HISTORY OF THE PRESENT

Number 4

Power, Moral Values, and the Intellectual

This interview was conducted by Michael Bess, a graduate student in the Department of History at the University of California, Berkeley. Foucault was in Berkeley to deliver the Howison lectures ("Subjectivity and Truth") on 20-21 October 1980. Excerpts of this interview appeared in an article written by Bess, and published on 10 November 1980 in the Daily Californian, *the Berkeley student newpaper.*

AN INTERVIEW WITH MICHEL FOUCAULT

CONDUCTED BY MICHAEL BESS

SAN FRANCISCO (3 NOVEMBER 1980)

Question: You were saying a moment ago that you are a moralist. . . .

Foucault: In a sense, I am a moralist, insofar as I believe that one of the tasks, one of the meanings of human existence—the source of human freedom—is never to accept anything as definitive, untouchable, obvious, or immobile. No aspect of reality should be allowed to become a definitive and inhuman law for us.

We have to rise up against all forms of power—but not just power in the narrow sense of the word, referring to the power of a government or of one social group over another: these are only a few particular instances of power.

Power is anything that tends to render immobile and untouchable those things that are offered to us as real, as true, as good.

Question: But we nonetheless need to pin things down, even if in a provisional way.

Foucault: Certainly, certainly. This doesn't mean that one must live in an indefinite discontinuity. But what I mean is that one must consider all the points of fixity, of immobilization, as elements in a tactics, in a strategy—as part of an effort to bring things back into their original mobility, their openness to change.

I was telling you earlier about the three elements in my morals. They are: (1) the refusal to accept as self-evident the things that are proposed to us; (2) the need to analyze and to know, since we can accomplish nothing without reflection and understanding—thus, the principle of curiosity; and (3) the principle of innovation: to seek out in our reflection those things that have never been thought or imagined. Thus: refusal, curiosity, innovation.

Question: It seems to me that the modern philosophical concept of the subject entails all three of these principles. That is to say, the difference between the subject and the object is precisely that the subject is capable of refusal, of bringing innovation. So is your work an attack on the tendency to freeze this notion of the subject?

Foucault: What I was explaining was the field of values within which I situate my work. You asked me before if I was not a nihilist who rejected morality. I say : No! And you were asking me also, in effect, "Why do you do the work that you do?"

Here are the values that I propose. I think that the modern theory of the subject, the modern philosophy of the subject, might well be able to accord the subject a capacity

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for innovation, etc., but that, in actuality, modern philosophy only does so on a theoretical level. In reality, it is not capable of translating into practice this different value which I am trying to elaborate in my own work.

Question: Can power be something open and fluid, or is it intrinsically repressive?

Foucault: Power should not be understood as an oppressive system bearing down on individuals from above, smiting them with prohibitions of this or that. Power is a set of relations. What does it mean to exercise power? It does not mean picking up this tape recorder and throwing it on the ground. I have the capacity to do so – materially, physically, sportively. But I would not be exercising power if I did that. However, if I take this tape recorder and throw it on the ground in order to make you mad, or so that you can't repeat what I've said, or to put pressure on you so that you'll behave in such and such a way, or to intimidate you – well, what I've done, by shaping your behavior through certain means, *that* is power.

Which is to say that power is a relation between two persons, a relation that is not on the same order as communication (even if you are forced to serve as my instrument of communication). It's not the same thing as telling you, "The weather's nice," or "I was born on such and such a date."

Good. I exercise power over you: I influence your behavior, or I try to do so. And I try to guide your behavior, to lead your behavior. The simplest means of doing this, obviously, is to take you by the hand and force you to go here or there. That's the limit case, the zero-degree of power. And it's actually in that moment that power ceases to be power and becomes mere physical force. On the other hand, if I use my age, my social position, the knowledge I may have about this or that, to make you behave in some particular way – that is to say, I'm not forcing you at all and I'm leaving you completely free – that's when I begin to exercise power. It's clear that power should not be defined as a constraining act of violence that represses individuals, forcing them to do something or preventing them from doing some other thing. But it takes place when there is a relation between two free subjects, and this relation is unbalanced, so that one can act upon the other, and the other is acted upon, or allows himself to be acted upon.

Therefore, power is not always repressive. It can take a certain number of forms. And it is possible to have relations of power that are open.

Question: Equal relations?

Foucault: Never equal, because the relation of power is an inequality. But you can have reversible systems of power. Here, take for instance what happens in an erotic relationship – I'm not even speaking of a love relationship, simply an erotic relationship. Now you know perfectly well that it's a game of power, and physical strength is not necessarily the most important element in it. You both have a certain way of acting on each other's behavior, shaping and determining that behavior. One of the two can use this situation in a certain way, and then bring about the exact

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The Future of the History of the Present

Issue 4 of *History of the Present* brings together a number of new articles by or about the work of Michel Foucault, as well as a previously untranslated biographical sketch done by Foucault himself under a pseudonym. These pieces, together with the interview by Michael Bess, elucidate the aims and trajectory of Foucault's work.

The following issue will consist entirely of a bibliography of Foucault's published works. We believe this to be the most complete and up-to-date bibliography available and hope our readers will find it to be a valuable reference tool.

As *History of the Present* enters its fourth year, we will be changing the format. We will be moving away from publishing articles, and will be focusing more on works in progress, conference reports, announcements, and bibliography. We hope in this way to continue to facilitate the interdisciplinary and international exchange of ideas among scholars interested in carrying out research on the history of the present. As always, we encourage you to send us reports on your own research, and information on any organizations, conferences, and publications that may interest our readers.

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Night Thoughts on Philology

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BY IAN HACKING

These thoughts are for Mr. I. B. Bopp of Columbia, S. C.

The Order of Things is, among many other things, a story of abrupt transitions in what is said. One of these breaks, for whose description Foucault is rightly admired, is a matter of language. General Grammar became philology. Language ceased to be the double means of representation: double because words and sentences were thought of as representing ideas and mental discourse, and at the same time as able to represent things and facts. With the advent of philology language was no longer studied primarily as a system of representation. Individual languages were treated as historical entities, and the focus of attention was grammar and word formation. Comparative, rather than general, grammar became the order of the day. This happened "early in the nineteenth century—at the time of [Friedrich] Schlegel's essay on the language and the philosophy of the Indians (1808), [Jacob] Grimm's *Deutsche Grammatik* (1818) and Bopp's book on the conjunction of Sanskrit (1816)" (p. 282).[1]

As is well known, Foucault described this mutation as one member of a trio, in which life, labor and language came into being as objects of thought. Yet it is language that stands out in Foucault's account. There are several plain reasons for this. One is that at the time the book was being written, language was the pre-eminent professed interest of Foucault and indeed of Paris. Another is that it is within a certain modern conception of language that Foucault frames the rest of *The Order of Things*. A third is that the events concerning language were and are still far less familiar than those connected with life and labor. We all knew that life and labor had been transformed conceptually, for we knew about Darwin and Marx, and even if Cuvier and Ricardo were not quite household names, they were hardly unknown to the general reader. But who was Grimm except a maker of dictionaries and a brother who collected fairy tales? Who on earth was Bopp? The answer to the latter question, to be gleaned only from thorough reference books, is that Bopp wrote, for example, *A Comparative Grammar of Sanskrit, Persian, Greek, Latin, Lithuanian, Old Church Slavonic, Gothic and German*, later turning his attention to Albanian, Celtic vowel systems, Malay, and Polynesian. That is not the stuff of which fashionable texts are made, or which resonates in the minds of the young.

It was all the more astonishing, then, that Foucault could make a tour de force out of his discussion of such figures, and tell us, for example, that the transition effected in their work made literature possible. It was they who marked the threshold between "our prehistory and what is still contemporary" (p. 304)—one of Foucault's reformulations of what he more commonly calls "Classicism and modernity" and what is more widely called the transition between the Enlightenment and the Romantics. It was of course part of Foucault's strategy to expel those cliched labels from intellectual history, to make us think not about the celebrated romantics, but the utterly unromantic-sounding Grimm and Bopp. Yet even he found it necessary to add that Humboldt was "not merely Bopp's contemporary; he knew his work well, in detail" (p. 290). The point was that Humboldt might be taken (although by only the most casual of readers) to stand for the very opposite of what we think of as philology, because he exhibited "the tendency to attribute to language profound powers of expression." Foucault might, at this juncture, have been a trifle more explicit. It is stretching our modern use of the term to call Bopp the contemporary of Humboldt, 24 years his senior. It was Humboldt's support that enabled Bopp to get the chair of Sanskrit in Berlin in 1821. Humboldt may, for some, be the paradigm of the romantic expressionist, but his final, his most energetic, and in the opinion of many, his greatest work, is built around a study of certain Polynesian languages, using, among other tools, some principles of Bopp's. The latter repaid the compliment, turning his attention to Malayan/Polynesian languages after

1 References are to the English translation, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of Human Knowledge* (New York: Pantheon, 1971).

Humboldt's death.

