive vivacity: behind the asylum walls, the spontaneity of madness; through the penal system, the generous fever of delinquency; under the sexual interdict, the freshness of desire." Because Foucault cannot accept this life-philosophical conception, he likewise cannot answer the question about the normative basis of his critique.

FOOTNOTES

¹Paul Veyne deals with this example in his Der Eisberg der Geschichte: Foucault revolutioniert die Geschichte (Berlin: Merve, 1981).

²M. Foucault, The Archaeology of Knowledge, p. 205.

³M. Foucault, Language, Counter-Memory, Practice, pp. 162-163.

⁴Ibid., p. 157.

⁵Nancy Fraser, "Foucault on Modern Power," Praxis International 1:3 (1981). Vol.1, N.3. 1981.

⁶In a manuscript entitled, "Foucault's Body- Language: A Post-humanist Political Rhetoric."

⁷Peter Sloterdijk develops this alternative with regard to the silent, bodily expressive forms of protest of the cynics, in Kritik der zynischen Vernunft, 2 vols. (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1982).

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Works by Michel Foucault

Books (in chronological order)

Foucault, Michel. Maladie mentale et psychologie (1954). 2nd rev. ed. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1962. Translated by Alan Sheridan as Mental Illness and Psychology. New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1976.

----- Folie et déraison: Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique. Paris: Plon, 1961; abridged ed., 1964. Translated by Richard Howard from the 1964 edition as Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason. New York: Mentor Books, 1965. Reissued from the 1961 edition as Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique, with two appendices: "Mon corps, ce papier, ce feu" and "La folie, l'absence d'oeuvre." Paris: Gallimard, 1972.

----- Naissance de la clinique: Une Archéologie du regard médical. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1963. Translated by A.M. Sheridan as The Birth of the Clinic: An Archeology of Medical Perception. New York: Vintage Books, 1973.

----- Raymond Roussel. Paris: Gallimard, 1963.

----- Les Mots et les choses: Une Archéologie des sciences humaines. Paris: Gallimard, 1966. Translated by Alan Sheridan Smith as The Order of Things: An Archeology of the Human Sciences. New York: Random House, 1970.

----- L'Archéologie du savoir. Paris: Gallimard, 1969. Translated by A. M. Sheridan Smith as The Archaeology of Knowledge. New York: Random House, 1970.

----- L'Ordre du discours: Leçon inaugurale au Collège de France prononcée le 2 décembre 1970. Paris: Gallimard, 1971. Translated by Robert Swyer as "The Discourse on Language," appendix to The Archaeology of Knowledge. New York: Harper and Row, 1972.

----- Ceci n'est pas une pipe: Deux lettres et quatre dessins de René Magritte. Paris: Pata Morgana, 1973.

Foucault, Michel, ed. Moi, Pierre Rivière, ayant égorgé ma mère, ma soeur et mon frère...: Un cas de parricide au XIXe siècle. In collaboration with Blandine Barret-Kriegel et al. Paris: Gallimard, 1973. Translated by Frank Jellinek as I, Pierre Rivière, having slaughtered my mother, my sister and my brother...: A Case of Parricide in the Century. New York: Pantheon, 1977.

Foucault, Michel. Surveiller et punir: Naissance de la Prison. Paris: Gallimard, 1975. Translated by Alan Sheridan as Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison. New York: Pantheon, 1977.

----- Histoire de la sexualité. I: La Volonté de savoir. Paris: Gallimard, 1976. Translated by Robert Hurley as The History of Sexuality, Volume I: An Introduction. New York: Pantheon, 1976.

Foucault, Michel, et al. Les Machines à guérir (aux origines de l'hôpital moderne). Paris: Institut de l'Environnement, 1976.

Foucault, Michel. Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews. Edited, with an introduction, by Donald Bouchard. Translated by Donald Bouchard and Sherry Simon. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977.

----- Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977. Edited, with a preface, by Colin Gordon. Translated by Colin Gordon, Leo Marshall, John Mepham, and Kate Soper. Brighton, Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1980.

Foucault, Michel, et al. Le désordre des familles. Paris: Gallimard, 1982.

Foucault, Michel. L'Usage des plaisirs. Histoire de la sexualité. Vol. II. Paris: Gallimard, 1984.

----- Le Souci de soi. Histoire de la sexualité. Vol. III. Paris: Gallimard, 1984.

----- . The Foucault Reader. Edited by Paul Rabinow. New York: Pantheon Books, 1984.

Translations (in chronological order)

Weizsaecker, Viktor von. Le Cycle de la structure. Translated from the German by Michel Foucault and Daniel Rocher. Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1953.

