and postmodern politics has yet to be seen to offer a *constructive* political model.

The thesis of power/knowledge will be the focal point of the present chapter. I will argue that Foucault's thesis entails a recognition of the ubiquity of power and that this is a thesis that encourages imaginative reconstructions of everyday life along lines that are in keeping with the poststructural insight that subjectivity and intentionality are not prior to, but functions of forms of life and systems of language, and that they therefore do not constitute the world but are themselves elements of a linguistically disclosed reality. It is also in keeping with the poststructural demand for allowing the other to speak, and with the postmodern repudiation of all legitimizing discourse.[5] On the negative side, however, I will argue that Foucault's thesis of power/knowledge leaves no room for subjects of oppositional resistance. This is a problem which comes about with the tendency to equate power with terror, a tendency found totalized in Lyotard and present also in Foucault, though not perhaps consistently. (This is a point to which I will be returning later in this chapter.) I will be asking, then, whether Foucault's work can offer a viable oppositional *politics*. Along with this we will need to know whether Foucault is able to constitute resistance within the context of a political theory that thematizes the ubiquity of power; is he able to offer not merely a negative, but also a positive critique? In part, an affirmative answer to these questions depends on whether his theory offers or suggests a model of consensus and community which both resist the totalizing impulse which characterizes Rorty's defense of bourgeois liberalism, and is also resistant to the universalization of difference and terror, which is the bad side of Lyotard's resistance to traditional political theory and all legitimizing discourse.

Sketching Foucault

I will begin by offering an overview of Foucault's genealogical method and its consequent bearing on his understanding of power and knowledge. Such an overview will serve as a background and grounding for my discussion of Foucault's politics and for arguing his advance over Rorty.

Foucault came to view his early "archaeological" task of analyzing the internal logic of autonomous discourses as being inadequate because it did not place enough emphasis on the social practices and

institutions in which such discussions were embedded. In works such as *Discipline and Punish* and *The History of Sexuality*, archaeology is replaced by "genealogy." The aim of genealogy is to uncover through the historical analysis of discontinuities (the moments at which social practices change) the ways in which individuals are constituted as subjects and objects of knowledge: "The history of the 'objectification' of those elements that the historians consider as objectively given . . . that is the sort of circle I want to try and investigate."[6]

Genealogical analysis seeks to disrupt the unity of familiar "natural" objects of our experience. Foucault sees his job as genealogist and intellectual, as one of providing a reexamination of evidence and assumptions. His goal is to "shake up habitual ways of working and thinking, to dissipate conventional familiarities, to re-evaluate rules and institutions and starting from this re-problematization, to participate in the formation of a political will."[7] The formation of such a political will is not carried out through theory and theoreticians, but by acting and actors. It is, Foucault says, "a matter of showing how social mechanisms up to the present have been able to work, how forms of repressions, constraint have acted, and then, starting from there, it seems to me, one [leaves] to the people themselves, knowing all the above, the possibility of self determination and the choice of their own existence."[8] Genealogy helps effect such a choice because its analysis problematizes truth; it problematizes the givens of our everyday existence by showing how those familiar, apparently actual or given objects of our experience—the self and our bodies (sexuality) as well as our social institutions (prisons, schools, hospitals, families) and scientific norms (sanity and insanity, health and illness) are objects produced in historically variable relations of power: "To grasp these effects [of power] as historical events—with what this implies for the question of truth [of the relationship between power and knowledge]—this is more or less my theme."[9]

One of the terms Foucault uses to describe the problematic of history and the construction of the present is "eventalization." By this he means,

> First of all, a breach of self-evidence. It means making visible a *singularity* at places where there is a temptation to invoke a historical constant, an immediate anthropological trait, or an obviousness that imposes itself uniformly on all. To show that things "weren't as necessary as all that"; it wasn't a matter of course that mad people came to be regarded as mentally ill; it wasn't self-evident

> that the only thing to be done with a criminal was to lock him up, it wasn't self-evident that the causes of illness were to be sought through the individual examination of bodies; and so on. A breach of self-evidence, of those evidences on which our knowledges, acquiescences, and practices rest. This is the first theoretico-political function of "eventalization."
>
> Secondly, eventalization means rediscovering the connection, encounters, supports, blockages, plays of forces, strategies, and so on that at a given moment establish what subsequently counts as being self-evident, universal and necessary. In this sense one is . . . effecting a sort of multiplicity or pluralization of causes.[10]

Genealogical analysis, or eventalization, thus treats the constitution of objects about which true or false statements can be made, "objects" such as the body, for example, as historical events. In so doing, genealogy replaces what has been seen to be unitary, necessary, and invariant with the multiple, contingent, and arbitrary. Its "theoretico-political" goal then is to contribute to changing people's ways of perceiving and doing things, to "participate in this difficult displacement of forms of sensibility and thresholds of tolerance." As Baynes and Bohman correctly point out, Foucauldian analysis makes us "critical of the presumed rationality of our discourses and practices"; it takes us behind the facade of universality and objectivity to reveal the operations of modern techniques of domination of which the modern self-examining, self-policing, self-disciplining—in short, "normal"—individual is a product.[11]

From the perspective of oppositional politics and the concern to resist normalization of dominant discourses, the most interesting, and useful, aspect of the genealogical method is its consequent understanding of power; genealogy reveals the extent to which we are the effects of power, for the "truth" that makes the laws, that produces the discourses which "decide, transmits and itself extends upon the effects of power" is itself a product of relations of power. So much so, that in the end "we are judged, condemned, classified, determined in our undertakings, destined to a certain mode of living and desiring," as a function of discourses of truth which are "bearers of specific effects of power."[12] This kind of determinism would seem to preclude any sort of freedom, any possibility for resistance, but this is not Foucault's conclusion. There is something, and he is not always clear on exactly what this something could be, given that he seems in passages such as these to be universalizing the effects of power, about the mechanisms

of power which themselves produce the possibility, perhaps even the inevitability, of resistance.[13]

What resistance can mean, given his view of power, is an important question to which I will be returning, but for now, I am more concerned to note the fact that genealogy is meant to serve as a tool for that resistance (and this theme too will be returned to). A genealogical understanding of ourselves, our social institutions, and our practices reveals how the mechanisms of power come to be effectively incorporated into the social whole. Such an analysis is meant to suggest how the individual can also produce new effects of power.[14]

But what exactly is meant by "power"? Modern power in Foucault's formulation differs from all other forms of power in that it is "disciplinary" and "confessional"; its goal is normalization and the production of docile and useful bodies. In *Discipline and Punish* Foucault focuses on prisoners to show how discipline becomes self-regulating and in this sense is "inscribed" on the body. Instead of enforcing the repression of desires, carceral society produces bodies that signify the prohibitive law as the essence of their selves. The law never appears as external to the bodies it subjects and subjectifies. The very body then becomes both a product and agent of political power.

Foucault's point in *Discipline and Punish* and elsewhere is that modern power is so insidious because its power relations no longer operate openly as coming from a sovereign and demanding obedience. Instead, disciplinary and confessional forms of power mask themselves as forms of truth and knowledge—as, for example, sanity or insanity, as delinquency or sexuality. The particular form modern power takes is centerless—it is not, for example, located in the State or in any "unique source of sovereignty from which secondary and dependent forms would emanate"[15]—rather, it is for Foucault a "moving substrate of force relations which, by virtue of their inequality, constantly engender states of power, but the latter are always local and unstable. . . . Power is everywhere, not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere."[16] Power is "omnipotent,"[17] "ubiquitous:" it is "always already there."[18] The agents of this distinctively modern form of normalizing/disciplinary power include social scientists, social workers, psychiatrists, doctors, teachers, and the ordinary citizen who internalizes the categories and values of the power regime. It is these kinds of configurations of power/knowledge that are the target of Foucault's analysis in works such as *Discipline and Punish* or *The History of Sexuality*.

