

**"Foucault on Power: ...Politics from
Behind...Societies on the Diagonal"**

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I

'Nowadays I prefer to remain silent about Nietzsche...The only valid tribute to thought such as Nietzsche's is precisely to use it, to deform it, to make it groan and protest. And if the commentators then say that I am being faithful or unfaithful to Nietzsche, that is of absolutely no interest.'() In that spirit, this paper is not intended as a Baedeker's Guide to Foucault, a further attempt to discover a 'true' Foucault, excluding all others and their possibility. All too often, the 'keys' to Foucault 'discovered' in such guides are made of ice. They melt at the touch. The various magics they sometimes reveal in Foucault's oeuvre, and even more commonly, the flaws they sometimes discover or the critiques they enter, tend to a kind of essentialism. First, the essence of the Foucaultian 'system' is revealed. Then it is valorized, high or low. JG. Merquior offers just such an account in his *Foucault* in the Fontana Modern Masters series. In the manner of the history of ideas, with only hints of the hostility to come, Merquior reviews some of Foucault's pivotal texts. By the end, the allegation of Foucault's 'neo-anarchism' comes as no surprise. *Kathedernihilismus*, however, suggested by Merquior as Foucault's destination, a sort of final essentialist location, this is something of a shock. Yet Merquior's conclusion is a function of his procedure. This is the essentialist rule of 'reading' via procedures of classification, scrutiny of sources and intellectual affinities, and the discovery of a final location in a lattice of possible positions which already exists in the head of the reader. It is an elevated sort of

pigeon-holing. It separates the oeuvre scrutinised from the scrutineer. It renders Foucault's work an *object* of intellectual analysis, separate from the reader, an independent 'other', part of an objective world to be revealed purely by reflection. Without engaging the identities and subjectivities of the reader, it is designed precisely to reveal a 'true' Foucault. It proceeds on the basis of conceptions of truth, value-neutrality and scholarly objectivity which Foucault explicitly refuses. In a sense, it is what passes for 'science' in this sphere, and it doesn't seem to me to work too well if the Merquior text is taken as the measure. For, in common with other commentators, he seeks to authorise an essentialist truth which excludes its opposites and even most alternatives. This is in stark contrast to Foucault's own appropriation of Nietzsche quoted above where using and deforming, making groan and protest, take priority over any authorisation of 'truth'.

Nevertheless, it may be objected, an authoritative 'reading' at least excludes the possibility of political hijack, of impertinent annexation, of improper scholarly appropriation as well as certain forms of radical 'button-pushing', sometimes chic, sometimes simply illegitimate. The fluidity of Foucault's writing, its sheer difficulty as well as its unremitting and occasionally confusing oppositions, lends itself perhaps to one or all of these. For, make no mistake, Foucault is certainly fashionable. Yet his work also commands a substantial presence in contemporary debates on science and reason, truth, knowledge and power; that is, in a whole slew of questions pertinent to history, philosophy and politics and fundamental to central questions of social science. The current state of some of these debates plainly shows that the work of Michel Foucault is capable of many readings, not always compatible, whose purpose in principal part is to situate the speaker in respect of his or her particular appropriation of Foucault: a veritable craft-industry of theoretical and critical interpretation. Ensuing exchanges in print reach dizzying heights of synthetic brilliance as to intimidate those, like the present writer, who either choose to enter the intellectual world of Foucault suddenly, in a single terrifying plunge, or who, more commonly, are coerced into doing so. Partly the coercion takes the form of a fear of ignorance of that which generates so much heat and dust and excitement all around. Partly it derives from accumulating dissatisfactions as to one's own intellectual practice within discourses and systems of thought gradually decaying, and not only at the edges, under the incremental

assault, the flourish, the bravado and derring-do, and, sometimes it feels, the sheer cheek of the Foucaultians and the poststructuralists.

Geoff Eley has recently given us his thoughts on the impact of their critique on the field of social history (). Along the way, he seeks to de-polemicise the debate and enters a plea for constructive pluralism, a recognition of differences and their clarification through argument. My own reading of Foucault leads me to an (unduly severe?) scepticism as to the existing conditions of possibility for such a pluralism. Recurring claims in some quarters that the work of Foucault reveals an entirely new tissue of analytical salience in respect of power and its disposition; that Foucault's questions press former totalizing theories of power and process to the margin; and, in perhaps its strongest form, that Foucault's concepts and practices serve to 'decapitate' formerly unassailable cardinal concepts, grand narratives, and over-arching theoretical accounts - all these should be treated with caution, I guess. After all, such radical novelty, if indeed it is truly to be discovered in the texts of post-structuralism, tends inherently to lay waste what has gone before, and to place its adherents in a posture of implicit polemics or open proselytism. At the very least it must be admitted that the enthusiasm of some Foucaultians, verging at its worst on a form of sycophancy, can sometimes make the hackles and the reflex of resistance rise fairly rapidly. These are not self-evidently the conditions appropriate to pluralist debate, the cool recognition of difference and its exploration through unheated argument.

Save for one exceptional circumstance of the present time, I suspect that, to the contrary, the scene would be set for a further prolonged, polemical and destructive exchange such as marked the reception of the work of Althusser in the United Kingdom some ten or more years ago (). The circumstance I refer to, of course, is the rapid collapse of various Stalinisms in Eastern Europe and the USSR, and the more or less contemporaneous implosions of certitude in and around what, for economy's sake, might be referred to as traditional Western marxisms. () Sustained and truly destructive polemics require at least two poles of mutual hostility and systematic deligitimation. For the moment at least, one of them is absent without leave. A space for debate certainly exists, but largely I fear by default. It is provided in the main by an 'accidental' freedom from inquisitorial demands: to take sides, to state a position in

respect of a vituperative row whose polemical form required, it seemed in the case of the Althusser debate, the enunciation of incompatible truths and the consequent deligitimization of the project of the 'enemy'. Foucault's own principled position on these questions is certainly attractive and congenial, declining, sometimes under severe provocation, to engage in polemical exchange or even to defend himself against charges levelled from a variety of quarters. This seems to have been Foucault's position in the last years of his life at any rate. So, in this period, whatever else Foucault offers us, it is never a 'police action' against error, never a 'straightening' of the intellectual line, never accusatory intervention, seldom the allegation that opposing theoretical perspectives lead to abhorrent political practices.

What I think he does offer is a new and complex way of seeing relations and practices of power. His method, on my reading, is not that of 'decapitation' of previous analytical discourses. Rather, he raises new questions on new terrains in seeking to illuminate the practices and consequences of the exercise of power. Yours are interesting questions, he seems to be saying, but they are not my questions. These are my questions: '... the questions I am trying to ask are not determined by a pre-established political outlook and do not tend toward the realisation of some definite political project... This is doubtless what people mean when they reproach me for not presenting an overall theory. But I believe precisely that the forms of totalization offered by politics are always, in fact, very limited. I am attempting, to the contrary, apart from any *totalization* - which would be at once *abstract* and *limiting* - to *open up* problems that are as *concrete* and *general* as possible, *problems that approach politics from behind and cut across societies on the diagonal* (my ital.), problems that are at once constituents of our history and constituted by that history; for example, the problem of the relation between sanity and insanity; the question of illness, of crime, of sexuality. And it has been necessary to raise them both as present-day questions and as historical ones, as moral, epistemological, and political problems.' (.)

