Foucault's Historiographical Expansion: Adding Genealogy to Archaeology[1]

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Abstract

This paper offers a rereading of Foucault's much-disputed mid-career historiographical shift to genealogy from his earlier archaeological analytic. Disputing the usual view that this shift involves an abandonment of an archaeological method that was then replaced by a genealogical method, I show that this shift is better conceived as a historiographical expansion. Foucault's work subsequent to this shift should be understood as invoking both genealogy and archaeology. The metaphor of expansion is helpful in clarifying what was involved in Foucault's historiographical shift. I describe two expansions at the heart of Foucault's move. First, Foucault went from analyzing singular isolable domains of practice (such as knowledge) to analyzing the interactions between multiple domains of practice (such as power/knowledge). Second, Foucault went from an analytic which relied on a single temporal category of rupture to an analytic which invoked the relations amongst multiple temporalities, including continuity alongside discontinuity in his subsequent analyses.

Keywords

genealogy, archaeology, history of the present, power/knowledge, temporality, Foucault

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Why did Foucault add genealogy to archaeology, expanding his critical apparatus so that it could include two interrelated yet distinct forms of philosophical-historical inquiry? Because only then could he properly focus his inquiries in a way that would enable him to write what he would come to call "the history of the present". Only by adding the historiographical elements necessary for genealogy could Foucault write histories that were relevant to and useful for a critique of the present situations in which he found himself. I argue here that an inquiry into the history of the present requires philosophical and political resources which are not yielded by an archaeology taken by itself but which can be generated on the basis of an expansion of historical inquiry so as to include genealogy alongside archaeology.

I: Existing Accounts of the Relation between Archaeology and Genealogy

In the existing scholarly literature, there are more or less two kinds of explanation for why Foucault expanded his repertoire from archaeology to genealogy plus archaeology. The first kind of explanation emphasizes external factors which are generally political and biographical in orientation – for example, Foucault's involvements with the movements in the wake of May 1968 and the influence of Gilles Deleuze and other of his politically-engaged friends. The second kind of explanation emphasizes internal factors pertaining to Foucault's philosophical and methodological commitments – the idea here is that Foucault came to acknowledge certain crucial deficits internal to archaeology which he then tried to repair in developing his genealogy. I shall argue that both strands of explanation can be helpful, but only if we do not construe them as mutually exclusive.

One of the most recent attempts to engage with the relation between archaeology and genealogy in Foucault can be found in Eric Paras's intellectual history of Foucault's life and work. Paras argues that the "decisive" factor in this intellectual shift in Foucault's work was his "concrete situation as a practicing philosopher and social activist in post-1968 France."[2] Gilles Deleuze offers a compelling statement of the importance of Foucault's

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[2] Eric Paras, *Foucault 2.0: Beyond Power and Knowledge* (New York: Other Press, 2006), 69.

political engagements: "For France this was something totally new… Michel provided a new kind of political practice… The intellectual was no longer the guarantor of certain values. His conception was, in a way, much more functional…. Therefore the point is not to seek truth in Sartre's fashion, but to produce new conditions."[3] If Deleuze's claims are anywhere near accurate, then Paras's attempt to focus attention on Foucault's political practice should prove crucial. But Paras presses well too far in this direction by insisting that an external (biographical) explanation of Foucault's development of genealogy must exclude the second sort of internal (philosophical) explanation of this development. Paras writes: "Foucault's development of genealogy has been treated almost exclusively as an intellectual event – an internal affair of philosophy in which historical conditions were at best ancillary, and at worst irrelevant. Yet Foucault's genealogical turn should be seen neither as the result of methodological failure of archaeology, nor as the result of a sudden interest in Nietzsche."[4] Paras instead attributes nearly everything to Foucault's biography. Contrary to Paras, I find that both modes of explanation are needed to come to terms with why Foucault expanded his critical apparatus to include genealogy alongside archaeology. Surely Foucault's concrete engagements with hybrid complexes of power and knowledge in 1968 provided a practical motivation for developing something like genealogy, but just as important were the philosophical deficits of archaeology highlighted in these very same years by leading intellectuals such as Jean-Paul Sartre.

In attempting to bring these internal philosophical deficits into focus alongside of the more obvious external deficits to which Paras points, the usual explanations focus on one of two shortcomings. First, there are those who claim that archaeology can be used to write the history of knowledge, but not the history of power. James Bernauer writes in this vein that, "Without effective treatment of the social and political conditions within which discourse appears and functions, archaeology will fail to reach the

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dimension of existential necessity."[5] Second, there are those who focus on the related problem of Foucault's inability to use archaeology to, in Gary Gutting's words, "give a clear account of just how discursive and non-discursive factors are related."[6] There are also those commentators who combine (or perhaps less charitably, conflate) these two pairs of relation in comparing archaeologies to genealogies. Thomas Flynn holds that "archaeology is related to genealogy, roughly as the analysis of discursive to that of nondiscursive practices" and also that "the archaeological accent is on discourse, the genealogical on relations of power."[7] Flynn takes the discursive as the space of knowledge and the nondiscursive as the space of power. Critics such as Bernauer, Gutting, and Flynn propose to interpret the relation between archaeology and genealogy in terms of these various distinctions. While I find these usual explanations helpful up to a point, I think more is to be gained by considering just what is at stake in Foucault's shift of attention from the analysis of isolable epistemes to the analysis of the dynamic interactions which hold between two or more fields of activity.

It is important to recognize, against the first sort of typical explanation for which Bernauer is representative, that one could very well write the archaeology of power on the model supplied by Foucault's *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. Foucault in fact had already undertaken exactly such a project, albeit in limited fashion, in attempting an archaeology of political economy in *The Order of Things*. As was there apparent, such an archaeology requires that power and knowledge be analyzed as separate domains not directly related to one another but only indirectly related by virtue of the underlying shared *episteme* in which both are articulated. Foucault had also already proposed further archaeologies of power, sexuality, and psychology in "The Order of Discourse" – the essay widely regarded as Foucault's first attempt to signal that his archaeological approach needed some sort of supplementation which genealogy would later come to supply.[8]

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[5] James Bernauer, *Michel Foucault's Force of Flight* (Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press, 1990), 119.