Genealogy, then, reveals not only the omnipresence of power, it also

reveals its "productive" nature; power is not merely repressive, it doesn't just say no. It is also productive: "it induces pleasure, forms of knowledge, produces discourse. It needs to be considered as a productive network which runs through the whole social body, much more than a negative insistence which function is repressive."[19] This means that power is not the possession of subjects any more than knowledge is, for "power produces effects on the level of desire and also at the level of knowledge. Far from preventing knowledge, power produces it."[20] Power is thus seen as a "network" of relations which are responsible for the constitution of subjects as both products and agents of power: ". . . The individual is not a pregiven entity which is seized on by the exercise of power. The individual, with his identity and characteristics, is the product of a relation of power exercised over bodies, multiplicities, movements, desires, forces,"[21] and is therefore, not "the *vis-à-vis* of power," but "one of its prime effects."[22]

Thus, power does not extend from the top down, but instead operates from the bottom up.[23] This means that power is "capillary"—it circulates through the cells and extremities of the entire social body and operates on every level of social practice, social relations, and social institutions. I shall refer to this capillary view of power as "ubiquitous."[24] The political import of the thesis of the ubiquity of power becomes clear when contrasted with Rorty's exclusion of the private from the public. It is what makes Foucault attractive to, and useful for, oppositional politics, and it is the absence of such a thesis in Rorty which makes his work correspondingly useless and unattractive.

The debate between Rorty and Foucault: enlightenment vs. oppositional struggle

> . . . in contrast with the various projects which aim to inscribe Knowledges in the hierarchical order of power associated with science, a genealogy should be seen as a kind of attempt to emancipate historical knowledges from that subjection, to render them capable of opposition and of struggle against the coercion of a theoretical, unitary, formal and scientific discourse.[25] (Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*)

The most trenchant differences between Rorty and Foucault are outlined in this section. I suggest in this and the following section that the insidiousness of Rorty's implicit political program is highlighted against the background of Foucauldian critique.

Rorty wishes to maintain the status quo beneficial to North Atlantic democracies, and does so by banishing from public consideration or political seriousness any theory or voice which would threaten his preferred order since nothing can count against the progress it supplies us with. He argues that the drawbacks of liberal bourgeois society, including those ways in which it does not allow for self-creation, are overridden by the fact that "the selves shaped by modern liberal societies are better than the selves earlier societies created."[26] While it may be true that those patterns of acculturation liberal societies have imposed on their members take forms of which premodern societies had never even dreamed, Rorty is willing to see these constraints as being "compensated for by a decrease in pain."[27] As far as Rorty is concerned, then, J.S. Mill's suggestion that governments devote themselves to optimizing the balance between leaving people's private lives alone and preventing suffering, is "pretty much the last word."[28]

Foucault's genealogical deconstruction of the public/private is, on Rorty's view, both uncalled for and unnecessary. It is uncalled for since it encourages intrusion on other people's private poems and it is unnecessary, since the public humanist values of liberal societies allow for the greatest freedom of private expressions coincident with the greatest good for the greatest number.

Foucault, on the other hand, wishes to bring the private into the sphere of the public, effectively banishing the distinction. This would bombard the status quo with a multiplicity of oppositional voices; the "status quo" would be dethroned. Instead of a central regulating power structure producing regimes of truth, there would be many temporary and competing local power struggles. This brings to light the political nature of truth: for Rorty truth is synonymous with whatever works best to maintain the values of bourgeois liberalism, for Foucault, it serves to bring to light the "reality of possible struggles."[29] As Foucault says, "I would like to produce some effect of truth which might be used for a possible battle, to be waged by those who wish to wage it, in forms not yet to be formed and in organizations yet to be defined."[30]

For both then, following in the footsteps of Nietzsche, truth is created. For both "truth" aids a political ideal. The difference though is that while Rorty uses truth to silence difference, Foucault wields truth to promote it; the multiplicity of truths is emphasized, a multiplicity which he sees as existing in the public, and not just the private, sphere.

Foucault's commitment to multiplicity, and his distinction from Rorty on this point, is also evident in their respective conceptions of how the present ought to relate to the future. Foucault speaks to a yet-to-be-imagined future, but refuses to speak for it, since the forms of the future are as various as the multiple points of possible kinds of struggle. Rorty speaks for a segment of the present whose partiality he either discounts or ignores altogether. He does not speak to a future substantially different from the present, but imagines, to use Hegelian metaphors, the march of Spirit to have reached its final stage, or as Rorty himself puts it,

> I think that contemporary liberal society already contains the institutions for its own improvement—an improvement which mitigates the dangers Foucault sees. Indeed, my hunch is that Western social and political thought may have had the last *conceptual* revolution it needs.[31]

All that is left is to "expand the range of our present 'we.' "[32]

Foucault, on the other hand, views such an extension of the present as illegitimate and, I suppose one could even say, unjust: "to imagine another system is to extend our participation in the present system,"[33] and what is wrong with this can be stated in Lyotardian terms: it is terroristic, instead of allowing for serious difference, it forces conformity (normalization).

All of these differences between Rorty and Foucault can be boiled down to a different conception of the "we" they address, the "we" each aims to protect.

We liberals vs. we deviants

> I disagree with Foucault about whether in fact it is necessary to form a new "we." My principle disagreement with him is precisely over whether "we liberals" is or is not good enough.[34] (Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, Solidarity.*)

Let us reconsider Rorty's claim that Western, social, and political thought may have had the last conceptual revolution it needs, along with his statement that this is not to say that the world has had the last *political* revolution it needs.[35] Rorty is assuming here that what is at stake is always the diminution of cruelty and what is more controversial, that "cruelty" and its remedies are obvious and univocal. It is with this in mind that he claims that the unmasking which Foucault is so good at is "irrelevant."[36] But is it? Is it always the case that "power swaggers naked, and nobody is under any illusions"?[37]

Rorty is able to hold such a view because he does not see that power operates at the lowest extremities of the social body in everyday practice. Once power is seen, with Foucault, as being thus anchored in the multiplicity of "micropractices," in the social practices which comprise everyday life in modern society, divisions between the public and the private appear obsolete.

As a proponent of liberal humanists' values, Rorty champions the public/private distinction for its ability to protect autonomy and selfhood—as if subjectivity, autonomy, selfhood, creativity, pursuits of the good life, could be developed in isolation from the encroachment of the "public," of the political, of state and/or economic interests. But if modern power is as Foucault argues, if it is normalizing and disciplinary, then the notions to which the humanist appeals are integral components of the disciplinary regime; they are the very norms and objects through which discipline and normalization operate.

This is why Foucault mounts an attack against humanism. He sees humanism as comprising the totality of discourse through which Western citizens are denied the exercise of power and taught to submit to the power regimes already in place:

> Humanism invented a whole series of subjugated sovereignties: the soul (ruling the body, but subjected to God), consciousness (sovereign in a context of judgment, but subjugated to the necessities of truth), the individual (a titular control of personal rights subjected to the laws of nature and society), basic freedom (sovereignty within but accepting the demands of an outside world and "allied with destiny"). In short, humanism is everything in Western civilization that restricts *the desire for power*: it prohibits the desire for power and excluded the possibility of power being seized.[38]

The revolt against humanism is a revolt against all forms of subjugation. Such revolts cannot just be waged in the arena of class struggle, for power operates in spheres other than the economic—in social and cultural spheres as well. So political struggles do not simply entail a redress of economic forces, they must also be mounted against the

hegemony of "culture." This is the form Foucault's own political struggle takes. The analysis of normalization in, for example, the *History of Sexuality, Volume I* is meant to aid in the breaking up of all the prohibitions that form and guide the development of a normal, rational, conscientious, and well-adjusted individual.[39] Relationships of power must be attacked "through the notions and institutions that function as their instruments, armature, and armor."[40]

Humiliation, which, as the reader will recall, is singled out by Rorty as constituting the worst form of cruelty one human being can inflict upon another, is a good example of the cultural process of normalization and discipline. Fear of humiliation teaches one to talk, act, dress, and think in ways consistent with the norms of bourgeois society, with the ideal already in place. It is thus no accident that Rorty picks on humiliation as being the worst form of cruelty; such a form of cruelty, along with the concomitant values it presupposes, are already inscribed within the domain of the liberal political doctrine. Being taught to fear humiliation is one of the ways the present society engenders discipline and forms and guides the development of a normal individual. There are different forms of cruelty whose eradication would have far more radical implications for present liberal capitalist societies—for example, what if the silencing of deviant voices were viewed as the worst form of cruelty? What if we refused the possibility of humiliation? (If I don't care about "fitting in," then having it pointed out that I don't will not be a cause of pain.)

