

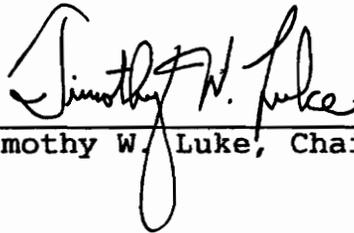
Normalizing Foucault

by

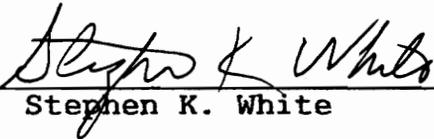
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NORMALIZING FOUCAULT

by

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Political Science

(ABSTRACT)

In this thesis I examine the possibility of deriving a normative position and political stance from the theory of Michel Foucault. In an attempt to answer the question, "If power cannot be separated from knowledge, then how can one use knowledge to critique forms of power?," I analyze and judge the arguments against Foucault's perspective by Nancy Fraser and Jurgen Habermas. I argue that the criticisms made by each are incongruent with the position from which Foucault speaks and are the result of their own theoretical frameworks. I then problematize the frameworks of need interpretation and universal pragmatics that Fraser and Habermas, respectively, appeal to revealing the connection between their foundations and bio-power. Following this, I explore William Connolly's suggestion of "dialogical ethics" as a normative foundation for Foucault's suggestions concluding that this approach fails due to its ultimate appeal to an imaginary telos as justification. Rather, I

suggest that Foucault's normativity rests in the desire to open up possibilities for being other than what we are, and that this translates into a politics centered less on locating and overturning centers of power and more on local struggles against government and market intrusions into our lives. Nevertheless, I conclude that questions concerning the utility of Foucault's work for social theory are better answered not through metatheoretical discussions concerning it, but rather through genealogical analyses of socio-historical phenomena that draw from it.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis represents an attempt to grapple with many of the ideas I have encountered since coming to Virginia Tech. I arrived here fairly sure of what I believed, why I believed it, and why I was right in those beliefs. I leave confused, uncertain, and with a multitude of questions. Progress has been made. I would like to thank my chair, Timothy Luke, for contributing to this progress. My experience with you through classes, independent studies and discussions have been both intellectually rewarding and enjoyable. You have been extremely influential in how I perceive and think about political questions and academia. I would also like to thank Stephen White for his contribution to this progress, for asking questions I would rather avoid, and for making me aware of positions I would generally not consider.

I especially want to thank my wife, Reggie, for marrying me in the middle of this maelstrom, and for your sacrifice, support and confidence. Your presence in my life has made the accomplishments here sweeter, and the struggles less bitter. I also want to acknowledge my gratitude to my parents for their support in all the goals I have aspired to. Special thanks also goes to Todd Penland.

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Introduction

This, it seems to me, is the question at the heart of much debate surrounding the work of Michel Foucault: If power cannot be separated from knowledge, then how can one use knowledge to critique forms of power? Since the Enlightenment, the distinction between knowledge and power has remained fairly consistent in philosophical thought and social theory (Hiley, 1988, p.86). One strand of this distinction can be located in Francis Bacon's Advancement of Learning. Here "knowledge is power" in a cause and effect relationship. The growth of science provides practical knowledge which in turn provides us with more power (control) over ourselves and nature. Another strand can be located with Locke and Condorcet, who are generally connected to the liberal tradition of political theory. It has been widely understood within this tradition that knowledge would free us from power, that truth existed as separate from that which was viewed as repressive or dominating, that through methods borrowed from the natural sciences, and premised on rationality and reason, the human sciences could in some way help humankind (and specifically mankind, and preferably a Western mankind) gain control over his moral and social environment in the same way that the natural sciences seemed to be gaining control over nature.

Granted, this is a glossed view of a very intricate and disparate history of ideas and movements. Nevertheless, it is I believe an accurate portrayal of the broader Enlightenment project, a project Foucault is often posited as challenging. This said, it should also be noted that Foucault was not the first to challenge such a project, though his challenge is unique in an important way.

Many Frankfurt School "critical theorists" for example, questioned the applicability of scientific methods in understanding ourselves. Adorno and Horkheimer, in Dialectic of Enlightenment (1991, p. 9), showed the underbelly of rationalization in a particularly succinct manner, arguing that the Enlightenment's liberation from myth had turned liberation into domination as men became alienated from that over which they exercised power. Nevertheless, they retained, by separating rationality into two poles, the idea that truth could emancipate us from repression. On this view there is bad rationality, often referred to as instrumental rationality (following Weber), and good rationality, which provides for immanent critique in Adorno and Horkheimer's terms. Later in Habermas the latter is developed into communicative rationality. The first colonizes our consciousness, is tied to power mechanisms in society, and should be resisted. The second provides a critique of itself and power, and it is through this process that truth and progress can be achieved.

Adorno and Horkheimer (1991, p. 41) maintain, for example, that "true revolutionary practice depends on the intransigence of theory in the face of the insensibility with which society allows thought to ossify."

Again this is a gloss of an intricate argument, but the point I wish to illustrate here is that power is still assumed to operate outside of knowledge in at least one area, that of the good kind of rationality. Equally important, the criteria of delineation that have been retained throughout the various challenges to the original Enlightenment project for determining good and bad practices in society rests on the acceptance of this separation. Whether the goal is freedom from princes, capitalism, or our own false consciousness, the power that represses is challenged from the ground of truth, and if one cannot retain this separation than one has no moral ground on which to stand in order to critique society.

This then brings us back to Foucault, who couples power/knowledge as a web of relations that structures our actions, and who maintains that knowledge cannot be separated from power thus rejecting the long held assumption that knowledge can provide independent normative criteria for criticizing and challenging regimes of power in society. Rather than paving roads to our freedom, Foucault sees the analysis of modern forms of power by the liberal and Marxist traditions as contributing to the normalization process and

subjectification that is the result of power/knowledge. In Discipline and Punish (1979) and The History of Sexuality vol. 1 (1990), for example, he showed how it was the emergence of new forms of coercive, disciplinary, and insidious forms of power that made the human sciences possible, and not the advance of reason or the receding of power. It is this understanding of power, as capillary, productive, and unrepresentable in its totality, that has generated charges from his critics that Foucault can provide no moral philosophical grounds on which to base a critique of, and generate a political stance against, modern forms of repression. If power cannot be separated from knowledge, than how do you critique power?

To complicate matters, while Foucault resisted any normative framework for criticizing regimes of power - preferring to remain a "felicitous positivist" on the surface of discourse - his writings are laden with political and moral condemnations and rhetoric. So then, how are we to understand Foucault's form of critique? Is it, as many of his critics contend, merely confused, relativist, intellectual posturing?

It is my claim that Foucault's form of critique is not confused, but rather can be understood as employing a specific strategy in its apparent contradictions; nor is it just another strand of relativism, but rather can be understood as abandoning in some ways the role of

intellectual prescribing to the world; nor is it merely intellectual posturing, but rather, and quite ironically, it is the lack of such posturing which brings charges of relativism. Hence, I contend that Foucault's critique does contain allow us to challenge modern forms of repression, and that it does so in a less disciplinary, normalizing fashion than those projects of the Enlightenment and the human sciences he identified in his archaeologies and genealogies.

At the onset I mentioned the debate surrounding Foucault's work. Up to this point, it seems, this debate has largely taken place on Enlightenment ground. Let me explain what I mean by this, and why I think this is not a fruitful way to approach Foucault's project. In his essay "What Is Enlightenment?" (1984, p. 46) Foucault wrote that criticism will be:

Archeological - and not transcendental - in the sense that it will not seek to identify the universal structures of all knowledge or of all possible moral action, but will seek to treat the instances of discourse that articulate what we think, say, and do as so many historical events. And this critique will be genealogical in the sense that it will not deduce from the form of what we are what is impossible for us to do and to know; but it will separate out, from the contingency that has made us what we are, the possibility of no longer being, doing, thinking what we are, do, or think. It is not seeking to make possible a metaphysics that has finally become a science; it is seeking to give new impetus, as far and wide as possible, to the undefined work of freedom.

It is this shrugging from an ahistorical universal ground and a predetermined result for the basis of critique that

has garnished charges of relativism from Nancy Fraser (1989) and Jurgen Habermas (1973; 1979; 1979a; 1981; 1987). These charges however, require from Foucault a space with which to talk that is in some ways free of power and the historical contingency of who we are, a space that, as the quote above makes clear, he is not willing to provide. At the same time Foucault is attempting to undermine the very assumptions on which the idea of critique free from power is possible, his critics demand from him a normative framework to determine legitimate and illegitimate exercises of power. They require him, in other words, to justify his claims in terms of the Enlightenment project discussed in the beginning. This is a test that he cannot pass by default, for if he were to claim a position for critique outside of the power/knowledge regime he would negate his position that knowledge cannot exist free from power. Likewise, if he were to claim an ahistorical, foundationalist position, he would negate the claim of historical contingency. Foucault's works from Madness and Civilization (1973) through The History of Sexuality vol. 1 (1990) served to dispel the binary oppositions of sane/insane, healthy/sick, and normal/abnormal that normative judgments are based on. One might ask then, why would Foucault even be concerned with privileging one side of these oppositions over the other for the sake of normative criteria when his project was to shatter such oppositions that operate as "dividing

practices" by providing a "history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects" (Foucault, 1983, p. 208).

This does not mean that such criticisms should be ignored, for Habermas and Fraser do raise important questions about Foucault's work. In particular, the possibility of a critique that can contribute to the undefined freedom Foucault mentions needs to be explored. In the next chapter I will analyze and judge the cases Fraser and Habermas make against Foucault. For now, let me briefly outline their arguments.

In her essay, "Foucault on Modern Power: Empirical Insights and Normative Confusions," (1989, p. 33) Fraser argues that:

Foucault vacillates between two equally inadequate stances. On the one hand, he adopts a concept of power that permits him no condemnation of any objectionable features of modern societies. But at the same time, and on the other hand, his rhetoric betrays the conviction that modern societies are utterly without redeeming features. Clearly what Foucault needs, and needs desperately, are normative criteria for distinguishing acceptable from unacceptable forms of power.

While Fraser is never explicit about what she means by normative criteria, the arguments she uses that lead her to this conclusion provide us with some hints.

For Fraser, Foucault simply "calls too many different sorts of things power" (1989, p. 32). This does not enable him to provide any philosophical ground on which to judge one form of power from any other. What Fraser wants from

Foucault, and wants desperately, is a space for the intellectual to speak that is removed from power regimes. This becomes evident in her discussion of rationality concerning Foucault and Habermas. "In the thought of Jurgen Habermas," she writes, "rationalization involves a contrast between instrumentalization - which is one-sided, partial, and insufficient rationalization - and a fuller practical, political rationality. It therefore carries with it a normative standard for critiquing modern societies. Foucault's discussion of political rationality...contains no such contrast and no positive normative pole" (1989, p. 25). While Fraser has problems with Habermas' project for other reasons, she clearly endorses at least this aspect of it. And while she thinks Foucault does provide some useful analysis of modern power, it is his lack of a space outside of power from which to speak that renders his critique "a curious amalgam of amoral militaristic description" (1989, p. 31).

I will pursue this argument further in the next chapter, but as we can already see Fraser is engaging Foucault on the Enlightenment ground I alluded to earlier. By situating her argument such that normative criteria can only exist outside of power, she apriori relegates Foucault to a position of relativism from which he has no recourse. Failing to acknowledge the larger implications of Foucault's work, and the thrust of that work as decentering the very

criteria she is attempting to hold him to, Fraser instead chooses to demand from Foucault apples that taste like oranges, and by failing that challenge, Foucault becomes boxed into the position of relativism.

Habermas likewise raises similar doubts as to the viability Foucault's work provides for engaging in a critique of modern forms of power, though his argument is more sophisticated than Fraser's. For Habermas (1987, p. 275), genealogy "retreats into the reflectionless objectivity of a nonparticipatory, ascetic description of kaleidoscopically changing practices of power" which can only lead to relativism. Employing an argument similar to that he uses against Nietzsche and Adorno and Horkheimer's Dialectic of Enlightenment (1991), Habermas argues that Foucault's complete opposition to the Enlightenment traps him in a self-referential paradox that does not allow him to make any evaluative judgments with which to "discriminate between a power which deserves to be esteemed and one that deserves to be devalued" (1987, p. 125). On Habermas' reading (1987, p. 127):

Foucault...replaces the model of domination based on repression (developed in the tradition of enlightenment by Marx and Freud) by a plurality of power strategies. These power strategies intersect one another, succeed one another; they are distinguished according to the type of their discourse formation and the degree of their intensity; but they cannot be judged under the aspect of their validity, as was the case with consciously working through conflicts in contrast to unconsciously doing so.

In other words, because Foucault rejects the idea that

values can be judged according to rational criteria, he rejects the idea of a critical basis for emancipation from modern forms of power and repression. Because of this, Foucault does not retain at least the one standard he needs to engage in a "critique of the present," and his, according to Habermas, is a totalizing critique caught in a performative contradiction. It is in this way that Habermas (1981, p. 13) links Foucault with the "young conservatives," who "justify an irreconcilable anti-modernism" on modernism's own terms (i.e., they use critique to show the impossibility of critique).

While this line of argumentation raises questions about conservative traits within a critique that refuses an apriori stance, it is also extremely limited in how it conceptualizes critique. I will argue that by returning to Foucault's discussion in "What Is Enlightenment?" (1984) we can see Habermas as too quickly placing Foucault within an anti-Enlightenment perspective. Likewise, by appealing to performative contradictions as an attack against Foucault, Habermas is allowing only his form of critique as the proper tool with which to engage modern forms of power. He is closing off alternative conceptions of critique that seek to problematize without prescribing, and is thus engaging in what Foucault calls Enlightenment blackmail (1984).

In chapter two, I will turn my attention to the frameworks Habermas and Fraser suggest in their own work.

Using Georges Bataille's (1991; 1985) work on general economy and expenditure I will problematize Fraser's (1989) ideas concerning need interpretation. Utilizing elements in Roland Barthes' (1972) work, I will question some of Habermas' (1973; 1979; 1979a; 1981; 1987) basic assumptions surrounding universal pragmatics. Likewise, I will question the position both perspectives, need interpretation and universal pragmatics, place the intellectual in.