[6] Gary Gutting, *Michel Foucault's Archaeology of Scientific Reason* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1989), 138.

[7] Thomas Flynn, *Sartre, Foucault, and Historical Reason, Volume Two: A Poststructuralist Mapping of History* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2005), 24.

[8] Michel Foucault, "The Order of Discourse" as appendix to Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. A.M. Sheridan-Smith (New York: Pantheon, 1972), 232–4.

Foucault was perfectly consistent in that essay to insist upon the intelligibility of the project of an archaeology of power.

Why, then, do some commentators argue that power is precisely that which motivated Foucault's move to genealogy? Bernauer writes that, "While archaeology attempts to do justice to the specific production of forms of rationality and truth, the intricate links between these discourses of knowledge and political practices cannot be grasped in terms of univocal relations to institutions conceived as simple forces of prohibition or approval."[9] Or consider Béatrice Han's rather more perspicuous complaint about the same problem: "Insofar as [archaeology] treats the discursive from the epistemic point of view along, and limits itself to asking the question of the conditions of possibility and the rules of formation of discourses that attempt to attain scientific status, it can only establish that which concerns the possibility of a statement being 'in the truth'."[10] The error common to Bernauer and Han is that of conflating the "discursive" level of archaeological analysis with the "epistemic" level at which Foucault just so happened to deploy that analysis. There is no reason why Foucaultian archaeology could not produce a discursive analysis of the political just as rigorous as those analyses of the epistemic which Foucault actually produced. Archaeology can be used to analyze 'scientific status' and being 'in the truth' but it can also be used to analyze 'political status' and being 'in power'. And indeed much of Foucault's later work on modern political governmentality and ancient ethical practice was explicitly archaeological in orientation. It is therefore not the analysis of power itself which makes necessary the methodological shift from a narrower archaeology to a broader genealogy. What makes the shift necessary is the move from an analysis of an isolable domain of human activity to the analysis of the interaction between two or more non-isolable domains. When Foucault actually got around to studying power he realized how useless such an inquiry would be for the purposes of the historical present if power were not somehow taken up in relation to other domains such as the social scientific knowledge that informs the structures of power prevalent in law, criminology, medicine, and policy. What requires a genealogy is

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9) Bernauer, 144.

10) Béatrice Han, *Foucault's Critical Project*, trans. Edward Pile (Stanford: Stanford University, 2002), 92.

neither power nor knowledge, but rather the interaction between power and knowledge.

Turning now to the second typical sort of explanation offered for Foucault's shift from archaeology to genealogy, such as that given by Gutting, it must be kept in mind that this is not a simple matter of clarifying the relation between discursive and nondiscursive realms. Power is not related to knowledge as an instance of the nondiscursive to the discursive. Foucault's genealogical model is, rather, that of exploring the complex workings of the power-knowledge relation. There are, to be sure, both discursive and nondiscursive factors which are simultaneously present on both registers, but the distinction between discursive and nondiscursive types of factors is of no particular strategic value for Foucault in his genealogical phase. Foucault, then, did not in his archaeological work fail to adequately confront this problem such that his genealogical work can be read as a "return to the interrelations of the discursive and the nondicursive."[11] It is as if Foucault had simply gotten over those problems which lead so many philosophers into the dilemma of nominalism (there is no realm of the nondiscursive) versus foundationalism (the nondiscursive is a foundation for the discursive). Foucault just began to ask different sets of questions than those motivating these outworn philosophical perplexities. With a different set of questions given pride of place, the old problem of the relation between discursive and nondiscursive factors of experience is no longer the most fruitful domain of inquiry. Foucault himself was clear enough about this: "It doesn't much matter for my notion of the apparatus to be able to say that this is discursive and that isn't. If you take Gabriel's architectural plan for the Military School together with the actual construction of the school, how is one to say what is discursive and what is institutional? That would only interest me if the building didn't conform with the plan. But I don't think it's very important to be able to make that distinction."[12]

I find that the explanations of these tensions in Foucault's work offered early on by Paul Rabinow and Hubert Dreyfus remain more useful than those later explanations put forth by commentators such as Bernauer, Han,

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[11] Gutting, 138.
[12] Michel Foucault, "The Confession of the Flesh" in Foucault, Colin Gordon (ed.), *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972–1977* (New York: Pantheon, 1980), 198.

Gutting, and Flynn. Rabinow and Dreyfus agree with these other critics that there is something important in Foucault's attempt to embrace power and knowledge together, but they locate this importance neither in the attempt to incorporate power as a new level nor in terms of the relation between discursive and nondiscursive although the clearly agree that both of these shed some light on these matters. Their more nuanced claim is that Foucault's archaeology left him stranded with "the strange notion of regularities which regulate themselves." Foucault's archaeology is not sufficient to explain historical transition and so "the archaeologist must attribute causal efficiency to the very rules which describe these practices' systematicity."[13] Archaeology thus lacks capacities for explaining why the rules and regularities have in fact assumed the form that they have. This is then linked by Rabinow and Dreyfus to the very political concerns which for Foucault became increasingly important in the late sixties and early seventies. If archaeology cannot help bring into focus that which motivates, substantiates, and perpetuates the rules and regularities that are in place, then it cannot even begin to critically examine these rules and regularities. Rabinow and Dreyfus conclude that "there is no place in archaeology for a discourse with social significance."[14] This is not exactly a refutation of archaeology. But it is a clear statement of the limits of a narrow practice of archaeology. To surpass these limits, Foucault would find that he needed to fashion a critical apparatus which contained both archaeology but something else in addition too. Following the lead of Rabinow and Dreyfus's two-part explanation given in terms of an internal lack of explanatory capacity and an external lack of political efficacy, I will here explore in finer detail just how these deficits led Foucault from archaeology to genealogy.