So Foucault's practice is not a practice of falsification, 'decapitation', or any other form of conceptual dragon-slaying. His practice is one of refusal or even of circumnavigation. It is clear that

the valorization of statements on the basis of their falsifiability, and the practice of falsification itself have little or no place in Foucault's thought or modes of argument. They belong to a tradition which he explicitly refuses. (See Rabinow and?). As a result, there exist radical incompatibilities between Foucault's notations of power and those of previous 'structuralists' and others. I am unconvinced therefore that a debate such as that proposed by Eley, however open and pluralist, however little polemical and destructive, can serve even to begin to synthesise the various poles of argument. The evident discontinuities are simply too radical for that, their incompatible consequences for the analysis of knowledge, power and practice simply too complete. An example. At the outset I had thought that Gramsci's notion of 'consent' might serve as a place to seek for continuity, or at any rate, a kind of communication between Foucault on power, and some of the most fertile marxian studies of the operation and effects of power in the 'sphere of the superstructures', in the realm of the cultural, and in the institutions of civil society. Self-evidently, it seemed, these were the social spheres of Foucault's own detailed analyses: the prison, the asylum, the clinic, the body and discourses of sexuality. Not quite what Gramsci meant by civil society, perhaps, but, empirically, at first blush, not a million miles away either. Both plainly departed from economic and other reductionisms, from reflexive, knee-jerk notations of class power and crude calibrations of class-dominion and subjugation. Neither claimed possession of a magic conceptual grid serving to filter all knowledge of conflict, tensions and human unhappiness, discharging it back into a pure and unsullied stream of class contradiction. Each focussed, it seemed, on the 'superstructural' complexities of advancing capitalist societies, and awarded these complexities at least a relative autonomy. Both recognised openly the unique particularities of determinate, sometimes national social formations in specific historical time: '... power is not an institution,' writes Foucault, 'and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with; it is the name one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society.' (HofS 93) There are many further passages, especially in the *History of Sexuality*, where Foucault's language resonates with an apparent Gramscianism: 'Power comes from below,' he writes, 'that is, there is no binary and all-encompassing opposition between rulers and ruled at the root of power relations, and serving as a general matrix - no such duality extending from the top down and reacting on more and more limited groups to the the very depths of the social body. One must suppose rather that the manifold relationships of force that take

shape and come into play in the machinery of production, in families, limited groups, and institutions, are the basis for wide-ranging effects of cleavage that run through the social body as a whole. These then form a general line of force that traverses the local oppositions and links them together....Major dominations are the hegemonic effects that are sustained by all these confrontations.'(94)

So, 'Foucault meets Gramsci' was the provisional title of this paper. But they do not meet. On the contrary, as I shall argue, their respective work may be seen as a site of the radical discontinuities referred to a moment ago. Discontinuity. Not an arena of contest, struggle, or polemics, but a radical discontinuity. Not an unclear and shadowy failure to communicate, but a radically different language. Before exploring this further however, I want to enter some other points of difficulty.

Foucault expressly refuses to be situated on the 'chessboard' - it is a recurrent theme of his various interviews.() This is so whether the chessboard is a political one, or one designed to grid the lines of his intellectual descent or dependency after the fashion of the history of ideas. He consistently declines close citation or reference to the three 'sources' whose cardinal importance he acknowledges in general terms: Marx, Freud and Nietzsche. '...I quote Marx without saying so, without quotation marks, and because people are incapable of recognising Marx's texts I am thought to be someone who doesn't quote Marx'.(Prison talk 52) Nietzsche, as we have seen, he makes groan and protest. His mode of presentation not only makes things hard for the novice reader. It lays him open to attack from an astonishing variety of directions. Foucault's 'anti-Marxism' is commonly asserted. He is attacked for anti-rationalism, and sometimes for embracing the irrational in the form of radical subjectivism.() He is accused of an epistemological anarchism, curiously like that advanced by Feyerabend (), but now used as a catch-all by those who criticise Foucault for anti-scientism, or the refusal to develop a general theory of his own. He is reviled, among others, for dilettantism, for enjoying the puns and paradoxes of a *belle-lettriste*, self-congratulatory and smart-arsed French tradition(). And, finally, he is charged with failure to make his work converge to a political or normative practice, and, by implication, with a consequent political quietism.()

Yet no reader of Foucault can fail to discover in his work a quality of implacable opposition, of resistance, of critical irony, of hatred of the human consequences of the practice of power, and, on occasion, a tone of moral distress. Foucault the subject is visible in his writings, often hurting, frequently doubtful, constantly resistant. Indeed, it can plausibly be argued that Foucault's whole oeuvre is resistance, but in a local, sectoral, micro-political sense, circumnavigating the grand categories of state and class-struggle. Nevertheless, the charge against him of political failure, of implicit quietism, is probably the one most pertinent to this paper. It raises precisely the questions I want to touch on in the next section: those of power and knowledge, the place of intellectuals, the nature of resistance and the conditions of its possibility. I am convinced that it is based upon a misreading. Yet it provides a point of departure, as well as a moment of real irritation.

Perhaps now is the time to confess to an unexpected enthusiasm for Foucault's notations of power, knowledge, societies and the appropriate forms of their analysis - in so far as I understand them. What follows in this paper should be read as the contingent efforts of a reluctant Foucaultian to situate himself along two or three significant lines of debate, a further contribution to the craft-industry which threatens to displace, for the moment at least, traditional forms of social scientific enquiry as well as the broadly consensual, if largely unreflected, axioms of scholarly knowledge production. The first obstacle to this modest project, however, lies less with the question of situating oneself in respect of Foucault's writings, and more with the problem of situating Foucault in and against a background of discourses and silences passing like shadows through one's own assumptions about self, society, power and the production of knowledges. It would be easier not to start from here: as Foucault himself tells us, with some pain, beginnings are hard, if not impossible(). Yet we do and must.

