

Postmodern Theory - Chapter 2

Foucault and the Critique of Modernity

Is it not necessary to draw a line between those who believe that we can continue to situate our present discontinuities within the historical and transcendental tradition of the nineteenth century and those who are making a great effort to liberate themselves, once and for all, from this conceptual framework? (Foucault 1977: p. 120)

What's going on just now? What's happening to us? What is this world, this period, this precise moment in which we are living? (Foucault 1982a: p. 216)

[T]he impression of fulfillment and of end, the muffled feeling that carries and animates our thought, and perhaps lulls it to sleep with the facility of its promises ... and makes us believe that something new is about to begin, something that we glimpse only as a thin line of light low on the horizon - that feeling and impression are perhaps not ill founded (Foucault 1973b: p. 384).

Foucault's critique of modernity and humanism, along with his proclamation of the 'death of man' and development of new perspectives on society, knowledge, discourse, and power, has made him a major source of postmodern thought. Foucault draws upon an anti-Enlightenment tradition that rejects the equation of reason, emancipation, and progress, arguing that an interface between modern forms of power and knowledge has served to create new forms of domination. In a series of historico-philosophical studies, he has attempted to develop and substantiate this theme from various perspectives: psychiatry, medicine, punishment and criminology, the emergence of the human sciences, the formation of various disciplinary apparatuses, and the constitution of the subject. Foucault's project has been to write a 'critique of our historical era' (1984: p. 42) which problematizes modern forms of knowledge, rationality, social institutions, and subjectivity that seem given and natural but in fact are contingent sociohistorical constructs of power and domination.

While Foucault has decisively influenced postmodern theory, he cannot be wholly assimilated to that rubric. He is a complex and eclectic thinker who draws from multiple sources and problematics while aligning himself with no single one. If there are privileged figures in his work, they are critics of reason and Western thought such as Nietzsche and Bataille. Nietzsche provided Foucault, and nearly all French poststructuralists, with the impetus and ideas to transcend Hegelian and Marxist philosophies. In addition to initiating a postmetaphysical, posthumanist mode of thought, Nietzsche taught Foucault that one could write a 'genealogical' history of unconventional topics such as reason, madness, and the subject which located their emergence within sites of domination. Nietzsche demonstrated that the will to truth and knowledge is indissociable from the will to power, and Foucault developed these claims in his critique of liberal humanism, the human sciences, and in his later work on ethics. While Foucault never wrote aphoristically in the style of Nietzsche, he did accept Nietzsche's claims that systematizing methods produce reductive social and historical

analyses, and that knowledge is perspectival in nature, requiring multiple viewpoints to interpret a heterogeneous reality.

Foucault was also deeply influenced by Bataille's assault on Enlightenment reason and the reality principle of Western culture. Bataille (1985, 1988, 1989) championed the realm of heterogeneity, the ecstatic and explosive forces of religious fervour, sexuality, and intoxicated experience that subvert and transgress the instrumental rationality and normalcy of bourgeois culture. Against the rationalist outlook of political economy and philosophy, Bataille sought a transcendence of utilitarian production and needs, while celebrating a 'general economy' of consumption, waste, and expenditure as liberatory. Bataille's fervent attack on the sovereign philosophical subject and his embrace of transgressive experiences were influential for Foucault and other postmodern theorists. Throughout his writings, Foucault valorizes figures such as Hölderlin, Artaud, and others for subverting the hegemony of modern reason and its norms and he frequently empathized with the mad, criminals, aesthetes, and marginalized types of all kinds.¹

Recognizing the problems with attaching labels to Foucault's work, we wish to examine the extent to which he develops certain postmodern positions. We do not read Foucault as a postmodernist tout court, but rather as a theorist who combines premodern, modern, and postmodern perspectives.² We see Foucault as a profoundly conflicted thinker whose thought is torn between oppositions such as totalizing/detotalizing impulses and tensions between discursive/extra-discursive theorization, macro/microperspectives, and a dialectic of domination/resistance. We begin with a discussion of his critique of modernity (2.1). This critique is developed in the form of new historiographical approaches which he terms 'archaeology' and 'genealogy'. We shall then explicate Foucault's postmodern perspectives on the nature of modern power and his argument that the modern subject is a construct of domination (2.2). After analyzing the political implications of Foucault's genealogical method (2.3) and his later studies of ethics and techniques of the self, we shall conclude with some critical remarks on the tensions and lacunae in his work as a whole (2.4).

2.1 Postmodern Perspectives and the Critique of Modernity

I think that the central issue of philosophy and critical thought since the eighteenth century has always been, still is, and will, I hope, remain the question: *What* is this Reason that we use? What are its historical effects? What are its limits, and what are its dangers (Foucault 1984: p. 249).

My objective ... has been to create a history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects (Foucault 1982a: p. 208).

Foucault was born in Poitiers, France, in 1926 and died in 1984. He began his academic career as a philosopher, studying with Jean Hyppolite at the Lycée Henri IV and Althusser at the Ecole Normale Supérieure. Becoming intolerant of the abstractness of this discipline and its naive truth claims, Foucault turned to psychology and psychopathology as alternative forms

of study and observed psychiatric practice in French mental hospitals during the early 1950s (see Sheridan 1980). These studies led to his first two books on the theme of mental illness and began his lifelong preoccupation with the relationship between knowledge and power. For a time, he was a member of the Communist Party, but could not accept the straitjacket of orthodoxy and broke with them in 1951, holding ambiguous feelings about Marxism throughout his life. Foucault taught in French departments in Sweden, Poland, and Germany during the 1950s and returned to France in 1960 in order to complete his *doctorat d'état* in the history of science under Georges Canguilhem. After the May 1968 protests, Foucault became chairman of Department of Philosophy at Vincennes. In 1970, he was appointed to the (self-titled) chair of Professor of History of Systems of Thought at the Collège de France where he taught for the rest of his life.

Foucault's work provides an innovative and comprehensive critique of modernity. Whereas for many theorists modernity encompasses a large, undifferentiated historical epoch that dates from the Renaissance to the present moment, Foucault distinguishes between two post-Renaissance eras: the classical era (1660-1800) and the modern era (1800-1950) (Foucault 1989: p. 30). He sees the classical era as inaugurating a powerful mode of domination over human beings that culminates in the modern era. Foucault follows the Nietzschean position that dismisses the Enlightenment ideology of historical progress: 'Humanity does not gradually progress from combat to combat until it arrives at universal reciprocity, where the rule of law finally replaces warfare; humanity installs each of its violences in a system of rules and thus proceeds from domination to domination' (Foucault 1977: p. 151). Yet, ironically, Foucault believes that the modern era is a kind of progress - in the dissemination and refinement of techniques of domination. On this point, his initial position is similar to that of Adorno, who spoke of the continuity of disaster 'leading from the slingshot to the megaton bomb' (Adorno 1973: p. 320), and quite unlike that of Marx, Weber, or Habermas who attempt to identify both the emancipatory and repressive aspects of modernity.

Like Horkheimer and Adorno (1972), Foucault therefore believes that modern rationality is a coercive force, but where they focused on the colonization of nature, and the subsequent repression of social and psychic existence, Foucault concentrates on the domination of the individual through social institutions, discourses, and practices. Awakening in the classical world like a sleeping giant, reason finds chaos and disorder everywhere and embarks on a rational ordering of the social world. It attempts to classify and regulate all forms of experience through a systematic construction of knowledge and discourse, which Foucault understands as systems of language imbricated with social practice. He argues that various human experiences, such as madness or sexuality, become the objects of intense analysis and scrutiny. They are discursively (re)constituted within rationalist and scientific frames of reference, within the discourses of modern knowledge, and thereby made accessible for administration and control. Since the eighteenth century, there has been a discursive explosion whereby all human behaviour has come under the 'imperialism' of modern discourse and regimes of power/knowledge. The task of the Enlightenment, Foucault argues, was to multiply 'reason's political power' (1988d: p. 58) and disseminate it throughout the social field, eventually saturating the spaces of everyday life.

Foucault therefore adopts a stance of hostile opposition to modernity and this is one of the most salient postmodern features of his work. Postmodern theory in general rejects the modern equation of reason and freedom and attempts to problematize modern forms of rationality as reductive and oppressive. In his genealogical works of the 1970s, Foucault stigmatizes modern rationality, institutions, and forms of subjectivity as sources or constructs of domination. Where modern theories tend to see knowledge and truth to be neutral, objective, universal, or vehicles of progress and emancipation, Foucault analyzes them as integral components of power and domination. Postmodern theory rejects unifying or totalizing modes of theory as rationalist myths of the Enlightenment that are reductionist and obscure the differential and plural nature of the social field, while politically entailing the suppression of plurality, diversity, and individuality in favour of conformity and homogeneity.

In direct opposition to modern views, postmodernists valorize incommensurability, difference, and fragmentation as the antidotes to repressive modern modes of theory and rationality. For example, Foucault valorizes ‘the amazing efficacy of discontinuous, particular and local criticism’ as compared to the ‘inhibiting effect of global, *totalitarian theories*’ at both the theoretical and political level. While he acknowledges that global theories such as Marxism and psychoanalysis have provided ‘useful tools for local research’ (1980a: p. 81), he believes they are reductionistic and coercive in their practical implications and need to be superseded by a plurality of forms of knowledge and microanalyses. Consequently, Foucault attempts to detotalize history and society as unified wholes governed by a centre, essence, or telos, and to decentre the subject as a constituted rather than a constituting consciousness. He analyses history as a non-evolutionary, fragmented field of disconnected knowledges, while presenting society as a dispersed regularity of unevenly developing levels of discourses, and the modern subject as a humanist fiction integral to the operations of a carceral society that everywhere disciplines and trains its subjects for labour and conformity.