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[13] Paul Rabinow and Hubert Dreyfus, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, second edition (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1983), 84. Though incorrectly situating the point in terms of the relations between the discursive and the nondiscursive, Gutting is correct to follow Rabinow and Dreyfus in claiming that "[genealogy] combines [archaeology] with a complementary technique of causal analysis" (Gutting, 271), while Bernauer insists that "archaeology endeavors to give content to the empty notion of change by inspecting different types of transformations" (Bernauer, 115).

[14] Rabinow and Dreyfus, 89.

II: Critical Inquiry as the History of the Present

The theme which unites these two sides of my explanation, a lack of philosophical explanation and a lack of political critique, is supplied by Foucault's idea of a history of the present. In one early formulation of that notion, offered by Foucault during the years in which he was expanding his critical ensemble to include genealogy alongside archaeology, he noted, "To diagnose the present is to say what the present is, and how our present is absolutely different from all that is not it, that is to say, from our past. Perhaps this is the task for philosophy now."[15] This at least suggests that Foucault added genealogy to archaeology in order to intervene in the present situations in which he found himself. It was in this sense that he explicitly offered *Discipline and Punish* as an intervention into the present: "I would like to write the history of this prison . . . 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."[16] This view of his work is clearly born out in the book's final pages. A few years after its publication, Foucault clarified that his book was intended as an inquiry into the conditions of the possibility of the general apparatuses of power and knowledge invoked by and manifested in the prison: "What I wanted to write was a history book that would make the present situation comprehensible and, possibly, lead to action. If you like, I tried to write a 'treatise of intelligibility' about the penitentiary situation, I wanted to make it intelligible and, therefore, criticizable."[17] Note that inquiry in the form of a history of the present is here explicitly offered as a critical inquiry.

It is in the idea of a history of the present that philosophy and politics intersect in Foucault's practice of critical inquiry. A history of the present has certain philosophical requirements, such as a capacity for explaining the contingent genesis of the present, and certain political requirements,

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[15] Michel Foucault, "Foucault Responds to Sartre" radio interview by Jean-Pierre El Kabbach in Foucault, Sylviere Lotringer (ed.), *Foucault Live*, trans. John Johnston (New York: Semiotext(e): 1989), 53.

[16] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage, 1995), 30–1.

[17] Michel Foucault, "On Power" in Foucault, Lawrence Kritzman (ed.), *Politics, Philosophy, Culture: Interviews and Other Writings, 1977–1984* (New York: Routledge, 1988), 101.

such as critical relevance to the present. Thus, as I have said, the shift in question should be seen in the context of Foucault's life and work as both philosophical and political. This is why I find helpful but particularly incomplete those accounts of a supposed break in Foucault's work between the two phases of archaeology and genealogy that emphasize only external political factors or only internal philosophical requirements. As for the latter, it is undeniable that Foucault himself was motivated to develop genealogy not only on the basis of philosophical criticisms offered by his friends and interlocutors. Clearly Foucault also felt a certain lack of engagement with the cultural conditions in which he found himself. As for the former accounts, namely those accounts emphasizing only these external motivations, it is patently clear that Foucault's political involvements in Tunisia and Paris along with his friendships with politicized intellectuals such as Deleuze and Sartre were influential in his desire to fashion a form of intellectual practice which could intervene in the critical political situations in which Foucault found himself. But why, we might ask, did Foucault specify these political situations in his work in terms of a historical present? And why should an inquiry that is avowedly historical in orientation have any important bearing on what he took the present to be? Why, in other words, was the present so important for Foucault? One seemingly obvious answer to this question would be to say that the present is where we always find ourselves. The present is important because it is only by being attentive to where we are that we can do anything to improve our situation. There is surely some truth in this answer, but it is too superficial to be of much use.

There are important philosophical issues which are relevant to these matters and it is these issues which help us understand why Foucault's histories of the present would be motivated simultaneously by internal and external considerations. A more helpful answer to the question concerning the importance of the present can be developed by focusing on the way in which the question itself is posed. The question is not 'why did Foucault want to study the situations in which he found himself?' but rather 'why did Foucault want to study the present in which he found himself?' The question, in other words, should be posed as a question about the turn toward historicity and temporality as the diacritic of who, where, and what we are. This suggests a more plausible answer to our question to the effect that Foucault was so concerned about the present precisely because he

understood the present to be the site of the temporal and historical processes through and in which we constitute ourselves as subjects. To study the present situations in which we find ourselves requires that we study these situations as historically and temporally located amidst ongoing processes of change. The present is constituted by its historicity and temporality. A history of the present is so needful precisely because the present gains its coherence from the history out of which it has developed and on the basis of which it will flow into the future. This helps explains why, as Mark Poster writes, "Foucault, the genealogist, roots his position in a detotalized confrontation with the present."[18] Or as Foucault himself put it, "If history possesses a privilege, it would be insofar as it plays the role of an internal ethnology of our culture and our rationality."[19] Our situation is figured by Foucault as a present whose history can be investigated.

Foucault's emphasis on the present does not so much explain his turn toward history as his understanding of the historicity and temporality of the constitution of knowledge, power, and ethics explains his patient focus on 'the present' rather than on some other category such as 'where one finds oneself.' An inquiry into the conditions of the possibility of the present enables us to understand who we are, where we have come from, and where we may go. The present is where we find ourselves as historically and temporally invested and as such the present is conditioned by its inertia. This constitutes the crucial difference between being headed in one direction or being headed in the other, a difference that an ahistorical inquiry cannot always discern.