Kant, Emmanuel. Anthropologie du point de vue pragmatique. Translated from the German by Michel Foucault. 2nd ed. Paris: J. Vrin, 1970.

Introductions and Prefaces (in chronological order)

Foucault, Michel. Introduction and notes to Le Rêve et l'Existence, by Ludwig Binswanger. Translated from the German by Jacqueline Verdeaux. Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1954.

----- . Introduction to Rousseau: Juge de Jean-Jacques. Dialogues, by Jean Jacques Rousseau. Paris: Armand Colin, 1962.

Foucault, Michel, and Deleuze, Gilles. Introduction to Le Gai Savoir: Fragments posthumes (1881-1882), by Friedrich Nietzsche. Translated by Pierre Klossowski. Paris: Gallimard, 1967.

Foucault, Michel. Preface to Grammaire générale et raisonnée (1660), by Antoine Arnauld and Claude Lancelot. New ed. Paris: Republications Paulet, 1969.

----- . Forward to Oeuvres complètes, Vol. I: Premier écrits, 1922-1940, by Georges Bataille. Paris: Gallimard, 1970.

----- . "7 propos sur le 7^e ange." Preface to La Grammaire logique, by Jean-Pierre Brisset. Paris: Claude Tchou, 1970.

----- . Preface to La Tentation de Sainte Antoine, by G. Flaubert. Paris: Le livre de poche, 1972.

----- . Preface to De la prison à la révolte, by Serge Livrozet. Paris: Mercure de France, 1973.

- . Introduction to Le Désire est partout (Gérard Fromanger). Exhibition catalogue. Paris: Galerie Jeanne Bucher, 1975.
- . Preface to En attendant le grand soir, by Wiaz. Paris: Denoel, 1976.
- . Preface to L'Affaire Mirval ou Comment le récit abolit le crime, by Bernard Cuau. Paris: Les Presses d'Aujourd'hui, 1976.
- . Preface to Le Panoptique, by Jeremy Bentham. Paris: Belfond, 1977.
- . Preface to Les Juges kaki, by Mireille Debard and Jean-Luc Hennig. Paris: Moreau, 1977.
- . Preface to My Secret Life, by Frank Harris. Paris: Editions les formes du secret, 1977.
- . Preface to Anti-Oedipus: Le capitalisme et la schizophrénie, by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. Translated by Robert Hurley, Helen Lane, and Mark Seem as Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia. New York: Viking Press, 1977.
- . Introduction to Herculine Barbin dite Alexina B. (1978) Translated by Richard McDougall as Herculine Barbin: Being the Recently Discovered Memoirs of a Nineteenth-Century Hermaphrodite. New York: Pantheon, 1980.
- . Introduction to On the Normal and the Pathological, by Georges Canguilhem. Translated by Carol Fawcett. Boston: D. Reidel, 1978.
- . Preface to Ennemi de l'Etat, by Pierre Bruckner. Paris: Pensée Sauvage, 1979.

Articles (in chronological order)

- Foucault, Michel. "Le 'non' du père" (on Friedrich Holderlin). Critique 178 (March 1962): 195-209. Translated as "The Father's 'No'." In Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews. Interviews, Edited by Donald Bouchard, pp. 68-86. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977.

- . "Un si cruel savoir." Critique 182 (July 1962): 597-611.
- . "Le Langage à l'infini," Tel quel 15 (Autumn 1963): 44-53. Translated as "Language to Infinity." In Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews. Edited by Donald Bouchard, pp. 53-67. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977.
- . "Préface à la transgression" (on Georges Bataille). Critique 195-196 (August-September 1963): 751-69. Translated as "A Preface to Transgression." In Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews. Edited by Donald Bouchard, pp. 29-52. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977.
- . "Distance, aspect, origin." (1963). In Théorie d'ensemble. Edited by Philippe Sollers, pp. 11-24. Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1968.
- . "Guetter le jour qui vient" (on Roger Laporte), La nouvelle revue française 130 (October 1963): 709-16.
- . "La prose d'Actéon" (on Pierre Klossowski). La nouvelle revue française 135 (March 1964): 444-59.
- . "Le Langage de l'espace." Critique 203 (April 1964): 378-82.
- . "Nietzsche, Freud, Marx." In Nietzsche, pp. 183-200. Proceedings of the Seventh International Philosophical Colloquium of the Cahiers de Royaumont, 4-8 July 1964. Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1967.
- . "La pensée du dehors" (On Maurice Blanchot). Critique 229 (June 1966): 523-46.
- . "Un 'fantastique' de bibliothèque" (on Flaubert). Cahiers Renaud-Barrault 59 (March 1967): 7-30. Translated as "Fantasia of the Library." In Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews. Edited by Donald Bouchard, pp. 87-109. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977.
- . "Réponse à une question." Esprit 371 (May 1968): 850-74. Translated by Anthony Nazzaro as "History, Discourse and Discontinuity." Salmagundi 20 (Summer-Fall 1972): 225-48.
- . "Réponse au Cercle d'épistémologie." Cahiers pour l'analyse 9 (Summer 1968): 9-40.
- . "Qu'est-ce qu'un auteur?" Bulletin de la Société française de Philosophie 63 (1969): 73-104. Translated as "what is an Author?" In

Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews. Edited by Donald Bouchard, pp. 113-38. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977.