In what follows I want to emphasize the connection between grammar and romanticism, and to turn attention to, for a chief example, a man who died before Bopp was born. This is to call in question Foucault's implication of a sharp break between the old general grammar and the new philology, one that took place within the stated timespan of books by Friedrich Schlegel (1808) and Jacob Grimm (1818). At the time that he wrote *The Order of Things*, Foucault was rather keen on precisely dated discontinuities in thought and speech: a decade, in this case 1808-18, was just what he liked to find. Now this procedure has been amply criticized by historians of ideas who tend to notice long spans of time and fairly uniform evolution. That is not a camp to which I wish to belong, or to which I can be accused of belonging.[1] I shall urge only that now that Foucault's picture of the philological revolution is firmly in place in the minds of his readers, it can be enriched by conjuring up a longer period of time. More importantly, what happens within that longer period is profoundly important to the very break in thought about which Foucault wrote, and helps to understand not only the proximate causes of the break, but also its longstanding effects that still act strongly, silently but blindingly, when we try to think about language.

We all knew that life and labor had been transformed conceptually, for we knew about Darwin and Marx, and even if Cuvier and Ricardo were not quite household names, they were hardly unknown to the general reader. But who was Grimm except a maker of dictionaries and a brother who collected fairy tales? Who on earth was Bopp?

My case in no way rests upon idiosyncracies of dating to be found in *The Order of Things*. But I should remark them, in order to evade some straightforward rebuttal that would merely re-cite several pages of that book. Thus, for a moment Foucault nods in the direction of those who would argue that Bopp and Schlegel are less inaugurators than participants in an onflowing process of change. He writes of "what distinguishes the analyses of Schlegel and Bopp from those that may perhaps have seemed to anticipate them in the eighteenth century " (p. 285, note 34). The grounds of Foucault's distinction are sound; it is a point about syllables and roots and the formation of sense. I want merely, for a moment, to call attention to the dating.

Schlegel's "date" for an essay on the language and philosophy of the Indians (from the subcontinent, not America, by the way) was given as 1808. Now the contrasting reference for eighteenth century writers, from note 34, is 1798: a work published in London in that year by John Horne Tooke, with the title *On the Study of Language*. When the claim to "eighteenth century writers" turns out to be 1798, one may admire the audacity of the claim to a break between 1798 and 1808 (Schlegel).

Unfortunately there is no such book of 1798. There is a famous book on the study of language by John Horne Tooke; the second edition, in two volumes, had its first volume published in 1798, under the title ΕΠΕΑ ΠΤΕΡΟΕΝΤΑ *or, the Diversions of Purley*; the second volume was published in 1805. The first volume is a minor revision of the first edition, of 1786; the second published in 1805 is new.[2] (Horne Tooke had not been idle in the years between the two volumes. He had to stand trial in 1796 for High Treason; the second volume is dedicated to the named twelve members of the jury that acquitted him and thereby made that volume possible). When one reflects that Schlegel's 1808 book on India was, on all accounts, largely composed in Paris in 1802, the sharp datings do not look so good. Nor do they when we find that Grimm's *Deutsche Grammatik*, given as 1818, appeared in 1819, and that virtually everything Foucault ascribes to Grimm is from the second and entirely rewritten edition of the work, whose first volume appeared in 1822, and whose four volumes took 15 years to complete. All of which is nit-picking at its worst, were it not for my incidental purpose of reminding ourselves that Foucault's picture of clean sharp dates and decades is rather tidier than the record reveals.

The preceding paragraph does not put in question Foucault's theses. Not only was Horne Tooke no writer who began in 1798: some work in his volume of 1786 had been published two decades earlier under the title of "A Letter to Mr. Dunning," and he assures us that "all that I have farther to communicate on the subject of Language, has been amongst the papers in my closet" since the man

1 Nothing could be much more *coupure*-oriented than my *The Emergence of Probability* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975).

2 I shall refer to the second edition as HT, namely John Horne Tooke, ΕΠΕΑ ΠΤΕΡΟΕΝΤΑ *or, the Diversions of Purley*, 2nd ed., Part I (London, 1798); Part II (London, 1805.

was thirty years of age (HT I:74). Horne Tooke (1736-1812) was eminently a writer of the eighteenth century, confirming Foucault's mention of eighteenth century writers far better that the misleading footnote 34. Yet putting Horne Tooke's writings back to 1766 or so makes less compelling the talk of a mutation occurring precisely during the second decade of the nineteenth century. And Foucault does make something of just *that* periodization, stating that the break creating "the new philology" (p. 285) occurred substantially later than that for biology and political economy. If one finds the periodization to be less sharply defined, one creates a space for other texts which shift the way in which one should think of "the new philology."

First a word on how Horne Tooke does contrast with Bopp or Grimm. The man is not uninteresting, quite aside from the vagaries of his public life. He aimed at rewriting Locke in terms of etymology. He accepts that we may begin by thinking that words are signs for things or signs for ideas. But it has been supposed that each word must have a grammar corresponding to the nature of the mental operation or event (idea), or to the thing to which it corresponds, or which it represents. The error was to fail to notice that most words are abbreviations for other words; most words are "the signs of other words" (HT I: 26). "The first aim of Language was to *communicate* our thoughts: the second to do it with *dispatch*" (*Ibid*). And each language effects its "abbreviations" differently. When the penny finally drops, the interlocutor says, "I thought we were talking of Universal Grammar"(HT I:46); to which it is replied that we are; certain features are necessary for all languages, but a study of how words get their signification cannot be conducted "unless you confine it to some particular language with which I am acquainted" (*Ibid*: 46-47). Our work is Universal, only in the sense that the principles with which we work on English, Gothic or Greek "will apply universally." The principles concern the historical study of how words came, in the long past of ours and other languages, to stand for the longer sequences of words of which they are abbreviations. Note that in this methodology there is an implicit standard of linguistic appraisal, for that language is best, which communicates its abbreviations of other words with greatest "dispatch." "Words have been called *winged*: and they well deserve that name when their abbreviations are compared with the progress which speech would make without these inventions; but compared with the rapidity of thought, they have not the smallest claim to that title" (HT I: 28). The metaphor of language and Hermes, the winged messenger, is an old one. Horne Tooke's title ΕΠΕΑ ΠΤΕΡΟΕΝΤΑ is even more the Greek of Augustine England than Athens. It means "winged words." The frontispiece of volume I is an androgynous Hermes tying the wings on his heels.

There is a certain ambivalence in Horne Tooke, between the private and public nature of language. Language is to communicate thought, which runs far faster than speech. The study of thought, of what Hobbes called mental discourse, would then seem a fit and proper one, as for all other writers on language during the Enlightenment. Do we not demand a theory of the mind and its relation to language? No, we are told (HT I: 51): "The business of the mind, as far as it concerns Language, appears to me to be very simple. It extends no further than to receive Impressions, that is, to have Sensations of Feelings. What are called its operations are merely the operations of Language." From the consideration of ideas, the mind, or things, we at most get some clues to the noun, nothing else. It appears, then, that language has been *externalized*. By this I mean the following. In the Classical theory of representation, language is first of all something internal, which can then be used to communicate with others, to transfer thoughts in my mind to yours. Horne Tooke still believes this is the primary purpose of language, but there is nothing peculiarly mental or private about language. Language appears to be public and historical, and the origin of ideas, à la Locke, is nothing more than the origin of words in the evolution of particular languages.

These many paragraphs of mine may make a little more plain the half paragraph of Foucault to which they refer, and which cites Horne Tooke. Why is it that the author of "Winged Words" may only "have seemed to anticipate" Bopp and Schlegel? Does he not anticipate, in that he is turning the theory of ideas into etymology? Does he not anticipate by beginning to shred the whole doctrine of inner representation, replacing it with the study of public language? The point, for Foucault, is now not the mere historicizing of language, but the study of historical languages as complex grammatical structures. Etymology, or what we might call comparative word-study, does not mark the decisive transition. Instead it is comparative grammar. That is not part of a theory of signs at all, whereas Horne Tooke is propounding what is, in effect, a new variant on an old theory of signs. Comparative grammar is concerned with the way in which internal structures of the word and of the entire sentence are guided and modified by rules for language change – regardless of that for which the word or the sentence is a sign.

It is one among many consequences of this new perspective that no languages are better or worse than others. Hence the genuine lack of condescension in examining the languages of isolated, "primitive or uncivilised" peoples.

Their languages are objects exactly in the way in which the languages of mainstream Europe or of the high ancient civilizations of the orient are objects. Moreover a certain relativity about the very aims of a conversation are implied. Horne Tooke could compare different languages in terms of the "dispatch" with which they could communicate. But that assumes that speakers of all languages want to communicate the same things. What is dispatch for one communication may be ponderous for another.

Such contrasts between the new philology and the old confirm the exactness of Foucault's observations, aside from the trifling matter of dating. I drew attention to the dating only to make room for the possibility that the new philology has a longer and denser history than that implied by Foucault's proposed decade, 1808-1818.

A new philology implies an old one. What was that? Not necessarily one thing. *Philology*, the love of words, was a neologism or revival intended to contrast with *philosophy*, the love of wisdom. There must be as many ways to love words as to love wisdom. The word "philology" quick acquired a number of fairly specialized senses. One of these, well suited to my purposes, may be illustrated by work of J.M. Chladenius (1710-1749). Hitherto obscure, he has attracted some attention by those looking for precursors or originators of the hermeneutic tradition. It is not, I think, an attention that he deserves, but here I attend only to the role that he ascribes to the philologian, the man he calls *Philologus*.

Chladenius's philologian is one of four partners who share the task of making intelligible a difficult text. A "text," it is to be understood, is the physical object or its transcription left behind by an ancient author; this is the traditional usage of "textual criticism" as opposed to that recently fashionable parlance in which almost anything comes out as a text. The first partner in making sense of a text is, indeed, called the *critic*. The task of the critic is to restore, as best he can, the text of the author, for we typically have only an object with gaps, corruptions, the erasures of time.