It is genealogy as an analytic of inquiry that enabled Foucault to begin writing the history of the present understood as such. This suggests that Foucault's analytic of archaeology is not by itself sufficient for a historical engagement with the present. What are the elements, lacking in archaeology but present in genealogy, which enabled Foucault to bring to the philosophical study of the history of the present? The answer I venture in this article emphasizes two interlaced elements: a conceptualization of

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[18] Mark Poster, "Foucault, the Present, and History" in Timothy Armstrong (ed.), Michel Foucault: Philosopher (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1992), 308.

[19] Michel Foucault, "On the Ways of Writing History" in Foucault, James D. Faubion (ed.), *Essential Works, Volume 2: Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology* (New York: New Press, 1998), 293.

temporal multiplicity and an analytic for bringing into focus the intersecting relations between multiple vectors or domains of practice such as *power and knowledge*. These two elements help us recognize genealogy as an expansion of archaeology: archaeology was informed by a singular conception of temporality (discontinuity) and a singular focus on one domain of practice (knowledge) whilst genealogy expanded the view so as to wrestle with multiple temporalities and multiple practical domains in their relation to one another.

No doubt other elements would be important to complete the story I am telling. Of particular importance is the notion of *problematization* insofar as it offers a way of tying together the two elements I here explicitly focus on. Though it is outside of the scope of this paper, it would be useful to discuss how problematization functions to analytically and conceptually tie these other two elements of *temporal multiplicity* and *intersections of power and knowledge* together. Such an account would probably begin with the idea that the contingent emergence of complexes of power and knowledge can be studied in terms of the problematizations which both enable certain newer practices of power and knowledge and disable certain older such practices.

III: Genealogy as Critical Inquiry into Power-Knowledge Relations

It is sometimes difficult to realize the immensity of a philosopher's ambitions in later decades after their efforts have been widely adopted. The works in which those ambitions are realized get cycled through round after round of critical review. Certain themes emerge in the literature. Interviewers focus on these topics. Anthologies get published. Gradually, everyone forgets that the philosopher had at some point struggled a great deal to elaborate a point which everyone now accepts as a matter of course.

So with Foucault's idea of power-knowledge. It should be remembered, then, that one of the primary points which Foucault sought to establish in his works leading up to and including *Discipline and Punish* was that, in his words, "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."[20] While nearly everyone who reads Foucault admits that the power-knowledge relation was crucial for his work in the seventies, what is too often passed over in silence is the amount of intellectual labor that Foucault put in to developing a viable method for analyzing this relation. The power-knowledge relation does not grow on trees. Foucault had to construct it as a specified and coherent object of conceptualization. This was no easy matter. The very idea of the entanglement of power and knowledge is, in a culture such as ours which is obsessed with a certain purifying tendency in modern philosophy, hardly evident. I believe that Rabinow and Dreyfus were in many ways right to describe the power-knowledge relation as "the most radical dimension of Foucault's work."[21]

It was in the process of the intense development of this conception and an analytical form fit to inquire into it that Foucault understood that he must abandon a narrow archaeological method in favor of the more complex mode of analysis we know as genealogy. In order to incorporate power into his analysis as a separate element not identical to knowledge, but rather in constant interaction with it, Foucault had to expand his methodology from his earlier archaeological approach to a more sophisticated genealogical approach. In the process, it is no so much that genealogy replaced archaeology, but rather that archaeology was reinscribed into the wider methodology of genealogy. Johanna Oksala states that, "It is not a question of power relations presenting a new level or a simple addition to previous analyses of discursive practices, but rather that the idea of the fundamental entanglement of power and knowledge, power/knowledge, becomes central."[22] What is important in the move to genealogy is neither the mere addition of power nor the reduction of the relation between power and knowledge to that of nondiscursive and discursive. The important thing is a new form of critical inquiry into a new kind of complex object of conceptualization: power-knowledge. Critical inquiry into this

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[20] Foucault, *Discipline*, 27.

[21] Rabinow and Dreyfus, 114. But see also a forceful claim for the conservatism of Foucault's philosophy on this point by Barry Allen, "Power/Knowledge" in Karlis Racevskis (ed.), *Critical Essays on Michel Foucault* (New York: G.K. Hall & Co., 1999).

[22] Johanna Oksala, *Foucault on Freedom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2005), 97; cf. Han, 110.

new kind of object would yield a form of critical inquiry which is capable of both philosophical explanation and political critique. It would yield something adequate to the history of the present. At least so Foucault would hope.

To understand what might motivate such hope, it will be helpful to first consider the reasons why archaeology taken by itself cannot muster this sort of critical inquiry. In the final pages of *The Archaeology of Knowledge* Foucault indulges in one of those dreamy speculations, irresistible for we of a philosophical temperament, about the future uses of the research methodology he has just finished outlining. Taking archaeology beyond the thus far explored domain of knowledge, Foucault suggests that he plans to write archaeologies of "sexuality" and "painting" and "political knowledge" or if he will not write them himself then he at least invites others to do so.[23] The formulations which Foucault settled on in that essay proved to be insufficient to the future research there also proposed. Foucault would be preoccupied for years to come by the proposed course of study and would therefore find himself obliged to radically revise the methodological formulations he had worked so hard to develop. In subsequent work, when Foucault attempted to make good on these promises, he would do so by first turning his attention away from an archaeology of knowledge and toward an archaeology of power. Whatever his motivations for turning to power rather than any of the other domains referred to near the end of *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, it quickly became apparent that in order to properly engage with this new domain of research he would have to make some major revisions to the archaeological methodology he had just completed. One revision in particular stands out. Foucault gradually shifted from the historical description of *epistemes*, which on the archaeological model are isolated slices of time which remain discontinuous from one to the other, to the historical explanation of *power-knowledge* complexes, which are described genealogically in terms of their transformations from one into the other.