Finally, in chapter three I will lay out why I think Foucault's critique can foster resistance and challenge those effects of power he revealed. I will also look at how one of Foucault's sympathizers (William Connolly) has attempted to answer his critics. William Connolly, who sees himself as a "critical legitimist," (1987, p. 92) takes on the double task of both incorporating Foucaultian sensibilities into the liberal tradition Foucault criticized and claiming a normative position for Foucault's genealogy that attempts to answer his critics (1987; 1983). Through conceptions like "slack" and "agonistic respect" Connolly attempts to incorporate Foucault's analysis into a framework for fighting resentment (which he sees as the major threat to the "other" and democracy) and for opening up "new spaces for life to be" (1993, p. 388).

Foucault's genealogy however, appears to counter such a project. Foucault (1984a, p. 385) explains that "the problem is, precisely, to decide if it is actually suitable

to place oneself within a "we" in order to assert the principles one recognizes and the values one accepts; or if it is not, rather, necessary to make the future formation of a "we" possible, by elaborating the question. Because it seems to me that the "we" must not be previous to the question; it can only be the result - and the necessary temporary result - of the question as it is posed in the new terms in which one formulates it." Connolly however, seeks to rescue Foucault from his critics by appealing to a predetermined "we" based on a static conception of self and laden with the very liberal traits Foucault uncovered as so problematic in his genealogies. Connolly does give Habermas and Fraser what they require from Foucault, but in so doing he sacrifices the potential Foucault offers for a ~~reconceptualization of critique, while at the same time~~ internalizing his work within a framework that contributes to, rather than fights against, ~~the normalizing tendencies~~ of modern forms of power.

I will therefore argue that Foucault's creation of the self is "normative," though not as traditionally understood. This normativity rests in his conception of self-mastery as ~~the opening up of possibilities for being other than what we~~ are (Foucault, 1977a; 1984; 1984b; 1990; 1990a; 1990b; Bove, 1988; Delueze, 1983, 1988; Hiley, 1988). Yet, at the same time, it is a normativity that rests more on what should be resisted than on what should be. If we take seriously the

arguments Foucault made about the position of the human sciences in relation to modern forms of power, then we should also be open to thinking new possibilities and roles in our own self creation.

Chapter One: In Search of Foundations

In this chapter I will be looking at the criticisms levied against Foucault by Nancy Fraser and Jurgen Habermas. Because these critics contend that many of Foucault's theoretical conceptions render a basis for critique unattainable, I will begin here with a brief discussion of Foucault's conception of genealogy and power. I will then present, and respond to, the arguments made by Fraser and Habermas concerning the inability to garnish an effective form of critique from Foucault's work. "Intellectuals are themselves agents of this system of power -the idea of their responsibility for "consciousness" and discourse forms part of the system. The intellectual's role is no longer to place himself "somewhat ahead and to the side" in order to express the stifled truth of the collectivity; rather, it is to struggle against the forms of power that transform him into its object and instrument in the sphere of "knowledge," "truth," "consciousness," and "discourse" (Foucault, 1977, pp. 205-206). Let us compare this statement of Foucault's with one from Nancy Fraser: "I claim that we can distinguish better from worse interpretations of people's needs. To say that needs are culturally constructed and discursively interpreted is not to say that any need interpretation is as good as any other. On the contrary, it is to underline the

importance of an account of interpretive justification" (1989, p. 181). This simple juxtaposition reveals the gap in theoretical perspective between Fraser and Foucault. Fraser retains a belief, using Foucault's characterization, that she can be "somewhat ahead and to the side" of the collectivity. She comes to Foucault from this belief, and her critique of Foucault should be understood as a response from this standpoint. From Fraser's perspective, Foucault's genealogy and conception of power undermine the position she claims, and so she seeks to show how Foucault's work is susceptible to charges of relativism.

Foucault writes in "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History" (1984b, p. 89) that "effective history studies what is closest, but in an abrupt dispossession, so as to seize it at a distance." Genealogy therefore concentrates on the surface of events revealing the "affirmation of knowledge as perspective" (Foucault, 1984b, p. 90). Rather than seeking interpretive justification, it shuns the depth traditional hermeneutics, and Fraser's perspective, claims for itself: "Whereas the interpreter is obliged to go to the depth of things, like an excavator, the moment of...[genealogy] is like an overview, from higher and higher up, which allows the depth to be laid out in front of him in a more and more profound visibility; depth is resituated as an absolutely superficial secret" (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1983, p. 106).

When Foucault was writing his genealogies, he was

writing a history of the present.¹ He was not, however, attempting to read into the past what he perceived as contemporary problems, nor was he seeking to reveal the unfolding of history, with a point of origin traceable to current conditions.² Instead, where others saw continuity and progress the genealogist sees rupture and decadence. Likewise, for Foucault, in genealogy "History has a more important task than to be a handmaiden to philosophy, to recount the necessary birth of truth and values; it should become a differential knowledge of energies and failings, heights and degenerations, poisons and antidotes. Its task is to become a curative science" (1984b, p. 90).

The focus here is to provide an overview that illustrates the gap between Foucault's understanding of analysis and Fraser's call to interpretation. This is

¹At the end of the first chapter, "The Body of the Condemned," in Discipline and Punish Foucault tells us why he engaged in a genealogy of the prison: "I would like to write the history of this prison, with all the political investments of the body that it gathers together in its closed architecture. Why? Simply because I am interested in the past? No, if one means by that writing a history of the past in terms of the present. Yes, if one means writing the history of the present."(p. 31)

²In "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History" Foucault distinguishes between two types of history. The first of these is associated with metaphysics, the search for origins, and philosophy; the second, which he calls "effective history" following Niet, is associated with genealogy. He writes that, "History becomes "effective" to the degree that it introduces discontinuity into our very being...[it] deprives the self of the reassuring stability of life and nature, and it will not permit itself to be transported by a voiceless obstinacy toward a millennial ending."(p.88) "Effective history" therefore allows the genealogist "to dispel the chimeras of origin."(p.80)

necessary because, as I will argue, Fraser's critique of Foucault takes place within a framework that his conceptualizations lay outside of and even seek to undermine. By briefly outlining what Foucault means by genealogy and power I believe that contrast becomes more apparent. I will here turn to a discussion of power as it appears in Foucault's work, and then return to the arguments Fraser puts forward.

In The History of Sexuality, vol. 1 (1990) we find one of Foucault's more specific explanations of what he means by power, and specifically bio-power:

it was the taking charge of life, more than the threat of death, that gives power its access to even the body...this power over life evolved in two basic forms...One of these poles - the first to be formed, it seems - centered on the body as a machine; its disciplining, the optimization of its capabilities, the extortion of its forces, the parallel increase of its usefulness and its docility, all this was ensured by the procedures of power that characterized the disciplines: an anatomo-politics of the human body. The second, formed somewhat later, focused on the species body, the body imbued with the mechanics of life and serving as the basis of the biological processes: propagation, births and mortality, the level of health, life expectancy and longevity, with all the conditions that can cause these to vary. Their supervision was effected through an entire series of interventions and regulatory controls: a bio-politics of the population (1990, p. 143).

Foucault's project was not to analyze the phenomena of power, or create foundations or paradigms that serve as depositories for the intellectual to plug in his or her observations. Rather, his conception of power aided him in creating "a history of the different modes by which, in our

culture, human beings are made subjects" (Foucault, 1983, p. 208).

According to Foucault, the 17th century marks the beginning of a transition from juridical power, witnessed in the sovereign's deductive power of death, to disciplinary bio-power and the productive power of life, where "political power has assigned itself the task of administering life" (Foucault, 1990, p. 139). Prior to the Enlightenment, juridical power through public execution and torture signified the superiority of the sovereign over the people; a crime against another individual was also a crime against the prince because the law was an embodiment of the sovereign's will. The spectacle of punishment levied against the criminal served as "a ceremonial by which a momentarily injured sovereign is reconstituted," and as such the act did not seek to "re-establish justice; it reactivated power" (Foucault, 1979, pp. 48-49).

With the development of capitalism and the challenge of "humanitarian" reformation movements, largely centered around crime and mental illness and turning from punishment to rehabilitation, power was "shifted from the vengeance of the sovereign to the defence of society" (Foucault, 1979, p. 90). This was accompanied by a "a shift in the point of application of this power: it is no longer the body...it is the mind or rather a play of representations and signs circulating discreetly but necessarily and evidently in the

minds of all" (Foucault, 1979, p. 101). Power became associated with acting upon behavior instead of physical bodies; efficiency and management - key to the success of the rising bourgeoisie in capitalism and inherent in utilitarian theory - also became critical to a power exercising in a society tied to these modes of production and requiring administration. Capitalism and the bourgeois nation-state (with all the corresponding claims of legitimate and illegitimate exercises of power) become points of application within which "methods of power and knowledge assumed responsibility for the life processes and undertook to control and modify them" (Foucault, 1979, p. 142). Power, we could say, became more insidious.

As an example of this more covert, less discernable form of power, Foucault employs Jeremy Bentham's panopticon. Seen as the realization of "humanitarian" prison reform, the panopticon was designed so that a guard tower stood in the middle of a circular construction of prison cells. From this vantage point the guard is able to view the prisoners through their windows without being seen him or herself, thus making it impossible for the prisoners to know when they are being monitored. Not sure of the times in which they are under surveillance, the individuals as prisoners internalize disciplinary techniques, monitoring and objectivizing themselves. In modernity, the human sciences act(ed) in the same way; sociology, psychology, and

criminology helped to formulate norms with which to compare and compartmentalize various acts, cultures, and beliefs. On the anatomo-political level these disciplines helped to create docile bodies which monitored themselves in terms of the norm, and made it easier for the state to supervise and administer them as the docile social body in a bio-politics of the population.

The hysterical female, the masturbating child, the homosexual, and the perverse adult thus became abnormal as judged by the norm of the bourgeois procreative couple. In this sense we can see the procreative couple and resultant deviations in terms of the same/other dichotomy. The procreative couple becomes constituted as same while all that lies outside this characterization becomes the other. With the norm established, the human sciences set themselves to the task of comparing and classifying various acts in terms of this norm. This can be seen most clearly in Foucault's analysis in Madness and Civilization (1973, p. 125) of the Hopital General, "a sort of semijudicial structure, an administrative entity which, along with the already constituted powers, and outside of the courts, decides, judges, and executes." This process is also evident in his analysis of the penal system and the institutionalization of deviance and spatial separation in Discipline and Punish (1979).

We should not be surprised, given Foucault's analysis,

that the transition from juridical power to disciplinary bio-power also coincides with "the high tide of sovereign nationhood," when the "unity of the nation was thus the basis of political legitimacy in theory, and the support of state unity in practice" (Toulmin, 1990, p. 140). Just as power had shifted from the prince's vengeance to society's defense, so to did the legitimacy of rule by divine right shift to the social contract. We can see Paul Henri and Baron d'Holbach as a window with which to locate a point of the discursive transition to bio-power. Using Newton, they began to question the authority of monarchy while retaining the legitimacy of a nation-state. Holbach, in Syteme de la Nature, "rewrites, in secular terms, the natural philosophy which was used forty years earlier...to legitimate the Hanoverian establishment" (Toulmin, 1990, p. 141). As Enlightenment ideas about reformation and humanity shifted the public execution to the panoptic gaze, so to did they strip monarchical legitimacy of its divine right reinstating pastoral power in documents of nation-states. The bio-power panopticon became congealed in constitutions that "showed the harmony between the causal Order of physical nature and the rational Order of a constitutional Society" (Toulmin, 1990, p. 141). Thus we see how "a power whose task is to take charge of life" found refuge in documents and constitutions guaranteeing the state the role of administrator for the people. In this light the great

"Enlightenment project" and its variously affiliated people's revolutions and searches for truth is not so illuminating as some might wish; it becomes the result of a discursive strategy based on rationality and humanity that helped to necessitate a shift in power and its point of application. As Foucault (1990, p. 144) notes, "we should not be deceived by all the Constitutions framed throughout the world since the French Revolution, the Codes written and revised, a whole continual and clamorous legislative activity: these were the forms that made an essentially normalizing power acceptable."

It is also clear that, for Foucault, power is not exclusively structural. Power is the result of an economy of disciplinary relations, of strategies that create subjects. Hence, Foucault is led to claim that "There are two meanings of the word subject: subject to someone else by control and dependence, and tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge. Both meanings suggest a form of power which subjugates and makes subject to" (1983, p. 212). The first type of subjectification mentioned here relates to his analysis of the Hopital General and penal system alluded to above. Here, "the subject is objectified by a process of division either within himself or from others" (Foucault, 1983, p. 212).

Yet, one of Foucault's major contributions to social theory is his conception of power as productive and

capillary. That is, unlike traditional liberal conceptions that see power primarily as repressive, and base/superstructure accounts that locate power solely in the state or economy, Foucault sees power everywhere. Power is productive as the various struggles it undertakes create subjects and truths, and it is capillary in that it reaches down to our every day practices, to "micropractices" that effect the ways we conceptualize ourselves as subjects. As Dreyfus and Rabinow (1983, p. 109) state, "Subjection, domination, and combat are found everywhere he looks." The subject, for Foucault, is not prior to these struggles, rather the subject emerges from these interstices of power. As such, there are no hidden truths for the analyst to discover. Rather, Foucault sees this process of exploration as contributing to and concealing power. Hence, the genealogist seeks to remain on the surface of things.

It is these claims by Foucault that have been the targets of his critics. Nancy Fraser (1989, p. 33) asserts that:

Foucault vacillates between two equally inadequate stances. On the one hand, he adopts a concept of power that permits him no condemnation of any objectionable features of modern societies. But at the same time, and on the other hand, his rhetoric betrays the conviction that modern societies are utterly without redeeming features. Clearly what Foucault needs, and needs desperately, are normative criteria for distinguishing acceptable from unacceptable forms of power.