After the critic has done his job, we have the best available sequence of complete sentences. The next task is to construe the grammar of the best text. *This* is the task of the philologian. The implied picture is familiar to anyone who has found it necessary to read some material in a language with whose words he is dimly familiar (Norwegian, say); having looked up the words in a dictionary, one may well be unable to understand any of the interesting sentences for lack of following the grammar. *Philologus* is called for. After the philologian, there remain two kinds of obscurity. There is the relatively uninteresting one, that some words may be ambiguous. Then there is the relatively interesting one, that somehow the text that we are now able to read, in the most elemental sense, we still do not understand. Chladenius's approach to this last problem has suggested to some that he is addressing the problem of modern hermeneutics.

I follow Robert Levanthal in the above exposition, and also in his argument that Chladenius was *not* a proto--hermeneutician.[1] For Chladenius has the standard Enlightenment view that words are the expression of inner discourse, and as he sees the problem, the concepts, in the mind of the writer, may be inadequately expressed in the words that he has used. So the task of the fourth and last partner of interpretation is to construct concepts that adequately reflect the mind of the writer. The writer, far from being the historical personage of the hermeneuticists, is a timeless mind of the Enlightenment, one whose concepts are inadequately expressed by his words. The words are defective signs of ideas: in short, we are in Foucault's "Classical" epoch, not the modern one where language is public and words get their sense in the public domain.

Chladenius is not definitive of "the old philology" (as if there were one such thing): he is merely illustrative. The love of words has become specific. The philologian is an applied grammarian. That's important, for the lover of words might have remained merely a lover of the ancient authors or of scripture. Instead he became the grammarian of typically dead tongues, and made possible the characterization of Bopp and Grimm as philologians. But this is only the slightest and most terminological of steps towards the new philology. For Chladenius, the job of philology is to parse the text reconstructed by the textual critic. The parsing is not in itself an object of study. For Bopp and Grimm, the structures that enable one to parse *are* the object to investigate.

I have been saying that the extending of Foucault's span of dates makes a space for more events in the creation of the new philology than he allows for. I have now explained at some length his briefly noted contrast worth calling a divide between an old and a new philology. It is now my turn to introduce some new class of events and distinctions, consistent with my (I hope) sympathetic expansion of Foucault, but also supplementary to it. Naturally there are many

1 Robert S. Levanthal, "Semiotic Interpretation and Rhetoric in the German Enlightenment 1740-1760," *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte*, 60 (1986): 223-248.

events. I wish to choose only one, partly with a view to restoring a connection between the "Romantic Movement" and the new philology.

My point of entry is old-fashioned. Standard accounts of the emergence of Romantic theory of language accent Johann Georg Hamann (1730-1788), Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803) and Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767-1835). Humboldt is often presented as pivotal. Thus Bloomfield taught that Humboldt inaugurated the new philology, while Chomsky urged that he was the last of the Cartesian linguists, the General Grammarians! Even Foucault, we have noticed, thought it prudent to mention that Humboldt knew Bopp's work well, in order to connect Humboldt the romantic with Bopp the comparative grammarian. It was as if he expected that the general reader would take for granted that Humboldt was where the action was, while Bopp was not.

The standard view tells of the new attitude to language starting with an almost invisible Hamann profoundly influencing a highly visible Herder, who led on to the prominent Humboldt. This version of history is manifestly impoverished, if only because of the immense amount that both Herder and Humboldt took from their French predecessors and contemporaries. But lines of filiation are no concern of mine here. I wish to draw attention only to the most obscure member of the sequence, namely Hamann.

He died three years before Bopp was born. I am not about to say that he "anticipated Bopp." He is interesting here because of his curious intermediate philology and vision of language. No man was ever more opposed to the Enlightenment and its values. As a special case he loathed what Foucault calls the "Classical" conception of language. He is partly able to do this by leapfrogging backwards and finding something of a foothold in the Renaissance world of resemblances. But this is largely strategy; in truth he is an innovator, totally denying the intellectual world in which he found himself. Hence he sometimes had to avail himself of what sound like the very forms of speech that the Enlightenment had excluded in order to create itself.

Now Hamann is not too promising a figure. The only systematic review of Hamann's work, by a first class mind, is that written by Hegel in 1828, after the publication over that decade of Hamann's works, many of which had not even been printed earlier.[1] By Hegel's lights, Hamann was too dark, too obscure, despite flashes of brilliance, although one can also sense that Hegel felt somewhat threatened by Hamann's words. In terms of existential religion, his great admirer was Kierkegaard. Hamann was a born-again Christian whose practices make little sense in our age which is so simplistic with regard to religion. Here is a man who after low life in London, where he had taken up with a lute player and found himself betrayed, reconverts to his original Lutheran faith. He is deeply involved with God throughout his life, and never disavows his religion. But he denies the immortality of the soul. He lives in domestic harmony with a common-law wife whom he declines to marry and who bears him four children. Ever Lutheran, he spends the last couple of years in the intellectual company of Roman Catholics, and is buried in the Roman churchyard in Münster. He is very explicit about physical sex, which he identifies with mystical union; vastly franker than any of this enlightenment peers, he would yet win no admirers from sexual revolutionaries today. It is easy to read him as anti-semitic. Certainly his principal modern editor and biographer did just fine during the Third Reich. Of outstanding modern intellectuals, perhaps only Sir Isaiah Berlin is genuinely and unstintingly fond of Hamann, and even he, in *Vico and Herder*, limits his explicit discussion of the man.

What can we learn from this curious figure, the self-styled "Magus of the North,"about philology, and, more generally, about conceptions of language? It is useful to begin by playing Hamann off against Kant. This is useful in any case, but perhaps particularly useful in connection with Foucault's readings. Kant, especially of course the Kant of the *Anthropologie*, is a mighty if usually silent figure in *The Order of Things*. That is the Kant who during his logic lectures around 1780 added to the three standard questions of philosophy, the question, "What is man?" Personally, Kant and Hamann were well known to each other, Kant the elder by six years. After Hamann's conversion to fundamentalist Lutheranism, Hamann's best friend arranged with Kant to try to restore Hamann to sound Enlightenment values. The result was a disastrous weekend with Hamann unmoved. Much later in their lives, Hamann read the first *Critique* in proof, probably before Kant himself. He had published and edited a good number of Kant's occasional pieces. His short essays and reviews of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, to which I shall return, were scathing, yet Hamann retained much respect and even affection for Kant, as well as gratitude for Kant's taking some hand in the education of

1 G.W.F. Hegel, "Ueber: Hamann's Schriften [. . .]" reprinted in *Berliner Schriften*, ed. J. Hoffmeister (Hamburg: F. Meiner, 1956), pp. 221-294).

Hamann's son Michael. I mention these personal matters only to compensate for the impression that might be left by my previous paragraph, that Hamann was some kind of nut who could serve to illustrate nothing about any transition in discourse. The fundamental contrast between Hamann and Kant is of importance partly because Hamann was at the heartland. Resident in Köigsberg much of his life, he was not so many doors away from Kant – or, for many years, from his good friend and pupil Herder. Furthermore, during times of financial distress, Hamann's family (an elder brother in terminal depression, common-law wife, four children, and a job as a minor functionary in the Prussian excise department) took shelter with Kant's more prominent and mainline critic, Friedrich Jacobi.

My contrast between Kant and Hamann is a paradoxical one. Kant *was* Enlightenment, Hamann its opposite, but it is not the tag that counts. Kant was a truly public man, attracting large audiences and, in the *Anthropologie* and elsewhere, writing with care about how to arrange the best dinner-parties, where all the news of the world would be exchanged before moving to the later stages of frivolity. At the same time, Kant's philosophy is founded upon privacy, just as much as that of Descartes or Locke or Leibniz. A person is an ego, and thereby comes the challenge of discovering a basis for objectivity. Throughout Kant's final work we find the same solution in morality and science alike. One's judgement must be the judgement of every rational man, when placed in the same circumstances. In our knowledge of the world, we attain objectivity because of certain preconditions for experience in space, time, causality, substance and the like; in the moral realm, we attain objectivity by willing (as noumenal private agents) to will only what we would want any other like being to will. The voice of reason is the voice of standardization and of public norms. The objectivity of the self is assured only by "the transcendental unity of apperception" according to which every thought is accompanied by the thought, "I think this."

Hamann's position is exactly the opposite. To begin lightheartedly, compare the two men on mathematics. Kant made an explanation for the Enlightenment's admiration of mathematical rigor: arithmetic and geometry were not merely the glories of reason but, as the synthetic a priori laws of the pure concepts of space and time, were what made possible our knowledge of the world. Hamann: "If mathematics is noble, then it should give way to the *instinct* of insects" (W. III: 285).[1] Where Kant thought of a person confronted with the problem of public objectivity and founded thereon an epistemology, an ethics and a theory of the state, Hamann thought that there is no such thing as a person except what is constituted in a social setting, and which is characterized by a particular and individual language. Language is essentially public and shared and is prior to the individuation of one's self. This of course is a theme that one regularly finds in Herder and Humboldt. For Kant, the "I think" had to accompany every thought in order there to exist an objective and continuous "I": for Hamann, there is an "I" only in a community with a language that has a way of talking about oneself as a person.

Where Kant thought of a person confronted with the problem of public objectivity and founded thereon an epistemology, an ethics and a theory of the state, Hamann thought that there is no such thing as a person except what is constituted in a social setting, and which is characterized by a particular and individual language.