The most important contribution of Foucault to oppositional discourse is that he would render meaningless the distinction between the public and the private: both the public and the private are the effects of power. The very production and reproduction of life itself in modern society is an effect of power, not the least of which is "biopower": population, health, urban life, sexuality . . . these too are objects of power/knowledge; these too are resources which are administered, cultivated, and controlled.[41] And if power is instantiated in mundane social practices and relations, then efforts to dismantle or transform the regime cannot ignore those practices and relations. The insightful consequences of Foucault's theory is this: since politics addresses itself to the control and maintenance of power regimes, *all social practices are potentially political.* This last is an insight which is not simply missing from Rorty's theory, his insistence on the public/private split prevents it from even being considered.

The realm of the political should not be predetermined; and in Foucault it is not. He frees us to ask of politics a whole series of

questions not traditionally part of its statutory domain: questions about women, about relations between the sexes and forms of desire about medicine, about mental illness, about the environment, about minorities, about delinquency.[42] These kinds of questions are kept silent by the public/private distinction, but the ability to ask these sorts of questions, to see these issues as relevant to political and public concerns, is precisely what is at stake in a politics of difference. It is also what is at stake in Foucauldian politics. The liberation of the act of questioning plays a positive role: it poses a plurality of questions to politics rather than simply reinscribing the act of questioning in the framework of a preexisting political doctrine. Foucault's analysis of power and knowledge thus makes it possible for the silenced majority to begin to speak, to begin to formulate points of resistance.

Rorty's oversimplistic understanding of the sphere of political struggle acts to ensure the opposite. It keeps the status quo safe from genuinely critical questioning; it silences voices of genuine opposition for it does not allow the seriousness of attacks aimed at the heart of the normalizing and disciplinary regimes. His analysis of revolution does not go beyond localizing the source of power in the state or in the economy. He therefore sees Foucault's deconstruction of modern forms of power and the necessity of attacking such decentralized powers from the bottom up as being superfluous and "irrelevant."[43]

Foucault's capillary understanding of power refuses the adequacy of a thesis which centralizes power in the state or the economy. Seizure and transformation of state and/or economic power is not sufficient to dismantle or transform the modern power regime. Political struggles are not merely over who gets control of state or economic power, they are more accurately depicted as struggles over the actual ways in which power operates.

Viewing power as capillary, then, restructures our understanding of the purpose of revolutionary action. The goal is not the emancipation of truth from every system of power, "for truth is always already power," but of detaching truth from the forms of hegemony—economic, but also social and cultural—within which it operates at any given time.[44]

I have said that Foucault argues that power is anchored in the multiplicity of "micro-practices," the social practices which comprise everyday life in modern society, and it is just this that is necessary for oppositional politics. Contrary to Rorty's affirmation of the end of conceptual revolutions, Foucault's politicizing of everyday life and its implications for the multiplicity and plurivocality of power struggles,

and that of concomitant formations of plural truths, keeps conceptual revolutions, and therefore opposition, an open possibility. Because Rorty's faith in a univocal, liberal bourgeois society leads him to believe that the need for conceptual revolution has ended, his idea of political struggle is one where what is being fought over is a way of better adjusting the same thought to the reality of things. But this goal of transformation does not go far enough, it does not yet see that "the reality of things" is an effect of disciplinary power:

> A transformation which would only be a certain manner of better adjusting the same thought to the reality of things, would only be a superficial transformation. On the other hand, from the moment one begins to be unable, any longer, to think things as one usually thinks them, transformation becomes simultaneously very urgent, very difficult, and altogether possible. . . .[45]

The difference between Rorty's ideal of politics which maintains the status quo, and Foucault's, which makes suspect the very existence of all normalizing structures, can be cashed out in terms of the "we" each is addressing. Rorty's "we" is the bourgeois liberal and the values he promotes are those which benefit that group. But the bourgeois liberal and the social order consonant with the protection of bourgeois values does not speak to the concerns of those marginalized by that social structure; for example, it benefits white propertied males at the expense of women, people of color, the middle and lower classes, the dispossessed.

Foucault's focus, on the other hand, is on all of those who are marginalized by liberal society, on all those who are the subjects of disciplinary power. His concern is to have his analysis of power/knowledge used as a tool for the voicing of resistance. Foucault can thus be characterized as a champion of deviancy—which is not to say that he need align himself with any particular deviant position—it is the *possibility* of deviant power struggles that is the point: the rebel is not necessarily innocent, the rebel's position not necessarily curative. One revolutionary group's success will not end the need for future revolution, will not end the need for conceptual revolution:

> One does not have to be in solidarity with [revolutionaries]. One does not have to maintain that these confused voices sound better than the others and express the ultimate truth. For there to be a sense in listening to them and in searching for what to say, *it is sufficient that they exist and that they have against them so much which is set up to silence them* [emphasis mine].[46]

The point is that the "we" he speaks to are groups yet to be formed. They have yet to be formed because they have yet to break their silence.

Rorty criticizes Foucault for failing to appeal to any "we."[47] He argues that the "rhetoric of emancipation is absent from Foucault's work. Foucault's work "lacks an identification with any social context, any communication"; he "forbids himself the tone of the liberal sort of thinker who says to his fellow citizens: '*we* know that there must be a better way to do things than this; let us look for it together.' " There is, he concludes, "no 'we' to be found in Foucault's writings, nor in those of many of his French contemporaries."[48]

The question is not, however, whether Foucault fails to identify himself with any particular community, but whether there is anything inherent in his work—as I argued there was in Lyotard—to preclude the possibility of a "we": of consensus or community. For the worry behind Rorty's criticism is valid: without some form of community there cannot be an effective politics.

But it is one thing to allow for the formation of communities, and another to specify the form these communities must take. Whether or not Foucault's analysis *precludes* the formation of community will remain, for the moment, an open question. But it is true that he does not attempt to specify the form future communities must take, and this motivates much of the criticism against him. In part, this boils down to a contest between champions of the tradition and its dominated opponents.

I want, however, to come to Foucault's defense. His analysis of power paves the way for the multiplicity of yet-to-be-specified "we's" necessary for poststructuralist and oppositional politics.

Foucault and his critics

Foucault may not participate, as does Rorty, in the defense of any particular community, but this is intentional.[49] As Foucault sees it, the "true" discourses of Western culture have been constituted by the social and human sciences. These interested discourses have provided reasons, principles, and justification for those practices through which people have been classified, examined, trained, and formed as subjects. Both "conservative" and "progressive" prescriptions and program-

mings of behavior have been predicated on the assumed scientificity of such behaviors.[50]

Barry Smart is correct to note that "one of the principal objectives of Foucault's analysis is to contest the scientific hierarchizations of knowledges and the effects intrinsic to their power" implied in the scientific discourse of Western culture. Smart argues that Foucault's goal is not "the construction of a higher, more general and powerful theory." Rather he wishes to develop critiques of objectifying and subjectifying forms of power/knowledge in order to "reveal and thereby help reactivate the various forms of subjugated knowledges and local criticisms of 'an autonomous, non-centralized kind . . . whose validity is not dependent on the approval of the established regimes of thought.' "[51] That Foucault is not concerned with the approval of the established regimes of thought marks him as a *bête noire* of mainstream or liberal political theorists, and it in part explains why his politics offends critics such as Fraser, Habermas, Walzer, Taylor, and Rorty.[52] In their own way, each claims that since Foucault does not speak to a recognizable (or acceptable) "we," he cannot be a concerned or even effective critic, for he offers no program for "what ought to be done."

But Foucault's response is that this is a worry only for those operating within a certain set of traditional expectations. Foucault's epistemology is particularly attractive for those participating, or to those who would participate, in oppositional struggles. The epistemological attractiveness of Foucault's decentering of knowledges lies precisely in the fact that it bears little resemblance to current conceptions of knowledge and rationality, which, as Foucault enables us to appreciate, are intimately bound up with modes of domination. Whether or not his analyses are "effective" depends on the viewpoint of the "we" in question. It is true that he does not speak to those satisfied with the established order. From this perspective, he may in fact fail as a critic of reform. But suppose the "we" Foucault speaks to is not those happily operating within the boundaries of established norms; suppose he addresses the deviant . . . from that perspective his critique might in fact be suggestive of change, even if that change is outside of the establishment's idea of progress, and it is the deviant perpetrators of change he means to be addressing:

> It is true that certain people, such as those who work in the institutional setting of the prison—are not likely to find advice or instructions in my books that tell them "what is to be done." But my project is precisely to bring it about that they "no longer know what to do," so that the acts, questions, discourses that up until then had seemed to go without saying became problematic, difficult, dangerous. This effect is intentional. And then I have some news for you: for me the problem of the prisoners isn't one for the social workers, but one for the prisoners. . . .[53]

It is no accident that those most critical of Foucault's political program are those happy operating within the framework provided by the mainstream, and those willing to find him useful are those who are looking for alternative voices. Whatever shakes up the carceral continuum is all right with Foucault—and this may well make defenders of the humanist tradition nervous.