What Fraser means here is that because Foucault "calls too many different sorts of things power" he is unable to

distinguish between objectionable and desirable features of modern society (1989, p. 32). Yet, on the other hand, his rhetoric is charged with judgments about modern society. For Fraser, the normative confusion in Foucault's work springs from his conception of power. While empirically she finds the implications of a "politics of everyday life" derived from bio-power and "micropractices" as promising, she nevertheless sees the normative ambiguities of such conceptions as lacking. She notes that "He [Foucault] tends to assume that his account of modern power is both politically engaged and normatively neutral" (1989, pp. 18-19). The problematic raised by Fraser is that Foucault has either supplied an alternative normative framework than that of liberalism, or that he has rejected the need for a normative framework to guide political practice (1989, p. 18).

As a contrast she turns to Foucault's theoretically posited counter ego, Jurgen Habermas. Noting that Habermas' conception of rationality contains two poles, one which characterizes a partial, one-sided instrumentalization and the other a "fuller practical, political rationality," she claims that Foucault even abandons this bastion of normativity and "Rationality for him is either a neutral phenomenon or (more often) an instrument of domination tout court" (1989, p. 25). Having failed even the rationality blot test, Foucault's critique becomes "a curious amalgam of

amoral militaristic description" (Fraser, 1989, p. 31). The implications of this lack of bi-polarity for distinguishing normative judgments in Foucault results in a total rejection of modernity. "Because Foucault has no basis for distinguishing, for example, forms of power that involve domination from those that do not," Fraser concludes, "he appears to endorse a one-sided, wholesale rejection of modernity as such" (1989, p. 33). This seems to be a major problem for Fraser because "he [Foucault] appears to do so without any conception of what is to replace it" (1989, p. 33).

While these charges may raise questions about Foucault's work in terms of a specific framework, one which, I will argue later, does not fit with Foucault's project, it also raises some interesting questions that may not seem apparent at first glance. We may ask, for example, what kind of position Fraser's dilemma with Foucault places the intellectual in? Since Fraser is clearly committed to at least some form of critical theory, in that she is essentially asking Foucault how he can challenge domination, we might also ask what critical theory means given the charges Fraser is making.

These questions are important in understanding how Foucault is useful for rethinking critical social theory because they require those of us who claim to be doing relevant social critique that is contributing to the

betterment of whatever dilemmas we see in society to address our own roles. Put another way, we might inquire into the political economy of the ways Foucault's work has been both attacked and defended. Does Fraser's critique of Foucault bring us any closer to engaging the "politics of everyday life" she identifies, or does it help support the intellectual's place in the ivory tower?

In an interesting conversation with Gilles Deleuze Foucault (1977, p. 207) said that "the masses no longer need him [the intellectual] to gain knowledge: they know perfectly well, without illusion; they know far better than he and they are certainly capable of expressing themselves." Foucault goes on here to discuss the role power plays in blocking and penetrating the discourse of the collectivity.³ To this extent intellectuals are implicated in power, and to this extent intellectuals who seek to speak the truth of the collectivity or represent the consciousness of the masses contribute to the progression of power. This is why Foucault asks if it is "suitable to place oneself within a 'we' in order to assert the principles one recognizes and the values one accepts" before the question has been posed (1984a, p. 385). Likewise, it is why he sees his analysis in Discipline and Punish (1979) as a "counter-

³I do not mean to insinuate that Foucault conceives of the collectivity here in terms of the whole social body. When this term is used it is done so in terms of a specific collectivity like, for example, the insane, prisoners, or homosexuals.

discourse of prisoners and those we call delinquents - and not a theory about delinquency" (1977, p. 209). Rather than make claims for prisoners, assuming access to their consciousness through interpretation, he chronicled the ways in which it was this very penetration into the body of the prisoner that led to more invisible and insidious forms of power, and how it was through processes symbolically represented by the Panopticon and exercised through "dividing practices" that the soul became the prison of the body. By questioning the history of the prison that posited progress in humanistic terms he sought to open a space in which the other (in this instance prisoners) had the possibility to speak for themselves, while at the same time disrupting the same/other opposition that the traditional history drew from for its story.

With this in mind, Fraser seems to be holding Foucault to the very criteria that he was trying to undermine, that of a knowledge/power separation, of the intellectual, as Gilles Deleuze (Foucault, 1977, p. 209) puts it, participating in "the indignity of speaking for others," and seems to be dismissing him on those grounds without engaging the larger implications of his work.

Fraser (1989, p. 29) notes that "the military usage of 'domination,' 'struggle,' and 'submission' cannot, in and of itself, explain or justify anyone's preference for, or commitment to, one side as opposed to the other." This, as

the discussion above alludes to, is the point of a Foucaultian critique. In his analysis from Madness and Civilization (1973) through The History of Sexuality (1990) Foucault sought to dispel binary oppositions like sane/insane, normal/abnormal, healthy/sick, legitimate/illegitimate. It is the favoring of one side of these oppositions over the other that he identifies in social science and Western philosophy as determining normative criteria and contributing to disciplinary power. Instead of shattering these oppositions by choosing one side over the other, he sought to problematize the ways in which such oppositions have been structured in social analysis through, for example, "dividing practices." Because Foucault does not choose one side of an opposition to favor, Fraser would have us conclude that there is no normative potential in his work. Yet, we could as easily ask Fraser to justify her claim, given Foucault's analysis, that the intellectual necessarily needs to take a position for a group that falls on one side or another of an opposition. On what grounds does she assume that she can speak for the marginalized, and more important, to what extent would her speaking for the marginalized serve to hinder their own voice?

This does not mean that writers and intellectuals like Fraser are necessarily pompous egoists (certainly no more than the contemporary French "postmodern" intellectuals that

~~have become the source of so much debate in their writings),~~ though there is, as Deleuze put it, a certain indignity in speaking for someone else (not to mention the indignity of being spoken for). Perhaps it would be different if the texts being produced in academia were actually read by those for whom they claim to speak. Ben Agger, in The Decline of Discourse (1990, p. 80), notes that rarely is this the case even within disciplines: "Most academics read only what they 'do,' not what disciplinary specialists across the corridor are reading and writing." Theory is no less immune, as he notes most of his colleagues are committed to democracy as a radical endpoint but "too few of them are genuinely democratic in their mood; hence they ignore the contribution their own argot makes to hierarchy, empowering only those who speak in the arcane phrases of European high theory" (1990, p.210). When it comes to the public's access to academic work, the story seems even more grim than within disciplines. The reason I raise these points here is to question the criteria Fraser is using to judge Foucault's work, and to begin framing why I will argue in the last chapter that a Foucaultian influenced form of critique is desirable.

Jurgen Habermas also raises similar doubts to Fraser's about the political viability of Foucault's work. Habermas' criticisms can be understood within two avenues. First, he claims that Foucault's critique can only result in

relativism due to its lack of evaluative criteria, and second, it is a totalizing critique caught in performative contradictions.

In The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity (1987, p. 276) Habermas claims that genealogy runs into problems:

(1) by the involuntary presentism of a historiography that remains hermeneutically stuck in its starting situation; (2) by the unavoidable relativism of an analysis related to the present that can understand itself only as a context-dependent practical enterprise; (3) by the arbitrary partisanship of a criticism that cannot account for its normative foundations.

Habermas wants from Foucault a justification for normative criteria, a means with which to determine valid claims from invalid ones. He notes that Foucault's power strategies "intersect one another, succeed one another; they are distinguished according to the type of their discourse formation and the degree of their intensity;; but they cannot be judged under the aspect of their validity" (1992, p. 127).

Habermas claims that Foucault engages in critique without the foundation necessary to do so. He cannot provide the evaluative judgments necessary to "discriminate between a power which deserves to be esteemed and one that deserves to be devalued" (Habermas, 1992, p. 125). For Habermas the Enlightenment separation of truth from power is a powerful tool with which to criticize practices in society. While he would not deny the analysis Foucault presents of disciplinary forms of power that arose from such

a project, indeed he even sees them as powerful in their insights, Habermas claims these forms to be a bastardization of the potential reason offers for emancipation. According to Habermas, modernity can be divided into two poles, one which represents instrumentalizing rationality and could be seen to correlate with Foucault's insights about disciplinary power, and one which is fuller and politically liberating through communicative competence. For Habermas, we can strive toward consensus in our relations by holding practices accountable according to the degree they influence and hinder communicative rationality. To this extent, we seek to clear away the "noise" of instrumental rationalization in order to evaluate competing claims in terms of rational criteria more fully realized and free from dominating practices, and in this second form of "cultural modernity" we seek to fight against the encroachment of the first instrumentalized form of rationality into our "lifeworld."

Having already discussed the position Foucault sees the intellectual in, and the position of historical contingency genealogy claims, the differences between himself and Habermas is readily apparent. Habermas (1979, p. 56) sees critical social theory as a practice of formulating "an idea of progress that is subtle and resilient enough not to let itself be blinded by the mere appearance [Schein] of emancipation. One thing, of course, it must oppose: the

thesis that emancipation itself mystifies." Habermas, then, sees much at stake when Foucault claims that knowledge is perspective, and not universal and immortal. Indeed, the two seem diametrically opposed on this issue when in Foucault (1984b, p. 85) we read:

Humanity does not gradually progress from 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.

Clearly, this difference is also transferred to the way in which the intellectuals role is perceived. As has already been noted, for Foucault the intellectual does not seek to interpret the hidden desires and consciousness of the masses, or to speak for them. But clearly this is not the case in Habermas, as Stephen White (1986, p. 421) has noted, "the concept of politically enabling structures only has sense when one can say for whom those structures are more enabling."⁴

Because of the absence of evaluative criteria, and specifically criteria that draw from the rules of rational discourse, Habermas makes the claim that genealogy results in relativism. For where, in Foucault's work, if every claim is an interpretation, and every claim historically

⁴It should be noted that in this essay White does not endorse Foucault's project over Habermas'. Rather, he argues that Habermas' work can both incorporate Foucault's ideas and provide a framework based on juridical subjectivity for political action less problematic than Foucault's.

contingent and developed within the dominating framework of the present, can the intellectual claim to be speaking from? How can we determine which claims about modern forms of power are legitimate and which are not? Of course, we can just as easily ask of Habermas how he can assume access to the multifarious language games that produce such claims in order to evaluate them.⁵

The other avenue which Habermas pursues in his criticism of Foucault is the claim that Foucault is engaged in a totalizing critique laden with performative contradictions. Here, Habermas uses a similar argument he employs against Nietzsche and Adorno and Horkheimer's Dialectic of Enlightenment (1991). He claims that if they "still want to continue with critique, they will have to leave at least one rational criterion intact for their explanation of the corruption of all rational criterion" (1987, pp. 126-127). In this way Foucault becomes entrapped in a performative contradiction because while he

⁵Here, the reply might be that communicative rationality serves that purpose. But then the lines become blurred in Habermas' distinction between a rationality that colonizes the lifeworld and one that does not. For his framework would require that we translate claims into its terms, which would mean colonizing the lifeworld that is making such claims since it would require their reduction or translation into a different framework. Here it is helpful to think of Roland Barthes statement that "to rob a man of his language is the first step in all legal murders" because we are required to take a disclosure of reality other than our own, claim access to it, and then fold it into our own framework for the purposes of evaluation based on our own disclosure. It is in this way that universal frameworks negate the reality of that which lies outside of them, colonizing their difference for the purpose of identity.

delegitimizes the idea of a criteria for critique he nevertheless engages in critique.

At the same time, Habermas reads Foucault as rejecting all of modernity and places him within the category of the young conservatives. Here, the justification of "an irreconcilable anti-modernism" is undertaken on modernisms own terms (Habermas, 1981, p. 13). This results in, for Habermas, merely negating modernity and with it any possibility of emancipation that their critiques may have held. Yet also, by undertaking this negation of modernity on modernisms own terms, the young conservatives (and hence Foucault) only serve to reify and buttress the elements of modernity they seek to negate.

This criticism would be fair if it was actually congruent with Foucault's position on the issue of the Enlightenment. However, a brief excursus into "What is Enlightenment?" (1984) reveals that Habermas' interpretation of Foucault in this regard is a false characterization, albeit one that serves his purposes. Habermas sets up his complaint by claiming that either Foucault is for the Enlightenment or he is against it. Beyond the authoritarian nature of such a framing, setting the parameters of an accepted response so stringently, this charge corresponds accordingly with Foucault called Enlightenment blackmail.

In "What is Enlightenment?" (1984) Foucault responded to much of the criticism levied at his writings. Among

these responses, he claimed that one can criticize elements and philosophical tenets that are associated with the Enlightenment:

But that does not mean that one has to be "for" or "against" the Enlightenment. It even means precisely that one has to refuse everything that might present itself in the form of a simplistic and authoritarian alternative: you either accept the Enlightenment and remain within the tradition of its rationalism (this is considered a positive term by some and used by others, on the contrary, as a reproach); or else you criticize the Enlightenment and then try to escape from its principles of rationality (which may be seen as good or bad). And we do not break free of this blackmail by introducing "dialectical" nuances while seeking to determine what good and bad elements there may have been in the Enlightenment (1984, p. 43).

In Foucault's terms, it would be absurd to think that we could simply negate the Enlightenment since we are in some way historically determined by it. To this extent, Habermas' charge is premised upon a reductionist and straw man characterization of Foucault's analysis. For Foucault, the Enlightenment, in any case, is a set of events and historical processes that cannot easily be reduced or summed up in a word.

Drawing from Baudelaire's conception of art and Kant's analytic of finitude, Foucault (1984, p. 42) even acknowledges his connection with the Enlightenment: "I have been seeking to stress that the thread that may connect us with the Enlightenment is not faithfulness to doctrinal elements, but rather the permanent reactivation of an attitude - that is, of a philosophical ethos that could be described as a permanent critique of our historical era." I

will return to this idea of a philosophical ethos in the conclusion, what I want to stress here is that there are many Enlightenments, and that we need not assume that the strand Habermas subscribes to is the only one viable for imagining the possibility of critique and critical social theory.