Perhaps the fundamental guiding motivation of Foucault’s work is to ‘respect ... differences’ (Foucault 1973b: p. xii). This imperative informs his historical approach, perspectives on society, and political positions and takes numerous forms: a historical methodology which attempts to grasp the specificity and discontinuity of discourses, a rethinking of power as diffused throughout multiple social sites, a redefinition of the ‘general intellectual’ as a ‘specific intellectual’, and a critique of global and totalizing modes of thought. Foucault analyzes modernity from various perspectives on modern discourses and institutions. On Nietzsche’s understanding, perspectivism denies the existence of facts, and insists there are only interpretations of the world. Since the world has no single meaning, but rather countless meanings, a perspectivist seeks multiple interpretations of phenomena and insists there is ‘no limit to the ways in which the world can be interpreted’ (Nietzsche 1967: p. 326). Nietzsche’s reflections on the origins of values, for instance, proceeded from psychological, physiological, historical, philosophical, and linguistic grounds. For Nietzsche, the more perspectives one can gain on the world or any of its phenomena, the richer and deeper will be one’s interpretations and knowledge.³

Following Nietzsche, Foucault rejects the philosophical pretension to grasp systematically all of reality within one philosophical system or from one central vantage point. Foucault believes that 'Discourse ... is so complex a reality that we not only can, but should, approach it at different levels with different methods' (1973b: p. xiv). Hence, no single theory or method of interpretation by itself can grasp the plurality of discourses, institutions, and modes of power that constitute modern society. Accordingly, while Foucault is strongly influenced by theoretical positions such as structuralism or Marxism, he rejects any single analytic framework and analyzes modernity from the perspectives of psychiatry, medicine, criminology and sexuality, all of which overlap in complex ways and provide different optics on modern society and the constitution of the modern subject.

2.1.1 Archaeology and Discontinuity

In his initial books, Foucault characterizes his position as an archaeology of knowledge. He employs the term archaeology to differentiate his historical approach, first, from hermeneutics, which seeks a deep truth underlying discourse or an elucidation of subjective meaning schemes. The surface-depth and causal models utilized by modern theory are overturned in favour of a postmodern description of discontinuous surfaces of discourse unconnected by causal linkages. The 'hermeneutics of suspicion' itself becomes suspect. Archaeology is also distinguished from 'the confused, under-structured, and ill-structured domain of the history of ideas' (Foucault 1975a: p. 195). Foucault rejects this idealist and humanist mode of writing which traces a continuous evolution of thought in terms of tradition or the conscious productions of subjects.

Against this approach, archaeology attempts to identify the conditions of possibility of knowledge, the determining rules of formation of discursive rationality that operate beneath the level of intention or thematic content. 'It is these rules of formation, which were never formulated in their own right, but are to be found only in widely differing theories, concepts, and objects of study, that I have tried to reveal, by isolating, as their specific locus, a level that I have called ... archaeological' (Foucault 1973b: p. xi). Unlike structuralism, to which his early analyses bear some resemblances (see Dreyfus and Rabinow 1982), these rules are not universal and immutable in character, or grounded in the structure of the mind, but are historically changing and specific to given discursive domains. Such rules constitute the 'historical *a priori*' of all knowledge, perception, and truth. They are 'the fundamental codes of a culture' which construct the '*episteme*', or configuration of knowledge, that determines the empirical orders and social practices of a particular historical era.

In *Madness and Civilization* (1973a; orig. 1961), for example, his first major work, Foucault attempts to write the 'archaeology of that silence' whereby madness is historically constituted as the other of reason. He returns to the discontinuity marked by the great confinement of 1656 where modern reason breaks off communication with the mad and attempts to 'guard against the subterranean danger of unreason' (1973a: p. 84) through discourses of exclusion and institutions of confinement. Classical and modern discourses construct oppositions between sane and insane, normal and abnormal that work to enforce

norms of reason and truth. In his next book, *The Birth of the Clinic* (1975a; orig. 1963), subtitled 'An Archaeology of Medical Perception', Foucault analyzes the shift from a premodern speculatively-based medicine to a modern empirically-based medicine rooted in the rationality of the scientific gaze. Rejecting a history based on the 'consciousness of clinicians', he pursues a structural study of discourse that seeks to determine 'the conditions of possibility of medical experience in modern times' (Foucault 1975a: p. xix) and the historical conditions whereby a scientific discourse of the individual can first emerge.

Then, in *The Order of Things* (1973b; orig. 1966), subtitled 'An Archaeology of the Human Sciences', Foucault describes the emergence of the human sciences. He gives his most detailed analysis of the underlying rules, assumptions and ordering procedures of the Renaissance, classical, and modern eras, focusing on the shifts in the sciences of life, labour, and language. In this analysis, Foucault uncovers the birth of 'man' as a discursive construct. 'Man', the object of philosophy as the human sciences (psychology, sociology and literature), emerges when the classical field of representation dissolves and the human being for the first time becomes not only an aloof representing subject, but also the object of modern scientific investigation, a finite and historically determined being to be studied in its living, labouring, and speaking capacities.

Embedded in a new field of temporality and finitude, the status of the subject as master of knowledge becomes threatened, but its sovereignty is maintained in its reconstitution in transcendental form. Foucault describes how modern philosophy constructs 'Man' - both object and subject of knowledge - within a series of unstable 'doublets': the cogito/unthought doublet whereby Man is determined by external forces yet aware of this determination and able to free himself from it; the retreat-and-return-of-the-origin doublet whereby history precedes Man but he is the phenomenological source from which history unfolds; and the transcendental/empirical doublet whereby Man both constitutes and is constituted by the external world, finding secure foundations for knowledge through *a priori* categories (Kant) or through procedures of 'reduction' which allow consciousness to purify itself from the empirical world (Husserl). In each of these doublets, humanist thought attempts to recuperate the primacy and autonomy of the thinking subject and to master all that is other to it.

Foucault's initial critique of the human sciences is that they, like philosophy, are premised on an impossible attempt to reconcile irreconcilable poles of thought and posit a constituting subject. It is only in his genealogical works, as we shall see, that this critique assumes its full importance as Foucault becomes clear on the political implications of humanism as the epistemological basis of a disciplinary society. Having analyzed the birth of 'man', *The Order of Things* concludes by anticipating the 'death of man' as an epistemological subject in the emerging posthumanist, postmodern epistemic space where the subject is once and for all dethroned and interpreted as an effect of language, desire, and the unconscious. This development begins in the twentieth century with the appearance of the 'counter-sciences' (psychoanalysis, linguistics, and ethnology), and archaeology itself clearly belongs to this space. No longer a sovereign cogito or transcendental ground, the subject in this episteme becomes an epiphenomenon of prepersonal forces.

Finally, in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972; orig. 1971), Foucault pursues a metatheoretical reflection on his project and methodology in order to clarify his ideas and criticize some of his past mistakes. Drawing from the work of French historians of science, Bachelard and Canguilhem, Foucault self-consciously announces that ‘a new form of history is trying to develop its own theory’ (1972: p. 5). From within this new conceptual space the modern themes of continuity, teleology, genesis, totality, and subject are no longer self-evident and are reconstructed or abandoned.

Unlike in modern historiography, discontinuity is no longer seen as a blight on the historical narrative and stigmatized in principle. Rather, Foucault adopts discontinuity as a positive working concept. He opposes his postmodern concept of a general history to the modern concept of a total history that he attributes to figures such as Hegel and Marx. Foucault summarizes the difference in this way: ‘A total description draws all phenomena around a single centre - a principle, a meaning, a spirit, a world-view, an overall shape; a general history, on the contrary, would deploy the space of a dispersion’ (1972: p. 10). The types of totality that Foucault rejects include massive vertical totalities such as history, civilization, and epoch; horizontal totalities such as society or period; and anthropological or humanist conceptions of a centred subject.

For Foucault, evolutionary history such as written by Hegel or Marx attains its narrative totalizations in an illegitimate way, through the construction of abstractions that obscure more than they reveal. Beneath these abstractions are complex interrelations, a shifting plurality of decentred, individualized series of discourses, unable to be reduced to a single law, model, unity, or vertical arrangement. His goal is to break up the vast unities ‘and then see whether they can be legitimately reaffirmed; or whether other groupings should be made’ (1972: p. 26). The potential result of such detotalizing moves is that ‘an entire field is set free’ - the field of discursive formations, complex systems of dispersions. Hence, as a postmodern historiography, archaeology ‘does not have a unifying but a diversifying effect’ (1972: p. 160), allowing the historian to discover the multiplicity of discourses in a field of knowledge.

Foucault’s archaeological approach can be distinguished from theorists such as Baudrillard, Lyotard or Derrida in two significant ways. First, Foucault does not dissolve all forms of structure, coherence, and intelligibility into an endless flux of signification. Having cleared the ground, he attempts to grasp what forms of regularities, relations, continuities, and totalities really do exist. The task of archaeology is not just ‘to attain a plurality of histories juxtaposed and independent of one another’, but also ‘to determine what form of relation may be legitimately described between ... different series [of things]’ (1972: p. 10). Second, unlike Baudrillard’s apocalyptic trumpeting of postmodernity as a complete break with industrial modernity, political economy, and referential reason, Foucault employs a cautious and qualified use of the discourse of discontinuity. While he appropriates this discourse to attack the traditional interpretation of history as the steady accumulation of knowledge or the gradual progress of truth or reason, and to show that sudden and abrupt changes occur in configurations of knowledge, he rejects the interpretation of his work as simply a

‘philosophy of discontinuity’ (Foucault 1988d: pp. 99-100). Instead, he claims that he sometimes exaggerated the degree of historical breaks ‘for pedagogical purposes’, that is, to counter the hegemony of the traditional theories of historical progress and continuity (see also Foucault 1980a: pp. 111-12).