Whether or not Foucault's work strikes one as "extraordinarily dry" as it strikes Rorty, is a function of one's perspective and one's commitments. Rorty thinks that Foucault's "dryness" is "produced by a lack of identification with any social context, and communication." But his dismissal of the seriousness of Foucault's work can be explained by the fact that it goes beyond Rorty's idea of the limits of acceptable political practice; it does not identify itself with a "project of reform"—it does not, in other words, accept the limits imposed by bourgeois liberalism.[54]

Michael Walzer argues that Foucault gives us no reason to believe the new codes and descriptions that will be produced will be any better than the ones we live with. But this misses the point. Again, the point is, it depends on the "we." Foucault refuses to identify with any particular "we." This is not his project, and in fact it is antithetical to his goal. But the "we's" he is sympathetic to and for whom his project is meant to be an aid are all those who would formulate resistances to the prevailing configurations of disciplinary power.

The critics I have mentioned want to fit Foucault into their idea of what counts as a useful theory. Nancy Fraser, for example, looks for a normative standpoint she can identify with, looks for Foucault's "justifications," for his "position."[55] Foucault is, from her point of view, successful, only if he can elaborate a "substantive, normative alternative to humanism." While she recognizes that "since his critique abjures traditional normative foundation and is therefore a critique rooted not in postmodern *theory*, but in postmodern *rhetoric*," she finds this unsatisfactory.

She also argues that in fact Foucault must be operating with humanist ideals; what else would explain his critique of normalization and carc-

erel society? Fraser argues that Foucault makes use of the very humanistic rhetoric he claims to be rejecting. This is evident, she says, in his "graphic description of the process of producing docile-useful bodies." The fact that this is offensive" can only be explained by Foucault's commitment to modern ideals of autonomy, dignity, reciprocity and human rights."[56]

I do not wish to argue this point here. What I want to argue is that even if she is right, it doesn't matter. Fraser, Rorty, et al., all criticize Foucault because they take him to be doing something he is not. They are trying to force him to conform to their notion of what a concerned social critic must be—but he does not want to fit that mold.

Foucault would, I think, be willing to concede the point that his way of thinking cannot fully escape the confines of his particular culture—after all, he too is a product of modern power. Joseph Margolis makes an important point regarding this claim. Margolis's point is that while Foucault is a poststructuralist, he is not a postmodernist. As a poststructuralist, he is concerned with the "Other" victimized by the efficiency of normalizing and disciplinary power. But the recovery of the Other always takes place within a certain power structure, within normalizing discourse. As Margolis so aptly notes: "the recovery of the 'Other' *requires a parasitic use of language that is never merely discursive though it will appear to be.*"[57] "Foucault," he goes on to say, "introduces 'empiricist' and 'transcendental' discourse all right. He *uses* it, aware that, in doing so, *he* is normalizing the distinctions and claims he introduces. But he introduces it to subvert it. . . ."[58] Margolis claims that Foucault's originality lies precisely in this recognition that "second-order legitimation [i.e., theory] of a discursive regime" is "itself subject to the effective 'power' that installs or produces that very regime."[59] In other words, "we cannot abandon our own order—even where we would attack it."[60] So even if, *pace* Fraser or Habermas, it can be shown that Foucault does hold on to humanist or legitimative ideals, this need not be seen as damaging to Foucault's thesis. The important thing to consider is how he treats those ideals. And what sets him apart from his critics is that he doesn't seek to legitimate practices or discourses—he does not, as does Rorty, argue that his values are universal or that they should shape or limit the course of the future.

Insofar as he is a spokesman for bourgeois liberal society, and insofar as he promotes the hegemony of that society by arguing that its success has ended the need for conceptual revolutions, Rorty's humanist idea of liberation is an ideal which operates against a transcendence of

domination. Labels such as "we liberals" and "we members of rich North American democracies" foster illusory unity that serves only to repress difference and social contexts. Rorty sees his role as one of expanding the range of "our" present we. Such a project is, he argues, an "end in itself."[61] But then Rorty's project and Foucault's project are diametrically opposed. And this is true not only for Rorty, but for all defenders of the liberal tradition.

The point I have been making in this section is that many of Foucault's critics do not take seriously his commitment to a politics of difference, to the project of creating the means by which marginalized voices can assert themselves—even if this means overthrowing the present power regime, along with the regime of truth and values. To understand Foucault is to appreciate his radical sympathies. It is to pay attention, and I come back to this again, to who the "we" is Foucault speaks to, and more particularly, why he refuses to speak *for* them.

On the question "What is to be done?"

> In my opinion you were the first—in your books and in the practical sphere—to teach something absolutely fundamental: the indignity of speaking for others. We ridiculed representation and said it was finished, but we failed to draw the consequences of this theoretical conversion—to appreciate the theoretical fact that only those directly concerned can speak in a practical way on their own behalf. (Deleuze in conversation with Foucault.)[62]

Foucault refuses to be a spokesman for any particular "we" because he is wary of his ability to transcend his particular normalizing discourse. We must take seriously his claim that to imagine another system is to extend our participation on the present system.[63] But if we take him seriously, then Rorty's and the others' criticism lose a great deal of their force: Foucault's point is that he cannot speak for others, nor does he wish to. He does not want to prescribe what ought to be done. He takes his embeddedness seriously:

> . . . the intellectual discovered that the masses no longer need him to gain knowledge: they *know* perfectly well, without illusion; they know far better than he and they are certainly capable of expressing

> themselves. But there exists a system of power which blocks, prohibits, and invalidates this discourse and this knowledge. A power not only found in the manifest authority of censorship, but one that profoundly and subtly penetrates an entire social network. 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."[64]

Foucault sees himself as being involved in "a struggle against power, a struggle aimed at revealing and undermining power when it is most invisible and insidious." The struggle is not to awaken consciousness, not to alert the masses to their "true" needs, "but to sap power, to take power; it is an activity conducted alongside those who struggle for power, and not their illumination from a safe distance."[65] Foucault, then, means his analysis of power to be used as a *tool* for those involved in struggles over power. The notion of theory as a toolkit means first that "the theory to be constructed is not a system, but an instrument, a *logic* of the specifics of power relations and the struggles around them," and secondly, "that this investigation can only be carried out step by step on the bases of reflection (which will necessarily be historical in some of its aspects) on given situations."[66] He agrees with Deleuze's assessment that one's books should be treated "as a pair of glasses directed to the outside; if they don't suit you, find another pair; I leave it to you to find your own instrument, which is necessarily an instrument for combat. A theory does not totalize; it is an instrument for multiplication. . . ."[67]

Foucault sees the problem of politics as setting differences into play[68] while respecting the multiplicity of "truth."[69] He therefore views his political role as an intellectual as one which seeks to provide oppositional voices with a tool for destabilization.[70] His analysis of power, then, is meant to be a tool for resistance. But offering his analysis of power as a tool for resistance does not mean he is offering a program of action or committing himself to any particular struggle: "I would like to produce some effects of truth which might be used for a possible battle, to be waged by those who wish to wage it, in forms not yet to be found and in organization yet to be defined."[71]

Foucault thus refuses to play the game his critics try to draw him into. He refuses to take a prophetic stance, to prescribe for others what action they should take:

> . . . it seems to me that "what is to be done" ought not to be determined from above by reformers be they prophetic or legislative, but by a long work of comings and goings, of exchanges, reflections, trials, different analyses. . . . And it is because of the need not to tie down . . . or immobilize . . . that there can be no question for me of trying to [say] "what is to be done."[72]

The most important thing, he claims, is not to bury those seeking an answer to the question "what is to be done" under the weight of prescriptive or prophetic discourse:

> The necessity of reform mustn't be allowed to become a form of blackmail serving to limit, reduce, or halt the exercise of criticism. Under no circumstances should one pay attention to those who tell you, "Don't criticize, since you're not capable of carrying out a reform." Critique doesn't have to be the premise of a deduction that concludes: This then is what needs to be done. It should be an instrument for those who fight, those who resist and refuse what is. Its use should be in the process of conflict and confrontation, essays in refusal. It doesn't have to lay down the law for the law. It isn't a stage in a programming. It is a challenge directed to what is.[73]

The problem is one for the subject who acts; the real will be transformed "when critique has been played out in the real, not when reformers have realized their ideas."[74]

Rorty serves as an example of the kind of theoretician Foucault is warning against.

