Michel Foucault and the Legislation of Reality:
The Assumptions of Positivism, Insanity and Scientific Knowledge

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Michel Foucault is one of the best known anti-structuralists – sometimes known as postmodernists – in both history and philosophy. Poststructuralism is primarily concerned with power in that nothing, not science, not music, not medicine, is bereft of power relations. Every socially significant object exists because its fought a Darwinian war for primacy and won. Because of this, everything is the result of coercion of some type.

Their great weakness is their solipsism. They cannot turn their own method against themselves. The fact that the world's most prestigious universities and old money foundations have spent billions on this movement suggests that they too are the creation and manifestation of power. Jean Baudrillard said as much about him, yet the pot and kettle are both black. It is difficult to consider a wealthy professor, driving around town in a jaguar, as an "outsider." Yet, Freshmen are told to think just this every semester.

Apart from this huge flaw, their views revolve around the idea that all social artifacts, including the scientific construction of "nature," derive from power and receive its legitimacy from having won a war of ideas. "Science" doesn't merely "record" what's "out there." It's a construction both in its apprehension and its communication. Foucault's concern is to discover how power operates in a society that calls itself "free," that is, a society that claims that coercion is at a minimum and where it exists, it must exist. It is also a society that has given them a privileged place in its most elite universities and publishing houses, making matters at least more complex, if not more comical.

The purpose of this paper is to use the social theory of Foucault to deal with how power operates in education in the very broad sense of "upbringing." For any truth claim, there must be a set of criteria that a claim must meet to be called "true" and hence accepted. These criteria are the concern of any postmodernist and, in fact, any intellectual at all. Foucault takes the technocratic power of education seriously, but his approach is less "organized." Most power is almost completely invisible and is never capable of real "organization" under such labels as "field" or "practice" (Foucault, 1981, 225ff). Foucault's method was to develop a history of a social institution through the evolution of its basic practice within a holistic understanding of the society that both gave rise to it and justified it. Therefore, this essay will provide a sympathetic reading of Foucault and his criticism of Positivism.

Positivism was and is a prime target for deconstruction because it claimed universal knowledge and is based on a single criterion of falsifiability. The problems with any epistemology like this is in its assumptions. It assumes far more than its willing to admit, and it too is a privileged epistemology. The essential definition of Positivism can be reduced to two postulates, according to Julius Weinberg, a man who apparently knows something about it:

> The two most fundamental doctrines of Logical Positivism are (i) that propositions of existential import have an exclusively empirical reference, and (ii) that this empirical reference can be conclusively shown by logical analysis. The empiristic doctrine is thus to be proved by a logical method. This calls for an

account of logic consistent with such a thorough-going empiricism (Weinberg, 1936:1-2).

The modern man looks at the above as "common sense" that doesn't require justification. It might only be a slight exaggeration to reduce all modernity to some variant of Positivism. At the same time, its assumptions are exceptional and do great damage to the theory's claim that it doesn't use them. Just a few are: a) that all reality is knowable; b) that to be "knowable" is to be empirically verifiable; b) that no non-empirical statement can be actual knowledge; c) if there are no words to describe an experience, then it cannot be knowable, and so on (Foucault, 2006). There are many others, and most of the readers here will be familiar with them.

Foucault sought to demote the Positivist approach as deceptively simple. Foucault's method was the re-introduction of the Nietzschian concept of "archaeology" in order to shift attention from simple, logical phrases and instead to search for the "synchronous unity" among them. This "unity" refers to common fields of mental capabilities within a particular era. Thus, Foucault, by his own method, needs to show how the development of modernity out of the Renaissance can account for this epistemology being taken for "common sense" (Bevir, 2002: 219). Today, we can ask the same of Foucault.

The concept of an "archaeology" is the analysis of how a field came to view itself. It is how a field, especially once that has become powerful, such as biology or mechanical engineering, explains its own development and, in this narrative, justifies its own existence. Criticism of these stories sharply opposes all types of "universalism," and relative to Positivism, that the story of the progress of knowledge through the accumulation of facts is just that, a story (Foucault, 1984: 131). This is essential to Positivism since it makes no sense without the moral category of "progress."

The archaeological method found in *The Order of Things* presents several elements of the European cultural mentality as the middle ages faded and the Renaissance grew. These elements of Positivism define the synchronous development of a set of circumstances, some set of conditions that had to exist in the broader life of European society such that the areas of knowledge that we now call biology, philology or physics, for example, could have come into existence and become dominant. It's not so much a method of how a field makes truth claims, but how a society came to both produce that particular set of criteria in the first place (Foucault, 1984: 53).