For Foucault, discontinuity refers to the fact that in a transition from one historical era to another ‘things are no longer perceived, described, expressed, characterized, classified, and known in the same way’ (1973b: p. 217). In the shift from the Renaissance to the classical *episteme*, for example, ‘thought ceases to move in the element of resemblance. Similitude is no longer the form of knowledge but the occasion of error’ (1973b: p. 51) that is derided as the poetic fantasy of an age before Reason. But there is no rupture or break so radical as to spring forth *ex nihilo* and negate everything that has preceded it. Rupture is possible ‘only on the basis of rules that are already in operation’ (Foucault 1972: p. 17). Anticipating a similar position employed by Raymond Williams and Fredric Jameson (see Chapter 6), Foucault argues that rupture means not some absolute change, but a ‘redistribution of the [prior] *episteme*’ (1973b: p. 345), a reconfiguration of its elements, where, although there are new rules of a discursive formation redefining the boundaries and nature of knowledge and truth, there are significant continuities as well.

Hence, Foucault employs a dialectic of continuity and discontinuity; historical breaks always include some ‘overlapping, interaction, and echoes’ (1980b: p. 149) between the old and the new. In *The Order of Things* (1973b: pp. 361ff.), for example, he emphasizes the continuities between the modern and the emerging postmodern *episteme*, such as the continued importance of the problematic of representation in the space of the counter-sciences. Similarly, in his works on sexuality, he describes a continuity between medieval Christianity and modernity in terms of the constitution of the individual whose deep truth is its sexuality. Also in his later work, he seeks to identify ‘that thread that may connect us with the Enlightenment’ (1984: p. 42), a still existing historico-critical outlook.

The Archaeology of Knowledge was the last work Foucault explicitly identified as an archaeology and it marks the end of his focus on the unconscious rules of discourse and the historical shifts within each discursive field. This perspective has led theorists such as Habermas (1987a: p. 268) and Grumley (1989: p. 192) to wrongly argue that Foucault’s archaeologies grant ‘total autonomy’ to discourse over social institutions and practices. This critique of the early Foucault as idealist is belied, most obviously, by the focus on institutional supports of discourse in *Madness and Civilization*, but one also finds a concern with policing, surveillance, and disciplinary apparatuses already in *The Birth of the Clinic*, and an emphasis on the ‘materiality’ of discourse (albeit vaguely defined) in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (see also Foucault 1989: pp. 18-19).

Nevertheless, there is no doubt that Foucault’s archaeologies privileged analysis of theory and knowledge over practices and institutions. While Foucault’s limited focus had a legitimate philosophical justification, recasting traditional views of history and seeking an immanent clarification of the intelligibility of discourse in terms of linguistic rules unperceived by human

actors, a more adequate analysis would ultimately have to focus more directly on practices and institutions to situate discourse within its full social and political context. Working through the influence of Nietzsche, this became Foucault's project and marks his turn to genealogy and an explicit concern with power relations and effects.

2.1.2 Nietzsche and Genealogy

In 1970 Foucault began to make the transition from archaeology to genealogy and thereby to a more adequate theorization of material institutions and forms of power. In his essay, 'The Discourse of Language', he speaks of employing a new genealogical analysis of 'the effective formation of discourse, whether within the limits of control, or outside them' (1972: p. 233). In a summary of a course he gave in the Collège de France (1970-71), he stated that his earlier archaeological studies should now be conducted 'in relation to the will to knowledge' (1977: p. 201) and the power effects this creates. In his 1971 essay 'Nietzsche, Genealogy, and History', he analyzes the central Nietzschean themes that will inform his new historical method, which appears in mature form in his next major book, *Discipline and Punish* (1979; orig. 1975).

While genealogy signals a new shift in focus, it is not a break in his work, but rather a widening of the scope of analysis. Like archaeology, Foucault characterizes genealogy as a new mode of historical writing, calling the genealogist 'the new historian' (1977: p. 160). Both methodologies attempt to re-examine the social field from a micrological standpoint that enables one to identify discursive discontinuity and dispersion instead of continuity and identity, and to grasp historical events in their real complexity. Both methodologies, therefore, attempt to undo great chains of historical continuity and their teleological destinations and to historicize what is thought to be immutable. Foucault seeks to destroy historical identities by pluralizing the field of discourse, to purge historical writing of humanist assumptions by decentering the subject, and to critically analyze modern reason through a history of the human sciences.

In the transition to his genealogical stage, however, Foucault places more emphasis on the material conditions of discourse, which he defines in terms of 'institutions, political events, economic practices and processes' (1972: p. 49), and on analyzing the relations between discursive and non-discursive domains. Consequently, he thematizes the operations of power, particularly as they target the body to produce knowledge and subjectivity. This transition is not then a break between the idealist archaeological Foucault and the materialist genealogical Foucault, but rather marks a more adequate thematization of social practices and power relations that were implicit in his work all along.

Archaeology and genealogy now combine in the form of theory/practice where theory is immediately practical in character. As Foucault states (1980a: p. 85), "archaeology" would be the appropriate methodology of the analysis of local discursivities, and "genealogy" would be the tactics whereby on the basis of the descriptions of these local discursivities, the subjected knowledges which were thus released would be brought into play'. Where archaeology attempted to show that the subject is a fictitious construct, genealogy seeks to

foreground the material context of subject construction, to draw out the political consequences of 'subjectification', and to help form resistances to subjectifying practices. Where archaeology criticized the human sciences as being grounded in humanist assumptions genealogy links these theories to the operations of power and tries to put historical knowledge to work in local struggles. And where archaeology theorized the birth of the human sciences in the context of the modern *episteme* and the figure 'Man', genealogy highlights the power and effects relations they produced.

In *Discipline and Punish*, for example, Foucault describes the historical formation of the soul, body, and subject within various disciplinary matrices of power that operate in institutions such as prisons, schools, hospitals, and workshops. Disciplinary techniques include timetables for constant imposition and regulation of activity, surveillance measures to monitor performance, examinations such as written reports and files to reward conformity and penalize resistance, and 'normalizing judgement' to impose and enforce moral values such as the work ethic. The life of the student, soldier and prisoner are equally regulated and monitored. The individual now is interpreted not only as a discursive construct, but as an effect of political technologies through which its very identity, desires, body, and 'soul' are shaped and constituted. 'Discipline "makes" individuals; it is the specific technique of a power that regards individuals both as objects and as instruments of its exercise' (Foucault 1979: p. 170). The ultimate goal and effect of discipline is 'normalization', the elimination of all social and psychological irregularities and the production of useful and docile subjects through a refashioning of minds and bodies.

Similarly, in *The History of Sexuality* (1980b; orig. 1976) Foucault attempts to write the history of the 'polymorphous techniques of power' that since the end of the sixteenth century have rigorously inscribed the body within discourses of sexuality governed by a scientific will to knowledge. Power operates not through repression of sex, but through the discursive production of sexuality and subjects who have a 'sexual nature'. 'The deployment of sexuality has its reason for being ... in proliferating, innovating, annexing, creating, and penetrating bodies in an increasingly detailed way, and in controlling populations in an increasingly comprehensive way' (Foucault 1980b: p. 107). The production of the sexual body allows it to be inscribed within a network of normalizing powers where a whole regime of knowledge-pleasure is defined and controlled.

In order to theorize the birth of modern disciplinary and normalizing practices, genealogy politicizes all facets of culture and everyday life. Following Nietzsche's genealogies of morality, asceticism, justice, and punishment, Foucault tries to write the histories of unknown, forgotten, excluded, and marginal discourses. He sees the discourses of madness, medicine, punishment and sexuality to have independent histories and institutional bases, irreducible to macrophenomena such as the modern state and economy. Hence, against 'the tyranny of globalizing discourses' (Foucault 1980a: p. 83), he calls for 'an insurrection of subjugated knowledges' (1980a: p. 81), of those 'disqualified' discourses that positivistic science and Marxism delegitimize because they are deemed marginal and/or non-formalizable. Genealogies are therefore 'anti-sciences', not because they seek to 'vindicate a lyrical right to

ignorance or non-knowledge' and attack the concepts and methods of science *per se*, but rather because they contest 'the [coercive] effects of the centralizing powers which are linked to the institution and functioning of an organized scientific discourse' (1980a: p. 84).

2.2 Power/Knowledge/Subjectivity: Foucault's Postmodern Analytics

[W]e had to wait until the nineteenth century before we began to understand the nature of exploitation, and to this day, we have yet to fully comprehend the nature of power (Foucault 1977: p. 213).

Beginning in the early 1970s, Foucault attempts to rethink the nature of modern power in a non-totalizing, non-representational, and anti-humanist scheme. He rejects all modern theories that see power to be anchored in macrostructures or ruling classes and to be repressive in nature. He develops new postmodern perspectives that interpret power as dispersed, indeterminate, heteromorphous, subjectless and productive, constituting individuals' bodies and identities. He claims that the two dominant models for theorizing modern power, the juridical and economic models, are flawed by outmoded and erroneous assumptions. The economic model, as espoused by Marxists, is rejected as a reductionistic subordination of power to class domination and economic imperatives. The juridical model, his primary target, analyzes power in terms of law, legal and moral right, and political sovereignty. While the bourgeois revolution decapitated the king in the sociopolitical realm, Foucault argues that many concepts and assumptions of the sovereign-juridical model continue to inform modern thought (for example, in liberal theory and repression theories of power in general). He therefore attempts 'to cut off the head of the king' in the realm of theory with a genealogical guillotine.

Foucault marks a rupture in history that inaugurates a radically different mode of power than theorized on the juridical model, a power that is productive, not repressive, in nature, one which is 'bent on generating forces, making them grow, and ordering them, rather than one dedicated to impeding them, making them submit, or destroying them' (Foucault 1980b: p. 136). As evident from the dramatic historical shifts Foucault outlines in *Discipline and Punish*, from the gruesome torture of Damians to the moral reform of prisoners, schoolchildren, and others, this power operates not through physical force or representation by law, but through the hegemony of norms, political technologies, and the shaping of the body and soul.

In *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault terms this new mode of power 'bio-power'. Its first modality, as we have already discussed, is a disciplinary power that involves 'an *anatomo-politics of the human body*' (1980b: p. 139). Most generally, Foucault defines disciplines as 'techniques for assuring the ordering of human multiplicities' (1979: p. 218). Initially developed in monasteries and in late-seventeenth-century plague towns that required methods of spatial separation and population surveillance, disciplinary techniques soon extended throughout society, thereby forming a gigantic 'carceral archipelago'.

