READING FOUCAULT: CELLS, CORRIDORS, NOVELS

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Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow. MICHEL FOUCAULT: BEYOND STRUCTURALISM AND HERMENEUTICS. *Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982.*

Karlis Racevskis. MICHEL FOUCAULT AND THE SUBVERSION OF INTELLECT. *Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983.*

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Jacques Donzelot ends his account of nineteenth-century social practices of discipline and regulation, *The Policing of Families,* with this little story:

> *At Easter time in 1976, an obscure inmate of a provincial prison died as the result of a long hunger strike that he had embarked upon because, in his judicial dossier, only his faults, his deviations from the norm, his unhappy childhood, his marital instability, had been noted down, but not his endeavors, his searchings, the aleatory train of his life. It seems that this was the first time a prison hunger strike had ended in a death, the first time too that one had been undertaken for so bizarre a motive.*[1]

This small narrative is interesting on several counts, not least because what this anonymous and marginal, but well-documented – well-documented perhaps because marginal – figure seems to have resisted above all is his arrest as the subject of narrative treatment. More precisely, he seems to have resisted the sort of narrative in which he has been inscribed. What has *not* been recorded are his searches and drifts – the aleatory career of the picaro. What *has* been recorded – making a shift in the discourse of criminality – are the petty and malicious minutiae, the everyday delinquencies and abnormalities of family life and conjugality. The difference between these two stories is in fact a difference *about* difference. If the first links transgression and quest, the second registers a technology of power that operates "to assimilate the transgression of the laws into a general tactic of subjection."[2] "Instability," deviation, and difference appear not as the means of escaping power, but as the points of that power's application. The subject, inhabiting a normative scenario that defines his "individuality" in the act of confiscating it as deviation, is produced at an exemplary crossing of knowledge, discourse, and power. Not surprisingly,

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[1] *Jacques Donzelot,* The Policing of Families, *tr. Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon, 1979), 234.*

[2] *Michel Foucault,* Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison, *tr. Alan Sheridan (New York: Pantheon, 1977), 292. Subsequent references are given in brackets in the text, preceded by DP.*

his protest is situated at the place where these regulative technologies cross – the body. It might further be said that this story reads as a miniature and foreshortened version of the genre that so closely resembles the police report and judicial dossier – the realist novel – not merely in its detailed and "criminal" content, but also in its form – the relentlessly coherent, determined, and "genetic" progress, always in a direction preestablished, from unhappy childhood to unhappy marriage to this two-fold bringing to book.[3]

Donzelot's close, however, hints also at a different and opposed sort of story, hints at a certain narrative reversal – an undramatic passion and resurrection of the body ("Easter time") and the initiation of a certain, barely defined resistance (for "the first time . . . too"). How are we to read this somewhat "too literary" reversal? And, more generally, how are we to read this recalcitrant opposition of the literary and the political, in a text that everywhere traces the comprehensive production and assimilation of opposition and difference as a tactic of power? How read this difference – and the difference of the literary – in a text that centrally traces what might be called a reactionary "deployment of difference"?

The closing passage of Donzelot's explicitly Foucauldian history concisely poses the related matters that I want to address here: first, the character of the social technologies that Foucault has been elaborating in his more recent work, and the networks of knowledge, discourse, and power that support these technologies, and produce the subject as the subject of power; second, the relation between these technologies and the content and techniques of literary narrative, particularly, the realist and naturalist novel, which becomes prominent at the same time as these disciplinary practices take power; third, and perhaps most significant for our purposes, the uncertain status of resistance, opposition, and marginality, the uncertain status of difference within a political regime that, as Foucault and Donzelot have traced, operates through the production and "management" of differences.

To pose the questions of "the literary" and "the political" together is also to open the question of resistance, and this is in part because of the still dominant conception of "the literary" as an oppositional or counter-discourse. Such a conception operates to guarantee an absolute antinomy between the literary and what I have generally been calling "the political" domain. By this view, the literary is essentially opposed to and outside the political. Whether this externality of the literary to the political is founded on an "irony intrinsic to the literary" that decenters and undoes structures of power; or on a "critical difference" that must be repressed in any (therefore necessarily illegitimate) exercise of power; or on an "arbitrariness of the sign" taken to entail the repressive arbitrariness of any enforcement of power and meaning (terms that tend toward synonymy in this account) – however this antinomy has been theoretically posited, what all these accounts of an internal difference in the literary rely upon is an opposing of repression and subversion, of containment and liberating difference. What they all project is an essential autonomy of the literary, and an intrinsic opposition of literary resistance and social practices of regulation.