Rorty demands of critique that it give "concrete alternatives and programs."[75] The problem with this can be argued from more than one angle. For one, what is counted as a serious or viable alternative or program is predetermined: it must be one which furthers the goal of expanding the values of bourgeois culture, of the present "we" into the future. This has the consequent effect of silencing any alternative not acceptable to the current idea of the normal or rational. And the form of critique is limited in yet another way: it is made the property of the ironist intellectual.[76] The non-intellectuals would not be raised to participate in the sorts of language games which would enable them to have doubts about the contingencies they happen to be. Rorty thus

on the one hand demands that critique give concrete alternatives and programs, and on the other, denies the people the possibility of cultivating the kind of imagination needed for such critique. Liberal culture, he claims, neither could, nor ought, to be a culture whose public rhetoric was ironist: "I cannot imagine a culture which socializes its youth in such a way as to make them continually dubious about their own process of socialization."[77] And here the differences between Rorty and Foucault are both striking and obvious; Rorty disqualifies precisely those forms of knowledge which interest Foucault: namely deviant and destabilizing knowledges.

Foucault would argue that the alternatives and programs given by *critique* in Rorty's sense would simply amount to regurgitating acceptable and pre-formed effects of the knowledge and power that invests present scientific discourse. Expanding the present "we" into the future amounts to a program of normalization. The kind of knowledge he is encouraging is altogether different. It is,

> . . . the set of knowledges that have been disqualified as inadequate to their task or insufficiently elaborated: naive knowledges, located low down on the hierarchy, beneath the required level of cognition or scientificity. I also believe that it is through the reemergence of these low-ranking knowledges, these unqualified, even directly disqualified knowledges (such as that of the psychiatric patient, of the ill person . . . of the delinquent, etc.), and which involve what I would call a popular knowledge, but is on the contrary a particular, local, regional knowledge, a differential knowledge incapable of unanimity and which owes its force only to the harshness with which it is opposed by everything surrounding it—that is through the reappearance of this knowledge, of these local popular knowledges, these disqualified knowledges, that criticism performs its work.[78]

And even for himself, for the "ironist intellectuals" if you will (though I imagine Foucault would hate having that label attached to him, given its formulation in Rorty's corpus), he would spurn the claim that the validity of critique depends upon its ability to suggest "concrete alternatives," to specify what is to be done. Foucault genuinely struggles to participate in multiplicity—difficult as it may be to escape the totalizing effect of normalization. His work, he says, is an attempt to modify what he thinks, and even what he is; "to work is to undertake something other than what one has thought before."[79]

Foucault's goal, then, is not to provide a theory of what ought to be done. He has no wish to formulate a global, systematic theory, but

only to analyze the specific mechanisms of power, to locate connections and extensions, to build little by little strategic knowledges. He feels that such analyses will aid revolutionary struggles because he believes that when struggles are provided with an adequate logic of their history and their effects, hegemony over the left cannot be successful. Foucault sees everything as being an effect and product of power.

This is analogous to the domination of phrase regimes talked about in Lyotard; because everything is formulated within the domain of a phrase and a phrase is both the "effect of power" and exclusionary of other powers, it is seen by Lyotard as a mark of terror. It is impossible then to locate within Lyotard the voice of resistance; it is as if his thesis of the terrorizing by "phrase regimes" forces him to conclude that to speak is already to be co-opted, and this is why the presentation of the unpresentable is totally mystified. Foucault, on the other hand, at least claims to be able to both postulate the omnipresence and ubiquity of power, even as inscribed on our very bodies, and still allow for the possibility of resistance and oppositional transformation. The question, though, is how? How can he both universalize the domination of subjectless power and still leave space for the empowerment of marginalized voices? In fact he sometimes uses his refusal to speak for oppositional voices as a shield to hide behind; we cannot allow his refusal to speak for marginalized voices to excuse him from addressing the difficult questions regarding resistance—made even more difficult, given the context of power in which resistances arise and are said to be products.

This leads us then to consider more closely his notion of resistance. Granted, he need not provide a blueprint for the form oppositional struggles must or should take, still, his thesis of the ubiquity of normalizing and disciplinary power, along with its implication for his theory of the subject as an effect and also the vehicle of such power, forces us to ask questions such as: How is resistance possible, where does it come from, why would it arise? How can we affect conscious choices for resistance or subvert those powers which both constitute and oppress it? Does Foucault's analysis of the ubiquity of power eliminate reference to a thinking/willing subject who might motivate resistances?

In short, the thesis that "we cannot abandon our own order, even where we would attack it," renders Foucault's theory of power problematic for the possibility of resistance, and an evaluator of Foucault interested in the formation of oppositional struggles, and the voicing of marginalized voices, can both respect his refusal to shape those

struggles while at the same time refusing to thereby be put off from demanding a more constructive (or even coherent) notion of resistance and transformation from a power regime to which we are subjected, to one we control.

Resistance and the subjects of opposition

There exist in Foucault's theory of resistance many unresolved tensions, among which is the tension which exists between his thesis that resistance is an inevitable consequence of power, and his belief that self-conscious subjects are the necessary catalyst for resistance. This last assertion is further complicated by the fact that if subjects are merely the effect of power, then self-consciousness is at best problematic. For example, his thesis that the subject is merely the effect of power invites the following question: how can, or why would, subjects which are the effects of power also subvert it?

While Foucault does mean to leave open the possibility for seeing self-conscious subjects as necessary to resistance, he does not do much to explain how such self-consciousness is possible, or why resistance would result in the transformation of power—and it is not enough of an excuse to say that this is a function of his unwillingness to prescribe what ought to be done.

To begin from the relation of power to resistance. Foucault believes that for every form in which power is exercised and applied there exist corresponding forms of resistance. This holds, even though resistances are themselves always inscribed within relations of power:

> Where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power. Should it be said that one is always "inside" power, there is no "escaping" it, there is no absolute outside where it is concerned, because one is subject to the law in every case? . . . This would be to misunderstand the strictly relational character of power relationships. Their existence depends on a multiplicity of points of resistance: these play the role of adversary, target, support, or handle in power relations. These points of resistance are present everywhere in the power network . . . there is a plurality of resistances, by definition, they can only exist in the strategic field of power relations. But this does not mean that they are only a reaction or rebound, forming with respect to the basic domination an underside that is in the end always passive, doomed to perpetual defeat. Resistances do not derive from a few heteronomous principles; but neither are they a lure or a promise that is of necessity betrayed. They are the odd term in relations of power; they are inscribed in the latter as an irreducible opposite. . . . And it is doubtless the strategic codification of these points of resistance that makes a revolution possible.[80]

This gives us a summary of Foucault's theory of resistance in its relation to power. But how much does this description really tell us? It seems to hold out hope for the possibility of meaningful resistance even though resistance itself is always inscribed within those very relations of power it opposes. But I want to ask, "How exactly is this possible?" And on the face of it, at least, Foucault does not do more than merely state the relation of resistance to power as one of logical entailment. This leaves Foucault open to the charge that his is a world "in which things move, rather than people, a world in which subjects become obliterated or, rather, recreated as passive subjects."[81] In fact, it seems as if power/resistance follows an inevitable kind of materialist logic: wherever there is power, there will also be resistance; this is simply the logic of the situation. This is rather like a political application of Newton's third law: For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. But can this law be applied to people? What reason does Foucault give for believing it can? And even if resistance is logically entailed by power, what does this make of resistance? Can we get from resistance to purposive *transformation*?[82]

In fact, though in informal discussions and interviews Foucault speaks as a revolutionary, as a *theorist* Foucault gives us reason *not* to be optimistic about the possibility of resistance and transformation.