The second modality of bio-power, emerging subsequent to disciplinary power, focuses on the 'species body', the social population in general. 'Governments perceived that they were not dealing simply with subjects, or even with a "people", but with a "population", with its specific phenomena and its peculiar variables: birth and death rates, life expectancy, fertility, state of health, frequency of illnesses, patterns of diet and habitation' (Foucault 1980b: p. 25). The ensuing supervision of the population represents 'the entry of life into history', into a densely constituted field of knowledge, power, and techniques. Hence, in the eighteenth century, sexuality became an object of discursive administration and regulation. The 'deployment of sexuality' produced perversions and sexual categorizations of various sorts in accordance with normalizing strategies of power.

Against modern theories that see knowledge as neutral and objective (positivism) or emancipatory (Marxism), Foucault emphasizes that knowledge is indissociable from regimes of power. His concept of 'power/knowledge' is symptomatic of the postmodern suspicion of reason and the emancipatory schemes advanced in its name. The circular relationship between power and knowledge is established in Foucault's genealogical critiques of the human sciences. Having emerged within the context of relations of power, through practices and technologies of exclusion, confinement, surveillance, and objectification, disciplines such as psychiatry, sociology, and criminology in turn contributed to the development, refinement, and proliferation of new techniques of power. Institutions such as the asylum, hospital, or prison functioned as laboratories for observation of individuals, experimentation with correctional techniques, and acquisition of knowledge for social control.

The modern individual became both an object and subject of knowledge, not 'repressed', but positively shaped and formed within the matrices of 'scientifico-disciplinary mechanisms', a moral/legal/psychological/medical/sexual being 'carefully fabricated ... according to a whole technique of force and bodies' (Foucault 1979: p. 217). As Foucault understands it, the term 'subject' has a double meaning: one is both 'subject to someone else by control and dependence, and tied to . . . [their] own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge' (1982a: p. 212). Hence, as Dews (1987) has noted, Foucault rejects the Enlightenment model which links consciousness, self-reflection, and freedom, and instead follows Nietzsche's claim in *The Genealogy of Morals* that self-knowledge, particularly in the form of moral consciousness, is a strategy and effect of power whereby one internalizes social control.

Against modern theories that posit a pre-given, unified subject or an unchanging human essence that precedes all social operations, Foucault calls for the destruction of the subject and sees this as a key political tactic. 'One has to dispense with the constituent subject, and to get rid of the subject itself, that's to say, to arrive at an analysis which can account for the constitution of the subject within a historical framework' (Foucault 1980a: p. 117). The notion of a constituent subject is a humanist mystification that occludes a critical examination of the various institutional sites where subjects are produced within power relations. Taking his cue from Nietzsche, Foucault's task is to awaken thought from its humanist slumbers and to destroy 'all concrete forms of the anthropological prejudice', a task which would allow us

‘to renew contact ... with the project of a general critique of reason’ (Foucault 1973b: p. 342). To accomplish this, the subject must be ‘stripped of its creative role and analyzed as a complex and variable function of discourse’ (Foucault 1977: p. 138). Hence, Foucault rejects the active subject and welcomes the emerging postmodern era as a positive event where the denuding of agency occurs and new forms of thought can emerge (Foucault 1973a: p. 386).

As we see, Foucault’s account of power emphasizes the highly differentiated nature of modern society and the ‘heteromorphous’ power mechanisms that operate independent of conscious subjects. This postmodern theory attempts to grasp the plural nature of modernity itself, which Foucault believes modern social theory such as Marxism has failed to adequately understand. Modernity is characterized by the fact that ‘never have there existed more centres of power ... more circular contacts and linkages ... more sites where the intensity of pleasures and the persistency of power catch hold, only to spread elsewhere’ (Foucault 1980b: p. 49). Hence, Foucault defines power as ‘a multiple and mobile field of force relations where far-reaching, but never completely stable effects of domination are produced’ (1980b: p. 102). Modern power is a ‘relational’ power that is ‘exercized from innumerable points,’ is highly indeterminate in character, and is never something ‘acquired, seized, or shared’. There is no source or centre of power to contest, nor are there any subjects holding it; power is a purely structural activity for which subjects are anonymous conduits or by-products.

In opposition to modern totalizing analyses, Foucault undertakes a pluralized analysis of power and rationality as they are inscribed in various discourses and institutional sites. Demarcating his approach from the Frankfurt School and other modern approaches, Foucault rejects a generalized description of ‘rationalization’. Instead, he analyzes it as a process which occurs ‘in several fields, each grounded in a fundamental experience: madness, illness, death, crime, sexuality, etc.’ (1988d: p. 59). Consequently, Foucault conducts an ‘ascending’ rather than ‘descending’ analysis which sees power as circulating throughout a decentred field of institutional networks and is only subsequently taken up by larger structures such as class or the state. These macroforces ‘are only the terminal forms power takes’ (Foucault 1980b: p. 92). Moreover, this explains why Foucault calls his approach an ‘analytics’, rather than a ‘theory’ of power. The latter term implies a systematic, unitary viewpoint which he seeks to destroy in favour of a plural, fragmentary, differentiated, indeterminate, and historically and spatially specific mode of analysis.

We should therefore distinguish between a theory of postmodern power and a postmodern analytics of modern power. While there are salient postmodern aspects to his analysis of power, whereby he dissolves power into a plurality of microforces, and while he anticipates a new postmodern era, Foucault never theorizes those technologies and strategies that some theorists identify as constituting a postmodern power. For theorists such as Baudrillard (see Chapter 4), a postmodern power involves electronic media and information technologies and semiotic systems that undermine the distinction between reality and unreality and proliferates an abstract environment of images and manipulated signifiers. In fact, given Foucault’s desire to theorize ‘this precise moment in which we are living’, it is peculiar that he says nothing about these new forms of power which have emerged in this century as powerful social and

cultural forces, and which are only partially illuminated by the model of a disciplinary bio-power in that they involve the circulation of information and abstract sign systems. On Foucault's scheme, therefore, there have been no significant developments in the mechanisms and operations and power since the nineteenth century, an assumption that theorists such as Baudrillard sharply contest by positing the existence of a new postmodern society and a 'disembodied' semiotic power.

While Foucault does not identify a postmodern form of power, we have seen that he does anticipate a new postmodern *episteme* and historical era, describing his strong impression that 'something new is about to begin, something that we glimpse only as a thin line of light low on the horizon' (1973b: p. 384). But this era is not specified beyond its conception as a posthumanist era and is therefore not explored more broadly in terms of new social, economic, technological, or cultural processes. Indeed, as we shall show below, the move of Foucault's later thought was to shift from an analysis of modernity toward an analysis of premodernity in order to further develop his genealogy of the modern subject.

Moreover, in later essays such as 'What is Enlightenment?' (Foucault 1984: pp. 32-50) we find that far from positing a radical rupture in history, he draws key continuities between our current era and the Enlightenment. In doing this, he modifies his earlier critique of rationality in important ways which force rethinking of charges that he is an unrepentent irrationalist or aestheticist (see, for example, Megill 1985; Wolin 1986). While still critical of Enlightenment reason, Foucault attempts to positively appropriate key aspects of the Enlightenment heritage - its acute historical sense of the present, its emphasis on rational autonomy over conformity and dogma, and its critical outlook. He now sees the uncritical acceptance of modern rationality and its complete rejection as equally hazardous: 'if it is extremely dangerous to say that Reason is the enemy that should be eliminated, it is just as dangerous to say that any critical questioning risks sending us into irrationality' (1984: p. 249). This qualification rescues Foucault from the aporia of repudiating reason from a rational standpoint. Critical thought must constantly live within a field of tension; its function is to accept and theorize 'this sort of revolving door of rationality that refers us to its necessity, to its indispensability, and at the same time to its intrinsic dangers' (Foucault 1984: p. 249).

Hence, Foucault modified his attitude toward the Enlightenment, modernity, and rationality. While his early critiques of modernity are sharply negative, in his later work he sometimes adopts a more positive attitude, seeing a critical impulse in the modern will-to-knowledge which should be preserved. This leads him, as we will show below, to qualify his position that subjectivity is nothing but a construct of domination. Such changes are symptomatic of a shift in French thought away from earlier denunciations of reason and subjectivity. As we shall see, Lyotard made a similar reappraisal of reason and appropriated certain Kantian positions in his work (5.3). For now, let us examine the political implications of Foucault's genealogical method and analytics of power, before examining the shifts in the later Foucault.

2.3 Domination and Resistance: Foucault's Political Fragments

Free political action from all unitary and totalizing paranoia. Develop action, thought, and desires by proliferation, juxtaposition, and disjunction, and not by subdivision and pyramidal hierarchization (Foucault 1983: p. xiii).

Maybe the target nowadays is not to discover what we are, but to refuse what we are (Foucault 1982a: p. 216).

The cumulative effect of Foucault's archaeologies and genealogies is perhaps enervating. For, in his description, power is diffused throughout the social field, constituting individual subjectivities and their knowledges and pleasures, colonizing the body itself, utilizing its forces while inducing obedience and conformity. Since the seventeenth century, individuals have been caught within a complex grid of disciplinary, normalizing, panoptic powers that survey, judge, measure, and correct their every move. There are no 'spaces of primal liberty' in society; power is everywhere. 'What I am attentive to is the fact that every human relation is to some degree a power relation. We move in a world of perpetual strategic relations' (Foucault 1988d: p. 168).

Despite this intense vision of oppression, it is a mistake to see Foucault as a fatalist with respect to social and political change for his work can be read another way. Indeed, Foucault's own interventions into political struggles and debates would make little sense if he felt that the deadlock of power was unbreakable. One might even speak of Foucault's optimism that issues from his belief in the contingency and vulnerability of power: 'There's an optimism that consists in saying that things couldn't be better. My optimism would consist rather in saying that so many things can be changed, fragile as they are, bound up more with circumstances than necessities, more arbitrary than self-evident, more a matter of complex, but temporary, historical circumstances than with inevitable anthropological constraints' (Foucault 1988d: p. 156). Ultimately, this attitude proceeds on the belief that 'Knowledge can transform us' (1988d: p. 4) - hence the importance of archaeology and genealogy as historical methods that expose the beginnings and development of current subjectifying discourses and practices.