It is this scenario that I want to question. What I want to clarify here are the ways in which the insistence on literary difference may in fact function as part of and end up reaffirming the very structures of power that the literary (and literary theory) are imagined to subvert. Put simply, the problem with the scenario that founds the autonomy or privileged externality of the literary to the political on an intrinsic irony or difference is that, as Foucault has been tracing, irony and difference are themselves crucial to the operation of modern arrangements of power. Modern power-arrangements of discipline and normalization aspire to a "double discourse" of disavowal and reinscription. From this point of view, the assertion of literary autonomy or subversiveness appears not as an escape from power but rather as part of that power's deployment. To adapt Foucault's formulation, "the irony of this deployment is in having us believe that our 'liberation' is in balance."[4]

It may already be clear that the terms by which the literary and the political are opposed invoke the terms of what Foucault has called the "repressive hypothesis." Foucault has

[3]*For an account of this bringing to book in the realist novel, see my* "The Princess Casamassima: *Realism and the Fantasy of Surveillance,*" Nineteenth-Century Fiction *35:4(March 1981):506–34.*

[4]*Michel Foucault,* The History of Sexuality *1, tr. Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon, 1978), 159. Subsequent references are given in brackets in the text, preceded by HS.*

argued that the view of power as essentially negative, imprisoning, and censoring covers for the "productiveness" of modern power-relations. It is not merely that the view of power as comprehensively repressive and silencing automatically aligns speech and discourse with the promise of liberation; more generally, as Foucault observes, the notion of "power as a pure limit set on freedom is, at least in our society, the general form of its acceptability" [HS 86]. What makes power tolerable is its limitation *as* limit. And what this collaterally involves is the projection of a domain outside of power – the difference and alternative to power or "world elsewhere" – that makes power tolerable.

Modern power arrangements thus require difference, not only because it is the very production of differences, abnormalities, and anomalies that extends the field of "normalizing" operations, but also because the production of differences promises a haven or escape from power. As Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow point out, in their significant *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics,* "the repressive hypothesis – the lynchpin of bio-power – rests on this assumption of externality and difference" [182]. The human sciences – and the discourse of aesthetics – invoke a "privileged externality," and assume that the "truths they uncover lie outside the sphere of power," and occupy a space "outside" the matrices of discipline and regulation [180–81]. The assumption, then, of externality, difference, and autonomy may ultimately support the very power-moves it would seem to oppose. As Dreyfus and Rabinow argue, regulation "masks itself by producing a discourse, seemingly opposed to it, but really part of a larger deployment of power" [132].

If Foucault has attempted to demonstrate the ways in which the "opposition" of subversion and repression supports, in a circular fashion, what it seems to resist, Karlis Racevskis' *Michel Foucault and the Subversion of Intellect* – as the title itself indicates – tends to remain within the logic of this opposition, and it will be useful to indicate some of the consequences of that logic. Racevskis sees Foucault's own strategy as "profoundly liberating in its effects" and successful at "dismantling the system of constraints . . . with which Western civilization has established the norms and limits of humanity." Foucault's approach is seen as "fundamentally subversive" in its revelation that "society is an inherently flawed and highly deficient process" that represses "much of what is beyond the reach of rational understanding and control" [R 15, 16, 20].

The imprecision in Racevskis' account here and elsewhere reflects at least in part the difficulty of aligning Foucault's analytic with a subversive and "positive" program, a matter to which we must return. But the imprecision also proceeds from the only sketchy indication Racevskis provides about shifts and trajectories in Foucault's project, from the history of madness to the history of sexuality. Racevskis tends to conflate different and at times rival positions, so that, for instance, the continuities and significant discontinuities between Foucault's problematic attempt to speak the silent "other" of madness and his more recent critiques of the function of the "alternative" remain largely unread. If Foucault in his earlier work – in *The Order of Things,* for instance – represented the literary as an essentially transgressive counter-discourse, he more recently has viewed the literary, not as a privileged source of resistance to normalizing and regulative social practices, but rather as one among other disciplinary practices. The novel thus appears as one of those documents, by no means merely "documentary," that constitutes and polices the real and individualizes the subject, inciting a social and psychological "secrecy" that must be disclosed, classified, positioned within networks of power and knowledge. By this view, literature has no privileged status at all, although its claims to be oppositional, as we will see, function as part of a more general ideology of power.[5]

But such a desire to see literature as power's subversive other governs Racevskis' account. One consequence of this desire appears in Racevskis' ready assimilation of Foucault's strategies to a debatable reading of the Lacanian categories of the Imaginary and the Symbolic. Racevskis insists that Foucault's "purpose is comparable to Lacan's, since it also consists in showing that 'man is not an object, but a being in the process of realizing itself, something metaphysical,' that our humanity is not the image we construe of ourselves but something over which we have little control" [R 38]. But although something of an analogy

[5]*Cf. John Rajchman, "Foucault, or the Ends of Modernism,"* October *24(Spring 1983):37–62.*

can be made here, such a linking is generally misleading. For one thing, Racevskis simply elides Foucault's critiques of psychoanalytic discourse, ignores above all Foucault's reading of psychoanalysis as yet another of the technologies of confession by which the desires of the subject are "taken into account" and deployed in modern Western society. For another, Racevskis sees the categories of the Imaginary and the Symbolic not as two interdependent modes of *representation,* but rather as moral and political categories that fit neatly into a hierarchical arrangement – the point is to be "for" the Symbolic and "against" the Imaginary, or, as it appears in Racevskis' account, "for" difference and "against" the same.

Put somewhat differently, the reason why Racevskis thinks of the Symbolic as "better" than the Imaginary is that he reads the relation between these categories as a relation of subversion and repression, arguing that "Psychoanalysis [and, by extension, any discursive practice] can redeem itself every time it works to subvert its own Imaginary procedures." Such a promise of redemption is achieved, for Racevskis, through a heightened awareness of difference, or, more basically, through an increase in "self-awareness." It is thus the "very awareness" of paradox, contradiction, and difference that is seen to give Foucault's strategy "its subversive potential." In all, Foucault, "acutely aware of his subjectivity," liberates a "new kind of awareness," and produces for the reader "an increased sense of self-consciousness" that is, again, "profoundly liberating in its effects" [R 51, 116, 30].

