**Foucault and the Battle for Politics Itself:
An Aleatory Materialist Intervention**

by

Ronjon Paul Datta

A thesis submitted to the
Department of Sociology and Anthropology
In conformity with the requirements for the degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Carleton University,
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

May 2008

© Ronjon Paul Datta, 2008

Library and
Archives Canada

Published Heritage
Branch

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Bibliothèque et
Archives Canada

Direction du
Patrimoine de l'édition

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Your file Votre référence
ISBN: 978-0-494-40518-5
Our file Notre référence
ISBN: 978-0-494-40518-5

NOTICE:

The author has granted a non-exclusive license allowing Library and Archives Canada to reproduce, publish, archive, preserve, conserve, communicate to the public by telecommunication or on the Internet, loan, distribute and sell theses worldwide, for commercial or non-commercial purposes, in microform, paper, electronic and/or any other formats.

The author retains copyright ownership and moral rights in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

AVIS:

L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque et Archives Canada de reproduire, publier, archiver, sauvegarder, conserver, transmettre au public par télécommunication ou par l'Internet, prêter, distribuer et vendre des thèses partout dans le monde, à des fins commerciales ou autres, sur support microforme, papier, électronique et/ou autres formats.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur et des droits moraux qui protègent cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

In compliance with the Canadian Privacy Act some supporting forms may have been removed from this thesis.

Conformément à la loi canadienne sur la protection de la vie privée, quelques formulaires secondaires ont été enlevés de cette thèse.

While these forms may be included in the document page count, their removal does not represent any loss of content from the thesis.

Bien que ces formulaires aient inclus dans la pagination, il n'y aura aucun contenu manquant.

Canada

Foucault and the Battle for Politics Itself:

An Aleatory Materialist Intervention

Abstract

This dissertation argues that while Michel Foucault is the most significant resource for critical social analysis today, his work is limited since unable to coherently conceptualise the transformation of contemporary life. In this respect his work challenges the notion that sociology can and should play a role in politics (i.e., projects of societal transformation), since such links are rather believed to be part of the problem. The thesis confronts and resolves the limitations of this expulsion of politics and sociology through symptomatic readings and the retheorising of his work, guided by explicitly posing questions concerning the construal of the object and modes of transformation in it. A coherent ontology of modes of being is constituted to provide a clear conception of the object of transformation. More positively, Foucault's work on government is shown to provide a salient account of contemporary post-politics in which politics is reduced to debates about the ways and means of social administration accompanied by a myopic focus on development. The metatheoretical reasons for his displacement of politics and sociology are subjected to critique and transformed by developing his implicit aleatory materialism. A Foucauldian model of politics, based on aleatory materialism, is then postulated, leveraging his work on discursive formations, imagination, avant-garde art, organisation, communication and mass uprisings, supplemented with Althusserian and Durkheimian material, to demonstrate that politics is both viable and desirable today. The concept of *demopolitics* is created to provide a way of conceptualising an alternative to post-political government thus affirming the political work of perpetuating a concern

with collective fates. In short, *the battle for politics itself* is argued to traverse both Foucault's work and the present situation and the thesis develops means for rendering a Foucault for politics, able to engage in this battle on the side of both politics and sociology.

Acknowledgements

My work owes a great deal to many, not least of whom are the sociologists and theorists whose works I engage with here—their works have made my own possible. Perhaps I owe the greatest debt then, to sociology as a discursive formation that thankfully construes authors as mere functions. But there is also the matter of the people whose love, support and encouragement have helped me get to this aleatory destination, to whom I wish to express my deepest thanks. They are: my parents, Manik and Birgitta Datta; Kristina, Greg, Gabby and Sophie Coens; Anu and Prasanta Das; Scott Richardson; Jon Frauley; Angela Moslinger and Andrew Dacosta; Heidi Rimke; Liz Kim; Paul Giovanetti; Shaun Bertram and Mike Bradley; Emily Fudakowski; Zoe Sujon; Kelly Gorkoff; Julie Witmer and Jonathan Browne; Vahide Pikel; Holly Thomas; Jennifer Birch; Mark Ayyash; Jon Verdon; Emily Flann; Jonathan Frances; Trevor Rous; Nick Hardy; the Spino Family; Erika Dyck; Dave Lieske and San Patten; Craig McFarlane and Mark Lajoie.

I also would like to thank a number of professors: Peter Swan, Lorna Weir, Daiva Stasiulis, Bruce Curtis, Rob Shields, Wally ‘The Godfadda’ Clement, Aaron Doyle, Pat O’Malley, Neil Gerlach, Tony Woodiwiss, Bill Pickering, Bill Ramp, Phillip Thurtle, Rob Beamish, Roberta Hamilton, Richard Day and the late Bruce Macfarlane. To Frank Pearce, from whom I first learned much of my theoretical method, a special thanks for many years of friendship and intellectual camaraderie. The administrative staff in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Carleton have my gratitude for being both friendly and helpful, especially, Nazira Conroy, Anne Carroll, Kim Mitchell and Paula Whissell. I wrote the last three chapters of the thesis while in my current post as a lecturer

in sociology at Mount Allison University. I have very much appreciated the support of my fellow sociologists there Erin Steuter, Judith Doyle and Berkeley Fleming; they are first-rate colleagues.

I am immensely grateful to my PhD committee, Alan Hunt, Bela Egyed and Derek Smith. I could not have asked for a better supervisor than Alan, or better interlocutors and readers than Derek and Bela. I would also like to thank my external examiners, José Julián Lopez and William Walters, for their careful and generous reading of the thesis. The work of the examining committee made the defence for me, a rich, memorable and invaluable experience.

Earlier versions of sections of this dissertation have been previously published as 'From the Sacred to Radicalism: The College de sociologie, Kristeva and Zizek, *Critical Sociology*, 31(4), pp. 617-637 (2005); and 'From Foucault's Genealogy to Aleatory Materialism: Realism, Nominalism and Politics', *Critical Realism and the Social Sciences: Heterodox Elaborations*, (eds.) Jon Frauley and Frank Pearce, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, pp. 273-295 (2007). Portions of the final chapter appear as 'Politics and Existence: Totems, Dispositifs and some Striking Parallels between Durkheim and Foucault', *Journal of Classical Sociology*, Vol. 8 (2), pp. 284-305 (2008). Research funding for this project was supplied in part by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada Doctoral Fellowship Programme.

Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements	iv
Table of Contents	vi
List of Figures	xi
List of Abbreviations of Foucault's Books	xii
 1. Foucault and the Battle for Politics Itself	 1
Introduction	1
Foucault's Innovation	2
Foucault's Conception of the Political Field	5
The Foucault Effect Today	10
The Potential For a Foucault for Politics	13
The Importance of Being Theoretical	20
Re-Reading Foucault Critically and Productively	22
Preliminary Definitions: Politics, Rule and the Political Field	26
The Stakes	30
Outline of the Remainder	30
 2. Aleatory Materialism and the Symptomatic Method	 33
Introduction	33
Theory and Theoretical Practice	36
<i>Definition of Social Theory</i>	38
<i>Assessing Theoretical Discourse</i>	39
<i>The Metatheoretical Commitments of the Symptomatic Method</i>	40
Introduction to Aleatory Materialism	41
<i>Aleatory Materialist Ontology</i>	48
<i>Aleatory Materialist Epistemology</i>	52
Reading Texts Symptomatically	58
<i>Reading Foucault Symptomatically</i>	60
<i>Theory and its Kampfplatz: The Politics of Questions</i>	62
Rethorising Discourses	66
Conclusion	69
 3. Foucault's Battleground	 71
Introduction	71
Archaeology, Genealogy and the Political Field	74
Surrealist Resonances in Foucault's Work	80
Foucault's Activism	83
Foucault's Diffidence Toward Marx-ism	86
<i>The Foucauldian Opposition to Marxist Strategy and Tactics</i>	97

Foucault's Self-Critique in <i>Psychiatric Power</i>	103
Beyond Self-Critique: The General Critique of Political Theory	107
<i>The Remainder of The Juridico-Discursive</i>	112
Conclusion	115
4. Modes of Being and Foucault's Ontology	117
Introduction	117
Modelling as a Theoretical Exercise	123
<i>Foucault's General Theory of Human Existence</i>	124
The Multiplicity of Thought	125
<i>Problematisation</i>	133
The Political Field and the Multiplicity of Power	139
<i>Techniques of the Exercise of Power</i>	143
<i>Discipline</i>	145
<i>Normalisation</i>	147
<i>Governing</i>	149
<i>Power-Knowledge: The Articulation of Thought and Power</i>	152
<i>The Model of War and the Analytic of Power</i>	158
<i>An 'Analytics of Power'</i>	160
Subjectivity: From Multiplicities to Singularity	163
<i>Modes of Subjectivity</i>	168
Conclusion: Modes of Being, Action and the Foucauldian Object	169
5. Governmentality and Political Modernity	174
Introduction	174
Theoretical Context: From Power to Government	177
Governmentality: The Scope of Foucault's Concern	182
Governmentality as a Type of Political Rationality	186
The Aleatory Encounter of Pastors, Police and Diplomats	189
<i>The Pastoral Mentality</i>	191
<i>Police/Policy: It's the thought that counts... the sheep</i>	194
<i>The Diplomatico-Military Model</i>	198
<i>Reason of State</i>	201
<i>Liberalism</i>	203
Governmentality: Political Economy, Security, Territory, Population	207
From Biopower to Autonomo-politics and Biogovernance	213
Discussion: Security and The King's Two Heads	221
Conclusion: The Post-Political Epoch of Governmentality	232
6. The General Economy of Domination	236
Introduction: Political Power Beyond Government	236
The Governmental <i>Dispositif</i>	240
<i>Dispositifs</i>	241

<i>Institutions</i>	242
<i>Programmes</i>	247
<i>Effects/Results, Failure and Success</i>	253
<i>Usage/Use</i>	256
<i>Strategy</i>	258
The Hegemony of 'Hegemony'	263
<i>Foucault's Descriptive Use of Hegemony</i>	267
<i>The Governmental Invention of Hegemony</i>	270
<i>Governmentality and Consciousness</i>	272
<i>The Governmental Dispositif as Concrete Support for Hegemony</i>	274
The General Economy of Domination	275
<i>Strategy, Abjection and Hegemony</i>	278
<i>The Universal, the Particular and Para-security</i>	281
Conclusion	290
7. Foucault's Expulsion of Politics	293
Introduction	293
The Analytical Reduction of the Political Field to the Rubric of Rule	297
Transforming Thought	301
<i>Critical Thought</i>	303
<i>Analytics and Diagnostics: From Being to Becoming</i>	305
<i>Art: The Possibilities of Thought Beyond Man and Truth</i>	309
<i>Transforming the Modern Episteme: The Counter-Human Sciences</i>	312
<i>The Role of Intellectuals</i>	314
<i>Parrhesia</i>	316
Transforming Power: Resistance and Revolt	317
<i>Resistance</i>	318
<i>Revolt</i>	323
Transforming Subjectivity: Transgression and Ethics	330
<i>Transgression</i>	330
<i>Ethics</i>	335
Distilling and Assessing Foucauldian Modes of Transformation	353
Foucault's Critical Expulsion of Politics: The Value of Aesthetics	355
The Logic of Foucault's Expulsion of Politics	359
<i>The Impossible and Forbidden in Psychoanalysis</i>	360
<i>Politics is Impossible Because its "Object" Does Not Exist</i>	362
<i>Politics Is Forbidden Because It Is Disastrous and Deadly</i>	365
<i>The Phantasmic Return of Politics in Foucault</i>	369
Conclusion	371
8. The Foucault Effect and Post-Politics Today	373
Introduction	373
The Casualties of Foucault's Expulsion of Politics	375
Defining Post-Politics	381

Neoliberalism and Post-Politics	386
Post-politics and Anti-democracy	390
The Response of the Left	392
<i>The Crisis of Marxism</i>	394
<i>Postmodernism and the Left</i>	398
<i>The Ethical Turn</i>	402
<i>Changing Tactics</i>	404
The Forced Choice of Post-Politics	409
Post-politics and the Future	412
Foucault as Unwittingly Ally of Post-Politics	416
Conclusion	418
9. From Foucault's Critical Nominalism to Aleatory Materialism	420
Introduction	420
Initial Definitions	426
Foucault's Transformation of Kant: The <i>A Priori</i> and Experience	430
Foucault's Critical Nominalism	437
A Materialist Critique of Critical Nominalism	438
The Foucauldian Version of the Epistemic Fallacy	440
Genealogy, Power and The Real Object of Transformation	447
The Metatheoretical Limits of Critical Nominalism and Genealogy	460
The Move Toward Aleatory Materialism: Four <i>Theorems</i>	462
Conclusion	466
10. A Foucault for Politics	469
Introduction	469
Politics as a Theoretical Possibility: The Legacy of Archaeology	472
The Sacred Difference Between Politics and Rule	476
<i>The Sacred Difference in Durkheim</i>	478
<i>The Sacred Difference in Foucault</i>	482
<i>The Political Field as a Function</i>	487
<i>The Topological Model of the Political Field</i>	489
The Foucault for Politics: An Aleatory Materialist Model of Politics	495
<i>Political Imagination and Heterotopian Thinking</i>	497
<i>Political Organisation: Networking a Political Body</i>	511
<i>The Political Apparatus</i>	514
<i>The Effervescent Demos and the Arts of Collective Existence</i>	521
Politics and Aleatory Causality	532
Demopolitics: Characteristics, Conditions and Consequences	541
<i>Characteristics</i>	543
<i>Conditions: Substantive Egalitarianism and the Demopolitical State</i>	547
<i>Consequences</i>	551
<i>Societal Effect: Underdetermination Overdetermining Social Formation</i>	551
<i>Historical Effect: Short-Circuiting the Topology of the Political Field</i>	552

<i>Tragic Effect: Failure and Success</i>	555
Conclusion: Foucault, Sociology and the Battle for Politics Itself	556
Bibliography	561

List of Figures

<i>Figure 3.1 Foucault's Kampfplatz in Political Theory</i>	74
<i>Figure 4.1 The Multiplicity of Thought</i>	138
<i>Figure 4.2 Power, The Multiplicity of Relations of Force and A Body</i>	142
<i>Figure 4.3 The Continuum of the Exercising of Power</i>	144
<i>Figure 4.4 The Model of Modes of Being</i>	172
<i>Figure 10.1 The Aleatory Materialist Model of Politics</i>	534

List of Abbreviations of Foucault's Books

AB	<i>Abnormal</i>	(1999/2003)
AK	<i>The Archaeology of Knowledge</i>	(1969a/1972)
BC	<i>The Birth of the Clinic</i>	(1963/1972)
CS	<i>The Care of the Self</i>	(1984g/1988)
DP	<i>Discipline and Punish</i>	(1975/1979)
HERM	<i>The Hermeneutics of the Self</i>	(2001/2005)
HM	<i>The History of Madness</i>	(1961/2006)
HS	<i>The History of Sexuality</i>	(1976a/1994)
OT	<i>The Order of Things</i>	(1966/1994)
PP	<i>Psychiatric Power</i>	(2003/2006)
SMBD	<i>"Society Must Be Defended"</i>	(1977b/2003)
STP	<i>Security, Territory, Population</i>	(2004/2007)
UP	<i>The Use of Pleasure</i>	(1984f/1986)

Chapter One:

Foucault and the Battle for Politics Itself

I think that to imagine another system is to extend our participation in the present system. [...] Reject theory and all forms of general discourse. This need for theory is still part of the system we reject. ... I would rather oppose actual experiences than the possibility of a utopia. It is possible that the outline of a future society is supplied by the recent experiences with drugs, sex, communes, other forms of consciousness, and other forms of individuality (Foucault 1977k/1980: 230-1).

Introduction

This dissertation offers a theory of politics, developed through a materialist sociological engagement with Michel Foucault (1926-1984). The main question is: What is an adequate concept of politics for today and to what extent does Foucault help us develop one? I examine the works of Foucault, the most influential reference point for critical social analysis today, not simply to endorse or point out shortcomings, but to show what can be done with them sociologically in a way pertinent to the present. But somewhat ironically as I argue below, Foucault *the* theorist of 'the subject and power' (Foucault 1982a/2003) *has no concept of politics* because he was both unwilling and more importantly unable to form a concept of politics. A major consequence of this is that he does not develop a concept of a collective political subject, how it might be constituted and with what effects including potentially a fundamental transformation of a society. Politics then, is a special problem in Foucault's work, perhaps the *definitive* one. This is a serious but unnecessary lacuna and hence is resolvable but not without a fair amount of work. Thus, the thesis takes on the task of both critically assessing the productivity and limits of Foucault's *oeuvre* and developing an alternative Foucault, a Foucault *for politics*. In doing so, I demonstrate the theoretical necessity of a concept of politics in

Foucault, because of its importance to understanding societal transformations. I carry out a critical and productive re-reading and retheorisation of his work to produce it. Priority is given to Foucault's questions and concepts, assessing their adequacy and that to which they refer. By way of introduction, this chapter makes the case for this theoretical intervention.

Foucault's Innovation

Michel Foucault, historian, social analyst, philosopher and activist, fundamentally transformed the debate about the political, in terms of what comprises it, how one should analyse it and make recommendations about how it can be transformed. His writings address in a startlingly new way, questions of the experience of madness and reason, criminality and sexuality, pleasure and perversity in Western civilization that still disturb the self-evidence of how we think about ourselves and others. He challenges many fundamental assumptions about the allegedly humanitarian features of Western civilization. He shows how relying on science and reason to solve our problems and free humanity rather ensconces us in different forms of mute, subtle and masked forms of domination. His work, while drawing on and engaging with the social sciences and humanities, remains enigmatic: he is not a thinker easily defined or located in one or other discipline and indeed refused such identifications (AK: 17).

Foucault's work is unrivalled in social analysis in the post- Second World War era. It undertakes a new project with new objects and new methodological techniques in order to account for the emergence, conditions and consequences of what we might colloquially call 'Western civilization' today. As such, he ranks with Marx, Weber,

Durkheim and Freud as a 'founder of discursivity', to apply his own category (Foucault 1967b/1998). His encyclopaedic knowledge and unparalleled analytical acuity are distinguishing features of his books. What follows is a serious attempt to do justice to his contributions and works of social analysis inspired by them.

But there are reasons to be circumspect about his contribution, especially for sociologists. Foucault viewed sociology, counted amongst the human sciences, as very much part of the problem. He also views politics, that can conventionally be taken to mean, projects for the transformation of societies, often with the support of social scientific dreams and schemes, as pernicious. What I set out to do here is to offer means for retaining a serious theoretical appreciation and understanding of Foucault's work and its implications, while at the same time offering a challenge and alternative to his aversion to any linkage between sociology and politics.

The materials on which I draw, spanning the full range of Foucault's work from his earliest publications, through to his books, lectures, interviews and journalistic writings, are familiar to many but there is much that is new in the pages that follow. In many respects, we are entering a period of a renewed and changing evaluation of Foucault, as if after the first flurry of reception to the resting period of a paradigmatic use of Foucault, we are now in a position to more thoroughly assess both the potential and limitations of his work. This thesis is part of this emerging re-evaluation, focused on its *theoretical content*, attending in particular to the adequacy of its concepts, and its analytical and explanatory models. This involves much more than exegesis. What interests me is the striking *consistency* of his approach, united by a concern with the systems of thought that contingently shape how we think of ourselves, others and the

world, and how this then constitutes the material on which people work in the name of betterment. It is I contend a misconception to say that Foucault changed his tack based on new problems, questions and concerns of his; there are innovations but Foucault remained concerned with the same set of questions throughout his career. This is what makes Foucault a *great theorist*; he is a great theorist for having discovered a new way of posing a set of questions about the potential and limitations of the contingent formation of human existence and what this implies for making the contemporary world otherwise.

Foucault is also enigmatic and controversial for reasons other than the novelty of his work. His reflections on politics and his own activist practices do not readily fit conventional categories and the normative status and implications of his work remain a subject of debate. At the very least, Foucault was an astute critical analyst who attempted to diagnose the contingent ways in which our contemporary world enables and constrains people in Western civilization, making us what we are, and sought to account for how such a world has come to be so. His work refuses the limitations of the present and subjects it to relentless criticism in order to show how the ways we think and act (and what enables us to do so) that constitute our existence have been contingently formed and arbitrarily attached thus shaping our modes of being.

The contemporary proliferation of radical political theory since Foucault's intervention—'the return of the political' as it is called—from Agamben, Badiou, Butler, Laclau and Mouffe, Lefort, Negri and Žižek, to name a few, in many respects is a consequence of Foucault's interventions. They made it possible to think again about what the substance of the political is and means. But, the use of the adjectival form—'the political'—itself hints at a crisis of politics in how we think about it, indicating that

perhaps it is an empty signifier. I find myself asking ‘the political *what?*’. Perhaps here we should apply the critical procedure used by Foucault himself in his examination of ‘the love of boys in ancient Greece’ and substitute ‘the political’ for it: ‘Since there is an important and large literature about loving boys in Greek culture, some historians say, “Well, that’s the proof that they loved boys.” But I say that proves that loving boys was a problem’ (Foucault 1983a/2003: 105). So, if the political is not a problem, why then is there so much talk about it? Is the political symptomatic of a crisis of politics today, or rather crisis of its absence? Given that today ‘Foucault is our Hegel’, as Macherey put it (in Resch 1992: 255), I think a good place to begin engaging in the battle for politics itself, a battle for appreciating its exceptionality, is with the battle for politics itself traversing Foucault’s own work.

I undertake this task *via* Foucault not as an iconoclast, attempting to strike down the theoretical giant of our time, but because there is arguably no facet of contemporary political life that he did not address in some way or another, from the politics of mental illness (HM; PP), to the meaning and consequences of contemporary government (STP; Foucault 1979a/2003); from systems of exclusion (DP; AB) to state illegalities in suppressing dissent (Foucault 1979c). As such, his work even with its limitations is an indispensable resource for thinking about the political today.

Foucault’s Conception of the Political Field

At its most basic level, for Foucault, the political is about power relations and the actions made possible by them; power relations are the material of the political and indeed, the very stuff of what people are and do. Power relations are ubiquitous, multiform, small

exercises of relations of dominance and subordination between people and even with the self, comprising a network of the complex actuality of the social body and its political present. Power relations are found for instance, in the mundane relations between a doctor and patient; police and citizen; management and workers; student and teacher; parents and children; social workers and their clients; and in how we become teachers, police, and psychologists to ourselves (HS: 92-93; Foucault 1977e/1980: 187-189). As he put it,

Every relation of force implies at each moment a relation of power (which is in a sense its momentary expression) and every power relation makes reference, as its effects but also as its condition of possibility, to a political field of which it forms a part. To say that 'everything is political', is to affirm this ubiquity of relations of force and their immanence in a political field (Foucault 1977e/1980: 189).

Power relations though, are distinct from the direct use of physical force and violence used to coerce people into submission. Rather, power relations for Foucault are interconnected and productive of specific kinds of human life. More specifically, these power relations he aimed to demonstrate, shape the capacities of human bodies as individuals and collectives thus enabling people to do what they do.

Foucault also stresses that the political field comprised of these power relations is shaped, directed and communicated throughout a social body by systems of political thought. Political thought supplies the coordinates for making judgments about how objects of rule, social ordering and coordination are construed, together with a set of goals (STP). The dream of political thought, a characteristically modern concern called 'government', is to transform a variegated, uncoordinated social body into a body politic. For him, the modern political field is comprised of the intersection of power relations and

the political thought of government that flow through people, making them what they are. For example, a key product of political thought is the policy programme that functions like social software installed in the hardware of some or other social institution, be it a prison, or in the private home, for example, shaping, directing and channelling power relations to achieve an objective deemed beneficial by a dominant class of subjects, e.g., psychological experts, or a collection of dominant subjects, like the capitalist class and the experts of state bureaucracy. In this regard, policy programmes in the modern political field are designed to solve problems confronted in the attempts to achieve the dream of a future, improved society.

Power can be exercised both directly and indirectly and hence political thought involves concerns with the possibilities of direct and indirect exercises of power. This is especially so in the contemporary world. Power can be exercised directly by one subject over others, when for instance, soldiers and students are drilled in the means of proper, orderly, predictable, comportment in order to be transformed into sergeants and teachers to themselves (DP). Power can also be exercised indirectly—‘*at a distance*’ (Rose 1999: 49; cf. Miller and Rose 1990)—as found in the governing of both the self and others, involving the attempt to channel and use what people are freely doing to achieve an objective. In the terms of Foucault’s well-known *theorem* of governmentality, governing concerns ‘the conduct of conducts’ (Foucault 1982a/2003: 138).

The governmental exercise of power also characteristically involves creating and modifying social conditions *facilitating* a likely form of action, or conduct, instead of another. It involves a concern to make some sphere of social life ‘thinkable and practicable [...] as a knowable and administrable domain’ (Rose, O’Malley and Valverde

2006: 5.4). As such, governing attends to how it might be possible to ‘structure the possible field of actions of others’ and even the self (Foucault 1982a/2003: 138). For example, when one refuses to buy junk food at the grocery store, one structures the field of possible actions of oneself since if junk food is not in the pantry at home it is not there to eat. This is a distinctively governmental form of thinking about power and exercising power since it is not about having junk food in the cupboard and *training* oneself to say “No!”. Granted, practices like these are not politics but rather are the stuff that the activity of governing thinks about and aims to use in an indirect way to get closer to achieving the goals of societal betterment. Moreover, it is not as though one is likely to have an overbearing dietician or personal trainer there following you in the store monitoring your every selection in an infantilising way. Rather, one acts in what one thinks is in one’s own best interest in having a healthy diet, supposedly leading to the goal of a lengthy, more vibrant, energetic existence. For Foucault, political thought refers to: rendering some facet of social life governable; the activities of those developing solutions to the problems confronted in the exercising of power; the calculated thought about and attempt to achieve an objective like increased productivity; techniques for exercising power; and how these techniques might be developed and deployed in a social sphere. It is this combination of power relations and political thought that constitutes the political field according to Foucault.

Foucault’s critical legacy and his overarching concern with the transformation of human ‘modes of being’ (OT: 344; 1984a/2003: 26) his key object, one he *discovers* (see Chapter 4), I contend is however an equivocal one and has its limits. The quotation opening the thesis indicates that politics is far from being a self-evident concern in

Foucault, at least not a positive one. Politics, as distinct from power, government and systems of political thought is an excluded element of his approach, a hard resistant kernel that cannot be symbolized by it but on which his *oeuvre* continuously touches. Below, this depoliticisation in Foucault's analytic is shown to be dependent on what can be called 'Foucault's expulsion of politics' (see Chapter 7), to paraphrase Hunt's argument about 'Foucault's expulsion of law' (1993b). This is in large part because, far from being a potential solution, even thinking about political alternatives for him is very much part of the problem, 'extending our participation in the present system'.

As I argue in detail in Chapter 9, the lacuna of politics in his work is a consequence of his analytic, developed through his critique and transformation of Kantian questions concerning Man, knowledge and the present. The result is his critical analysis of the contingent emergence of contemporary societies from the various combinations of specific systems of thought and modes of power relations. True, this renders a distinct conception of the political field but without a concept of politics. Thus as is, I argue that Foucault's predominant approach to the political field is more a hindrance than a help for thinking about societal transformation today and for that reason is not as radical or progressive as it is often made out to be (cf. Paras 2006). This is why I engage in a battle for politics itself in Foucault's work, to import a trope from his argument that the 'model of war' has structured the way modern Western civilisation approaches the problem of politics (SMBD; HS: 102). So, if a concept of politics is to be developed in a Foucauldian way, this will require the elaboration of a quite different kind of theoretical sensibility than the one generally characteristic of his work. Indeed, the serious theoretical question to raise is whether it would make any sense to even form a

Foucauldian concept of politics. I argue that it is and that there are significant features of his own works that support moving in that direction.

The Foucault Effect Today

Given that Foucault's works have been explored in a multitude of exegesis and commentary, why return again to his work? Is there anything new to be discovered in it? Many may well feel that they have absorbed the salient elements of his work and have now moved on toward Deleuze, Negri, Zizek, Badiou or Butler, or have become post-Foucauldians. Indeed, Foucault has virtually achieved the status of the classical sociological theorists and as such one may well wonder as in the case of Durkheim whether 'it is possible in reading his work to discover anything new?' (Pearce 2001: 1). Yet, the richness and breadth of Foucault's *oeuvre* continues to be an important stimulus for contemporary theoretical and empirical research as evinced by recent works like Paras' *Foucault 2.0* (2006). As such, 'the Foucault effect' remains a sustained one. As Burchell *et al*, citing Deleuze argue, 'An effect of this kind is by no means an appearance or an illusion. It is a product which spreads or distends itself over a surface [...] A proper name can be considered fully as a sign only to the extent that it refers to an effect of this kind' (Deleuze 1969/1990: 70 in Burchell *et al* 1991: ix). For example, Foucault's work has spawned a productive and coherent research programme of histories of the present, especially along the lines of governmentality studies, in contemporary political sociology (e.g., Simons 1995; Barry *et al* 1996; Rose 1999; Larner and Walters 2004; Beaulieu and Gabbard 2006); health (Weir 2006); criminology (Garland 1997; Valverde 1998); everyday life (Hunt 1996); socio-legal studies (e.g. Hunt and Wickham 1994; Pearce and

Tombs 1996; Hunt 1999); economic sociology (Walters 2000); science and mathematics (Hacking 1990) and cultural studies (Bratich *et al* 2003). Important new critical work also continues, as witness by the publication of *Foucault and the Iranian Revolution* that collects together, for the first time in English, all of Foucault's writings on the Iranian revolution of 1978-79 (Afary and Anderson 2005). Unfortunately the Foucault effect has also led to the neglect of a previous generation of work in Major-Poetzl (1983), Poster (1984/1987), Smart (1983/1987; 1994), Cousins and Hussain (1984) and Gane (1986b) for example, and even the neglect of major portions of Foucault's work, like *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, *The Order of Things*, and even the well-known *Discipline and Punish*.

At the same time neither Foucault nor those who claim fidelity to the paths opened up by his work have exhausted its theoretical potential whether this concerns the mechanisms of contemporary rule, his analyses of avant-garde art, or his fascination with religion and different subjective formations (e.g., Carrette 2000). Indeed, the fairly recent publication of an article on the concept of 'governmentality', first introduced by Foucault in the late 1970s, by leading figures of the history of the present indicates that perhaps a great deal more conceptual work remains to be done (Rose, O'Malley and Valverde 2006).

Changing circumstances and how social analysts attempt to make sense of them also provide new reasons for returning to Foucault. The most pertinent circumstance in my view for re-engaging with Foucault is what I call the present 'crisis of politics', characteristic of 'post-politics' or rather, the crisis of the absence of politics and with it, the matter of the possibility and desirability of thinking about collective fates and the

shaping of societal organisation. The contemporary crisis of politics is aptly described by what Slavoj Žižek, following Jacques Rancière, has called a ‘post-political’ condition (1999/2000: 198ff.; cf. Laclau 2005/2007: x). In post-politics what counts as ‘politics’ is reduced to debates about, and concerns with, the ways, means and modifications of social administration, subordinated to the logic of the accumulation of capital, characteristically organised and implemented through neoliberalism and legitimised through representative parliamentary democracy—in short, post-politics is a condition in which policy is King but at the cost of politics. Post-politics depends on the foreclosure of political alternatives and projects for transforming the reigning coordinates for thinking about the trajectories of societies and the societies that make possible the dominance of a certain set of normative coordinates. The cost is the foreclosure on the creative question of politics concerning the nature of the “good society” and how it might be protected or achieved. Thus, I think it necessary to pose questions to Foucault’s work like ‘What is politics? What does politics do? What are the conditions of an effective politics?’. These questions make it possible to read Foucault again and think about what sort of answers to these questions can be found there or not, as the case may be. Thus, my work is situated in critical social analysis today and its stakes in the contemporary crisis of politics in which there appears to be no other way of conceiving of a future other than one that takes us down the path we are already on.

This is also why I think politics is also a special problem in Foucault, a problem made visible and pertinent because of the current post-political situation. So while he was concerned with how people’s existence in the present might be made otherwise, he was averse to politics. It is when faced with the impasses of post-politics and the difficulty of

posing the question of politics today that Foucault's works appear in quite a different light. Attending to his work from the point of view of politics is an important task because some very elementary Foucauldian axioms have stuck, the most pertinent in my view is that the political is about power and/or government. But, this conception is far from being self-evident and the readiness with which certain of his formulations have become accepted truisms is cause for suspicion, suspicion that perhaps we have stopped thinking because we have accepted the Foucauldian terms of debate.

The Potential For a Foucault for Politics

Yet, there remains the potential for the development of a Foucault *for* politics even if loosely linked with the optimism about ethics evinced in his final works. As he states, 'we always have possibilities, there are always possibilities of changing the situation. We cannot jump *outside* the situation, and there is no point where you are free from all power relations. But you can always change it' (Foucault 1984j/1996: 386). A concern with transformation lies at the core of Foucault's work but what needs to be assessed is the adequacy of his way of accounting for the *object of transformation*, (is it the whole of a society's mode of existence, as indicated in his discussions of Iran?) in order to escape from the limitations of the present, and the desirable and plausible *mode of such a transformation*. To pose the question of politics will require attending to both the object and mode of transformation to help focus attention on the nature of transformation.

On the whole Foucault's optimism hinges on his overarching concern with subjective transformation even if it tends to focus on *individual* subjective transformation. It is here that a sociological intervention in Foucault's thought under a

post-political conjuncture becomes a leverage point. Indeed, one of the central themes of Foucault's work, one that I think is its central concern, is that transformations of modes of being are an ever present possibility because existence is contingently formed and has no unchanging essence: because existence is made, it can be unmade and remade (Foucault 1980b/2003; cf. Simons 1995: 17). Foucault's attention to transformations, especially as found in systems of thought and in how subjects think about themselves, others and the world as a guide to their own conduct, provides the pivot-point for creating a Foucault for politics. The concern with the transformation of subjectivity is found throughout his work, from his first publication on existential psychoanalysis through to his concern with ecstatic 'limit experiences' that desubjectify existence, and his later concerns with 'subjectivation' and 'ethics', i.e., the ways in which subjects attempt to constitute a new self. This indicates that there is an important element of radicalism in his work: he sought the means for changing what we are (e.g., Foucault 1954/1984; 1980b/2000; UP; CS).

Foucault's detailed, rich and sophisticated historical investigations of how various ways forms of subjectivity have been constituted in Western civilization, from ancient Greece and Rome, through to the Renaissance and up to the present (with the absence of an extended analysis of the Middle Ages) highlight the possibilities for transformation. Thus, what we understand by human existence is in reality but a series of episodes of successive forms of subjectivity, without historical progressions. For example, as his famous historical analyses of sexuality show, it is not some inherent, universal, defining feature of human existence, but only came to be regarded as such from the late eighteenth century when states became concerned with the health of the population (and hence with

what can be done about reproduction) and combined with how the bourgeoisie took its familial forms as the means for thinking about morality and civility (HS). Thus, Foucault's attention to history allowed him to argue that modes of being and our thoughts about them are contingently assembled and as such there are no good reasons for arguing that things must be the way that they are. But his method of analysis begins at a point when a dramatic change—a discontinuity—has been documented in the reference points orienting a society. Thus, his analysis begins *after a transformation has already happened*.

For example, prior to the modern concern with sexuality, there was

A society of blood—I was tempted to say, of “sanguinity”—where power spoke *through* blood: the honor of war, the fear of famine, the triumph of death, the sovereign with his sword, executioners, and tortures; blood was *a reality with a symbolic function*. We, on the other hand, are in a society of “sex,” or rather a society “with a sexuality”: the mechanisms of power are addressed to the body, to life, to what causes it to proliferate, to what reinforces the species, its stamina, its ability to dominate, or its capacity for being used. Through the themes of health, progeny, race, the future of the species, the vitality of the social body, power spoke *of* sexuality and *to* sexuality; the latter was not a mark or a symbol, it was an object and a target (HS: 147).

So, while the Classical Age relied on an aristocratic ‘symbolics of blood’ that organised the thought of power, the organisation of the political field was transformed producing the ‘analytics of sex’ characteristic of modern biopower. He himself notes that the issue is about how ‘the new procedures of power that were devised during the classical age and employed in the nineteenth century were what caused our society to go from *a symbolics of blood* to *an analytics of sexuality*’ (HS: 148). However, he falls short when accounting for the conditions that cause the new forms of power to be effective in a lasting way. Thus, a key limitation of Foucault's account of the political field is that it always already

assumes that a stabilised major transformation has occurred. What is needed then is some way to account for such interventions. Certainly, Foucault's comparative historical analyses show that significant changes occur. But he fails to develop a conception of the conditions of existence of such changes such that they spread throughout a society or civilisation, as distinct from *descriptions* of the small-scale inventions and mutations that come to have extensive effects (Foucault 1968a/1991).

Foucault was also attentive to the circumstance that things do not change and often stabilise for long periods (Foucault 1968a/1991). For example, his novel periodisations of the history of Western civilization demarcates various epochs that stabilised the relations between 'words', 'things' and 'modes of being' (OT). These epochs are the Renaissance (1500-1650), the Classical Age (1650-1800) and the Modern Epoch (1800-the present). That the present has thus lasted a long time, for him, is the point of doing 'a history of the present' and not 'writing a history of the past in terms of the present' (DP: 31). This sensibility is well illustrated by his analysis of modern imprisonment and punishment: even though imprisonment is meant to reform criminals, it fails and tends instead to produce 'delinquents' and has done so since imprisonment came to be viewed as the solution to the problem of criminal punishment in the early nineteenth century (DP). Thus, calls for prison reform are coextensive with the creation of the penal-carceral system and are still with us today (Foucault 1983d/2000). The same can be said for the intertwining of psychiatry, medicine and legal discourse in deciding on matters of the criminal responsibility of an accused (Foucault 1977c/1988).

At the same time it is not as though there aren't serious equivocations in Foucault's work about how desirable transformations of human existence might be

achieved. There are places where he suggest that politics may well be a plausible and desirable means for transforming the present. The end of *The Archaeology of Knowledge* for example, outlines how an archaeology of political knowledge, i.e., a critical historical analysis of forms of political discourse, could be conducted. This projected research was partly realised in his work on governmentality from 1978 onward, but his description in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* is quite distinct and indicates that the work of developing an analysis of politics, different from the analytic of power, has more than a little resonance with Foucault's concern with transformations of subjectivity. In carrying out such a project,

One would try to show whether the political behaviour of a society, a group, or a class is not shot through with a particular, describable discursive practice. ...It would define the elements in politics that can become an object of enunciation, the forms that this enunciation may take, the concepts that are employed in it, and the strategic choices that are made in it. ... Since it is regularly formed by a discursive practice that is deployed among other practices and is articulated upon them, it is not an expression that more or less adequately 'reflects' a number of 'objective data' or real practices. ... one would analyse the formation and transformations of a body of knowledge. ... it would try to explain the formation of a discursive practice and a body of revolutionary knowledge that is expressed in behaviour and strategies, which give rise to a theory of society, and which operate the interference and mutual transformation of that behaviour and those practices (AK: 194-195).

Furthermore, just a year earlier, Foucault had outlined a series of hypotheses on what a progressive politics might look like (Foucault 1968a/1991: 70). This is a striking moment, one of very few where he is explicitly positive in his political reflections, and prior to the formulation of his explicitly genealogical concern with power in 1971, but also a moment when he was close to Althusserian Marxism. This is a period when he is at the height of his conceptual powers, a point at which he had consolidated and explicated

the prior decade's archaeological research into the emergence of the human sciences and had in the process completely transformed how historians and social analysts thought about historical transformations and the practice of doing history.

In this interview he stresses the need to appreciate the complex determinations of political processes and transformation; stresses that the capacity of a subject to act politically is structured by 'the different levels and functions which subjects can occupy in a domain which has its own rules of formation' and that political discourse is a form of practice 'which is articulated upon the other practices' (Foucault 1968a/1991). What is surprising is that this explicit concern for politics *precedes and is extraneous to*, his 'analytic of power' (PP: 13; HS: 82), conception of 'the political field' and 'governmentality'. Thus, there is another sense in which Foucault's expulsion of politics produces effects on his own work, namely, a battle for politics itself within it, in which the apparently a-political analyses of the order of discourse peculiar to the human sciences that were the focus of his archaeological works of the 1960s shows itself to be *more political* than his later concern with power, government and ethics.

Another resource in Foucault for thinking about political transformations is provided by the many traces of his fascination with collective subjects and collective uprisings, especially those that take individuals beyond themselves, i.e., are ecstatic. As has been noted by Foucault's biographer, David Macey, this interest came early as witnessed by his fascination with a carnival put on by the patients of the psychiatric hospital in Musterlingen in 1952 (Foucault 1976c/1996: 184-185; Macey 1993: 61-62; cf. Rabinow 1997: xxii-xxiii). This fascination is echoed in the depiction of the mad that

opens *The History of Madness* (HM), confined in their Ship of Fools on an endless voyage (Macey 1993: 62).

Foucault also witnessed and actively supported student uprisings during his two years at the University of Tunis, Tunisia between 1966-1968 (Foucault 1978/2000: 280; cf. Eribon 1989/1991: 195; Macey 1993: 191). Then, there is, Foucault's (in)famous fascination with the Iranian revolution 1978-1979. As he remarks,

There was in these demonstrations a link between collective action, religious ritual, and an expression of public right. It's rather like in Greek tragedy where the collective ceremony and the re-enactment of the principles of right go hand in hand. In the streets of Tehran there was an act, a political and juridical act, carried out within religious rituals—an act of deposing the sovereign (Foucault 1979b/2005: 254)

According to Foucault, the impetus for those participating in the Iranian revolution was 'the promise and guarantee of finding something that would radically change their subjectivity' (255). On another occasion, Foucault joined with other Parisian intellectuals like the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, in support of the Polish *Solidarnosc* in the autumn of 1982 (Macey 1993: 446-447; cf. Foucault 1982d/2000). Or again, in 'Sexual Choice, Sexual Act', Foucault comments in sociological terms on homosexuals as a collective (1982b/1996).

These experiences, distinctively political ones, hint at what Georges Bataille, following Durkheim, analysed in terms of the sacred and profoundly volatile moments of 'collective effervescence'. Given that Foucault had edited the first volume of Bataille's *Oeuvres Completes* for Gallimard in 1970 (cf. Foucault 1970c) that contained several of Bataille's most explicitly sociological analyses of political phenomena like 'The Psychological Structure of Fascism' (1933/1994) and 'The Popular Front in the Street'

(1936/1994), he certainly had at his disposal a way of conceptualising these experiences of politics.¹ Moreover, Bataille's analyses of fascism may have provided Foucault with a resource for attending to the fascising elements of Islamism in Iran, hence mitigating his naïve endorsement of the Iranian Revolution (Afray and Anderson 2005). Such sensibilities never made their way into his analytics of power even though this radical Durkheimian current developed a distinctive and theoretically powerful way of linking politics and the sacred together, precisely the phenomenon that fascinated him about Iran and Poland.²

The Importance of Being Theoretical

This thesis is theoretical out of necessity; it requires the defence and development of the conceptual means to adequately account for two key elements. The first element is that of the object to be transformed. In the case of politics, I argue that this requires a concept of society as a concrete totality, i.e., a social formation. This does not imply adhering to the notion that societies are coherent, united wholes, or essences (Althusser and Balibar 1965/1970; Resch 1992: 34-42; Read 2001). The second element to be accounted for are the conditions and effects of politics as that which intervenes in social formations with potentially massive effects. This also requires making a case for a productive, non-reductive relation between sociology, conceived as the science of social formations, and

¹ Many of the pieces contained in the first volume of Bataille's *Oeuvres Complètes* have been translated into English and published in *Visions of Excess* (Bataille 1994).

² Given Foucault's fascination with collective uprisings and political phenomena, it is rather surprising to note that Simons' quite comprehensive book *Foucault and The Political*, (1995) says little about Iran and nothing about Tunisia or Poland and Carrette's *Foucault and Religion* (2000), while containing an excellent analysis of the politics of homosexuality in Foucault's work, only discusses Iran briefly and also says nothing about Tunisia or Poland.

politics, a position that Foucault was opposed to since he saw social science as implicated in the multiform relations of domination that constrain modes of existence in the modern epoch (SMBD: 11; 1983a/2003: 104; Rabinow and Rose 2003: xv; Rose and Miller 1992: 177; Dews 1979/1986). Thus one needs to attend to the theoretical dimensions of Foucault's work since his accounts of the political field rely upon and are produced by the questions with which he was concerned; the categories used in his analyses of what is happening; the concepts created to explain what is happening; and models of how social and political processes work. That is to say that Foucault's work is dependent upon theoretical production and a serious engagement with it requires inspecting its theoretical grounds. This involves examining how and why Foucault makes the kind of claims he does and not others such that it results in his expulsion of politics. Accounts of the world inherently imply both commitments about the nature of the world than one aims to know (i.e., ontological commitments) and about the nature and limits of knowledge of the world (i.e., epistemological commitments). And often enough, these metatheoretical commitments are accompanied by normative commitments and some sense of moving from what is the case to what ought to be the case or more modestly, what other case might be made. These commitments will need to be assessed.

Now, since Foucault's empirical accounts of the political field require him to describe phenomena and events in terms of his categories and concepts, theoretical work will mean in part a concern with his substantive analyses. Of course, what is meant by empirical research is itself something to be examined. My own position is that the empirical element of sociological research concerns social formations. While most social researchers would likely recoil from this formulation for being too abstract, I think it is a

necessary one if we are to avoid restricting sociology to analyses of some parcel of the social and perpetually relying on the unhelpful caveat that that parcel exists in broader social conditions (cf. Mills 1959/1967; Sayer 1981; Althusser and Balibar 1965/1970: 207). In my view, one of the main contributions of sociology was and remains the sensitivity to working out the relations between the parts and the whole, and the dominance of the latter over the former. Of course, many dangers lie here but they are dangers to be navigated; caution is to be preferred to abandoning this form of the sociological journey.

For these reasons, developing a Foucault for politics will require substantial theoretical work. His expulsion of politics though, can be redressed by theoretically examining the productivity and limits of his conception of the political field (i.e., his conception of what the problem is *qua* the object of transformation) and examining his recommendations about what can be done to transform the contemporary political field.

Re-Reading Foucault Critically and Productively

Now, as Althusser (1974/1976: 149) and Bourdieu (Hacking 2001/2002) argue, neither concepts nor the social world are givens and so we need to be wary of the self-evidence of either the terms used in social analysis or of the social reality to which they are made to refer. This means that social science needs to reflect upon and theorise the reading of texts and indeed, theoretical work itself (Lopez 2003; Pearce 2001). My own work comes from a long-term sociological engagement with Foucault, especially as read alongside classical social theory, contemporary debates in social science and following political debates in a period of global restructuring. As Althusser (1965a/1970) and others

following him (e.g., Pearce 2001) have argued, any engagement with texts ‘is determined and informed by the concerns of the reader’ and as such is guilty (Pearce 2001: xxi). My readings of Foucault are no different and have been positioned by the two central reference points of Durkheim and Althusser. Not surprisingly, my Althusser, Durkheim and Foucault have been affected by this intertextuality and have become quite heterodox. For reasons that I hope become clear over the remainder, the Foucault-Durkheim-Althusser axis is a promising one.

That said, my reading of Foucault and the present situation in critical social analysis from the point of view of the concern for politics, and as a sociologist committed to materialism-realism (see Chapter 2) affect the way I read Foucault and sets the parameters of my theoretical project. It is also now impossible to review the enormous body of literature on Foucault. Thus what follows is based predominantly on my own interpretations drawn from an extensive and sustained immersion in his entire *corpus*. I suggest that reading Foucault symptomatically and drawing on Althusser’s late position of aleatory materialism provides a method for theoretical work of this kind, allowing one to confront and offer a plausible resolution to the problem of politics in Foucault. But, while I engage with the full range of Foucault’s work, what I do here is not primarily an exegesis of his approach to the political especially since this would merely attempt what Simons (1995) has already done in fine fashion.

In reading Foucault symptomatically, I explicate and assess his ‘problematic’, i.e., his dominant means of posing questions and producing accounts of the social world, providing a certain degree of coherence to these accounts and hence too, to what is excluded from it (Althusser 1965/1970; Pearce 2001; Woodiwiss 1990; Read 2001). Over

against Rabinow and Rose (2003: xv), this does not imply the search for ‘hidden interests’ but means reading Foucault exactly to the letter, attending to the various signifying chains that traverse his *oeuvre*.

Characteristically, symptomatic readings map how signifiers like ‘power’ and ‘the subject’ refer to each other through signifying chains. This provides the basis for assessing the relative coherence and plausibility of the theoretical logic of an account constituted by these chains of meaning. The reader must also attend to any aporias and lacunae produced by a problematic, degrees of theoretical development, attenuation, displacement and contradiction. A symptomatic reading of Foucault then, allows the reader to identify two quite different Foucaults: one opposed to politics, the other fascinated by its manifestations. A crucial part of reading him this way thus requires assessing the productivity of both, their sets of signifying chains, and accounting for why his fascination with the phenomenon of politics continually emerges in supplemental (i.e., theoretically underdeveloped) form.

The main methodological resource for this work is Althusser’s late position of aleatory materialism, or a materialism of chance. The theoretical component of aleatory materialism stresses the contingent conditions from which social formations emerge and in doing so, offers an non-reductionist explanation of the contingent conditions of an effective politics that may transform a social formation (Althusser 2006; 1999). Moreover, there is an important point of convergence between aleatory materialism and Foucault’s work since both share a stringent antipathy for theoretically humanist and teleological accounts of social life (cf. HM; Foucault 1971b/2003; Althusser 1968/1972;

1978/2006). This point of compatibility provides the basis for a non-eclectic synthesis of Foucault and aleatory materialism.

I frame the present project in terms of aleatory materialism for several reasons. First, its point of departure is the question of politics; it involves thinking about politics as the means for societal transformation. Second, it conceives of thinking as a political activity without reducing it to interests and power, i.e., the cognitive reduction of ‘knowledge to interests’ as Habermas might have put it (Habermas 1968/1971). Rather, aleatory materialist theorising is to be based on the attempt to account for things ‘as they actually are’ (Althusser 1999: 7) and imagining alternative arrangements of social life since a current arrangement does not exhaust potential and plausible alternative social arrangements. Thus, there is an important but not vanguardist role for theoretical interventions to play in politics according to aleatory materialism. Third, its attention to contingent encounters allows us to better appreciate the stakes in the chance encounter between Foucault’s expulsion of politics and the post-political exclusion of politics.

There is a more pronounced element to my engagement with aleatory materialism because I argue that reading Foucault’s work symptomatically by posing the question of politics to it, requires a change of the Foucauldian terrain, moving into an explicit aleatory materialism. This is necessary if a concept of politics is to be made consistent with his important contribution to understanding the emergence and resilience of the modern political field in Western civilization since the mid-nineteenth century. But, the dissertation does not argue for an imposition of aleatory materialism on Foucault’s work but rather highlights the underdeveloped and much attenuated aspects of it that are consistent with aleatory materialism and so with a concern for politics and a theory

adequate to it. Furthermore, in my estimation, Foucault gives us an impeccable aleatory materialist account of rule. Foucault's work can be made more powerful by developing this aleatory materialism explicitly and taking it as the point of departure for posing the question of politics today. To put this somewhat differently, leveraging Foucault's already existing implicit aleatory materialism makes it possible to think the possible production of a *discontinuity*—a break—from our present political actuality.

Theoretically developed, the combination of Foucault and aleatory materialism produces a distinct theory of politics and the political field producing a Foucault for politics. Thus, I (re-)read Foucault's work in a critical yet productive way to show how his more fruitful and perspicacious accounts of modern existence can be developed to extend our understanding of contemporary social life and help us think about the conditions for its potential transformation. Where necessary, underdeveloped or incoherent elements of Foucault's work are supplemented and retheorised with more adequate concepts found in aleatory materialism and radical Durkheimianism. In short, facilitated by aleatory materialism, the present project confronts and offers a plausible theoretical resolution to the problem of politics in Foucault's work, developing a Foucault adequate to challenging the impasse of post-politics and developing a theoretical position able to engage in the battle for politics itself.

Preliminary Definitions: Politics, Rule and the Political Field

Creating a Foucault for politics requires transforming his conception of the political field and here I wish to provide some early indication of what this will involve. Minimally, this requires a concept of politics and a concept of rule. Preliminary definitions of these

concepts will, for the time being, outline the basic contours of my aleatory materialist Foucault.

The central concept developed and defended in this thesis is that of politics, a move that involves a positive valorisation of what Foucault's predominant position rejects. Politics at this point can be taken to mean large-scale projects of societal transformation undertaken by a collective-politicised subject, the contingent effect of which produces new symbolic coordinates, institutions and procedures for the organisation and coordination of societies and problematisations of its fate. As such, politics is exceptional in relation to a current situation of rule and potentially *constitutive* of a new situation; *politics is radically constitutive*. Developing a concept of politics in this way facilitates rethinking what is meant by the political field since designating a concept of the *object* of political transformation is (i.e., a social formation) and the *mode* of its transformation (i.e., politics and its conditions of efficacy).

Politics though, needs to be distinguished from what I call 'rule'. Rule, an often used, but poorly theorised term, can be defined as the condition that keeps things the way they are in a society. More precisely, I take rule to refer to the arrangement of places that people occupy in a society as found in the condescending phrase 'Know your place!', together with the dominant set of coordinates through which people think about their fate. To adopt a technique from Nietzsche's *On the Genealogy of Morals* (1878/1989), etymologies often provide useful clues or signposts for understanding relations of domination, a technique appropriate for grasping what I aim to get at with the concept of rule.

The postulated Proto-Indo-European (hereafter, 'proto-I-E') root of the English word 'rule' is '*reg-', meaning 'priest-king' (Benveniste 1969/1973: 311), from which is derived the Latin *regula* ('straight stick') and other Latin derivatives like *Rex* ('King') and *Regina* ('Queen'), and English derivatives like 'regular' and 'regime'. In Latin, *rex* was related to the verb *regere*. Benveniste's comparative historical analysis of Indo-European texts helps clarify the representations and practices associated with the proto-I-E *reg-, providing a way of formulating the preliminary definition of rule as distinct from politics.

In order to understand the formation of *rex* and the verb *regere* we must start with this notion [of straightness], which was wholly material to begin with but was susceptible of development in moral sense. This dual notion is present in the important expression *regere fines*, a religious act which was preliminary to building. *Regere fines* means literally 'trace out the limits by straight lines'. This is the operation carried out by the high priest before a temple or town is built and it consists in the delimitation on a given terrain of a sacred plot of ground. The magical character of this operation is evident: what is involved is the delimitation of the interior and the exterior, the realm of the sacred and the realm of the profane, the national territory and foreign territory. The tracing of these limits is carried out by the person invested with the highest powers, the *rex*. [...]

The Indo-European *rex* was much more a religious than a political figure. His mission was not to command, to exercise power but to draw up rules, to determine what was in the proper sense 'right' ('straight'). It follows that the *rex*, as thus defined, was more akin to a priest than a sovereign (Benveniste 1969/1973: 311-12).

Two of the English meanings of 'ruler', referring to a political figure and a measuring stick or straight edge has involved a separation of the effects of the same social structure and practices in which the priest-king enacted this ritual, in which both meanings were condensed.

To follow through on the proto-I-E uses, rule at once designates the asymmetries of a social order (i.e., priest-king as the first stratum of the caste system in Indo-European societies); the ritual apparatus of *delimiting* a social sphere (the reference point for systems of inclusion and exclusion); and the *sanctioning*, in the positive sense, of what takes or *holds and occupies* the place so designated (namely, what goes on in the building correctly delimited). In this sense, rule is constitutive of the measure and coordinates of a structure of places within a social order.

While this concept of rule refers to what it is that keeps things the way they are, this by no means commits one to a static model of rule. In this respect, Foucault's work is very helpful. Read in this way, the question of rule, of the way things are, is about the direction in which social life is actually headed because of how a field structuring possible actions is constituted; it is dynamic because it deals with actions. To put this in slightly different terms, actions *actualise* and so *hold* a place delimited by rule. My conception also encompasses how things are spoken of and thought about. That is to say that a ruled condition is one in which there is a predominant *measure of things*. Indeed, Foucault was an exemplary analyst of such measures, e.g., how one distinguishes between reason and madness, between life and death, between normal and abnormal, healthy and perverse.

Moreover, rule can be said to be the overarching rubric of Foucault's analytic of the political field. By and large, Foucault's analyses of the political field are concerned with conditions of rule, the many techniques on which rule in modern Western civilization depend, and the systems of thought through which the problems and solutions confronting the exercise of rule are addressed. Thus rule in aleatory materialist

Foucauldian terms, refers to the mechanisms of social ordering and coordination that attempt to limit historical development by directing it or channelling social capacities in some directions and not others. This is especially true if one appreciates Foucault's unique way of conceptualising 'hegemony' (cf. HS: 93, 94, 127). By way of introduction then, to re-read Foucault from the point of view of politics will require keeping the distinction between politics and rule in mind, appreciating that they are at odds in a political field.

The Stakes

The stakes in theoretical work of this kind on Foucault, of taking the time to think about what politics can mean today, the conditions of doing politics and what can and should be done if we are to transform the world in which we live, are not trivial. They involve considering the object to be transformed, the mode of transformation, and the thought of transformation. In short, to be concerned with politics means attending exactly to what is *not* taking place. Foucault was himself aware of the stakes: 'What are we, are we superfluous in this age when what should be happening is not happening?' (Foucault 1977g/1988: 121).

Outline of the Remainder

The next chapter explicates my methodology for theoretical work. Chapter 3 maps the theoretical milieu in which Foucault's critiques of political theory intervene. In Chapter 4 I create an ontology for Foucault captured in his phrase 'mode of being', rendering his main concepts in coherent theoretical form. I focus in particular on his concern with the

human sciences, his conception of the political field in terms of power and knowledge, and his concept of subjectivity in order to situate his analysis of the emergence of modern forms of government addressed in the following chapter. In Chapter 5, I clarify the theoretical content and logic of his account of governmentality as a system of political thought that frames debates about the fate of societies in modernity. Chapter 6 moves beyond the realm of systems of political thought to show how contemporary modes of being, and the multiplicity of human actions that result, are hegemonised by the *dispositif* (social apparatus) of government. I show how theoretical work on Foucault helps develop a persuasive account of the process of hegemony *via* governmentality, yielding a complex causal account of the dominance of contemporary post-politics.

Foucault's recommendations about viable and desirable modes of transformation are outlined in Chapter 7. The logic of his expulsion of politics is then explicated. Chapter 8 situates the stakes of engaging in the transformation of Foucault's problematic in the current post-political condition by discussing the concept of post-politics and the consequences of Foucault's work in it. In Chapter 9, a thoroughgoing symptomatic reading of his work lays out the structure of its implicit problematic, identified as *critical nominalism*. I argue that his problematic logically leads to the displacement of politics by ethics but also produces aporias concerning conventional objects of sociological analysis and hence serious difficulties for coherently theorising the object of politics. These aporias, I contend, cannot be coherently resolved by critical nominalism. The theoretical case for a change of terrain from critical nominalism to aleatory materialism is then made and recommended as a plausible means for dealing with these aporias, opening the way to a productive relationship between social science and politics.

In Chapter 10, the final chapter, I explicate my alternative conception of the political field by confronting and resolving the dimensions of Foucault's expulsion of politics. A range of concepts are then defined and put to work on the central Foucauldian thematics of avant-garde art, strategy, imagination, power, *dispositifs*, and mass uprisings as they pertain to the constitution of an effective politics. My alternative aleatory materialist version of a Foucault for politics then suggests that we can today conceive of the death of government and move political debate beyond the concern with better or worse government to the possibility of something that I call *demopolitics*. Demopolitics describes how *the perpetuation of politics itself by political means* can short-circuit the strong tendency for a politics to ossify as post-political government. I specify the conditions for demopolitics and then conclude the thesis.

Chapter Two:

Aleatory Materialism and the Symptomatic Method

Introduction

In this chapter, I lay out the metatheoretical foundations and methodological protocols for a critical and productive relationship to Foucault's texts. I argued in Chapter 1 that there are *two different* Foucault's present in his texts, one opposed to politics and another, much attenuated, for politics. As suggested by Althusser's aleatory materialist method of symptomatic readings, this circumstance becomes a point at which Foucault can be de- and *re-constructed* (Althusser 1965/1970; Woodiwiss 1990; Resch 1991: 174). In doing so, I aim to show that this kind of theoretical work allows us to discover something new and that 'theoretical research' is not the oxymoron that many believe it to be—empirical research is not the lone path to discovery. Furthermore, pointing out that Foucault's expulsion of politics depoliticises social analysis, unwittingly providing theoretical support for post-politics does not imply that Foucault must be abandoned *tout court*. Neither does it imply that some other position is correct.

Regarding this problem Pearce remarks, 'Whilst within critical social science the recognition of the importance of the epistemological, political and moral assumptions that lurk within allegedly objective sociological analyses has a long and useful history, there remains the problem of the appropriate stance to take towards "flawed" work' (2001: 2). Aleatory materialism in my view, has the most methodological capacity of contemporary positions for working with texts. This is not least because it views theoretical work as an inherent, constitutive part and necessary condition of any knowledge that claims to offer

an account of the world. Theoretical work is necessary since a theory of politics is not lying there waiting to be read in either Foucault or in a post-political condition. Aleatory materialism also requires being explicit about one's point of view and in this case, I take up the point of view of a concern for politics. Thus, in terms of the aleatory materialist sociology elaborated here, the object of an unactualised politics becomes the starting point for social analysis. As such, it is partisan but it is precisely this partisanship (being on the side of politics) that allows one to apprehend the current situation and what might be done about it. While aleatory materialism is a fairly new position it opens up a space for a different kind of social science that is partial to politics.

In this respect I suggest that the expulsion of politics characteristic of Foucault's critical orientation, can be resolved by taking up the theoretical point of view of the Foucault for politics. I suggest that this Foucault is intuitively (i.e., lacking an adequate theoretical basis) better able to handle the two main questions concerning the transformation of human existence: what is the *object* to be transformed and what is the *mode* of transformation adequate to that transformation. At the same time, I subject aleatory materialism to critical development because Althusser's formulations are themselves traversed by contradictions (e.g., his functionalist *versus* his realist conceptions of social formations) and at important points inadequate formulations (e.g., 'class struggle in theory').

Symptomatic reading offers a methodology for reading texts and the world to which they refer in a rigorous way, facilitating critical and creative retheorising (Althusser 1965a/1970; Negri 1997). As a theorist, my focus is on the productivity and scope of questions and concepts made possible by theoretical discourse. By discourse is

meant the systematic, relatively logically governed signifying chains that attempt to answer a question about an object, structured by relations of difference between signifiers the combination of which produces the meaning effects of any particular signifier.

It is important to identify different levels of theoretical discourse in a text. These include: metatheory (i.e., epistemological, ontological and normative commitments, whether these are implicit or explicit); general theories say, of society and history; specific, regional theories; and empirical discourses. As such, I attend to concepts, categories and descriptions dependent upon categories to which theoretical components linguistically refer, and to the phenomena and events they aim to account for whether this accounting is viewed as an explanation or a systematic description of constituent components.

Posing the question of politics to Foucault's work requires attending to three dimensions:

1. *The Protocols of the Foucauldian Problematic.* The work of clarifying a problematic—the central task of a symptomatic reading—aims to determine the productivity of a discourse concerning: the questions asked that direct research; the criteria for answering them; and how we are to go about thinking about and accounting for the social world to the exclusion of other, rival problematics. As concerns the political field, clarifying the features and logic of Foucault's problematic requires that one specify how the object of the political field is thought about, what it renders visible and articulable (to the exclusion of other problematics) and whether or not this conception governs judgments about what can be done about it.
2. *The Object of Transformation.* The concept of the object of transformation attempts to grasp in thought what it is that 'we' are fighting against or, what it is that needs to change if we are to escape the constraints of the present.
3. *The Mode of Transformation.* The mode of transformation concerns conceptualising what can and/or must be done in order to transform the object and specifying the requisite conditions for such a project: is it resistance, ethics, protest, partisan politics, or winning the battle for hearts and minds? In conventional terms, this can be referred to as the *normative dimension* of a theoretical system. It is important to note that Foucault

himself argues from “is” to “ought” (see Chapters 7 and 9). Thus, his conception of the object of transformation governs his recommendations about possible modes of transformation.

These questions provide the point of departure for assessing what can be done to develop Foucault’s work, assessing it in terms of the adequacy of the answers given to these questions.

This task is not without substantial risks since it means running counter to Foucault’s predominant position on the link between theory and politics. If it can be shown that Foucault’s conceptions of the object and mode of transformation are inadequate or contradictory and it can be shown that his problematic produces inadequacies concerning the object and mode of transformation, then there are good reasons for seeking to change the theoretical terrain of Foucault’s problematic.

Theory and Theoretical Practice

It is unfortunate that much theoretical work in social and political theory more generally does not have an explicit methodology of theoretical practice that specifies what theorists do when they theorise, and means of assessing theoretical works. There is an alternative though for assessing theoretical work as found in Keat and Urry (1982), Archer *et al* (1998), Pearce (2001) and Lopez (2003). To begin with, some minimal ideas will help clarify how the different components of theorising work together. The first is that of a theoretical discourse, a discourse that aims to account for some or other facet of the world, including analyses and/or explanations of phenomena and events. The second is the ‘discourse-object’ (Althusser 1965a/1970), i.e., the way phenomena and events are conceptualised and signified in a theoretical discourse. The third component is that of

‘reality’ that produces phenomena and events and to which both theoretical discourse and discourse-objects *refer*. Hence the importance of Spinoza’s point that ‘the concept of a dog does not bark’ (Althusser 1975/1990: 228).

In this example, one has some roughly theoretical discourse about animals, kinds of animals and the characteristics of these animals, what they look like, what they do, etc. Second, is the specific discourse-object of “dog” that designates a kind of animal, signified by a word that differentiates it from other signifiers belonging to the *genus* “animal”. Third, one has the phenomena of “barking”, the noise that this animal makes apprehended by the senses and categorized as “barking”, together with the event of “that dog there barking at such a time and place”. Fourth, the signifier “barking” also differentiates it from other signifiers for sounds that animals make, i.e., “barking” is not “purring”. Fifth, there is the fundamental difference between what a concept is and what a real animal is, a difference that cannot be overcome. And last, there is reality, a world in which it is possible for humans, theorising and dogs to encounter each other to produce a statement like “the concept of a dog does not bark”. Keeping these distinctions in mind, while often difficult to do in practice, is an important facet of any adequate critical and productive relationship to theoretical work. Moreover, these conceptual guidelines imply that one cannot take theories at face value; there are different interpretations of what is going on in the world, different points of view on phenomena and events and hence good reasons for being sceptical about both interpretations and uses of texts and accounts of reality. In this respect, theoretical practice shares a sensibility with what Foucault, drawing on Nietzsche, Freud and Marx called a ‘hermeneutics of suspicion’ (Foucault

1967b/1998). To spell out what theorists do when they theorise it is useful to define what is meant by theory, and clarify what its constituent components and practices are.

Definition of Social Theory

Specifically, I take social theory to mean a system of linguistic signs comprised of more and less logically interrelated concepts, categories, questions and models (including their implicit and explicit assumptions about the nature of knowledge and the world) used to analyse, explain and describe the social realm. The primary objective of social theory is to attempt to provide systematic accounts of the social realm and its difference from other strata of reality. Doing so involves generating accounts of the social realm that go beyond what we can observe and measure. Theories work to specify and demarcate their distinctive positions within a broader range of discourses that deal with the social realm, including historical, political, anthropological and psychological discourses among others.

Theoretical practice also involves elaborating the defence and justification of the reasoning subtending the positions held by a theory and the statements contained therein. Theories must be explicated (spelled out; made clear) by differentiating their concepts, categories and questions from everyday understanding, political and theoretical ideologies, previous theories or from rival theories. The abstractness of theoretical language in sociology does not derive from its apparent distance from the everyday world but on the need to *differentiate and distinguish* sociological discourse from other discourses. Like poetry, it works upon commonly used signifiers to create new meanings. Social theory is thus a specialised technical language that enables us to think about and

gain knowledge of the world. By producing distinctiveness, theories always exclude some elements and are called to justify these exclusions. 'In sum, social theorists *qua* theorists should aim to provide not pictures of social reality but rigorously interrelated ensembles of signs that have been made to refer to extra-theoretical reality' (Woodiwiss 1990: 9).

Assessing Theoretical Discourse

Having a concept of social theory and theoretical practice helps one specify what one is assessing when engaging with theoretical discourse. What is distinctive about social theory is: the *clarity* of its theoretical apparatus; the *scope* of its analysis; its *productivity* or fecundity, especially of its questions (has it opened up new research domains?); and explanatory *power*. In this regard, explanation can be said to be the goal of social scientific work. Explanations involve offering accounts of 'the necessary relations between things' (Durkheim 1892a/1997). In doing so explanations aim to answer "why" questions by specifying how some thing or event occurs and not something else, and offering a conception of the conditions in which the relations of necessity productive of phenomena and events occur. Reading texts critically yet productively will involve attending to the degree of development and degree of coherence in a theory in as much as it aims to offer a plausible account of why things are the way they are and not otherwise. I suggest that the aleatory materialist methodology of symptomatic reading facilitates doing just this. The symptomatic methodology of aleatory materialism allows one to identify the presence of more than one series of discourses in a theory that more and less systematically and coherently attempt an account of reality. Having laid out the basic

components of theory and theoretical practice, I now turn to an explication of my metatheoretical commitments.

The Metatheoretical Commitments of the Symptomatic Method

The metatheoretical basis of aleatory materialist methodology is realist both ontologically and epistemologically. It is ontologically realist in that it assumes that social reality, including its discursive dimension, exists independently of the awareness of humans (cf. Woodiwiss 1990: 25) and that ‘the world is a material entity in that if it were not accessible to our senses there would be no grounds for assuming its externality to our minds’ (Pearce and Woodiwiss 2001: 51). Realism holds that all epistemologies implicitly or explicitly assume some conception of what the world must be like such that knowledge of it is possible. My approach is also epistemologically realist ‘in that it assumes that theory precedes but does not displace observation in the order of scientific inquiry’ (Woodiwiss 1990: 25). Furthermore, realist social ontology takes social reality to be a domain *sui generis*, irreducible to the realm of human individuals (Pearce 2007). Rather, social reality has distinctive emergent properties that structure and constitute, and hence enable and constrain, the capacities of both human and non-human social potentials.

As a realist work, the thesis holds stringently to the position that discourse about the real world is distinct from and irreducible to the reality to which it refers. This implies a verificational scepticism since there is no way that we can be certain whether or not one’s account is true. But, ‘this does not mean that we cannot know anything but only that we cannot be sure to *any* degree as to the correctness of what we know’ (Woodiwiss

1990: 32). So, knowledge can never be verified or falsified with any certainty, but valid knowledge is nevertheless possible and accounts can be assessed as to their coherence, analytical and explanatory power and their productivity in attempting to account for the phenomena described within the terms of a theory. Thus, while aleatory materialism like the scientific realism explicated by Keat and Urry (1982), Woodiwiss (1990) and Pearce (2001), is sceptical it is not nihilistic since 'it also assumes that reality may be apprehended, at least referentially, by the social sciences' (Woodiwiss 1990: 25). But it nevertheless recognises that while no one right answer might exist, there are wrong answers and hence realist epistemology is fallibilistic. These metatheoretical commitments lay the groundwork for understanding aleatory materialism.

Introduction to Aleatory Materialism

Aleatory materialism, Althusser's late position, provides the metatheoretical groundwork for symptomatic readings of texts and the real-concrete. It can do so in a non-reductive way because both discourse and reality are *material, external to and constitutive of subjects as knowers*, but differently so. Hence, for aleatory materialism, the reality of the material world enables and constrains the capacities of subjects, including subjects as knowers. I have extended and developed aleatory materialism, drawing out some of its less explicitly developed *theorems* and so I depart in some respects from conventional interpretations of Althusser. In particular, I do not concur with the arguments made by

Negri (1997) that aleatory materialism amounts to an unravelling of Althusser's earlier work.¹

Aleatory materialism, also called 'the philosophy, or materialism of the encounter' consolidates Althusser's late work even though aleatory materialist sensibilities are found throughout his corpus (Althusser 2006; 1999). While underdeveloped and lacking an explicit elaboration of its implications for sociological research, enough material now exists to outline an aleatory materialist programme for theoretical work in sociology.

The theoretical advance of aleatory materialism develops from Althusser's direct concern to elaborate a theoretically plausible materialist concept of politics, first, of the

¹ To my knowledge, there have only been two sociological works that have explicitly drawn on aleatory materialism: Pearce's analysis of Aztec sacrifice (1998) and Feltes' (2001) theorisation of the role and work of intellectuals in a radical political organisation. The core texts of aleatory materialism in English, from which I have drawn my aleatory materialism are, in order of importance: an edited collection of Althusser's late work, *Philosophy of the Encounter* (2006) and *Machiavelli and Us* (1999)—these two texts allow one to identify certain of Althusser's earlier works as developing aleatory materialist ideas (cf. Negri 1997; Goshgarian 2006). Here, one should apply Althusser's later position on 'epistemological breaks' to his own writings and note that aleatory materialism is comprised of signifying chains and more and less developed theoretical discourses that are present as a *tendency* within his corpus. It is largely a tendency against Hegelian teleology (Althusser 1974/1976: 107ff). To my mind, several of Althusser's earlier pieces are of particular interest in this regard: 'Contradiction and Overdetermination' (Althusser 1965d/2005); 'Marx's Relation to Hegel' (1968/1972); 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses' (1969a/1972) and 'Is it Simple to be a Marxist in Philosophy?' (1975/1990). Each of these texts argue for a complex materialist conception of structured history produced by a politics that is contingently effective. They specifically address the conditions and effects of theoretical practice in social formations. Important secondary literature has emerged since the 1994 publication in French of most of Althusser's late works in *Ecrits Philosophique et Politique*, (Althusser 1994) from which *Philosophy of the Encounter* has drawn. In English these include: the edited collection *Postmodern Materialism and the Future of Marxist Theory*, edited by Antonio Callari and David Ruccio (1997); the 1998 special issue of *Rethinking Marxism* on Althusser, edited by Callari and Ruccio (1997) and the 2005 special issue of *Borderlands*.

politics of theoretical practice and then of the conditions of a politics that effectively de- and re-structures a social formation, creating a new social formation.² In doing so, Althusser sought to remedy the central lacuna of Marxist thought, namely the persistent problem of the relation between theory and practice by showing the relative autonomy of theory and politics/practice, less from each other, but rather in relation to the social formation in which they intervene. That said, while I think Althusser is correct to identify these problems, his own theoretical solutions to them while sustaining the debate, are inadequate because he essentialises class struggle as the basis of contemporary politics.

Drawing inspiration from Machiavelli, with aleatory materialism Althusser sought to elaborate a theory of history and society appreciative of the contingent formation of societies by politics. It is a general theory of the formation of societies by chance encounters, a metatheory adequate to it, and a specific/regional theory of politics. Some sense of what aleatory materialism is can be gained by attending to its two terms:

² It is interesting to note that while Foucault did a great deal in the field of history to affirm contingency, drawing on Nietzsche and especially Deleuze's reading of Nietzsche, Althusser barely mentions Foucault in his elaboration of aleatory materialism and simply comments that Foucault 'clearly perceived' the material and practical nature of ideology (Althusser 1994a/2006: 240). Nevertheless, others who have worked on aleatory materialism have sought to develop a productive relationship between aleatory materialism and Foucault. See especially Callari and Ruccio (1997) who link Althusser's work on ideological state apparatuses, mechanisms of domination and their contingent formations in societies to Foucault; Pearce and Dupont's (2001) insight that Veyne's explication of Foucault's theory and method of history—endorsed by Foucault (1980a/2003: 258)—indicates strong affinities with aleatory materialism; the recent work of Montag (1995) bringing Althusser and Foucault together; Jason Read's (2001) work on power relations and the capitalist mode of production; see also Montag (2005) and Holden and Elden (2005). Most important to an aleatory materialist reading and retheorisation of Foucault are Althusser's discussions of theorists he identifies as belonging to the 'underground current' of aleatory materialism that were important reference points for Foucault, namely, Heidegger, Nietzsche and Spinoza, although the last two are mediated by Foucault's deployment of Deleuze's readings of them (Deleuze 1962/1983; 1970/1980; cf. below Chapter 4).

‘aleatory’ and ‘materialism’. ‘Aleatory’ is derived from the Latin word for ‘dice’, a game of chance. Althusser’s position aims to affirm the position that what happens is the result of chance encounters that when they last have the effect of necessity, but a contingent necessity (Althusser 1982/2006: 187; Elliot 1998). Sayer provides a helpful example of how contingent necessity works:

Frequently, two or more objects which are contingently related in the sense that each could exist without the other, are brought into contact and interact (i.e. causally influence one another). Once this has happened, certain further new mechanisms may arise. This is sometimes called, rather confusingly, “contingent necessity”. Thus it is contingent whether a football team is amateur or professional, but once it goes professional, then new conditions and demands necessarily come into being, such as increased need for income to cover the pay of its employees, whether it be from “gate-money”, spectators, gifts or advertising (Sayer 2000: 16).

Contingent necessity if it is to be causally efficacious requires specific conditions: ‘a successful encounter, one that is not brief, but lasts, never guarantees that it will continue to last tomorrow rather than come undone’ (Althusser 1982/2006: 174).

A couple of images recur in aleatory materialist writings that help situate what is at stake. The first is the image of ‘catching a moving train’. As Althusser writes, ‘The important thing is that [a person] doesn’t know where he is, and wants to go somewhere. That’s why he always catches a moving train, the way they do in American Westerns. Without knowing where he comes from (origin) or where he’s going (goal). And he gets off somewhere along the way’ (Althusser 1986/2006: 290). In aleatory materialism, one always starts from where one is—a situation. Thus there is no question of a “first beginning”. To get somewhere else one has a chance encounter with a train heading somewhere and does not know who s/he will meet, or what they will talk about, etc. (cf.

Althusser 1988/2006: 277). Thus, what happens is the contingent result of a lasting encounter between the rider and the train. This image captures the basic argument against teleological conceptions of history and knowledge since history, politics and knowledge are viewed as a ‘process without a subject or a goal’ (Althusser 1968/1972).

A second image comes from the Ancient Greek atomist, Epicurus. For Epicurus, a world comes into being only when atoms falling in a void (i.e., elements that have no relation or contact with each other) have a chance encounter. Both the atoms and the void in which they fall are real. It is a minute swerve—the *clinamen*—in the trajectory of an atom falling in the void that is originary of a world, but without this being determined by an underlying, previously posited reason or a *telos*—it just happens. The swerve of an atom leads to an encounter between one atom and the one next to it, ‘and from encounter to encounter, a pile-up and the birth of a world—that is to say, of the agglomeration of atoms induced, in a chain reaction, by the initial swerve and encounter’ (Althusser 1982/2006: 169). For Althusser then,

The world may be called *the accomplished fact* in which, once the fact has been accomplished, is established the reign of Reason, Meaning, Necessity and End. But *the accomplishment of the fact* is just a pure effect of contingency, since it depends on the aleatory encounter of atoms due to the swerve of the *clinamen*. Before the accomplishment of the fact, before the world, there is only *the non-accomplishment of the fact* (Althusser 1982/2006: 168-9).

That is to say that reality and a world, for aleatory materialism, while comprised of real elements, only comes to be a reality, or a world, on the basis of the contingent combination of elements in which the combination *sur-prises* (literally, in French ‘over-takes’) the atoms. The chance encounter over-takes the goal-less trajectories the atoms

had while they were just falling in the void. Thus a world is first *the combination of elements that has an effectivity on each of the elements*. Then, ‘there emerges in them a structure of Being or of the world that assigns them as “elements of...” (the atoms as elements of bodies, of beings, of the world) in such a way that the atoms, far from being the origin of the world, are merely the secondary consequence of its assignment and advent’ (Althusser 1982/2006: 192).

Althusser also stresses that aleatory materialism implies that when one examines a situation, be it a theory or an historical conjuncture, one is confronted with three possibilities. First, one has a condition in which nothing takes place—the non-encounter between elements, or *the void*. Second, one has an aleatory encounter or collision of elements. But, this encounter may occur but not hold and so the encounter does not take place, i.e., *sur-prise* the elements to produce a *combination*. Third, one has an encounter that lasts as a combination (Althusser 1982/2006: 174). Each of these three cases are determined by chance: there is no necessary inherent drive destining some elements to encounter others in a lasting way.

Thinking about the formation of a world in this way provides the basis for Althusser’s materialist-realism since the elements from which a world is constituted, i.e., atoms and the void, exist prior to the formation of that world. Thus, ‘if we are to talk about the world and its atoms in this way, it is necessary that the world exist, and *prior to that*, that the atoms exist, a situation which puts discourse on the world *for ever in second place*’ (Althusser 1982/2006:192; cf. Levine 2003: 86-87). Materialism, and more specifically the materialism Althusser finds in Epicurus, Democritus, Spinoza, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Rousseau, Marx, Heidegger, Derrida (Althusser 1982/2006: 167),

Nietzsche (189) and Deleuze (189) for Althusser means that what is the case is material, whether that be thought, experience, or history and that matter exists independently of the thought of it. In this sense it is identical to ontological realism. As Althusser argues, 'Philosophy of a materialist tendency recognizes the existence of objective external reality, as well as its independence from the subject who perceives or knows this reality. It recognizes that being or the real exists and is anterior to its discovery, to the fact of being thought or known' (Althusser 1982/2006: 274; cf. 1965a/1970: 40-43; 1975/1990: 227-228; Levine 2003: 86-87). There are good reasons for realism, for without it there would be no reason to assume that the world is anything different than what people think of it. Althusser however pushes his materialism quite far and well into the realist camp (cf. Resch 1992: 18-29) hence I will often use 'materialist-realism' to designate aleatory materialist ontology and epistemology. As such, it has strong commitments to a materialist conception of knowledge and empirical analysis; in Machiavelli's words, 'it seems to me better to represent things as they are in actual truth, rather than as they are imagined' (in Althusser 1999: 7, 57).

With aleatory materialism, Althusser sought to evacuate all teleology or intentionality from our understanding of history: we cannot retrospectively read backwards from what is now the case and attribute to the elements combined in a stabilised way any *telos* or destiny compelling them to come together in this way. Thus, for Althusser contingency lies at the core of any materialist conception of history and is the condition of knowledge production itself. So, aleatory materialism sets itself up against and offers an alternative to teleological accounts of history that link origin and

end, always imposing the end and the explanation of the end result on both the present and what has preceded it.

The chance encounter of elements that lasts constitutes the *conjuncture* (literally, the ‘bringing together’) of the elements. Thus, a social formation is never an essence but is always only a *singular formation* (cf. Montag 1998). Aleatory materialism then, is both a methodology for, and a theory of, what takes place. Its primary point of departure is what happens. What happens is taken to be the effect of chance or *aleatory* encounters between elements that have no meaning or effectivity outside of the encounter between elements combined in such a way that they structure these elements. Crucially, this does not mean that the structure pre-exists its aleatory formation. *Contra* the rationalist and idealist position of Levi-Strauss for instance, structures are not like Platonic forms, the eternal and universal structure behind all appearance (cf. Althusser 1974/1976: 126-131).

Aleatory Materialist Ontology

Like realism, aleatory materialism argues that ‘the philosophy of science is wrong to begin with epistemology. The questions concerning what we can know depend upon what there is in fact there possibly to be known; that is, epistemological questions are dependent upon ontological answers to questions about the nature of existence’ (Lopez and Potter 2001: 10). Aleatory materialist ontology grapples with the question of the nature of the objects of social, historical and political inquiry, how they are connected, their conditions of existence, relations of dependence and how different classes of beings (e.g., the physical, chemical, biological, psychological and social realms) are related to and affect each other.

Crucially for realists, reality is not modifiable by the sheer act of human will (cf. Durkheim 1895/1982: 46). Realists argue that the socio-historical realm is comprised of structures or mechanisms that are greater and more fundamental than the relations, events and phenomena they produce. There are prior conditions for the emergence of phenomena and events that are the possible objects of human experience. Objects are generally held to be comprised of multiple elements in articulated relations with more and less complex properties. Thus, these objects or things ‘may be very different from our ordinary notions of such. “Things” may be powers, forces, mechanisms, characteristics, or sets of relations’ (Lopez and Potter 2001: 11).

A crucial part of realism is the distinction between reality, actuality and empirical experiences. First, reality is whatever exists whether or not it is an object of possible experience. Reality is also the realm of mechanisms, powers or *potentials* be they actualised or not. For example, real objects, ‘like bureaucracies, ...have certain structures and causal powers, that is, capacities to behave in particular ways, and causal liabilities or passive powers, that is, specific susceptibilities to certain kinds of change’ (Sayer 2000: 11). In contrast to reality, actuality ‘refers to what happens if and when those powers are activated, to what they do and what eventuates when they do, such as when a bureaucracy’s powers are activated and it engages in activities such as classifying and invoicing’ (11). For example, if we take Foucault’s analysis of medical discourse, (BC; AK: 50ff; 1974a/2000) there is a distinction between the constitution of the place of medical authority and an actual doctor who makes a statement. The place of medical authority refers to the complex real structure of a discursive formation and its relation to

state institutions and the capacity of human subjects to exist within social structures and work on bodies, while practicing medicine belongs to the domain of actuality.

What humans experience, always from a partial, linguistically mediated position (experience is synthetic and decentred in the socio-historical realm of language), is the real-concrete of actuality. For example, a doctor may observe that a patient has a fever by measuring their temperature, thus generating empirical experience of that actual patient's condition. This also means that 'while we may be able to observe such things as the structure of an organization or a household, as well as what happens when they act, some structures may not be observable' (Sayer 2000: 12). Thus, for realists, empirical experience is a subset of actuality, and actuality is a subset of reality. Furthermore, realist ontology suggests that actuality is limited. As Sayer writes,

A crucial implication of this ontology is the recognition of the possibility that powers may exist unexercised, and hence that what has happened or been known to have happened does not exhaust what could happen or have happened. The nature of the real object present at a given time constrains and enables what can happen but does not pre-determine what will happen. Realist ontology therefore makes it possible to understand how we could be or become many things which currently we are not: the unemployed could become employed, the ignorant could become knowledgeable, and so on (Sayer 2000: 12).

In this respect, the effectivity of a social structure is greater than and different from the sum of its parts.

These realist arguments can be put into more Althusserian terms, although here I develop them in a way different from his own formulations. Our everyday experiences are a subset of actually existing social relations produced by the independently existing real structure of their articulation (i.e., location or placement in a hierarchy of

determinations) in a social formation. Our experiences and what actually takes place are *overdetermined* (or, '*sur-prised*') by the structured combination of practices, the social relations that make them possible and social institutions (e.g., culture, politics, economics) in which they occur; what happens is the actualisation of only *one* real possibility. Thus, *social formations are underdetermined by their potentials*. What actually happens does not exhaust what else could happen and what other arrangements of social forces, actualising currently unactualised potentials, could be made. Unactualised potentials in Althusser's later aleatory materialist terms, *refer to the reality of the void*, i.e., the *absence* of an encounter between real social things.

The basic aleatory materialist ontological position then is that the nature of the external world that is existentially extrinsic relative to knowledge of it, enables, constrains and limits our capacity to have knowledge of the world. Reality is also the final arbiter of the adequacy of knowledge: whether or not we are wrong is determined by the nature of reality not by the order of any particular discourse. Consequently, a key part of realism holds that while knowledge is transitive in nature and there may be many different plausible theoretical accounts, it does not follow that all accounts are equally adequate (Sayer 2000: 62; Manicas and Secord in Palys 1992: 13). To now move to the epistemological dimensions of aleatory materialism, realism means that there is a world to be wrong about and it implies a healthy scepticism since just because I think I have knowledge of the world doesn't mean that I have knowledge about the world.

Aleatory Materialist Epistemology

Aleatory materialism has epistemological commitments that follow from its ontology. It has a specific position on the possibility, structure and limits of knowledge production. As mentioned above ontological realism commits the social analyst to fallibilism. This further implies that aleatory materialist epistemology is a variant of epistemological relativism since there are no guarantees that a particular way of producing knowledge is inherently better than another with which it competes. While it is relativist, not just anything goes and hence it is possible to decide between competing theories. As Bhaskar has argued in this regard, indirectly correcting the tension between Althusser's rationalist or theoreticist tendencies and his epistemological relativism and realism,

If the relation between theories is one of conflict rather than merely differences, this presupposes that they are alternative accounts of the *same* world, and if one theory can explain more significant phenomena in terms of its descriptions than the other can in terms of *its*, then there is a rational criterion for theory choice, and *a fortiori* a positive sense to the idea of scientific development over time (Bhaskar 1998a: x-xi).

Thus, both an independently existing reality and the degree of theoretical development provide criteria for deciding between competing theories. Bhaskar's early realist interventions, in *A Realist Theory of Science* (1975) and *The Possibility of Naturalism* (1979) that draw upon and extend Althusser's metatheory, provide a number of helpful distinctions for understanding what is at stake in aleatory materialist epistemology.

The first of these is the distinction between the intransitivity of reality (roughly, it doesn't change) and the transitivity of knowledge about that reality (our knowledge often changes). More precisely, reality is intransitive *relative* to knowledge. This implies two things. First, it implies that knowledge of reality does not change reality. 'When theories

change (transitive dimension) it does not mean that what they are about (intransitive dimension) necessarily changes too: there is no reason to believe that the shift from a flat earth theory to a round earth theory was accompanied by a change in the shape of the earth itself' (Sayer 2000: 11). In Althusserian terms, knowledge is *impotent* (Althusser 1978/2006: 46-54). Were it not so we could change reality simply by generating new knowledge of it. Second, this distinction implies that knowledge of reality (including that of the social sciences) can change and develop and knowledge can *progress* (Bhaskar 1998: xi). So even though societies are historically contingent realities since they can stabilise for often long periods of time knowledge about particular social formations can develop.

Realist epistemology further implies rejecting conventionalism, the position that whether or not a knowledge claim is true depends upon 'whatever a community, scientific or otherwise, agrees with' (Sayer 2000: 41). Conventionalism (including constructivist positions on knowledge) tends to occlude ontological questions and relies on a variant of the logical fallacy of appealing to authority since questions about theoretical adequacy are decided by appealing to the authority of the ideas of a group. Furthermore, conventionalism is guilty of instrumentalism since 'knowledge that is called true is so merely because it is useful' (Sayer 2000: 42). In contrast, realists are concerned with 'why such beliefs are successful—what it is about the world which makes them so. They are not made useful merely by a collective act of will. The question is not only what works, but what it is about the world which makes it work' (42). Rejecting conventionalism is important in order to avoid the position of uncritically accepting

Foucault's account of the political field: just because Foucault said something does not mean that it is true.

Another key element of aleatory materialism is the argument that knowledge is produced—it must be made—and hence there are no givens in knowledge. This is why Althusser, drawing on Foucault's archaeologies of madness and illness, addresses epistemology in terms of a 'mode of production of knowledge' (1965/1970) and 'theoretical dispositive' (1999; cf. Lecourt 1975). The key concept here is that of the 'problematic'. It refers to a broad discursive field a network that frames a question (explicitly posed or not) that renders reality perceptible such that intelligible statements can be made about it. As Althusser argues, 'This means that, with regard to the real object, in order to know it, "thought" operates on the transitional forms which designate the real object in the process of transformation in order finally to produce a concept of it' (Althusser 1975/1990: 227-228). By stressing that knowledge has modes of production, Althusser also emphasizes the point that the conditions of knowledge production are to be found in social formations and hence presuppose a particular division of labour. Intellectual work is part of a division of labour and hence its production and reproduction conditions depend upon the production and reproduction of the society in which it exists.³

³ This is the point forcefully made by both Lecourt (1975) and Poulantzas (1978) in their critiques of Foucault. For them, Foucault had failed to theorise that a class of subjects—the experts—can only exist in social formations where there is a division between intellectual and manual labour. In societies where capitalism is the dominant mode of production, this division of labour presupposes that part of the surplus value produced by workers goes to support this class of subjects and often enough, these subjects are paid by the State or supported by State apparatuses like universities. For them, the problem with Foucault's analyses of the emergence, workings and effects of the will to truth about humans is that it fails to adequately consider this class dimension of the division between intellectual and manual labour. In short, Foucault does not theorise the *place* of

While Althusser's distinction between science and ideology has been subjected to often vicious criticism and rejection, these are largely unhelpful since they tend either to espouse conventionalism or epistemological anarchism—an “anything goes” approach—that undermines social analysis. The science-ideology question can be resolved by stressing that science is the conceptual practice that enables subjects to *think about reality*. Scientific practice and its conditions constitutes subjects who think about the structure of reality and pose questions about the reality to be explained (why it is the way it is and not otherwise). In this sense, sciences ‘have their own autonomous problematics and are thus open-ended, guiding, but not determining, the results and significance of research’ (Pearce 2001: 11). So, *contra* Althusser's critics, to argue for science is quite the opposite of dogmatically claiming that social scientists have “the Truth”. Rather, science is about the openness and fallibility of conceptions of reality, opening up the knower to the opacity of both discourse and reality.

In contrast, ideology is not concerned with why and how things are the way they are and not otherwise. As such ideology operates under already constituted conditions. As Badiou puts it, ‘science is a process of *transformation*, ideology ... is a process of *repetition*’, namely the repetition of already existing, previously produced, practical coordinates (in Elliot 1987: 100). It is for this reason that research questions and questions about theoretical adequacy disrupt ideology and become political in nature. As Althusser argues, ideology is the lived relation between people and their world and their understanding of the world is based on the *practical concerns* of getting on in the world (Althusser 1969a/1972: 155ff.). Thus, ideology is not false in relation to science but

knowledge production in a broader structure of *asymmetrical places* in modern societies, a point on which I elaborate in Chapter 9.

rather is governed by getting on practically in the social world. The production of a problematic works with and works on, and so transforms ideology through the audacity of its questions.

When it come to the implications of these concepts for theoretical practice the issue is the mode of reference to reality. For Woodiwiss,

corrigible reference may only be achieved if one makes reference as explicit and transparent as possible. Thus it may be agreed with Pearce that one very important indicator of “quality” as regards social theory is the degree to which it is “re-readable” and reusable in different historical and cultural contexts. In sum, social theorists *qua* theorists should aim to provide not pictures of social reality but rigorously interrelated ensembles of signs that have been made to refer to extra-theoretical reality. (Woodiwiss 1990: 9).

So, as Woodiwiss (1990) and Sayer (2000) in a similar manner argue, just because knowledge is comprised of arbitrary relations of difference between signifiers, not just anything *can go*. Thus, ‘even our simplest experience of particulars is always already in terms of available descriptions. Yet the realization that this is so does not license the conclusion that either language is not influenced by the extra-discursive world or—inverting naïve objectivism—that language gives reality its shape’ (Sayer 2000: 35).

That theoretical texts aim to account for an independently existing world through systems of signifiers has two important consequences that limit readings. First, signifiers within chains of signification do not produce simply any meaning effect but are constrained by socio-historically specific conventions about the arbitrary relations between signifiers: signifiers have meaning effects because they refer to other signifiers in a chain. As Sayer elaborates,

The same entity can also be validly called many different things within a single language—“a person”, “a neighbour”, “an uncle”, “a librarian”, etc.

However, some terms, such as “the economy” may have referents which do not seem to correspond to pre-existing natural kinds or occupy determinate stretches of space-time. Still others, such as “but” and “or” do not have referents at all (Sayer 2000: 38).

That is to say that something beyond a particular signifier, not present in the signifier, produces meaning effects. In this regard, ‘how we make sense of one subject or concept depends on the concepts we use to interpret it, as do these on others still, and hence on any number of other texts that we have read. Interpretation is therefore characterized by “intertextuality”’ (Pearce 2001: xxi). Yet, and as Foucault’s theory of discursive formations argues, statements in a discursive formation like sociology cannot refer to just anything but are constrained by the reality of that formation to discuss objects constituted by the discursive formation. Moreover, this facility of reference *within language* allows one to argue for realist referentialism: ‘It is, to put it mildly, rather implausible that language should be able to refer to itself and, in particular, to its own limitations *and to no other referent in the world*’ (Tallis in Sayer 2000: 39, original emphasis).

In sum, the epistemological realism of the symptomatic method makes it possible to distinguish between different sorts of discourses, specifying the kinds of discourse-objects they make statements about the reality to which these discourse-objects are made to refer. That is to say that it is important to note that discourses do more than simply make reference to other places in an array of texts; they also make reference to the extra-discursive world and to happenings in that world. In this sense, there are always two sides to a discourse: the statement about a discourse-object (the object as viewed through a problematic) and the reality to which it refers. While these two sides are distinct in theoretical work, they are inseparable.

This means that while there is no *one* right interpretation of Foucault, there are wrong ones. For example, it would be wrong to say that Foucault explicitly argues that scientific knowledge is produced by a continuous, progressive line of knowledge stretching back to the Ancient Greeks. Or, it would be wrong to say that Foucault himself does not make a distinction in his texts between archaeology and genealogy. It is possible then to decide between better and worse interpretations. First, one can assess an interpretation and see whether or not the explication of the logic of the text it interprets is able to derive the same conclusions (e.g., like in mathematics when a proof can be derived in different ways but using similar procedures). Second, if an interpretation can systematically incorporate and account for a wider array of discourses (and hence, their meaning effects) within a text or an *oeuvre* than another, it can be said to be a better interpretation. Having laid out the basic elements of aleatory materialism, I now turn to an explication of the symptomatic method of reading texts and indicate how it can be put to work on Foucault.

Reading Texts Symptomatically

A symptomatic reading aims to account for a problem being puzzled through in a text, what it is trying to account for, and explicating the often implicit rules or protocols rendering an account of reality distinct from, and hence in competition with, others. Symptomatic readings refer to what is written and what this renders perceptible in the world. It is in this sense that the symptomatic methodology deals with the productivity of texts. In some respects, this approach can be summed up as ‘you can only work with what you have’, hence challenging any foundationalism. This is because aleatory materialism

challenges the transparency of things, be they texts or human practices and instead views texts as contingent assemblages of signifying chains.

The outlines of the application of the symptomatic method to Foucault's work has already been laid out by Balibar, an approach moreover, that recognises the compatibility between the symptomatic method and Foucault's own. As Balibar writes,

one can apply to his texts (I am thinking here particularly of his books) his own principles of analysis of the rules governing the formation or individualisation of statements: that we should look for their correlations with others, those which 'populate the margins around them', and with which the 'enter into the process of dispute and contestation', in order that we might 'rediscover how it was they came into being' [AK]; also that we should, for that reason, reconnect effective statements to the discursive tactics which have come into being, and produce their effects in the context of a given strategic field; and that we should study the transformations of these tactics to see how, by the very fact that these particular transformations have been made, the territory in which they intervene is modified. There is no question, of course, of speculating on that which is unsaid or on intentions. The affirmation of theoretical discourse which is already of a political nature, should be taken literally within its own 'incorporeal materiality'. Philosophy is, as has been clear since Kant's time, a *Kampfplatz* in which there is no definitive settling of conflicts and in which, consequently, no intellectual scheme ever occupies a position which is absolutely simple and stable but develops in opposition to existing statements, as a result of their incessant 'problematization' (Balibar 1989/1992: 38-39).

The main task of a symptomatic reading is to identify the problematic governing a text.

The problematic in a text is an apparatus of thought that enables questions to be posed and answered in an intelligible way. Often, it is necessary to formulate the question that a text is trying to answer since it may not be explicitly posed. The problematic is itself the surface effect of the structural, linguistically produced mechanism of articulations of difference between signifiers within a text that combined produce meaning effects. Thus,

the range of possible readings [in a conjuncture] is not infinite but is limited by the problematic of the reading (with its relative degree of explanatory power) as well as the structure of the text itself (with its real existence as a product of a specific historical-social conjuncture). As Derrida says, there is no “outside” of the text, because we are always inside a realm of meaning that makes the text accessible to us in some manner or other (Resch 1992: 175).

Perhaps the most important feature of a problematic is that it produces ‘the light’, that allows us to see a world, make it intelligible, and make statements about it. This does not imply that theory enables us to simply read the truth of the world—this is not possible since intelligibility is itself a synthetic emergent effect of the combination of language (always socio-historically specific) with the real-concrete world. That is to say that theory can produce a different illumination of the world, rendering the selectivity of our perceptions (signifiers *plus* the real world) intelligible and explicable in a different and perhaps better way (i.e., more coherent, more perspicacious and more comprehensive).

Reading Foucault Symptomatically

A symptomatic reading of Foucault’s discourses on the political field requires attending to precisely what Foucault sees (the object in thought; the discourse-object) and precisely what Foucault says about the discourse-objects in his texts. This allows the reader to identify the problem and combination of sights and oversights in his texts, attending to what is seen but not theorised in an adequate way. Reading Foucault in this way thus does not mean that the reader takes note of what is *not* seen. Rather it means attending to exactly what is rendered visible. In this regard I argue that Foucault does not see what was visible in his own texts *vis-à-vis* the object of transformation, or politics as a viable candidate for a concept of transformation because his problematic blinds him. These are

questions that cannot be answered in his own terms because of his problematic and because he refused to pose the question of politics in terms of its conditions (e.g., the formation of a collective political subject) and its effects as a consequence of his expulsion of politics. In short, when it comes to politics, especially actively engaged collective subjects aiming to transform their societal conditions, *Foucault does not see what he sees*.

To point out this oversight also helps one understand why politics is a symptom produced by the Foucauldian terrain itself. In this sense, the aporia of politics amounts to the return of a repressed element, the return produced by his expulsion of politics. The repressed is not some hidden, unconscious thought in Foucault's mind, running contrary to his intentions but is rather that which is written there on the page; it is the difference, i.e., the point of failure that allows us to delineate that there *is* a structure to his problematic (Stoltze 1998). The other set of discourses, constituting a Foucault for politics, are akin to parapraxes or slips in the signifying chains where his discourse veers off course and unwittingly enters another problematic untheorised by Foucault. The blindness produced by the terrain of his problematic is thus a consequence of his unwillingness to pose the question of politics as pertinent to the question of transformation since *a priori* and constitutively excluded from it, not least because he viewed politics as very much part of the problem. The result is that Foucault's ways of addressing the question of transformation are structured by this constitutive discrepancy between the two different Foucault's, an incoherence produced by his expulsion of politics.

As noted in Chapter 1, from the 1950s through to the end of his life, Foucault remained fascinated with engaged collective subjects as found in festivals, religion and political uprisings. When he attempts to address these phenomenon he tends to rely on conventional sociological discourse. So, while Foucault's problematic, producing his analytic of the political field predominates in his work, there remains an underdeveloped Foucault for politics. The two Foucault's are incompatible and contradictory thus rendering aporetic the theoretical, including normative, status of politics in his works. Thus, a symptomatic reading of Foucault's texts elucidates his reliance on another discourse, as opposed to a specific, rigorous one produced by a problematic with explicit criteria for making judgments about the truth or error of statements or accounts of the world produced within that terrain. To point this out is not dogmatic but follows the requirements of Foucault's own method and conception of discourse (Woodiwiss 1990).

Theory and its Kampfplatz: The Politics of Questions

A further development of the aleatory materialist symptomatic methodology concerns its explicitly political element and here I seek to critically develop Althusser's work. This political dimension refers to the struggle for a position in the order of discourse for producing and posing a question and for differentiating a problematic from other competing problematics: 'any thesis is a counter-thesis' (Althusser 1993/2006: 223). It is important then, to situate a text in relation to a theoretical field of competing positions in which it intervenes, requiring that the position for theoretical elaboration be first opened up by critical intervention and then occupied—it must hold a sustainable position. As Althusser states,

A philosophy does not make its appearance in the world as Minerva appeared to the society of Gods and men. It only exists in so far as it occupies a position, and it only occupies this position in so far as it has conquered it in the thick of an already occupied world. It therefore only exists in so far as this conflict has made it something distinct, and this distinctive character can only be won and imposed in an indirect way, by a form of the conflict which determines what side a philosophy takes in the battle on the “Kampfplatz” (Kant), the battlefield which is philosophy. Because if the philosophy of philosophers is this perpetual war (to which Kant wanted to put an end by introducing the everlasting peace of his own philosophy), then no philosophy can exist within this theoretical relation of force, except in so far as it marks itself off from its opponents and lays siege to that part of the positions which they have had to occupy in order to guarantee their power over the enemy whose impress they bear. [...] If philosophy is, in the last instance, class struggle at the level of theory, as I have recently argued, then this struggle takes the form proper to philosophy, of theoretical demarcation, detour and production of a distinctive position (Althusser 1975/1990: 204-206).

Theorising then, takes place in a *Kampfplatz*—a battleground—and hence is politics in the level of theory/ideology (149).

Theoretical practice makes interventions first by clearing or occupying a space already occupied in thought from which to elaborate a new position. This is the strategic dimension of theoretical practice. By strategies here are meant the explication and justification of how one critically and creatively deals with rival ways of understanding the social realm (e.g., sociology *versus* economics). Foucault’s own conception of discursive strategies in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* can help clarify things here. The formation of strategies in a discursive formation indicates ‘the different possibilities that it opens of reanimating already existing themes, of arousing opposed strategies, of giving way to irreconcilable interest, of making it possible, with a particular set of concepts, to play different games’ (AK: 37). There is an inescapably historical dimension in which theory intervenes (what precedes it; its raw material). As Althusser argues, there is

the need for every philosophy to make a detour *via* other philosophies in order to define itself and grasp itself in terms of its difference: its *division*. In reality (and whatever its pretensions) no philosophy is given in the *simple*, absolute fact of its presence [...] It only exists in so far as it “works out” its difference from other philosophies, from those which, by similarity or contrast, help it sense, perceive and grasp itself, so that it can take up its own *positions* (Althusser 1974/1976: 133).

So, aleatory materialism in theoretical practice means working with what you have and intervening in what is the case—there is no dream of theorising out of nothing. At this point it is now necessary to properly formalise the relation between a problematic and politics in discourse.

Althusser’s reading of Marxist theory makes the case that there is a fundamental and irreducible minimal difference between the place of Marx’s theorising, i.e., his actual engagement in communist politics, and the discursive content he worked upon in order to theorise the constitution of that place. Here, I develop Althusser’s point to integrate his conception of a problematic and his sensibilities about the political quality of theorising. The place of Marx’s theorising was the place of the proletariat in social formations dominated by the capitalist mode of production (e.g., Germany, France and England). This has two implications: (i) the place of enunciation (engagement in working class politics) did not spontaneously provide the content for understanding and explaining that place (that politically/practically engaged position was not enough, hence neither is a standpoint epistemology); (ii) the transformation of the theoretical materials (German idealism, French socialism and British political economy) of Marx’s bourgeois education did not happen without these previously unconnected elements encountering the concrete practical problem of the exploitation of workers (Althusser 1978/2006: 34). In other

words, it is the *lasting* encounter between the two that was decisive in producing the event of Marx's materialist conception of history.

Marx's thought then, cannot be reduced to some 'vague confluence' of sources (Althusser 1978/2006: 34). The Marx of *Capital* is the contingent effect of three independent aleatory series: his encounter with Engels; Marx's and Engels' encounter with working class misery and political struggles, and the three sources. Thus Marx becomes 'Marx' only on the contingent condition of the *Kampfplatz* he sought to occupy in political practice, bringing his theoretical knowledge to bear on the problem of the conditions and causes of the immiseration of the working class. That is to say that Marx's question, the question of the relationship between the economy and the working class, was the effect of the contingent encounter between his political involvement on the side of wage-workers and his philosophical (bourgeois) education. It took a while for this encounter to take and Marx never spelt out the mode of this theoretical combination (i.e., his methodology) that produced *Capital* out of the three sources plus class struggle. But, there is an important aleatory materialist point to be developed here. In aleatory materialist terms "the question is political" in two senses.