Foucault's writings, and their reception in intellectual territories which are broadly familiar, do not always help, endlessly and deliberately cutting across familiar patterns and practices of reading, associating, connecting; continuously disrupting long-entertained reflexes which fluently 'discover' in all texts familiar affinities, systematic continuities, lines of intellectual descent, incomplete affiliations or

poorly-concealed dependencies, clever classification and a final location. It is not so much that Foucault is hard to classify via the daily protocols of 'reading'. Rather his work refuses them, disrupts them, and threatens to make them an object of his own analysis of power, knowledge and discourse. He proposes to make an analytical agenda out of one's own hitherto unquestioned, regular practices, out of that mesh of knowledges that we understand as the intellectual tools of our trade, our 'absolute presuppositions'.() As a result, Foucault disturbs, at any rate he disturbs me, sometimes engendering precisely the sense of jeopardy and disorientation of *The Man Without Qualities*:

"...one cannot step into the street or drink a glass of water or get into a tram without touching the perfectly balanced levers of a gigantic apparatus of laws and relations, setting them in motion or letting them maintain one in the peace and quiet of one's existence. One knows hardly any of these levers, which extend deep into the inner workings and on the other side are lost in a network the entire constitution of which has never been disentangled by any living being. Hence one denies their existence, just as the common man denies the existence of air, insisting that it is mere emptiness; but it seems that precisely this is what lends life a certain spectral quality - the fact that everything that is denied reality, everything that is colourless, odourless, tasteless, imponderable and non-moral, like water, air, space, money and the passing of time, is in reality what is most important."()

II

Questions of class power and subordination in capitalist societies have lain at the very centre of the development of social history as a field in the last twenty or thirty years. They do not exhaust the discipline's grid of salient questions, but they have provided the basis of a large segment of its significant output. They have certainly stood at the crux of the fiercest debates in the field, and provided the site of recurrent waves of polemic since the 1960's. This is not the place to review the development of social history in the UK, or elsewhere, still less to provide an account of its many moments of conceptual rupture, productive and otherwise. This has been done already more than once(). What I want simply to assert here is the centrality of the questions themselves. They are plainly reflected in the field's various languages, concepts, even buzzwords. Recognize the following as the organizing postulates of modern social history : the aristocracy of labour thesis; the mobilization of 'social control'; the operation of hegemonies; class negotiation and the winning of consent; the importance of the spheres of culture and of civil society in reproducing and maintaining class power; the seemingly endless arguments as to the precise relationships between base and superstructure; claims for 'determination' but only in the last instance; the operation of structures 'behind mens' backs'. At one recent time or another, all of these have enjoyed a prominent place in the practice of social history or in the arguments which have riven the discipline from time to time.

Even where the importation of 'foreign' concepts has been most resisted, especially among those ungraciously referred to as 'culturalists', the assumption of a *class* subordination was fully in play. Retrievals of the defeated from the condescension of posterity, or histories designed to recuperate the authenticity of a subordinated culture plainly assume the *fact* of class domination, and seek to illuminate it empirically. As a result it can reasonably be argued that the relations of class in capitalism, and their determinant role in processes of historical change, are assumed by both 'structuralists' and 'culturalists' to be pivotal. Taken together these embrace almost all the theorizations of power we have come to associate with a left social history. This was the case even when the field was locked in apparently mortal, internecine combat in

the late 1970's and early 1980's. The antagonists shared more than they knew or were prepared to admit.

Yet it is at least plausible that their conflict was not so much about history or society directly. Rather, I suspect, the Althusserian 'moment', especially, was a struggle for the 'true' Marx, the authoritative reading, the authorised version. (Johnson art.) Such a struggle is familiar enough from spheres other than that of historiography. After all, Lenin made much of the authority of his own appropriation of Marx, not least his closure of its alternatives by one means or another. In the case of the writing of social history, the politics of theoretical appropriation are less obvious and their consequences seldom resonate outside the field itself. Yet, arguably, they serve to attenuate it, occasionally concealing in a flak of bombast and bitter polemics precisely what the poles of argument share. This shared terrain is worth exploring a little further .

The resilience of modern capitalism takes pride of place here. It seems able to ride out self-generated cycles of boom and slump, and to survive apparently terminal crises. It constantly reproduces social conditions appropriate to its own survival. The dominant class maintains its own capacity to act partly by maintaining the dominated class in place, moulding it, modifying it, punitively eliminating its differences through processes of control like education and the mass media, or repressing its resistances by the use of force. Contradictions engendered between the forces of production and the relations of production (Marx's classical statement in the 1859 Preface) are handled either by the naked use of disciplinary power, by the agencies of the state, or within the superstructural hegemonies of law, culture and information. This, at any rate, is the run of the argument in its simplest, most classical form. The question it raises acutely is this: if capitalism is so resilient, so subtle in its exercise of class power, so all-embracing in its control, how can socialism ever be achieved? Moreover, how can a subaltern class within capitalism hope to escape the repressive class tyrannies which so dominate its daily life? How can the commanding heights of the bourgeois, capitalist state ever be stormed? Or the class hegemonies in the superstructure broken?

In recent years, important work in social history has focused upon

the reproduction of class relations in historical conditions of no obvious violence - the threat of it perhaps, but not its exercise. Following Gramsci, the questions of the 'consent' of the subaltern class and how it is won in civil society, have been prominent. The state and its apparatuses have receded as a centre of attention, if indeed they were ever prominent in empirical work (fn Where are the detailed social histories of the police or the military or the bureaucracy?). 'In Russia,' Gramsci writes in the *Prison Notebooks*, 'civil society was primordial and gelatinous; in the West there was a proper relation between State and civil society, and when the State trembled a sturdy structure of of civil society was at once revealed. The State was only an outer ditch, behind which there stood a powerful system of fortresses and earthworks, more or less numerous from one state to the next, it goes without saying - but this precisely necessitated an accurate reconnaissance of each individual country'.(Selections 238, 1982 ed.)

This reasoning has given us some of the most fruitful accounts of the history of class relations in specific societies at specific times. It frees analysis from seeking an infrastructural cause for every political event, the reductionist reflex of a previous marxian historiography. It recognises the historical particularities of single, national societies, and the need for their detailed empirical reconnaissance and historical recuperation. At the same time, it insists that the relations of power are imbricated in the practices of daily life, not simply at the point where individuals or groups meet the State. And it suggests, to some at least, therefore, that the life of a subaltern class is more complex, fuller and richer, than simply the reflexes of its subordination. Gramsci's concepts of 'consent', of 'civil society' and of cultural rather than simply political 'hegemony', have fertilised social history in recent times, and in important ways liberated it from a reductionist problematic. In an important sense, these insights and the social histories which flow from them may be seen as a rich catalogue of the sites of essential struggle, significant points of the exercise of class power and the possible forms of resistance to it.

Fertile though this tendency has been however, the central theorization of power on which it is based remains broadly familiar. The Gramscian contribution has not so much transformed the theorization of class

power itself, or indeed, shifted its absolute centrality. Rather it has transferred to new sites the analysis of the exercise of that power, in particular towards the spheres of culture and civil society, and away from the repressive apparatuses of the class state itself. This argument cannot be fully developed here, but a couple of these points are worth repetition and development. They are intended to isolate precisely the discontinuities which lie between Gramsci's practice, his notation and analysis of power, and that of Foucault.