One's self is constituted and constructed within a society and a language. But this does not imply that there is an immutable and irrevocable framework. On the contrary it is Kant who requires the immutable framework of a standardized language, for without that, his world dissolves into solipsism. Hamann, who has no problem about intersubjectivity, feels utterly free to reform the language in which he is embedded. Indeed much of Hamann's prose intended for "publication" is as intensely original as Artaud or *Finnegan's Wake*. Hamann is one of the earliest expositors of the originality of genius and its responsibility to remold language over and over again, rather than being constrained by the established forms. He denies originality in his propaganda for originality, owning as his master Edward Young (1681-1765) whose *Conjectures on Original Composition* (1759) and *Night Thoughts on Life, Death and Immortality in Nine Nights* (viz. a poem of 6900 lines

1 References will be made as follows. W = Johann Georg Hamann, *Sämtliche Werke, Historische-kritische Ausgabe*, ed. J. Nadler, 6 vols. (Vienna: Thomas-Morus-Presse im Verlag Herder, 1949-57). B = J. G. Hamann, *Briefwechsel*, ed. W. Ziesemer and A. Henkel, 5 vols. (Wiesbaden: Insel-Verlag, 1955-65).

divided into nine parts) gained some recognition in England but immense celebrity in the German-speaking lands.[1] Hamann was able to say that he knew not how much he had learned from Young, perhaps everything.

On Young, more presently, but let me first sum up the seeming paradox about Kant and Hamann. Kant, whose whole philosophy is founded upon the "Classical" or Enlightenment notion of the private ego, must construct a theory of shared judgements in order to assure any objectivity for the person at all. Hamann, taking for granted a self that is constituted in the public world of language and social intercourse, is enabled to become a thoroughly private figure, positively making fun of the public. His *Socratic Memorabilia* of 1759 says, on its title page, that the memorabilia are "Compiled for the Boredom of the Public by a Lover of Boredom, with a Double Dedication to Nobody and to Two" (W. II: 58).[2] The two are Hamann's good friend (Berens) and Kant, who had tried to restore him to Enlightenment conventions; the work is dedicated as well to the Public, i.e. nobody.

Let us now turn to the contrast in philosophy. Hamann wrote several pieces on the first *Critique.* One is a "Metacritique of the Purism of Reason," written in 1784. Typically, the title is almost unbearably complex. The metacritique is not just "about a critique"—Hamann used the word "metaschematism" both with reference to Kant's schematism, and with reference to Paul's Epistle (I Corinthians 4:6), a marvelous pun that would take two pages to elucidate.[3] The "Purism" is a word of Hamann's invention (*Purismum*) with connotations of the purity of reason, the purifying effected by reason, and the purification of reason. But, as he wrote to his friend and Kant's critic Jacobi, "With me it is not so much the question, What is reason? but rather, What is Language?" (B. V: 294). And, as he wrote in the "Metacritique," the "chief and as it were empirical purism concerns language, the only, the first and the last instrument and criterion of reason, *with no other credentials but tradition and usage*" (W. III: 284). It's a doctrine he attributes to Young: ". . .language, the organ and criterion of reason, as Young says. Here is to be found pure reason and its critique" (B. V: 360). "All chatter about reason is pure wind: language is its organ and criterion, as Young says. Tradition is its second element" (B. V: 108).

Hamann can evidently be made to come out sounding like Wittgenstein, what with language having no credentials but tradition and usage, with "the whole of philosophy is grammar," with "the more one considers language the deeper and more inward is one's dumbness and loss of all desire to speak" (W: III: 285). That way lies anachronism, although I argue elsewhere that it is at the time of Hamann (rather than Wittgenstein in the 1930's) that language "goes public" (in something like the sense that Wittgenstein argued that a private language is impossible).[4] What's important is that although Kant provides a critique of pure reason, it is in order to *vindicate* reason by preserving it against its excesses. Hamann is dismissive of reason, not necessarily because he wants us to be unreasonable, but because all the certainty that's attributed to reason is to be found only in the language used to reason, even in mathematics: "The whole certainty of mathematics depends upon the nature of its language" (B. V: 360).

But this view of language is not that of the positivist. Hamann calls himself a philologue and also a verbalist.[5] His philology is not that of Chladenius nor that of Bopp. It is an older philology, that of the evangelist John. He is a lover of the word, of the *logos* speaking once again of the "*Organo oder Criterio*—I mean language. Without words, no reason, no world. Here is the source of all creation and order!" (B. V: 95). This is a characteristic sentence that looks two ways. I shall try to indicate the two directions.

One is backwards: "Speech is translation—out of angel speech, that is, thoughts into words—things into names—forms into signs," (W. II: 199). "This kind of translation is . . . analogous more than anything else to the reverse side of a tapestry ('and shows the stuff but not the workman's

1 Edward Young, *The Complete Works: Poetry and Prose*, ed. J. Nichols (London, 1854). Cf. John L. Kind, *Edward Young in Germany*, Columbia University Germanic Studies, II.iii (New York, Columbia University Press: 1906), esp. pp. 28-40. J. Barnstorff, *Youngs Nachtgedanken und ihr Einfluss auf die deutsche Litteratur*, (Bamburg: C. C. Buchner, 1895).

2 On the first page of the text (W. II: 59) we have, "To the Public, or Nobody, the Well-known," followed by a tag from Euripides, "Where is Nobody?"

3 Cf. Rudolf Unger, *Hamann und die Aufklärung* (Jena: Eugen Diderichs, 1911), I, pp. 501-505.

4 "How, Why, When and Where did Language go Public?" forthcoming.

5 For a systematic survey of Hamann's relation to the various kinds of philology, see V. Hoffmann, *Johann Georg Hamanns Philologie: Hamann's Philologie zwischen enzyklopädisch Mikrologie und Hermeneutik* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1972). For Hamann's relation to Chladenius, see esp. pp. 154-160.

skill')" (W. III: 287). In the celebrated debates on the origin of language, and in particular in criticism of Herder's famous essay on the topic, he holds that there is no such thing as a question about how language came into being. Much later Humboldt would rather somberly state that "Language could not be invented or come upon if its archetype were not already present in the human soul." [1] Hamann more dramatically thinks of language and the world coming into being together. The backward-pointing, Renaissance version of this is Adamacism: that God created man and language when the world was created, or shortly thereafter, with the words being signs of the things, but also being no different from things which are signs of other things.

The forward-looking version is altogether different, and quite properly called "verbalism" by Hamann himself. There is nothing, neither substance nor form, without language. It is a kind of linguistic idealism that has reared itself in our century, and one of whose centers has been Paris. For Hamann the Adamicist fable is false. There were not things to which names were then attached by God or man. There were things only when there were words to describe them. Moreover, these words are not the private artifact of some Enlightenment Adam, discoursing within his soul. They are the words of any first human community, which is a first community only in that it comes to speak of itself. "In the language of every people we find the *history* of the same," (B. I: 393), not because there are traces in the language of the history (Leibniz had known that when he wrote the *Nouveaux Essaies*, and said so) but because there is no people aside from its historical language.

In short, language for Hamann is profoundly non-representative, profoundly non-"Classical." Language is creative; it is to it that we owe existences and the structures that we call the world. It is to it that we owe the forms and logic that we call reasoning. Moreover, by an apparent circularity that Hamann found totally unproblematic, this language which is creative has its existence and regularity only within tradition and use. The human being who would be an original, who can be creative, is the one who can change the language itself.

How much of this does Hamann really owe to Young? Precious little. The *Nights Thoughts* are in good measure a dialogue with Reason; a dying man is considering the grounds for immortality and in the end it is of necessity something prior to reason that provides them. That prior is, among many other things, "speech." Whatever inspiration Hamann found in his frequent readings of the long poem, together with Young's *Original Composition*, it was only a source for the rethinking of the nature of language. Hamann happens to love Young's phrases—there are many more mimicked in his writings than he acknowledges or perhaps was fully aware of—but the notion of language as prior to thinghood and to reason is Hamann's own.

Hamann provided no systematic philosophy to oppose to Kant (whom he long called "the Prussian Hume"): "My poor head is a broken pot compared to Kant's—earthenware against iron" (B. V: 108). Few will dissent from that honest self-judgement. But his sentences (along with those of many subsequent writers) help put in place those very features of modernity that Foucault attributes perhaps too specifically to the philological revolution. Hamann participated in a revolution broader in scope: the termination of a theory of language as something inner and representational. Language becomes outer and creative. It is not merely historical and evolving, as the philologists and comparative grammarians teach. It is mutable. It is both what makes ourselves possible as selves, and that which we can transform in order to change not only ourselves but also our world. Nietzsche, the most famous man ever to hold a chair of philology, was of course, the heir of Bopp and Grimm. But he was also the heir of Hamann; and without Hamann and the romantic tradition, philology would have been a merely technical enterprise. The new philology did not bring literature into being on its own, by creating a new space in which literature could exist. That space was the creation of more forces, and one that is as essential as comparative grammar, phonetics and the like is Hamann's excessive but professed "verbalism," *logos* as creator.