One of the elements that the criticisms by Fraser and Habermas share, and what is most interesting for my purposes here, is the concern with a lack of foundation in Foucault's work that would guide political action. It seems to be assumed that because there is not a plea to the universal or a form of systematization in Foucault's work, it follows that there are significant problems with a Foucaultian influenced form of social theory and critique. It has ~~already been pointed out that the major criteria used in evaluating Foucault's project rests on delineations and~~ ~~stances that his work actively seeks to undermine. These~~ ~~criteria are foundational~~ in that they are perceived to be universal in their applicability. When Fraser speaks of the need in Foucault for an independent normative framework she is speaking of the need for a foundation. Likewise, when Habermas claims that there are no evaluative criteria in Foucault's work for determining practices that should be esteemed and ones that should be devalued, he is making this statement based on the absence of a systematizable and universal foundation of evaluative criteria.

Clearly Foucault choose ~~which~~ specific rationalities, or regimes of power, to investigate. When he pursued a genealogy of the prison, for example, he did so because "The problem of the prisons is local and marginal...[and it] is the only place where power is manifested in its naked state, in its most excessive form, and where it is justified as moral force...for once power doesn't hide or mask itself" (1977, pp. 209-210). These choices were made according to what he perceived as current dangers. His analysis of power, and hence genealogy, was therefore not arbitrary. However, due to the historical contingency of genealogy, and the lack of a space absent from power from which truth can speak, the genealogist decenters at the same time the position from which he or she speaks. The claims are not universal but specific to the issue at hand, they are not atemporal but situated within the present, and they are not free from power but within the strategies of power that help constitute the discourse that gives such claims meaning.

As I have tried to show in this chapter, the criteria put forward in at least one strand of contemporary social theory, that of the need for a philosophically based universal and systematizable foundation to guide critique and action, has problems in addressing Foucault's project. In order to respond to the challenges Foucault presents, such perspectives must first relegate and reduce his insights to their framework. This is a dilemma, I believe,

that is not only evident in how they respond to Foucault, but in the very assumptions of their frameworks themselves. It is also a dilemma, I will argue later, that Foucault's ideas help us overcome.

Chapter Two: Feet of Clay?

In the last chapter I explored the criticisms made by Fraser and Habermas against Foucault's work. There is an implicit assumption being made within these criticisms that their (Fraser's and Habermas') respective theoretical foundations are not nearly as problematic as Foucault's. Fraser and Habermas thus claim that need interpretation, and the action coordinating function of language, respectively, provide a stronger and better basis with which to judge and support political action than does the work of Foucault. Part of the question I want to pursue here concerns the extent to which their respective foundations are problematic from a perspective other than their own. Yet, I also want to trace the positioning of their assertions in terms of the "Foucault" debate. That is, I want to ask what some of the implications are in their own positions.

With these questions in mind, I want to reexamine the foundations that Fraser and Habermas claim for themselves. To do this I will be drawing from my interpretation of Georges Bataille's (1985; 1991) work concerning general economy, as well as some of the insights about competing claims I derive from Roland Barthes' (1972) work on mythologies.

"All Other Things Being Equal"

Nancy Fraser (1989, p. 181) makes the claim that Foucault's work underlines "the importance of an account of interpretive justification," in order to ascertain competing need claims in late capitalist western societies. As Fraser points out, needs talk is a recurrent theme in contemporary social theory discourse. And, according to Fraser, it is also a central yet contestable and highly debated topic within feminist thought. Yet, one of the questions I wish to ask here is what exactly are needs and the assumptions underlying their formation? Concurrent with this concern, I want to question how Fraser posits her interpretive justification.

If we turn to Bataille, for example, we come across serious dilemmas in discussions concerning needs. Implicit in such formations is the notion of scarcity, usually scarcity of resources such as food and shelter, which one group of people seeks to acquire from another. In Fraser's work the dilemma is posed in terms of women seeking the resources they lack from the state. Yet, this problem only arises, according to Bataille, if one is focused on particular existence. He writes:

As a rule, particular existence always risks succumbing for lack of resources. It contrasts with general existence whose resources are in excess and for which death has no meaning. From the particular point of view, the problems are posed in the first instance by a deficiency of resources. They are posed in the first instance by an excess of resources if one starts from the general point of view (1991, p. 39).

According to Bataille, the problem in modern capitalist societies is not one of finding mechanisms to incorporate more and more individuals into the production process. Rather, it is a question of determining how to expend the excess that is created from such societies. Bataille reverses the problematic inherent in utilitarian and marxist/socialist economic perspectives, including Fraser's "Socialist-Feminist Critical Theory," by switching the problematic of control from production to consumption.

In some "primitive" societies, especially those located in extremely rich eco-systems, scarcity rarely presents itself. The society is easily able to produce what it requires to meet the needs of its people. There is, however, a constant surplus available that helps sustain the survival of the society in case of a threat to its resources, like drought or fire. The difference between these societies, and western capitalist ones, according to Bataille, is the way they organize themselves around this excess. In these "primitive" societies expenditure is associated with sacrifice and luxury, their system is partly organized around the consumption of this excess, and status is derived from waste or sacrifice, so to speak, instead of accumulation. This process can be illustrated through the system of exchange among Northwestern American Indians known as potlatch. Bataille (1985, p. 121) explains that:

Potlatch excludes all bargaining and, in general, it is constituted by a considerable gift of riches, offered

openly and with the goal of humiliating, defying, and obligating a rival. The exchange value of the gift results from the fact that the donee, in order to efface the humiliation and respond to the challenge, must satisfy the obligation (incurred by him at the time of acceptance) to respond later with a more valuable gift.

Potlatch is opposed to conservation and production then, in that "It is the constitution of a positive property of loss - from which spring nobility, honor, and rank in a hierarchy - that gives the institution its significant value"

(Bataille, 1985, p. 122).

Capitalist societies, according to Bataille, seek to ignore this realm of exchange through production organized around the increase of excess, and status derived through the increase of accumulation. Discourses such as needs talk and scarcity based models help reinforce such systems because they help reinforce structural power relations, the who and what if you will, of these societies. Fraser's project becomes implicated in this reinscription as she appeals to both needs talk interpretation and a state/client relationship. I will elaborate this position in a moment. Bataille (1985, p. 121) notes, "at its base exchange presents itself as a process of expenditure, over which a process of acquisition has developed." In this way, "humanity recognizes the right to acquire, to conserve, and to consume rationally, but it excludes in principle nonproductive expenditure" (Bataille, 1985, p. 117). The problem from a Bataillan perspective, is not one of how do

~~we help individuals who face scarcity on a particular level~~
become more productive so as to meet their needs, but
rather, how do we conceptualize the expenditure of excess
that is present in the general existence of society.

From Bataille's point of view then, welfare, the area
of Fraser's concern, is a good thing. It is a system which
enables a society that exists in excess to expend this
excess without producing more. He notes that "a human
society can have...an interest in considerable losses, in
catastrophes that, while conforming to well-defined needs,
provoke tumultuous depressions, crises of dread, and, in the
final analysis, a certain orgiastic state" (1985, p. 117).
In fairness to Fraser, she does attempt to problematize the
distinction between domestic and public production that most
utilitarian economic theories are based on, however she does
this in order to position the domestic as a realm of
production, and to somehow legitimate the need claims being
made in terms of a reciprocal relationship of production and
reward. But from Bataille's perspective, needs become a
~~problematic point of departure~~ for any theory, precisely
because they assume in their current form a solution based
on productivist notions.

They would also assume, at some level, what is and is
not useful since this is prior to the definition of what
constitutes need fulfillment. Yet, "given the more or less
divergent collection of present ideas," Bataille contends,

"there is nothing that permits one to defend what is useful to man" (1985, p. 116). It would be extremely difficult to formulate such need and need fulfillment definitions based on scarcity in western capitalist nations, especially when we consider that in the United States, for example, approximately only 18% of those employed are on farms (3%) and in factories (15%); places where the production of goods that actually meet our "needs" take place. Such a claim becomes even more ludicrous when we realize that much of agri-business receives subsidies not to produce food. Bataille (1985, p. 116) highlights this dilemma by pointing out that, "This lacuna [what is or is not useful] is made fairly prominent by the fact that it is constantly necessary to return, in the most unjustifiable way, to principles that one would like to situate beyond utility and pleasure." For Fraser (1989, p. 183), those principles reveal themselves in "translating justified needs claims into social rights."

In this light needs become more problematic as a foundational point from which to launch critiques and justify political action. For here, the problem is not the lack of, but rather the excess of resources. It is not a matter of competing for limited resources, but rather of the expenditure of excess resources in some circumstances, and the recognition that "if it [general economy] considers poverty or growth, it takes into account the limits that the one and the other cannot fail to encounter and the dominant

(decisive) character of the problems that follow from the existence of surpluses" (Bataille, 1991, p. 39).

Of course Bataille's ideas are contestable, yet they are also insightful as a means with which to view needs in a different way. Needs become relegated to the domain of the needy individual, and extremely contestable as both a fundamental concept and problem for western capitalist societies. The level of individual is also problematic in a Foucaultian sense, as "the managing of a population not only concerns the collective mass of phenomena, the level of its aggregate effects, it also implies the management of population in its depth and details" (Foucault, 1991, p. 102). In Bataille, a society's continuance becomes the result of exuberance and expenditure, and when viewed from the perspective of general economy, the focus shifts from needs to luxury, to the expenditure of surplus that limits growth, and to the recognition that growth is always limited not by the inability to provide for society, but by the inability to effectively disperse the excess productivity of society. Likewise, in Bataille, needs talk acquires the status of reifying and augmenting the structural power relationships in society that benefit from the organized production of excess. This occurs because needs appeal for their fulfillment to calls for increased production, or inclusion into the production process.

When we read in Fraser (1989, p. 182) that interpretive

justification has as one of its tenets consequential considerations, and that "consequentialist considerations dictate that, all other things being equal, the best need interpretations are those that do not disadvantage some groups of people vis-a-vis others," we can see the implicit assumption that needs are based on the competition between groups for limited resources. Yet, from a perspective of general economy this makes no sense in so far as the dilemma rests in expending excess, not laying claim to limited amounts that could possibly disadvantage one group over another.

This type of needs talk also contains a normalizing effect as it structures legitimate from illegitimate discourses. As I mentioned, Fraser is attempting to politicize the distinction between domestic and public spheres in the hopes of questioning what constitutes a productive role in society and what does not. From this problematization, she hopes to appeal to social rights as the basis for fulfilling needs once interpreted in a justifiable fashion. This posits production in a privileged position, and seeks to marginalize those who refuse to adhere to some bastardized protestant work ethic. It delegitimizes the claim, for example, that waste is as beneficial to society as production. It devalues identities that seek to oppose rather than contribute to the social good, and places obstacles in the way of challenging the

definition of that social good.

The acceptance of the larger productivist framework as shaping legitimate claims is apparent in the language Fraser employs. There is a consistent element of translation throughout need interpretation, be it "translating sufficiently politicized runaway needs into objects of potential state intervention," (Fraser, 1989, p. 173) or "translating justified needs claims into social rights" (Fraser, 1989, p. 183). Such translation rests with an interlocutor who claims access to the language games of both realms. So that, in the first example, it may be an activist or social worker who is familiar enough with the community to understand the claims being made within their context and through their modes of expression, while at the same time possessing access to the defined parameters of the state that constitute interdiction, as well as the discourse within which such appeals are legitimately made.

Fraser's concern becomes the legitimation of identities on the "margin." In this case women on welfare. She attempts this through problematizing their relationship to the center, hence her concern with the public/private dichotomization in terms of state concerns. Here, let's substitute the word "marginality" for sexuality in a passage by Foucault (1990, p. 98):

One must suppose that there exists a certain sphere of [marginality] that would be the legitimate concern of a free and disinterested scientific inquiry were it not the object of mechanisms of prohibition brought to bear

by the economic or ideological requirements of power. If [marginality] was constituted as an area of investigation, this was only because relations of power had established it as a possible object; and conversely, if power was able to take it as a target, this was because techniques of knowledge and procedures of discourse were capable of investing it.⁶

It is state discourse that Fraser partly identifies as marginalizing the identities of women on welfare. Her remedy becomes problematizing the way identities are constructed, but she does this by affirming the identity of the marginalized. The problem, from a Foucaultian perspective, is that this fixes the marginalized identity while at the same time reinforcing through justification what is "expertly" discourse.

As Spivak (1993, p. 160) points out, marginality is a "constantly changing set of representations." This fixing of marginal identity takes on the form of recoding unstable identities into stable identities based on the center, in Fraser's case rights and the welfare state, and more specifically, the required equivalences necessary in communicative processes that seek to arbitrate and judge between competing claims.⁷ As capricious identities, the "marginal" represent a crisis to the center (or the welfare

⁶Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak makes this same substitution in her discussion of postcolonialism and imperialism in "Foundations and Cultural Studies," Questioning Foundations: Truth/Subjectivity/Culture, ed. Hugh J. Silverman (New York: Routledge, 1993).

⁷There is an implicit assumption throughout this that language is transparent which will be addressed later in the chapter in the discussion concerning Jurgen Habermas.

state and associated apparatus' that seek to define them) to the extent that their precariousness hinders and prevents their effective management and normalization.

Foucault (1990, p. 99) notes that, "No 'local center,' no 'pattern of transformation' could function if, through a series of sequences, it did not eventually enter into an over-all strategy." The overall strategy Fraser's moves could be seen entering into may very well be those mechanisms that help divert crisis and sustain power relationships in capitalist welfare societies. By seeking to stabilize the identities of those on the "margins" of welfare discourse, she provides the center that helps constitute such discourse with a means of objectifying them; of diverting crisis by comprehending the otherwise unstable in terms of stability and equivalence that allow for arbitration through the same mechanisms that help constitute and reinforce dominant power strategies. In this way, Fraser's "translating" is a recoding of "otherness" and "difference" into the constitution of a realm of investigation accessible and colonizable by the "same" and "identity" that serves to divert possible crisis to these constituting centers.

What occurs in this instance is a devaluing of the unstable "marginal" identities represented through their own disclosure for the purposes of arbitrating their claims according to the parameters established by the mechanisms

they are appealing to. While Fraser (1989, p. 174) acknowledges the potential negative dangers of such a process, she nevertheless maintains that "expert discourses become the bridge discourses linking loosely organized social movements with the social state." Yet, they also serve to legitimate one form of expression, or disclosure, while delegitimizing another, and they posit the hierarchical necessity of an interlocutor to translate.