Foucault states in the passage quoted above, that the existence of power "depends on a multiplicity of points of resistance," that resistance "can only exist in the strategic field of power relations." But this means that resistance is co-opted for the purposes of disciplinary and normalizing regimes of power, and is evidence of the fact that resistance need not result in transformation.

And in fact, Foucault is not wrong. We see this co-opting of resistance all the time. Enough white middle-class women objected to being confined to the role of housewife for it to have become the norm for those women to find jobs outside of the home. But, far from changing the basic power structure, the phenomenon of women in the workplace has served to strengthen it. The male-dominated society hasn't given much up—women are still responsible for the household; government has not taken on the responsibility of making day care available to

all, it has not sufficiently altered the workplace to accommodate demands for maternity (much less demands for paternity) leave, women are still not given equal pay for equal work, etc., it would not then be surprising if these women "chose" to go back to being housewives. The dominant power regime assures a no-win situation. If women work, more can be produced, and two-income families are able to spend more in an inflationary age than a single-income family would. On the other hand, if women are forced to go back to being housewives, the patriarchal power regime wins by having its values reinforced. Either way the dominant power regime is able both to benefit from, and deflect, resistance.[83] Or one could take the example of how resistances are used as a target to strengthen the hold of the dominant powers by unifying the people against a common enemy. This is seen in the war against drugs and in the homophobia grown up around the fear of AIDS. It was also dramatically illustrated a few winters back in the windows of Macy's department store in New York City, when they made the "homeless look" a fashion: mannequins were featured promoting shoes that were made to look like tattered rags. If homelessness can become a fashion, the horror evoked by seeing actual people in real rags will be defused. The protests of the homeless will then fall on deaf ears. And of course, the examples could easily be multiplied.

Resistance is also made problematic at the level of desire. Since we are formed by strategies of power we may well identify our interests with the interest of that very power which was formulated to oppress us. This is why Susan Bordo argues that a Foucauldian analysis of the strategic uses of power force us to question the integrity of our understanding of our oppositional realities. She is right to argue that Foucault "constantly reminds us that the results of individual interest and desire do not always lead where imagined and may often sustain unintended and unwanted configurations of power."[84] Foucault's analysis of power forces all marginalized voices to be alert to the possible co-opting of their particular consciousness. Bordo asks the question Foucauldian analysis makes worrisome: "Could feminist gender-skepticism, in all its multifaceted 'deployment' (to continue the Foucauldian motif), now be operating in the service of the reproduction of white male knowledge/power?"[85] We must be on the lookout to recognize the ways even defiant alternatives are co-opted.

Bordo's question is made even more urgent by Foucault's notion of resistance, of the seizure of power, because he takes the position that one can take power only by recognizing it—one can shape alternative

power regimes only by seeing how we are the effect of present ones (this is the positive hope for genealogy). This is what he means by saying

> What I want to do . . . is to work out an interpretation, a reading of a certain reality, which might be such that on the one hand, this interpretation could produce some of the effects of truth; and on the other, these effects of truth could become implements within possible struggles. . . . Deciphering a layer of reality in such a way that the lines of force and the lines of fragility come forth; the points of resistance and the possible points of attack; the paths marked out and the shortcuts. It is the reality of possible struggles that I want to bring to light.[86]

But here certain problems begin to intrude. If disciplinary power feeds off of resistance, if it "annexes" the counter-discourses that have developed,[87] how can resistance be made genuinely subversive (how can it help being co-opted by the dominant power structures)? How can resistance be strategically codified—especially if the codes are always the products of normalization (or phrase regimes)?

At the very least, what such resistances require are subjects who are self-conscious about the effects of power. But this self-consciousness does not come easy.

Foucault often writes as if power constitutes the very individuals upon whom it operates:

> The individual is not to be conceived as a sort of elementary nucleus, a primitive atom, a multiple and inert material on which power comes to fasten or against which it happens to strike. . . . In fact, it is already one of the prime effects of power that certain bodies, certain gestures, certain discourses, certain desires, come to be identified and constituted as individuals.[88]

But if, as this thesis implies, individuals are *wholly* constituted by the power/knowledge regime Foucault describes, how can discipline be resisted in the first place? (Unless it comes about as an inevitable moment in the march of . . . but no, this is a very unfoucauldian thesis.) If individuals are wholly constituted by the power/knowledge regime, then it would make no sense to talk about resistance to discipline. As Sandra Lee Bartky notes, Foucault seems sometimes on the verge of depriving us of a vocabulary in which to conceptualize the nature and

meaning of resistance.[89] And where he suggests the possibility of an alternative vocabulary, his thesis that individuals "with his identity and characteristics [are] the product of a relation of power exercised over bodies, multiplicities, movements, desires, forces"[90] must leave us skeptical about the possibility of alternative vocabularies.

If the subject is "constituted through practices of subjugation," then what sense can we make of the claim that it is also constituted "through practices of liberation, of freedom . . . starting, of course, from a certain number of rules, styles, and conventions that are found in the culture"?[91] This grossly begs the question: how does one start from the rules, styles, and conventions of a disciplinary and normalizing culture and end up with practices of liberation and freedom?

Foucault never provides us with the missing steps, and in fact, has given us powerful reasons to suppose practices of "liberation" and "freedom"—even if these are liberations from one power regime to another—are impossible.

The difficulty of finding the possibility of a revolutionary vocabulary is not a problem peculiar to Foucault; it haunts many revolutionary proponents of poststructuralist politics. We have seen this in Lyotard's notion of the "unpresentable," which denotes his frustration over the cultural and scientific hegemony of language. This is also true of French feminists Luce Irigaray and Julia Kristeva, both of whom suggest that Western cultural traditions are univocally masculinist, and that the phallocentric discourses of these cultural traditions offer no place for women to speak out except insofar as they speak in ways predetermined by men.[92] Jana Sawicki argues the consequence of this viewpoint: "refusal of these subject positions leaves women with no alternatives but to speak in a masculine voice, or be silent."[93] Sawicki says that Foucault offers "a slightly more optimistic view of the relationship between language and power, for he rejected the view that the power of phallocentric discourse is total. Discourse is ambiguous and plurivocal, it is a site of conflict and contestation. Thus, women can adopt and adapt it to their own ends."[94] But this does not, I think, provide a good enough defense of Foucault. It is not obvious that discourse for Foucault *is* plurivocal. Certainly it isn't if one refers to *Discipline and Punish*, and though it might be argued that *The History of Sexuality* provides for the possibility of plurivocal discourse, this needs to be argued. At any rate, what we want to know is how it is possible for discourse to be multiple in the right way, i.e., in a way that allows for genuinely oppositional discourse and purposive transformation.

The thesis that phallocentric discourse is not total depends upon

the existence of genuine loci of resistances. And even if we did not require that these points of resistance were not themselves instances of power, the question would still remain: how are the subjects of disciplinary and normalizing power regimes able to break out of the constraints of power? What tools do they have that are not already co-opted by (codified within) those very power regimes they are trying to resist?

Given that subjectivity is constituted through disciplinary practices and rationalizing discourses and is an effect of patriarchal, racist, and classist society, it could be said that Foucault cannot account for the fact that oppositional discourses do, in fact, appear. For while on the one hand, Foucault thinks that resistance requires subjects capable of acting in self-conscious and regulatory ways—the hoped-for practical application of his genealogical analyses of power presupposes the belief that because human practices are made they can be unmade, "of course, assuming we know how they were made"[95]—on the other hand, his thesis that resistance only exists in strategic fields of power relations where those relations of power are conceived of as disciplinary and normalizing, makes it unlikely that there can be regulatory or even self-conscious subjects of resistance. Furthermore, while his analysis may enable us to see ourselves as the objects of those relations of power which have made us what we are (and have made the world what it is), it does not help us to see how we can be the makers of new histories—how Foucault can begin with resistance and end up with self-conscious transformation.