Interestingly enough, this liberating awareness is primarily an awareness of limits, a self-awareness of the grids of power and knowledge that traverse and inscribe the "self." There is perhaps nothing unfamiliar about such an implicitly paradoxical logic – the logic of "I may be trapped, but at least I know it" – or about the way in which the acknowledgment of limitation, though an internal torsion, becomes an escape from those limits. This double-logic is a version of what Foucault has described as the "analytic of finitude" that, he argues in *The Order of Things,* has formed the (contradictory) basis of positive knowledge from Kant on. In brief, such an analytic converts the subject's limitation by social and positive law into a principle of knowledge, and the awareness of these laws becomes "the right, through an interplay of these very laws, to know them and to subject them to a total clarification."[6] As Dreyfus and Rabinow suggest, what the contortions of such a perspective promise is "the possibility of turning the knower's messy involvement in the factual world of language, life, and labor into the pure ground of knowledge" [32]. This contradiction also underwrites the "conventionalist" position in contemporary literary theory, a position that acknowledges the contextual and conventional constitution of knowledge and belief, but does so only by implicitly positing an unconstrained position from which one might "choose" or "stand outside" contexts and beliefs. That is, the very acknowledgment that there is no escaping the constitutive force of contexts and beliefs is converted into a position of exemption from which one may assess the conventions and beliefs of others (or, effectively, of oneself as another); and what this contradiction elides is the unending (impossible) effort that would be involved in attempting to reappropriate one's own position and beliefs.

Clearly, a privileged self-reflexivity has been taken to define the literary difference; notions of the self-referential, self-conscious, and self-deconstructing character of the literary have formed a part of what Foucault has called "[t]he whole relentless theorization of writing" and the more local theorization of the literary as intrinsically oppositional.[7] For now it is necessary to note that both the "repressive hypothesis" and the "analytic of finitude," on different levels, work to assimilate opposition, tension, irony, paradox, and contradiction to a principle of knowledge and a scheme of liberation. Foucault's work, however, involves a rereading of these "figures," and outlines a rhetoric of power that points to another way of seeing these deployments of difference. Modern power-relations, for Foucault, tell two apparently separate but in fact inseparable stories. This two-sidedness is in part a relation of masking: hence Foucault observes that "power is tolerable only on condition that it mask a substantial part of itself" [HS 86]. But this two-sidedness is also and more significantly a function of the double and "circular" logic of normalizing structures of power.

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[6] *Michel Foucault,* The Order of Things *(New York: Vintage, 1973), 310.*

[7] *Michel Foucault, "Truth and Power," tr. Colin Gordon, in* Power/Knowledge *(New York: Pantheon, 1980), 127. Rajchman, in "Foucault, or the Ends of Modernism," traces Foucault's earlier participation in and later criticism of this relentless theorization.*

Programs of normalization have the circular efficiency of the normal school, a school in which teaching is taught. The notion of the norm derives of course from the model of the organism and its power of self-regulation. The internal environment of the organism exists in a state of controlled equilibrium, and maintains this equilibrium through constant regulative adjustments or "homeostasis." The normal is achieved through a perpetual adjustment of deviations and abnormalities. The concept of the norm is itself normative: one can hardly point out the difference between the normal and the abnormal, the correct and the perverse, without imposing a requirement of normalization and correction. The norm, as Georges Canguilhem observes in a provocative study of nineteenth-century medical concepts and their social application, is a "dynamic and polemical concept": the norm "increases the rule at the same time as it points it out." The goal is an immanent economy of power, internally and organically policed. Always self-confirming, every deviation from the norm, at least in principle, reaffirms the norm by providing an occasion for normalization and correction. As Canguilhem points out, "it is not just the exception that proves the rule *as* rule, it is the infraction which provides it with the occasion to be rule by making rules."[8] The policing of the norm can scarcely be resisted, not merely because one can scarcely resist the normal, the healthy, and the correct, but also because the power of the norm not merely tolerates but requires resistances. Thus, it might be said that normalizing arrangements – effected during the course of the nineteenth century in the institution of the prison, the factory, the school, the hospital, and the family – succeed by never *quite* succeeding. The goal is not to eliminate offenses and infractions but to "use" them, to assimilate infraction and deviation in a general tactic of subject. The achievement of normalizing arrangements is this *coupling* of power and resistance.