In order to understand why this revision was necessary for the historical-philosophical work which Foucault envisioned for himself, it first needs to be understood exactly how Foucault thought power should be studied.

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[23] Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheton, 1972), 192.

Crucial to his research on power was the assumption that power cannot be reduced to knowledge just as knowledge cannot be reduced to power. Power and knowledge were, for Foucault, never identical. But neither were they ever wholly separable. In turning to the study of power, then, Foucault wanted to study not simply power taken by itself, but rather power in its relation to knowledge. To study power taken by itself without concern for its relation to knowledge would be to reduce power to just one additional type of episteme. This is precisely the approach which Foucault rejected since, in his words, "studying their *relation* is precisely my problem." He explained why for the purposes of his work he is forced to reject the thesis that power and knowledge can be identified: "If they were identical, I would not have to study them and I would be spared a lot of fatigue as a result. The very fact that I pose the question of their relation proves clearly that I do not *identify* them."[24] Indeed, as I further explain below, it is precisely insofar as genealogy enables us to take up the relations between elements of power and elements of knowledge which operate quite differently from one another that genealogy provides a way of taking up history as a temporal process.

What thus has to be studied, according to Foucault, is neither power taken by itself nor knowledge taken by itself. What has to be studied is the relation between knowledge and power. Barry Allen provides a useful description of one way in which Foucault inquired into these relations in his work on disciplinary power and knowledge: "The point is to emphasize the *reciprocity* that obtains between those specific forms of knowledge which generalized discipline made possible (the so-called human sciences) and the exercise of disciplinary power over conduct."[25] Not that there are no other possible forms of power-knowledge. Examples abound in Foucault's later work: the entanglement of disciplinary power and knowledge, the entrainment of statistical reason and state power in certain biopolitical forms, the coalescence of individualizing knowledge and collective power in the early modern pastoral, or the entwinement of social knowledge and social control in the vast institutional apparatus of the police. But in all this Foucault's

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[24] Michel Foucault, "Structuralism and Post-Structuralism" in Foucault, James D. Faubion (ed.), *Essential Works, Volume 2: Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology* (New York: New Press, 1998), 455.

[25] Barry Allen, "Foucault and Modern Political Philosophy" in Jeremy Moss (ed.), *The Later Foucault: Philosophy and Politics* (London: Sage, 1998), 176.

point was never that power is reducible to knowledge or, even worse, that knowledge is reducible to power. The idea of power-knowledge was nothing more nor less than a concept which enabled Foucault to bring into view certain historical relations in our modernity which otherwise would have remained obscure. Foucault's point is thus not a philosophical one about the necessary relations between power and knowledge – it is rather a historical point about the relations which contingently hold between certain prominent forms of power and knowledge in our modernity. We can, for these purposes, safely ignore questions about power in general or knowledge in general. Foucault was never attempting to write a general theory of Power nor a general theory of Knowledge, so much as he was describing specific powers and knowledges which condition our possibilities for action in the historical present. Foucault noted that "there is no such entity as power, with or without a capital letter."[26] Allen is thus correct to note that for Foucault "[a]n appreciation of this new relationship between knowledge and power seems necessary for a sound grasp of present-day political reality."[27] In this, Foucault's approach seems far more complementary to other empirically-sensitive philosophical traditions than has thus far been remarked.[28] I am thinking in particular of the empirically-trained eyes of German critical theorists and American pragmatists.

I have been describing one of the crucial methodological shifts which occurs from the period of *The Archaeology of Knowledge* and "The Order of Discourse" to the period of "Truth and Power" and *Discipline and Punish*. This shift can be described as the result of Foucault's reorientation from an analysis of an isolable episteme to an analysis of the relation holding between the two quite different but heavily cross-invested fields of knowledge and power. It is in terms of this shift from an analysis of one field of activity to that of the variable relations between two fields of

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[26] Michel Foucault, "The Subject and Power" in Foucault, James D. Faubion (ed.), *Essential Works, Volume 3: Power* (New York: New Press, 2000), 340; see also, Foucault, Arnold Davidson (ed.), *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977–1978* (New York: Picador, 2007), 1.

[27] Allen, 174.

[28] Contrast Han's view according to which Foucault hopelessly vacillates between contradictory "metaphysical" and "nominalist" accounts of the power-knowledge relation, but her criticism seems to me to ignore the possibility of a critical inquiry into power that is neither metaphysical nor nominalist but robustly both philosophical and empirical (142–4).

activity that we can best account for Foucault's transition from a narrow archaeology to a broader analytic employing both genealogy and archaeology together. It is in part because he is writing the history of our present (our culture and our rationality) that Foucault took up critique in the form of an inquiry into the temporal relations between variable elements of power and knowledge. It seems to me that this appeared to Foucault to offer a way of recuperating philosophically and politically viable concepts of historicity, temporality, and the historical present. While our actual present is conditioned by certain forms of power and certain forms of knowledge, our historical present is conditioned by the temporalized interactions between these powers and knowledges. Hence: neither power alone nor knowledge alone, but power-knowledge as an analytic grid for multiplicitous histories of the present.

IV: Genealogy as Critical Inquiry into Multiple Temporalities

Foucault's crucial shift toward genealogy forced him, or perhaps enabled him, to reconstruct his understanding of historicity and temporality. If in his earlier work Foucault had treated history as marked above all by discontinuity and rupture, he is now forced to confront the reality of a history that undergoes change. History, in other words, must now be studied as a process in which both continuity and discontinuity are essential axes or elements.