First questions posed in a theoretical discourse (or not) produce meaning effects within a theoretical system intervening in and transforming the linguistic/discursive materials on which it works. In doing so, theory politically engages in creating a new discourse for grasping (and hence also *experiencing*) the reality in which it too is imbricated. Second, politics is the question. That is to say that aleatory materialist theoretical practice poses the question of the possible lasting transformation of social formations. Combining Althusser's concept of a problematic with his later conception of

the inherent imbrication of theorising politics leads to the following *theorem*: *questions represent politics in the terrain of thought*.

Retheorising Discourses

While symptomatic readings aim to explicate a theoretical problematic, this is not the end of the story since Althusser shows how inconsistent discourses, incompatible with or directly contradicting those formulated in the terrain of the problematic can be discarded and retheorised with other discourses. A fine accessible example of this procedure, similar to Althusser's disarticulation of Marx's humanist discourse and its concern with alienation from *Capital*, is Althusser's explication of the consequences of Marx's and Lenin's choice of 'apparatus' and 'machine' as signifying the nature of the state in a social formation. Neither of them spelt out what this meant. What Althusser does is to turn to places in Marx's texts where he explicitly discusses 'machines' and interpolates those meaning effects into Marx's and Lenin's discussions of the state as an 'apparatus' or 'machine'—a 'machine-apparatus'—hence allowing Althusser to form a concept proper (Althusser 1978/2006: 81-85). I do something similar with Foucault as a means for developing his much attenuated, untheorised material on politics, even if this means highlighting and then explaining the nature, production and potential resolution of the discrepancies in his work.

To go beyond the negative gesture of pointing out the discrepancies in Foucault's writings on the political field and transformation thus requires some sense of the rules of theoretical method for productively resolving these discrepancies. As Pearce writes,

such a textual analysis must not simply be negative but must also help the 'liberated' concepts to be put to work in a new manner. Needless to say any new texts generated by a 'reformulation' of a deep structure of concepts will not represent a mere tidying up or correction of the old texts. The original texts will be displaced by the theoretical work expended upon them producing conceptual systems with significantly different substantive implications. Once different discourses (signifying chains) have been identified and their relationship to each other specified it is possible to discarded those aspects of each that are fundamentally incoherent, and retain and synthesize those that are coherent and compatible with each other, supplementing this at times somewhat fragmentary conceptual system with other (equally compatible) concepts drawn from elsewhere—thereby achieving a non-syncretic synthesis. It is important to note that to utilize a signifying chain or set of concepts is also to be constrained by its logic—one is not free simply to pick and choose when to use which element of which argument. *Rigorous retheorizing constrains the theorist, forcing him or her to think through the general implications of 'regional' analysis* (Pearce 2001: 8).

Symptomatic readings, while able to provide the raw materials for retheorising through the critical analysis of texts (i.e., retheorising *qua* theorising) requires appreciating the metatheoretical implications of a signifying chain, lest one risk a mere eclectic combination. The problem with eclecticism is that it cannot resolve the production of some theoretical impasse that allegedly requires supplementation because failing to consider that metatheoretical commitments, whether we like it or not, govern and so enable and constrain the coherence of the other levels of theoretical discourse. In other words, eclecticism does nothing to actually *transform* a theoretical discourse but simply adds more to a pile of *incoherence*.

Althusser's symptomatic reading of Marx is instructive here: Marx does not become 'Marx' simply because he eclectically combined the three sources. Marx only becomes 'Marx' when the work of theoretical transformation had been produced, even if the new theory (the science of history) remained underdeveloped. With his concepts of

Generalities I, II and III, Althusser outlines how critical and productive theorising takes place (Althusser 1965f/1970). Generalities I are the ‘raw materials’ of theoretical practice, always socio-historically specific. These can be concepts, facts, observations, etc. Generalities II refers to the work of a problematic in transforming these raw materials into new theoretical concepts proper (i.e., Generalities III), proper to that problematic. A break is produced by the formation of a problematic with its arrangement of its metatheoretical commitments *plus* its question (the question of its object), plus its *Kampfplatz*, that creates a terrain in which other materials can be worked upon and yet remain metatheoretically governed. This is why the metatheoretical compatibility of discourses combined in a theory is so important.

While Althusser’s schematic is helpful, Bhaskar provides a more sophisticated version of it and clearer sense of how retheorising works. In his analysis and explanation of scientific change, Bhaskar distinguishes between theoretical and applied explanation. Theoretical explanation ‘proceeds by description of significant features, retroduction to possible causes, elimination of alternatives and identification of the generative mechanism or causal structure at work (which now becomes the new phenomenon to explain)’ (Bhaskar 1998: xvii). The key procedure here is *retroduction*. Retroduction refers to the theoretical work of postulating possible causes of phenomena or events. It thus postulates the existence of a real mechanism ‘which *if* it were to exist and act in the postulated way, would account for the phenomena in question’ (Bhaskar 1989: 19). My symptomatic reading of Foucault involves the retroductive work of theoretical explanation in that I offer a model of politics as a ‘generative mechanism’ and a model of

the structure of the political field able to account for the phenomena that Foucault himself identifies as significant.

Conclusion

Following this method of aleatory materialist theorising allows me to develop something distinct from Foucault's problematic and yet something belonging to it. Hence, it is possible to discover something new in his work if one directly poses the question of politics to it. This makes possible the discovery of its limits such that it leads to an expulsion of politics and at the same time, allows one to discover unwitting answers to the question of politics. Many Foucauldians would find my characterisation and defence of scientific theoretical development objectionable. On this account they simply and simplistically contradict themselves since they view his anti-humanism, for instance, as a productive advance on previous humanist accounts of existence and assert the superiority of his approach, e.g., his analytics of power. I think it better to actually spell out how this process of theoretical development works and can work in contemporary theoretical practice. Thus, I take up and develop the salient contributions of the Foucault for politics and supplement them with compatible discourses drawn from aleatory materialism and radical Durkheimianism in particular. Doing so facilitates the development of Foucault's much attenuated accounts of collective political subjects, their constitutive conditions, and potential effects of politics on social formations.

The reader may well have noted that this is no small task and moreover is a task fraught with risks because it means not abandoning the Foucauldian terrain, but of *changing terrain*, displacing his problematic and explicating the protocols and content of

a different problematic so as to produce the theoretical conditions under which a different terrain can be elaborated and developed. Thus, the critical task is not to denounce Foucault as fatally flawed but to specify *how* his problematic produces its aporias and lacuna when it comes to conceptualising politics. In the next chapter, I explicate the key dimensions of the formation of Foucault's *Kampfplatz* for political analysis since they delimit the space in which he develops his analytics of power and government.

Chapter Three:

Foucault's Battleground

Introduction

A common difficulty faced when trying to understanding Foucault's approach to the political field is that he does not readily fit any of the conventional categories we use to classify theorists, intellectuals and activists. For some he is an anarchist, for others a Marxist, and for others still, a liberal or a conservative (Foucault 1983b/1984: 376). Foucault was himself well aware of this and often exploited his anomalous status; it was part of his ethic against identitarianism (AK: 17; 1972c/2000). That is to say that he resisted attempts to force him to identify his position and commitments. This form of resistance was closely aligned with his call for experimenting with thought and existence. His anomalous status though involved a concerted effort to create new openings for thought and action; indeed it is a definitive part of his *ethic*, 'to learn to what extent the effort to think one's own history can free thought from what it silently thinks, and so enable it to think differently' (UP: 9). Now this does not mean that Foucault is somehow unclassifiable. Rather, what it means is that it is necessary to assess Foucault's work based on the *immanent criteria* elaborated in it. This allows one to assess its adequacy, potential and limitations on its own terms first, rather than risking a dogmatic reading.

An important part of the aleatory materialist approach to theorising involves grasping how a place in thought is cleared for thinking differently. In a sense, this component of aleatory materialist theorising helps to map the discursive region that one is dealing with when reading a text and figuring out what belongs to a problematic and

what does not. Such a reading requires attending to Foucault's strategy of reasoning found in his intervention in political theory, and to the discourses deployed that allowed him to say something new. Thus, it is not enough to engage in exegetical work, although necessary; the point is rather to get a sense for the place that Foucault's work occupies and whether or not it is literally tenable, specifying what makes it hold as a distinctive position.

Foucault's work from the end of *The Archaeology of Knowledge* to his last writings (e.g., 1983c/1996), continually sought to demarcate his approach to the political field, not only from the works of others, but more significantly, from his previous work. At issue in the emergence of his self-critique, consolidated with his lecture course on psychiatric power (PP), is not his problematic and its *Kampfplatz* that remained Kantian throughout. Rather, one finds a more regional and circumscribed *Kampfplatz* concerned with the need for clearing a new place in thought for thinking about the political field (see Figure 3.1 below). The theoretical position from which Foucault elaborates his distinctive analyses of the political field did not fall from the sky—it had to be constituted and it was consolidated in the moment of self-critique. That is to say that Foucault's works on power and government depend on his clearing of a regional theoretical space in which to elaborate his concepts and conduct his research.

Moreover, *Psychiatric Power* indicates that the work of self-critique is distinct from the elaboration of his alternative approach discussed in the next chapter. Appreciating the emergence of this work of clearing some theoretical ground is important because it gets one out of the fraught matter of trying to force Foucault's position into some pre-existing camp. So, I bracket questions and debates about Foucault's

relationship to historical materialism (e.g., Olssen 2004; Poster 1984; 1989; Anderson 1983), not because I do not think they are important, but because they are likely to lead one astray when it comes to grasping what exactly—i.e., *theoretically*—takes place in Foucault's work.

I contend that there are five components to Foucault's theoretical strategy, demarcating a place in which his intervention and transformation of political thought is made. The first dimension is the resonance between Foucault's concerns and those of surrealism; these provided the positive normative dimension of his programme. The second concerns his own activist practices from the late 1960s onward, providing a positive, practical dimension to his conception of the political field. Third, is his diffidence toward Marxism as both a theoretical guide to political practice and as a rationale and justification for projects of societal transformation. Fourth is the emergence and consolidation of Foucault's self-critique, especially *The History of Madness*, that amounts to a theoretical response on his part to both his activist experiences and diffidence toward Marxism. Fifth and last, is the 'regicide in political theory' (Simons 1995) consisting of his critique of the 'juridico-discursive' (HS) model of power in which he rejects the reliance on the image of monarchic power to say 'no!' as the basis for political analysis in the modern epoch. Understanding the constitution of the Foucauldian *Kampfplatz* in political theory will help us appreciate why Foucault develops the concept of power that he does and the bearing it has on his conception of modes of being, hegemony and governmentality, discussed in Chapters 4-6.

Figure 3.1 Foucault's *Kampfplatz* in Political Theory

Archaeology, Genealogy and the Political Field

Foucault's concern with power, government and the political field only comes to take shape from 1970 onward with the formation of his genealogical problematic of power, bodies and knowledge. The shift in Foucault's focus from his concern in the 1960s with the conditions of possibility of the human sciences to a concern with power can be seen in 'The Discourse on Language', (1970a/1972) his inaugural address for his Chair in the History of Systems of Thought at the College de France. The genealogical problematic begins to bear fruit in his second course at the College (1971-1972), 'Penal Theories and Institutions' (Foucault 1972d/1997) and would continue throughout the 1970s. With this

shift of questions he sought to delineate a *new Kampfplatz* for political analysis and liberatory practice; its name: *genealogy*.

Naming the *Kampfplatz* is a distinctive theoretical move in its own right and should not be confused with the explicit analytical, descriptive and explanatory genealogical programme elaborated in *Discipline and Punish* and *The History of Sexuality* for instance. The emergence of Foucault's *Kampfplatz* in political theory does not amount to a break with his earlier archaeological work (*contra* Elden 2006); Foucault is very clear on that point. As he states at the moment of this emergent shift,

The critical [archaeological] side of [historical] analysis deals with the systems enveloping discourse; attempting to mark out and distinguish the principles of ordering, exclusion and rarity in discourse. We might, to play with words, say it practices a kind of studied casualness. The genealogical side of discourse, by way of contrast, deals with series of effective formation of discourse: it attempts to grasp it in its power of affirmation, by which I do not mean a power opposed to that of negation, but the power of constituting domains of possible objects, in relation to which one can affirm or deny true or false propositions (Foucault 1970b/1972: 234).

So, I think that what we see with genealogy is a shift of *position* relative to the archaeological works, a position theoretically leveraged by a concern with a Nietzschean concept of power and a relatively open concern with how it might help us think differently about the shaping of human existence in the present (Foucault 1970a/1972; 1971/2003).

The trope of archaeology, around which Foucault's research in the 1960s was oriented, involves describing and analysing systems of thought and discourses that render human existence intelligible as an object of knowledge done in the name of humanity's 'truth' and betterment. This project though, as one might expect, was not an epistemological one but rather focused on the institutional and practical conditions

facilitating the birth of the human sciences. Doing an archaeology of knowledge primarily deals with the production of knowledge statements, their material, institutional production conditions and the manner in which statements are linked together such that they form a somewhat unified collection of veridical (i.e., truthful) statements. These discourses are exclusive, 'rare' and ordered in that they are constituted by elaborate procedures (methodological, theoretical and political) for distinguishing these discourses from everyday, practical knowledge claims and from other discourses (AK; Foucault 1970a/1972).

Foucault's archaeological works contend that the human sciences are discursive formations that regulate the production of statements about humans that are taken seriously as being true, i.e., as governed by a concern for scientific veracity (AK). The trope of archaeology allows him to focus on how the current discursive practices through which people are rendered objects of true knowledge, are active on a surface beneath which lie the historically sedimented layers of previous statements, discursive practices and the modes of regulation that produced them. It is also important to note that archaeology is less a *methodology* and more a *general theory* of how knowledge about humans could be produced, systematised, regulated, extended and developed in the modern epoch.

In the best known archaeological books, e.g., *The History of Madness*, *The Birth of the Clinic*, *The Order of Things* and *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, one finds an explicit focus on the conditions of possibility and conditions of emergence of the 'human sciences' (e.g., psychology, sociology, criminology and literary analysis) (cf. Hunt and Wickham 1994: 6-7). Thus, four of his books from his archaeological period, focus on

how human existence was variously constituted as a possible object of true knowledge and how actual knowledge about humans was made and rendered intelligible. *The History of Madness* and *The Birth of the Clinic* in particular focused on the institutional conditions and practices that made humans visible in such a way that true statements could be made about them (e.g., the *Hopitaux Generales* as grand houses of confinement, and the teaching hospital). In contrast to the institutional focus on the practices that objectify humans as objects of knowledge for a subject also constituted in and through those conditions, *The Order of Things* analyses the conditions of possibility of rendering human existence intelligible.

What Foucault notes in *The Order of Things* is that biology, economics and linguistics, that emerged as discourses in the nineteenth century, delimited humans as living, labouring and speaking beings. As such, these sciences focused on the *positivity* of humans—it was not the abstract question ‘What is Man?’ that concerned these sciences but humans respectively as living beings in a broader environment, as labouring beings in systems of exchange and as beings that spoke about and represented their world. As argued in *The Order of Things* and *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, veridical statements about humans who are rendered visible as objects of knowledge, are then sedimented, like archaeological layers, laying out a grid of intelligibility for humans as objects of true knowledge in the present. *The Archaeology of Knowledge* consolidated this work by theorising the structural production of actually pronounced true statements about humans as objects of knowledge.

The archaeological works have something of a political dimension to them though, linked with the systems of classifying human beings. Foucault’s way of thinking

about politics in the archaeological works, is aptly captured in one of his interviews from 1967:

Every society establishes a whole series of systems of opposition—between good and bad, allowed and forbidden, lawful and unlawful, criminal and uncriminal; all these oppositions, which are constitutive of every society, are reduced in the Europe of today to the simple opposition between normal and pathological. This opposition is not only simpler than the others, but it also presents the advantage of allowing us to believe that there exists a technique which allows the reduction of the pathological to the normal. Thus faced with offences, with sexual deviations, etc., we say it is a pathological case. Now, this codification of all oppositions, in the opposition between normal and pathological in fact occurs thanks to an alternative opposition, implicit in our culture, but very active even though virtually invisible: the opposition between madness and reason. To be able to say that a criminal is a pathological case, you have to start by saying that you are dealing with a madman; you will go on to say that every madman is a person suffering from mental illness, thus a pathological case. This is how the criminal can enter the category of the pathological. In other words, the madness-reason opposition functions as an alternative opposition which allows all the old oppositions peculiar to our culture to be translated into the major, sovereign and monotonous opposition between normal and pathological (Foucault 1967c/1999: 89).

Foucault's archaeological works were not concerned with what he would later call 'power' and 'governing', but they still make important contributions to the analyses of political phenomena, especially as concerns the state.

The first political aspect of the archaeological works concerns exclusion. In *The History of Madness*, Foucault drew attention to the pervasiveness of exclusion through confinement in constituting the domain (and *dominion*) of reason, that paved the way for the human sciences to constitute their objects of knowledge. Second, Foucault's analyses of medicine and its importance to the modern state apparatus in *The History of Madness* and *The Birth of the Clinic*, provide a means for understanding how people became individualised in clinical practice and simultaneously linked with the epidemiologic

collective. Foucault was thus able to argue, rather convincingly, that the discourse of medicine, was the first discourse to scientifically study the individual. Foucault's analyses of police are also quite distinct in that 'police' is viewed less as a straightforward example of repression and is instead much more closely associated with the actual practices of urban social ordering and the attempt to constitute a population that espoused bourgeois morality and hygiene (in particular, its valorisation of work). Policing is also shown to be a necessary condition of possibility for medical practice since it provided highly localised knowledge of who was sick, where and when and what people's living conditions were like. Both exclusion and state institutions, Foucault argues, play a constitutive role in establishing the conditions of emergence for the human sciences in which 'Man' for the first time in the first half of the nineteenth century, could enter the table of knowable objects.

Foucault's analyses of the role of exclusion in the order of discourse also displace a concern with ideology: the effectiveness of a dominant discourse does not reside in its mystifications; rather it is to be found in its reliance on, and practices of, *excluding* statements deemed false or found to be in error, backed by (but not reducible to) the power of the state to invest some (e.g., doctors) with the recognisable authority to make true statements (Foucault 1968a/1991; AK; 1970a/1972). Now, while these contributions are important, Foucault's archaeological problematic is not concerned with the question of politics or power.

But, something changes after the publication of *The Archaeology of Knowledge*—a lasting aleatory encounter in Foucauldian discourse occurs. This new combination, an aleatory encounter between his archaeological sensibilities and his own activism,

registers in the genealogical programme of combining the analysis the discursive formations of the human sciences with an analysis of power. With this notion of Foucault's archaeological concerns in mind, we can now move on to consider the five dimensions of Foucault's regional *Kampfplatz* in political theory, beginning with surrealism.

Surrealist Resonances in Foucault's Work

The impact of surrealism on Foucault's work, not just on its content has been neglected. In this regard, Foucault's debts to surrealism extend beyond his writings about them, e.g., his essay on Magritte's *Ceci n'est pas une pipe* (Foucault 1968c/1998), or his fascination with Roussel, a key resource for surrealist poetics and literature and occasional pieces like the fairly late 'Archaeology of a Passion' (Foucault 1985b/1996) where he discusses Roussel, Michel Leiris, and Marcel Duchamp, each of whom were important to surrealism. What is crucial is tracing the forms of strategic theoretical engagement shared by surrealism and Foucault. Juxtaposing Breton and a comment by Foucault about Breton, helps highlight the importance of surrealism to the formation of the Foucauldian *Kampfplatz*.

We are still living under the reign of logic, but the logical processes of our time apply only to the solution of problems of secondary interest. The absolute rationalism which remains in fashion allows for the consideration of only those facts narrowly relevant to our experience. Logical conclusions, on the other hand, escape us. Needless to say, boundaries have been assigned even to experience. It revolves in a cage from which release is becoming increasingly difficult. It too depends upon immediate utility and is guarded by common sense (Breton 1924/1972: 66).

...what one really owes [to Breton] in particular is the discovery of a space which is not that of philosophy, nor that of literature, nor that of art, but which would be that of "experience". Today, we live in an age in

which experience—and the thought that it is inextricably part of—develops with unheard-of richness, at once in a unity and a dispersion that cancels the frontiers of our outer regions established in the past.

The whole network that traverses the works of Breton, Bataille, Leiris, and Blanchot, that traverses the domains of anthropology, the history of art, the history of religion, linguistics, and psychoanalysis, cleanly wipes away the old rubrics in which our culture classified itself and made relationships, associations and unforeseen connections appear before our eyes. It is highly probable that we owe this new dispersal and this new unity of our culture to the person and work of Andre Breton. He has simultaneously dispersed and shepherded the whole flecked surface of modern experience (Foucault 1966b/1996: 12).

While he may be difficult to classify, in many respects Foucault's political orientation retains an air of surrealism about it, something he shared with many of his intellectual contemporaries (e.g., Gilles Deleuze, Julia Kristeva, Jacques Lacan, Jacques Derrida, Jean Baudrillard and the Situationists). The impact of surrealism on his work can be initially surmised by noting the justification for surrealist intervention by Andre Breton, the key figure in the movement, cited above.

Crucially, surrealism was much more than an artistic movement or aesthetic sensibility; rather it involved collective attempts to transform and experiment with everyday perceptions as a means to both challenge and transform bourgeois common-sense, especially in the face of the rising threat of fascism (Nadeau 1944/1989; Waldberg 1965/1972; Harris 2004; Carrette 2000; Spiteri and LaCross 2003; Short 1966). Drawing on Freud, Dada, Marx, Nietzsche, and Artaud, to name the most recognisable departure points, the surrealists sought to disturb modern, bourgeois values, not least the value of the rational, conscious, purposively-rational individual actor. For the surrealists, 'this implied the rejection of dominant notions of sanity and insanity, the normal and abnormal, and a corresponding urge to contribute to the upheaval of a society strongly

marked by the quest for, or even obsession with, the useful, efficient and instrumental' (Osterberg 1988: 217). To these thematics should be added a fascination with childhood and removing the halo around it (Nadeau 1944/1989; Waldberg 1965/1972). These are themes very much present in Foucault, not least in his more romantic valorisation of madness (Major-Poetzl 1983: 198-199; Boyne 1990; Rose 1990).

Significantly, surrealism questioned the value and effects of 'the Individual' and the '*Auteur*'—creator of the *oeuvre* (cf. Foucault 1969b/2003; HM: 535ff; 1972e/2006). Surrealist experimentations with thought and representation also provided a resource for Foucault's attention to discursive machines constitutive of the effects of written statements as evinced in his book *Death and the Labyrinth* (1963b/1986), in contrast to the modern myths of 'the Author' as the source from which emanate great works.

The surrealists were also very much oriented toward transgressive practices, reflected in their endeavours of collective disruptions of bourgeois cultural events, collectively authored and signed manifestos, collective artistic production and collective experiments with techniques for altering states of consciousness like automatic writing. As such, surrealism was a resource for Foucault's displacement of the figure of Man and its attendant individualist humanism, both theoretical and normative. Moreover, Foucault elaborated a theoretical and historical defence of this displacement of Man in his endorsement of psychoanalysis in *The Order of Things* (374-381) and later (Foucault 1980b/2000: 251).

Foucault well appreciated how psychoanalysis displaces the human subject as the main object: the human subject is not the centre or source of existence but is rather the effect of sets of relations—human experience (e.g., the contents of 'consciousness') is a

phenomenon or effect to be explained by structured relations, not their cause. The surrealists deployed psychoanalysis as a means to critique bourgeois liberal individualism, used psychoanalytic techniques such as automatic writing in their poetics, and dream analysis as a stimulus for both painting and photographic representation. The surrealist focus on critique through transgression, disruption and shock also resonates with Foucault's work as indicated by the oddity of descriptions that opened many of his books, like the Ship of Fools in *The History of Madness*; eighteenth century treatment regimens in *The Birth of the Clinic* and Damien's punishment in *Discipline and Punish*.

Foucault knew and wrote about a range of surrealist works, from Breton, Bataille, Klowssowski and Magritte, to works that inspired surrealist experimentations, including Marx, Nietzsche, Freud and Artaud (cf. Carrette 2000; Pearce 2006a). Throughout his work, Foucault, like the surrealists, would affirm the activity of disrupting and transforming the means through which people experience themselves, others and the world at large. He viewed the dominant systems of thought, like those of the human sciences, as a serious limitation on the always present but rarely explored possibilities of human existence. That said, the surrealist proclivities of Foucault's archaeological works found a new leverage point when they were combined with a new-found decidedly anti-Marxist activism.

Foucault's Activism

Foucault's activism in the late 1960's into the early 1970s, one could say, was literally ecstatic—it took Foucault, historian of the human sciences, beyond himself. The formation of the regional Foucauldian *Kampfplatz* in political theory in certain respects resembles a trajectory similar to that of Marx in that his problematic of power involved

his aleatory encounters with political activism. So while Marx only becomes Marx on condition of his engagement with politically active workers, providing the leverage point for his massive critique of bourgeois ideology, from Adam Smith through to Hegel, the genealogical Foucault only becomes so through his direct activist engagements that transformed his concern with the epistemic and institutional status of the human sciences into one of action and resistance to how people are actually objectified in practice.

Foucault's experiences as a supporter of student uprisings in Tunisia, 1966-1968, are indicative of his activism, even though he did not share their Marxism (Macey 1993: 263; Simons 1995: 9). And, while the May 1968 events in Paris found Foucault in Tunisia, he was active in France from the Autumn of 1968 onward during this period (Lecourt 1998/2001: 37). He was involved in student protests, sit-ins and occupations of the University of Vincennes in support of students during his brief time there in 1968-1969.¹ For him, 1968 marked a shift in how politics would be done. As he states in 1972, 'It is true that the old banners [of Marx and Freud] were raised, but the combat shifted and spread into new zones' (1972c/2000: 107).

May 1968 was important for Foucault because it highlighted that the range of struggles went well beyond Marxist orientations and concerns with the politicised working-class. Rather what one finds in the May '68 uprisings is that there was a plurality of actors. But, their concerns were considered marginal to the theory and tactics of the radical vanguard of the French Communist Party (PCF). These new manifestations of politics brought to light the political activity of what Nicos Poulantzas theorises as new social classes (1975). They were 'new "social subjects" or new political groupings,

¹ For Foucault's own comments on the events of May 1968 see Foucault (1980b/2000: 278-284).

“groupuscles”, around specific issues, such as education, women’s liberation, ecology, gay liberation, prisoners’ rights, and so forth’ (Smart 1983/1989: 7). Indeed, what was striking about ’68 was that popular protest seemed to emerge spontaneously, quite apart from the Marxist leadership of the PCF. It troubled many that in this context, ‘the PCF had adopted a conservative position, having determined that the conditions were not “ripe” for radical social change and that the form take by the popular protests and rebellions was “adventurist”’ (Smart 1983/1989: 7).

Foucault quite enjoyed his activist engagements (Macey 1993: 222). The ’68 generation discovered a new way of doing politics, imported from the US. This was not the traditional politics of the Left, championing the poor; rather it involved things like fighting for the rights of criminals and prisoners (Sheridan 1980/1986: 130). This became a key arena for Foucault’s activism and research in the early 1970s, culminating in *Discipline and Punish*. The most important factor here is Foucault’s involvement in the *Groupe d’Information sur les Prisons*, (GIP). Foucault played an instrumental role in helping found the organisation in 1971 and his apartment was often used as its administrative base (Macey 1993: 257ff.).

GIP publicised the plight of prisoners by facilitating the circulation of statements made by prisoners themselves about their conditions under incarceration rather than making them suffer the indignity of being spoken for by ‘public intellectuals’, as Foucault argues in an interview from this period, conducted together with his ally and fellow philosopher Gilles Deleuze who had also been recently politicised by the anarchist psychoanalyst Felix Guattari (Foucault 1972a/1996). ‘[T]he spectacular riots that took place in a number of French prisons in 1972 were evidence of the effectiveness of GIP’s

activities' (Sheridan 1980/1986: 130). Foucault himself makes a veiled reference to his involvement with GIP in *Discipline and Punish* where he writes 'That punishment in general and the prison in particular belong to a political technology of the body is a lesson that I have learnt not so much from history as from the present' (DP: 30; cf. Foucault 1974c/1996). Thus, Foucault's concern with power emerged from outside of his research programme of the 1960s and instead was spurred by his practical activism. Moreover, during the first two years of his appointment at the *College de France* (1971-1973) Foucault was primarily occupied with political activism and agitation (Macey 1993: 257).

Foucault's activism resulted in a rethinking of his work. It is not so much that he abandoned or denounced his archaeological writings; rather, these materials were transformed by his activism. In short, his activism forced him to pose new questions to his body of research on the history of the human sciences. The consequences of this were quite noticeable and involved a self-critique of *The History of Madness*, as we shall see shortly. Moreover, the kind of activism in which Foucault was involved was denounced by the PCF. Foucault sided with those who rejected the political forms of the PCF. The pluralist activism in which Foucault participated valorised a new political agent—the militant—and a new subjective orientation: a militancy against *all* forms of domination and *all* forms of subjugation. Thus, *contra* the PCF, for him no form of domination should be a privileged target.

Foucault's Diffidence Toward Marx-ism

Foucault's experiences with activism are inseparable from his view of Marxism. He was keen to disarticulate Marx's work from its use in partisan political programmes (Foucault

1983g/2003: 100). As he states of his work in the 1960's 'it was good form (in order to be viewed favorably by the institutional Left) to cite Marx in the footnotes. So I was careful to steer clear of that' (Foucault 1983g/2003: 101). His impressions of Marxism were shaped by a number of different experiences beginning first with his experiences in Poland where he first became anti-Stalinist (Macey 1993). Again, the response of the PCF to the events of May 1968 was decisive. As Foucault states,

What happened in France in 1968, and in other countries as well, is at once extremely interesting. It is a case of movements that, very often, have endowed themselves with a strong reference to Marxism and, at the same time, have insisted on a violent critique *vis-à-vis* the dogmatic Marxism of parties and institutions (Foucault 1983g/2003: 81).

In effect, it was the *marginalisation* of the tactics of the pluralist (and disorganised) activism of the '68 generation by the PCF that is arguably the basis for Foucault's diffidence toward Marxism as an emancipatory project. Now, Foucault's attitude to Marx and Marxism comes in many different guises:

Sometimes, it was simply tangential to his concerns, while on many other occasions he certainly he certainly disputed its claims to validity [OT; Foucault 1983a/2003]. But he was also often appreciative, as is evident from the Althusserian inflections of [AK] to the very positive positions he adopted in interviews right through until 1983 (Pearce and Tombs 1998a: 571).

Foucault's diffidence toward Marxism, both theoretical and practical, cleared the space for the emergence of his own roughly Nietzschean approach to political analysis.

Polemics on Foucault's part here are part of the problem since they tend to obscure the stakes and are part and parcel of his genealogical phase. As Pearce states, 'However critical [Foucault] may have been of polemic, it was, at times, only by caricaturing

Marxism that Foucault was able to sustain the view that it was inherently deficient and was displaced by his rival different concepts and methodologies' (1988: 259). That said, there is a coherence to Foucault's diffidence toward Marxism, one that was far from uncommon amongst the French Left after 1968 (Christofferson 2004; Reader 1993; Lecourt 1998/2001). It consolidated around antitotalitarianism, the focal point of the new *gauchisme* found in France in the mid-1970s (Christofferson 2004). For this *gauchisme*, Marxism, like all political projects that claimed a basis in scientific truth, led to disasters like Stalinism and Nazism. Indeed, for Foucault, the events of May 1968 were viewed in France as 'something profoundly anti-Marxist' (1975b/1980: 57). Consequently 'Marxism was now identified with a technocratic, authoritarian practice of politics whose terminus was *l'enfer concentrationnaire* (capitalism had once equalled fascism; now it was socialism's turn' (Elliot 1987: 281).

Now, the debate about the Foucault-Marx link is almost coextensive with the emergence of Foucault's work and to go through it all would be quite a project in its own right. After all, Althusser in 1965 cites *The History of Madness* and *The Birth of the Clinic* approvingly in *Reading Capital* (1965a/1970: 26, 44, 45); Lecourt, himself, like Foucault and Balibar a former student of Althusser's, wrote an approving and critical review of *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (Lecourt 1970b/1975) and there is perhaps the *locus classicus* of debate, Poulantzas' *State, Power, Socialism* (1978/1980). Or, one could note Foucault's reliance on the Marxist critical theory of Rusche and Kirkheimer's *Punishment and Social Structure in Discipline and Punish*.

It is difficult *not* to find Marxian tropes and references to Marx in the Foucault corpus. In his archaeological writings, for example *The History of Madness*, he discusses

the ascendance of the bourgeoisie and its work-focused morality; *The Order of Things* contrasts Marx's 'revolutionary promise' in relation to Ricardo's 'pessimism' (261); one finds in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* that Foucault 'accepted that Marx's concepts of surplus value and the falling rate of profit were elements of a valid "theory and critique" [AK: 126]' (Pearce 1988: 259).

Then, the genealogical works, especially a number of Foucault's lectures that paved the way for the seminal *Discipline and Punish* and *The History of Sexuality*, pose explicitly Marxian questions and deploy Marxian categories (cf. DP: 77, 83, 86-87, 144-145, 163-164, 174-175, 287). For example, 'Truth and Juridical Forms', a precursor to *Discipline and Punish* that touches on many Marxian themes, describes and analyses various techniques through which workers' time was controlled. There, Foucault writes that 'a mechanism was established by means of which the entire time of human existence was put at the disposal of the labour market and the demands of labour' (1973c/2000: 81). And at the same time, Foucault, allying himself with Althusserian Marxism argues that,

I don't think we can simply accept the traditional Marxist analysis, which assumes that, labor being man's concrete essence, the capitalist system is what transforms that labor into profit, into hyperprofit [*sur-profit*] or surplus value. The fact is, capitalism penetrates much more deeply into our existence. ... A web of microscopic, capillary political power had to be established at the level of man's very existence, attaching men to the production apparatus, while making them into agents of production, into workers (1973c/2000: 86).

This line of thinking is empirically and analytically enriched between 1973-1975 when Foucault was conducting his research for *Discipline and Punish*, where modalities of class domination are highlighted.

A striking example of his occasional Marxian approach is found in his discussion of his visit to Attica:

The problem is to then find out what role capitalist society has its penal system play, what is the aim that is sought and what effects are produced by all these procedures for punishment and exclusion? What is their place in the economic process, what is their importance in the exercise and the maintenance of power? What is their role in the class struggle? (1974c/1996: 115).

The theoretical discourse in *Discipline and Punish*, where Foucault offers broader analyses and explanations of what was going on in penology in Western civilization in the nineteenth century, in contrast to his descriptions of the minute political technologies of discipline, also rely on Marxian thematics.

Echoing the Marxian critique of legal ideology and the labour contract, Foucault writes that ‘Historically, the process by which the bourgeoisie became in the course of the eighteenth century the politically dominant class was masked by the establishment of an explicit, coded and formally egalitarian juridical framework’ (DP: 222).² Creating and exploring the concept of ‘biopolitics’, his lecture in Rio de Janeiro from 1974, ‘The Birth of Social Medicine’, also takes a Marxian focus, tracing how medicine came to be concerned with and targeted the proletarian body, a process that began in eighteenth century England. As he argues, social medicine was ‘a medicine that consisted mainly a control of the health and the bodies of the needy classes, to make them more fit for labor and less dangerous to the wealthy classes’ (1974a/2003: 336).

² For contemporary discussion, analysis and elaboration of the Foucauldian contribution to Marxian analyses of the constitution and deployment of labour-power see (Marsden 1999; Neocleous 1996 and Montag 1995).

Once again Marxian concerns are well evinced in *The History of Sexuality* where a focal point of analysis is the formation of class bodies, extending the analyses found in 'The Birth of Social Medicine'. As he writes,

Conflicts were necessary (in particular, conflicts over urban space: cohabitation, proximity, contamination, epidemics, such as the cholera outbreak of 1832, or again, prostitution and venereal disease [cf. Foucault 1974a/2003: 326-327; AB: 26-27]) in order for the proletariat to be granted a body and a sexuality; economic emergencies had to arise (the development of heavy industry with the need for a stable and competent labor force, the obligation to regulate the population flow and apply demographic controls); lastly, there had to be established a whole technology of control which made it possible to keep that body and sexuality, finally conceded to them, under surveillance (schooling, the politics of housing, public hygiene, institutions of relief and insurance, the general medicalization of the population, in short an entire administrative and technical machinery made it possible to safely import the development of sexuality into the exploited class; the latter no longer risked playing an assertive role opposite the bourgeoisie; it would remain the instrument of the bourgeoisie's hegemony) (HS: 126-127).

Moreover, in this passage Foucault is directly engaged with *Capital Volume I*, chapter ten, where Marx analyses the organisation of working-class life. In commenting on *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault again makes an explicit comparison between Marx's problematic and his own:

What did Marx do when in his analysis of capital he came across the problem of the workers' misery? He refused the customary explanation which regarded this misery as the effect of a naturally rare cause of a concerted theft. And he said substantially: given what capitalist production is, in its fundamental laws, it cannot help but cause misery. Capitalism's *raison d'être* is not to starve workers but it cannot develop without starving them. Marx replaced the denunciation of theft by the analysis of production.

Other things being equal, that is approximately what I wanted to say [in HS]. It is not a matter of denying sexual misery, nor is it however one of explaining it negatively by repression. The entire problem is to grasp the positive mechanism which, producing sexuality in this or that fashion, results in misery (1977g/1988: 113).

As has been noted by Balibar (1989/1992), Hunt (2004), Lemke (2002); Pearce (1988), Pearce and Dupont (2001), Pearce and Tombs (1998a), Montag (1995), Read (2001), Curtis (2002), Olssen (2004), and Milchman and Rosenberg (2002)—to cite only a small sample of this debate—Foucault makes positive references to Marx. In this regard, Lemke's remarks are quite a propos:

Etienne Balibar once wrote that Foucault's work is characterised by some kind of "genuine" struggle with Marx [Balibar 1989/1992: 39], this struggle being one of the principle sources of its productivity. According to Balibar, Foucault moved in his theoretical development from a rupture with Marxism as a theory to a "tactical alliance," the use of some Marxists concepts or some concepts compatible with Marxism (Lemke 2002: 49).

In this debate there are those who affirm the power and usefulness of Marxist elements in Foucault and those who reject such interpretations as being unfaithful to the novelty of Foucault's work (e.g., Miller and Rose 1992; Rose and Miller 1995). There are those who argue that Foucault follows in the footsteps of Marx's historical materialism, and Foucault himself can be counted among them (cf. Hunt 2004; Curtis 2002; Pearce 1988; Olssen 2004), and those who argue that Foucault and Marx are fundamentally different (Rose and Rabinow 2003; Poster 1984). But I think the matter of Foucault's relationship to Marx and Marxism as both a theoretical problematic and as a political practice may actually be simpler than is conventionally represented. My sense is that the matter comes down to this: Foucault and Marx have *metatheoretically distinct discourses* (potentially incompatible); and Foucault opposed both the political project of Marxism and its tactics.

The Distinction Between Marxian and Foucauldian Ontology

The metatheoretical difference between Foucauldian and Marxian discourse can be discerned if one asks the question about their respective objects of analysis. Foucault's object is 'modes of being', considered first in terms of the mode of being of humans as objects of knowledge in the human sciences and as subjects doing the knowing. And as I discuss in the next chapter, to this is added the dimension of 'power', i.e., of what it is that enables and constrains the capacities of a human body 'doing this' as opposed to 'that'. Marx's object though, after the *Theses on Feuerbach*, is the contradictory totality of social relations in class-divided societies and their reproduction conditions.

For Marx, the theoretical and practical/political problem is the place of subjects as constituted in and through the social relations of ownership and control of the means of production within a social formation—this is what he takes to be decisive and determinative of the capacities of persons and social formations to produce and reproduce human existence in a definite historical circumstance. Hence, the object of transformation and the target of political practice in Marxism is economic and the sets of social institutions and social relations that reproduce the exploitative relation between labour and capital.³

³ It is important to note what Marx means by the terms 'economic' and 'production', because it is not nearly so reductionist as conventionally argued. The economic, drawing on Marx's materialist ontology, and as laid out in both *The German Ideology* (cf. Hunt 2004) and *The Grundrisse*, refers to all forms of production *qua* material synthesis between human subjects within a social formation (i.e., as always imbricated in and constituted by social relations) and their material conditions of existence. This is in contrast to both Kant's and Hegel's idealist conception of synthesis that combines a conceptual/subjective *a priori* and empirical sensation to produce perception (cf. Habermas 1968/1971; Sixel 1995). Neither should Marx's conception of economics and production be confused with the classical economic notion of exchange in the marketplace which is but *one* of four moments of the circuit of capital, namely

Furthermore, a central dimension of Marx's analytic is the property relation since it is the *legal form* of exercising and protecting the ownership and control of the means of production (and hence of the reproduction of labour-power as a whole within the social formation), something about which Foucault was well aware (DP: 222; Hunt 1978/1993; cf. Palmer and Pearce 1983). Given Foucault's opposition to viewing 'power' as something that can be possessed (DP: 26) or, 'acquired, seized, or shared', (HS: 94), he cannot coherently analyse class relations as power relations given their basis in proprietary and possessory control over the means of production in the hands of a small minority. In short, Foucault's object is not Marx's object because Foucault's object here—power relations—*precludes* the very materiality of ownership as an instance of *power* relations at all. So while they both share a concern with 'relations', the metatheoretical point at issue concerns the stuff of the relation.

Keeping the distinction between Marx's and Foucault's object in mind helps one avoid confusion about what Foucault is writing about. For example, Foucault uses an economic model for considering the effects of power and analyses a political economy of the body's capacities and how they might be produced, shaped, harnessed and literally, 'put to work' (cf. DP: 25). But bodies for Foucault in contrast to Marx, are not a means of

production (which is primary or dominant), distribution, exchange and consumption. Given the breadth of Marx's concepts of production and the economy one cannot unproblematically claim that Marx is an economic reductionist. To do so is to risk jettisoning the critical and explanatory import of Marx's materialism. Moreover, the generality of these concepts of production and the economy is precisely why Marx's uses *different signifiers* for the specificity of a *mode* of production. In *Anti-Oedipus*, with their concept of 'desiring-production' and the concepts of 'the connective synthesis or production of production', corresponding to Department I of production in Marx, and 'the conjunctive synthesis or the production of consumption', corresponding to Department II of production, Deleuze and Guattari employ this non-reductive conception of production (1972/1994; cf. Althusser and Balibar 1965/1970: 80, 165-172).

production or a even a force of production because a force of production is only such because captured and shaped by *relations of production*; rather, for Foucault bodies are *productive relations themselves*—‘the political technology of the body’ as found in capitalist disciplinary and normalising practice is precisely the body as its contingent, local relational capacities (DP: 26). This line of analysis produces a distinct account of what is decisive about the modern epoch.

For Foucault, what is decisive in the nineteenth century is not the emergence of the capitalist mode of production as the dominant mode of production and from there to becoming the dominant instance in Western societies. Rather, with emergence of Foucault’s genealogical programme, the decisive historical feature is held to be the emergent dominance of the human sciences and its practices of objectifying both individual and collective human existence as a target of intervention (PP: 57-58; DP: 191, 226). So, rather than focusing on commodity production and exchange, dependent upon the exploitation of wage-labour to extract surplus-value, the real event according to Foucault is the emergence of a political economy of bodies, a mode of production of bodies and their capacities —the ‘vital’ as opposed to ‘economic’ base, one could say— of the living human multiplicity that interested him.

In this respect, the important matter of ‘the possibility of causal explanations’ in materialist terms, applied to the terrain of history, needs to be seen as *epistemological one* and becomes less contentious an issue (Hunt 2004: 604; cf. Foucault 1980a/2003). The difference between Marx and Foucault though, still concerns the ontology of the *object*, i.e., the stuff to be explained. Focusing on the difference between Marxian and Foucauldian ontology involves considering the specific qualities of the stuff found in a

particular stratum of materiality in which causal mechanisms exist, no matter how complex, and the modality of determination peculiar to that stratum (what does that stratum make happen?). In the case of Marx, the stratum is the materiality of social relations; in Foucault, in the archaeological period, the stratum is that of discourse, and in the genealogical period, it is that of power and the ways it is shaped, organised and coordinated by discursive practices.

So, what then do we do with arguments containing extensive references to Foucault being positive about Marx, for example, or Woodiwiss' (1990) and Pearce and Tombs' (1998) extensive use of Foucault's concept of discursive formation deployed to understand the workings of legality, illegality and the constitution of juridical subjects in the spheres of labour and environmental law respectively? I think the key here is to *read Foucault's texts symptomatically* and thus pose to Foucault's texts the question of the discourse-object relation: what is it that Foucault is writing about and what discourse (categories, concepts, models, etc.) is used to handle this object, rendering it visible and thinkable?

In most cases where Foucault and Marx are critically and productively combined, rather than insisting on a dogmatically imposed division between them, the exegetical work that is done, *disarticulates*, I contend, a Foucault that is not "Foucauldian" at all but rather is an *Althusserian Marxist*, bearing all its hallmarks of anti-humanism, anti-historicism, emphasis on class relations, domination, contingency and state apparatus (e.g., legal, penal, police, educational, tax, etc.).⁴ And, it is important to note that Foucault

⁴ The other temptation is *empiricism*, i.e., taking a range of descriptors as directly referring to real phenomena and events, but failing to appreciate that the meaning of

makes substantial contributions to the structural Marxist problematic (cf. Callari and Ruccio 1996; Poulantzas 1978/1980; Jessop 1990) by elaborating concrete analyses of the practices constitutive of working-class bodies and the specific forms of class power involved in them, an analysis freed from the humanism, empiricism and historicism found for example in E. P. Thompson's work.

The important thing to note here is that the Marxian signifying chains in Foucault do not belong to either the archaeological or genealogical problematic. The procedure of theoretically disarticulating Foucault in this way is I suggest a fruitful and rigorous way of engaging with the question of Foucault and Marxian analysis. Moreover, it takes an approach to texts consonant with Foucault's own work —there is no inherent unity to any text given by the author's signature; rather the issue is how particular statements are produced and rendered intelligible and hence susceptible to assessment by a discursive formation (cf. Palmer and Pearce 1983; Pearce and Tombs 1998a).⁵ That is to say that the 'struggle for Foucault', as Pearce puts it, is inscribed internally in the texts that bear Foucault's signature themselves, a signature that ought not be confused with an adequate theoretical *suture* for Foucault's own use of Marx (cf. Foucault 1983g/2003: 101).

The Foucauldian Opposition to Marxist Strategy and Tactics

The second component, and most important aspect of Foucault's relationship to Marxism as far as the development of his *Kampfplatz* goes, is his rejection of Marxism as a means

descriptors, e.g., 'the proletariat', only have their meaning effect in the context of their difference from other signifiers within the signifying chains comprising a text.

⁵ On this point, Althusser's remarks about the consequences critique are well-taken: a new problematic will always be tainted by the discourse subjected to critique and will retain elements of it within the new theory (Althusser 1993/2006: 269-270).

of escape from the present at all. Foucault's rejection of Marxism as a political project, together with its institutions, can also be viewed in a fairly straight-forward manner. It rests on his correct view on the *practical* and strategic myopia of the French Communist Party (PCF) during the events of May 1968 and afterward. Foucault's opposition to Marxist tactics and strategy (as found in the PCF for instance) over the means of societal transformation and means of organising a new socialist body politic, can be summed up in a phrase: Marxism is illiberal because it curtails critique and experimentation (cf. Foucault 1983g/2003: 96-97). After all, in May 1968 'France had virtually come to a halt, precipitated by large-scale student protests and occupations that led to the greatest general strike in European history, involving nine million workers and losing 15 000 000 working days' (Reader 1993: 1). The events were characterised by 'demands for autonomy and control at the base, their forming of assemblies governed by direct democracy, and their speaking out ("*prise de parole*"...) in favor of a transformation of everyday life were echoed throughout society by industrial workers, technicians, artists, doctors, architects, priests and even football players' (Christofferson 2004: 51).

Initially, before the emergence of workers' strikes, the PCF denounced the student uprisings as '*gauchisme*', i.e., falling outside of the discipline required for effective Marxist politics, and as 'provocative' i.e., likely 'calling forth as its inevitable consequence "repression" that bred further provocation in turn' (Reader 1993: 65-66). Case in point was the visit of Pierre Juquin to Nanterre where there had been unrest since November the previous year. Juquin, 'a member of the PCF's central committee, went to [the overcrowded and under-serviced University of] Nanterre on 26 April to denounce those whom he described as '*les agitateur-fils a papa*/agitators with rich daddies', and

was literally chased off campus' (Reader 1993: 9). The PCF was far from being supportive. Indeed,

The PCF strongly condemned the early manifestations of student discontent, especially when these were the works of what is called "ultra-Left" (in other words, anarchist, Maoist, or Trotskyist) groups. Georges Marchais (later to become its General Secretary) wrote a venomous editorial in *L'Humanite* on May 3 in which he declared that "these false revolutionaries must be energetically unmasked, for objectively they serve the interests of the Gaullist power and the large capitalist monopolies". ... It was only when the working class became involved after the police brutality of the night of 10 May that the PCF changed its tune, supporting the workers who went on strike and sometimes even occupied their factories (Reader 1993: 4).

Althusser for his part, was also accused of minimising students' protests, describing them as 'an extremely important phenomenon, but ...*subordinated* to the economic class struggle of the nine million workers' (cited in Reader 1993: 67). What was important for Althusser was not the succession of phenomena and events (i.e., that student protests preceded the strikes) but rather their impact on the hierarchy of determinations structuring the social formation.

What Foucault and others witnessed was a PCF that overtly disregarded what were demonstrably major concerns for a large number of people in France. Reflecting back on the problems about gender, the environment, the power of the medical establishment, mental illness and minorities that came to the fore in '68, Foucault states that 'the process that was evident at that time led not to taking over the problem posed by the Marxist doctrine but, on the contrary, to a more and manifest powerlessness on the part of Marxism to confront these problems' (Foucault 1984e/2003: 21-22; cf. Foucault 1982i/1997: 125). The critical consensus that emerged about the events of 1968 was that they challenged 'the legitimacy of ruling and oppositional institutions; models of

production, consumption and information; as well as established rules, beliefs and customs' including the institutions of partisan electoral politics in France (Smart 1983/1989: 8; cf. Lefort 1978: 37).

Foucault himself challenged the stultifying features of PCF vanguardism and dogmatism in his veiled comments on the polemical targets of Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus*: the PCF were 'the political ascetics, the sad militants, the terrorists of theory, those who would preserve the pure order of politics and political discourse. Bureaucrats of the revolution and civil servants of truth' (1972c/2000: 107). Moreover, the sentiments of Daniel Cohn-Bendit, the key figure of the student movement during '68, resonate strongly with Foucault's own sensibilities. 'Cohn-Bendit stressed that the movement should not try to seize power, but rather function as an experiment and critique of institutions that offers a glimpse of a possible alternative society... it had to foster the "disorder that lets men speak freely" and shun representation' (Christofferson 2004: 53).

One should be careful here though—Foucault was not in any way on the intellectual vanguard of the '68 movement, but his work and his normative orientation certainly reflects the impact of the May events. In this regard, Althusser was more in tune with events and indeed was himself more than a little responsible for the Maoist-inspired *gauchisme* of students, as witnessed for instance in his essay 'Contradiction and Overdetermination', (1965d/2005) not to mention his major theoretical work from that period, 'Ideology and ideological state apparatus' (1969a/1971) that developed a non-reductive analysis of the structure of social formations and the plurality of powers involved in the uneven development and reproduction of social formations (Reader 1993:

67-69; cf. Elliot 1993). It would be a couple of years yet before Foucault would be able to make his own theoretical statements on the impact of May '68.⁶

By the mid-1970s, Foucault overtly denounced the disastrous actualisation of Marxism in the states of actually existing socialism. Foucault denounced Soviet imperialism and the imposition of communist government on Poland, backed by the military and repressive might of the USSR (Foucault 1982d/2000: 470). At the same time one needs to appreciate that the issue here is less Marxism-Leninism or Stalinism because the issue is one of the *tactics used in modern rule tout court*. As he states in 'The Subject and Power',

I'd like to mention only two "pathological forms"—those two "diseases of power"—fascism and Stalinism. One of the numerous reasons why they are so puzzling for us is that in spite of their historical uniqueness, they are not quite original. They used and extended mechanisms already present in most other societies. More than that: in spite of their own internal madness, they used, to a large extent, the ideas and devices of our political rationality (1982a/2003: 127).

Key among the supports of both Nazism and Stalinism is their reliance on variants of humanism, truth and the project of making a "good society", linking them together as one rationale for intensified domination—this was the recipe for totalitarianism. To cite only a few examples of this line of attack in Foucault's work, humanism underlay many justifications of party domination in the USSR (Foucault 1977c/1988: 184; 1984d/2003: 52); Stalinism crushed intellectual inquiry like formalist cultural analysis (1980b/2000:

⁶ One should also note that Althusser was far from being an apologist for the PCF—the Althusser of *For Marx* onward sought to challenge and reformulate the dogmatic Marxism of the PCF. An important instance of Althusser's interventions within the PCF is found in 'The Crisis of Marxism' (1978b). For Foucault's assessment of the theoretical politics involved in the Althusserian challenge to the PCF see Foucault (1980b/2000: 269).

271); and the PCF required an ‘unconditional allegiance to the Soviet Union’, even when the PCF was engaged in critical developments in Marxism (274).

Indeed, Foucault argues that the socialist Left was poorly equipped to handle the political novelties of neoliberalism. As Gordon writes, drawing on Foucault’s governmentality lectures, ‘socialism itself does not possess and has never possessed its own distinctive art of governing’ (Gordon 1991: 6). Foucault charges socialism with a very simplistic conception of power and government (Foucault 1978b/1996: 258). Thus when one situates Foucault’s diffidence toward “Marx-ism”, the issue is not “Marxism” *per se* because Marxism is not a distinct genus of rule—it is a *species* of the broader *genus* of modern forms of rule and domination.⁷ The issue for Foucault, as for the liberalist *gauchisme* of the French left in the 1970s, was the extreme application of modern techniques of rule and domination, including the reliance on the human sciences (psychiatry, medicine and criminology in particular), and the institutions and techniques of confinement on which all of them relied.

In short, the Foucauldian *Kampfplatz* in political theory is very much affected by his diffidence about both the theoretical justifications and project of Marxist politics. In doing so Foucault demarcated his intervention from the Marxist framework that viewed

⁷ Foucault well highlights the difference between his problematic and that of Marxism when it comes to theorising political phenomena in the following remark:

What strikes me about Marxist analysis is that it’s always a question of “class struggle,” but less attention is paid to one word in this expression, namely “struggle.” ...when they speak of “class struggle” as the mainspring of history, they worry especially about defining this class, where it is situated, who it encompasses, but never concretely about the nature of the struggle. With one exception, however: Marx’s own non-theoretical, historical texts, which are better in this regard (1977g/1988: 123)

politics in terms of the revolutionary transformation of the economic basis of human existence and the restricting of the means necessary to achieve such a transformation to the party apparatus.

Foucault's Self-Critique in *Psychiatric Power*

Now while Foucault's diffidence toward Marxism played a major role in demarcating his *Kampfplatz*, the decisive moment for him comes in the form of the elaboration of a self-critique. This self-critique was elaborated after his period of intense activism in the early 1970s, especially his involvement with GIP. We find it spelled out clearly, for the first time, in his 1973-1974 lecture course entitled *Psychiatric Power* (PP). This is also the place where he distances himself from the Althusser of 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses' (Althusser 1969a/1972) and hence from the usefulness of even the much renovated Marxism of Althusser for analysing what could and should be meant by 'power' and 'the political'.

In *Psychiatric Power*, Foucault reflects upon his work in *The History of Madness* and takes note of several analytical limitations each of which hinge on the problem of defining 'power' and what this entails for analysing 'power', veridical discourse and the contingent constitution of human existence. The first criticism he notes is that *The History of Madness* relied on an analysis of representations of madness that were 'the site of origin of practices concerning madness' (PP: 13). In some respects, this is not surprising since both the method and ontology of *The History of Madness* were indebted to Durkheim's sociology of religion, dependent on the concept of collective representations, as conveyed to Foucault by one of his key mentors, Georges Dumezil

(Pearce and Woodiwiss 2001; Pearce 2006a). Now Foucault, in true Nietzschean form, wants to turn his analytic around—it is power that produces representations and not the other way round (cf. Foucault 1970b/1972: 234). He furthermore claims that an ‘analytics of power’ will allow him to think about ‘the relationship between discursive practice’ and ‘economic structures, relations of production’ (PP: 13). Foucault thus rejects the possibility that either the Durkheimian analysis of representations or Marxian analysis can help him resolve the question of knowledge and power because they still themselves depend on notions like ‘representation, the subject, and so on, appealing to a ready made psychology and philosophy’ (PP: 13). Foucault’s targeting of Marxism here is an example of the kind of polemic noted above by Pearce since Althusser’s work involved a whole scale attempt to rid Marxism of any reference to a foundational subject. But, the issue very clearly for Foucault concerns how to open up a new kind of analysis rather than risk repeating the theoreticist errors of not only Marxism, but of psychology and philosophy too.

The second criticism of *The History of Madness* is that it placed too great an emphasis on violence, taken to mean ‘an unregulated, passionate power, an unbridled power... This notion seems to me to be dangerous because, on the one hand, picking out a power that is physical, unregulated, etcetera, allows one to think that good power, or just simply power, power not permeated by violence, is not physical power’ (PP: 14). Foucault here is suggesting that a ‘power’ is much more mundane and pervasive and the phenomena to which it refers are not nearly so rare as one might be tempted to argue if holding to the equation of power with violence.

The third self-criticism is levelled against the notion of 'institution' and the role that institutionalisation played in the medicalisation of madness. Relying on the concept of institution as a basis for analysing power is weak since sociological analysis typically implies that things function smoothly. This obscures 'the imbalances of power' that 'distort the asylum's regularity and, at the same time, make it function' (PP: 15). Although not stated explicitly here, the target here is a sociological *cum* Durkheimian conception of 'institutions'. As Durkheim and Fauconnet put it, 'institutions, although continuing to evolve, preserve their essential character over long periods of time, sometimes even over the entire existence of one society, for they express what is most deeply constitutional in any social organisation' (1903/1982: 196). It is this assumption that institutions sustain themselves because they work that Foucault now challenges.

The fourth self-criticism, once again critical of an Althusserian approach, targets reliance on the family as the primary site through which social control is organised and coordinated. Foucault then generalises this point and attacks the Althusserian concept of State apparatus. As Foucault writes, 'We cannot use the notion of State apparatus, because it is much too broad, much too abstract to designate these immediate, tiny capillary powers that are exerted on the body, behaviour, actions, and time of individuals. The State apparatus does not take this microphysics into account' (PP: 16). As Foucault would later put it, a major problem with Marxism, both as a problematic and as a political project is that it never analysed 'the mechanics of power in themselves' (1977d/2003: 305).⁸ Nevertheless, Foucault's self-critique tells us a great deal about what he does not

⁸ Foucault though seems to miss the point about Althusser's intervention. What Althusser does is to *displace* the centrality of the concern with production in Marxist analysis and replace it with the question of the *reproduction of the social formation in the face of the*

mean by his emergent 'analytic of power' and tells us a number of important things about what his object is not. First, it does not mean focusing analysis on representations, thus providing him with a way out of the tendency to argue in terms suggestive of 'the illusion of autonomous discourse' (Dreyfus and Rabinow 1982/1983). Second, it means focusing on the mundane, quotidian character of power, not something removed from daily affairs. Third, it means focusing less on institutions as successfully functioning systems and more as sites of contestation. Fourth, the rejection of Althusser's renovated Marxism means that an analytics of power would have to move away from a concern with the structure of the society as a totality and rather shift to the microphysics of power.

Foucault soon comes to see that he was far from being alone in failing to consider what could be meant by doing specific analyses of the mundane microphysics of power. His self-critique is generalised to encompass the conventional departure point of modern political theory. Appreciating the development of his self-critique helps us grasp his reasons for rejecting conventional political theory and not just that of the Marxist Left. Ironically, modern political theory including Marxism, Foucault contends, has been unable to grasp what might be distinctive about modern forms of thinking about and exercising power at all because beholden to the image of the monarch. And rather than elucidating what it is that we are fighting against, the figure of the sovereign functions to obscure and mask the rationales, justifications and exercising of *distinctively modern* power. So let us look at his well-known generalised critique of modern political theory.

concrete contradictions produced by the structure of the capitalist mode of production. For Althusser this shift in Marxian analysis from a focus on production to one of contradiction and reproduction in the social formation, is exactly what requires Marxian analysis to focus on the variety and concreteness of the constitution of subjects and their practices—the "micro-" dimension of social life that Foucault wishes now to analyse.

Beyond Self-Critique: The General Critique of Political Theory

From these elements of self-criticism at the analytical level Foucault was able to level his central critique of political theory, namely its reliance on the figure of the Sovereign and how the Sovereign exercised power. This was consolidated in *The History of Sexuality* where this critical move receives its clearest explication. As he famously put it,

At bottom, despite the differences in epochs and objectives, the representation of power has remained under the spell of the monarchy. In political thought and analysis, we still have not cut off the head of the king. Hence the importance that the [juridico-discursive] theory of power gives to the problem of right and violence, law and illegality, freedom and will, and especially the state and sovereignty (even if the latter is questioned insofar as it is personified in a collective being and no longer a sovereign individual). To conceive of power on the basis of these problems is to conceive of it in terms of a historical form that is characteristic of our societies: the juridical monarchy (HS: 88-89; cf. Foucault 1977d/2003: 309).

Foucault challenges an analysis of politics and its referent power, beholden to a notion of power as a constraint or limit on the actions of pre-existing subjects. Power, and hence the political, is not about repression, exclusion, coercion or the direct application of physical force on the human body (Foucault 1982a/2003). All of these conventional figures of the political are *negative* and have the form of prohibition (Foucault 1983a/2003: 41; Hunt and Wickham 1994: 40). As Foucault programmatically states,

In short, it is a question of orienting ourselves to a conception of power that replaces the privilege of the law with the viewpoint of the objective, the privilege of prohibition with the viewpoint of tactical efficacy, the privilege of sovereignty with the analysis of a multiple and mobile field of force relations, wherein far-reaching, but never completely stable, effects of domination are produced. The strategic model rather than the model based on law (HS: 102; cf. Foucault 1977i/1980).

Foucault's intervention targets the blindness of conventional political theory. Foucault rightly sees this as a serious problem because deductively constraining the questions that one can pose in any political theory that relies on the model of prohibition, whether liberal, Marxist (Palmer and Pearce 1983), or Freudian (HS). Now while what Foucault then has to say about 'law' is inadequate because of this narrow formulation (Hunt 1993b; Hunt and Wickham 1994), and while his broader work has been usefully extended to produce a sophisticated conception of the formation of juridical subjects (Palmer and Pearce 1983; Woodiwiss 1990), this is not my focus here. Rather, my focus is on the theoretical productivity of Foucault's intervention in as much as it consolidates and demarcates his regional *Kampfplatz* in political theory. The main culprit in this approach to the political is relying on how monarchs thought about and attempted to organise social life as at all helpful for analysing power. Moreover, to appreciate this intervention does not mean at this point that we need to define what Foucault means by 'power' or 'field of force relations' since the theoretical effect that needs to be noted concerns consolidating by extensive demarcation the *Kampfplatz* that will be fleshed out by analyses of power relations.

So, what does Foucault mean by the 'juridico-discursive'? It refers to the capacity of the King who issues sovereign commands and requires the respect and obedience of subjects; the King does so by 'right'. This form of power, which Foucault claims defined power relations throughout the Middle Ages up until the end of the eighteenth century was characterised by 'forcible seizure, abduction, or repression, usually culminating in death' (Ewald 1990: 138; cf. SMBD: 23ff.). Sovereign power definitively involved 'the power to *take* life or *let* live' (HS:136). The power relations constitutive of sovereign

power are forcefully illustrated in the punishment of Damien, the would-be regicide of Louis XV (DP; cf. Pearce 2003a), where one witnesses ‘the coercive power of the state epitomised in the bloody vengeance wreaked on the bodies of those who offend against the king’ (Hunt and Wickham 1994: 41).

This negative model of power is characteristic of the power of monarchs to prohibit, forbid and take things away, as articulated and stated through laws. For this reason Foucault calls this model of power the ‘juridico-discursive’, ‘juridico’ referring to ‘law/prohibition’ and ‘discursive’ referring to the King’s stated command (HS: 85-91). Thus the juridico-discursive model of power is closely linked in Foucault’s work to his analyses of sovereign power, the power of the King and his contention that this model for conceptualising power relations is inadequate for analysing and describing the characteristically positive, productive aspects of power relations especially in the modern epoch. It is in this light that Foucault suggests that we need to cut off the head of the king in political theory.

Foucault’s approach to questions of modern law involves a theoretical displacement of the link between law and sovereignty and an analytical rearticulation of the links between law, sovereignty and the positive, productive, relational exercises of power found in discipline, normalisation and governing. Foucault argues that a juridico-discursive model of power was only truly appropriate to medieval sovereign power. At the same time however, Foucault recognised that there has not been an absolute break between the juridical programme of rule (or the diagram of sovereign rule) and modern law. Hence, Foucault noted how the juridico-discursive model of law continues to function as a mask for modern mechanisms of power (HS: 86; Tadros 1998: 82; Foucault

1977d/2003). It also rears its “head” when it comes to suppressing dissent, engaging in a ‘catch-all strategy’ (Foucault 1979c).

Foucault rejects the usefulness of the model of Sovereignty for an analysis of power for several reasons. First, although there is some equivocation on this point in Foucault, it is not at all clear that the exercise of Sovereign rule was actually a form of power at all since it relied so heavily on violence and the threat of violence. Second, it was also important to Foucault to show that Sovereign rule, even at its Absolutist apex, did not work nearly as well as we moderns might think (Foucault 1977b/1980; 1977a/2003). Third, things changed—the rationales of rule, the objects of rule and the ways and means of exercising rule—had substantially changed by the mid-nineteenth century, not least because the human sciences had by that point emerged as a central over-arching rationale for programmes of social ordering, coordination and organisation. Thus, the central point of Foucault’s critique is that the Sovereign is an anachronism that no longer corresponds to how rule is thought about in the present. And, if we continue to rely on it, we will be asking the wrong sets of questions, questions that will not help us understand the constitution and shaping of human existence in modern Western civilization.⁹

The practical-political implications of Foucault’s rejection of the juridico-discursive model comes to the fore in *The History of Sexuality* where he targets the ‘repressive hypothesis’. The repressive hypothesis contends that modern, typically

⁹ It should be noted that Foucault also turns his analytics of power around and debunks the theoreticist analyses of Sovereign rule during the Classical Age—as it happens, Sovereignty was not as Sovereign as we might be tempted to believe; Sovereign rule itself relied on a variety of power-knowledges; Sovereign rule was itself crucially involved in the development and intensification of the ‘governmentalization of the state’ (STP: 109).

bourgeois-capitalist rule has sought to limit and prohibit free sexual expression. If people are allowed to engage in sexual practices as they will, their nature will not be distorted and we won't see the emergence of subjects susceptible to fascism, a form of repressive desublimation. If we reject the notion that power is repressive, then *emancipation* will not come in the form of say, sexual liberation. Foucault generalised this point by offering a critique of a certain form of 'naturalism':

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. And also a certain aesthetic and moral choice: power is bad, ugly, poor, sterile, monotonous and dead; and what power is exercised upon is right, good and rich (1977g/1988: 120).

Foucault's critique of the juridico-discursive model for analysing power thus forces the *raison d'être* of Left politics and criticism to shift: liberation from *sur-pouvoir* is no longer a useful way for thinking about power or what to do about it. In the case of sexual desire this is because there is no pre-existing authentic human subject to be liberated—the subject of sexuality is itself produced by the discursive practices of the human sciences that then constitute, target and attempt to shape what people are actually doing. To say all of that though does not minimise that the important productive point that this dimension of the Foucauldian *Kampfplatz* contributes, namely, that if our questions about power are framed in terms of the juridico-discursive we are likely to miss a great deal of what is going on in the mundane stratum of power where we moderns live.

The Remainder of The Juridico-Discursive

If we are to examine Foucault's work from the productivity of his problematic, then I think we need to take seriously the formation of his *Kampfplatz*. What this means is that we should read Foucault from the strong position of his *Kampfplatz* and formulate its immanent theoretical criteria as follows: an analytic of power is not about exclusion, coercion, violence, repression, taxation, or killing. That is also to say that the analytic of power does not refer to these phenomena as they are thought about in terms of the juridico-discursive model. They are something else, but what they might be is unclear. Perhaps the most we can say is that they involve both representations and practices. But, I think that we can say that from the point of view of the Foucauldian regional *Kampfplatz* in political theory there are two theoretical possibilities.

The first of these possibilities is that all of these negative and prohibitive practices do not exist at all precisely because they are practices and practices are productive—they do something and affect things. The corollary here is that repression, exclusion, coercion, etc., can all be accounted for, with some work, in terms of power and that what is at issue is the representation of these exercises of power in terms of the juridico-discursive model.

This is the line of argument suggested in *The History of Sexuality*: 'We shall try to rid ourselves of a juridical and negative representation of power, and cease to conceive of it in terms of law, prohibition, liberty and sovereignty' (HS: 90-91), note the presence of the signifiers 'representation', 'conceive', and 'terms'. What these categories of the juridico-discursive refer to 'is an instrument of power which is at once complex and partial' (Foucault 1977f/1980: 141). The problem of the theoretical demarcation and intervention of genealogy for Foucault then is clearly a *theoretical one*, as found in his

statement that the juridico-discursive is a ‘mask’ (HS: 86; SMBD: 28) and an ‘ideology of right’ (SMBD: 36-37). Foucault develops his work in this direction in ‘Lives of Infamous Men’ (1977a/2003), where the King’s power—emphasis on *power*—is found to be based in the actions and requests of the common person; ‘power comes from below’, as the formulation in HS goes (94). A similar theoretical tack is used when Foucault concurs with an analysis of Absolutist rule: ‘The French monarchy was equipped with a very strong, but very rigid administrative apparatus. Certainly there was a King, the manifest representative of power, but in reality wasn’t centralised and didn’t express itself through grand strategies, at once fine, supple and coherent’ (Foucault 1977b/1980: 207).

The second theoretical option available as far as Foucault’s regional *Kampffplatz* in political theory is concerned is that while juridico-discursive *prohibitions*—actual practices—are not pervasive in modern societies, they exist in some parallel fashion with power relations. If so, as Foucault himself argues, then the juridico-discursive model is still appropriate to some facets of modern societies. For example, while he rejected the juridico-discursive model he still saw it as important and constitutive of the problem of madness in the present.

[A judicial conception of power] had, however, been adequate to my purposes in *Madness and Civilization* [HM] (not that that book is in itself either satisfactory or sufficient) since madness is a *special case*—during the Classical age, power over madness was, in its most important manifestation at least, exercised in the form of exclusion, thus one sees madness caught up in a great movement of rejection (Foucault 1977e/1980: 183-4).

A similar sensibility is expressed in the ‘Governmentality’ lecture. As he states there, ‘we should not see things as the replacement of a society of sovereignty by a society of

discipline, and then a society of discipline by a society, say, of government. In fact, we have a triangle: sovereignty, discipline and governmental management, which has the population as its main target and apparatuses of security as its essential mechanism' (STP: 107-108). But, even in this formulation there is an implicit but still ambiguous distinction between how the sovereign thinks about, justifies and rationalises some or other project of social ordering, how discipline does, how government does, etc., and the array of practices for achieving social order and the dream of the good society found in each of these approaches.

What Foucault seems to be suggesting in his 'Governmentality' lecture is that the rationality of government—its system of thought—is dominant (since the nineteenth century), but that it still may use techniques of sovereign rule, and/or disciplinary ordering, to achieve its goals of a secure, healthy, wealthy population. So, the issue of the remainder of Foucault's critique of political theory is rather equivocal as far as its status within his regional *Kampfplatz* in political theory goes: it is likely that coercion, violence, repression, etc., have existed and continue to exist, but that the analytic of power, since focused on power (and its productivity) cannot analyse these negatives because it makes no logical sense to analyse these negatives in terms of positives. What then do we call these negatives and where do they fit as far as an account of the formation of modern societies? This analytical problem is not solved by Foucault but it does indicate what is at stake in the formation of his regional *Kampfplatz* in political theory.

Conclusion

Taking this aleatory materialist approach and posing to Foucault's intervention in political theory, first the question of the constitution of its *Kampfplatz* rather than starting with his substantive analysis of the modern political field in terms of power relations, helps one grasp the *theoretical and practical stakes* involved in Foucault's transformation of the very object of social analysis as delimited by him—this delimitation is a fundamental part of his contribution. Foucault as a theoretical critic tells us very clearly what he did not mean by an *analytic of power* and why. One could say that Foucault's regional *Kampfplatz* in political theory—his battleground—allows us to see a region of human existence on which he shone his spotlight. What he then sees in that region, is the content of his substantive analyses and his theorising about the phenomena in that region.

Appreciating the theoretical work of these five dimensions of Foucault as critic of political theory helps one appreciate why he then carried out the analysis of the political field that he did. Surrealism provided the goal and justification for political activity—the means for transforming the experience of oneself, others and the world at large; surrealism tells us something about the *normative coordinates* of Foucault's approach, a dimension of his work often neglected but as we shall see, one that plays a major role in the logic of his recommendations about changing things. His activist pluralism along the lines of May '68 provide a sense of his preferred concrete tactics of engagement. His diffidence toward Marxism involves the rejection of vanguardism and prioritising of economic transformation at the expense of a broader array of struggles against domination. Foucault's self-critique put him on the path to a new alternative and this was

then generalised into a critique of the juridico-discursive model of power, highlighting its inadequacies for analysing a political field.

This chapter has focused on the analytical options that Foucault rejected by attending to the formation of his regional *Kampfplatz* in political theory. Reading Foucault this way is not so different from a form of discursive analysis that he explicates in AK and in ‘The Discourse on Language’ (Foucault 1970a/1972) where he attends to the role of exclusion in the order of discourse, of how discursive formations engage in the expulsion of ‘error’ and ‘falsity’—Foucauldian discourse is no different in that regard. So, now that we have a sense for the theoretical ground that Foucault occupied, I will attend to the alternative he developed to hold that ground, the alternative I aim to consolidate as a general theory of ‘modes of being’. This serves to provide a consolidated model of how modern rule works on ‘modes of being’ allowing for a theoretically coherent conception of the object of transformation and a sense of Foucault’s recommended modes of transformation.

Chapter Four:

Modes of Being and Foucault's Ontology

It has been a long while since thinkers like Spinoza and Nietzsche first began to show that modes of existence have to be assessed according to immanent criteria, according to their content of possibilities, liberty or creativity, without any appeal to transcendental values (Deleuze 1989/1992: 163).

Introduction

In the previous chapter, I laid out the regional *Kampfplatz* of Foucault's critiques of political theory. In this chapter I pose the question concerning what is Foucault talking about, or the question of his *ontology* in relation to the totality of his work. This will help us grasp the conceptual and substantive content of that *Kampfplatz*, namely what is actually theoretically achieved in such a way that it does not fall prey to various theoretical errors subjected to critique in the formation of his regional *Kampfplatz* in political theory. I argue that the elementary object of Foucauldian analysis is the 'mode of being' (or 'existence'); this is the stuff that Foucault is talking about. Unpacking what could be meant by this term when taken in the light of the totality of Foucault's work allows us to firmly grasp his *ontology* and why he argues for a 'critical ontology of ourselves' and what 'the critique of what we are is at one and the same time the historical analysis of the limits imposed on us' actually means (Foucault 1984d/2003: 56; cf. Foucault 1983a/2003; Hacking 2002: 2ff.; Clifford 2001: 9). By constructing an explicit ontology for Foucault it becomes possible to then make a case that his work develops in an uneven way, a fourth sociology precisely because he identifies a distinct object and a distinct ontology for that object irreducible to Marxian, Weberian or Durkheimian

ontologies or any combination thereof, as we find in Parsons, Habermas, Bourdieu and Giddens for example. So, just as we can say that Marx's object is the totality of social relations in class divided societies and their reproduction conditions, or that Durkheim's object is degrees of crystallisation of collective representations and their conditions of possibility, these objects providing the determinant element of distinctive sociological problematics, we can say that 'modes of being' does the same work in the Foucauldian *corpus*.

Late in his work, Foucault consolidated his various analytical dimensions, representing them as the three axes of truth, power and ethics:

Three domains of genealogy are possible. First, a historical ontology of ourselves in relation to truth through which we constitute ourselves as subjects of knowledge; second, a historical ontology of ourselves as subjects acting on others; third, a historical ontology in relation to ethics through which we constitute ourselves as moral agents (Foucault 1983a/2003:110; cf. Foucault 1984d/2003: 55; cf. Deleuze 1989/1992).

By examining these three domains and their referents, I construct the general model of modes of being and so provide an explicit and coherent ontology for Foucault. This then serves to provide a guideline for assessing the productivity and coherence of his analyses of the contingent formation of modern Western civilisation. Importantly, the underdeveloped concept of mode of being allows Foucault to offer a non-essentialist conception of the constituent components of human existence, the action in general that results from it and its contingent historical formations.

To speak of Foucault's ontology though is a tricky matter because it does not involve a general theory of *content* or refer to a real, transhistorical essence of human being, however complex that essence may be understood; a mode of being is not a unitary

thing and neither does it have a foundational element. As he says, ‘Nothing is fundamental. ... There are only reciprocal relations, and the perpetual gaps between intentions in relation to one another’ (1982f/2000: 356). His ontology is not a unitary one because it is not comprised of *one* substratum but involves *three* dimensions: thought, in which resides truth; power; and the subject. I also suggest *contra* Clifford (2001) for example, that these are not just three *analytical axes*, there for pure heuristic purposes because they have a definite structured relation to each other in which thought is *dominant*, power *determinant* and subjectivity *selective*, producing an *action* that actualises the contingent structure of a mode of being giving content to what happens in human societies.

At the same time though, ‘action’, a rather neglected Foucauldian concept, provides the linkage between the ontological structure of a mode of being and how it can then be hegemonised by governmentality discussed later, not least since governing involves an ‘action upon an action’ (Foucault 1982a/2003: 137). In short, by focusing on the mode of being, one gains a clearer sense of what guides Foucault’s sense of both the *object of transformation* and desirable *modes of transformation* when viewed in light of what it is that we may wish to change. This combination of the mode of being though, is structurally *intransitive* but existentially specific as far as its content goes. That is to say that when we look at Foucault’s work as a whole, the concept of mode of being helps us make sense of the whole range of phenomena that he discusses precisely because the structured articulation of thought, power and subjectivity always remains the same.

However, theoretical work proper demands specifying the structure of their articulation of these dimensions. Thus, it is not enough to cling to either the empiricist or

obscurantist formulation that these three domains are interwoven (e.g., Simons 1995). In the empiricist formulation, one operationalises each of the three terms and describes and analyses some phenomenon by applying Foucauldian categories, but without *specifying* the structure of their articulation. The obscurantist formulation simply repeats the mantra about dealing in complex phenomena and fails to specify how some phenomenon or event is actually produced, since it is not a given. To resolve this tempting false dichotomy, I draw on an aleatory materialist hypothesis and contend that Foucault's ontology of human existence refers to the general structure of a mode of being whose specific content—the stuff that actualises it—is produced by the contingent encounter between the two multiplicities of thought and power that are brought into relation by the form of subjectivity that bends thought around power relations to produce the rarity of an action—that person or those people, doing that, there, and often over there too.

It is also absolutely crucial not to confuse a mode of being with an individual person or even a social group, even if the latter is closer to what the Foucauldian problematic apprehends. Rather, we are dealing with degrees of extension and intensification of how the variable multiplicities of thought and power relations make possible particular kinds of subjects articulating the two multiplicities together to produce an action. Thus, a mode of being cannot be simply referred to. In some respect then, one could well say that a mode of being refers to the macro-conditions of pervasive, replicable and repeated causal conditions of actions that can be found throughout, not only a society, but even throughout a civilisation.

The formula of the 'mode of being' is a recurrent trope of Foucault's work from its substantive archaeological high-point in *The Order of Things*, to the much more

tentative genealogical reflections on ethics and spirituality. In his first publication, 'Dream, Imagination and Existence', Foucault uses the concept, drawn from the existential psychiatry of Ludwig Binswanger and his Heideggerianism (cf. Foucault 1984k/1996: 470), to theorise constitutive moments of human ontology. As he argues,

If one remains at the level of the other existential directions, one can never grasp existence in any but its constituted forms. One could identify situations, define structures and modes of being, one could explore the modalities of its *Menschsein*: but one must turn to the vertical dimension to grasp existence making itself... One thereby abandons the anthropological level of reflection which analyzes man as man within his human world, and accedes to an ontological reflection which concerns the mode of being of an existence as presence to the world. Thus is the transition effected from anthropology to ontology (Foucault 1954/1984: 66).

Mode of being again plays a central role in *The Order of Things* in a discussion of the historical *a priori*, where Foucault states that 'This *a priori* is what, in a given period, delimits in the totality of experience a field of knowledge, defines the mode of being of the objects that appear in that field' (158) and this would come to include 'Man' once the human sciences emerge. In a similar vein, as Bouchard points out, Foucault's discussion of literature, madness and authorship highlight what Foucault called the 'literary mode of being' (Bouchard 1977/1980). Then, commenting on his use of structuralist methods of analysis in making sense of systems of exclusion, he would extend 'mode of existence' to the level of a culture:

During the past few years, however, in ethnology, Levi-Strauss has explored a method that makes it possible to reveal the negative structure in any society or culture. For example, he demonstrated that if incest is prohibited within a culture this is not due to the affirmation of a certain type of values; it is because there is a checkerboard, as it were, with barely perceptible gray and light-blue squares that define a culture's mode of existence. It is the weave [*trame*] of these squares that I wanted to apply to the study of systems of thought (Foucault 1970b/2003: 370).

Much later, speaking of ethics and ascetic practice, he would use the same terminology to describe ‘an exercise of the self on the self by which one attempts to develop and transform oneself, and to attain a certain mode of being’ (1984a/2003: 26). It then plays a role in his conception of ‘spirituality’. As he states, ‘By spirituality I mean—but I’m not sure this definition can hold for very long—the subject’s attainment of a certain mode of being and the transformations that the subject must carry out on itself to attain this mode of being’ (1984a/2003: 36). He retains this sensibility in his concern with the Enlightenment attitude, ‘one that simultaneously problematizes man’s relation to the present, man’s historical mode of being, and the constitution of the self as an autonomous subject’ (Foucault 1984d/2003: 51). But to distil this object will take some theoretical work, even if covering a familiar terrain. My point then is to develop the positive theoretical content of his *problematic* or, what is it that allows one to think about, investigate, analyse and explain the range of phenomena discussed by Foucault, in terms of modes of being. In short, what is at stake is understanding the distinctiveness of the Foucauldian theoretical apparatus facilitating the apprehension of the salient features of his account of the modern political field and its substantive content, i.e., that to which it refers. This will require posing to Foucault’s work the question of hierarchies of determination, not least because some things are more important than others according to the terms of Foucault’s discourse. Explicating a hierarchy of determinations also helps one appreciate why Foucault makes the range of recommendations that he does about how to transform the present, discussed in detail in Chapter 7. If we are willing to ask the question and do the work, we do indeed find a hierarchy of determinations in Foucault. Granted, to identify an albeit implicit hierarchy of determinations means thinking about

the objects of modern rule in terms of the contingency of complex causality and this is precisely where the strength of Foucault's work makes its presence felt as a means for 'analyzing an event according to the multiple processes that constitute it' (Foucault 1980a/2003: 249).

Modelling as a Theoretical Exercise

In realist terms, 'a model attempts to represent the nature of the object postulated in explanation of the initial problem' (Marsden 1999: 33). In explicating the theoretical logic of a Foucault rendered more coherent than as actually presented in his work, a key task is to provide the model of the mode of being. The initial problem here is supplied by Foucault, namely the contingent constitution of modes of being and the actions that are their concrete actualisation. So, the theoretical work of modelling a specific mode of being in Foucault's work requires that one make

real (as opposed to positivism's nominal) definitions, that is, statements which attempt to describe the constitution of the postulated object, the basis of its causal powers. ... The abstractions of modelling (or "object constitution") are not generalizations from the empirical, nor are they concepts under which similar categories of events are grouped: they are attempts to designate the necessary connections between internally—or organically—related elements of an object. A theory is a model with existential commitments, in which the posited entities and described mechanisms, which may well be nonempirical, are conceived as real (Marsden 1999: 33).

Thus, I am not interested in criticising this or that aspect of Foucault's work, or of those who practice 'the history of the present' or are involved in 'governmentality studies'; my aim is directly theoretical in that I am concerned with the hierarchy of determinations in Foucault's implicit model of the mode of being.

Foucault's General Theory of Human Existence

Althusser and Poulantzas argue that one can distinguish between: a 'general theory' like 'historical materialism', that provides the basic set of categories like 'history' and 'society', necessary to any specific form of socio-historical science and 'regional theories' of particular levels or 'instances' in a social formation, for example theories about the organisation of the economic instance; and concrete analysis of a situation, in which a general theory is put to work to puzzle through and explain particular historical events (Althusser 1966b/2003: 35; 41-47; Poulantzas 1973: 16; Benton 1977: 154ff.). By distilling the concept of the mode of being as referring to a general structure, I contend that much like Marx's concept of mode of production in general is central to the project of a 'materialist conception of history', the concept of the mode of being, if distilled and explicated according to its theoretical logic, provides us with the basic concept necessary to a Foucauldian analysis of modern societies and their political fields. Examining the logic of his concepts, the categories deployed in his analyses and taking note of their referents, facilitates modelling this theory and specifying its hierarchy of determinations.

Explicating what is meant by thought, power and subjectivity (together with their cognates), understanding their referents and the specific, enduring structure of their articulation, is crucial to appreciating his accounts of the political field, especially the field of modern government. Indeed, the object and target of rule, in Foucauldian terms, is exactly a mode of being and its actions. Following the logic of Foucault's categories will help us grasp why disciplining, normalisation and governing as exercises of power, do not target individuals or populations, taken to be pre-existing entities. Rather, what they do is *intervene at the level of a mode of being*, and so aim to *produce* some kinds of

action and discourage, or create obstacles, to other possible actions. Individuals and populations that are the conventional objects of modern rule are thus *distinct* modes of being and their structure and effects need to be accounted for in terms of each of the three dimensions of thought, power and subjectivity. So, let us begin with the first dimension, that of thought.

The Multiplicity of Thought

Thought, as Foucault understands it, is not the realm of ideas but is a roughly systematised mechanism producing acts of judgment, actualised as statements about objects: ‘thought is the act that posits a subject and an object, along with their various possible relations [and] a critical history of thought would be an analysis of the conditions under which certain relations of subject to object are formed and modified, insofar as those relations constitute a possible knowledge [*savoir*]’ (Foucault 1984h/2003: 1; cf. Foucault 1984c/2003: 59). Foucault’s substantive concerns with concrete historical analyses of veridical discourses, are concerned to question the value of truth in a Nietzschean way, asking what will to power and what value it serves (Nietzsche 1878/1989: 20, 55). Indeed, a dominant thematic in Foucault’s work is a concern with what he called ‘the will to truth’ (Foucault 1970b/1972; cf. Nietzsche 1878/1989: 16). He attempts to account for the compulsion or will present within Western societies since the Middle Ages to *speak the truth* and the form that this takes (e.g., religious confession or judicial proceedings). The will to scientific truth is a perspective that has endured since the beginning of the nineteenth century. It is characterised by an insistence that the truths formed through veridical procedures can solve social problems. More specifically,

Foucault was concerned to examine how 'scientificity' becomes the dominant value for assessing claims about the world, including especially the human world, be it individual or collective (SMBD: 39).

Analyses of this circumstance involve a consideration of how the will to truth, 'like 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' (Foucault 1970b/1972: 219). This process however, is not a simple one because it is

as though the will to truth were masked by truth itself and its necessary unfolding. ... True discourse, liberated by the nature of its form from desire and power, is incapable of recognising 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 (Foucault 1970a/1972: 219).

Hence, Foucault sought to explicate how statements about the world come to be recognised or accepted as scientific and how these judgments are produced, regulated, transformed and modified within an economy of discourse and with what concrete social and political effects (SMBD: 24).

In *The Birth of the Clinic*, he traces the history of how clinical medicine came to treat individual human beings and human society as objects of medical knowledge. *The Order of Things* explicitly describes and analyses the conceptual materials out of which the human sciences of sociology, psychology and literary analysis were formed, tracing them back to the manner in which the nineteenth century discourses of biology, economics and philology analyse human beings as living, producing and speaking

subjects respectively. This allows him to specify the theoretical conditions of possibility in which Man became a knowable object, a possibility that did not exist before the modern *episteme*. Foucault continued to investigate the socio-political effects of the uses of the human sciences in his genealogical works, extending his analyses of psychiatry, medicine and the human sciences to cover the formation and functioning of criminology, penology, pedagogy, sexology, psychoanalysis and political science.

Foucault's point of departure for his analysis of systems of thought and their will to truth is certain privileged *experiences* or *perceptions* that he argued have constituted and continue to delimit the domain by which human subjects make sense of their mode of being, rendering human existence an intelligible and operable domain (Foucault 1984/1996: 408-9; Gutting 1994a: 15). Foucault linked his critical analyses of veridical discourse to his notion of experience in order to begin puzzling out the particular histories of the experiences of madness, illness, crime, sexuality, and government that have colonised how we think about ourselves. This is important because we tend to take these experiences as natural and self-evident and hence miss that they only emerged and became dominant in particular socio-historical conditions. For example, *The History of Madness* begins with the problem of the 'Classical experience of madness' and how these were linked to the different ways in which unreason was either expelled from or confined within society (HM: xxvi, 132). Thus were created particular forms of constituting discourses on reason and unreason. These forms then provided the categories through which the 'madness' produced within society could be perceived and acted upon (Foucault 1961b/1996).

Thought is an implicit, broad category in Foucault's work. But, without a definition of the category of thought, it is not possible to make thorough sense of Foucault's concern with this range of experiences constitutive of how people render others, themselves and the world intelligible and operable. Moreover, experiences or perceptions, are rare or *selective*—from all of the welter of sensations one perceives 'that, there'. This selective aspect of experience is determined by thought. That is to say that thought (in terms of Foucault's Kantianism) always contains a *legislative*, or normative dimension—the veridical and the juridical are inextricably linked (Foucault 1980a/2003).

I define thought-in-general as the general condition for rendering the world *perceptible* and hence operable, in any particular socio-historical epoch. This is consistent with Foucault's comment about the breadth of thought: 'Thought does exist, both beyond and before systems and edifices of discourse. It is something that is often hidden but always drives everyday behaviors. There is always a little thought occurring even in the most stupid institutions; there is always thought even in silent habits' (Foucault 1981/2003: 172). Thought precedes, but does not determine what is perceived since the content of any thought about the world is synthetic—Foucault is no empiricist or subjectivist in his understanding of thought and what it does. This means that there is no universal form of thought neither is there any *transhistorical experience*, or more precisely, *trans-epochal* experience.

Thought though, has an ordering dimension to it that has led to highly regulated forms of perception and ways of making statements about perception deemed to be true. These are 'systems of thought' (Foucault 1971c/1997). Systems of thought include both the formal and positive sciences (mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, economics

and linguistics) and discursive formations like those found in the human sciences. There are also interconnections and borrowings between systems of thought within an epoch and systems that shape possible interconnections between systems of thought. This system of interconnections and possible borrowings is called an *episteme* (OT: xxi; cf. AK: 191). For example, the different uses of mathematics or evolutionary models in the history of science illustrate how *epistemes* are differently structured. 'For example' Foucault writes,

I am thinking of the fact that at a certain point mathematics was used for research in physics, while linguistics, or if you will, semiology, the science of signs, was used by biology (to deal with genetic messages). Likewise, the theory of evolution was used by, or served as a model for historians, psychologists, and sociologists of the 19th century. All these phenomena of relationship between the sciences or between the various scientific sectors constitute what I call the *episteme* of an epoch (Foucault 1972e/1996: 96-7).

Epistemes refer to the different ways in which epochs constitute the form that knowledge takes and constitutes the domain of possible objects to be known and how one can speak about them through such forms. Thus, *epistemes* are not closed systems that determine knowledge directly. *Epistemes* rather, refer to a broader network that facilitates perception. Sciences themselves are located within *epistemes* and hence 'do not apply directly to human experience' but rather refer to the formations of knowledge within an *episteme* (Canguilhem 1994: 76).

With his concept of *discursive formation*, Foucault would make similar links between experience and the broader conditions of existence necessary to the production and application of veridical knowledge as constituted within discursive formations. According to his archaeological conception of discursive formation, scientific discourse

involves the 'formation of scientific objects and by the same action specifies the connection or oppositions between science and experience' (Foucault 1968c/2003: 420-421). The central concepts here are 'discursive practice' and 'discursive formation'. Emphasis on the first allows Foucault to later say that 'thought is an action'. While the archaeological works developed these two specific concepts, they also included a range of concepts that can be taken as referring to thought in general, i.e., thought that may not have the degree of systematicity and modes of regulation found in either the formal or positive sciences (e.g., mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, etc.) or of the distinct discursive formations of the human sciences.

With the concepts of discursive practices and discursive formations, Foucault focuses on what he refers to as *savoir*, translated as 'knowledge', or 'know-how' as distinct from *connaissance*. *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' (AK: 15). *Connaissance*, refers to 'the relation of the subject to the object and the formal rules that govern it' (AK: 15). *Connaissance* thus refers to a constituted, formalised system of knowledge about a particular object or field of knowledge like criminality. In contrast, *savoirs* are the practical conditions that produce a possible object of knowledge, or a problem to be thought about and solved within a *connaissance* that can then be reformulated as a statement made by an expert or authoritative subject and subsequently applied to projects for ordering and coordinating social life. The emphasis on *savoirs* allows Foucault to investigate the conditions under which knowledge of human beings is produced through mechanisms for observing subjects and making authoritative statements about them. Foucault's concepts facilitate

analysing who it is that is speaking, who it is that does the observing and under what conditions such authoritative subjects are constituted and invested with the authority to make a true statement. The specific mechanism productive of true discourse is called a ‘discursive formation’: it is a mechanism for speaking the truth. The discursive domain is that which produces an articulation of a truth about an object defined within a discursive formation made by an authoritative or expert subject, for example, a psychiatrist making a judgment about whether or not an individual accused of a crime was a ‘monomaniac’ (Foucault 1977c/1988).

When systems of knowledge that organise, regulate and produce means of seeing and saying are stabilised, together with their conditions of existence and sites of application, one has what Foucault calls a ‘discursive formation’. This stabilisation and regularisation of discourse involves crossing a number of thresholds that produce an autonomous domain of systematicity in the production of statements (AK: 186-7). Thus, a discursive formation is comprised of many different elements that create the conditions under which true statements are made. These include, but are not reducible to, institutions like hospitals or prisons that produce the *savoirs* systematised and formalised by discursive formations.

Discursive formations are themselves constituted by certain rules that regulate the production of the objects of knowledge, the authority and exclusivity of the subjects that speak about those objects and the rules for applying an array of possibilities for theoretical and methodological procedures for analysing the objects. In his own words, Foucault formulates how one can identify a discursive formation as follows:

Whenever one can describe, between a number of statements ... a system of dispersion, whenever, between objects, types of statements, concepts or

thematic choices, one can define a regularity (an order, correlations, positions and functions, transformations), we will say ... that we are dealing with a discursive formation ... The conditions to which the elements of this division (objects, mode of statement, concepts, thematic choices) are subjected we shall call rules of formation. The rules of formation are conditions of existence (but also of coexistence, maintenance, modification and disappearance) in a given discursive division (AK: 38).

The various forms of regulation at work in a discursive formation give a certain kind of unity to the diverse field of knowledge statements actually made.

Deleuze makes a helpful analytical distinction between 'speaking' and 'seeing' in Foucault's treatment of knowledge (Deleuze 1986/1988: 47-69; cf. Deleuze and Guattari 1987/1993: 66-7). In Deleuze's interpretation, there is a stratified relationship between the articulable (statements, the discursive) and the visible. For him, Foucault analyses the production conditions that render statements possible and intelligible (i.e., produce authoritative speakers) and the production conditions that render objects visible, i.e., the mechanisms for producing light, illuminating a possible object of discourse so that authorities and experts can see. In this relationship, primacy is accorded to the articulable. This is because in discursive practices, the statement actually intervenes within a socio-historical field and hence is a carrier of relations whereas seeing is a receptive apprehension of an object captured, and hence occurs after a relation of subjugation has been exercised. For example, in the prison or the factory, individuals are captured and can be observed within conditions that allow for the production of an illumination; these are concrete conditions of mechanisms required to produce a knowing subject that can observe a human being, learn about them and target them with various managerial techniques, for example.

Subsequently, various kinds of statements can be articulated and deployed on the basis of this vision in order to transform subjugated individuals into discourse objects. Thus, while prisons produce vision, penology involves discursive practices and *connaissances* that are applied to prisoners in order to punish or correct them in a particular way. Importantly, the order of discourse requires a general medium in which statements are understood, e.g., an *episteme* or a discursive formation. Thus, thought, intelligibility and perception occur ‘in the anonymity of a murmur’ (Foucault 1969b/2003: 391; Deleuze 1986/1988: 55): just as vision requires the mode of production of illumination, speaking requires the anonymous murmur that constitutes conditions of intelligibility. In many respects, the anonymous murmur *is* thought-in-general as I have defined it.

Now, while there are distinct systems of thought, together with the *epistemes* in which they are imbricated, these are not the only types of thought. So, one can equally do an analysis of discourses that are not at play in the realm of the true, i.e., are not governed by the will to truth that pervades the sciences and discursive formations. ‘Subjugated knowledges’ (SMBD: 7) and literature (AK: 183-184) are examples of the different forms that thought can take.

Problematization

Towards the end of his work, Foucault began to place greater emphasis on the theme of how particular systems of thought make possible particular ways of registering something as a problem for an authority requiring some solution. Extending his work in *Discipline and Punish*, he calls this process ‘problematization’ (DP: 227). This focus becomes

important to Foucault because attending to ‘when, why and how did something, be it madness, the relation between crime and punishment, or sexual practice, become a problem that required thought’ (Simons 1995: 38). Indeed, he would even characterise his own work in terms of problematisation. As he states, ‘I have never tried to analyse anything whatsoever from the point of view of politics, but always to ask politics what it had to say about the problems with which it was confronted’ (Foucault 1984e/2003: 21). For him, problematisation refers to ‘the ensemble of discursive and non-discursive practices that make something enter into the play of true and false and constitute it as an object of thought (whether in the form of moral reflection, scientific knowledge, political analysis, etc.)’ (Foucault 1984i/1996: 456-457). Foucault frames the investigation of problematisation in the following terms:

it is a question of a movement of critical analysis in which one tries to see how the different solutions to a problem have been constructed; but also how these different solutions result from a specific form of problematization. And it then appears that any new solution which might be added to the others would arise from current problematization, modifying only several of the postulates or principles on which one bases the responses that one gives (Foucault 1984e/2003: 24).

Researching the process of problematisation provides a different inroad for critical analysis since it does not require an already existing, stabilised system of thought as an object of analysis necessary for archaeological investigation.

Foucault’s clarification of his position on madness and the importance of focusing on problematisation are well illustrated by a late interview from 1983. There he states that

Sometimes people have read my book about madness as if I had written that madness does not exist, or that madness was either a myth in medical or psychiatric discourse, or that it was a consequence of mental

institutions. I have never said that madness does not exist, or that it is only a consequence of these institutions. That people are suffering, that people make trouble in society or in families, that is a reality. What I have tried to analyse are the ways these conditions, and the context in which this kind of suffering—delirium, persecution, etc.—are problematized as an illness, a mental illness, something which has to be cured inside such institutions and by such institutions (Foucault 1983h/1996: 418).

To put this somewhat differently, problematisation allows one to focus on how particular experiences become *dominant* experiences and reference points for how people aim to regulate their own conduct and the conduct of others.

While the concern with problematisation is not a major departure from his archaeological concern with systems of thought, it does make important theoretical contributions integrating aspects of both archaeology and genealogy. First, it provides a much more dynamic conception of thought: problematisations are less formalised systems and more about the *process of actually formulating a problem*. In some sense then, problematisation provides some theoretical content to the Nietzschean figure of the will to truth. In this light, ‘will’ can be taken to mean the process of problematisation, a compulsion or drive to problematise, think and thus develop solutions about how human existence can and should be shaped.

Second, problematisation suggests that there is a process at work in the field of power relations—something *initiates* the process of saying that something is a “problem”. Most importantly, since a focus on problematisation does not require that a formalised system of thought be in place, it highlights how the very way problems and questions are formed and posed, *restrict the terms of debate* that then result in excluding or marginalising other kinds of problematisation. For example, as Sheridan points out in his discussion of *Discipline and Punish*, ‘what the [prison] reformers wanted above all was

not a more humane, but a more efficient system' (Sheridan 1980/1986: 144). By investigating the form of problematisation, he aimed 'to discover the system of thought, the form of rationality, which since the end of the 18th century has underlain the idea that the prison, in sum, is the best means, one of the most efficient and most rational, to punish infractions in a society' (Foucault 1984j/1996: 423; cf. DP: 89). The problematisation of punishment then, revolves around the problematisation of economics and effectiveness.

Although not framed by Foucault in this way, the shift to problematisation allows the critical analyst to be more Nietzschean in one's orientation because problematisation provides some indication about the system of values at work at a particular historical moment. For example, miasma is a problem, to which sewers are a solution because of the *valorisation* of a healthy population able to work; health is a value because wealth is a value. In this regard, the goal of modern governmentality is to strengthen the state relative to other states by facilitating the strength of the life of the population. At the same time, since there are competing problematisations within a society, analysing problematisation also attunes us to competing systems of values within a society.

At the same time, such problems come to be problems produced in veridical thought *because* veridical discourses are used as the dominant means for ordering, coordinating and directing social life. Hence, problems of rule as thought about in veridical discourse take centre stage. In this sense the will to truth is concerned with its own problems and veridical discourses are occupied with attempts to answer their own questions, marginalising others. This dominance means that problems are linked to the solutions developed to address those problems, solutions that are also developed in

veridical discourse. So, problematisation is still about thought but is not the same as a *system* of thought. Problematisations are the visible—readable—trace of a will to power; they are a sign that *something is happening* in the agonic field of power relations, something that is of concern to rule. And since veridical discourse is the *dominant* form of thought, problematisations become fodder for the repetition and reproduction of the dominance of veridical discourse and its armies of experts.

In sum, the multiplicity of thought is a complex but theorised dimension of modes of being in Foucault's work. As Foucault himself put it, summarising the key point of departure for his conception of thought,

“Thought,” understood in this way, then, is not to be sought only in theoretical formulations such as those of philosophy or science; it can and must be analyzed in every manner of speaking, doing, or behaving in which the individual appears and acts as knowing subject [*sujet de connaissance*], as ethical or juridical subject, as subject conscious of himself and others. In this sense, thought is understood as the very form of action—as action insofar as it implies the play of the true and the false, the acceptance or refusal of rules, the relation to oneself and others. The study of forms of experience can thus proceed from an analysis of “practices”—discursive or not—as long as one qualifies that word to mean the different systems of action *insofar as* they are inhabited by thought as I have characterised it here (Foucault 1984c/2003: 59).

The major constituent components of a multiplicity of thought are represented in Figure 4.1. The arrows indicate both possible and actualised relations of interdependence.

Figure 4.1 The Multiplicity of Thought

The Political Field and the Multiplicity of Power

Having explicated the salient features of Foucault's approach to the thought dimension of a mode of being, we can turn to the dimension of 'power'. Power, or more correctly, 'power relations', is the central category of Foucault's account of the formation of the political present—power relations are the stuff of what is happening—people do things because there is power.¹ Foucault's analytic of power displaces conventional social scientific questions. The logic of Foucault's work suggests that *power produces action* and the political field is a multiplicity of actions. Above all, Foucault stresses the productive, relational and micro-characteristics of power: power is a relation, or more correctly, a bundle of relations, where some group of forces comes to dominate and so shape and direct another bundle of relations. This is why Foucault examines the daily, small, mundane exercises of domination that abound in schools, prisons, factories, hospitals, barracks, etc. instead of focusing on direct violence or coercion: these are what are responsible for constituting the reality of actual life. It is this dynamic, relational quality of power relations that constitutes the actualised capacities of persons and groups

¹ Foucault's concept of power draws heavily upon, but nevertheless inflects in his own way, two of Deleuze's works, *Nietzsche and Philosophy* (1962/1983) and *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy* (1970/1988). From the first, Foucault takes the notion that power is comprised of 'relations of force' (cf. Deleuze 1962/1983: 40, 49-50) and from the second, he develops the notion of the productive capacities of bodies. For example, Foucault writes 'there may be a knowledge of that body that is not exactly the science of its functioning, and a mastery of its forces that is more than the ability to conquer them: this knowledge and this mastery constitute what might be called the political technology of the body' (DP: 26). Foucault thus transforms Deleuze's reading of Spinoza in which Deleuze argues that Spinoza's philosophy focuses on the question 'What can a body do?'. Different kinds of bodies for Spinoza are distinguished from one another by the various ways they can be affected and the various ways in which they can affect other bodies: bodies are thus complexes of potentials of material connections (Deleuze 1970/1988). On the shifts in Foucault's conception of power and resistance cf. Zizek (1999/2000: 306 n. 3).

in a society, giving them the ability to do the things that they do (Foucault 1977d/2003: 307)

The interactions between forces is also characterised by an *agonism*, ‘a relationship which is at the same time reciprocal incitation and struggle’, which is an on-going battle between forces brought into relation with each other (Foucault 1982a/1983: 222). Thus, there is always an irreducible dimension of opposition in Foucault’s conception of power relations, an inherent resistance within any and all power relations (HS: 92). Foucault thus defines power relations as ‘the multiplicity of force relations’ constitutive of the actual capacities of living human bodies imbricated in particular kinds of connections with other bodies (HS: 92; cf. 1977e/1980: 189). It is important to note that neither power nor the body, are ‘things’ and hence cannot be possessed (Foucault 1976/1994: 92; cf. 1977e/1980: 189). As such, power, congealed as a body, is again a multiplicity of relations of force. For Foucault, this means that we must see power as productive and analyse it in terms of an exercise (DP: 26ff.; 194; Foucault 1977d/2003: 307; Deleuze 1986/1988: 89). Foucault’s conception of power also requires an analytical shift since power relations are micro-. The political field then is at core a series of connections—a network—of multiform exercises of micro-powers (DP: 26). Power as relations of force or as he later formulates it, ‘action upon an action’, is always a relation of dominance and subordination (Foucault 1982a/2003: 137-8).

Networks and connections of power do not consist of a fixed infrastructure but are the channels or ‘capillaries’ through which power relations flow (DP; Foucault 1982a/2003: 141). Foucault also stresses that given this circumstance power does not necessarily flow from the dominators to the subjugated, neither does it have a central

source, or flow from major social institutions like state apparatuses, the mode of production or religious institutions down toward the masses. Rather, power can flow in any direction and indeed often ‘comes from below’ (HS: 94).

Power relations are also *vectoral*: every relation of force, when encountering other forces, steers them in a direction (DP: 30; HS: 94-95). In Deleuzian terms, forces have a minor teleology, a direction, but not a major teleology, i.e., a goal to which they are headed. This is why for both Foucault and Deleuze, human existence is always *becoming*, becoming something else because of the vectoral character of power—force relations are always heading “somewhere”, where they will encounter other force relations and be affected by them and hence become something else (Deleuze 1989/1992: 164).