This is the structure of difference that Jacques Donzelot has described as a "system of flotation," as a system by which two apparently opposed structures are suspended in relation to each other, intrinsically promoting a coordination and adjustment of structures, while protecting the differences that "oppose" these structures. Thus, Donzelot argues, Keynesian economics "adjusts" the social and economic spheres, at once maintaining the required autonomy of these spheres – of private enterprise and social welfare – and avoiding the "alternative of anarchic liberalism or authoritarian centralism." The "contradiction" between free enterprise and social welfare is, in principle, converted into a "circular functionality between the two registers of the production of goods and the production of producers (and consumers)." Similarly, Freud, according to Donzelot, provides a flexible mechanism of adjustment between the juridical and medical spheres that defends against, on the one hand, statist control of the family, and, on the other, the danger of the family's autonomy. This tactically polyvalent and uneven development "facilitat[es] social regulation by referring the frustrations of individuals to the family," that is, to the family thoroughly injected with social norms of health and education. Put simply, the family is left "free" to police and justify itself, autonomous so long as it regulates itself. Donzelot suggests that Freud and Keynes together provide the model for a social mechanism that deploys contradiction and difference within a system of flotation that equilibrates "autonomy" and "regulation" while saving these categories and the saving contradiction between them.[9]

In both instances, the "liberal" differences between private initiative and social welfare, between possessive individualism and public norms, between, in all, private and public domains are scrupulously preserved; at the same time, the "floating" of the categories in relation to each other provides them with a "principle of conversion" into one another. As Michael Ignatieff has suggested, advanced liberal society operates through a perpetual "adjudication of the claims of liberty and the claims of order."[10] Robin Evans, in his recent study of English prison and urban architecture of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, *The Fabrication of Virtue,* describes a similar coordination and management of public and private spaces, at once a segregation and marriage of social and individual imperatives. Discussing the Philadelphia penitentiary system of cellular confinement, Evans notes that "In terms of planning, the separate prisons were comprised of a marriage between the static,

[8] *Georges Canguilhem,* On the Normal and the Pathological *(Boston: D. Reidel, 1978), 146, 148.*
[9] *Donzelot,* The Policing of Families, *217–33.*
[10] *Michael Ignatieff,* A Just Measure of Pain *(New York: Pantheon, 1978), 214.*

shrouded, contemplative, individualized space of the cells and the generalized connective space of the galleries converging on the central observatory." He adds that this marriage "between open and closed space was echoed more directly in housing than in factories, and this is not the only connection between prisons and housing." Indeed, this difference between private occupied space and public servicing space is duplicated within the model tenements which were in fact advertised as a sort of *sanctuary* from a general public criminality. And since, as Evans shows, the difference between private and public spaces is mapped onto a difference between a private sphere of morality and goodness and a public sphere of promiscuous contagion and violent gregariousness and interpenetration, the tenement paradoxically duplicates the prison-house in its very retreat from the evils of the social domain. It is again the contradictory segregation and connection of public and private, repeated on every level, that one finds here, the necessity of a simultaneous protection and violation of differences, the simultaneous partitioning and interpenetration of spaces within the same "structure."[11]

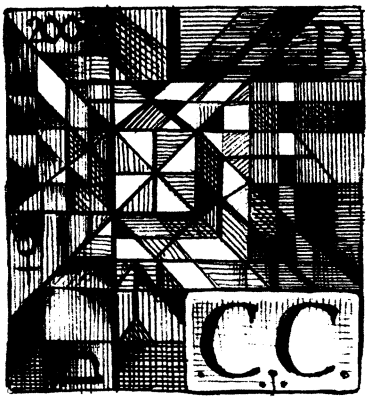
I have elsewhere tried to map such a fantasmatics of confinement and contagion, of private retreats and enclosures and public exposure.[12] Perhaps the richest novelistic representation of this architecture of regulation occurs in Zola's *L'Assommoir*. The tenement that centers the novel, and appears as a metonym of the city, is no longer Balzac's rooming house, but rather a complexly interrelated and partitioned "block" of private and public spaces, of cells and corridors. In fact, Zola's mapping of spaces and of the circulation of populations explicitly reproduces on the narrative level the reordering, the opening and segregation of urban space, achieved by Baron Haussman, the "artist in demolition" who reconfigured Paris; and it is of course this reordering that regulates the chronology of the novel. The tenement is at once "barracks," "prison," and "factory," one of the new institutions of the disciplinary society in which an economy of discipline inheres in the architectural arrangements themselves. The proper circulation in the world of the novel is between the private space of the family and the public space of work, a "going constantly to and fro between home" and work-place. The bars that occupy the barriers or margins (at the walls and octroi) between these two domains, divert and block this circulation between home and shop. And if the disjoining of these two sites leads to the "inevitable downfall" of the working-class family, their absolute identification – the cohabitation of public and private, as in Gervaise's laundry-home – equally produces a "loosening" of moral and familial ties. The work-place in Zola's novel is an arena at once of eroticism and discipline, and it is this double discourse, this discipline of desire, that breaks down when public and private spaces infiltrate and violate each other. What is required, as we have seen, is a simultaneous linking and segregation of domains. What violates this normative principle is a promiscuous mixing, on one side, or withdrawal, on the other. Gervaise's taking of her former lover into the home, without securing the dividing wall, over-"extends" the family ("the walls must surely fall down"), as her daughter's conversion of her bedroom into a sort of "open" house, in *Nana*, allows the street to infect the home. And Gervaise's final and deadly locus, neither in the private space of the apartment nor on the street, but rather in the tenement corridor, emblematizes the final dissolution of the regulative movement that traces the normative grid of the novel. In the play of cell and corridor one reads the perpetual adjustments of public and private domains "floated" in relation to each other.