One concept central for this new relation to historicity and temporality is that of emergence (*Entstehung*). Foucault first wrote about emergence in his 1971 essay on Nietzsche: "Emergence is the entry of forces; it is their eruption, the leap from the wings to center stage, each in its youthful strength." Foucault proposes to write history in terms of emergent phenomena understood as the results of "substitutions, displacements, disguised conquests, and systematic reversals." As it is elaborated in this essay, emergence is focused in terms of "the eruption of an event" which unsettles familiar historiographical attempts to establish a "necessary continuity" over historical time.[29] We can discern even in Foucault's earliest references to the

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[29] Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History" in Foucault, James D. Faubion (ed.), *Essential Works, Volume 2: Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology* (New York: New Press, 1998), 377, 378, 380.

concept of emergence an attempt to recover something like historical time without yielding to the concepts of necessity and unity which had traditionally characterized time for the historian. Yet it is clear that Foucault in this essay had so far only proceeded negatively, because he was still not yet able to positively grasp historical time in terms of continuity, development, and evolution. The concept of emergence thus remains rather ambiguous in the context of this clearly transitional essay.

As he refined genealogy in subsequent investigations, the historiographical category of emergence increasingly served to focus attention on the distance between an archaeology of historical rupture and a genealogy of historical change. If Foucault's genealogical work is ultimately oriented towards a study of the historical conditions which have enabled and disabled certain forms of power and knowledge, then it is fair to characterize this work as a study of the emergence of new forms of power and knowledge. Archaeology, by contrast, is not a study of emergence but rather only of existence. The archaeologist asks about what has existed in the past. They do not concern themselves with how that which existed came into being. Yet that is precisely the concern of the genealogist. The genealogist wants to know how that which existed came into existence in the first place. This clarifies the sense in which genealogy is additive to rather than substitutive for archaeology. The genealogist studies the emergence into being of the various forms of being which the archaeologist inquiries into. Archaeology (or at least something very much like it) therefore seems to be necessary but not sufficient for genealogy.

One way of understanding the increasing prominence of emergence in Foucault's work in this period is to focus on the shift in his work from a purely descriptive enterprise to accepting the difficult historiographical labor of explanation. Early on, Foucault explicitly refused to explain historical change and claimed that he was instead more interested in describing momentary slices of the historical archive.[30] But Foucault eventually came to recognize that his critics were right to note that his tantalizing descriptions failed to capture the actual processes of historical change. The

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[30] Michel Foucault, "History, Discourse and Discontinuity ('Réponse à une question')", Anthony M. Nazzaro (trans.), *Salmagundi*, 20 (Summer-Fall 1972), 225–248; see also the discussion in Clare O'Farrell, *Foucault: Historian or Philosopher* (London: Macmillan, 1989), 57ff.

massive shifts registered in, for instance, *The Order of Things* are not so much explained as processes of change as they are merely inferred from the fact of the disjunction between two vastly different moments of static history. The effect of this procedure was to historiographically reduce dynamic change to an epiphenomenon of static moments at rest. Change is simply inferred on the basis of a gap between two seemingly incommensurable moments, rather than engaged with as essential to the historical processes themselves. Foucault's work looked increasingly ahistorical insofar as it functioned to freeze history and temporality themselves. Everyone in Foucault's archaeologies was made still and silent within the motionless episteme which had captured them. How, critics rightly wondered, would it ever happen that within such vast frozen epistemes there might occur the massive breaks and ruptures which these archaeologies so obviously demonstrated the existence of? How, exactly, do we get over the gap from, say, the episteme of resemblance to that of representation? What explains that transformation? Insofar as his critical repertoire consisted only of archaeology, Foucault could not answer these questions. He could make vague appeals to the thunder of events such as the French Revolution, but these appeals only gave the impression that Foucault had no idea of why millions of persons would risk their lives in a revolution.

While professional historians severely criticized Foucault's tacit understanding of history for these and other reasons, his most influential critic on this count was surely Jean-Paul Sartre. Sartre wrote of the temporal immobility characteristic of Foucault's archaeological historiography: "Certainly Foucault's perspective remains historical. He distinguishes different periods, a before and an after. But he replaces the cinema with the magic lantern, movement by a succession of immobilities."[31] Sartre's claim was that history, when taken up through an archaeological analytic, is limp and unmoving, the dead frozen past dug up by careful excavation but incapable of living ever again. History for the archaeologist is simply the static succession of one lifeless state after another. Influenced by Sartre's criticisms, a host of other French intellectuals responded to Foucault along

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[31] Jean-Paul Sartre, "Jean-Paul Sartre répond" in *L'Arc*, 30 (1966), 87; see also a helpful discussion of this exchanges in Didier Eribon, *Michel Foucault*, trans. Betsy Wing (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1991),163ff.

similar lines.[32] In future decades, historians and political theorists in North America would echo many of the same criticisms.[33]

Foucault was led to revise his approach to history not only in light of Sartre's theoretical criticisms; also influential were Sartre's practical exemplification of the politically-engaged intellectual.[34] Foucault expanded his methodology for both internal and external purposes. The philosophical queries posed by critics like Sartre and the empirical queries posed by his historian critics presented serious difficulties for Foucault. Just as important was the increasing sense that his historiography blocked his accounts from adopting any sort of transformative relation to the present. Along both of these fronts, Foucault's concept of a "history of the present" remains such a crucially important concept for appreciating what Foucault wanted his historical analytics to do. One way of understanding this concept is in light of his Kantian reflections on temporality and historicity in his late essay, "What is Enlightenment?" where he writes: "in the reflection on 'today' as difference in history and as motive for a particular philosophical task… we may recognize a point of departure: the outline of what one might call the attitude of modernity."[35] If there is one thing that is clearly missing from *The Order of Things* and *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, it was a clear sense of how Foucault's inquiries might be deployed as critical contributions (in Kant's special sense of 'critique') to the radical cultural ferment of the present in which he was immerse.[36]

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[32] With Sartre against Foucault see articles by Sylvie Le Bon, "Un Positivist désespéré: Michel Foucault" and Michel Amiot, "Le Relativisme culturaliste de Michel Foucault" both in *Les Temps modernes*, no. 248 (1967). For rejoinders on Foucault's behalf see articles by Pierre Daix, "Sartre est-il dépassé?" in *Les Lettres françaises*, nos. 1168–1169 (1967), 1–10 and Georges Canguilhem, "The Death of Man, or Exhaustion of the Cogito?", trans. Catherine Porter in Gary Gutting (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault*, second edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2005), also originally published in 1967.