Michel Foucault and Georges Canquilha. "Hommage à Jean Hyppolite." Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale 74 (1969): 129-36.

Foucault, Michel. "Croftie et multiplier" (on Francois Jacob). Le Monde (15-16 November 1970): 13.

----- . "Theatrum Philosophicum" (on Gilles Deleuze). Critique 282 (November 1970): 885-908. Translated under the same title in Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews. Edited by Donald Bouchard, pp. 165-96. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977.

----- . "Nietzsche, la généalogie, l'histoire." In Hommage à Jean Hyppolite, by Suzanne Bachelard et al., pp. 145-72. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1971. Translated as "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History." In Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews. Edited by Donald Bouchard, pp. 139-64. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977.

----- . "La Naissance des prisons." Le Nouvel Observateur 536 (17 February 1975): 69-86.

----- . "Two Lectures" (Collège de France, 7 and 14 January 1976). Translated by Kate Soper. In Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977. Edited by Colin Gordon, pp. 78-108. Brighton, Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1980.

----- . "L'Occident et la vérité du sexe." Le Monde (5 November 1976). Translated by Laurence Winters as "The West and the Truth of Sex." Sub-Stance 20 (1978): 5-8.

----- . "Inutile de se soulever?" Le Monde (11 May 1979): pp. 1-2.

----- . "Omnes et Singulum." The Tanner Lectures on Human Values (1981): 224-54. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1981.

Interviews (in chronological order)

Bellour, Raymond, interviewer. "Entretien avec Michel Foucault" (1966). In Le Livre des autres, by Raymond

Bellour, pp. 135-144. Paris: Editions de l'Herne, 1971.

Bellour, Raymond, interviewer. "Deuxième entretien avec Michel Foucault" (1967). In Le Livre des autres, by Raymond Bellour, pp. 189-207. Paris: Editions de l'Herne, 1971.

Caruso, Paolo, interviewer. "Conversazione con Michel Foucault" (1967). In Conversazione con Claude Lévi-Strauss, Michel Foucault, Jacques Lacan, by Paolo Caruso, pp. 91-131. Milan: Mursia, 1969.

El Kabbach, Jean-Pierre, interviewer. "Foucault répond à Sartre." La Quinzaine littéraire 46 (1-15 March 1968): 20-22.

Simon, John K., interviewer. "A Conversation with Michel Foucault," Partisan Review 38 (1971): 193-201.

Chomsky, Noam, and Foucault, Michel. "Human Nature: Justice versus Power" (1971). In Reflexive Water: The Basic Concerns of Mankind. Edited by Fons Elders, pp. 133-197. London: Souvenir Press, 1974.

Burnier, Michel-Antoine, and Graine, Philippe, interviewers. In C'est demain la veille. Edited, with an introduction by Michel-Antoine Burnier, pp. 19-43. Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1973. Translated as "Revolutionary Action: 'Until Now'." In Language, Counter-Memory, Selected Essays and Interviews. Edited by Donald Bouchard, pp. 218-33. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977.

Foucault, Michel. "Sur la justice populaire: Débat avec les Maos." Les Temps Modernes 310 B15 (1972): 335-66. Translated by John Nephew as "On Popular Justice: A Discussion with Maoists." In Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977. Edited by Colin Gordon, pp. 1-36. Brighton, Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1980.

Foucault, Michel, and Deleuze, Gilles. "Les intellectuels et le pouvoir." L'Arc 49 (March 1972): 3-10. Translated as "Intellectuals and Power." In Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews. Edited by Donald Bouchard, pp. 205-17. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977.

Brochier, Jean-Jacques, interviewer. "Entretien sur la prison: le livre et sa méthode." Magazine Littéraire 101 (June 1975): 27-33. Translated by Colin Gordon as "Prison Talk." In Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977. Edited by

Colin Gordon, pp. 37-54. Brighton, Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1980.

Foucault, Michel. "Pouvoir et Corps" (1975). Translated by Colin Gordon as "Body/Power." In Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977. Edited by Colin Gordon, pp. 55-62. Brighton, Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1980.