Foucault has argued that such a system of flotation governs the representation of modern power arrangements. On one level, there is the "official" representation of power – as sovereignty and legal codes and apparatuses; on another, the barely visible, tiny and meticulous disciplines of everyday life. Although there is a constant functional interchange between these two levels, Foucault insists that "they cannot possibly be reduced to each other. The powers of modern society are exercised through, on the basis of, and by virtue of, this very heterogeneity between a public right of sovereignty and a polymorphous disciplinary mechanism."[13] The irreducibility or strategic disarticulation of these representa-

[11] *Robin Evans,* The Fabrication of Virtue *(Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1982), 404–19.*

[12] *For a more comprehensive account of the double discourse of power in the later nineteenth-century novel, see my* Henry James and the Art of Power *(Ithaca: Cornell, forthcoming 1984).*

[13] *Michel Foucault, "Two Lectures," in* Power/Knowledge, *106.*



tions thus provides the crux of modern political technologies. As Foucault suggests, "the general juridical form that guaranteed a system of rights that were egalitarian in principle was supported by these tiny, everyday, physical mechanisms, by all those systems of micro-power that are essentially non-egalitarian and asymmetrical that we call disciplines" [DP 222]. Racevskis points out that these two forms of representation seem to be at odds, but in fact coexist and reinforce each other; if their relation seems paradoxical, Racevskis notes, "this paradox does not therefore constitute a contradiction from the point of view of an effective social arrangement" [R 101]. Or rather, this paradox constitutes a contradiction that is precisely effective. Foucault describes this contradiction as a strategic opposition of form and content, commenting that the purpose of panoptic and normalizing arrangements of power is "to make the effective mechanisms of power function in opposition to the formal framework that it had acquired" [DP 222]. The double discourse of power thus requires a strategic opposition and difference – an aporetic moment; it requires a power of separation and a separation of powers in order to operate. Difference is required to project an "alternative" and privileged externality to regulative mechanisms, even as this difference establishes the relational equilibrium or system of flotation that correlates "autonomy" and "regulation."

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The notion of the privileged externality of discourse, and more narrowly, of the autonomy of the literary, might be understood in terms of such a system of flotation. It is not hard to see that the recalcitrant oppositions of history and textuality, power and discourse, politics and aesthetics maintain an "insoluble" problem – the mutual exteriority of discursive and non-discursive practices. Shifting the terms of this problem about, on the model of Keynes and Freud, one might say that two questions have been implicitly posed in contemporary theory: "how protect the autonomy of the literary without sacrificing its worldliness?" and "how defend worldliness from the abyss of textuality?" Or, put more succinctly, "how maintain textuality as a haven from power while avoiding the danger of an irresponsible anarchy, or in E. D. Hirsch's evocative phrase, 'cognitive atheism'?" Or yet again, "how maintain the view of the literary, and particularly of the novel, as at once in the world but not of it?"

Theoretical answers to these questions repress the circular functionality of these "opposed" terms, converting a tautology into an opposition that must constantly be renegotiated. Specialists in undecidability and double-reading endlessly shuttle between cells and corridors in a theoretical and aesthetic duplication of the double discourse of power. The categories (and values) of irony, ambiguity, paradox, aporia, and contradiction have been deployed – in formalist, deconstructionist, and Marxist criticism – to "exempt" the literary, or to mark its internal difference, from the political. But these theorizings of a necessary incompatibility between worldly and textual functions (between the political and the literary, between rhetoric and grammar, between history and discourse, etc.) inhabit the structure that they would seem to exit from. The "literary" contradiction between autonomy and regulation (between "liberation" and "repression") has the circular efficiency of the nor-

malizing operation. The very instability and oscillation between the terms of the double-reading deploys the power such a reading seems to deplore. This exit from power is a revolving door.

The double discourse of the realist novel has been read, both in traditional and in deconstructionist criticism, as an inherent tension or ambivalence within the novel. Thus, George Levine, in his recent *The Realistic Imagination,* speaks of "the self-contradictory nature of realism itself." Levine sees this self-contradiction in terms of a certain struggle within the novel: the realist novel displays "admirable struggles to get at truth without imprisoning it in conventions." Correlatively, the realist novel, on the side of a liberating "truth" and against "imprisoning" forms and conventions, centrally displays a tension between the imperatives of subject and the imperatives of treatment. "The continuing literary problem that plagued realism from the start," Levine observes, "was the incompatibility of tight form with plausibility." And Levine assents to Northrop Frye's assertion that "the realistic writer soon finds that the requirements of literary form and plausible content always fight against each other."[14]