The first is concerned with Gramsci's purpose in the *Prison Notebooks* and elsewhere. Facing the tenacity of capitalism, he recognises the internal complexity of modern capitalist societies, realising that much of their capacity for reproduction and self-renewal lie outside the state's ability to mobilise force. He finds these capacities rather in culture and in the institutions of civil society. No matter that Gramsci's account of the relationship between state and civil society fluctuates considerably, as Perry Anderson has shown(), sometimes claiming an autonomy for civil society, sometimes seeing it as a part of the state itself. Gramsci's precise definition of civil society and its institutions is not the principal matter of concern here. However he defines it, and however rich his conception of the cultures and practices inscribed within it, it is yet a site of class and power relations. It is an arena in which the contradictory relationships and the power-play of classes under capitalism are enacted. As we have seen, it takes us far from crude economic reductionism in its explanation of these relations and it opens new horizons of social and historical analysis. But it leaves the centrality of class power as the fundamental object of analysis. In this respect, whatever insights Gramsci gives us, and in my view they are many, his work leaves us still on a familiar terrain of unequal class relations as the dominant, unitary form and source of power in society. He leaves us with a refined view of the particular historical enactment of class domination and subjugation in Italian and other capitalist societies. He exposes a subtle tissue of power relations not simply at the level of the state, but across and through the daily life of a whole society. Yet, for Gramsci, however they occur, however silently they move, however subtly they mobilise the subaltern consciousness, the pivotal relations of power in society remain those of class. Their principal purpose is to reproduce the social and other conditions in which capitalism can reproduce itself - not just social stabilities or freedom from class war, but also the biological reproduction of labour power, and its cultural conditioning. The field of force

surrounding the relations of class, and the balance of forces within them, determine the chances of stability or change and condition the possibilities of revolution. Class, therefore, is simply a given. Its cruciality for his analysis of power is absolute. Conditions of class society provide the pivot of all its power relations. Class is the conceptual headquarters from which proceed all repressions, all hegemonies, all attempts to win consents. Power and its purposes are invariably class power and class purposes.

This account is not intended as an attack on Gramsci, and should not be taken as such. It is intended rather to show the obvious, I suppose: that is, to demonstrate that Gramsci, for all his innovations, is embedded in a Marxist tradition for which the springs of historical change lie in the contradictions between the forces and the social relations of production. These define the limits of significant conflict, if not its precise historical form. In the latter lies Gramsci's principal insight: he illuminates some of the peaceful mechanisms through which capitalism reproduces itself. He addresses the problem of power as something more than merely repression and coercion of one class by another. His notion of 'consent' at least begins to suggest that the contents of the consciousness of the subaltern class are more complex than the conditions of its subjugation might suggest. And his belief in the construction of a counter-hegemony proposes a form of class resistance alternative to a full frontal Bolshevik-style assault on the power of the bourgeois state.

In this sense, Gramsci's work is intended to provide the pivot of an analysis of modern capitalism around which might develop the levers of its revolutionary transformation. His analysis is precisely intended to converge to revolutionary politics, to a political strategy. The degree to which the PCI under Togliatti was able to employ the resultant strategy is open to argument. But it is plain that the partial transfer of the revolutionary struggle to the institutions of civil society was a part of it. So, profoundly unlike the work of Foucault on power, Gramsci's analyses were designed to convene revolutionary opposition, precisely to create a new political strategy appropriate to socially complex, modern conditions in the West. In this respect, his methods, his purposes and procedures were those of Marx himself. First, an intense reflection on the world as object, outside, difficult to penetrate but nevertheless open to the intellectual's independent mind. Second, to discover by reflection

the springs of power in capitalist society, and the levers by which it might be resisted or overturned, the laws of its motion reversed. Third to develop a working-class political strategy consistent with a sophisticated analysis of bourgeois class power thus provided. The structures of class, the centrality of state power, and the marxian problematic of contradiction lie at the very crux, providing a tissue of assumptions about the nature of power, a set of 'absolute pre-suppositions' apparently valorized by a scientific procedure.

III

For me, the most fascinating thing about Foucault lies in his radical disengagement from these concepts, methods and assumptions - that is, exactly in his discontinuities. An example: 'By power,' says Foucault, 'I do not mean "Power" as a group of institutions and mechanisms that ensure the subservience of the citizens of a given state. By power, I do not mean, either, a mode of subjugation which, in contrast to violence, has the form of the rule. Finally, I do not have in mind a general system of domination exerted by one group over another, a system whose effects, through successive derivations, pervade the entire social body. The analysis, made in terms of power, must not assume that the sovereignty of the state, the form of the law, or the over-all unity of a domination are given at the outset; rather these are only the terminal form power takes'. (HofS 92)

The sovereignty of the state, class dominion where it exists, the subtle subjugation of the subaltern, are all, by this account, the *destination*, the *terminus* of the processes of power. 'Social hegemonies' are the *results* of the endless play of power, not its source or its cause. In this way Foucault reverses the essential flow of the argument about the nature of power. He does not deny the existence of the state as a locus of power. He does not entirely refuse a conception of social hegemony turning around social divisions of class. He does not rule out, in the manner of some post-structuralists, the analytical pertinence of the social formation - the 'entire social body'. Rather, what he argues is this: that far from being the centralised, unitary sources of power, all these are the results of its exercise in other, more localised domains. All of them depend upon

a whole field of prior power relations. In this account, the state, for example, does not control, manipulate, or inaugurate by acting as the Committee of Public Safety of the dominant class. On the contrary, the ability of that class to act through a state depends upon the 'complex, strategical situation' in the power relations of a particular society. It is not a given. It is not a prime cause. It does not represent an omnipresent or inexhaustible sump of class power exercised through mechanisms of repression by force or those of winning the grudging consent of the subordinated:

"To pose the problem in terms of the state means to continue posing it in terms of sovereign and sovereignty, that is to say, in terms of law. If one describes all [the] phenomena of power as dependent on the state apparatus, this means grasping them as essentially repressive: the army as a power of death, police and justice as punitive instances, etc. I don't want to say that the state isn't important; what I want to say is that relations of power, and hence the analysis that must be made of them, necessarily extend beyond the limits of the state. In two senses: first of all because the state, for all the omnipotence of its apparatuses, is far from being able to occupy the whole field of actual power relations, and further because the state can only operate on the basis of other, already existing power relations. *The state is superstructural in relation to a whole series of power networks that invest the body, sexuality, the family, kinship, knowledge, technology, and so forth [my italics].* True, these networks stand in a conditioning-conditioned relationship to a kind of 'metapower' which is structured essentially around a certain number of great prohibitive functions; but this metapower with its prohibitions can only take hold and secure its footing in a whole series of multiple and indefinite power relations that supply the basis for the great negative forms of power."(Rabinow 63-4)

Let there be no misunderstanding here: Foucault is not asserting that the multiple networks of actual power relations are simply the building blocks of a 'metapower' at the level of the state or of social hegemony. They are not the fragments of localised practices which accumulate spontaneously to form the great, unitary forms of state power, or, indeed, any other generalised fount of power. On the contrary, multiple, local, micro-political relations of power create the conditions

of its possibility: '...the state consists in the codification of a whole number of power relations which render its functioning possible'(Rab. 65), he writes. Codification, note, not absorption or subsumption, or even annexation. The state does not represent a field of intentionality and rationality openly reflected in the practices of power as Foucault sees them. The state is not the condensation of these practices in a transcendent form of metapower. Indeed, to the contrary, he frequently expresses doubts about the clarity of the relationship between local or sectoral forms of the exercise of power and the alleged general purposes of class domination or capitalism. For example, he expresses a refreshing doubt in the matter of discourses of sexuality as to whether the ultimate objective of their creation is to '...ensure population, to reproduce labor capacity, to perpetuate the form of social relations; in short, to constitute a sexuality that is economically useful and politically conservative?'(HofS 37). 'I still do not know whether this is the ultimate objective', he writes.