Karol, K.S., interviewer. "Michel Foucault: Crimes et châtements en U.R.R.S. et ailleurs...." Le Nouvel Observateur 585 (26 January 1976): 34-37. Translated in abridged form by Mollie Horwitz as "The Politics of Crime." Partisan Review 43 (1976): 453-59.

Fontana, Alessandro, and Pasquino, Pasquale, interviewers. "Intervista a Michel Foucault" (1977). Translated by Colin Gordon as "Truth and Power." In Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977. Edited by Colin Gordon, pp. 109-133. Brighton, Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1980.

Pinas, Lucette, interviewer. "Les rapports de pouvoir passent à l'intérieur des corps." La Quinzaine littéraire 247 (1-15 January 1977): 4-6. Translated by Leo Marshall as "The History of Sexuality." In Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977. Edited by Colin Gordon, pp. 109-133. Brighton, Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1980.

Foucault, Michel. "Pouvoirs et Strategies." Les Revoltes Logiques 4 (1977): 89-97. Translated by Leo Marshall as "The History of Sexuality." In Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977. Edited by Colin Gordon, pp. 134-145. Brighton, Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1980.

Barou, Jean-Pierre, and Perrot, Michelle, interviewers. "Un entretien avec Michel Foucault: L'oeil du pouvoir." Nouvelles littéraires 2578 (April 1977): 6-7. Translated by Colin Gordon as "The Eye of Power." In Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977. Edited by Colin Gordon, pp. 146-65. Brighton, Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1980.

Lévy, Bernard-Henri, interviewer. "Foucault: Non au sexe roi." Le Nouvel Observateur 644 (March 1977): 92 ff. Translated by David Parent as "Power and Sex: An Interview with Michel Foucault." Telos 32 (Summer 1977): 152-61.

Foucault, Michel. "Le Jeu de Michel Foucault" (1977).
Translated by Colin Gordon as "The Confession of the
Flesh." In Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews
and Other Writings, 1972-1977. Edited by Colin Gordon,
pp. 194-228. Brighton, Sussex: The Harvester Press,
1980.

Raulet, Gérard, interviewer. "Structuralism and Post-
Structuralism." Telos 55 (Spring 1983): 195-211.

Michel Foucault. "Le retour de la morale." Les
Nouvelles (June 28, 1984): 40-44.

Secondary Works on Michel Foucault

Books on Michel Foucault

Cotesta, Vittorio. Linguaggio, Potere, Individuo: Saggio su
Michel Foucault. Bari: Dedalo Libri, 1979.

Herbert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow. Michel Foucault: Beyond
Structuralism and Hermeneutics. Chicago: The
University of Chicago Press, 1982.

Guedez, Annie. Foucault. Paris: Editions Universitaires,
1972.

Kremer-Marietti, Angele. Foucault et l'archéologie du savoir
Paris: Seghers, 1974.

Lemert, Charles, and Garth, Gillian. Michel Foucault: Social
Theory and Transgression. New York: Columbia
University Press, 1982.

Major-Poetzl, Pamela. Michel Foucault's Archaeology of Western
Culture: Toward a New Science of History. Chapel
Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983.

Racevskis, Karlis. Michel Foucault and the Subversion of
the Intellect. Ithaca: Cornell University Press,
1983.

Sheridan, Alan. Michel Foucault: The Will to Truth. London:
Tavistock Publications, 1980.

Articles on Michel Foucault

Arac, Jonathan. "The Function of Foucault at the Present Time." Humanities in Society 3 (Winter 1980): 73-86.

Auzias, Jean-Marie. "Le non-structuralisme de Michel Foucault." In Le structuralisme, pp. 128-46. 3rd ed. Paris: Seghers, 1975.

Baudrillard, Jean. "Forgetting Foucault." Translated by Nicole Dufresne. Humanities in Society 3 (Winter 1980): 87-111.

Bove, Paul A. "The End of Humanism: Michel Foucault and the Power of Disciplines." Humanities in Society 3 (Winter 1980): 23-40.

----- . "Mendacious Innocents, or, the Modern Genealogist as Conscientious Intellectual: Nietzsche, Foucault, Said." Boundary 2 9/10 (Spring/Fall 1981): 359-88.

----- . "Intellectuals at War: Michel Foucault and the Analytics of Power." Substance 37/38 (1983): 36-55.

Brodeur, Jean-Paul. "McDonnell on Foucault: Supplementary Remarks." Canadian Journal of Philosophy 7 (September 1977): 55-68.

Brown, P. L. "Epistemology and Method: Althusser, Foucault, Derrida." Cultural Hermeneutics 3 (August 1975): 147-63.