The deconstructive practice of double-reading rewrites these contradictions as an intrinsic literary "difference," or, more specifically, as Jonathan Culler observes, as a "structure of undecidability" produced by the "convergence of two narrative logics that do not give rise to a synthesis." Culler identifies these two incompatible logics as "story" and "discourse"—as, respectively, the events that must be conceived of as "independent" of any particular narrative presentation and "the force of meaning" and "demands of narrative coherence" that contradict this independence. Narrative thus displays a paradoxical economy by which, for instance, a character's actions are seen at once as cause of consequent events and as effect of narrative demands, as at once independent of and constrained by the force of the narrative system; "free choice" and systemic constraints are floated in relation to each other, never quite coordinated, at once inseparable and never quite capable of harmonious synthesis. In his earlier *Structuralist Poetics,* Culler had defined a somewhat similar narrative paradox, "that fundamental tautology of fiction which allows us to infer character from action and then to be pleased at the way in which action accords with character." The logic of double-reading converts this "tautology" into an absolute incompatibility, converts an oscillation between autonomy and regulation within a single structure into a principle of undecidability. But it is just the *tautological* structure of the double discourse of power that we have tried to indicate, and just this separation of the "moments" of the tautology into distinct and irreconcilable differences that secures at once the theoretical project and the aesthetic and theoretical rewriting of power. The irony of this rewriting is that it underwrites, on the level of theory (or, *as* theory) the very arrangements of power it disowns. The absolute incompatibility of narrative logics, Culler insists, produces the "force of the narrative" and the text's "intriguing and dislocatory power." But this power of the novel might be seen somewhat differently. Concluding his account of the divided logic of narrative, Culler observes that "one must be willing to shift from one perspective to the other," one must be willing, that is, to "oscillate" from story (acts and choices) to discourse (the system of narrative) and back again. What I want to suggest is that the willingness to submit to the double logic of narrative is also a willingness to inhabit a certain style of power. And it is perhaps this submission that the discourse of the novel, both as a form and as an institution, has most comprehensively operated to achieve.[15]

Shifting the emphasis somewhat, we might say that narrative fiction plays out, in exemplary fashion, a certain anxiety about "how language relates to the world," a certain anxiety about "representation." In the terms that Richard Rorty has provided, this anxiety might be seen as part of an "attempt to 'ground' predicative discourse on a nonconventional relation to reality." One consequence of this attempt, according to Rorty, has been the theorizing of distinctions between "real world talk" and "fictional discourse," between responsible and "first-rate discourse" (reports on what's out there) and irresponsible and "second-rate

[14]*George Levine,* The Realistic Imagination: English Fiction from Frankenstein to Lady Chatterley *(Chicago: Univ. of Chicago, 1981), 7, 11.*

[15]*Jonathan Culler,* The Pursuit of Signs: Semiotics, Literature, Deconstruction *(Ithaca: Cornell, 1981), 169–87;* Structuralist Poetics: Structuralism, Linguistics, and the Study of Literature *(Ithaca: Cornell, 1975), 143.*

discourse" (making things up). What such distinctions promise is "an account of our representations of the world which guarantees that we have not lost touch with it." One might say that, from a traditional perspective, the problem has been to enforce a difference between being "really out there" and being "made up" in order to guarantee the "tie" between language and world; and, from a deconstructionist perspective, to enforce this difference in order to guarantee the absence of such a tie, and hence the inherent indeterminacy of meaning.[16]

But as Rorty implies, both perspectives depend upon a representational account of discourse that is basically mistaken. "The common root of all these problems," Rorty argues, "is the fear [or promise] that the manifold possibilities offered by discursive thought will play us false, will make us 'lose contact' with the real."[17] Put somewhat differently, the root of these problems is a division between discourse and world and a consequent tension between an irresponsible or autonomous discourse and a discourse regulated by its "tie" to the world. Such a position remains committed to a divided and contradictory account of the true: to a disinterested truth (that stands outside mere belief) and to an interested belief (that cannot guarantee its contact with truth). The need to protect a division between real world talk and fictional discourse is thus part of a desire to protect a distinction between truth and mere convention, between knowledge, on one side, and mere beliefs and interests, on the other – just the distinctions that the pragmatist account centrally contests. The need is thus to guarantee a "contact" (or gap) between discourse and world. On the pragmatist view that Rorty presents, it is just this representational concept of discourse, in its "positive" or in its "negative" form, that produces a problem about the status of fictional discourse, and the need to theorize a distinction between worldly and fictional discourse. But if, on this pragmatist view, there is finally "no problem about fictional discourse," we might still ask why this problem has been reproduced and maintained within the realist novel, both as a problem in the novel (in the struggle between form and content) and as a problem of the novel (in the question of the novel's relation to the world). What ideological and institutional benefits might accrue in maintaining this problem as the problematic of the novel?

The novel's contradictory requirements of subject and treatment, of story and discourse, far from putting the novel's regulative power in jeopardy, may operate to secure that power, or rather to secure it precisely by insisting on its insecurity. Such a paradoxical movement supports the double discourse of the realist novel. We have already traced the deployment of a difference between public and domestic spaces, between corridor and cell, in Zola's *L'Assommoir*. A similar tension defines the practice *of* the novel as well. In his preface to *L'Assommoir,* Zola offers two not entirely compatible "defenses" of the novel. On one side, the novel is defended in terms of its detailed realism: as an accurate depiction of "the polluted atmosphere of our urban areas," it is "a work of truth, the first novel about the common people which does not tell lies but has the authentic smell of the people." But, on the other, the novel is exculpated in terms of a formal purity that explicitly resists the contamination of its "filthy" subject matter. If the author has been "accused of every kind of crime," he responds that "Form! Form is the great crime," and that his aim in the novel was "to do a purely philological study." Yet if Zola fails to notice the incompatibility of these defenses, it is perhaps because this "tension" between form and subject functions for the novel as well as within it. These contradictory defenses – the defense of realism and the defense of formalism – are not finally at odds in the naturalist novel. Indeed, it is what Zola calls the "inevitable," formal "progress" and "logic" of the naturalist novel that *polices the real* and imposes what is literally a politics of form on the criminal content of the novel. If the naturalist novel appears at once as criminal and as a policing action, if Zola appears at once as a "drinker of blood" and as a "dull bourgeois" ("If they only knew what a dull bourgeois this drinker of blood, this ferocious novelist is . . . ."), this is to indicate not the internal contradictions that "undo" the naturalist project, but rather the contradictions that constitute and maintain the double discourse of the novel.