Misinterpretations of Foucault turn on a conflation between power as omnipresent and as omnipotent. While power is everywhere, it is indissociable from contestation and struggle: 'I am just saying: as soon as there is a power relation, there is a possibility of resistance. We can never be ensnared by power: we can always modify its grip in determinate conditions and according to a precise strategy' (Foucault 1988d: p. 123). The common argument that Foucault presents subjects as helpless and passive victims of power fails to observe his emphasis on the contingency and vulnerability of power and the places in his work where he describes actual resistances to it. In *Discipline and Punish*, for example, he briefly discusses 'popular illegalities' and strategies of indiscipline to counter the mechanisms of discipline and normalization (1979: pp. 273ff.). Similarly, in *The History of Sexuality*, he argues that while the discourses of 'perversity' multiplied the mechanisms of social control, they also produced

a reverse discourse where homosexuals appropriated them in order to demand their legitimacy as a group (1980b: p. 101).

Admittedly, such passages are rare and the overriding emphasis of Foucault's work is on the ways in which individuals are classified, excluded, objectified, individualized, disciplined, and normalized. Foucault himself became aware of this problem and shifted his emphasis from 'technologies of domination' to 'technologies of the self', from the ways in which individuals are transformed by others to the ways in which they transform themselves (see 2.3.2 below). Throughout his work, Foucault's remarks on political tactics are highly vague and tentative, and nothing like a 'Foucauldian politics' - which would entail the very systematic theory that he rejects - ever emerges. Nevertheless, there are distinctly Foucauldian strategies that break from the assumptions of the Marxist revolutionary tradition and constitute a postmodern approach to politics.

2.3.1 Post-Marxist/Postmodern Strategies: Politics of Genealogy

Instead of the Marxist binary model of class struggle between antagonistic classes, Foucault calls for a plurality of autonomous struggles waged throughout the microlevels of society, in the prisons, asylums, hospitals, and schools. For a modern concept of macropolitics where clashing forces struggle for control over a centralized source of power rooted in the economy and state, Foucault substitutes a postmodern concept of micropolitics where numerous local groups contest diffuse and decentred forms of power spreading throughout society.

The 'general intellectual' who 'represents' (that is, speaks on behalf of) all oppressed groups is demoted to the 'specific intellectual' who assumes a modest advisory role within a particular group and form of struggle. Foucault rejects nearly the entire vocabulary of classical Marxism. The concepts of liberation or emancipation, for example, imply for Foucault an inherent human essence waiting to be freed from the shackles of a repressive power. The notion of ideology, moreover, assumes the possibility of a true consciousness and a form of truth constituted outside the field of power, as well as a power based on mental representations rather than physical discipline. Finally, Foucault finds the very idea of revolution to be erroneous insofar as it entails a large-scale social transformation radiating from a central point (the state or mode of production), rather than a detotalized proliferation of local struggles against a relational power that no one owns. '[T]here is no locus of great Refusal, no soul of revolt, source of all rebellions, or pure law of the revolutionary. Instead there is a plurality of resistances, each of them a special case' (Foucault 1980b: pp. 95-6).

If Foucault is right that modern power is irreducibly plural, that it proliferates and thrives at the local and capillary levels of society, and is only subsequently taken up by larger institutional structures, then it follows that a change only in the form of the state, mode of production, or class composition of society fails to address autonomous trajectories of power. Thus, the key assumption behind the micrological strategies of thinkers like Foucault, Deleuze and Guattari, and Lyotard, is that since power is decentred and plural, so in turn must be forms of political struggle. A Foucauldian postmodern politics, therefore, attempts to break with unifying and totalizing strategies, to cultivate multiple forms of resistance, to

destroy the prisons of received identities and discourses of exclusion, and to encourage the proliferation of differences of all kinds.

The political task of genealogy, then, is to recover the autonomous discourses, knowledges, and voices suppressed through totalizing narratives. The subjugated voices of history speak to hidden forms of domination; to admit their speech is necessarily to revise one's conception of what and where power is. As Marx attempted to break the spell of commodity fetishism in capitalist society, or as the surrealist and Russian formalists practised 'defamiliarization' techniques to shatter the grip of ordinary sensibility, so genealogy problematizes the present as eternal and self-evident, exposing the operations of power and domination working behind neutral or beneficent facades. In Foucault's words (1974: p. 171): 'It seems to me that the real political task in a society such as ours is to criticize the working of institutions which appear to be both neutral and independent; to criticize them in such a manner that the political violence which has always exercised itself obscurely through them will be unmasked, so that one can fight them.'

Genealogies attempt to demonstrate how objectifying forms of reason (and their regimes of truth and knowledge) have been made, as historically contingent rather than eternally necessary forces. Consequently, 'they can be unmade, as long as we know how it was they were made' (Foucault 1988d: p. 37). Foucault's genealogy of sexuality was written with such purposes in mind. He attempted to problematize contemporary notions of sexual liberation by demonstrating that the concepts of sexual nature or sexuality originated in early Christian culture and in modernity became articulated with disciplinary and therapeutic techniques that work to imprison individuals in normalizing discourses and identities.

In our reading, a Foucauldian micropolitics includes two key components: a discourse politics and a bio-politics. In discourse politics, marginal groups attempt to contest the hegemonic discourses that position individuals within the straitjacket of normal identities to liberate the free play of differences. In any society, discourse is power because the rules determining discourse enforce norms of what is rational, sane, or true, and to speak from outside these rules is to risk marginalization and exclusion. All discourses are produced by power, but they are not wholly subservient to it and can be used as 'a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy' (Foucault 1980b: p. 101). Counter-discourses provide a lever of political resistance by encapsulating a popular memory of previous forms of oppression and struggle and a means of articulating needs and demands. In bio-struggle, by contrast, individuals attempt to break from the grip of disciplinary powers and to reinvent the body by creating new modes of desire and pleasure. Foucault believes that the development of new bodies and pleasures have the potential to subvert the construction of normalized subject identities and forms of consciousness. The political deployment of the body, however, could not take the form of a 'liberation of sexuality', as Reich or Marcuse call for, since sexuality is a normalizing construct of modernity. Hence, for Foucault, 'the rallying point for the counterattack against the deployment of sexuality ought not to be sex-desire, but bodies and pleasures' (1980b: p. 157).

There is some tension between these two strategies since discourse politics promotes a critical reflexivity and a popular counter-memory and bio-politics explores the transgressive potential of the body. The first perspective emphasizes the historical constitution of everything human and the second sometimes verges toward a naive naturalism. Ultimately, this reflects the tension that runs throughout Foucault's work between discursive and extra-discursive emphases. There is also tension between the emphases on the ubiquity of domination and the possibility of resistance insofar as the balance of description is tipped toward the side of a domination that shapes every aspect of mental and physical existence, while very few specifics about resistance are given and the efficacy of human agency, at least theoretically, is denied. Moreover, as Fraser notes (1989: p. 60), it is not clear how the 'bodies and pleasures' Foucault valorizes are not, like 'sexuality', also power effects or implicated in normalizing strategies. Foucault contradicts himself in claiming that everything is historically constituted within power relations and then privileging some realm of the body as a transcendental source of transgression. He thereby seems to reproduce the kind of essentialist anthropology for which he attacks humanism.

Nevertheless, discourse and bio-struggle are intended to facilitate the development of new forms of subjectivity and values (Foucault 1982a: p. 216). The precondition for the development of new subjectivities is the dissolution of the old ones, a move first anticipated in *The Order of Things*. While Foucault never provided any conception of human agency, he did, unlike Althusser and other structuralist or poststructuralist thinkers, gesture towards a positive reconstruction of subjectivity in a posthumanist problematic. This move occurs in his later works - the second and third volumes of his history of sexuality and various essays and interviews from the 1980s - and it moves into the forefront of Foucault's thought a concern with ethics and technologies of the self.

2.3.2 *Ethics and Technologies of the Self*

We have to create ourselves as a work of art (Foucault 1982b: p. 237).

[Genealogy] is seeking to give new impetus, as far and wide as possible, to the undefined work of freedom (Foucault 1984: p. 46).

In this section we describe the third major shift in Foucault's work, from the archaeological focus on systems of knowledge in the 1960s, to the genealogical focus on modalities of power in the 1970s, to the focus on technologies of the self, ethics, and freedom in the 1980s. There are both continuities and dramatic discontinuities if we compare the early and middle with the later Foucault. The continuities concern the extension of his archaeological and genealogical investigations to a new field of study that seeks the beginnings of the modern hermeneutic of desire - the search for the deep truth of one's being in one's 'sexuality' - in Greek, Roman, and Christian culture; the discontinuities arise in regard to his new focus on a self-constituting subject and his reconsideration of rationality and autonomy.

Throughout his career, Foucault has been concerned with the problematization of fundamental domains of experience in Western culture such as madness, illness, deviance, and sexuality. He has shown how subjectivity is constituted in a wide range of discourses and practices, within a field of power, knowledge, and truth. His project is to develop a multiperspectival critique of modernity and its institutions, discourses, practices, and forms of subjectivity. In his books, essays, and interviews from the 1980s, however, Foucault leaves the familiar terrain of modernity to study premodern Greek, Roman, and Christian cultures.