In short, in this way he tentatively disengages from the broad raft of assumptions and of 'absolute presuppositions' which inhabit marxian analysis, be it reductionist or not. The significance of this disengagement is crucial. It does not amount to a finalised deligitimation, to an essentialist rejection or falsification. This is not the manner of it at all. Indeed, it should not be assumed either that the critique of these assumptions lies at the centre of Foucault's project. He certainly does not start with them. His disengagement from them is a consequence and not a starting point of his work; it is the result of his own analyses of power not a point of polemical departure. Its immediate merit may be seen as two-fold. First, it provides a startling exit from the labyrinths of marxian debate, not least in the sphere of the development of modern social history. Second, probably more important, it opens space for the consideration of some pertinent questions. Among these, as I see it, the most important is that a reading of Foucault invites the question: *what are the actual contents of power, and through what mechanisms do the practices of power actually work?*

IV

For Foucault the practices of power are not simply given

within the co-ordinates of a general theory of capitalism. Their consequences cannot be read off from the assumptions and assertions of such a general theory, however sophisticated might become the empirical analyses which result. That is, in Foucaultian terms, analytical distinctions drawn between what, for economy's sake, we have referred to as reductionism or as culturalism, have little meaning. Both proceed with a shared tissue of assumption about the fundamental nature of capitalism and its characteristic structures of class, even though they ascribe to the enactment of their power-effects different sites, different procedures and different levels of sophistication. But what if the categories given in the general theory are illusions, deriving from an intellectual or scientific practice which is itself inscribed in the actual power relations of historical and contemporary societies? What if the procedures by which the *givens are provided and the knowledges created* are themselves a part of the discursive practices of power? What if these procedures, and the knowledges which result from their application, lie integrally within the networks of power in our present time? Far from being the results of rational reflection on an objective world outside and beyond, what if these knowledges lie *inside* the networks and practices of power and, at the same time, serve to constitute them, to 'authorise' them within some mutualities of power-knowledge? Then the exquisite, and occasionally bloody distinctions of marxian debate are collapsed, each pole of argument forming a support for a contingent 'regime of truth', a discourse of power or a fragment of one.

This line of reasoning is surely familiar enough from a reading of Foucault. He insists, for example, that his concern is not with truth, but with 'truth-effects'; not with scrupulously neutral knowledge of objective world but with the power and truth-effects of the 'knowledge' itself. "...I believe that the problem does not consist in drawing the line between that in a discourse which falls under the category of scientificity or truth, and that which comes under some other category, but in seeing historically how effects of truth are produced within discourses which in themselves are neither true or false." (Rab. 60) There is little time here to develop this further, yet perhaps a couple of points may be entered.

In trying to grasp Foucault's argument in this respect, I have found Feyerabend's *Against Method. Outline of an anarchistic theory of knowledge* more than merely pertinent:

"Scientific education as we know it today...simplifies 'science' by simplifying its participants: first, a domain of research is defined. The domain is separated from the rest of history...and given a 'logic' of its own. A thorough training in such a 'logic' then conditions those working in the domain; it makes *their actions* more uniform and it freezes large parts of the historical process. Stable 'facts' arise and persevere despite the vicissitudes of history. An essential part of the training that makes such facts appear (sic) consists in the attempt to inhibit intuitions that might lead to a blurring of the boundaries. A person's religion, for example, or his metaphysics, or his sense of humour...must not have the slightest connection with his scientific activity. This is again reflected in the nature of scientific 'facts' which are experienced as being independent of opinion, belief, and cultural background...It is thus *possible* to create a tradition that is held together by strict rules, and that is also successful to some extent. But is it *desirable* to support such a tradition to the exclusion of everything else? Should we transfer to it the sole rights for dealing in knowledge, so that any result that has been obtained by other methods is at once ruled out of court?(19)"

Now, Feyerabend is dealing centrally with paradigms of scientific knowledge, and the tyrannies, as he sees them, of the methods of their generation. In the main, Foucault admits the pertinence of the knowledges of the 'hard' sciences to his analysis but chooses rather to deal with the 'softer' ones: psychiatry, medicine, penology etc. What he shares with Feyerabend, therefore, is not a definite terrain of analysis, but a way of looking at power inside knowledge, and knowledge inside power, at the power of discursive knowledges to exclude their opposites and to 'authorise' a unitary, exclusive truth. For Feyerabend, the present paradigms of natural science assert that there exists but one path to truth, neglecting, even vilifying all others. The power of the paradigm is primarily epistemological, supported by accompanying sociologies of knowledge and of education. For him, the paradigm attenuates the knowledge-possibilities of scientific endeavour. Foucault, by contrast, conceives general theories, like Marx's, to have power-effects which extend far beyond the constrictions of the scientific field in which they are generated and over which they exercise a restrictive hegemony. So, for Foucault, the general categories of Marx, and the openly 'scientific' manner of their production and presentation, are an obstruction. And not just Marx, though his work is obviously the most pertinent to this paper. In fact, he rejects all practice which makes claims to a true, scientific knowledge, especially

where this knowledge is 'motivated' about the object which it claims to know. For example, Marx claims both to 'know' capitalism theoretically and to link this knowledge to the political transformation of its object, real capitalism, which the knowledge 'objectively' reflects: "Philosophers have hitherto tried to understand the world; the point, however, is to change it".