In Foucault's reading, the emergence of life, labour and language as objects of study has to do with the matrix in which Man comes into being. Yes, there's Kant's question posed around 1780, "What is man?" But even before the question is set Hamann is providing the rudiments for Humboldt's partial answer: "Man is Man only through language." [2] That could well be the epigraph to Foucault's chapter, "Man and His Doubles." There had to be philologists in order for the epigraph to be composed, but there also had to be that other tradition of philology, of logos-loving, of "verbalism" of which Hamann is so satisfactory a representative. ●

1 *Wilhelm von Humboldts Gesammelte Schriften*, 17 vols. (Berlin: B. Behr, 1903), IV, p. 15.
2 *Ibid.*

Power, Moral Values, and the Intellectual

continued from page 2

inverse vis-à-vis the other. Well, you have there a purely local form of reversible power.

Relations of power are not in themselves forms of repression. But what happens is that, in society, in most societies, organizations are created to freeze the relations of power, hold those relations in a state of asymmetry, so that a certain number of persons get an advantage, socially, economically, politically, institutionally, etc. And this totally freezes the situation. That's what one calls power in the strict sense of the term: it's a specific type of power relation that has been institutionalized, frozen, immobilized, to the profit of some and to the detriment of others.

Question: But are both sides in the relation victims of it?

Foucault: Oh not at all! It would be pushing it a bit too far to say that those who exercise power are victims. In a sense, it's true that they can get caught in the trap, within their own exercise of power—but they're not as much the victims as the others. Try for yourself. . . . you'll see. [laughs]

Question: So are you aligned with the position of the Marxists?

Foucault: I don't know. You see, I'm not sure I know what Marxism really is—and I don't think it exists, as something abstract. The bad luck or the good luck of Marx is that his doctrine has regularly been adopted by political organizations, and it is after all the only theory whose existence has always been bound up with socio-political organizations that were extraordinarily strong, extraordinarily volatile—even to the point of becoming an apparatus of state.

So, when you mention Marxism, I ask you which one you mean—the one that is taught in the German Democratic Republic (Marxism-Leninism); the vague, disheveled, and bastard concepts used by someone like Georges Marchais; or the body of doctrine which serves as a point of reference for certain English historians? In other words, I don't know what Marxism is. I try to struggle with the objects of my own analysis, and when it so happens that I use a concept that is also used by Marx, or by Marxists—a useful concept, a passable concept—well, that's all the same to me. I've always refused to consider an alleged conformity or non-conformity with Marxism as a deciding factor for accepting or repudiating what I say. I couldn't care less. [. . .]

Question: Do you have any ideas about a system of power, for ordering this mass of human beings on the planet—a system of governance that would not become a repressive form of power?

Foucault: A program of power can take three forms. On the one hand: how to exercise power as effectively as possible (in essence, how to reinforce it)? Or, on the other hand, the inverse position: how to overturn power, what points to attack so as to undermine a given crystallization of power? And finally, the middle position: How to go about limiting the relations of power as embodied and developed in a particular society?

Well, the first position doesn't interest me: making a program of power so as to exercise it all the more. The second position is interesting, but it strikes me that it should be considered essentially with an eye to its concrete objectives, the struggles one wishes to undertake. And that implies precisely that one should not make of it an a priori theory.

Power is not always repressive. It can take a certain number of forms. And it is possible to have relations of power that are open.

As for the middle positions—Which are the acceptable conditions of power?—I say that these acceptable conditions for the exercise of power cannot be defined a priori. They are never anything but the result of relations of force within a given society. In such a situation, it happens that a certain disequilibrium in the relations of power is in effect tolerated by its victims, those who are in the more unfavorable position for a period of time. This is by no means to say that such a situation is acceptable. They become aware of it right away, and so—after a few days, years, centuries—people always end up resisting, and that old compromise no longer works. That's all. But you can't provide a definitive formula for the optimal exercise of power.

Question: You mean that something freezes or congeals in the relations between people, and this becomes, after a certain time, intolerable?

Foucault: Yes, although it sometimes happens right away. The relations of power, as they exist in a given society, are never anything but the crystallization of a relation of force. And there is no reason why these crystallizations of relations of force should be formulated as an ideal theory for relations of power.

God knows I'm not a structuralist or a linguist or any of that, but you see, it's a bit as if a grammarian wanted to say, "Well, here is how the language should be spoken, here is how English or French should be spoken." But no! One can describe how a language is spoken at a given moment, one can say what is comprehensible and what is unacceptable, incomprehensible. And that's all one can say. But this doesn't imply, on the other hand, that this kind of work on language will not allow for innovations.

Question: It's a position that refuses to speak in positive terms, except for the present moment.

Foucault: Starting from the moment when one conceives of power as an ensemble of relations of force, there cannot be any programmatic definition of an optimum state of forces – unless of course one takes sides, saying "I want the white, Aryan, pure race to take power and to exercise it," or else, "I want the proletariat to exercise power and I want it to do so in a total fashion." At that moment, yes, it's been given: a program for the construction of power.

Question: Is it intrinsic to the existence of human beings, that their organization will result in a repressive form of power?

Foucault: Oh yes. Of course. As soon as there are people who find themselves in a position (within the system of power relations) where they can act upon other people, and determine the life, the behavior, of other people – well, the life of those other people will not be very free. As a result, depending on the threshold of tolerance, depending on a whole lot of variables, the situation will be more or less accepted, but it will never be totally accepted. There will always be those who rebel, who resist.

Question: Let me give a different example. If a child wanted to scribble on the walls of a house, would it be repressive to prevent him or her from doing so? At what point does one say, "That's enough!"?

Foucault: [. . .] If I accepted the picture of power that is frequently adopted – namely, that it's something horrible and repressive for the individual – it's clear that preventing a child from scribbling on the walls would be an unbearable tyranny. But that's not it: I say that power is a relation. A relation in which one guides the behavior of others. And there's no reason why this manner of guiding the behavior of others should not ultimately have results which are positive, valuable, interesting, and so on. If I had a kid, I assure you he would not write on the walls – or if he did, it would be against my will. The very idea!

Question: It's problematic. . . something one has to question continually.

Foucault: Yes, yes! That's exactly it! An exercise of power should never be something self-evident. It's not because you're a father that you have the right to slap your child. Often, even by not punishing him, that too is a certain way of shaping his behavior. This is a domain of very complex relations, which demand infinite reflection. When one thinks of the care with which semiotic systems have been analyzed in our society, so as to uncover their signifying value [*valeur signifiante*], there has been a relative neglect of the systems for exercising power. Not enough attention has been given to that complex ensemble of connections.

Question: Your position continually escapes theorization. It's something that has to be remade again and again.

Foucault: It's a theoretical practice, if you will. It's not a theory, but rather a way of theorizing practice. [. . .] Sometimes, because my position has not been made clear enough, people think I'm a sort of radical anarchist who has an absolute hatred of power. No! What I am trying to do is to approach this extremely important and tangled phenomenon in our society, the exercise of power, with the most reflective, and I would say prudent attitude. Prudent in my analysis, in the moral and theoretical postulates I use: I try to figure out what's at stake. But to question the relations of power in the most scrupulous and attentive manner possible, looking into all the domains of its exercise, that's not the same thing as constructing a mythology of power as the beast of the apocalypse.

If I had a kid, I assure you he would not write on the walls – or if he did, it would be against my will. The very idea!

Question: Are there positive themes in your concept of what is good? In practice, what are the moral elements on which you base your actions toward others?

Foucault: I've already told you: refusal, curiosity, innovation.

Question: But aren't these all rather negative in content?

Foucault: The only ethics you can have, with regard to the exercise of power, is the freedom of others. I don't tell people, "Make love in this way, have children, go to work."

Question: I have to admit, I find myself a bit lost, without points of orientation, in your world – because there's too much openness.

Foucault: Listen, listen. . . How difficult it is! I'm not a prophet; I'm not an organizer; I don't want to tell people what they should do. I'm not going to tell them, "This is good for you, this is bad for you!"

I try to analyze a real situation in its various complexities, with the goal of allowing refusal, and curiosity, and innovation.

Question: And as regards your own personal life, that's something different. . .

Foucault: But that's nobody's business!

I think that at the heart of all this, there's a misunderstanding about the function of philosophy, of the intellectual, of knowledge in general: and that is, that it's up to them to tell us what is good.

The good is defined by us, it is practiced, it is invented. And this is a collective work.

Well, no! No, no, no! That's not their role. They already have far too much of a tendency to play that role, as it is. For two thousand years they've been telling us what is good, with the catastrophic consequences that this has implied.

There's a terrible game here, a game which conceals a trap, in which the intellectuals tend to say what is good, and people ask nothing better than to be told what is good – and it would be better if they started yelling, "How bad it is!"

Good, well, let's change the game. Let's say that the intellectuals will no longer have the role of saying what is good. Then it will be up to people themselves, basing their judgment on the various analyses of reality that are offered to them, to work or to behave spontaneously, so that they can define for themselves what is good for them.

What is good, is something that comes through innovation. The good does not exist, like that, in an atemporal sky, with people who would be like the Astrologers of the Good, whose job is to determine what is the favorable nature of the stars. The good is defined by us, it is practiced, it is invented. And this is a collective work.

Is it clearer, now? ●

(Auto)biography MICHEL FOUCAULT 1926-1984

The following biographical sketch is taken from the Dictionnaire des philosophes *(Paris: PUF, 1984), vol. I, pp. 941-944. The author of the essay, identified as "Maurice Florence, écrivain," is in fact Foucault himself. Foucault furnished the essay at the request of the editor of the* Dictionnaire, *Denis Huisman.*

BY MAURICE FLORENCE

TRANSLATED BY JACKIE URLA.