[33] On Foucault's reception by the discipline of professional historians see Alan Megill, "The Reception of Foucault by Historians" in *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 48 (1987), 117–141 and essays later collected in Jan Goldstein (ed.), *Foucault and the Writing of History* (London: Blackwell, 1994).

[34] See Eribon, 238ff. on Sartre's and Foucault's mutual political engagements.

[35] Michel Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?" in Foucault, Paul Rabinow (ed.), *Essential Works, Volume 1: Ethics, Subjectivity, and Truth* (New York: New Press, 1997), 309.

[36] On Foucault as practicing Kantian critique in a way that transforms critique itself see Amy Allen, *The Politics of Our Selves: Power, Autonomy, and Gender in Contemporary Critical Theory* (New York: Columbia University, 2008).

Foucault's thought was ultimately an attempt to understand the world in which he found himself such that he may be able to provide tools which might help transform that world. Complex forms like knowledge and power, Foucault came to understand, cannot for the purposes of a history of the present by analyzed only according to the method of an archaeological excavation which reveals discrete and stabilized moments in the history of these domains. An archaeology could, his earlier work had shown, showcase past forms of knowledge and power. But it was helpless to explain how newer forms of knowledge and power might come to replace those older forms. As such archaeology taken by itself was clearly not suited to a history of the present. It became increasingly clear that Foucault needed something to explain transformations in knowledge and power, the emergence and descent of new forms.

Foucault came to the conclusion that these transformations can be best explained, though certainly not explained away, by considering the relations which hold between knowledge and power. This means that the primary object of study must be neither power nor knowledge taken in isolation, but rather power-and-knowledge taken in inclusion. If the historiographical concept of the episteme was able to represent isolated knowledge and presumably also isolated power as a discrete historical slice in perfect repose, then the new historiographical concept of emergence reveals objects of analysis which are in continuous change. These new hybrid objects of analysis, those complexes of power and knowledge for which Foucault is best known, are through and through historical. Their historicity is a function of the internal tension generated by the relations between elements of power and elements of knowledge. Pascal Michon writes of Foucault's genealogy, in a passage that seems as if intended as a response to Sartre's criticisms, "Through the historical study of the interplays of power-knowledge apparatus and of the succession of their conflicts, Foucault reintroduces movement in his descriptions, although without mobilizing a dialectical logic that would transform history into a process suited for the coming of the transcendence."[37]

Foucault's study of historical change in terms of processes of emergence and descent was thus made possible by inquiry into the relations between

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[37] Pascal Michon, "Strata, Blocks, Pieces, Spirals, Elastics and Verticals: Six Figures of Time in Michel Foucault" in *Time & Society*, 11, (2002), 173.

two different registers such as the relations between elements of power and elements of knowledge. But exactly how is it that the coordination of two different registers gives rise to historical emergence if each register by itself is insufficient for historical change? Change emerges at such sites of inter-section precisely insofar as two registers enable interactions through which occurs the possibility of the formation of tensions between the various ele-ments composing each register. These tensions provide impetus for change as each register shifts in order to accommodate the requirements imposed by other. Foucault wrote that, "Relations of power-knowledge are not static forms of distribution, they are 'matrices of transformations'."[38] The twain registers of power and knowledge form a matrix in which transfor-mation is virtually inevitable while the specific forms which any given transformation will take are actually contingent all the way.

Foucault thus recovered a sense of historical transition precisely by increasing the complexity of his objects of inquiry. By taking up historical practices in terms of the relations between multiple registers of practice, Foucault was able to recover time by situating these practices in light of the tensions amongst the variable times which each register is able to generate on its own. In his "Return to History Essay", written during those crucial years in which he was expanding his repertoire to include genealogy along-side archaeology, Foucault claimed: "History, then, is not a single time space: it is a multiplicity of time spans that entangle and envelop one another. . . . In reality there are multiple time spans, and each one of these spans is the bearer of a certain type of events."[39] Focusing on temporal multiplicity enables the historian to situate various practices in terms of the relations between, for example, the differing historical vectors of epis-temic events and political events. Foucault later wrote, in 1978, of "several times, several durations, several rates of change that get entangled with one another, crisscross and precisely form events. An event is *not a segment of time*. Basically, it is the *point of intersection* between two durations, two rates of change, two evolutions, two lines of history."[40] The historical

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[38] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hur-ley (New York: Vintage, 1990), 99.

[39] Michel Foucault, "Return to History" in Foucault, James D. Faubion (ed.), *Essential Works, Volume 2: Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology* (New York: New Press, 1998), 430.

[40] Michel Foucault, "La scène de la philosophie" interview with M. Watanabe in Foucault,

events that the genealogist studies are complex constructions formed at the intersection of a multiplicity of temporal vectors. The genealogist thus recovers time through the lens of the contingent and complex intersections that form eventalizations or what Foucault would later call problematizations. Genealogy substitutes temporal complexity and contingency for historical unity and necessity. This was the substitution already underway in "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History" although Foucault did not find his way toward a full philosophical grasp of historical complexity and contingency until at least a few years after that essay appeared.