Carroll, David. "The Subject of Archaeology or the Sovereignty of the Episteme." Modern Language Notes 93 (May 1978): 695-722.

Cavallari, Hector Mario. "'Savoir' and 'Pouvoir': Michel Foucault's Theory of Discursive Practice." Humanities in Society 3 (Winter 1980): 55-72.

Connolly, William E. "Discipline, Politics, and Ambiguity." Political Theory II (August 1983): 325-41.

Cranston, Maurice. "Michel Foucault." Encounter 30 (June 1968): 34-42.

D'Amico, Robert. "Four Books on or by Michel Foucault." Telos 36 (Summer 1978): 169-183.

Dews, Peter. "The 'Nouvelle Philosophie' and Foucault." Economy and Society 8 (May 1979): 128-71.

----- . "Power and Subjectivity in Foucault." New Left Review N. 144 (April/May 1984): 72-95.

Droit, Roger-Pol. "Un relativism absolu." Le Monde (June 27, 1984): 10.

Pelman, Shoshana. "De Foucault à Nerval ou 'Le livre infaisable'." In La folie et la chose littéraire, pp. 61-77. Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1978.

Fraser, Nancy. "Foucault on Modern Power: Empirical Insights and Normative Confusions." Praxis International I (October 1981): 272-87.

----- . "Is Michel Foucault a 'Young Conservative'?" (Unpublished manuscript).

----- . "Foucault's Body-Language: A Post-Humanist Political Rhetoric." Salmagundi (Spring 1983): 17-33.

Giddens, Anthony. "From Marx to Nietzsche? Neo-Conservatism, Foucault, and Problems in Contemporary Political Theory" in Profiles and Critiques in Social Theory. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982, pp. 215-230.

Hacking, Ian. "The Archaeology of Foucault." The New York Review of Books 28 (May 14, 1981): 32-36.

Hoy, David. "Power, Repression, Progress: Foucault, Lukes and the Frankfurt School." Trigquarterly 52 (Fall 1981): 43-63.

Lecourt, Dominique. "On Archaeology and Knowledge (Michel Foucault)" (1970; revised 1972). In Pour une critique de l'épistémologie (Bachelard, Canguilhem, Foucault), pp. 98-133. Paris: Maspero, 1972. Translated by Ben Brewster as Marxism and Epistemology: Bachelard, Canguilhem, Foucault, pp. 187-213. London: New Left Books, 1975.

Lévy, Bernard-Henri. "Le système Foucault." Magazine Littéraire 101 (June 1975): 7-9.

Lentricchia, Frank. "Reading Foucault (Punishment, Labor, Resistance)." Baritan I/II (Spring/September 1982): 5-32; 41-70.

McDonnell, Donald J. "On Foucault's Philosophical Method." Canadian Journal of Philosophy 7 (September 1977): 537-53.

Millet, Louis, and Varin d'Ainvelle, Madeline. "La mort de l'humanisme." In Le structuralisme, pp. 69-79. 2nd ed. Paris: Editions Universitaires, 1972.

Minson, Jeff. "Strategies for Socialists? Foucault's Conception of Power." Economy and Society 9 (February 1980): 1-43.

Philp, Mark. "Foucault on Power: A Problem in Radical Translation?" (Unpublished Manuscript).

Racevski, Karlis. "The Discourse of Michel Foucault: A Case of an Absent and Forgettable Subject." Humanities in Society (Winter 1980): 41-53.

Rajchman, John. "Nietzsche, Foucault and the Anarchism of Power." semiotexte 3 (1978): 96-107.

Rorty, Richard. "Beyond Nietzsche and Marx." The London Review of Books (February 19, 1981): 5-6.

Said, Edward W. "'Abecedarium Culturae': Absence, Writing, Statement, Discourse, Archeology, Structuralism" (1971). In Beginnings: Intention and Method, pp. 277-343. New York: Basic Books, 1975.

----- "Linguistics and the Archeology of Mind." International Philosophical Quarterly 11 (March 1971): 104-34.

----- "Michel Foucault as an Intellectual Imagination." Boundary 2:1 (Fall 1972): 1-36.

----- "The Problem of Textuality: Two Exemplary Positions." Critical Inquiry 4 (Summer 1978): 673-714.

Sprinker, Michael. "The Use and Abuse of Foucault." Humanities in Society 3 (Winter 1980): 1-21.

Taylor, Charles. "Foucault on Freedom and Truth." Political Theory 12 (May 1984): 152-183.