Furthermore, power relations do not obtain between discreet entities like individuals or classes (cf. Foucault 1977b/1980: 203). Rather, power relations *constitute* the kinds of bodies to which they relate. It is in this precise sense that for Foucault, as for Nietzsche, *being is doing and doing is becoming*. Doing is becoming because it is identical with the contingent event of the actualisation of those force relations, constituting the capacities of bodies. The central point to recognise here is that while power is relational and productive is it fundamentally a *relation of domination*. It is only because some set of force relations, concentrated at a particular point and time, comes to dominate another set of force relations, that the particular quality and productivity of the resultant power relation is produced. Thus, domination produces the contingent capacities of a body and this domination expresses itself as an action. The figure below provides a simplified schematic for understanding the contingent formation of bodies by power relations.

Figure 4.2 Power, The Multiplicity of Relations of Force and A Body

In these terms, to say that the political is about power means that it is about what people are actually doing. More precisely, power provides the fuel for what people do. And since what people do depends on bodies, power involves bodies. Power makes the body what it is as an active ensemble of force relations. In Figure 4.2, the shaded area labelled 'A Body', is the localised encounter of a multiplicity of force relations in which some set of force relations becomes intensified by becoming aligned with other forces. This allows a dominant relation of forces to produce the *quality* of a body such that it can do things, i.e., constitutes its productive capacity to do 'that, there'. This also means that a body is *only the localised contingent encounter of power relations*. A body is nothing but its capacities as produced by that contingent encounter of a multiplicity of power relations. Thus, a body—that body (always a particular)—is the contingent *event* of the

actualisation of relations of force. (This is the source of Foucault's anti-essentialism about bodies). The result of force relations is a body acting in a particular way. In terms of the broader political field then, the object of rule is power and the target and aim of rule is *what bodies are doing and can do*.

Thus, it is crucial to note that the body does not pre-exist the conjunction of force relations in which it is imbricated. Contrary to the conventional way of formulating the relation between power and the body, power does not constitute the body; rather, the body *is* the contingent encounter of quantities of force relations actualised as *action*—*what that body is now doing there*. Thus, the body as part of the genealogical problematic, does not refer to the physical reality of physiology, anatomy or biology that might deal with skeletal structures, musculatures, the endocrine system, etc. Rather, in the Foucauldian problematic, the body refers specifically to the *stratum* of power relations and their localised, contingent effectivity.

Techniques of the exercise of power

Foucault made an important contribution to modern political analyses by distinguishing between *types of power relations*, types that are distinguished by how they are 'exercised' (Foucault 1978b/1996: 260). These are not ideal types in the Weberian sense; rather, they refer to particular exercises of power or ways of *extensifying and intensifying power relations*. They are distinguishable by the quantity, direction and location (degree of concentration/intensification) of power relations. So while all human actions are the effect of actualised power relations, some have come to have more purchase on constituting the present.

There are four main types: violence/coercion, discipline, normalisation and governing. While the first type is conventionally excluded from the Foucauldian typology of power, I include it here because it still requires the *action of a body on another body*. Violence/coercion though, is not productive of what a body can do; we are not dealing with the exercising of power as resulting in a new productive body. What distinguishes violence/coercion from the other three types of the exercising of power, is that it directly aims to intervene in such a manner that the capacities of the targeted body are *directly restricted* by confinement, arrest, or ‘constraint’, for instance (cf. Foucault 1982a/2003: 139). The limit point of this negative exercise of power is *killing*, an action that annihilates the body that is its target. That said, it is useful to think of the types of the exercise of power as falling on a continuum with direct restriction on action at one end and the indirect facilitation of action on the other.

Figure 4.3 The Continuum of the Exercising of Power

In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault introduces concepts of two types of distinctively modern power that remain with us today even if contemporary rule is less

dependent on them. They are 'discipline' and 'normalisation' and while distinct, they are closely related. 'Discipline makes individuals; it is the specific technique of power that regards individuals both as objects and instruments of its exercise' (DP: 170).² Discipline refers to the small exercises of power that subjugate bodies by turning them into *individuals*. More precisely, discipline targets a body to individualise it, rendering a population of interchangeable, commutable, individualised human units.

Discipline

Discipline involves the use of drills and repetitive exercises such that individuals can be trained to do things in a standardised way. It requires individuals attentive to repeating exercises with an eye to improvement, increasing individuals' productive and efficient performance of specific tasks. Discipline has four constituent components. First,

² In doing so, Foucault inverts Althusser's formulation of the subject as constituted through the material practices of ideology. For Althusser, ideology hails individuals as subjects, implying that individuals have an extra-ideological or extra-social existence, whereas for Foucault, discipline constitutes subjugated subjects as individuals (Althusser 1969/1971). For an in-depth discussion of the Foucault-Althusser link see Pearce (1988) and Montag (1995). Cf. Zizek:

...Foucault enables us to specify Althusser's definition of interpellation as the process which transforms individuals into subjects: these mysterious individuals whose status remains unspecified in Althusser are the objects and the product of disciplinary micro-practices; they are the bodily 'stuff' on which these practices work. In other words, interpellation is to the subject what individuals are to the disciplinary micro-practices (Zizek 1999/2000: 306 n. 2).

Nevertheless, Foucault retains lessons learned from Althusser's theoretical anti-humanism that demonstrated Marx's critiques of abstract individualism and *homo faber* contained in liberal political philosophy and bourgeois economics (Pearce 1988: 260): 'The individual is no doubt the fictitious atom of an "ideological" representation of society; but he is also a reality fabricated by this specific technology of power that I have called "discipline"' (DP: 194).

discipline involves dividing, classifying and arranging subjects as individuals within an institution. Second, it uses prescribed activities. Third, it involves a highly regimented and explicitly defined schedule of activities and with it, lives subjected to highly regimented time. And fourth, discipline involves organising and coordinating the activities of these disciplined individuals. These four disciplinary exercises facilitate the use of these individualised, trained bodies in a regularised, predictable way. Thus, as Foucault stresses in *The History of Sexuality*, discipline is an *anatomo-politics* that, ‘it seems—centred on the body as a machine: its disciplining, the optimizing of its capabilities, the extortion of its forces, the parallel increase of its usefulness and its docility, its integration into systems of efficient and economic controls’ (HS: 139). For example, Foucault’s analysis of discipline, of individualised workers’ bodies in factories described in *Discipline and Punish*, thus fleshes out what capitalism does, once free labour is caught in the exploited position of wage-labourer. Foucault in this respect is right to point out that just because there is a working class (constituted by capitalist relations of production), this does not immediately take the form of the disciplined worker caught at her/his workstation. Rather, the worker, what s/he does, how they will do it, how fast, for how long, reporting to whom, etc., must be *made* and produced by the disciplinary exercise of power. The disciplinary exercise of power is characterised by its high degree of direct, localised and intensified force relations, first by others and then on one’s own.

Normalisation

A second type of power, a collectivising one, that Foucault notices emerging in the nineteenth century, is what he calls 'normalization' (DP: 177ff.; SMBD: 38-39). The normalising exercise of power involves *extensifying the powers of bodies subjected to disciplinary exercises of power*. Normalisation is a technique of collectivising human existence in a form that allows it to be targeted by techniques of the exercise of power, typically to facilitate its health and productivity as measured and targeted for example, by the GDP in a population. Normalisation is a fairly indirect form of the exercise of power. First, expert subjects take the meticulous observations developed by the disciplining of individuals, classifying, comparing and analysing them, but in terms of groups, or collectives like a 'class' of schoolchildren or a demographic age cohort. In normalisation, power is exercised as continual supervision, surveillance, assessment and comparison. Normalisation also aims to intervene at the level of the group, population or collective that is the object analysed. This is an exercise of power that he equates with 'biopolitics' (1974a/2003: 321) whose object and target is the regulation of a 'population'. It 'focused on the species body, the body imbued with the mechanics of life and serving as the basis of the biological processes: propagation, births and mortality, the level of health, life expectancy and longevity, with all the conditions that can cause these to vary' (HS: 139). But this also has consequences for individualised subjects too because of the process by which individuals are held to a standard or a model and compared with others that have been individualised by discipline.

Normalisation also has specific functions namely, 'simplification, unification, and specification' (Ewald 1990: 150). Normalisation requires training individuals to

imagine the ordering principle behind his activity not only with respect to some ideal of perfection that he might attain in isolation (such an ideal has no meaning in a normative system), but with respect to a determined need that must be satisfied. Normalization is a means of organizing that solidarity which makes each individual the mirror and measure of his fellows (Ewald 1990: 151).

‘Normalization is thus the production of norms, standards of measurement and comparison, and rules of judgment’ (Ewald 1990: 148). In the process, a norm becomes *normative* but normative in terms of aiming to achieve an *ideal*.

Normalisation is facilitative of using *collectives* of individuals within a society, allowing for their circulation, distribution and installation in various places in a society for an aimed at optimal effect. For example, the student who is subjected to disciplinary power in the school, has been normalised/standardised so that s/he will fit into the workplace. Indeed, my own experience working in factories and large office complexes struck me as quite similar to those of the regular school day. All that has happened is that “morning recess” becomes “coffee break” or “smoke break”. Then, a couple of hours later, there is lunch. Two more hours and another break. Two more hours, and the workers stream out of the office or factory just like school children; and school children just like workers. Some factories I worked in still use the same kind of bell found in schools. Enter the normalised individual, the worker who can move from one workstation to another, and still fit in. This in many respects remains today in as much as universities are expected to produce students with *transferable* critical thinking, analytical, research, oral and written communications skills, able to work in teams with their attendant need of ‘soft’ emotional skills for dealing with co-workers and clients. As the saying goes, ‘You know the drill.’

It is the pervasiveness, or the extension and distribution of disciplinary and normalising exercises of power that constitute a particular kind of body politic as a multiplicity of biopower, that combines discipline and normalisation that interests Foucault in *Discipline and Punish* and *The History of Sexuality*. That is to say that the pervasiveness of the replication of the exercises of anatomo- and bio-politics that produce a distinctive mode of being, and hence too wide-spread *actions*, allows Foucault to say that he was talking about ‘the disciplinary society’ (DP: 228).

Governing

The fourth type of the exercising of power is that of governing. As Foucault formulates it, ‘to govern is to structure the possible field of action of others’ or, to use another of his formulations, governing involves ‘the conduct of conduct’ (Foucault 1982a/2003:138). I will not deal with the broader conditions and structure of government since this is a much more complicated matter dealt with later. My immediate concern here is with what kind of *action* or exercise on bodies is involved in governing as an exercise of power, as distinct from violence/coercion, discipline and normalisation.

Governing, as an exercise of power is markedly distinct from the other three since it is not concerned with directly targeting individualised bodies or with collectivising them, but with *facilitating* some power relations and discouraging others even though governing is concerned with facilitating the actions of individualised and collectivised bodies. Like normalisation, governing is *indirect* in contrast to the direct targeting of the individualised body’s capacities that we find with discipline. But governing differs from both discipline and normalisation in its object and objective. Its object is what subjects

freely do. This is because people 'are faced with a field of possibilities in which several kinds of conduct, several ways of reacting and modes of behavior are available' (Foucault 1982a/2003: 139). In some respects then, rather than formulating governing as 'action at a distance' as Rose and Miller (1992) suggest; governing, is *domination at distance* since with governing we are still dealing with power relations and power relations, in as much as they produce actions, inherently involve relations of dominance and subordination of forces expressed as action.

Let us take the actions of a committee chairperson as an example of governing, namely governing the actions of other members of the committee. At core, the power that rests in the position of the Chair involves the indirect actions of the Chair on the other members. Central here to Chairpersonship is the control of meeting agendas. The Chair does not directly command members about what they should decide, neither does s/he engage in disciplinary activity, individualising each of the members so that they are interchangeable units required for committee work. Rather, by setting an agenda, the Chair lays out what the topics of discussion will be and what decisions will need to be made and action taken. This of course *excludes* other topics and other decisions. But, by setting an agenda for a meeting, the Chair 'structures the field of possible actions of others': committee members are governed through their freedom to offer input, attempt to influence others through persuasion and vote on motions as they will. But we do not find a Chair directly engaged in the exercise of coercion, discipline or normalisation. Moreover, it is precisely by setting an agenda that a Chair can govern in such a way as to move toward a goal of say, policy changes in a department in order to improve the efficient and effective allocation of resources.

That is not to say that the structure of a committee is solely determined by governing as an exercise of power. There may be discipline involved since members are expected to attend meetings and come prepared. There is also the quasi-legal dimension, with say 'Robert's Rules', determining the protocols for initiating actions, laying out means for resolving committee disputes and for determining degrees and relations of accountability. Sovereign exercises of power may even be involved, requiring the expulsion of members if they fail to fulfil their obligations in which case the expulsion would be 'an instrument of power' (Foucault 1982a/2003: 138). Nevertheless, the dominant way in which a Chair is able to exercise power is through governing—acting on the actions of others or engaging in the conduct of conduct. It is precisely such small, indirect exercises of power between free subjects—governing—that comprises the predominant form of the exercising of power in the contemporary political field, or to put this somewhat differently, governing is the predominant mode of the actualisation of rule in the post-political field.

Power-knowledge: The Articulation of Thought and Power

At this point, we now have two of the three dimensions constitutive of a mode of being, namely the multiplicities of thought and power. Specifying the relation between them was a major concern for Foucault and it is found in his formulations on power-knowledge (DP: 27). The concept of power-knowledge in Foucault may cause problems if the difference between the two is not adequately appreciated. Key here is that one should not reduce one to the other: knowledge is not power, which is Bacon's position; neither is knowledge reducible to power, which is an strictly instrumentalist position. On the

difference and relation between the two, once again, Deleuze's reading of Nietzsche is helpful although I have developed his insights in my own way.

Nature, including human nature, is comprised of the multiplicity of life itself. As Rajchman argues:

The problem of “making multiplicities” or “constructing multiplicities” is therefore a problem of life—of “a life”, as Deleuze puts it, an indefinite life. But such a life is not to be confused with “the life” of the corresponding individual. It is a potential or virtuality that exceeds our specification as particular individuals; and we are thus never fully “constituted” or “accomplished” individuals, and our relations with one another may yet pass out through the segments into which are our lives are divided up (Rajchman 2000: 83).

But, once thought, judgment or interpretation emerges from life itself, as in the case of the emergence of human life, i.e., history (or the *historicity of life*), we have the distinctive mode of *human life*, or more precisely, will or power as relations of force. In this strict metaphysical sense it is only when thought first emerges from and then touches life, that power emerges at all—only humans have ‘power’; only history is constituted by the multiplicity of *actions*. (Animals then, do not act; they behave). Power relations are the distinctive substratum of human action. Power relations, taken or analytically isolated on their own as actions are *pure events*. They only come to be historical, become historicised or have an *epochal historicity*, because of the dominance of a thought that articulates, shapes, directs and connects them.³

³ My explication here of the difference between life and power in which power is life after the emergence of thought from life itself, in my view, helps one understand the Greek distinction between *zoé* and *bios* that more recently has been popularised by Agamben (1995/1998) and developed by Rose (2001), Rose and Rabinow (2003) and discussed by Weir (2006). Agamben argues that in Western politics, one finds an opposition between ‘bare/naked life’, ‘*zoé*’, and political or social life, ‘*bios*’. Naked life is the life outside of the *bio*-political community that nonetheless remains a force that subtends it: ‘At once excluding bare life from and capturing it within the political order,

In the modern epoch, the exercising of power, in as much as it always involves thought and power, has become dominated by discursive formations that produce true knowledge about human beings. As such, modernity involves both power and knowledge.

As Foucault states,

We should admit rather that power produces knowledge (and not simply by encouraging it because it serves power or by applying it because it is useful); that power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations (DP: 27).

In short, 'Knowledge is a major resource of power' (Hunt and Wickham 1994: 13).

Foucault continues this line of analysis in *The History of Sexuality* to specify the relationship between sexuality as a discourse object and the exercises involved in producing sexuality as an object of knowledge, together with the relations of subjugation immanent in the production of a discourse about sexuality. As he writes, 'If sexuality was constituted as an area of investigation, this was only because relations of power had established it as a possible object; and conversely, if power was able to take it as a target, this was because techniques of knowledge and procedures of discourse were capable of investing it' (HS: 98). This power-knowledge of sexuality also involved specific exercises of power, for example, 'the body of the child, under surveillance, surrounded in his cradle, his bed, or his room by an entire watch-crew of parents, nurses, servants, educators, and doctors, all attentive to the least manifestations of his sex' (HS: 98). In this case, what is decisive is not who is involved in the production of childhood sexuality as a problem requiring correction; rather, what is decisive are the exercises of power.

the state of exception actually constituted, in its very separateness, the hidden foundations on which the entire political system rested' (Agamben 1995/1998: 9).

Foucault's position on power-knowledge is thus contrary to the traditional view of Enlightenment philosophy in which knowledge is corrupted by power and in which true knowledge is to be achieved by a subject who is free of power relations (DP: 27).

By conducting analyses of power-knowledge relations, Foucault supplements his problematics of *veridiction* with those of *jurisdiction*. Jurisdiction refer to the methods and targets that establish and impose judgments based on some value upon the world especially in the form of constituting particular kinds of subjects. For example, in *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault represents his project as involving a 'genealogy of morals', examining the procedures used to punish and what rationales made these acceptable (Foucault 1980a/2003: 247). By doing so, Foucault is able to analyse 'regimes of practices' (discursive practices and practices of punishment) specific to modern imprisonment. Thus, 'effects of jurisdiction' that concern the matter of 'what is to be done' and 'effects of veridiction' that concern the matter of 'what is to be known' are combined in 'programmes of conduct' that prescribe a particular moral ordering of the social world (Foucault 1980a/2003: 248).

The key shift from archaeology to genealogy is that discursive practices are seen as dependent upon, as expressing, and transmitting power relations. The very practices of producing knowledge (e.g., by a doctor in a clinic, a teacher in the classroom, or a government statistician) rely upon and actualise power relations. This is because the discursive practices of the human sciences involve treating humans as objects of knowledge and intervention and require the constitution of knowing subjects examining and treating their human objects of knowledge (HS: 92ff).

Foucault's way of thinking about power and knowledge also paves the way for his understanding of political *technologies*, by which he means, 'a practical rationality governed by a conscious goal' (Foucault 1982f/2000: 364). Foucault broadens the meaning of technology beyond its conventional meaning to include government as a technology, involving 'the government of individuals, the government of souls, the government of the self by the self, the government of families, the government of children, and so on' (Foucault 1982f/2000: 364). Political technologies in this sense are practices that are reflected upon, practices that inherently involve *relations of force*, whether between individuals, with the self, or between groups.

Foucault's analyses of the doctor-patient relationship since the early nineteenth century helps elucidate the mutual implication of knowledge and power relations. So let us work through this relation. The doctor is first constituted as a knowing subject through scientific and clinical discourse in which the student-doctor is subordinated to his/her educators (BC; AK: 51-52). This education is recognised and authorised by state power, authorising the doctor to make expert medical and therapeutic judgments (BC: 28ff; AK: 41-42), even while professions like law and medicine have the authority to self-govern members. Inherent here is a politics of discourse based on the exclusion of non-scientific discourse e.g., folk remedies, or beliefs in supernatural healing supported and authorised by state institutions (Foucault 1968a/1991).

Second, the material conditions in which the doctor can examine and speak about a patient's condition, constitute the patient as an *object* of investigation and intervention (Foucault 1968a/1991: 67; AK: 51-52). These conditions have been provided by either the state or by religious apparatus, as found for instance in the autopsy theatre (BC:

124ff): the institutional apparatus is what constitutes the doctor's capacity to see the condition of the body's health and to say something truthful about the state of health of a human body (cf. Deleuze 1986/1988: 47ff).

Third, the patient is transformed into a case within a broader epidemiological set of cases within a population with which a state government is concerned, thus revealing the imbrication of the individualisation of the patient in a broader concern with the health and well-being of a social body (BC: 23-26). Indeed, the social and society can even be said to be produced by such practices. Thus, public health is shown to be an inherently *political* sphere as indicated for instance by public hygiene programmes that targeted the urban working class in the nineteenth century (Foucault 1974a/2003; 1977b/1980: 205).

At the same time, the doctor's position also provided the basis for the medical criticism of state practices. As one French doctor said in 1792 'Who, then, should denounce tyrants to mankind if not the doctors' (BC: 33) and so one cannot simply reduce medical practice to state domination (Foucault 1968a/1991: 67). In these ways, medical practice and bio-medical knowledge are shown to be dependent on such small exercises of power, the dominance of the relations of force over the subjugated/objectified patient, constituting the doctor as one able to make interventions (who him/herself is in turn imbricated in power relations *vis-à-vis* a state apparatus, the bio-medical discursive formation and professional association) on both the patient's body and the broader social body. Thus, power relations are an inherent part of the coordinates and directives, based on the true knowledge that transmits such exercises of power throughout the social body, justified in the name of health, truth and the well-being of human society. This brings us to an important distinction of functions between thought

and power. I formulate this distinction as ‘Thought communicates types of actions’, types like discipline, normalisation or government, as means for directing and coordinating power relations.

Thought in general and systems of thought like discursive formations in particular, because of their inherence in a pervasive and dominant system of perception is fundamentally a multiplicity that transmits, connects and communicates; it is a mechanism of *networking* in which discourse functions as a conduit for extensifying exercises of power. Foucault stresses exactly this point in ‘The Subject and Power’:

It is necessary also to distinguish power relations from relationships of communication that transmit information by means of a language, a system of signs or any other symbolic medium. . . . Whether or not they pass through systems of communication, power relations have a specific nature.

Power relations, relations of communication, objective capacities should not therefore be confused. This is not to say that there is a question of three separate domains. Nor that there is on the one hand, the field of things, of perfected technique, work, and the transformation of the real, and on the other, that of signs, communication, reciprocity, and the production of meaning (1982a/2003: 135).

This allows Foucault to explain how a particular local practice from one place and institution can be replicated and reproduced somewhere else, so long as its necessary material conditions are satisfied. Thought allows for a model or programme for a type of the exercise of power to be transmitted and shared and so become pervasive or extensive. Without the communicative capacity of thought, there is no way to account for the collectivised structure of a society, a social body or, body politic. Discursive networks provide the basis for the pervasive communication of types of power relations throughout the capillaries of the social body.

The Model of War and the Analytic of Power

Foucault's concept of power relations was also accompanied by a change in his heuristic model. As noted in Chapter 3, Foucault rejected the juridico-discursive *model* of power in which the concept of power is operationalised in terms of prohibition or repression because rather than helping us discover the mute exercises of power that pervade our actions, it obscures them. So he sought an alternative model. As he states,

One thing seems certain to me; it is that in order to analyze the relationships of power, at present we have only two models at our disposal: the one proposed by law (power as law, interdiction, the institution) and the military or strategic model in terms of power relations. The first has been much used and has proven its inadequate character, I believe. We know very well that law does not describe power. I know that the other model is also much discussed. But we stop with words: we use ready-made ideas or metaphors ("war of all against all," "struggle for life"), or again formal schemata (strategies are very much in fashion among certain sociologists or economists, especially Americans) (Foucault 1977g/1988: 123).

Yet, while he stresses the relational and productive character of power, he did not like Marx, or Deleuze and Guattari, take the model of production as the basis for a new genealogical heuristic. Neither did he take a religious model in which power is viewed as the immanent, sacred life-force/*mana*, constitutive of and subtending the whole of social existence, as one finds in Durkheim, Bataille or Caillois (Datta 2005). Rather, he suggests that we analyse the political field in terms of the model of war (SMBD: 43ff.). Thus, Foucault recommends, inverting Clausewitz, that 'politics is the continuation of war by other means' (15). In some respects, this formulation follows naturally from his agonistic conception of power since relations of force are perpetually engaged in a battle for dominance.

In developing this militarist heuristic for power relations, Foucault developed two related categories to help him specify the relation between the micro-physics of power relations and the macro-effects created when they are networked together. These categories are *tactics and strategy*. ‘Tactics’ refer to the micro-level of localised power-knowledge relations whereas ‘strategy’ refers to the networking and communication of local situations, extending them throughout a social body, producing a macro-effect (HS: 105-108; Foucault 1977d/1980: 195ff; SMBD; 15-19). Thus for Foucault, exercises of power are still the basic unit, functioning as supports for strategic networking, communication and extensifying effects: tactics only become tactics proper when articulated and connected together to form a particular kind of action network (i.e., the effect of a strategy), a network where many bodies are involved in the same organisation and ordering of actions.

In *Discipline and Punish* for example, the bourgeoisie uses discipline, medical discursive practices, normalisation, policing etc., as tactical elements within a broader strategy of dominating the working class (DP: 277). The bourgeoisie though does not carry out strategies on the basis of some fully worked out project designed in advance—there is no one Master subject that functions as *the strategist* (Foucault 1977b/1980: 202). Rather, a dominant class is able to take up and use the various effects that exercises of power, power-knowledge relations, institutions, etc., have on social life, and use them for their own comparative advantage.

The concept of tactics helps one focus on the localised techniques for combining relations of force into a particular power relation that directs, modifies or transforms the capacities of subjects. For example, disciplinary techniques are tactically deployed in

order to dominate students and workers. Strategies attempt to align the effects produced by exercises of power such that they become tactical supports deployed in an over-all strategy with an aim, like a productive, orderly society (DP: 169, 174, 198). In strategies, the effects of exercises of power enter into new relations of force since they are subordinated to the aims and capacities of subjects of a dominant class that exists beyond the local, concrete mechanism of power. Foucault's model of war though, was not simply a theoretical intervention since he also stressed and investigated the extent to which wars have defined social and political structures in the West since the Middle Ages up to and including the form of class warfare and class struggles that are a persistent feature of societies in which the capitalist mode of production is present (SMBD: 15-16).

An 'Analytics of Power'

We are now in a position to see why Foucault argues that he is not offering a 'theory of power' but an *analytics of power* (HS: 82-83; 1977d/1980: 198; 1982a/2003: 139-142; cf. Rose 1999: 12; Deacon 2002). Indeed, the point it seems according to Foucault's own explicit statements, is 'not to formulate the global systematic theory which holds everything in place, but to analyse the specificity of mechanisms of power, to locate the connections and extensions, to build little by little, strategic knowledge (*savoir*)' (Foucault 1977f/1980: 145). But it is important to note that his reasoning here endorses a shift from aprioristic theorising to an analytics of power. As he states, at least in his view, 'a theory assumes a prior objectification, it cannot be asserted as the basis for analytic work' (Foucault 1982a/2003: 127). This was a move consolidated in his self-critique in *Psychiatric Power* (PP: 13).

Foucault continued to refine what he meant by his ‘analytics of power’ in “*Society Must Be Defended*” (SMBD: 27-34), arguments that he distils in clearest form in *The History of Sexuality*. Programmatically, he states that an ‘analytics of power’ involves a move ‘toward a definition of the specific domain formed by relations of power, and toward a determination of the instruments that will make possible its analysis’ (HS: 82). This analytical shift is necessary because there is no specific form to power in general from which can be derived all subsequent types of power. Indeed, this was the problem he saw with the tendency of political theory to impose the juridico-discursive model of power on any and all phenomena in the political field. The problem with this kind of theorising is that the answer to the question of what is going on is always already given in advance: in the juridico-discursive model, power inhibits people’s desires in the form of interdiction—the King prohibits one’s actions (HS: 83). Consequently, a shift to an analysis of power relations

must not be telescoped by laying everything at the door of individual responsibility, as was done above all a decade ago by the existentialism of self-flagellation—you know, how everyone is responsible for everything, there is not an injustice in the world to which we are not accomplices—it must not be evaded by those displacements that are glibly practiced today: everything derives from the market economy, or from capitalist exploitation, or simply from the rottenness of our society (so that sexual problems, or problems of delinquency or insanity are put off until there is a different society) (Foucault 1977e/1980: 189).

In contrast to this aprioristic concept of theory the important thing for Foucault is that there are specific types of the exercise of power. This is because in the actualised content of power relations, neither the actions involved nor the power relations that make them possible, can ever be determined in advance. It is also crucial to note that by stressing an analytics of power, Foucault is making a *methodological claim* and not an *ontological*

one. If he were making *ontological claims* he would be unable to talk about power relations at all as the force relations actualised in the specific actions of bodies.

What Foucault aims to do with his analytics of power is aptly captured in ‘The Subject and Power’:

the analysis of power relations within a society cannot be reduced to the study of a series of institutions or even to the study of all those institutions that would merit the name “political” [e.g., “The State”]. Power relations are rooted in the whole network of the social. This is not to say, however, that there is a primary and fundamental principle of power which dominates society down to the smallest detail; but based on this possibility of action on the action of others that is coextensive with every social relationship, various kinds of individual disparity, of objectives, of the given application of power over ourselves or others, of more or less partial or universal institutionalization and more or less deliberate organization, will define different forms of power. The forms and the specific situations of the government of some by others in a given society are multiple; they are superimposed, they cross over, limit and in some cases annul, in others, reinforce one another (Foucault 1982a/2003: 141).

There are significant analytical advantages to Foucault’s militarist heuristic and agonic conception of power relations because it stresses the *immanence of agonism in the political field itself*. Thus, an analysis of power relations is not one of struggles between discrete entities, be they classes or individuals. Rather, the relation between bodies is always-already traversed by agonism since we are dealing with power *relations*, relations of dominance and subordination between forces. This also means that the exercising of power is never a done deal: the resultant actions produce another situation of force relations modulating bodies. So, now that we have some sense of the two multiplicities of thought and power, we can move on to an explication of the point at which they meet and are articulated, namely, the ‘subject’.

Subjectivity: From Multiplicities to Singularity

Deleuze generously claims that the subject is a category that Foucault had discovered (1989/1992).⁴ This is a generous claim in that Foucault did not elaborate a developed concept of what ‘the subject’ or ‘subjectivity’ is but instead developed a number of categories that aim to refer to a similar structure of the subject. And, I say ‘structure’ because the subject is neither a pure event, as can happen in the field of power relations, neither is it a phenomena that can be observed—its existence must be inferred.

For Foucault, ‘the subject’ refers to the many ways, or modalities, in which human beings enter into relations with others, themselves and the world. To analyse subjectivity is to attempt ‘to discover how multiple bodies, forces, energies, matters, desires, thoughts, and so on are gradually, progressively, actually and materially constituted as subjects, or as the subject’ (SMBD: 28; cf. Foucault 1984k/1996: 472-473). Foucault’s concept of the subject has several different components, varying emphases and developments in his writing. He specifically defines ‘the subject’ as that which is:

⁴ Unfortunately, Foucault’s specific concepts have not been translated uniformly and it is left to the reader of English translations to work out the meaning of Foucault’s uses of these terms in their specific contexts. Foucault used three main French terms to designate the modalities of the subject: *assujettissement*, *subjectivité* and *subjectivation*. First, he used ‘*assujettissement*’, taken from the verb *assujétir* meaning “to subjugate” or “to subject to a rule”. ‘*Assujettissement*’ thus is usually translated as: “subjection”, “subjugation”, “subordination”, or “submission”, (though he also uses the word ‘*soumission*’, meaning “submission”). The second, *subjectivité*, translates straightforwardly as “subjectivity”. Third, he created his own neologism, ‘*subjectivation*’ that in his writings most often refers to the ways subjects make themselves, i.e., it is used to refer to the self-constituting subject, the ethical subject (e.g., UP; Foucault 1982g/1994: 307; cf. Foucault 1982f/1997). It is sometimes directly transliterated as ‘subjectivation’ and at other times, translated as ‘subjectivization’ or as ‘subjectification’, the latter, following the translation of the French ‘*objectivation*’ as ‘objectification’. These difficulties being the case, I have reservations about Hurley’s translation of *assujettissement* as primarily referring to the meaning of the latter of Foucault’s concept of the French ‘*subjectivation*’.

‘[1] subject to someone else by control and dependence, and [2] tied to his own identity by a conscience or self knowledge. Both meanings suggest a form of power which subjugates and makes subject to’ (Foucault 1982a/2003: 130). Minimally then, the subject in Foucault refers to how humans are variously thrown under (or, to echo Heidegger, ‘thrown into’) some socio-historical relation (e.g., in discursive practices, in power relations), including relations to the self.

Later in his career Foucault began to more clearly specify what he meant by subjectivity. Subjectivity he argues, specifically refers to the *form* in which subjects are constituted and imbricated in relations (Foucault 1982a/2003; 1984a/2003: 33). Thus, subjectivity is not a capricious effect of the contingent encounter between thought and power but is *formed* in specific ways, recognisable by its effects, namely as the action that results and that we can observe as a discursive practice in the case of thought, or as an action in the terms of an analytic of power. That said, drawing on his work it is possible to specify a distinct concept of ‘the subject’ and here Deleuze’s work is again helpful. So, drawing inspiration from Deleuze (1986/1988), I suggest the following formulation:

the subject refers to the bending or folding of thought around a contingent, localised field of power relations, producing the shaping, directing and connecting of power relations (a body) to a localised encounter between the multiplicities of thought and power. In doing so, subjectivity selects from possible courses of action, possibilities offered by the localised multiplicity of thought.

This relationship between thought and the subject is aptly expressed by Foucault’s description of what critical thought does: critical ‘[thought] allows one to step back from this way of acting or reacting, to present it to oneself as an object of thought and to

question it ... Thought is freedom in relation to what one does, the motion by which one detaches from oneself from it, establishes it an object, and reflects on it as a problem' (1984e/2003: 23). Thus, the subject is what makes thought bend around life itself, and so bring together and channel power relations as the synthetic combination of thought and life itself to produce that peculiarly human-historical phenomenon of actualised power relations, or action. This bending and channelling (almost literally 'education; e-*duct*') is what the form of subjectivity does. So, one can see that 'that action, there' is an effect of the selective, or juridical effect of the subject on power, a juridical effect shaped by a system of possible judgments, provided by thoughts about what can be done about the world as it is perceived. The effectivity of the subject results in another configuration of power relations (that may repeat or reproduce previously existing power relations, or create a new encounter of power relations) that can be 'thought' and so subjected to the juridical effect of the subject once again. Another way of putting this is to say that the subject is the *singular* encounter between thought and power and its concrete content is the singular contingent encounter of the two general multiplicities of thought and life.

It is for this reason that the subject can be said to *disrupt* the continuity of thought (or the making or possibility of a correspondence between thought and subjectivity), meaning that the discursive practices of thought may need to stop and think again, i.e., produce problematisation. That is also to say that there is no subject without thought or power and also means that the subject is not the leverage point directing either thought or power. Thus, while the subject is a central category of Foucault's work, it does not have a universal content; neither is it an individual; nor even collective subject like Reason, Nation or a People, as found in Hegel for instance. It could never be so because of its

contingently necessary conditions of thought and because its condition of effectivity—that the subject does something and is active—depends on the contingent, localised power relations constitutive of a body's capacity to act.

That said, there are several points that will allow one to understand what the category of the subject refers to in Foucault. The first point to note is that *subjects are constituted*—they do not pre-exist their formation. This is why the subject does not refer to the pre-existing individual person that exists externally to, or outside of thought or power (cf. Foucault 1982a/2003: 126-130). In like manner, collective subjects like classes (e.g., the bourgeoisie), populations or homosexuals (HS), are not groups that pre-exist their constitution but are effects of extended, wide-spread modes of producing, delimiting, regulating and governing, inserted into and investing various bodies. Subjects thus can be individualized or collectivized, but both types are constituted.

A corollary of this first point is that *subjects are socio-historically specific*. Subjectivity does not possess at core a human essence or any kind of essence that transcends all particular circumstances; rather, it is constituted in different ways within specific materially concrete socio-historical conditions (cf. Veyne 1978/1997: 168-171). Indeed, as we have seen, Foucault was deeply concerned with how humanity as a concept and value emerged in the history of the modern West. A further corollary is that subjects are constituted positionally; subjects occupy positions within an complex social field. That is to say that subjectivity is always constituted in particular locations or sites within particular socio-historical conditions as found for instance in juridical institutions, or hospitals or schools.

Appreciating Foucault's conception of the multiplicities of thought and life means that subjects are *imbricated in relations*, but are not reducible to the imbrications in which they are positioned. Thus, subjects do not exist as isolated atoms outside of relations but are defined and constituted by various relations, including institutions (e.g., the modern teaching hospital, the modern prison or the capitalist mode of production) and practices (e.g., an expert imbricated in a discursive formation and engaged in the discursive practice of making an authoritative statement about people). Being constituted through relations gives subjects their capacities while at the same time limiting or constraining others. In some sense, we can say that the subject is a point within discursive relations that affects power relations.

As concerns the stuff of subjects, they are material because they are an enfolding of the materiality of thought, i.e., since subjects are constituted by materially concrete conditions, they are themselves composed of the same material (Veyne 1978/1997: 170-171; Pearce and Woodiwiss 2001: 61). That is to say that the concept of the subject refers to an emergent modality of matter—i.e., 'objectifications' (Foucault 1982a/2003). For example, in *The History of Madness*, the 'formerly visible fortress' that once confined lepers and the mad, has been folded inward to become 'the castle of our conscience' so constituting the modern rational, responsible individual that does not pre-exist this material constitution (HM: 11). This also means there is no spiritual/mystical core of subjectivity but like truth it is a 'thing of this world' (Foucault 1977d/2003: 316). Thus, for Foucault subjects are: constituted, historically specific, positioned, relational and material. Attending to the specificity of the subject means that one must analyse different modes of subjectivity. As Foucault states, his work has been concerned to historically

analyse ‘the different modes by which, in our culture, humans are made subjects’

(Foucault 1982a/1993: 208). So let us attend to the different modes he identifies.

Modes of Subjectivity

Foucault considers his work on the subject as being concerned with the ‘modes of objectification that transform human beings into subjects’. In ‘The Subject and Power’,

Foucault identifies three of these modes to which I suggest a fourth be added:

[Mode I] The first is the modes of inquiry which try to give themselves the status of sciences; for example, the objectivizing of the speaking subject, in *grammaire generale*, philology, and linguistics. Or again, in this mode, the objectivizing of the productive subject, the subject who labours, in the analysis of wealth and of economics. Or a third example, the objectivizing of the sheer fact of being alive in natural history or biology.

[Mode II] In the second part of my work, I have studied the objectivizing of the subject in what I shall call “dividing practices”. The subject is either divided inside himself or divided from others. This process objectivizes him. Examples are the mad and the sane, the sick and the healthy, the criminals and the “good boys”.

[Mode III] Finally, I have sought to study—it is my current—the way a human being turns him- or herself into a subject. For example, I have chosen the domain of sexuality—how men have learned to recognize themselves as subjects of “sexuality” (Foucault 1982a/1983: 208).

Mode IV can be defined as follows: the authoritative/expert subject that utters veridical statements enabled by discursive formations, that articulates and transforms human subjects into discourse-objects. Mode IV subjects are themselves constituted and rendered authoritative by particular conditions, especially by religious or state apparatuses and are thus also objects of the investments of particular power relations. Doctors, psychiatrists and political scientists are examples of subjects objectivised by mode IV.

In mode I, the subject is similar in meaning to its use in the following sentence: English literature is my least favourite subject this semester. Foucault's researches concerning this area attempted to describe, analyse and explicate the historical conditions under which humans as human subjects could become the concern and object of scientific veridical discourse, thus constituting human subjects as objects of the human sciences. In mode II, subjects are constituted both as objects of knowledge and as objects of intervention. Mode III, refers to *subjectivation*: the infra-constituting subject and the ways in which subjects become self-reflexive (which involves thinking about the stuff on which they will work) and use techniques to cultivate or make, a self (Foucault 1983a/2003: 114; 1982e/2003). It is important to note though that this self is constituted through these reflections and practices—it does not pre-exist them.

In sum, Foucault's concept of subjectivity allows us to think about the relations constitutive of practices in which some subjects take other subjects as objects of knowledge and intervention or take themselves as an object of intervention. This relation can be distilled as follows. In the case of discursive formations, expert subjects work for truth; in the case of subjugating others, a dominant subject *works on* another subject; and in the case of ethics, the subject *works on itself*. I have now delineated the specifics of the three dimensions of thought, power and subjectivity necessary to the concept of mode of being and will conclude by distilling the concept of the mode of being as a model.

Conclusion: Modes of Being, Action and the Foucauldian Object

In this chapter I have argued that modes of being are the basic object that can be derived, distilled and explicated from the totality of Foucault's work. In doing so, I provide a

concept for an identifiable ontology for Foucault, one able to account for its definitive features in a theoretically coherent way. Taken together, Foucault's concepts indicate that there is a general hierarchy of determination in the formation of a mode of being—any mode of being is the resultant of the specific formation of thought, power and subjectivity that is combined together in a particular way to produce an action. That is to say that the concept of the mode of being provides more than an 'analytics'. The concept of mode of being can go beyond 'analytics' because the specific structured articulation of thought, power and subjectivity provides the means to *explain* the causes of an action.

This hierarchy of determinations can be summarised in the *theorem* that *thought* is dominant in subjective formation but not determinate of mode of being. This is because the actualised mode of being—what a subject does in action—the body in action (the action is rare, a rare actualisation of power relations, rare because shaped by thought) is only possible because of power—action is the actualisation of power relations. Thought is dominant since it is what shapes and directs events of power where the subject is located. In doing so, thought can introduce differences to antecedent power relations; thought can provide different qualities to power relations by connecting them with other local power relations. The intervention of thought by the subject thus means that the subject's actions are not the mere resultant of the antecedent power relation.

The capacity for thought by a subject is itself determined in general, by the local configuration of power. This is because thought itself is an action, a practice (Foucault 1984c/2003: 59). But the rarity of thought—that the subject is able to render a world intelligible in a particular way, a way made particular by the available *episteme*, or in the case of the human sciences, by a discursive formation—remains rare because actualised.

The effect that that thought has on the mode of being rests in the way thought shapes, by connection, the local event of power relations. By connecting relations of force with different force relations (the difference introduced into life by thought) a different body is constituted, actualised by an action (cf. Foucault 1997a/2003: 278). Action then (or practice, if one prefers), is always singular and thus selective. In contrast to thought being dominant, power relations are determinate since they make possible their expression in the specific form of the rare statement and rare action.

In the constitution of modes of being, *it's the thought that counts*. This can be taken in two senses. First, without systems of thought, there is no forming or transmission of power relations—thought still orders human existence since taking it in some direction and not another—but, this direction is neither expressly steered, nor channelled (as in digging a trench to channel a flow of water). Second, a systems of thought ‘counts’: it is based on how things are classified and counted as distinct classes, groups, and populations (e.g., the mad and the bad) and divided, their activities recorded and analysed. The combination of thought, power and subjectivity as productive of action is schematically represented in Figure 4.4.

Figure 4.4 The Model of Modes of Being

This concept of the mode of being provides the Foucauldian problematic with a way to account for the historically contingent constitution of the *actualisation* of a political field, since a political field is precisely the interconnection of bodies in action, or more conventionally, *what people are doing*. Foucault himself stresses just this with his focus on practices, concerned with ‘what [people] do and the way they do it. That is, the forms of rationality that organize their ways of doing things (this might be called the technological aspect) and the freedom with which they act within these practical systems, reacting to what others do, modifying the rules of the game, up to a certain point’ (Foucault 1984d/2003: 55). Of course, this does not mean that one dispenses with specific concrete investigations. So, as one finds in *Discipline and Punish*, the phenomena to be explained are what people are doing in prisons, schools, factories, monasteries or in a barracks. The specific concrete analysis involves describing the multiplicities of thought and power relations and how they are brought together by

particular forms of subjectivity to produce *disciplinary exercises of power* that *individualises and collectivises bodies*.

In sum, Foucault's basic concepts, their logic and their implicit hierarchy (and hence structure) of determinations leads to the following conclusion: the political field is constituted by the aleatory encounter between the multiplicity of thought and the multiplicity of power that constitutes forms of subjectivity resulting in modes of being; and political systems of thought are those concerned with shaping, directing, facilitating and coordinating the effects of modes of beings. More specifically, the political field is constituted by the contingent encounters amongst the multiplicities of systems of political thought and power that meet in forms of subjectivity to produce conduct or action. All of Foucault's specifically genealogical concepts (e.g., strategy, tactics, *dispositif*, governing, critique, etc.) can be coherently accounted for in this ontology of modes of being.

By developing the theoretical logic of Foucault's concept of the mode of being and how a mode of being produces an action, one can better appreciate how, in Foucault's powerful terms, the specific mechanisms of modern rule work and how they target and shape a present situation. We are now in a position to specify the particular, dominant mode by which these three dimensions are combined in modern rule as governmentality, the subject of the next chapter. I will argue that governmentality is a distinct system of thought about rule that hegemonises the contemporary field (i.e., the multiplicity of actions produced by modes of beings) by selecting means of facilitating actions, under specific institutional conditions hence directing the actualities of societies.

Chapter Five:

Governmentality and Political Modernity

Introduction

Foucault's concept of governmentality designates a distinct region of political thought that broke with the model of sovereignty introducing a discontinuity in the history of how rule was construed. As Miller and Rose argue,

from at least the eighteenth century, rulers, statesmen and politicians came to see their tasks *in terms of* government, and to ask who can govern, what is the justification for government, what or who should be governed and how. This does not treat "the exercise of political power exclusively as a rational political science" ... Rather, it points to the fact that, since about this time, those seeking to exercise power have sought to rationalize their authority, and these rationalities have a systematicity, a history and an effectivity: enabling both the exercise of government and its critique (Miller and Rose 1995: 591; Rose 1999).

What is meant by politics being dependent on thought is a complicated matter since it tends to raise issues of 'idealism' and 'subjectivism' so let me clarify (cf. Curtis 1996; Dupont and Pearce 2001). To do a genealogy of political rationalities is to appreciate that we are dealing with a work of thought. This requires that the historian of the present take as the object of archival investigation the rationalities and forms of calculus which constitute a kind of cosmology through which governors make their moves, produce statements and articulate programmes as solutions to the problems that are the effects of the very practices of governmental rule (cf. Veyne 1978/1997). In an exemplary illustration of his genealogical method, Foucault sought to trace the 'lines of descent' (Foucault 1971b/2003) of governmentality in order to get a sense of the contingent formation of what we take as being self-evident, i.e., that we have government and today

and ‘live in the era of governmentality discovered in the eighteenth century’ (STP: 109).

My concern in this chapter is to carefully attend to the logic of Foucault’s categories and how they refer to one another. I restrict myself primarily to Foucault’s writings and the logic of his analytic, drawing on supplementary literature when necessary. This kind of work is necessary because there is a great deal of category slippage and confusion when it comes to contemporary histories of the present (e.g., Rose 1999) as recently highlighted in an excellent article by Singer and Weir (2006) and this chapter shares the spirit of their work.¹

Based on Foucault’s own explicit claim in ‘*Omnes et Singulatim*’, it is generally argued that governmental rationality emerged from the encounter between the pastoral and police models of thinking about power and rule. There is however, a third model largely neglected by Foucault and his followers, namely the ‘diplomatico-military’ model (STP: 110). This third model is crucial I contend, because of its reliance on *strategic thought*. I argue in the next chapter that ‘strategy’ is an element of thought that traverses both the explicitly modern political governmental rationality and a much broader field both within and beyond the territorially bounded domain of what is conventionally understood to be a ‘nation-state’ or perhaps more accurately, a state-society. My aim in this chapter is to explicate the contingent encounter of these three distinct political rationalities that construe the domain of the exercise of power in terms of government. This will help us to understand the importance of three discourse objects that concerned Foucault in his governmentality studies: security, territory and population.

¹ For an introduction to the dominant approach to ‘governmentality’ and ‘the history of the present’ see Rose, O’Malley and Valverde (2006), Gordon (1991) and Dean (1999). For an exemplar of governmentality studies see Barry *et al* (1996). For a critique of the logic of Foucault’s analytic see Dupont and Pearce (2001).

To continue the argument made in the previous chapter, since thought is dominant in the structure of modes of being to attend to political thought will help us a great deal in getting a sense of how Foucault conceives of the object of transformation. The strong thesis presented here is that modes of being in the political present are *hegemonised* by governmentality, a mentality that frames a post-political epoch. To put this somewhat differently, the genealogist needs to account for the governmentalisation of actions. We should be careful not to confuse this approach to rule with conventional sociologies of rule. Rather,

They are the studies of a particular stratum of knowing and acting. Of the emergence of particular regimes of truth, concerning the conduct of conduct, ways of speaking the truth, persons authorized to speak truths, ways of enacting truths and the costs of doing so. ... [o]f the invention and assemblage of particular apparatuses and devices for exercising power and intervening upon particular problems (Rose 1999:18-19).

At the same time, governmentality is not *exhaustive* of modern political thought and neither is the political field simply dominated by governing, as at times suggested by Rose. I go beyond contemporary historians of the present in showing that the political thought of government is decentred in relation to the distinctive emergence of a strategic calculus of domination traceable to the diplomatico-military model that became predominant when the Westphalian system came to be seen as the solution to the problem of state security. Now, the objection that could be made here is that I am imposing a coherence and consistency on Foucault's work that is not there. But, by engaging in the theoretical work of specifying and explicating the logic of his concepts, we gain a concept proper of the aleatory constitution of the dominant discursive coordinates of modern rule.

The chapter begins with a discussion of the theoretical context of Foucault's work and a clarification of the scope of the analytics of government as concerned with species of political rationalities. Next, I explicate the aleatory formation of governmentality attending in particular to the three models, pastoral, police and diplomatico-military. Special attention is then paid to the hybrid political rationality of reason of state and to its critique by liberalism. Central here is the epistemic role played by the discovery of population on the one hand, and the emergence of the discourse of political economy on the other. In doing so I draw upon Foucault's analysis of political economy, sovereignty and the analytic of finitude found in *The Order of Things* because they help us grasp the distinctiveness of governmentality proper and crucially, the construal of individuals within it. Taking archaeology seriously in a genealogy of political rationalities focuses attention on the modern link between thought and action, a relation that *displaces* disciplinary approaches to individuality. In order to consolidate my line of argument I suggest that there has been a significant shift in biopower as concerns individuals. I thus introduce two new concepts, that of *autonomo-politics* in place of the anatomo-politics of discipline and *biogovernance*. Grasping the architecture of modern political thought in this way suggests that to paraphrase Latour (1991/1994), 'We have never been liberal'. A discussion of the implications of sovereignty, security and politics follows and the chapter is concluded.

Theoretical Context: From Power to Government

Foucault's work from about 1972 onward, offers a series of related analyses, together with a range of concepts that aim to account for the pervasiveness of systems of thought,

techniques of domination and their effects that limit and constrain possibilities for becoming otherwise. (The theoretical content of these was discussed in the previous chapter). This for him was what was at stake in doing a history of the present and in analysing the present actualities of Western civilization (Foucault 1983c/1996; 1984d/2003). Foucault's concern with government, while somewhat marginal when compared with his broader output on madness, medicine, criminality and sexuality, nevertheless is a major conceptual innovation.² Unfortunately, much contemporary social analysis that takes Foucault's work as its point of departure has tended to neglect the broad scope of his research and concern with the pervasiveness and extensive effects of dominations in Western civilisation. The cost of doing so means missing the point about what concerned him, namely the conditions in which some or other systems of thought and techniques of domination constitutively limit the possibilities for becoming otherwise.

Foucault's concern with government came to take an important place in his thinking after the completion of *Discipline and Punish* and *The History of Sexuality*. His investigations of government led him to the diagnosis that we live in *governed* societies, rather than disciplinary ones, a feature linked to transformation of state rule and its administrative apparatuses, urbanisation and the rise of capitalist industrialism (Foucault 1980a/2003). Foucault's work on government is linked to a contemporary concern of his, namely the crises and problematisation of the welfare state that took place in the 1970's

² The central pieces of Foucault's work on governmentality are: *Security, Territory, Population* (2004/2006), '*Omnes et Singulatim*' (1979a/2003), 'The Birth of Biopolitics' (1979d/2003), 'The Subject and Power' (1982a/2003), 'Technologies of the Self' (1982c/2003), 'What Our Present Is' (1983c/1996) and 'What is Enlightenment?' (1984d/2003).

with the rise of neoliberalism (Gordon 1991; Foucault 1983e/2003). (This theme is dealt with in greater detail in Chapter 8).

Questions of government are also in many respects an attempt by Foucault to resolve theoretical and practical impasses inherent in his concept of discipline in which human beings are subjugated to such an extent that they become little more than docile bodies with no capacity to transform the conditions of subjugation (Palmer and Pearce 1983; Garland 1997: 175). His analyses of government by contrast, attend very closely to the role that subjects' freedom as active subjects plays in relation to governmental activities since they are not directly controlled, commanded or coerced in order to achieve some end, but are more indirectly guided or *disposed* toward a goal, whether this is a goal chosen by the subject or not. Governing in this sense involves subjects who to some degree voluntarily govern themselves, purposively regulate their activities, and think about how best to do so. Foucault's work on government also involves an extended critique of the two main figures of modern political thought: the state as Leviathan and its double, the little sovereign, namely the liberal concept of the rational, self-interested individual who initiates and legitimates the social contract that is then believed to be the foundation of the humane, rational, orderly polity. Both of these apparently polar opposites are rather discarded. What we have instead are discourses and techniques of government that individualise and totalise, that are shown to be effects immanent to the same terrain of the discourses and techniques of government.

Exegetically and theoretically though, things are a little tricky not least since Foucault makes a series of rough equivalences about what he is talking about with his analyses of power relations, governing, and the modern political field. The concept of

power is the lynchpin of Foucault's analysis of modern rule, but it is more than a heuristic facilitating the categorisation of distinctively modern phenomena, distinguishing between sovereignty as a diagram or discursive schema for rendering a territory amenable to rule or governmentality as a discourse for rendering the world governable. This is because the concept of power also involves ontological and explanatory claims, claims about what is actually going on and how that happens.

At the same time, the concept of power ought not to be abstracted from its determinate articulation by thought and subjectivity as a dimension of a mode of being. There are a series of analytical developments in which Foucault attempts to refine his concepts. His reasoning goes something like this. First, power is comprised of relations of force. Relations of force themselves are specific instantiations of relations of domination and subjugation; in important respects, relations of force can be said to govern each other since no force relations are confined or destroyed (cf. Foucault 1983c/1996; 1982a/2003). Power relations make up the domain of pure events in the political field. This is not the whole story since while power relations are determinant, what actually happens is the result of *actions*. To investigate the present actuality means to take the political field and actions as apprehensible by an analytic of power relations. Genealogy renders the contingent formation of action perceptible to the critical social analyst. But, there is a subtle shift of emphasis in Foucault's analytic with the introduction of the *theorem* that governing, as an exercise of power 'at a distance' (Rose 1999) is at core, action on an action, or 'the conduct of conducts' (Foucault 1982a/2003: 138) that characteristically takes the form of attempts to structure the field of possible actions of others.

The shift that occurs in the governmental analytic of rule suggests that bodies are no longer the target as found with discipline and normalisation. And although Foucault never explicated the logic of his shift, it involves the integration of his implicit ontology of modes of being to an analysis of the political field; the object of governmental rule is action as the combined effect of thought, power and subjectivity. Foucault himself indicates something of this shift in his analytic from a focus on power, to a more sophisticated focus on government in 'What Our Present Is' (1983c/1996). As he states,

when one sees what power is, it is the exercise of something that one could call *government* in a very wide sense of the term. One can govern a society, one can govern a group, a community, a family; one can govern a person. When I say "govern someone," it is simply in the sense that one can determine one's behaviour in terms of a strategy by resorting to a number of tactics. Therefore, if you like, it is *governmentality* in the wide sense of the terms, *as the group of relations of power and techniques which allow these relations of power to be exercised, that is what I studied*. How the mentally ill were governed; how the problem of governing the sick (once again, I put the word to govern in quotation marks, giving it both a rich and wide meaning); how patients were governed, what one did with them, what status they were given, where they were placed, in what type of treatment, what kind of surveillance, also acts of kindness, philanthropy, economic field, care to be given to the ill: it is all that, I think, that one must try to see (Foucault 1983c/1996: 410; emphasis added; cf. Singer and Weir 2006).

What then is the logical hypothesis to be derived from this chain of concepts?

The logic of Foucault's categories suggests that governing is a form of domination once removed, the result of which is in the end the rarity of action. In terms of an analytics of government there is an action not because the individual or social group is commanded to do so at pain of violence, or because another individual or the subject itself has directly targeted their bodily capacities to help them act in a 'normal', standardised predictable way to enhance performance as with discipline, but because that

action is facilitated or is the result of obstacles to other actions that are put in place. This is what I take to be the meaning of Foucault's *theorem* that 'to govern is to structure the possible field of actions of others' (Foucault 1982a/2003: 138): it involves facilitation and blocking to constitute the likelihood of a range of action useful to improvement (136). So, from the point of view of his later work focusing on 'action' is an obvious point of theoretical departure. This is because, as he argues, thought is an action, power is an action and governing involves an 'action on an action' and the attempt 'to structure the possible field of actions of others'. Moreover, governmentality is precisely a system of political thought and as such is an action actualised by that activity of thought.

Governmentality: The Scope of Foucault's Concern

What Foucault's research uncovers is that from the fifteenth century onward the problem of how to govern has remained a fundamental concern. It proliferated in a vast array of domains, from governing children, the poor, beggars, a family, a house, armies, different groups, cities, states and the individual body and mind (Foucault 1979a/2003).

Governmentality produced what we would come to recognise as distinctively modern knowledge domains like pedagogy, economics and social work (cf. Smart 1983/1989). As such, and this is arguably Foucault's main contribution, government extends beyond and take place in domains both internal and external to the state. Indeed, the invention of government as a problem and solution beyond the state provided a rationality and a range of techniques subsequently taken up by state apparatuses. Foucault's concept of governmentality (or 'governmental rationalities') and its cognate concepts, offers a distinct conception of how matters of social ordering and coordination, whether found in

a monastery, a family, the economy or the state are thought about and worked upon (STP: 108).

Crucially, government includes the rather decentred manner in which state societies (i.e., human existence as delimited by a territory secured by an agent—the sovereign—responsible for its protection) were organised and coordinated from the sixteenth century onward. As Dupont and Pearce elaborate,

Governmentality gives consideration to the organization of the social into distinctive domains, and having various immanent logics. Governmentality considers the construal of individuals in relation to different sites—for example, the family, schools, business establishments—and in relation to different regularities—including a biopolitics of birth, longevity, health, death, etc. In each of these domains and sites one finds the deployment of distinctive modes of governance—all of which generate knowledge of subject populations in order to govern ‘the conduct of conduct’ and to intensify and perfect the inherent nature of their object. This creates possibilities that those human subjects who are so governed are well equipped to govern themselves (2001: 125; cf. Foucault 1982a/2003: 138).

Government then is far from being simply a concern of states alone, a concern that Foucault calls ‘the political form of government’ (STP: 89).

Central here is a concern with the freedom of subjects and how subjects play an active role in their own self-governance. At the same time, this freedom is imbricated in broader designs on shaping and directing the conditions of such freedom within a larger set of institution (e.g., the family, the economy or the territorial state). Thus Foucault’s concern with governmentality and government focuses on how people’s freedom is the very medium through which societies are coordinated and directed toward a dreamt of improved future society within a secured territory (Foucault 1980a/2003: 254; Dupont and Pearce 2001; Hunt and Wickham 1994) .

The analysis of governmentality thus redresses to a large extent Foucault's neglect of a theory of the state pointed out by his Marxist critics (Gordon 1991: 4), providing 'some fragmentary indications as to something midway between the state as a type of political organisation and its mechanisms viz., the type of rationality implemented in the exercise of state power' (Foucault 1979a/2003: 192). Rose contends that Marxism and Critical Theory are limited in their capacity to grasp the distinctiveness of the modern political field because they remain trapped in the binary divisions of 'domination and emancipation; power and resistance; strategy and tactics; Same and Other; civility and desire' (Rose 1999: 277). In this respect, the problem is an apriorism restricting the range of questions than can, and in Foucauldian terms, need to be posed. Indeed, in Rose and Miller's response to Curtis' Marxist critique of their analytic of government they claim that Marxian political sociology is limited by its constant reference to the state (Miller and Rose 1995). This an overstatement on their part however (cf. Curtis 1996). Foucault himself puts the political form of the state at the centre of his analysis of individuals (1982a/2003: 131).

In contrast to Rose and Miller's polemics, Deleuze's remark on the State-form as understood by Foucault better formulates the relation between government, state and society:

If the State-form, in our historical formations, has captured so many power relations, this is not because they are derived from it; on the contrary, it is because an operation of "continual state control", which depending on the case in point can vary greatly, was produced in the pedagogical, juridical economic, familial and sexual domains which encouraged global integration. At all events, far from being the source of power relations, the State already implies them. Foucault expresses this by saying that government comes before the State, if by "government" we understand *the power to affect in all its aspects* (the government of children, of souls, of the sick, of families and so on) (Deleuze 1986/1988: 76).

It is precisely in this sense that the state for Deleuze and Guattari (1980/2000) and also 'empire' for Hardt and Negri (2000) are apparatuses of capture: they plug into the flows of force within the social body in particular ways in order to deterritorialise certain flows and reterritorialise them onto the terrain of an organised body politic. So for Foucault the pertinent genealogical problem *a propos* of the state is 'the governmentalization of the state' (STP: 109), of how states capture government and various models and techniques of government from the broader social field beyond the state, transposing them into resources for the political form of government by the state (cf. Deleuze 1986/ 1988: 37). The lines of descent and ignoble origins of the governmentalisation of the state are subject to a similar process discussed in *The History of Madness* where the leprosia provided the model for the treatment of insanity. Another example of how this process works is found in *The History of Sexuality* in which monastic self-examination supplied the model for psychoanalysis (HS).

That said, Foucault was more than a little circumspect about accepting his critics' terms of debate. Foucault's intervention is not so much a polemic against political theory and Marxism although there is certainly some of that (e.g., Foucault 1978b/1996), but rather is methodologically consistent with his previous work; that is the real point of disagreement. Methodologically, Foucault does not need a theory of the state because the issue is about examining a range of discourses as a means for displacing aprioristic state-centric analysis. Moreover, to focus on the archive of such discourses is entirely consistent with the ontology of modes of being because thought is dominant in their constitution. He lays out his point in a compelling way in *Security, Territory, Population*:

We know the fascination that the love or horror of the state exercises today; we know our attachment to the birth of the state, to its history, advance, power, and abuses... But there is a second way of overvaluing the problem of the state that is paradoxical because apparently reductive. This analysis consists in reducing the state to a number of functions like, for example, the development of the productive forces and the reproduction of the relations of production. But this reductive view of the relative importance of the state in the comparison with something else nonetheless makes the state absolutely essential as the target to be attacked and, as you well know, as the privileged position to be occupied (STP: 109).

Foucault's main interest then, is in the contingent formation of this distinctive mentality dealing with government and its problematisations: how, and in what forms, does government come to be seen as the solution to the problem of rule; with what objects and objectives is it concerned?

Governmentality as a Type of Political Rationality

For Foucault, governmentality is a type of rationality, political rationality in particular. In this section I attend to the analytical scope of the term 'governmentality/governmental rationality' as a distinct object of genealogical analysis. When theoretically guided by the concept of mode of being, attention to the referents of political rationality will help us grasp the logic of Foucault's account of the political present. It is again important to note that Foucault is very consistent—he approaches the question of the state by first examining statements actually pronounced and analysing the discourses concerned with government. This facilitates archaeological and genealogical analyses of how the subjects and objects with which government is concerned are contingently formed, constituted and problematised within the same agonic field (Foucault 1984e/2003).

It is in this precise sense that he is concerned with the ‘rationalities’ immanent to systems of thought and problematisation. ‘Political rationalities conceptualize and justify goals as well as means to achieve them, thus defining the proper parameters of political action and the institutional framework appropriate to those limits’ (Simons 1995: 55; Foucault 1982c/2000: 416). Foucault is again very consistent as far as his approach is concerned. For example, commenting on *Discipline and Punish*, he argues that

I wanted to uncover the system of thought, the form of rationality that, since the end of the eighteenth century, has supported the notion that prison is really the best means, or one of the most effective and rational means, of punishing offences in society... it’s very important to know not only what the institutions and their real effects are, but also what type of thought sustains them (Foucault 1983d/2000: 383).

The shift from an analysis of the disciplinary society to an analysis of government is not methodological but concerns the distinctiveness of a specific domain of political rationalities in which objects and targets are subjected to government. The way Foucault approaches matters of government is, ‘rather than wonder whether aberrant state power is due to excessive rationalism or irrationalism, I think it would be more appropriate to point out the specific type of political rationality the state produced. After all, at least in this respect, political practices resemble scientific ones’ (Foucault 1979a/2003: 192; cf. 1980a/2003: 251).

The import of Foucault’s analyses of discursive formations and systems of thought then is entirely applicable here. Not all forms of thought about rule and social ordering are governmentalities, since governmentality has a historical specificity as a type of political rationality. In particular, Foucault examined models of political rationality found in,

the history of pastoral power; the 16th century anti-Machiavellian treatises on government; the formation of a late 16th and early 17th century 'art of government' via the introduction of family 'economy' into the governing of the state; the doctrine of 'reason of state' and its associated political rationalities/knowledges including the technology of police (cameralism) and the practice of 'political arithmetic' or statistics; the emerging object of 'population', its subsequent articulation as a political problem, and corresponding association with disciplinarity, political economy, biopolitics and biopower; liberalism, and its associated mechanisms of self-regulation and apparatuses of security; the German social market theorists and practitioners; and the neo-liberal critique of the state (Dupont and Pearce 2001: 126).

These different discourses each conceptualised rule in particular ways and partially constituted both governors and governed as particular kinds of subjects within the field of government.

Taking the object of the analytics of government to be thought/rationality does not mean that programmes of rule are the product of individual authors or are the product of what rulers were thinking about. Just as the author in Foucault's work is displaced by discursive formations and the anonymous murmur that produces the conditions of intelligibility for any discourse within a particular epoch with its regimes of truth, governors and their thoughts are produced within the anonymous discourse of government. As Deleuze puts it, 'He does not write a history of mentalities but of the conditions governing everything that has a mental existence, namely statements and the system of language' (1986/1988: 116). This brings us to the historically contingent formation of governmentality as a distinct type of political rationality or political mentality.

Programmatically, Foucault lays out the dimensions of his research as requiring attention to:

[1] the ensemble formed by institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, calculations, and tactics that allow the exercise of this very specific, albeit very complex, power that has the population as its target, political economy as its major form of knowledge and apparatuses of security as its essential technical knowledge... [2] the tendency, the line of force, that for a long time, and throughout the West, has constantly led towards the pre-eminence over all other types of power—sovereignty, discipline and so on—of the type of power that we can call “governmental” and which has led to the development of a series of specific governmental apparatuses (*appareil*) on the one hand, (and, on the other) to the development of a series of knowledge (*savoirs*)... [and 3] the process, or rather, the result of the process by which the state of justice of the Middle Ages became the administrative state in the fifteenth and sixteenth century and was gradually “governmentalized” (STP: 109).

This list maps fairly well onto Foucault’s ontology of modes of being to provide a sense of the dominance of the thought about government in constituting the governmentalisation of being. The first point deals with the specific forms of thought—the rationality component—of governmentalised existence. The second explicitly deals with government as a type of the exercise of power relations. And the third refers to the singular points of contact between thought and power in the domain comprised of the subjects of the administrative state. I now attend to the contingent formation of governmentality between the fifteenth and late eighteenth centuries.

The Aleatory Encounter of Pastors, Police and Diplomats

Foucault argues that governmentality emerged from the combination of three distinct political rationalities, namely those associated with the pastoral model, those of police and those of diplomats (STP: 110). Explicating their rationalities helps to appreciate the coordinates of their contingent combination. The mid-sixteenth century, what can be

called the beginning of political modernity, saw the emergence of a theoretical battle over the meaning of politics, especially as construed by Machiavelli.

Crucially, rule for princes and sovereigns focused on the threat posed by external enemies seeking to conquer the principality and on internal threats 'for there is no a priori or immediate reason for the Prince's subjects to accept his rule' (STP: 91-92). Princely rule thus had a necessary objective, namely to retain the principality (STP: 91-92; Foucault 1978/a2003: 237; cf. DP: 47-54; HS: 81-91; SMBD: 34-40). The justification of princely rule was based on the value of 'the common good' associated with 'obedience to the law' (STP: 98). This justification is identical to the juridical order of sovereignty discussed in *The History of Sexuality*.

The political rationality of sovereignty was tied to a classical view of history and time in which the order of the world was believed to be static and given for eternity: beneath the welter of surface changes lay the divinely appointed order. The implication is that 'the end of sovereignty is circular' because only referring to itself (STP: 98). The goal of sovereignty was not a historical or teleological one since the goal is reached in securing the sovereign rule over the territory. In contradistinction to this non-historicity of rule (and of nature one might add), one has the divine eschaton, the story of the redemption of creation by God: history is the exclusive playfield of the divine. So, how did 'history' enter into rule, or how did rule become goal oriented (Gordon 1991)? Here is where things get interesting because we witness a discontinuity in the archive, produced by the invention of the historicity of rule. This thought of the historicity of rule is what is distinctive about political modernity and it is traceable to the three models of pastors, police and diplomats.

The Pastoral Mentality

In '*Omnes et Singulatim*' (1979a/2003) and *Security, Territory, Population*, Foucault focuses his attention on two of the three political rationalities, namely the pastoral model and the police model. The pastoral model introduced a simultaneous concern with individuals and the totality (Foucault 1982a/2003: 131ff.) and a concern with guiding the flock toward a goal or objective. Foucault discusses the Hebraic and Christian discourses of pastoral leadership. A modern form of pastoralism came into existence in the eighteenth century.

Foucault's analysis of the shift in pastoralism is outlined as follows. In Hebrew society,

the shepherd's power is not exercised over a fixed territory so much as over a multitude moving towards an objective; its role is to provide the flock with its subsistence, to watch over it every day and to ensure its salvation; finally, though an essential paradox, it is a power that individualizes by according as much value to a single sheep as to the whole flock. This type of power was introduced into the West by Christianity and was institutionalized in the ecclesiastical pastorate: the government of souls was formed in the Christian Church as a central and learned activity indispensable for the salvation of all and of each (STP: 364).

Being a shepherd involves the distinctive activities of guiding, leading and keeping the flock together (Foucault 1979a/2003). When transposed to the activity of government the Hebraic pastoral model invents the discourse objects of the king-shepherd and the people-flock. The associated discursive practices of rule involve the constitution of a relation between the king-shepherd and the people-flock (cf. Veyne 1978/1997). Consequently, in the Hebraic pastoral discourse of rule the relation between governor and governed is

treated as being equivalent to the way a shepherd manages his flock and is conducted accordingly. For the Hebrews, God and God alone is seen as being the true shepherd, who in turn allowed King David to take up this role. But the pastoral model remains the standard measure.

Furthering his analysis of the Christian confessional in *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault also notes that similar pastoral ideas of care and guidance are present in the Christian pastoral model, with its emphasis on 'self examination' and the 'guidance of conduct' (Foucault 1982e/2003: 161-167). A Christian pastor needs to care for 'all and each' (the English translation of *Omnes et Singulatim*). Based on the principles and obligation of Christian fellowship, the pastor gains detailed knowledge of each parishioner, facilitated by self-examination, confession and the obedience of each, including the pastor, to the life and work of the church as a whole. Pastoral techniques were not simply instances of subjugation because these techniques and practices 'produce a guided, and yet self-governed subject' (Dupont and Pearce 2001: 127). The pastoral rationality as developed in Western Christianity consisted of the aim of salvation in the afterlife, the willingness of the leader to sacrifice himself, a relationship between the community and the individual and 'the knowledge and direction of conscience' (Foucault 1982a/2003: 132).

In the late eighteenth century when a distinctive governmentality can be said to be consolidated, the pastoral sensibility of a concern with all and each, combined with guidance, directorship and leading toward the good, and the role of active self-governance are retained, but take on a secular basis. Instead of a focus on salvation in the

next world there emerges a concern for the ‘health, well-being and security of the people-flock as ensured by state apparatus or police’ (Foucault 1982a/2003: 132).

In short, the pastoral mentality introduced three key elements: the care of all and each; care of the self; and guidance, or leadership. Government means taking the flock-population to a better place but without thereby leaving the territory; rather, the task is seen to involve the development and improvement of the territory so as to indirectly facilitate the life and actions of the population. Governmental development is exactly an intervention in the territory in order to ‘structure the possible field of actions of others’. In short, the pastoral inflection in governmentality invents a notion of a government-shepherd that *doesn’t go anywhere*. The government of states involves aligning and coordinating ‘a whole series of specific finalities that become the objective of government as such’, for the end of governing the specific aggregate object, a population, in contrast to securing rule over a territory (STP: 99). This is the rationality that introduces the historicity of rule, a *telos*, inaugurating political modernity as a project, ‘moving forward’ as the contemporary managerial cliché goes. So, in contrast to the concerns and aims of sovereignty, government has a different set of aims centred on the population (STP: 105). This is the point where pastors meet police. We find some ‘sheep’ in the emergence of the doctrine of reason of state and its combination with ‘police science’ as elaborated in cameralism, *Polizeiwissenschaft* and statistics, or political arithmetic as the science of the state. Police provides knowledge of the objects to be improved and directed by government, providing knowledge of the place and contents to be developed.

Police/Policy: It's the thought that counts... the sheep

The model of 'police' emerges in seventeenth century and was elaborated in the administrative practices and discourses of 'cameralism' or 'the science of police' (in German, *Polizeiwissenschaft*). The meaning of 'police' in Foucault's usage and reading of the discourses of cameralism, is much closer in meaning to 'social policy', its discourses, forms of social intervention and means of application, than to the meaning of law enforcement officer (Gordon 1991). Foucault in *Security, Territory, Population* and Pasquino (1978/1991) both argue that cameralism is the first instance of a modern rationality of government.

Police is characterised by its concern with everything, anything and everyone within a jurisdiction and thus at core, was a technique of power-knowledge (STP: 366; Hunt and Wickham: 26-27). Police provided the detailed knowledge of the all and each to be guided and was the means 'by which a government in the framework of the state was able to govern people as individuals significantly useful for the world' (Dupont and Pearce 2001: 129). The objective of police is to constitute a kind of social utopia, a fully organised, orchestrated and regulated society (Foucault 1979a/2003).

In '*Omnes et Singulatim*' Foucault pays particularly close attention to Louis Turquet de Mayenne's *La Monarchie aristo-démocratique* (1611), and to Von Justi, an eighteenth century policy theorist. For Turquet, police is a technique of rule for construing social life as a domain that could be governed, worked upon and developed involving persons imbricated in all kinds of social relationships within their environment; 'The police's true object is man' (Foucault 1979a/2003: 196). In many important

respects, 'police' was seen as the solution to the failure of religion to create a wise, moral society (HM: 76).

For Turquet, police is to be a key office existing alongside the king. The others are Justice, the Army and the Exchequer. The main concern of police was morality. Thus, the official in charge of police 'was to foster among the people modesty, charity, loyalty, industriousness, friendly cooperation, honesty' (Foucault 1979a/2003: 196). What was distinctive about this approach to fostering virtue within the state was the manner in which this objective was to be attained. Law and order were to be established between people and things. As concerns people, boards were to be established to develop the productive aspects of social life through education and employment. This involved assessing individuals' capacities and aptitudes. *Procureur de Roi*, Nicolas De La Mare's (1639-1723; HM: 594) eighteenth century *Treaty on the Police* (1705) provides an illustrative list of the responsibilities of the police: '(1) religion; (2) morals; (3) health; (4) supplies; (5) roads, highways, town buildings; (6) public safety; (7) the liberal arts (roughly speaking, arts and science); (8) trade; (9) factories; (10) manservants; (11) the poor' (Foucault 1979a/2003: 197-198). For example, in the seventeenth century, police were called upon during economic crises to arrest beggars (HM: 66). In short, police was basically concerned with how 'men and things are envisioned as to their relationships' (Foucault 1979a/2003: 196).

The specific aims of police were argued to be: the splendour, strength and vigour of the state; and the protection and fostering relationships between social subjects. Thus, 'the role of police is to supply [people] with a little extra life; and by doing so, supply the state with a little extra strength. This is done by controlling communication, i.e., the

common activities of individuals (work, production, exchange, accommodation)’ (Foucault 1979a/2003: 197; Gordon 1991:20; cf. Foucault 1982a/2003: 135-136).

Sexual morality was a key concern and police were given the ‘absolute right to arrest without procedure any person caught in an act of public debauchery’ (HM: 89). In this instance, the rationale was not couched in terms of sexual morality *per se*, but in terms of the family as a domain of economic security and regulation; at issue was inheritance. It can thus be linked to the aristocratic ‘symbolics of blood’ that structured the understanding of kinship systems in European society in the Classical age, forming the logic of political alliances amongst sovereigns, caste hierarchies and inheritance (HS: 147; Foucault 1977b/1980: 201-202). From 1667 onward, with the creation of the Lieutenant of Police in France (HM: 125), confinement was the preferred solution to the problems confronting police in attempting to create a secular moral order because confinement *contained* moral corruption (HM: 89). In the eighteenth century, the Lieutenant of Police had another solution, namely shipping ‘those who were good enough’ to the French colonial islands of the Americas (HM: 401). The point of both of these solutions was the moral purification of the population. Police then, delimits the populated space of pastoral directorship.

By the end of the eighteenth century as one can note in Johann Heinrich Gottlob Von Justi’s *Elements of Police*, police is inherently concerned with the health of populations, understood ‘as live individuals living in society’ (Foucault 1979a/2003: 199-200). Through statistics collected from a territory, not least through police reports, rulers discovered that the population had become its own specific object and target of

government. The science of the state—statistics (or political arithmetic)—also played a role in construing population as ‘the subject of need, aspirations’ (STP: 105).

As concerns the history of the present, police provided an archaeological layer of the extensification and multiplication of sites and agents of power-knowledge, its techniques and its communicative infrastructure. Let us take one of Foucault’s famous objects of analysis, the *Lettres de Cachet* from the late seventeenth century into the eighteenth century, as a case in point. With this legal device ‘The family or entourage made a request to the king, who accepted it and granted it after it had been signed by a minister. Some such demands were accompanied by medical certificates, but those cases were the least common. Normally, the family, the neighbours or the parish priest were asked for their opinion’ (HM: 125). The police were then called upon to *verify* the allegations of the *Lettres de Cachet* (HM: 445), thus combining in a quintessential exercise of power-knowledge, the juridical and the veridical, generating a massive amount of archival statements about everyday life, rendering a *domain* of knowledge as a governable domain (cf. Foucault 1977a/2003; Beaulieu 2006). Furthermore, the police had the power to deploy commissions of inquiry as evinced during the public panic over an epidemic in Paris in 1780 (HM: 357). The Lieutenant of Police also had the *de jure* authority (and *de facto* the expertise) to separate, and indeed free, the insane and pitiable from other prisoners in the grand houses of confinement (HM: 396-397). In doing so, the police played a key role in constituting what was meant by the reasonable person; thus is rationality construed as a political problem.

So, since government ‘presupposes the constitution of certain type of knowledge’ (Foucault 1979a/2003: 195), it is crucial to recognise the role played by the development

of police in generating, solidifying and extensifying the routings of power-knowledge throughout a territory. It produces detailed knowledge necessary to government as a means of exercising authority (AK: 44). Foucault analyses the role of authority in constituting objects of knowledge as consisting of:

The relation between the authority of medical decision and the authority of judicial decision (a really complex relation since medical decision recognizes absolutely the authority of the judiciary to define crime, to determine the circumstances in which it is committed, and the punishment that it deserves; but reserves the right to analyse its origin and to determine the degree of responsibility involved). The relation between the filter formed by judicial information, police information, and the filter formed by the medical questionnaire, clinical examinations, the search for antecedents, and biographical accounts. The relation between the family, sexual and penal norms of the behaviour of individuals, and the table of pathological symptoms and diseases of which they are the signs. The relation between therapeutic confinement in hospital (with its own thresholds, its criteria of cure, its way of distinguishing the normal from the pathological) and punitive confinement in prison (with its system of punishment and pedagogy, its criteria of good conduct, improvement, and freedom) (AK: 44).

That is to say that the relationship between power and knowledge is very much a technique developed and consolidated by police to render social life an object of intervention and direction.

The Diplomatico-Military Model

The third model from which modern governmental political rationalities descend is the diplomatico-military one (STP: 109). It was less a grand model of the rationales and justifications of rule than it was a technique, specifically, a strategic technique and a pragmatic one at that, for constituting a secure domain of international economic activity in contrast to a reactive and precarious system predicated on bellicose rivalry amongst

sovereigns. The result was the institutionalisation of a diplomatico-military system governing European states. This model provided a way for thinking about the imbrication of 'a sovereign's legitimate domination over a territory...in a space (European and global at once) of competition between states, very different from that in which dynastic rivals confront each other' (STP: 365). It thus contrasts with the 'the unitarian and expansive logic of empire' (Valverde 2007: 171). As Foucault puts it, 'diplomatico-military technics', refers to a 'technology that consists in ensuring and developing the forces of a state through a system of alliances, and the organization of an armed apparatus. The search for a European equilibrium, which was one of the guiding principles of the treaties of Westphalia, is a consequence of this political technology' (STP: 365). The Westphalian system invented the notion of absolute state sovereignty 'over a territory and a people as well as independence internationally and recognition by other states as sovereign states' (Weber 1995: 1). The techniques and range of institutions developed created an orderly space, governed by codes in which states, together with their colonies, could engage in international trade and trans-state economic activity (STP: 306-311). It is in this respect that, 'The European equilibrium thus functions as a sort of inter-state police or inter-state law. The European equilibrium gives the community of states the right to make sure that police matters are in good order in each of its states' (Valverde 2007: 171).

In some respects, we witness a migration of the diplomatico-military model of inter-state policing to the domestic sphere. It bears a striking resemblance to the form of social security and programmes of social insurance. For example as Foucault writes regarding social medicine, programmes of security and health, they 'aimed at controlling

the needy classes' but were met with popular resistance (Foucault 1974a/2003: 335). This model provided a technique of what can be called 'inter-class/caste alliances', although Foucault does not put it in these terms.

The emergence of 'race war' is based on a biopolitics internal to a society and based on attempts to identify 'ethnic differences, differences between languages, different degrees of force, vigor, energy, and violence; the differences between savagery and barbarism; the conquest and subjugation of one race by another' (SMBD: 60). Race war then becomes a model for class war (SMBD: 79), but also class alliances too. As Gordon writes, class struggle was a *consequence* of biopolitical class formation: 'the question of class, as the problem of making an industrial market economy *socially* possible, becomes, from the bourgeois point of view, an essential part of the politics of security' (1991: 31). By the late nineteenth century, 'urgent efforts are addressed to the reconstruction of the population of the poor according to a model of collective economic citizenship: the social incorporation of the working class as an element of the body politic' (31). It is not going too far to say that this form of problematisation is Westphalia writ small.

The chance encounter between these three models formed the basic materials of a new thought about rule. At the same time though, these models were configured in different ways and received differing emphasis in two quite different political rationalities, namely the doctrine of reason of state first elaborated in the sixteenth century (Neocleous 2003) and the liberalism of the eighteenth century. Reason of state could be construed as the dream and justification of extensive police powers. Liberalism, in contrast not only functioned as the critique of reason of state but invented new techniques thus constituting a governmentality proper anchored by concerns with

population and security, ordered and led by legal regulations and economic market information systems. So, let us look at reason of state and liberalism.

Reason of State

Just what role did police play in the development of the global project for the government of society and the governmentalisation of the state? The answer to this question lies in the political rationality of reason of state found midway between sovereignty and what Foucault analyses as liberalism (i.e., governmentality proper). The rationality of reason of state marks an important shift in the calculus of sovereign rule over a territory; 'it is the new matrix of rationality according to which the prince must exercise his sovereignty in governing men' (STP: 365). At core, reason of state is a political rationality concerned with 'the enhancement of the state's strength in a competitive framework, relying on knowledge of the state (statistics) to measure its success' (Simons 1995: 39; Foucault 1979a/2003: 195; Neocleous 2003: 40ff). As such reason of state came to be reliant on police as its basic tactical support.

Reason of state emerges from three conditions. The first concerns the imbrication of states in a system of states, both global and European, and the requisite development of 'an armed apparatus' (STP: 365). The second condition is that of police/policy as 'the set of means necessary to make the forces of the state increase from within' (265). The third condition concerns economic activity: 'commerce and monetary circulation between the states: enrichment through commerce offers the possibility of increasing the population, the manpower, production, and export, and of endowing oneself with large, powerful armies' (261). For reason of state the *means* of securing the territory is through

the strength of the population to be known and enhanced by police. Reason of state also conceived of the relationship between the individual and the state in a particular way: 'Individuals are relevant to the state only to the extent that they contribute to the state's strength' (Foucault 1982c/2000: 409).

In some respects then, reason of state is a hybrid political rationality. But, an autonomous, distinctive governmental rationality was hampered in its development by objectives tied to sovereign rule that persisted in reason of state—the health and wealth of the population within the territory was seen as a means for the *sovereign* to secure rule over the territory. There had not yet developed an autonomous governmentality, i.e., a political rationality that had truly broken with the political rationality of medieval sovereignty (Valverde 2007: 170). Moreover, Foucault identifies a number of circumstances that blocked the art of government, the most significant one being the framework and institutions of 'the administrative monarchy' (STP: 101ff.).

There were a range of historical circumstances that hampered the development of governmentality linked with the exigencies of the bellicose seventeenth century that were resolved by the Westphalian system. War was accompanied by 'peasant and urban rebellions and the western monarchies' revenue crisis' (Dupont and Pearce 2001: 130; cf. STP: 101-102). The rationales and justifications of sovereignty also restricted properly governmental rationality because, its goal was not that of developing and improving the life of the population but was rather the perpetuation and strength of the sovereign.

Liberalism

It is really only with the emergence of liberalism that governmentality can be said to have been consolidated as the dominant political rationality of modernity. In as much as the reason of state is characteristically a concern to increase the strength of the state itself, liberalism emerges as a critique of this view and challenges ‘the hegemony of “reason of state”’ (Foucault 1979d/2003: 205). Foucault argues that at core, liberalism is motivated by a careful eye on the excess of government (Foucault 1979d/2003: 204). Liberalism means continually questioning and assessing the economy of government and its degree of optimisation. This autocritical function has priority of place in liberal political rationality and calculus, and second comes law.

In contrast to the totalising concern of police in reason of state as a means for regulating social life,

Liberalism sought that regulation in “the law,” not through a legalism that would be natural to it but because the law defines forms of general intervention excluding particular individual, or exceptional measures; and because the participation of the governed in the formulation of the law, in a parliamentary system, constitutes the most effective system of governmental economy (Foucault 1979d/2003: 205).

Juridical technology Foucault argues, was seen as the best tool available to liberalism.

Indeed for him ‘the liberal revolution in law and in economics is presented as a negation of police rather than as a revision or modification of police techniques’ (Valverde 2007: 170). Thus liberalism compels government to justify its activities but does so by recourse to the study of the effects of government, especially on the market. For example, government and economic health are argued to be inversely related, a ‘basic incompatibility between the optimal development of the economic process and a

maximization of governmental procedures' (Foucault 1979d/2003: 205). Economic health thus became the benchmark of whether there was too much government.

Additionally, the discourse of political economy (e.g., Adam Smith), as a characteristic discourse about governmentalised regulation fundamentally challenges the notion that the economy was 'knowable by government' (Simons 1995: 39). In this respect, liberalism and political economy challenged the dream of reason of state that 'public authority could possess the detailed knowledge to legislate for every possibility' (Simons 1995: 57; cf. Gordon 1991: 24-27).

The British political economists as evinced by Adam Smith's *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, were also fundamentally interested in how morality, a *pleasure*, serves to regulate the whimsical subject of ego-orientation and instead brings a concern for others (Swingewood 1991). Since liberalism functions fundamentally as a critique of the excesses of state regulation and intervention in the vibrancy of society, it at the same time problematised government in terms of a 'social order that is compatible with individualism' and, I might add, freedom from direct state intervention (Simons 1995: 58). In some respects then, liberalism discovers the reality of civil society that itself was constituted by the activity of government (cf. Donzelot 1979; Deleuze 1979; Burchell 1991; Smart 1986/1989: 159-161). Indeed, the very stuff of which society is made is thus argued by Foucault to be the effect of police (cf. Foucault 1982c/2000: 404). Political economy could rely on this reality of civil society because like the human sciences that emerged in the nineteenth century, it discovers that the life of the population, or of civil society, is always already a moral entity. For liberalism and political economy, the juridical subject is assumed to be always already a constituent of civil society, driven by

the pleasure of morality; the morality deemed inherent in individuals was the means to explain the regularities of actions.

What matters for both liberalism and political economy as elaborated by Foucault, is the broader biopolitical effect of people's actions, i.e., the recording of distributions of people's actions in a given area that can be taken as signifying the actual life of the population. Morality then can be taken as the name given by liberalism to the immanent regularity and regulation of the life of the population. In certain respects, we are dealing with a biopolitics of trust in *morality* that offsets problems of the uncertainty of knowledge about society.

Biopower as an object thus changes: there is a shift in the combination of *anatomo- and biopolitics* linking disciplinary individualisation to the total life of the population-species. There is a tendency to displace discipline with government as the means for individualising subjects. Liberal government objectifies individuals not through discipline but through security as a means to mitigate the likely costs of probable harms at the margins based on distributions of recorded actions in a population. The role of government in this respect is to create the conditions for orderly social intercourse, not to constitute it directly through police or disciplinary intervention.³

The most striking example of this process is not to be found in Foucault's governmentality papers, or in those who continue in that line of research; rather it is

³ There are some problems with Foucault's periodisation. For example, if we take MacPherson's reading of Hobbes, it could be argued that Hobbes was the first neoliberal in as much as he recognised that the conditions necessary for the actualisation of human rational activity, i.e., activity in which individuals can foresee the consequences of their actions, needed first to be constituted and secured by the Sovereign. Without the fabrication of a second nature of the state by that Mortal God, the Sovereign, the rational individual does not and cannot exist (MacPherson 1964).

found in an element of *The History of Madness*. What we see is that the liberal conception of civil society was not, like authentic sexual desire, something repressed that only needed to be liberated from the excess oppressiveness of reason of state, to import the logic of Foucault's critique of the 'repressive hypothesis' from *The History of Sexuality*. Rather, it is shown to be *constituted* by the devolution of police powers to citizens in 1789. Foucault describes this process as follows:

The reorganisation of the police in the early days of the Revolution caused that power, which was both independent and mixed, to disappear, granting its privileges to citizens instead, conceived as both private individuals and the collective will of society. The electoral districts created by the decree of 28 March 1789 served as a framework for the reorganisation of the police... From one day to the next, private individuals found themselves entrusted with the task of carrying out a fundamental social division that precedes the act of justice and is the work of all police. Private individuals now had to deal directly, with no intermediaries and no controls, with all of the human material that was previously consigned to the houses of confinement: vagabondage, prostitution, the debauchery and immorality, and of course all the confused forms that went from violence to frenzy, from weak-mindedness to dementia. Man, as a citizen, was now called upon to exercise within the group the provisionally absolute power of police (HM: 444-445; cf. Foucault 1977i/1980:153).

From the point of view of a genealogy of governmentality this is a striking moment. This is because the state apparatus precisely through de-regulation and privatisation in effect *responsibilises* not the population but *individuals*. That is to say that the state apparatus constituted the conditions in which individuals were responsibilised (deputised?) and construed as always already inherently juridical subjects of an immanently self-regulating moral domain called 'civil society', (or popular sovereignty) whose essence is determined by its race and is policed by individual citizens that government then aims to conduct. Indeed, even the power-knowledge apparatus that combined the juridical and veridical was now individualised since, 'a citizen had a fundamental power that made him both a

“man of the law” and a “man of the government” [administration]’ (HM: 445). Thus was the dream of “democratic” government realised by the displacement of the Absolutist monarch’s use of police onto the population: to be a citizen is to be both a constable and a bureaucrat.

Governmentality: Political Economy, Security, Territory, Population

We are now in a position to bring together this series of chance encounters in thought and hence grasp the contingent formation of (liberal) governmentality. I will focus first on political economy and then discuss why Foucault links governmentality to three distinct objects, namely security, territory and population. The contingent formation of governmentality though, was far from being a smooth development. For instance, Foucault points to Guillaume de la Perriere *Le Miroir Politique* (1599). He had already formulated a discourse of government that displaced the sovereigntist focus on territory and extended the activity and concern of governing to a range of actors, because for La Perriere, ‘Government is the right disposition of things, arranged so as to lead to a suitable end’ and this could be done anywhere (STP: 96). But it would be a mistake to think that governmentality appeared on the scene fully formed. It is much more accurate to think in terms of the uneven development of government. Foucault himself gives evidence of this sensibility. There is no smooth progression from pastoral to sovereign, to police, to disciplinary to governmental models because, ‘In fact we have a triangle: sovereignty, discipline, and governmental management which has population as its main target and apparatuses of security as its essential mechanism’ (STP: 107-108). (Foucault though, failed to develop analyses in this direction). Aspects of the sovereign model remain given

the persistence of a concern with the territory and its contribution of the diplomatico-military model of strategic alliances (be they internal or external), as the means for thinking about solutions to the problems of security. Discipline and normalisation also remain but as a tactical implements of government. The key here is to recognise the dominance of governmentality as the preferred form of the problematisation rule.

The decisive epistemic shift here concerns the *object* of the art of government or the ‘things’ discussed by La Perriere, namely:

men in their relationships, bonds and complex involvements with things like wealth, resources, means of subsistence, and, of course, the territory with its borders, qualities, climate, dryness, fertility and so on “Things” are men in their relationships with things like customs, habits, ways of acting and thinking. Finally, they are men in their relationships with things like accidents, misfortunes, famine, epidemics, and death (STP: 96).

Thus is introduced the *object of government*. But, what of how it was problematised?

The first model of how to govern men in their imbrication with other men and things came from the model of patriarchal family economy called at that time ‘the government of the family’ (STP: 95). The father’s good government of wife and children has the aim to ‘make the family fortunes prosper’ through a ‘meticulous attention’ (95). However, this familial model of economy was ‘too narrow, weak and insubstantial’ and hence unable to deal with the scale of the object of government (STP: 103).

The key shift that emerges between the sixteenth century and the eighteenth century (e.g., Quesnay) is that instead of finding the solution to the *art* (or practice) of government in the family model, economy, specifically political economy, comes to provide the key resource for developing policy solutions for state officials. The economy comes to ‘designate a level of reality and a field of intervention for government’ (STP:

95). Indeed, statistics indicate that the life of the population has regularities and a life all its own; it is its own distinct object. That is to say that political economy refined the perception of the object of government and developed a system of thought about the 'things' of population. What Foucault's research on governmentality does then is to specify the discursive conditions of possibility of biopolitics as a phenomena he researched from 1974 through to *The History of Sexuality*.

There is a further question to ask: what are the rationales and justifications for population enhancement? *Contra* Dupont and Pearce (2001), it is more than a matter of governments claiming that they are improving the welfare of the population and hence we are dealing with something distinct from the legitimation of domination in the Weberian sense. It is here that concerns with security and territory, the older concerns of sovereignty, become important; but they are transformed by (liberal) governmentality.

In Foucault's archaeology of political rationality, '*Securité* is the future-oriented management of risks' (Valverde 2007: 172). Foucault argues that 'mechanisms of security' are inherently linked to the emergence of population as an object; security is the 'essential technical instrument' of government (STP: 88; 108): for government, *a future is at stake*, an *enhanced future*, or as they say, 'a better quality of life'. This is not the utopianism of police *per se* but a kind of *Realpolitik* from within the state that attends to what is likely, and on that basis what can be enhanced. As Gordon writes, security 'deals in series of possible and probable events; it evaluates through calculations of comparative costs; it prescribes... by the specification of an optimal mean within a tolerable bandwidth of variation' (Gordon 1991: 20; cf. Valverde 2007: 172).

In *Society Must Be Defended*, Foucault formulates his analysis somewhat differently, contrasting a ‘disciplinary technology of the body’ with *regulation*,

a technology which brings together the mass effects characteristic of a population, which tries to control series of random events that can occur in a living mass, a technology which tries to predict the probability of those events (by modifying it, if necessary), or at least to compensate for their effects. This is a technology which aims to establish a sort of homeostasis, not by training individuals, but by achieving an overall equilibrium that protects the security of the whole from internal dangers (SMBD: 249).

The function of security, and by extension regulation then, is to ‘assure the integrity of “natural phenomena, economic processes of population” [Foucault] while affirming the vulnerability of such natural processes and the need for a well modulated intervention in relation to them’ (Osborne 1996: 102). Foucault takes a town actually built in the nineteenth century to illustrate how such regulatory mechanisms work. They

apply to the population as such and which allow, which encourage patterns of saving related to housing, to the renting of accommodation and, in some cases, their purchases. Health insurance systems, old-age pensions; rules of hygiene that guarantee the optimal longevity of the population; the pressures that the very organization of the town brings to bear on sexuality and therefore procreation; child care; education, *et cetera* (SMBD: 251; cf. Foucault 1973c/2000: 80-83).

In important respects, the security of the life of the population is *the* justification of government.

However, it is important to note that security does not only mean security from incursions by foreign states or internal threats to public order. In this regard, Foucault points to the distinction in *Polizeiwissenschaft*, e.g., Von Justi’s, between *Polizei* (police/policy) and *Die Politik*. It is the latter that ‘consists in the state’s fighting against its internal and external enemies’ (Foucault 1979a/2003). Rather, Foucault contends that

‘security’ really means the conditions of possibility of enhancing the life of the population. In short, security means securing the conditions of possibility of the exercising of government *toward a future*, hence the increasing importance of insurance technologies, actuarialism and risk. The ends of government then involves the *perpetuation*, not of security itself, but of field in which to engage in a project of making *a future*, namely, a ‘new and improved’ society. Foucault is quite clear about this for as he argues, ‘security, protection against accidents’, are a ‘series of “worldly” aims’, and have a finality (Foucault 1982a/2003: 132). In terms of strictly biopolitical security, the problem is not ‘the abnormals’ but sources of uncertainty (cf. STP: 33) such as individuals with a character/personality structure that are more likely to do something that would undermine the conditions of possibility of continuing to govern, i.e., are a *security threat* (cf. Di Vittorio 2006). This is in contrast to the negative task of *Die Politik*, concerned as it is with internal and external protection. Security techniques were envisaged as a solution to the problem of *securing the activity of governmental development*. Let us now turn to the transformation of the concern with territory.

In terms of governmental rationality, ‘territory’ is not objectified in terms of borders but in terms of a domain of regulation involving legal regulatory techniques as means for facilitating the life of the population. For Hunt, regulation needs to be understood as making possible and facilitating certain forms of social relations while discouraging and disadvantaging others (1993c). Cast in terms of the liberal understanding of the technique of using law, ‘law serves to demarcate and secure the boundaries between distinct fields of regulation such that their relative autonomy within their specific fields is reinforced’ (Hunt 1993c: 325). What law does in the hands of

liberalism is delimit a field of legalities. In short, and to modify Hunt's formulation of law and governance, regulation through law is construed as a *constitutive mode of security*. A sports analogy may help clarify things here. One has various plays for scoring goals, various tactics that can be used, all with the aim of winning a match. The rules don't prescribe commands about how to play; rather they set a series of limits on permissible play together with penalties to discourage actions that would *undermine* play. Rules in this sense are a *security apparatus*.

In this regard I do not agree with Osborne's statement that security involves 'intervention' (1996: 117); security is much less direct because regulative, a means for pre-disposing the life of the population in a particular direction as actualised in its actions. To give a slightly different inflection to this, in as much as government and strategy involve communication, regulatory strategising creates 'what Deleuze & Guattari have called *striated* space: a space within which movements and flows are regulated in ways which enable authorities to act; a space that is measured, directed and standardized' (Barry 1996: 127-128; cf. Deleuze and Guattari 1980/2000: 474-500). Since government involves the concern with structuring the field of possible actions of others, to say 'structuring', in as much as it actualises a field of possible, probable and actual actions, *is to say 'territory'* and hence territory does not pre-exist its security formation; the structuring produces the effect of territory. Put somewhat differently, territory is the field of possible strategising and alliance formation; it is the constituted domain of security facilitated by the regulatory frameworks of law. Whether or not a territory lasts is a matter of *security*.

So, the issue of security is less of a bounded territory and here I disagree with Dupont and Pearce (2001); space is not the issue: time is. The over-arching concern of governmental rationality is with apparatuses of security that constitute the regulatory mechanism of a shared (i.e., concerning a population) fate (i.e., a future construed in terms of probabilistic distributions of events produced by people's actions), within what is deemed to be a tolerable variation between the probable, actual and hoped for improved result. The concern with security in governmentality is not then the protection of the population, but is about ensuring the integrity of *regulatory* mechanisms that render a field of possible actions in the first place. What security protects is the possible range of what people do. In governmentality, territory is thought about in terms of the result constituted by the structuring of the field, not in terms of a given starting point as one finds in the model of sovereignty. So we have, 'the all' of population, security and territory. Now, what of 'the each'—the individual—as a discourse-object of governmental rationality? Here things get interesting.

From Biopower to Autonomo-politics and Biogovernance⁴

Governmentality, and here the emphasis really needs to be on the distinctive mode of problematisation, handles the object of the individual in a peculiar way precisely because its focus is not individual persons or bodies; rather actions are the objects that are individualised. In important respects, the state 'ignores individuals, looking only at the interest of the totality, or, I should say, of a class or a group among the citizens' (Foucault

⁴ My neologism of 'biogovernance' is distinct from that of Gerlach (2004) for whom 'biogovernance' 'arises from the intersection of risk management and biotechnology to produce techniques of state management of biotechno-logical risks' (18).

1982a/2003: 131). In this regard, governmentality is gradually consolidated as a distinctive political rationality that makes a major innovation by connecting ‘the technologies of domination of others and those of the self’ Foucault 1982e/2003: 147; Simons 1995: 36; cf. Hunt and Wickham 1994). But, for the logic of governmentality it is less self-discipline that matters than it is *self-government* carried out by always-already free subjects within the moral terrain of civil society. Crucially, we should extend the liberal critique of reason of state on the macro-scale to the micro-scale of the government of both the self and others in order to grasp the ‘each’ of governmentality. The analytical line I develop here thus suggests that with liberal government there is a transformation of *biopower*.

Biopower is a specific form in which individualisation and totalisation are produced by the complementarity of the anatomo-politics of discipline and the biopolitics of population. But, self-government comes to displace the anatomo-politics of discipline and is coupled with the biopolitics of population that remains. I suggest that a central innovation of liberal governmentality thus involves the shift from a concern with biopower that involves the coupling of the biopolitics of population, not to the anatomo-politics of discipline, but to what can be called an ‘autonomo-politics’ of free subjects, constituting a new liberal discourse-object of rule. So, governmentality invents what can be called *biogovernance*: the combination of the autonomo-politics of individualisable actions and the biopolitics of populations in which domination takes place at a distance from individuals through regulation. This shift occurs because with government, the technique of individualisation tends to displacement by a liberal agnosticism about the possibility of governing individuals directly and instead relies on their autonomy as

always already moral subjects. In this respect liberalism is at least epistemologically nonhumanist because of the limits placed on self-knowledge—the subject is inherently *opaque* to itself and to others, as per the modern *episteme* with its analytic of finitude. Here, the logic of liberalism can be better understood by a brief return to *The Order of Things*.

Liberalism, political economy and the modern *episteme* *displace* knowledge of what Man is. Foucault's point about the liberal critique of the limits of reason of state needs to be analytically extended to an analytics of liberal individualism as an *object of government*. It is crucial to note that liberalism, as a discourse of critique about government, together with political economy, has little to do with the liberalism of political and legal theory (Foucault 1979d/2003: 205). We should say rather that the individual as depicted and theorised in liberal political and legal theory belongs to the rationality of sovereignty. The liberalism of legal/political theory is the individual, or the hoped for individual, constituted by the devolution of the sovereign's power and rights to the population of rational individuals (i.e., property holders).

This conception of the individual of rational self-interest in important respects, belongs to the *Classical episteme*. This is a discourse about the individual *prior to* the emergence of the human sciences and the modern *episteme* in which Man enters the table of knowable objects. The conventional liberal/political theory depiction of the individual is the individual holding the place of the King while standing in front of Velasquez's painting *Las Meninas*. This is a 'fictitious position occupied by the royal personage, which is also the painter's real place, since the occupier of that ambiguous place in which the painter and the sovereign alternate, in a never-ending flicker, as it were, is the

spectator' (OT: 308). This is an organisation of knowledge, representation and sovereignty in which '*man* did not exist—any more than the potency of life, the fecundity of labour, or the historical density of language' (308). Then, we have the disciplinary individual locatable within the problem space of the hybrid political rationality linking police and reason of state (especially because of the bellicose seventeenth century) for which military discipline and dressage were so important. But neither the sovereign, nor police, nor disciplinary models of the individual are the basis of liberal governmental invention.

In a way, political economy, liberalism and the human sciences have a kind of *realist agnosticism* about the human individual in which the reality of human individuals is held to exist but the gaining of certain, true knowledge of Man cannot really be said to be possible, hence the odd status of the human sciences. For the technique of *laissez-faire*, the truth is found in what people are doing, not hidden in the individual with their desires and passions. Rather, as Foucault argues in *The Order of Things*, in political economy what we know about humanity is its positivity, not humanity as it is in-itself; we only know what humanity *posits* in the world, 'puts out there' so to speak. There is no need inherent in the modern *episteme* for subjects to truly know themselves or others. Indeed, Nietzsche, Freud and Marx, with their hermeneutics of suspicion, not to mention the counter-human sciences that 'dissolved man', critically rejected the very possibility of self-knowledge (Foucault 1967b/1998; OT: 379). As Foucault notes, '*Homo oeconomicus* is not the human being who represents his own needs to himself, and the objects capable of satisfying them... He is a finite being' (OT: 257): Smith and Kant, economics and critical thought, are on the same page.

In this respect what is conventionally called 'neoliberalism' is simply the discovery of liberalism *minus* its Classical conception of the individual. Neoliberalism accepts that information in the market is both imperfect and that individuals are inherently unable to gain complete information and hence ignorance is key (Pearce and Tombs 1998). Furthermore, the existence and possibility of constituting a quasi-natural domain of the market means that the state plays a key role by setting secured regulatory frameworks in place. The market itself is also held to be regulated in large measure by the morality of populations or civil society. Markets, through costing and price mechanisms, create quasi-natural consequences of practices hence producing a naturalisation of morals (i.e., means of regulating conduct, since all conduct involves some moral calculus). Markets facilitate the possibility of individuals being able to foresee the consequences of their actions in a naturalistic way where choices have costs. In other words markets make it possible to have a kind of cause-effect calculus that responsabilises individuals but not in terms of an explicitly moral discourse. That is not to say that neoliberalism, like Smith's political economy before it, does not have a moral justification. Indeed, for Friedmann, markets create 'unanimity without conformity' (in Pearce and Tombs 1998: 23). But my point is that liberalism as a political rationality was always already 'neoliberal'. So, just as biology, economics and philology are concerned with the positivity of Man, government relies on knowledge of the positivity of the individuals' actions, not on what they are in-themselves.

In this sense, ignorance is freedom; ignorance of what Man is, is the condition of possibility of the free subject of government. The free subject is freed from the ontological and epistemological baggage of humanism. One doesn't need to know the

self or another; you only really need to know what it is you're doing. The problematisations and technical solutions of liberal governmentality assume self-government, assume that individuals are constituted as moral, juridical subjects since belonging to a population that has a life of its own, a life that is inherently moral. That is to say that practices belong to the normative sphere—there is always a little value in what people do. After all, Kant's second critique, *The Critique of Practical Reason*, in addressing the conditions of possibility of normative judgments argues that they are found to rest in the freedom of our ignorance. As Žižek explains, for Kant, 'God, in his infinite wisdom, limited our cognitive capacities in order to make us free responsible agents, since, if we were to have direct access to the noumenal sphere, we would no longer be free, but would turn into blind automata. Human imperfection is thus, for Kant, the positive condition of freedom' (Žižek 2000b: 317-318).