Ironically, in the end, Fraser encounters a bind in her process of "interpretive justification" of needs claims because it devalues the position of those who are making such claims in the first place. This dilemma places the women with such claims in a precarious position. Because Fraser resorts to rights, she resorts to appeals to the sovereign; claims of opposition must be translated into rights talk, talk which is sanctioned by the same juridical and procedural apparatus that constitute the power of that which is being appealed to. She is thus reifying and helping to support the apparatus' that she is attempting to challenge. Rather than opening new spaces as legitimate means with which to oppose and resist authority, she "translates" such resistance into the discourses that legitimate such authority. This in turn becomes a means in which to legitimate her role as "critical theorist" while assisting in the normalizing and disciplinary tendencies of state/client relations.

These problems, as mentioned at the end of the last chapter, are partly the result of a critical social theory that seeks to base its legitimacy on a universal foundation. This is readily apparent when we get to Fraser's tenets of "interpretive justification." One of these has already been mentioned, that "consequentialist considerations dictate that, all other things being equal, the best needs interpretations are those that do not disadvantage some groups of people vis-avis others" (1989, p. 182). To this, one might easily ask, how could Fraser project the circumstances of such actions onto all possible other groups? Her other tenet for interpretive justification is that "procedural considerations dictate that, all other things being equal, the best need interpretations are those reached by means of communicative processes that most closely approximate ideals of democracy, equality, and fairness" (1989, p. 182). What are the criteria for determining "ideals of democracy, equality, and fairness," how are such criteria to be determined, and likewise, could she justify them once determined? These terms are, to say the least, extremely contestable on their own.

In both of these tenets Fraser uses the terminology "all other things being equal." When are all other things equal? Assuming that at some point all other things are equal, how would we know? Fraser's position, and the alternative she offers to Foucault's "relativism," is a

matter of faith. She is decontextualizing her claims so that philosophically she can isolate all other things, making them equal, and attempting to legitimate her ground by a rhetorical positioning that posits her criteria as somehow removed from the socio-historical context they would operate in. This move results in a faith that all other things could ever be equal, faith that we could determine if they were, and faith that any need interpretation is not as good as any other.

When we approach her foundation of "interpretive justification" based on needs from alternative perspectives like that of Bataille, or ones which are sensitive to unstable identities, we see that it is at least as problematic as Foucault's assertions, without the claims of foundation. Yet, we also see that the need for her to create such a foundation also results in closing off certain discourses, in this case the discourses of those she wishes to help, because it must constantly "translate" and ultimately reduce all claims into the framework that she appeals to for legitimacy.

"As If It Were Real"

We can locate similar tendencies of colonization and traits of authoritarianism in the basis for normative formulations in the work of Habermas. Similar to Fraser, Habermas' insistence on a normative foundation to guide

~~critique succumbs to a blindness of the role such an~~
insistence plays in normalizing power. Likewise, his position arises from the reliance on, and augmentation of, a rhetorical situatedness upheld through disciplinary enforcement which helps frame his discourse in such a way as to appear less tenuous in its normativity. Given the extreme range of Habermas' work and conceptual apparatus, I will be unable to address his entire project here. Instead, I will concentrate on his concept of an ideal speech situation and the construct of universal pragmatics that underlies it.

Habermas' ideas have not been without controversy. They have been questioned by poststructuralists and critical theorists alike. Yet, in many ways, his suggestions have managed to escape the marginalization imposed upon those that occupy the other side of the modernity/postmodernity debate. Later, I will assert that this partly rests in the position his formulations hold within the North American academic power/knowledge regime of political theory. For now, I want to turn my gaze on his concepts themselves.

Romand Coles (1992, p. 81) has pointed out that:

One of the central and most contested dimensions of Habermas' theory concerns the possibility, nature, and desirability of the potential consensus he claims "must" underlie our serious speech acts. Whether or not we "must" is more plausible if serious communication is mostly according to a logic of universal validity claims.

Coles is referring here to Habermas' claim that we enter

into discourse with the assumption that a consensus can be reached, "that at all times and all places, if only we enter a discourse, a consensus can be arrived at under conditions which show the consensus to be grounded" (Habermas, 1973, pp. 239-240). This grounding for Habermas is based on rationality. Put another way, the anticipation of such an ideal speech situation is what grants him the means to describe a consensus as a rational consensus. It is "a critical standard against which every actually realized consensus can be called into question and tested" (Habermas, 1973, p. 258).

Habermas acknowledges that the ideal speech situation is just that, an ideal. Yet, he claims that it is an ideal that all competent speakers enter into discourse with, "anticipated, but as anticipated...also effective" (1973, p. 258). Because of this, we can assume its reality. Likewise, exchanges between speaker and hearer in speech situations are universal and rational:

With their illocutionary acts, speaker and hearer raise validity claims and demand they be recognized. But this recognition need not follow irrationally, since the validity claims have a cognitive character and can be checked. I would like therefore to defend the following thesis: In the final analysis, the speaker can illocutionarily influence the hearer and vice versa, because speech-act-typical commitments are connected with cognitively testable validity claims, that is, because the reciprocal bonds have a rational basis. The engaged speaker normally connects the specific sense in which he would like to take up an interpersonal relationship with a thematically stressed validity claim, and thereby chooses a specific mode of communication (Habermas, 1979a, p. 63).

~~There is an apparent commitment revealed in this passage to the primacy of the action coordinating function of language. It is posited that speakers "demand" recognition and that this demand is motivated by the will to assert claims and reach victory (or "consensus") over/with whomever such claims are being asserted against. The means by which such disputes are resolved, according to Habermas, are through universal rational criteria that the interlocutors appeal to for validity.⁸~~

For Habermas, the ideal speech situation and possibility of consensus must be anticipated prior to this discursive engagement or there would appear to be no reason for entering it in the first place. As David Held (1980, p. 344) has pointed out, "the ideal can serve as a standard for the critique of systematically distorted communication and as a guide for the institutionalization of discourse: where it is clearly violated doubt can be cast on the genuineness of the consensus and the legitimacy of all that is derived

⁸Habermas claims that every speaker has the possibility of selecting one of three modes of communication to appeal to for justification: the cognitive, interactive, and expressive. He writes that "every competent speaker has in principle the possibility of unequivocally selecting one mode, because with every speech act he must raise three universal validity claims, so that he can single out one of them to thematize as a component of speech" ("What is Universal Pragmatics," in Communication and the Evolution of Society, trans. Thomas McCarthy (London: Heinemann, 1979, p. 59). See also, Habermas, Jurgen. The Theory of Communicative Action, vol. 1: Reason and the Rationalization of Society, trans. Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984), especially "'Rationality' - A Preliminary Specification"(pp. 8-43) and part III, "Intermediate Reflections: Social Action, Purposive Activity, and Communication"(pp. 273-339).

from it." This then is Habermas' foundation and basis for normative criteria and critique.

I do not want to claim the position that the action coordinating function of language is nonexistent; to do so would place me in a position I am unable to defend. I do however, want to raise questions about the extent to which such a view is privileged in Habermas, and conversely the extent to which the world disclosing function of language is ignored. As Coles (1992, p. 82) has stated in reference to Habermas' rhetoric on consensus: "when the rhetoric of "reach" is deployed so repeatedly throughout these texts and in such proximity to "have to" and "must," one wonders if the text does not begin to build up a sort of imperative pressure - Reach! Reach! - an insistence that lies hidden in a very particular disclosure of the world that denies its particularity under the cloak of independent logics based on 'universal validity claims.'" Coles highlights the possible authoritarian tendency I alluded to earlier rather well. What Habermas does, by his seemingly overemphasis on the action coordinating function of language, is dismiss the plethora of possible world disclosing functions that take place in discourse. By requiring the universality of his claims, and granting them the criteria of rationality, he also imposes the requirements of his language game, and identity constituted through it, onto any and all who would enter discourse.

To illustrate this point I want to refer to Roland Barthes' essay, "Dominici, or the Triumph of Literature" (1972, pp. 43-47). Dominici was an 80 year old farm owner who was convicted in 1952 of murdering Sir Jack Drummond, his wife, and his daughter. Barthes' essay however, is not so much concerned with criminality as with linguistic assumptions and incommensurable language games; with the impossibility, in Habermas' terms, of ideal speech situations, but also with the dilemmas present in assuming such "as if it were real." Barthes notes that in the trial of Dominici, an old uneducated goatherder, the "official visit of Justice to the world of the accused is made possible thanks to an intermediate myth which is always used abundantly by all official institutions:...the transparency and universality of language" (1972, p. 44). The assumption, in other words, that, in this case, the condemned and the condemnor can appeal to the same resources, indeed must appeal to the same resources, and the decision made will be based on the validity of the arguments. As Barthes (1972, p. 45) notes, "this "universal" language comes just at the right time to lend a new strength to the psychology of the masters: it allows it always to take other men as objects, to describe and condemn at one stroke." For Barthes (1972, p. 46), the trial of Dominici revealed that:

whatever the degree of guilt of the accused, there was also the spectacle of a terror which threatens us all,

that of being judged by a power which wants to hear only the language it lends us. We are all potential Dominici, not as murderers but as accused, deprived of language, or worse, rigged out in that of our accusers, humiliated and condemned by it. To rob a man of his language in the very name of language: this is the first step in all legal murders.

A Habermasian might agree that of course the trial of Dominici was a tragedy, but Habermas acknowledges the importance of comprehensibility before accessing the modes of communication that can serve as grounds with which to rationally evaluate claims. Dominici's case was the result of his inability to comprehend the criteria for validity claims that the judge was appealing to, or vice versa. But even this raises a dilemma in Habermas' claims, for who in the trial of Dominici do we determine as supplying the comprehending principle with which to judge? Dominici? The Judge? Barthes (1972, pp. 44-45) notes that "this language of the [judge] is just as peculiar [as Dominici's], laden as it is with unreal cliches." This is the problem of criteria that was addressed by the Pyrronian skeptic Sextus Empiricus (Popkin, 1960, p. 3):

...in order to decide the dispute which has arisen about the criterion, we must possess an accepted criterion by which we shall be able to judge the dispute; and in order to possess an accepted criterion, the dispute about the criterion must first be decided. And when the argument thus reduces itself to a form of circular reasoning the discovery of the criterion becomes impracticable, since we do not allow them to adopt a criterion by assumption, while if they offer to judge the criterion by a criterion we force them to a regress ad infinitum.

Barthes (1972, p. 45) concludes that the decision

concerning criteria is clear enough, for "one of them has honours, law and force on its side." In this instance both interlocutors may have assumed that they could exchange discourse, but the inability of commensurating their language games falls on the less powerful of the two. For Dominici could have been anticipating an ideal speech situation, a consensus on the explanation of what occurred on the night of the murders, and be meeting Habermas' requirement of a standard for critique. This is because the problem so vividly illustrated with Barthes' essay rests not in the action coordinating function of language, the reaching for, but rather the world disclosive function. In other words, Dominici's world as disclosed through his language was not the same as the judges world disclosed through his language. Yet, due to the assumptions of transparency and universality in language, assumptions Habermas holds, Dominici was forced to enter a speech situation as if both worlds were the same, as if "they could, if the background consensus is brought into disrepute, vindicate their beliefs" (Held, 1980, p. 333).

The problem apparent in Habermas' formulation of a foundation based on the assumption of this ideal speech situation, and the resultant criteria for arbitrating competing claims, is that it excludes all that lays outside it. Unfortunately, it is too often the case that in situations like that of Dominici's it is the language games

most connected to power/knowledge regimes that determine the entrance fee, often through claims of universality, and that would have Dominici normalize the way his language discloses the world in terms of this universal. As Foucault (1981, p. 67) points out, "there is no prediscursive providence which disposes the world in our favor." Habermas obviously thinks otherwise, and it is this assumption at the heart of his claims to universality, which leads to a colonization of alternative conceptions of the world, and can only reduce language to the task, the goal, or the "consensus."

Part of this concern, and the acceptance of Habermas' project over Foucault's in North America can be understood in terms of the power/knowledge regime within which it operates. Habermas' project allows the academic a space to criticize, it helps legitimate his or her authority, and it speaks to a predisposed concern with action. That is, while Habermas' project may be very divorced from empirical struggles and the workings of political institutions, its purpose is to direct and justify legitimate from illegitimate political arrangements and actions. This concern within political theory can be located as a partial result of the German influence on American academia (and early progresivist orientation of political scientists), and the impact of the Weimar Conversation in setting the

legitimate parameters and concerns of political theory.⁹ John Gunnell (1993, p. 146) has pointed out that, "The problem at the center of the Weimar conversation was the relationship between theory and practice or, more specifically, the academy and politics." This was represented by Weber, for example, on one side, who argued that "the qualities that make a man an excellent scholar and academic teacher are not the qualities that make him a leader to give directions in practical life or, more specifically, in politics," (1946, p. 150) and those who believed in theoretical intervention like Horkheimer or Adorno, for example, on the other.

This debate is reinvigorated between Foucault and his critics,¹⁰ as the constant calls of his critics are for action orientation and normative justification. Yet what occurs in this debate also reveals the way in which Foucault is approached. There is a constant searching for his position, and then a call to justify such a position. —What concerns me here is the way in which Habermas, for example, seeks out a demand by Foucault for a recognition of his

⁹For an excellent discussion of the role German scholars have played in shaping the academic project in American political theory see John Gunnell, The Descent of Political Theory: The Genealogy of an American Vocation (Chicago: The Univ. of Chicago Press, 1993), especially chapters 7-9.

¹⁰I would not suggest here, however, that Gunnell would support Foucault in this debate. It is much more likely, given his arguments in The Descent of Political Theory: The Genealogy of an American Vocation that he has few problems with the theorist dictating proper from improper political interventions.

validity claims, and then a dismissal when he finds none. This is revealing in that such demands are integral to Habermas' project, a project with predefined ends that posit action as the result of theory, and the theorist as producing such intervention in society (as if removed from it). He does not seek to question the goals of his own project, but rather to oppose "the thesis that emancipation itself mystifies" (Habermas, 1979, p. 57).