Wahl, Francois. "Y a-t-il une 'epistème' structuraliste? Ou d'une philosophie en deça du structuralisme: Michel Foucault." In Qu'est-ce que le structuralisme? by Oswald Ducrot et al., pp. 305-90. Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1968.

Walzer, Michael. "The Politics of Michel Foucault." Dissent (Fall 1983): 481-90.

White, Hayden V. "Foucault Decoded: Notes from the Underground." History and Theory 12 (1973): 23-54.

Other Works Consulted

- Adorno, Theodor W. Negative Dialectics. Translated by E.B. Ashton. New York: Seabury Press, 1973.
- Adorno, Theodor, and Horkheimer, Max. Dialectic of Enlightenment. Translated by John Cumming. New York: Herder and Herder, 1972.
- Allison, David B. ed. The New Nietzsche: Contemporary Styles of Interpretation. New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1977.
- Anderson, Perry. In the Tracks of Historical Materialism. London: Verso Editions, 1983.
- Arnaud, Alaine, and Excoffon-Lafargue, Gisèle. Bataille. Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1978.
- Barret, William. Irrational Man. New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1962.
- Bataille, Georges. Complete Works. Volume I: Premiers Ecrits, 1922 - 1940: Histoire de l'oeil, L'Anus solitaire, Sacrifices, Articles. Edited by Denis Hollier. Paris: Gallimard, 1970.
- Volume II: Ecrits posthumes, 1922 - 1940. Edited by Denis Hollier. Paris: Gallimard, 1970.
- Volume III: Oeuvres littéraires: Madame Edwarda, Le Petit, L'Archangelique, L'Impossible, La Scissiparité, L'Abbé C., L'Etre indifférencié n'est rien, Le Bleu du ciel. Edited by Thadée Klossowski. Paris: Gallimard, 1971.
- Volume IV: Oeuvres littéraires posthumes: Poèmes, Le Mort, Julie, La Maison brûlée, La Tombe de Louis, XXX, Divinus Deus, Ebauches. Edited by Thadée Klossowski. Paris: Gallimard, 1971.
- Volume V: La Somme athéologique I: L'Expérience intérieure, Méthode de méditation, Post-scriptum, 1953, Le Coupable, L'Alleluiah. Edited by Paule Leduc. Paris: Gallimard, 1973.
- Volume VI: La Somme athéologique II: Sur Nietzsche, Mémorandum, Annexes. Edited by Henri Ronse and Jean-Michel Rey. Paris: Gallimard, 1973.
- Volume VII: L'Economie à la mesure de l'univers, La Part maudite, La Limite de l'utile (fragments), Théorie de la religion, Conférences, 1947-1948. Edited by Thadée Klossowski. Paris: Gallimard, 1976.
- Volume VIII: L'Histoire de l'erotisme, Le surréalisme au jour le jour, Conférences, 1951-1953, Souveraineté. Edited by Thadée Klossowski. Paris: Gallimard, 1976.
- Volume IX: Lascaux ou la naissance de l'art, Manet, La Littérature et le mal. Edited by

Denis Hollier. Paris: Gallimard, 1979.
Volume X: Forthcoming.

----- . L'Eroticisme. Paris: Editions de minuit, 1957.

----- . "Hegel, la mort, et le sacrifice." Daucaillon
No. 5, Etude Hegeliennes (1955), pp. 21-43.

Benjamin, Walter. Reflections: Essays, Aphorisms, Autobiographical Writings. Edited, with an introduction, by Peter Demetz. Translated by Edmund Jephcott. New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1979.

Bernstein, Richard J. The Restructuring of Social and Political Theory. Philadelphia: The University of Pennsylvania Press, 1976.

Boyne, Roy, and Lasche, Scott. "Communicative Rationality and Desire." Telos 61 (Fall 1984): 152-158.

Brinton, Crane. Nietzsche. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1941.

Camus, Albert. "Nietzsche and Nihilism." In The Rebel. Translated by A. Bower. New York: Vintage, 1956.

Cerisy Colloquium. Bataille. Collection 10/18. Paris: U.G.E., 1973.

Centre Culturel International de Cerisy-La-Salle. Nietzsche Aujourd'hui? Volume I: Intensités. Volume II: Passion. Proceedings. Paris: U.G.E., 1973.

Chassad, Pierre. Nietzsche: Finalisme et histoire. Paris: Editions Copernic, 1977.

Cooper, Barry. Michel Foucault: An Introduction to His Thought. New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1981.

Danto, Arthur C. Nietzsche as Philosopher. New York: Macmillan, 1965.

Deleuze, Gilles. Différence et répétition. Paris: P.U.F., 1968.

----- . Nietzsche and Philosophy. Translated by Hugh Tomlinson. New York: Columbia University Press, 1983.