This temporal shift was prompted by the demands of the project initiated in *The History of Sexuality* (envisaged as a six-volume study of the genealogy of modern sexuality). The attempt to theorize how and when individuals first seek the truth of their being as subjects of desire through a hermeneutics of the self, led Foucault to analyze the beginnings of this process in early Christian cultures and the continuities and discontinuities between Christian and modern morality. In trying to locate the beginnings of the constitution of the self as a subject of desire, he traced the matrices of Christian morality to Greek and Roman culture. In the second and third volumes of his project, *The Use of Pleasure* (1986; orig. 1984) and *The Care of the Self* (1988a; orig. 1984), he analyzed the similarities and differences between Greek and Roman morality, and the continuities and discontinuities between Greco-Roman morality and Christian and modern morality. For Foucault, there are continuities throughout Western culture in terms of a problematization of desire as a powerful force that needs to be morally regulated; the discontinuities arise, as we shall see, in terms of the different modes of regulation.

The most dramatic transformations in the later Foucault, however, concern not the temporal changes in the fields of study, or the new expository writing style, but the focus of the new project and the revaluation of previous positions. As we have already seen, one important shift in Foucault's later work involves a revaluation of the Enlightenment in terms of its positive contributions to a critique of the present era and his identification of his own work with a trajectory of critical theory running from Kant to Nietzsche to the Frankfurt School. The second major difference involves a qualified turn to a problematic of the creative subject, which was previously rejected as a humanist fiction, along with the use of the vocabulary of freedom, liberty, and autonomy, previously eschewed by the theorist of the death of man. Foucault's concern is still a history of the organization of knowledge and subjectivity, but now the emphasis is on the knowledge relation a self has with itself.

These changes occur as Foucault shifts the focus from technologies of domination, where subjects are dominated and objectified by others through discourses and practices, to technologies of the self, where individuals create their own identities through ethics and forms of self-constitution. Explaining his motivations in an 'auto-critique', Foucault says: 'If one wants to analyze the genealogy of the subject in Western civilization, one has to take into account not only techniques of domination, but also techniques of the self. One has to show the interaction between these two types of self. When I was studying asylums, prison, and so on, I perhaps insisted too much on techniques of domination ... I would like, in the years to

come, to study power relations starting from techniques of the self (Foucault and Sennet 1982c: p. 10).

Foucault defines technologies of the self as practices ‘which permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality’ (1988c: p. 18). Given this new emphasis, subjectivity is no longer characterized only as a reified construct of power; the deterministic view of the subject is rejected; impersonal, functionalist explanations give way to a study of how individuals can transform their own subjectivities through techniques of the self. Discipline, in the form of these techniques, is no longer viewed solely as an instrument of domination. Furthermore, issues concerning the freedom and autonomy of individuals emerge as central concerns.

These changes in Foucault’s work were influenced by his study of Greek and Roman cultures where techniques of the self, as practiced by free males (slaves and women were excluded from the ethical field) provided models of the practice of freedom. In *The Use of Pleasure* and *The Care of the Self*, Foucault analyzes how Greek and Roman citizens problematized desire as an area of intense moral concern and defined key domains of experience (diet, family relations, and sexuality) as areas requiring moderation and self-control. For the Greeks, especially, ethics was immediately bound up with an ‘aesthetics of existence’ where it was admirable to turn one’s life into a work of art through self-mastery and ethical stylization.

In *The Use of Pleasure*, Foucault debunks the common interpretation of Greek culture as wholly libertarian in its attitudes toward desire to show that the Greeks saw desire as a powerful and potentially destructive force in need of moderation and regulation. The practice of austerity and self-formation through knowledge, therefore, begins not with the Christians, but in antiquity itself. In *The Care of the Self*, Foucault describes how the problematization of pleasure in Roman society takes basically the same form as in Greek society, with the difference that there is less emphasis on aesthetics of existence, a greater emphasis on marriage and heterosexuality, an increase in austerity in the form of a ‘care of the self’, and a greater tendency to situate ethics and self-knowledge within the discourse of truth. Thus, although Roman morality is more continuous with Greek morality than with Christianity, Christian culture constitutes a genuine rupture within Western societies and is far more continuous with modern culture than with Greco-Roman culture.

Unlike Christian morality, Greek and Roman morality aimed not at abstinence *per se*, but at moderation and self-control; it was not a question of banishing or stigmatizing desire and pleasure, but of their proper use. Where Romans saw desire as potentially evil in its effects, Christians saw it as evil by its very nature. In Christian culture, caring for the self took the form of renunciation and debasement of the self. Moreover, where in Greek and Roman culture moral problematizations were ultimately the responsibility of each individual who wished to give style, beauty, and grace to his existence, Christian culture employed universal

ethical interdictions and rigid moral codification. Beginning in Christian cultures, the care for the self shifts from aesthetic or ethical grounds towards a hermeneutics of desire where individuals seek the deep truth of their being in their 'sexuality', a move that opens the way to modernity and its normalizing institutions. Thus, despite the fact that in secularized modern cultures science replaces religion as the locus of knowledge and value, there are fundamental continuities in terms of the hermeneutical search for the deep truth of the self and an essentialist view of the self which this project entails.

In Foucault's reading of Greco-Roman culture, ethics is the relation an individual has with itself. This is not to say that there is no social component to ethics, for mastery of and caring for the self is inscribed in a nexus of social and pedagogical relations and aims at developing oneself as a better ruler over oneself and other people. Whereas other forms of ethics such as Kantianism focus on the duties and obligations a self has to others, the Greco-Roman model holds that the freedom of individuals (defined not as free will or in opposition to determinism, but in relation to mastery of one's desires) was essential for the overall good of the city and state, and that the person who could best rule himself could best rule other people. On this model, ethics is the deliberative component of free activity and the basis for a prolonged practice of the self whereby one seeks to problematize and master one's desires and to constitute oneself as a free self.

While Foucault does not uncritically affirm Greek culture, and expresses his distaste for their hierarchical and patriarchal society (1982b: pp. 231-2), the unstated normative assumption is that Greco-Roman ethical practice is superior to Christian and modern moral systems. Foucault rarely explicitly states his moral and political preferences. Indeed, the most often made criticism of his work is that he fails to define and defend the implicit normative assumptions of his analyses and politics and hence provides no theoretical basis for his vigorous critiques of domination (see Fraser 1989; Rachjman 1985; Taylor 1986; Walzer 1986; Dews 1987; Habermas 1987a and 1987b). Nevertheless, Foucault seems to suggest that Greek and Roman cultures offer contemporary individuals elements of a model for overcoming modern forms of subjectivity and creating new forms of life that break with coercive normalizing institutions of modernity. Foucault seems to be embracing the reinvention of the self as an autonomous and self-governing being who enjoys new forms of experience, pleasure, and desire in stylized forms. In a rare moment of normative declaration, he proclaims that 'We have to promote new forms of subjectivity through the refusal of this kind of [normalized] individuality which has been imposed on us for centuries' (1982a: p. 216).

But Foucault is adamant that the Greeks do not offer an 'alternative' (1982b: p. 231) for contemporary society, only an example of a non-normalizing morality which modern cultures will have to develop themselves: 'Trying to rethink the Greeks today does not consist of setting off Greek morality as the domain of morality *par excellence* which one would need for self-reflection. The point rather is to see to it that European thinking can take up Greek thinking again as an experience which took place once and with regard to which one can be

completely free' (Foucault 1985: p. 7), 'free', that is, of nostalgia for a lost world or a past normative model to reproduce in the present.

Hence, the genealogical importance of Foucault's historical inquiries into ethics would seem to involve the valorization of a form of ethical practice that is non-universalizing and non-normalizing, attentive to individual differences, while emphasizing individual liberty and the larger social context of the freedom of the self. As Foucault says, 'What was missing in classical antiquity was the problematization of the constitution of the self as a subject ... Because of this, certain questions pose themselves to us in the same terms as they were posed in antiquity. The search for styles as different from each other as possible seems to me to be one of the points on which particular groups in the past may have inaugurated searches we are engaged in today' (1985: p. 12). Ethics here depends not so much on moral norms as free choice and aesthetic criteria and avoids subjectivizing the individual into a normalized, universal ethical subject. The task is not to 'discover' oneself, one's secret inner being, but rather to continually produce oneself. A goal of genealogy here, like before, is to help delegitimize the present through a recuperation of a radically different past. Yet where earlier Foucault sought a vindication of marginalized and excluded groups, here he is analyzing the moral codes of ruling classes, finding among the privileged elite of antiquity a way of life and form of ethics radically different from what one finds in the modern world, and which presents a useful critical perspective on modernity. For Foucault now defines the task of genealogy as an attempt to create a space for freedom where there can be a 'constitution of ourselves as autonomous subjects' (Foucault 1984: p. 43).

Foucault still rejects essentialist liberation models that assume the self is an inner essence waiting to be liberated from its repression or alienation. He contrasts liberation with liberty, and defines the later as an ongoing ethical practice of self-mastery and care of the self. He sees liberty as 'the ontological condition of ethics' and ethics as 'the deliberate form assumed by liberty' (1988b: p. 4). Similarly, the return of the 'subject' in Foucault is not a return to a pre-archaeological - i.e., humanist or phenomenological - concept of the subject endowed with an inner essence or originary will that precedes and stands apart from the social. The subject is still discursively and socially conditioned for Foucault, and still theorized as situated within power relations; the difference is that he now sees that individuals also have the power to define their own identity, to master their body and desires, and to forge a practice of freedom through techniques of the self. What Foucault now suggests, therefore, is a dialectic between an active and creative agent and a constraining social field where freedom is achieved to the extent that one can overcome socially imposed limitations and attain self-mastery and a stylized existence. As Foucault says: 'if now I am interested ... in the way in which the subject constitutes himself in an active fashion, by the practices of the self, these practices are nevertheless not something that the individual invents by himself. They are patterns that he finds in his culture and which are proposed, suggested, and imposed on him by his culture, his society and his social group' (1988b: p. 11).