Conceptually, then, Foucault constitutes a quite different object of analysis. This is neither the attempt to recuperate in thought an 'objective' world, nor to discriminate between the competing 'truths' of any such recuperations. Foucault's focus rather is upon the knowledges themselves and their truth-effects, on the way in which power inflects the production of knowledge itself and in which knowledge contributes to the exercise of power. To clarify, a lengthy quotation:

"I would say, then, that what has emerged in the last ten or fifteen years is a sense of the increasing vulnerability to criticism of things, institutions, practices, discourses. A certain fragility has been discovered in the very bedrock of existence - even, and perhaps above all, in those aspects of it that are most familiar, most solid and most intimately related to our bodies and our everyday behaviour. But together with this sense of instability...one...also discovers something that...was not initially foreseen, something one might describe as the inhibiting effect of global, *totalitarian theories*. [An unfortunate translation this 'totalitarian'] It is not that these global theories have not provided nor continue to provide in a fairly consistent fashion useful tools for local research: Marxism and psychoanalysis are proofs of this. But I believe these tools have only been provided on condition that the theoretical unity of these discourses was in some sense put in abeyance, or at least curtailed, divided, overthrown, caricatured, theatricalised, or what you will. In each case, the attempt to think in terms of a totality has in fact proved a hindrance to research."

Further, he describes the predominant feature of his work as "...the *local* character of criticism. That should not, I believe, be taken to mean that its qualities are those of an obtuse, naive or primitive empiricism; nor is it a soggy eclecticism, an opportunism that laps up any and every theoretical approach; nor does it mean a self-imposed asceticism which taken by itself would reduce to the worst kind of theoretical impoverishment. I believe that what this essentially local

character of criticism indicates in reality is an autonomous, non-centralised kind of theoretical production, one...whose validity is not dependent on the approval of the established regimes of thought"(Power-knowledge 80-81)

The territories of Foucault's own work of local criticism are by now familiar: the asylum, the clinic, the prison, the body and sexuality. They cannot be dealt with in detail here. In any case, three or four of the principal texts are by now very well known, and works of exegesis and criticism appear with every morning newspaper. It is perhaps worth noting, however, that the list is not exhaustive; a completed oeuvre inviting us to abandon our own territories in favour of studies of the madhouse, the hospital or the prison etc. The point is not that Foucault retrieves from historiographical obscurity some neglected empirical terrains, or fills gaps in the historical account of the development of modern societies. The point is that his theoretical trajectory finds actual relations of power in these social and institutional spaces. He does not deny, indeed he forcibly asserts, that relations of power invest all discourses and discursive practices: "relations of power are not in a position of exteriority with respect to other types of relationship(economic processes, knowledge relationship, sexual relations), but are immanent in the latter...Power relations are both intentional and nonsubjective. If in fact they are intelligible, this is not because they are the effect of another instance that 'explains' them, but rather because 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; let us not look for the headquarters that presides over its rationality; neither the caste which governs, nor the groups which control the state apparatus, nor those who make the most important economic decisions direct the entire network of power that functions in a society (and makes it function)..."(HofS 94-95)

Power is everywhere. It is not a thing, to be won or lost, enjoyed, wilfully exercised, or seized. Exercised from innumerable points, it is immanent in the interplay of mobile relations. The binary oppositions of rulers and ruled neither lie at its root, nor serve as a key of its explanation. It has no headquarters. There is no central committee

of public safety. At the same time "...there is no single locus of great Refusal, no soul of revolt, source of all rebellions, or pure law of the revolutionary."(HofS 955-96) Though he is an analyst of power, Foucault cannot at the same time be a revolutionary strategist. Like us, he is located *inside* the networks and discourses of power, not just repressed by them but also created as a subject by them. There is no 'outside', no place where objective knowledges are gathered by minds independent of all 'authorizations' of truth, free of all discourses and the power of their truth-effects. There can be no 'science' of revolution or change based upon contemplation of the 'objective' world and its laws of motion, precisely because such a science would necessarily share, in its very methods, the terrain of power and knowledge of the system it seeks to oppose. Somewhere, I can't remember where, Foucault imagines a revolution, plainly a socialist revolution, which entirely fails to modify the pre-existing relations of power, leaving in place all their actual processes while claiming to supplant their previous holders. Stalinism?

Power, resistance, and their understanding, therefore, may not be found in 'objective', scientific macro-accounts of society, politics or history. Such totalizations are abstract and limiting, their grand concepts necessarily restrictive if not downright illusory. Local research, by contrast, approaches politics from behind and cuts across societies on the diagonal. It makes no claim to a reflective understanding of an objective world existing outside knowledge; it belongs to no restrictive regime of truth. It sets aside the question as to whether such knowledges reflect a true reality. It focusses rather on the knowledges themselves, their truth-effects and authorities, their place and function in the generation of concrete, ever-changing networks of power. In this way, it permits consideration of actual mechanisms of power, the discursive contents of the relations of power, without any ascription of motives, ideologies, false consciousnesses or other devices which tend to be used to explain less why people behave as they do, and more to account for why they do not behave as they should according to some higher intellectual or theoretical 'truth'. Why won't the proletariat in the West behave like a proper proletariat, take hold of its manifest destiny and get organised? Why do I accept as true some knowledges, while discarding others? From where does the 'authority' of the acceptable come? Does it simply make a junction with subjective identities, with 'recognitions' through a process that Althusser referred to as 'interpellation'? How is 'authority' produced? Where does the 'authority' of science reside, of intellectual

procedures designed to provide objective knowledges? Are these categorically different from the 'authorities' and truth-effects inscribed in non-intellectual discourses? For example, the propensity to consume is not the same thing as the 'objective' laws of the market. Yet the power of its discourses to enact truth-effects in our own practices is at least as great. Truth is not at issue. Authority is.

v

So, Foucault's work is not about objects, but about discourses which authorise our own and other subjectivities. While admitting, as well as analysing the repressive dimensions of the exercise of power, Foucault stresses also its creativity. What it creates is us, and him. The reason that Foucault is visible on the page as a subject, unlike most philosophers, is that he is hurting. He is not concealed as an identity. The effects of confinement and restriction cause pain, the creation of subjectivity through discourses and their practices causes dissatisfaction. And therefore resistances. This is why his work can be interpreted as an act of resistance. As we shall see in a moment, he refuses special status to philosophy or the human sciences or even intellectual work, including of course his own. It is a sphere of discursive practice, in many ways like the prison or the hospital or the factory, a sphere of the exercise of power and a sphere of resistance to it: "Resistances...are the odd term in relations of power; they are inscribed in the latter as an irreducible opposite." (HofS 96) Accordingly, resistance in this sphere is no more important, no more elevated, than in any other. What is different about intellectual work is that it produces precisely the dubious knowledges around which discursive practices can revolve: medical knowledges, theories of the psyche and of personality, of fertility, sexuality and kinship, of discipline, supervision and punishment. The hysterization of women, the refusal of the sexuality of children, the disciplinary architecture of the school or the prison, the definition of the line allegedly lying between madness and sanity, the disciplinary, pastoral practices of the Christian church, the professionalization of medicine, psychiatry, penology, and the creation of endless languages of sexuality - all these, Foucault notes, are both discourses and discursive practices. They all inscribe truth-effects and carry relations of power beyond the immediate territories of their 'interest' - that is, beyond the asylum, the prison or the clinic, and into the subjectivities and the

self-identifications of the population. They all contribute to a power network which is inside the whole run of relationships in society, its 'authoritative' knowledges and the practices of its local, sectoral institutions.