Foucault's thesis is further muddied if we consider passages like the one quoted above in which he seems to be implying that the necessary and *sufficient* catalyst for resistance is self-conscious subjects. When speaking of his role, Foucault says that by uncovering the multiple effects of power he thereby aids the formation of multiple points of resistance—once we see not just that, but *how* forms of rationality and formations of the subject rest upon a foundation of human practices, once we know how these are made, he believes it then becomes possible for them to be unmade. This possibility rests upon subjects becoming aware of the multiple effects of power.

But it is not obvious that resistance *will* follow upon awareness of the effects of power. And the inference is even more unlikely if we take seriously the thesis that the subject and her or his identity is *entirely* a product of disciplinary and normalizing discourse.

If our personal identity is bound up with the interests of domination, radical critiques may in fact be seen as the threat to be resisted. Speaking

to this point, Sandra Lee Bartky asks the following, I think, striking question: given that feminist critiques have pointed out the ways in which women's identities have been formed as a result of disciplinary and normalizing discourses, why isn't it the case that all women are feminists? She suggests, in keeping with Foucault's view of subjects as the effects of power, that the reason is that this identity is all we have; disciplinary power has formed our very idea of the feminine and has inscribed its power in the female body. All women, she says, have internalized patriarchal standards of bodily acceptability, which in turn have determined our sense of mastery and competence. She goes on to argue that women may very well be reluctant to part with the rewards of compliance, and that many women will resist the abandonment of an aesthetic that defines what they take to be beautiful. And then there is the fact that our culture has structured our options so that they will appear to be limited to the category of either the masculine or the feminine. To give up one's sense of oneself as female, then, might be felt as equivalent to giving up one's very self.[96] His theory of resistance notwithstanding, this is not an unfoucauldian conclusion.

So even if being alerted to the productive effects of power *could* result in attempts to oppose the hegemony of the dominant power regime, the resister who would refuse to be part of that regime is left with the difficult personal, psychological, epistemological, and also the difficult *political* question of who she might be. Foucault's analysis of power might lead the disadvantaged to want to formulate alternatives to the subjugating power regime, but it also implies the impossibility of this, since the question of being a woman—or any unco-opted, "deviant" identity—has been made more difficult by Foucault than we might have originally thought, for to refer to an identity is not just to refer to a social category, but to a felt sense of self. I find in Foucault no reason for revolting against oneself, and even more problematic from the standpoint of oppositional politics, no strategy for recovering an empowered, oppositional self.

The point can also be made on a larger scale: the political effectiveness of resistance for Foucault comes not from the standpoint of community, but from the standpoint of the subject, this despite passages coincident with the postmodernist demand for its deconstruction. But I would argue that the possibility of becoming conscious of subjugation, and the possibility of articulating marginalized voices and of formulating oppositional struggles, depend not on the self-consciousness of an autonomous subject, but on subjects-in-community, and so, on the *articulation* of community. There are times when similarity

is more important than difference (this point will be developed more fully in the last chapter).

At his worst, Foucault's pluralism, which results from his insistence on the proliferation of localized power struggles—not only intersubjectively, but also interpersonally—keeps him from allowing for a subject sufficiently coherent to form communities of active resistance and transformation. We saw this in Lyotard's paralogistic and agonistic model of politics. We see this again in Foucault's commitment to the confrontational omnipresence of power and its concomitant destabilizing effect of the subject, evident in such passages as "there aren't any immediately given subjects of the struggle . . . who fights against whom? We all fight each other. And there is always within each of us something that fights something else."[97] Since the individual is nothing but the effects of power, it is better, he thinks, to speak of the subjects of struggle not as "individuals," but as "sub-individuals" always at war with their own values. But if the very self is thus fragmented into antagonistic sites of power, then he is no better able to admit consensus and community than was Lyotard.

It is this kind of conclusion that leads those engaged in oppositional struggles to repudiate the viability of postmodern politics. This is true, for example, of some feminists who consider Foucault, and postmodernism in general, to be disadvantageous for oppositional struggles:

> The postmodern project, if seriously adopted by feminists, would make any semblance of a feminist politics impossible—to the extent that feminist politics is bound up with a specific constituency or subject, namely women, the postmodernist prohibition against subject-centered inquiry and theory undermines the legitimacy of a broad-based organized movement dedicated to articulating and implementing the goals of such a constituency.[98]

Without a subject there can be no locus of resistance and without subjects coherent enough to form coalitions there can be no force to resistance.

And yet he doesn't always go this far. It is also clear that Foucault sees himself as participating in the formation of oppositional consciousness—in the formation of the consciousness of oppositional subjects—and that he sees such subjects as necessary for the project of the instantiation of new regimes of power formed from the standpoint of subjugated knowledges.

Unfortunately, where he allows for agents of struggle, these agents

are "subjects" in an uncomfortably familiar sense of the word, and despite his advances over Rorty, this signifies yet another of those totalizing impulses which mask the viewpoint of the bourgeois male. There are (even if he doesn't say how—and this points to tensions which can be said to exist between Foucault's modern and postmodern tendencies) times in Foucault's writings where he posits the existence of subjects coherent enough to form coalitions, some of which coalitions will even, he says, be "permanent" [*sic*]. But, as he sees it, the first and last components of these coalitions will be "individuals,"[99] and this doesn't get us away from the bourgeois individualism which has dominated modern patriarchal, racist, and classist power regimes.[100] It also does not, therefore, adequately reflect how we come to achieve the self-consciousness necessary for oppositional political struggle.

On this point Lacanian theory proves instructive. It helps feminist theory articulate the ways in which the very notion of the subject is a masculine prerogative within the terms of culture. As Judith Butler notes,

> The paternal law which Lacanian psychoanalysis takes to be the ground of all kinship and all cultural relations not only sanctions male subjects, but institutes their very possibility through the denial of the feminine. Hence, far from being subjects, women are variously, the Other, a mysterious and irrecoverable lack, a sign of the forbidden and irrecoverable maternal body, or some unsavory mixture of the above.[101]

I would argue (though this is not the place for it) that Lacan's universalization of patriarchy goes too far. However, it does suggest that the traditional conception of the subject *is* necessarily patriarchal. The "traditional" subject I have in mind is the *autonomous* subject. *This* subject is a masculine cultural prerogative from which women, and also those with non-bourgeois values, have been excluded. This subject is "always already masculine" because it represses the importance of *dependency* in its very construction. The first step in recovering a female subject—and my intuition is that this would also be a first step in the recovery of any other oppositional subject which would abjure the values of possessive individualism—would be to acknowledge the necessity of the subject-in-dependency, or to use terms more consistent with my thesis, the necessity of subjects-in-community. Unfortunately, where he allows for a subject, Foucault's subject remains the subject of the bourgeois male.

Foucault's insights regarding the omnipresence of power should have led him to insist, in a way that he unfortunately did not, that since one's identity is always already the prime effect of power, it is always more than a personal question.[102] In failing to insist on this, Foucault makes an important mistake—and an important *political* mistake, for in the formation of resistance, of oppositional consciousness, I would argue that it is necessary to seek others out: to reconstruct, revitalize one's identity in community with others.

Foucault misses this point because he does not do enough to differentiate between effects of power. Laurie Hicks is correct to stress that "the effects of power vary depending upon one's place in the [power] network."[103] I would take this one step further and suggest that the very same strategy can be seen as both repressive and liberating. This can be seen in various strategic theories of the subject. For example, while it is true that the theory of the subject can be seen as one more instance of the repressive effects of patriarchal power, there are times at which it is strategically important to insist on the availability to oppositional theory of a coherent and unified subject. Oppositional struggles have both a critical and a constructive component. The ways in which their voices have been marginalized must be uncovered in order that alternative identities can be built. On the side of critique, feminist criticism can appeal to the destabilization of the subject as a useful tactic in the exposure of masculine power, and, as noted by Butler, ". . . in some French feminist contexts, the death of the subject spells the release or emancipation of the suppressed feminine sphere, the specific libidinal economy of women, the condition of *écriture féminine*."[104]

However, the constructive task of oppositional politics is to remake the future in terms of new subjectivities—to "construct the subjectivity of the Other." If this is the case, then the deconstruction of the subject can also be seen as a threat. All marginalized voices fighting for empowerment should be sympathetic to Nancy Hartsock's concern:

> Somehow it seems highly suspicious that it is at the precise moment when so many groups have been engaged in "nationalisms" which involve redefinitions of the marginalized Others that suspicions emerge about the nature of the "subject," about the possibilities for a general theory which can describe the world, about historical

> "progress." Why is it that just at the moment when so many of us who have been silenced begin to demand the right to name ourselves, to act as subjects rather than objects of history, that just then the concept of subjecthood becomes problematic?[105]

When Lyotard and Foucault deny the possibility of coherent subjects, when they repudiate consensus and community, it can be argued that their postmodern theories merely reproduce the effects of Enlightenment theories; the result of theories which deconstruct subjects is to deny the marginalized to participate in defining their interests, goals, desires—to construct a new voice.