Where earlier it could be said that Foucault privileged political issues relating to the theme of power, in his later work he states that 'what interests me is much more morals than

politics or, in any case, politics as an ethics' (1984: p. 375). This is not to say that Foucault abandons his past concepts and methods, for all three 'axes' of his studies overlap in his later works on techniques of self: the archaeology of problematizations intersects with a genealogy of the ethical practices of the self. Nor is it to say that the turn to analysis of techniques of the self represents a rejection of his earlier political positions, since ethics for Foucault suggests the struggle of individuals against the forces that dominate, subjugate, and subjectify them. But the analysis of power undergoes an interesting mutation in this stage of Foucault's work. He continues to hold that all social relations are characterized by power and resistance (1988b: pp. 11-12), but he distinguishes now between power and domination, seeing domination as the solidification of power relations such that they become relatively fixed in asymmetrical forms and the spaces of liberty and resistance thus become limited (1988b: p. 12).

In the later Foucault, emphasis on technologies of the self decentres the prior emphasis on power and domination. Yet, it would be a mistake to think that domination disappears altogether in this stage of his work. First, one finds an emphasis on gaining power and domination over oneself, of subduing and mastering one's desires and body in a self-relation of 'domination-submission' and 'command-obedience' (Foucault 1986a: p. 70). Here the conflict between power and the autonomy of the self is overcome as freedom is defined as mastery of and power over oneself. Second, in his history of ethics, Foucault foregrounds the domination of men over women. He constantly stresses that the Greco-Roman project of self-mastery is a strictly male concern from which women are excluded, or, if they are included at all, it is only in order to be a better servant for the man (see 1986: pp. 22-3, 47, 83-4, 154-6) - although in Roman culture women gained a greater degree of equality with the increased importance of the marriage institution (1988a: pp. 75-80). Thus, while feminist critiques of Foucault rightly point out that his early and middle works fail to confront power in the form of male domination (see the essays in Diamond and Quinby 1988), his later works on ethics discuss to some extent gender differences and male domination.⁴

Furthermore, we find that critics like Megill (1985) and Wolin (1986) exaggerate the Nietzschean aestheticism in Foucault's work, since the concepts of aesthetics of existence and care of the self imply some form of reflexive practice, acquired habits, and cognitive capacities.⁵ As Foucault emphasizes in his later works, the aesthetic stylization and practice of freedom these technologies of the self may involve are impossible without self-knowledge and rational self-control. While Foucault sometimes may have privileged the aesthetic over the cognitive component of the constitution of the self, we find a shift within the later Foucault away from an emphasis on creating one's life as a work of art toward a care of the self where he moves ever closer to some of the Enlightenment positions he earlier described under the sign of social coercion. Indeed, the later Foucault sometimes sounds almost Kantian in his later embrace of the Enlightenment 'historico-critical attitude' and its discourse of autonomy, in his concern for the question 'What are we today?', in his emphasis on the formation of oneself as a thinker and moral agent, and in his conception of philosophy as a project of critique (Foucault 1984: pp. 42ff.).⁶

Yet there are several undertheorized aspects of Foucault's later writings. While Foucault signals in places that an ethics of self-mastery and care of the self has a social dimension involving how the governing of the self is integrated into the governing of others, he does little to bring this out. He thus has no social ethics or theory of intersubjectivity - a problem we shall note in other postmodern theorists. We therefore find an individualistic turn in Foucault's later works where his earlier emphases on the politics of genealogy are submerged in the project of care for the self and where individual differences - 'the search for styles [of existence] as different as possible from each other' - are emphasized over social and political solidarity.⁷ Symptomatically, the social or cultural field is defined as something that is 'imposed' rather than a positive field for self-constitution.

If Foucault intends his ethics to have a substantive social and political dimension, it is not clear how and when self-constitution leads to social contestation nor why care of the self - especially in our present culture dominated by therapeutic and media industries - does not lead to narcissistic self-absorption and a withdrawal from the complexities and vicissitudes of social and political life. We are not arguing for any false separation between ethics and politics for, certainly, the struggle against the disciplinary archipelago within each one of us is an important political act and on this count ethics can be seen as an extension of Foucault's earlier micropolitical concerns. But this struggle has to be placed in a larger sociopolitical context that Foucault only hints at and does not specify; and the emphasis on personal ethics should be supplemented with a social ethics that is lacking in Foucault.

In general, while Foucault has developed an interesting new perspective that overcomes some of the problems of his genealogical stage, such as speaking of political resistance on one hand and rejecting the category of the subject on the other, he creates for himself a whole new set of problems. In particular, he does not adequately mediate the shift from technologies of domination to technologies of the self and fails to clarify the connections between ethics, aesthetics, and politics. He did not, therefore, accomplish his task 'to show the interaction between these two types of self (Foucault 1982c: p. 10), between the constituted and constituting self.

Thus, he leaves untheorized the problem of how technologies of the self can flourish in our present era which, as he claims, is saturated with power relations. His attempts to situate discursive shifts within a social and historical setting remain vague and problematic (for example, his attempt to 'explain' the social and political forces behind the Roman cultivation of the self; see 1988a: pp. 71-95). Moreover, Daraki notes (1986), there is a symptomatic displacement of politics and democracy in Foucault's study of the Greeks. His focus is solely on sexuality and the techniques of self-constitution rather than on the Greek practices of democratic self-government. Foucault stresses that mastery of the self is essential for mastery of others, but nowhere discusses the constitution of the self through democratic social practices. This omission points to a typical ignoring of democracy, a word he rarely employs, which points to his decentering of politics and his individualistic tendencies, since democracy is a socially constituted project. And Foucault downplays the importance of the demise of the city state in the transition from Greece to Rome, as if the disappearance of democracy

was not a key factor in the ‘withdrawal into the self’ in Rome which Foucault himself presents as a key feature of the era.

Foucault’s continued refusal to specify alternative modes of subjectivity and social organization to those of modernity, and to develop a normative standpoint from which to criticize domination and project alternative forms of social and individual organization undermines the critical import of his work. Against conventional Foucault scholarship, Gandal (1986) persuasively argues that Foucault resists specifying his values and normative beliefs not because he feared reproducing power (Foucault understood that everything is more or less cooptable), but because he was concerned strictly with the strategic uses of his ideas, rather than their justifications. While Gandal provides a lucid account of Foucault’s politics, his apologetics fail to grasp that Foucault’s refusal to specify his normative commitments, whatever the practical efficacy of his positions, forces him into vague formulations, as when it prevents him from clarifying what our freedom should be from and for.

2.4 Foucauldian Perspectives: Some Critical Comments

Foucault’s work has had a profound impact on virtually every field in the humanities and social sciences. Undoubtedly, one of the most valuable aspects of his work is to sensitize theorists to the pervasive operations of power and to highlight the problematic or suspicious aspects of rationality, knowledge, subjectivity, and the production of social norms. In richly detailed analyses, he demonstrates how power is woven into all aspects of social and personal life, pervading the schools, hospitals, prisons, and social sciences. Following Nietzsche, Foucault questions seemingly beneficent forms of thought and value (such as humanism, self-identity, and utopian schemes) and forces us to rethink them anew. Where Nietzsche showed how the highest values have the lowliest ‘origins’, for example, how morality is rooted in immorality and resentment, and how all values and knowledge are manifestations of the will to power, Foucault exposes the links between power, truth, and knowledge, and describes how liberal-humanist values are intertwined with and supports of technologies of domination. Foucault’s work is a powerful critique both of macrotheorists who see power only in terms of class or the state, and microtheorists who analyze institutions and face-to-face interaction while ignoring power altogether.

For all its virtues, however, Foucault’s work also suffers from a number of limitations. While Foucault came to acknowledge some positive aspects of Enlightenment reason, he failed to follow suit for the institutions and technologies of modernity. His critique of modernity remains too one-sided in its focus on repressive forms of rationalization and fails to delineate any progressive aspects of modernity (see Merquior 1985; Walzer 1986; Taylor 1986; Habermas 1987a). On Foucault’s scheme, modernity brings no advances in medicine, democracy, or literacy, but only in the efficacy of domination. While Habermas’ characterization of Foucault as a ‘young conservative’ (1983) is problematic and itself one-dimensional (see Fraser 1989: pp. 35-54), he has correctly observed that Foucault describes all aspects of modernity as disciplinary and ignores the progressive aspects of modern social and political forms in terms of advances in liberty, law, and equality (see 7.32).

In general, Foucault's writings tend to be one-sided. His archaeological works privilege discourse over institutions and practices, his genealogical works emphasize domination over resistance and self-formation, and his later works analyze the constitution of the self apart from detailed considerations of social power and domination. The shift from technologies of domination to technologies of the self is abrupt and unmediated, and Foucault never adequately theorizes both sides of the structure/agency problem. He leaves behind his earlier political positions for a 'politics as ethics' and shifts the focus from analysis of social institutions to analysis of medical and philosophical texts of antiquity, never returning to analysis of the present era and its urgent political issues.

Moreover, while Foucault has argued that power breeds resistance and has on occasion pointed to tactics of resistance, there is no adequate description of resistance, the scope, detail, and rigour of which approaches the analysis of technologies of domination. To put it another way, a *genealogy of resistance* remains to be written as a full-scale study and historical perspective in its own right. Interestingly, in his later essay 'The Subject and Power' (1982a: pp. 210-11), Foucault proposes an alternative method of studying power relations: from the perspective of resistance to power rather than the exercise of power. This is similar to the proposal of Antonio Negri (1984) who analyzed class struggle from the perspective of the 'self-valorization' of workers against capital.⁸ But Foucault never followed through on this proposal, nor did he ever adequately specify the meaning of the terms struggle, force relations, resistance, and opposition, the same problem for which he chastized Marxist analyses of class struggle (Foucault 1980a: p. 208). In his later work he might have theorized political resistance as a form of technologies of the self, as a creative response to coercive practices, but, as we have been arguing; Foucault's later work lacks substantive political dimensions.

On Foucault's account, power is mostly treated as an impersonal and anonymous force which is exercised apart from the actions and intentions of human subjects. Foucault methodologically brackets the question of who controls and uses power for which interests to focus on the means by which it operates. Whatever new light this perspective sheds in its emphasis that power operates in a diffuse force-field of relations of subjugation and struggle, it occludes the extent to which power is still controlled and administered by specific and identifiable agents in positions of economic and political power, such as members of corporate executive boards, bankers, the mass media, political lobbyists, land developers, or zealous outlaws in the Pentagon and White House.