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[16] *Richard Rorty, "Is There a Problem About Fictional Discourse?" in* Consequences of Pragmatism (Essays: 1972–1980) *(Minneapolis: Minnesota, 1982), 130, 128.*

[17] *Rorty 130.*

I am suggesting then that the power *in* the novel and the power *of* the novel may be furthered by the very tensions and insecurities that split the practice of the novel. In his recent *Factual Fictions: Origins of the English Novel,* Lennard J. Davis traces the "constitutively ambivalent" practice of the early English novel, the ways in which the novel is divided in its commitments, at once, to "reports on the world" and fictional invention, to "fact and fiction, news and novels, reportage and invention." Davis concludes by broaching the possibility that "in the disjunction and dialectic between these apparent contraries rests the foundation for the power of the novel in society and in the bourgeois imagination."[18] Although this connection between novelistic disjunction and bourgeois ideology remains somewhat provisional in Davis' study and although his subject is the seventeenth and eighteenth century novel, the ambivalences he maps in the early novel can perhaps take us a step further in considering the double discourse of the realist novel.

Davis argues that the crucial ambivalence in the novel between factual and fictional imperatives produces a paradoxical "phenomenology of reading" such that the reader, experiencing the novel at once as a "report on the world" and as a "framed" world elsewhere, must "split his perception" of the text consumed. The reader must in effect be in two places at once. If the reader is "brought within the frame of the discourse both spatially and temporally," he is paradoxically also made "more a part of that world" that the novel brings news of. What Davis calls the "news/novels" matrix puts the reader in motion between these two insistently segregated but also communicating domains. What is effected is not merely an ambivalent exchange between the private world of reading and the public world of news, but also a publication of the private and domestic, and a privatization of the social. Extending the terms of Davis' argument, we might say that if the novel "allow[s] history to enter the nonpublic realm," it also allows the private realm to enter history. In this "private" consumption of the public and "public" documentation of the private, the novel supports both the documentary production of the "subject" that Foucault reads as a crucial achievement of the disciplinary society, and, more generally, supports the ideological "system of flotation" that we have been sketching.[19]

For Davis, the tension between news and novel above all makes for the productive insecurity of the novel, as a form and as an institution. A different but not unrelated tension exists in the traditional novel of the nineteenth century. The history of the later nineteenth-century novel is in part a history of the redefinition of the terrain of the "novelistic" in relation to the rival or, alternatively, corroborative discourses of journalism, sociology, and other reports on the world. The mid- and later nineteenth century novel's attempt to locate a "middle ground" between realist and romance imperatives may be read as an attempt to locate a point of intersection between fictional and real world commitments – a point of intersection that nonetheless retains the ratifying differences between social and individual domains and between the world "out there" and the fictional "world elsewhere." Perhaps the clearest example of this divided and dividing practice is the work of Hawthorne, whose fiction attempts both to "open an intercourse with the world" and to protect a private space of romance. And perhaps the most concise instance of the "disjunction and dialectic" in Hawthorne's fiction occurs in the scene (ch. 17) in *The House of the Seven Gables* in which Clifford and Hepzibah take flight from the seclusion of their ancestral house into what Hawthorne calls "the world."

The railway car that transports the fugitives is something of a mobile home or half-way house, located between the "stale ideas of home and fireside" they have fled and the "rapid current of affairs" they are entering. The "interior life" of the train that "had taken their two selves into its grasp" is at once a public and a domestic space, housing "fifty human beings in close relation with them, under one long and narrow roof." Not merely does the train represent a juncture between public and private sites, but also its "to-and-fro" movement is a movement – literally a commuting – between home and market-place. Above all, and not finally unlike the regulative movement we have sketched in Zola, the train traces a movement between dangerously opposed fixations: on one side, an absolute domestic

[18] *Lennard J. Davis,* Factual Fictions: Origins of the English Novel *(New York: Columbia, 1983), 211.*
[19] *Davis 74, 114.*

withdrawal ("This one old house was everywhere!"), at the other, the complete immersion of self in the market-place (the danger that "the market should ravish them away"). The attempt is to locate a point of intersection between home and market-place, an intercourse emblematically represented, of course, by the opening of the shop-door in the house of the seven gables.

What must be emphasized here, however, is the way in which the novel itself participates in the movement it represents. For one thing, the interior life of the railway car is also a space of reading, and of reading precisely regulated to the "commuting" of the readers: "Some, with tickets in their hats, long travellers these, before whom lay a hundred miles of railroad, had plunged into the English scenery and adventures of pamphlet novels . . . . Others, whose briefer span forbade their devoting themselves to studies so abstruse, beguiled the tedium of the way with penny-papers." News and novels supply a shorter or longer movement between the reader's private space and the world; the market productions of news and novels transport and "beguile" the reader doubly shuttling between home and market-place. The novel is thus both for commuters and a commuter itself, representing and enacting an exchange between domesticity and the market-place of the world. Nor is this commuter literature merely a "sham" commercial production. For if *The Scarlet Letter* opens by putting Hester Prynne – the scarlet letter herself – on display in the "Market-Place," and if *The House of the Seven Gables* promotes the opening of the house to the shop, what these novels at once resist and enact is a necessary "exchange" between romance and novel, privacy and publication, fiction and market. The mid-century romance retains a critical and "oppositional" character in its very resistances to what Hawthorne calls the requirements of "the novel," retains its oppositional force, one might say even as it points to the conversion of oppositions into the regulative management of crises and differences that, I have been arguing, defines the late nineteenth-century novel.