This has implications for how contemporary ethics and self-government are construed: one governs the self not through what one knows about the self, but by knowledge of the effects of one's practices. This makes possible what one should call 'strategies of the self', the strategic configuration not of what one aims to do, but using what one actually *does*, in its *effects*, as the basis for supporting one's aims, just as political technologies are tactical supports for a broader strategy. In this light it ought not to be a surprise that with the appearance of discourses that decentred Man, not least by a hermeneutics of suspicion, pragmatism comes to take hold: pragmatism is a discourse of liberal self-government *par excellence*. Civil society is the field of this pragmatism, the field in which ignorance is externalised in a self-regulating field of practices/actions in

which we get the truth of our being in the form of *prices*, the signifier of the moral consequences of the actions of populations.

This analysis of liberal governmentality thus supports the accuracy of Foucault's *theorem* of government as 'action upon an action' (or, 'the conduct of conducts'): the object is not the government of humanity, but what people do. The analytical danger to avoid here is to abstract out 'the subject' from action, hence unwittingly treating the subject as the agent of action. Or, one focuses on discourses about individuals that produce subjectifications. If one does so, the fundamental centrality of Foucault's *theorem* of government as 'action upon an action', and governmentality as the constitutive thought about it, gets lost. In this respect, Foucault is more correct than his own work itself might indicate: the object of the individual is displaced or decentred in governmental rationality. This is because it is not the individual that has purchase as an object or target of government and biopolitics; the individual is not the 'each' of 'all and each'. The 'each' is *action*: what is happening is a matter of what people are *doing*, their *practices*. Thus, individualisation in the problematisations of government is the individualisation of actions in a population with its frequency distributions. Moreover, the individualisation of action is surveilled and recorded as a field of probabilistic distributions of actions. For political economy, markets are information generating mechanism about normative tendencies amongst a population as indexed by frequencies and distributions of exchanges. This is an ingenious technique of the economic problematisation of price.

With ignorance inscribed into the very modern *episteme*, governmentality too is affected as a form of problematisation. There is no liberal ideology here because

everything is there in plain view: *laissez-faire*—‘*leave people to do*’—but make sure it gets counted and recorded. Indeed, even though disciplinary techniques as a political technology of the body and its forces remain, the individualised body and its forces are not the target of government. We move from a concern to create docile bodies to the concern with, and use of, active, free, creative, innovative but opaque individuals. It is their actions that count, that are counted and measured in biogovernmental rationality.

To reiterate the point, governmentality is concerned with structuring the possible field of actions, *not* structuring the possible field of individuals. In this sense, biogovernmental security is the solution to the problem of the opacity of individual human existence that itself is an effect of the analytic of finitude: ‘if man’s knowledge is finite, it is because he is trapped, without the possibility of liberation, within the positive contents of language, labour, and life; and inversely, if life, labour, and language may be posited in their positivity, it is because knowledge has finite forms’ (OT: 316). ‘The figure of Man... is therefore composed of relations which are in tensions; the tension between the finite character of Man as given by external determination, and the problem of characterising the knowledge of that finitude’ (Cousins and Hussain 1984: 50). Biogovernmental security is the solution to the problem of how to govern individuals even though governors/experts are ignorant of individuality and without having to bear the costs of extensive policing. Security now becomes a new way of construing the link between ‘all and each’, the all of populations and the ‘each’ of actions, within the limits of ignorance and uncertainty.

In sum, governmentality invents the goal of a new and improved society made thinkable and operable by the leftovers of police, political economy and the human

sciences, to be secured by regulation. The pastoral component of governmentality introduces a historicity into political rationality, i.e., there is a sense of ‘aim’, an ‘objective’ (Foucault 1983h/2000: 385), a ‘finality’ (STP: 99). The *telos* of government thus resonates with biopolitics in which we see ‘the entry of life into history’ (HS: 139). As Foucault writes, ‘A new historical perception takes form; it is no longer polarised around the end of time and the consolidation of all the particular sovereignties into the empire of the last days; it is open to an indefinite time in which the states have to struggle against one another to ensure their own survival’ (STP: 365). The dream and promise of government then, is that domination can be exercised at a distance with minimal, or even no direct intervention, save a form of surveillance and a form of power-knowledge in and through which this knowledge is put to work to modulate the immanent actualities of the social field (cf. Deleuze 1990/1995). States are not the only site of government, neither the chief governing agent. Governing is an activity of schools, hospitals, voluntary associations, professional associations and the like is not reducible to, or even comprehensible, in terms of State theory. Foucault’s work on governmentality has implications for understanding key features of the discursive coordinates of post-politics, to which I now turn my attention.

Discussion: Security and The King’s Two Heads

WHEREAS the safety and security of the individual, the protection of the values of the body politic and the preservation of the sovereignty, security and territorial integrity of the state are fundamental obligations of government (Preamble, Emergencies Act 1985, c. 22 (4th Supp.), *The Government of Canada* 1985).

While Foucault called for a regicide in political theory, his genealogy of the

governmentalisation of the state draws attention to growth of ‘the administrative state that corresponds to a society of regulation and disciplines’ (STP: 110). This was especially the case under Absolutism as witnessed for instance by the creation of the grand houses of confinement, the *Hopitaux Generales* and the Lieutenant of Police, under Louis XIV. The king had grown morbidly obese and was put on a diet of liberalism. Nevertheless the sovereign was not nearly so absolute as the name suggests (Foucault 1977b/1980: 207; DP: 188; HS: 87). The increased reliance on police, and then political economy, suggests that the king had a swelled head (we have his neural networks preserved in the archive). The head of the king has been cut off, since the mentality of rule has changed from one of maintaining rule over a territory to that of the *telos* of governmentality. But, maybe the king has two heads. What I am suggesting is that while the contents of the mentality of sovereignty have been displaced, the place of sovereignty itself remains, now filled by the concern with security. This requires that we then rethink the meaning of law, security, crime and fate.

Kantorowicz contends that the king has two bodies ‘the one being the physical body of the incumbent and the other the symbolic body of the crown’ (Hunt and Wickham 1994: 135). For Kantorowicz, if it weren’t for the king’s two bodies, there would be no conception of the sovereign that was not tied to the actual person of the monarch and hence the continuity of sovereignty and passage of the crown from one person to another would not be possible. I suggest that something similar is at work with the governmental concern with security. Perhaps the second of the king’s heads rolled from Place de la Revolution, now Place de la Concorde, across the Champs-Élysées and off to the Latin Quarter, to the Sorbonne, the College de France and Salpetriere, where it

was educated in those expert discourses through which we have learned the truth of ourselves and been governed in the name of that truth. This figure of the king's two heads has implications for understanding sovereignty and security today. I develop them below by drawing attention to the various displacements of the juridico-discursive conception of law that we find in the analytics of political rationalities.

First, in Foucault's accounts, we have the displacement of the aims of sovereignty by the aims of governmental finality that introduces a historicity and *telos* into rule. With the emergence of liberal governmentality, law, as understood in Foucault's concept of the juridico-discursive, is no longer the predominant form in which juridical exercises of power are cast or designed. So, for Foucault the laws of the sovereign cannot help us as a reference point. Second, we have the displacement of law by 'norm' in a disciplining-surveillance societal diagram.

Accompanying Foucault's analytical shift is a critique of liberal legal and political thought and Marxist conceptions of law. For liberalism, there is an opposition between a 'space of freedom' for individuals and the domains of the social and the state in which law is seen as involved with defining what acts are to be permitted and which are to be prohibited within society and the state (Tadros 1998: 77). For conventional Marxist conceptions of law, law is seen in terms of the relationship between the bourgeois state, capitalist social relations and repression in which 'the very categories of civil law—person, property, right, etc.—are integral to the operation of the capitalist mode of production' (Palmer and Pearce 1983: 362). Both approaches, in Foucauldian terms, miss the extent to which individuals and populations are constituted by techniques of power irreducible to, nor derived from, either the state or law. Foucault's work on power and

law illustrates the extent to which mechanisms that define what is to be excluded, confined or prohibited extend far beyond law to include the production of veridical knowledge, the health of society, the reasonableness of individuals, and processes of normalisation that cover everything from the regulation of work, to children's pursuits of pleasure. Thus, Foucault's analysis of law and crime extends the domains of judgment 'beyond the law', one could say, precisely by stressing the effect of juridicalisation inscribed in the production of veridical discourse itself.

Foucault connects his displacement of law and analyses of crime and criminality to judgments about: 'indiscipline' (those who refuse wage-labour, regimented lives and a permanent residence) (DP: 291); normality (assessing who is a criminal and in what ways they are different from the rest of society; questions of mental capacity and responsibility); government—how can criminality be directed to some positive end, like reform; displaying prisons as exemplary models of a disciplined community that then functions as a model for the normalised society; or redeployed in the service of state and bourgeois illegalities (e.g., as strike-breakers, *agents provocateurs*, drug traffickers, prostitutes and informers) (DP: 278-282).

At the same time however, Foucault does make mention of the visible role of penal law in modern societies, a consequence of which is that 'individuals who are part of this society have to recognize each other as subjects of the law who as such are susceptible of being punished and chastised if they infringe upon some rule' (Foucault 1983d/2000: 392). Furthermore, an important link was made between law and psychiatry in modern societies in the nineteenth century in which being classified as a madman meant that one lost virtually all status as a juridical subject, was deprived of all rights and

hence was excluded from the juridical sphere. Thus, 'It could be argued that law prevailed over medicine in endowing madmen with a marginal status' (Foucault 1970b/2003). The result of Foucault's approach suggests that law is but one mode of social relation (an archaic and not a terribly significant one in Foucault's view) and crime, criminals and criminality are not primarily effects of law at all but are effects of the articulations of discipline, normalisation (primarily in medical and juridical discourses) and concerns of rule within modern societies.

Then, as noted above, we have the displacement of the discipline-regulation/norm model by the distinctively liberal technique of regulation-security. But, with the liberal diagram of government, I think we see a return of sovereignty of a sort, not in terms of 'the right of death and power over life' (HS), neither in terms of biopower but in terms of a different mechanism of exclusion, a negative exercise of power. Here, a discussion of Giorgio Agamben's *Homo Sacer* (1995/1998) and legal theory will prove useful.

Agamben placed the question of the relationship between the sacred and politics at the forefront of contemporary social and political theory by focusing on how exclusions are constitutive of a polity. From this, he develops a concept of sovereign power. According to Agamben sacred exclusions draw a line between biological life (*zoē*) and political life (*bios*). Agamben's argument, drawing on Schmitt, Foucault, Arendt and his readings of archaic Indo-European legal statutes concerning banishment and exclusion, endeavours to show how politics is constituted in and through the power of political sovereignty to exclude human subjects in such a way that they are reduced to a naked living existence, stripped of social and political significance. And yet, this excluded position is still defined in relation to the political community, precisely by this

exclusion—it is a social relation *minus* any social status accorded to the excluded subject. Moreover, the constitutive power of sovereignty lies in its capacity to reduce the subjects of the polity to this state of naked existence. Sovereign power then is constitutive of *bare life*—human life reduced to a state stripped bare of the social element. In this respect, Agamben’s book remains somewhat conventional because sovereignty is seen as being the definitive locus of decision-making. The core of his argument is that modern, Western politics has three bases:

1. The original political relation is the ban (the state of exception as zone of indistinction between outside and inside, exclusion and inclusion).
2. The fundamental activity of sovereign power is the production of bare life as originary political element and as threshold of articulation between nature and culture, *zoé* and *bios*.
3. Today it is not the city but rather the camp that is the fundamental biopolitical paradigm of the West. (Agamben 1995/1998: 181).

For Agamben, the originary form of modern biopolitics can be traced back to the Roman category of *homo sacer*.⁵ He is the sacred man who can be killed without it being called homicide and whose life, because of his exclusion from the community, cannot be offered as a sacrifice for the community (Agamben 1995/1998: 8). The articulation of sovereign power and biopolitics lies in the power of the sovereign to decide which subjects are to be ‘included’ in this state of exception, ‘something that is included solely by exclusion’ (153, 11). What we have then is the phenomena of ‘inclusive exclusion’ as

⁵ Historically, there is a problem with equating Roman and Greek data. There is a long-standing and unresolved debate concerning the extent to which Ancient Greek society, including the period of Athenian democracy can be classified as primarily Indo-European, like the Roman. If Greece is not, then the equation of Greek and Roman politics subtending Agamben’s work, the reference to the difference between the Greek *zoé* and *bios* as a “sacred difference” homologous with the difference between the Roman citizen and *homo sacer*, is suspect (cf. Littleton 1966).

the constitutive of the form of political sovereignty in Western civilization. Thus for Agamben,

The sovereign sphere is the sphere in which it is permitted to kill without committing homicide and without celebrating a sacrifice, and sacred life—that is, life that may be killed but not sacrificed—is the life that has been captured in this sphere (Agamben 1995/1998: 83, emphasis in original).

He then contends that in modern biopolitics we are all *homo sacer* (1995/1998: 115), existing in a ‘zone of indistinction’ between *zoé* and *bios*, between life and law. In modern politics, the entire zone of the political no longer has demarcated spaces of inside and outside: to be a subject is to have one’s life subjected and hence, ‘life is immediately political in its facticity’ (153). In this configuration, biopolitics all too easily becomes *thanato-politics* (a deadly politics) since it comes to involve deciding on the state of exception for the life that is judged to be of no political value and hence can be killed with impunity.

I think there is a problem here since in Agamben, and subsequently in Rose’s (2001) work, politics in general and biopolitics in particular has as its substance *zoé*, or ‘life itself’. Hence, it would be more correct for them to say that they are referring not to *bio-politics*, but to *zoé-politics*. However, *zoé-politics* (or as Rose puts it ‘vital politics’) is at best a paradoxical term and at its worst, contradictory because the reduction of politics to *zoé* involves the negation or eradication of politics itself, i.e., precisely a concern with the *social* determination of life. What is thereby lost in the process is exactly a consideration of biopolitical problematisation i.e., questions and problematisations of regulation and security, in short, questions about the *future* of societal life. This is a quite different object of concern than that of bare life. These are

debates and struggles over the kind and/or transformation of *social existence*. In contrast to Agamben and Rose, I contend that security now performs the function of sovereignty in a modified form. Legal theory provides helpful resources for reconceptualising the implications of security occupying the place of sovereignty.

As I have argued above, justifications of liberal regulation and indeed government at all, are made in the name of security because what is at stake in security are the conditions of possibility of engaging in government and with it, the fate of the new and improved future. In this respect, security, with its expert discourses, probabilistic calculus, etc., i.e., the king's head (cf. Neocleous 2003), comes to hold the place of the sovereign as a 'necessary fiction' (Pearce and Tombs 1998a), or in more Durkheimian terms a 'symbolic fiction' (Pearce 2001: 113) or totem. In what sense is sovereignty a 'necessary fiction'?

Sovereignty is a fiction in that on the one hand it is the agency seen to be the condition of possibility for laws at all, in both monarchical and popular forms; and on the other, the roles, rights, and responsibilities of the sovereign are themselves inscribed in written codified, legal and frequently enough, either constitutional documents or in public and administrative law (cf. Hirst 1986: 22-27). It is a fiction then, because it occupies an impossible place that is both inside and outside the law, both condition of yet subject to law. For Pearce and Tombs, drawing on Hirst, 'a *differentia specifica* of a society wishing to be characterized as subject to the "rule of law" is that its laws and classes of rules (usually) effectively claimed 'by the agencies issuing them to be the dominant and binding rules in a given territory' (Pearce and Tombs 1998b: 570). Sovereignty, as a necessary fiction, is perhaps even the basis of constitutional legality and the rule of law,

for as Hunt argues, ‘The distinctive supplement of modernity that is added to law’s project, which is captured by the concept of the rule of law, is that of policing the boundaries of the political and securing the constitutional unity of the nation state’ (1993b: 298). What I argue is that just as sovereignty was and in some respects remains a necessary fiction (e.g., treason remains a criminal offence), the place of the sovereign as both inside and outside the law functioning as the necessary fictional constitutional grounding of law is now held by *security*. Thus, security as a necessary fiction like sovereignty grounds the constitution of our present governmentalised actuality.

By inserting ‘security as a necessary fiction’ back into Agamben’s notion of the sovereign as the agency that decides on the state of exception we get a quite different sense of the dangers of the present. I contend then that *security decides on the state of exception*, or perhaps more accurately, *the time of fear and uncertainty*. This suggests that *politics itself* occupies the same place as *homo sacer* in relation to Roman law; politics is construed as *sacred* in a governmentalised world, a world of (post-political) security. (This point is developed further in Chapter 10).

In this case, and here I disagree with Foucault, Agamben and Rose, the crux of the matter does not concern the object of power/the body but concerns thought. The logic of this structure of the sovereignty of security means that politics proper amounts to an attack on the mental capacity of the king’s second head. What security-government does is to exercise its ‘right and power’, not over ‘life’, as is the case with sovereignty, but over the thought of a different future. I do not mean a utopian imagination because at issue is not, as the Greek prefix ‘*eu-*’ signifies, about creating a superlative place, based on already existing coordinates of what counts as better according to the biogovernmental

measure of things. Rather the problem of 'politics itself' for security concerns thinking about a *heterotopia*, a completely different structure of placements with its normative coordinates and a different set of criteria for deciding on better and worse arrangements of social existence. And since the future does not exist for governmental thought, except as construed as a probabilistic calculus, what will actually happen is *uncertain*. But this irreducible aporetic pairing of security-uncertainty and ignorance-liberty in governmentality then justifies unlimited detention (e.g., Canadian Security Certificates) in the name of national security (cf. Wright 1998). In Canadian legal discourse, manifestly the same actions and intentions are doubly inscribed, one in the register of the sovereign in the Criminal Code (e.g., public order offences including treason, sedition and riots), and the other in the register of *security*, i.e., in terms of terrorism and emergency. For example seditious libel and terrorist activity both deal with *intentions* to overthrow the government by force but 'it's the thought that counts' as the threat as far as security is concerned.

Moreover in Canada's *Anti-Terrorism Act* the object of concern is very much 'security' and 'risk', very broadly understood. 'Terrorism' refers to

(b) an act or omission, in or outside Canada, (i) that is committed (A) in whole or in part for a political, religious or ideological purpose, objective or cause, and (B) in whole or in part with the intention of intimidating the public, or a segment of the public, with regard to its security, including its economic security, or compelling a person, a government or a domestic or an international organization to do or to refrain from doing any act, whether the public or the person, government or organization is inside or outside Canada, and (ii) that intentionally (A) causes death or serious bodily harm to a person by the use of violence, (B) endangers a person's life, (C) causes a serious risk to the health or safety of the public or any segment of the public, (D) causes substantial property damage, whether to public or private property, if causing such damage is likely to result in the conduct or harm referred to in any of clauses (A) to (C), or (E) causes serious interference with or serious disruption of an essential service,

facility or system, whether public or private, other than as a result of advocacy, protest, dissent or stoppage of work that is not intended to result in the conduct or harm referred to in any of clauses (A) to (C) (Section 83.01) (Government of Canada 2001).

Homo sacer under a governmentalised order, is the one who has a political imagination, as it was once called by British crown attorneys, in the late eighteenth century, fearing a repetition of the French Revolution inflamed by ‘imagining the king’s death’ (Lobban 2000).

Kent Roach argues that Canadian anti-terrorism laws and the Emergencies Act in effect criminalise politics (Panitch 2002: 42). In some respects this is accurate as far as its rationality is concerned, but this would be to emphasize an older sovereign model of criminality. Under the sovereignty of security, it is not criminality that is at issue but a ‘threat’. The justification of the exercise of the negative power of exclusion in the rationales of security is moreover right at the limit of the sovereignty of security, right at the limit of liberal legality, since from the point of view of the state what is at stake is the very conditions of possibility of the activity of government itself: apparatuses of security are precisely what draw and sustain that limit. Imagining the death of the king is treasonous; to think politics, i.e., a different future and a different measure of things, is not treason or other public order crime, but is construed as security threat. If Agamben’s *homo sacer* is reduced to bare life, perhaps the subject of security proper today is stripped bare of thinking and imagination, reduced to a state of bare perception/experience (as understood by Foucault).

This is a dream of rule perhaps already realised in the citizen-consumer who experiences and problematises their existence in terms of health, wealth and sexiness and

buys solutions as means for governing their conduct. But this is also why we experience security as liberal. We return to the will to truth: we aren't dupes of 'ideology'; we are dupes of our problematisations. What we are dealing with then is the sovereignty of the mentality of security as supplying the dominant normative coordinates of post-politics. In this respect, the issue is not that we are all *homo sacer* and live in a state of emergency; rather we live in a state of being indirectly disposed toward a particular future through the very freedom of our actions and the pleasure we take in them.

Conclusion: The Post-Political Epoch of Governmentality

Attending to Foucault's analytic of government in aleatory materialist terms provides us with a persuasive account of the constitution of the problematisation of the contemporary political field. We live in an epoch of improvement made possible by the various means through which human beings are made into subjects through distinct modes of objectification. The result is the governmentalisation of the multiplicity of actions constituting the political field, as the dominant structuring, epochal coordinates through which we think about and problematises our individuality, others and our shared fate. It is the distinctive modality and conditions of existence of the political thought of government that gives human existence a direction and a connection to life itself, giving a historicity to human existence, in definite, but aleatory conditions.

I have stressed that governmentality is a system of thought that introduces a *telos* into the thought about human existence, introducing the *telos* of the development and improvement of the life of a population. Furthermore, this improvement also requires a system of measurement, supplied by the will to truth about humanity as a basis for

regulating our progress toward improvement. I have also highlighted the series of contingent encounters in thought leading to the birth of a *governmental* world. But, as Laclau (2000) has pointed out, it is not enough to assert that socio-historical reality is always a field of contingency. Rather, for him the very possibility of recognising socio-historical reality as a field of contingency itself depends on the stability of a framework for recognising socio-historical reality as contingent. Thus, a *discourse of history* produces the enframing of raw events as having a *historicity*. In this sense, the concern with historicity depends on the structure of our epoch, an epoch in which ‘history’ frames our perceptions and judgements of events (OT: 367-373). Our sense of history, our political modernity, is one invented by governmentality; it constitutes our discourse of history, one in which our lives and the government of our lives have a historicity, a direction.

For us, our present actuality is one in which we are faced with government and are caught in a deadlock over ‘too little or too much’ government—government perpetually remains as the solution to the problem of government. But it functions only on condition that it necessarily *precludes* thinking about alternative future possibilities that could be actualised by the effect of a politics. This to me is the real effect of *security*. Thus, the consolidation of the era of governmentality in the eighteenth century that remains with us today, introduced two distinctive political dispositions, one historical and the other epistemic. First, history enters into politics in the form of calculations about the future, involving specific rationales and means for making choices about convenient ends. Second, the epistemic dimension concerns the object as thought about in terms of government. The thought of governing was seen to require detailed knowledge of all

facets of what was taking place in a population, within a territory or a jurisdiction, hence the birth of three key domains of knowledge and ways of gaining knowledge: statistics (i.e., the 'science of the state'), police and political economy. In this context, policy relies on police, and for governmentalist, politics exactly becomes a concern with policy thus paving the way for post-politics.

This is why I contend that Foucault's work on government provides an adequate concept of the immanent aleatory cause of post-political rule and that post-politics is epochal in exactly the same way as governmentality. It is governmentality then that supplies the objects, invented techniques, rationality and justification of post-politics. Our future *must* be 'new and improved'...and *secured*, according to the rule of government, i.e., the dominant measure of things. That is our fate; another is precluded by the exclusionary effects of governmentality.

To this point, my emphasis has been on the thought of government, its forms of problematisation and its logics. Given Foucault's extensive accounts of discursive formations, power-knowledge, police, the human sciences and the like, there is some sense, often missed, that this thought about rule already refers to an extensive material network. But there is more to government than this. Were we to stop with the materiality of governmentality, we would miss *how* Foucault's work, his governmentality studies and beyond, model the constitution of the modern-governmentalist political field. To model the modern political field will mean heading in the direction of his accounts of the mechanisms that produce practices of government, i.e., their conditions of existence. That is to say that there are structural causes of both governmentality as a system of thought *and* the post-political effects that result from its pervasiveness. It is only by theoretically

attending to Foucault's account of how the phenomena of governmental action is produced that we can gain a proper sense of the material actuality of what he is talking about and the limits that it places on what we contingently are. It is here that his concept of *dispositif* (social apparatus) can play a very useful role by showing how the aleatory conditions in which a variety of constituent components of effective government came to endure as our present. This is the focus of the next chapter.

Chapter Six:

The General Economy of Domination

Introduction: Political Power Beyond Government

In this chapter I argue that Foucault's approach to power relations and government needs to be located in a broader conception of *the general economy of domination*. I do so to mitigate against the temptation to view the political field as solely comprised of power relations, a formulation that Foucault himself fell into while writing *Discipline and Punish*. From *The History of Sexuality* onward though, there is a renewed emphasis on the role of thought on the one hand, and a fairly sharp but untheorised conception of the decentring of governmentality in a much more opaque and general conception of domination and inequality in societies for which he created the concept of 'strategy' and his own concept of 'hegemony'. In showing why this is the case, I aim to consolidate the Foucauldian conception of the *object of transformation*. Moreover, Foucault increasingly sought to refine his analytic of contemporary domination and government. For him, this requires analysing the potential and limitations of the present by attending to institutions, programmes, effects/results, usages and strategies (Foucault 1983d/2000; Gordon 1980; 1991). When theoretically modelled the specific way in which these elements are combined provides a conception of the *effectivity* of what government does, i.e., its immanent conditions of complex causality. I call this combination of elements the *governmental dispositif* (social apparatus). Closely attending to the ontology of modern governmental rule is crucial because it governs how Foucault thinks about conceivable and desirable means for transforming modern rule, to be covered in the next chapter.

Thinking about government in this way provides a persuasive account of how human existence comes to be *hegemonised by government*, creating a post-political condition. The governmental *dispositif*, in the terms of the Foucauldian problematic, is the condition that sets the terms of debate about the fate of human existence, but does not *determine* everything that happens in the political field. In other words, there is more to Foucault's account of the political field than government because there is a domain of power relations beyond government, very closely linked to his concepts of strategy, hegemony and class domination in Western civilisation. Below, I push Foucault's concepts to their limits to show that strategies produce class dominations that extend well beyond the concerns of government. I suggest that strategy can be accounted for and hence explained, if we appreciate the general structure of human existence *qua* mode of being, and how it is articulated in a general economy of domination in which government is dominant but not determinant of the present actuality.

Attending to the *dispositif* of government opens the door to a retroductive explanation of the range of phenomena and events described by Foucault's genealogy of government. As discussed in Chapter 2, retroduction involves taking the results of an analysis of phenomena and events and postulating possible causes of them. Once again though, clarifying the scope of Foucault's concepts is important. For example, much of what counts as the history of the present and governmentality studies actually engages in descriptions and analyses focused on the contingent emergence of the discursive content of policy programmes and fails to make a clear distinction between policy programmes, governmentalist problematisation proper and how government works. I am not opposed to empirical research of this kind but I do think it needs to be located in Foucault's

broader—*much* broader—analytic of power and government.

The logic of Foucault's analytical refinements results in a decentring of governmentality when analysing the political field. Foucault's analytic of power forces the genealogist to investigate 'political power beyond the state' as Rose and Miller stress but also requires looking beyond the field of political power. That is to say that the political field beyond government actually situates and articulates—i.e., *places*—activities of government in a broader, but still contingently structured agonistic field. This is why I opt for the formula that the political field is structured by a *general economy of domination*.

Bataille's concept of 'general economy' is useful here because of its focus on abjection /waste, failure and excess (1967/1995). He thus fundamentally challenges the notion that modern societies are characterised by rationality. When we look at Foucault's analytic of government, we find that abjection plays a significant role in shaping what happens, causing policy programme failures for instance. This suggests that the political field is structured by a general economy of domination in which a different rationality is at work, a rationality of *strategy*. Taken together and coherently modelled and explicated, the Foucauldian conception of the present political field provides material in support of a diagnosis that the governmental present is a 'state of domination'. This contributes to a sense of the post-political constraint on the problematisation of the present. For Foucault, a 'state of domination' is one

in which the power relations, instead of being mobile, allowing various participants to adopt strategies modifying them, remain blocked, frozen. When an individual or social group succeeds in blocking a field of power relations, immobilizing them and preventing any reversibility of movement by economic, political or military means (Foucault 1984a/2003: 27).

So, even though he claims that he is not interested in ‘states of domination’ but in government and power (Foucault 1982a/2003; 1983c/1996: 410), his position is theoretically inconsistent, undermining a more adequate sense of the extent to which post-political coordinates ‘block’ the battle for politics itself. Indeed, even in one of Foucault’s quintessential pieces on the history of mentalities of self-government, ‘Technologies of the Self’, he continues to classify his analyses of technologies of production, sign systems, power and the self in terms of ‘domination’ (Foucault 1982e/2003: 147). This being so, the centrality of domination must be retained. In this regard, Valverde’s (2007) claim that the history of the present must focus on ‘practices’, is misleading because occluding the extent to which the term ‘practice’ glosses over the centrality of the concept of domination.

So, my aim in this chapter is to develop a consistent and coherent Foucauldian concept of the modern political field arguing that the constitution of our political present is characterised by *the general economy of domination, hegemonised by governmentality*. The result is a very powerful model of contemporary forms of domination and their conditions of existence in which the casualty is politics itself. The chapter begins with an outline and definition of the governmental *dispositif*. Then, each of the elements are defined and explicated. This is followed by a discussion of Foucault’s concept of hegemony, showing how on the one hand, governmentality *invents* the problem of hegemony and how the concept of the governmental *dispositif* provides the means for indicating how social life comes to be hegemonised by government. The final component

of the chapter explicates how the concept of strategy refers to a general economy of domination and hence to a large-scale object of transformation.

The Governmental *Dispositif*

Foucault provides a clear outline of how to analyse rationalities in ‘What Is Called “Punishing”?’ (Foucault 1983d/2000) in which he comments on his work in *Discipline and Punish*. His explication can be productively transposed from his analysis of penal rationality to that of governmentality. Foucault stresses that his main concern there was to do a history of penal rationality. An analysis of this kind is important he argues, because the systems of thought through which questions of punishment, imprisonment and reform are raised, have not changed, neither have they been successfully challenged for 150 years. He contends that the components of modern penalty are comprised of: the programme of an institution and its goal or objective; its effects; its usage and the strategies of which it is an element (385). Since the conditions of the effectivity of penal rationality and those of government are the same, his analytic of modern penalty helps one get a clear sense of the material conditions of the effectivity of policy programmes and their role in producing the actions of free subjects and governmentalised being.

A crucial component of Foucault’s analysis is that governmentality does not have an actualised existence apart from a material complexus that functions as its supports and relays. Governmentalised existence then is not transcendental in a formalist-idealist sense; it does not exist independently of its immanent conditions of actualisation. Once again, understanding Foucault’s ontology provides guidelines for distilling an explanatory model of the effectiveness of government with a structure of determinations

in which the combined elements are articulated in a definite way. Foucault's concept of *dispositif* is useful for highlighting this aleatory combination of elements that come to be stabilised as a present actuality.

Dispositifs

The concept of *dispositif* plays a central role in the theoretical armature of Foucault's genealogical works and it plays a role equivalent to that of 'discursive formation' (and to some extent *epistemes*) of his archaeological problematic; as Foucault says, 'the *episteme* is a specifically *discursive* apparatus [*dispositif*]' (Foucault 1977b/1980: 197). A *dispositif* is the immanent, contingent structure that combines the two multiplicities of thought and life into a regularised and *enduring* mode. The object and target of a *dispositif* is 'the ordering of human multiplicities' (DP: 218; cf. Brenner 1994) and what it does is produce effects of hegemony (HS: 93, 94, 127; Balibar 1989/1992: 51). With this concept Foucault develops a conception of how thought constitutes bodily capacities in their actuality, and addresses their use, organisation and direction. In an exemplary piece of theoretical clarification on his part, Foucault explicitly states that a *dispositif* is comprised of

a heterogeneous ensemble consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions—in short the said as much as the unsaid. Such are the elements of the apparatus. The apparatus itself is the system of relations that can be established between these elements. Secondly, what I am trying to identify in this apparatus is precisely the nature of the connection that can exist between these heterogeneous elements. Thus, a particular discourse can figure at one time as the programme of an institution, and at another it can function as the means of justifying or masking a practice which itself remains silent, or as a secondary re-interpretation of this practice, opening out for it a new field of rationality. In short, between

these elements, whether discursive or non-discursive, there is a sort of interplay of shifts of position and modification of function which can also vary very widely. Thirdly, I understand by the term ‘apparatus’ a sort of—shall we say—formation responding to an *urgent need*. The apparatus thus has a dominant strategic function (Foucault 1977d/1980: 194-5; cf. Rabinow and Rose 2003: xvi).

Dispositifs then, are contingent assemblages of various means of production of existence and experience: they make a present that lasts. They might begin small but can be expansive. For example, we can find disciplinary and normalising practices, or the spread of governmentalities as the means of problematising the organising of conduct, in many different social institutions like schools, hospitals, prisons, etc. (Foucault 1977d/1980: 194; cf. Deleuze 1989/1992; Rabinow and Rose 2003: xvi). Thus, *dispositifs* extensify by distribution through discursive networks, types and degrees of intensities of power relations. That is to say that a *dispositif* is a new figure of the *a priori* present in and as its effects, that structures human action. As such a *dispositif* is effectively an active political constitution of a social body, an immanent cause of a hegemonised political field of actions and events. The concept of *dispositif* thus helps explain how institutions, programmes, effects, usages and strategies are combined together. In my model, the first component of the governmental *dispositif* is an ‘institution’.

Institutions

For Foucault, institutions are the main site in which governmental programming takes place. A major part of what Foucault does in *Discipline and Punish*, and by extension *The History of Sexuality* as well, is an analysis of ‘institutions’. Now, since he criticised his work in *The History of Madness* in part for its concept of institutions, what does he

now mean (cf. Valverde 2007)? In posing this question, I focus on the ontological dimension of Foucault's analytics, as distinct from what happens in an institution. Attending to the ontological referent helps check the tendency to reduce the matter of institutions to the description of what happens in them. It should be noted that Foucault himself prefers description to a careful explication of what institutions are (1980a/2003: 247-248). But, his self-critique of *The History of Madness* does not imply that his implicit ontology of institutions was wrong, but only that he assumed that institutions actually produce results that correspond to their intended design. In other words, what he correctly rejects, in a manner consistent with aleatory materialism, is a *teleological* conception of institutions. A programme, with its explicit aims, objectives and justifications, is not determinate of what the institution produces; there is no inherent contiguity between the programme with its aims and the effects it produces. This is the difference between his earlier, implicit functionalist conception of institutions and his genealogical sense of the contingent formation of *dispositifs*. So, from *Discipline and Punish* onward, a teleological approach is abandoned in favour of an implicitly aleatory materialist conception in which the contingent ensemble of elements comprising the institution becomes the analytical focus (Foucault 1983d/2000: 384). Thus, institutions are treated as one part of a *dispositif*. Consequently, methodologically, institutions are considered not from the point of view of the intended aims but in terms of the immanent rationalities they contain and the failures they produce.

The list of what Foucault includes under the category of 'institution' is quite extensive, including: 'a factory, a prison, a psychiatric hospital, a convent, a school, or a barracks' (Foucault 1973c/2000: 73); 'a licensed brothel'; 'orphanages, training centres,

correctional institutions, like prisons, reformatories, houses of correction for young adults; institutions that were correctional and therapeutic at once such as hospitals, psychiatric hospitals, everything that Americans call “asylums”; industrial institutions’ (75-76). In the context of his immediate research concerns, Foucault focused on ‘buildings’ and ‘institutions of confinement’ that formed the basis of state control in the nineteenth century (Foucault 1982a/2003: 141).

A key feature of these institutions is that they link individuals and collectives together. As he states,

in the institutions that formed in the nineteenth century, it was not as a member of a group that an individual was placed under supervision; on the contrary, it was precisely because he was an individual that he was placed in an institution, that institution being what constituted the group, the collectivity to be supervised (Foucault 1973c/2000: 77).

In practice, disciplinary institutions for example, attach individuals to a goal involving orderly use and regimentation of time, the control over existence, productive work, and decision-making powers (78).

Later, Foucault elaborated a clearer concept of ‘the forms of institutionalization’, a concept integral to his analytic of power relations. His concept is quite sociological.

The forms of institutionalisation of power relations he says,

may mix traditional conditions, legal structures, matters of habit or fashion (such as one sees in the institution of the family); they can also take the form of an apparatus closed in upon itself, with its specific loci, its own regulations, its hierarchical structures that are carefully defined, a relative autonomy of its functioning (such as scholastic or military institutions); they can also form very complex systems endowed with multiple apparatuses, as in the case of the state, whose function is the taking of everything under its wing, to be the global overseer, the principle of regulation, and to a certain extent also, the distributor of all power relations in a given social ensemble (Foucault 1982a/2003: 141).

A Durkheimian concept of institutions (*minus* the functionalist tendency) helps clarify what Foucault is trying to get at. A brief look at Durkheim's concept also suggests a high degree of compatibility between Foucault's and Durkheim's ontology of institutions.

For Durkheim, social existence can be said to be constituted by institutions, i.e., 'all the beliefs and modes of behaviour instituted by the collectivity' (Durkheim 1901/1982: 45). Durkheim clarifies his concept of institutions further when he states that

societies present a new phenomenon of a special nature, which consists in the fact that certain ways of acting are imposed, or at least suggested *from outside* the individual and are added on to his own nature: such is the character of the "institutions" (in the broad sense of the word) which the existence of language makes possible, and of which language itself is an example. They take on substance as individuals succeed each other without this succession destroying their continuity; their presence is the distinctive character of human societies, and the proper subject of sociology (Durkheim 1917/1982: 248).

The compatibility between Durkheim and Foucault as concerns institutions rests on their shared nonhumanism, stressing that the capacities of subjects to act are constituted by institutions, hence the *externality* of institutions relative to subjects. The externality of institutions implies their continuity, especially as concerns the varying composition of the persons found in them. This is what gives institutions their regularity *and* capacity to regulate actions. In view of this, I take Foucault's notion of 'institution' to mean a domain in which there is an immanent regulation of action that links individuals to classes/groups of a population.¹

¹ My definition of what Foucault means by 'institution' is in contrast to Cousins and Hussain's definition of the institution as 'nodes in a network of practices', which is overly vague (1984: 102).

As concerns governmentality, institutions can fruitfully be thought of as ‘surfaces of emergence’, for the regulation of existence, to use the language of *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. ‘Surfaces of emergence’ are social institutions like the family with respect to the development of nineteenth century psychopathology, or the field of penality with respect to assessing criminality. Surfaces of emergence then, are the sites that are objectified and targeted for regulation (AK: 40). Regulatory techniques include those of discipline or government that target bodies or actions as individualisable units. These are combined with a localised biopolitics of populations that are divided and classified by various authorities and experts. Institutions as surfaces of emergence in some respects are “raw”, untouched as yet by governmentalist programming. That is to say that they do not yet have a manifest *aim*, i.e., a calculated use for the actions they produce, and/or for their improvement, *until* they are subjected to a policy programme. That does not imply that governing as an exercise of power doesn’t happen in institutions; it simply means that the actions produced in the institution are not subjected to the directorship of governmentality. Foucault cautions though that institutions are only part of broader networks of power, ‘of more or less partial or universal institutionalisation and more or less deliberate organization’ (Foucault 1982a/2003: 141).

We can now move on to what governmental programmes produce through their installation, namely, converting raw institutions into governmental sites—this point is key to understanding Foucault’s conception of how apparatuses of rule work. As he states, ‘My work is not a history of institutions or a history of ideas, but the history of rationality as it works in institutions and in the behavior of people’ (Foucault 1980c/1996: 299). Programmes transform institutions into sites of development governed

according to specific aims and systems of judgment. Programmes provide the *measure of things*, inserting the institution into the broader governmental *dispositif* and governmentalist valorisation of improvement guided and directed by the truth of human existence.

Programmes

Nazism was not invented by the great erotic madmen of the 20th century but by the most sinister, boring and disgusting petit-bourgeois imaginable. Himmler was a vaguely agricultural type, and married a nurse. We must understand that the concentration camps were born from the conjoined imagination of a hospital nurse and a chicken farmer. A hospital plus a chicken coop: that's the phantasm behind the concentration camps. (Foucault 1976b/1996: 188).

The second component of how rationalities produce their effectivity is the programme or 'diagram' as he also calls it (DP). Programmes invent objectives and convey the thought about the means for reaching these objectives (Foucault 1983d/2000: 385). They lay out identified goals at the outset of their design. Programmes are specific policy solutions to specific problems identified and problematised by governmental rationality in order to achieve a goal of improvement. It is useful to think of programmes as analogous with the software that allows a computer to run an application, turning the computer into a 'calculating machine, a drawing machine, etc.' (Patton 2000: 44-5). To follow this analogy through, programmes are pieces of social software in the sense that this software is inserted into a raw institution allowing for new delimitations of what is deemed possible and desirable. Programmes are of interest to Foucault because he sees them as a characteristic feature of the present. As Gordon argues, 'Our world does not follow a programme, but we live in a world of programmes, that is to say in a world traversed by

the effects of discourses whose object (in both senses of the word) is the rendering rationalisable, transparent and programmable of the real' (Gordon 1980: 245).

Programmes amount to the dreams of rule adopted by dominant subjects seeking to governmentalise an institution (Foucault 1980a/2003: 253; DP: 169; Rose and Miller 1992). In the case of the concentration camp, as discussed by Foucault in the quote above, its programme combines the biopolitical uses of the hospital and the confinement and surveillance of the chicken coop and installs it in social institutions as a means for achieving the goal of racial hygiene.

Methodologically, Foucault starts with the analysis of programmes since they are part of the archive; we have the actually pronounced policy statements to analyse. As Foucault explains, 'When I analyze the rationalities proper of penal imprisonment, the psychiatrization of madness, or the organization of the domain of sexuality, ... They are explicit *programs*; we are dealing with sets of calculated, reasoned prescriptions in terms of which institutions are meant to be reorganized, spaces arranged, behaviours regulated' (Foucault 1980a/2003: 252). For example, that the prison became a machine for punishment and correction by combining confinement, with disciplines comprised of regimented time-tables, various and continuous exercises, and continuous supervision. One such programme for achieving all of these aims was the panopticon.

Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) drew up architectural plans for a panopticon, an architectural diagram of how a prison could be built such that prisoners would be subjected to perpetual illumination and surveillance. Bentham well illustrates how such mechanisms of power would work thus providing a discursive diagram for organising power and bodies. As Deleuze puts it 'What is a diagram? It is a display of the relations

between forces which constitute power in the above conditions' (Deleuze 1986/1988: 37).

The panopticon was designed such that individual prisoners would eventually conduct themselves as if they were being watched since with Bentham's diagram the prison guard could even be absent, but this would not affect prisoners' conduct.

Hence the major effect of the Panopticon: to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power. So to arrange things that the surveillance is permanent in its effects, even if it is discontinuous in its action; that the perfection of power should tend to render its actual exercise unnecessary; that this architectural apparatus should be a machine for creating and sustaining a power relation independent of the persons who exercises it; in short, that the inmates should be caught up in a power situation of which they are themselves the bearers (DP: 201).

Panoptic institutions thus facilitate a move away from the dark hidden world of dungeons to an illuminated domain of correction, producing, it was hoped, the moral enlightenment of inmates.

Foucault is careful to stress that programmes are not idealities. Rather, since they are part of the thought dimension of his ontology, they are materialities of the same modal type as discursive practices. This makes it possible for, 'these programs [to] induce a whole series of effects in the real ... they crystallize into institutions, they inform individual behavior, they act as grids for the perception and evaluation of things' (Foucault 1980a/2003: 253-254). Indeed, governmental programmes 'constitute new sectors of reality and make new fields of existence practicable' (Miller and Rose 1990: 7). Once again, we see the joint presence of the juridical effect of veridical problematisation as two sides of the same coin of governmentality since programming objectifies social reality and puts in place criteria for assessing progress toward the goal.

Programme development relies on power-knowledge techniques. Through *savoirs* and the will to truth, power-knowledge practices supply the raw materials for the programming. As Gordon writes,

every programme also either articulates or presupposes a *knowledge* of the field of reality upon which it is to intervene and/or which it is calculated to bring into being. The common axiom of programmes is that an effective power is and must be a power which *knows* the objects upon which it is exercised. Further, the condition that programmatic knowledge must satisfy is that it renders reality in the form of an object which is programmable (Gordon 1980: 248).

Crucial here is the autochthonous production of both the scientific knowledge and the object of knowledge in the field of veridical discourse. And while I will deal with this difficult theoretical matter in Chapter 8, since at issue is Foucault's nominalism, it is worth noting here that the very condition of the practices of knowledge production in a programmable domain itself produces the object that will be programmed. The material production of the object of knowledge as an input for programming is also why 'programmes' are not just 'dreams of rule' (cf. Foucault 1980a/2003: 253) and neither are they ideological: programmes have a reality—the same reality—as the institutional domain they aim to programme and through this programming, develop.

There are implicit ontological assumptions to Foucault's method of starting with programme analysis. Strictly speaking, the specific aim and goal of an institution, in as much as it aims to regulate action and provide the rationales and justification for the government of institutions, does not pre-exist its being programmed: programming is the means through which social institutions enter into the domain of government, broadly speaking, providing the dynamic historicised dimension of the institution. It is in this sense that Deleuze contends that abstract machines/programmes are the 'immanent cause'

of the concrete assemblage (1986/1988: 37). Actions are objectified in the combination of the veridical and the juridical components of the programme that then supply an aim to the actions produced by the programmed institution.

Since a programme installs a goal or finality into institutions, it also installs rule *qua* the measure of things. This measure is the juridical component of the programme, constituting the criteria through which the effectiveness of the programme will be assessed. Consequently, programming inscribes its own failure and impetus to correction and modification into the institution to be governed. The installation of the programme inherently produces failure because programmes always already *create the problem they are trying to solve*. That is to say that the programme renders visible what does not yet conform to the goal. This process is homologous with the Pauline theory of law: once divine law is given to humans, it becomes the mirror in which we see that all we humans are sinful. So, to paraphrase St. Paul ‘All actions in institutions are sinful and fall short of the aim’. The actual effects of the programme installed in the institution means that there is an inherent deviation from the goal, the measure of which is supplied by the veridical component of the programme. This then justifies the rationales and application of types of power (sovereignty, discipline, or government) as available technical solutions for addressing the non-correspondence between aims and consequences (Foucault 1983h/2000: 386). Moreover, this reflex of failure perpetuates a will to truth in the institution and a constant, regular surveillance and assessment of what is happening as a result of the programme. Hence the prevalence of quarterly and annual reports, audits and the like. The failure to meet expectations also provides the opening for modifying the

programme, intensifying the application of types of power relations, or changing programmes altogether.

Programmes of rule then, are solutions in practice and discourse—as outlined in policy—that are constituted by and reaffirm, governmentality (Gordon 1980: 246). So, to this point, we have the combination of the institution and the programme. The raw institution is transformed (one could say is modernised) and enters the field of biogovernance when it is programmed. The programme articulates the dominance of thought onto the raw actions produced by the institution to give them a direction of improvement, giving a governmental form to the content of people's social practices. Programmes introduce a finality and the measure of things—its rule—that in turn serves to 'keep things on track; moving forward', as they say. It is precisely in this sense that Deleuze is correct in saying that abstract machines (programmes) are the immanent cause of the concrete assemblage (institution). They are the immanent cause to the extent that they introduce a *telos* into the raw institution.

Thinking about the government of raw institutions also helps us appreciate how and why Foucault argues that 'Power relations are both intentional and nonsubjective...they are imbued through and through with calculation: there is no power that is exercised without a series of aims and objectives. But this does not mean that it results from the choice or decision of an individual subject' (HS: 94-95). A programme however, does not realise 'the programmer's dream' (Miller and Rose 1990: 14). Rather, 'the programmer's world is one of constant experiment, invention, failure, critique and adjustment' (14). This is because of the very effects produced by the governmental programming of institutions. I now turn to this aspect of Foucault's analytic.

Effects/Results, Failure and Success

The effects of the programmed institution are the actions produced by it, including the actions of thought in the repetition of the will to govern that takes the form of recurrent problematisation. Foucault's point about 'results', or 'effects', is that they 'very rarely coincide with the aim' (Foucault 1983d/2000: 385). This won't come as a surprise to those familiar with Robert K. Merton's distinction between the 'manifest and latent functions' of social actions, and 'the important sociological issue about the gap between "intentions" and unintended consequences' (Hunt and Wickham 1994: 29). However, in contrast to the conventional sociological project of trying 'to close the gap between policy and outcome', the Foucauldian point is 'that the very nature of power, its success/failure, lies in what we might call the necessary non-correspondence between discourse, practice and effects' (Hunt and Wickham: 30). Foucault's clearest example of the effects of the programmed institution is found in his analysis of the panoptic prison.

The prison cannot fail to produce delinquents. It does so by the very type of existence that it imposes on its inmates: whether they are isolated in cells or whether they are given useless work, for which they will find no employment, it is, in any case, not "to think of man in society; it is to create an unnatural, useless and dangerous existence" [Lucas, I, 127 and 130] (DP: 266) .

The effects of prison incarceration as a means of punishment through correction is not successful as a programme for transforming criminals into disciplined individuals, workers and citizens. The prison does not correct, reform or rehabilitate individuals Foucault argues; rather it produces 'delinquents' that are then used by the bourgeoisie and state apparatuses in the service of tolerated illegalities.

Foucault describes an extensive list developed by penal critics of how the panoptic prison fails. For instance: prisons do not decrease the crime rate; detention causes recidivism; it creates a milieu of habitual criminals who educate other inmates in the art of criminality; and imprisonment indirectly produces criminals because prisoners' families are thrown into destitution (DP: 264-268; cf. Douglas 1966/2002: 121). In short, 'the objective of the correctional prison, of imprisonment as a means for improving the individual, has not been achieved. The result has been the opposite on the whole, and the prison has tended to give a new impetus to delinquent behaviours' (Foucault 1983d/2000: 385). How does this happen?

First, these failures were noted almost immediately. There was a kind of 'telescoping' of 'the establishment of a penalty of detention, then the recognition of its failure; the slow rise of projects of reform, seeming to culminate in the more or less coherent definition of penitentiary technique; then the implementation of this project; lastly, the recognition of its successes or its failure' (DP: 264-265). In short, the history of the prison is contemporaneous with calls to reform the prison system (DP: 234). Reforms have typically repeated the same form of problematisation and the same disciplinary rationality. This provides the context in which there is a return to the will to truth and its experts (DP: 269ff.).

Paradoxically, the failure of the disciplinary prison also creates the conditions for its success. In this regard, the success lies in the endurance of societal surveillance and its justification. As Foucault writes,

Prison and police form a twin mechanism; together they assure in the whole field of illegalities the differentiation, isolation and use of delinquency. In the illegalities, the police-prison system segments a manipulable delinquency. This delinquency, with its specificity, is a result

of the system; but it also becomes a part and an instrument of it. So that one should speak of an ensemble whose three terms (police-prison-delinquency) support one another and form a circuit that is never interrupted. Police surveillance provides the prison with offenders, which the prison transforms into delinquents, the targets and auxiliaries of police supervisions, which regularly send back a certain number of them to prison. ...it is a structural feature that characterizes punitive mechanisms in modern societies (DP: 282).

The failure of the prison and its production of a delinquent underclass of dangerous individuals justified the widespread policing and surveillance of the whole of society. This in turn multiplies the *savoirs* and power-knowledge practices that generate knowledge of the territory-population field, the data subjected to biogovernmental problematisation. All of these power-knowledge relations extend far beyond the walls of the prison or other houses of discipline and hence involve the disciplining, normalisation and government of the whole social body. Workers at their work-stations, for example are subordinated to the regimentations of the clock, and with it are subjected to the continuous supervision and assessment of their productivity. Such disciplinary technologies for ordering and regimenting individual conduct can be intensely applied because of the way in which confinement, supervision, disciplinary and normalising technologies are used in institutions of confinement to govern outcomes. In this context, confinement functions as both a laboratory for the development and refinement of political technologies and as an exemplary model for the rest of society thus linking confinement and discipline as tactics of wider attempts at social ordering. Thus, panopticism remains a success since its form of problematisation and production conditions persists. Governmentality continues to rely on the sedimentations of police, surveillance, discipline and normalisation that crystallised in the eighteenth century.

What has changed is the dominant form of problematisation that now privileges the biogovernmental programming of actions.

The effects of programmes are then inscribed on a number of levels. First, they produce actions that are the result of the contingent articulation of thought and the localised events of power in the programmed institution. Second there comes the call for their assessment based on the criteria laid out in the programme that in turn repeats the power-knowledge activities that generate the veridical statements on which assessments will be based. These then are the basis for criticising programmes, for modifications, or for suggesting that a new programme be developed and installed. And third, linked to the second effect, is the successful repetition and reproduction of the activity of governmental problematisation and programme development. We can now turn our attention to the ‘use/usage’ of these effects that have a paralogical character. They are paralogical because they involve calculations distinct from the criteria immanent in the programme (the rationales and justifications for the aims of the programme). In this respect, we move to a terrain external to governmentality proper. But, we still see a concern with how to direct actions.

Usage/Use

For Foucault, ‘usage’ concerns the thought about and hence recoding of the effects of a programmed institution, but not in the terms of the programme. As such, the calculus of use falls outside of the terrain of governmental veridical problematisation proper.

Foucault frames the issue of use in the following way: ‘when the result doesn’t coincide with the aim, there are several possibilities: either one implements reforms, or one uses

those results for something that wasn't envisaged at the start but can very well have a direction and a utility' (Foucault 1983d/2000: 385; cf. Nietzsche 1878/1989: 77). In the case of prisons producing delinquents, their activities and knowledge were put to use in the service of a range of state and bourgeois illegalities. Delinquents were used as: police informants; prisoners were put to use in colonisation through penal colonies; with licit employment difficult, prostitution became a use; delinquents infiltrated political parties and workers associations; and they were used as strike breakers and for quelling riots. Indeed, delinquents served as a reserve standing army. As Dupont and Pearce point out, 'immediately prior to the French Revolution, the police in Paris had employed 3000 spies, many of them criminals, including a sizeable number from the 20, 000 or so then active prostitutes' (2001: 144; cf. DP: 280).

This penal rationality divided the working class into respectable and criminal segments such that delinquents, 'and their forms of sociality and conditions of life functioned as a negative reference point for the working class as a whole' (Palmer and Pearce 1983: 374). In classical criminological discourse for example, 'the difference between "deserving" and "undeserving [poor]"', between honest and dishonest, was allegedly due to character, a transferable essence that transcended social contexts and for which one bore personal responsibility' (Palmer and Pearce 1983: 371). But, Foucault argues, this distinction can be shown to be the effect of penalty.

Now while the use of delinquents is external to disciplinary or governmental thought, it still involves thought, but of a different kind. In contrast to both the emergent juridical and psychiatric problematisation of criminal character that displaced the strict legal concern with the criminal act itself (Foucault 1977c/1988), with the usage of

delinquents, what they are is not the issue; knowing what they do and can do is. What is thought about as far as delinquents are concerned is not pathological character structure; rather, what is objectified are their *savoirs* of illegalities, their actions and local knowledge. This form of thought is strictly strategic, in contrast to veridical thought. This brings us to the last component of the governmental *dispositif*, namely 'strategy'. Strategy implies use because it deals in what gets done with what we do and hence is an *action on an action*, but beyond governmentalisation.

Strategy

A strategy is a non-subjective, non-intentional adjustment of actions produced by programming, reliant on a calculus used by a dominant class. The effect of strategy is to accrue comparative advantages to dominant classes, advantages that are themselves constituted by existing power-knowledge networks. (Colloquially, 'You need to be in a position to take advantage of an opportunity'). Strategy, simply put, is a concern with what gets done with what we do, assessed in a manner oblique to programming. But, 'There isn't someone or some group that is controlling this strategy' (Foucault 1983d/2000: 386). Strategy reacts to the failures of the programme and aims at another productive use of failures. A strategy is a redirection of the institution-programme-effects series that then becomes a tactical support for a dominant class (Foucault 1977d/1980: 199): 'they are results that are adapted to different uses, and these uses are rationalized—organized, in any case—in terms of new ends' (Foucault 1983d/2000: 386). For example, in the case of the nineteenth century bourgeoisie,

it succeeded in constructing machines of power allowing circuits of profit, which in turn reinforced and modified the mechanisms mostly operated through capital levies and expenditures, drained itself. Bourgeois power perpetuates itself not by conservation, but by successive transformations, which accounts for the fact that its arrangement is not inscribed within history as the feudal arrangement is. This both accounts for its precariousness and its inventive resiliency (Foucault 1977i/1980: 161).

As concerns the analytic of power, we ought not be seduced by Foucault's polemical tone and hence think that power-knowledge networks are basically unstable, fluid and chaotic. His central point is to stress that stabilised configurations of power-knowledge, and hence degrees of the pervasiveness and extensity of some or other mode of being, are contingent, conjuncturally specific configurations of a potentially wide array of elements, be they buildings, expert discourses, and types of exercising power; contingency though does not mean that effects are capricious. This brings us to the widespread effects of stabilised relations of class domination in a society. As Foucault states,

A dominant class isn't a mere abstraction, but neither is it a pre-given entity. For a class to become a dominant class, for it to ensure its domination and for that domination to reproduce itself is certainly the effect of a number of actual pre-meditated tactics operating within the grand strategies that ensure this domination. But between the strategy which fixes, reproduces, multiplies and accentuates existing relations of forces, and the class which thereby finds itself in a ruling position, there is a reciprocal relation of production. Thus, one can say that the strategy of moralising the working class is that of the bourgeoisie. One can even say that it's the strategy which allows the bourgeois class to be the bourgeois class and to exercise its domination. But what I don't think one can say is that it's the bourgeois class on the level of its ideology or its economic project which, as a sort of at once real and fictive subject, invented and forcibly imposed this strategy on the working class (Foucault 1977d/1980: 203).

We are thus dealing with 'strategy without strategists' in a configuration distinct from, but related to the programmed institution and its effects (Foucault 1977b/1980: 202ff.).

The concept of strategy thus begs the question of 'class' and here I explicate Foucault's underdeveloped conception of class. To take the logic of Foucault's analysis further than his own discourse, 'use' deals in securing the conditions for exercising class domination within a political field hegemonised by governmentality. In this regard, 'class dominance' refers to the *oblique security* of classes of subject located in dominant networks. In this respect, Palmer and Pearce's critique and reformulation of Foucault's argument about the strategic function of the prison is not so far off from Foucault's own albeit underdeveloped position. Thus, 'the strategic function of the prison (the political and economic marginalization of illegalisms) is in fact not fulfilled by prisons alone...but by a network of related institutions: it is the criminal law, the police force, public prosecution of criminal offences, and prisoners, *in combination* that have the effectivity' (Palmer and Pearce 1983: 375). This formulation has implications for understanding Foucault's conception of 'classes'.

Drawing on Foucault's uses of the term 'class', several classes can be identified: a state governmental class with judges and police, for example; what can be called the 'veridical class' with experts like epidemiologists, social workers, criminologists, psychologists, penologists, jurists, etc.; a capitalist class, a working class and the lumpenproletarian delinquents. In good structuralist terms, Foucault is clear about his position that classes do not pre-exist the structure that relates and positions them with greater and lesser capacities for action, and better and worse access and control of discursive networks. Class then, in Foucault's work can be taken as referring to the constitution of particular subject positions shaped by the dominance of a value (a regime of valorisation) and a concrete institutional resource base that provides security for, and

the reproduction of, a value system. For example, the veridical class depends on the valorisation of the true and its concrete basis is the discursive formation. A governmental class depends on the valorisation of improvement, the value of programming, plus the discursive formations of the human sciences and the *savoirs* on which they rely. Its concrete basis is any raw social institution together with the governmental *dispositif*. The capitalist class, again in Foucauldian terms, is much like the state governmental class because of its concern with the future (e.g., risk, investment, security). It is concerned with maximising the capacities of bodies, geared toward orderly, predictable capital accumulation. In sum, strategies consist of the thought about how power relations, discourse, their concrete conditions of existence, effects and uses can be taken up to achieve a goal or objective, retroactively created or used by a dominant class—a *para-aim*, if not a ‘para-programme’.

Attending to the contingent yet lasting formation of the governmental *dispositif* requires that one appreciate the different conditions and capacities of each of the contingent components, from the formation of a governmentality proper, a political thought that becomes the dominant form of problematising rule, to power-knowledge techniques and networks, to the really existing immanent capacities of raw institutions, to various dominant classes in a condition to take strategic advantage of programme failures. At the same time however, the aleatory formation of the governmental *dispositif* provides the concrete conditions that stabilises the epochal quality of the present actuality.

The concept of the governmental *dispositif* helps us think about how governmentalist problematisation recurs and is secured in a pervasive way. So even

though, for example, we find governmentality in the early seventeenth century with La Perriere, it is only when a whole range of lasting contingent encounters emerge, solidifying in the nineteenth century, that a hegemonising governmentalisation of being comes to be constituted in a dominant way. So, La Perriere's dreams and schemes still require police and its extensification and sedimentation of communications capacities if they are to be achieved. Governmentality also, in retrospect, requires the liberal critique of reason of state as a means for transforming the use of the population as an object.

Appreciating the aleatory combination of these diverse elements, each with their own histories and unevenness relative to each other, helps us grasp the contingent formation of a governmentalised actuality. Crucially, the concept of the governmental *dispositif* helps one avoid falling into a discourse determinism that plagues post-Marxisms, as found for example in Laclau, Butler and Žižek. In this respect, Foucault is quite clear: the *dispositif* 'overdetermines' effects (Foucault 1977b/1980). So, in terms of the governmental *dispositif*, the permanence of the *dispositif* involves the articulation of the actions produced by the governmental programming of institution by the *dominance of governmental problematisation* and its material basis, that is itself articulated by class dominance. A full appreciation of this Foucauldian account of governmental rule though, will require a consideration of Foucault's concept of hegemony to grasp how human existence comes to be dominated by government.

The Hegemony of 'Hegemony'

Foucault's work contains a unique but quite underdeveloped concept of 'hegemony', one that has many resonances with but remains distinct from Gramsci's (Gramsci 1971). The development of the model of the governmental *dispositif* above opens the door to explicating this distinctive Foucauldian concept of hegemony. The logic of Foucault's concepts is important here because he argues that strategies hegemonise societies and strategies stabilise as *dispositif* (Foucault 1977b/1980). I will begin with a short exposition of Gramsci's concept, using it as a basis for highlighting the distinctiveness of Foucault's conception.

Like most Hegelian Marxisms, Gramsci's intervention rejected crude economic determinism and had a greater concern with ideology and 'civil society'. He did so in order to develop a more sophisticated account of the dynamics of rule in a society. Rule for him was always traversed by struggles and compromises between dominant, but minority groups and subordinate, majority groups. At the same time, he sought to develop a conception of how ruling conditions could be transformed by drawing on and amplifying struggles against rule. Gramsci's most famous innovation in his account of rule is his concept of hegemony.

For Gramsci, hegemony is the process by which a leading group comes to the fore, facilitating a condition in which its set of ideas come to play the *leading* and in many respects, *constitutive role* in determining the framework through which a society decides on its fate, providing the 'social cement' and basis of popular consent to existing conditions of domination in class divided societies. Thus, hegemony produces 'the "spontaneous" consent given by the great mass of the population to the general direction

imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group' (Gramsci 1971: 12).

Crucially, 'Gramsci's focus is on the securing and exercising of "leadership" and "direction" by the dominant block rather than upon the more passive idea of consent itself' (Hunt 1990/1993: 229).

While Gramsci's concept of hegemony, true to the word's etymological roots, stresses the leadership (or directorship) of the masses of subordinate groups by a dominant block as the means for securing consent, this was only one of three components of his theory of rule. The second component of Gramsci's theory of rule is that of *force/coercion*, drawn from the conventional Marxist conception of the state as the institution that 'functions by violence' (Althusser 1969a/1971: 136). Gramsci however did not subscribe to the view that the state could be 'reduced to the (Repressive) State Apparatus, but included... a certain number of institutions from "civil society": the Church, the Schools, the trade unions, etc.' (136). Force though, remains a fundamental part of Gramsci's theory of rule.

For him, force is a central component of rule because it can be relied on to secure rule if hegemony fails. Because dominant groups are in a minority they need to incorporate aspects of demands made by the subordinate majority and make compromises with them. But, if this 'incorporative hegemony' cannot be reached because of intensified class antagonisms, dominant groups can and often do, use force to secure rule. Force is the preserve of state apparatuses like the army, the police, courts and prisons but also includes vigilante groups. This has the effect of reproducing the conditions under which the dominant group can again exercise its hegemony.

The third component of Gramsci's theory of rule involves his conception of how a

group becomes the dominant, hegemonic group forming a 'historical block'.

This involves persuading other members of that class, other dominating classes and other professional groupings to accept its moral and political leadership and to contribute to its mode of governance. Further, members of such a block anticipate that subordinate classes will, to a considerable extent, formulate their interests within the categories of the dominant ideology (Gramsci 1971: 180-95). Hegemony involves 'the entire complex of practical and theoretical activities within which the ruling class not only justifies and maintains its dominance, but manages to win the active consent of those over whom it rules' [Gramsci 1971: 244] (Pearce and Tombs 1996: 429-30).

The basis for the formation of a historical block is its role in extracting surplus 'in the decisive nucleus of the economy' (Pearce and Tombs 1996: 430) providing the resources for attempts at securing the conditions for exercising hegemony. That is to say that a material institutional basis is the necessary condition for exercising hegemony.

The main contribution of Gramsci's concept of hegemony is that it stresses that social order is secured 'by way of practices, techniques and methods which infiltrate the minds and bodies, cultural practices which cultivate behaviours and beliefs, tastes, desires and needs as seemingly naturally occurring qualities and properties embodied in the psychic and physical reality (or truth) of the human subject' (Smart 1986/1989: 160). What I wish to stress is that while there are affinities between Gramsci and Foucault, as Smart argues, a distinctively Foucauldian conception of hegemony can be developed, providing an alternative conception of the leadership/directorship of human existence. The Foucauldian concept of hegemony refers to the process by which the dominant mode of thought (e.g., governmentality as a system of political thought) articulates, shapes and directs the power relations that are the substratum of social relations and social institutions, producing global effects of class domination in a society (HS: 94).

The Foucauldian conception of hegemony I develop here has four components. First, Foucault uses the term to describe the generalisation and extension of types of class domination in a society, closely linked with his concept of strategy. However, he does not develop a clear concept of class domination and so one will have to be formed (HS: 92-93; Hunt 1993b: 277). Second, his analysis of governmentality suggests that governmentality *invents* the very technique of hegemony as involving the leadership or development of human existence. It also invents the domain of civil society as the discourse object in which hegemony is to be deployed and secured. Third, Foucault's account of the will to truth, the production of veridical discourses about human existence and problematisation, provides an account of how the very way in which we *experience* our present is constituted and repeated in an enduring way. The dominant systems of thought constitutive of the categories of experience set the terms of debate and criteria by which contestations over government are fought. Foucault thus provides an alternative to the humanist elements of Gramsci's focus on ideology and consciousness. And fourth, the concept of the governmental *dispositif* that I have developed here, provides a sophisticated model of the blocks on which governmentality, as the hegemonic, dominant and pervasive rationality of improvement, rests. In sum, a Foucauldian concept of hegemony provides an explanatory account of the immanent material conditions in which the hegemony of government is first invented and then becomes *hegemonic*, producing the effect of post-politics. I will deal with them in order.

Foucault's Descriptive Use of Hegemony

For Foucault, the effect of strategies, in contrast to the effects of programming (i.e., success/failure), is a social hegemony, the result of which is class cleavage. Foucault's descriptive use of the concept of hegemony essentially refers to the effect of class cleavage (HS: 94ff.). The *effect* of class cleavage secures dominant classes in a position to be able to take advantage of the effects of programmed institutions. As with his concept of strategy, hegemony cannot be accounted for in terms of either capitalism or the state. Rather, the basis of hegemony is oblique in relation to state apparatuses and capitalism.

The challenges faced by the nineteenth century bourgeoisie provides a useful illustration of what Foucault aims to explain with his concept of hegemony. For the bourgeoisie as the dominant class,

It's the whole problem of eliminating blockages and obstacles, such as the obstacles placed in the way of decisions of power by constituted bodies and the privileges of particular groups, the clergy, the magistrature, the corporations. The bourgeoisie is perfectly well aware that a new constitution or legislature will not suffice to assure its hegemony; it realises that it has to invent a new technology ensuring the irrigation by effects of power of the whole social body down to its smallest particles. And it was by such means that the bourgeoisie not only made a revolution but succeeded in establishing a social hegemony which it has never relinquished (Foucault 1977i/1980: 156).

Foucault here captures how hegemony works as a derivative effect of dominations.

Hegemony is the effect, and not a precondition, of strategic use; the effect of hegemony is not external to its production condition. Thus, the cause (class) does not precede the effect (i.e., pervasiveness of types of domination). For Foucault, it is more correct to say that what is produced by the extension of the governmental programming of institutions

throughout a territory and the strategic use of the resultant actions, is a *hegemony-effect* of class dominance with the ‘wide-ranging effects of cleavage that run through the social body as a whole’ (HS: 94). When it comes to industrial capitalism, it is the pervasiveness of ways of exercising power ‘present at every level of the social body and utilized by very diverse institutions (the family and the army, school and the police, individual medicine and the administration of college bodies)’ that produced ‘segregation and social hierarchization... guaranteeing relations of domination and effects of hegemony’ (HS: 141; Smart 1986/1989: 163). This is an absolutely central point: Foucault is not a *realist* about class and so classes are not structurally produced positions as we find in the Marxian-realist conception of class.

Class for Foucault *only* means the effect of how a *partial* form of problematisation and *partial* practical solutions to the problems identified come to be pervasive in a society. Thus, the bourgeoisie as a class does not exist when it invents its meticulous attention to cleanliness, hygiene and sexuality as applied, in the first instance, to itself. As we find in *The History of Sexuality*, the concern with the health and care of the body,

should undoubtedly be linked to the process and growth and establishment of bourgeois hegemony; not, however, because of the market value assumed by labour capacity but because of what the ‘cultivation’ of its own body could represent politically, economically, and historically for the present and the future of the bourgeoisie. Its dominance was in part dependent on that cultivation; but it was not simply a matter of economy or ideology, it was always a ‘physical’ matter as well. The works, published in great numbers at the end of the eighteenth century, on body hygiene, the art of longevity, ways of having healthy children and of keeping them alive as long as possible, and methods for improving the human lineage, bear witness to the fact (HS: 125).

In this case, the bourgeoisie only exists *as a class* once the problems and techniques used

in that small domain of the bourgeois family came to be deployed on a massive scale as a solution to public health and industrial production problems that plagued Western urban development in the nineteenth century.

In this respect, Foucault is correct to remain at the level of a descriptive use of the category of hegemony. Thus, in contrast to Gramsci, hegemony is not a causal precondition for *securing* rule in class divided societies; it is rather the result of the use and spread of systems of thought, forms of problematisation and types of the exercising of power facilitated by the remnants of the networks of police now populated by human science experts. This is also the exact sense in which Foucault uses hegemony in *The History of Sexuality*: 'Major dominations are the hegemonic effects that are sustained by all of these confrontations' (94) of power relations in institutions like industrial production and the family. Or again, bourgeois hegemony is an effect of the spread of a specific form of problematising the body, 'to ensure the strength, endurance, and secular proliferation of that body through the organisation of a deployment of sexuality. This process, moreover, was linked to the movement by which it asserted its distinctiveness and its hegemony' (HS: 125-126). The bourgeois home is the institutional site where the problematisation, techniques and solutions were developed. It was only *after* particular biopolitical problems emerged in the nineteenth century, like the 1832 cholera outbreak or the development of heavy industry, that bourgeois techniques of family government came to be deployed as solutions to the biopolitical problematisation of workers' bodies (HS: 126-127). This in turn paved the way for a variety of biopolitical regulatory techniques and institutions like 'schooling, the politics of housing, public hygiene, institutions of relief and insurance, the general medicalization of the population, in short,

an entire administrative and technical machinery' (HS: 126). Foucault's formulation here has an affinity with Gramsci's analysis of the role of intermediate agents in hegemony, especially local priests. What we see then is that the effect of class cleavage is a central characteristic of the hegemony-effect. It is an effect of the governmental *dispositif* that at the same time facilitates the spread of home-grown bourgeois solutions that become the basis for the biogovernmental programming of proletarian existence. For Foucault both the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, *as classes* in a society, only exist after the success of governmental problematisation. The next point is much less complicated.

The Governmental Invention of Hegemony

Governmentality, as explicated in the previous chapter, can be said to have invented hegemony, subsequently discovered and named as such by Gramsci. Governmentality can be said to have invented hegemony for three reasons. First, governmentality invents hegemony given its concern with the development and improvement of the population, thus providing, in its modified pastoralist sense, the leadership/directorship of the capacities of a population. Furthermore, the very domain of 'civil society' as a discourse object, is itself an effect of police science, subsequently elaborated in political economy and by Hegel for example, the latter being the key resource for Gramsci's concept. Moreover, the discovery of population as a distinct object, with its own needs and aspirations, provided the conditions in which consent comes to be thinkable as an end, the means of which are immanent in the population which is the characteristic technique of governmental rule. As noted by Foucault, the Physiocrats invented a new domain of intervention in the population, precisely by developing their concept of population to

include ‘ways of doing things and ways of living that may be brought about by “campaigns”’ (STP: 366). In this respect, consent, in Gramsci’s sense, is indeed something to be secured, i.e., is a part of apparatuses of security.

The third reason that governmentality can be said to invent hegemony is the role played by the diplomatico-military model in governmentality that privileges strategy and war as a model of addressing problems of security and insecurity. We see the traces of this discourse not only in Marx and Engels’ adoption of the model of class war from that of race war, but also in Gramsci’s notion of ‘war of position’. In some respects, the very governmentalist notion of security is almost exactly what Gramsci is getting at with the concept of incorporative hegemony that ‘contributes to securing the minimum standards of social life’ (Hunt 1990/1993: 230). We also see the strategic thought of government at work in the invention and deployment of social medicine, social insurance and housing for workers in urban areas as a means of insurance against the risk of the working class degenerating into a massive *lumpen*, dangerous or revolutionary class.

Moreover, the costs of police under a reason of state model makes strategy—infra-territorial (class) alliance formation—the liberal solution to the problem, not of “public order” *per se*, but of securing the conditions of regulation. Strategic class alliance thus becomes the *economical* solution to the problem of domestic security, one consistent with the liberal critical sensibility (see Chapter 5). The prime example of this is the alliance between state functionaries, like the police and courts, and capitalists in their shared use of delinquents in the service of their respective illegalities that further galvanised a working-class that saw itself as moral and disciplined in contrast to the *lumpen* class of delinquents. What we see is a strategic alliance between the state, capital,

and the working class around the problem of delinquents produced by the effects of the imprisonment of the convicted. In short, the exigencies of class domination in Foucault's sense, invents what Gramsci calls the 'war of position'.

Governmentality and Consciousness

In contrast to the Gramscian focus on ideology and consciousness, found for instance in his conception of 'hegemonic consciousness', Foucault stresses that ideology and consciousness are precisely *not* the problem. For Gramsci, 'the most important and distinctive stage of [hegemony] is that of "hegemonic consciousness" whose key characteristic is the emergence of political and ideological projects that seek to develop the capacity to integrate purely class aspirations which is the achievement of leadership over other subordinate groups' (Hunt 1990/1993: 231). In contrast, what is pertinent to Foucault is the role of contingently formed systems of thought in constituting the fundamental categories of experience through which humans make judgments about their existence. These experiences become the basis for making decisions, going through the discursive formations of the human sciences, power-knowledge networks and *savoirs* that produce statements about human existence that are deemed to be true.

Truth here means 'the ensemble of rules according to which the true and the false are separated and specific effects of power attached to the true' (Foucault 1977d/2003: 317). Moreover, thought is an action, and in the case of the human sciences, it is fundamentally about discursive practices in particular material institutional conditions. It is not so much a question of the materiality of ideology as we find in Gramsci or Althusser, but one of the discursive practices that express power relations, leading to

particular modes of the objectification of subjects. With this line of analysis, Foucault displaces a concern with consciousness and instead speaks in terms of a 'regime of truth'.

As he argues,

"Truth" is to be understood as a system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation, distribution, circulation and operation of statements.

"Truth" is linked in a circular relation with systems of power that produce and sustain it, and to effects of power which it induces and which extend it—a "regime" of truth (Foucault 1977d/2003: 317-318).

For a Foucauldian concept of hegemony, the focus cannot be on ideology, ideas, or consciousness. As he argues, 'The problem is not changing people's consciousnesses—or what's in their heads—but the political, economic, institutional regime of the production of truth. ...The political question, to sum up, is not error, illusion, alienated consciousness, or ideology; it is truth itself' (318.).

For us, since the emergence of the human sciences combined with liberal governmentality, we have an almost inescapable compulsion to perceive and assess our existence (individualised or collectivised) in terms of improvement and we rely on true knowledge of what we do in the process. So, once we have the human sciences as the basis for governmental programming, the will to truth about humans becomes the preferred resource for, and frequently enough, justification of institutional governance. Governmentality, as actualised in the activity of programming, is hegemonic because delimiting the measure of things. It supplies the juridical framework for assessing the effectiveness of programmes. What Foucault's conception of the human sciences does is provide an alternative way of dealing with the matter of the effects of discourse in

limiting how aims and working-class demands are made and how the activities of government, in whatever sphere, are rationalised and justified.

The Governmental Dispositif as Concrete Support for Hegemony

The fourth and last component of the Foucauldian concept of hegemony concerns its material basis, namely, the governmental *dispositif*. The material basis is supplied by the materiality of all social institutions as surfaces of emergence, discursive formations and the administrative state and even more, by any and all actions of government, including self-government/improvement. The material basis of hegemony is thus actualised in an immanent circuit that hegemonises modes of being by perpetually producing the urgent need for governmentality as the dominant system of thought that shapes and directs power relations to produce actions. The rise in the number of the points of insertion and distribution for types of intensified power relations sedimented by the growth of police, provided the communications infrastructure for installing various programmes. Programmes produce effects that can then be used as tactical implements of a strategy that in turn crystallise in a hegemony-effect characterised by *global* dominations and class cleavages. Subsequent class struggles which then traverse populations, threatening their internal security and hence too their strategic strength relative to other states, creates another problem for which new biogovernmental programming is required. At stake in all of this is precisely the justification of governmental hegemony as *hegemony*, as *leadership* toward improvement, the measure of which is provided by programming, supported by the material basis of the governmental *dispositif*.

Modelled in this way, the governmental *dispositif* provides a concept of how

societies are hegemonised by governmentality. This does not mean that governmentality is everything, but it does mean appreciating its leading, predominant role in limiting and justifying the problematisation of existence in the political present. In this respect, to modify Zizek here, governmentality, supported by the governmental *dispositif*, ‘structures in advance *the very terrain* on which the multitude of particular contents fight for hegemony’ (Zizek 2000b: 320). The governmental *dispositif* sets the framework of problematisation, debate and valuations of aims, goals and decision-making calculi, like the prioritising of security in the rationality of government. The hegemony of (governmentalist) hegemony is the effect of the *dispositif* of government. It manifests itself in the pervasiveness of a concern with improvement and a reliance on the will to truth about human existence and especially, our actions and what their consequences are (and are likely to be). This is what constitutes populations as free subjects of the governmentalised political field to produce a pervasive post-politics.

The General Economy of Domination

There is a temptation given the Foucauldian emphasis on thought and political rationalities to think that we are dealing with a fairly rational system, a particular ordering of reality. In some ways, this is true. But, Foucault’s stress on the inherent failures of programming mitigates against this to some extent. That said, even failure is seen as a success because failure becomes the justification for the repetition of governmental problematisation. We also see how actions that do not correspond to programmed aims are taken up in strategic thought making the hegemony-effect possible but it all seems to work as a means for sustaining domination and rule. The crucial

theoretical point to stress here is that Foucault argues that *dispositifs* are stabilisations of *strategies*. This link between *dispositif* and strategy checks the temptation to see government as an enclosed system. But there is a stronger point to be made here. The logic of Foucault's concepts suggests that failure, abjection and the excesses of veridiction and domination, produce a *non-rational ordering*. This system is I contend, the real stuff of the political field. Nowhere is this seen more than in the importance of strategy in structuring the political field and the thought about it. Here, George Bataille's concepts of restricted and general economy can help to clarify the nature of this non-rational ordering of the political present that I call the general economy of domination (Bataille 1967/1995).

There is, moreover, a compatibility between Bataille and Foucault on this account. Foucault himself uses Bataillean formulations, describing 'a series of excesses...of the "carceral" in relation to the "juridical"' (DP: 247) and more explicitly when he writes that the problem of justice is part of 'a general economy of illegalities whose other elements are ... the police, the prison, and delinquency' (DP: 282). Analysing the dominance of governmentality, characteristic of post-politics, structured in dominance by the governmental *dispositif*, in terms of general economy, helps us think about the contingent structuring of the political field without unwittingly succumbing to instrumentalism or to an overly rationalist account. It also facilitates a stronger appreciation of the Foucauldian concepts of strategy and hegemony that I have taken up and developed above.

For Bataille, it is important to make a clear distinction between what he calls 'restricted economy' and 'general economy'. The restricted economy is characterised by

instrumental rationality, the logic of capitalist accumulation and the homogenisation of value. What we find in modernity is the reduction of human existence to economic utility (Bataille 1933/1994: 117). Similarly, governmentality is a system of thought belonging to the restricted economy. Characteristically, restricted economy ‘excludes in principle *nonproductive expenditure*’ (117): if things and actions are not seen to be useful as tools for achieving a calculated end, they must be eliminated or abjected (Bataille 1976/1995; 1973/1989). This is the law of restricted economy; there is no room for waste. Indeed, waste itself, in the dream of restricted economics, must itself be eliminated. The restricted economy produces a levelling of human existence precisely by reducing everything to a means to a calculated end.

This homogenising process helps us think about governmentalisation because of modes of objectification, rationalised and justified in the name of truth and improvement of human existence impose the values of truth and improvement on the multiplicity of human life. The result is a homogenisation of human existence as an object of true knowledge and target of improvement. Crucially for Bataille, while the homogenisation of values necessary to instrumental calculation is certainly totalising in modernity, it should not be confused with the totality of the life of the societal organism. So, in contrast to restricted economy there is a general economy that organises human existence as part of the broader movement of societies (cf. Bataille *et al* 1988).

Drawing on Durkheim and Mauss’ sense that societies are totalities in which all spheres of sociality and social institutions are connected together, Bataille suggests that we examine the nature of communication and exchange that binds the parts of the social totality together (Datta 2005). Bataille though, radicalises both Durkheim and Mauss by

suggesting that social bonds are not simply what holds various facets of social life together; rather, social bonds rely on destruction, waste and elimination. In other words, there is no social bond without the destruction of the social bond. Thus, social bonds also tear apart the functionality of communication within and between institutions. The general economy is characterised by useless expenditure, waste, abjection and excess. Examples of such nonproductive (i.e., non-instrumental) expenditure include 'luxury, mourning, war, cults, the construction of sumptuary monuments, games, spectacles, arts, perverse sexuality' (Bataille 1933/1994: 118). Moreover, the restricted economy remains within the general economy and so the laws of general economy in the end are determinant. This also means that there is even a uselessness, a *real powerlessness* of the restricted economy since its logic does not correspond to the structuring principles of general economy that are the basis for societal existence and hence for human life. Attending to the abjections and excesses of the governmental *dispositif* will help us grasp how this general economy of governmental domination works.

Strategy, Abjection and Hegemony

For Bataille, abjection refers to a 'double movement of exclusion and intrusion' (Hegarty 2000: 62). Abjection is the process by which that which is eliminated becomes a problem for the domain from which it was expelled. The abjected element of government, I contend, is *particularism*. Class particularism, as we find with strategy, is abjected because it is not concerned with the 'all' of 'all and each' but with advantages accruing to dominant classes. To put this somewhat differently, governmentality involves a universalist concern with the life of the population within a territory while class

strategising does not. More precisely then, what is abjected from governmentality is the particularism of class strategising. This is followed by the hegemony-effect produced by failure, usage and strategy that includes, but also extends beyond the governmental *dispositif*. The effect of class cleavage then comes to intrude on the individualisation-totalisation coupling of governmentality. In short, the particularism of class strategising hegemonically articulates and subsumes the explicit universalism of governmentality. That is to say that the concrete totalising of the political present is not produced by government but is rather the result of the particularism of class strategising. (We see something of this mechanism in the distortion of parliamentary legislative process by lobbyists).

In terms of the dominance of thought in structuring modes of being, it is this dual inscription of strategy, one within governmental programming with its explicit aims and the other external to it, of class calculus, that undermines the restricted economy of governmental rationality in a general economy of class dominance. This creates the problem of class cleavages that then call for governmental strategising as a means for securing the activity of government in the face of a political class war. Where governmentality and class strategies differ is that governmental programming has explicit aims, whereas strategy, while emerging from the effects of the *dispositif*, is about usage *after* a programme has failed to reach its aim. Strategy, one could say, then involves a re-direction of already governed actions. The problem is how to distinguish between strategy and its use of actions, and government as action on an action. Posing the question of the universal and particular helps sort this out.

The main effect of biogovernmental programming is that of dominant classes and

the hegemony-effect on a society. Foucault is unequivocal on this point:

the interconnections [of power relations] delineate general conditions of domination, and this domination is organised into a more-or-less coherent and unitary strategic form that is dispersed, heteromorphous, localised procedures of power are adapted, re-enforced and transformed by these global strategies (Foucault 1977b/1980: 142).

The effects of strategy include and go beyond governmental programming in a general economy of class particularist strategising that subsumes governmentality. What interests Foucault in this regard is how dominant classes are able to engage in a strategic use of the actions produced by programmed institutions in a manner *oblique* to the aims of governmental programming. Indeed, class strategising and its hegemony-effects produce problems for state government, problems like class struggle. At the same time, the governmental *dispositif* remains the dominant reference point for class dominations. Thus, governmentality and the governmental *dispositif* are not the whole story—the political field of actions is not *solely* constituted by governmentalisation. So, while I concur with Rose and Miler's formulation that Foucault's concern with governmentality is innovative because it forces us to think about 'political power beyond the state', since activities of government can and do happen in many institutional sites beyond the governmentalised state, strategy and hegemony tell us more. Strategy and hegemony traverse the whole political field, a field beyond both the state and government.

Strategy then can be located as an activity beyond governmentality as the dominant system of thought about societies and their futures; it refers to a domain beyond that of the life of the population *per se*. True, there is strategic thought within governmentality, but in this case we are dealing with a strategic calculus of

biogovernance. This is not to be confused with the logic of totalitarianism as found in the link between police and reason of state. This is because a biogovernmental strategy engages in a calculus about the *effects* of autonomo-politics upon the population as a whole, as means to the end of improvement. So, in contrast to the statistical serialisation of actions as events on distribution curves that we find in governmentality, strategy, involves much more partial knowledge, knowledges like that obtained through informants, that can be used. In short, strategic thought proper refers to, and aims to intervene in a sphere beyond what counts in governmentality; strategising is about what counts for some.

The Universal, the Particular and Para-security

Strategy, while derivative of the failure/success of governmental programming, transcends and subsumes government in broader conditions of domination, including various class relations. Now Foucault is quite weak here because his sense of the structures of stratification in a society is either implicit or asserted, but something can nevertheless be done with his comments about class and society. The logic of Foucault's position suggests that the articulation of governmentality, strategy and the concrete actualisation of the hegemony-effect (i.e., the reality of class dominance, understood in Foucauldian terms) produces a perversion of universalism. How so?

Crucially, the conditions of class domination and its effects are both included in governmentalist concerns (e.g., class struggle and security, social medicine and discipline deemed the solution to constituting a productive orderly social body). But class strategising is also excluded from governmentality because of its concern with the 'all' of

the population. Thus what happens in the hegemonising of the political field is a perverse structuring of the logic of the universal and the particular. First, governmentality construes itself in universalist terms, i.e., the ‘all’ of ‘all and each’ within a territory. The governmentalised state is also concerned with the universality of the imbrication of states in relations with other states. However, Foucault’s analysis of strategy, of how the bourgeoisie and the state are able to use failures, suggests that the ‘all’ is not all there is, because the all of governmentality is subsumed in strategic elaborations of dominant classes that include the effects of state government. Class strategising is thus characterised by a concern with the government of all (including governmentalised state apparatuses) by some—we are dealing not with the universal of all but a *particularism of class strategy* that aims to exclude itself from a concern with the all: class dominance means to count the dominant group out. Thus, the particularism of class strategising, as thought, and its real-concrete advantageous position, articulates and subsumes the universalism of governmentality and its *dispositif*. Class while part of the political field, is *exceptional* in relation to government. In this respect, dominant classes engaged in strategic usages have more in common with the sovereign model of rule in which sovereignty is construed as transcendent of the object of government, i.e., excludes itself from the very terrain of the concern with rule. In the general economy of domination, there is another avatar of the King’s head in the form of what can be called the ‘para-security’ of class strategising. Why ‘para-security’?

Since governmentality involves the autono-politics of actions and the biopolitics of population, strategy can be formulated as the autono-politics of actions (i.e., their use) and the class-politics of dominance. Like government, it remains a

domination at a distance as distinct from say, direct class exploitation or directly targeting bodily capacities. The calculus of strategy then, has a resemblance to the calculus of security-territory-population. But here we have two species of security, i.e., conditions for rendering a field of action calculable and practicable. Like governmentality, strategy is a modality of thought about a future. But strategic use is parallel and reactive to government because reliant on unequal class positioning necessary to usage, but remains distinct from it since the domain with which it is concerned extends beyond the 'all and each' of governmentality. So, strategic thought has a security rationality but it is not about the security of the population; rather it is about the security of dominant classes. Strategy is the pragmatics of securing domination at a distance. Thus, people are not simply thought about as biogovernmental objects, but as particular means of securing advantages to dominant classes. In short, *strategy is particularist security pursued by other means*, the result being structured inequalities.

This class particularist calculus amounts to a concern with what I call 'para-security'. The effects are means to a different end, used as different tactical supports from a dominant class or set of class alliances. In other words, strategy involves calculations about how to secure the conditions for the exercise of dominance over others, conditions for rendering a field of action calculable and practicable to the advantage of some. To consider a genealogy of the governmentalisation of the state then involves a very marked *decentring* of modern political rationality and its concern with 'all and each' by means of strategic thought. What the class dominance of hegemony does is produce the excess of a concern with para-security.

Governmentality, the governmental *dispositif* and class strategising, then

constitute the totality of the thought about societies and their futures. The totality here is one of governmentalisation that produces not a universal totality, but a *hegemonised* totality (totality as understood in the Bataillean sense) in which are articulated two dominant systems of thought: the restricted economy of governmentality and the unrestricted economy of class strategies. Consequently, the restricted universal economy of governmentality is pushed into a general economy of class dominance. The universalism of governmentality is then undone and subsumed by its abjected other of class particularism. In Foucauldian terms, *strategy* because of its particularism, undid the *universals* of both the French Revolution and the Russian Revolution. In the case of the former, it is the particularism of the bourgeoisie that undoes the Jacobin revolution of 1792, paving the Thermidorian way for Napoleon. In the case of the Russian Revolution, it is the strategy of the Communist Party that undoes the universal, soviet-democratic apparatus of socialist government.

There are two other excesses found in Foucault's account of government, strategy and hegemony indicating that a general economy is very much at work in the political field. The first is the excess of power and with it, the excess of action over the thought about those actions. Governmental thought is thrown into the domain of actions, thrown into the political field. The first experience of governmental thought, or indeed any thought, I think Foucault would say, is that of the problem: thought is confronted with what to do with the actions perceived in the terms of a discourse. Programming attempts an ordering of that perceived reality and actually tries to make it make sense and give it order and direction. Implied here is the notion that prior to programming, the multiplicity of actions that actualise human existence in a society, life does not really make sense,

hence the problem.

Furthermore, the failures of programmes suggests that the actions produced are themselves excessive—modes of being, even while hegemonised by governmentality are not *totalised* by it. The excess of being, actualised as the multiplicity of actions, is the inherent condition of programme failure. In this sense, human existence is an excess relative to the thought about it. This is why I argue that thought, while dominant, is not *determinant*: what is determinant is power. This determinance of power supplies an excess of action over thought. The actuality of human existence, its body and its forces are abnormal and perhaps even monstrous when compared to the smooth, homogenised thought about population. Indeed, the monstrous life of the population appears in the nightmare of security, i.e., the people in the moment of insurrection (Foucault 1972b/1996: 90-91; cf. AB: 101-102). Putting Bataille to work on Foucault suggests that the governmentalisation of being leads to a monstrosity, an abject object of governmentality. This is a radical, sacred difference between the population as an object of governmental thought and a deviant life that inheres in biogovernmental life itself. The excess of life in the population threatens to reveal itself in the revolutionary mob as the obscene, spectral underside of the fantasy of governmentalist rule.

At the same time however, there is also an excess of thought itself. It is precisely the proliferation of discourse about a domain of existence, first in the form of problematisation and then in the form of objectification. The failure of the programme is what perpetuates the excess of the will to truth, i.e., its eternal return. In Bataillean terms, there is a general economy in the order of discourse. In this respect, we find a Foucauldian methodological rule: the way to choose a pertinent part of the archive for

research is to note a marked quantitative increase of statements in the order of discourse about a problem or object (HS; Foucault 1983a/2003: 105). The excesses of actions over thought, that in turn drives the excess of thought in the recurrence of a form of problematisation, means that there is a general economy inscribed right in the heart of what appears, at first glance, to be a restricted economy of strategic calculus about improvement and security. The repetition of governmental problematisation given its necessary failing, is thus, unwittingly, *nonproductive expenditure*, an expenditure that does not and cannot produce the desired results (Bataille 1933/1994).

What I wish to stress in theorising Foucault's analytic of power and government in terms of general economy is that the will to truth and its deployment in governmental programming is excessive and nonproductive, whatever its pretence to scientific rationality and means-ends calculation. Moreover, strategy and hegemony reveal a perverse underside of the governmental *dispositif* that traverses it, just as the restricted economy is traversed by the laws of general economy. In other words, the hegemony-effect is both more determinant (but not dominant) and more extensive in its effects than the governmental *dispositif*. In short, it is the excess of the hegemony-effect that produces failures and the excessive return of the will to truth in the governmental *dispositif*.

Bataille suggests that the life of societies, as an emergent complex organism in many respects, is driven by tragic movement. For him, life is structured between experiences of 'laughter and tears' (Bataille 1943/1988). Laughter and tears are moments when subjectivity is brought to the point of failure. Tears take us to the limit of seeing and beyond, to a kind of blindness. In laughter, speech is taken beyond its limit in a contagious paroxysm. Both laughter and tears communicate the deepest experiences of

human existence at the limit of seeing and saying, but not in a form that can be homogenised by a value system. From the point of view of governmental thought, the activity of thinking about the ordering and directing of human existence is *inherently tragic*, possessing a flaw, namely its ignorance and finitude.

It is precisely the *object* of the governmental *dispositif*, its excluded term, that supplements the subject-object couple of the power-knowledges of the human sciences, that becomes decisive in structuring the political field. First, the abjected element of the *governmental dispositif* is the failure of the programme. Then, there is the object/excess of *effects* over the programme, i.e., the production of *action* beyond the restricted designs of governance. Dominant classes then use the same security calculus of governmentality but exclude themselves from its application. Next, the strategic calculus of dominant classes responding to the effects of the governmental *dispositif* does not count themselves among the 'all' of the 'all and each'. It would not be so far off to say that this is the quintessential discursive event of ruling-class formation. In each of these case we find an economy of abjection and excess traversing the whole structuring of the political field.

We are now in a position to return to the Foucauldian formulae that the political is about power, that in modern societies governmentality is the thought about it, and that the governmental exercise of power involves 'action upon an action'. Once again, the actuality of the political field is to be found in the positive effects of power: power is about what people do and government concerns itself with what they are doing and can do. I argue that when taken together and adequately theorised, the Foucauldian account of the political field and its conditions of existence refer to a severe blockage of

possibilities, producing a post-political condition.² Because of this, Foucault's own remarks aside, the post-political epoch of government, in which existence is hegemonised by governmentality is indeed what he called a 'state of domination' as noted above (Foucault 1984a/2003: 27). Understanding Foucault's account of the political field in terms of a general economy of domination in which human existence is hegemonised by governmentality also helps us to appreciate why for him political ideology is inconsequential.

Foucault was at pains to show that both discursive formations and political technologies cannot be sorted into types of political ideology. Rather, what he finds is that they are shared amongst liberals, Stalinists and Nazis: they all use the same types of the exercise of power and rely on the same forms of thought about human existence. In a Heideggerian vein, Foucault argues that it is these technologies that make us what we are. For example, the forms of power like *dressage*, discipline and biopolitics are not peculiar to capitalist societies or to the dominance of utilitarian philosophy but are found in

² This formulation has affinities with the Gramscian concept of 'blocked hegemony'. Blocked hegemony is a situation where

one element of the dominant hegemony may be of such paramount significance that it blocks or inhibits change and development within the dominant hegemony itself. For example, the priority within Catholic theology on the injunction against birth control impedes any process of doctrinal modernization over the whole range of reproductive and familial policies. Alternatively, the strength and near fixity of some element in the dominant hegemony may have such wide-ranging repercussions as to block the development of a counterhegemonic project; for example, the centrality that Islam accorded to gender segregation may have succeeded, for the present at least, in blocking the modernization and secularizing thrust unleashed during the overthrow in 1979 of the Shah in Iran (Hunt 1990/1993: 234).

socialist societies too (cf. Foucault 1978d/2003; 1977c/1988; 1974b/1996; Zizek 1999/2000: 11-12).

Foucault makes this point forcefully in an interview entitled 'The Politics of Soviet Crime' from 1976 where he links the political techniques of nineteenth century Western Europe to the Nazi concentration camp at Dachau and to forms of Soviet social control—they all used the same rationalities and techniques:

It is undoubtedly true that although the Soviets indeed changed the distribution of property and the role of the state in the control of production they merely adopted certain power and management techniques perfected by 19th-century European capitalism. The particular form of morality, esthetic forms, and disciplinary method that already functioned effectively by 1850 in European bourgeois society—its forms of social control—were adopted wholesale by the Soviets. ... Just as the Soviets adopted the principles of scientific management and other related management techniques developed in the West, they also adopted our disciplinary techniques, adding one new weapon—party discipline—to the arsenal we had perfected (Foucault 1976d/1996: 191-192).

Thus the differences between the two allegedly diametrically opposed main political ideologies of the twentieth century, Marxism and Nazism, are inconsequential. What is consequential are the systems of thought and the technologies of power that they use in their attempts to achieve their respective projects and attempt to secure the project.

Foucault's approach to analysing the political field then, can be summed up as follows. First, we must reject the reduction of the political to any other instance and affirm that modes of being are contingently constituted. Second, we need to recognise that the actuality of the political field is constituted by actions, resting on micro-power relations of dominance and subordination connected with one another that both enable and constrain the capacities of subjects imbricated in those relations. Power relations are shaped by thought and are articulated with other social determinants to form a network of

conduits of capacities coursing through the social body. These comprise the tactical implements for dominant classes of subjects to engage in various strategies for pursuing some overall goal for the coordination and organisation of the social body. The articulation of thought and power to produce actions, *via* the juridical element of subjectivity, is located and organised in a general economy of domination. And last, governing and the thought about it, is the hegemonic element of the political present in the modern world. Government refers to the various means through which actions, in a variety of institutions, are coordinated and directed without this activity being necessarily dependent on direct domination or coercion. Government involves the ways in which individualised and collectivised modes of being are constituted in relation to the effects produced by their activities so as to improve them indirectly and come closer to realising a programmed goal. The central feature of this modality of power relations is the thought of governing (i.e., governmentality) that provides the means for rendering the social field intelligible in terms of the immanent capacities actually existing within a social body and how possible courses of action and intervention in the social body could be used to direct, strengthen or weaken these relative capacities in order to achieve some or other objective that is positively valorised by classes of subjects in positions of authority to decide on them.

Conclusion

This chapter has rendered an explication of the Foucauldian conception of the *object of transformation*, namely, the general economy of domination and its structure. This required the development of the model of the governmental *dispositif*. Since thought is

dominant, governmental rationality is dominant in the problematisation of contemporary modes of being. This installs a will to truth and a veridical character to governmental rationality not least since it relies on the *savoirs* and power-knowledge techniques of the human science. It is nothing new to say that we live under a tyranny of experts (Sheptycki 1996: 70) and Foucault would not disagree, but that is not really the point. The point is that the governmentalisation of social life *hegemonises action*. Theorising the linkages between the strategic thought of domination as the model for, and genus of governmental political rationality, together with their real-concrete referents can be summed up as follows: the modern political field, i.e., the constitution of our political present, is characterised by the general economy of strategic domination, hegemonised by governmentality.

The activity of government needs to be understood as itself located and subordinated by the hegemony-effect and class cleavage of the general economy of domination. There is then a remarkable consistency to Foucault's problematic. With his analyses of types of power relations and attention to political rationalities, he is able to link his archaeological concern with the human sciences and the will to truth to a series of discourses and mechanisms that have led to the hegemonisation of societies by truth. This is the truth we tell ourselves, tell others, produce, analyse, quantify and catalogue, that is then used as the data for developing policy solutions to social and individual problems. The thought about our truth and how this governmental thought and our truth are compelled and produced *are* our hegemony, are our 'state of domination', Foucault's reservations about the term notwithstanding.

This state of domination produces a post-political condition, the epochal effect of which is precisely the constraint and limitation on the thought about the future. In a governmentalised present, the future must be new and improved and guided by the truth about human existence. What the entire *dispositif* of government and its bases of support, situated in the general economy of domination does, is *abject* the constitutive *question* of politics, namely, “What kind of society do we wish to live in and how might it be achieved?”. In short, the post-political effect of governmentality rests upon a fundamental abjection, namely the problematisation of a different future and a different measure of things.

I now have explicated a Foucauldian conception of the *object of transformation*. The object of transformation is the articulation of actions, structured in dominance by the hegemonisation of modes of being by governmentality to produce the present actuality. It is itself decentred by *strategic usages* all of which are overdetermined by the actual structure of inequalities. What does Foucault see as being effective means of transforming these conditions of domination; what justification does he have for them? These questions bring us to the next chapter in which I address his most significant ways of addressing modes of transformation.

Chapter Seven:

Foucault's Expulsion of Politics

Work done at the limits of ourselves must, on the one hand, open up a realm of historical inquiry and, on the other, put itself to the test of reality, of contemporary reality, both to grasp the points where change is possible and desirable, and to determine the precise form this change should take. This means that the historical ontology of ourselves must turn away from all projects that claim to be global or radical. In fact, we know from experience that the claim to escape from the system of contemporary reality so as to produce the overall programs of another society, of another way of thinking, another culture, another vision of the world, has led only to the return of the most dangerous traditions (Foucault 1984d/2003: 54).

Introduction

This opening quotation in important respects encapsulates Foucault's conception of desirable and possible modes of transformation in the present. My aim in this chapter is to examine and distil the theoretical logic of Foucault's concepts and arguments subtending this kind of remark. Having argued that the Foucauldian object of transformation is the general economy of domination hegemonised by the governmental *dispositif*, in this chapter I pose the question of what Foucault recommends can be done about the conditions that limit possibilities for becoming otherwise or, to put it somewhat differently, 'Are we trapped in "perpetual spirals of power and pleasure" (HS: 45)?' (cf. Simons 1995; 49). It is important to actually pose the question about transformation to Foucault to neither dogmatically support or oppose his optimism about ethics.

It might be objected that Foucault never endorsed any particular political programme for the practical transformation of the present. By and large, I agree with this characterisation of his work. At the same time though, Foucault's investigations of what he saw as effective transformations that opened up possibilities implies that some forms

of thought and some ways of being are more effective than others for enabling means of escape from the present actuality. As he puts it, 'It would not be possible for power relations to exist without points of insubordination which, by definition, are means of escape' (Foucault 1982a/1983: 225).

However, it is important not to be overly taken with Foucault's account of the political field nor with his sense about possible and desirable modes for transforming the present and this is why I write of Foucault's expulsion of politics. Jon Simon's endorsement of Foucault's position tellingly reveals both the coordinates of, and the stakes in, the expulsion of politics: 'Perhaps there is no more pressing political need than arts of the self through which people detach themselves from current subjectivities. Foucault's thought is therefore timely because it addresses the costs of remaining attached to seemingly natural personal and collective identities' (Simons 1995: 123; cf. Paras 2006: 126-127). But for Foucault, and Simons and Paras following him, ethics cannot be a politics, not least since its focus is distinctly on individualisation, characterised by 'an ethics or stylization of life which is not shackled to political power and scientific truth' (Simons 1995: 75). To call a focus on the self as a mode of individualisation, a form of politics stretches what is meant by politics beyond recognition; it may be transformative, but the issue is transformative of what? Given the Foucauldian conception of what the object of transformation is, to uncritically endorse this displacement of politics by ethics gives us ample reason for inspecting Foucault's reasoning about modes of transformation. Indeed, what interests Foucault as concerns ethics is precisely that it breaks with politics. It is the cost of doing so that is pertinent.

There are two main reasons for arguing that there is an expulsion of politics in Foucault. The first is that if we pose the question of whether or not there is a concern for, or a concept of, politics in Foucault's account of the political field, we find that he has no positive or direct answer to the question. Indeed, his account of the political field is exclusively an account of the contingent formation of modern rule. True, and as I hope I have conveyed in the preceding three chapters, it is a very powerful account of rule, one that I have developed in a way that allows one to grasp the uneven and aleatory formation of post-politics, hence offering an account of the central epochal limitation of the present. But it is a major oversight on his part to have *only* rendered an account of the political field in terms of rule. In short, we only get an account of the dominations that make us and our present what they are, actualised in our actions. And, as I stressed at the outset of the thesis, when it comes to the question of politics, it is precisely *what isn't happening* that has purchase on conceptualising politics and thus the focus cannot simply be limited to a concern with what is actually happening which is Foucault's methodological rule. So, the first feature of Foucault's expulsion of politics is that his account of the political field never poses the question of the possibilities of politics in the present. The second limitation is found when examining the range of what Foucault sees as transformative, none are politics *qua* large-scale projects of societal transformation undertaken by a collective subject in order to create the coordinates and conditions of a *new, different future*.

This chapter deals with the limits of Foucault's concern with domination; his sense about plausible modes of transformation; their implicit normative criteria leading to a displacement of politics by ethics; and finally the logic of his expulsion of politics. In

short, we are dealing with an analytical expulsion of politics (i.e., the focus on rule and domination); the practical expulsion of politics (i.e., none of Foucault's favoured modes of transformation qualify as a politics); and third, a critical expulsion of politics, i.e., the displacement of normative/regulative criteria for assessing courses of action required for transforming the general economy of domination.

Foucault's expulsion of politics has important implications for justifying the kind of critical analytic of the present he advocates. His justifications reject the conventional Enlightenment link between science and politics in which the former prescribes a course of political action in the pursuit of humanitarian progress. As he argues, 'the block constituted by the Enlightenment and the Revolution has no doubt prevented us in a general way from truly and profoundly questioning this relationship between rationalization and power', that limits the experimentation with new ways of living (Foucault 1997a/2003: 269). This rejection is based on his critical analysis of the forms of domination inherent in government and its reliance on the human sciences. Notwithstanding Foucault's expulsion of politics, this does not lead to a Foucauldian nihilism because he offers two positive recommendations as alternatives to the link between science and politics.