While Foucault opens up a space for rethinking power and political strategies, he provides very little positive content with which to fill it and has no means whatsoever for a normative grounding of the critique of domination. Since his emphasis is on the microlevel of resistance, Foucault does not adequately address the problem of how to achieve alliances within local struggles or how an oppositional political movement might be developed. If indeed it is important to multiply and autonomize forms of resistance to counter the numerous tentacles of power, it is equally important to link these various struggles to avoid fragmentation. The question becomes: how can we create, in Gramsci's terms, a 'counter-hegemonic bloc'? This

is a question which concerns Guattari, Laclau and Mouffe, some feminists, and Jameson, but to which Foucault has no response. At times, he seems to recognize the problem, as when he speaks of the ‘danger of remaining at the level of conjunctural struggles’ and ‘the risk of being unable to develop these struggles for lack of a global [!] strategy or outside support’ (1980a: p. 130). But he then dodges the problem, retreats to an insistence of the efficacy of ‘specific struggles’, and speaks as though larger macrostruggles would somehow take shape on their own accord apart from the strategies and intentions of human subjects.

Moreover, Foucault rarely analyzes the important role of macropowers such as the state or capital. While in *Madness and Civilization* and *Discipline and Punish* he occasionally points to the determining power of capitalism, and in *The History of Sexuality* he sees the state as an important component of ‘bio-power’, macrological forces are seriously undertheorized in his work. In Foucault’s defence, it could be argued that his intention is to offer novel perspectives on power as a diffuse, disciplinary force, but his microperspectives nevertheless need to be more adequately conjoined with macroperspectives that are necessary to illuminate a wide range of contemporary issues and problems such as state power (as manifested in oppressive laws or increasingly powerful surveillance technologies) and the persistence of class domination and the hegemony of capital.

As Poulantzas (1978) observes, Foucault seriously understates the continued importance of violence and overt repression. For Poulantzas, by contrast, ‘*State-monopolized physical violence permanently underlies the techniques of power and mechanisms of consent: it is inscribed in the web of disciplinary and ideological devices; and even when not directly exercised, it shapes the materiality of the social body upon which domination is brought to bear*’ (1978: p. 81). Poulantzas does not deny the validity of Foucault’s perspective of disciplinary power, he only insists that it wrongly abstracts from state power and repression which, for Poulantzas, are the conditions of possibility of a disciplinary society. As we shall see, the neglect of macrotheory and political economy is a recurrent lacuna of all postmodern theory (see Chapter 8).

In order to more satisfactorily analyze the totalizing operations of macropowers, Foucault would have to modify his ‘theory-as-tool-kit’ approach and adopt a more systemic mode of analysis. In fact, there are numerous places in his texts where he lapses into totalizing claims and positions and tries to theorize certain types of unities or systems. One often finds highly general statements about power and domination that apply to all societies: ‘in any society, there are manifold relations of power’ whose existence depends on the production and circulation of ‘a certain economy of discourses and truth’ (Foucault 1980a: p. 93). Similarly, he has spoken about relations of power whose ‘interconnections delineate general conditions of domination’ where ‘domination is organised into a more-or-less coherent and unitary strategic form’ (1980a: p. 142). He has even referred to ‘the global functioning of . . . a *society of normalisation*’ (1980a: p. 107).

Thus, Foucault utilizes global and totalizing concepts as he simultaneously prohibits them, resulting in a ‘performative contradiction’ (Habermas). Our quarrel with Foucault is not that

such generalized statements or analyses are fallacious or misconceived, for we shall argue in favour of forms of systemic theory, but rather that they are inconsistent with his strident attacks on ‘the tyranny of globalising discourses’. To the extent that disciplinary powers assume a ‘global functioning’, their analysis will require a form of global or systemic analysis. Like other poststructuralists, Foucault fails to distinguish between legitimate and illegitimate kinds of totalities and macrotheories, for example between open and heterogeneous modes of analysis that situate seemingly discrete particulars within a common context of determination, and homogeneous modes which obliterate differences among diverse phenomena. Foucault, in fact, employs both kinds of analysis, while polemicizing against totalizing thought *tout court*. If his analysis of a ‘regularity in dispersion’ in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* is an example of a complex and open system, his all-out attack (until his 1980s writings) on modernity, rationality, and knowledge is an example of a closed and reductive approach. In many ways, Foucault violates his own methodological imperative to ‘respect differences’.

Thus, Foucault is beset by competing theoretical commitments. He is a conflicted thinker whose work oscillates between totalizing and detotalizing impulses, discursive and biopolitics, destroying the subject and resurrecting it, assailing forms of domination but eschewing normative language and metadiscourse. He sometimes attacks the Enlightenment and modern theory *in toto* while at other times aligning himself with their progressive heritage. His later positions seek a cultivation of the subject in an individualistic mode that stands in tension with emphasis on political struggle by oppressed groups.

Ironically, this thinker often associated with the postmodern ended his career affirming Enlightenment criticism and Greek ethics while entrenched in the study of antiquity and writing in the style of a classicist. Throughout various times Foucault employed a rhetoric of the postmodern, referring to new forms of knowledge and the dawn of a new era in *The Order of Things*, to a new form of postdisciplinary and posthumanist rights in *Power/Knowledge* (1980a: p. 108), to new bodies and pleasures in *The History of Sexuality*, and to ‘new forms of subjectivity’ in a later essay (1982a: p. 216). Moreover, in his later work he embraces philosophy as a project of critical reflection on the contemporary era, on ‘this precise moment in which we are living’ (1982a: p. 216). Yet, Foucault ultimately abandoned the pathos of the postmodern to descend into the dusty archives of antiquity. He thereby not only retreated from ‘an enigmatic and troubling “postmodernity”’ (Foucault 1984: p. 39), he became something of a classicist and modernist with Kantian elements, while continuing the postmodern project of rejecting universal standpoints in order to embrace difference and heterogeneity. Thus, we find a complex, eclectic mixture of premodern, modern, and postmodern elements in Foucault, with the postmodern elements receding ever further into the background of his work.

As we turn now to Deleuze and Guattari, we shall find that they adopt many similar positions to Foucault, but also offer quite different perspectives on power, subjectivity, modernity, and politics, as well as providing other models of postmodern thought, writing, and living.

Notes

1. This empathy is demonstrated in the conclusion to *Madness and Civilization* (1973a), in *I. Pierre Rivière* (1975b), and in the introduction to *Herculine Barbin* (1980c).

2. Foucault has his own specialized periodizing discourse. He rarely uses the term 'modernity' and tends to speak instead of the 'modern age' which he distinguished from the Renaissance and classical eras, as well as the unnamed era that succeeds it which could be called, literally, postmodern. We sometimes collapse Foucault's distinction between the classical and modern eras to speak of his 'critique of modernity', since the disciplinary and normalizing powers of the modern era begin in the classical era. Moreover, Foucault rarely mentions and nowhere adopts the discourse of the postmodern. In response to one interviewer's question about postmodernity, Foucault says, 'What are we calling postmodernity? I'm not up to date ... I do not understand what kind of problem is common to the people we call postmodern or poststructuralist' (Foucault 1988d: pp. 33-4). Of course, Foucault might be speaking ironically or playfully here and may know more about these discourses than he is letting on. Whether Foucault is knowledgeable of these developments or not, there are salient postmodern aspects to his thought and he periodizes a postmodern break in history. In the final chapter of *The Order of Things*, and in a 1967 interview (1989: p. 30), he says, 'I can define the modern age in its singularity only by opposing it to the seventeenth century on one hand and to us on the other; it is necessary, therefore in order to be able to continuously establish the division, to make the difference that separates us from them surge up under each of our sentences.' He then says the 'modern age ... begins around 1790-1810 and goes to around 1950'.

3. Nietzsche's perspectival theory, however, did not commit him to relativism of the kind that all values are equally good or plausible, since he believed that the perspectives of the 'higher types' were superior to those of the 'lower types' and he even appealed to life, instincts, and the will to power to attempt a non-arbitrary grounding of his positions. Foucault certainly does not develop a normative philosophy of the *Übermensch*, but like Nietzsche he does not believe all perspectives are equally valid, rejecting conventional views of history and philosophical theories such as phenomenological theories of the subject, for example, as erroneous, and privileging Greek ethics over Christian morality.

4. Yet Foucault never developed a critical analysis of patriarchy in modern culture and nowhere developed a critique of the family as an institution that oppresses women and children.

5. Wolin (1986) commits a genetic fallacy, reducing Foucault's problematic to that of his two major philosophical sources, Nietzsche and Heidegger. Wolin follows Megill in accepting overly aestheticist readings of all three thinkers. In particular, Megill and Wolin exaggerate the primacy of aestheticist motifs in the early Foucault and fail to note the shift in the last works and interviews from the rhetoric of almost all Foucault commentators of an aesthetics of existence to that of care of the self and practices of freedom. We find that most interpreters of Foucault who miss this shift tend to totalize marginal asides into general positions.

Aestheticism is a perpetual temptation for Foucault, but he ultimately rejects it in turning to stress the importance of care of the self, Enlightenment autonomy, and the practices of freedom (see Foucault 1984; 1988b; 1988c).

6. Foucault is careful, however, to separate the Enlightenment, which for him has redeeming aspects, from humanism, which he believes does not, and to reconstruct Enlightenment critique in non-universalizing and non-transcendental forms (see 1984: pp. 43-6).

7. The political omissions in the later Foucauldian analyses are especially surprising since, as Gandal notes (1984: p. 134), Foucault continued to work on political problems such as prisons until the end of his life.

8. For a trenchant critique of monolithic domination models of the Frankfurt School and the alternative perspectives of 'Italian New Left' theorists such as Negri and Tronti who focus on workers' resistance to capital, see Cleaver 1979. For a Foucauldian analysis of the history of prisons that focuses on practices of resistance by various confined groups, see O'Brien 1982.