It is undoubtedly still too early to appreciate fully the rupture that Michel Foucault, professor at the Collège de France (Chair of the History of Systems of Thought since 1970), introduced in a philosophical landscape heretofore dominated by Sartre, and by what the latter termed the unsurpassable philosophy of our time: Marxism. From the very start, *Histoire de la folie* (1961), Michel Foucault has been elsewhere. His task is no longer one of founding philosophy on a new *cogito*, nor of systematizing things previously hidden from view. Rather it is to interrogate that enigmatic gesture, perhaps characteristic of Western societies, by which true discourses (including philosophy) are constituted with the power we know them to have.

If Foucault can be inscribed in the philosophic tradition, it is within the *critical* tradition of Kant. One could call his enterprise the *critical history of thought*. By that, I do not mean a history of ideas – which would be an analysis of errors that one could measure after the fact – nor a deciphering of the misunderstandings to which these ideas are linked and upon which what we think today might depend.

If by "thought" one understands that act which poses a subject and an object in all their various possible relations, then a critical history of thought would be an analysis of the conditions under which certain relations of subject to object are formed or modified, to the degree that the latter are constitutive of a possible knowledge [*savoir*]. It is not a question of defining the formal conditions of a relation to the object; nor is it a question of identifying the empirical conditions which at any particular moment have allowed the subject in general to gain understanding of an object already given in reality. The question is to determine what

the subject must be, what his condition must be, what status he must have, what position he must occupy in the real or in the imaginary, in order to become a legitimate subject of any given type of understanding. In short, it is a question of determining his mode of "subjectification." This is obviously not the same if the knowledge in question takes the form of an exegesis of a sacred text, an observation of natural history, or an analysis of the behavior of a person who is mentally ill. But the question is also, and simultaneously, to determine under which conditions something can become an object for a possible knowledge [*connaissance*], how it has been problematized as an object to know, to what methods of analysis it has been susceptible, and what part of itself has been considered pertinent. It is thus a question of determining its mode of objectification, which also differs according to the type of knowledge being pursued.

This objectification and subjectification are not independent of one another; from their mutual development and reciprocal ties are born what we might call "truth games." In other words, this is not the discovery of true things, but of the rules according to which that which a subject can say about certain things derives from the question of truth and falsity. In sum, the critical history of thought is neither a history of the acquisitions nor a history of the maskings of truth. It is a history of the emergence of truth games; it is the history of "*veridictions*," understood as the forms according to which, discourses susceptible to being called true or false are articulated on a domain of things. What were the conditions of this emergence; what price, of sorts, was paid for this; what have been the effects on the real; and what has been the manner in which, by linking a certain type of object to specific modalities of the subject, the historical *a priori* of a possible experience has been constituted for a time, a climate and specific individuals?

Now this question, or this series of questions—which are those of an "archaeology of knowledge"—were not posed by Michel Foucault of just any truth game; nor would he wish to have done so. Rather, he posed them only of those games in which the subject itself is presented as the object of possible knowledge [*savoir*]. What are the processes of subjectification and objectification that permit the subject, as a subject, to become the object of knowledge [*connaissance*]? Of course, this is not a question of knowing how, in the course of history, a "psychological knowledge" has been constituted, but rather of understanding the formation of the various games of truth by which the subject has become an object of knowledge.

At first, Michel Foucault attempted to carry out this analysis in two ways. On the one hand, he was concerned with the appearance of the question of the speaking, laboring and living subject, and its insertion in domains—and in the form of an understanding—accorded scientific status. For him it was a question of analyzing the formation of certain "human sciences," studied with reference to the practice of the empirical sciences and their specific discourse in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (*The Order of Things*).

On the other hand, Michel Foucault attempted to analyze that constitution of the subject which enabled him to appear on the other side of a normative division and become an *object* of knowledge—as a lunatic, an invalid, or a delinquent—as a result of practices such as psychiatry, clinical medicine, and criminal science (*Madness and Civilization*; *The Birth of the Clinic*; *Discipline and Punishment*).

In keeping with this same general project, Michel Foucault has now undertaken to study the constitution of the subject as an object for himself: the formation of procedures by which the subject is led to observe, to analyze, to decipher, and to recognize himself as a domain of possible knowledge. This entails, in short, a history of "subjectivity," if one understands by this word the manner in which the subject comes to know himself in a game of truth, and where he has a relationship with himself. The question of sex and of sexuality appeared to constitute for Michel Foucault not, of course, the only possible example, but at least a relatively privileged case; it is, in fact, in this respect, that throughout Christianity, and perhaps beyond, individuals have been called upon to recognize themselves as subjects of pleasure, of desire, of concupiscence, of temptation, and they have been entreated by various means (self-examination, spiritual exercises, avowals, confession) to deploy toward themselves, and toward that which constitutes the most secret and most individual part of their subjectivity, the game of truth and falsehood.

In sum, in this history of sexuality, it is a question of constituting a third layer that complements the analysis of the relations between the subject and truth. Or, to be more precise, it complements the study of the methods by which the subject has been able to be inserted as an object in truth games.

To take the question of the relations between the subject and truth as the guiding thread of all these analyses implies certain methodological choices. First of all, a systematic skepticism about all anthropological universals. This does not mean that one rejects them all from the start, once and for all, but that one must not accept anything of that order that is not *strictly* indispensable. Every aspect of our knowledge that is presented to us as having universal validity, with respect to human nature or the categories one

may apply to the subject, must be tested and analyzed. To refuse the universals of "insanity," "delinquency," or "sexuality" does not mean that these notions refer to nothing, or that they are chimeras invented in support of a dubious cause; it does, however, mean much more than simply to observe that their content varies with time and circumstance. It means to question oneself about the conditions which permit us, according to the rules of stating truths and falsehoods, to recognize the subject as a person who is mentally ill, or which allow a subject to recognize the most essential part of himself in the modalities of his sexual desire. The first methodological rule for this type of work is thus the following: Avoid as much as possible the universals of anthropology (and of course, those of a humanism which would valorize the rights, privileges and nature of a human being as the immediate and timeless truth of the subject), in order to investigate their historical constitution. We must also reverse the philosophical approach of ascending toward the constituting subject [*sujet constituant*] who is asked to account for every possible object of knowledge in general. On the contrary, we must descend to the study of the concrete practices through which the subject is constituted within a field of knowledge. Here, too, we must be careful; to refuse the philosophical recourse to a constituting subject is not equivalent to acting as if the subject did not exist, or to making it an abstraction in the pursuit of pure objectivity. The aim of this refusal is to make visible the processes specific to an experience where the subject and the object are "formed and transformed" by each other, each in relation to the other and as a function of the other. The discourses of mental illness, of delinquency, or of sexuality do not tell us what the subjet is, except in the context of a very particular game of truth. But these games are not imposed from the outside upon the subject, according to a necessary causality or according to structural determinations; they open up a field of experience where the subject and the object are constituted only under certain simultaneous conditions. But the subject and object are constantly modified in relationship to each other and, thus, they modify the field of experience itself.

From this, we have a third methodological principle: to address "practices" as the domain of analysis, and to take up the study in terms of what "we do." Thus what did we do with the insane, the delinquents, or the ill? Of course, one could try to deduce from the representations we had of them, or from knowledge we believed to have about them, the institutions in which they were placed or the treatments to which they were subjected. One could also investigate what was the form of "true" mental illness, or the modalities of real delinquency in a particular period, in order to explain what was thought about it at the time. Michel Foucault approaches these issues in a very different manner: he begins by studying the ensemble of ways of doing things—which are more or less methodical, more or less thought-out, more or less finalized—through which the real was given shape by those who sought to think and manage it, and the latter simultaneously constituted themselves as subjects capable of knowing, analysing, and eventually modifying the real. These are the "practices," understood simultaneously as a mode of acting and thinking, which provide the key of intelligibility to the correlative constitution of the subject and the object.

We must descend to the study of the concrete practices through which the subject is constituted within a field of knowledge.

Now, from the moment one begins to study, through these practices, the different modes of objectification of the subject, one understands the important role which the analysis of relations of power must play. But again, one must clearly define what a similar analysis can and aspires to be. It is obviously not a question of interrogating "power" about its origin, its principles, or its legitimate limits, but of studying the processes and techniques that are used in different institutional contexts to operate on the behavior of individuals, taken individually or as a group—to shape, to direct, to modify their manner of conducting themselves; to impose ends on their inaction or to inscribe it within global strategies, which are therefore multiple in their form and place of exercise, and equally various in the procedures and techniques that they set into place. These power relations characterize the way in which men are "governed" by each other, and their analysis illustrates how the insane, the sick, or the delinquent subject is objectified through certain forms of "governing" lunatics, the sick, criminals, etc. Such an analysis does not tell us that such-and-such abuse of power has produced lunatics, criminals, or sick people where there were none, but that the various and particular forms of "government" of individuals have played a determining role in the different modes of objectification of the subject.

One can see how the theme of a "history of sexuality" can be inscribed within the general project of Michel Foucault: its goal is to analyze "sexuality" as a historically-specific mode of experience in which the subject is objectified by himself and for others through certain precise procedures of "government." ●

ON PROBLEMATIZATION

*In 1983, Foucault taught a seminar at Berkeley on the practices of truth-telling (*parrhesia*) in ancient Greece and Rome. He ended the seminar, which he conducted in English, with the methodological discussion that follows.*

The text is taken from an edited transcription of tapes of the seminar, published (without a final revision by Foucault) by Joseph Pearson at Northwestern University. A copy of the publication is housed in the Foucault archive in Paris.