Displacing science, he advocates instead the practice of writing critical histories of the present. Practically, his work also implies a displacement of politics by ethics. So, instead of science guiding politics, with ethics we find a work of thought that seeks to open the door to existential possibilities for individuals and hence potentially new forms of subjectivity and new modes of being. For Foucault, ethics, or arts of existence, offer a possible and desirable means of escape from hegemonised existence, but without

transforming a mode of being for one purpose or singular political goal—the point is to perpetuate experimentation with modes of being. That said, the issue is whether or not this Foucauldian position is persuasive and what price is to be paid for accepting it. First, I will deal with Foucault's analytical expulsion of politics.

The Analytical Reduction of the Political Field to the Rubric of Rule

The main limitation of Foucault's account of the political field, supplying his concept of the object of transformation, is that his problematic is solely concerned with domination and rule. In short, his concern is with the way things already are and thus his referent is an always already accomplished and stabilised condition of rule. For example the conditions of hegemonised human existence within a social body or body politic, found in *Discipline and Punish* and *The History of Sexuality*, refer to conditions enabling the constitution of a ruling class (or collective of dominant subjects) able to stabilise a social field in such a way that it becomes possible for them to use people's actions in an advantageous way, thus reproducing their position of dominance. True, we find a very powerful conception of the *object of transformation*, or what it is that we are fighting against, but that is all. Thus, rule, or hegemony *via* governmentality, can be said to be the overarching rubric of his analytic of the political field.

Additionally, we find a another major analytical limitation in Foucault's ontology and it hinges first on his concept of power and second on his concept of action. Key here is Foucault's endorsement of the notion that 'everything is political' (Foucault 1977e/1980: 189), because the political is comprised of power relations that are equated with the actualised capacities of human life. Consequently, the category of the political

field is extended so far that it loses any specificity; what it refers to is *all actions* and the thought about them. What gets lost is the specificity of the battles over the shaping of a shared fate and the battle for the conditions necessary to engaging in politics. These are conventional concerns to be sure, but ones still worth thinking about. Consequently, in the terms of Foucault's analytic, it is not possible to specify any distinctly political sphere, however one might define it. Foucault's account of everything that happens in history and human existence (i.e., the contingently formed historicity of modes of being) is deemed to be the product of power relations actualised in the multiplicity of actions. This is then equated with the political field and later government, in his own terms. His analytic of power and government thus results in the conceptual dissolution of the actual content of the political field into the vicissitudes of the multiplicities of human action (cf. Neocleous 1996). Here, Althusser's critique of Gramsci, and by extension of Poulantzas and Foucault, is helpful for clarifying the theoretical limitations of restricting an analysis of the political field in terms of what we are fighting against and the claim that everything is political.

For Althusser, the main weakness of many Marxian conceptions of politics is their focus on the state, even if underdeveloped. The main achievement of Marx's own 'elements of a theory of the state' (Althusser 1978/2006: 68) is to have appreciated the separateness of the state from both the conditions of economic exploitation and from politics. The way Althusser puts it, drawing on Marx and Lenin, is to stress that the state is an 'instrument' or 'bludgeon', 'that the dominant class uses to perpetuate its class domination' (Althusser 1978/2006: 68). Consequently, Althusser argues that 'the political is not reducible to the state', but is something that exists to first constitute and second, to

reproduce class domination because ‘it is the instrument, “machine” or “apparatus” on which everything depends whenever it is a question of changing the economico-social bases of society’ (Althusser 1978/2006: 69). The state then, is something fought over in a broader series of class struggles in which the state is merely one of the stakes. This implies that politics, i.e., actual class struggle, encompasses both matters of class domination and the state (cf. Althusser 1978/2006: 61-80). Althusser then turns his sights on Gramsci because with the Gramscian concept of hegemony, everything is political and at the same time the political has autonomy from both political society and civil society—hegemony is what actualises their articulation. Thus, for Gramsci, as for Foucault, there is nothing outside the political (Althusser 1978/2006: 149).

The point that Althusser stresses missed by both Gramsci, and by extension Foucault, concerns the *constitutive power of violence*, first of the Sovereign and then as a power unique to the state, hence its separateness as stressed by Marx and Lenin. What Althusser’s work shows is that the political cannot be usefully thought about as a unitary sphere that swallows all else. To do so is to miss the point about the role and use of violence in history, including the violence used to seize the capacities for organised violence taken to be the distinguishing feature of the state as an instrument of societal ordering. My solution here, stressing the *difference* between the actuality of rule (and its conditions of existence in a social formation) and politics, does not mean ‘bringing the state back in’ (Evans *et al* 1985) as the central focus of political analysis. Rather, it means posing the question of what could be meant by the capacity of a politics that makes hegemony possible in the first place.

Althusser's argument about the dangers of over-extending the category of the political and so losing any sense that politics, class domination and the state are distinct but related, should also be applied to Foucault's dissolution of the political field. For Althusser, to say that "everything is political" is an 'aberrant thesis', that highlights an 'absolute limit of Marxist thought': namely its inability to conceptualise politics. We find the same logic in Foucault for while he certainly decentres the state in a general economy of domination we are still left with the axiom that 'everything is political', history is comprised of 'actions' and our sense of what our present is—our historicity—is constituted by the thought about those actions. In short, we are still dealing with a domain constituted by the determination of relations of domination. The aleatory materialist point then does not mean focusing on identifying the specific manifestations of state power but on the manifestations of politics. That is to say that the Foucauldian problematic of the political field of power and government lacks the capacity to pose the question of politics and hence is unable to think it, in the terms of his analytic; we are dealing with an analytical expulsion of politics. Consequently, Foucault's innovations notwithstanding, and while his ontology is distinct from that of Marx, Lenin and Gramsci, the logic of his analytic is similar to Gramsci's because any specificity of the activity of politics is dissolved into domination and rule. The result is that Foucault does not help us get beyond this Marxian impasse and hence there is no positive, developed theoretical answer to the question, '*just what might politics be?*' (Althusser 1978/2006: 150 [emphasis in original]).

In sum, when it comes to the analytical expulsion of politics, Foucault's detailed descriptions of various types of domination, their conditions of existence and effects,

occludes what could be meant by politics, missing the rarity of politics as a social force potentially constitutive of a new structuring of the political field. In Foucault, the political field is exclusively about the contingent formation of rule. It thus misses a distinctively political matter of what political subjects fight for and the battle for the material conditions in which to pursue a different future. In doing so, Foucault produces a dissolution of the concept of the political field as referring to a distinct field, into a concept about everything that for him counts as existence and history. Foucault's question was not a question about politics but instead involved a concern with the contingency of modes of being. However, it is not as though he did not have a sense of how intentional transformations, of what he saw as being problems are absent from his work. Attending to a number of them helps provide some sense of how and why Foucault saw some practices as transformative, hence attuning us to his preferences for certain modes of transformation.

Transforming Thought

Foucault's attention to systems of thought and its dominance in the structure of modes of being is accompanied by his attention to the transformative capacity of thought. And he undertakes a number of important investigations into transformations of thought and their potential in the present. His own practice as an intellectual and his reflections on it are themselves indicative of his conception of critical thinking as a mode of transformation.

As he states,

I dream of the intellectual destroyer of evidence and universalities, the one who, in the inertias and constraints of the present, locates and marks the weak points, the openings, the lines of power, who incessantly displaces himself, doesn't know exactly where he is heading nor what he'll think

tomorrow because he is too attentive to the present; who, in passing, contributes to the raising of the question of knowing whether the revolution is worth it, and what kind (I mean what kind of revolution and what effort), it being understood that they alone who are willing to risk their lives to bring it about can answer the question (Foucault 1977g/1988: 124).

His analysis of transformations of thought also guide his understanding of avant-garde art and the role of intellectuals in critical and/or transformative activities. But, Foucault's conception of transformative knowledge is based on his conception of the work of critical thought, tied to his way of approaching history and to an attitude of experimentation toward one's existence in the present. Attending to thought in this way is important because these modes of transformation are something he emphasized throughout his career and with remarkable theoretical consistency. They also serve as a reminder that the dominance of thought in the ontological structure of modes of being is reflected in his understanding of the transformative capacity of certain modes of thought. For example, the justification for the practical, transformative impact of archaeological and genealogical analysis rests on the relationship between the activity of thinking (as opposed to already constituted forms of thought) is captured in the following:

The work of the intellect is to show that what is, does not have to be what it is. ... Therefore the return to history makes sense in the respect that history shows that that which is, not always was so. It unites causal movements into threads of a fragile and uncertain history. Thus, things were formed which give the impression of the greatest self-evidence. What reason considers its necessity or much more what various forms of rationality claim to be their necessary existence, has a history which we can determine completely and recover from the tapestry of contingency. But this doesn't mean that these forms of rationality are irrational. They rest upon a foundation of human practices and human faces, because they are made they can be unmade—of course assuming we know how they were made (Foucault 1983f/1996: 359).

Here, Foucault distils much of the justification for his own work and why he thinks that this ‘work of the intellect’ can be transformative because attuning us to the openness of existence since what we are is contingently formed (cf. Foucault 1981/2003: 173). The transformative capacity of thought can be grasped by considering the practices and effects of what he understood by: criticism; analytics and diagnostics; the counter-human sciences and anti-science; avant-garde art; the role of specific intellectuals; and *parrhesia* (i.e., fearless speech).

Critical Thought

Critical thought plays a key role in Foucault’s conception of modes of transformation; it relies on the practice of uncovering, through historical research, the contingent formation of modes of being, analysing how we have become what we are, ‘calling into question domination at every level and in every form in which it exists, whether political, economic, sexual, institutional or what have you’ (Foucault 1984a/2003: 42). As he states, ‘A critique does not consist in saying that things aren’t good the way they are. It consists in seeing on what type of assumptions, of familiar notions, of established, unexamined ways of thinking the accepted practices are based’ (Foucault 1981/2003: 172). For example, in *Discipline and Punish* his analysis of the emergence of a new penal rationality of confinement in the nineteenth century, ‘It’s a matter of shaking this false self-evidence, of demonstrating its precariousness, of making visible not its arbitrariness but its complex interconnections with a multiplicity of historical processes, many of them of a recent date’ (Foucault 1980a/2003: 248; Foucault 1978b/1996: 261). For Foucault

then, the negative orientation of critique needs to take a positive turn, focusing on 'whatever is singular, contingent' (Foucault 1984d/2003: 53).

Foucault also argues that critical work is central to any transformative project, because, 'as soon as people begin to have trouble thinking things as the way they have been thought, transformation becomes at the same time very urgent, very difficult and entirely possible' (Foucault 1981/2003: 172). This form of positive critique has a specific form and programme, very closely tied to archaeology and genealogy and hence to a specific form of criticism through historical research. As he states,

criticism is no longer going to be practiced in the search for formal structures with universal values [as in strict Kantianism] but, rather, as a historical investigation into the events that have led us to constitute ourselves and to recognize ourselves as subjects of what we are doing, thinking, saying. In that sense, this criticism is not transcendental, and its goal is not that of making a metaphysics possible: it is genealogical in its design and archaeological in its method (Foucault 1984d/2003: 53).

It is not as though this form of critique through historical research simply amounts to a concern with the past or with what we have already become, because archaeological and genealogical work 'starts off from this present day actuality', attending to 'a field containing a number of points that are particularly fragile or sensitive at the present time' (Foucault 1983c/1996: 411).

In the 1980s, Foucault increasingly emphasises that to have a productive and positive relationship to the Enlightenment and the critical *ethos* that he associates with both Kant and Nietzsche, means being attuned to the present actuality, i.e., to 'what is happening around us, what our present is... asking oneself about what we are today in our present actuality' (Foucault 1983c/1996: 407; cf. 1984d/2003; 1983f/1996: 359). The point 'is to try to detect those things which have not yet been talked about, those things

that, at the present time, introduce, show, give some more or less vague indications of the fragility of our system of thought, in our way of reflecting, in our practices' (Foucault 1983c/1996: 411). Foucault's interpretation of the Enlightenment attitude toward the present certainly shares something with journalistic practice but it is much more than this. Moreover, Foucault cautions that we should not be naïve about the representations of the present actuality found in contemporary mass media that is 'a materiality caught up in the mechanisms of the economy and power' (Foucault 1977i/1980: 161-162). For him, 'journalism, that capital invention of the nineteenth century [...] made evident all the utopian character of this politics of the gaze' (162). His way of linking the past and possibilities in the present is reflected in the way he distinguishes between analytical critical thought and diagnostic critical thought.

Analytics and Diagnostics: From Being to Becoming

Foucault's approach to writing history was to use history as a weapon against histories constructed as apologies for the present. Donnelly (1982/1994: 331) outlines three techniques that Foucault uses to this end: 'making the past unfamiliar', 'highlighting breaks or discontinuities in the historical record' and 'making the basic concepts and categories of the human sciences problematic' (Donnelly 1982/1994: 331). Histories of the present, are concerned with rationalities that limit forms of problematisation and experimentation, 'which constitute the partition between present and past, "new" and "old"' (Gordon 1980: 241-2). But, there is an important link in the programme of the history of the present, one that links the past and openness of the present. Indeed, for him, 'liberation can only come from attacking... political rationality at its very roots' (Gordon

1980: 201).

Insightfully, Deleuze argues that Foucault's critical analyses involve historical and contemporary dimensions. The historical dimension concerns being (i.e., the history of the present actuality of what we are) and the contemporary dimension concerns what we are becoming. (Deleuze 1989/1992: 164). Archaeology very much concerns an analysis of being as the already constituted actuality of what we are; genealogy is more attuned to a diagnosis of the fragility and openness of the present. Writing this kind of history facilitates accounts of how things can change dramatically and yet combine with things that remain the same (cf. Foucault 1980a/2003: 248-249; Foucault 1968a/1991), the result being a new *dispositif*. The objects of Foucault's historical analytics (i.e., archaeology) focus on what he called 'the archive' (Foucault 1969d/1996: 57).

Archaeology aims to describe and analyse systems of thought, in particular those veridical discourses that deal with human beings as objects of knowledge. An archaeological approach to knowledge attempts to analyse the history of knowledge without recourse to the reduction of knowledge to the history of a whole society, a history of ideas or any other form of general history; rather archaeology attends to the specific region of the accumulated productions of domains of veridical statements. This focus is more than simply a matter of method; it is guided by Foucault's ontology. Archaeology also treats the history of knowledge as constituted by interruptions, thresholds, transformations and displacements. This approach allows one to attend to specificities and particularities in the history of knowledge. This is done by identifying *events* and different *series* 'which are juxtaposed to one another, follow one another, overlap and intersect, without one being able to reduce them to a linear series' (AK: 8), series like

those of economic history, demographic changes, various histories of sciences, etc.

Attending to history in this way opens up the archaeological research field, 'made up of the totality of all effective statements (whether spoken or written), in their dispersion as events and in the occurrence that is proper to them' (AK: 27). Archaeology then 'designates the general theme of a description that questions the already-said at the level of its existence: of the enunciative function that operates within it, of the discursive formation, and the general archive system to which it belongs. Archaeology describes discourses as practices specified in the element of the archive' (AK: 131). A further dimension of critical thought involves adding the diagnostic, more genealogical sensibility to critical thought as a transformative practice.

Foucault links the diagnosis of the present to the attitude characteristic of the Enlightenment but emphasizes that Nietzsche opened the door to a methodology adequate to a transformative, life affirming, critical ethos (Foucault 1967c/1999: 96-97). This diagnostic sensibility is a definitive feature of Foucault's interviews through which he clarifies his theoretical positions and illustrates how his conceptual tools and historical analyses can be combined to assess the possibilities contained in the present (Deleuze 1989/1992). Diagnoses include cartographies of the sites and locations of mechanisms of knowledge and power that constitute us as particular kinds of subjects, in order to show how we might be able resist and destabilise the manner in which we are made subjects. Considerations of the contemporary world thus illustrate that issues of continuity-discontinuity become important insofar as diagnoses also require that one ascertain 'how our present is absolutely different from all that is not it, that is to say from our past' (Foucault 1969c/1996: 53).

Genealogical writing aims at writing ‘effective histories’, histories of the concrete social effects of relations between knowledge, power and bodies that ‘differs from traditional history in being without constants. Nothing in man—not even his body—is sufficiently stable to serve as the basis for self-recognition or for understanding other men’ (Foucault 1971b/2003: 360). In contrast to analytics, diagnostic investigation involves not simply rationalities but also relations between forces. In other words, contemporary diagnosis attends to the signs that indicate where and how struggles over modes of life occur. There are though some limitations to the transformative effects of critical thought.

While the manifest justification for critical thought *via* historical analysis and contemporary diagnosis lies in attending to the fragility and openness of the present, one of the effects of Foucault’s work was a kind of impasse experienced by those engaged in humanitarian work, people like social workers in prisons (Foucault 1980a/2003: 254–255). In one of his replies to this objectionable effect, he argues ‘that this very reaction proves that the work [DP] was successful... It shows that people read it as an experience that changed them, that prevented them from always being the same, or from having the same relation with things, with others’ (Foucault 1980b/2000: 245–246). Foucault’s answer to this problem is telling because it reflects the importance of thought as he understands it. What he attempts is ‘to contribute to changing certain things in people’s way of perceiving and doing things’ (255). Producing an impasse through critique is part of that work because producing a point at which it becomes important to actually stop and think, to struggle for thinking, as part of a transformative practice. As he states,

The problem, you see, is one for the subject who acts—the subject of action through which the real is transformed. If prisons and punitive

mechanisms are transformed, it won't be because a plan of reform has found its way into the heads of social workers; it will be when those who have a stake in that reality, all of those people, have come into collision with each other and with themselves, run into dead ends, problems and impossibilities, been through conflicts and confrontations—when critique has been played out in the real, not when reformers have realized their ideas (Foucault 1980a/2003: 256-257).

Analysis and diagnosis, as the work of a truly critical thought, aims to open some space for contest and dispute, creating some space for new battles that bring power relations to light and show that it is important to think once again. Critical analysis aims to introduce an urgency about thinking in the present without there being a prescriptive alternative as far as the content of thinking goes—the point is to engage in the activity of *thinking*, for 'to work is to undertake to think something other than what one has thought before' (Foucault 1984i/1996: 455; cf. 1981/2003: 172). Parallel to the elaboration of the practical impact of archaeology and genealogy as a means for thinking about the present actuality, are a number of Foucault's considerations of how avant-garde art can as well be transformative, not least since it displaces the figure of Man—the *Auteur*.

Art: The Possibilities of Thought Beyond Man and Truth

Foucault's archaeological writings attend to the ability of avant-garde art to break with the dominant coordinates of systems of thought and indeed, even with the modern *episteme*. As discussed in Chapter 3, his interests in avant-garde art were quite broad. They include discussions of surrealist Andre Breton (Foucault 1966b/1996), Antonin Artaud (HM), Klowssowski (1964b/1999), Boulez (1980c/1997), Bataille (1963c/2003), Roussel (1963b/1986) and Magritte (1968c/1998) (cf. Pearce 2006; Carrette 2000). At issue for him was the way a range of works were able to exist outside of dominant

discourses rooted in the contemporary university. Foucault's remarks on Bataille and Blanchot concerning the problematisation of subjectivity in modern literature after the death of man provides some evidence that thought, even in the modern *episteme* in which humanity and its truth are the dominant coordinates, is effective in opening a new kind of discourse and a new kind of writing without requiring any valorisation of Man (Gutting 1994a).

Nonhumanist thought can also extend beyond art to include different kinds of rigorous analysis and reflection. In Bataille for instance, 'thought ceases to be the discourse of contradiction or the unconscious, becoming the discourse of the limit, of ruptured subjectivity, transgression' (Foucault 1966b/2003: 426). So Bataille's discourse broke with the central organising tropes and concerns of rationalist, humanist approaches to questions of subjectivity and knowledge. Furthermore, 'Blanchot's and Barthes' trajectory tended to desacralize literature by breaking the connections that put it in a position of absolute expression' (Foucault 1975c/1996: 152). He contends that 'for Bataille and Blanchot, I believe that the former's experience of eroticism and the latter's language, understood as experiences of dissolution, disappearance, denial of the subject (of the speaking subject and the erotic subject)' (Foucault 1967c/1999: 98), were proof of another kind of thought, a transformative thought that did not rely on the valorisation of myths about the creative subject.

Foucault's fascination with the work of Raymond Roussel also points to his optimism about the possibilities for new thought and new discourse precisely because Roussel constructed ways of experimenting with already existing discourse in order to make it do something else, i.e., create new narratives and ways of perceiving what

already exists. What Roussel does is offer a practical poetics of imagination based on actualities, not on some deep source in the minds of subjects (Foucault 1985b/1996: 399; 402). This was tied to the way Roussel approached writing, namely from the basis of what was already written: 'What Roussel did was to take a completely banal sentence, heard everyday, taken from songs, read on walls, and with it he constructed the most absurd things, the most improbable situations, without any possible relationship to reality' (Foucault 1985b/1996: 401-402). At the same time, the classification of Roussel's writing is what Foucault initially found compelling about it because it was first considered to be the discourse of a madman and only later came to be viewed as literary discourse (Foucault 1976c/1999: 91). Moreover, this way of writing itself constitutes the mode of being of the writer (Foucault 1985b/1996: 405).

While Foucault does not say much about music and acknowledged that he did not have any competence in the area (Foucault 1982i/1997: 130), he found the approach of the conductor Pierre Boulez to resonate with his own concern with formal structures, history and the transformative work of critical analysis. What impresses him is Boulez's ability to appreciate and work with the registers of seeing and saying, allowing each to develop in an individual way in the conducting of opera (Foucault 1980d/1998: 237). In this respect, Boulez demonstrates an understanding of how discursive formations work and can be transformed. Boulez also displays a historical analytical acuity in his conducting of Wagner for example, able to link past and present without reducing one to the other.

He wanted both [past and present] to be in perpetual motion relative to each other. When he focused closely on a given work, rediscovering its dynamic principle, on the basis of a decomposition that was as subtle as possible, he was not trying to make an monument of it; he attempted to

traverse it, to “pass through it”, to undo it with an action such that the present itself might move as a result’ (Foucault 1980d/1998: 243-244).

Foucault found in Boulez a musical analogue to his own approach to history. In sum, Foucault’s concern with avant-garde art focused on the possibilities of thought that appreciated the contingent formation of sense without relying on the values of humanity and truth. Avant-garde arts indicate that we need not be subjugated to the will to truth about humanity and think about the governing of our existence in such terms.

Transforming the Modern Episteme: The Counter-Human Sciences

While Foucault found transformative elements in avant-garde arts that displaced Man, and in the case of Boulez, provided evidence of new ways of relating past and present in thought, his own archaeological work, especially in *The Order of Things*, indicates that even the human sciences exist alongside a kind of thought that displaced Man. He called them ‘counter-human sciences’. His own work provides some indication that it itself is a counter-science. In many respects, the actuality of counter-human science is the strongest case that can be made about a transformative practice of thought linked to his archaeology analyses; archaeology comes to form its own transformative discourse linked to Foucault’s anti-humanism.

In the last chapters of *The Order of Things* Foucault describes the condition of possibility of a discourse about modes of being that was not in the sway of a fascination with the figure of humanity and its truth. He draws attention to the possibilities opened up by Levi-Straussian ethnology, Lacanian psychoanalysis and Dumezilian literary analysis. Together, they comprise the ‘counter-human sciences’. In particular, psychoanalysis and

ethnology 'occupy a privileged position' (OT: 373). This is because each of these discourses require questioning how the unconscious and history are articulated together to structure human experiences. Althusser's Marxism could also be added to this list (cf. Foucault 1980b/2000: 251-252).

Foucault also envisages the possibility of a third counter-science. It would be comprised of analysing 'the double articulation of the history of individuals upon the unconscious of culture, and of the historicity of those cultures upon the unconscious of individuals' (OT: 379; cf. Pearce and Woodiwiss 2001: 56-57). It would not focus on the individual-society couple. Rather, it would concern itself with the point,

at which they intersect at right angles; for the signifying chain by which the unique experience of the individual is constituted is perpendicular to the formal system on the basis of which the significations of a culture are constituted: at any given instant, the structure proper to individual experience finds a certain number of possible choices (and of excluded possibilities) in the systems of the society; inversely, at each of their points of choice, the social structure encounters a certain number of possible individuals (and others who are not)—just as the linear structure of language always produces a possible choice between several words or several phonemes at any given moment (but excludes all others) (OT: 380).

Thus, the essential object Man is displaced and decentred in structures of relations. For the counter-human sciences, these structured relations are the object of analysis, not Man, hence creating the possibility of displacing the valorisation of humanity and its truth as the basis for thinking about existence. Foucault had thus identified a *practical anti-humanism* in the order of discourse, i.e., a discursive practice freed from the figure of Man and with it, an alternative way of thinking about and accounting for the contingent formation of human existence.

Later, elaborating on his genealogical programme, Foucault shifts emphasis and describes what he calls ‘anti-science’, linked with an intense awareness of ‘a historical knowledge of struggles’ in order ‘to make use of that knowledge in contemporary tactics’ (SMBD: 8). Describing what genealogy, as an anti-science aims to do, discussing Deleuze and Guattari’s *Anti-Oedipus* approvingly (SMBD: 6), he argues that genealogies,

are about the insurrection of knowledges. Not so much against the contents, methods, or concepts of a science; this is above all, primarily an insurrection against the centralizing power-effects that are bound up with the institutionalization and workings of any scientific discourse organized in a society such as ours. That this institutionalization of scientific discourse is embodied in a university or, in general terms, a pedagogical apparatus, that this institutionalization of scientific discourses is embodied in a theoretico-commercial network such as psychoanalysis, or in a political apparatus—with everything that implies—is largely irrelevant. Genealogy has to fight the power-effects characteristic of any discourse that is regarded as scientific (SMBD: 9).

This brings us to Foucault’s reflections on the role of the intellectual and his own practice as a potential ally in transformative practice.

The Role of Intellectuals

Foucault has a suspicious view of the image and aspirations of the theorists of global situations speaking for the whole of society (Foucault 1972a/1996; 1977d/2003: 315ff.). Indeed for him, in the events of 1968, ‘the intellectual discovered that the masses no longer need him to gain knowledge; they know perfectly well, without illusion; they know far better than he and they are certainly capable of expressing themselves’ (Foucault 1972a/1996: 75). He eschewed any kind of proscriptive or prophetic role for intellectuals, and certainly, ‘the work of an intellectual is not to mould the political will of others’ (Foucault 1984i/1996: 463). Taking up the prophetic role, according to him

was a key problem with the radicalism of the PCF (Foucault 1978b/1996: 262). But, he was far from being dismissive of the role of intellectuals because he saw them as playing a key role as critics of forms of rationality and their dangers (Foucault 1982f/2000: 358). Elsewhere, he links the role of the intellectual more specifically to his sense of critical thought. The role of the specific intellectual 'is to try to isolate, in their power of constraint but also in the contingency of their historical formation, the systems of thought that have now become familiar to us, that appear evident to us, and that have become part of our perceptions, attitudes and behaviour' (Foucault 1983d/2000: 384).

The role of intellectuals who are supportive of projects of resisting various forms of domination is thus not to make grand pronouncements or to denounce the repressive power of the state or capitalism; rather it involves becoming a 'specific intellectual' (Foucault 1977d/2003: 312ff.). Specific intellectuals analyse the localised sites in which political technologies of domination are used, examining how they work in order to point out how they can be resisted by drawing on specialised knowledge of these sites. Intellectuals can assist in destabilising the tactical supports of global strategies of domination rather than functioning as a theoretical vanguard for political movements. Foucault saw his own work as providing a kind of practical cartography for resistance, but without being proscriptive of a particular political programme. He aims to make the workings of power and knowledge accessible 'in such a way that the possible paths of attack are delineated' (Foucault 1978b/1996: 262).

Parrhesia

Foucault envisages another kind of transformative discursive practice, based on the Ancient Greek practice of *parrhesia*, that also corresponds to the Latin *libertas* (HERM: 366). *Parrhesia* is the practice of frank, thoughtful, open speech and encouraging others to do so, ‘often in situations in which it is dangerous to do so because of the power of one’s interlocutor’ (Simons 1995: 93; HERM: 137; 404–407). What Foucault’s investigations of the Epicurean understanding of this practice indicate is that it is a technique ‘which ensures one’s ability to select from the field of true knowledge that which is relevant for the subject’s transformation, change and improvement’ (HERM: 242). These historical investigations of the relationship between true speech, subjectivity and the transformation of the self and others suggest another way for us to think about true/frank speech as a transformative practice. He frames this transposition as follows:

To be sure, one cannot expect a government to speak the truth, the whole truth, nothing but the truth. On the other hand, it is possible to expect from governments a certain truth in relation to final aims, to the general choice of tactics, and to a number of specific points of its program: that is the *parrhesia* (free speech) of the governed, who, because they are citizens, can and must summon the government to answer for what it does, for the mean of its actions, and the decisions that it has taken, in the name of their own knowledge and experience (Foucault 1984b/1996: 453).

In the contemporary world, resuscitating the practice of *parrhesia*, may allow us, Foucault hoped, to ‘elaborate a form of political truth that can be spoken to resist governments’ (Foucault 1984b/1996: 464).

To summarise the role of thought, especially critical thought as the work of specific intellectuals, the point for Foucault is to denaturalise how we think about and so construe our practices. Critical thought aims to hold open a space for becoming otherwise

since there is no inherent necessity to what we are, think, and do (Foucault 1984d/2003: 54). In important respects, the whole point of his work is to explicate the system of judgments about modes of being in order to show their contingent formation. Avant-garde art, the counter-sciences and the anti-sciences show that this is more than a possibility—they are a present actuality that have real effects since giving us reason to think about and battle for possibilities. Each of these examples indicate something of the transformative capacities of thought and the role that *thinking* itself can play in creating openings for becoming otherwise. I now move on to a consideration of modes of transformation of power relations.

Transforming Power: Resistance and Revolt

When it comes to Foucault's analytic of power relations the question of transformation hinges on what is meant by 'resistance', what resistance does and potentially can do. Indeed, his first recommendation is strategic resistance: 'it is doubtless the strategic codification of these points of resistance that makes a revolution possible, somewhat similar to the way in which the state relies on the institutional integration of power relationships' (HS: 96). The concept of resistance and what it means for transformative projects has been a subject of much contentious debate. Simons contends that 'resistance is drastically undertheorized in his work' (1995: 83; cf. O'Malley 1996; O'Malley, Weir and Shearing 1998). On this point, I do not agree. What I think has happened is that Foucault's interpreters have largely failed to consider Foucault's ontology. In this respect, Foucault doesn't need to theorise resistance; it is an axiom derived from his

critique of the juridico-discursive, developed in positive form as the concept of power as relations of force.

Resistance

It is important to keep in mind that resistance does not refer to some particular set of techniques to be deployed; rather it refers to the basic determinate ontological condition of the political field, i.e., relations of force. This has consequences for understanding what it is that resists and how certain types of resistance produce their effects. In contrast to placing faith in a hidden, because repressed or undeveloped resource of human agency lying beneath the manifest forms of subjectivity, or affirming some primal freedom inherent in human existence as the well-spring of transformation from which rights flow, Foucault displaces this approach, stressing instead the relation between power and resistance.

In some respects, we are dealing with a shift in perspective: resistance is what confronts programmes of rule once installed in an institution, a problem that then comes to be registered in veridical discourse as a problem. This is what I take his remark that there is a certain 'plebian quality' in power to mean. It refers to an 'inverse energy', inverse to disciplinary and normalising power. This plebian quality of power relations 'is not so much what stands outside relations of power as their limit, their underside, their counter-stroke, that which responds to every advance of power by a movement of disengagement' (Foucault 1977f/1980: 138). Thinking about power and resistance as dealing with the same material but from two different points of view, helps resolve an apparent contradictory shift in Foucault, between the formulation of power and resistance

and resistance as inherent in power relations. The first deals with the point of view of programming; the second is from the theoretical point of view concerned with ontology. From the point of view of governmental hegemony, programmed institutions both interrupt the relations of force in the field in which programmes are installed and these raw power relations disrupt the workings of an institution causing it to break down (cf. Deleuze and Guattari 1972/1994: 36). At the same time, the resistance that causes problems for programmes can ‘bring to light power relations, locate their position’, i.e., help map the configurations of *dispositifs* (Foucault 1982a/2003: 128).

While power relations are constituted by ubiquitous relations of domination this does not thereby imply that the forces and capacities of subjects thus subjugated, are destroyed, annihilated or simply captured. Since power involves the *relation* between *forces*, this implies that even the subordinated forces of modes of being remain and can potentially produce effects that cause problems or disrupt relations of dominance and the strategies of dominant classes. Moreover, Foucault is quite clear in arguing that ‘resistance comes first, and resistance remains superior to the forces of the process; power relations are obliged to change with the resistance’ (Foucault 1984j/1996: 386); in short, living actuality is primal and resists its shaping by thought. In other words, what resists does not exist independently of the forces in relation: relations of force are constitutive of the terms (Foucault 1978b/1996: 260). Thus, Foucault stresses that power relations inherently involve the possibility of leveraging this always already existing resistance (Foucault 1977f/1980: 142; cf. HS: 94-95). Struggle then is not something that a group intentionally undertakes in some or other radical project; struggle is an

ontological condition of any and all human actions (Foucault 1978b/1996: 260). This is why Foucault describes this condition of domination and resistance in agonistic terms.

When it comes to the transformative capacity of resistance, its effectiveness depends on destabilising power relations, relying on the fragility of power relations and amplifying this fragility in order to maximise the instability of complex societies and create space for becoming otherwise (Foucault 1980c/1996: 300). Foucault's optimism about resistance in this respect stems more from his general theoretical affirmation of the contingency of modes of being than on any particular form of political practice. While my discussion here addresses the ontological referent of Foucault's concept of resistance, three examples of resistance will help clarify its transformative capacity. The first is that of resisting identification; the second 'indiscipline'; and the third, 'revolt'. Granted, by dealing with revolt in brief it may seem like I am giving short shrift to a very important phenomena discussed by Foucault, one indispensable to understanding how he thought about modes of transformation. However, Foucault carefully defines his concept of revolt and what he says about revolt is very closely linked to his conception of resistance (Foucault 1979a/2003: 201).

Some of Foucault's remarks about his own location as an intellectual give some indication of how kinds of critical thought could themselves be used in a transformative way. His stance on refusing the identities imposed on him—'Do not ask me who I am and do not ask me to remain the same: leave it to our bureaucrats and police to see that our papers are in order' (AK: 17)—is a type of escape from the identitarianism of discipline that demands that we identify with our occupation, political commitments, ethnic group, or sexual orientation. He was quite aware of the temptations of the fallacy

of attributing truth to words produced by experts and intellectuals. A practical example of this is his choice to remain anonymous in a 1980 interview for *La Monde* (Foucault 1980e/2003). Anonymity is a tactic for addressing readers more directly, to force them to judge his words on their own terms and for themselves. This is more than a refusal of the demand to be identifiable. Rather, it is a way of disturbing and transforming the way we habitually link individuals, especially authoritative individuals, and discourse. To think about transformative agency in terms of individuals, individuality and *identifying* with one's individuality is part of the problem Foucault argues because 'The individual is the product of power. What is needed is to "de-individualize" by means of multiplication and displacement, diverse combinations' (Foucault 1972c/2000: 109). This form of resistance is based on a refusal to essentialise one's individuality and use this identification as a basis for making decisions about what one should do.

In *Discipline and Punish*, a means of escape from the disciplinary society can be found in the life of the petty criminal Béasse, who because of his homelessness and his various means of gaining income through means other than structured employment (i.e., wage labour), reveals the points at which disciplinarity—the locating, regimenting and subordinating of individuals—fails (DP: 290-1). The indisciplined endeavour to live in the world in such a way as to make themselves unclassifiable and uncapturable. What is compelling about Foucault's discussion of Béasse is that it shows that rather than a frontal assault on the apparatus, as one finds in conventional Left discourse, what we have instead is the actualisation of an alternative mode of being that proves to be resistant to the machinations of biopower.

Both indiscipline and refusing the imposition of identities resist how the characteristically modern form of governmental power ‘applies itself to immediate everyday life categorizes the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attached him to his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him that he must recognize and have others have to recognize him’ (Foucault 1982a/2003: 130). Foucault stresses that present struggles about gender, child rearing, mental illness and clinical medicine involve a refusal of being located, identified and assigned an identity, manifesting a ‘refusal of scientific or administrative inquisition that determines who one is’ (Foucault 1982a/2003: 130; 1984j/1996: 386).

There are some shifts that occur in Foucault’s conception of resistance after his investigations on ethics. For example, the medicalisation of homosexuality provided a tactical leverage point, allowing the gay movement to resist by raising the question, ‘if we are sick, then why do you condemn us, why do you despise us?’ (Foucault 1984j/1996: 387). In a similar way, the centuries of exclusion faced by lesbians ‘has given them the real possibility of constituting a society, of creating a kind of social relation between themselves, outside the social world that was dominated by males’ (Foucault 1984j/1996: 387). In important respects, this is less resistance than it is counter-actualisation, actually making new alternatives in a space held open by resistance. The possibilities and affirmation of experimenting with existence in gay culture also help one understand the Foucauldian conception of ‘liberty’ and its transformative impact.

In a manner that echoes Marx and Lenin, Foucault stresses that while resistance is inherent in power relations, ‘liberty is a *practice*’ not a right given by laws and

institutions (Foucault 1982f/2000: 354). He correctly challenges a critical and transformative orientation that focuses on the right to resist, or the right to freedom and ‘the institutions and laws that are intended to guarantee them’ (Foucault 1982f/2000: 354). To pose the problem in terms of practices of resistance instead of in the legalistic terms of rights is to stress the *effective* consequences of what people do: freedom, liberty and resistance do not refer to classes of subjects who take sides but to the substantive actualisation of a state of force relations that always remain to some degree open. Foucault thus once again displaces the conventional linkage of liberty, resistance and rights.

According to Foucault, since global strategies depend on the alignment and usage of tactical supports consisting of the localised, concrete ways in which human beings are constituted with certain capacities, and since these tactical supports inherently involve relations of force in which subjects have the possibility of resisting, resistance to the workings of the small mechanisms of power that are pervasive in modern social life, this is enough to destabilise the global strategies that dominate the vast majority of people. For him, resistance is the most practical, accessible and effective way of engaging in political struggle since it targets the concrete mechanism of subjugation that inhere in the routine practices of daily life.

Revolt

Foucault’s concept of revolt, and its relation to his understanding of revolution, also refer to moments of transformative potential. There are though, ambiguities in Foucault’s position and conception of revolution and revolt. Largely, he saw revolutionary projects

as deadly and dangerous and as belonging to a system of normative coordinates now exhausted, now part of the problem (Foucault 1979e/2000; 1977g/1988; Paras 2006; Rachjman 1983: 61). Foucault's rejection of the conventional modernist conception of revolution can in most cases be linked to his analytical displacement of state-centred analyses of the political field. The main limitation in this respect is solely targeting the state, a state that does not exist (it has no centre), and that is not decisive in limiting possibilities in the present (Foucault 1977g/1988: 119).

Foucault's critics even charge that in *Discipline and Punish*, the French Revolution is erased since the struggle for rights actualised itself in disciplinary techniques (Rachjman 1983: 63; cf. Foucault 1980a/2003). After all, it was Napoleon who effectively ended the revolutionary period and who spread the *Ecoles Normales* system, emphasis on the 'normal'. Moreover for Foucault, to think in terms of a revolutionary collective subjects is quite misplaced because in important respects, they impose a morality similar to that of the dominant bourgeoisie, namely a kind of Puritanism. In contrast, those who are marginalised by systems of exclusion are the ones who actually have revolutionary potential because they typically fall outside of and refuse the old coordinates of the bourgeoisie *versus* a disciplined, politicised proletariat. This is why Foucault sees them as 'truly revolutionary forces' (Foucault 1974c/1996: 120) and the bourgeoisie, since the French Revolution, has feared the insurgency of such marginalised groups (Foucault 1972f/1980: 16).

Revolt for Foucault refers to a refusal by individuals 'a group, a minority, or an entire people', to obey an authority and who are willing to risk their lives in the face of a situation deemed by them to be unjust (Foucault 1979e/2000: 449). His conception of

revolution refers to the linking together of various 'points of resistance' (HS: 96), that potentially have pervasive effects 'at the level of the whole social body' (Foucault 1982a/2003: 143-144). There is a high degree of theoretical consistency between the concepts of resistance and revolt, much of it stemming from his interpretation and endorsement of the form of 'popular struggles', like those of 1968 (Foucault 1975e/1996: 130).

Foucault's reflections on revolt and revolution do not take real shape until his encounter with the Iranian revolution of 1978-79. Yet, *Security, Territory, Population*, contains an indication that he was trying to consider an alternative to reference points of resistance and revolt. For example, he discusses the English, French and Russian revolutions that involved 'the revolt or insurrection of conduct' (STP: 228). In this respect, revolt is not simply directed against a target like the state or a ruling class, or even the dominance of religious institutions; rather we are dealing with people refusing how they are led and toward what sort of goal (STP: 196).

Foucault now begins to think in terms of 'counter-conduct', in contrast to resistance, revolt, disobedience and dissidence, largely because these terms are too negative in their connotations (STP: 200). In contrast, counter-conduct for him refers to the 'struggle against the processes implemented for conducting others' (STP: 201). Once again Foucault aims to highlight that transformations of existence do not occur in grand events *per se*, as found in a revolutionary toppling of the government and the state; rather transformations of existence happen in a much broader and extensive creation of counter-conducts. Foucault's fascination with the Iranian revolution provides a quite different consideration of revolt. Since this episode in his work has recently been the subject of

two excellent treatments (Afary and Anderson 2005; Paras 2006), I will only highlight the most pertinent points.

What interested Foucault about Iran was that it perhaps was constituting a new form of political existence (Foucault 1979b/2005). He saw in Iran a new kind of ‘political spirituality’, involving ‘the will to discover a different way of governing oneself through a different way of dividing up true and false’ (Foucault 1980a/2003: 254), constituted by ‘living the Islamic religion as a revolutionary force’ (Foucault 1979b/2005: 255). Crucially, this was a mode of political engagement that refused the dominant coordinates of the Cold War (together with their respective dreams and schemes). Iran meant ‘the insurrection of bare-handed men who want to lift the formidable...weight of the entire world order. It is perhaps the first great insurrection against the planetary systems, the most modern form of the maddest revolt’ (Foucault 1978e/2005: 222).

Foucault would later argue that uprisings in Warsaw shared the same intensity as he saw in Iran (Foucault 1979e/2000: 449; Simons 1995: 85). Nevertheless, Foucault was more than a little equivocal about what was happening in Iran. As Paras points out, ‘The word revolution, prior to the actual seizure of power by Khomeini, was almost completely absent from his reports: it was “revolt,” and “uprising,” a “movement”’ (2006: 96). For, Foucault, revolution was something like a pure historical event without design, programme or *telos*. Thus, it did not share in the progressivist justifications for modern political revolutions one finds from the French Revolution onward. Indeed, he would follow Kant’s interpretation of the meaning of the French Revolution: it was not the concrete transformations that were of consequence—those are considered disastrous.

Rather, what mattered was the inauguration of the interrogation of, and experimentation with, our ways of living (Foucault 1984d/2003).

What is striking about Foucault's writings about the Iranian Revolution is that they are not rendered in the terms of his own problematic. For one, they are entirely journalistic and/or editorial in tone (Carrette 2000: 140; Lecourt 1998/2001: 41-42). We also find him Foucault advocating 'inviolable laws and unrestricted rights' as means for opposing power (Foucault 1979e/2000: 453). This would appear to be a wholesale abandonment of his own critique of the juridico-discursive conception of power and his argument that individual rights are imbricated in disciplinary power. Foucault's writings about Iran reveal the deeply aporetic structure of Foucault's problematic when it comes to thinking about transformative capacities in the present. Iran is an object of fascination and curiosity for Foucault, but it is never adequately analysed or theorised (cf. Foucault 1979b/1988: 219), and he never wrote of it again after 1979. This is more than an episode of Orientalism in Foucault; rather it is symptomatic of the orientalisation of politics itself in his problematic, something beyond the limit of the coordinates of the Western political present (cf. HM: xxix-xxx).

The pertinence of Foucault's conceptions of resistance and revolt can now be distilled. First, resistance creates inefficiencies in the apparatuses of rule, rendering them less economical thus undermining their alleged efficiency and effectiveness, rationales and justifications of programmes of rule. And, since economic efficiency has been the dominant benchmark of policy problematisation going back to liberalism, resistance can create what Habermas calls a 'legitimation crisis'. Foucault's formulations about resistance are thus consistent with his implicitly Bataillean sensibilities about the general

economy of power with its excess of power over thought. Moreover, resistance opens and multiplies spaces of possible thinking and experimentation, although Foucault does not frame the effects of resistance in this way. By extension, revolt simply refers to the multiplication and extensification of resistances at a particular historical moment producing a destabilisation of *dispositifs* in the social body.

There are however, significant problems with Foucault's formulation, even if it provides a major check to the temptation of a functionalist account of social ordering in which *dispositifs* function smoothly and governmental goals are achieved as a matter of course. The first of these is one that Foucault's critics (e.g., Baudrillard 1977/1987; Dews 1987: 188; cf. Simons 1995: 82-83; Hunt 1993b) were quick to point out: Foucault's logic suggests that resistance is itself taken up and used in *strategies*. In the case of sexuality for instance, resisting normal sexual activity, further enmeshes people in the *dispositif* of sexuality. This form of resistance still relies upon the valorisation of one's sexuality—sexuality is still the reference point and so the cause of the problem remains unaffected. Furthermore, abnormal or perverse sexual activity creates opportunities for repeating the problematisation of sexuality and the objectifications of subjects that are part and parcel of the *dispositif* of sexuality on which these depend. Later, Foucault would make an important, but sadly ignored point on this matter: 'Sex is boring' (Foucault 1983a/2003: 102). In more positive terms, resistance provides a means of potential escape because power forces contingency into history. But here we come across a second related problem, namely that as far as a concept of resistance goes, it is self-referential, i.e., tautological and hence does not add anything to his conceptual armature for generating adequate accounts of a political field.

In this regard, as Foucault himself acknowledges, his *theorem* that ‘where there is power, there is resistance’, is a tautology (Foucault 1977j/1996: 224). People do not need a reason to resist—that is to misplace the issue—resistance is not about thought: it is about power. Since power is a relation between forces that have a quantity, a valence and a location that gives them their quality of intensity, and these forces encounter and direct other forces, and forces never have a clear path (i.e., there is no such thing as a state of inertia in the political field), any power relation faces resistance. The fact of resistance is internal to the ontology of power relations and so is self-referential: it does not tell us anything new not already contained in the *theorem* of power. It would be more correct to state that all power relations in the exercising of power are resistant.

On the other hand, the tautology of the *theorem* of power and resistance, couched in somewhat negative terms (there must be resistance because there is *power*, and not direct violence or coercion), takes on a positive form with his conception of freedom and ethics. As he puts it, ‘Freedom is the ontological condition of ethics. But ethics is the considered form that freedom takes when it is transformed by reflection’ (Foucault 1984a/2003: 28). Once again, this formula is consistent with his ontology: in as much as power is comprised of relations of force, to stress *relations* is to stress the freedom of the forces related. Moreover, it is thought that takes this given ontological condition of freedom and gives it a form and a shape, hence able to potentially escape from being subjugated to the work of others.

A second problem with Foucault’s conception of revolt is that he claims that revolt is opposed to obedience. To stress obedience to authority as the object of transformation as he does in the context of the Iranian Revolution, means exactly

reverting to a juridico-discursive conception of power, or in short, a command theory of law and domination. The logic of Foucault's categories here only further highlights that his analysis of what was happening in Iran is the product of a discourse *external* to the terrain of his problematic.

Transforming Subjectivity: Transgression and Ethics

Transgression and ethics are two practices that focus on transforming the status of subjectivity. Transgression is the more negatively oriented of the two practices since it results in the *dissolution* of a form of subjectivity whereas ethics is more positive, seeking to work upon the formation of subjectivity itself.

Transgression

Foucault's concern with transgression is deeply indebted to his study of Bataille. It is important to appreciate the inherent link between thought and subjectivity when considering Foucault's understanding of the transformative capacity of transgression. This is not least because of how he links thought and experience and with this link, how subjects experience the limits of a system of thought constitutive of the conditions of existence of subjectivity *per se*. So by transgression, Foucault refers to a practice that involves crossing a constitutive limit of experience, rendered intelligible by discourse, be it religious discourse or the discourse of sexuality, for example.

Foucault defines transgression and its effects as follows:

Transgression is an action that 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 it crosses. The play of limits and transgression seems to be

regulated by a simple obstinacy: transgression incessantly crosses and recrosses a line that 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 (Foucault 1963c/2003: 445).

Moments of transgression produce a 'limit experience', which he defines as one 'that wrenches the subject from itself' in an encounter with the limit (Foucault 1980b/2000: 241). Thus, 'transgression does not overcome limits, restore the repressed and instigate the rule of freedom, but shows us that what we are, our being, depends on the existence of limits' (Simons 1995: 69).

In 'A Preface to Transgression' (1963b/2003), Foucault contrasts the Christian religious epoch governed by discourses of a transcendent God, with the modern epoch where God is dead and humanity comes to grips with the problem of immanence and finitude. Both discourses affect how subjects are positioned relative to a limit, hence affecting the transgression of limits. The theoretical problem that Foucault reflects upon concerns how *ecstatic* forms of subjectivity (with its effect of desubjectification), together with the intensity of the experience, are variously constituted within epochs governed by transcendental values, and in the modern epoch, shaped by the analytic of finitude. He argues that there is no transcendent, valorised element in the modern world and consequently, no limit between transcendence and immanence to transgress. In a sacral epoch (where God is alive), the limit to which transgression refers is a *transcendental one*. In the modern epoch, the limit is drawn on an immanent plane of the body and language: ecstasy can today only take the form of bodily profanations, like sexual perversions, the experiences of which are expressed in the transgressive discourses of *erotisme*, like those found in Bataille. In the modern world, 'sexuality is a fissure—not

one which surrounds us on the basis of our isolation or individuality, but one which marks the limit within us and designates us as limit' (Foucault 1963b/2003: 442-443). Transgression then, is about the intensification of experience for the subject at or beyond the limit, and this experience is seen as potentially transformative since it produces a desubjectification of the subject—it annihilates the discursive coordinates through which subjects orient themselves.

There is also a positive aspect to transgression since what it does is bring limits to light, reminding us of their fundamental role in shaping our culture. One can say that transgression is, in effect, an instance of *practico-concrete critique*: transgression echoes Kant's concern with assessing the constitutive limits of the understanding. This conceptual linkage between transgression and critique is found throughout Foucault's work. For example, Enlightenment means in part a project 'to transform the critique conducted in the form of necessary limitation into a practical critique that takes the form of a possible crossing-over' (Foucault 1984d/2003: 53). Foucault's contribution lies in showing how the limits of human existence can be known through transgression—transgression reveals to the subject the limits constitutive of the form of subjectivity itself. This is more than a theoretical exercise—it is an existential practice within particular socio-historical conditions, conditions governed by certain limits and the form of dominant discourse that renders the existential conditions of subjective experience intelligible. Transgression reveals in a 'flash of lightening' (Foucault 1963b/2003: 446) the normative horizon of subjectivity—this is its critical work.

Foucault's conception of the transformative potential of transgression though, has limits. To experience limits is one thing; to transgress them is another. In as much as

transgression involves *crossing* the limit of a dominant system of thought in an ecstatic moment, the problem then becomes whether or not subjectivity exists at all on the other side or if it has been dissolved since lacking any thought, or at least a thought that could be intelligible to others. This is an important problem because for both the archaeological Foucault and the later Foucault concerned with ethics, subjectivity is constituted in and through thought. To put this somewhat differently and perhaps in a form that the Foucault of the 1960s would have been familiar with, transgression and the experience associated with it, namely the experience of dissolution, or the annihilation of the conditions of possibility of experience *qua* sensibility at all, would be identical to psychosis. A discourse of what the world is like on the other side of the discourse that is transgressed, could certainly be rendered in discursive form, but lacking an anchorage point, a *point de capiton*, Lacan might say, hence producing an unintelligible discourse. This suggests that perhaps transgression is not, strictly speaking, transformative of subjectivity since what seems to happen is the annihilation of the conditions of possibility of subject formation at all.

However, in 'Sexual Choice, Sexual Act' (Foucault 1982b/1996) what are generally regarded as transgressive sexual behaviours (e.g., S/M) are treated in a quite different manner, a more sociological one, in which transgression is linked to the interconnections and mutual mechanisms of differentiation and appropriation obtaining between heterosexual and homosexual practices. Foucault's analysis of contemporary homosexual and heterosexual communities begins by addressing certain prohibitions placed around the kinds of professions open to homosexuals, teaching for instance. Homosexuality is to some degree treated as transgressive by Foucault in that it is

subjected to prohibitions. As he argues, 'The fact that a teacher is homosexual can only have an electrifying and intense effect on the students to the extent that the rest of society refuses to admit the existence of homosexuality' (1982b/1996: 325).

The modality of homosexual practice, Foucault suggests, is an effect of an interdiction on homosexuality that emerged in Western Christian culture. Consequently, homosexual culture 'had to concentrate all its energy on the act of sex itself' and unlike heterosexual culture 'homosexuals were not allowed to elaborate a system of courtship because the cultural expression necessary for such an elaboration was denied them' (Foucault 1982b/1996: 329). This too had an effect on homosexual culture and imagination which became 'concerned with reminiscing about the act rather than anticipating it' (330). That is to say that the exclusion of homosexuality produces the effect of individualising homosexuality and the sexual act, which in turn is seen as transgressive or aberrant when contrasted with the history of heterosexual courtship and sexuality, the culture that excludes homosexuality in the first place. This individualisation of the act is then read as some kind of perversion.

Homosexuals remain politicised subjects since they are a reminder that cultures impose limits when it comes to matters of individual freedom, including the freedom to identify oneself in terms of sexual orientation and to have sexual choice. Foucault continues a line of analysis developed in his investigations of madness (Foucault 1970b/2003) stressing that, 'the important question here, it seems to me, is not whether a culture without restraints is possible or even desirable but whether the system of constraints in which a society functions leaves individuals the liberty to transform the system' (Foucault 1982b/1996: 327). In sum, transgression can play some transformative

role first by dissolving the subjective formation constituted by dominant discourses together with their limits, and second by bringing to light the most fundamental systems of limits and exclusion within a culture: transgression plays a kind of diagnostic role for subjects. Now, while Foucault's interest in transgression is largely concerned with the dissolution of subjectivity, his concern with ethics focuses on the active and voluntary self-constitution of subjectivity and hence of actively becoming otherwise.

Ethics

The conception of the subject found in *Discipline and Punish* and *The History of Sexuality* reduces it to little more than an objectified site of power relations—there was little subjectivity at all in the targets of biopower; it all seemed to be a done deal from which there was little chance of escape even if there was resistance. Petty criminal activity, forms of sexual perversion and aims to liberate either the dangerous urban underclass or one's sexuality from the moral codes of the nineteenth century bourgeois family were no means of escape. Rather, Foucault's accounts suggest that these allegedly emancipatory gestures and forms of resistance just provide further material to be ground up and processed in the grand *dispositifs* that limit possibilities in the present (Zizek 1999/2000: 251-2).

The logic of Foucault's work also suggests that transgression might not be suitable as a means of escape, not least since the target of transgression is some or other prohibition and hence transgression presumes and targets *negative* exercises of power, not the dominant modalities of positive, productive power relations that he stressed. Foucault was at an impasse, trapped in his conception of the dominance of the will to

truth about Man and an ontology of power relations that always already implies resistance (cf. Deleuze 1986/1988: 94). Indeed, if one considers what Foucault has to say about resistance, there is something to Poulantzas' argument that 'one can deduce from Foucault nothing more than a guerrilla war and scattered acts of harassment of power' (1978: 149). Foucault's investigations of ethics change all of this.

Christianity had in many respects invented the technique of truthful self-reflection as a means of transformation (i.e., the confessional). But, it was a thought about one's subjectivity constituted by a fundamental relation to law and morality. Foucault's work on what ethics might mean for today represents an attempt to recuperate a link between active thinking and subjectivity (cf. Foucault 1984k/1996: 473), but thought about in terms of power, not law. Hence, Foucault would need to find a positive, productive relationship to subject formation, one opening possibilities for action.

What Foucault's historical investigations discover is that ethics is characterised by a concern with the ontology of one's being, especially the ethical *substance* on which one freely works (UP; CS). This form of freedom comes from thought, or more precisely, in the case of ethics, freedom comes from thinking about what else one might become so long as one understands by thinking the activity that holds open the place of possibilities for individual existence. An ethical practice is thus a way to problematise individualised existence, offering an escape from either disciplinary or governmentalist individualisations. In this respect, ethics involves a repositioning of governance since it still involves the conduct of conduct (Foucault 1984i/1996: 337-8).

Foucault's turn to ethics and his concept of *subjectivation* marks a shift away from his earlier concerns with the status of the subject making statements, the subject-

object doublet of the human sciences, and the subject as subjugated by disciplinary and normalising techniques and practices. His focus is no longer on truth or power but on the self-constituting subject (1982a/2003: 208). The attempt to recuperate subjectivity from the machinery of the will to truth and government drew him back to the Ancient Greco-Roman world because he found there an active thought about ‘the relationship you have to yourself when you act’, or simply, ‘ethics’ (Foucault 1982i/1997: 131). He was not interested in a return to a ‘golden age’, but rather sought a way of breaking with the dominant forms of problematising subjectivity (Foucault 1983a/2003).

By ‘ethics’ Foucault means the practices in and through which individuals think about and make themselves an object and project of transformation, involving the care of themselves and others (UP: 14-32; Foucault 1983a/2003; 1984b/1996; Foucault 1982b/1994: 307). This involves choosing one’s own goals and means of transformation rather than being subjected to the goals and means of experts that would otherwise subjugate them to another’s directives. So he defines ethics as ‘those intentional and voluntary actions by which men not only set themselves rules of conduct, but also seek to transform themselves, to change themselves in their singular being, and to make their life into an *oeuvre* that carries certain aesthetic values and meets certain stylistic criteria’ (UP: 10-11).

Foucault identifies four aspects of individuals’ normative relations to themselves. First, the individual treats him/herself as a material to be worked upon, i.e., as an ‘ethical substance’ (UP: 26). Second, we have ‘the mode of subjection’ of the individual to a system of rules and obligations (UP: 27). Third, we have the ‘forms of elaboration’, techniques that individuals can use to work on themselves, or, ‘askesis’ and ‘ethical

work'. For example, regimenting one's diet would be a technique for working on the self (UP: 27). Fourth and last, the subject relates to themselves through a conception of what they aspire to be. There is then a *telos* introduced in the ethical relation to the self, an aim, the result of which is a highly valued state of being such as, 'salvation after death and blissful immortality' (UP: 27-28).

Ethics, he suggests, creates openings for transforming our existence because engaging in these arts of existence transforms the materials (i.e., our body's capacities as made possible by its connections with other bodies that are shaped and transmitted by thought) that are the raw materials from which contemporary forms of rule fashion their dominance. As Rose puts it, this new ethics, would 'be in favour of life, of the obstinate, stubborn and indomitable will to live, of the creation of new modes of existence' (Rose 1999: 282-3). Foucault's explorations of ethics, sexuality and subjectivation continue to explore questions raised in his essay on Bataille. However, the emphasis is less on the systems of exclusion and limits than it is on how subjects reflect upon and relate to themselves in order to become otherwise. While a full review of Foucault's explorations on ethics would require a work in its own right, there are a number of points that need to be highlighted concerning ethics as a desirable and viable contemporary mode of transformation.¹ Theoretically explicating what Foucault has to say about ethics is important because it is the mode of transformation for which he advocated most strongly.

In *The Use of Pleasure* he set out to discover 'how individuals were led to practice, on themselves and on others, a hermeneutics of desire, a hermeneutics of which

¹ For helpful and comprehensive overviews, see Simons (1995: 71-78) and Rabinow (1997: xxvii-xxxix). Paras (2006) also provides a compelling and theoretically sophisticated reconstruction of the theoretical logic of Foucault's ethics.

their sexual behavior was doubtless the occasion, but certainly not the exclusive domain' (UP: 5). Foucault clarifies the distinction between morality and ethics, emphasizing how morality 'thus designates the manner in which [individuals] comply more or less fully with a standard of conduct, the manner in which they obey or resist an interdiction or prescription; the manner in which they respect or disregard a set of values' (UP: 25). Moral problematisations are thus linked to relationships to the self as an object of reflection, knowledge, examination and decipherment such that forms of moral subjectivation are ensured (UP: 29). The moral rule of self-mastery (*enkrateia*) held sway over this world, the objective of which was to guard against the enslavement of the individual by pleasures (UP: 63ff.). Consequently, as Foucault describes in detail, an economy of austerity developed to target the body through various regimens (dietetics); marriage and household management, (economics); and the love and courtship of boys (erotics). The core finding of *The Use of Pleasure* then, is that 'whilst the Greeks were also concerned with self-control the practices that they developed were not designed to reveal the secret depths but rather to make the lives of active ruling-class males internally ordered and publicly honourable so that they succeeded in avoiding the ignominy of subjection to any kind of unbridled appetite' (Pearce 1988: 257).

In *The Care of the Self*, Foucault analyses texts from the time of the Roman Empire. He begins with an exposition of a manual devoted to the interpretation of dreams written by Artemidorus in the second century CE. Dreams were deemed an important source of information about future events and a potential guide to future action that indicated to an individual some activity to be avoided. As such, dream interpretation was part of a technique of existence. Foucault goes on to describe how techniques for

cultivating the self were valorised, developed and transformed through ‘an intensification of the relation to oneself by which one constituted oneself as the subject of one’s acts’ rather than through ‘a tightening of the code that defined prohibited acts’ (CS: 41). The cultivation of the self was above all ruled by a concern to ‘take care of oneself’ (CS: 43).

In this period, ethical life involved a struggle against the self in which *askesis* and self-knowledge become increasingly important. *Askesis* refers to ‘the work that one performs on oneself in order to transform oneself or make the self appear that happily one never attains’ (Foucault 1981b/1996: 309). The first two centuries CE were considered to be ‘a kind of golden age of the cultivation of the self’ (CS: 45), in which were elaborated a variety of techniques for taking care of the self and having one’s needs met, the aim of which was to create a way of life. Foucault follows this formulation by discussing how relationships to self and others in marital relations and in civic life occasioned ‘a different way of considering oneself as the subject of one’s pleasures’ (CS: 71). He also analyses a range of problematisations of the body, the soul, medicine, marriage and of sexual relations. The result of these techniques for taking care of oneself was that ethics was no longer concerned with self-mastery. Instead, it develops ‘an art of existence that revolves around the question of the self, of its dependence, independence, of its universal form and of the connection it can and should establish with others, of the procedures by which it exerts control over itself, and of the way in which it can establish a complete supremacy over the self’ (CS: 238-9).

The Christianity that followed involved quite different arrangements leading to the renunciation of oneself, i.e., negative techniques. For example, ‘In Christianity ... sexuality is linked to evil by its form and its effects, but in itself and substantially, it is

not evil. It finds fulfilment in marriage, but—with certain exceptions—marriage is not an express, indispensable condition for it to cease being an evil' (CS: 239). In short, 'Early Christianity...intensified the form of the law, but it also re-oriented the practices of the self in the direction of a hermeneutic of self and a deciphering of self as a subject of desire' (Foucault 1984i/1996: 458-459). Foucault's turn to the Greco-Roman world required a revision of his analysis of Christianity and pastoral power. What he finds is that Christianity was a means to 'tighten the bolts of the Greco-Roman world' (Foucault 1982h/1996: 367). Christian self-renunciation is contingently formed by linking law, desire and subjectivity. *Contra* Lacan (HERM), Foucault finds reason for optimism here since this means that subjectivity in and of itself is recuperable as a locus of transformation since not simply a derivative effect of discursive prohibitions. 'Take care of yourself... Make freedom your foundation, through the mastery of yourself' (Foucault 1983a/2003: 42); that is the lesson distilled by Foucault.

It is not as though Foucault only thought about archaic ethical practice. He finds in his historical researches a new way of problematising contemporary existence and hence of practically engaging with subjectivity, quite apart from the will to truth. For him, there is an affinity between the ancient arts of existence and the modern interest in style exemplified in Baudelaire's *dandysme* (cf. Foucault 1984k/1996: 466). The link between the ancient and the modern for him refers to 'the search for styles of existence as different as possible from each other appears to me to be one of the points around which contemporary research could be initiated in particular groups in the past' (Foucault 1984k/1996: 473). Foucault's reflections on Baudelaire and on gay culture in America provide a helpful indication of his conception of the transformative capacity of ethics in

the present. As he argues,

We have been taught throughout the 20th century that one can do nothing if one knows nothing about oneself. The truth about oneself is a condition of existence, whereas you have societies where one could perfectly imagine that there is no attempt at all to regulate the question of what one is and where it makes no sense, while the important thing is: what is the art of putting into a work what one does, for being what one is. An art of the self which would be the complete contrary of oneself. To make one's being an object of art, that's what is worth the effort (Foucault 1982g/1996: 318).

Baudelaire's attitude toward modernity has some resonance with the archaic care of the self but is much more closely linked with the role of subjectivity in affirming the contingency of the present in order to take hold of it (Rabinow 1997: xxxii). This attitude, or *ethos* toward the present has an intensive active relationship to the present. For Baudelaire,

the attitude of modernity, the high value of the present is indissociable from a desperate eagerness to imagine it, to imagine it otherwise than it is, and to transform it not by destroying it but by grasping it in what it is. Baudelarian modernity is an exercise in which extreme attention to what is real is confronted with the practice of liberty that simultaneously respects this reality and violates it (Foucault 1984d/2003: 50).

In this *ethos* one treats one's existence as a work of art, not as an object from which to extract the truth of one's being as a guide to the future (Foucault 1984d/2003: 50). The modern 'is the man who tries to invent himself. This modernity does not "liberate man in his own being"; it compels him to face the task of producing himself' (Foucault 1984d/2003: 50). The Baudelairean project is not to be realised 'in society or in the body politic' for it 'can only be produced in a different place, which Baudelaire calls art' (Foucault 1984d/2003: 50-51). What Foucault advocates is extending this Baudelarian project beyond the sphere of art to 'points where change is possible and desirable and to

determine the precise form this change should take' (Foucault 1984d/2003: 54; cf. 1983a/2003: 109).

What might this kind of ethics, a contemporary arts of existence where people actively seek to make and invent themselves look like? Foucault's discussions of homosexuality, gay culture and pleasure provide some indication of what he was thinking about. His comments on homosexuality are especially pertinent in this regard not least since he sought to displace the emphasis on sex and sexuality that for him were part of the problem (Foucault 1983a/2003). He does see something positive in the sexual liberation movements though, because in them sex has been 'volatilized' (Foucault 1977g/1988: 114-115). In the case of feminism, he appreciates how feminist movements challenge the imposition of feminine sexuality, deemed to be natural and inherent, and instead affirm a reinvention of 'political, cultural and economic existence' (Foucault 1977g/1988: 115).

Homosexuality as Foucault understands it, is a leverage point for multiplying and creating new kinds of relationships (Foucault 1981b/1996: 308). The real problem faced by both heterosexuals and homosexuals is not finding one's truth in one's authentic sexual being and desires. What makes gay culture disruptive and transformative is that it has invented new forms of relationship and alliance, new ways of loving, in short, 'the tying together of unforeseen lines of force' (Foucault 1981b/1996: 309). This for him is what lies at the core of a genuine problematisation of homosexuality—the issue is not the sexual act itself or even sexuality. Rather, it is the possibility of creating a 'homosexual mode of life' (Foucault 1981b/1996: 310). In a very rare moment, Foucault mentions his own love relationship, one that he describes in terms of 'passion'. What interests him is

that this passion is formed of a constitutive relation that then creates a different mode of being (Foucault 1982g/1996: 316).

Viewing sexuality as a mode of life constituted by relationships provides a means of escape from the modern problematic of sexuality and personality—multiplying relationships offers an alternative to the individualising problematisation of sexuality (Foucault 1982i/1997: 127-128). S/M is precisely this kind of inventive practice.

Practitioners 'are inventing new possibilities of pleasure with strange parts of their body—through the eroticization of the body. ... These practices are insisting that we can produce pleasure with very odd things, very strange parts of our bodies, in very unusual situations, and so on' (Foucault 1982i/1997: 128). As he puts it, 'we have to understand with our desires, through our desires, go new forms of relationships, new forms of love, new forms of creation. Sex is not a fatality: it's a possibility for creative life' (Foucault 1984j/1996: 382). Crucially this would not mean the creation of a culture of homosexuality, a ghettoised culture; rather it means the creation of culture over against identities that repeat dominant forms of classifying individuals and even group identification—identity politics is certainly not the point (Foucault 1984j/1996: 383).

Contemporary gay culture for example, places a great degree of emphasis on cultivating friendships between men. In doing so it challenges a shift that occurred in the eighteenth century concerning relationships between men, when friendship had disappeared and the problem of 'What is going on between men?' appears (Foucault 1984j/1996: 389). In contrast, what an inventive sexuality does is multiply relationships. This then provides a context, a power network one could say, that makes possible new intensities of bodily pleasures (Foucault 1982i/1997: 131). So transformative bodily

practice is not about liberating desire but about creating pleasures (Foucault 1982i/1997: 129).

To summarise, the point of Foucault's reflections on ethics is that he finds an alternative to politics, one very consistent with his ontology of modes of being. Ethics becomes a new mode for the objectification of subjects, freed from the value of truth, since affirming an *aesthetic* relationship to individual existence: 'people have to build their own ethics' (Foucault 1982i/1997: 132). This formulation when put in terms of Foucault's ontology is identical with ethics as a form of self-government—an action on the material objectivity of one's actions in which the object and product is not what one "is", but what one does. He had found a way of thinking about intentional transformation but without falling prey to the many pitfalls he worked so hard to avoid, like some notion of emancipating a repressed core of subjectivity in each of us or of offering a positive political programme formed in exactly the same kind of apparatus that subjugates us now. This alternative fundamentally endorses *experimentation with modes of being* (i.e., arts of existence/living). Ethics as art has the potential to be a means of escape because it valorises creativity. It is a means for experimenting with our actual capacities to think and to do, in opposition to what Foucault argues are the dominant values today, like scientific truth, productivity, health, normalcy and even identity.

While Foucault's emphasis on the thinking individual bears some resemblance to the liberalism of political theory, it is quite different. Ethics is not about an apolitical pursuit of self-realisation. This is not least because there is no self to be realised because the self of which Foucault speaks does not pre-exist its formation in a work of thought. In this respect he was critical of both the Sartrean project of liberating or cultivating an

authentic existence and of the Californian cult of self-realisation (Paras 2006: 141).

Foucault saw many dangers in the attempt to derive the “ought” of practice from the “is” of an ontology (Foucault 1983a/2003: 109; Paras 2006: 140). Indeed, he saw that path, begun with the care of the self that paved the way for Christian self-domination, as eclipsing a different way of problematising one’s existence. Rather, the point was to use thought in an experimental way as a means for aiming to discover new capacities for pleasure, discovering, to echo Deleuze’s Spinoza, what a body can do and experience as pleasure. The self is not the *result* of an arts of existence or ethics; it is rather the locus of *thinking about experimentation with the body and pleasure*. The result of the process then, is a style or arts of living, a way of connecting to the world by creating, fostering and experimenting with intersubjective relationships.

Foucault’s reflections on the possibility of a new kind of ethics powerfully combines all of the dimensions of his ontology of modes of being. Thought and reflection in Foucault’s writings on ethics and government contend that thought involves a distancing of the subject from their immediate imbrications as subjects of concrete social relations, conditions of existence and discourses—there is a certain kind of critical detachment that takes place in ethical reflection and self governance (cf. Foucault 1984i/1996). Nevertheless, thought is both ‘an integral aspect of action, because when we do, speak and behave, we do so in relation to thought’ (Simons 1995: 55). Ethics combines a commitment to critical thought, an emphasis on what bodies can do and produce when relationships are invented, multiplied and intensified and a new form of subjectivity that is neither the authoritative subject of an expert discourse, neither the subject *produced* by the dominance of others. The result is the transformation of a mode

of being made possible by the emergence of a different form of thought, and hence too, the possibility of a new form of subjectivity.

Foucault's historical and contemporary investigations of ethical practice as an open, inventive, thoughtful experimentation with what else we might do as a way to introduce further possibilities for existence in the present, are *not* a new kind of politics, a new kind of resistance or figure of struggle. He very much sought to think beyond these reference points. This is the reason why I have posed the question of modes of transformation to Foucault's work and why I have attended to his implicit ontology and pushed his substantive analyses of domination and governmental rule to their limits. Foucault is carefully consistent in trying to think through possible and desirable modes of transformation adequate to the *object of transformation* as understood by the terms of his own discourse. So ethics is not apolitical in Foucauldian terms because he sought to get rid of the reference point of politics as a value and guide for transforming existence. Foucault's expulsion of politics in light of his reflections on ethics then, seeks to clear some space for thinking about the conditions of the transformation of modes of being, grounded to a remarkable degree in his ontology.

Now Foucault's optimism about ethics was challenged not least by his Californian colleagues at Berkeley, Dreyfus and Rabinow. As they note, 'Of course, that kind of project is very common in places like Berkeley where people think that everything from the way they eat breakfast, to the way they have sex, to the way they spend their day, should itself be perfected' (Foucault 1983a/2003: 109; Paras 2006: 132). Foucault's response stresses that the difference between the California cults of self-realisation and his reflections on ethics is that the former are still reliant on access to the truth about

one's *real* self (Foucault 1983a/2003: 118). The point for him in contrast, is that the self that one is, is itself something to be made, made by a critical inventiveness about actions, relationships, intensities, etc.—we are dealing with *subjectivation* not *self-subjectification* or self-discipline. Foucault's historical and contemporary explorations of what an arts of living might be able to accomplish do more than stress the contingent formation of modes of being because they highlight that we need to think about how existence, actualised in our actions, guided by a way of thinking critically about existence, can actually be made differently, in an open way (Foucault 1983a/2003: 117). There are though other important criticisms of Foucault's conception of ethics, attendant to the narrowness with which he approached the problem of subject formation.

Concerning ethics, the only reason why Foucault sees arts of existence as a means of escape is that the subject chooses from available means of thought and techniques for working on the self and chooses the goal instead of being subjugated to the goal of another dominant subject. There are four criticisms in particular that highlight the basic limitations of Foucault's approach. The first, addressed by Žižek, is that Foucault's concern with the ancient Greco-Roman world is expressly an attempt to return to a constitution of subjectivity 'before the Fall'. The second criticism is that it fails to take into account the relations of inequality and domination that were the condition of existence for the problematisation of ethics in the ancient world. The third criticism is the equivocation about the role of expert discourse in an arts of existence. The fourth, more an open question, concerns whether or not complex societies could be reproduced if everyone solely concerned themselves with making themselves a work of art. I will deal with them in order.

Zizek's contends that Foucault's conception of ethics is basically a fantasy about an impossible condition of subjective formation before (i.e., in the absence of) authoritative discourse (Zizek 1999/2000: 251-2). In other words, the ancient world that Foucault describes is understood as a world before law and sin enter the Western world with the rise to dominance of Christian discourses of asceticism, self-examination and its consolidation in the Christian confessional and pastoral exercise of power. In this respect, Christianity legislates a concern with knowing and producing the truth of one's thoughts and desires, or legislates a will to truth about subjectivity as a *juridical* principle. The result is a technology for objectifying existence, especially treating one's life as having an essence and governing oneself and others according to a true discourse about one's real being. Granted, Foucault stresses that Christianity only intensifies techniques and forms of problematisation that were already present in the Greco-Roman world. But the introduction of the problem of law and desire in Christian subjective formations *invents* that form of subjectivity that concerned his researches on the Classical and Modern epochs. The problem here is that in terms of Foucault's own conception of subjectivity and his ontology of modes of being, there is *always* a juridical component to thought and experience actualised by the form of subjectivity. In this respect, Zizek is correct to say that Foucault's conception of the ethical subject and 'the image of Antiquity deployed in Foucault's last two books is *stricto sensu* phantasmic, the fantasy of a discipline which, even in its most ascetic version, needs no reference to the symbolic Law/Prohibition of pleasures without sexuality' (Zizek 1999/2000: 252). In short, Foucault's account of ethics contradicts his own concept of subjectivity and its link with the juridical

component of thought. That is to say that ethics is perhaps not a different type of subjective formation at all and hence no means of escape.

The second criticism of Foucault's concern with ethics focuses on the matter of domination and inequality as the condition of existence of, and justification for, ethical practice. As Pearce (1988) and Hunt (1998) have pointed out, the justification for ethics, both Ancient and modern, was that it was the means for constituting and reproducing a ruling class. In this regard, ethics is characterised by a relation of mimesis between relations with the self and relations with others. Thus the problem as described by Foucault in *The Use of Pleasure* and *The Care of the Self* is how can one master others if one cannot master the self? In other words the ethical problem and the justifications for being concerned with the problem of ethics reflects already existing relations of domination. What we are dealing with are subjects that are located in a structure of places, constituted by relations of domination. So strictly speaking, in Foucault's own terms, ethics does not transform relations of domination *per se* but rather presupposes them and reflects on what can be done in those places constituted by relations of domination. Ethics does not address those already existing relations of domination. Indeed, when it comes to contemporary possibilities for ethical work, the issue is the conditions of existence necessary to engage in making oneself a work of art and implicitly for Foucault, that position would appear to belong to a ruling class.

This failure to consider inequality and domination as preconditions for ethics also has a bearing on Foucault's conception of his own practice as an intellectual and his optimism about critical thought. In this respect, Foucault is remarkably unreflexive, having failed to consider his own privileged position as an intellectual at the *College de*

France able to write as means of *subjectivation*. Consequently, we find Foucault making remarkably naïve statements about the transformative power of thought and self transformation. As he states,

To be at the same time an academic and an intellectual is to try and to engage a type of knowledge and analysis that is taught and received in the university in a way so as to modify not only the thought of others but one's own as well. This work of modifying one's own thought and that of others seems to me to be the intellectual's reason for being (Foucault 1984i/1996: 461).

This is a highly limited prospect for the vast majority of people. Foucault's own emphasis on the rarity of discourse and the constraints of discursive formations directly contradicts the possibility that this kind of concern with thinking and transforming ourselves can be made available to people in a society given structural inequalities.

The third problem with Foucault's conception of ethics is that it still presupposes that the resources people will use to problematise their existence, be they forms of dream analysis (CS), diet (CS: 133), or writing the self in personal journals (*hypomnemata*) (cf. Foucault 1983a/2003: 118-119) depend upon the works of the experts of the day. So in his genealogy of the ethics of ancient Greece and through to Rome we are still dealing with the discourse of experts and with it, a regime of truth. The difference that Foucault wishes to stress is that individuals take themselves as an object and choose their own goals and techniques. The possibilities for the present that Foucault introduces with his return to the ancients, allegedly rest in a change in the form of the individualisation of subjectivity. The subject is not directly individualised by another dominant subject engaged in power-knowledge as we find in modern psychiatry, medicine, pedagogy or penology. Rather, there is a folding of individualisation such that the form of subjectivity

produces itself as an object of thought and practice, i.e., constitutes itself as an ethical substance to be worked upon by that same subject: it is the absence of another dominant subject in that very practice that differentiates ethical objectification from the modes of objectification that concerned Foucault's researches on power-knowledge. But in the ancient world, we are still dealing with the dominance of systems of thought, even if we are dealing with a concern for the self and others. Since we are still dealing with expert discourse, the systems of exclusion on which veridical discourses depend remain and still aim at the expulsion of error. In short, to deal with a system of thought about ethics is still to deal with a system of thought and hence its systems of exclusion remain unaffected (cf. Palmer and Pearce 1983).

The fourth limitation of Foucault's optimism about ethics concerns the matter of whether or not subjects engaged in a perpetual experimentation with their existence would permit complex societies to function at all. Here, the classical critical Hegelian technique, questioning whether or not an action can be universalised as a practical attitude, is pertinent: If everyone was engaged in an arts of existence, would society at all be possible? In strict terms it would not because with ethics, the meaning of the juridical subject, a subject of responsibility with obligations only appears to have obligations to its own art. The result is a kind of juridical solipsism negating or at least ignoring the circumstance, acknowledge by Foucault, that modes of being go beyond the locale of the individualised subject and include broader social conditions of existence. In some respects then Foucault's earlier archaeological concerns with avant-garde art and the counter-human sciences are both more radical and more viable as desirable modes of transformation because they go right to the heart of the will to truth about humans and

displace the core object of the human sciences. Nevertheless, Foucault's interest in posing again the possibility of an arts of existence in the present highlights an impasse in the very problematisation of plausible and desirable modes of transformation in the present. This impasse is about the limits of the very coordinates and forms of problematisation that structure the modern/Enlightenment conception of the very project of politics.

Distilling and Assessing Foucauldian Modes of Transformation

Foucault's thoughts about possible and desirable modes of transformation lead to a fairly definitive conclusion. The first is negative in some respects; it concerns an ethic of permanent resistance (cf. Simons 1995) perhaps better formulated as multiplying refusals. In short, he exhorts us to simply "stop". Resistance and refusal open things up by disrupting the smooth workings of rule; ethics is what one does in that place. This has positive effects too—something else happens even if there are no guarantees about the consequences. Foucault shifts the conception of the *object of transformation* to that of modes of being hence offering a distinctive sense of what we are fighting for. For him, we are fighting for the space in which to experiment with and create *new modes of being*. This is a shift in the way of thinking about the relationship between what "is" and what "ought" to be. What "is" are modes of being and this governs his conception of what ought to be done. Thus, the Foucauldian conception of how to change what we are involves distinctive conceptions of the *object and means of transformation*.

Moreover, an injunction is implied in his work namely, "Hey you! Stop (resist/refuse) and think (critically); then give yourself something else to do". Yet again, we see something of Foucault's Kantianism because we are dealing with what resembles

a purely formal procedure: ethics is a form of how subjects relate to themselves. Thus the substantive content of ethics is the form of problematisation and experimentation: there is no substantive command supplied in the Foucauldian exhortation to objectify one's existence as a work of art. But what the combination of the negative figures of resistance, refusal, revolt and the positive activity of ethics do is to introduce a formal glitch in the modes of objectifications of subjects. The insistence of this formal procedure of stopping and thinking (as an activity) *is* a new form of subjectivity, a modern, critical, enlightened form of *subjectivation*.

To review the above catalogue of modes of transformation what is clear is that none of these modes of transformation can be characterised as a politics, either conventionally or according to my definition. It is not that transgression, resistance, anti-science, ethics, etc., do not have effects in the political field—they make rule more difficult and in conjunctures where the social bases of rule are weak, may even cause a system of rule to collapse. But even so, this is not a transformation of, or intervention in social formation, but its *destabilisation*. True, there may be a creative element to this destruction. But the substance of the matter (in all of its senses) simply put is this: Once we have levelled the house, what do we build in its place, with what, how, who will do what, for what, how will it be maintained because we need some place to live? Indeed, Foucault's aversion to politics is quite clear given what he explicitly endorses. For example, he asserts that

I prefer the very specific transformations that have proved to be possible in the last twenty years in a certain number of areas which concern our ways of being and thinking, relations to authority, relations between the sexes, the way in which we perceive insanity or illness; I prefer even these partial transformations, which have been made in the correlation of historical analysis and the practical attitude, to the programs for a new

man than the worst political systems have been repeated throughout the twentieth century (Foucault 1984d/2003: 54).

Moreover, he saw partisan politics with its will to programming, as stultifying creativity (Foucault 1984j/1996: 390). He much prefers the new social movements because in his assessment, they ‘have really changed our whole lives, our mentality, our attitudes and the attitudes and mentality of other people—people who do not belong to these movements. And that is something very important and positive. I repeat, it is not the normal and old traditional political organizations that have led to this examination’ (Foucault 1984j/1996: 390). Indeed, for Foucault being radical is a practical, physical activity: ‘the essence of being radical is the radicalness of existence itself’. But, to frame radicalism this way is simply to repeat the dissolution of the political field into any and all actions. He has unwittingly reduced political engagement to a truism about the contingency of existence, power and resistance. But, it is also important to note that the logic of Foucault’s work does not lead to nihilism or a blind hedonism (same difference in many respects). Rather, there is a normative criterion that can be distilled by attending to these modes of transformation. This criterion leads to the *critical* expulsion of politics, or, as I formulate it, the displacement of normative judgements about “What is to be done?” with an aesthetic criterion, closely aligned with both his understanding of avant-garde art and ethics.

Foucault’s Critical Expulsion of Politics: The Value of Aesthetics

It has been said by many of Foucault’s best known critics such as Poulantzas (1978), Habermas (1987), Walzer (1983/1986), Fraser (1989), and Neocleous (1996), that he

lacks any sort of normative criteria that would provide motives and reasons for people to resist. Basically, Foucault is charged with ‘having no coherent theory of politics as a consequence of his purportedly self-defeating theory of power’ (Osborne 1998: 45) and with lacking any sort of normative or regulative principle from which to answer the question of about why people resist and for what (cf. Simons 1995: 65ff.). At face value, these seem like reasonable charges especially for critical scholars and activists who wish to make a better world (however conceived)—and Foucault should be counted amongst them. But such charges are predicated on dogmatic readings of Foucault, failing to grasp the theoretical displacements and questions produced by the Foucauldian problematic. That is to say that the old rule about doing immanent critique, i.e., understand something in its own terms, seems sadly absent. In short, the question of normative criteria in Foucault first requires that one have a clear conception of the object of transformation to be followed by an assessment of his conception of modes of transformation. Let us take the question “why should people resist domination?” as a case in point. Here, it is important not to be confused about Foucault’s statements of fact, like people finding their situation intolerable, or people being too frustrated, with a normative position (cf. Foucault 1982a/2003; 1972a/1996). In strict Foucauldian terms, the question makes no sense.

The old philosophical argument about the relationship between “is” and “ought”, will help to clarify matters. In Foucauldian terms, resistance has nothing to do with the “ought”; rather, Foucault puts resistance firmly in the domain of the “is”. Moreover, Foucault further turns things around by showing how “oughts” are the very stuff of governmental programming making an “is” of constrained problematisations of existence

in the present actuality: the “ought” too, is an “is” that limits thinking. By the same token, Foucault, like Marx, Nietzsche and Durkheim, highlights how practices, because human and contingent, always have a normative valence (i.e., the juridical component of any veridical statement or power-knowledge exercise). That said, Foucault is concerned with the “is”. The “ought” in Foucault stems from his conception of the “is”, i.e., the present actuality and following Kant’s conception of the Enlightenment, we *ought* to attend to our present actuality. It is also important to note that Foucault’s normative orientation (what can and/or should be done) logically follows from his account of what the problem is. The reasoning goes something like this: if micro-dominations are the problem, micro-practices, like arts of existence are the solution since transforming the basic materials—actual human life—that are the tactical supports of hegemonising strategies. (I subject this position to critique in Chapter 9).

But there is more to it than this because there is an implicit normative injunction very much tied to Foucault’s account of what is the case: to free ourselves from the limitations of the present, we should create, invent and multiply “what is the case”—*make more of the present and multiply our actualities*. Foucault says as much in the context of his discussion of gay culture: ‘We have to dig deeply to show how things have been historically contingent, for such and such reason intelligible but not necessary... We must think that what exists is far from filling all possible spaces. To make a truly unavoidable challenge of the question: what can we make work, what new game can we invent?’ (Foucault 1981b/1996: 312). He did not shy away from making this kind of injunction—‘transform yourself’, he says, affirming his aestheticism (Foucault 1982i/1997: 130). Or, in more rhetorical form, Foucault expresses his position as follows:

‘This transformation of one’s self by one’s own knowledge is, I think, something rather close to the aesthetic experience. Why should a painter work if he is not transformed by his own painting?’ (Foucault 1982i/1997: 131). Furthermore, he contrasts this injunction not to an aesthetics of existence, but to an aesthetic orientation toward *experimenting*, being inventive with what we are: ‘being without a program can be very useful and very original and creative, if it does not mean without proper reflection about what is going on, or without very careful attention to what’s possible’ (Foucault 1984j/1996: 390).

What this means is that Foucault does have a normative position, something well grasped by Deleuze (1986/1988; 1986b/1995) and Osborne (1998). In positive terms, Foucault affirms creativity: *we must affirm the capacity to create and re-create modes of being*. The normative coordinates of Foucault’s work thus follow from his method of political analysis. Hence politics is not to be done and ethics is recommended as a means for transforming human existence since at least it does not fall prey to the totalitarian aims of Grand Politics or rely on experts with their particular ends so circumventing the will to truth in the service of government.

The normative displacement of politics by ethics thus also more pertinently means an *ethics for aesthetics*. In theoretical terms, he displaces normative judgments—including political ones—with aesthetical ones. Thus in Foucauldian terms the object of transformation is ruled existence and the mode of transformation is ethics, not politics: domination by another, or self-domination, the effects of which can be used by another in a position of dominance relative to the individual, is the problem and experimental art is the answer. What we have is the valorisation of creative experimentation as the *criterion* for guiding action: an action will be deemed good if it creates or invents new ways of

living *and* if it perpetuates this activity, *and* if it maximises this activity for the self and others. This is a shrewd, implicit move, one that smashes the last idol of legal and political philosophy, and their concern with *normative questions*. He displaces them altogether by affirming the value of aestheticism, or more correctly, affirming the value of the formal structuring of aestheticisation necessary to subjectivation, a thoughtful, critical way of stopping and thinking so as make something else of what one does. The substance/content of this displaced normativity is the *structure of the procedure*, actualised in the practical form that he calls subjectivation. In doing so, Foucault also gives aesthetic valence to critical thought.

The Logic of Foucault's Expulsion of Politics

There is a price to be paid for endorsing the Foucauldian approach to modes of transformation and its tripartite expulsion of politics (analytical, practical and critical). In this section, I attend to this price by explicating the logical structure of Foucault's expulsion of politics. I contend that the structure of the Foucauldian terrain, both in its conception of the object and mode of transformation, has a logic similar in its structure to the psychoanalytic conception of subject formation found in *Totem and Taboo* (1914/1938) and *Moses and Monotheism* (1939/1955) and subsequently elaborated in Lacanian work (cf. Žižek 1991b: 42ff). My point here is to stress the price of being Foucauldian in as much as his approach to critical thought and to transforming the present means abandoning politics as a viable and desirable mode of transformation. Making this argument about the logical structure of Foucault's expulsion of politics also helps clarify a paradox concerning the articulation of Foucault's ontological and

normative claims about the possibility and desirability of politics in the present. My basic argument is as follows. First, given Foucault's account of the human sciences and the governmental *dispositif*, the object of politics, i.e., "society", "humanity", etc., cannot be said to be a reality that exists *sui generis*. Thus, politics as the pursuit of societal transformation cannot be said to be possible because its object does not exist. Second, and here we encounter the paradox, if politics is impossible because its object does not exist, why then is there effectively an interdiction on politics, with its partisan apparatus, its will to programming new alternatives and aspirations for transforming society? In short, the question to pose to Foucault is how can politics be both impossible and forbidden? If it is impossible why then the need to articulate the interdiction that is the price of entry to Foucauldian asesthetics?

The Impossible and Forbidden in Psychoanalysis

In *Totem and Taboo* (1914/1938) and *Moses and Monotheism* (1939/1955) represents Freud's attempt to offer a phylogenetic account of civilisation and human existence. I take the fundamental insight of these works to be the discovery of the role of a *constitutive exclusion*, together with its representative, in founding the conditions of possibility of human sociality and hence of civilisation too. Freud's 'myth can be divided into three periods: 1) the affirmation of the unrestricted sexuality of the primal father, who 2) is killed or repressed by his sons, and 3) who returns in the form of a totem which prevents a certain animal from being killed' (Samuels 1993: 76). In this regard, I follow Lacan and read Freud's account to be a *diachronically* structured theoretical account of a *synchronic structure*. In this respect, Freud's narrative is similar to Rousseau's on the

state of nature—it is the product of *logic* and it produces a logic of exception (Voruz 2006).

The exception here is the person that Freud calls the ‘primal father’:

The strong male was lord and father of the entire horde and unrestricted in his power, which he exercised with violence. All the females were his property. ... The first decisive step towards change in this sort of “social” organisation seems to have been that the expelled brothers, living in a community, united to overpower their father and, as was the custom of those days, devoured him raw ([Freud, *Totem and Taboo*] in Voruz 2006: 168).

This primal father is the one who can fuck any and all with total impunity—he has unlimited access to satisfaction and enjoyment and hence no real obstacles to his desire. In this respect, he is more god-like than human. Moreover, this is why he symbolises pure power. Then, elaborating a tale similar to Hobbes, Freud conjectures that after the brothers realised the dangers and futility of struggling over who will hold the place of the father they had killed, they came to form a contract. The murdered father is memorialised as a totemic figure whose murder made possible the emergence of civilised order with its institutions, obligations and justice. Then, one finds the interdiction on the *repetition* of the founding act, an interdiction on murder, and the implementation of the incest taboo (i.e., rules governing sexual relations). The result of law and social institutions produces the paradox that it is both impossible and forbidden for anyone to emulate, or take up the position of the primal father. First, it is impossible because once these institutions are in place they are *constitutive of subjects qua* persons in social relations, persons of the social contract. That is to say that they are constituted as *juridical subjects* and hence cannot simply become subjects before and apart from the law as was the primal father. The effectiveness of social institutions and laws makes it impossible to act like the primal

father. After the law, there is no going back for the subject. (There is, but it is called psychosis). And yet, to take up the position of the primal father (e.g., to engage in incest) is forbidden in an attempt to avoid a repetition of the collective murder and precarious struggle for dominance that followed.

The Lacanian explication of this structure is different and stresses the logic of the structure of law, subjectivity and desire (Samuels 1993: 75-103). The position of the primal father is shown to be the logical product of the structure constitutive of subject formation. In short, the primal father does not refer to some real person; it is the phantasm about one who has complete, unlimited satisfaction and *jouissance*. But were a subject to act in this way they would feel the full weight of law and punishment and hence would no longer be part of the community. In short, to not have to face the limits and constraints imposed by civilisation on our wants and potentially unlimited quest for *jouissance*, is impossible *because* it is/has been, forbidden: the ontology of the social and its consequent constitutive power of subjective formation means that we can never go back. Working through Foucault's expulsion of politics reveals that it has a similar structure, producing politics as a phantasm that haunts his account of the political field and his sense of both viable and desirable means for transforming the present actuality.

Politics is Impossible Because its "Object" Does Not Exist

A major consequence of Foucault's account of the human sciences is the conclusion that "society", "the social", "the people", "population" etc., do not refer to an already, independently existing reality. Quite the contrary, his work is at pains to show how these terms are objects within the discourses of the human sciences, constituted and brought to

light by various technologies of power. For Foucault, the very idea of the ‘whole of society’ is tied to utopianism and is an idea that needs ‘to be destroyed’ (Foucault 1971a/1980: 232-233). (That this is a function of Foucault’s nominalism is something I address in Chapter 9). This line of analysis is emphasized and developed for example in Donzelot (1979; 1991), Baudrillard (1983), Rose (1999: 98ff), (O’Malley 1999: 93) and Curtis (2001/2002). Consequently, the logic of Foucault’s problematic means that the conventional construal of the object of revolutionary politics, “society”, “the people”, “the polity”, or “the social formation” are not at all what they are claimed to be by radicals. So, there is no real essence to social life comprising a whole greater than the sum of its parts. Instead, he views “society” and “the social” as governmental effects of attempts to administer populations. Foucault’s antirealism about “the social” covers both the individualist and collective ends of the political spectrum.

In conventional liberal terms, individuals need to be freed from social institutions like the state that thwart individual designs. But as Foucault argues in his analytic of government, the very linkage between the individual and the social is part and parcel of the apparatus of government and thus there is no opposition between two discrete locales of forces, “the individual” on one hand, and “society” on the other. The same critique holds for conservatives because we are dealing with the inversion of the terms: it is the capricious desires and inconsiderate actions of individuals that need to be limited and held in check in order to protect social order. Thus, the conventional focus on the relationship between individual and society and debates about which comes first are displaced because their realist ontologies are wrong. The individual and society are not *real things*. This perhaps lends to radical, revolutionary politics, a feel for “tilting after

windmills”, imagining the object of transformation to be something real that it is not. This is a corollary to Foucault’s rejection of sociological realism (or essentialism—his position covers both), closely linked with his critique of liberation in *The History of Sexuality*.

The impossibility of politics can also be got at by posing the question of what it is that is emancipated by “revolution” which is typically the main justification for politically committed critical social analysis. This is a central theoretical and practical matter, especially for radical social science because it concerns the conceptual object thought about and the practical target of transformation. Foucault’s work challenges the justification for both. In Foucauldian terms, critical and radical social scientific discourses with their commitment to emancipation all too often rely on humanist conceptions in which humans will become free if mechanisms of domination are abolished. Emancipation raises the question of “emancipate what?” and the answer one tends to find in much critical and radical social science is “our real humanity”. Humanist justifications for social science thus tend to see humanity as something external to historically specific conditions of oppression, placing humanity outside of history, knowledge and power. In Foucauldian terms, humanist justifications for science and politics obscure the circumstance that the human is part and parcel of what subjugates us; this “human” is itself a product of discursive formations and their placement in hegemonising *dispositifs*. Consequently, Foucault is unable to form a conventional concept of politics because it would mean admitting the existence of a reality that his protocols not only simply deny, but actively challenge and supplant. In short, to affirm the object of politics would contradict Foucault’s ontology. So, politics is impossible

because its real object does not exist; rather what it imagines its target to be is a ruse of the human sciences.

Politics Is Forbidden Because It Is Disastrous and Deadly

There are countless criticisms of the pursuit of politics in Foucault and I have noted and quoted a number of them (cf. Paras 2006: 85ff). Foucault's aversion to revolutionary politics is premised on his rejection of the desirability of politics (Foucault 1979e/2000: 450). This is why Foucault is *unwilling* to develop a concept proper, or pose the question of politics; according to him, it won't get us anywhere. Posing the question of politics to Foucault's work though, highlights his deep aversion to politics *qua* the pursuit of societal transformation that he equates with Stalinism and Nazism (Foucault 1982a/2003: 127). Nazism and Stalinism as pathological forms of the exercise of power both relied on what Foucault calls the 'eroticization' of power, focused on the figure of the leader (Foucault 1975e/1996: 127). But at core, Foucault consistently argues that to engage in politics is something "bad", something worthy of explicit denunciation and interdiction, 'Everything that this socialist tradition has produced in history is to be condemned', Foucault claims when it came to the politics of the Left (Foucault 1977l/1994: 397-198 in Paras 2006: 87). For starters, Foucault saw the pursuit of revolutionary politics as elitist, not least because of the role of vanguard prophets and intellectuals. Whether or not a revolutionary politics is something desirable in the present was inherently linked to the matter of the dogmatism of party politics, and especially the legacy of Stalinism (Foucault 1977g/1988: 122).

Apart from the indignity of speaking for others as a public intellectual advocating for revolution, there is the matter that political programming and planning for an alternative future, together with the plans for realising that future, (revolutionary or otherwise) is seen to be both disastrous and deadly. Foucault was unequivocally opposed to politics and the offering of new political programmes, because not only were they deadly, they were abusive and failed: ‘We have come to realize things never happen as we expect from a political program; and that a political program has always, or nearly always, led to abuse or political domination from a bloc, be it from technicians or bureaucrats or other people’ (Foucault 1984j/1996:390). Foucault gives a very precise normative argument for why developing new political programmes, and dreams of a better society, are to be rejected. This is because for him, ‘the idea of a program of proposals is dangerous. As soon as a program is presented, it becomes a law and there’s a prohibition against inventing’ (Foucault 1981b/19996: 312). And there we have it: politics rather than *making history* puts obstacles in the way of an arts of existence.

Large-scale projects of societal transformation, or more precisely, the power-knowledge relations used by them, Foucault might say, involve the attempt to make “a new Man and Society” using the same forms of problematisation found in the will to truth about humans. Marx’s work, for example is not revolutionary but rather inhabits the same epistemic space as political economy. For Foucault, “humanism” is absolutely key to his condemnation of both Nazism and Stalinism as evidenced by the circumstance that ‘there was a time when people supported the humanistic values represented by National Socialism, and when the Stalinists themselves said they were humanists’ (Foucault 1984d/2003:52).

Grand Politics is in large measure responsible for the disastrous diseases of power like Nazism and Stalinism, limiting the possibilities of the present. This kind of analysis lies behind Foucault's aversion to Marxism as a political project and a way of thinking about the world. The reasoning goes something like this: Marxism sees the problem of our existence in terms of a "totalising" factor pervasive throughout society, i.e., the dominance of the capitalist mode of production and its objective tendency toward the real and total subsumption of social life to the accumulation of capital. Marxist social ontology thus normatively justifies a "totalitarian" project of societal transformation that in the end resulted in further limiting our possibilities, ending in the purges and the Gulag—i.e., the total expulsion of the project's opponents.

Nazism too sees the problem of human existence in the "totalising" terms of "modernity", that erodes and undermines the true, essential racial life of "the Community", *das Volk*. Nazism attempted to reclaim *das Volk* through a totalising project of societal transformation through racial purification, moral and ideological purification too (Neocleous 1997; Mosse 1964/1981). It is not going too far to say that according to the logic of Foucault's position, all politics is *totalitarian* because *totalising*. Politics has the taint of totalitarianism because it involves the transformation of the totality *qua* society. If anything, Grand Radical Politics through its will to change everything, creates the object it aims to transform: totalitarianism creates the totality rather than the totality creating the need for a Grand Politics aiming to transform an already pre-existing totality.

The strongest indictment of politics made by Foucault is his argument that biopower has always had the underside of a 'thanatopolitics'. In the case of police technologies, 'the state has essentially to take care of men as a population. It wields its

power over living beings as living beings, and its politics has to be a biopolitics. Since the population is nothing more than what the state takes care of for its own sake, of course, the state is entitled to slaughter it, if necessary. So the reverse of biopolitics is 'thanatopolitics' (Foucault 1982c/2000: 416; cf. HS: 149-150; SMBD: 253-263). *A propos* of the Russian Revolution, 'Apparently nothing in the life of the individual is a matter of indifference to the [Soviet or communist] government. The Soviets killed 16 million people to build socialism. Mass slaughter and individual control are two deep characteristics of all modern societies' (Foucault 1980c/1996: 299). Both the Nazi and Stalinist attempts to create a better life in the end were shown to be dependent rather on death. In this regard, Foucault saw Nazism and Stalinism as species of politics because targeting the life of the population and hence engaging in a biopolitics that then justifies thanatopolitics. Thus, grand political projects, while claiming to create a better form of social life for all, end up in massive projects of death.

In short, far from being radical, politics has lead to the worst excesses of rule and domination. In making arguments like these about why politics should be forbidden and indeed, the very conceptual terrain of politics displaced altogether by his version of aestheticism, Foucault commits an egregious error on the grounds of his own sensibilities. In effect, what Foucault has is an essentialist, deeply reductionist and teleological conception of politics: all politics is not simply dangerous but leads to deadly disasters and massive control over individuals—even to pursue it or dream about it means to endorse this will to death; that is the logic of Foucault's position. What is striking is that this reasoning about politics runs contrary to his stress on complexity and contingency when it comes to everything else in his accounts of the political field. At the

same time though, according to my conceptions of politics and rule, the obvious answer to the Foucauldian charge that what I am advocating would lead to disasters, is that neither Nazism or Stalinism are politics. In this sense, I am in agreement with Foucault: they are both *extremes of rule*. What then happens to politics?

The Phantasmic Return of Politics in Foucault

Lacan's explication of the logic of totemism also shows how the image of the primal father who is a *completely free subject*, while strictly speaking impossible (how can there be social relations without the enabling and constraining effects of sociality that allow a social person to engage in relations at all?) nevertheless is produced by the structural logic of discourse itself. The temptation here is to see Foucault's depiction of the ethical subject in these terms. In some respects, this works. But, Foucault is equivocal on this point since he is well aware that ethical subjects do not achieve their goals but rather continue to pursue them; this is the point of *askesis*. Hence, they are not as free as Žižek suggests in his critique of Foucault. Moreover, there is still the effect of discourse and thinking on the subject and hence a juridical dimension to making oneself a work of art. So, I do not think that we should equate the primal father and the ethical subject. Rather, the logic of Foucault's expulsion of politics suggests that it is the *political subject proper* who exists without the law, prior to the law who makes the world as they will—this indeed is the disposition and desire of revolutionaries as Foucault defines them and this is why he sees them as being so dangerous and deadly. This is a god-like subject, who like the gods of ancient Greece, were not subject to the laws of humans and so exist in a

completely different world (cf. Eliade 1954/1991; Caillois 1949/1959). And yet, it is the *absence* of the gods that founds the possibility of the human world.

Thinking about Foucault's work in this way helps us account for the *exceptional* status of politics in his work. The best example of this is his inability to render an account of the Iranian revolution in the terms of his own discourse. In Lacanian terms, politics is that which cannot be symbolised by the Foucauldian terrain, structured as it is by his expulsion of politics. Politics is constitutively excluded in a primary theoretical move forming the theoretical terrain in which he elaborated his thoughts about the transformation of existence. Politics then, is only produced as a logical possibility that falls outside of the coordinates of Foucault's terrain.

For the critical social analyst it is necessary to question what is taken for granted and in my view, Foucault's accounting of the political field in terms of power relations and governance and his use of the model of war for political analysis has all too commonly been uncritically accepted as the correct answer. That Foucault's critiques of political theory are salient does not thereby logically imply that his alternative analytic of power is correct or adequate to the analysis of the political field, as understood in its own terms. Indeed, there is the question of the unthinkable, the unimaginable, the veritable unconscious taboos subtending the consensual side of hegemony (foreclosure), namely questions of revolution, the overthrow of capitalism, the hubris of positivist science and the doctrine of theoretical humanism that serves as the foundation for normative judgments. When theoretical discourse fails to facilitate thinking it has failed and becomes dangerous. In effect, Foucault has been adopted as a new theoretical common-sense and hence has become an obstacle to thinking about the political field.

Conclusion

Posing the question of what are some desirable and viable modes of transformation as far as Foucault is concerned, one finds that he was both unwilling and unable to form a concept of politics and moreover, a concept of politics cannot be coherently thought within the terms of his predominant approach. He is unwilling to endorse politics because deadly and disastrous; he is unable not least because his analytic of the political field is solely an account of rule and domination. Hence there is *no place* for politics in Foucault's work except in the dust-bins of a history we would do well to forget. I have also argued that Foucault endorses the *displacement of politics by ethics* as the means we should follow for transforming our modes of being in the present. Foucault thus shifted the conception of the *object of transformation* (we are not dealing with "Society" as an object of transformation) to that of modes of being and hence also offered a distinctive sense of what we are fighting for. For him, we are fighting for the space in which to experiment with and create *new modes of being*.

Does Foucault's work help us to think about politics? I argue that, as is, he does not help us much to develop a concept of politics and when he does, it is largely in negative terms. Foucault's dissolution of the political into the contingencies and varieties of human life and displacement of politics by ethics as the means to transform our lives thus *depoliticises critical thought*. Foucault's expulsion of politics means taking exception to what is *exceptional* within the coordinates of his account of the political field, namely politics as a monstrous phantasm. To put it bluntly, Foucault's predominant approach to the political field, outlined above, is more of a hindrance than a help for breaking the post-political impasse because his own work itself is a *depoliticised* critical

thought. So while Foucault's works provide the basis for a sophisticated account of the conditions of existence and mechanisms constitutive of post-political domination, his depoliticisation of critical analysis has the unhappy consequence of being inadequate to breaking, or at least challenging, the dominance of the post-political tendency in critical social analysis and in contemporary societies.

The Foucauldian terrain is thus an exemplary place to engage in the theoretical battle for politics itself because the Foucauldian terrain is itself determined by the opposition between politics and rule, between his rule-focused analytic and his expulsion of politics. The issues are serious—it is not simply a matter of saying, “well, Foucault should endorse politics!”. There are reasons why the Foucauldian position leads to the conclusions that it does—they are not simply a matter of personal preference, of his dislike for politics, groups, etc. The reasons are inherent in the terrain of his problematic. The consequences of Foucault's expulsion of politics though are not only theoretical but have practical consequences in a post-political conjuncture, which brings us to the subject of the next chapter.