Derrida, Jacques. Spurs: Nietzsche's Styles. Translated by Barbara Harlow. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978.

----- . Writing and Difference. Translated, with an introduction, by Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976.

Descombes, Vincent. Le Même et l'autre. Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1979.

Durançon, Jean. Georges Bataille. Paris: Gallimard, 1976.

Durkheim, Emile. Elementary Forms of the Religious Life. Translated by J.W. Swain. New York: Free Press, 1965.

Foster, Hal, ed. The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Post-Modern Culture. Port Townsend: Bay Press, 1983.

Fuss, Peter, ed. Nietzsche: A Self-Portrait from His Letters. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971.

Gasché, Rodolphe. "L'Echange héliocentrique." L'ARC 48 (1972): 73-84.

Goyard-Fabre, Simone. Nietzsche et la question politique. Paris: Editions Sirey, 1977.

Grimm, Reudeger Hermann. Nietzsche's Theory of Knowledge. New York: Wide Gruyter, 1977.

Habermas, Jurgen. Communication and the Evolution of Society. Translated by Thomas McCarthy. Boston: Beacon Press, 1979.

----- . "The Entwinement of Myth and Enlightenment: Re-Reading Dialectics of Enlightenment," New German Critique 26 (Spring 1982): 12-30.

----- . "The French Path to postmodernity: Bataille Between Eroticism and General Economics." New German Critique 33 (Fall 1984): 79-102.

----- . "Genealogische Geschichtsschreibung: Über einige Aporien im machtttheoretischen Denken Foucaults," Merkur 429 (October 1984): 245-253.

----- . Knowledge and Human Interests. Translated by Jeremy J. Shapiro. Boston: Beacon Press, 1971.

----- . "Modernity versus Postmodernity." New German Critique 22 (Winter 1981): 3-14.

----- . "A Philosophico-Political Profile," New Left Review 151 (May-June 1985): 75-105.

- . Theory and Practice. Translated by John Viertel.
Boston: Beacon Press, 1973.
- . Toward a Rational Society. Translated by Jeremy
J. Shapiro. Boston: Beacon Press, 1970.
- Hatab, Laurence J. Nietzsche and Eternal Recurrence: The
Redemption of Time and Becoming. Washington:
University Press of America, 1978.
- Hayman, Ronald. Nietzsche: A Cultural Life. New York:
Oxford University Press, 1980.
- Hegel, G. W. F. The Phenomenology of Mind. Translated by
J. B. Baillie. New York: Harper and Row, 1967.
- Heidegger, Martin. Basic Writings. Edited by David Farrell
Krell. New York: Harper and Row, 1977.
- . Nietzsche. Volume I: The Will to Power as Art.
Translated by David Farrell Krell. San Francisco:
Harper and Row, 1979.
- . The Question Concerning Technology and Other
Essays. Translated by William Lovitt. New York:
Harper and Row, 1977.
- Held, David. Introduction to Critical Theory. Berkeley:
University of California Press, 1980.
- Hawley, Daniel. L'Oeuvre insolite de Georges Bataille:
Une Hiérophanie Moderne. Paris: Librairie H.
Champion, 1978.
- Hinman, Lawrence M. "Nietzsche, Metaphor, and Truth."
Philosophy and Phenomenological Research 43:2 (December
1982): 179-199.
- Hollier, Denis. "Le Dispositif Hegel/Nietzsche dans la
bibliothèque de Bataille." L'ARC 38 (1969): 35-47.
- . "Le matérialisme dualiste de Georges Bataille."
Tel Quel 25 (1967): 41-54.
- Hollingdale, R. J. Nietzsche: The Man and His Philosophy.
Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1965.
- Jaspers, Karl. Nietzsche: An Introduction to the
Understanding of His Philosophical Activity.
Translated by Charles Wallraff and Frederick Schmitz.
Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1965.
- Kaufmann, Walter. Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist,
Anti-Christ. Princeton: Princeton University Press,
1974.