On other words, Foucault is opposing the "isolation" of epistemology in that no field, especially one as fundamental as scientific rationality, can develop unless it has produced its own criteria of truth. This is taken directly from Hegel. Science, in other words, is a social and historical development. These knowledge claims are found in a broad social context using symbolic communication and a certain connection (or lack thereof) of words and their relation to things.

The essential and programmatic statement of Foucault on this can be found in *Politics and Ethics, An Interview with Michel Foucault,* where he argues that

Truth isn't outside power, or lacking in power: contrary to a myth whose history and functions would repay further study, truth isn't the reward of free spirits, the child of protracted solitude, nor the privilege of those who have succeeded in liberating themselves. Truth is a thing of this world: it is produced only by virtue of

multiple forms of constraint. And it induces regular effects of power. Each society has its regime of truth, its "general politics" of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true (Foucault, 1984: 72-73).

This is as clear as Foucault makes it. Today, the "regime of truth" is heavily influenced by Foucault himself, throwing a monkey wrench into his theory. Still, regardless of the simplicity and parsimony of the positivist idea, it has a history, and importantly, a myth. "Myth" here is that story that scientists tell themselves as they're justifying their own methods and power. It is a narrative that people in a specific field tell about themselves. For the scientific mind, their own view of history stresses the "rational" opposition to the "superstition" of the middle ages and the desire of these "free spirits" to function entirely by objective and verifiable standards. Objectively, this is mythical in the true sense. Knowledge is power in that it is power over nature. What one can control, one can make better (Foucault, 1984: 67). Further, as their power grew, they began to go to extremes and say that what science can control is all that's real. Their own power was the yardstick for not just truth, but reality.

Externally, Positivism is formulated as a nihilism. It is about strengthening the position of impersonal language and the displacement of people or "personality" from their vocabulary. Since it deals with scientific topics, it deals with abstract forces, not embodied wills. Forces are abstract, whether it be gravity or the working class. These are impersonal, general and universal in scope. These are everything that Foucault opposes (Agger, 1991, 92). They also cannot be reconciled with nominalism, to which all Positivists adhere, making things more complicated.

Foucault's conception of "power" is crucial to understand his view of logic. For Foucault, power and truth are one and the same (except for him), since the production of truth requires the ability to impose it as true, scientific or rational. You have to convince people. Therefore, it is not difficult to see how science contains its own myth, its own sense of self that it mystifies as history. He writes, to continue the quote above:

Each society has its regime of truth, its "general politics" of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true (Foucault, 1984: 73).

In earlier times, one could talk about the nature of man, his body and soul, but all that has been collapsed into in an "ego": it is important to grasp that the bulk of the historical content is about exposing the sub-rational elements inherent in such a view. It's what they avoid saying as much as what they do say in their story.

The modern era violates all of this by stressing a radically objective order that contains everything empirically verifiable. The other side to this is what Positivism does not say: it holds that non-empirically verifiable arguments are "nonsense" in that they cannot be verified according to its own standards. This is circular. For the Positivist, to understand the ego can only be found in studying the human biological organism independent of any ends or purposes, for ends are non-verifiable and subjective (Kennedy, 1979, 270). What Foucault is saying above is that what counts as a "fact" has a history, and this history needs to shed its "mythical" elements

to become amenable to rational analysis. It is not as if the Enlightenment writers such as Bacon or Locke sought to reduce man to a mere "ego," but it is a consequence of their view. This is not to shield Foucault from this same criticism, but it doesn't change its impact.

So, when comparing modern and classical forms of knowledge, the current philosophy arises on the corpse of the old philosophy. Modern science calls into question the former bond between thinking and being that had not previously been questioned in both the late medieval and Renaissance eras. What was taken for granted in one century was questioned (and found lacking) in another.

Everything that could ever be given to us philosophically is given only by and through man and his limited abilities. This defines a fundamental shift in the philosophy of knowledge. One of the elements defining Positivism is the fact that knowledge is for and by the scientific elite exclusively. However, Foucault takes issue with the pure "objectivity" of Positivism by arguing that human affairs are about power in that they are never purely and completely rational.