Chapter Eight:

The Foucault Effect and Post-Politics Today

We are perhaps experiencing the end of politics. For politics is a field that has been opened by the existence of the revolution, and if the question of the revolution can no longer be posed in these terms [because of Stalinism], then politics is in danger of disappearing (Foucault 1977g/1988: 122).

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the main casualties and consequences of Foucault's expulsion of politics in the current post-political period. Central here is the effect of the aleatory encounter between the dominance of the *dispositif* of governmentality, as the concrete basis of post-politics, and the effect of Foucault's expulsion of politics on the capacities of Left, or critical social science and oppositional movements to respond to post-politics. So while Foucault opened up a new *Kampfplatz* for analysing contemporary mechanisms of domination, his expulsion of politics severely constrains the ability of the Foucauldian problematic to address what is at stake in politics today and what sociology might have to say about the fate of politics in the post-political present.

In this regard, Foucault saw himself as part of a generation who 'witnessed the collapse, one after another, of most of the utopias that had been constructed in the nineteenth century and at the beginning of the twentieth century, and who saw the perverse and sometimes disastrous results that could ensue from projects that were extremely generous in their intentions' (1983d/2000: 384). Yet as indicated by the quote opening this chapter, excerpted from an interview with Bernard-Henri Levy the key spokespersons of *la nouvelle philosophie*, champions of the belated French discovery of liberalism, Foucault had some sense of the broader historical consequences of

demonising politics. This Foucault is a Foucault for politics, acutely aware that politics is about possibilities; I concur with this Foucault. In this case, his polemics are *productive*. The extent to which Foucault plays something of the devil's advocate with Levy is telling about his own equivocations about what can be done. Nevertheless, this subterranean current in Foucault rarely makes its presence felt. The result is that Foucault, the dominant resource for critical social analysis today, leaves social analysis unable to think about *possibilities* in a post-political period, unable to address the question of politics in the face of the 'end of politics'.

I begin the chapter with a discussion of the theoretical casualties of Foucault's expulsion of politics. Next, I explicate the concept of post-politics, illustrating some of its effects on contemporary political culture in Western societies. Then, I discuss neoliberalism as the dominant form of the problematisation of rule today. The effects of post-politics on the Left are outlined, focusing in particular on the crisis of Marxism. Left alternatives in the post-political present are then subjected to critique, both for their turn toward the problem of ethics instead of politics, and for their tactical preferences. These moves are then consolidated and framed in terms of a subjugating structure of choices, limiting thought in post-politics. This leads to an analysis of the trace of politics lurking behind post-politics. The chapter concludes by arguing that the Foucauldian problematic is an unwitting ally of post-politics. This provides further reason for displacing the Foucauldian problematic by aleatory materialism, the work carried out in the next chapter.

The Casualties of Foucault's Expulsion of Politics

There are a number of theoretical casualties that follow from Foucault's expulsion of politics. Being aware of these casualties helps to sensitise us to what the stakes are in being a Foucauldian sociologist. The first concerns collective subjects; the second, the Foucauldian focus on rule and domination; third, the matter of the connection between science and politics; and fourth, the suspension of normative judgments proper.

Amongst critics, Foucault is charged with lacking a conception of collective subjectivity (e.g., Neocleous 1996). This is an equivocal charge because examining his corpus shows that the matter is more complicated. I have already discussed and developed a Foucauldian conception of class adequate to a minimal conception of collective subjects, the bourgeoisie for example. The bourgeoisie in Foucault's analyses occupies a theoretically privileged position. Yet, it is not at all clear what Foucault means by this category of collective subject. In the first instance, the bourgeoisie seems to be the well-spring from which emerges predominantly secular social and political thinkers, planners, dreamers and schemers offering solutions about how society ought to be and how this might be achieved. As such, they are the authors of secular plans of morals and civility. Second, they seem to refer to those who occupy the position of scientific experts, those subjects carried along by the modern will to truth, e.g. doctors, psychiatrists, lawyers, judges, teachers and statisticians. Third, they refer to those occupying governmental posts at the level of *savoirs*: their practices are what actualise and lay down the conduits of power-knowledge networks that are then used and transformed by either sovereign power (albeit a decentred sovereign power) as depicted in *The Lives of Infamous Men* (Foucault 1977a/2003) or by governmentalized states. Fourth, they are the

group that invents and implements on their own social life, secular morals and civilizing projects (e.g., as in the case of sexual mores, forbidding child masturbation and hygiene) that are then used as a basis and justification for attempts to impose these cultural sensibilities and types of judgment on the working class and on those who are colonised (Hunt 1998). Fifth, the bourgeoisie at times refers to capitalists. Largely though, Foucault highlights and describes the moral and broadly cultural activities and projects of the bourgeoisie and in this sense, he has a culturalist conception of class.

However, Foucault has no account of how this collective was constituted in their position of dominance, perhaps the most determinative position of dominance in constituting the modern present. Neither does there appear to be historical evidence that such a class (and here I am referring to Foucault's usage) existed—we have no account of what is constitutive of this collective (cf. Maza 2003). In *The History of Madness*, for example, it is the bourgeoisie that appears as the initiator of various schemes and justifications for constituting a reasonable society as early as the seventeenth century. Since capitalism in France does not take any kind of foothold of note until the eighteenth century, this bourgeoisie is not constituted by the emergence of a capitalist mode of production in France (Maza 2003; di Corcia 1978). We can plausibly argue that it is the growth of the absolutist state that created the conditions under which the dominant position of the bourgeoisie was constituted in France. The bourgeoisie are best understood as the upwardly mobile section of the Third Estate (i.e., neither nobles of the robe or the sword, nor clergy, nor possessing bloodlines connecting them to royal power) that was able to accumulate enough money to either educate themselves as professionals or possessed enough money to buy offices like tax collector or tax farmer offered by the

sovereign as a means of generating the massive revenues needed for fighting wars and for royal splendour. This was a conscious strategy on the part of the French monarchy to consolidate its power relative to the power of the nobility. This was not least because being a member of the Second Estate meant exemption from taxes (Lefebvre 1947/1979; Hibbert 1980/1982). In short, we find in Foucault an account of what an already dominant class does and an indication of the competitive advantages accruing to it; we do not find an account of the political subjective formation of a class, neither of its pursuit of objective interests. There are other collective subjects in Foucault's work, the working class for instance that is much less a subject than it is an *objective* material targeted by various political technologies. We also have the homosexual community of gay culture in America of the 1970s and early 1980s as instances of Foucault dealing with collectives.

The real theoretical problem here concerns the circumstances that the collective subjects described and analysed by Foucault are those that are described as already in a position of dominance and thus attention to the formation of collective political subjects of counter-dominance are neglected. So, as concerns how a *political* subject is produced, Foucault's work fails to develop a concept of political subjectivity at all. Moreover, when it comes to his endorsement of ethics, the focus is on individualised subjects.

The third casualty of Foucault's expulsion of politics is the reduction of his account of the political field to events of domination and rule. But, is politics solely about rule? What grounds are there for accepting Foucault's reduction of the ontology of the political to the microphysics of power: are all little relations of power political? I concur with Foucault that they belong to a political field (i.e., the dimension of domination) but this does not thereby imply that all exercises of power are an "active politics".

In this respect, Foucault's work exemplifies the dominant tendency of modern political analysis, whether on the Left or on the Right because the point of departure is rule and the way things are. The Right concerns itself with rule in order to affirm it, fights against those opposed to it, and reacts to the ruled in order to secure and reproduce societal hierarchies. The Left, on the other hand, occupies itself with criticising, fighting against, resisting, and denouncing—in a word *reacting*—to rule. By taking rule as the departure point the question of *transformation* and the problem of how to introduce a concepts that enable one to differentiate between what is now taking place and what else might take place, all too readily falls by the wayside. So, even though Foucault correctly displaces the conventional ways of thinking about rule he remains constrained.

The third casualty of Foucault's expulsion of politics is that theory, social science and politics are the problem and indeed is the spawning ground of thanatopolitics. As noted above, social science, regardless of political stance, is wrong on both counts of what needs to be changed and the positive consequence of human emancipation that supposedly follows. So, in Foucauldian terms the conventional social sciences like sociology, psychology, criminology and political science have fundamentally misconceived their two main objects (the Individual-Society couplet) and the political object to be transformed. The linkage between political projects and science, perhaps the defining feature of political modernity, is in very large measure responsible for the predicament we are in. Since politics and science are part of the problem it would be futile to see in them the possibility of a solution. Thus to engage in them it to participate and perpetuate the problem: neither is a way out. In this regard, it is difficult to be a Foucauldian sociologist with commitments to emancipation.

The last casualty I wish to point out is that of making sociologically informed normative judgments. With his expulsion of politics, Foucault's works themselves have contributed to *legitimising* the depoliticising of critical social science. His most (in)famous, and often-cited statement in this context is his claim concerning 'the bad and the dangerous' (Foucault 1983a/2003: 104). In this light, the characteristic rejection of any and all forms of biopolitics in post-Foucauldian work as somehow *inherently* dangerous also involves a depoliticisation of social life. My point here is to actually recuperate Foucault's remark concerning the difference between the 'bad' and the 'dangerous': 'My point is not that everything is bad, but that everything is dangerous, which is not exactly the same as bad' (Foucault 1983a/2003: 104). So the question one must ask is under what conditions do things become dangerous?

To be strictly Foucauldian about it, things (i.e., concrete mechanisms of power and various discourses) become dangerous when they are articulated as tactical supports for an overall strategy of domination where some class (which is not one; a non-instrumentalist conception of class) is able to engage in projects and programmes of rule on the basis of certain conditions of existence, e.g., an enabling *dispositif*, in the pursuit of a goal or objective moving toward some valorised image of a future society. In other words, and running contrary to his own insights about the inherent linkage between the juridical and the veridical, power-knowledge techniques are implied as being *normatively neutral* on their own. This would imply that, say, being spoken for by experts (e.g., criminologists in the case of prisoners) on its own is fine and hence that there is no *indignity* involved. It only comes to be dangerous when articulated with the broader strategy of dominating the working class. The progressive question then becomes how to

deploy the politics of discourse in order to actualise more egalitarian, progressive and democratic forms of social organisation and coordination. In short, *it matters* who is piloting the ship of state; it matters which class is dominant and is able to, with relative successes, actualise their strategies; it matters what dreams of rule are being pursued; it matters what goals or objectives are pursued by those developing programmes of rule and developing solutions to the problems of dominance, rule and governing; it matters how these are fought over because the outcomes significantly determine what is deemed bad and/or dangerous. In short, to expulse politics is to dispense with posing the question of how politics, when it happens, actually constitutes the conditions of a new normative framework able to determine what is “bad and dangerous”. What the radical sociologist needs to be wary of in going in a Foucauldian direction is precisely what is valorised by Foucault’s position on the bad and the dangerous, in short, the extent to which the value and effect of politics is called into question by this stance.

This does not imply that one then must reject as of no use Foucault’s significant contributions to theoretical and substantive investigations of the concrete mechanisms, conditions of existence and contingencies of domination, rule and governance. But it does imply that one see these concerns as limiting when it comes to thinking about the relation between politics and the present post-political condition. Thus, I do not dispense with the important contemporary work being done in a Foucauldian vein on surveillance, risk, security, genealogies of governance, corporeal dimensions of the objects of dominance, rule and governance. Rather I question the over-valuation of these phenomena and the relative paucity of work that attempts to think about politics and what is meant by it. And

here, there are implications to being Foucauldian that extend beyond the order of discourse to discursive effects within a broader array of conjunctural forces.

Defining Post-Politics

Classically, from Plato through to Machiavelli and on to Marx, politics referred to the collective pursuit of transforming an existing state of affairs, involving the imagination of an alternative arrangement of the social institutions and relations comprising the already existing collective fate in order to create conditions of what is deemed to be a “good society”. That is to say that politics was about an *alternative fate to be actively made*. In these terms, the salient, definitive question of politics can be taken as being: What kind of society do we wish to live in and how might we get there? This in turn implies the political concerns proper of those seeking to realise a different fate. The dominance of contemporary post-political circumstances are such that the question of politics and the concern with politics are deemed deeply impolitic.

Drawing on Jacques Ranciere’s *Disagreements* (1995/1999; cf. Ranciere 2001) Slavoj Zizek, with whom I concur, argues that we are now living in an era of post-politics in which what counts as politics is reduced to debates about and concerns with, the ways, means and modifications of social administration (1999; cf. Laclau 2005/2007).¹ The concept of post-politics is anticipated by a range of earlier theories. In my view the main ones include: Saint-Simon’s (1952) notion of industrial society orchestrated by scientists

¹ There is also a critical literature on ‘antipolitics’, based in the American Left, that overlaps and resonates with the Ranciere-Zizek discussions of post-politics. There is a difference of emphasis though. Antipolitics refers to the denigration of government and politicians and hence withdrawal of civic engagement in what I would call the post-political circuit. For an excellent historical review and theoretical assessment of “antipolitics” in America see Carl Boggs (2000).

and technocrats and cemented by the dissemination of scientism to the masses through aestheticised, religious forms; the Durkheimian conception of profane social life governed by individualised, egoistic, utilitarian concerns (Datta 2005); Horkheimer and Adorno's concept of the 'totally administered society' (1947/1972); Carl Schmitt's critique of liberalism as depoliticising the properly political dimension of deciding on who is a friend or enemy of the state (1932/1996); and Lyotard's conception of postmodernity as governed by technocratic, pragmatic, efficiency criteria under the control of expert management (1979/1984). In postmodernity, according to Lyotard, management becomes an end in-itself in contrast to the modern notion of management as a means to an end.

Zizek defines the post-political condition as follows:

In post-politics, the conflict of global ideological visions embodied in different parties which compete for power is replaced by the collaboration of enlightened technocrats (economists, public opinion specialists...) and liberal multiculturalists; via the process of negotiation of interests, a compromise is reached in the guise of a more or less universal consensus. Post-politics thus emphasizes the need to leave old ideological divisions behind and confront new issues, armed with the necessary expert knowledge and free deliberation that takes people's concrete needs and demands into account (Zizek 1999: 198).

That is to say that political questions are made technical and managerial and are transformed into questions of policy/police. For Ranciere, in a manner quite similar to Foucault, police refers to 'the set of procedures whereby the aggregation and consent of collectivities is achieved, the organisation of powers, the distribution of places and roles, and the systems for legitimizing this distribution' (1995/1999: 28). That is to say that the post-political reduction of politics to policy is based on police knowledges of what is the case—it does not bother with what might be made to be the case (Ranciere 2001: 22).

To think in terms of a post-political epoch or condition is not so foreign from Foucault's ways of periodising Western history. As concerns periodisation, the post-political present is of the same historical order as the Enlightenment. For Foucault,

the Enlightenment is an event, or a set of events and complex historical processes, that is located at a certain point in the development of European societies. As such, it includes elements of social transformation, types of political institution, forms of knowledge, projects of rationalization of knowledge and practices, technological mutations (Foucault 1984d/2003: 52).

The aspect of the Enlightenment that interested Foucault most is 'the mode of reflective relation to the present' (52). What I mean by a post-politic epoch is very much a matter of how people relate to the present and crucially how this reflective activity is supported by the governmental *dispositif*. The result is a characteristic orientation to the present actuality predicated on the expulsion of politics; this is what gives post-politics its epochal historicity.

Post-politics has created something like a crisis of politics, a crisis of the absence (i.e., occlusion and expulsion) of politics *within* post-politics. It has been supported and accompanied by the marked underdevelopment of alternatives to post-politics, linked to a series of historical defeats suffered by socialist politics in the West, like Mrs. Thatcher's brutal crushing of the miner's union; the spread of anti-union legislation and the eroding of workers' rights in North America and Britain since the mid-1970s (Laxer 1998).

For Žižek, British Prime Minister Tony Blair's New Labour exemplifies the post-political mentality: 'advocates of New Labour like to emphasize that one should take good ideas without any prejudice and apply them, whatever their (ideological) origins. And what are these 'good ideas'? The answer is, of course, *ideas that work*' (Žižek 1999:

198-199). The question to ask as Nietzsche and Lenin might, is “Work for what”? These pragmatically oriented concepts ‘remain within the framework of existing sociopolitical relations’ (Žižek 1999: 199). That is to say that post-politics works for keeping things just as they are, modifying them when necessary: post-politics is not about societal transformation but about the development of the society we already have problematised in terms of governmental coordinates. As Ed Broadbent, former leader of the federal social democratic party in Canada argues, this pragmatic orientation ‘reveal[s] a deep commitment to the status quo’, commitments in which questions of social justice and equality are excluded (Broadbent 2006: A19).

By reducing politics to the pragmatic concerns of administration, post-politics means that parliamentary representative democracy plus capitalism are deemed the only viable coordinates for a free and vibrant human civilisation. These are allegedly the coordinates and mechanisms that will protect us from tyranny. People appear to have some choice over the vehicle by which to arrive at the destination of well-administered parliamentary democracy plus capitalism (e.g., retain some revenue guzzling features of the old welfare state, or aggressively privatise welfare state service provision in the name of efficiency) and free to choose taking the superhighway, e.g., rapidly de-regulated Russia in the 1990s (Gerber and Horst 1998), or the scenic route (e.g., Sweden after Palme).

Nevertheless, the destination remains the same as do the coordinates for thinking about the direction in which society is headed. Or to use another analogy, we are free to choose anything from the menu, but changing the restaurant is out of the question, hence the ideological structure of post-politics since premised on the foreclosure of the question

of politics. In contrast, a ‘true political act...changes the coordinates of the situation, and renders the unthinkable thinkable’ (Zizek 2004b: 39). Thus, the battle for politics itself, a politics that thinks about alternatives and thus excepts itself from post-political coordinates, is the definitive feature of a conjuncture in which the post-political tendency dominates debates about societal fates.

A debate over American consumerism in the Canadian national daily newspaper *The National Post*, aptly captures the dominance of post-political thought and its foreclosure on alternative political coordinates in America. Daniel Gross writes that ‘America’s fat problem is a metaphor for our economic troubles: We are too flabby to compete in a cutthroat global economy. But instead of seeing our obesity as a crisis, maybe it’s time we recognized it as an opportunity—the rare chance for the United States to dominate a new industry’ (2005: A15). Gross’ suggestion is not to address the causes of poverty, closely correlated to obesity and to gross and growing inequalities in America, or to address how the capitalist post-Fordist restructuring of work-time has constrained people’s capacities to reproduce their labour-power by reducing the amount of non-work time available for, say, exercise or healthier home cooking, now replaced by highly refined and processed, fattier, sodium and sugar-loaded convenience foods. Rather than think about the social conditions producing obesity as a symptom, the post-political solution is to be found in *more of the same*, i.e., American innovation and entrepreneurship. In characteristic post-political form, the problem of obesity generates an opportunity for health and fitness products and expert services to be offered in the capitalist marketplace.

Living in Canada perhaps gives the social analyst a privileged position from which to consider post-politics. After all, the catchphrase for political coordinates in Canada is enshrined in its constitution: 'Peace, order and good government'. The contemporary Canadian post-political coordinates are well indicated by an editorial in the Canadian national daily, *The Globe and Mail*, stating that 'politics should not subsume policies' — a post-political slogan if ever there was one (April 12, 2005: A14). I would go so far as to say that Canada is perhaps the quintessential post-political society. As Stephen Schecter's writes, in Canada, 'we want to get rid of the political means altogether and treat political questions as technical ones, as problems of social engineering' (1993: 42).

Neoliberalism and Post-Politics

The coordinates of post-political thought are found in its common policy recommendations of tax cuts, discussions about a knowledge economy, a flexible workforce, life-long learning and public-private partnerships. Neoliberalism can be taken as delimiting these formulae and the contemporary post-political symbolic coordinates. It has become the main resource for producing solutions to the problems confronting the exercise of governmental rule. Neoliberalism also involves a rethinking of the role of the state, capitalist markets and individual freedom, since states are deemed to be inherently poor deliverers of goods and services. As Peters points out, 'for neoliberals the commitment to the free market involves two sets of claims: claims for the efficiency of the [capitalist] market as a superior allocative mechanism for the distribution of scarce

resources and claims for the market as a morally superior form of political economy' (Peters 2001: 19).

Neoliberalism is characterised by several main elements: limiting the role of the state in society; shifting the role of the state as the agency responsible for constituting and securing markets; an extension of voluntary agreements; creating conditions of self-governing, responsible individuals; an increased emphasis on management, modelled after capitalist enterprise; state governance through markets and marketisation; reliance on expert knowledges; 'the marketization of democracy' in which citizens become consumers in a marketplace of public management models; replacing the social with the community as the main field of government; and the global liberalisation of capital and commodity flows (Peters 2001: 21-22; cf. Rose 1999: 137-139; Pearce and Tombs 1998b: 3ff.).

Neoliberalism is seen as an answer to the cumbersome features of Keynesianism and its welfare state model caught in bureaucracy, deemed wasteful and inherently deresponsibilising. In neoliberal terms, Keynesianism was a recipe for stultifying innovation, creativity and self-actualising individuals. In short, the welfare state governs too much. With this insight, shared by many on the Left as well including Foucault (1983e/2003: 67), neoliberalism got an important element right. Neoliberals recognised that desirable individuals in society (be they acting as citizens, consumers or workers and the like) did not pre-exist their social constitution. Thus, there was an important socialising role to be played by the state in contrast to classical liberal notions of restricting state intervention and allowing rational individuals to largely do as they will so long as their actions do not harm others.

Consequently, grand political projects for the transformation of society have become taboo, even in Leftist circles. Post-politics though, relies on a historical myopia. The foreclosure surrounding politics occludes historical accomplishments of politics and effects of massive projects in constituting contemporary societies, e.g., the New Deal in America or the Marshall Plan in post World-War II Western Europe. Post-political thought thus denies the possibility of any future organisation and coordination of massive projects.

The consensual aspect of post-political hegemony accompanying the coercive side of physical and legislative attack (or its threat) is the promise of being able to consume as one will. The advertisements for state owned and controlled lotteries in Canada tellingly indicate what freedom and happiness are. The buy-line for Lotto 649 is 'Imagine the Freedom', i.e., the freedom to buy what you want. There is also a hyper-activity that accompanies the securing of post-political consent, because if people are doing something else, they will not be doing politics. Hyper-activity is a kind of perverse post-political self-governance—structuring the field of actions of oneself such that there really is no time for politics. This need not be an explicit instrumental technique, but it is the *effect* that counts. So the consuming classes spend their time at the mall, shuttling children to endless lessons, building their home theatre, playing videogames, or on renovations. I am not suggesting that these are morally "bad" from the point of view of an substantively egalitarian democratic political project—why shouldn't the working-class (and they are the working-class; they all have to go to work to reproduce their lives) have some fun? Rather, I take these practices as evidence of the normative truth of their activity, namely the answer to the anxiety about what people are supposed to do. This is

equivalent to a perverse injunction—"You must do something!"² We may even do so much of this "something" that we become exhausted. Exhaustion then becomes means for a retroactive justification for hyper-activity: "I'm so tired, I must have been doing *something*". Perhaps exhaustion too is a healthy means of generating oblivion (unlike flirting with the demons of alcoholism or psychopharmacopoeia), a means to at least get free of the self. This is an ecstasy that does not however take you out of your place; rather it leaves you in the place where you are, but with nothing left. (This is exactly what we say when we over-work ourselves: 'I've got nothing left...'). On this account, Žižek's insight about hegemony is *apropos*: we are hegemonised by our enjoyments (Žižek 1991/2002). Moreover, the extent to which people's enjoyments depend upon consumer credit is important since it always involves a promise of payment. As Nietzsche points out in *On the Genealogy of Morals*, promises subject us to a morality and have a deeply conservative element to them constraining possibilities for the future (Nietzsche 1878/1989).

There is an underlying sense that grand political projects and the means for achieving them are either impossible or lead to the tyranny of the Party or the State, and thus lead to being governed too much, in classically liberal terms. Hence the resonance of

² This suggests that the ethical injunction of neoliberalism, its basic interpellative message, is: "You are free to do, *do!*" Thus, the subjection of the neoliberalised free subject is lies precisely in its hyper-activity. Baudrillard and Žižek, in different ways and for different reasons suggest a means of escape, namely the refusal to be a subject at all. So, in *Seduction* (1979/1990) the key for Baudrillard's ethics of symbolic exchange is for the subject to become an object, a pure object, of another's desire, i.e., the aims and objectives of a system of simulacra. For Žižek, Melville's *Bartleby* is the key:

His "I would prefer not to" is to be taken literally. ... In his refusal of the Master's order, *Bartleby* does not negate the predicate; rather, he affirms a non-predicate: he does not say that he *doesn't want to do it*; he says that he *prefers (wants) not to do it* (Žižek 2006: 381).

Mrs. Thatcher's T.I.N.A. doctrine: 'There Is No Alternative', no alternative to globalised capital, parliamentary representative democracy and consumerist-life-style-choice orientations (cf. Pearce and Tombs 1998: 58).

Thus, post-politics needs to be seen as a kind of mentality like governmentality. Post-politics precludes a concern with properly political thought about alternative futures since its coordinates of parliamentary democracy plus capitalism are accepted as being the only viable ones. It is here that the impasse of post-politics reveals its ideological character since it is overtly opposed to actually thinking about how things have come to be the way they are and not otherwise, that the present actuality does not exhaust potential alternative arrangements and coordinates and thinking about how things can actually be made otherwise (cf. Stavrakakis 1999: 79). The post-politics of the dominance of governmentality is in a very precise sense ideological because its coordinates are unquestionable—alternatives are unthinkable and deemed *a priori* unacceptable.

Post-politics and Anti-democracy

Post-politics exists in the midst of a Western civilization that is substantively anti-democratic: the bulk of social life is governed and determined by anti-democratic, substantively inegalitarian social institutions and relations in which people have little influence over how and why they are governed in a particular way (e.g., state institutions, work, law, school, family, health, religion, economic markets, media, arts and leisure). It is more than ironic—it is symptomatic—that the West has to watch the "Others" (e.g., Argentina 2001-2002, Venezuela, the Orange Revolution in the Ukraine, 2004-2005, or The Cedar Revolution in Lebanon, 2005) to see and vicariously practice democratisation.

It is as if democratisation in the West is dead or perhaps *abject* (“all those disshelved, disaffected anti-globalisation protesters who need to get a real job and quit complaining...”). The mass uprisings of these Others exert their fascination on the globally dominant post-political Anglosphere because they symbolise real politics in action for post-political publics for whom there is no real politics anymore. The eruption of the Others’ democracy confronts post-politics with the possibility of real politics that must however be disavowed in order to sustain the dominance of post-political norms.

Yet, uprisings function like a mythic supplement to post-politics, similar to what psychoanalysis calls a ‘fundamental fantasy’ (Žižek 1997). This is a fantasy in which individuals unconsciously witness the moment of their own conception and this fantasy subsequently organises their capacity for pleasure. The spectre of the Others’ democracy I suggest, allows post-political subjects to witness their own conception along the lines of: “We went through that which is why we now have it so good”. But, this organises the *absence* of political desire. The basic ideological message is thus that we in the Western Anglosphere have no need of further politics since we have already arrived in a condition of freedom. Hence, any further politics is deemed either false or dangerous.

Today, it is as if democracy (in contrast to protesting, demonstrating or exercising one’s right to free speech—little pieces of democracy that do not result in concrete transformations of social organisation), is subversive and monstrous, the usual ruling-class fantasy as found in Burke and explored by Foucault in *Abnormal* (AB: 96-104). For example, the Jacobin revolutionaries ‘are the mirror image of the bloodthirsty monarch. The people in revolt are the hyena that attacks the social body’, in a cannibalistic frenzy (AB: 98).

Contemporary neo-Conservatives have actively attacked democracy, from Huntington (Hardt and Negri 2004: 33-35) to the more recent work of Fareed Zakaria. For them, there is too much democracy and it should be replaced 'by delegating power to impartial experts insulated from the democratic fray, such as the independent central banks' (Zizek 2004b/2005: 59). The result is an attempt to depoliticise the economy. However, as Zizek notes,

is it not ridiculous to complain about "overdemocratization" at a time when key economic and geopolitical decisions are, as a rule, not an issue in elections: for at least three decades, what Zakaria is demanding has already been a fact. What we are indeed witnessing today is a split between ideological lifestyle issues, where fierce debates rage and choices are solicited (abortion, gay marriage, and so forth) and basic economic policy, which is presented as a depoliticized domain of expert decisions—the proliferation of "overdemocracy", with its "excesses" of affirmative action, the "culture of complaint", and demands for financial and other compensation by victims, is the front whose back is the silent weaving of economic logic (Zizek 2004/2005: 59-60).

The Response of the Left

The response of the Left to the post-political tendency has been chaotic and situated in the rightward shift of the political spectrum. More precisely, with the collapse of the USSR, the battle between two political spectrums in Western political coordinates disappeared and only one spectrum remained, defined by post-political coordinates. This has predominantly led to an acceptance of post-political coordinates even when anti-capitalist.

Two key events have situated the contemporary Left: the collapse of the USSR and the equation of postmodernism as radical. It is significant that the fate of Marxism is the flash point of both. For postmoderns, Marxism is a quintessentially modernist

political project attempting 'to define and implement universal goals like freedom, equality and justice, in an attempt to transform institutional structures of domination' (Best and Kellner 2005: 2). The problem with Left postmodern politics is that since Marx put the matter of the dominance of the capitalist mode of production and its adverse tendencies for societal reproduction and democracy on the theoretical and practical/political map, what theoretical resources could the Left rally in a time of the massive retrenchment of neoliberalism and capitalist accumulation if it abandoned the Marxian moment? As Wood writes, 'The current preoccupation with "postmodern" diversity and fragmentation undoubtedly expresses a reality in contemporary capitalism, [...] It disguises the underlying systemic unity, the imperatives which create that diversity itself while at the same time imposing a deeper and more global homogeneity' (1995: 261).

The role played by the rejection of Marxism both as an analytic and as a privileged form of political engagement in postmodernism however, led to the negative valorisation of politics *qua* politics in favour of an uncoordinated plurality of localised struggles, resistance and analyses that failed to consider the broader structuring of social formations that are the condition of possibility of both plural forms of domination and forms of resistance. Foucault shares this sensibility: 'The first thing that happened after '68 was that Marxism as a dogmatic framework declined and new political, new cultural interests concerning personal life appeared' (Foucault 1972f/1998: 125). This is to say that "society" as the target of politics and politics as the means for transforming societies were both held to be at a minimum suspect and often *anathema*. Thus,

the modern emphasis on collective struggle, solidarity, and alliance politics gave way to extreme fragmentation, as the "movement" of the

1960s splintered into various competing struggles for rights and liberties. The previous emphasis on transforming the public sphere and institutions of domination gave way to a new emphasis on culture, personal identity, and everyday life, as macropolitics were replaced by the micropolitics of local transformation and subjectivity (Best and Kellner 2005: 3).

The Crisis of Marxism

Post-politics is very much dependent on the crisis of Marxism especially after the collapse of the USSR. The main theoretical and practical political effect was the spurious conclusion that the collapse of the USSR means that Marxism is theoretically wrong, disastrous and unworkable; that Marxism is a failure.³ In this view, Marxism is deemed a species of modern tyranny, i.e., totalitarianism/unfreedom.⁴ This has also meant that the Marxist goals of substantive egalitarianism, the responsibilities of states to provide goods, services and legal process, and socialist democracy are dismissed. This circumstance for many, on both the Left and the Right, put an end to the long crisis of Marxism—any hope in Marxism is deemed a misplaced, mistaken and dangerous hope.

What was this long crisis of Marxism? In simplest terms, it has centred on questions of politics, the state and historical becoming (Vatter 2004: 4). One can appreciate the connections between these terms of the crisis by beginning with the circumstance that the crisis of capitalism, especially in the most capitalist societies never

³ One should note here how the theoretical rejection of Marxism on both the Left and the Right is dependent on variants of idealism that go something like “Marx thought about things, wrote them down and these ideas led to authoritarian political parties and then deadly, totalitarian states. Eventually, ‘the people’ could not take it anymore and it collapsed. So, since Marxist ‘ideas’ started the whole *inevitable* process, they must be abandoned as inherently dangerous”.

⁴ For a critique of the political genus of totalitarianism that groups Marxism, Nazism, Stalinism and Italian fascism together see Neocleous (1997: 11), Žižek (2001), and Badiou (1993/2001: 62ff.).

seemed to come. Eduard Bernstein and Georges Sorel articulated the stakes well, early in the twentieth century. For Bernstein, Marxism had ‘underestimated the power of capitalist self-regulation’ (Aronowitz 1987: 5). Its contemporary version can be found in Žižek. Žižek’s ‘move is to envisage the constant potential for breakdown in capitalism not (as Marx did) as the limit on which it will founder but, on the contrary, as the condition of its continued existence’ (Kay 2003: 131). So, crisis in capitalist societies rather than being a precipice over which capitalism would fall rather becomes a stimulus to social creativity and rejuvenation.

On the question of historical development, Sorel argued that Marxism was inherently undermined by a crude determinism unable to handle contingencies in the economy (Aronowitz 1987: 6). This facet of the crisis of Marxism stemmed from a simplistic eschatology of capitalist development inadequate to matters of either developments in capitalism, say from competitive capitalism to joint-stock companies, or of the societies in which they exist. Moreover, the lesson of fascism taught Marxism that when things became difficult for the working class, the possibility exists that they will embrace reactionary, intensified domination. For instance under Nazism, ‘The message to the worker then, is: why identify with an oppressed class when you can identify with the (racial) aristocracy?’ (Neocleous 1997: 41). As Rancière has argued, racialised hatred is symptomatic of contemporary post-politics in which we ‘depoliticize conflicts in order to settle them, or stripping otherness of any yardstick the better to solve its problems—this is the madness which our time identifies with a reasonable and easy democracy’ (Rancière 1990/2007: 105-6). Frequently, ‘the immigrant’ becomes the target: ‘Alternately problematized and hated, the immigrant is caught in a circle, one might even

say a spiral: the spiral of lost political otherness, doomed to the unnameable form of hatred' (Ranciere 1990/2007: 105).

Closely linked with the weaknesses of vulgar Marxist notions about historical development is the question of the role of politics in societal transformation. Marxism, since its inception as a rallying point for the revolutionary transformation of capitalist societies, had plenty of difficulty theorising both politics and the constitutive role played by the state in stabilising the class antagonisms traversing capitalist societies. Lenin, through to Gramsci, Althusser, Poulantzas and Jessop helped correct this oversight in Marxism (Aronowitz and Bratish 2002; cf. Althusser 1978/2006: 50). In doing so, they also provided an alternative to the tendency of linear conceptions of capitalist development and economic reductionism by stressing the relative autonomy of state apparatuses, ideology and culture as having reciprocal but asymmetrical effects on the economy.

Key to these strands of Marxist theorising is the notion that states play a constitutive and regulatory role in capitalist markets and at the same time, state power is caught in a position where it must cope with the contradictions produced by its constitutive role if the exercising of state power is to be secured. However, the addition of theorising the state, ideology and culture only partly addressed the crisis of politics in Marxism since focusing more on targets for opposition and factors that constrain possibilities for the transition to socialism and much less on the conditions of possibility for societal transformation without falling into the opportunism criticised by Lenin in *The State and Revolution* (Lenin 1918/1932; Zizek 2002b/2004).

This I contend, is the more pronounced weakness in Marxist conceptions of politics. This weakness concerns the constitution of collective political subjects and the constitutive power of politics. Indeed, it is striking that when compared to the many Marxist critiques of capitalist political economy and analyses of the forms of domination and exploitation characteristic of contemporary societies, theorising the constitutive power of politics perhaps has had only a handful protagonists—Lenin, Trotsky, Lukacs, Gramsci, Althusser's later work and most recently Hardt and Negri (2004).

However, the question of Marxist politics *qua* Marx-ism, has been overly constrained by Lukacs' concern with how Marxist thought provides the means for the transformation of the working class in-itself to a class for-itself, i.e., the politicised proletariat (Lukacs 1968/1999). The problem here is the tendency to miss the *ontological primacy* and exceptional quality of politics in relation to a mode of production. The conditions of a politics produce different forms of subjectivity—there is no conscious self as the agency that serves as the commonality/identity (in Hegelian terms), mediating the transition from the misrecognised (because reified) economic and political instances to a revolutionary consciousness. Materialist critique aims at counter-recognition in order to apprehend the conjuncture, but remains at the level of interpretation. Here, Marx's eleventh thesis on Feuerbach is *a propos* of the crisis of politics in Marxism: 'The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world, in various ways; the point however, is to *change* it' (Marx 1845/1978: 145). Perhaps Lenin put it best when he said that 'Politics cannot but have dominance over economics. To argue otherwise is to forget the ABC of Marxism' (in Collier 1998: 281).

Belatedly, the disappearance of Marxism as a political force to be contended with in Western societies has become the condition in which contemporary Marxism has increasingly come to grips with the weakness of limiting political analysis to sites of domination and the concerns with the reactionary tendency of collective political movements (e.g., environmentalism). This is indicated by the recent attempt of Hardt and Negri (2004) to explicate the ontological conditions for the emergence of a politicised 'multitude' and by Žižek's attention to collective-political subjects as found in his discussions of Rancière's concept of the *demos* (Rancière 1995/1999), the Pauline conception of the formation of the Christian church and Lenin's conception of the political party (Žižek 2002a/2004).

What is disconcerting however, is that many who were once Marxists of a stripe, and many who now identify and are identified as on the Left, have accepted the post-political terms of debate. In a very real sense, the post-political Left advocates a better neo-liberalism. It does not question representative parliamentary democracy or the dominance of capitalism (i.e., that economic growth and health trumps all is an effect of structured domination). Rather the post-political Left split into two predominant camps: Third Way/Progressives, i.e., neoliberalism (Callinicos 2001; Evans 2002) and critics and protestors. The scapegoating of Marxism however has had the serious consequence of precluding politics from both Left theory and practice.

Postmodernism and the Left

Postmodernism counts among the main reasons why the Left has ended up facilitating the post-political tendency. In the wake of postmodernism, social and political theorists,

especially on the Left, saw politics as part and parcel of an inherently doomed Enlightenment project of the rational, planned and progressive transformation of human civilization. For postmodernists, even if major political projects are not doomed, it is argued that people in contemporary societies no longer believe that we are living and advancing this story, what Lyotard famously calls the 'incredulity toward metanarratives' (1979/1984: xxiv). While postmodernism has been subjected to critique, especially as concerns its impasses about normative justifications for transforming societies and assessing policy options, the wariness toward politics remains. For example, large-scale political projects as involving the strategy for transforming societies has largely been rejected since, it is argued, it attempts a total transformation of social life, hence is totalitarian and rather than increasing freedom, it escalates and intensifies unfreedom in the name of the political project.

The alleged inherent Marxist reduction of human existence to economics was also deemed untenable and hence neither could political tactics privilege the concerns of wage labourers at the expense of women, visible minorities and subalterns.⁵ (But, is it not the case today that *Marxists* are *the* subaltern group?). Radicalism has come to mean struggle, resistance, culture jamming, protests, social movements and struggling for and asserting distinct identities and believing in the spontaneous creation of forms of social

⁵ Harrington defines 'subaltern' as follows:

Subaltern [is a] term originally in the work of Antonio Gramsci, referring to the exclusion of working-class voices from bourgeois culture more recently used in postcolonial theory, especially by Guyatri Spivak and in Indian cultural studies, referring to dominated or oppressed groups who are excluded from hegemonic discourses and are unable to find a hearing for their cause, in contrast to other dominated or oppressed groups who *do* have a hearing within hegemonic discourses and who attempt to advance their cause in terms of these discourses (Harrington 2005: 328).

organisation instead of hierarchical, authoritarian institutions and criticism. Thus, I do not consider identity politics or the politics of difference to be radical because they all too readily fit with post-political conceptions of individuals and their rights.⁶ Indeed, as Dinerstein has argued *a propos* of the insurrection in Argentina 2001-2002, its effectiveness rested precisely on a rejection of identity politics, i.e., a politics based on the hegemonically assigned placement of individuals in a capitalist division of labour and in the *re*-presentationalist political parties. As she puts it, ‘The slogan chanted by the demonstrators [in 2002] ... “I can see it, I can see it tonight, *all of us are piqueteros* [unemployed workers]!”—adequately captured the need to fight identity politics and social fragmentation to confront capital’ (2002: 33).

On this account I do not find the emergence of concern with new social movements valorised by Habermas (1983) and Laclau and Mouffe (2001; cf. Canel 1992) that emerged in the wake of postmodernist rejections of Marxism, persuasive—this substitution of movements for politics occludes and/or displaces the radical political matter of move and mobilise *in what, according to what, for what?*. That is to say that the matter of their radicality is one of their position relative to post-political coordinates, i.e., whether they are within them or not. This is not to minimize the struggle for civil rights and the emergence of the new social movements, from Free Speech at Berkeley, to second wave feminism, to environmentalism. Radical second wave feminism indeed had a politics and was often explicitly socialist in its political imagination (e.g., Firestone 1970; Childers and hooks 1990; cf. Hamilton 2005).

⁶ For a compelling critique of culture jamming and counter-culture, see Heath and Potter (2004).

At the same time it is important to stress the reformist dimension of the new social movements. By and large, they fought for the extension, and/or protection, of already existing liberal rights not least by sanctioning activities that threatened the exercising of these formally existing rights. As Goodwin argues, social movements 'seek directly or indirectly to reform the state or to utilize state power in order to reform existing economic, social, or cultural arrangements. Most social movements, that is, do not attempt to restructure national societies in truly fundamental ways' (Goodwin 2001: 10). This is in contrast to what Goodwin calls a 'radical revolutionary movement' that 'seeks the destruction or fundamental transformation of (at least) several important institutions' (10). For example, the passage of the Civil Rights Act in 1964 by US President Johnson did just this, as did the Voting Rights Act, 1965, that abolished the literacy tests for African-American voters. In this respect, the new social movements were about 'expanding political opportunities', within the already existing coordinates (Goodwin 2001: 24). This made it less difficult for them to legitimate their claims since they appealed to what was purportedly already the case.

The normative consequence of this position was the affirmation of local struggles and resistance, cultural politics, identity politics, the politics of difference, none of which however are concerned with the transformation of the whole of society. Moreover, part of the justification for abandoning politics lay precisely in the theoretical rejection of the notion of societies as wholes. The rejection of thinking about the social in terms of totalities opened the door to a retrogressive abstract empiricism. Thus, wary of being charged with elaborating grand theories about society, social analysts have increasingly focused on descriptions and analyses of some or other localised social phenomena or

series of events, abstracting them from the societal relations in which they are imbricated. In place of theorising totalities, the obscurantist caveat that social phenomena exist in a broader social context gets deployed. This abstract empiricist predilection also serves as a justification for emphasising local struggles guided by local analysis.

Although not generally linked together, postmodernism and Left postmodern political practice have strong affinities with the anarchist anti-political turn. For contemporary anarchists, the usual mechanisms of politics are entirely part of the problem and so they advocate an anti-politics. This has also meant that while radicals reject parliamentary politics and journalistic interventions, the Right is more than happy to make decisions in ways that support their conceptions of the future. Now while I am no unqualified supporter of neoliberal government, I do think it is necessary to intervene in that sphere: there are no good reasons why the Left should abandon government to the Right. Why should it not, on the Left-anarchists' own terms, be part of the diversity of tactics they rightly endorse? That politics is part of the problem seems to unite these disparate elements: politics is the constitutively excluded, sacralised element, making this Left political culture possible.

The Ethical Turn

While the linguistic turn of Left theory in the 1980s, inspired in part by Foucault's work drove the theoretical agenda, by the mid-1990's, it had been replaced by an ethical turn. In this context, one should question the conditions under which the concern with normativity emerged (e.g., questions of morals and ethics, as evinced in Foucauldian ethics, the Levinas-Derrida concern with the encounter with the Other, or Habermasian

communicative ethics). Badiou's critique of the normative turn in his *Ethics* highlights its limits (1993/2001). For Badiou, this contemporary ethical turn especially as evinced in the focus on human rights, is based on the notion that what is deemed 'good' means the absence of suffering. However, what he rejects is the premise that humans in this respect need to be viewed as victims 'because the status of victim, of suffering beast, of emaciated, dying body, equates man with his animal substructure, it reduces him to the level of a living organism pure and simple' (Badiou 1993/2001: 11) and thus is actually based on an anti-humanism. Furthermore, as Levine has argued, the figure of the victim denies the social, and hence human, capacity to politically intervene and transform systems of domination. As he writes,

it is one thing, after all, to be a self-conscious maker of history, and something else to be a victim of a system that is, at root, beyond fundamental repair. Thus, progressive forces are caught in a vicious circle in which a sense of permanent and unalterable victimhood spawns the conviction that the system is unchangeable and vice versa (Levine 2003: 12).

Thus, it is the humanist progressives' advocacy of human rights that end up denying the human agency that they champion over against structuralists and poststructuralists.

The ethical turn also underlies the call for greater inclusion and the increased extension of rights. In this context, Left liberalism has been advocating for increased inclusion, unfortunately (and perhaps unwittingly) occluding a fundamental political question of "include in what and for what?". Arguably, the basis of this exclusion is itself normative; it involves seeing politics as morally bad and ethically suspect, hence the attempts, like the Habermasian one, to ground politics in an ethics. This too has resonances with neoliberalism since normative arguments are to be based on the notion of

the constitution of an ethically disposed individual in an ideal-speech situation to be governed by discourse-ethics.

There is also a nostalgia on the Left, especially for the generation of young people in the former Eastern Bloc. Žižek's sense is that this *Ostalgie* is not a wish for a return to the "good ole' days" but is rather the nostalgia for a moment lost, a moment opened by the October Revolution that made something else possible—they are nostalgic for possibility (Žižek 2001).

Changing Tactics

The Left, while finally coming to grips with the crisis of politics in Marxism, produced an odd series of theoretical reversals closely associated with the 'postmodern turn' that also had practical tactical ramifications (Best and Kellner 2005: 1). The first of the practical effects of abandoning Marxism was the rejection of a broad-based political strategy in favour of the proliferation of local struggles based on the notion that the political is traversed by many different kinds of dominations with no necessary or inherent connection to capitalist exploitation, the state or any centre for that matter.

These contemporary conceptions of radicalism are about local, piecemeal change, or perhaps, even about individualised or group interests seeking to extend some state constituted rights and hence occlude a direct engagement with the conditions of a shared, collective fate and how this might be transformed. This Left is about destabilising relationships that limit what we might otherwise do. Can Nietzsche's lesson be forgotten, that openings for becoming otherwise cannot be created without a goal, a purpose

(Nietzsche 1888/1990)? I do not think they can because in the absence of a new goal or purpose its frame of reference is still the *status quo*.

Much of this is consonant with liberalism and libertarianism: it is about people seeking freedom from something and seeking to do what they want so long as it does not harm others. The post-political Left thus exhibits an extraordinary theoretical regressiveness, forgetting classical sociological critiques of, and opposition to, liberalism. For Durkheim and Marx for example, liberalism was based on a conception of human life that failed to take into account that these kinds of individuals only exist within particular social conditions: liberalism abstracts a contingent social phenomena and universalises it. Both argued that the individuals described in liberal terms can only exist *because* of a social field that constitutes them.⁷ But, what if, as Žižek argues, what we want to do is exactly what keeps us in our place? What if what people want to do does nothing to change the position, their place in which they do these things? What if post-political neoliberals are apologists for the Last/Ultimate Men described by Nietzsche: ‘They have their little pleasure for the day and their little pleasure for the night: but they respect health’ (1883/1978: 47)? What if to change the position means fighting for something else, means imagining a different arrangement of places, different coordinates of existence, different values? What if what is not the case is the reference point we need?

What seemed to have slipped away with the rejection of Marxism—even socialist democracy and its party apparatus as a viable rationale and vehicle for changing the

⁷ That is not to assert that the liberal advocacy and defence of individual rights is inherently theoretically and practically regressive: it depends on the conjuncture. Thus, ‘this liberalism is antirevolutionary only where liberalism is already established. Where it is not, a post-Revolutionary liberal might well be moved to take up revolutionary positions, or at least, to sympathize with those who do’ (Levine 2003: 19).

world—was the matter of thinking about large-scale societal transformation *qua* politics (Zizek 2002b/2004). Lost too, was the work and the power of fighting for something, how this unifies disparate persons and interests for *a* future and thinking about and imagining what a different future might be, and how we might get there. This is a situation in which there is contemporary radicalism at the cost of politics. This does not mean that I dismiss out of hand these critiques of Marxist conceptions of politics, nor that I wish to return to some golden age of Marxism or socialism, but I do question the substitution of these new figures of radicalism for a politics.

Progressives and the Left are adept at defining a target of opposition but have failed to offer a trenchant political imagination of what is to be fought for. Instead, there are endless calls for a new politics but little development on what this might actually mean. *Multitude*, (Hardt and Negri 2004), the sequel to Hardt and Negri's wildly popular *Empire* (2000) is a case in point as is Zizek's recent *The Parallax View* (2006) that seeks to reclaim 'dialectical materialism' by laying out a method for radical thought. Hardt and Negri (2004) offer an analytic for a new politics, one that they suggest requires a new political imagination and new forms of organisation but sadly they offer little in the way of either. Zizek's self-professed *magnum opus*, *The Parallax View* (2006), like much discussion of dialectical materialism before it still fails to develop a materialist conception of politics and instead endlessly explicates the effects of a shift of perspective, as if method is the path to an effective politics. In this case, Zizek's dialectical materialism is all dialectics and little materialism (Datta 2005).

The main problem with what now tends to count as the Left is its overwhelming negative orientation, producing endless lists of grievances. This negative myopia comes

at the cost of not effectively making the case that substantive egalitarianism and the democratic organisation of institutions and societies as wholes is both necessary and desirable for the vitality and peace of social life. For example, post-structuralist radicalism has failed to appreciate that increased creativity—multiplying the kinds of ‘lines of flight’ in Deleuzian terms, or the play of ‘difference’ in Derridean ones—is only possible under concrete conditions of increased substantive egalitarianism, democracy and stabilised, coordinated social formations. As Best and Kellner argue,

Thus while today we need the expansion of localized cultural practices, they attain their real significance only within the struggle for the transformation of society as a whole. Without this systemic emphasis, cultural and identity politics remain confined to the margins of society and are in danger of degenerating into narcissism, hedonism, aestheticism, or personal therapy, where they pose no danger and are immediately co-opted by the culture industries. In such cases, the political is merely the personal, and the original intentions of the 1960s goal to broaden the political field are inverted and perverted. Just as economic and political demands have their referent in subjectivity in everyday life, so these cultural and existential issues find their ultimate meaning in the demand for a new society and mode of production (2005: 8).

As part of the dominance of the post-political tendency the Left has left the stage of history by accepting the symbolic coordinates of neo-liberal historicity, viewing the present and the future in terms of capitalism plus liberal democracy administered by experts and technicians. No new thought of and for a future and its conditions of possibility has emerged, except maybe one freed from capitalism, but anti-capitalism is not a politics but is reactive, taking the forms of protest, resistance, critique and moralistic denunciation (cf. Brown 2002; Duggan 2003; Skillen 1974). Unfortunately, it all too often comes down to little more than “Bad people are doing bad things that make

our lives bad—down with the bad people!’. In doing so, they overlook the societal, structural conditions under which these “bad” things become possible and actualised.

However, it is important to note that the absence of an effective Marxist or socialist democratic intervention is not an inherent property of contemporary Marxist and socialist democratic projects themselves. Case in point,

those Althusserians who rejected Althusser and Marxism and then moved on to embrace various culturalisms might have, in part, done so through a process of forgetting that a historical project had been politically defeated, not because the system had been transcended by one superior to it, however intellectually dominant this latter might have become (Pearce 1996: 584).

Or, as Badiou has pointed out, ‘the death of communism is rhetorically deployed alongside the break up of the Soviet empire’ as if the two are the same (Badiou 1998/2005: 128). The crisis and demise of Marxism as a serious political force has involved a series of non-sequiturs and reductionisms. First, the development of a materialist theory of politics remains a serious task, one that continues in the works of post-Marxists like Laclau, Mouffe and Žižek. Second, the political defeats of the engaged Left, and the collapse of the USSR that have had historical effects does not mean that Marxian problematics are inherently in error—drawing this conclusion is a form of historicist reduction, failing to appreciate the inherent disjuncture between, and hence relative autonomy of, discourse from the real-concrete historical processes and events to which they refer, and that the latter has ontological primacy in determining what takes place and the sense people make of it.

Thus, the main mistake of what I call the “Up-and-Left” was to have overextended the crisis of Marxism, signified by the collapse of the USSR, into a crisis of

politics *tout court*. The result was a substantial weakening of the theoretical and organisational bases for at least an effective opposition to post-politics. What the “Up-and-Left” had forgotten was that the crisis of politics was, and remains *the* crisis of Marxism, i.e., the *crux of the matter concerns societal transformation given the current situation* (cf. Althusser 1978/2006: 150). That is to say that the crisis of Marxism is really the crisis of politics in Marxism; the concern with societal transformation was and remains its *constitutive problem*. The problem faced by any politics if it aims to be effective is to think and respond to the concrete situation, including thinking about the conditions for a potentially effective politics. To be a materialist means that one cannot dogmatically impose political thought on a situation. As Althusser argues, ‘if there was a truth to Marxist theory, this could only be a function of its immanent and imminent crisis, of its finite and fallible character, which remains effective as a theory because it points beyond itself’ (Vatter 2004: 1).

The Forced Choice of Post-Politics

The subjective effect of post-political thought and its coordinates can be understood in terms of what Lacan called a ‘forced choice’ (Lacan 1973/1978: 212; Žižek 2006: 331), like the one found in the case of the robber who says ‘Your money or your life’. If you choose to not hand over your money, the robber will kill you and take your money anyway. If you choose to give your money, the robber may spare your life. So the only (non-suicidal) choice is to hand over your money and hope that the robber won’t kill you. Similarly, post-politics presents a false choice in the post-political coordinates of liberal parliamentary democracy plus capitalism (via the symbolic coordinates of neoliberalism

and totalitarianism/unfreedom). The first choice given is between government or totalitarianism. Since nobody wants totalitarianism, the choice is government, which yields a second arrangement of choices: neoliberalism (the tolerant, multiculturalist Left), neoconservatism (the moralistic Right, plus culture wars) or, since Blair, Clinton and Giddens, 'The Third Way', i.e., neoliberalism again. Significantly, the structure of these choices implies that in the absence of totalitarianism, since it is an option we would actually have to choose in order to realise it, we actually are free and live in democratic societies (cf. Althusser 1993/2006: 281). In terms of post-political thought, we are free to choose but we are free to choose our politics, normative coordinates and our future so long as we choose the correct answer of parliamentary liberal democracy plus capitalism and accept that, henceforth, politics will amount to the post-political concern with management and social administration.

In the post-political epoch, both the coordinates of this forced choice and the destination of the future have already been decided upon. That is to say that post-politics is structured by a forbidden choice, namely the choice *for politics*, involving conceiving of and actively engaging in creating new coordinates for the organisation of societies for an alternative future. In my view, this is why Western democracies have seen growing voter apathy, declining voter-turnout, especially amongst younger voters, and declining participation in partisan politics since the coordinates are fixed and the alternative is deemed a recipe for disastrous tyranny/unfreedom (cf. Boggs 2000: 34). This is a false choice premised on the exclusion of the transformative potential of politics in creating alternative coordinates.

The false alternative between the political coordinates of liberal government and tyranny is repeated in the structuring of the contemporary political-ideological spectrum aptly surmised by Žižek:

...the new populist Right [...] plays a key structuralist role in the legitimacy of the new liberal-democratic tolerant multiculturalist hegemony. They are the negative common denominator of the entire centre-left liberal spectrum: they are the excluded ones who, through this very exclusion (their unacceptability as the party of government), provide the negative legitimacy of the liberal hegemony, the proof of their 'democratic' attitude. In this way, their existence displaces the *true* focus of the political struggle (which is, of course, the stifling of any Leftist radical alternative) on to the 'solidarity' of the entire 'democratic' bloc against the Rightist threat. That it is the ultimate proof of the liberal-democratic hegemony of today's ideologico-political scene, the hegemony which was accomplished by the emergence of the 'Third Way' social democracy: the 'Third Way', as precisely social democracy under the hegemony of liberal-democratic capitalism (i.e., deprived of its minimal subversive sting), thus succeeds in excluding the last reference to anti-capitalist class struggle (2001: 241-2).

Post-political thought means the return of the repressed option we cannot choose, i.e., totalitarianism. But, it returns in the form of the total hegemonisation of political thought by post-politics since with the forced choice of totalitarianism *versus* the beneficent present, we freely choose post-political coordinates, but are not free to choose totalitarianism if we are to remain part of normal society. Thus, post-politics is totalitarian in the precise sense that all other alternatives are totally foreclosed, i.e., post-politics is totalitarian since no other politics is permitted. The difference is that people freely choose: post-politics relies on consent rather than coercion but they do so because of the surplus enjoyments/pleasures people get after paying the requisite dues of giving up politics.

Post-politics is only possible because of a constitutive exclusion—the *sacralisation* (i.e., setting apart and forbidding)—of politics. I stress the term ‘sacralisation’ because as Durkheim well understood, sacralisation *founds* a social order (Datta 2005). In post-politics, there is no alternative because of the way the choice is framed. Politics can thus be understood as akin to the sacred of the present, an element that must be excluded because polluting, putting our future at risk. Politics is a necessary absence: to belong to the present is to sacrifice politics and at the same time this very exclusion is what hegemonises the problematisation of collective fates.

Post-politics and the Future

Extending this sensibility, the post-political tendency needs to be understood as the circumscription on what is meant by history, the making of history and the matter of alternatives, possibilities and hence of *a* future (the future is indefinite). In this regard, it is important to consider the ‘post’ of post-politics. I take it as referring to a fidelity to a politics that has already happened—very much taken place or seized a society to such an extent that it is seen as the only possible politics. So even social improvements and progress remain conservative since they further entrench the coordinates that revolutionised political formations in Western civilisation in the nineteenth century. Arguably, the political imagination of the Right is less a political imagination than an attempt to secure dominance and rule by eradicating any other politics. At best, post-political hegemony is interested in controlling politics (in the Deleuzian sense), giving protesters their circuit (circus?) and giving interest groups access to the political lobby, all of which circulate in post-political space (Deleuze 1990b/1995). None of this is a

threat to the dominance of post-political coordinates but ensconces these activities within them. It is interesting to note as well, how the appeal to nationalism, to the nation as the only legitimate collective subject is made by both Left and Right.

To live in such programmed, administered societies is to live in societies in which the future has been decided upon, a future that today tends to mean a retrenchment of what was deemed to have just recently, “thankfully”, taken hold of Western civilisation, the world as it was coming into fruition between the fall of the Berlin Wall that began at 2:30 AM November 10, 1989 to the morning of September 11, 2001 when Al Qaeda terrorists hijacked three planes and crashed two of them into the World Trade Center in New York. This was a world safe for capital and the free societies in which it operates, where governing through marketisation, be it in the economy, state apparatus or civil society, purportedly allows for maximal individual freedom since fostering and rewarding initiative and responsibility, creating the dynamic, self-actualising individuals that make for vibrant societies. In this sense, ‘the future has already taken place’ (Zizek 2004b/2005: 15).

At the same time, post-politics is premised on its own disavowed past politics; politics is the obscene supplement to the apparent enlightened, pragmatic, expert administration of things. This is why it is important to keep the ‘post-’ in mind: post-politics is the space of policy/police opened up by a now disavowed previous politics. That is to say that post-political coordinates were not inevitable, as some might put it, but were made by a politics that transformed an earlier situation. This past politics, for instance, that of the enlightened humanitarian liberal bourgeoisie, relied on illiberal tactics as Foucault’s critical history of madness well illustrates. The alleged

humanitarian, scientific reformers like the psychiatrist Pinel, relied on people excluding their own madness, submitting to the care of experts (HM; cf. Valverde 1996). Or one might consider the liberal use of terror in the nineteenth century (Eagleton 2005; Hardt and Negri 2004: 16-17). Or, one might consider the excluded and actively suppressed non-male, non-white, non-propertied persons from the voting franchise. Or, one could examine the brutal tactics used by Thatcher in crushing the miner's union, thus dealing a serious blow to the social bases of socialist politics in Britain in the 1980s and since. That is to say that post-politics forbids the presence and development of any other politics, any other political coordinates than the ones already in place, and seeks to sustain the material, social bases of its hegemonic supports.

As such, post-politics is subtended by the foreclosure on the determination of alternative futures, alternative coordinates for creating a different society: *post-politics is a war on politics, against possibilities, a war against the future, other than the one already decided upon, i.e., our recent past: our future must be that, only more of it*. Post-politics does not mean that things will stay the same, but rather that the coordinates by which we judge and assess what is going on remain the same. So, things will change, our societies will be transformed—there will be progress and setbacks (because of the disavowed agonistic field in which post-politics is imbricated producing resistance to the programmes of continued economic growth). But to follow Žižek (2006) what does not change is the measure of things (i.e., the dominant normative, symbolic coordinates), the very means through which we recognise and measure things, figure out what counts and should be accounted for (cf. Badiou 1998/2005: 116-119; Rancière 2001), decide what will be done with them and the political economic conditions that enable such

coordinates to be hegemonic. Thus, one could say that the end of history really refers to the means by which dominant groups will actively attempt to repeatedly put an end to history (i.e., any other history) *via* the expulsion of politics: the end of history means *putting an end to politics*.

The pertinent materialist point in my view concerns how the relationship between means and ends is conceptualised. The characteristically post-political orientation is to treat administration (i.e., the way the present system is run and maintained) *as an end in itself*. This dovetails nicely with both the neo-conservative and neo-liberal sense that democracy is an end in itself and since Western societies already have it all we need deal with are these means. In contrast, a characteristic feature of politics proper is to treat administration as a *means to an end* and not depoliticise administration as an end in itself.

In short, the crisis of politics and why politics is a problem today is that it is sacralised even in a condition in which apparently everything is political. This also means that politics is far from being a self-evident phenomenon of societies today. Critical social analysts should be wary of the self-evidence of the political in contemporary societies, treating it as if a concern with the political includes a concern for politics. In contrast, I contend that politics should refer to specific battles over the *direction* of collective life, and with it, battles over the basic question of politics: What kind of society do we wish to live in and how might we get there?.

Foucault as Unwittingly Ally of Post-Politics

While Foucault's works provide the basis of a sophisticated account of the conditions of existence and mechanisms constitutive of post-politics, his depoliticisation of critical analysis and expulsion of politics has the unhappy consequence of being inadequate to breaking, or at least challenging, the dominance of the post-political tendency in critical social analysis and in contemporary societies. So, on the one hand we have the widespread influence of Foucault's work as the main alternative way of thinking about the political, since neither a conservative, liberal or Marxist, and on the other, we have post-politics. Foucault's incisive and salient critiques of modern social and political theory have made it seem that for critical intellectuals concerned with how we might become otherwise, there appears to be no alternative. After all, a major part of Foucault's work was explicitly concerned with contemporary forms of power and government and how these enable and constrain possibilities for people to become otherwise: his work seems to exemplify a truly political thought. However, Foucault's expulsion of politics renders this interpretation untenable.

I take this to be an unhappy circumstance, an *aleatory encounter* between post-politics and Foucault. This is a moment when post-politics deems politics obsolete and the most influential critical way of thinking about the political (both what it is and what can be done about it), namely Foucault's, depoliticises critical social analysis. What has thus become unlikely, even unthinkable then, for both post-politics and Foucauldian critique is the possibility and pursuit of projects of large-scale societal transformation. This is not to say that Foucault's work is somehow an expression of a post-political *Zeitgeist* of which Foucault is the prime expression providing a justification for post-

politics or worse, that he is the cause of post-politics. Rather, it is to point out that the expulsion of politics itself is a point—arguably the definitive symptom of the present—that sutures post-politics and Foucault's work together, creating a serious impasse in contemporary critical thought. The implication here is that the question of politics is deemed unnecessary or even something to be avoided.

From the early Reganite-Thatcherite led hegemon and for the next quarter century, i.e., until today, what has the new post-political radicalism been able to accomplish? Very, very little, the extension of human rights being a notable exception. If our present has a history, it is first one of defeats and then of surrender of many Marxists. The result is the continuous undermining of the capacity to have sociology taken seriously (since much sociology is both unwilling and unable to indicate reasons for deciding between accounts of the world, or courses of action, other than personal preference) and the continuous weakening of an oppositional alternative force to the aggressive capitalist-neoliberal restructuring and organisation of Western societies, and indeed of the globe. As a socialist, defending it partly in and through sociology, I remain committed to the goals of substantive egalitarianism and the spread and increase of substantively democratic forms of social organisation because I think these are the conditions in which to constitute the increasing likelihood of a vibrant and dynamic human existence. Nevertheless, whatever the resonances of Marxism in my work, and there are many, I think the real struggle faced by radicals today is not simply against the dominance of the capitalist mode of production, but rather is a battle for creating and sustaining a politics and for opening a void in the present situation of capitalist

triumphalism and Left impotence. At issue here is not the status of Marxism, since it is but *one possible* form of politics for today.

That is not to say that the global dominance of the capitalist mode of production, led by corporate and finance capitals is not a problem and that capitalism is not inherently conservative and *anti-democratic*. Crucially, this does not mean that critical thought and progressive politics must return again to a focus on capitalism or on the contemporary state; it is not self-evident that Marxist thinking (“capitalism is the problem; socialist democracy is the answer”) is the alternative way of thinking about the impasses and possibility of politics today. Rather, I suggest that the main site of struggle, the *Kampfplatz*, is not primarily that of capitalism, but is rather the battle for politics itself. In the post-political present, the class struggle is not one in the economic instance, but in the political instance: the struggle is between those on the side of politics and the others, on the side of government.

Conclusion

In sum, the post-politicising effect of the hegemonisation of the political field by governmentality actualised by the actions produced by modes of being, is structured by the absence of different means for problematisation collective fates and possibilities. Politics, from the point of view of the objective interest of governmentality, *must be sacralised*. I now move on to a thorough-going metacritique of Foucault’s problematic, the subject of the next chapter. The metacritique I offer, arguing for a move from genealogy to aleatory materialism, provides the theoretical means for reclaiming politics

in Foucauldian discourse and hence for constituting a Foucault for both sociology and politics, dealt with in the final chapter.

Chapter Nine:

From Foucault's Critical Nominalism to Aleatory Materialism

Introduction

Surprisingly scant attention has been paid to the basic metatheoretical assumptions of Foucault's approach and the protocols of his problematic. Consequently, explicating the criteria for assessing whether or not an account of the world is Foucauldian has been neglected. Without clearly specifying these criteria it is also not possible to theoretically account for Foucault's expulsion of politics or move beyond polemics, either *pro* or *con*, or do anything about it without relying on the grounds of personal preference. This chapter aims to remedy this situation.

Up to this point, a major part of my focus has been on the Foucauldian conception of the object of transformation that today produces the impasse of post-politics, and on his conception of desirable and viable modes of transformation. Posing the question of modes of transformation to Foucault's work resulted in the discovery of his expulsion of politics. The previous chapter considered the consequences of Foucault's expulsion in the post-political present. In this chapter I argue that even if Foucault was not averse to politics (i.e., didn't have his essentialist conception of politics as actualising a thanatopolitical teleology), he would be unable to form a concept of politics. I have provided some indication already about why he would be unable to form a concept of politics because it is strictly speaking, an impossible project (the object—society—does not exist). In this chapter I attend to the question of why the Foucauldian problematic is

inherently unable to form a concept of politics and to show why it is that the very structure of his problematic logically requires the displacement of politics by ethics.

I carry out a symptomatic reading of his work in order to explicate the structure of his problematic. Doing so will allow me to highlight and argue for the remarkable consistency in the Foucauldian *corpus*, contrary to conventional readings that highlight the shifts and changes in his work, evinced by his questions and research interests (e.g., Rabinow and Rose 2003; Paras 2006; Valverde 2007). So, while it is only towards the end of Foucault's work that it becomes possible to explicate his ontology and hence the distinctiveness of the object of Foucauldian analysis as modes of being, there is a consistency at the level of his *problematic*.

In reading Foucault symptomatically, I explicate the basic protocols of his way of accounting for the contingency of modes of being. I contend that Foucault's indebtedness to Kant and his nominalism that derives from his critique and transformation of Kant, a metatheoretical position I call '*critical nominalism*', is what makes the Foucauldian problematic unable to form a concept of politics (thus producing the aporia of politics and its phantasmic return) and unable to coherently conceptualise societies as the target of transformation. Explicating this critical nominalism facilitates assessing why he argues that the practices of the human sciences (and their constituent conditions) far from being liberating, are what subjugate us and constrain our possibilities for becoming otherwise (e.g., Foucault 1982c/2000:417). Attending to his problematic will also facilitate grasping why it necessarily leads to the displacement of politics by ethics as the most desirable and viable mode of transforming the present.

Making this kind of argument brings into sharp relief the opposition between a realist-materialist sociology and Foucault's anti-realist conception of critical analysis. Foucault's frequent attempts to distinguish his own work from that of the social sciences are part and parcel of his rejection of the project of social science. As he puts it, 'My general theme isn't society but the discourse of the true and the false' (Foucault 1980a/2003: 257). Concerning his histories of sexuality, he writes, *contra* conventional sociology, that 'I wanted to undertake a history in which sexuality would not be conceived as a general type of behavior whose particular elements might vary according to demographic, economic, social, or ideological conditions, any more than it would be seen as a collection of representations' (Foucault 1984c/2003: 58). Much of his rejection of conventional social science rests on the weakness of its simplistic view of causality (Foucault 1983c/1996: 414-415; 1980a/2003: 249; Barry *et al* 1996: 4; Rajchman 1985: 58; Veyne 1978/1997: 170). Rose and Miller have been the most vociferous in objecting to a realist or materialist sociological appropriation of Foucault. As they state, 'we do not try to characterise how social life *really* was and why' (Rose and Miller 1992: 177).

But there are also equivocations in Foucault's work about his relationship to conventional social science. So, in contrast to his attempts to stringently distinguish his work from sociology, he also says things like 'the fact of "health" is a cultural fact in the broadest sense of the word, a fact that is political, economic, and social as well, a fact that is tied to a certain state of individual and collective consciousness' (Foucault 1983e/2003: 77). Moreover, that there was something like a discursive contest between reason of state and liberalism suggests that there was a social reality, independent of the order of discourse, for political rationalities to be wrong about, and that 'populations have a life,

so to speak, that is analytically prior, and not reducible to, their status as objects of governance' (Pearce and Tombs 1996: 450). In this respect, there are at least some materials from which to build a case for a weak realist fallibilism implicit in Foucault. So, while I am sympathetic to the argument that Foucault is a realist about discursive formations (Pearce and Woodiwiss 2001), I wish to account for why Foucault is not an epistemological realist about anything else without contradicting his own protocols. One major consequence of this is the persistent problem of what is meant by the extra-discursive realm.

Nevertheless, the strong thesis here is that Foucault's diagnosis leads to the conclusion that a social or political science cannot be part of the solution since this will to truth is precisely what dominates us and constrains the possibilities of human existence in modernity (1983a/2003: 104; 1982c/2000: 417; Rabinow and Rose 2003: xv; Rose and Miller 1992: 177). At the same time, Foucault's genealogical writings are traversed by a materialist realism (or 'ordinary realism') much indebted to Althusser, one compatible with materialist realism but incompatible with his own critical nominalism. Indeed, much of the strength of Foucault's genealogical work rests in its implicit advocacy of an aleatory materialist approach to history (cf. Rajchman 1985: 61; Dupont and Pearce 2001). While I find Bhaskar's critical realism useful because of its critiques of various philosophies of science, I find its humanism and its dialectical conception of social change and metaphysics of deep structures regressive. But I also do not find Foucault's nominalism and justifications for writing histories of the present persuasive either. I suggest that aleatory materialism provides an alternative theoretical path able to break the stalemate between realist sociologies on the one hand and nominalist historians of the

present on the other. This is no return to structural Marxism, even though structural Marxism has not exhausted its potential; rather what is at stake is a materialist concept of politics. The recent translation of Althusser's late work on aleatory materialism entitled *The Philosophy of the Encounter* (1993/2006) and fruitful re-engagement with Althusser in Butler (1997) and Badiou (1998/2005) indicates that a rejection of anything bearing the name 'Althusser' is dogmatic and spurious (cf. McInerney 2005; Matheron 1998).

In opposition to Foucault, I aim to defend social science and politics to show why a materialist understanding of both, drawing on aleatory materialism, is a plausible and necessary alternative that can displace the Foucauldian problematic. In short, I argue that Foucault's own understanding of the political field requires him to think in terms of *the reality* of social formations and how they are structured (i.e., a sociological conception of the object of transformation), but his nominalism constrains him from doing so. The key question then to pose to Foucault's work is: What must the terrain of the Foucauldian problematic be like such that ethics (and not politics) comes to be endorsed as the solution to the problem of how we can transform our existence? This question is important because it forces us to assess the adequacy of Foucault's reasoning about what is constitutive of the present in Western societies, which in turn defines the object of transformation. If his reasons are implausible and one can show what produces this implausibility, then there are grounds for changing terrain.

I begin with an initial definition of critical nominalism, the name I give to the Foucauldian terrain and contrast it with the aleatory materialist conception of politics and history that Althusser develops from his reading of Machiavelli's *The Prince*. I then derive the metatheoretical logic of Foucault's central concerns and object of investigation

since this will provide the criteria by which to assess the adequacy of his account of the present in its own terms. Next, I explicate the impact of Kant on Foucault's problematic. This is important because Foucault takes up Kant's questions as his own. But Kant also leaves traces on Foucault's problematic including traces of the epistemic fallacy. Next I indicate how his transformation of Kant leads to Foucault's diagnosis of the present and his nominalism. The basic assumptions of critical nominalism are then explicated and subjected to a materialist critique by focusing on its handling of the relationship between the discursive and the non- (or extra-) discursive. I then show how the introduction of the genealogical concepts of power, the body, *dispositif* and strategy do not resolve either the question of the non-discursive or the question of politics, but only redoubles the problem of the relation between the discursive and the extra-discursive. At the same time however, Foucault's concepts of *dispositif* and strategy indicate a fault line, a theoretical discrepancy, that can only be resolved by abandoning critical nominalism because lacking epistemological protocols for dealing with the referents of these concepts in a coherent way. In short the move from genealogy to aleatory materialism involves standing Foucault on his materialist feet since as is, he is standing on his nominalist head.

To put this in summary terms, Foucault's dissolution of politics into the multiplicity of actions and the displacement of politics by ethics as the means for transforming modes of being holds only if we accept his account of what it is that limits modes of being and hence the terms of his problematic. That is to say that any critical assessment, appreciation and use of Foucault must grasp the epistemological and ontological structure of his problematic i.e., the structure of the categories, concepts, models and arguments that allow Foucault to pose the questions that he does and take up

positions relative to other competing accounts of the contemporary world and make recommendations about what might be done about it. It is also important to note that his account of the contingent assemblages constitutive of particular modes of being guides his normative aversion to and rejection of politics, and his affirmation of ethics. This gives us good reason to more carefully assess Foucault's epistemology and ontology, since supplying the protocols of his analyses.

Initial Definitions

To consider a move from genealogy to aleatory materialism, that is to say a change of terrain, we need to be clear about both the methodology and the ontology of Foucault's researches. As discussed earlier, archaeology involves the analysis of discourses, the statements actually pronounced that are sedimented in the archive. Genealogy, like archaeology investigates the formation of objects and the problems that concern a discourse. These methodological techniques enable one to map the contours of a discursive formation and to compare and contrast a range of discourses and hence classify them as belonging, or not, to a discursive formation. As a form of analysis genealogy involves breaking down the order of discourse and the *dispositif* of which it is a part, into its constituent components in order to assess the particular mode of being constituted therein and the actions produced by it. But genealogy more so than archaeology attends to the relatively independent histories—lines of descent—of the component part in order to highlight *contingent* encounters of discourses and political technologies under conditions that allow the contingent elements to come together in a

lasting way as a *dispositif* that produces a mode of being the result of which are definite, rare, actions.

Critical nominalism is the terrain producing a consistency in Foucault's *oeuvre*, from his early transformation of Kant to his later work on ethics.¹ The term 'critical' is indicative of Foucault's debt to Kant since for both the task of philosophy requires that we 'know knowledge' (Foucault 1997a/2003). Indeed, Foucault explicitly identifies with Kantian questions. They concern 'what can be known, what must be done, and what may be hoped for' (Foucault 1984d/2003: 47). This requires accounts of experience and the limits of knowledge which then provide the basis for making legitimate judgments about the world. Foucault however also transformed Kant and in the process the meaning of 'critical'. He did so by offering his own distinctive, non-humanist, non-universalist, immanentist and historicised concept of the *a priori*. This is the critical side of critical nominalism.

'Nominalism' here means that human existence in-itself does not exist and is not an independently existing thing, thus rejecting realism. In Foucauldian terms, realism is exactly what serves to justify the need for genealogical anti-sciences since the problem of

¹ Conventionally, nominalism is an ontological position that holds that there are no natural kinds and that universals do not name anything. As Rajchman explicates it,

Nominalism is usually taken to refer to the doctrine, propounded in the Middle Ages, that only individual things exist and that the way they are sorted into classes is only a convention of human practice, an assumption of human language, or an invention of the human mind. In formulating a 'nominalist critique' through *historical* analysis, Foucault would rule out the inference that 'names' such as 'the mad' or 'the criminal personality' are just fictions of the mind or creatures of language, for the practices in which they are 'determined,' while not conceived by consciousness, are taken to be quite real. It is this reality of the practice in which names figure that is capable of transformation, which, however, cannot be effected through mere linguistic change or voluntarist fiat (1985: 74).

correspondence between discourse and reality (i.e., the problem of how to decide on questions of science or ideology) evaporates if one acknowledges that there are no real things but only objectifications. Rather, what exists are only objectifications of unformed bodily capacities produced by discursive formations (cf. Rajchman 1985: 74).

Aleatory materialism offers a theory of politics, society and history together with a distinctive justification for theoretical practice based primarily on Althusser's reading of Machiavelli. Its main concern is with the real-concrete objects of social formations and real mechanisms of societal transformation. Its central *theorem* drawn from Machiavelli, is that politics happens because of a chance encounter between virtue and fortune (Althusser 1999: 74). 'Virtue' refers to: (i) the theoretical task of explaining things as they actually are (7); (ii) offering an account of how things might be otherwise (i.e., theory as an intervention involving thinking what is possible yet deemed impossible according to reigning accounts of the world) (Negri 1995: 54); (iii) the courage to act in order to actualise the possible (Althusser 1999: 84); and (iv) the massive organisation of social forces that enable action, that can potentially shift the balance of social forces (Althusser 1999: 11, 25, 50). 'Fortune' refers to the singular structure of a social formation under its conjuncture, overdetermined by some dominant instance (or, hegemonic bloc) that gives social formations their structure. Social formations are underdetermined by the exceptional quality of politics in relation to a state of rule (Althusser 1999: 17-18; Montag 1998; Matheron 1998: 31). More precisely, I take underdetermination to mean the circumstance that the potentials within a social formation are not exhausted by the actually existing arrangement of social forces.

The difference between actuality and potentiality is the space in which the battle between politics and rule takes place. Thus, in aleatory materialist terms, politics refers to something exceptional (the void of a conjuncture; the anti-place, or the excluded place of politics) that proves that there is rule and the task of theory is to name this void (cf. Matheron 1998). Politics erupts in history when there is a fortuitous encounter between virtue and fortune that allows a new structuring of a social formation to take hold or to *take place*, giving it its historicity (Althusser 1999: 20-21; Matheron 1998: 33). This transforms the fundamental normative coordinates of social existence, subjective formation *and* the material dominance of different institutional arrangements. Crucially, politics does not take place in history but is the exception to a history; history is what happens *between* political events (cf. Badiou 1988/2007). So while critical nominalism calls for writing histories of the present, aleatory materialism is concerned with the present and the future (i.e., with what isn't happening but could) and for aleatory materialism, it is the future that is at stake in present politics.

The primary difference between critical nominalism and aleatory materialism lies in the way in which materialism figures in their respective accounts of the constitution of the object of knowledge. In critical nominalism the object of knowledge *constitutes* the materiality of the object *qua* apprehensible object: knowing and the determinate form of being (i.e., a mode of being) are one and the same. For aleatory materialism on the other hand, the object (the real-concrete) is external to the object of knowledge. For Foucault, his nominalist ontology is of primary importance given its opposition to universalism, foundationalism and essentialism. For Althusser, the epistemological and ontological consequences of materialism are primary: 'The principle of all exteriority is materiality,

and all existence is objective, that is “prior” to the “subjectivity” which knows it and independent of that subjectivity’ (Althusser 1972/1976: 54). Thus, aleatory materialism like realist materialism, requires that we put knowledge “in its place” within a social formation. In contrast, the critical nominalist position is that the process of producing knowledge about Man is exhaustive of the constitution of the object, i.e., human existence: knowing occupies the whole place of existence for Foucault.

The second difference between them lies in their respective orientation toward the present. Critical nominalism advocates writing histories of the present to show how what we take as self-evident and natural is an effect of contingently assembled diverse elements that have stabilised but remain open to some degree. Aleatory materialism on the other hand, endeavours ‘to think theoretically from the point of view of a task to be accomplished and not from the angle of the necessity of an accomplished fact’ (Matheron 1998: 32).

Foucault’s Transformation of Kant: The *A Priori* and Experience

The Foucauldian object of investigation is derived from his critique and transformation of Kant. Foucault’s position is determined by his adoption of Kantian concerns, posing the same questions as Kant concerning Man, true knowledge, experience and the present actuality (Foucault 1984h/2003: 1; 1982a/2003: 128). What this means is that Foucault asks the same questions as Kant concerning knowledge, experience and the present. Indeed for him, ‘since Kant, the role of philosophy is to prevent reason from going beyond the limits of what is given in experience’ (Foucault 1982a/2003: 128; cf. 1984d/2003: 56; OT: 340-1; Han 2002). That is not to say that he was a Kantian in

simple; rather it requires that we attend to the consequences of the Kantian *Kampfplatz* that Foucault's work occupies (Foucault 1984h/2003: 1). Again in a Kantian vein, Foucault defines criticism 'as analysis of the historical conditions that bear on the creation of links to truth, to rules [power relations], and to the self' (1984e/2003: 60), corresponding to the first to third Kantian critiques respectively.

Kant sought to account for the conditions of possibility of true/legitimate knowledge and sought the mechanism through which the welter of sensations bombarding subjectivity are rendered intelligible. Since intelligibility is itself not given by the sources of stimuli beyond the subject (the world as it is in-itself) the source of the intelligibility of sensations that are the stuff from which experience is made must exist *a priori*: the *a priori* exists independently of all experience. This suggests that there is something active in and transcendent of experience namely the structure of the human mind.

Crucially, the object of knowledge is phenomenal (its status is determined by how it is perceived) since it is impossible to have direct cognitive access to things in-themselves. Rather, knowledge of the world is the synthetic product of the *a priori* and the external world, irreducible to either mind or world. This has important implications for understanding critical nominalism since for Kant and Foucault, the object and the reality to which it belongs are within the field of knowledge, not external to it. Appreciating Kant's account of experience and the status of the object of knowledge also allows us to understand his and Foucault's attention to discursive and subjective formations: the *a priori* forms and orders sensations into perceptions (experience) and allows us to make judgments about perceptions thus creating conceptions (thoughts and

judgments about perceptions). So, form shapes content (the world as it is in-itself) to render a world for us, our reality. Thus, Kant's postulation of the *a priori* allowed him to 'know knowledge', allowing reason to legislate the appropriate scope and limits of knowledge, i.e., what can be known and what kinds of reasoned judgments can be made about truth, conduct and art. Knowledge of the world is limited in its very structure to knowledge of phenomena, the synthesis of the *a priori* categories and the world in-itself which remains noumenal, beyond our knowledge.

Foucault's transformation of Kant occurs through three main moves. First, the structure of human subjectivity becomes an historical explanans and not an explanandum. Second, the *a priori* is not taken as a universal but as something historically specific (Foucault 1977a/2003: 316; 1984d/2003: 53-54). Third, there is no progressive unfolding of truth or reason (hence Hegelian or Comtean teleologies are not an option): systems of thought that succeed each other are incommensurable, not cumulative. Nevertheless, a Kantian sensibility remains in Foucault because experience is still argued to be produced by an *a priori*. So, in order to account for experience he developed the concept of 'the archive' to be analysed by archaeology (AK: 27).

Foucault's work like Kant's attempts to theorise the conditions of possibility of knowledge by thinking about how an *a priori* structures experience or perception.

Foucault argues that the archive is this *a priori*. The archive is comprised of the set of statements actually pronounced and these statements are material (AK: 26-7; 131). The archive then becomes something that itself needs to be explained and for Foucault, it is explained by the concept of 'discursive formations' because they are 'structures' productive of the archive (historical *a priori*), i.e. the sedimented grids of intelligibility.

Discursive formations provide the material conduits for making sense and repertoires of practices for gaining knowledge (*savoirs*) that render the world intelligible (Foucault 1984c/2003: 61; 1980a/2003: 254).

Foucault's main point of departure for his archaeologies and genealogies are certain forms of experience (Foucault 1984e/2003: 59-60; Rabinow and Rose 2003: viii). As he puts it, his concern is with 'how this or that object could appear as a possible object of perception' (Foucault 1983f/1996: 356). Experiences can be individual or collective (Foucault 1984e/2003: 60; 1983c/1996: 408). Experiences orient and govern individual and collective life in the present since they are the basic material for making judgments of veridiction and jurisdiction. These experiences include 'madness, illness, transgression of laws, sexuality, self-identity ... suffering, death, crime, desire, individuality' (Foucault 1979a/2003: 190-191). Thus, he concerned himself with 'a number of collective and social experiences' (Foucault 1983c/1996: 408).

Foucault explicitly links his concern with experience to his project of analysing systems of thought. As he states, 'There is no experience that is not a way of thinking and cannot be analyzed from the viewpoint of the history of thought... this thought has a historicity which is proper to it' (Foucault 1984c/2003: 60). A Foucauldian concept of experience can thus be defined as the form through which both subject and object come to be related within the same terrain through practices of seeing and saying that meet in systems of thought. This allows Foucault to delineate how subjects apprehend their present, orient themselves to it, and how this apprehension also partially constitutes the subjective capacity to render experience intelligible and hence be subjects of their historical world. What Foucault rejected was Kant's concept of the *a priori* which located

it within the universality of human subjectivity; for Foucault, humans are not the transcendental universal foundation of knowledge and hence neither the foundation of synthetic judgments, like judgments about experiences of the world (OT: 344; AK: 12). Foucault also espoused a materialist conception of knowledge in contrast to Kantian idealism, since for him, 'historico-critical investigations are quite specific in the sense that they always bear on a material, an epoch, a body of determined practices and discourses' (Foucault 1984d/2003: 56).

The central object of the archaeology of the human sciences are *savoirs* governed by the immanent, varied and uneven criteria for making true statements about a discursive object (i.e., the constitutive elements of the archive). Statements are rare in the sense that many other possible statements could be made but only some are actually made (Veyne 1978/1997: 147). A statement is material in that it 'must have a substance, a support, a site and a date' (AK: 101; cf. Lecourt 1970b/1975: 195). So the concept of discursive formation answers the Kantian/critical injunction to 'know knowledge'.

Discursive formations are mechanisms producing true judgments that actualise the will to truth that gives determinate form to existence, even while the discursive formation exists independently of any particular *savoir*. Its sole existence is material, actualised through discursive practices of producing statements about objects of knowledge. Thus discursive formations through their actualisation in *savoirs*, constitute the mode of being of objects of knowledge. Discursive formations then are mechanisms of objectification and since Foucault is concerned with the human sciences, discursive formations are mechanisms productive of modes of objectification of subjects, giving them a determinate mode of being (cf. AK: 7).

Discursive formations constitute subjects whose statements can be recognised as either true or false according to the constituent 'rules of formation' (AK: 40). In this sense discursive formations can usefully be thought of as material modes of production of knowledge (cf. Althusser 1965a/1970: 42). In discursive formations as in social formations its causes are not 'external to phenomenal effects' (Althusser 1965e/1970: 188); rather 'the structure is immanent in its effects in the Spinozist sense of the term, that is *the whole existence of the structure consists in its effects*, in short is merely a specific combination of its peculiar elements, is nothing outside of its effects' (189). Thus, 'The regime of materiality that statements necessarily obey is therefore of the order of the institution rather than of spatio-temporal localization' (AK: 107; cf. Lecourt 1975b: 195). Discursive formations as structural causes are present in their effects as discursive practices and hence are constitutive of modes of objectification.

Foucault's account of objectification caused by discursive formations also allows him to displace the problem of science *versus* ideology in the human sciences. Since Man is an invention of the modern epoch, Man is not a thing external to knowledge and hence cannot function as an external referent or criteria for truth claims (i.e., it is not plausible to have correspondence or referential truth criteria). In doing so, Foucault transformed the Kantian question 'What is Man?' through historical and materialist methods, hence his history of the human sciences. The historical analysis of discourses about humanity allowed Foucault, in a Comtean way, to displace the concern with the universal conditions of possibility of science by focusing on sciences that already exist. And, it is through his archaeology of the human sciences that he is able to argue that 'Man' is a recent invention (OT). This move is also consistent with Foucault's interpretation of the

meaning and implications of Kant's project of doing anthropology from a 'pragmatic point of view' that is, from the point of view of human practices in the historical world (Foucault 1984c/2003: 59; Rabinow 1988: 355-6; Han 2002: 20-25). So, since the object is always already produced within a terrain governed by the true (i.e., rules of formation), there is no question of ideology: the referent and the statement about the object are produced in one and the same process, hence there is no difference between them. To dissolve the difference is to dissolve the grounds on which the problem of science *versus* ideology is predicated.

Having produced his concept of the *a priori* and answered the Kantian problems of experience and Man, Foucault transformed the critical enterprise by historicising it in the form of a history of the present. As Foucault states 'experience has taught me that the history of various forms of rationality is sometimes more effective in unsettling our certitudes and dogmatism than is abstract criticism' (Foucault 1979a/2003: 200). Thus, a new conception of 'Enlightenment' emerges (Foucault 1984d/2003: 45). 'Criticism', he writes, 'brings to light transformable singularities. These transformations could not take place except by means of a working of thought upon itself; that is the principle of the history of thought as critical activity' (Foucault 1984c/2003: 60; 1984d/2003: 54). Foucault's transformation of the Kantian *Kampfplatz* leads logically to his nominalism by explaining how it is possible for thought to work on itself. Understanding the protocols of his nominalism will allow us to reconstruct the problematic that makes possible his ontology of modes of being, and hence too, his conception the object of transformation.

Foucault's Critical Nominalism

Foucault's attention to the contingency and historical variability of subjectivity led him to his nominalism: there is no real, independent existence of subjectivity, self, society, state, etc. (Foucault 1980a/2003: 249; Rajchman 1985: 51; Veyne 1997: 155, 157, 167). As he puts it, 'we wish to dispense with things' and 'to define these objects without reference to the ground of things, but by relating them to the set of rules that enable them to be formed as objects of a discourse and thus constitute the conditions of their historical appearance' (AK: 47-48). He exhorts us to examine the discursive practices that constitute the materiality of humans as objects in the human sciences that are simultaneously objects of knowledge and sites of intervention. Although eschewing labels he adopted the label of nominalism and it governs his epistemological protocols. That is to say that critical nominalism structures the terrain of Foucault's problematic.

At core, critical nominalism holds that the object of knowledge does not have an existence independent of its constitution in a discursive formation: 'things' do not exist, only objectifications that occur through discursive practices, i.e., the material relation obtaining between the knower and the known (who happens to be a human subject). Critical nominalism holds that objectifications, e.g., "the mad and the bad", do not *refer* to anything beyond their constitution in discursive formations; rather they are effects of relations, the existence of which are determined by practices. His nominalism about human existence is thus a result of his critical histories and at the same time, consolidates his position. As he claims, 'The history of the "objectification" of those elements which historians consider as objectively given (if I dare put it thus: of the objectification of objectivities), this is the sort of circle I want to try and investigate... it's a matter of the

effect on historical knowledge of a nominalist critique itself arrived at by way of a historical analysis' (Foucault 1980a/2003: 258).

Foucault explicitly identified with nominalism from the writing of *The History of Sexuality: The Will to Know* onward. There he writes 'One needs to be nominalistic, no doubt: power is not an institution, and not a structure, neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with; it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society' (HS: 93). This nominalism also subtends his work on liberalism (Foucault 1979d/2003: 202). Moreover, Foucault linked nominalism with his Kantian concerns about transforming anthropology, and with it, the question of Man:

I wondered whether...it would be possible to consider the very historicity of forms of experience. This entailed two negative tasks: first a 'nominalist' reduction of philosophical anthropology and the notions that could rest upon it, and second, a shift of domain to the concepts and methods of the history of societies. On the positive side, the task was to bring to light the domain where the formation, development and transformation of forms of experience can situate themselves—that is, a history of thought (Foucault 1984c/2003: 59).

In short, Foucault recognised that nominalist protocols adequately describe the basic assumptions and arguments of both his archaeological and genealogical concerns.

A Materialist Critique of Critical Nominalism

Are our modes of being and modes of knowing one and the same? The important point here concerns the theoretical consequences of having a materialist ontology and the limits that Foucault places on it as a consequence of his critical nominalism. The materialist epistemology that Althusser and Bhaskar take from Marx is based on the distinction between the real-concrete and the concrete-in-thought. As Althusser explicates,

This distinction is contained in the very phrase in which Marx deals with the process of knowledge. As a materialist, he argues that knowledge is knowledge of a real object (Marx says: a real subject) which (I quote) 'remains, after as before, outside the intellect and independent of it'. And a little later, in reference to the subject of investigation, society, he writes (I quote) that it 'must always be envisaged therefore as the precondition of comprehension'. Marx therefore poses, as a precondition of the whole process of knowledge of a real object, the existence of this real object outside of thought. But this exteriority of the real object is affirmed at the same time as he affirms the specific character of the process of knowledge which is 'the product of the assimilation and transformation' of perceptions and images into concepts. ...But neither can the thought-concrete which is finally produced be confused with the real, and Marx attacks Hegel precisely for allowing this confusion to take place... Of course if this necessary distinction is not solidly supported it may lead to nominalism (Althusser 1975/1990: 227-8; cf. Althusser 1965a/1970: 40-43).

The entire stakes of the problem are here because critical nominalism exactly collapses the two: discursive practices of the human sciences (the knowledge production process) are argued to be what is constitutive of the real object, i.e., human existence. According to critical nominalism there is no difference between the discourse-object and the reality it claims to apprehend in a truthful way. Moreover, what humans are before-hand as pre-discursive referents is not the problem according to Foucault since they are unformed content and hence the equivalent of noumena, to put this in conventional Kantian terms.

The problem here is not idealism since his account of the knowledge production process is properly materialist and structural. Rather, the problem concerns the ontological status of the object to be transformed (e.g., forms of subjectivity): the naming and knowing what is called human (its conditions of existence and production process, including the subject doing the naming which does not pre-exist its constitution as an agent with the power to name) is taken to constitute human reality. Thus the knowledge object and the real object are collapsed together in the same process of objectification that

takes place in discursive formations. For Foucault then, the question of transforming the present requires that we concern ourselves with the naming of human existence that objectifies the subject, thus subjugating subjects to the dominance of the human sciences and their uses. To change the subjugations of the present, i.e., to transform modes of being, we must change the names, we must change the discursive practices, the thought, so that we are not subjected to the will to truth that constrains the present. This is how Foucault's normative recommendations follow logically from critical nominalism, hence his endorsement of subjugated knowledges, ethics and experimentation all of which require thought but none of which are governed by the will to truth (Foucault 1997b/2003: 7; 1984d/2003: 56).

The Foucauldian Version of the Epistemic Fallacy

Significant limitations emerge from critical nominalism and they are largely consequences that follow from Foucault's Kantian *Kampfplatz*. The most significant limitation is that Foucault commits his own version of the Kantian epistemic fallacy. Foucault assumes that, like Kant, he must begin with the question of experience and knowledge and hence, what is beyond knowledge production occupies the same position as the Kantian thing in-itself. The effect of this structuring of Foucault's terrain is that the problem of the extra- or non-discursive continually emerges and is never resolved.²

² Critical nominalism thus leads to the problem of taking what subjects in *savoirs* (e.g., experts, governors, administrative officials) say or write about what is going on for what is actually going on (Dupont and Pearce 2001). This is not a problem according to Foucauldian reasoning since what is actually going on is the practice of making these statements, the production conditions of which are the practices, the know-how, exercised by knowing subjects, practices that create the object to which the statements refer. This is

Foucault's critical nominalism requires that he take up a position within the historical archives of true discourses and his point of view is that of true knowledge. Now Kant committed the epistemic fallacy through his critical approach to the question of knowledge and its limits. The epistemic fallacy

consists in the view that statements about being can be reduced to or analysed in terms of statements about knowledge; i.e., that ontological questions can always be transposed into epistemological terms... [and] Kant committed it in arguing that the categories 'allow only of empirical employment and have no meaning whatsoever when not applied to objects of possible experience; that is to the world of sense' [Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* B 274]... More generally, the epistemic fallacy is manifest in a persistent tendency to read the conditions of a particular concept of knowledge into an implicit concept of the world (Bhaskar 1975/1998b: 27; 28-29).

As Bhaskar argues, all knowledge claims presuppose some conception of what the world must be like such that knowledge is possible and rely on an ontology, some conception of a world external to knowledge over which knowledge claims compete (Bhaskar 1989a: 13). The correlate is that Kant is an agnostic realist: we must postulate the existence of the world as it is in-itself but epistemological access to this world beyond knowledge is impossible; we cannot know it because it is noumenal; we can only know knowledge (i.e., phenomena).

However, Foucault's Kantian concerns and his examination of the human sciences leads him to commit a fallacy similar to the Kantian epistemic fallacy. This fallacy can be called the *ontico-discursivist fallacy*: 'ontico-' designating that we are dealing with particular beings and 'discursivist' in that we are dealing with a

a consequence of Foucault's collapsing of the problem of the existence of objects into that of knowledge: the external referent beyond knowledge disappears.

determination in the order of discourse. Foucault's version of the epistemic fallacy goes something like this: since knowledge of Man is produced through discourse about Man (discursive formations that objectify human existence, giving it its form) all we can know and need know about Man (i.e., modes of being) are discourses and since discursive formations produce the object that is known, we can come to know the object that is Man by knowing the discursive practice. This also leads to the solution that the transformation of the object that is Man is possible if we take up discursive practices that are not governed by the will to truth (e.g., ethics as the thoughtful arts of existence). Thus, according to Foucault's reasoning all that we need to know is given in the archive since the archive is the *a priori* of discursive practices that give existence determinate form (i.e., objectifies human life), constituting the present. Hence the epistemological and normative justification for the analysis of systems of thought as the necessary form that being critical must take. But, Foucault's position is reductive in two senses: ontologically, it reduces modes of human existence to its formal determination *qua* objectification in a discursive practice; and normatively, it reduces the transformation of human existence to ethics.

There is also a resulting circularity stemming from Foucault's Kantian *Kampfplatz*. He takes the point of view of the problem of thought, knowledge and experience (by historicising the *a priori*) and these then come to be seen as the problem, i.e., the techniques and conditions of the human sciences are what has subjugated us. The terrain of his problematic is self-referential: the epistemological point of view on possible knowledge of human existence, *via* an account of experience, *produces* his ontology, and his nominalist ontology is concerned with the conditions that limit the capacities of

subjects. This leads to the normative position of targeting the transformation of the human sciences, creating genealogical anti-sciences and his endorsement of ethics. That is to say that ethics is the logical normative conclusion to be drawn from critical nominalism. But this conclusion only holds if one believes that we can only 'know knowledge' and hence that we cannot know anything about what is beyond knowledge, i.e., what is beyond the field of discursive practices. Were we to do so, we would need to put knowledge in its place. This leads to another problem that plagues Foucault's Kantianism, that of the extra-/non-discursive.

Foucault's remarks about the extra-discursive are rather thin, even if they populate the margins of his works. To cite one such characteristic late remark, in the 'Preface to the *History of Sexuality, Volume Two*', he states that one should recognise that the historicity of thought is not 'independent of all the other historical determinations (of an economic, social, or political order) but that it has complex relations with them' (Foucault 1984c/2003: 60). And later in the same piece, commenting on his analysis of punitive practices, he states that penal 'rationality must be relocated in the context of this new [governmental] technology [of guiding conduct], itself linked to the demographic, economic, and political changes that accompany the development of industrial states' (62). But Foucault fails to develop his reasoning here to specify the relationship between the discursive and non-discursive realms, namely 'the mechanism governing the relations of those two systems' and hence no 'theory *as such*' is developed (Lecourt 1970b/1975: 209).

In one very explicit statement on the extra-discursive Foucault notes that historical analyses of discourse must involve an analysis of the inter-relations between

discourse and a broader range of transformations. These include: ‘*Extra-discursive dependencies* (between discursive transformations and transformations outside of discourse: for example, correlations studied in *Histoire de la Folie* and *Birth of the Clinic* between medical discourse and a whole play of economic, political and social changes’ (Foucault 1968a/1991: 58). The extra-discursive in Foucault’s works appears to cover four main areas: (i.) concrete institutional supports as sites necessary to the production of knowledge (e.g., hospitals, universities, laboratories and courts); (ii.) concrete social networks that operate as the conduits for production and exercises of power, e.g., roads and other ‘collective equipments’ that have been necessary elements of systems of production and have historically been closely linked to state power, allowing for taxation for instance (Foucault 1973b/1996); (iii.) the vast array and varieties of social relations, structures and institutions (that can then serve as surfaces of emergence for discursive formations); and (iv.) social, economic, political and demographic processes over a long duration, like urbanisation, the rise of capitalism and the emergence and growth of the administrative state. For example in his seminal ‘The Birth of Social Medicine’ (1974a/2003), Foucault links the emergence of the biopolitics of social medicine to economic changes, property regimes, economic production and demographic changes, none of which are the stuff of either his archaeological or genealogical problematics.

Furthermore, doing archaeology involves considering correlations between discourses like medicine and psychiatry and ‘an institutional field, a set of events, practices, political decisions, a sequence of economic processes that also involve demographic fluctuations, techniques of public assistance, manpower needs, different levels of unemployment, etc.’ (AK: 157). As Lecourt argues, ‘Discursive connexions are

said to be *secondary* with respect to certain connexions said to be primary which “independently of all discourse or all objects of discourse, may be described between institutions, techniques, social forms, etc.” [AK: 45]’ (Lecourt 1970b/1975: 199).

Moreover, the connections between the two systems ‘are not present in the object’ and so these connections refer to a realm beyond that which is apprehensible by archaeology (AK: 45). Similar remarks are found throughout Foucault’s corpus and generally speaking, the realm of the non-discursive is lumped together under categories like ‘society’, ‘civilization’, and ‘social body’ that populate *Discipline and Punish* and *The History of Sexuality*, for instance.

This position produces aporias in Foucault, especially about how to change the present, discrepancies in his accounts, the constant juxtapositioning of the discursive and non-discursive and with it, the constant use of realist sociological supplements like urbanization, demographic changes, the rise of capitalism, class relations, the growth of the administrative state, myth and ritual. A typical form of defence that Foucault uses, making reference to the extra-discursive can be found in statements like this:

Singular forms of experience may perfectly well harbour universal structures; they may well not be independent of the concrete determinations of social existence. However, neither those determinations, nor those structures can allow for experience (that is, the understandings of a certain type, for rules of a certain form, for certain modes of consciousness of oneself and others) except through thought (Foucault 1984c/2003: 60).

In short the problem with archaeology is that Foucault only juxtaposes the discursive and non-discursive, indicates that there is an interlocking between these two kinds of practices and never specifies exactly what kind of relationship (articulation) obtains between them (Lecourt 1970b/1975: 204).

So just as Kant rendered the world in-itself noumenal Foucault must postulate the existence of things, i.e., a socio-historical world beyond the order of discourse, but has no protocols for justifying his reference to them or means of specifying how they are related. Just as Kant was an agnostic realist, Foucault is an agnostic sociologist even though he actively sought to distance his work from the social sciences (e.g., 1980a/2003: 257; 1984c/2003: 58). But the problem that remains concerns the object of transformation and its consequences for Foucault's expulsion of politics: do these sociological supplements imply that something like society exists as a reality distinct and independent from the order of discourse? If they do, is Foucault's conception of the object of transformation and recommended mode of transformation adequate?

So, there are several points to consider in this regard: (i.) Foucault continually, makes reference to the extra- or non-discursive; (ii.) Foucault does not clarify the specific forms of determination that exist between discursive and extra- or non-discursive determinations; and (iii.) there are no good reasons why Foucault could not offer rigorous theoretical accounts of extra-discursive social determinants. This is for two reasons. First, his account of knowledge was materialist and implicitly realist (Pearce and Woodiwiss 2003). Second, the material comprising the extra-discursive social world is of exactly the same type that he discusses and uses in his materialist and realist account of discursive formations which allowed him to explain the production of the archive, *savoirs*, objectifications of humans, etc., for example, institutions and practices (cf. Lecourt 1970/1975: 207-8). The only reason Foucault has for limiting his materialist methodological protocols to the domain of knowledge is that in the end he accepts the Kantian limitation on knowledge and a modified Kantian problematic as the basis of his

critical thought. In important respects what is really surprising is that Foucault makes reference to the extra-discursive at all given his nominalism: he had accounted for modes of being and for how they could be transformed without needing to refer to what subjects are before they are objectified or what other processes might be involved. Nevertheless, Foucault was aware of the problem of what lies beyond the order of discourse and the genealogical analytic of power is his main answer to the problem.

Genealogy, Power and The Real Object of Transformation

It is generally held that the genealogical problematic by introducing the concept of power allowed Foucault to incorporate the extra-/non-discursive into his work and also to integrate the question of politics. By introducing his concept of power, Foucault postulates the existence of a dimension of the determination of human existence and the contingencies of history, *distinct* from the order of discourse and for that reason, it belongs to the realm of the extra-discursive. However, the concept and analytic of power relations brings to light the limitations of critical nominalist protocols since referring to conditions that also need explanation. The discrepancy that emerges in the critical nominalist terrain arises because under the terms of Foucault's own accounts of both the conditions and effects of power, he is required to account for how power is organised, coordinated and directed, i.e., he needs to theorise the conditions for the exercise and direction of power such that it has massive and stable effects on a society.

As argued in Chapter 6, the genealogical concepts of *dispositif* and strategy attempt to address the issue of how 'societies' are shaped. Both concepts involve specifying the relation between thought and life constitutive of the historically contingent

assembling of modes of being. So while archaeology concerns the *a priori* of experience, genealogy is concerned with the *a priori* of existence, actualised as *actions*, involving the structuring or contingent assembling of thought and life to produce enduring effects. The realist-materialist question to pose to Foucault's work then concerns the nature of social existence such that strategies are possible and come to be massively effective.

Hegemonic strategising on Foucault's own terms needs to be explained since it is apparently the condition necessary for the constitution and effectiveness of dominant and pervasive means of hegemonising actions. Moreover, it is in the context of discussing the concept of strategy that Foucault offers, in a rare moment, a specific definition of politics as distinct from the field of relations of force: 'the set of relations of force in a given society constitutes the domain of the political and ... a politics is a more-or-less global strategy for co-ordinating and directing those relations' (Foucault 1977e/1980: 189).

Now, does the analytic of the multiplicity of power relations answer the ontological question concerning Foucault's sociological supplements? In this regard they do not precisely because Foucault argues that power relations are not social relations; rather, power relations are the substratum of social relations:

Relations of power are not in a position of exteriority with regard to other types of relations (economic processes, relations of knowledge, sexual relations) but ... are immanent to them; they are the immediate effects of the divisions, inequalities and disequilibria that are produced with them and they are, reciprocally, the internal condition of these differentiations (HS: 94; 1984a/2003: 34).