The claims Paul Bove (1988, p. xii) makes about Charles Taylor's critique of Foucault seem fitting here as well:

we might say that [Habermas] has measured Foucault by a certain unannounced and unexamined set of argumentative standards of signification which he thinks are central to "reasoning" itself - whereas we might easily say that they belong rather to the constitutive practice of the discipline of which he is a leading exponent...he has failed to put together any demonstrative case that this certain kind of sense must be made before any thought can be found acceptable.

While Habermas' project seems problematic in the foundations it creates for critique it nevertheless operates within the defined parameters of the power/knowledge regime in which it circulates, reinscribing these relationships as it sustains a constructed universality around a particular disclosure of the world. In critiquing Foucault the way he does, Habermas helps to reinforce the exchange value of his own work by defending the parameters of justifiable critique that help constitute the power/knowledge regime of American academic political theory.

Without questioning the sincerity of the charges Fraser

and Habermas make against Foucault, and their commitment to what they might perceive as a better arrangement of society, we can nevertheless locate on the surface of this debate a reluctance to problematize the grounds they stake for themselves. What is interesting about this, is that they seek to critique Foucault according to the predetermined ends of their own projects. The questions they ask are positioned in such a way that Foucault must answer to them before his work is judged "political," or "normative." They do not approach their work from Foucault attempting to test the limits their frameworks impose, or the normalizing tendencies they conceal, but instead circle the wagons and issue charges from the position of sameness in order to both marginalize alternative conceptions of what is considered normative and reinforce their own positions as critics.

I have attempted here to do that problematizing for them, to ask from a Foucaultian position, what are the dangers of their respective foundations? Through this, the relationship of their truth claims to power, and the implication of their assertions in relationships of power/knowledge strategies have hopefully been revealed. To borrow from Foucault (1983a, p. 231), "My point here is not that everything is bad, but that everything is dangerous."

Nevertheless, one might easily agree with all this and still ask, how is genealogy "political," how can Foucault suggest a way to combat the "dangers" of power? In the next

chapter I will attempt to answer this by exploring the suggestions of William Connolly in combination with my own understanding of Foucault's potential for resistance.

Chapter Three: An Answer to Foucault's Critics?

Up to this point I have attempted to trace the way in which one strand of the Foucault debate has occurred, partly to illustrate the dimension of this debate as it relates to power/knowledge, and partly to shift the ground of the problematic in which it occurs. As shown in chapters one and two, Fraser and Habermas address Foucault in terms of a grand theory that demands consistency in conceptual linkages that seek to define what we are, and a systematizable foundation to guide action and normative claims. In the previous chapters, I deconstructed these claims by approaching them from a Foucaultian position. In this chapter I want to return to the claims I made in the introduction, and suggest why I think Foucault's form of critique can provide us with a way in which to challenge those forms of power he revealed in his work.

William Connolly (1993) has attempted to construct a framework on which Foucaultian "sensibilities" can be mapped, and with which we can derive a position to make normative claims from. "Fou-connoism," as he calls it, includes the following elements of a Foucaultian ethical sensibility:

1. Genealogical analyses that disturb the sense of

ontological necessity, historical inevitability, and purity of discrimination in established dualities of identity/difference, normality/abnormality, innocence/guilt, crime/accident, and responsible agency/delinquent offender.

2. Active cultivation of the capacity to subdue resentment against the absence of necessity in what you are and to affirm the ambiguity of life without transcendental guarantees.

3. Development of a generous sensibility that informs interpretations of what you are and are not and infuses the relations you establish with those differences through which your identity is defined.

4. Explorations of new possibilities in social relations opened up by genealogy, particularly those that enable a larger variety of identities to coexist in relations of "studied" indifference on some occasions, alliance on others, and agonistic respect during periods of rivalry and contestation (Connolly, 1993, pp. 367-368).

In combining Foucault with Nietzsche, Connolly attempts to suggest how, and why, such an ethical sensibility should be cultivated.

Connolly distinguishes between a teleological morality and an antiteleological ethic (associated with the genealogist) in order to illustrate the similarities the two share, and the points at which they diverge. His main concern here is to suggest that these two approaches are viable options for entering into "competitive relations of agonistic respect," because: "These two orientations produce each other as competitors; they manufacture a competition in which neither is in a good position to write its adversary off as inconceivable, incoherent, or unthinkable because the elements of strength and weakness in each are too close for

comfort to those in the other" (1993, pp. 370-371). The closeness he refers to is in reference to a sensibility, as opposed to systematic theory, that each approach attempts to cultivate.

The idea of a sensibility, or an attitude, is important here because it connotes the absence of guarantees. In other words, genealogy cannot guarantee the effects of decentering, destabilizing, or problematizing which it claims to attempt. But more important, the genealogist does not guarantee an escape from power, or an escape from the limits on our self-creation that the effects of power produce. Instead, the concern is with exposing

artifice in hegemonic identities and the definitions of otherness (evil) through which they propel their self-certainty; second, to destabilize codes of moral order within which prevailing identities are set, when doing so crystallizes the element of resentment in these constructions of difference; third, to cultivate generosity - that is, a 'pathos of distance' - in those indispensable rivalries between alternative moral/ethical perspectives by emphasizing the contestable character of each perspective, including one's own, and the inevitability of these contestations in life; and fourth - as Foucault eventually endorsed - to contest moral visions that suppress the constructed, contingent, relational character of identity with a positive alternative that goes some distance in specifying the ideal of political life inspiring it (Connolly, 1993, p. 372).¹¹

What Connolly suggests here seems congruent with my understanding of a Foucaultian sensibility, with the

¹¹ibid., p. 372.

exception of the last suggestion: "a positive alternative that goes some distance in specifying the ideal of political life inspiring it. He is here drawing from Foucault's statement that "in the end, I've become rather irritated by an attitude, which for a long time was mine, too, and which I no longer subscribe to, which consists in saying: our problem is to denounce and criticize; let them get on with their legislation and their reforms. That doesn't seem to me the right attitude" (Connolly, 1993, p.386). Given Foucault's multiple understanding of what criticism means, it does not necessarily follow from this quote that he was endorsing the prescription of an alternative which specifies an ideal of political life that could inspire it.

In "What is Enlightenment?" (1984) for example, Foucault (1984, p. 46) claims that "the historical ontology of ourselves must turn away from all projects that claim to be global." This does not mean that we simply denounce and criticize, but it also does not mean that we construct a political ideal to inspire our action. When Foucault referred to himself as a "felicitous positivist" he was emphasizing one of the major thrusts of his work. For Foucault, we should not appeal to "as if's" for political justification; instead, the critic should concentrate on "what is." This is why he claims that his project is neither transcendental or metaphysical. It is also why his

concepts, especially power, seem so ambiguous in their definitions.

One of Foucault's concerns with western thought was the assumption of representation between our concepts and reality, the assumption, in other words, that our concepts can grasp all that is there. His use of power actively seeks to escape this assumption, but it does not necessarily follow that such an escape results in relativity or an inability to act. This is because, while Foucault avoided saying exactly what power is, he nevertheless spoke of "power effects."

Gilles Deleuze (1988, pp. 25-26) has identified Foucault's discussions of power in terms of a "new functionalism," where:

power is not homogeneous but can be defined only by the particular points through which it passes...Foucault's functionalism throws up a new topology which no longer locates the origin of power in a privileged place, and can no longer accept a limited localization...Here we can see that 'local' has two very different meanings: power is local because it is never global, but it is not local or localized because it is diffuse.

In this way, the specific intellectual seeks to trace "power effects" because power is both diffuse and unrepresentable in a totalizing picture. As Paul Bove (1988, p. xxvii) points out, "It is just because one realizes after Foucault that one cannot think to have identified power in a locale that one is most likely to be suspicious of one's own

inscription within the power/knowledge apparatus at the moment when one is developing the most powerful or authoritative of critical or oppositional instruments."

This is why we find in Foucault continuous statements that divert the fixing of possible ideal political situations: "the farthest I would go is to say that perhaps one must not be for consensuality, but one must be against nonconsensuality" (1984c, p. 379). This quote is revealing when placed in proximity to his unwillingness to just denounce and criticize because both allude to an important element in Foucault's understanding of political engagement. Foucault chooses to not be for consensuality because such phrasing closes down *apriori* other possibilities, and masks the underside of appealing to such ideals as consentuality. To simply say one is for consensus, and then extrapolate this position to a global and universal system of judgement (or regulative ideal as it is referred to in this particular interview) is to leave consensus as a criterion of political organization unproblematic. It is to posit a *telos*, a final goal of theoretical intervention, which closes off other possibilities. Within such a claim is a latent assumption about our being which claims communicative competence and commensurability of language games, and which justifies such a constructed conception of self due to the teleological end (or future) it appeals to. Yet also, and as important, is

the appeal to an "as if" for the justification of such a normative system.

For Connolly, the telos posited takes the political form of democracy, and the ethical framework shaping his vision of democracy is agonistic respect, "an element in an impossible utopia, worth pursuit even amidst the impossibility of its final realization" (1993, p. 381). Genealogy helps foster such respect, according to Connolly, because it reveals the contestability of all adversarial claims, "Its impossible utopia is agonistic respect among differences irreducible to a rational consensus in settings where it is often necessary to establish general policies. It locates freedom in the gaps and spaces fostered by these collisions and negotiations rather than in a pattern of harmonious unity or private sanctuary it hopes to realize" (1993, p. 383).

~~Much of the ethics Connolly proposes is based on "as if" assumptions,~~ "as if" assumptions Connolly readily acknowledges. He admits, for example, that the ideal he is suggesting will probably never be reached. The point of suggesting it, and the major concern in his "Fou-connoism," is the struggle to reach it. It is an acknowledged imaginary telos that we strive towards as if we could acquire it. Through this striving we concentrate less on bending others to our vision and our will, and concentrate

more on fostering an understanding of ourself that recognizes the contingency of that understanding and seeks to apply "techniques of the self" on the self in striving towards the ideal. We therefore, according to Connolly, help overcome the resentment towards the world that results from a recognition of our finitude and the challenges to our self definitions we perceive from the outside.

When Connolly posits a particular end to this struggle, he also constructs a path in which the struggle should take place. In other words, the construction of the self will always be undertaken with the ideal of agonistic respect and democracy in mind. While I agree with Connolly's emphasis on the path, on the getting there, over the end result or final goal, I also think that he is misled in thinking that his end is not as confining to a Foucaultian sensibility as any other. Let me turn to the idea of goals as an example of my point.

Goal orientation can be understood in many ways. For some people, the final goal can be so high that merely getting close to its realization is an accomplishment in itself. We often hear phrases like, "I'm glad to even be here," or "I never thought I'd even get this far." These comments are always in relation to the end goal that was sought from the beginning. It was identified, and then pursued; success is judged in relation to the proximity of

achieving the goal one identified from the onset. Yet, other times we see that it was the process of striving towards the goal that is rewarding. Here, we might think of the phrase, "Getting there was half the fun." Nevertheless, the understanding derived from both experiences of how we should judge our "progress" is always related to the goal that was posited before the journey. In the first instance, it is our proximity to reaching the goal that is the criteria. In the second instance, the "fun in getting there" is defined by the "there" as well, only here it is a more nuanced effect. While the reaching of the goal is not what is valued, the whole process of getting there was nevertheless defined by the goal. The means are valued over the end, so to speak, but the means are still dictated and determined by the end.

Connolly is linked to the second form of goal orientation, and the dilemmas here in terms of a Foucaultian sensibility need to be addressed. Firstly, while he is willing to acknowledge the contestability of any positions along the path we may take, he leaves relatively unproblematic the final ideals we are striving towards. The recognition of contestability may infuse some ambiguity and space for us to interact at various points along the path, but it still fixes a legitimate from illegitimate end that the path leads to. For Connolly, this is necessary for the

construction of a framework, and resultant system, to base normative claims on. We can change the speed limit, and even the car, and we can respectfully disagree with each other over the best route to take, but the destination once fixed (and it is fixed by Connolly) becomes stable.

This incorporation of Foucault by Connolly provides a normative framework similar to the type requested by Habermas and Fraser. By fixing agonistic respect and his ideal of democracy as criteria he provides a means to judge various claims and struggles as legitimate and deserving support, or illegitimate and deserving rejection. This shares many of the problems as Habermas' and Fraser's frameworks (discussed in the last chapter), though not to the same degree.

For Foucault, the construction of frameworks and systems helps to necessitate the inability to locate multifarious power effects throughout society. These frameworks seek to gaze on various political phenomena and judge accordingly. Genealogy, on the contrary, seeks to locate the effects of power as a starting point for analysis. It is specific and contextual: "I have tried to indicate the limits of what I wanted to achieve, that is, the analysis of a specific historical figure, of a precise technique of government of individuals, and so forth. Consequently these analyses can in no way, to my mind, be

equated with a general analytics of every possible power relation" (Foucault, 1984c, p. 380). Foucault was clear that "theory does not express, translate, or serve to apply practice: it is practice. But it is local and regional...and not totalizing" (1977, p. 208).

There is a reason, in other words, that Foucault choose to describe criticism as "seeking to give new impetus, as far and wide as possible, to the undefined work of freedom" (1984, p. 46). The choice of the word "undefined" is pivotal in gaining some insight into Foucault's theoretical self-understanding. In his essay "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," (1984b) Foucault notes that "'Effective' history differs from traditional history in being without constants" (1984b, p. 87). Both of these references, undefined and being without constants, suggest an unwillingness to fix either a beginning or end as justification for engaging in critique or struggle. There is no fixed, eternal justification for the genealogist doing what he or she does. Foucault is aware of what such fixing masks when we begin to tell our stories, of marches of progress through history concealing the panoptic, the construction of the abnormal, and the external and internal objectification of the self.