It's in the nature of political power to be only partial. Reason was brought to bear on nature in that the self, the observer, was not part of this nature. Only in this isolation can anything be seen as "objective." If the self was a part of the same nature being analyzed, then science has a problem. It would fail to be objective. Now, the stress is on the proposition and its reference to a real object that "all" can agree exists. A dog exists, and we all will agree upon seeing one without being called loony.

God, on the other hand, might exist, but cannot be an object of discussion rationally because God is not an object among other objects. It is not part of daily experience in a sense that all can agree upon in the same way. Put differently, God doesn't bow to Positivist methods, and thus, he can't be known. If God exists, the theory isn't invalidated, but it cannot be proven according to the Positivist conception of "proof." God is not available to the perception of all people in the same way that a dog is. To say "the dog is walking" is a perfectly valid statement in the Positivist mind because we all can view it and see if either walking or standing still. "God is close to me" might well be true, but it's non-verifiable in the sense that the dog's walking can be verified.

What has not been the subject of scientific rationality are its own assumptions including, first, the fact that the human being is so alienated from nature that the mind that thinks logically isn't a part of it. There is the observer and the observed, or "dead matter," and they have nothing significantly in common. This is fairly non-controversial, since one cannot be intrinsically a part of what is being analyzed, but it remains a huge assumption that has to be understood and explained away in order for Positivism to survive, that is, unless its power status permits it to function regardless.

There must be an external place to stand to make objective judgments. This separation and alienation of self and other is a part of the non-rationalized aspect of the Positivist view. Society came to see this as "common sense." But how did this occur, and why that? What was so special about the epoch of the early industrial revolution or even the Enlightenment such that the ego can objectively judge what is true or false? (Kurzweil, 1977: 400ff).

If power lies at the root of all knowledge claims, then the modern world is totalitarian. Power functions with a great degree of efficiency in modern life, far more so than in the middle ages. There, it was honest. Moderns hide it. The medieval period is positively libertarian by comparison to how the disciplining of individuals functions under the rule of modern technology and those classes that control it. Foucault writes in a famous passage on one characteristic of

power:

> [This sort of power] traverses and drives those other powers. I'm thinking of an epistemological power—that is, a power to extract a knowledge from individuals and to extract a knowledge about those individuals—who are subjected to observation and already controlled by those different powers. This occurs, then, in two different ways. In an institution like the factory, for example, the worker's labor and the worker's knowledge about his own labor, the technical improvements – the little inventions and discoveries, the micro-adaptations he's able to implement in the course of his labor – are immediately recorded, thus extracted from his practice, accumulated by the power exercised over him through supervision. In this way, the worker's labor is gradually absorbed into a certain technical knowledge of production which will enable a strengthening of control (Foucault, 2000: 83-84)

This summarizes Foucault view of power and, to a great extent, that of the postmodern approach in general. Most people view power as the product of bureaucratic coercive agencies such as police departments or prison guards. Power under modern technocracy does not operate like that. It's a constant application of "micro-adaptations" in human life. Power, for lack of a better phrase "goes all the way down." This means that even the most minute actions of mundane life are both created and regulated by those who have a position in the technocratic elite.

Concerning the ordinary conception of power, Foucault writes,

> The State does not have an essence. The State is not universal, the State is not in itself an autonomous source of power. The State is nothing other than the effect, the outline, the moving cross section of a perpetual process of State formation, or perpetual processes of State formation. . . The State is nothing other than the changing effect of a multiple regime of governmentalities (Foucault, 2004: 79).

This quotation is particularity important because it shows that power is not some obvious "force" that controls an unwilling people. The structures of modern life such as capitalism, the work day, psychiatry and other modes of control are only loosely brought under its label. They are complexes of power that take from other fields and are largely invisible.

What Foucault likes to point out is that most operations of technocratic power are voluntarily entered into by a benighted population. Technocracy itself is an endless set of power-details. It ensures total supervision and discipline, where every point of the day can be recorded and supervised. Even there, the concept does not go far enough. Power is also internalized, and the structures of technocracy are reproduced in the very thought process of daily life and even the subconscious. Thus, to criticize technocracy is to affirm it. This suggests that there's really no way out. Domination, since it's nothing obvious like a policeman, is not seem to be domination. In some cases, it is seen as "liberation." If language itself is coercive, then what is liberation?

In other words, the historical analysis of a phenomenon is essential to grasping its components, and logic is no exception. There is no such thing as "scientific reason" as something separate from the values of its age. Each attempt to apprehend some idea has several features: first, that there is a reason that this specific thing requires an explanation. In other words, there is

some social force that seeks an answer.