Thus power relations are not social relations but concern the decentred multiplicities of life that are held to be more fundamental. But, this has the effect of redoubling the problem of the extra-discursive elements that Foucault discusses: the discursive-non-

/extra-discursive juxtaposition of his archaeological works is transposed into the power-knowledge-extra-discursive juxtaposition. Thus the question about what relationship exists between 'society' and power-knowledge is not resolved by genealogy. So instead of the dualism of the order of discourse and the extradiscursive that we find in archaeology, in genealogy, we now have three terms: discourse, power, and social reality, and the question of social reality is again deferred.

When it comes to genealogical protocols reliant on the critical nominalist terrain, knowledge of power is not dependent on epistemology. The consequence is that fallibilism is again untenable in the terms of critical nominalism. For genealogy, the realm of power as external to knowledge is directly recorded in knowledge as a problem requiring a solution. We have an excellent example of how this process works in Foucault's analysis of the case of Pierre Riviere (Foucault 1973a/1982). We have knowledge of Pierre and of the diverse kinds of power-knowledge networks of French life at the point of its passage from the Classical epoch to modernity since they are recorded in the legal and medical archives from the 1830's. Pierre is a problem for various experts because as a twenty year-old, uneducated peasant man, he wrote a remarkable autobiographical narrative describing his reasons for killing his mother, eighteen year-old sister and seven year-old brother. It is for this reason that Foucault is nominalist about Pierre: he is variously constituted as a discourse-object in a number of discourses including legal discourse, different systems of medicine and psychiatry.³

³ Foucault also argues that the murder and the narrative are not two distinct acts, but are a single deed and hence the event of the parricide is the result of the 'operation and production of a single mechanism: the murder/narrative'. This in my view, is indicative of the circumstance that Foucault gives ontological priority to the order of discursive practices since these are what form specific existences (Foucault 1973a/1982: 202).

Again, it is important to think this through in terms of Foucault's ontology. The concept of power relations (relations of force) do not refer to social relations or social reality but refer to the dynamic multiplicities that are the actuality of the contingent formations of human existence itself, i.e., separate from the thought about it. Force for Foucault is nothing but the dynamism of life itself. This can be inferred from his remark that the ultimate form of resistance to being 'dominated' or 'governed' by another, is to kill oneself or kill the other (1984a/2003: 34). In some respects then, Foucault transposes the Kantian dualism of will and idea into a dualism of materialism and vitalism (Deleuze 1990/1995: 91; Deleuze 1986/1988: 91-93; HS: 144; Balibar 1989/1992: 55). Foucault's derivative post-Kantian vitalism finds its way into Rose's endorsement of ethics, based on the affirmation of the creativity of life. As he argues, ethics, 'would accord itself the right, perhaps the duty, to oppose all that blocks or subverts the capacity of others asserting themselves their own vitalism, their own will to live though the active shaping of their lives' (Rose 1999: 283). Indeed for Rose, it is the creativity of life, that it has no inherently necessary form that resists governmental programming, producing failures, struggles, resistance, etc., that are then the stuff of governmental problematisation. We are now quite some way from the analytics of the thought of government and dealing in a terrain defined by its references to the creativity of life and an ontology of will. The genealogical concepts of power and bodies are in this sense, 'infranoumenal' and Deleuze is well attuned to the circumstance that Foucault is a dualist in a way similar to Kant because of the difference between knowledge and power (Wahl in Balibar 1989/1992: 56; Deleuze 1986/1988: 83).

But at the same time that genealogy introduces *one* answer to the question of the extra-discursive realm with the concept of power, *two* other kinds of reality emerge. First, the dominance of a class is seen as involving questions of society and second, Foucault shifts from the actuality of discursive practices and the actuality of exercises of power to talk about potentials. For example, as he notes concerning class dominance, the structuring of societies and questions of their transformation, ‘what makes the domination of a group, a caste, or a class, together with the resistance and revolts that domination comes up against, a central phenomenon in the history of societies, is that they manifest in a massive and global form, at the level of the whole social body’ (Foucault 1982a/2003: 143-4; cf. Hunt 1993b: 276-279). Then, when it comes to his attempt to conceptualise the dominance of classes, the referent actually appears to be the *real conditions* that make it possible for a dominant class to engage in strategic re-coding (Foucault 1977b/1980: 203). Foucault’s point is consistent with critical nominalism because the constitutive factor in the development of dominance again appears to be knowledge/thought because strategies shape and direct power (HS: 97; 1977d/1980: 196). For example, ‘If sexuality was constituted as an area of investigation, this was only because relations of power had established it as a possible object; and conversely, if power was to take it as a target, this was because techniques of knowledge and procedures of discourse were capable of investing it’ (HS: 98). It is the combining of numerous instances of power-knowledge that gives strategy its political character. So, we are still in the critical nominalist terrain. But, when it comes to the *activity* of strategising, Foucault’s discourse slips because strategising requires the capacity to think in terms of the actuality of the present, its conditions *and* potentials: ‘Insofar as power relations are

unequal and relatively stable relations of forces, it's clear that this implies an above and below, a difference of potentials' (HS: 200-1).

While Foucault's concept of strategy aims to provide an account of how massive effects are produced within a society critical nominalism still privileges knowledge and this again produces discrepancies in his accounts. In the end, the critical nominalist problematic produces a discourse determinist account of how massive effects are produced in a society. It is strategic thought that facilitates new alignments of force relations, allows for new discourses and programmes of rule to be transmitted (HS: 101).

Consequently, the question of strategy that Foucault poses does not deal with how a dominant class comes to occupy a place of dominance within the social body to such an extent that they can with relative effectiveness (and not success), attempt to bring to life their dreams of rule and hegemonise the political field of power relations within a society. That is to say that Foucault fails to theorise the articulation of dominance and determinance: what is it that determines the place of dominance? He offers us an account of what these subjects do in dominating, i.e., an actualist account of what takes place, but without theorising the constitution of the place of dominance that empowers a ruling class, even though he himself starts to talk about inequalities of potential. We can account for this failure by returning to critical nominalism: the exercise of power does not refer to anything else because domination and determination are collapsed into the actual exercise of power transmitted by discursive practices. To acknowledge the constraints of Foucault's protocols is to again highlight the importance of the materialist-realist distinction between what takes place in knowledge production and the place of knowledge production itself.

So Foucault's discourse produces another phenomenon to be accounted for, namely, how a collection of dominant subjects comes to be in a place of dominance such that their practices have pervasive effects on the organisation and coordination of the capacities of human multiplicities, even if the strategy does not realise a specific, programmed goal. The introduction of words like 'potential' and 'possible' are symptomatic of a slippage in the critical nominalist terrain: we are no longer in the terrain of the actuality of the present or actual exercises of power—there is something else. This requires that Foucault account for these positions in which there are differences of potentials. By indicating such, he unwittingly introduces the 'minimal difference' between what holds the place (the exercise of dominance) and what is constitutive of the place/position (Žižek 2004a: 92). So, there is a dominant class that holds the place, actualising dominance, but the place itself is what gives this actuality a real potential relative to other subjects. Something else is constitutive of the 'asymmetrical' potentials of positions within a 'society' or 'objective capacities'—these are all terms introduced by Foucault to account for matters arising from his elaboration on questions of class and strategy (Foucault 1984a/2003: 35; 1982a/2003: 135). He thus needs to account for what might be called the 'strategising instance' that cannot be explained in terms of either discursive practices or power relations since both are concerned with actual exercises that objectify subjects and actions. This other source of determination is that which constitutes the asymmetrical potentials of places/positions.

What is remarkable in the passages where Foucault draws on his most developed genealogical concepts (strategy and *dispositif*) is that all of a sudden discursive practices are no longer the dominant dimension of modes of being and apparently neither are

modes of being, or the *dispositifs* that act on actions, mechanisms adequate to explaining the multiplicity of actions constitutive of the contingency of history: the more determinant element concerns the constitution of the place of strategising. At this point, the aleatory materialist conception of a social formation becomes particularly useful because a social formation is given determinate conjunctural form by the dominance of an instance, a place that has greater potential than other places. This dominance and how it affects all other social relations, forms a vast, uneven array of social existence and articulates them as a *particular*, or actualised, arrangement of positions/places. This process of dominance is no different from what Foucault himself theorises with his concept of discursive formation, and the ability of discursive formations to articulate all other discourses thus producing the massive, epochal effect of the will to truth in modern Western civilisation.

In this respect a social formation is a real structure and is the immanent cause of an arrangement of inequalities of potentials existing amongst various places in a social formation. In terms of Foucault's critical nominalist account then, what was previously held to form human existence (i.e., discursive practices) now itself becomes the content in a place, in a *structure of places*. The logic of Foucault's own account, an account that has now left the critical nominalist terrain suggests that power and knowledge are decentred in a social formation. Foucault has unwittingly changed terrain. But, Foucault cannot think this object, the material reality of a social formation that arranges and structures places, actualised by the powers of holders, without contradicting critical nominalism. It cannot do so because a social formation is a real object that exists

independently of *dispositifs* that, moreover, places them. To introduce the object of social formations also has implication for thinking about the object of transformation.

If we wish to transform modes of being (the object of transformation) then a new target of transformation has emerged. The decisive *political* factor now appears as the structure of a society such that positions of *asymmetrical potentials* are produced, potentials that constitute subjects with the capacity to attempt to realise their dreams and schemes with greater effectiveness than others in reproducible and enduring conditions. By asymmetrical potentials I mean the material social conditions/bases through which the capacities of subjects are constituted, producing a different potentiality for particular exercises/actualisations of this potential relative to others. As such, it refers to the condition of politics as the capacity to ‘structure the possible field of actions of other people’, to borrow Foucault’s own *theorem* (Foucault 1982a/2003: 138).

A new kind of diagnostic question now emerges, i.e., what must a social formation be like such that a *dispositif* can be formed by a strategy? Now while Foucault’s concepts do not rely on intentionalism or an instrumentalist conception of rule, it does require that one think about the differentials obtaining between subjects in a conjuncture— asymmetrical potentialisation—in short, the real capacity to generate a range of possible effects on other subjects (without this implying that the desired effect will be produced or that dominant subjects are aware of all of the possible effects). It is necessary then to postulate the real existence of *political power beyond power*: the bases of power are found in the structure of a social formation (i.e., that there are dominant instances that articulate other instances in such a way that inequality is produced).

To read Foucault symptomatically requires assessing whether his concepts and their referents can be coherently located within the terrain of critical nominalism. But we now have a fault-line that appears in the critical nominalist terrain concerning the constitution and conditions of the place of dominance (or the position of ruling classes) through which societal hegemonisation can occur. Identifying this fault-line is not the dogmatic imposition of an outdated Althusserian Marxism—these are Foucault’s own terms. What I am suggesting is that Foucault’s own remarks imply the existence of real processes determining the place of dominance since it too is a historically contingent phenomenon requiring explanation. This pushes Foucault beyond a nominalist conception of the object of human existence toward a materialist one because it is no longer a question of objectifications of subjects but of the positions on which such practices of objectification rest. In short, the materialist (and structuralist) position that there is a difference between what holds the place and the place itself becomes insistent—we are dealing with the difference between material reality as it is in-itself, existing independently of our awareness of it, and knowledge about that reality. Moreover, Foucault uses concepts from Althusserian Marxism like ‘overdetermination’ (1977b/1980: 195), ‘the class that finds itself in a ruling position’ (203), ‘unequal and relatively stable relations of forces’ (201), ‘inequality’ (Foucault 1982a/2003: 135) and ‘social hegemonies’ (HS: 93), introducing thought-objects incompatible with his nominalist rejection of society as an independently existing and objective world (cf. Balibar 1989/1992: 51).

Posing the question of the structure of asymmetrical places of potential within a society also allows us to highlight a crucial aspect of ‘politics’ (in Foucault’s terms). The

political point to stress about a *dispositif* is not that it is a heterogeneous, contingent ensemble that can be broken down into its various elements each with their own specific origins by critical nominalist histories. Neither is it a question of how a heterogeneous ensemble produces regularised, enduring modes of being. Rather, the political point is that something (something dominant) was able to combine heterogeneous elements in such a way that the combination becomes stabilised and dominance secured. In other words the fundamental political issue is not that networks (of power-knowledge) or *dispositifs* exist: the politics takes place through the asymmetrical conditions of existence necessary to making or establishing a network. Thus, *the politics is in the networking or the combining of elements*, not in the facticity of the network or the *dispositif*. The theoretically pertinent task isn't analysis (although this is necessary) but requires accounting for how such disparate elements could be and were put together. Another way of getting at this is to ask the question concerning what must a society be like such that strategising or governmentality comes to exert effectivity. The dreams and schemes of expert policy programmers only matter if they are in a position of dominance with resources to engage in attempts to apply their programmes to some social sphere. In other words, there is no *dispositif* without some dominant position (or bloc of positions) providing the potential for the activity of strategically assembling things (cf. Foucault 1977e/1980: 189). Foucault's own implicit shift of terrain implies formulations compatible with aleatory materialism with two important differences: (i.) relations of force in aleatory materialism refer to how social relations determine the place of power relations (content) in a structure of places constitutive of a social formation under the singularity of its conjuncture; (ii.) doing politics involves the actual intervention in a

conjuncture attempting to organise a shift of inequality that determines the structuring of social life as a social formation (i.e., gives it determinate form).

At this point, Foucault's own conclusions about the relation between strategy and tactics undermines his expulsion of politics. Ironically, it is Foucault's interdiction on politics that indicates that it is indeed possible and potentially effective. To say that politics in the end produces elitist, constraining, thanatopolitics *is* to say that massive societal transformations *are* possible, just not desirable. So, in the cases of Nazism and Stalinism, true they were deadly disasters, but they nonetheless had massive effects. Furthermore, Foucault's specification of the relation between strategy and tactics also brings to the fore inconsistencies in his expulsion of politics. His reliance on the notion of the tactical polyvalence of discourse and political technologies suggests that it is precisely the tactics that are decisive in actualising the present; strategies just connect practices together the result being that these practices only then become tactics. The logic of this position suggests that in the case of politics (and the question of the possibility of politics), *qua* networking of elements that then hegemonises a society, it is strategy that is decisive. But, his nominalism forces him to reduce the actualities of the political field to its tactical, local, micro-components.

What Foucault thereby misses is that it is not politics, as a kind of strategic activity that is the problem, but rather that *tactics*/techniques are the problem. This suggests that other techniques can be used in a strategy—the problem of politics is not at the level of the desirability of political strategising, it is at the level of tactics. What we confront here is that Foucault cannot answer the question of what it is that makes politics 'dangerous': tactical implements or strategising? Politics then, need not be forbidden as a

desirable and viable mode of transformation if the tactical implements are changed and can be networked together in a new kind of strategy. In this respect, we should side with the Machiavellian aleatory materialist point that the means/techniques used determine the ends at which one arrives. Foucault's failure to distinguish between good and bad tactical supports, e.g., arbitrary policing, surveillance, etc., (even using his own normative criteria of creative experimentation) leads him to the false conclusion that it is strategy that makes politics undesirable. In contrast, the materialist point, one that is present but underdeveloped in genealogy, is that politics/strategy is indeed possible and can be effective in transforming social formations and that rather what makes for the disasters of Stalinism and Nazism are their tactics. Rethinking the concepts of strategy, tactics, politics, social formations and differences of potential, using Foucault's own concepts, suggests that he himself moved toward the aleatory materialist terrain, a terrain in which the aim of politics is the transformation of a social formation and in which politics is both viable and desirable as a mode of transformation.

It is my view that Foucault's failure to theorise counter-hegemonic politics according to his own definition of politics as 'a more or less global strategy for coordinating and directing [power] relations', means that he abandoned the activity of politics to the ruling classes. This leads to a rather weak conception of the transformation of existence whereby the multiplication of ethical subjects is held to be enough to bring down the *dispositifs* that hegemonise societies (Foucault 1984d/2003: 50). On this point, we should use Foucault's microphysics against him since the question is exactly one of the agonistic condition of relations of forces: on the one hand, we have the massive force relations that are the conditions of existence of *dispositifs* versus a collection of

individuals engaged in making themselves and caring for others. If this is enough to surpass the quantities of force in a strategy or *dispositif* (and its emergent quality as a hegemonised social body) this seems to indicate that effective transformation is reducible to one instance, i.e., the individual, practicing subject, a position that runs contrary to Foucault's own general sense of the complexities and overdeterminations productive of social effects, including subjects (Foucault 1977b/1980: 195). What is thus needed is a conception of politics as an aleatory intervention in a conjuncture.

The Metatheoretical Limits of Critical Nominalism and Genealogy

We can now state the ontological and normative limits of critical nominalism. First, ethics does nothing to change the place: it only changes what happens in a place, e.g., 'the place of art' as we find with Baudelaire. What Foucault has done is focus on actions or practices that actualise a mode of being, failing to consider the conditions of existence of an action within a social formation. Somewhat surprisingly, he fails to consider the overdetermination of subject positions, i.e., the imbrication of positions in social formations even though he speaks of 'overdetermination' (Foucault 1977b/1980; cf. Dupont and Pearce 2001). The question to ask here is, 'What is overdetermined and by what?'. Even in Foucault's underdeveloped but nevertheless implicit aleatory materialist terms, a doctor or a criminologist is not simply a subject with authoritative expertise objectifying subjects as individuals; they are also workers, legal subjects, juridical subjects, kin, etc. To say overdetermination is *not* to say 'complex' or 'multiple' determinations because we are dealing in a hierarchy of determinations; there is a structure, not a capricious, arbitrary arrangement that is the outcome of the accidents of

history. This hierarchy of determinations is not a simple hierarchy—we are dealing with articulated determinations in which one instance articulates the others while still depending on the other elements to some degree. That is to say that any practice is overdetermined by its place in the structure of the social formation. It is overdetermined and hence structured by a hierarchy of determinations that supplies the conditions of existence of any particular practice. If something is overdetermined, it means that Foucault's nominalist object—the action that actualises a mode of being (that in critical nominalist terms, is all that there is), is not all there is and hence Foucault unwittingly shifts terrain by decentring the multiplicity of actions in a hierarchy of places with asymmetrical potentials constituting the social formation under its conjuncture.

Once again, we need to focus on the question of the object and mode of transformation. Ethics are concerned with what is possible from the position occupied by an individual and thus neither with what other position one might occupy (social mobility) *nor* with what it is that determines the structuring of positions that subjects can occupy. As concerns the thought and arts of governing (of others or the self) there are no good reasons to assume that the effects of ethical subjects themselves won't be taken up and used by a dominant governmentality or strategy since governing is exactly concerned with using, coordinating and organising the actually existing activities of subjects. Indeed, if once the injunction of the master was to 'know your place' and that of the sage was 'know thyself', today it is precisely 'knowing thyself/making yourself' that amounts to obeying the (absent) master's command that keeps you in your place: contemporary capitalism thrives on this condensation.

Ethics can only be the solution if one forgets the fundamentally political matter, namely, that it is the potential to network and engage in doing so that is the *social basis* of hegemony i.e., asymmetrical potentialisation constituted by the structure of places that modes of being actualise, produced by a social formation (cf. Foucault 1977b/1980: 202-3). If we are to transform existence and escape the limitations of the present in Foucault's own (contradictory) terms the will to truth of Man can no longer be the target. The target is the structure of the differential placement of potentials within a social formation. What must be done then is to transform the structure of places and what constitutes the places, rather than resist.

This points to the central fault of critical nominalism and its collapsing of knowledge production and the reality of the object of knowledge or, the structural difference between the constitution of the place of the subject and what holds or actualises this place. Ethics only modifies what subjects do in their place (modifies conduct) and not the place in the structure of places that subjects occupy within a discursive formation, *dispositif* or a society. In short, ethics is impotent in the face of the social formation as the object of transformation. But the shift of terrain from critical nominalism to aleatory materialism makes it possible to confront and resolve Foucault's expulsion of politics on the metatheoretical terrain.

The Move Toward Aleatory Materialism: Four *Theorems*

The shift from the terrain of critical nominalism productive of genealogy, to aleatory materialism can be distilled in four *theorems*. These *theorems* redress the metatheoretical reasons subtending Foucault's expulsion of politics. The first concerns the place of

knowledge. The second concerns thinking about political power *beyond* power, i.e., thinking about potentials and their structuring. The third *theorem* involves thinking about the effect of politics on social formations. Fourth and last involves a shift of perspective, namely, a shift from a critical analytics of the present to an exceptionalist theory of potentiality over-against what is deemed to be possible within the dominant discursive coordinates of the post-political present.

The first *theorem* concerning knowledge (and by extension, thought, in Foucault's ontology) is: *knowledge must be put in its place*. Thus, discursive formations are not the dominant element of modes of being. This *theorem* means affirming the materialist argument that the 'real-concrete object' of a social formation has an existence independent of its constitution as an object of knowledge in the human sciences. Hence, changing discursive practices does not change the real-concrete object of the social formation. Thus, if we are to transform the present limitations on our modes of being actualised in the multiplicity of actions it is not enough to target dominant systems of thought; rather we must transform that which gives social formations their structure. Decentring knowledge and hence *dispositifs* too puts one back in the materialist-realist camp. Putting knowledge in its place justifies the protocols of a realist sociology as the science of social formations and hence the need for theoretical work that refers to the intransitive external socio-historical world. This also implies that the knowledge production process itself does not have the power to change the world. In short, there is a social reality to be wrong about and hence fallibilist criteria are back in, thus correcting the ontico-discursivist fallacy. Putting knowledge in its place in short requires that we think about social formations as a *real* object of transformation.

The second *theorem* is that it is necessary to *think about political power beyond power* in contrast to the Foucauldian formula of ‘political power beyond the state’ (Rose and Miller 1992). Doing so means thinking about the social bases of power instead of focusing on what is taking place, or actualised between subjects (Foucault 1982a/2003: 135). The power-knowledge nexus is not solely constitutive of the objectifications that are the result of life being formed by thought: power-knowledge has its outside, the outside of the social formation under its conjuncture; this is the true thought of ‘the outside’, not power as Blanchot (1986/1987) and Deleuze (1986/1988) claim (cf. Montag 1998: 72). So, power-knowledges are the contents positioned by social formations in a structure of asymmetrical potentials and their combination as a singular social formation. Relations of force in aleatory materialist terms (*per contra* critical nominalism) refer to social relations, in particular, the specific modalities by which modes of articulation of social institutions and their social relations are able to transform existence. The relations constitutive of the positions of dominators and dominated are what need to be dismantled or displaced. For aleatory materialism, the social relation has primacy over power relations since it is the social relation obtaining between asymmetrical potentials that determines the place of the exercising of power, actualising the asymmetrical potentials (cf. Balibar 1989/1992: 52). What is decisive for politics then, is the organisation of ‘the people’ (Althusser 1999: 59) since this is the basis for a potential shift in the balance of social relations.

The third *theorem* is that politics in Machiavelli’s aleatory materialist terms (i.e., the chance encounter between the two multiplicities of virtue and fortune) is the mode of transformation. Thus, it is not enough to have the connecting together of resistances or to

displace politics by ethics. But here the concepts of strategy and *dispositif* can be rearticulated in the aleatory materialist terrain: a collective political subjects exists because constituted by a *dispositif for politics* (e.g., the aleatory encounter of each of the independent series of virtue noted above). Perhaps Foucault should be read as the theorist of bourgeois virtue who has forgotten its fortune and isn't governmentality the name for bourgeois virtue?

The fourth and last *theorem* concerns a shift in the point of view of critical thought, as conceived of by Foucault, to *exceptionalist theorising*. The standpoint of aleatory materialism in this respect resonates with the old saying that “the exception proves the rule”. In aleatory materialist terms thinking about politics as making a future kind of society deemed exceptional in relation to the current state of affairs elucidates the real mechanisms of rule that are obstacles to differently problematising a shared fate. In the move from genealogy to aleatory materialism, a change of perspective is absolutely key. Foucault was well aware of the limits of simply opposing oneself to repressive powers. As states, ‘As soon as we repeat indefinitely the same refrain of the anti-repressive ditty, things remain in place—anyone can sing the tune, without anyone paying attention’ (Foucault 1977g/1988: 120). Critical histories do the work of showing that things aren't as necessary as all that. Foucault's actualism and its critical nominalist protocols do allow him to challenge humanist metaphysics and mechanistic determinist (and Whiggish) conceptions of history, hence highlighting the contingency of modes of being. At the same time however, as one finds in Foucault's governmentality writings, he takes actually existing discourses of rule as his point of departure. But because of his

focus on the sedimented monuments of problematisation that are his archival concern his work inherently takes the point of view of rule (i.e., the problems that confront rule).

Ironically though, in being rid of the Sovereign as the reference point for political theory, Foucault also got rid of a clue to thinking about politics because the sovereign is exceptional in relation to its subjects. Aleatory materialism turns this conception of the sovereign as exceptional inside-out by moving from the point of view of a concern with rule (i.e., with what is actually happening and what we are fighting against), to a point of view of what isn't happening (i.e., politics). That is to say that perhaps Foucault has not gone as far as we might have hoped, for while freeing us from reliance on the figure of Sovereign rule, he remains within the purview of rule, analysing what it is that is leading us down one path to the exclusion of others. Changing perspective puts rule in its place as but one actualisation of the real potentials that exist in a social formation. Taken together, these four *theorems* allow us to resolve the impasses of critical nominalism and change terrain to an aleatory materialism thus reintroducing a concern for politics itself.

Conclusion

To return to the original question, Foucault's terrain is structured by his critical nominalism and it leads him to displace politics by ethics as the answer to how to transform existence. Ethics is the normative conclusion logically drawn from his ontico-discursivist fallacy that perpetually only juxtaposes the relation between knowledge, power and the social. In short, Foucault's own conception of rule requires him to think in terms of social formations but his nominalism constrains him from doing so. To stand Foucault right-side up, on his materialist feet, requires four moves: putting knowledge in

its place; thinking political power beyond power; defining politics as the organising of social relations of force necessary to challenging how post-politics hegemonises the problematisation of a shared fate; and changing the point of view from a critical focus on rule to one concerned with the exceptionality of politics.

Considering Foucault's conception of the object and mode of transformation helps put things in perspective. Ethics can be held to be a plausible means of escape only if one forgets that the issue is a discursive network connecting together the diverse elements of a *dispositif* that makes the present an enduring state of affairs. To recognise that the place of subjects determines their field of possible actions (a condition of asymmetry as *per* Foucault's definition of power relations) is to implicitly recognise that there is something that structures and connects the places, i.e., that articulates the locations of subjects as places. In aleatory materialist terms it is the structuring of asymmetrical potentials in a social formation that makes it possible to have a dominant class engage in strategies with massive hegemonising effects.

The problem with Foucault's nominalism is that it stops short and it is rather aleatory materialism that is the more persuasive materialist, nominalist position, the position that affirms the contingency of existence. What does this mean? Althusser argued that nominalism is the only materialism but here we should note what we need to be nominalist about, namely, the singularity of a social formation under its conjuncture (Montag 1998: 67; Althusser 1999: 16; Matheron 1998). Thus, social formations do not have essences, are not things (conventionally understood) and neither can there be *one*, true content to politics: politics and thinking about what is to be done must continually be made and remade. It is this circumstance that demands that the materialist must always

think the actual state of things that exists independently of the awareness or knowledge of it. This is in contrast to the critical nominalist justification for writing histories of the present, disturbing the experiences we take as self-evident. In the move from genealogy to aleatory materialism everything hinges on how one ‘experiences’ and thinks (through some discourse or other) the present and the making of a future. It hinges on the difference between the ‘is’ and ‘the possible’; the ‘is’ of existence and the ‘possible’ of politics: the thought of a future.

The move from genealogy to aleatory materialism makes it possible to coherently take the best of what we find in Foucault, namely his model of the general economy of domination hegemonised by government, as being able to account for the post-political effect of the present and at the same time confront *and resolve* the metatheoretical problem of his expulsion of politics that makes the Foucauldian problematic unable to intervene in post-politics. Aleatory materialism is a terrain adequate to forming a concept of, and concern for politics in modified Foucauldian terms, by spelling out a different conception of the object and mode of transformation. We can now appreciate something more of the theoretical stakes namely, to engage in the battle for politics itself in post-politics. The next and final chapter offers a model of politics rendering a Foucault for both realist sociology and politics much transformed by the move from genealogy to aleatory materialism, and hence a Foucault on the side of politics in the battle for politics itself.

Chapter Ten:

A Foucault for Politics

If politics has existed since the 19th century, it is because the revolution took place. The current one is not a variant or a sector of that one. Politics always takes a stand on the revolution. When Napoleon said “the modern form of destiny is politics,” he was merely drawing the logical conclusions from this truth, for he came after the revolution and before the return of another one.

The return of the revolution—that is surely what our problem is. It is certainly that without it, the question of Stalinism would be purely academic—a mere problem of the organization of societies or of the validity of the Marxist scheme of things. But something quite different is at stake in Stalinism. You know very well what it is: the very desirability of the revolution is the problem today... (Foucault 1977g/1988: 122).

Introduction

This passage from Foucault is indicative of a slippage and a set of equivalences that I aim to disturb by disarticulating the question of politics and revolution in order to lay out the possibility of a Foucauldian conception of politics suited to a post-political condition.

The equivalences are those held in post-political coordinates between politics, revolution and deadly tyranny (e.g., Napoleon and Stalin). I contend that the problem today is not “revolution”, but *politics itself* and its real possibility. In this light, post-politics is the problem in as much as it is no longer a question of the desirability of revolution that is at stake but rather the impossibility of politics (Žižek 1999/2000: 1999). The apparent impossibility of politics is supported by the governmental *dispositif* that hegemonises the perception of the present and the problematisation of the future. The problem then is to conceive of the possibility of another dominant *dispositif* (or something like it, with the same ontological weight), that manifests the anti-place of politics in a social formation,

able to potentially displace the dominance of the governmental *dispositif* that hegemonises actions in the contemporary political field.

To this point, I have answered the three main questions necessary to assessing Foucault's account of the political field and its adequacy for a sociology seeking to understand and potentially intervene in a post-political world. Those questions concern the object, modes and problematic of transformation in Foucault's work. In doing so, I have laid out the *Kampfplatz* of Foucault's approach, offered a model of the object of transformation (*qua* post-political social formations); explicated and assessed his recommended modes of transformation; highlighted the consequences of his expulsion of politics in a post-political epoch and last; addressed the terrain of Foucault's problematic, arguing for a shift from critical nominalism to aleatory materialism to resolve the problem of the displacement of politics by ethics. The move to aleatory materialism permitted the retrieval of the *object* of political transformation, i.e., the articulated structure of what a social formation must be like such that we find the dominance of post-political problematisation. With this object back in play so too returns the import of an aleatory materialist sociology.

The liberation of Foucault's own aleatory materialism from his critical nominalism accomplished in Chapter 9 does sufficient metatheoretical underlabour for a Foucault for politics by bringing back into play the existentially intransitive reality of the object of transformation together with the concept of underdetermination (i.e., what is actually the case does not exhaust what might else exist). Below, I develop an aleatory materialist conception of politics leveraging the best of what Foucault has to offer, augmenting it with compatible Durkheimian and aleatory materialist work. In particular, I

argue for a concept of the constitutive potential of politics and a real mechanism to which it refers, specifying the aleatory effectivity of the chance encounter between three components that address and extend the dimensions of Foucault's ontology of modes of being. The three components are: the formation of a heterotopian political imagination (addressing thought and subjectivity), organisation (addressing power and the body) and the effervescent *demos* (addressing power and biogovernance) producing a concept of the theoretical possibility of an effective politics. Key here is to think of politics in terms of the production conditions of a new mode of being, a *political mode of being*, constituted by the apparatus of a politics that can potentially become the dominant form for problematising social existence. The potential effects brought about by a politics are then shown to rely on an *aleatory* form of causality.

I resolve Foucault's analytical expulsion of politics by arguing that the post-political field is traversed and structured by the sacred difference between politics and rule, held to be homologous with the difference between the sacred and the profane that Durkheim contends subtends societal (and hence human) existence. The practical expulsion of politics is resolved by developing the model of the aleatory effects of the contingent encounter between the three components introduced above. The normative expulsion of politics is resolved by developing something like an ethic for politics itself, one that moves us beyond the false post-political coordinates of "better or worse government" on the one hand, which is entirely a choice structure within the problematic of governmentality, or ethics, as recommended by Foucault.

The chapter is divided into four sections. The first section leverages the legacy of Foucault's archaeology works as the basis for a realist retheorisation of his approach to

modes of transformation. The second section develops an alternative analytic of the political field. Particular attention is paid to theorising the constitutive potential of politics. The third section develops an aleatory materialist model of the formation of politics. In the fourth section, I create a new concept—*demopolitics*—to indicate the possibility of an alternative form for problematising societal formation as a means for retrieving Foucault's innovative conception of ethics as a formal process for perpetually reconstituting modes of being. The dissertation is then concluded.

Politics as a Theoretical Possibility: The Legacy of Archaeology

Developing a Foucault for politics rests on the recognition of the theoretical possibility of forming a concept about a real but unactualised political process. This requires paying attention to a few things. First, it requires the recognition that we are dealing substantially with Foucault's ontology. The *reality* to which his concepts refer is not exhausted by the actuality of practices and actions that Foucault's works describe and analyse. For example, the concept of discursive formation refers to a structural mechanism productive of veridical discourses about humans. The *reality* to which the concept refers is that of the real-material potential of certain kinds of social institutions able to produce regulated representations. Thinking along these lines is realist because guided by the question of what the structure of the world must be like such that veridical statements are possible. Answering this question requires postulating a reality the model of which is able to account for the actuality of discursive formations and the actuality of discursive practices and statements. Put differently, not all statements are the product of discursive formations even if discursive formations produce statements. So, even though Foucault restricted his

analysis of statements to veridical statements about humans and created the concept of discursive formation to explain their production, his materialist ontology suggests that other kinds of statements can possibly be produced. Thinking along these realist lines helps us then leverage Foucault's now liberated aleatory materialism and pertinent analyses of present actualities beyond the immediate referents contained in his work. Examining what Foucault has to say about avant-garde art in light of the question of the theoretical possibility of an aleatory materialist Foucauldian concept of politics is quite helpful here because it provides a powerful indication of potentially major transformative interventions.

Foucault's archaeological works, especially his fascination with and commentary on a range of surrealist discourses, indicate that major and substantial transformations are possible even if limited to the sphere of culture. Surrealism, the avant-garde arts and the political interventions associated with it were able to do more than resist or reject the values of Man, the author, science and liberal capitalism—they actively produced alternative counter-arts, discourses and interventions, together with a different, collective mode of being. Key resources for surrealism like the works of Nietzsche, Artaud, Bataille, and Roussel for instance, did not produce their counter-human discourses by simply resisting the exclusion of madness from their works or resisting the modern will to truth and its figure of humanity. Rather, their discourses and modes of existence were deeply involved in collective projects of developing other discourses, problematisations of subjectivity, and other modes of knowledge production that did not fall under the sway of the figures of reason, truth, humanity, and capitalist productivity, while trying to grasp a reality beyond consciousness.

The production conditions of surrealism, for example, discussed in Chapter 3, illustrate that surrealists were involved in much more than the *subjectivations* of individuals engaged in an arts of existence: surrealist movements characteristically involved a high degree of collective participation and interchange amongst a range of members more and less strongly affiliated. It was in and through this mode of being that it became possible for surrealist discourses to significantly contribute to the transformation of the modern *episteme*, sharing the same epistemic structure as the counter-human sciences.

Furthermore, the form of collective authorship found in surrealism—something like a “communism of counter-art”—is formed in direct contrast to limitations placed on how discourse is treated in property-like form by the modern regime of truth. As Foucault contends,

in our societies (and no doubt in many others) the property of discourse—in the sense of the right to speak, ability to understanding, licit and immediate access to the corpus of already formulated statements, and the capacity to invest this discourse in decisions, institutions, or practices—is in fact confined (something with the addition of legal sanctions) to a particular group of individuals; in the bourgeois societies we have known since the sixteenth century, economic discourse has never been a common discourse (no more than medical or literary discourses, though in a different way) (AK: 68).

At the same time however, while avant-garde arts are not governed by the will to truth about Man, they are not madness since they actually produce works—‘madness is the absence of *an oeuvre* [i.e., the work of art]’, Foucault says (HM: 536; 1972e/2006), just not works that fit within the coordinates of modern, humanist aesthetic and scientific judgments.

This is no minor achievement since Man and his truth is the result of the modern *episteme* and key resource for government. Moreover, Foucault stresses that an *episteme* is ‘an explicitly discursive *dispositif*’ (1977b/1980: 197). So, to admit that surrealism produced something entirely distinct from humanist-modernist art with its cult of the individual author and authorial intent (Foucault 1969b/2003) and knowledge of human existence, drawing as it did on the counter-sciences of Marx and Freud and extending them in the terrains of culture and politics (e.g., opposition to fascism) means that, at a minimum, discursive *dispositifs* can be transformed. This gives us reason for optimism about politics in light of Foucault’s ontology of modes of being in which thought is dominant, but not determinant, in constituting action. To change thought, as surrealism and the counter-sciences did, makes a strong case for the possibility of transforming the dominance of the governmental *dispositif* and with it, displacing its fixation on one future, a new and improved one, with entirely different coordinates for problematising modes of being. Attending to Foucault’s own categories for analyzing the human sciences and the will to truth, brings the theoretical possibility of forming a concept of an effective politics to the fore.

So, while it is possible in Foucauldian terms to analyse and explain the emergence of a system of thought, an order of discourse and cultural productions that are discontinuous with the modern *episteme*, he was not able to adequately formulate a similar analysis of how a *transformation of existence and action* might be possible in the modern political field. That is to say that while avant-garde art suggests possibilities for transforming thought, Foucault’s conceptions of resistance and ethics do not suggest similar possibilities for the political field and the social formation of which it is a part.

The task to be accomplished here thus requires leveraging the theoretical possibility of transforming *epistemes* (discursive *dispositifs*) as indicated by Foucault's analysis of avant-garde art and transposing it, *mutatis mutandis* to societies. In short, Foucault's own work provides an indication that politics is a real possibility.

The Sacred Difference Between Politics and Rule

The first component of developing a Foucault for politics requires resolving his analytical expulsion of politics. I do so by highlighting and explicitly theorising the homology between Foucault's expulsion of politics, Durkheimian conceptions of sacralisation (Durkheim 1912/1995; Datta 2005; Pearce 2001) and Foucault's own analyses of similar practices. The problem to be resolved here is that Foucault's analytical expulsion of politics results in a conception of a political field in which there is no room for politics as an object of analysis or of endorsement. As far as the development of an analytic is concerned, this means finding a place for politics in an otherwise exclusively rule-focused conception of the political field for without a category of politics there is no way to study it in a way that it could coherently be combined with the Foucauldian account of rule.

Ironically, Foucault's expulsion of politics gives us the answer to the question of "Where is politics?" in inverted analytical form as opposed to its real form. How so? For Foucault and post-politics, politics is *set apart and forbidden* or *sacralised*, to use Durkheim's *theorem* and must be so for objective reason: to admit of other coordinates for human existence within a hegemonised situation would be to undermine the very security condition of biogovernment and the para-security of class dominance. Thus, we

should not be surprised that national security legislation, as noted in Chapter 5, includes expressly major *political* activities that deal with challenging or transforming the state, *qua* mechanism for securing the conditions of government at all.

To examine Foucault's analytical expulsion of politics from this point of view we find that we are dealing with a structuring mechanism in the political field similar to Durkheim's model of the sacred as referring to an irreducible and constitutive differentiating collective representation, structuring the very conditions of possibility of social *qua* human existence. For Durkheim, that difference is between the sacred and the profane; i.e., between the profane, utilitarian life of egoistically oriented individuals each fulfilling their roles in a division of labour, and sacred moments of collective effervescence where, when faced with the overwhelming currents of the collective assembly, individualistic orientations are swept away and transcended. The transcendence of egoism by the collective then frees individuals from the bonds of duties and obligations, providing them with the capacity for inventive and creative transgressions (Durkheim 1914/1973).

Crucially, thinking about the political field as structured by the sacralisation of politics provides a way to resolve Foucault's analytical expulsion of politics since able to specifically locate politics as part of a political field and specify the nature of the relation between politics and rule. Furthermore, Durkheim's *theorem* provides a way to think about the relationship between the mundane, quotidian actuality of action (what is happening; what our present is) and *what isn't*, because constitutively excluded by sacralisation. So, I contend that Foucault's analytical expulsion of politics is resolved with the *theorem* that:

The political field is structured by the sacred difference between politics and rule, i.e., politics is set apart and forbidden from rule and this difference traverses all points of the actualisation of rule (i.e., all actions that are in play in the political field).

This alternative conception of the political field as being structured by the sacralisation of politics from rule, which also thus implies that a sacred difference structures and traverses the entire terrain of the political field as its constitutively excluded but objectively necessary element, thus offers a broader conception of the political field and a precise conception of the place of politics in it. Important resources for considering the implications of this *theorem* can be found in Foucault's archaeological works, even if lacking the later analytics of power and government, precisely because of their focus on exclusion. Now while the basic *theorem* of the sacred difference between politics and rule as the structuring principle of the political field is fairly straightforward, the broader theoretical implications are not, so I will elaborate by explicating the Durkheimian model of the sacred.

The Sacred Difference in Durkheim

Durkheim's theory of the sacred is at core a theory of difference and its causes (Gane 1983; Masuzawa 1988). Accounting for difference is important since it implies the capacity to make judgments (crucially, of identity) and with it, the contingent conditions that make judgments possible. Durkheim's concept of the sacred is also distinct from his theory of religion since religion refers to and aims to manage the sacred world; the two should not be confused since sacralisation is primary. In this regard, religion is defined in terms of the collective representations and practices that establish and reproduce a radical

difference in a society, i.e., the sacred as ‘that which is set apart and forbidden’ (Durkheim 1912/1995: 44).

The sacred can also be seen as a means of escape, a discontinuity wrought in the very heart of social existence that is radical in relation to the normal/normalized course of social life even to the point of revolution (Datta 2005). The sacred subtends and makes possible the basic coordinates of human existence (like the categories of time and space), once it is expressed in a fundamental and nodal collective representation—a ‘totem’ for instance (Durkheim 1912/1995: 233-4; Gane 1983: 15). Sacred moments of collective effervescence constitute a pure difference in societal history, providing a punctuating point that serves as the basis for collective representations of time. The place where moments of effervescence happen also provides the coordinate of a centre and hence the basic difference for the organisation of collective representations of space. This is why in many myths the most sacred place in the community is held to be the centre of the world and the point at which the divine touched humanity, typically commemorated by an altar (Durkheim 1912/1995; Eliade 1954/1991; Hertz 1909/1960). The conditions of what Kant called the transcendental analytic, with its categories of space and time then are for Durkheim the product of the sacred origins and punctuations of social life that come to be expressed in totems as nodal and exceptional collective representations. Thus, the eruption of the sacred serves to anchor all other individual and collective representations that are the basic materials making judgments possible, be they cognitive, normative or aesthetic. The paradoxical character of the sacred, and by extension politics too, rests in the circumstance that it is at once the originary stuff of social life while at the same time being excluded from much of it: the sacred is something like a ‘constitutive absence’, to

use one of Laclau's terms (cf. Laclau 2005/2007), within social life and hence also within the individual *qua* social being.

Durkheim's theory of sacral difference thus combines conceptions of both diachronic and synchronic difference, lending a unique sense of vibrant dynamism to his model of social existence in contrast to more static conceptions of structural difference found for example in Kant and Levi-Strauss. Moreover, for Durkheim, it is the temporal oscillations of societal life that have ontological primacy. Sacred time determines the sacral organisation of places within the differential structure of sacred and profane spheres. These can be found in the organisation and crystallisation of sacred differences with their regulations of religious institutions, places and buildings. Again, altars are a good example since they commemorate events of the irruption of sacred time (e.g., hierophanies and miracles) that disturb the routinised ordering of profane life, structured by the division of labour. Thus, spatial differentiation is mimetic of, or repeats and reproduces, the temporal difference of sacred and profane time that punctuates human existence.

Now, while the sacred and profane are inherently related, there remains a fundamental difference between the two that Durkheim theorises in the strongest of terms:

In the history of history of human thought, there is no other example of two categories as profoundly differentiated or as radically opposed to one another. The traditional opposition between good and evil is nothing beside this one: Good and evil are two opposed species of the same genus, namely morals, just as health and illness are nothing more than two different aspects of the same order of facts, life; by contrast, the sacred and the profane are always and everywhere conceived by the human intellect as separate genera, as two worlds with nothing in common. The energies at play in one are not merely those encountered in the other, but

raised to a higher degree; they are different in kind (Durkheim 1912/1995: 36).

For Durkheim, the practice of setting apart and forbidding makes the world of everyday activity possible, where the interactions between people, places and things do not encounter the destructiveness that accompanies unprotected contact with the sacred. The constant relation of the sacred with the profane realm illustrates the peculiar fragility of both, indicating the precariousness and contingency of social life. Morality and communal prophylaxis hinge on regulating this inherent radical difference because ‘this heterogeneity is such that it degenerates into real antagonism’ (Durkheim 1912/1995: 37; cf. Bataille, 1973/1989; Pearce, 2001; Richman 2002).

The absence of elaborate prophylactic rituals like initiations and sacrifices results in actions baneful to both sacred and profane spheres with disastrous consequences by erasing the constitutive division between the sacred and profane foundational to human *qua* social existence (Durkheim 1912/1995: 38). Rituals in important respects seek to destroy profanity, a destruction necessary for there to be beneficial, as opposed to baneful communion with the sacred, hence revitalising social and human existence. In my view, attending to this ambivalence of the sacred is important since it points to an inherent instability and volatility in sacrality itself. And since Durkheim contends that sacrality subtends the very condition of possibility of social life, this volatility subtends the entirety of societal and hence human existence too (cf. Pearce, 2001; Gane, 1983; Masuzawa, 1988). To resolve Foucault’s analytical expulsion of politics by recourse to a model of homologous difference between the sacred and the profane means that politics

and rule are radically heterogeneous in exactly the same structural way with similar attendant consequences.

The Sacred Difference in Foucault

Foucault's own work indicates that a homologous structure of radical heterogeneity is present in modern rule. As he writes, it is a matter of 'through what system of exclusion, by eliminating whom, by creating what division, through what game of negation and rejection can society begin to function' (Foucault 1974c/1996: 115), and this holds for the status of politics in post-politics. While exclusions are produced by negative exercises of power that does not mean that they are not still in play and relied upon by governmentalist hegemony. Moreover, the will to truth depends on the division between reason and non-reason, a relation, he claims, for which it is appropriate to use the juridico-discursive model of power, even in the contemporary world (Foucault 1977e/1980: 183-4). One way to resolve this problem of reliance on a negative exercise of power while retaining genealogical sensibilities is to draw on what Foucault says about dividing practices in 'The Subject and Power'. But his formulations there are incoherent.

Foucault defines 'dividing practices' as a mode of the objectification of subjects: 'the subject is either divided inside himself or divided from others. This process objectivizes him. Examples are the mad and the sane, the sick and the healthy, the criminals and the "good boys"' (Foucault 1982a/2003: 126). However, this formulation conflates three distinct processes analysed by Foucault: constitutive divisions; grids of specification; and mechanisms of delimitation. In this regard, it is necessary to return to *The History of Madness* to render Foucault's concepts coherent:

What is constitutive is the action that divides madness, and not the science elaborated once this division is made and calm restored, What is originative is the caesura that established the distance between reason and non-reason; reason's subjugation of non-reason, wresting from it its truth as madness, crime, or disease, derives explicitly from this point (HM: ix-x, original emphasis).

This indicates that there is an articulation of a double process: a constitutive division that separates reason from madness producing the delimitation of a certain quality of civilised experience *and* 'the science elaborated once this division is made and calm restored' which in turn is productive of the experience of reason and unreason. The elaboration of a science, i.e., a specialised, rare, veridical discourse, has as its condition of existence then, the *originary constitutive division* that subjugates unreason through either confinement or expulsion. In either case, *sacralisation is constitutive*.

A secondary process involves the mechanisms and practices allowing doctors and jurists to classify and separate the groups whose confinement was justified in the name of reason, into the mad, the sick, the criminal, the lazy, indigent and morally depraved, thus constituting each of these classes of subjects as various kinds of discursive objects. In this regard, we could call the event of the Great Confinement the "primitive accumulation" of biopower by modern government. It is the emergence of these discursive objects that warrants theoretically disarticulating the concept of 'dividing practices' into *constitutive divisions* and *grids of specification*.

Classificatory schemas and their place in the structure of discursive formations are called 'grids of specification' (AK: 42). 'Grids of specification' refer to 'the systems according to which [for example] the different "kinds of madness" are divided, contrasted, related, regrouped, classified, derived from one another as objects of

psychiatric discourse' (AK: 42). With this we get a sense of how 'delimitations' operate *within* a discursive formation. Yet there is still a sense developed in *The History of Madness*, *The Birth of the Clinic* and *Discipline and Punish* that what is at stake is the matter of limits involving a political question of "Where to draw the line?" (e.g., between reason and madness, reason and mental illness, gainful employment and the immorality of idleness, life and death, disciplined and normal vs. undisciplined, abnormal/pathological and heterosexual and pervert).

Foucault's use of this analytic is aptly captured in his remarks on the deployment of bourgeois models of the family and sexuality in the eighteenth into the nineteenth century:

Eventually the entire social body was provided with a "sexual body," although this was accomplished in different ways and using different tools. Must we speak of the universality of sexuality, then? It is at this point that one notes the introduction of a new *differentiating element*. Somewhat similar to the way in which, at the end of the eighteenth century, the bourgeoisie set its own body and its precious sexuality against the valorous blood of the nobles, at the end of the nineteenth century it sought to redefine the specific character of its sexuality relative to that of others, subjecting it to a thorough differential review, and tracing a *dividing line* that would *set apart* and protect its body. This line was not the same as the one which founded sexuality, but rather a bar running through that sexuality; this was the taboo that constituted the difference, or at least the manner in which the taboo was applied and the rigor with which it was imposed. ... Henceforth social differentiation would be affirmed, not by the sexual quality of the body, but by the intensity of its repression (HS: 127-129, emphasis added; cf. DP: 183).

In this case the bourgeoisie developed and deployed a positive value, a sacrosanct model for a program of rule used first on itself, and used this to rationalise and justify attempts at a broader transformation of the social body, especially the body of the working class

(cf. Hunt 1998).¹ So, a distinction needs to be maintained between sacralisation and dividing practices, the latter referring to classifications *within* a domain of rule constituted by sacralisation, whereas the former refers to the mechanisms of sacralisation and the drawing of the line of judgment deployed throughout the social body.

Furthermore, there are times when Foucault provides explicit indication of the importance of sacred difference to the very organisation of contemporary human existence:

And perhaps our life is still dominated by a certain number of oppositions that cannot be tampered with, that institutions and practices have not ventured to change—oppositions we take for granted, for example, between private space and public space, between cultural space and useful space, between the space of leisure and the space of work. *All these are still controlled by an unspoken sacralization* [emphasis added] (Foucault 1967/1998: 175).

And again, ‘it was a matter of not knowing what is affirmed and valorized in a society or a system of thought but of studying what is rejected and excluded. I merely used a method of working that was already recognised in [Levi-Straussian] ethnology’ (Foucault 1970a/2003: 370). Foucault points out that certain discourses, like literature and philosophy are ‘sacralized’ involving an ‘institutional valorization of which the university is at once the operator and the receiver’ (Foucault 1975c/1996: 150-151). Moreover, he links the will to truth to sacralisation because science is held to be sacralised in a positive way (it is not to be touched, or questioned as a form for problematisation modes of

¹ Indeed, Foucault’s description of the rationality of the dreams of bourgeois sexuality in the eighteenth century contains a fitting definition of the sacred—bourgeois sexuality had become something sacred ‘There is a valuable element within us that must be feared and treated with respect; we must exercise extreme care in dealing with it, lest it be the cause of countless evils’ (HS: 128).

being); it is a 'a sort of power and knowledge that has been rendered neutral because its scientificity has become sacred' (SMBD: 39).

Foucault's remarks here suggest that his analytic of the political field can benefit from a clearly formed concept of the sacred for which the strong thesis is that *sacralisation* plays a significant role in constituting a politics that inherently involves delimiting the coordinates of rule as distinct from, yet related to, the concrete contents of events of power relations within the locales or places of rule that can be analysed in genealogical terms. In governmentalist post-politics, sacralisation produces a social domain consisting of a population in a territory in which some project of development takes place. Sacralisation requires that we think about how the domain in which political projects of social transformation take place, come to be concretely actualised.

Importantly, the sacred difference between politics and rule in a political field is not about differences within a natural kind of political event. Rather the difference is, as Durkheim puts it, between an entirely different genera altogether, even if both produce effects of structuring the dominant coordinates shaping a shared fate. It may be helpful to compare this difference with another radical difference, namely that described by Foucault in terms of the discontinuities between *epistemes*. For example, the difference between the natural history of the Classical Age and modern biology in terms of their respective objects and analytics follow one another in a succession, which is not a progression—we are dealing with incommensurable systems of thought that quite differently render the world intelligible (OT: 160-162). For one the discourse of the other, strictly speaking is "non-sense"; speakers of one would not be able to understand the other (hence there is no progress to be made from natural history to biology). In like

manner, politics, as a rare and sacred intervention, does not unfold “in history” but rather punctuates the shift from one set of coordinates of historicity to another (cf. Badiou 1988/2007).

The Political Field as a Function

The diachrony and synchrony of the difference between politics and rule and how this structures the political field can now be simplified and summarised. This is perhaps most economically represented in algebraic form as follows, where “R” stands for “rule” and “P” stands for “politics”, the numbers referring to their ordering in a historical sequence.

1. A constitutive politics emerges as a sacred event and endures, transforming a previously hegemonised situation (“R1”). We can call this constitutive political intervention “P1”.
2. In as much as P1 is effective, it is able, in a manner akin to strategy, to use its new discursive formation of normative coordinates for problematising existence to network a range of social institutions and sites to stabilise a new condition of rule, a new measure of things. I call this the *political constitution of the social formation*. P1 can thus also be equated with and substituted by “R2” if it endures (“R2” because P1 displaces the previous hegemonising situation, or “R1”).
3. This gives us $R1 \rightarrow P1 = R2$ as analytically identifiable conditions.
4. R2 attempts to secure itself in part by sacralising any future politics that would repeat the constitutive act that founded R2 in the first place (i.e., P1); R2’s own origin becomes its obscene, sacred supplement, a spectre of a politics that was once effective but must not be repeated lest it undermine its own security conditions. We can represent this as “R2/P1” since P1 “de-nominates” R2, providing it with its valuation (as in the “nomination of a candidate” as the condition of possibility for a successful run for office). This denomination of R2 by P1 also structures the objective interest of sacralising the emergence of the repetition of a constitutive politics, structuring the system of difference as a conjuncture.
5. In as much as R2 must be secured, a politics—P2—that would transform the hegemonised situation of R2 must be sacralised or we could say ‘subtracted’ from R2 (Badiou 1988/2007; Žižek 1999/2000). We can write this as “R2 - P2”.

6. We can then express the relation of the sacred difference structuring the political field in terms of a function in which " $f(x)$ " stands for the conjuncture of the political field and state of actualisation of the sacred structure of the difference between rule and politics that structures the problematisation of "the future" of potentials in a social formation ("conjuncture" because of the "joining" or articulation of politics and rule). This structuring is identical to the structure of asymmetrical potentials within a social formation that over- and underdetermines the likely effectiveness of a politics. Politics is able to intervene in and affect a conjuncture by manifesting the anti-place of another instance (i.e., politics or 'the void' in Althusser's terms) that might then articulate other instances in such a way that a different structure of places *qua* new social formation would emerge. It is in this precise sense that this sacral model of the political field is an *aleatory materialism*—'it depends'. So:

7. $f(x) = (R2 - P2)/P1$

Putting the problem of politics in a post-political condition in terms of the battle for politics itself aims to capture its standing outside of hegemonised existence, occupying the void of a conjuncture. Formulating 'politics itself' this way helps us think about politics on its own—subtracts it, excepts it, sets it apart (i.e., *sacralises it* in positive terms as a potential) from what is the case, while appreciating its relation to rule as what makes and sustains the case.

However, to focus only on the structural difference between politics and rule would mean missing out on a way of conceiving their relationship, their perverse kinship so to speak. How so? Well, as noted above R2 was once and remains dependent on the massive effectiveness of P1. So, while there is a difference of radical heterogeneity between politics and rule in a hegemonised political field ($R2 - P2$), from the point of view of historical process (i.e., that we can notice changes of the coordinates of different epochs), politics and rule are of the same stuff, but viewed from different positions i.e., before and after the event of a break. This apparent tension between the heterogeneity on

the synchronic axis and homogeneity at the level of diachrony, can be resolved by borrowing a topological model from Lacan (1973/1978: 143, 156, 213, 235).

The Topological Model of the Political Field

Before elaborating the aleatory materialist Foucauldian model of politics we can nevertheless locate politics and its effects in a political field and do so in terms of an aleatory process. In short, we can postulate at this point, for retroductive reasons, that there are constitutive processes that produce the effect of a politics even to the point of massive societal transformations (cf. Agamben 1995/1998: 43-48). This sets the stage for a possible (and *not* necessary in the causal sense) hegemonisation of modes of being and their resultant actions. The conventional political categories of “constituency”, “constituent” and “constitution” provide a useful inroad for rethinking the constitution and structure of the political field. For example, a Member of Parliament has a constituency that s/he serves, comprised of constituents, those with the right to vote for their Member of Parliament for a riding. A legal constitution specifies the means for how a society is to be organised and directed. It defines its “constituents”—those subject to it—and hence too, their “constituency”, i.e., the specific place they occupy in relation to the constitution and the structure of their relation to the constitution. Using the language of “constitutive” is also helpful since it refers to the “make-up”, or “set-up” (from the Latin *statuere*: “set up”) of the political field and how it is put together, while at the same time appreciating that the effect of the “set-up” has emergent properties: the combination of elements produces an effectivity irreducible to any of its constituent component parts.

The structuralist (and poststructuralist) conception of the minimal, but irreducible difference between “the place” (what I call “constituency”), what “holds the place” (what I call “constituents”), comprising the societal structure of places is important here (Zizek 2004a: 92; cf. 103). In Lacan for example, psychoanalysis depends upon an appreciation of the minimal difference between ‘the subject of enunciation’ and ‘the subject of the statement’.² The subject of enunciation requires the constitution of the place from which the subject speaks: the subject is subjugated in a symbolic order that assigns, distributes and regulates exchanges between places. Thus, the subject of enunciation depends upon a structure of places comprising the symbolic order. The subject of the statement, the statement made by the subject from its place, by contrast represents, holds and actualises the place, representing it to others. An example of this structural difference is found in Zizek’s analysis of the ‘clash of civilizations’:

...let us recall the letter from a seven-year-old American girl whose father is a pilot fighting over Afghanistan: she wrote that although she loves her father deeply, she is ready to let him die, to sacrifice him for her country. When President Bush quoted these lines, they were perceived as a “normal” outburst of American patriotism; let us conduct a simple mental experiment, and imagine an Arab Muslim girl pathetically reciting into the camera the same words about her father fighting for the Taliban—we do not have to give much thought to what our reaction would have been: morbid Muslim fundamentalism which does not stop even at a cruel manipulation and exploitation of children (Zizek 2002b/2004: 236-237).

The difference of meaning effect in this case is one produced by the difference between the words that hold a place (the place of enunciation) and the constitution of the place

² Foucault notes that his archaeological analyses of systems of thought shared aspects of this distinction between the subject of enunciation and the subject of the statement with Lacanian analysis: ‘in seeking to define, outside all reference to a psychological or constituent subjectivity, the different positions of the subject that may be involved in statements, archaeology touches on a question that is being posed today by psychoanalysis’ (AK: 207).

from which they are uttered. (This is what is conventionally referred to as the “importance of context”).³ This structure of difference between place and holder thus helps us think about a constituency as founded on a sacral exclusion that delimits a place in a structure of places, and constituents as what holds or actualises the sacral structure of the political field. *Sacralisation* then, refers to the *constitution of the place* (e.g., the place of biogovernment *qua* territory), whereas *actions* refer to what fills out this place of rule. In this respect, the weakness of Foucault’s genealogical problematic of power becomes apparent: it is limited by its overemphasis on the productive effects of *constituents* at the expense of an accompanying analysis of what is *constitutive* of the place occupied by constituents. This analytical distinction provides the basis for thinking about the constitution of the post-political field by an originary sacralisation that structures the ‘field of possible actions’, *qua* subject positions actualised by practices constituting the place held by actions.

Understanding the relation between the constitutive and constituency is perhaps the real challenge of rethinking the Foucauldian analytic of the political field. The political field is, I contend, the effect of the minimal difference between the constitutive and the constituency since it refers to battles over how the lines of a constituency are drawn. This is in contrast to the post-political circumstance that reduces politics to the administration of a constituency, leaving aside struggles over what is constitutive of the constituency. Thinking the difference between the constitutive and constituents and the

³ This distinction is important for evaluating statements. For example, to believe that if “Bush said it”, means that it is wrong and/or bad, is to annul the structural difference between the subject of enunciation and the subject of the statement by collapsing the statement into the evaluation of the place from which it is made. The logical fallacy of the appeal to authority (e.g., “because Foucault said it, it is right”) is produced by the same reduction, imputing the adequacy of a statement to the place from which it is made.

elementary sacral structure of the political field indicates that an originary sacralisation forming a constituency is what translates “raw dominance” into an originary element of a subsequent possible hegemonisation. Moreover, this formulation allows us to maintain the dominance of social relations of placement in a social formation over the contents (i.e., constituents) of the place produced by modes of being actualised as actions (i.e., what people do in a place).

The Lacanian conception of the relationship between a signifier (e.g., an inscription or vocal sound) and its signified (the mental concept arbitrarily attached to the signifier) is of some use in understanding this structure of the political field. For Lacan, ‘[the signifier and the signified] are not different entities but the front to back of one and the same entity, that is, one and the same entity inscribed onto the surfaces of a Mobius strip. [...] it emerges from a topological twist of the surface itself’ (Zizek 2004a: 92).⁴ In a similar manner the political field can be conceptualised as the double inscription of a constitutive politics. Using this formulation, a political constitution is the first pass on the strip of the political field representing the movement to a constitutive politics (R1 to P1). The second pass on the strip around its other side, is that of the move from P1 to R2, when P1 stabilises and endures as a new, stabilised system of rule. This topological model allows the social analyst to go from a constitutive politics to the hegemonised constituents that hold the place of that politics that comes to be stabilised as post-political rule.

⁴ A Mobius strip is a strip twisted once which then has the ends then connected together, producing a surface in which one can only trace one’s way back to a starting point by going around twice, since the first time around, one ends up on the underside of where one started.

For my aleatory materialist model of politics the constitutive intervention of a politics is a pure demarcator that breaks with a previous set of coordinates, setting a new benchmark limit for a system of judgments. In short, a constitutive intervention like the constitutive division between reason and madness, marks the line or limit—the *criteria*—that makes it possible to think of a “place” (i.e., a delimitable place in a structure of places *qua* conjuncture). So, without a constitutive intervention there can be no possible distinction between the place and what holds or actualises the place. In this respect, politics is a pure postulate—it must be the case that constitutive interventions exist since we can distinguish between a “place” and a “holder”.

Taking the topological model further, in post-politics a *constituency* refers to the formation of the *place* of a development project actualised through its policy programs. A constituency is formed by a constitutive sacralisation that creates the place of programming and the place of the abject of the constituency, its excess or waste, that returns as a problem of social ordering (e.g., “What do we do with the ‘Others’, the ‘outsiders’?”). Constituency formation is the originary act of a politics becoming rule actualised since delimiting the place of a politics that when “in place” becomes “policy implementation”.

The concept of constituency can also be elaborated as the apparatus that makes judgments produced by a system of thought possible—a constituency is the real apparatus of “a rule”, i.e., a stabilised set of coordinates for making judgments about reality, conduct, aesthetics, and crucially the terms of debate about the nature of the good society. That is to say that the post-political constituency is actualised by the dominance of a form of problematisation restricting the thought about the future in terms of development and

improvement, thus linking the veridical and juridical characteristics of governmentality and its reliance on the human sciences. So, a constituent refers to what holds and actualises the place/constituency such that a rule, that shapes the problematisation of a shared fate, happens as it does to seize a social formation.

A political constitution of a social formation can now be equated with the strategic dominance of a *dispositif* as the stabilisation of a politics (that has passed over into rule) *via* the alignment and coordination of previously existing social relations obtaining between institutions, made possible by a new place of dominance through which a society is hegemonised. That is to say that the structure of a political field shapes the fate of a social formation actualised in actions (i.e., the stuff of its actuality). So, a political constitution draws a stable line of social forces, referring back to the constitutive potential of politics, through each of a constituency and constituents, aligning, directing and coordinating them in actualising the imagination of the “future society” produced by dreams of post-political rule. We can push this further in diachronic terms: from the aleatory materialist point of view, politics and rule are two sides of the same coin, viewed from different subjective formations within a social formation. Thus “what our present is”, concerns the politics of a past currently “taking place”, and the sacralisation of any other politics. The political constitution of the present is then traversed by the sacred differences between a past politics and a future politics. An epoch, I suggest, is nothing but this kind of stabilised structure of sacred difference between politics and rule traversing the political field. Moreover, since the thought of and for politics itself refers to unactualised potentials for displacing the dominance that forms a society *via* hegemonic articulation; politics does not refer to “anything” or “actuality” because

politics is about what isn't happening or "taking place". In this precise sense, *politics is not about power*, since power in Foucault refers to actualised relations of force.

Perhaps the main analytical issue to be addressed in using a sacral model to understand the structuring principle of a political field is how to move beyond the spatial metaphor. I think this can be achieved to a large extent by considering a constituency as referring not to a "territory" *per se*, which would return us to older models of political sovereignty, but to a particular modality of social relation dominated by a system of though made possible by asymmetrical potentials. This relation of sacred difference needs to be analysed in terms of the intensity of relation to a rule as the measure of things actualised in a "decision"/"delimitation". In turn, this relation is constitutive of and/or repeats or reproduces a configuration of how the sacred difference between politics and rule is structured. The limit is instantiated or concretised in the act of decision (i.e., going from veridiction to jurisdiction). Conceptualising the political field in terms of the sacred difference between politics and rule, elaborated in terms of a topological model, thus resolves the problem of Foucault's analytical expulsion of politics.

The Foucault for Politics: An Aleatory Materialist Model of Politics

Having introduced a place for politics in the political field the case for the positive concept of politics introduced in Chapter 1 can now receive theoretical elaboration.

Politics was defined as,

large-scale projects of societal transformation undertaken by a collective-politicised subject, the contingent effect of which produces new symbolic coordinates, institutions and procedures for the organisation and coordination of societies and problematisations of its fate.

Some further indication of an aleatory materialist concept of politics was developed in Chapter 9 with the explication of Althusser's conception of virtue, drawn from Machiavelli. And it was argued that the undesirability of politics is really a matter of 'tactics', not 'strategy', and thus large-scale transformative projects are not inherently disastrous. We are now in a position to provide a theoretical model adequate to a concept of politics thus resolving Foucault's practical expulsion of politics: it can be done.

What follows is the explication of the theoretical possibility of the aleatory conditions in which a politics is likely to be effective, drawing upon Foucault's ontology of modes of being and my work on the concepts of the governmental *dispositif* and general economy of domination that explain post-politics. In this regard, it is important to keep in mind how the object of transformation is constituted and to use this as an ontological guide, as indicated in the previous chapter, since at stake is the *displacement* of the governmental *dispositif* and hence the emergence of a political mode of being. Politics is thus postulated as what is constitutive of a transformation of the political field such that politics can potentially become the dominant place in a social formation and hence in a position to restructure it. In a post-political world politics thus means displacing the dominance of the governmental *dispositif* that is its concrete support. To think in these terms requires attending to the underdetermination of social formations by the sacred place of politics (the void) as a potentially constitutive force in history that produces a discontinuous intervention thus breaking, displacing and replacing the structuring of a social formation and its dominant coordinates.

As noted in Chapter 9, in aleatory materialism, there are several independent components that contingently combine to produce the emergence of a politics. As I

develop them they are: a heterotopian political imagination; political organisation; and an effervescent *demos*. Theorising the effectiveness of each component indicates how each of the three dimensions of modes of being can be transformed. This does not require arguing for a direct one-to-one correspondence between the dimensions of modes of being and politics. But, these concepts provide theoretical grounds for grasping the formation of a thought for politics, the subject constituted by that thought, the broader social bases of power that gives effectivity to that thought and its subject producing an active politics. Last, conceptualising the presence of an effervescent *demos* provides a way of integrating Foucault's fascination with the phenomena of manifestations of masses of people that I argue occupy the anti-place of politics in the political field. In doing so, the model provides a conception of how a political mode of being and hence political action can be produced.

Political Imagination and Heterotopian Thinking

The concept of political imagination provides a way for conceptualising a distinctively political system of thought and hence too, the conditions for political subject formation. A political imagination is a form of political thought, a kind of problematisation of existence and its fate (and fortunes) that is not beholden to the dominant set of coordinates for making judgments about what to do. In important respects, it is useful to think about a political imagination as being a *discursive formation for politics*. As such, I distinguish a political imagination from the Lacanian concept of the Imaginary, Benedict Anderson's 'imagined communities' (1983), or the concept of 'imagining' developed most recently by Neocleous (2003). A political imagination constitutes the thought of a

different place and in this regard is *heterotopian* (Foucault 1967/1998). In doing so, it challenges the reliance of governmentalist coordinates on “knowing your place” and “knowing yourself”, characteristic of both discipline and government. A political imagination though, is less about alternative policy development than it is a mode of thinking about and posing the question of politics, i.e., “What kind of society do we want and what kind of politics is possible to achieve it?”. This question affirms the contingency of human existence while at the same time stressing that a different arrangement of things is possible, even if subject to the real the constraints of being reproducible (many things are possible but not anything is possible).

Two quotes from Foucault help clarify what is at stake in forming a concept of political imagination:

In today’s world, what can prompt in an individual the desire, the ability, and the possibility for an absolute sacrifice, without there being any reason to suspect in their action the least ambition or desire for power and profit? That was what I saw in Tunisia, the evidence of the necessity of myth, of a spirituality [...] Political ideology or a political perception of the world was no doubt indispensable for launching the struggle (Foucault 1980b/2000: 280; cf. Eribon 1989/1991: 195).

He also finds conventional Left coordinates unhelpful: ‘Indeed, it has often appeared to me that by setting reformism against revolution, as is usually done, one doesn’t provide oneself with the means for imagining what might bring about a real, profound and radical transformation’ (Foucault 1984j/1996: 383). The point of a heterotopian political imagination is to displace and replace the dominant coordinates of existence, including the array of choices about the collective fate in such a way that viable and desirable means for transforming existence are rendered in discursive form as real possibilities. A political imagination means thinking about the discursive conditions in which to think

differently about existence, developing a thought that does not fall prey to the post-political terms of governmentality. Political imagination fills the place in thought opened by critique, as Foucault defines it, holds and develops it and gives it material content.

Recalling Foucault's ontology of modes of being is useful for forming a concept of political imagination: thought is dominant (but not determinate of action) and is the terrain in which subjectivity is formed. Put differently, a political imagination is similar to a policy program installed in an institution as its abstract machine: a political imagination is an abstract machine for thinking about an exceptional, different structuring of a social formation. In this regard, as Foucault's work indicates, hegemonisation occurs not simply because of domination by a ruling class. Rather, hegemonisation is effective because the human sciences, the will to truth and its discursive conditions of production, only make possible a *limited* set of perceptions and hence a limited set of veridical judgments about those perceptions, and hence a limited set of judgments about what might be done about the social reality so perceived and conceived. That is to say, to paraphrase Marx and Engels' in *The Communist Manifesto*, that subjects are hegemonised because people only set out to solve problems they perceive in their experience of social reality, this being the basis for shaping the *telos* of power relations that determine actions (cf. Foucault 1984c/2003; cf. Canguilhem 1966/1991: 255).

What a political imagination does is to produce the thought of a *different place*, that itself is produced in a different place, a place outside of governmental hegemony. In this respect, a political imagination is akin to what Foucault as to say about Baudelaire's conception of art that 'can only be produced in another, a different place' (Foucault 1984d/2003: 51). But as shown above, art so conceived does nothing to actually change

the place of the subject in the structure of asymmetrical potentials that makes post-politics hegemonic. Moreover, leveraging this conception of art, a political imagination is oriented toward making *a* future, facilitating a means of escape from being trapped in a concern with “what the problem is; what we are fighting against”. In this regard, Foucault is right to stress that change will need to come from “outside”, from a different place like art. The concept of heterotopian political imagination thus provides an answer to the question posed by Foucault about ‘what can prompt’ the kind of event that he saw in Tunisia, a kind of ‘political ideology or a political perception of the world [that] was no doubt indispensable for launching the struggle’.

Foucault’s description of the impact of reading Borges remarks about a Chinese encyclopedia helps indicate how the concept of heterotopias, when linked to a concept of political imagination, can be extended to get at the constitutive effects of a political imagination on subjective formation, as a form of thought or problematisation:

there is a worse kind of disorder than that of the *incongruous*, the linking together of things that are inappropriate; I mean the disorder in which fragments of a large number of possible orders glitter separately in the dimension, without law or geometry, of the *heteroclite*; and that word should be taken in its most literal, etymological sense: in such a state, things are ‘laid’, ‘placed’ ‘arranged’ in sites so very different from one another that it is impossible to find a place of residence for them, to define a *common locus* beneath them all. *Utopias* afford consolation: although they have no real locality there is nevertheless a fantastic, untroubled region in which they are able to unfold; they open up cities with vast avenues, superbly planted gardens, countries where life is easy, even though the road to them is chimerical. *Heterotopias* are disturbing, probably because they secretly undermine language ... [they] desiccate speech, stop words in their tracks, contest the very possibility of grammar at its source; they dissolve our myths and sterilized the lyricism of our sentences (OT: xvii-xviii).

In 'Different Spaces' Foucault develops his concept of heterotopias further by analysing the possibilities offered by those few sacred spaces that remain in the modern world (1967/1998). In the course of his elaboration on different spaces, Foucault develops brief but illuminating analyses of sacred spaces in 'primitive societies'; cemeteries, urban space and their relation to the individualisation of death; theatres, cinemas, gardens and carpets; museums and archives; festivals, vacation resorts, motels as spaces of 'unlawful sexuality', and Jesuit colonies. The structuring of these 'heterotopias' is argued to be a 'constant of every human group' (1967/1998: 179). These different spaces are articulated together 'inside an ensemble of relations that define emplacements that are irreducible to each other and absolutely nonsuperposable' (1967/1998: 178). This system of spaces and constituent emplacements, the limits that define them and their system of difference constitute the domains in which people live that 'are still controlled by an unspoken sacralization' (1967/1998: 175).

By attending to these, Foucault attempts to think the space of the outside, spaces that hold the possibility of being drawn outside ourselves in a type of ecstasy. Thus in 'Different Spaces', sacralisation refers directly to a differential system of domains set apart and forbidden to others and refers in general to systems of spatial opposition that structure social life. What is interesting is that Foucault draws attention to the positive effects of this system of heterotopias: namely desubjectification, resubjectification (e.g., rites of passage) and the creation of the conditions of possibility of imagination. It is important to note that Foucault's concern is with what happens to subjectivity in the movement from one space to another. Thus, in the case of desubjectification, heterotopias make possible the dissolution of the form of subjectivity constituted by one emplacement

through movement to another. There is also the potential for resubjectification. Sacred spaces are a type of heterotopia that produces the positive effect of an imaginative subject, a subject that has experiences of how the world and hence subjectivity, can be structured otherwise. Foucault's analysis here has implications for understanding the potential effectivity of a heterotopian political imagination since it involves the movement from being a constituent to occupying the sacred place of the constitutive.

Foucault's concept of heterotopia thus draws attention to limitations of utopianism important for an aleatory materialist sociology for politics. Here, Durkheim's critique of utopianism is useful (Durkheim 1958/1962; Pearce 2001). As Durkheim argues, utopianism cannot be a guide to a positive, viable project of societal transformation because its object does not exist: politics driven by utopianism is governed by an unreality. As such, while utopianism should be appreciated as a social fact indicative of widespread misery and despair, indicating a hope for a better life, its epistemological protocols undermine the possibility of realist-materialist analyses and hence may actually miss the thought about unactualised potentials that could be developed to achieve different forms of societal organisation. Furthermore, as Foucault argues, utopianism is part of the problem. Modern political coordinates he contends exist between the two poles of 'proletarian socialist utopias, which have the property of never being realised, and capitalist utopias which often have the unfortunate tendency to be realised' (Foucault 1973c/2000: 75). Utopianism is part of the problem because typically based on a hope for a "better society", but "better" from the point of view of an already existing set of coordinates. These coordinates produce the forced choices between degrees of the

intensification and extensification of the same set of technologies of power relations justified and rationalised in the name of “development”.

In contrast, the work of a heterotopian political imagination would be to constitute a different set of coordinates altogether ‘without law or geometry’ (from the point of view of an existing order of things)—Foucault is onto something here (OT: xvii). As Rachjman puts it, ‘Foucault doesn’t ask us to hope for a better form of life, but to imagine a time so different as to make our own time seem arbitrary’ (Rachjman 1985: 49). Political imagination in heterotopian form thus anticipates and does better than Foucault’s later formulation of ‘political spirituality’ where one would find ‘the will to discover a different way of governing oneself through a different way of dividing up true and false’ in short a new combination of the veridical and the juridical (Foucault 1980a/2003: 254). It does better by providing an alternative to the procedures undertaken by a self for dividing up the true, the false and error on which the will to truth depends.

Foucault’s first published work provides further material for developing a concept of political imagination because it deals explicitly with a concept of imagination (Foucault 1954/1984). What is at stake in Foucault’s discussion of imagination is a concept of a constitutive formation of subjectivity as opposed to constituted subjectivity. Foucault begins with a critique of psychoanalytic conceptions of dreaming and imagination because they rely on the circumstance that psychoanalysis can only think about the constituted subject and hence cannot adequately account for how subjects come to be otherwise. In this regard, psychoanalysis is constrained by its focus on the past, namely, unconsciously motivated repetitions of past traumas that constitute the anchorage point for an individual’s orientation to the world.

Contra Freud and Lacan, dreaming, Foucault argues, is constitutive of a new mode of existence, a mode different from the subject's past. Foucault though, argues that dreaming involves an experience of a different world: 'The dream is an existence carving itself out in barren space. ...It is the world at the dawn of its first explosion when the world is still existence itself and is not yet the universe of objectivity' for a subject (Foucault 1954/1984: 59). Hence, this different world, the world of the dreamscape 'anticipates the moment of liberation', i.e., from being solely constituted by past trauma (Foucault 1954/1984: 58). For example, Foucault analyses the new form of subjectivity constituted in a dream about falling, a dream that locates the subject in a new space of existence. To dream that one is falling is to actually have the experience that one *is* falling and hence a quite different subjectivity is formed in this dreamscape. With new experience, facilitated by new grounds of thought, we get the constitution of a different form of subjectivity—something *constitutive* has emerged and become effective. Foucault links dreaming to imagination, arguing that dreaming is the condition of possibility of imagination (Foucault 1954/1984: 68). This allows for new forms of subjective perception.

Combined, the concepts of heterotopia and imagination provide means for theorising the constitution of a subject in a different form of thought and problematisation. In providing different discursive means, a heterotopian political imagination actually produces a different perception and hence experience of the world. And, in as much as experience is rightly an important concept for Foucault since it is the point of contact between thought, subjectivity and the world, it transforms the basis on

which judgments of both veridiction and jurisdiction are predicated. In short, it opens up a practical space, a space in which doing something else becomes conceivable.

A heterotopian political imagination would constitute in thought a different place for the thought of politics, i.e., the sacred place of political imagination relative to the dominant coordinates of a political field. We are now in a position to provide a procedure *for imagination*, one linked to aleatory materialist sociology as the science of social formations. I am not suggesting that this is the only path to an effective political imagination. Rather, I lay out reasons for taking seriously the protocols of an aleatory materialist sociology as a technique of heterotopian political imagination. This does not imply that sociology somehow provides “all of the answers” but that it is able to break a set of hegemonic coordinates, not so much through critique, as by trying to explain what is happening, what isn’t happening, and what else might happen. In doing so, it provides materials for thinking about viable alternative ways of constituting societies.

In a tellingly anti-realist statement, Foucault claims that having lived in France, Sweden, Poland he ‘had a sample of what the possibilities of Western societies were at that moment’ (Foucault 1982i/1997: 122-123). Foucault’s anti-realism here is a consequence of the actualism which is part and parcel of his critical nominalism. An analytics provides the means for systematically describing *what is going on*, but it cannot tell us “why”, i.e., get at explanations. This is because analytics is at core *actualist*, not realist in its epistemological orientation. In these terms, the aleatory materialist scientific task begins with the attempt to explain the present actuality, going beyond an analytics of the present actuality. This returns us to a concern with the aleatory materialist and realist point that what actually exists does not exhaust what might exist since the latter refers to

unactualised real potentials. This provides the basis for creating a concept proper of the real potentials that are the basis for the present actuality and hence the basis for thinking about unactualised potentials and with it a basis for creating a viable imagination of a heterotopia, i.e., a different structuring of a social formation. A heterotopian political imagination requires realist attention to the effects of institutions, how they can be connected together, with what kinds of programs and with what kinds of effects. In important respects, the *ethical* point of a realist ontology is to provide a means for breaking with the way that what is “possible and impossible” is thought about at all, thus providing different coordinates for thinking about what can be done with what is already the case.

Some might argue that “science” is not creative and that what an aleatory materialist sociology would do is actually foreclose on the development of heterotopian imaginings since it is bound to a restricted sense of “reality”. In this view, it is precisely our scientifically formed conceptions of reality that constrain imagination by dogmatically insisting on being “evidence based” and reliant on dominant theories and exclusionary character of scientific communities. However, in the case of “science”, the realist point is to *discover* and not dogmatically impose theories on experience. In this sense science means an orientation to the new not a repetition of what is already known. Moreover, in the case of scientific experimentation, already existing and known actualities are combined in novel and creative ways to try to produce “surprises”, phenomena and events not already accounted for or explained. Scientific practice thus involves, in Badiou’s terms, an *ethic of the Real* (1993/2001), a willingness to be exposed and attend to unknown realities that nevertheless make the knowledge and discovery

process possible. Indeed, as discussed in Chapter 2, it is scientific elaboration itself that *defends* the new, that defends the opening of new terrains in thought over-against dogmatism. The imaginative work of realist science, including social science, lies precisely in creating the categories, concepts and means of combining them, to develop explanatory models able to capture the significant and surprising phenomena and events produced by reality in a more coherent and adequate way than rival theories and thus open up possibilities for further experimentation. In this regard, Foucault's own valorisation of avant-garde art provides an unwitting defence for the imaginative powers of realist social science given their reliance on the realisms of Freud and Marx.

There are some resonances here with points made by Lenin and Gramsci about the role of theory and ideas as necessary for a revolution. They both stress that ideas lead and guide the people, a point that has resonances with Foucault's concept of hegemony (cf. Chapter 6). In this case what we are dealing with is the notion that the people need to be told what their real democratic desires are. Why is this a salient *and* democratic formation? First, it is *nonhumanist*—there are no inherent political desires in subjects lying waiting to be expressed and liberated—they must be constituted. And, an apparatus is necessary to produce this. For Lenin, that apparatus is the Party with its theoretical vanguard and programme. The concept of a heterotopian political imagination provides an alternative way of making a similar point since it is the *discursive formation of a politics*—it is not an institution or an organisation—with its constitutive form of problematisation. What makes the production of a heterotopian political imagination democratic is that the discursive apparatus of a political imagination “*makes choices*”, i.e., actually *gives people* a real choice, a choice beyond the existing hegemonising

coordinates. Furthermore, it is the possibility of choosing to do politics, in contrast to the forced choices of post-politics that makes it possible for a political desire to emerge. A political desire orients a subject toward the doing of politics; it is an effect of the very possibility of the choice of doing politics, constituting new objects of desire through a political imagination. This does not mean a blind striving after a new dream of a future society but rather constitutes a subject for something different. The work of a political imagination then is to “*make* choices” i.e., to make choices available about kinds of different futures, possibilities and developing criteria for thinking about the nature of a desirable society. To frame the matter of a heterotopian political imagination in these terms is to admit that people are not “free to choose” since caught in the forced choices of post-politics.

There are a range of implications for conventional concerns of political sociology that can be noted especially those of “membership” in an active politics and the limits of the politics of discourse found in post-Marxism. First, concerning membership, leveraging Foucault’s ontology of modes of being and the dominance of thought in it, we can note that a heterotopian political imagination constitutes the materiality of subjective formation. This means that political subjects do not “join” the movement or “party”—the political subject does not pre-exist the formation of a political imagination but rather is constituted by it. Even more strongly, a political imagination *joins* subjects because they are subjects formed in thought and share a form of problematisation. In this respect, it also makes no sense to talk about individuals who join and then develop a consensus about a political program.

Foucault's concept of imagination is precisely about a new kind of subjective formation; it does not refer to or repeat a traumatic past (constitutive of one's existential structure formed in and through discourse, in Lacanian terms) but founds the very condition of possibility of subject formation. That said, a political imagination certainly makes a kind of "demand" in as much as the subject of a political imagination articulates a heterotopic thought, a message "sent out". But the addressee is not a ruling class that holds the levers of power. Rather, it is addressed *to itself* and provides the coordinates for differently rendering the world perceptible, intelligible and practicable. These are coordinates in which decisions can be made about what is to be done and worked upon according to the "rule" of reality, i.e., the real measure of things one could say, not as it is formulated in governmental thought. This process is not so surprising: this is how scientific discourse works and is elaborated. It first constitutes an object, a conception of a stratum of reality and then aims to explain phenomena and events produced on that stratum by creating different kinds of discourse objects about which a range of other statements (descriptions, analyses, explanations and theoretical challenges are produced). All of this happens in the terrain of a discursive formation that is itself constitutive of its authoritative subjects. The concept of a heterotopian political imagination thus makes it possible to conceive of the production of a "desire" for politics but without this pre-existing the constitution of a political subject proper in the discursive formation of a politics. To put this somewhat differently, the desire for "something different" (i.e., heterotopia) is really the desire for the difference constituted by the actual emergence of politics itself in the political field. In this regard, the emergence of this "difference", even

if in thought, is enough, and doesn't need specific *content*, e.g., a fully developed alternative policy programme to sell to "the masses" for it to be effective.

When it comes to the importance of a heterotopian political imagination, the issue is less a question of finding better solutions to our problems since part of the problem lies in the criteria on which people decide on what is "better or worse". In contrast what a heterotopian political imagination does is constitute a sacred terrain in thought and a form of subjectivity. Thus, in good Foucauldian terms, *thought* is the dimension that makes the subject that in turn is imbricated in the multiplicity of force relations. Aleatory materialist sociology can intervene in an historical situation by offering an alternative way of thinking about "what kind of future we want"—it is about a thought of a future and hence also a thought for a politics in a particular situation. In some sense, the exceptionality of aleatory materialism involves a modification of Bismarck's famous remark that 'politics is the art of the possible'. In aleatory materialist terms, *politics is the art of the impossible*, it is the art of attempting to give discursive form to what is deemed impossible in post-political terms. It is an imagination of a possible transformation of a social formation with new coordinates for making judgments about its shared fate.

In sum, a heterotopian political imagination constitutes new subjects able to experience and problematise the world in a different way. In this regard, a political imagination performs a topological twist, transforming subjects that are a constituent component of post-politics into a *collective constitutive subject in thought*. And, in as much as perception shifts, new judgments about the world so perceived also become possible in a way that goes beyond political spirituality. A heterotopian political imagination though, or politics in the terrain of discourse, is not enough because if it were

this would leave us with a discourse determinism rejected in my critique of critical nominalism. The overdetermination of the heterotopian placement of subjects by the structure of asymmetrical potentials in a social formation has not changed. What has changed is a system of thought that problematizes the overdetermination of that place *and* its underdetermination by the possible emergence of a constitutive politics. In short, what is now required is a conception of the theoretical possibility of a power basis for the subject of a heterotopian political imagination which brings us to the question of political organisation and a body for politics.

Political Organisation: Networking a Political Body

Political organisation is not an institutional form *per se*. Rather, political organisation is the result of the articulation of a heterotopian political imagination on the relations of force existing in social institutions. The concept is a way to think about the coordination and organisation of power relations, i.e., the power base of an effective politics that manifests or actualises the sacredness of politics itself in a political field. In important respects, to think the possibility of an effective politics along the lines of the concept of *dispositif* as suggested in Chapter 9, requires theorising how a political imagination can be installed in “raw” social institutions, connecting them together, and with what effects on the state of force relations found in social institutions constituting the bodies therein.

Following from Foucault’s ontology, thought shapes and directs power relations to constitute a type of body and its forces. Thus, a political organisation can be taken as referring to the resultant power relations affected by a heterotopian political imagination. Furthermore, the effect of a political organisation can be postulated as a mechanism that

re-replaces the subjects of a political imagination in a different network of connections amongst “raw” social institutions thus producing and actualising a different kind of body, with new capacities, giving “body and force” to a politics. Political organisation thus corresponds in large part to the dimension of the multiplicity of power relations in Foucault’s ontology of modes of being. As such, political organisation takes the constituents of biogovernance out of their hegemonised placement in the *dispositif* of government and general economy of domination. In contrast, political organisation networks a body for politics and provides corporeal conduits for the communication of a heterotopian political imagination. This can mean both using existing networks for communicating a heterotopian political imagination or creating new networks that will facilitate “the message getting out”. This also provides means for using and altering the already existing potentials of institutions, but in a different way.

In this respect, a variety of institutions, regardless of the development of a broad consensus about the value and importance of a heterotopian political imagination, or of coalition building, are *de facto* connected and networked when the heterotopian political imagination is installed as a form of problematisation and system of thought in raw social institutions. The effect of the installation of an heterotopian political imagination in a range of social institutions, together with enduring networks of communication for the heterotopian political imagination then constitutes actualised political action. The salient contribution of a political organisation would be the networking and endurance of those networks because the communication of an heterotopian political imagination affects power relations, thus constituting both the body of a politics and its social basis of power in the institutions it connects.

At this point, we can leverage Foucault's nominalism about power and the body to clarify the importance of a body for politics. Without a way of conceptualising the body, there would be no way to account for political activity since power relations are determinate in modes of being, providing the "fuel" for the actions that would result from the contingent encounter between the multiplicity of thought in a heterotopian political imagination and a multiplicity of power relations in an institution. Thought is dominant but not *determinate* of action; power relations are *determinate* and a determinate state of force relations constitutes the body that acts.

Since a body is only the result of an actualised convergence of force relations at a localised point dominated by the discursive network facilitating their convergence, the capacities of a body can be transformed by new forms of thought like a political imagination being communicated, *via* installation, to an institution. This means that it is not as though a heterotopian political imagination needs to integrate and coordinate already existing bodies into it. Rather, it means that a political imagination itself, by engaging in its practices of problematisation within the terrain of a concern for politics itself, actually brings bodies into existence by affecting and shaping power relations. So, experimentation in thought about a different future does not work on "the body"; rather, by touching social life itself, a political imagination brings the body of politics into existence. This is part of Foucault's point about the inventiveness of political technologies of the body: what a body can do depends on the number of relations of force, their concentration and their shaping by discourse at a particular site. But, this also opens the possibility of an aleatory materialist form of experimenting with forces and

considering new forms of organisation, institutionalisation and regulation of forces by thought.

The formation of a body for politics can theoretically be determined by the extensity and intensities of networks that bring together relations of force, the shaping of which is dominated by thought. Power gives body to thought, providing particular kinds of intensities to politics, an active ingredient necessary for the rarity of any action. When understood in this way, a politics becomes an active force in a political field, entering into an agonism affecting the structure of asymmetrical potentials, when a heterotopian political imagination takes hold of and articulates social institutions. So to provide a concept of this second aleatory component helps provide a conception of a body for politics, leveraging Foucault's ontology to different but theoretically plausible ends. Taken together, the articulation and effects of a heterotopian political imagination and organisation actualises the sacred place of politics since giving actuality to a politics in a political field.

The Political Apparatus

Having developed the concepts of heterotopian political imagination and political organisation by leveraging and extending Foucault's ontology, we have, properly speaking, a model of what can be called an apparatus of an active politics, or simply a "political apparatus", combining dimensions of thought, power and subjectivity producing political action in a political field. It is important to note though, that to deploy Foucault's concepts of *dispositif* and strategy wholesale here would mean contradicting the model of the political field explicated above. This is because the concepts of strategy

and *dispositif* refer to stabilised mechanisms of rule and domination. To say an effective politics requires a *dispositif* would mean being guilty of a *petitio principii*, assuming that the task has already been accomplished and a new structuring of the political field, a new set of coordinates and structuring of potentials, was in place. So, some modification of the concept of *dispositif* in the direction of a *political apparatus* is in order. A couple of examples will help illustrate what a political apparatus might be like.

First, Lenin's conception of revolutionary politics would be one (but only one) type of a political apparatus (LeBlanc 1990; Žižek 2002a/2004; Polan 1984). For Lenin, there are three basic components of the Party necessary to its constitution as a political entity proper, i.e., one not subject to, or constituted by the traps of either bourgeois-capitalist or aristocratic-feudalist ideology. But the Party is nevertheless committed to undermining and transforming the existing state of affairs in which the masses find themselves in misery because of capitalism and threatened by a violent aristocracy. The three elements necessary to the Party are: a revolutionary program; organization; and the leadership of the masses and other groups and movements who either actively resist domination and/or are sympathetic to a socialist revolution. The effective combination of these three elements are necessary, Lenin argued, to bring about a transformation of political and historical circumstances such that the working class gains coherence of force and direction, actualising the basic agonism of class struggle.

The Party, as an apparatus constituted by the installation of the revolutionary theoretical work of the vanguard, that produces a revolutionary program with proposals for transforming society, installed in a disciplined, coherent organisation, provides the basis for leading the rest of society. The governance structures of the Party provide an

example of an alternative organisation of social life based on the soviet model and so leads by example to constitute a *dual power*, an alternative way of organising social life that actually exists alongside, but within, the social formation dominated by feudal and capitalist ruling classes.

The Party apparatus, as a type of political apparatus, provides a leverage point, another point of reference and real force from which to guide the masses toward revolution. But the Party can only do so by attending closely to the contingent responses of people to changing circumstances. This is important because it shows the extent to which Lenin knew full well that the Party was governed by what the masses do—Leninism is in this respect democratic from the point of view of ontology and history because, in the end, what the masses do is decisive. The role of the Party is to make another decision possible for people, not to decide for them, for even if the Party decided for the masses, there is no guarantee that this would have any concrete practical effect.

By way of contrast, in aleatory materialist terms, thinking about a future is the “vanguard”. In this light, Foucault’s conception of discourse, the politics of discourse (e.g., exclusion of error and falsity) and the extent to which certain experiences and forms of problematisation are dominant resembles Althusser’s point about theoretical practice being a form of politics and class struggle in its own right, i.e., in the materialist terrain of thought and ideology. In Foucauldian terms though, in as much as discursive formations do not have “leaders” or “authors”, a heterotopian political imagination would become the vanguard. This is how the dualist problem of the connection between “theory and practice” is displaced: a heterotopian political imagination itself produces concrete effects first by displacing the dominance of governmentality in a political apparatus but also, and

this is crucial, it *at the same time* produces the subject of the heterotopian political imagination as *per* Foucault's ontology and hence its discursive leadership *qua* dominance over power relations (which remain determinant) when it comes to the action of politics.

The Leninist critique though of the strategic limitations of the anarchistic over-emphasis on multiplying sites of resistance and the limitations of trade-unionism are still salient and remain so even in the Foucauldian terms explicated here. Concerning the limitations of the anarchistic rejection of enduring and extensive organisational forms, the Leninist lesson to retain is not that there then must be democratic centralism in which Party intellectuals, informed by the power-knowledge practices of Party members surveilling active groups, make decisions and guide Party activities and those of groups sympathetic to social revolution. Rather, the point is that an effective politics requires *coherence and systematicity*. Coherence, in aleatory materialist terms, needs to be viewed not as "consensus" but should be seen in materialist terms. Coherence then, is not something "decided upon" but rather is constituted by the installation of an heterotopian political imagination in different but connected institutions—the result, not the agent, is something resembling what Lenin means by the Party with its program and organisational form.

Second wave feminism, more appropriately called 'The Women's Liberation Movement' (Ryan 1992; Hamilton 2005) is also an illuminating type of political apparatus combining the development of a heterotopian political imagination and form of political organisation. The women's liberation movement developed distinctive forms of problematising and transforming women's experiences of sex and gender, constituting a

place in which 'to become aware of the effects of male domination' (Eisenstein 1983: 35; Ryan 1992: 46), especially through the technique of 'consciousness raising' (Miles: 1982: 485). For feminists,

[consciousness raising] is likened to the Chinese practice of "speak bitterness," which entails the sharing of personal experiences. Conceptually, through this process, one comes to see that what was thought to be an individual problem is instead a social or political problem requiring collective solutions (Ryan 1992: 167).

The discursive formation of women's liberation in North America, moreover, drew upon and extended the form of critical social analysis found for instance in Betty Freidan's famous *The Feminine Mystique*, that became 'the seed for ideological change ... protesting the limits of a family centered role for women', especially as portrayed on television (Ryan 1992: 41).

Moreover, consciousness-raising spread through North America like 'wildfire' (Ryan 1992: 47), especially after the 1966 founding convention of the National Organization of Women (NOW). The Women's Liberation Movement also produced a type of problematisation found in the counter-sciences of psychoanalysis, anthropology and Marxist political economy, as found in Shulamith Firestone's *The Dialectic of Sex* (1970), the dual-systems theoretic of Juliet Mitchell (1974) and Gayle Rubin's influential combination of Levi-Straussian anthropology and Marxian political economy 'The Traffic in Women' (1975), all of which displaced the figure of liberal humanism as the object of analysis. The practice of consciousness-raising together with the imagination of women's liberation, that raised the question of the transformation of women's placement in society and affirmed the contingency of the gendering of social relations, formed a kind of political programme or form of problematisation in the terrain of thought.

Moreover, the spread of the political imagination of women's liberation and the practice of consciousness-raising itself constituted a feminist heterotopia in the spatial and temporal interstices of North American suburban communities. The suburban single family dwelling, from which many men were absent during the day because of employment, constituted a new form of network. This made it possible for feminists to exploit suburban communication and transportation networks, constituting a form of political organisation "mapped" onto the existing coordinates of these networks. For example, consciousness-raising groups consisted of women contacted through 'informal movement channels' and 'through the initiative of women who had no prior involvement in the feminist movement' (Carden 1974: 34). 'The meetings took place generally one a week in one of the participants' homes' (Carden 1974: 34). In doing so, the women's liberation movement took shape as a political apparatus installing consciousness-raising and the question of women's liberation into the raw social institutions of gendered suburban life, constituting a novel network and body of social force.

While a political apparatus certainly would do more than change what subjects are doing in their place, as is the case with ethics, the actualisation of the anti-place of politics in the political field is not likely on its own to transform or shift the agonic (im-) balance of forces *qua* asymmetrical potentials constitutive of a social formation. This too indicates something of the volatile effects of the actualisation of politics in a political field since manifesting the sacralised thing—politics—in the political field. If we were to remain strictly within the terrain of Foucault's ontology of modes of being, then the combination of a heterotopian political imagination and political organisation might be enough to transform a political field. This is because there would be the articulation of a

different multiplicity of thought and a different multiplicity of power relations that contingently meet in the singularity of a form of political subjectivity constituted by the enfolding of a heterotopian political imagination. The result produced would be a new kind of action, actualising the sacred position of a politics in a political field.

Granted, the effect of a political apparatus would intensify a volatile agonism in the political field. The result would likely be the kind of “war of position” and circumstances conventionally analysed in terms of “class struggle”, even to the point of civil war. This would likely mean responses from dominant subjects, enabled by the existing structure of asymmetrical potentials. They would likely seek to secure their position and *reproduce* the structure of asymmetrical potentials. Concessions by ruling classes can be made, modifying the degree and extent of asymmetries as evinced by the effects of the labour movement, unionisation and general strikes, or as found with equity legislation and policy that stemmed from the Women’s Liberation Movement. However, in these cases we are still dealing with the capacity of dominant classes to govern, i.e., dominate at a distance by restructuring the field of possible actions of others—the coordinates remain the same even if the inequality gap is lessened. Moreover, as indicated by the outcome of countless resistance movements and mass uprisings, violence can “legitimately” be used by ruling classes, wielding the thanato-political power of state military and police forces to crush dissent. In short, we would likely be dealing in the emergence of another articulation of the para-security of dominant classes discussed in Chapter 6. What still remains at issue is the *displacement* of the dominance of the governmental *dispositif*.

That said, with the actualisation of a politics, constituted by a political apparatus, *the battle for politics begins*. Will it win? Will it be effective?—it depends. To put the matter differently, even if an apparatus for politics emerges, its location or placement in the existing political field (and its structuring of choices about the collective fate) *would still be overdetermined* by the dominance of the governmental *dispositif* and general economy of domination. This brings us to the necessity of theorising the aleatory effect of mass uprising noted but not theorised by Foucault.

The Effervescent Demos and the Arts of Collective Existence

As noted in Chapters 1 and 7, Foucault had a fascination with collectives and indeed quite enjoyed his own engagement with them (e.g., his support of students in Tunisia, or his active participation with students in constructing barricades at Vincennes). And yet, at the same time, he was never able to render a theoretical account of a collective/mass in the moment of its manifestation (Chapter 7). It is for this reason that it is important to actually create a concept adequate to Foucault's fascination with "mass phenomenon". Now, while the question of what it is that motivates or causes the masses to take to the streets is an important one, indeed the subject of what I hope to be my next major project tentatively entitled, *A Realist Theory of Justice: From Ontology to Normativity and Back Again*, the pressing theoretical point here is on the possibilities that arise once this type of social potential has been actualised and why particular kinds of effects, that have a bearing on the likely degree of effectiveness of a politics within a post-political situation, are likely to be produced.

However, the conventional terms for a “collective subject” in a moment of “uprising” are not quite fitting and would be incompatible with Foucault’s ontology, with his account of rule and domination and most crucially, with his critique of any essentialist concept of subjectivity, collective or not. To develop a concept compatible with an aleatory materialist Foucault, I suggest that Ranciere’s notion of the *demos* when combined with the Durkheimian concept of ‘creative collective effervescence’, produces a concept adequate to the aleatory materialist terrain, namely that of an “effervescent *demos*”. This is for two main reasons. First, for both Durkheim and Ranciere, key to the effectiveness of a mass demonstration, is that people are *not in their places*. In this respect, we are dealing with something similar to an act of collective indiscipline. Second, as Durkheim points out, creative collective effervescence more aptly captures what can be meant by a potentially massively effective arts of existence that is more than the multiplication of individuals engaged in ethics. This helps to resolve one of the impasses of Foucault’s displacement of ethics by politics, namely the reductionist notion that changing the discursive practices of individuals is enough to transform modes of being (cf. Chapter 9). Indeed, for Durkheim it is politics that is creative of the very existential structuring of human *qua* social existence (cf. Datta 2005; Datta 2008). I will begin by explicating Ranciere’s concept of the *demos*, extending it in terms of collective indiscipline to highlight the importance of a multiplicity out of place, to a Foucauldian concept of politics.

For Ranciere, the *demos* refers to all of those persons within a society and subjected to its political structure, that while formally included are concretely excluded from decisions about a shared fate, a fate moreover, to which they are subjected to a

greater extent than that of ruling classes who are fully included. He also refers to them as ‘the part of no part’ (Ranciere 1995/1999). For Ranciere, the *demos* is the crucial actor in politics. As Žizek elaborates,

What, for Ranciere, is politics proper? A phenomenon which, for the first time, appeared in Ancient Greece when members of the *demos* (those with no firmly determined place in the hierarchical social edifice) not only demanded that their voice be heard against those in power, those who exerted social control—that is, they not only protested the wrong [*le tort*] they suffered, and wanted their voice to be heard, to be recognised as included in the public sphere, on an equal footing with the ruling oligarchy and aristocracy—even more, they, the excluded, those with no fixed place in the social edifice, presented themselves as the representatives, the stand-ins, for the Whole of Society, for the true Universality (‘we—the “nothing”, not counted in the order—are the people, we are the All against the others who stand only for their particular privileged interest’). In short, political conflict designates the tension between the structures of the social body in which each part has its place, and ‘the part of no part’ which unsettles this order (Žizek 1999/2000: 187-188; cf. Laclau 2005/2007: 93, 244-249).

In this respect the *demos* manifests or actualises itself beyond the dominant set of coordinates with their concrete supports that subjects them to hegemonising places within the social edifice.

In *Abnormal*, Foucault points out how counterrevolutionary discourse construed the people in revolt as monstrous—a ‘cannibalistic people’ (AB: 104)—a distortion of natural order: ‘The monster ... is the revolutionary people who are the mirror image of the bloodthirsty monarch. The people in revolt are the hyena that attacks the social body’ (AB: 98). In this regard, just as resistance and the agonism of power relations in the political field are registered in the human sciences and governmentality as problems confronting policy programming, the *demos* manifests itself as something exceptional, monstrous and cannibalistic, not really “human” or civilised from the point of view of

governmentality. That is to say it confronts the problematics of the human sciences and governmentality with an experience of *their limit* in as much as the *demos* is no longer secured as the ontological foundation of the conditions of possibility of government: trust, in the terms of liberalism, has been broken. Put in terms of the analytic I developed above, the *demos* is the structural effect of a multiplicity that holds/actualises the anti-place—it involves a shift from actualisation as a constituent, to manifesting the potential to be *constitutive*. This actualisation need not be seen in solely negative terms as an act of refusal or complaint against the societal structure; rather, it can be seen in more positive terms as a kind of action/actualisation akin to what Foucault describes as ‘indiscipline’ (DP: 290-291; Chapter 7 above).

Indiscipline is an individualised mode of being that escapes the mechanisms of disciplinary biopower, e.g., surveillance, by refusing both regularised wage-labour and a fixed domestic residence. However, in as much as the post-political *dispositif* of government does not target or problematise the exercising of rule and domination in terms of the anatomo-politics of discipline (and its individualisations of bodies) and their insertion into the normalised population series of biopolitics, it is not enough to think in terms of “collective indiscipline”. Rather, the *demos* is the manifestation of collective action at the level of what can be called “ungovernability”, i.e., as a kind of aleatory action at the level of population (cf. STP: 33). This could also be put in terms of the manifestation of a pure multiplicity of power relations, i.e., power relations not subjected or dominated by any particular multiplicity of thought that would shape and direct that multiplicity. This does not mean that one is dealing with a chaotic morass of people;

rather, it is a matter of non-hegemonised actions falling outside the reach of governing *qua* an action upon an action.

In this light, it ought to come as no surprise that manifestations of the *demos* are not simply problems of the routine matters of public order crimes like riots. Rather, such phenomena enter the sphere of a concern with ‘emergency’ and hence of security. As Zizek notes,

when a state institution proclaims a state of emergency, it does so by definition as part of a strategy to avoid the true state of emergency and return to the “normal course of things”. There is one common feature to all reactionary proclamations of a “state of emergency”: they have all been directed against popular unrest (“confusion”) and presented as a decision to restore normality. In Argentina, in Brazil, in Greece, in Chile, in Turkey, the military proclaimed a state of emergency in order to curb the “chaos” of overall politicization: “This madness must stop; people must return to their normal jobs, work must go on!” In short, reactionary proclamations of a state of emergency are a desperate defence against the true state of emergency itself (Zizek 2002c: 108).