For Foucault (1984b, p. 85), "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." Connolly's suggestion of agonistic respect is an attempt to defer such precession, it is an attempt to have competing rules co-exist with each other. Yet, what this masks is the rules imposed by his appeal to a democratic ethos. Whether good or bad, this ethos installs its own rules precisely because it posits the end goal that all such co-existence is aimed towards. By shaping the future in terms of an ideal (even if unreachable), Connolly also shapes our understanding of the limits we impose on ourselves.

The reason this seems so incongruent with a Foucaultian sensibility stems from the unwillingness in Connolly's work to accept the possible ramifications of dispelling such imaginary and constructed limits. Undoubtedly, when we view the present in terms of a projected future, that projection helps frame the current situation. In the penal system for example, the past was viewed as barbaric and torturous, the future represented the possible fulfillment of humanitarian goals that saw the prisoner as rehabilitated and "cured," able to reenter society and freed from the horrific treatment experienced in the past. Foucault showed how these projections help to mask many of the effects of power taking shape in this system. In other words, since the past

was horrific, and the future humane, the present represented a path away from the horrific and towards the humane. It did not represent normalization, surveillance, and a shift of forms of power. In opposition to such stories of historical progression towards an ideal, genealogy thinks "its own history (the past), but in order to free itself from what it thinks (the present) and be able finally to 'think otherwise' (the future)" (Delueze, 1986, p. 119). When Foucault speaks of transcending limits, "in which the critique of what we are is at one and the same time the historical analysis of the limits that are imposed on us and an experiment with the possibility of going beyond them," (1984, p. 50) he speaks of possibilities for the future. He does so however, without prescribing what exactly that future should be.

The danger of approaching the creation of an ethical framework by fixing an imaginary end rests in a certain understanding of the will to power that is recognized in both Nietzsche and Foucault. We judge good and bad according to this fixed end, or ideal goal. But in so doing we also attribute a representativeness to power; we say for example, that power is exercised negatively here because what is happening deters or hinders agonistic respect. A dialectic of sorts emerges, with agonistic respect on one side and fundamentalism on the other, the ideal becomes a

democratic ethos both may be balanced into. Likewise, it sets the values we strive towards a priori conservatively. That is, it sets them according to what some may now value, while appealing to an imaginary future for their justification. The will to power is recognized in Connolly as a will to recognition. The world is seen as forces competing for dominance, yet that dominance resides in the ideals already posited by society. As Deleuze (1983, pp. 81-82) notes, "The will to power, understood as the will to get oneself recognized, is necessarily the will to have the values current in a given society attributed to oneself...Rousseau reproached Hobbes for having produced a portrait of man in the state of nature which presupposed society...the whole conception of the will to power, from Hobbes to Hegel, presupposes the existence of established values that wills seek only to have attributed to themselves. What seems symptomatic in this philosophy of the will is conformism, absolute misrecognition of the will to power as creation of new values."

Because the possibility of these new values rests in the disruption of established limits, and not the imposition of new ones, Foucault was very careful not to prescribe according to an ideal end, or systematic framework. Again, we can refer to the use of terminology like undefined freedom and being without constants as examples of this.

And because the creation of these values means that they are new, it also means that there are no guarantees attached to them. They are potentially no more or less dangerous (not to be confused with bad) than any others. Because Connolly acknowledges the absence of guarantees, yet constructs an imaginary telos in an effort to provide some, he imposes limits on the possible creation of new values. He takes us to agonistic respect, but no further. And yet, if we reject Connolly's constructions on these grounds, we are still left asking how Foucault's work provides us with normative grounds.

In many ways, a clear cut answer to these questions is difficult to locate in Foucault's work (and possibly intentionally difficult). One of the major strands of philosophical thought he problematized centered around the use of universal ideals as a basis for resistance and normativity. Granting this, we may not be able to garnish any definitive answers to the question of normative grounds in his work, and instead may be left with only suggestions.

One of the obvious dilemmas Connolly's incorporation of Foucault faces is the relationship of this incorporation with liberalism. By liberalism I am referring to what Gianni Vattimo (1992, p. 102) describes as a vision "of the affirmation of rights in competition with each other." This vision, among other things, has a primary assumption that

the world is made up of rights based struggles, and that these struggles are in fairly obvious counterposition with one another. Of course, this view is also seen in the way Connolly constructs his fundamentalist and antiteleological distinctions. Likewise, agonistic respect seems a distant cousin of tolerance - it has broader political implications than tolerance (co-existence connotes very different things than does tolerance, which merely allows one to exist), but is nevertheless part of the family.

Power is understood in these instances as oppressive, or restricting the fulfillment of rights claims. In Connolly's sense we could see power identified as one side (the fundamentalist or antiteleologist) denying the existence or attempting to quiet the claims of the other. Many of the claims levied against Foucault's work centers on its inability to challenge such oppressive or repressive tendencies.¹² While Foucault opposed analyses that judged power in terms of its legitimate or illegitimate uses, he did not claim that it was not repressive. Rather, he claimed that "the notion of repression remains a juridical-disciplinary notion whatever critical use one would make of it. To this extent the critical application of the notion of repression is found to be vitiated and nullified from the

¹²The reasons for these criticisms were discussed in chapter one.

outset by the twofold juridical and disciplinary reference it contains to sovereignty on the one hand and to normalization on the other" (1980, p. 108). Since juridical theories of power help conceal the actual workings of bio-power, such conceptualizations help contribute to normalization through hiding its practices.¹³ This was a major thrust of Foucault's work, and is partly what he is getting at when he notes that "the real political task in a society such as ours is to criticize the working of institutions which appear to be 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" (1974, p. 171). Such institutions for Foucault included the prison and hospitals, but also academia and the "institution" of knowledge and truth claims. When Foucault analyzes the human sciences, liberalism, Marxism, humanism, or Freudianism, he does so because the frameworks these traditions rest on help conceal what he perceives as the political violence exercised through them. This violence is not so much directly connected to them, but is parasitic on their legitimacy. As long as their perspectives and judgments are deemed satisfactory and legitimate we will not

¹³See previous chapters.

look outside of them to find political violence. That is, "We should admit...that power produces knowledge (and not simply by encouraging it because it serves power or by applying it because it is useful); that power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations" (1979, p. 27).

This approach also presents a problem for Foucault's conception of critique. He is unable to provide an independent normative framework because to do so would implicate him in the very processes of power he is attempting to reveal. By independent I am referring to a framework that is somehow free from the matrices of power, that is also somewhat systematizable for the purposes of judging various phenomena in society, and that provides sufficient grounds to justify its acceptance. Without these things, according to his critics, Foucault's work delves quickly into relativistic description. Connolly attempted to provide the elements mentioned above by appealing to Nietzsche within the framework of liberalism. I have already discussed why this attempt seems problematic. It may be more beneficial, in attempting to answer Foucault's critics, if we turn to Pyrrhonian skepticism as an example of critique similar to what I perceive in Foucault.

This does not mean that I am in any way suggesting that Foucault is a philosophical descendent of skepticism, that we could get out our pencils and begin drawing lines back to around 260 b.c. and the figure of Pyrrho of Elis. I am not even sure how much contact Foucault actually had with the thought of the skeptics. What I am suggesting is that there is a shared attitude between Foucault and the skeptics when it pertains to the purpose of critique, and that by keeping the skeptics in mind when we approach Foucault we gain a perspective that allows us to move away from the criteria for critique that is dictated by a certain understanding of the Enlightenment project still being carried out by his critics.

For the Pyrrhonian skeptics, nothing could ever be known for sure. As Richard Popkin (1960, p. xi) explains it, they "tried to avoid committing themselves on any and all questions, even as to whether their arguments were sound. Skepticism for them was an ability, or mental attitude, for opposing evidence both pro and con on any question about what was non-evident, so that one would suspend judgement on the question." For the skeptics, justifying what was true knowledge remained unproblematic so long as there was not a challenge to the criteria used, yet even the possibility of faulty criteria meant a denial of whatever framework was claiming to produce true knowledge.

The problem of criteria was explained by Sextus Empiricus, in Outlines of Pyrroniasm, like this:

...in order to decide the dispute which has arisen about the criterion, we must possess an accepted criterion by which we shall be able to judge the dispute; and in order to possess an accepted criterion, the dispute about the criterion must first be decided. And when the argument thus reduces itself to a form of circular reasoning the discovery of the criterion becomes impracticable, since we do not allow them to adopt a criterion by assumption, while if they offer to judge the criterion by a criterion we force them to a regress ad infinitum (Popkin, 1960, p. 3).

The purpose of such a suspension of judgement concerning truth and knowledge was to reach a state of tranquility. The skeptics believed that the anguish required to generate truth and then defend or redefine that truth could be overcome by illustrating the falseness of everything. They hoped to attain a state of tranquility by making doubt central to life, and to do this they problematized whatever truth claims were prevalent in their day. For Connolly, and certainly Habermas and Fraser, this would seem too close to relativism for their approval. And yet it was clearly not relativistic, rather it was different from the conventional requirements of logic to justify critique in the Pyrrhonian skeptics period.

The point I wish to make here is that the tradition of Pyrrhonian skepticism offers an example of critique that did not require a judgmental stance for or against a particular side of any problematic. It sought instead to displace the

possibility of a choice between any one side of a binary opposition by problematizing the grounds either side could stand on. It did this without the type of normative criteria Fraser and Habermas claim are essential if we are to have critique, and yet it was not without some form of normative criteria since the goal of skeptical problematizations was tranquility. Though Foucault, on my reading, does not see tranquility as the goal of his problematizations, he does share the commitment evidenced by the skeptics of questioning that which seems the most unproblematic in our society. Likewise, he sought to do so without recourse to any one side of the problematic.

Rather than seeking tranquility, Foucault concentrated his critiques on revealing what he called a "limit-attitude." He writes that "We have to move beyond the outside/inside alternative; we have to be at the frontiers. Criticism indeed consists of analyzing and reflection upon limits...The point, in brief, is to transform the critique conducted in the form of necessary limitation into a practical critique that takes the form of a possible transgression" (1984, p. 45). In this light we can see how his criticism of limit inducing contrasts like sane/insane, and normal/abnormal opened up the possibilities of self creation and self-rule he later discussed in The Use of Pleasure (1990a). They did this by revealing these

constructions as just that - constructions, and not as necessary limits to our self understanding. In this process we learn of the subjectification of ourselves through a normalization that draws from such oppositions, and become aware that we could be otherwise, that we have the task of producing ourselves. According to Foucault (1977a, p. 34), transgression "forces the limit to face the fact of its imminent disappearance."

Yet, "The play of limits and transgression seems to be regulated by a simple obstinacy: transgression incessantly crosses and recrosses a line which closes up behind it in a wave of extremely short duration, and thus it is made to return once more right to the horizon of the uncrossable" (Hiley, 1988, p. 106). This means that limits on how we understand ourselves are constantly reimposed. It is also why he considered his a permanent critique of the present. Given this, resistance in Foucault cannot be understood as an escape from power, but rather as a permanent critique that seeks to continuously open up a plenitude of possibilities for being while acknowledging at the same time that those possibilities are consistently being closed down, incorporated within webs of power, and even augmenting normalizing tendencies. As David Hiley (1988, p. 108) notes, "In revealing the way biopower operates in our practice...genealogy liberates but not by releasing an

autonomous self from repression or through progress toward the achievement of the self as a goal. Instead it opens up the limit; it prevents the leveling out or closure of normalizing power, freeing us to create ourselves in our autonomy."

For Foucault, this autonomy is understood as permanent self creation. Here we must tread with some caution, for Foucault's understanding of self creation, of "intentional and voluntary actions by which men not only set themselves rules of conduct, but also seek to transform themselves, to change themselves in their singular being, and to make their life into an oeuvre,"(1990a, p. 10) is open and subject to an array of interpretations by both critics and sympathizers. In an effort to answer the question, why should we do genealogy?, many readers have turned to Foucault's work on Greek ethics. This work constitutes the third of three domains in which Foucault claims genealogy is possible:

First, an historical ontology of ourselves in relation to truth through which we constitute ourselves as subjects of knowledge; second, an historical ontology of ourselves in relation to a field of power through which we constitute ourselves as subjects acting on others; third, an historical ontology in relation to ethics through which we constitute ourselves as moral agents (1983a, p. 237).

The motivation for choosing the Greek treatment of ethics for his genealogy was the same for the others. He choose to

study the first domain, that concerning truth, in The Birth of the Clinic (1975) because he identified a shift in the way medicine was practiced; the second, concerning power, in Discipline and Punish (1979), because "for once power did not mask itself;" and the third, concerning ethics, in his History of Sexuality volumes (1990; 1990a; 1990b) because "recent liberation movements suffer from the fact that they cannot find any principle on which to base the elaboration of a new ethics. They need an ethics, but they cannot find any other ethics than an ethics founded on so-called scientific knowledge of what the self is, what desire is, what the unconscious is, and so" (1983a, p. 231). All three domains of genealogy were undertaken because Foucault identified in each instance a disruption, a shift that both made the limits evidenced in each domain visible and transgressable.

Some commentators have sought to identify the self that Foucault appeals to for the justification of his critique as that which appears in this work on Greek ethics. David Hiley (1988), for example, reads Foucault as calling for self mastery, as appealing to the Greek idea of self control and mastery over ones own subjectification as the grounds Foucault offers us for engaging in genealogical analysis and making judgments about political phenomena in our day and age. Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow (1983) even seem to

suggest this in their work on Foucault. While there is ample evidence in Foucault's work that could lead someone to this conclusion, I believe it is not entirely correct to claim that Foucault is calling for self mastery, and that the ontological understanding motivating his work is one that rests in a self which masters the creation of itself. There is, in other words, something else going on here.

Foucault was clear that he did not see the Greek elaboration of ethics as a preferred alternative to what he saw as modern codes and laws of moral behavior. The Greeks are interesting because their conception of the self and ethics concerning it were different than modern conceptions, but "you can't find the solution of a problem in the solution of another problem raised at another moment by other people" (Foucault, 1983a, p. 231). Self mastery as understood by those who read Foucault in this vein connotes an active production of the self, genealogy opens the possibility for this creation, and to the extent we resist the closure imposed on our self understanding by normalizing and totalizing practices we gain control over our own self definitions.