BY MICHEL FOUCAULT

My intention [in this seminar] was not to deal with the problem of truth, but with the problem of the truth-teller, or of truth-telling as an activity. By this I mean that, for me, it was not a question of analyzing the internal or external criteria that would enable the Greeks and Romans, or anyone else, to recognize whether a statement or proposition is true or not. At issue for me was rather the attempt to consider truth-telling as a specific activity, or as a role.

But even in the framework of this general question of the role of the truth-teller in a society, there were several possible ways to conduct the analysis. For instance, I could have compared the role and status of truth-tellers in Greek society, Christian societies, non-Christian societies—the role of the prophet as a truth-teller, the role of the oracle as a truth-teller, the role of the poet, the expert, of the preacher, and so on. But, in fact, my intention was not to conduct a sociological description of the different possible roles for truth-tellers in different societies.

What I wanted to analyze was how the truth-teller's role was variously problematized in Greek philosophy. And what I wanted to show you was that if Greek philosophy has raised the problem of truth from the point of view of the criteria for true statements and sound reasoning, this same Greek philosophy has also raised the question of truth from the point of view of truth-telling as an activity. It has raised questions like: Who is able to tell the truth? What are the moral, the ethical, and the spiritual conditions which entitle someone to present himself as, and to be considered as, a truth-teller? About what topics is it important to tell the truth? (About the world? About nature? About the city? About behavior? About man?) What are the consequences of telling the truth? What are its anticipated positive effects for the city, for the city's rulers, for the individual?, etc. And finally: What is the relation between the activity of truth-telling and the exercise of power? Should truth-telling be brought into coincidence with the exercise of power, or should these activities be completely independent and kept separate? Are they separable, or do they require one another?

These four questions about truth-telling as an activity—who is able to tell the truth, about what, with what consequences, and with what relation to power—seem to have emerged as philosophical problems towards the end of the fifth century around Socrates, especially through his confrontations with the Sophists about politics, rhetorics, and ethics.

> What I tried to do from the beginning was to analyze the process of "problematization"—which means: how and why certain things (behavior, phenomena, processes) became a *problem*.

And I would say that the problematization of truth—which characterizes both the end of Presocratic philosophy and the beginning of the kind of philosophy which is still ours today— this problematization of truth has two sides, two major aspects. One side is concerned with insuring that the process of reasoning is correct in determining whether a statement is true (or concerns itself with our ability to gain access to the truth). And the other side is concerned with the question: what is the importance for the individual and for the society of telling the truth, of knowing the truth, of having people who tell the truth, as well as knowing how to recognize them. With that side which is concerned with determining how to insure that a statement is true, we have the roots of the great tradition in Western philosophy which I would like to call the "analytics of truth." And on the other side, concerned with the question of the importance of telling the truth, knowing who is able to tell the truth, and knowing why we should tell the truth, we have the roots of what we could call the "critical" condition in the West. And here you will recognize one of my targets in this seminar, namely, to construct a genealogy of the critical attitude in Western philosophy. That constituted the general objective target of this seminar.

From the methodological point of view, I would like to underscore the following theme. As you may have noticed, I utilized the word "problematization" frequently in this seminar without providing you with an explanation of its

meaning. I told you very briefly that what I intended to analyze in most of my work was neither people's behavior (which is something that belongs to the field of social history), nor ideas in their representative values. What I tried to do from the beginning was to analyze the process of "problematization"—which means: how and why certain things (behavior, phenomena, processes) became a *problem*. Why, for example, certain forms of behavior were characterized and classified as "madness" while other similar forms were completely neglected at a given historical moment; the same thing for crime and delinquency, the same question for the problematization of sexuality.

A problematization is always a kind of creation; but a creation in the sense that, given a certain situation, you cannot infer that this kind of problematization will follow.

Some people have interpreted this type of analysis as a form of "historical idealism," but I think that such an analysis is completely different. For when I say that I am studying the "problematization" of madness, crime, or sexuality, it is not a way of denying the reality of such phenomena. On the contrary, I have tried to show that it was precisely some real existent in the world which was the target of social regulation at a given moment. The question I raise is this one: How and why were very different things in the world gathered together, characterized, analyzed, and treated as, for example, "mental illness"? What are the elements which are relevant for a given "problematization"? And even if I won't say that what is characterized as "schizophrenia" corresponds to something real in the world, this has nothing to do with idealism. For I think there is a relation between the thing which is problematized and the process of problematization. The problematization is an answer to a concrete situation which is real.

There is also a mistaken interpretation according to which my analysis of a given problematization is without any historical context, as if it were a spontaneous process coming from anywhere. In fact, however, I have tried to show, for instance, that the new problematization of illness or physical disease at the end of the eighteenth century was very directly linked to a modification in various practices, or to the development of a new social reaction to diseases, or to the challenge posed by certain processes, and so on. But we have to understand very clearly, I think, that a given problematization is not an effect or consequence of a historical context or situation, but is an answer given by definite individuals (although you may find the same answer given in a series of texts, and at a certain point the answer may become so general that it also becomes anonymous).

For example, with regard to the way that *parrhesia* was problematized at a given moment, we can see that there are specific Socratic-Platonic answers to the questions: How can we recognize someone as a *parrhesiastes* for the city? What is the training of a good *parrhesiastes*?—answers which were given by Socrates or Plato. These answers are not collective ones from any sort of collective unconscious. And the fact that an answer is neither a representation nor an effect of a situation does not mean that it answers to nothing, that it is a pure dream, or an "anti-creation." A problematization is always a kind of creation; but a creation in the sense that, given a certain situation, you cannot infer that this kind of problematization will follow. Given a certain problematization, you can only understand why this kind of answer appears as a reply to some concrete and specific aspect of the world. There is the relation of thought and reality in the process of problematization. And that is the reason why I think that it is possible to give an analysis of a specific problematization as the history of an answer—the original, specific, and singular answer of thought—to a certain situation. And it is this kind of specific relation between truth and reality which I tried to analyze in the various problematizations of *parrhesia*. ●

Society in the Mirror of Science: Knowledge and Technology in France

September 30 - October 1, 1988
University of California, Berkeley

The Program in French Studies (University of California, Berkeley) will sponsor a conference this Fall on the history of research and planning in the sciences in France since the Revolution. The general theme of the conference is the relation among knowledge(s), scientific institutions, and society. Papers will be given on topics ranging from the "Pasteurian Revolution" to Reconstruction after WWII to the modernization of social technologies. Participants will include Robert Castel, Jean-Pierre Gaudin, Claire Salomon-Bayet, Claire Ambroselli, Camille Limoges, François Delaporte and Robert Nye.

For further information contact the Program in French Studies, Department of Anthropology, University of California, Berkeley CA 94720. (415) 642-2634

ENACTMENTS

REVIEW OF *A HISTORY OF SEXUALITY*

LIFE ON THE WATER THEATER
FORT MASON, SAN FRANCISCO
BY JAMES FAUBION

After a Seattle premiere and subsequent engagements in Sweden and Germany, Milwaukee-based Theater X performed *A History of Sexuality* in San Francisco from the eighth through the twenty-sixth of June 1988. The work, described in the distributed program as a "response" to the introductory volume of Foucault's own *History*, is divided into three acts. The first, written by John Schneider, reviews Justine's erotic education at the salon of the Marquis de Sade. The second, written by novelist Julia Romanski, pursues the depths of a murderous dream reported to Sigmund Freud. The last, written by John Kishline, looks in upon a boardroom full of contemporary concept developers struggling to convince a panoptic executive supervisor of the merit of one or another idea for a public television documentary on sex and power. The record of an interview with Schneider, Kishline, and Deborah Clifton, three of Theater X's four core members, follows.

On my way to the interview, I stumble across a billet that characterizes Theater X as a "political experimental" troupe. I ask Schneider, Kishline, and Clifton how they would themselves classify their company. They toy with several adjectives: "experimental," perhaps, or "alternative," or "avant-garde." They can at least agree on their project: "to understand the world we live in, and our relation to it."

I ask them about the history of their present. Theater X had its origins some twenty years ago in a group of independent-minded University of Wisconsin students. Kishline has been with it for sixteen, Schneider for seventeen years. Early on, their philosophy was, as Schneider puts it, "populist," their stagings activistic, concerned with such issues as the draft, the Vietnam War, civil rights. All experienced some measure of political and ethical discouragement as the seventies unfolded; all have "grown older," have come to regard their former optimism as too naive, have come to replace their former questions with "new and more complex" ones. They have come among other things to recognize the inevitability of their entanglements within a world from which they might once have seen themselves apart. They all resist pointing fingers at others, they say, that they do not point at themselves. They reject theatrical didacticism, take advantage instead of the less magisterial methods of comedy. Clifton offers her guiding image: a funhouse hall of mirrors, a place of surprise and occasional distortion, a place reflecting the self, a place for reflecting on the self. Everyone can play.

Schneider procured the Introduction to Foucault's *History* in 1981. What he read influenced his writing of *My Werewolf*, "a deconstruction of the Hollywood horror genre," a short while afterward. It was not, however, until 1986 that he brought together a cohort of friends and colleagues, Kishline and Clifton among them, to discuss the possibility of dramatizing Foucault's thought. The task was an exceptionally challenging one. They all tell me of the particular difficulties they had in finding a metalanguage, more neutral or expressively more powerful, in which to talk about the terms and the concepts they encountered. They do not suggest that they ever entirely succeeded in resolving the problem.