The ‘true state of emergency’, in my terms, is that of the presentation of the ground of a multiplicity of power relations from which a political apparatus might draw a massive and extensive force of effectiveness. From the point of view of post-political governmentality, what is at stake in mass uprising is precisely *security* in as much as a concern with security is about perpetuating the conditions for the exercise of post-political government at all. The “emergency” concerns the real possibility of the *emergence* of a new determinant ground (power is determinant) of another politics and the coordinates of another history. Such a manifestation highlights the limits of the conditions necessary for structuring the field of possible actions of others that are part and parcel of a concern with security and calculability, i.e., rendering a social world in

which actions can be subjected to shaping and steering precisely by structuring the field of actions.

The *demos* actualises and holds the anti-place of a politics within a social formation, actualising in part the underdetermination of a social formation in a conjuncture. In as much as it does so, it is not “placed” by a hegemonising apparatus and hence is not subject to “rule”, *qua* “measure of things”. The *demos* then, is a manifestation of the aleatory exception to the rule and the real possibility that people can do otherwise. Hence, it holds a “place” of different possible actualisations or experimentation. Put differently, a *demos* is not subject to an already existing set of normative coordinates. In this respect, it too like a political apparatus, actualises the sacred place of a politics within a political field. But while a political apparatus is closer to a *discursive formation for politics*, the *demos* holds the place of pure power. Taken together, we have an equivalent type of power-knowledge but now within the sacred place of a politics. This brings us to the last feature of moments of collective effervescence, namely their creative, experimental aspect, suggesting that collective effervescence in Durkheim’s terms is a real art of existence, or more precisely, the arts of real (social) existence that affirms the contingency of social life. In this respect, Durkheim’s concept of collective effervescence provides some life to Ranciere’s more structural notion of *demos*: collective effervescence, we can say, is what holds the anti-place of the *demos*, concretely actualising it.

For Durkheim, in moments of collective effervescence,

There are transports of enthusiasm. ... The very act of congregating is an exceptionally powerful stimulant. Once the individuals are gathered together, a sort of electricity is generated from their closeness and quickly launches them to an extraordinary height of exaltation. ... Probably

because a collective emotion cannot be expressed collectively without some order that permits harmony and unison of movement, these gestures and cries tend to fall into rhythm and regularity and from there into songs and dances. ... The effervescence often becomes so intense that it leads to outlandish behaviour; the passions unleashed become so intense that nothing can hold them (Durkheim 1912/1995: 218).

Periods of collective effervescence alternate with, and contrast to, periods of social relaxation. Periods of collective effervescence are those in which collective activity is high (i.e. individuals are more engaged in social interactions, more involved with collective representations, places and things), and they are characterised by the arousal of intense collective sentiments. This intensification of collective feeling and activity results in its objectification that produces sacred symbols. For example, 'This aptitude of society for setting itself up as a god or for creating gods was never more apparent than during the first years of the French Revolution (Durkheim 1912/1995: 244-245).

Symbols created in such moments become associated with the force of the collective that transcends the individual, lending to the sacred its exceptional kind of force (Durkheim 1912/1995: 231-3; 1914/1973). For Durkheim, societal revolutions are types of creative collective effervescence (Hunt 1988; Tiryakian, 1988; Pearce 2003a; Richman 2002). Revolutions intensify social interactions and hence the dominance of social over individual forces with potentially profound consequences: 'We see the most mediocre harmless bourgeois transformed by the general exaltation into a hero or an executioner' (Durkheim 1912/1995: 213). This provides some indication as to why Durkheim's theory of collective effervescence and the sacred serves as the basis for his account of the power of the French Revolution: moments of collective effervescence that produce the sacred and effects of sacralisation are radically heterogeneous instances in

history. Echoing his remarks in *Suicide* (1897/1951) that moments of political crisis bring intensity to social life, integrating and regulating individuals, in *The Elementary Forms*; Durkheim argues that moments of collective effervescence 'are periods in history when, under the influence of some great collective shock, social interactions have become much more frequent and active. Men look for each other and assemble together more than ever. That general effervescence which results is characteristic of revolutionary or creative epochs' (Durkheim 1912/1995: 241). In this regard, the shock of intensified effervescence interaction amplifies the disruption of the profane world of economic life when all play their role in a division of labour and everyone is in their place.

Granted, Durkheim's master narrative in *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* is incoherent because caught in a tension between the sacred as deployed within religious institutions that stabilise systems of authority in a society, and the sacred as a volatile difference that can potentially destabilise and transform the routine functioning of collective and individual life. Nevertheless, Durkheim's normative commitments to substantively egalitarian democratic forms of social organisation fueled his interest in the French Revolution. For him, it was a moment of creative collective effervescence that was sociogenic in nature (Datta 2005). It unleashed social forces with the power to destroy the *ancien regime* and the forms of individuality that accompanied it to provide new coordinates for social life in France.

Furthermore, collective effervescence is sacred time taken or subtracted from the material reproduction of society; we are dealing with a time when the rules of societal organisation are suspended resulting in the possibility of doing things that run contrary to what is necessary for societal reproduction in the division of labour. Ironically then,

breaking the social bonds of solidarity germane to the division of labour is what makes possible the making of those bonds in the first place. It should be noted though, that the assembly in periods of collective effervescence is not really a “collective subject” until a new totemic system, providing new coordinates for subjectivising the world has become stabilised. Rather we are dealing with something like the foundational collective object, a pure objectivity of social will akin to the social ‘protoplasm’ discussed in *The Rules of Sociological Method* (Durkheim 1895/1982: 113) from which originates all social forces and hence too, the condition of possibility of social life. It would not be going too far to translate this in Foucauldian terms and formulate collective effervescence as the pure action of biopower, biopower *minus* its hegemonisation by organic solidarity in which each different individual finds their place in a complex division of labour. We are dealing with a non-hegemonised “substance”, much like the ‘ethical substance’ discussed by Foucault. But, rather than dealing with the ethical substance on which individuals work, collective effervescence manifests a pure *political substance* on which the assembly can work.

Key here is what gets done: the intensified assembly engages in the activity of assembly, as if social reality were not already assembled, words and things, people and actions, attached. As Hunt well argues, ‘The contingency of material representations is evident in the experience of the French in 1789. No one could have predicted the emergence of tricolor cockades, liberty trees, red liberty caps, patriotic altars, or goddesses of liberty’ (1988 27). Similar creative effervescence was also evinced during the first few years of the Russian Revolution (Zizek, 2002b/2004). It is precisely the transformation and combination of previously stabilised collective representations,

actions and persons that marks effervescent creativity, making it an exceptional and sacred time, a “time of the gods” when laws for humans are transparently made, quasi-natural laws that govern the otherwise arbitrary relations between representations and things. In doing so, the profane world necessary to a division of labour is destroyed (cf. Ramp 1999). Effervescence has the power to break the bond holding words and things, representation and reality together and frees elements for new creativity. This is an arts of existence in which *collectives* creatively experiment and assemble *dispositifs*, constituting a more effective arts of existence that may have pervasive and enduring effects. Collective effervescence is an event when no one is in their place, and this is what makes them exceptional and creative moments.

To think in terms of an effervescent *demos* is to think in terms of a pure, aleatory multiplicity of power relations, aleatory in the precise sense that it is not clear in what “direction” it will go, or where it will be headed. Its potentiality and effect as part of the aleatory series of a politics lies in its holding the sacred anti-place of politics itself, the point at which a part of the underdetermination of a social formation is actualised. In this respect, the collective has not yet been hegemonised. So just as periods of collective effervescence are periods in which individuals are not in their place, collective effervescence indicates that the raw biopower of the masses are not in their “place” as a *population*: the *demos* is an *anti-populus*. The manifestation of an effervescent *demos* thus represents the *real* potential of a politics, *presents* to ruling political thought the total potential of *all* bodies and *all* actions to become otherwise.

Thinking in terms of an effervescent *demos* has some significant theoretical advantages. First, the concept does not naturalise or essentialise a collective subject that

is somehow liberated and so avoids the dangers of the naturalism criticised by Foucault (cf. Chapter 3 above). The concept of the effervescent *demos* avoids this essentialism because its potentiality is a differential effect of occupying the anti-place of a politics, a place not located in the asymmetrical structure of placements constituting a social formation. What we are dealing with is a holder *without a place*, a kind of leverage point from which another politics could take hold, constituting another place that this pure holder of potentiality—the effervescent *demos*—could occupy.

In addition, stressing the Durkheimian conception of collective effervescence as a *collective arts of existence* means that one is not dealing with the routine stuff of festivals and the carnivalesque, valorised by Bakhtin for instance, and criticised by Lacan. We are dealing with a time in which the rules of societal organisation are suspended and permission is *taken* to do things that run contrary to what is necessary for societal reproduction in the division of labour. An effervescent *demos* is not “transgressive” and neither does it involve the inversion of the normal placements of domination (e.g., servant and master playing at role reversal). That is to say that *rule* is not the reference point and neither is rule being resisted. Strictly speaking, *there is no rule*, only the experimentation with rules. Crucially though, in the aleatory materialist Durkheimian terms developed here, the issue is less phylo- than ontogenetic: an effervescent *demos* is an effect of the structural location of the sacred anti-place of a politics that underdetermines a post-political social formation. Moreover, the concept of the effervescent *demos* is but *one* of a necessary, but contingently formed series. It alone is not the cause or source of a politics as Durkheim and others who romanticise “the masses” would lead us to believe. In this regard, the effect of an effervescent *demos* is

that it supplies the condition of a leverage point of “raw power” that could *fuel* or be directed by a political apparatus, increasing the power base of a politics. This raises the question of the likely contingent effects of an encounter between a heterotopian political imagination, political organisation and effervescent *demos*.

Politics and Aleatory Causality

Having now conceptualised three components of an effective politics I have provided the basic materials for resolving Foucault’s practical expulsion of politics. Politics is possible and better handles the matter of real and effective arts of existence because taking into consideration the contingent structuring of social formations. I have also shown that the real potentials to which the concepts I develop refer, are consistent with, yet go beyond, Foucault’s ontology. This however is only part of the story because there is a form of articulation of each of these elements, specific to the emergence of politics.

Aleatory materialism has, as noted in Chapter 2, a distinct conception of causality, based on the emergent effects of chance encounters. How does this play out when it comes to the Foucault for politics presented above? First, it involves the chance encounter between the apparatus of politics and an effervescent *demos*. Again, we can use Foucault’s ontology as a guide not least since his accounts of the emergence and mechanisms of contemporary rule are implicitly aleatory materialist. The short version of what has happened is that the programme of government (i.e., the future will be new and improved) has been installed in an extensive way in raw social institutions, thus affecting what bodies do, the result being a political field actualised by actions. So, as found in *Discipline and Punish* for instance, it is the installation of a programme in an extensive

set of institutions, facilitated by the communicative networks of discourse, the concrete conduits of which were constituted by police, that then subjects raw social activity to disciplinary and normalising techniques constituting a distinctive form of activity in the political field. The effects analysed by Foucault are the result of chance encounters between a program, institutions and the multiplicity of power relations found in them that produces the present actuality. An effective and potentially transformative politics could be produced in a similar way, i.e., by the effects of a contingent encounter between a political apparatus and the effervescent *demos*.

The concept of a political apparatus allows us to consider the effects of two dimensions of modes of being together with its extensification through enduring communicative networks, while the manifestation of the effervescent *demos* provides a way to conceptualise the underdetermination of a social formation and hence its pure, raw, potential, i.e., of what else can happen when an apparatus touches and hegemonises the raw power relations of an effervescent *demos*. The extent of the effectiveness of a politics still remains contingent on whether or not and how, a heterotopian political imagination, with varying degrees of reach into a society (thus affecting the extent and endurance of its political organisation and hence too the body of a politics), could produce a political apparatus, and encounter an effervescent *demos*. Conceptualising these contingent encounters, if they last, provides a way to explain how a different problematisation of a future can be actualised in a political field.

Figure 10.1 below summarises the central analytical points of this aleatory materialist model of politics. In simplified form, it highlights how the transformations of a structure of placements, actualised by the asymmetrical potentials of a social formation,

are understood and contrasted in a political field itself, structured by the sacred difference between politics and rule.

Figure 10.1 The Aleatory Materialist Model of Politics

This model highlights why it matters whether or not people have the opportunity to *choose politics* and pursue a different placement, choose the work of doing political imagining as the solution to the problem of the constraints of post-politics on engaging in the activity of making a different future.

Since we are dealing with aleatory causality we are not dealing with “*the*” structure of politics, as if it is always only one, quasi-natural “thing”. Once again, the aleatory materialist point is that, like the rain of atoms and the possible clinamen (‘swerve’ of an atom), the effect of what I have modeled as politics produces a pile up and the birth of a world in which each of the elements of politics exercises a form of determination on the others. But it is here that it becomes important to specify the form taken by the contingent effectivity of a politics as implied by both the aleatory materialist conception of social formations and Foucault’s ontology of modes of being.

The first component necessary to the contingent formation of an effective politics is that of a heterotopian political imagination. Without the formation of a thought and its form of problematisation of and for politics itself there would be no material from which the very form of political subjectivity could emerge at all. This is because, as noted in Chapter 4, subjectivity is a form, a fold within thought that bends around local events of power relations. Next, the formation of this political subject also depends for its effectiveness on the extent and stability of its organisation, the combination of which produces the contingent quality of an active political body. The extent and reach of a political apparatus and with it the formation of a powerful collective political subject is substantially enhanced through contact with an effervescent *demos*.

The question here then, is whether or not the potential of the *demos* will be hegemonised and by what. The dominance of the *dispositif* of government could remain dominant in which case post-political normalcy remains. The other possibility is that a political apparatus will be able to hegemonise enough of the *demos* such that post-political hegemonisation is disrupted and concretely undermined because it lacks enough of the biopower on which it relies (since power is *determinant* of the specific actions that constitute the present actuality). This depends on whether or not the heterotopian political imagination takes, or lays hold, of the non-hegemonised political substance of an effervescent *demos*. If it does, we likely will find the conditions for emergence of a manifestation of the massive potential for doing politics. We would also likely have its extension to other places in the existing social formation, in turn multiplying the number of constituents out of place, occupying and holding the anti-place of politics as found with the spread of consciousness-raising after the founding NOW convention. This increasingly would void the hegemonisation of a shared fate by post-politics. In this way, a political apparatus could multiply the instances of those “out of place”.

From the point of view of the constitutive potential of politics, a lasting encounter between the apparatus for politics and the effervescent *demos* produces a discontinuous rupture in the political field of a social formation in which rule is confronted with the “return of the repressed” (or sacralised element) of the repetition of politics from which it too sprang. But the pertinent matter is whether or not the political apparatus can take hold and shape an effervescent *demos* and so actually break with the coordinates of the forced post-political choice of “tyranny or government”. In short, effervescence can happen, but

until it is subject to something like *strategic articulation*, nothing will have “taken place” in a society (i.e., actualised the potential of the anti-place of politics in a conjuncture).

In this regard, Lenin’s tactics after the event of the October Revolution are instructive (Žižek 2002b/2004; Beirne and Hunt 1988). The countless decrees and directives issued were less regulative in the positive sense of setting up new institutions of government and policy. Rather, they were effective from the point of view of stabilising a new set of coordinates for the effervescent *demos*. The Bolshevik discursive formation provided articulations of the new coordinates. What mattered (i.e., materialised) was not the concrete policy programmes; but rather the very terms, criteria or “measure of things”. What they manifested was the problematisation of a collective fate and announced that it was time to do politics. A similar analysis of the French Revolution is also possible. The event of the effervescent *demos* refusing to be in their places as evinced first by a few uprisings in Paris (e.g., the famous storming of the Bastille), then the spread of these uprisings, to the emergence of an effervescent *demos*. That is to say that it was one thing to throw off subjection to the societal structure of the *ancien regime*. But, what happened afterward, the experimentation and problematisation of what it would mean to have a republic determined by popular sovereignty was precisely the work of the spread and endurance of a secular, republican political apparatus (e.g., the Jacobin Club) and heterotopian form of political problematisation extensively elaborated previously by Montesquieu and Rousseau, for example. It is this kind of chance encounter that produces the battle for politics itself. Whether or not this is “revolutionary” is another matter.

Without the effectiveness of a dominant thought, there is no shaping, directing and coordinating of the biopower of a *demos* (the decisive unorganised multiplicity of force relations in history) to a heterotopic “end”. Without this, there would be no shift in the structure of the micro-physics of power that actualises the structure of the social formation in actions. It’s not a matter of what is in people’s heads; it’s a matter of what “the population” does, their practices. And their practices depend in part, on the dominant forms of problematisation and systems of thought. A political imagination as a new way of thinking about structuring the field of possible actions would shape the local events of power relations; it would shape them toward the doing of politics. Strategy then is not a “plan” conceived within the apparatus for politics. In this regard, Foucault’s own neglected conception of politics as ‘a more or less global strategy for coordinating and directing those relations’ is instructive (Foucault 1977b/1980: 189). “Strategy”, in this view, emerges only after the event through the collision of different tactics in which the general pattern of change is the complex result of the balance of forces produced when the specific tactics of a variety of social movements and classes clash and compete’ (Hunt and Wickham 1993: 31; cf. Poulantzas 1978: 135-7). The extent and hence degree to which a politics affects a social formation thus depends on how different effects of the actualisation of a politics in a political field affects other instances of the social formation. These effects can be strategically articulated by a political apparatus, spreading political action. In some respects, the extensive strategic articulation of local events of power relations in a social formation spreads the void of a politics, rendering “null and void” the structure of placements that hegemonise actions.

Thinking of politics in terms of liminality and initiation is helpful here (cf. Van Gennep 1908/1969; Bloch 1992). A politics is in some respects similar to a *rite de passage* over a *limen* (or limit) and initiation since it initiates the project of actually making history. In initiation rites, a child goes from being not yet a full member of the community, but with the possibility of being a member, to being a full member, taking on an identity that fully places them within the community. Initiation rites typically take place outside of the boundaries of the community, i.e., beyond its *limen*, an exceptional, sacred place, where there are exceptions to the routine rules of communal life. At the end of the rites of testing, hardship and danger, they cross the *limen* again, but enter as different subjects, characteristically with a new name and a new place in the community. Similarly, politics is a *limen* from the point of view of history, the “re-entry” of politics from its previously sacralised place.

However, we now have something of a theoretical paradox for an aleatory materialist conception of politics: “politics never seems to exist”—the object of my purported materialist theory of politics could be construed as perpetually deferred and displaced. How so? From the point of view of a political imagination, “politics” lies in the future, is a task to be accomplished, and hence does not exist except in thought, characterised by the theoretical intervention that what is actually the case does not exhaust the real potential of what else might be made the case. From the point of view of the moment of collective effervescence, such moments are not “politics” either, but rather are a voiding of a previous politics and what will happen is not yet decided: collective effervescence is a non-hegemonised condition of raw social life in which people occupy and actualise the anti-place of politics. Last, from the point of view of a transformed

structure of a social formation, “politics does not exist” since it has already “taken place”—and has passed over into a new structure of rule having gone one pass on the Mobius strip of the topology of the political field and ended up on the “rule side”. This paradox of a materialist theory of politics “without an object” can be answered as follows. Politics is not “an object”, it is a contingent effect within the structure of the political field in a social formation. More precisely politics is a *limit* itself, the pure differentiating element between “what once took place” and what else might take place. This pure difference, as a sacred difference, is the effect of the aleatory series of a politics and the conjuncture in which it intervenes. That is also why I suggest that “perhaps politics has nothing to do with power”, it has nothing to do with what is “actually taking place” but with what isn’t but could. Thus, politics is not “an object that exists”, but is rather present in and as its effects: its existence is in its effects and its referent is the production conditions of those effects. In sum, politics can be said to actually exist and be efficacious when the void of a social formation spreads. This is not a negative void but a positive void of actually doing politics, focusing in on the thought of impossibility—there is *a world in impossibility*, a world of many different contingent formations.

We can now distill this aleatory materialist Foucauldian concept of politics:

politics refers to the conditions constitutive of a collective subject with a heterotopian political imagination that develops different discursive means for problematising a shared fate, the force of which is supplied by the constitution of a body for politics in and through political organisation, that combined, form a political apparatus that actualises the void of politics in a political field. Politics, qua a sacred, exceptional, intervention, produces new coordinates for problematising societal existence. If an actualised politics encounters an effervescent demos in a lasting way, it produces, in an aleatory form, a liminal event in history. This then affects a conjuncture by actualising the battle for politics itself by providing constituents with a “different place” and means for holding this different place.

This elaboration of the three aleatory components of politics, resolves the practical expulsion of politics. I now turn to resolving the normative implications of Foucault's expulsion of politics.

Demopolitics: Characteristics, Conditions and Consequences

In one of his more enigmatic statements, Foucault, at the conclusion of *The Order of Things* suggests that it is possible to conceive of a time in which modern sensibilities, beholden to the valorisation of humanity and its truth, would no longer exist. This would be an epoch in which 'man would be erased, like a face drawn in sand at the edge of the sea' (OT: 387). In many respects, Foucault's extensive explorations of the contingent formation of the present and his investigations on modes of transformation could be construed as attempts to give some concrete indication that this indeed is a real possibility. But, as I have argued above, his critical nominalism severely limits his conception of what the problem is leading to all of the attendant features of his expulsion of politics. In doing so, he thus misses the point about what the problem is (i.e., the real object of transformation) and even that his own conception of government accounts for the production of post-political effects that I have explicated and extended above.

What I suggest is that the battle for politics itself makes it possible for another epoch to be conceivable and achievable. This would be a world in which the post-political constraint on political problematisation that now perpetually takes the form of "better *versus* worse biogovernance", would "be erased, like a face drawn in sand at the edge of the sea". I call this condition *demopolitics*; it is a condition in which *politics is*

“*sovereign*”, in which the exceptionality of doing politics is “the rule”; it would be a condition in which doing politics is on-going.

The possibility of demopolitics might be less hard to imagine than at first blush: if post-politics has come to hegemonise the multiplicity of actions, why couldn’t something else? After all, post-politics depends on contingent conditions indicating that there is no inherent intransitive necessity in society and history guaranteeing its perpetuation. Moreover, the realist arguments I have made to form a concept of a political apparatus in a post-political world can be extended. So, in as much as a political apparatus is possible, it can then serve as an actual model for how this might be done in other social institutions, disarticulating them from their imbrication in the governmental *dispositif*, its general economy of domination and post-political effect. In this regard, a political apparatus generates something like a type for exercising power relations to be communicated by discursive networks (cf. Chapter 4).

Arguing for theorising the characteristics and conditions of a different way of problematising collective fates means recognising that the forced choice of “government or tyranny” on which the dominance of governmentality rests, actually occludes the choice that Machiavelli, for one, put on offer, namely that there is another choice, the choice of doing politics. In short, demopolitics refers to a condition in which the battle for politics itself, instantiating a “real state of emergency”, is the normal course of affairs. Thinking along these lines and postulating a possible demopolitics resolves Foucault’s normative expulsion of politics in as much as a “new normal” would be constituted, as would a new “measure of things” for linking “the juridical and the veridical”. To

elaborate on this concept, I will outline what I suggest are key characteristics and conditions, and likely consequences, of demopolitics.

Characteristics

There would be two main characteristics of demopolitics, the first akin to the formal procedure of critical thinking, ethics and *askesis* found in Foucault and the second an agonistic one, similar to what Foucault, drawing on Blanchot, calls ‘contestation’.

Characteristically, demopolitics would refer to a world in which there is a perpetuation of politics by political (not administrative) means. It would be one where the question of politics—What kind of society do we wish to live in and how might it be achieved and protected?—would be continually posed, becoming the “rule” or “measure of things”, thus affirming the contingency of being.

Demopolitics would consist of a formal procedure. So, as discussed in Chapter 7, this would imply a normative injunction like the one in Foucault’s conception of ethics: “Hey you! Stop (resist/refuse) and think (critically); then give yourself something else to do”. Thus the substantive content of ethics is the form of problematisation and experimentation: there is no substantive content to the command supplied in the Foucauldian exhortation to objectify one’s existence as a work of art. This is how ethics introduces a formal glitch in the modes of objectifications of subjects. The insistence of this formal procedure of “stopping and thinking” (as an *activity*) is a new form of subjectivity, a modern, critical, Enlightened form of *subjectivation*. Similarly, perpetuating the question of politics would constitute a formal glitch against the

otherwise likely ossification of a politics into rule and focusing only on policy programming according to criteria exempted from the policy-making process.

Some may object that this means that demopolitics has no content, has no positive program. This is true and not—it is true from the point of view of developing policy programs since the point of demopolitics is not to develop alternative policies but rather to engage in problematising collective fates. So, in contrast to Foucault's affinity for "an ethic of a concern for the self as a practice of freedom", we would be dealing with an "ethic of a concern for a collective fate as a practice of politics". Demopolitics thus also provides a structure for a *political ethics* in the form of a political subjectivation orienting individuals in the direction of perpetuating a concern for politics itself. This amounts to a kind of collective *askesis* that continues to work, not on an ethical substance, but on a social substance that enables and constrains the field of real possibilities. In some respects then, the result of demopolitics is the development of, and experimentation with, *different criteria* for assessing the rationales and justifications for viable and desirable policy-making.

What I wish to stress though is that it is not true that there is no "content" to demopolitics. Rather, and here we can draw on Foucault again, the content is in the concrete production conditions and practices of the actualisation of a procedure, i.e., the procedure of political problematisation proper. Furthermore, in this manner, demopolitics helps resolve the normative dimension of Foucault's expulsion of politics because it would actually constitute a mode of being—the "is"—of the "ought", to put this in conventional terms. There is then, no gap between "what is" and "what ought to be" since what "ought to be" in demopolitical terms is the perpetual interrogation of and thinking

about what is the case and what else might be made to be the case—it is the eternal return of the constitutive event of politics itself “normalised” and inscribed in a mode of being itself.

The characteristics of demopolitics thus borrows something from Žižek’s sense of ‘democratic fundamentalism’. As he writes, ‘the Jacobins imposed their terror not as the natural embodiment of revolutionary power, but as the keepers of the empty place of power [...] democracy is the institutionalization of lack, a political order which takes into account the ultimate contingency of political life’ (Žižek 2004b/2005: 186). This formal procedure of demopolitics would characterise a condition in which the void of politics, affirming the contingency of societal formations and the modes of being within them would spread. Demopolitics might then become the dominant form for problematising what happens in social institutions and the effects that the imbrication of social institutions, so programmed, might have on the social formation.

The second characteristic of demopolitics concerns an affirmation of contestation as an inherent part of the formal procedure of demopolitics. Different social institutions and their placement relative to each other structured by asymmetrical potentials, means that there are specific and plural objective interests that accompany them and these would be at play in demopolitical problematisation. As Marx and Durkheim for example argue, with a complex division of labour in a society, these differences are an irreducible consequence of the structuring of complex societies. Consequently, this generates subjects of such institutions that would inevitably be competing with subjects of other institutions and would need to confront and problematise the conflicting demands and conceptions of how a collective fate could be made. In this regard, the concept of

demopolitics retains Foucault's sensibility about the agonism structuring the field of power relations. The point though is not to conceive of a time when the "need" for agonism, disagreement and debate has had its structural causes erased, or to think of a procedure for eliminating perspectivalist distortions that are the inevitable consequence of the particular constitution and location of subjects in their varying places in a society. Rather, the point, as Durkheim and Foucault suggest, is to actually *facilitate* and proliferate a terrain of agonistic contestation as the means for problematising the extent to which a particular course of action affects a collective fate.

This conception is close to how Foucault uses Blanchot's concept of 'contestation' since it refers to the consideration of limits. As Foucault writes,

Contestation does not imply a generalized negation, but an affirmation that affirms nothing, a radical break of transitivity. Rather than being a process of thought for denying existences or values, contestation is an act that carries them to their limits and, from there, to the Limit where an ontological decision achieves its end; to contest is to proceed until one reaches the empty core where being achieves its limit and where the limit defines being. ... Thus, contestation shapes an experience that Bataille wanted to circumscribe through every detour and repetition of his work, an experience that has the power "to implicate (and to question) everything without possible respite" and to indicate, in the place where it occurs and in its most essential form, "the immediacy of being" (Foucault 1963c/2003: 447).

The 'nothing' to be affirmed in demopolitics is the void of politics cognizant of the 'radical break of transitivity' *qua* contingency of societal structures and modes of being therein. The place where this would occur is that of the anti-placing of social institutions in which demopolitical problematisation is the dominant form of thought. With these two characteristics in mind, we can now surmise something of two conditions that would

facilitate demopolitics: substantive egalitarianism and communicative networks and domains.

Conditions: Substantive Egalitarianism and the Demopolitical State

As discussed in Chapters 6 and 9, in as much as asymmetrical potentials constitute a condition in which dominant classes of subjects, forms of thought and some dominant social institutions, constitute some subjects with greater capacities for actions relative to others and who are able to strategically obtain conditions of para-security in which actions can be taken up and used in ways advantageous to dominant classes, facilitating demopolitics would require minimising the substantive bases of such asymmetries. This is why I take traditional socialist critiques of liberal democracy, the inherently anti-democratic features of the capitalist mode of production and conceptions of socialist democracy as germane to demopolitics. In this regard, the socialist arguments made by Pearce (2001), Poulantzas (1978/1980), Levine (1988), Hirst (1986), Wood (1995) and Hunt (1980) are important for demonstrating how the capitalist mode of production undermines forms of democratic engagement. They are also pertinent for stressing that the substantive egalitarianism that is the goal of socialism must be constituted by democratic means. To put matters simply, people, if they are to be able to engage in demopolitics, need both time and resources to perpetuate the battle for politics itself. In this light, there would then need to be concrete transformations and substantively egalitarian conditions if there is to be a properly *agonic* (and not simply “representative”) form of demopolitics—where would the agonism be if concerned and affected parties, for want of resources, cannot engage? In this regard, the battle for politics itself and

concretely actualising demopolitics would involve political economic battles over the concrete means for doing politics. However, in demopolitics, the battle for increasing substantively egalitarian conditions is not the goal but rather is a condition necessary for facilitating demopolitical activity. There is a significant point to be made here as far as Left arguments for revolution today are concerned. I am not suggesting that a social, economic or political revolution is, or is not needed. Indeed, this is the point with which this chapter began. Rather, I am suggesting that the pertinent task for the Left today is to engage in the battle for politics itself, i.e., to get the question of politics back in play and hence make it clear that doing politics is a “choice” that can be made and that conditions necessary for doing politics need to be constituted. That to me is the truly “Left-radical” move in today’s post-political condition.

The second condition that would assist from another direction the first, concerns the role of the state, bearing in mind the model of the decentred complexity of the state contributed by Foucault. Key then would be abandoning the notion of the state as a central and centralising nexus of administrative control since this is rather the impossible dream of the reason of state. Rather, in Durkheimian terms, following his recommendations in *Suicide* (1897/1951), ‘Preface to the Second Edition’ of *The Division of Labour in Society* (1902/1984) and *Professional Ethics and Civic Morals* (1900/1992; cf. Hirst 1994; Pearce 2001), the key function of the state in demopolitics would be to provide and facilitate the communicative networks distributing the discursive products of demopolitical problematisation and proliferate arenas of demopolitical contestation. The task of a demopolitical state would be to facilitate communication from all locales and social institutions in a social formation *and* to provide the staging ground

for the perpetuation of questions of politics, i.e., a concern with a collective fate.

Moreover, the Durkheimian point is that the task of governments, and state officials in particular, is precisely to consider how courses of action would likely affect the society as a whole. In demopolitics this would be an activity to be extended to all social institutions. Indeed as Hirst (1994) well points out with regards to democracy, in many respects the issue is less what form it takes and more about *where it happens*. I view the task of a state for demopolitics as playing a key role in creating the conditions for, and facilitating the multiplication of, sites where demopolitics happens.

At the same time however, the point is not simply to multiply the institutional sites where the programme of demopolitics can be installed as facilitated by this state form. This would rather likely exacerbate particularisms and proliferate the chatter of “special interests”. The pertinent Foucauldian point about contestation and the Durkheimian one about democracy concerns *institutionalising* political conflict as necessary to democratic governance in complex societies. For Durkheim for example, the solution to the impasses faced by the Third Republic, deadlocked as it was between utilitarian individualism, capitalism, utopian socialism, royalism and clericalism, would involve constituting intermediary institutions of democratic governance between individuals and the centralised state in the form of occupational associations. For Durkheim, this would resolve the problem of the remoteness of state officialdom from differentiated individuals. Occupational associations were an ideal form for this type of intermediary site of democratic political engagement he argues, because that is where individuals spend a large portion of their lives, obtain their economic means and are both

integrated and regulated thus constituting morally responsible individuals who have more than a concern for just their own interests.

Durkheim also recognised that a terrain of agonistic engagement between competing sectors and interests in complex, advanced industrial societies would also need to be created. That terrain for him would consist of an industrial parliament since he saw the anomie characteristic of capitalist industrial relations with the working class as a major problem. Durkheim's arguments though can be extended along the lines suggested by Hirst and Pearce, to provide some indication of likely requisite conditions for demopolitics. First, subjective formation in whatever social institution would become a basis for demopolitical problematisation thus multiplying the intermediate sites for the battle for politics itself while recognising the plural social bases of the constitution and overdetermination of subjective formation. Second, this also implies that other forms of parliaments, not only industrial ones, could be constituted so long as by "parliament" this is taken to mean a terrain where a variety of social institutions can have their respective needs and interests problematised. Crucially then, a demopolitical state should not be equated with constituting a modified and extended form of the public sphere. Rather, it would be the network and regulatory apparatus for facilitating and securing demopolitics. These two combined conditions would facilitate and provide the concrete basis of the potentials for demopolitics. Having defined the characteristics and conditions of demopolitics I now move on to consider the consequences and effects of demopolitics.

Consequences

Explicating in realist fashion the likely consequences of demopolitics suggests that there would be three quite marked transformations on three dimensions. The first would affect the contingent formation of a societal structure caused by demopolitics becoming the dominant form for problematising collective existence and its futures. The second would affect the understanding of history caused by the short-circuiting of the “politics-rule-politics-rule” series. The third and last would affect the existential ethical orientation of subjects to political action by constituting a different kind of general economy. This would mitigate against the kind of homogenising instrumentalism that Bataille, Deleuze, Guattari and Foucault (cf. Chapters 6 and 7) saw as so dangerous since paving the way for fascism and the *hubris* of reason and science based as they are on maintaining particular types of subjective formation and hence subjection to one type of future and fate. These three consequences thus operate on the societal, historical and tragic level of social existence.

Societal Effect: Underdetermination Overdetermining Social Formation

In a post-political world in which the governmental *dispositif* is the dominant instance for problematising the contingent overdetermination of existence by a societal structure, we can only dream of a time when governmentality is not dominant. What this would mean, in effect, is creating the conditions in which “politics itself”—the doing of politics—would come to be the dominant instance in a social formation, overdetermining (or subjecting; hegemonising) all other instances. In doing so, demopolitics would also provide content to the form of heterotopia: the heterotopia appropriate to a post-political

world is one in which *politics itself* overdetermines social formations. That is to say that a chief characteristic of demopolitics is that it become dominant in all institutions, spreading into the capillaries of power. Moreover, a demopolitics would affirm the anti-place of the *demos* (hence *demo-politics*) and secure the conditions for its actualisation. Hence too, would be the real ground of potential that underdetermines social formations, manifesting the aleatory threshold (or limit/*limes*) from which any politics and any rule rely for success. This suggests that a main consequence of demopolitics would mean a new kind of societal formation, one in which, somewhat paradoxically, the *underdetermination* of social formations by real potentials that are the political substance on which demopolitics works, would *overdetermine* the process of societal formation constituting a quite different kind of societal structure.

Historical Effect: Short-Circuiting the Topology of the Political Field

The second consequence of demopolitics would refer to its effect on “history”, putting an end to the hegemonist sense of historicity, of always being directed, in a developmental way, to a “new and improved” future. Demopolitics would short-circuit the “politics-rule-politics-rule” series discussed above in terms of the topological conjunctural structure of the political field (and its function $f(x) = (R2-P2)/P1$), in as much as any rule is what takes place after its constitutive formation in a politics has become effective and stabilised. This formulation cannot imply that demopolitics then makes politics itself hegemonic since there is no postulated goal toward which a social formation is being directed. Instead, what is hegemonic is securing the conditions for perpetuating the problematisation of the aleatory destination at which a social formation has already

arrived (e.g., engaging in aleatory materialist sociology). Demopolitics would be an anti-teleological form of hegemony, one in which there would not be *one* goal, but rather *aleatory destinations*. In short, the perpetuation of the battle for politics itself in demopolitics would always affirm that *a* history is being made, not only “this history”, characteristic of governmentality. And crucially, again in aleatory materialist terms, people would not know what history is being made just that what is being done today, the means used, will constitute an end at which people will arrive to be again problematised by the demopolitical procedure of posing the question of politics in an agonic arena.

This characteristic of demopolitics is meant to address the question of how an alternative organisation of the political field today might be structured in such a way as to avoid the return of post-politics. This would make it possible to consider a form of subjectivity and a mode of being that would not require that subjects go from being part of the constitutive aleatory apparatus of a politics into being mere objects and targets of rule, of being only *constituents*. Again, there are some parallels between what I am suggesting and Žižek’s conception of democracy:

Democracy is thus the name for that political form of society that makes explicit the contingency of its foundations. In democracy, political power is secured through operations of competition, persuasion and election based on the hegemonization of the ‘empty place’ (Žižek 2004b/2005: 95).

But at the same time, the novelty of a truly “democratic politics”, a form of democracy that fully acknowledges and attempts to avoid ossifying into rule, must go beyond the notion of “democratic rule” since “rule”, as I have conceptualised it, precisely means the sacralisation (or, constitutive exclusion) of the repetition of a constitutive politics. Thus, demopolitics designates how *the perpetuation of politics itself by political means* is a way

to short-circuit the passage from politics to rule by making politics itself “the rule”. In demopolitics, politics—the void—is made the dominant “constituency” in as much as politics becomes the dominant “program” for social institutions. Politics need not pass into a post-political hegemonising conjuncture so long as the battle for politics itself is perpetuated. In more conventional terms we could say that demopolitics involves a shift from “everything is political” to “make everything about politics”. Moreover, in aleatory materialist terms, the ends do not justify the means. The aleatory materialist point is that the means constitute the ends at which one will arrive: the end *depends* (is contingent upon) the means that are used. This way of short-circuiting the teleology of societal government is already a sensibility present in Foucault’s conception of ethics since the goal of ethics—its *telos*—is not one of development but of perpetuating experimentation with one’s existence.

There are two realist points to be made here as well. First, Foucault’s work shows that the dominance of various forms of problematisation do have extensive effects on societies and stabilise for long periods. These have succeeded, transformed and displaced one another. So, the diagramme of sovereignty came to be transformed and displaced by the disciplinary and governmentalist diagrammes. And, as I have argued above, this does not imply that previously dominant forms for problematising a collective fate simply disappear; rather we are dealing with the subjugation of previous problematisations and exercises of power by another. A demopolitics would be characterised not by the development and proliferation of alternative policy programs but by the subjection of programming to politics itself. This suggests that it is possible to conceive of a world in which *demopolitics* could become the dominant form for problematising collective fates

and in so doing, form an anti-rule type of hegemony. Much of what is conventionally meant by a progressive notion of “democracy” in which those most directly affected by political decisions have the greatest input, hence implying extensive participation in the political process, is thus not, in *demopolitics*, an “end in itself”, but rather is a means to an end. In this respect, conventional conceptions of “democracy” can be taken as referring to political technologies. So, in contrast to the post-political coordinates of “democracy” (i.e., limited representative parliamentary democracy) as an end in-itself facilitative of “development”, a demopolitics would reverse the terms. “Democracy” is a means to be subordinated to the end of perpetuating the battle for politics itself.

Tragic Effect: Failure and Success

Demopolitics would also have the consequence of transforming the nature of general economy from one of the general economy of domination and the excess *hubris* of experts. In this respect, we can follow and extend the tragicomic form of the eternal return of experts characteristic of the governmental *dispositif*. Demopolitics would do so by constituting the conditions for the perpetual production of tragic demopolitical subjects of demopolitical thought. This is already to some extent implied by the realist components of aleatory materialism. This is because there is always an excess of real potentials over actualities, experiences and the transitive dimension of knowledge about reality. In this regard, demopolitics is precisely about what is *excessive*, namely the excess of reality that forever eludes the finitude of subjective formation constituted by thinking about that reality. There is an excess of possibility over actuality that can never be contained or restricted since interventions change the actuality that then again calls for

new analysis and explanation. In some respects, failure, i.e., subjectivity confronting its limits, is the basis for the success of demopolitics. That “we didn’t get it right this time” means that we have to do politics again and consider “how it is we got here” in aleatory materialist terms: the destination arrived at is determined by its means of production and it is their connection, in contingent conditions, that would again require explanation.

There would be no goal to be imposed on judgments of the present actuality; rather the goal is to perpetuate the process. Put differently, there would be an excess of the social formation over its *historicity*, i.e., the dominant set of coordinates through which problematisations of existence and the future are made. Demopolitics is about the eternal return to this excess, returning by thinking about and experimenting with societal reality that enables and constrains the possibilities for different modes of being.

Conclusion: Foucault, Sociology and the Battle for Politics Itself

In this chapter I have argued for and developed a concept and model of politics. I have done so to show that it is indeed possible and realistic to develop a Foucauldian concept of politics on the aleatory materialist terrain, a politics that could be effective and hence put on the table a quite different and distinct *mode of transformation* able to affect the *object of transformation* and so potentially break the impasse of post-politics. I have done so by first resolving Foucault’s analytical expulsion of politics, postulating instead a topological model of the sacred difference between politics and rule. Next, the resolution to his practical expulsion of politics was developed by creating the concepts of the three aleatory dimensions of an effective politics consisting of: a heterotopian political imagination to be assisted by an aleatory materialist sociology; political organisation

(these first two dimensions combining as a political apparatus); and an effervescent *demos*. And finally, a plausible resolution of the normative dimension of Foucault's expulsion of politics was developed with the concept of *demopolitics*, explicated in terms of its characteristics, conditions and consequences. Thus, this chapter explored the possibility of problematising the contingency of existence and suggested that it is indeed possible to conceive of a something like a dominant *dispositif*, a demopolitics, that does not impose "rule" on a social formation but one that can perpetuate politics itself as the structuring principle in it. This would inscribe the sacred exceptionality and sovereignty of politics into the constitution of modes of being. In more colloquial terms, what I suggest is the possibility of establishing conditions that would allow people to perpetually engage in seriously grappling with matters of a shared fate, of what kind of society they wish to live in, imaginings and debates about how it might be facilitated, protected and achieved. It is time to conclude.

This dissertation confronted Foucault's expulsion of politics, highlighting in particular the consequences of a Foucauldian approach to the political field and the contingent formation of modes of being, for a sociology appropriate to post-politics. I have done so in a manner appreciative of his *Kampfplatz* and problematic. I have challenged the current Foucault-inspired dismissals of sociology as a science, antipathy for political projects (because of their alleged inherent totalitarianism) and productive linkage between sociology and politics (since deemed a variant of vanguardism). Retrieving a link between politics and sociology is, I believe, an important task today given the rather post-political contemporary climate in which what counts as "politics" is reduced to matters of the ways and means of social administration, constrained by

governmentalist rule. Foucault's work though has been shown to be a form of de-politicised critical analysis that is more a hindrance than a help when it comes to confronting the war on contingency, possibility and politics characteristic of post-politics, even if Foucault's work explicitly affirms the contingency of being. The challenge I have argued, is not to either abandon or denounce Foucault's significant contribution but to appreciate the theoretical saliency of his work, accompanied by a critical inspection of it, enabled by symptomatic readings in order to engage in the productive work of retheorising.

In the process I have developed an ontology for Foucault with the model of modes of being, one that allows for a coherent and consistent theoretical explication of his significant contribution to explaining what we are today and what our present is. I have then shown how Foucault's concepts provide a way of accounting for the aleatory causes of post-politics. With it, we have a very powerful account of "what the problem is", i.e., the object of transformation. In this regard, I have attended to the battle for politics itself that traverses Foucault's work, limiting its capacity as a critical resource for challenging the current post-political condition. My aleatory materialist sociology provided means for confronting and plausibly resolving Foucault's expulsion of politics by explicating how the terrain of his problematic—critical nominalism—logically implies the displacement of politics by ethics. The move from critical nominalism to aleatory materialism, by recuperating *fallibilism*, liberates sociology from being solely a discursive practice of the will to truth (or, more crudely, an apologetics for governmentality), into a domain of contestations over accounts of what is going on in a society, "what the problem is" and how it might viably be transformed. Politics is thus defended, in part, as the clinic of

sociology without this implying or requiring sociologists to be a “theoretical ruling class” and without sociology being reduced to the pragmatic instrument of policy programming. At the same time, moving onto the aleatory materialist terrain puts the Foucauldian diagnosis about “what the problem is” in its real place within a social formation, i.e., the governmentalisation of societies was shown to be located in a real (but contingent) structure of a social formation and the asymmetrical potentials that give it its structure and hierarchy of determinations. Thus I explicated how the governmental *dispositif* affects all other institutions more than any other when it comes to the matter of politics and a different future. I then develop means for resolving the impasses produced by Foucault’s expulsion of politics with an aleatory materialist model of politics and conception of demopolitics. I am not suggesting that mine is the only possible way of conceiving of a sociology for politics pertinent to the contemporary world and its post-political impasse or of engaging with Foucault. Rather, what I have attempted is the layout of a theoretical terrain, and explicitly develop a theoretical problematic and its protocols, together with models consistent with these protocols to show that “Foucault”, the most significant critical resource for social analysts today, can be transformed and so made more pertinent, not to the present, but *to a future*.

Sociology can make a difference today in taking the time for what can “take place”, taking time to think about the exceptional quality of politics. This dissertation has aimed above all, to take time for thinking about collective fates, their contingent actuality and aleatory futures, which means appreciating the exceptional position of politics today. In this respect, “nothing” makes me hopeful—it is precisely what isn’t actually happening, but might, that makes me optimistic as a sociologist affirming the

contingency of being. And that is where I part company with Foucault. “Nothing”—what isn’t happening—“is important”, a peculiar point perhaps of a materialist sociology for today.

Bibliography

- Afary, Janet and Anderson, Kevin B. (2005) *Foucault and the Iranian Revolution*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Agamben, Giorgio (1995/1998) *Homo Sacer*, Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Althusser, Louis (1965a/1970) 'From "*Capital*" to Marx's Philosophy', *Reading Capital*, Louis Althusser and Etienne Balibar, London: New Left Books, pp. 11- 70.
- Althusser, Louis (1965b/2005) *For Marx*, New York: Verso.
- Althusser, Louis (1965c/2005) 'The Piccolo Teatro: Bertolazzi and Brecht', *For Marx*, New York: Verso, pp. 129-152.
- Althusser, Louis (1965d/2005) 'Contradiction and Overdetermination', *For Marx*, New York: Verso, pp. 87-128.
- Althusser, Louis (1965e/1970) 'Marx's Immense Theoretical Revolution', *Reading Capital*, Louis Althusser and Etienne Balibar, London: New Left Books, pp. 182-193.
- Althusser, Louis (1968/1972) 'Marx's Relation to Hegel', *Politics and History*, London: New Left Books, pp. 163-186.
- Althusser, Louis (1969a/1971) 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatus', *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, London: New Left Books.
- Althusser, Louis (1972/1976) 'Reply to John Lewis', *Essays in Self-Criticism*, London: New Left Books, pp. 35-77.
- Althusser, Louis (1974/1976) 'Elements of Self Criticism', *Essays in Self Criticism*, London: New Left Books, pp. 105-150.

- Althusser, Louis (1975/1990) 'Is it Simple to be a Marxist in philosophy?' *Philosophy and the Spontaneous Philosophy of the Scientists*, London: Verso, pp. 203-240.
- Althusser, Louis (1978/2006) 'Marx in his limits', *Philosophy of the Encounter*, New York: Verso, pp. 7-163.
- Althusser, Louis (1978b) 'The Crisis of Marxism', *Marxism Today*, July, 215-220.
- Althusser, Louis (1982/2006) 'The Underground Current of the Materialism of the Encounter', *Philosophy of the Encounter*, (eds.) Francois Matheron and Oliver Corpet, New York: Verso, pp. 163-207.
- Althusser, Louis (1986/2006) 'Portrait of the Materialist Philosopher', *Philosophy of the Encounter*, (eds.) Francois Matheron and Oliver Corpet, New York: Verso, pp. 290-291.
- Althusser, Louis (1993/2006) 'Philosophy and Marxism', *Philosophy of the Encounter*, (eds.) Francois Matheron and Oliver Corpet, New York: Verso, pp. 251-289
- Althusser, Louis (1994a/2006) 'Correspondence about "Philosophy and Marxism"', *Philosophy of the Encounter*, (eds.) Francois Matheron and Oliver Corpet, New York: Verso, pp. 208-250.
- Althusser, Louis (1994) *Ecrits philosophique et politique Tome I*, Paris: Stock/IMEC
- Althusser, Louis (1999) *Machiavelli and Us*, New York: Routledge.
- Althusser, Louis (2006) *Philosophy of the Encounter*, (eds.) Francois Matheron and Oliver Corpet, New York: Verso.
- Althusser, Louis and Balibar, Etienne (1965/1970) *Reading Capital*, London: New Left Books.
- Anderson, Benedict (1983) *Imagined Communities*, London, Verso.

- Anderson, Perry (1983) *In the Tracks of Historical Materialism*, London: Verso.
- Archer, Margaret *et al* (eds.) (1998) *Critical Realism: Essential Readings*, New York: Routledge.
- Aronowitz, Stanley (1987) 'Theory and Socialist Strategy', *Social Text*, Volume 16, Winter, 1986/87, pp. 1-16.
- Aronowitz, Stanley and Bratsis, Peter (eds.) (2002) *Paradigm Lost: State Theory Reconsidered*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Badiou, Alain (1993/2001) *Ethics*, London: Verso.
- Badiou, Alain (1997/2003) *St. Paul: The Foundation of Universalism*, Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Badiou, Alain (1998/2005) *Metapolitics*, New York: Verso.
- Badiou, Alain (1988/2007) *Being and Event*, New York: Continuum Books.
- Balibar, Etienne (1989/1992) 'Foucault and Marx: The Question of Nominalism' *Michel Foucault: Philosopher*, (ed.) Timothy Armstrong, New York: Routledge, pp. 38-57.
- Barry, Andrew *et al* (eds.) (1996) *Foucault and Political Reason*, London: UCL Press.
- Bataille, Georges (1933/1994) 'The Psychological Structure of Fascism', *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings 1927-1939*, (ed.) Allan Stoekl, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, pp. 137-160.
- Bataille, Georges (1936/1994) 'The Popular Front in the Street', *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings 1927-1939*, (ed.) Allan Stoekl, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, pp. 161-168.
- Bataille, Georges (1943/1988) *Inner Experience*, New York: SUNY Press.

- Bataille, Georges (1967/1995) *The Accursed Share, Vol. 1*, New York: Zone Books.
- Bataille, Georges (1973/1989), *Theory of Religion*, New York: Zone Books.
- Bataille, Georges *et al* (1988) *The College of Sociology*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Bataille, Georges (1994) *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings 1927-1939*, (ed.) Allan Stoekl, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Baudrillard, Jean (1977/1987) *Forget Foucault*, New York: Semiotext(e).
- Baudrillard, Jean (1979/1990) *Seduction*, Montreal: New World Perspectives.
- Baudrillard, Jean (1983) *In The Shadow of Silent Majorities*, New York: Semiotext(e).
- Beaulieu, Alain (2006) 'The Hybrid Character of "Control" in the Work of Michel Foucault', *Michel Foucault and Power Today*, (eds.) Alain Beaulieu and David Gabbard, Lanham: Lexington, pp. 23-34.
- Beaulieu, Alain and Gabbard, David (eds.) (2006) *Michel Foucault and Power Today*, Lanham: Lexington.
- Beirne, Piers and Hunt, Alan (1988) 'Law and the Constitution of Soviet Society: The Case of Comrade Lenin', *Law and Society Review*, Vol. 22, Number 2, pp. 575-614.
- Benton, Ted (1977) *Philosophical Foundations of the Three Sociologies*, London: Routledge.
- Benveniste, Emile (1969/1973) *Indo-European Language and Society*, London: Faber and Faber Limited.

Best, Steven and Kellner, Douglas (2005) 'Postmodern Politics and the Battle for the Future', www.gseis.ucla.edu/faculty/kellner/Illumina%Folder/kell28.htm, accessed August 15, 2005.

Bhaskar, Roy (1975) *A Realist Theory of Science*, Brighton: Harvester Press.

Bhaskar, Roy (1975b/1998) 'Philosophy and Scientific Realism', *Critical Realism: Essential Readings*, Margaret Archer *et al* (eds.), New York: Routledge, pp. 16-47.

Bhaskar, Roy (1979) *The Possibility of Naturalism*, Brighton: Harvester Press

Bhaskar, Roy (1989a) *Reclaiming Reality*, New York: Verso.

Bhaskar, Roy (1989b/1998) 'Societies', in *Critical Realism: Essential Realism*, (ed.) Margaret Archer *et al*, New York: Routledge, pp. 209-257.

Bhaskar, Roy (1998) 'General Introduction', *Critical Realism: Essential Readings* (eds. Margaret Archer *et al*, New York: Routledge, pp. ix-xxiv.

Blanchot, Maurice (1986/1987) 'Michel Foucault as I Imagine Him', *Foucault/Blanchot*, New York: Zone Books.

Bloch, Maurice (1992) *Prey into Hunter*, Oxford: Blackwell Press.

Bouchard, Donald F. (1977/1980) 'Introduction', *language, counter-memory, practice*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Boggs, Carl (2000) *The End of Politics: Corporate Power and the Decline of the Public Sphere*, New York: The Guildford Press.

Boyne, Roy (1990) *Foucault and Derrida: The Other Side of Reason*, Boston: Unwin Hyman.

- Bratich, Jack Z. *et al* (eds.) (2003) *Foucault, Cultural Studies and Governmentality*, Albany: SUNY Press.
- Brenner, Neil (1994) "Foucault's New Functionalism" *Theory and Society*, 23, pp. 679-709.
- Breton, Andre (1924) 'First Surrealist Manifesto', *Surrealism*, (ed.) Patrick Waldberg, London: Thames and Hudson, pp. 66-75.
- Broadbent, Ed (2006) 'Mr. Rae and the Grits deserve each other', *The Globe and Mail*, Thursday, April 27, 2006, Toronto, p. A19.
- Brown, Wendy (2002) 'Moralism as Antipolitics', *Materializing Democracy*, (eds.) Russ Castronovo and Dana D. Nelson, Durham: Duke University Press.
- Butler, Judith (1997) *The Psychic Life of Power*, Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Callari, Antonio and Ruccio, David F. (1996) 'Introduction', *Postmodern Materialism and the Future of Marxist Theory*, eds. Callari, Antonio and Ruccio, David F., Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, pp. 1-48.
- Callari, Antonio and Ruccio, David F. Ruccio (eds.) (1998) *Rethinking Marxism: Special Issue: Rereading Althusser*, Volume 10, Number 3.
- Callinicos, Alex (2001) *Against the Third Way*, Cambridge: Polity.
- Caillois, Roger (1949/1959) *Man and the Sacred*, Glencoe: The Free Press.
- Canel, Eduardo (1992) 'New Social Movement Theory and Resource Mobilization: The Need for Integration', *Organizing Dissent*, William Carroll (ed.) Toronto: Garamond, pp. 22-51.
- Canguilhem, Georges (1966/1991) *The Normal and the Pathological*, New York: Zone Books.

- Canguilhem, Georges (1994) 'The death of man, or exhaustion of the cogito?', *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault* (ed). Gary Gutting, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Carden, Maren Lock-Wood (1974) *The New Feminist Movement*, New York: Sage.
- Carrette, Jeremy R. (2000) *Foucault and Religion*, New York: Routledge.
- Childers Mary and hooks, bell (1990) 'A Conversation about Race and Class', *Controversies in Feminism*, (ed.) James P. Sterba, Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, pp. 60-81.
- Christofferson, Michael Scott (2004) *French Intellectuals Against the Left: The Antitotalitarian Movement of the 1970s*, New York: Berghahn Books.
- Clifford, Michael (2001) *Political Genealogy After Foucault: Savage Identities*, New York: Routledge.
- Collier, Andrew (1998) 'Stratified Explanation', *Critical Realism: Essential Readings*, Margaret Archer *et al* (eds.), New York: Routledge, pp. 258-281.
- Cousins, Mark and Hussain, Athar (1984) *Michel Foucault*, New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Craib, Ian (1984) *Modern Social Theory: From Parsons to Habermas*, New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Curtis, Bruce (1995) 'Taking the state back out: Rose and Miller on political power', *British Journal of Sociology*, 46(4), 574-589.
- Curtis, Bruce (2001/2002) *The Politics of Population*, Toronto: The University of Toronto Press.

- Datta, Ronjon Paul (2005) 'From the Sacred to Radicalism', *Critical Sociology*, Volume 31, Issue 4, pp. 617-637.
- Datta, Ronjon Paul (2007) 'From Foucault's Genealogy to Aleatory Materialism: Realism, Nominalism and Politics', *Critical Realism and the Social Sciences*, Jon Frauley and Frank Pearce, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, pp. 273-295.
- Datta, Ronjon Paul (2008) 'Politics and Existence: Totems, Dispositifs and Some Striking Parallels Between Durkheim and Foucault', *Journal of Classical Sociology*, pp. 283-305.
- Deacon, Roger (2002) 'An analytics of power relations: Foucault on the history of discipline', *History of the Human Sciences*, Vol. 15 No. 1, pp. 89-117.
- Dean, Mitchell (1999) *Governmentality: Power and Rule in Modern Societies*, London: Sage.
- Deleuze, Gilles (1962/1983) *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, New York: Columbia University Press.
- Deleuze, Gilles (1969/1990) *The Logic of Sense*, New York: Columbia University Press.
- Deleuze, Gilles (1970/1980) *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, San Francisco: City Lights Books.
- Deleuze, Gilles (1986/1988) *Foucault*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Deleuze, Gilles (1986b/1995) 'Life as a Work of Art', *Negotiations: 1972-1990*, New York: Columbia University Press, pp. 94-101.
- Deleuze, Gilles (1989/1992), 'What is a Dispositif?', in *Michel Foucault: Philosopher*, ed. Francois Ewald, New York: Routledge, pp. 159-167.

Deleuze, Gilles (1990a/1995) *Negotiations: 1972-1990*, New York: Columbia University Press.

Deleuze, Gilles (1990b/1995) 'Postscript on Control Societies', *Negotiations, 1972-1990*, New York: Columbia University Press, pp. 177-182.

Deleuze, Gilles and Guattari, Felix (1972/1994) *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia Volume I*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Deleuze, Gilles and Guattari, Felix (1987/1993) *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia Volume II*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Dews, Peter (1979/1986) 'The *Nouvelle Philosophie* and Foucault', *Towards a Critique of Foucault*, (ed.) Mike Gane, London: Routledge, pp. 61-105.

Dews, Peter (1987) *Logics of Disintegration: post-structuralist thought and the claims of critical theory*, London: Verso.

Di Corcia, Joseph (1978) 'Bourg, Bourgeois, Bourgeoisie', *Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 50, no. 2, pp. 207-233.

Dinerstein, Ana (2002) 'The Battle of Buenos Aires: Crisis, Insurrection and the Reinvention of Politics in Argentina', *Historical Materialism*, volume 10: 4, pp. 5-38.

Donnelly, Michael (1982/1994) 'Foucault's Genealogy of the Human Sciences', *Michel Foucault: Critical Assessments, Volume II*, Barry Smart (ed.), London: Routledge.

Donzelot, Jacques (1979) *The Policing of Families*, New York: Pantheon Books.

Donzelot, Jacques (1991) 'The mobilization of society', *The Foucault Effect*, (eds.) Burchell, G., et al, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 169-179.

Douglas, Mary (1966/2002) *Purity and Danger*, New York: Routledge.

- Dreyfus, Hubert L. and Rabinow, Paul (1982/1983) *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Duggan, Lisa (2003) *The Twilight of Equality?*, Boston: Beacon Press.
- Durkheim, Emile (1892a/1997) *Montesquieu: Quid Secundatus Politicae Scientiae Instituendae Contulerit*, Oxford: The Durkheim Press.
- Durkheim, Emile (1892b/1984) *The Division of Labour in Society*, New York: The Free Press.
- Durkheim, Emile (1895/1982) *The Rules of Sociological Method*, New York: The Free Press.
- Durkheim, Emile (1897/1951) *Suicide*, New York: The Free Press.
- Durkheim, Emile (c.1900/1992), *Professional Ethics and Civic Morals*, New York: Routledge.
- Durkheim, Emile (1901/1982) 'Preface to the Second Edition', *The Rules of Sociological Method*, (ed.) Steven Lukes, New York: The Free Press, pp. 34-47.
- Durkheim, Emile (1902/1984) 'Preface to the Second Edition: Some Remarks on Professional Groups' *The Division of Labour in Society*, New York: The Free Press, pp. xxxi-lix.
- Durkheim, Emile (1912/1995) *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, New York: The Free Press.
- Durkheim, Emile (1914/1973) 'The Dualism of Human Nature and its Social Conditions', *Emile Durkheim: On Morality and Society*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

- Durkheim, Emile (1917/1982) 'Society', *The Rules of Sociological Method*, (ed.) Steven Lukes, New York: The Free Press, pp. 248.
- Durkheim, Emile (1953/1960) *Montesquieu and Rousseau*, Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.
- Durkheim, Emile (1958/1962), *Socialism*, New York: Collier Books.
- Eagleton, Terry (2005) *Holy Terror*, London: Oxford.
- Eisenstein, H. (1983) 'Consciousness-Raising: The Personal as Political', *Contemporary Feminist Thought*, Boston: G. K. Hall.
- Eldon, Stuart (2006) 'Discipline, health and madness: Foucault's *Le pouvoir psychiatrique*', *The History of the Human Sciences*, Vol. 19, No. 1, pp. 39-66.
- Eliade, Mircea (1954/1991) *The Myth of Eternal Return*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Elliot, Gregory (1998) "The Necessity of Contingency: Some Notes" *Rethinking Marxism* Volume 10, Number 3, pp. 74-79.
- Eribon, Didier (1989/1991) *Michel Foucault*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Evans, Brendan (2002) 'The Third Way', *Contemporary Political Concepts*, (eds.) Georgina Blakeley and Valerie Bryson, London: Pluto Press, pp.145-161.
- Evans, Peter, *et al* (eds.) (1985) *Bringing the state back in*, New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Ewald, Francois (1990) 'Norms, Discipline and the Law', *Representations* 30, pp. 138-161.
- Ewald, Francois (ed.) (1992) *Michel Foucault, Philosopher*, New York: Routledge.

- Feltes, Norman (2001) 'The New Prince in a New Principality: OCAP and the Toronto Poor', *Labour/Le Travail*, Issue 48.
- Firestone, Shulamith (1970) *The Dialectic of Sex*, New York: William Morrow and Co.
- Foucault, Michel (1954/1984) 'Dream, Imagination and Existence', *Review of Existential Psychiatry*, Vol. XIX (1), pp. 31-78.
- Foucault, Michel (1961/2006) *History of Madness*, London: Routledge.
- Foucault, Michel (1961b/1996) 'Madness Only Exists in Society', *Foucault Live*, Sylvere Lotringer (ed.), New York: Semiotext(e), pp. 7-9.
- Foucault, Michel (1963/1973) *The Birth of the Clinic*, New York: Vintage Books.
- Foucault, Michel (1963b/1986) *Death and the Labyrinth: the world of Raymond Roussel*, New York: Double Day.
- Foucault, Michel (1963c/2003) 'A Preface to Transgression', *The Essential Foucault*, Paul Rabinow and Nikolas Rose (eds.), New York: The New Press, pp. 442-457.
- Foucault, Michel (1964/1988) *Madness and Civilization*, New York: Vintage Books.
- Foucault, Michel (1966/1994) *The Order of Things*, New York: Vintage Books.
- Foucault, Michel (1966b/1996) 'Andre Breton: A Literature of Knowledge', *Foucault Live*, Sylvere Lotringer (ed.), New York: Semiotext(e), pp. 10-12.
- Foucault, Michel (1967/1998) 'Different Spaces', *Michel Foucault: Aesthetics, Method and Epistemology*, James D. Faubion (ed.), New York: The New Press, pp. 175-186.
- Foucault, Michel (1967b/1998) 'Nietzsche, Freud, Marx', *Michel Foucault: Aesthetics, Method and Epistemology*, James D. Faubion (ed.), New York: The New Press, pp. 269-278.

- Foucault, Michel (1967c/1999) 'Who are you, Professor Foucault?', *Religion and Culture: Michel Foucault*, Jeremy R. Carrette (ed.), New York: Routledge, pp. 87-103.
- Foucault, Michel (1968a/1991) 'Politics and the Study of Discourse', *The Foucault Effect*, Graham Burchell *et al* (eds.) Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 53-72.
- Foucault, Michel (1968b/2003) 'On the Archaeology of the Sciences: Response to the Epistemological Circle', *The Essential Foucault*, Paul Rabinow and Nikolas Rose (eds.), New York: The New Press, pp. 392-422.
- Foucault, Michel (1968c/1998) 'This is not a Pipe', *Michel Foucault: Aesthetics, Method and Epistemology*, James D. Faubion (ed.), New York: The New Press, pp. 187-203.
- Foucault, Michel (1969a/1972) *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, New York: Pantheon.
- Foucault, Michel (1969b/2003) 'What is an Author?', *The Essential Foucault*, Paul Rabinow and Nikolas Rose (eds.), New York: The New Press, pp. 377-391.
- Foucault, Michel (1969c/1996) 'Foucault Responds to Sartre', *Foucault Live*, Sylvere Lotringer (ed.), New York: Semiotext(e), pp. 51-56.
- Foucault, Michel (1970a/1972) 'The Discourse on Language', *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, New York: Pantheon, pp. 215-237.
- Foucault, Michel (1970b/2003) 'Madness and Society', *The Essential Foucault*, Paul Rabinow and Nikolas Rose (eds.), New York: The New Press, pp. 370-376.
- Foucault, Michel (ed.) (1970c) 'Presentation', *Georges Bataille, Oeuvres Completes* Volume I, Paris: Gallimard.

- Foucault, Michel (1971a/1980) 'Revolutionary Action: "Until Now"', *Language, counter-memory, practice*, Donald F. Bouchard (ed.), Cornell: Cornell University Press, pp. 218-233.
- Foucault, Michel (1971b/2003) 'Nietzsche, Genealogy, History', *The Essential Foucault*, Paul Rabinow and Nikolas Rose (eds.), New York: The New Press, pp. 351-369.
- Foucault, Michel (1971c/1997) 'The Will to Knowledge', *Ethics, Subjectivity and Truth*, Paul Rabinow (ed.), New York: The New Press, pp. 11-16.
- Foucault, Michel (1971d/1996) 'Rituals of Exclusion', *Foucault Live*, Sylvere Lotringer (ed.), New York: Semiotext(e), pp. 68-73.
- Foucault, Michel (1972a/1996) 'Intellectuals and Power', *Foucault Live*, Sylvere Lotringer (ed.), New York: Semiotext(e), pp. 74-82.
- Foucault, Michel (1972b/1996) 'Confining Societies', *Foucault Live*, Sylvere Lotringer (ed.), New York: Semiotext(e).
- Foucault, Michel (1972c/2000) 'Preface to *Anti-Oedipus*', *Power*, James D. Faubion (ed.), New York: The New Press, pp. 106-110.
- Foucault, Michel (1972d/1997) 'Penal Theories and Institutions', *Ethics, Subjectivity and Truth*, Paul Rabinow (ed.), New York: The New Press, pp. 17-21.
- Foucault, Michel (1972e/2006) 'Madness, the absence of an oeuvre', *The History of Madness*, Jean Khalifa (ed.), London: Routledge, pp. 541-549.
- Foucault, Michel (1972f/1980) 'On Popular Justice: A Discussion with Maoists', *Power/Knowledge*, Colin Gordon (ed.), New York: Pantheon, pp. 1-36.
- Foucault, Michel (1973a/1982) *I, Pierre Riviere...* Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

- Foucault, Michel (1973b/1996) 'Equipments of Power', *Foucault Live*, Sylvere Lotringer (ed.), New York: Semiotext(e), pp. 105-112.
- Foucault, Michel (1973c/2000) 'Truth and Juridical Forms', *Power*, James D. Faubion (ed.), New York: The New Press, pp. 1-89.
- Foucault, Michel (1974a/2003) 'The Birth of Social Medicine', *The Essential Foucault*, Paul Rabinow and Nikolas Rose (eds.), New York: The New Press, pp. 300-318.
- Foucault, Michel (1974b/2006) 'Course Summary', *Psychiatric Power*, New York: Palgrave macmillan, pp. 335-347.
- Foucault, Michel (1974c/1996) 'On Attica', *Foucault Live*, Sylvere Lotringer (ed.), New York: Semiotext(e), pp. 113-121.
- Foucault, Michel (1975/1979) *Discipline and Punish*, New York: Vintage Books.
- Foucault, Michel (1975b/1980) 'Body/Power', *Power/Knowledge*, Colin Gordon (ed.), New York: Pantheon Books, pp. 55-62.
- Foucault, Michel (1975c/1996) 'On Literature', *Foucault Live*, Sylvere Lotringer (ed.), New York: Semiotext(e), pp. 150-153.
- Foucault, Michel (1975d/1996) 'Schizo-Culture: On Prisons and Psychiatry', *Foucault Live*, Sylvere Lotringer (ed.), New York: Semiotext(e), pp. 168-180.
- Foucault, Michel (1975e/1996) 'Film and Popular Memory', *Foucault Live*, Sylvere Lotringer, (ed.), New York: Semiotext(e), pp. 122-132.
- Foucault, Michel (1976a/1994) *The History of Sexuality*, New York: Vintage Books.
- Foucault, Michel (1976b/) 'Sade: Sargeant of Sex', *Aesthetics, Method and Epistemology*, James D. Faubion (ed.), New York: The New Press, pp. 223-228 .

- Foucault, Michel (1976c/1996) 'Paul's Story', *Foucault Live*, Sylvere Lotringer (ed.), New York: Semiotext(e), pp. 181-185
- Foucault, Michel (1976d/1996) 'The Politics of Soviet Crime', *Foucault Live*, Sylvere Lotringer (ed.), New York: Semiotext(e), pp. 190-195.
- Foucault, Michel (1977a/2003) 'Lives of Infamous Men', *The Essential Foucault*, Paul Rabinow and Nikolas Rose (eds.), New York: The New Press, pp. 279-293.
- Foucault, Michel (1977b/1980) 'The Confession of the Flesh', *Power/Knowledge*, Colin Gordon (ed.), New York: Pantheon Books, pp. 194-228.
- Foucault, Michel (1977c/1988) 'Confinement, Prison, Psychiatry', *Michel Foucault: Politics, Philosophy Culture*, Lawrence C. Kritzman (ed.), New York: Routledge, pp. 178-210.
- Foucault, Michel (1977d/2003) 'Truth and Power', *The Essential Foucault*, Paul Rabinow and Nikolas Rose (eds.), New York: The New Press, pp. 300-318.
- Foucault, Michel (1977e/1980) 'The History of Sexuality', *Power/Knowledge*, Colin Gordon (ed.), New York: Pantheon Books, pp. 183-193.
- Foucault, Michel (1977f/1980) 'Power and Strategies', *Power/Knowledge* Colin Gordon (ed.), New York: Pantheon Books, pp. 134-145.
- Foucault, Michel (1977g/1988) 'Power and Sex', *Politics, Philosophy, Culture*, Lawrence D. Kritzman (ed.), New York: Routledge, pp. 110-124.
- Foucault, Michel (1977h/1980) *language, counter-memory, practice*, Donald F. Bouchard (ed.), Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Foucault, Michel (1977i/1980) 'The Eye of Power', *Power/Knowledge*, Colin Gordon (ed.), New York: Pantheon Books, pp. 146-165).

- Foucault, Michel (1977j/1996) 'The End of the Monarchy of Sex', *Foucault Live*, Sylvere Lotringer (ed.), New York: Semiotext(e), pp. 214-225.
- Foucault, Michel (1977k/1980) 'Revolutionary Action: "Until Now"', *language, counter-memory, practice*, Donald F. Bouchard (ed.), Ithaca: Cornell University Press, pp. 218-234.
- Foucault, Michel (1977l/1994) 'Die Folter, das ist die Vernunft', *Dits et Ecrits, Volume III*, Daniel Defert and Francois Ewald (eds.), Paris: Gallimard, pp. 390-398.
- Foucault, Michel (1978a/2003) 'Governmentality', *The Essential Foucault*, Paul Rabinow and Nikolas Rose (eds.) New York: The New Press, pp. 229-245.
- Foucault, Michel (1978b/1996) 'Clarifications on the Question of Power', *Foucault Live* Sylvere Lotringer (ed.), New York: Semiotext(e), pp. 255-263.
- Foucault, Michel (1978c/2003) 'Security, Territory, Population', *The Essential Foucault*, Paul Rabinow and Nikolas Rose (eds.), New York: The New Press, pp. 259-262.
- Foucault, Michel (1978d/2003) 'Truth and Power', *The Essential Foucault*, Paul Rabinow and Nikolas Rose (eds.), New York: The New Press, pp. 300-318
- Foucault, Michel (1978e/2005) 'The Mythic Leader of the Iranian Revolution', *Foucault and the Iranian Revolution*, Janet Afrey and Kevin B. Anderson (eds.), Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 220-223.
- Foucault, Michel (1979a/2003) 'Omnes et Singulatim: Toward a Critique of Political Reason', *The Essential Foucault*, Paul Rabinow and Nikolas Rose (eds.), New York: The New Press, pp. 180-201.

- Foucault, Michel (1979b/2005) 'Iran: The Spirit of a World Without Spirit', *Foucault and the Iranian Revolution*, Janet Afrey and Kevin B. Anderson (eds.), Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 250-260.
- Foucault, Michel (1979c) 'The Catch-all Strategy', *International Journal of the Sociology of Law*, 16, pp.159-162.
- Foucault, Michel (1979d/2003) 'The Birth of Biopolitics', *The Essential Foucault*, Paul Rabinow and Nikolas Rose (eds.), New York: The New Press, pp. 202-207.
- Foucault, Michel (1979e/2000) 'Useless to Revolt?', *Power*, James D. Faubion (ed.), New York: The New Press, pp. 449-453.
- Foucault, Michel (1980a/2003) 'Questions of Method', *The Essential Foucault*, Paul Rabinow and Nikolas Rose (eds.), New York: The New Press, pp. 246-258.
- Foucault, Michel (1980b/2000) 'Interview with Michel Foucault', *Power*, James D. Faubion (ed.), New York: The Free Press, pp. 239-297.
- Foucault, Michel (1980c/1996) 'Truth is in the Future', *Foucault Live*, Sylvere Lotringer (ed.), New York: Semiotext(e), pp. 298-301.
- Foucault, Michel (1980d/1998) 'Pierre Boulez: Passing Through the Screen', *Aesthetics, Method and Epistemology*, James D. Faubion (ed.), New York: The New Press, pp. 241-244.
- Foucault, Michel (1980e/2003) 'The Masked Philosopher', *The Essential Foucault*, Paul Rabinow and Nikolas Rose (eds.), New York: The New Press, pp. 174-179.
- Foucault, Michel (1981/2003) 'So is it important to think?', *The Essential Foucault*, Paul Rabinow and Nikolas Rose (eds.), New York: The New Press, pp. 170-173.

- Foucault, Michel (1981b/1996) 'Friendship as a Way of Life', *Foucault Live*, Sylvere Lotringer (ed.), New York: Semiotext(e), pp. 308-312.
- Foucault, Michel (1982a/2003) 'The Subject and Power', *The Essential Foucault*, Paul Rabinow and Nikolas Rose (eds.), New York: The New Press, pp. 126-144.
- Foucault, Michel (1982b/1996) 'Sexual Choice, Sexual Act', *Foucault Live*, Sylvere Lotringer (ed.), New York: Semiotext(e).
- Foucault, Michel (1982c/2000) 'The Political Technology of Individuals', *Power*, James Faubion (ed.), New York: The Free Press, pp. 403-417.
- Foucault, Michel (1982d/2000) 'The Moral and Social Experience of the Poles Can No Longer Be Obliterated', *Power*, James D. Faubion (ed.), New York: The Free Press, pp. 465-473.
- Foucault, Michel (1982e/2003) 'Technologies of the Self', *The Essential Foucault*, Paul Rabinow and Nikolas Rose (eds.), New York: The New Press, pp. 145-169.
- Foucault, Michel (1982f/2000) 'Space, Knowledge, and Power' *Power, Power*, James D. Faubion (ed.), New York: The New Press, pp. 349-364.
- Foucault, Michel (1982g/1996) 'Passion According to Werner Schroeter', *Foucault Live*, Sylvere Lotringer (ed.), New York: Semiotext(e), pp. 313-321.
- Foucault, Michel (1982h/1996) 'History and Homosexuality', *Foucault Live*, Sylvere Lotringer (ed.), New York: Semiotext(e), pp. 363-370.
- Foucault, Michel (1982i/1997) 'An Interview by Stephen Riggins', *Ethics, Subjectivity and Truth*, Paul Rabinow (ed.), New York: The New Press, pp. 121-133.

- Foucault, Michel (1983a/2003) 'On the Genealogy of Ethics: An Overview of Work in Progress', *The Essential Foucault*, Paul Rabinow and Nikolas Rose (eds.), New York: The New Press, pp. 102-125.
- Foucault, Michel (1983b/1984) 'Politics and Ethics: An Interview', *The Foucault Reader* Paul Rabinow (ed.), New York: Pantheon Books, pp. 373-380.
- Foucault, Michel (1983c/1996) "What Our Present Is" *Foucault Live* Sylvère Lotringer (ed.), New York: Semiotext(e), pp. 407-415.
- Foucault, Michel (1983d/2000) 'What is Called "Punishing"?' *Power*, James D. Faubion (ed.), New York: The New Press, pp. 382-393
- Foucault, Michel (1983e/2003) 'The Risks of Security', *The Essential Foucault*, Paul Rabinow and Nikolas Rose (eds.), New York: The New Press, pp. 66-79.
- Foucault, Michel (1983f/1996) 'How much does it cost for reason to tell the truth', *Foucault Live*, Sylvère Lotringer (ed.), New York: Semiotext(e), pp. 348-362.
- Foucault, Michel (1983g/2003) 'Structuralism and Poststructuralism', *The Essential Foucault*, Paul Rabinow and Nikolas Rose (eds.), New York: The New Press, pp. 80-101.
- Foucault, Michel (1983h/1996) 'Problematics', *Foucault Live*, Sylvère Lotringer (ed.), New York: Semiotext(e), pp. 416-422.
- Foucault, Michel (1984a/2003) 'The Ethics of the Concern for the Self as a Practice of Freedom', *The Essential Foucault*, Paul Rabinow and Nikolas Rose (eds.), New York: The New Press, pp. 25-42.
- Foucault, Michel (1984b/1996) 'An Aesthetics of Existence', *Foucault Live*, Sylvère Lotringer (ed.). New York: Semiotext(e), pp. 450-454.

Foucault, Michel (1984c/2003) 'Preface to *The History of Sexuality*, Volume Two', *The Essential Foucault*, Paul Rabinow and Nikolas Rose (eds.), New York: The New Press, pp. 58-63.

Foucault, Michel (1984d/2003) 'What is Enlightenment?', *The Essential Foucault*, Paul Rabinow and Nikolas Rose (eds.), New York: The New Press, pp. 43-57.

Foucault, Michel (1984e/2003) 'Polemics, Politics and Problematizations', *The Essential Foucault*, Paul Rabinow and Nikolas Rose (eds.), New York: The New Press, pp. 18-24.

Foucault, Michel (1984f/1986) *The Use of Pleasure*, New York: Vintage Books.

Foucault, Michel (1984g/1988) *The Care of the Self*, New York: Vintage Books.

Foucault, Michel (1984h/2003) 'Michel Foucault', *The Essential Foucault*, Paul Rabinow and Nikolas Rose (eds.), New York: The New Press, pp. 1-5.

Foucault, Michel (1984i/1996) 'The Concern for the Truth', *Foucault Live*, Sylvere Lotringer (ed.), New York: Semiotext(e), pp. 455-464.

Foucault, Michel (1984j/1996) 'Sex, Power and the Politics of Identity', *Foucault Live*, (ed.) Sylvere Lotringer, New York: Semiotext(e), pp. 382-390.

Foucault, Michel (1984k/1996) 'The Return of Morality', *Foucault Live*, (ed.) Sylvere Lotringer, New York: Semiotext(e), pp. 465-473.

Foucault, Michel (1985/2003) 'Life: Experience and Science', *The Essential Foucault*, (eds.) Paul Rabinow and Nikolas Rose, New York: The New Press, pp. 6-17.

Foucault, Michel (1985b/1996) 'Archaeology of a Passion', *Foucault Live*, (ed.) Sylvere Lotringer, New York: Semiotext(e), pp. 397-406.

- Foucault, Michel (1997a/2003) 'What is Critique?', *The Essential Foucault*, Paul Rabinow and Nikolas Rose (eds.), New York: The New Press, pp. 263-278.
- Foucault, Michel (1997b/2003) "*Society Must Be Defended*": *Lectures at the College de France 1975-76*, New York: Picador.
- Foucault, Michel (1999/2003) *Abnormal: Lectures at the College de France 1974-1975*, New York: Picador.
- Foucault, Michel (2001/2005) *The Hermeneutics of the Subject: Lectures at the College de France 1981-1982*, New York: Picador.
- Foucault, Michel (2003b) 'Foucault', *The Essential Foucault*, Paul Rabinow and Nikolas Rose (eds.), New York: The New Press, pp. 1-5.
- Foucault, Michel (2003c/2006) *Psychiatric Power: Lectures at the College de France 1973-74*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Foucault, Michel (2004/2006) *Security, Territory, Population*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Fraser, Nancy (1989) *Unruly Practices*, Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press.
- Frauley, Jon and Pearce, Frank (2007) 'Critical Realism and the Social Sciences: Methodological and Epistemological Preliminaries', *Critical Realism and the Social Sciences: Heterodox Elaborations*, Jon Frauley and Frank Pearce (eds.), Toronto: University of Toronto Press, pp. 3-29.
- Freud, Sigmund (1914/1938) 'Totem and Taboo', *The Basic Writings of Sigmund Freud*, Ed.) A.A Brill, New York: The Modern Library, pp 807-930.
- Freud, Sigmund (1939/1955) *Moses and Monotheism*, New York: Vintage Books.

- Gane, Mike (1983) 'Durkheim: The Sacred Language', *Economy and Society*, 12 (1), pp. 1-47.
- Gane, Mike (1986) 'The Form of Foucault', *Economy and Society*, Volume 15 Number I, pp. 110-122.
- Gane, Mike (ed.) (1986b) *Towards a Critique of Foucault*, New York: Routledge.
- Garland, David (1997) 'Governmentality and the problem of crime', *Theoretical Criminology*, Volume 1, No. 2, May, pp. 173-214.
- Gerber, Theodore P. and Horst, Michael (1998) 'More Shock than Therapy' Market Transition, Employment, and Income in Russia, 1991-1995', *American Journal of Sociology*, 104, No. 1, July, pp. 1-50.
- Gerlach, Neil (2004) *The Genetic Imaginary: DNA in the Canadian Criminal Justice System*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Globe and Mail, The* (eds.) (2006) 'Editorial', April 12, 2005, p. A14).
- Goodwin, Jeff (2001) *No Other Way Out*, New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Gordon, Colin (1980) 'Afterword', *Power/Knowledge*, New York: Pantheon, pp. 229-259.
- Gordon, Colin (1991) 'Governmental rationality: an introduction', *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*, Graham Burchell *et al* (eds.), Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 1-51.
- Goshgarian, G. M. (2006) 'Translator's Introduction', *Philosophy of the Encounter*, Louis Althusser, London: Verso, pp. xiii-xlix.
- Government of Canada (1985) 'The Criminal Code (R.S., 1985, c. C-46)', *Department of Justice*, <http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/C-46/>

- Government of Canada* (2001) 'The Anti-terrorism Act', *Department of Justice*,
http://www2.parl.gc.ca/HousePublications/Publication.aspx?Language=E&Parl=37&Ses=1&Mode=1&Pub=Bill&Doc=C-36_4.
- Gramsci, Antonio (1971) *Selections From The Prison Notebooks*, Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (eds.), New York: International Publishers.
- Gross, Daniel (2005) 'Shake your money maker', *National Post*, Friday, July 29, 2005, p. A15.
- Gutting, Gary (1994a) 'Introduction: Michel Foucault: A User's Manual', *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault* (ed). Gary Gutting, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Habermas, Jurgen (1968/1971) *Knowledge and Human Interests*, Boston: Beacon Press.
- Habermas, Jurgen (1983) *Theory of Communicative Action, Volume 2*, Boston: Beacon Press.
- Habermas, Jurgen (1987) *The Philosophical Discourses of Modernity*, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Hacking, Ian (1990) *The Taming of Chance*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hacking, Ian (2001/2002) 'Inaugural Lecture: Chair of Philosophy and History of Scientific Concepts at the College de France', *Economy and Society*, 31 (1): 1-14.
- Hamilton, Roberta (2005) *Gendering the Vertical Mosaic*, Toronto: Pearson Prentice Hall.
- Han, Beatrice (2002) *Foucault's Critical Project*, Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Hardt, Michael and Negri, Antonio (2000) *Empire*, Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.

- Hardt, Michael and Negri, Antonio (2004) *Multitude*, New York: Penguin Books.
- Harrington, Austin (ed.) (2005) *Modern Social Theory*, Toronto: Oxford University Press.
- Harris, Steven (2004) *Surrealist Art and Thought in the 1930s: Art, Politics, and the Psyche*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Heath, Joseph and Potter, Andrew (2004) *The Rebel Sell*, Toronto: HarperCollins.
- Hegarty, Paul (2000) *Georges Bataille*, London: Sage.
- Hertz, Robert (1909/1960) 'The Pre-eminence of the Right Hand', *Death and the Right Hand*, Illinois: The Free Press.
- Hibbert, Christopher (1980/1982) *The French Revolution*, Toronto: Penguin Books.
- Hirst, Paul Q. (1986) *Law, Socialism and Democracy*, London: Allen and Unwin.
- Hirst, Paul Q. (1994) *Associative Democracy*, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Holden, Adam and Elden, Stuart (2005) "'It Cannot Be A Real Person, a Concrete Individual": Althusser and Foucault on Machiavelli's Political Technique', *Borderlands*, 4(2), e-journal.
- Horkheimer, Max and Adorno Theodore (1947/1972) *The Dialectic of Enlightenment*, New York: Herder and Herder.
- Hunt, Alan (1978/1993) 'Law, State and Class Struggle', *Explorations in Law and Society*, New York: Routledge, pp. 17-35.
- Hunt, Alan (ed.) (1980) *Marxism and Democracy*, London: Lawrence and Wishart.
- Hunt, Alan (1990/1993) 'Rights and Social Movements', *Explorations in Law and Society*, New York: Routledge, pp. 227-248.
- Hunt, Alan (1993a) *Explorations in Law and Society*, New York: Routledge.

- Hunt, Alan (1993b) 'Foucault's Expulsion of Law', *Explorations in Law and Society*, New York: Routledge, pp. 267-300.
- Hunt, Alan (1993c) 'Law as a constitutive mode of regulation', *Exploration in Law and Society*, New York: Routledge, pp. 301-333.
- Hunt, Alan (1996) *Governance of the Consuming Passions*, London: Macmillan.
- Hunt, Alan (1998) 'The Great Masturbation Panic and the Discourses of Moral Regulation in Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century Britain', *The Journal of the History of Sexuality*, Vol. 8, no. 4, pp. 575-615.
- Hunt, Alan (1999) *Governing Morals*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hunt, Alan (2004) 'Getting Marx and Foucault into Bed Together!', *Journal of Law and Society*, Volume 31, Number 4, December 2004, pp. 592-609.
- Hunt, Alan and Wickham, Gary (1994) *Foucault and Law*, London: Pluto Press.
- Hunt, Lynn (1988) 'The Sacred and the French Revolution', *Durkheimian Sociology: Cultural Studies*, ed. Jeffrey C. Alexander, New York: Cambridge University Press, pp. 25-43.
- Jessop, Bob (1990) *State Theory*, University Park: Pennsylvania University Press.
- Jessop, Bob and Peck, Jamie (2005) 'Fast Policy', paper delivered at the Institute of Political Economy, Carleton University.
- Kay, Sarah (2003) *Zizek: A Critical Introduction*, London: Polity Press.
- Keat, Russell and Urry, John (1982) *Social Theory as Science*, Second Edition, New York: Routledge.
- Lacan, Jacques (1973/1978) *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*, New York: Norton.

- Laclau, Ernesto (2000) 'Structure, History and the Political', *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality*, Judith Butler *et al*, New York: Verso, pp. 182-212.
- Laclau, Ernesto (2005/2007) *On Populist Reason*, New York: Verso.
- Laclau, Ernesto, and Mouffe, Chantale (2001) *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, New York: Verso.
- Larner, Wendy and Walters, William (eds.) (2004) *Global Governmentality*, London: Routledge.
- Latour, Bruno (1991/1994) *We Have Never Been Modern*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Laxer, James (1998) *The [Undeclared] War*, Toronto: Viking.
- LeBlanc, Paul (1990) *Lenin and the Revolutionary Party*, New Jersey: Humanities Press International.
- Lecourt, Dominique (1970a/1975) *Marxism and Epistemology*, London: New Left Books.
- Lecourt, Dominique (1970b/1975) "On Archaeology and Knowledge" *Marxism and Epistemology*, London: New Left Books, pp. 187-213.
- Lecourt, Dominique (1998/2001) *The Mediocracy*, New York: Verso.
- Lefort, Claude (1978) 'Then and Now', *Telos*, No. 36.
- Lefebvre, Georges (1947/1979) *The Coming of the French Revolution*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Lemke, Thomas (2002) 'Foucault, Governmentality, and Critique', *Rethinking Marxism*, Volume 14, Number 3, (Fall 2002), pp. 49-64.
- Lenin, V. I. (1918/1932) *The State and Revolution*, New York: International Publishers.
- Levine, Andrew (1988) *Arguing for Socialism*, London: Verso.

- Levine, Andrew (2003) *A Future For Marxism?*, London: Pluto Press.
- Littleton, Scott (1966), *The New Comparative Mythology: An Anthropological Assessment of the Theories of Georges Dumezil*, Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Lobban, Michael (2000) 'Treason, Sedition and the Radical Movement in the Age of the French Revolution', *Liverpool Law Review*, Volume 22, Number 2-3, May 2000, pp. 205-234.
- Lopez, Jose and Potter, Gary (2001) 'After Postmodernism: The New Millenium', *After Postmodernism: An Introduction to Critical Realism*, London: Athlone Press, pp. 3-16.
- Lopez, Jose (2003) *Society and Its Metaphors*, London: Continuum Books.
- Lukacs, Georg (1968/1999) *History and Class Consciousness*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.
- Lyotard, Jean-Francois (1979/1984) *The Postmodern Condition*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Macey, David (1993) *The Lives of Michel Foucault*, New York: Pantheon Books.
- Machiavelli, Niccolo (1515/1965) *The Prince*, Toronto: The Ryerson Press.
- MacPherson, C. B. (1964) *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism*, London: Claredon Press.
- Major-Poetzl, Pamela (1983) *Michel Foucault's Archaeology of Western Culture*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Marsden, Richard (1999) *The Nature of Capital: Marx After Foucault*, New York: Routledge.

- Marx, Karl (1845/1978) 'Theses on Feuerbach', *The Marx-Engels Reader*, Robert C. Tucker (ed.), New York: W. W. Norton, pp. 143-145.
- Masuzawa, Tomoko (1988) 'The Sacred Difference in the Elementary Forms: On Durkheim's Last Quest', *Representations*, 23 (Summer), pp. 25-50.
- Matheron, Francois (1998) 'The Recurrence of the Void in Louis Althusser', *Rethinking Marxism* Volume 10, Number 3, pp. 22-37.
- Maza, Sarah C. (2003) *The Myth of the French Bourgeoisie: an essay on the social imaginary, 1750-1850*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- McInerney, David (ed.) (2005) *Borderlands e-journal: Special Issue on Althusser*, Vol. 4, no. 2.
- Milchman, Alan and Rosenberg, Alan (2002) 'Marxism and Governmentality Studies: Toward a Critical Encounter', *Rethinking Marxism*, Volume 14, Number 1, March, pp. 132-142.
- Miles, A. (1982) 'The integrative feminine principle in North American feminist radicalism: value basis of a new feminism', *The Women's Liberation Movement*, ed. J. Bradshaw, Toronto: Pergamon.
- Miller, James (1993) *The Passion of Michel Foucault*, New York: Anchor Books.
- Miller, Peter and Rose, Nikolas (1995) 'Political thought and the limits of orthodoxy: a response to Curtis', *The British Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 46, No. 4 (Dec., 1995), pp. 590-597.
- Mills, C. Wright (1959/1967) *The Sociological Imagination*, New York: Oxford University Press.

- Minson, Jeff (1980/1986) 'Strategies for Socialists?: Foucault's conception of Power',
Towards a Critique of Foucault, (ed). Mike Gane, New York: Routledge.
- Mitchell, Juliet (1974) *Psychoanalysis and Feminism*, New York: Vintage Books.
- Montag, Warren (1995) 'The Soul is the Prison of the Body: Althusser and Foucault, 1970-1975', *Yale French Studies*, No. 88, pp. 53-77.
- Montag, Warren (2005) 'Foucault and the Problematic of Origins: Althusser's Reading of *Folie et Deraison*, *Borderlands e-journal*, Volume 4, Number 2.
- Mosse, George L. (1961) *The Crisis of German Ideology*, New York: The Free Press.
- Nadeau, Maurice (1944/1989) *The History of Surrealism*, Cambridge: Belknap Harvard.
- Navarro, Fernanda (1998) 'An Encounter with Althusser', *Rethinking Marxism*, Volume 10, Number 3, pp. 93-98.
- Negri, Antonio (1997) 'Notes on the Evolution of the Thought of the Later Althusser',
Postmodernism and the Future of Marxist Theory, Antonio Callari and David F. Ruccio (eds.), Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, pp. 51-68.
- Neocleous, Mark (1996) *Administering Civil Society*, London: MacMillan Press.
- Neocleous, Mark (1997) *Fascism*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Neocleous, Mark (2003) *Imagining the State*, London: Open University Press.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich (1878/1989) *On the Genealogy of Morals and Ecce Homo*, New York: Vintage Books.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich (1883/1978) *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Toronto: Penguin Books.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich (1887/1974) *The Gay Science*, New York: Random House.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich (1888/1990) *Twilight of the Idols/The Anti-Christ*, Toronto: Penguin Books.

- Olssen, Mark (2004) 'Foucault and Marxism: rewriting the theory of historical materialism', *Policy Futures in Education*, Volume 2, Number 3 & 4, pp. 454-482
- O'Malley, Pat (1996) 'Indigenous governance', *Economy and Society*, Volume 25, Number 3, pp. 310-326.
- O'Malley, Pat (1999) 'Social Justice After the "Death of the Social"', *Social Justice*, Volume 26, pp. 92-100.
- O'Malley, Pat, Weir, Lorna and Shearing, Clifford (1998) 'Governmentality, Politics, Critique', *Economy and Society*, Volume 26 (4), pp. 501-17.
- Osborne, Thomas (1996) 'Security and Vitality: drains, liberalism and power in the nineteenth century', *Foucault and Political Reason*, Andrew Barry *et al* (eds.), London: University College of London Press.
- Osborne, Thomas (1998) 'Critical Spirituality', *Foucault Contra Habermas*, Samantha Ashenden and David Owen (eds.), London: Sage, pp. 45-59.
- Osterberg, Dag (1988) *Metasociology*, Oslo: Norwegian University Press.
- Palmer, Jerry and Pearce and Frank (1983) 'Legal Discourse and state power: Foucault and the juridical relation', *International Journal of the Sociology of Law*, November.
- Palys, Ted (1992) *Research Decisions*, Toronto: Harcourt, Brace Jovanovich Canada Inc.
- Panitch, Leo (2002) 'Violence as a Tool of Order and Change: The War on Terrorism and the Anti-Globalization Movement', *Policy Options*, September 2002, pp. 40-44.
- Pasquino, Pasquale (1978/1991) 'Theatrum Politicum: The Genealogy of Capital - Police and the State of Prosperity', *The Foucault Effect*, (eds.) Graham Burchell *et al*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

- Pearce, Frank (1988) 'The Struggle for Foucault', *International Journal of the Sociology of Law*, 16, pp. 257-274.
- Pearce, Frank (1996) 'The Failure of Marxism', *Journal of Law and Society*, 23(4), pp. 580-586.
- Pearce, Frank (1998) 'Gifts of Blood', Manuscript, Dept. of Sociology, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, Canada.
- Pearce, Frank (2001) *The Radical Durkheim, Second Edition*, Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press.
- Pearce, Frank (2003a) 'Off with their heads', *Economy and Society*, 32 (1), pp. 48-73
- Pearce, Frank (2006a) 'Foucault and the Hydra-Headed Monster', *Michel Foucault and Power Today*, (eds.) Alain Beaulieu and David Gabbard, Lanham: Lexington Books, pp. 115-137.
- Pearce, Frank (2007) 'Bhaskar's Critical Realism: An Appreciative Introduction and Friendly Critique', *Critical Realism and the Social Sciences: Heterodox Elaborations*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, pp. 30-63.
- Pearce, Frank and Dupont, Danica (2001) "Foucault *contra* Foucault: Re-reading the 'Governmentality' papers", *Theoretical Criminology*, Vol. 5(2): 123-158.
- Pearce, Frank and Tombs, Steve (1996) 'Hegemony, risk and governance', *Economy and Society*, Volume 25, Number 3 August, pp. 428-454.
- Pearce, Frank and Tombs, Steve (1998a) 'Foucault, Governmentality, Marxism', *Social and Legal Studies*, Volume 7, Number 4, December, pp. 557-575.
- Pearce, Frank and Tombs, Steve (1998b) *Toxic Capitalism: Corporate Crime and the Chemical Industry*, Aldershot: Ashgate.

- Pearce, Frank and Woodiwiss, Anthony (2001) 'Reading Foucault as a Realist', *After Postmodernism: An Introduction to Critical Realism*, (eds.) Jose Lopez and Garry Potter, New York: Athlone Press, pp. 51-62.
- Peters, Michael A. (2001) *Poststructuralism, Marxism and Neoliberalism*, New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Polan, A. J. (1984) *Lenin and the end of politics*, London: Methuen.
- Poster, Mark (1984) *Foucault, Marxism & History*, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Poster, Mark (1989) *Critical Theory and Poststructuralism*, Cornell: Cornell University Press.
- Poulantzas, Nicos (1973) *Political Power and Social Classes*, London: New Left Books.
- Poulantzas, Nicos (1978/1980) *State, Power, Socialism*, London: Verso.
- Rabinow, Paul (1988) 'Beyond Ethnography: Anthropology as Nominalism', *Cultural Anthropology*, Vol. 3, No. 4, pp. 355-364.
- Rabinow, Paul (1997) 'Introduction', *Ethics, Subjectivity and Truth*, Paul Rabinow (ed.), New York: The New Press, pp. xi-xli.
- Rabinow, Paul and Rose, Nikolas (2003) 'Introduction: Foucault Today', *The Essential Foucault*, Michel Foucault, New York: The New Press, pp. vii-xxxv.
- Rajchman, John (1985) *Michel Foucault; The Freedom of Philosophy*, New York: Columbia University Press.
- Ramp, William (1999) 'Durkheim and Foucault on the genesis of the disciplinary society', *Durkheim and Foucault: perspectives on education and punishment*, Oxford: Durkheim Press, pp. 71-103.

- Ranciere, Jacques (1990/2007) 'Democracy Corrected', *On the Shores of Politics*, New York: Verso, pp. 93-107.
- Ranciere, Jacques (1995/1999) *Disagreement*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Ranciere, Jacques (2000) 'Dissenting Words', *Diacritics*, 30:2, pp. 113-26.
- Ranciere, Jacques (2001) 'Ten These on Politics', *Theory and Event*, 5:3.
- Read, Jason (2001) *The Micro-politics of Capital: Marx and the prehistory of the present*, Albany: SUNY Press.
- Reader, Keith (1993) *The May 1968 Events in France*, New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Resch, Paul (1992) *Althusser and The Renewal of Marxist Social Theory*, Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Richman, Michele (2002) *Sacred Revolutions: Durkheim and the College de Sociologie*, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press.
- Rose, Nikolas (1990) 'Of madness itself: Histoire de la folie and the object of psychiatric history', *History of the Human Sciences*, Volume 3, pp. 373-380.
- Rose, Nikolas (1999) *Powers of Freedom*, London: Cambridge University Press.
- Rose, Nikolas (2001) 'The Politics of Life Itself', *Theory, Culture and Society*, 18(6), pp. 1-30.
- Rose, Nikolas and Miller, Peter (1992) 'Political Power Beyond the State: Problematics of Government', *British Journal of Sociology*, 43(2): 173-205.
- Rose, Nikolas and Rabinow, Paul (2003) 'Biopower today: Vital Politics: Health, Medicine and Bioeconomics into the Twenty First Century', *London School of Economics*, 5-7, September.

- Rose, Nikolas, O'Malley, Pat and Valverde, Marianna (2006) 'Governmentality', *Annual Review of Law and Social Science*, 2:5.1-22.
- Rubin, Gayle (1975) 'The Traffic in Women: Notes on the "Political Economy" of "Sex"', *Towards and Anthropology of Women*, ed. R. Reiter, New York: Monthly Review Press, pp. 157-210.
- Saint-Simon, Henri (1952) *Henri Comte de Saint-Simon (1760-1825): Selected Writings*, (ed.) F.M.H. Markham, Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Samuels, Robert (1993) *Between Philosophy and Psychoanalysis*, New York: Routledge.
- Sayer, Andrew (1981) 'Abstraction: a realist interpretation', *Radical Philosophy*, 28, pp. 6-15.
- Sayer, Andrew (2000) *Realism and Social Science*, London: Sage.
- Schechter, Stephen (1993) *Zen and the Art of Postmodern Canada*, Montreal: Robert Davies Publishing.
- Schmitt, Carl (1932/1996) *The Concept of the Political*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Sheptycki, J. W. E. (1996) 'Law Enforcement, Justice and Democracy in the Transnational Arena: Reflections on the War on Drugs', *International Journal of the Sociology of Law*, 24, pp. 51-75.
- Sheridan, Alan (1980/1986) *Michel Foucault: The Will to Truth*, New York: Tavistock.
- Short, Robert (1966/2003) 'The Politics of Surrealism, 1920-1936', *Surrealism, Politics and Culture*, Spiteri, Raymond and LaCross, Donald (eds.) London: Ashgate, pp. 18-36.
- Simons, Jonathan (1995) *Foucault and the Political*, New York: Routledge.

- Sixel, Friedrich (1995) *Understanding Marx*, Boston: The University Press of America.
- Skillen, Tony (1974) 'Marxism and morality', *Radical Philosophy*, Summer, pp. 11-15.
- Smart, Barry (1983/1989) *Foucault, Marxism and Critique*, New York: Routledge.
- Smart, Barry (ed.) (1994) *Michel Foucault: Critical Assessments, Volume II*, New York: Routledge.
- Spiteri, Raymond and LaCross, Donald (eds.) (2003) *Surrealism, Politics and Culture*, London: Ashgate.
- Stavrakakis, Yanis (1999) *Lacan and the Political*, New York: Routledge.
- Stolze, Ted (1998) 'Deleuze and Althusser: Flirting with Structuralism', *Rethinking Marxism*, Volume 10, Number 3, pp. 51-63.
- Tadros, Victor (1998) 'Between Governance and Discipline: The Law and Michel Foucault', *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies* 18, pp. 75-103.
- Terray, Emmanuel (1997) 'An Encounter: Althusser and Machiavelli', *Postmodernism and the Future of Marxist Theory*, Antonio Callari and David F. Ruccio (eds.), Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, pp. 257-277.
- Tiryakian, Edward A. (1988), 'From Durkheim to Managua: revolutions as religious revivals', *Durkheimian Sociology: Cultural Studies*, ed. Jeffrey C. Alexander, New York: Cambridge University Press, pp. 44-65.
- Valverde, Marianna (1996) 'Despotism and ethical liberal governance', *Economy and Society*, Volume 25, Number 3, August, pp. 357-372.
- Valverde, Marianna (1998) *Diseases of the Will: Alcohol and the Dilemmas of Freedom*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Valverde, Marianna (2007) 'Genealogies of European state: Foucauldian reflections', *Economy and Society*, Volume 36, Issue 1, February, pp. 159-178.
- Van Gennep, Arnold (1908/1969) *Rites of Passage*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Vatter, Miguel (2004) 'Machiavelli After Marx: the Self-Overcoming of Marxism in the Late Althusser', *Theory and Event* 7(4).
- Veyne, Paul (1978/1997) 'Foucault Revolutionizes History', *Foucault and His Interlocutors*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 146-182.
- Voruz, Veronique (2006) 'The Logic of Exception: A structural reading of the foundational texts of psychoanalysis', *Law, Culture and the Humanities*, Volume 2, pp. 162-178.
- Waldberg, Patrick (ed.) (1965/1972) *Surrealism*, London: Thames and Hudson.
- Walters, William (2000) *Unemployment and Government*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Walzer, Michael (1983/1986) 'The Politics of Michel Foucault', *Foucault: A Critical Reader*, David Couzens Hoy (ed.), Cambridge: Basil Blackwell, pp. 51-68.
- Weber, Cynthia *Simulating Sovereignty*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Weir, Lorna (2006) *Pregnancy, Risk and Biopolitics: On the Threshold of the Living*, New York: Routledge.
- Wood, Ellen Meiksins (1995) *Democracy Against Capitalism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Woodiwiss, Anthony (1990) *Social Theory After Postmodernism*, London: Pluto Press.

- Wright, Barry (1998) 'Quiescent Leviathan? Citizenship and National Security Measures in Late Modernity', *Journal of Law and Society*, Volume 25, Issue 2, pp. 213-236.
- Zizek, Slavoj (1989) *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, New York: Verso.
- Zizek, Slavoj (1991a/2002) *For they know not what they do: Enjoyment as a political factor*, New York: Verso.
- Zizek, Slavoj (1997) *The Plague of Fantasies*, New York: Verso.
- Zizek, Slavoj (1999/2000) *The Ticklish Subject*, New York: Verso.
- Zizek, Slavoj (2000) *The Fragile Absolute*, New York: Verso.
- Zizek, Slavoj (2000b) 'Holding the Place', *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality*, Judith Butler, Ernesto Laclau and Slavoj Zizek, New York: Verso, pp. 308-329.
- Zizek, Slavoj (2001) *Did Somebody Say Totalitarianism?* New York: Verso.
- Zizek, Slavoj (ed.) (2002a/2004) *Revolution at the Gates: Zizek on Lenin, The 1917 Writings*, New York: Verso.
- Zizek, Slavoj (2002b/2004) 'Afterword: Lenin's Choice', *Revolution at the Gates*, (ed.) Slavoj Zizek, New York: Verso.
- Zizek, Slavoj (2002c) *Welcome to the Desert of the Real*, New York: Verso.
- Zizek, Slavoj (2003) *The Puppet and the Dwarf: The Perverse Core of Christianity*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.
- Zizek, Slavoj (2004a) *Organs Without Bodies*, New York: Routledge.
- Zizek, Slavoj (2004b/2005) *iraq: the borrowed kettle*, New York: Verso.
- Zizek, Slavoj (2006) *The Parallax View*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.