This misses the point of self-creation Foucault is aiming towards. We must remember that genealogy for Foucault seeks our historical ontology. But what does that mean? Well, for one, it means that he does not

conceptualize our being in terms of the choices we seek to make after genealogy's moment. In other words, self mastery does not reside in the choice of which path we take after genealogy has revealed the multitude of other possibilities we could be. It is in the revealing of those possibilities that we realize the self as understood by Foucault.

Genealogy to the extent it shows us a plenitude of possibilities for being other than what we are reveals the self to the self. It is in that opening that we find Foucault's grounds for critique. We engage in genealogy to open space for possibilities; yet, those possibilities reveal themselves to us - we do not seek to grasp them a priori in terms of their good or bad repercussions. This is why genealogy stays on the surface of discourse, and this is why Foucault refuses to give a coherent "alternative" to that which he critiques. Genealogy does not seek to shape the world as much as it attempts to facilitate our experiencing it differently.

Foucault's understanding of freedom is similar to this idea of perceiving differently. As Hiley (1988, p. 110) notes, "Though critique of the present will not provide for an escape from power/knowledge into freedom...neither does it result in acquiescence or accommodation to the current power/knowledge regime...It seems that, much in the way Heidegger's analysis of the essence of technology aimed at

achieving a free relation with it, one that neither resists it nor is swept along by it, Foucault's analysis of power/knowledge suggests a conception of the mature self that is free in relation to normalizing power, a self that creates itself in its possibilities." Once these possibilities are revealed we are shaped by the decisions we make regarding them, we thus reinscribe ourselves onto whichever of the possibilities we choose to adhere to. And yet, even with this possible reinscription, Foucault maintains that, "There are times in life when the question of knowing if one can think differently than one thinks, and perceive differently than one sees, is absolutely necessary if one is to go on looking and reflecting at all" (1990a, p. 8).

Foucault claims to engage in genealogy then in order to open up space in the discourses that constitute our subjectivity. It is not that we can ever escape the constitution of our subjectivity by discourses embedded in power strategies, but that we can see that the specific "subjectification" we live is not a necessary "subjectification." The genealogist is much like a facilitator who opens possibilities to us without dictating what to do with them. Or, in Foucault's words, we seek "to learn to what extent the effort to think one's own history can free thought from what it silently thinks, and so enable

it to think differently" (1990a, p. 9).

David Hiley (1988, p. 111) has suggested that even though Foucault's work does contain a notion of emancipation, and is certainly normative, it nevertheless "seems to suggest that liberation from closure or normalization is achieved by withdrawing from social action." Due to Foucault's continued ambiguity surrounding the idea of a "justified" or "legitimate" action, Hiley's reading here is understandable.

Yet, this ambiguity can also lead us into a different direction. For example, Foucault's conception of self mastery as the constant opening of spaces that allows us to "think differently," or perceive a plenitude of possibilities for being, is tantamount on resistance. He wrote in "The Subject and Power" (1983, pp. 210-211):

I would like to suggest another way to go further towards a new economy of power relations, a way which is more empirical, more directly related to our present situation, and which implies more relations between theory and practice. It consists of taking the forms of resistance against different forms of power as a starting point. To use another metaphor, it consists of using this resistance as a chemical catalyst so as to bring to light power relations, locate their position, find out their point of application and the methods used.

This approach, in many ways, reverses the relationship between the "collectivity" and the "critic." Rather than starting from the position of the "critic" who informs the "collectivity" about which power relationships need to be

resisted, the genealogist is informed by the "collectivity" about where to locate power effects. The relationship between theory and practice then, is a reciprocal relationship as each feeds off the other. The interesting thing here, and about Foucault's approach, is the starting point for this relationship - the reversal, in other words, of the "critic/collectivity" roles. Hiley, in his reading, seems to be demarcating theory from practice, a demarcation Foucault rejects. But, beyond that, he is confusing Foucault's emphasis on singularity and individualism with a withdrawal from the social.

It is not that we reject our connection to the social when we engage in struggle that Foucault is concerned with, but that we do not appeal to the "social" as some representative concept to justify our struggle. For Foucault, such appeals only prohibit "the actualization, success and perpetuation of those projects. . . . 'The whole of society' is precisely that which should not be considered except as something to be destroyed. And then, we can only hope that it will never exist again" (Hiley, 1988, p. 113). The "whole of society" is, in many ways, what bio-power aims at, it is what helped mask the fraud of constitutions that emerged out of the French Revolution (1789), and it is what helps to homogenize and level out our individual differences

into a managable whole.¹⁴ Foucault (1991, p. 92) notes that, "The art of government...is essentially concerned with answering the question of how to introduce economy - that is to say, the correct manner of managing individuals, goods and wealth within the family (which a good father is expected to do in relation to his wife, children and servants) and of making the family fortunes prosper - how to introduce this meticulous attention of the father towards his family into the managegement of the state." One of the ways this is accomplished is through appeals to essentially meaningless concepts like the "social." Through tactics centering on the creation of the social, we as "citizens" begin to monitor and objectify our own actions accordingly.¹⁵ It is no great surprise, for example, that advertising agencies point out the number of people using a particular product to lure those of us not using it in. Likewise, political figures utilize polls to win public support of particular positions.

It is only through resisting such normalizing and "subjectifying" practices, such codes and administrative apparatus', that the possibility of transforming ourselves

¹⁴See discussion concerning bio-power in chapter one.

¹⁵Connolly's "agonism" and democratic ethos can be seen as susceptible to this danger as the primary motivating concern is social over individual.

can be achieved. Self mastery then is not merely attempting to create oneself, but also resisting the creations imposed on us. This leads us full circle to the questions posed of Foucault's work, and addressed in the previous chapters. We engage in critique in order to foster the opening of space in our thought and understanding that allows our being to exist. Foucault's ontological understanding of our being as multiple possibilities suggests a politics that actively resists the closure of our self understanding. A politics that is "not exactly for or against the 'individual,' but rather...[is realized in] struggles against the 'government of individualization'" (Foucault, 1983, p. 212). Appeals to universality and the deep self foster normalizing tendencies that seek closures instead of openings. And rather than a withdrawal from action, we could affirm that "If everything is dangerous, then we always have something to do" (Foucault, 1983a, p. 232).

Chapter Four: some closing thoughts....

Throughout this essay I have attempted to analyze various theoretical frameworks as they represent themselves normatively. As is obvious by now, I have been particularly partial to the ideas and concepts of Michel Foucault. I used some of these ideas in chapter two, for example, in questioning the frameworks of universal pragmatics and need interpretation by Jurgen Habermas and Nancy Fraser, respectively. I saw this questioning as only fair, given that it was their criticisms of Foucault I was concerned with in chapter one. Since they seemed to have problems with the possible normative potential of Foucault's work in any real political sense, I thought that their own suggestions should at least be questioned. As I have hopefully shown, there are problems present in each one of their frameworks that, while not reason enough to dismiss them, should at least be acknowledged.

This said, it should also be pointed out that the previous chapter was an attempt at laying out a possible way of envisioning a normative political position from Foucault's work. This proved to be very difficult in the end, as Foucault's ambiguity is both a positive and negative experience for the reader. It is positive in that Foucault

can avoid many of the shortcomings at which his criticisms were aimed. Yet, it is also negative in that it avoids many of the possible consequences and or conclusions that could be drawn from his work.

James Miller (1993, p. 348), one of Foucault's biographers, noted that:

By undertaking an 'analytics of truth,' he had devoted his life to the discipline of critique, scripting his self in the historico-philosophical works that he wrote, trying to understand how he had become what he was, and at the same time making an effort to renew 'the living body of philosophy, at least if the latter is still what it once was, namely an 'ascesis,' an exercise of the self in thought.' But thinking and writing were not the only ways in which he had tried to take care of himself: for at the same time, he had pursued a 'critical ontology,' trying to transform and transfigure his self, by experimenting, sacrificing himself, putting his body and soul to the test directly.

This is fitting in many ways. For Foucault, the concern was the subjectification imposed upon us, and reciprocally our consent to such subjectification. In his own life, he attempted to harbor that consent for the purposes of his own scripting. This is something we could, or could not admire, but it is nevertheless something we cannot expect of everyone.¹⁶ Nor, with all his concerns about not prescribing, would Foucault I think expect us to.

This thesis may be an example of the extent to which

¹⁶The use of "we" in this chapter is in reference to those of us who choose to utilize Foucault's theories in an attempt to understand and explain social phenomena.

Foucault was right about a number of issues. He and his writings have become somewhat of a cottage industry in American academia, indeed careers may have been made through him (Bove, 1988; O'Hara, 1988). As the chapters in this thesis illustrate, 'Foucaultian' discourse has its own rules, jargon, and specific 'rationality.' To suggest a genealogy on Foucaultian genealogy would probably only help reinscribe and reinforce this game of truth. Again, in a strange way, this seems fitting.

So then, while I am openly sympathetic to his ideas and theoretical approach, I am not naive enough to claim it has no shortcomings. In an age of continued government and market intrusion and management of our lives, the desire to create oneself, to resist such intrusion and management is appealing. Yet even Foucault the materialist seemed to leave unproblematized the degree of poverty, illiteracy, and (lest I say it) ideology that pervades our society. Before I am misunderstood, let me clarify what I mean. It would seem that the work on "creating oneself" or opening possibilities of being that I dealt with in chapter three is aimed at a specific audience. It is aimed at those, like Habermas and Fraser, whom I believe demanded an ethical motivation for Foucault's approach to methodology and theory. Since, according to Foucault, the intellectual should not prescribe to the collectivity, I do not believe

Foucault saw his elaboration on the self as a foundational point for "everyone" to guide political action. He was telling those interested why he did what he did, and along the way exploring the socio-historical construction of ethics from the Greeks to Christianity. We can choose to accept this elaboration as good enough reason to do genealogy, as I do in the previous chapter, and seek to open spaces in scripting discourses, or we can choose to reject it. As a leading French intellectual, however, it was certainly easier to be concerned with the creation of one's self than it would be as a single mother in Watts or southeast D.C.. As a homosexual male, however, it was also probably more difficult than it would be for a heterosexual. Our subjectivity may be constituted through discourse, in other words, but some discourses constitute some of us more than others.

With this in mind I want to also remark on the process of writing this thesis itself. For all of the time and effort spent reading, re-reading, and attempting to understand Foucault's project and concern with binary oppositions and unitary perspectives, I was often struck by the extent to which I fell into that very trap. That is, I found myself siding with one side of the argument, attempting to evince it at all times, and avoiding the problems I may have encountered with it. This is apparent

in the extent to which I was willing to grant Foucault's ideas space while disallowing the same "benefit of doubt" to Nancy Fraser and William Connolly. Foucault, I nevertheless maintain, is extremely useful in visualizing new forms of resistance and ways of thinking about how we think, and how that thought helps to constitute who we are. His is not, however, the only way to do so. To simply claim his perspective as the right one, as all we need to analyze power's effects and how to resist them is to become the flip side of the coin much of contemporary political thought is attempting to challenge. It imposes new limits on what is acceptable, imposes new rules as to what is allowed, and masks the possibility of seeing things differently.

Nevertheless, while we need not appeal to conceptions like the "social" or "the rights of humanity" for frameworks, we can suggest some generalizations concerning the politics derived from Foucault's work. This politics would concentrate less on locating a center of power to overturn and more on local struggles over control. For example, we could envision tenant run housing as opposed to HUD (Housing and Urban Development) regulated and administered projects. Here, the tenants who have to live in low income and subsidized housing would gain control over the policies and day to day management of their residence. Negotiations, grievances, and claims would be made by them

as opposed to "experts" interpreting their needs for them. Such a politics may also lend support to co-ops and worker controlled business' as opposed to corporate and government owned enterprises. It would seek to question government defined needs and requirements in the area of social services while supporting the claims, and how such claims are made, by those making them.

In the introduction I claimed that I would argue why I think Foucault's form of critique allows us to counter those forms of power he identified in his work. In chapter one I provided a brief synopsis of my reading of Foucault's work, and the charges made against it by Nancy Fraser and Jurgen Habermas. I then, in the same chapter, showed why I believe these charges do not work. In chapter two I questioned the frameworks of need interpretation and universal pragmatics that Fraser and Habermas, respectively, appeal to for their own normative claims. I did this by problematizing the position of both themselves and their suggestions to bio-power and colonizing tendencies. And, in chapter three, I explored a couple of the possible answers to Fraser and Habermas' charges in an attempt to do what I claimed I would in the introduction. After re-reading all of this, I realize to what extent this thesis has been an exercise in meta-theory. An exercise, in other words, of theorizing about theory.

This is, I believe, a dilemma when dealing with Foucault and the questions posed of him by his critics. It is also a dilemma I illustrated in chapter one. Foucault's theoretical writings were also integrated empirical studies. They had less to do with theorizing theory than with theorizing particular, historical situations. I attempted to show this throughout the thesis by tying his concepts back into the studies of criminality, insanity, and sexuality out of which they arose. There is a trap then, in attempting to answer Foucault's critics without contradicting Foucault's perspective. Because the questions his critics pose are in terms of frameworks, and possible systems, the answers one might suggest tend to result in discussions concerning frameworks and systems. The legitimacy of Foucault's suggestions may be better judged according to the extent they work. That is, can we see things differently if we use Foucault, do we gain new avenues of resistance when we do genealogy, and does Foucault's perspective make us more aware of our own? This means an increased attentiveness to history in social theory, to the realization that history itself is theory, and to the role such history plays in power strategies and ways of understanding the world.

The answer to these questions is better determined not by engaging in theoretical discourses about them (which I

have attempted), but by engaging political phenomena in their socio-historical context and construct. Because of time and space limitations, I am unable to do that here. However, there is much in the fields of international relations (Campbell, 1992; Der Derian and Shapiro, 1989; Luke, 1991), cultural studies (Luke, 1989; Said, 1978; Spivak, 1993), and feminism (Flax, 1990; Sawicki, 1988) that do do that. To the extent genealogy contributes to these various perspectives a new way of seeing by looking into substance and not towards metatheory, and hence resisting the limitations imposed on, and constituted by them, it is successful.

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric Messer". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "E".