A History of Sexuality was purposefully an authorial collaboration. Scenarios for each act were developed conjointly; scripts were completed alone. I had noted, when viewing the work myself, stylistic choices that I found strikingly consonant with Foucault's usually passing remarks on the affinities between particular aesthetic predilections and particular regimes of knowledge and power. A spectacle unfolds in the Marquis' sovereign quarters; a narrative in Freud's disciplined office; a concatenation of dialogues at the decidedly professional roundtable. They tell me, though, that their settings were decided upon rather spontaneously. I ask them why they focused on the Marquis, to whom Foucault's *History* devotes only a few sentences. "But Foucault liked Sade, he liked him," Schneider rejoins. Foucault's Marquis, the obsessive recorder, indeed appears in Schneider's ribald, slapstick vignette. Other Sades appear as well. I mention de Beauvoir. They recall, after a moment's hesitation, that they had in fact also read her study. Stephen Heath's *The Sexual Fix* also had an impact on them. Heath's book, they say, seemed very Foucaultian, though it barely made any explicit reference to Foucault himself at all.

I ask them how their *History* has been received. They articulate a broad range of reactions. There are those who leave quite deliberately in the first act, as if to say "that they aren't morally prepared for what they're seeing." Others are thrilled. Seattle and San Francisco audiences, they tell me, have generally been approving. I ask them, ultimately, why Foucault? Clifton answers that she sees in the man's studies a broadening, and an enriching, of the feminist critique of society by which she had been so powerfully moved when she was younger. Schneider: "I've been so much hap-

pier since I've read Foucault." I comment that the reaction is not typical. "Because I've seen so many of the little prisons that had been constraining me." Kishline voices the same sense, if not of liberation, then of illuminating and ironic wisdom. They all hope that *A History of Sexuality* manages to convey that half querulous, half celebratory spirit. They would be content, they tell me, if it simply managed to convey what Foucault had to say. They remark on the importance of his shifting attention away from the isolation of individual interiority and toward the inescapable publicity of discourse. They reiterate the goal of self-examination and self-reflection. "Above all," they emphasize, "we want to say serious things." They do. ●

Foucault Center Notes

THE FOUCAULT ARCHIVES

The Foucault Center continues to assemble an archive containing the published works, manuscripts, correspondence, audio and video tapes, and photographs of Michel Foucault. Anyone in possession of such materials is urged to contact the Center regarding possible donations. Donors may be able to control access to personal materials.

The Foucault archive is open to scholars who obtain permission from the Centre Foucault, 9 rue Marcel Renault, 75017 Paris. Some texts and tapes are available for consultation only and may not be duplicated.

The archive is housed in the Bibliothèque du Saulchoir, a Dominican library founded in 1865, where Foucault worked from 1979 on the last volumes of his *History of Sexuality*. The Saulchoir is one of the most modern and important private libraries in France.

For further information regarding the holdings of the library, contact the Bibliothèque du Saulchoir, 43 bis, rue de la Glacière, 75013 Paris.

"MICHEL FOUCAULT, PHILOSOPHE: COLLOQUE INTERNATIONAL," PARIS, 9-11 JANUARY 1988

On 9-11 January, the Centre Michel Foucault organized an international conference centered on the philsophical questions raised by the work of Foucault. The conference, at the Théâtre du Rond-Point, was attended by more than 100 people. The proceedings were followed by the presentation of a videotape, "Michel Foucault à l'Université Catholique de Louvain-la-Neuve" (an interview with André Berten, 1981), and by a concert in hommage of Foucault by Pierre Boulez and the Ensemble Intercontemporain.

The acts of the conference will be published later this year.

Work in Progress

Send us your work in progress! Summaries should be approximately two pages, double-spaced, and should include your affiliation or mailing address. Send your reports to History of the Present, Department of Anthropology, University of California, Berkeley, CA 94720.

PSYCHOANALYSIS AND LEGAL THEORY

NEIL DUXBURY
UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER

Neil Duxbury has recently obtained his doctorate in legal theory from the London School of Economics, University of London. His thesis deals principally with phenomenology and jurisprudence, though there is a lengthy discussion of the emergence of psychoanalytic legal theory in France and Belgium. Dr. Duxbury focuses on the works of Pierre Legendre, Jacques Lenoble, and François Ost, and also discusses of the work of Foucault. Dr. Duxbury intends publishing an expanded version of this section of his thesis in the near future. He has also translated the following, recently published work by Foucault: "The Catch-All Strategy," *The International Journal for the Sociology of Law* 16:1 (1988).

CHILD STUDY AND PARENT EDUCATION

DENNIS BRYSON
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
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I am writing my dissertation on the child study and parent education movement in the United States from 1920 to 1950. Although child study and parent education initially took root in the U.S. in the late 1880's and 1890's under the leadership of such figures as B. Stanley Hall and Felix Adler, it was not until the 1920's that it assumed its modern form and took off as an important movement. During the early decades of the twentieth century, there was a proliferation of psycho- and social technologies in the U.S. directed toward "scientific" child-rearing practices. Focussing on the intellectual and psychological "growth" of children, the new technologies did not repress or deny the child's potentials (intellectual, psychological, and "instinctual"), but fostered, managed, and normalized the development of these potentials.

Massive foundation funding, especially by the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial, played a key role in the rise of parent education and child study during the twenties.

Originally founded in 1918 by John D. Rockefeller, the LSRM was supposed to promote the welfare of women and children. From 1922 to 1929, the LSRM devoted increasingly large sums of money to child welfare, child study, and parent education. It contributed several hundred thousand dollars to the Child Study Association; helped initiate or expand child welfare institutes at Columbia, Yale, Minnesota, Iowa, and Berkeley; aided journals such as *Parents' Magazine* and *Child Study*; and assisted child study and parent education in other ways. LSRM funds were to be used for social science research in child-rearing practices and in child psychology and development—as well as in the dissemination of such scientific knowledge through parent education programs (e.g., university courses, parents' study groups, radio programs). The LSRM also provided extensive funding for programs in "social science and social technology" and "interracial relations." According to the *Final Report* of the LSRM (1933): "It was felt that through the social sciences might come more intelligent measures of social control that would reduce such irrationalities as are represented by poverty, class conflict, and war between nations."

The "golden age" of child study and parent education ended in 1929 with the onset of the Depression. As the optimism that enlightened child-rearing practices could ameliorate social problems waned, foundation funding dried up. Nevertheless, the organizations, institutes, journals, etc., started or expanded during the 1920's continued to exist—and continued to exert an important influence over "middle class" child-rearing and familial practices. I hope to examine the impact of child study and parent education on class and gender in twentieth-century U.S. society.

Of Interest to Our Readers

THE SHORT WORKS OF FOUCAULT

Éditions Gallimard will publish the complete short works of Michel Foucault. The works, and an accompanying bibliography, are being assembled by Jacques Lagrange and Dominique Séglard.

The two-volume collection is due to appear in 1989, and will contain all of the articles, reviews, interviews and other short pieces published in Foucault's lifetime. The texts will include French translations and original versions of works that have, until now, appeared only in Japanese, Portuguese, Spanish, Italian, German, English and Arabic.

PERIODICALS

Philosophy and Social Criticism 12 (Summer 1987): "The Final Foucault: Studies on Michel Foucault's Last Works." Contents: Michel **Foucault**, "The Ethic of Care for the Self as a Practice of Freedom"; **Karlis Racevskis**, "Michel Foucault, Rameau's Nephew, and the Question of Identity"; Garth **Gillan**, "Foucault's Philosophy"; James **Bernauer**, "Michel Foucault's Ecstatic Thinking"; Diane **Rubenstein**, "Food for Thought: Metonymy in the Late Foucault"; Thomas **Flynn**, "Foucault as Parrhesiast: His Last Course at the Collège de France (1984)"; James **Bernauer** and Thomas **Keenan**, "The Works of Michel Foucault 1954-1984"; "Michel Foucault: A Biographical Chronology."

BOOKS

Claire **Ambroselli**, ed. 1988. *Ethique médicale et droits de l'homme*. Paris: Actes Sud.

James **Bernauer** and David **Rasmussen**, eds. 1988. *The Final Foucault*. Cambridge: MIT Press. Republication of special issue of *Philosophy and Social Criticism* (see above).

Irene **Diamond** and Lee **Quinby**. 1988. *Feminism and Foucault: Reflections on Resistance*. Ithaca: Northeastern University Press.

Michel **Foucault**. 1988. *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault*. Ed. Luther H. **Martin**, Huck **Gutman** and Patrick H. **Hutton**. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press. Contents: Rux **Martin**, "Truth, Power, Self: An Interview with Michel Foucault"; Michel **Foucault**, "Technologies of the Self"; Luther H. **Martin**, "Technologies of the Self and Self-Knowledge in the Syrian Thomas Tradition"; William E. **Paden**, "Theaters of Humility and Suspicion: Desert Saints and New England Puritans"; Kenneth S. **Rothwell**, "Hamlet's 'Glass of Fashion': Power, Self and the Reformation"; Huck **Gutman**, "Rousseau's *Confessions*: A Technology of the Self"; Patrick H. **Hutton**, "Foucault, Freud and the Technologies of the Self"; Michel **Foucault**, "The Political Technology of Individuals"

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Roberto **Machado**. 1987. *Ciência e saber: a trajetoria da arqueologia de Foucault*. 2nd ed. Rio de Janeiro: Graal.

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