In a brilliant passage in *Discipline and Punish* Foucault addresses the repressive aspects of these relationships. 'The soul,' he tells us, 'is the prison of the body.' This is perhaps the most famous of all quotations from Foucault. At first sight, it is merely an overly-clever reversal of Christian dictum, the closure of an argument by paradox, dinner-table dynamite. As such, it appears to some to endorse a view of Foucault as too clever by three-quarters, locked into the punning language games of a certain form of French philosophical life. Yet Foucault is quite serious, if a little metaphorical:

"It would be wrong to say that the soul is an illusion, or an ideological effect. On the contrary, it exists, it has a reality, it is reproduced permanently around, on, within the body by the functioning of a power that is exercised on those punished - and, in a more general way, on those one supervises, trains and corrects, over madmen, children at home and at school, the colonized, over those who are stuck at a machine and supervised for the rest of their lives. This is the historical reality of the soul, which, unlike the soul represented by Christian theology, is not born in sin and subject to punishment, but is born rather out of the methods of punishment, supervision and constraint. The real, non-corporeal soul is not a substance; it is the element in which are articulated the effects of a certain type of power and the reference of a certain type of knowledge, the machinery by which the power relations give rise to a possible corpus of knowledge, and knowledge extends and reinforces the effects of this power. On this reality-reference, various concepts have been constructed and domains of analysis carved out: psyche, subjectivity, personality, consciousness, etc.; on it have been built scientific techniques and discourses, and the moral claims of humanism. But let there be no misunderstanding: it is not that a real man, the object of knowledge, philosophical reflection or technical intervention, has been substituted for the soul, the illusion of the theologians. The man described for us, whom we are invited to free, is already in himself the effect of a subjection much more profound than himself. A 'soul' inhabits him and brings him into existence, which is itself a factor that power exercises over the body. The soul is the effect and instrument of a

political anatomy; the soul is the prison of the body."(DandP 29-30)

For example, the modern prison, and the discourses of penal practice whose technology it is, seek to create 'souls' via the disciplining of the body. Through discipline, arduous regimen, routine labour and isolation, the reformer's prison, the prison of a humanist rationality seeks liberation of the criminal from his criminal consciousness. It is intended to create him anew, to reconstruct his 'soul' by the exercise of power on his body. It is no practice of liberation of the 'natural' good man; it is the practice of the creation of a good citizen, a good worker, a good father as defined in the power-knowledge coda of modern societies. Of course, the refined technologies and exquisite interventions of the discourse are always and everywhere presented as offering liberation, and the satisfaction of the real but unconscious desires of the prisoner. This is why Foucault finds in the development of the modern prison exactly the intersections of power and knowledge, precisely the junctions of the repression and creation of subjectivities, the very circuits of his notation of power. This is why he finds its development so pertinent because it represents over time the enactment in social practice of theoretical discourses of much wider significance - notably what he calls humanism. Consider, for clarification, the difference between pre-modern forms of punishment, and those of our own times. Before 'enlightened' reforms, punishment, he tells us, was visited upon the body of the criminal in the form of torture or mutilation or death. The crime after all was considered juridically as an assault upon the person of the sovereign, the single source of authority; and, accordingly, there was a sort of brutal symmetry in the punishment of the body so extensively applied, and so publicly observed. In these conditions, the prison was principally a holding tank for those awaiting judgement and punishment. Only in relatively recent times was the prison awarded its reformed, creative functions: that is, not merely to punish by incarceration but, through order and discipline, to create in the prisoners the self-identities of non-criminals. New practices of punishment, new discourses of criminality, new purposes of incarceration 'authorise' new perceptions of society, of citizenship, of criminal or other aberration and, in turn, are 'authorised' by them. The prison and its reform may therefore be considered one of the multiple micro-spheres of the exercise of power and knowledge by which the order of the world is changed.

In the *History of Sexuality*, among much else, these insights

are further refined. In particular, Foucault develops here his study of the creative aspects of power on the terrain discourses of sexuality. There is no space here to review this complex text; but there is one point which needs to be made about it. This is concerned in particular with the notion of sexual liberation inscribed in many modern discourses of sexuality, discourses which loudly repudiate the concealments of sexuality and the hypocrisies of the Victorians, even the 'other' Victorians. Claims for such liberation are invariably made in the interests of a freer, more natural, more spontaneous sexuality. What Foucault finds striking in this respect is not so much the assertion of some sort of 'natural' sexuality which plainly underpins some of the liberationist discourses about it. Nor does he reject the facts of the historical repressions of sexuality since the seventeenth century: "...As if in order to gain mastery over it, it had first been necessary to subjugate it at the level of language, control its free circulation in speech, expunge it from the things that were said, and extinguish the words that rendered it too visibly present"(17). Discourses 'emblematic' of bourgeois societies imposed silences, censorship, prudishness. They acted repressively in a policing of statements, an expurgation of vocabulary, the creation of a whole restrictive economy of sex. Yet, yet, there has been a steady proliferation of discourses concerned with sex, a 'discursive ferment', '...and these discourses on sex did not multiply apart from or against power, but in the very space and as the means of its exercise'(32) Even the liberationist ones. Further, by these repressions, 'Sex was driven out of hiding and constrained to lead a discursive existence. From the singular imperialism that compels everyone to transform their sexuality into a perpetual discourse, to the manifold mechanisms which, in the areas of economy, pedagogy, medicine, and justice, incite, extract, distribute, and institutionalize the sexual discourse, an immense verbosity is what our civilisation has required and organised'. Accordingly, despite all the babble about sex, what should be blindingly obvious to us remains concealed, obscure: that what was involved in the repression of former sexualities, in the imposition of a silence about them was precisely an 'incitement to discourse', regulated as well as polymorphous. Previous repression and present discourse are intimately connected; the repressive hegemonizing of sexual behaviour gives way to much more subtle discursive, creative forms of the exercise of power, multiple forms enacted in medical practice, in psychiatry, in jurisprudence, and in criminal justice, etc. There is therefore no well of silence about sex. On the contrary, there is a multiplication of discourses concerning it which turn both around the