- Klossowski, Pierre. Sade, son prochain. Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1947.
- Kofman, Sarah. Nietzsche et la métaphore. Paris: Payot, 1972.
- Kojève, Alexandre. Introduction à la lecture de Hegel. Paris: Gallimard, 1947.
- LaCapra, Dominick. "Habermas and the Grounding of Critical Theory." History and Theory 16:3 (1977): 237-264.
- Larmore, Charles. "Bataille's Heterology." Semiotext 2:2 (1976): 87-105.
- Lasch, Scott. "Postmodernity and Desire." Theory and Society 14 (1985): 1-33.
- Laruelle, François. Nietzsche contre Heidegger: thèses pour une politique nietzschéenne. Paris: Payot, 1977.
- Lea, F. A. The Tragic Philosopher: A Study of Friedrich Nietzsche. London: Methuen, 1957.
- Liberston, Joseph. "Bataille and Communciation: Savoir, Non-savoir, Glissement, Rire." Sub-Stance 10 (1974): 47-65.
- Libertson, Joseph. "Proximity and the Word." Sub-Stance 14 (1976): 35-59.
- Limousin, Christian. Bataille. Collection, Psychothèque. Paris: Editions Universitaires, 1974.
- Lowith, Karl. From Hegel to Nietzsche. Translated by David Green. New York: Doubleday, 1967.
- Mauss, Marcel. The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies. Translated by I. Cunnison. New York: Norton, 1967.
- McCarthy, Thomas. The Critical Theory of Jürgen Habermas. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1978.
- Miller, James. "Some Implications of Nietzsche's Thought for Marxism." Telos 37 (Fall 1978): 22-41.
- Miller, J. Hillis. "The Disarticulation of the Self in Nietzsche." The Monist 64:2 (April 1981): 246-261.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. The Basic Works of Friedrich Nietzsche. Translated and edited by Walter Kaufmann. New York: Modern Library, 1968.

- . Beyond Good and Evil. Translated by Walter Kaufmann. New York: Random House, 1966.
- . The Birth of Tragedy and the Genealogy of Morals. Translated by Francis Golffing. New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1956.
- . The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche. 18 Vols. Edited by Oscar Levy. New York: Russel and Russel, 1964.
- . Daybreak. Translated by R. J. Hollingdale. With an introduction by Michael Tanner. London: Cambridge University Press, 1982.
- . The Gay Science. Translated by Walter Kaufmann. New York: Random House, 1974.
- . Human, all too human: a book for free spirits. Translated by Marion Faber. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984.
- . "Lecture Notes on Rhetoric." Translated by Carol Blair. Philosophy and Rhetoric 16:2 (1983): 94-129.
- . Philosophy and Truth: Selections from Nietzsche's Notebooks of the Early 1870's. Translated and edited by Daniel Breazeale. New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1979.
- . Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks. Translated and with an introduction by Marianne Cowan. Chicago: Regnery, 1962.
- . Selected Letters of Friedrich Nietzsche. Edited and translated by Christopher Middleton. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969.
- . Untimely Meditations. Translated by R. J. Hollingdale. With an introduction by J. P. Stein. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983.
- . The Use and Abuse of History. Translated by Adrian Collins. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1957.
- . The Viking Portable Nietzsche. Translated and edited by Walter Kaufman. New York: Viking Press, 1968.
- . The Will to Power. Edited by Walter Kaufmann. Translated by Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale. New York: Random House, 1967.

Poulantzas, Nicos. State, Power, Socialism. London: New Left Books, 1978.

Putz, Peter. "Nietzsche and Critical Theory." Telos 50 (Winter 1981-82): 103-114.

Rey, Jean-Michel. L'enjeu des signes: Lecture de Nietzsche. Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1971.

Richman, Michelle M. Reading Georges Bataille: Beyond the Gift. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1982.

Sartre, Jean-Paul. "Un Nouveau Mystique." In Situations Vol. I. Paris: Gallimard, 1947.

Sasso, Robert. Georges Bataille: Le système de non-savoir. Une Ontologie du jeu. Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1978.

Schutte, Ofelia. Beyond Nihilism: Nietzsche without Masks. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984.

Schacht, Richard. Nietzsche. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983.

Strong, Tracy B. Nietzsche and the Politics of Transfiguration. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975.

----- . "Reflections on Perspectivism in Nietzsche." Political Theory 13:2 (May 1985): 164-182.

Taylor, Charles. Hegel. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975.

Thomas, R. Hinton. Nietzsche in German Politics and Society: 1890-1918. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1983.

Ungar, Steven. "Parts and Wholes: Herclitus/Nietzsche/Blanchot." Sub-STANCE 14 (1976): 126-135.

Valadier, Paul. Essais sur la modernité: Nietzsche et Marx. Paris: Desclee, 1974.

Veyne, Paul. "Ideology According to Marx and According to Nietzsche." Diogenes 99 (Fall 1977): 80-102.

Warren, Mark. "Nietzsche and Political Philosophy." Political Theory 13:2 (May 1985): 183-212.

----- . "Nietzsche's Concept of Ideology." Theory and Society 13 (1984): 541-565.

Wilcox, John T. Truth and Value in Nietzsche: A Study of
His Metaethics and Epistemology. Ann Arbor:
University of Michigan Press, 1974.