I am urging that Foucault recovers historical time by considering practices from the point of view of the relations holding amongst various registers or vectors which compose them, such as the relations between the registers of power and knowledge. But, it might be wondered, is this really an appropriate way to recover a sense of temporal and historical change? Did Foucault really need to shift to an analytical method privileging the relations between multiple registers rather than sticking to a method of serial multiple analyses of unified registers? Insofar as we regard Foucault as seeking a historiographical perspective that could account for historical emergence, we must answer this question in the affirmative. A single register taken by itself will lack any motivation to change once it establishes an internal coherence and stability. A body of knowledge, for example, would have little reason to innovative itself were it able to form a coherent set of assumptions and implications isolated from the impact of anything outside of that body of knowledge. It is only when that body of knowledge is forced to interact with conditions of social power (or certain other external conditions such as economic forces or natural catastrophes) that tensions might develop such that there will be sufficient motivation for revision in the body of knowledge. This is true of any register of activity. Power taken by itself, just like knowledge taken by itself, need not be in tension with itself (though it could be). By shifting his interest to the interactivity between power and knowledge, Foucault was able to develop an analytical perspective according to which these very interactions already presumed internal tensions that would ceaselessly generate change. He was thus led

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Daniel Defert and François Ewald (eds.), *Dits et écrits, 1954–1988*, tome 3 (Paris: Gallimard, 1994), 581; as quoted and translated in Flynn, 75.

away from a history of rupture and toward a history of continuity: from being and toward becoming.

Emergence, then, emerges into Foucault's historiography on the conceptual site of the relation between two distinct registers of practice. Foucault soon came to describe his new genealogical mode of research in terms that explicitly emphasized processes of transformation in place of factual discontinuities: "As you know, no one is more of a continuist than I am: to recognize a discontinuity is never anything more than to register a problem that needs to be solved." Reflecting back on *Discipline and Punish* a few years after its publication he noted: "It was a matter not of digging down to a buried stratum of continuity, but of identifying the transformation that made this hurried transition possible."[41] Foucault's historiography thus came to look toward a temporality in which continuities and transitions, repetitions and differences, enabled one another. Dominick LaCapra helpfully summarizes the temporality at work in Foucault by describing it as, "recurrence with change in contrast to either unbroken continuity or unproblematic epistemological breaks between periods."[42]

Foucault's interests had shifted in little more than a decade from demonstrating historical discontinuity to engaging historical transformation itself. Discontinuities are the spaces of problems within the deeper and longer spaces of the continuities of solutions. In light of Foucault's later description of his genealogies as "histories of problematization" we should see genealogies as clarifying and intensifying the historical discontinuities which mark problems for thought in such a way that thought can fashion new emergent forms which would bridge these discontinuities and in some ways respond to the problems posed to it. The study of the becoming of emergence came to inflect and enrich the study of the being of discontinuity. Foucault finally realized history as a process of change. His histories would henceforth fail to signify the deafening thunder of suddenly erupting events, but they would better capture the long slow marches in which millions of persons would gradually but dramatically alter the world we

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[41] Michel Foucault, "Questions of Method (Round Table of 20 May 1978)" in Foucault, James D. Faubion (ed.), *Essential Works, Volume 3: Power* (New York: New Press, 2000), 226.

[42] Dominick LaCapra, *History and Reading: Tocqueville, Foucault, French Studies* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2000), 148; note that a similar interpretation of Foucault is developed by David Hoy in his forthcoming *The Time of Our Lives: A Critical History of the Phenomenology of Temporality* (Cambridge: MIT Press, forthcoming).

live in forever. This enabled Foucault in turn to bring into focus the sheer contingency of the processes by which we have constituted ourselves, whereas his former work was only able to treat the emergence of our processes of self-constitution as more or less arbitrary.

V: Conclusion

The difference between a history of contingency and a history of arbitrariness is, at least in part, the difference between a history oriented to the present and a history without any orientation at all. It is difficult to do anything about the present within which one defines oneself if one regards the history of the present as arbitrary. But if the history of the present is a story of unexpected contingencies, then we already have much material in hand for transforming that present in ways which we had previously not yet dreamt of. The specific advantage of Foucault's form of critical inquiry is thus not that it merely shows our forms of knowledge, power, and ethics to be contingent and hence capable of undergoing transformation, as many commentators have argued. The advantage is rather that genealogy shows the precise ways in which our forms of knowledge, power, and ethics have contingently formed. In so doing genealogy provides us with a great deal of specific material which we will if we are to engage in the project of transforming these contingent forms of our subjectivation. Foucault's primary aim is not to demonstrate *that* our present is contingently formed but to show *how* we have contingently formed ourselves so as to make available the materials we would need to constitute ourselves otherwise. This crucial point of Foucault's philosophico-historical work has been so widely misunderstood that it is today a commonplace that the central message of Foucault is *that* things could be otherwise than they are when indeed the real force of his thought is to show us *how* things might be transformed on the basis of the materials furnished by our contingently-constructed present.

Foucault was able to use genealogy as a critical inquiry into the history of the present because of his crucial shift to a more expansive object of study than that focused by his earlier archaeology. This involved a reciprocal elaboration of the study of both continuous historical emergence and the relations between power and knowledge. This double strategy enabled him to overcome the philosophical and political limitations implicit in his earlier inquiries into temporally disconnected fragments of the archive and

into deployments of either power or knowledge taken in isolation from one another. By conceiving of power and knowledge as interrelated, Foucault could not but help realize that the historical events he was previously content to regard as static were in fact undergoing constant change – by treating historical events as subject to multiple kinds of transformation, Foucault could not but require himself to expand his focus so as to account for the interrelations amongst different vectors or domains of practice. If the object of archaeology was to present the particular series of truths which functioned to sustain any particular historically discrete form of knowledge or power, then the object of genealogy would be to present the way in which these series of truths were produced, sustained, and revised over the course of a particular historical period. It is in this sense that Foucault's interest shifted from a rather quaint Borgesian fascination with the different shapes which truth can assume to a serious Kantian inquiry into the conditions of the possibility within which these shapes of truth emerge in their multiplicitous forms. It is in this sense that Foucault shifted from being a very sophisticated archivist indeed to an inquirer whose critical ensemble included both archaeology and genealogy.