instances of the individual subject and his or her sexuality, and around the population as a whole and its appropriate reproduction. In this way, both these are rendered objects of management by power - 'bio-power' in Foucault's less than graceful vocabulary. Thus, the very multiplication of discourse is linked to an intensification of the interventions of power.(30) It is not possible simply to declare our resistance in words and behaviour, to liberate ourselves from the effects of this discursive power by assertion. First, we must render our own self-identities visible to ourselves, in the context of the practices of power and its discourses which have created them. We ourselves, and not the objective world, become the proper spheres of analysis. The knowledges whose 'authority' we accept become the objects of scrutiny, not the more distant objects which the knowledges claim through science truthfully to reveal. Such a scrutiny cannot begin with grand scientific categories; cannot read off from objective knowledges of class or capitalism the contents of power relations or the mechanisms of their exercise. That project requires a quite different, and much narrower focus. For two reasons: firstly, because we cannot generate scientific concepts without participation in the truth-effects of the scientific method; secondly, because, *pace* Marx, we cannot know ourselves as members of the grand categories of science, notably in this case, classes. We know ourselves only as the element in which the truth-effects of multiple discourses are discharged, in the local worlds of our daily lives and work, in the institutions which constitute the machineries of discursive powers. And it is only here, from the subjective insides, that we can, and sometimes do, resist. Like the exercise of power itself, resistance is multiple, local; the two are intimately, inextricably connected. Oppositions may apparently be convened around conceptions of a future world of transcendent harmony in the form of a utopia, or around some dramatic moment of rupture which will transfer hegemonic power from one collectivity to another. But these are mere organizing illusions, reflecting not only a misunderstanding of the nature of power and its effects, but possibly also generating new discourses of power requiring further resistance. For Foucault, the conditions of possibility of resistance remain inside the relations power, for there is no escape from them whether it be in the single bound of the utopian or in the organization of a *motivated* science into political action.

It should by now come as no surprise that Foucault, discovering multiple, labile, mobile, and essentially local forms of power relations,

insists also on a similar form of possible resistances. Resistance is irregular, "...focuses of resistance are spread over time and space at varying densities, at times mobilizing groups or individuals in a definitive way, inflaming certain points of the body,, certain moments in life, certain types of behaviour. Are there no great radical ruptures, massive binary divisions, then? Occasionally, yes. But more often one is dealing with mobile and transitory points of resistance, producing cleavages in a society that shift about....Just as the network of power relations ends by forming a dense web that passes through apparatuses and institutions, without being exactly localized in them, so too the swarm of points of resistance traverses social stratifications and individual unities."(HofS 96)

VI

To conclude, two final points; one of exegesis, the other of speculation. The first is concerned with the role of intellectuals, especially intellectuals of the left, in Foucault's account of the relations of power. The other, briefer, is concerned with the moment of 1968 and its resonance in Foucault's work, as well as in his notions of resistance. This is perhaps best stated first since it amounts to no more than a simple speculation. It has two sides, expressible as questions. How significant is the shift in the emphasis of Foucault's work at or around 1968 or 1970? Before that time, he had concentrated in the main on discourses themselves, on their ordering and on the 'archaeology' of knowledges: in brief the epistemological side of his work. This did not cease after 1970, but the next fourteen years saw an increasing emphasis on discursive practices, on history, on power and the forms of resistance to it. I wonder how far his later work may be seen as a sophisticated theorization of the events and experiences of 1968?

Something of this is visible in his treatment of the role of intellectuals I think. Former notions of the function of the left intellectual do not survive Foucault's analyses of knowledge and power. The grand confrontation of power by truths laconically adumbrated by the intellectual as writer, neutrally, *de haut en bas*, giving the lie to the political and other servants of the great technologies of class power, will

no longer pass. On the contrary, Foucault treats with a certain contempt this kind of intellectual activity, suggesting more than once that its time is past, that the moment of the grand intellectual as truth-sayer and liberator is over, that this self-proclaimed function of the 'writer' or the 'scientist' - seldom, he suggests of too much value anyway - lies voided of plausibility. "Some years have passed since the [left] intellectual was called upon to play this role...(as the)...clear, individual figure of a universality whose obscure, collective form is embodied in the proletariat." "...the threshold of writing as the sacralizing mark of the intellectual, has disappeared." () It is no longer the business of the intellectual "...to place himself 'somewhat ahead and to the side' in order to express the stifled truth of the collectivity; rather it is to struggle against the forms of power that transform him into its object and instrument in the sphere of 'knowledge', 'truth', 'consciousness' and 'discourse'. In this sense theory does not express, translate, or serve to apply practice: it is practice." (quoted Smartt 17)

Conceptions of the intellectual as a vanguard of the as yet inchoate revolutionary force of the proletariat are completely collapsed. Unlamented by me at any rate, Leninist notions of the role of intellectuals are implicitly thrown out. At the same time, Gramsci's representation of the 'organic' intellectuals of the revolutionary class comes under a severe assault, his notion of praxis is rendered insecure at the very least, as are all marxian attempts to tie intellectual and revolutionary practice together. For Foucault, the principal struggle of the intellectual lies in his own sphere and against the forms of power that transform *him/her* into its instrument, precisely in the manner of resistances in other spheres of life and discourse. The struggle of intellectuals understood in this way brings them closer, not more distant, from the struggles of others. Yet this is not to say that their work should be exclusively the site of the resistance of intellectuals. After all, in common with the rest of the population, they are subject also to the whole net of relations of power, and these, too, require to be resisted. Nevertheless, as intellectuals, the principal sphere of their resistances should lie in the place where they are themselves created by power as intellectual subjects. This, I think, is the main burden of Foucault's argument in this respect.

However, it may be objected, this argument has the effect of severing intellectuals in respect of their intellectual work from the rest,

of isolating their intellectual activity in a separate sphere. To some extent, this is true. Yet it may be argued that this relative isolation in the local sphere of its own practices awards intellectual work precisely its due: that is, it renders the work of the intellectual, the conditions of its practice, and the problems of power which it confronts neither superior to, nor categorically different from the work, conditions and problems which face others - in the factory or the prison or the home or the school or the asylum, etc. The forms of resistance open to intellectuals is not of a higher kind than that which is expressed and mobilised by non-intellectuals. It is merely the form appropriate to their local conditions of life and work and to the primary forms of discourse and discursive practice which inhabit them. In this sense, intellectual work both 'authorises' certain forms of discourse - but by no means all, or even necessarily the most important of them at any given time - as well as providing a site, among many others, where resistances might form, perhaps within the Academy and the power of its institutionalized structures. Intellectual work is therefore not a form of escape from the identity-creating networks of power: it is one of the spaces that power traverses in this process of creation, one among many. So, where intellectuals resist as intellectuals, they form a knot of opposition, off which power itself might feed, as shown in the case of sexuality and its discourses. That is to say, they enact possibly contradictory oppositions akin to those enacted in other spheres - for example, in the spheres of sexuality itself, among prisoners or former prisoners, among those defined as mad, among factory workers, mothers, fathers, technicians, children, women, men - in all the manifold spheres where power, knowledge and discourse construct people as subjects, as self-identities.

"Roger: How many slaves are working on it?"

Carmen: The entire population, Sir. Half on nightshift, half on dayshift. In accordance with your wishes, the whole mountain is going to be excavated. The interior will be as complex as an ant's nest, or the Basilica at Lourdes, we don't know yet. Nobody will be able to see anything from outside. All they'll know is that it's a sacred mountain but inside tombs are already being entombed in tombs, cenotaphs in cenotaphs, coffins in coffins, urns..."

(Jean Genet. The Balcony.)

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