3

Such an account points both to the immanence of power *in* the novel and to the power *of* the novel: the manner in which the novel at once acts as a relay of social mechanisms of regulation and lays claims to an autonomy and difference from the political, a claim to autonomy that may ultimately support these mechanisms. Such an arrangement relies upon instabilities and paradoxes in order to function: the "corporate" novel of the late nineteenth-century specializes in crisis management. Again, this is not to say that instabilities are automatically or even in principle recuperable. But it is to say that there is a fundamental problem with a critical discourse that founds the "privilege" of the literary – its difference from the political – on its paradoxical, contradictory, or intrinsically self-deconstructing forms. The politics of the novel, and problems of resistance and recuperation, are not theoretical matters, although one might attempt, as I have, to map a politics of theory. Rather, these problems are located on a more "trivial," ordinary, and heterogeneous level, the level that the novel, for instance, takes as its domain.

But the figure of the *tautology* that I have invoked may be somewhat misleading here. If this figure implicitly governs, as I have argued, the double discourse of the late nineteenth-century novel, it suggests what might be called a "formalization" or "totalization" of power-discourse relations in the novel. The double discourse of the realist and naturalist novel perhaps provides the ideal form of a specific regime of regulation, as Bentham's Panopticon provides the ideal form of a specific technology of discipline. But Bentham's model was never – never totally – constructed, and if social practices and discourses of discipline and normalization aspire to the circular efficiency of a zero-sum model of power, such an absolute "coding" of power-relations is a theoretical fiction.

Foucault has emphasized how even the "weak links" in the multiple and heterogeneous apparatuses of power may become usable for those apparatuses, how "all those things which 'don't work'" can "ultimately serve to make the thing 'work.'"[20] But although Foucault is

[20]*Michel Foucault,* Le Monde, *21 October 1978, as cited by Colin Gordon, "Afterword,"* Power/Knowledge *257.*

routinely criticized for an overly monolithic conception of power, he in fact insists on the local and unstable moves of often conflicting apparatuses of discipline, administration, and regulation, localizations and instabilities that at once define the field of regulative practices and the limits on and resistances to those practices. If, as Foucault maintains, resistance is not "outside" power, this is not to say that resistance is always already conscripted or preempted. Rather, as Dreyfus and Rabinow note, "Resistance is both an element in the functioning of power and a source of its perpetual disorder" [147]. More generally, if in modern society "an increasingly better invigilated process of adjustment has been sought after – more and more rational and economic – between productive activities, resources of communication, and the play of power relations," and if there are "blocks" in which the adjustments of these processes "constitute regulated and concerted systems," there is "in a given society no general type of equilibrium" between these practices and processes.[21]

The "instability" of power thus cuts both ways, though it does not reduce to an "ambiguity" or "undecidability" about historically specific relations of power and resistance. The realist and naturalist novel aspires to a "totalizing" conscription of differences within systems of regulation, aspires to convert even what escapes it into points of support. But instruments of power may be reappropriated and lines of force reversed. "Turning the tables" is always a possibility. In fact, we have seen that it is the notion of a binary division between power and resistance – the desire for an "outside" to power – that idealizes arrangements of power in the very gesture of disowning power. If I have been emphasizing the ways in which the novel operates as a relay of regulative and disciplinary practices, this is in part because the realist and naturalist novel provides a virtual map of these practices, and in part because the assumption that the novel, necessarily and in principle, provides a haven or escape from power has become one of the ideological supports of that power. Foucault has cautioned against a "theoretical totalization under the guise of 'truth'"; it is necessary as well to defend against a theoretical totalization under the guise of "power."[22] At one extreme, it is necessary to avoid a "literary" reading of difference and contradiction as a necessary "undoing" of power; at the other, to avoid a totalizing reading of power as a necessarily preemptive regulation of difference; at both, to avoid reducing the double discourse of power to a theoretical model of undecidability. The attempt here has been to question the governing view of power in and of the later nineteenth-century novel by pointing to the micro-histories and micro-politics that traverse the discourse of the novel. Such an account is necessarily partial, local, and provisional – a history of novels rather than a theory of "the Novel."

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[21] *Michel Foucault, "The Subject and Power,"* Critical Inquiry *8:4(Summer 1982):788, 787. Rpt. as an afterword in Dreyfus and Rabinow,* Michel Foucault*; the second edition also includes an additional chapter, "Foucault's Interpretive Analytic of Ethics," and a composite interview with Foucault concerning his forthcoming books on pagan and early Christian ethical practices and technologies of the self.*

[22] *Michel Foucault, "Intellectuals and Power," in* Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews, *ed. Donald F. Bouchard (Ithaca: Cornell, 1977), 217.*