Foucault emphasizes, and sometimes totalizes, the repressive effects of power (critique or theory) at the expense of its potential for liberation (construction), and this deemphasis on liberatory practices makes him suspect from the perspective of the disempowered.

In *The History of Sexuality* Foucault characterizes confessional practices which aim at self-disclosure and self-discovery as aiding the interests of domination and social control. Indeed, as Jana Sawicki notes, "Foucault was suspicious of most efforts to tell the truth about oneself." But this is only one side of the equation.

If one's alternative identity is yet to be established, yet to be codified into strategic discourses, then one needs to talk about oneself, to share and compare personal experiences.[106] Since the subject is an effect of multiple community formation, alternative subjects can only be formulated within the discourses of alternative communities. This is to claim that there are no individuals, in the traditional sense and that the traditional autonomous subject must be replaced by the concept of subjects-in-community.

Jana Sawicki aptly summarizes the tactical use of confessional practices:

> While self-refusal may be an appropriate practice for a privileged white male theorist like Foucault, it is less obviously strategic for feminist and other disempowered discourses. As women, most of us have been taught to efface ourselves as a matter of course. It has been suggested that anonymous was a woman. The absence of a sense of self, of one's values and authority, and of the legitimacy of one's needs and feelings is a hallmark of femininity against which feminism has struggled. One principal aim of feminism has been to build self-esteem—the sense of self-certainty and identity which are necessary for developing an oppositional movement. Telling our stories to one another has been an important part of this process.

> It could even be argued that feminist psychotherapies which cultivate self-preoccupation and self-assertion have benefitted the women's tendencies to lose themselves in others, particularly male others. Moreover, if we look at the role that feminist psychotherapy has played in uncovering the scandal of incest and physical abuse, then we may be forced to conclude that telling the truth about oneself can indeed disrupt patriarchal power relations. *This is particularly true if this truth is shared, analyzed and strategically deployed*[107] [emphasis added].

I would concur with Sawicki that "some forms of self-preoccupation are more politically suspect than others. The retreat into oneself can represent an escape from political reality, or it can help one get clear about the conditions governing one's choices and thereby free one up for new ways of thinking, new choices." But I would emphasize, in keeping with the themes of poststructuralism (and this is why I think there are tactical reasons to engage with poststructuralism) that self-preoccupation is also necessarily an identification with some form of community—there are no subjects in isolation—but that doesn't mean there are no subjects which are not the effects of the dominant power. Confessional practices can help one identify oneself as an unhappy product of domination, and so help one form new communities to identify with, even if these alignments are temporary and the self-identity they speak to is partial.

Foucault may be correct to point out that our bodies have been made docile and obedient, but this has political force only when we realize that domination is not personal and idiosyncratic, but represents the strategic domination of, and has been instrumental in, the identity formation of an identifiable group, such as women, for example. One may not see that one's eating disorder is the result of a pain and the attempt at the formation of an alternative "language" (a "language-body" to use Mark Anderson's description[108]) until the phenomena of anorexia and bulimia come to light as the result of shared discovery. What has always seemed "natural" can come to be seen as unnatural and thereby as possible to resist, in the process of telling one's story and comparing one's experiences with others. Sometimes what one has not noticed as a pain in oneself or as an alternative to the confines of dominant discourses is seen clearly as a pain and also as a new "language" when reflected in the experience of others.[109] And though there are many ways in which each individual is dissimilar from the next and is oneself not a site of a single narrative, noticing the points at which we *are* similar has strategic political purposes.

Foucault reconsidered

In summary of this chapter, I conclude that on the positive side, Foucault's analysis of power allows us to see all social practices, the "private" as well as the "public" as potentially political. This leaves the realm of the political open to a myriad of reconsiderations, reshapings, and possibly resistances. Foucault frees us to ask of politics a whole series of questions not traditionally considered part of its domain, and since the "tradition" is the tradition of white propertied males, he frees us to consider politics from the perspective of the marginalized other. Foucault's program is coincident with the program of oppositional politics precisely because it is crucial to oppositional politics that the realm of the political not be predetermined—it must always remain open to debate and fundamental, even "conceptual" change.

Foucault's genealogy aids oppositional politics because he participates in liberating the act of questioning. Rorty's bias toward the ironist intellectual forecloses on such liberation. Lyotard would have liked to, but was unable to see how to open a space for such liberation; his theory remains insignificant for the purposes of oppositional struggles. Foucault's genealogy does succeed in offering a *tool* (even if not a *theory*) for the liberation of questioning, and so, it is an aid for the assertion of the Other.

Genealogy problematizes truth, politics, everyday familiar objects: personal "objects" such as the self and the body, "private objects" such as the family and education, public "objects" such as the sciences and the legal institution. Within the Foucauldian framework, these are all seen as objects produced within historically variable relations of power—they are all, in other words, subject to being understood politically.

Foucauldian analysis does, then, create a breach in self-evidence: it brings to light the fact that things we might never have considered as being objects of power—things such as the body (and its "docility" and "usefulness") or sexuality—are objects that have been made. This does offer us the suggestion that they can also be unmade. One can take power only by recognizing it.

If power is instantiated in mundane social practices and relations, then efforts to dismantle or transform the regime must address those practices and relations. In uncovering the omnipresence of power, the fact that anything can be seen as a target of power, Foucault points the way toward new loci of resistance. Again, the body, for example, and discourses such as anorexia, can be seen respectively as the effect of power and as a locus of resistance.

Foucauldian analysis can be, and indeed, has been, made use of in spheres he did not even consider. It is, for example, made use of in feminist critiques of the art canon. Utilizing Foucauldian genealogy, feminists have exposed "the canon" as a product of male-dominated power. Noticing the absence of women in the canon has led art historians such as Linda Nochlin and Griselda Pollack to redescribe the history of art as the product of power relations. This in turn opens up new possibilities for art historians, art critics, artists, and audiences, and affects our very understanding of aesthetics. It makes our traditional understanding of art and art history vulnerable to the gaze of the Other. But it is important to note that Foucauldian analysis is a tool for, but not the catalyst of, such critique. *First* one notices that the interests/images/discourses of one's community, in this case the community of women, is absent.

If, then, Foucault meant to be doing no more than offering a tool for those engaged in oppositional struggles, a tool which could be amended to fit certain situations (interpretations), put aside when the circumstances do not call for it, or be thrown away when it becomes useless or obsolete—if *this* was his goal, then he was, at least to a large extent, successful and remains useful.

However, he failed in his goal insofar as he can also be said to participate in the patriarchal, colonizing, order. Given Foucault's analysis of the subject as the effect of power, the possibility for self-consciousness remains problematic. And since he placed the formation of self-identity within the disciplinary and normalizing structure of power, it is doubtful that such reflection, even if possible, would result in resistance.

Despite his opening up the political space, and freeing "us" to ask correspondingly new and provoking questions of it, he never adequately opened up a space for this "questioning us." This, despite his active role in prison reform and gay liberation. Though he did indeed work to help dissonant communities resist or revolt, the possibility of this community formation is significantly absent from his theory. He did not explain where the self-conscious voice of the Other could come from or how it could speak or assert itself for the purposes of resistance. I suggest that this failure is at least partially explained by his deemphasis on the importance of community for the formation of the subject of resistance.

At its worst, Foucault's poststructuralism keeps him from allowing

for subjects sufficiently coherent to form communities of active resistance and transformation. At best it could be argued that while he did not exclude the possibility of the formation of community, neither did he take into account the seminal role of self-disclosure in community and community formation for the possibility of oppositional politics.

For various reasons, then, all the proponents of poststructural and postmodern politics I have been examining fail to provide a viable politics for oppositional struggles. It is time to assess this failure and its implications for an oppositional politics.

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