Second, that this knowledge generates a language that is embedded in the practice itself. One example is the technical language used among academics in various fields. It's a deliberate means of obfuscation. Third, in using this language, one is already assuming the essential range of definitions that count as "knowledge" in the field, or at least, are the means whereby knowledge is communicated. Finally, this language must be used in order for any opinion to be taken seriously as knowledge in a specific area.

Empiricism began its collapse with Kant. The moment the argument that objects and words did no coincide is made and justified, new thinking was possible. Objects are not the source of knowledge. If the mind is at least partly creative of its ideas, then the mind itself becomes essential to epistemology, not just what it perceives. Even more, words become productive of things rather than the reverse. This also means that the people who control the meanings of words would then control "reality." This is a form of power that never existed before. Words were a universal force in themselves and could not be manipulated. Today, it's an elite group that creates acceptable definitions of words over time and thus, the reality to which they refer. It controls the subject they purport to describe.

Like everything else in Foucault, all claims to knowledge contain implicit elements of coercion. Insanity is a clear example because those seen as insane are placed under the direct domination of medical professionals. These have the right to define normality (in the sense that a heart or liver might function normally) and to take chemical or more invasive actions to bring about this normality. Restoring normality then counts as "success."

The definition of terms like "sanity," "normality," "professional" and "therapy" all rest upon some mythical and coercive narrative. Foucault's account of power and truth is highly convincing especially when it is applied to behavior. Here, human behavior must be predictable for modern society to function. This functioning is the foundation for judgments of "normality" or "pathology." This keeps the discipline of psychiatry, for example, from ever being truly "objective." The needs of the social whole shape how the healthy behavior is construed. That and that alone is "normal."

In his *Madness and Civilization* (cf esp 40-64), the question of mental illness and the nature of its "treatment" is analyzed as an aspect of this same sort of domination. The primary method is to connect madness to "the normal" using the medium of logic. Logic connects all aspects of the world and serves as the benchmark of normality, that is, as defined by Positivism. No object or idea is exempted except science itself. The world functions by cause and effect and the whole can never be greater than its parts. What counts as "rational" in economics is identical to what counts as rational in history or medical practice. These are further assumptions of the system.

How is madness defined? That becomes simple once one knows how "reason" or "logic" is defined. In Foucault's "What is Enlightenment?" he criticizes the Kantian idea of "maturity," Kant's term for "progress." Societies are seen as either mature or immature (or alternatively, backward or advanced), when "reason" is employed in greater or lesser measures. An absolute standard is implied. If one rejects the definition of logic used to define that which is "mature," then such a person is perpetually immature, which is easily diagnosed as a mental problem (Hacking, 1979). They are "primitive" in some sense. In normal speech, when someone is chronically "irrational," he is automatically in need of medical attention. The person might even voluntarily place himself under the rule of a professional for the sake of his health, and more

significantly, his reentry into society.

Once an object is understood, that is, broken down, through logic, the person empowered to make such a determination now is master of the thing. Another way to see it is that logic takes a whole and resolves it into its parts. When the parts are rationally and logically ordered to form that same whole, it's "real." Otherwise, it's an illusion or worse, a delusion. To believe that illusions are real is delusion (Foucault, 1988: 91 and 105). The belief in illusion as reality typifies both children and insane adults. It also typifies religious belief and primitive societies in both modernity and Postmodernity. If this is the definition of the mature versus the immature or backward society, then it doesn't take long to get from the universality of logical methods to colonial domination (Hacking, 1979).

Foucault explains the process in *The Order of Things*:

> A "system of elements" — a definition of the segments by which the resemblances and differences can be shown, the types of variation by which those segments can be affected, and, lastly, the threshold above which there is a difference and below which there is a similitude — is indispensable for the establishment of even the simplest form of order (Foucault, 1994: xxi).

Logic categorizes reality according to "resemblances and differences." A diseased liver looks and acts differently than a healthy one. Proper social behavior appears and acts differently from improper behavior. A man speaking is an event seen every day. It is unremarkable. When an object is introduced, everything changes. When a man is seen speaking to his neighbor, it's normal. When the same man is seen speaking to his mailbox, its an illness. In both cases, the man is the same, as are the words used in his speech. The object of the speech then becomes the "difference" that puts it into a different category. The category becomes identical with "reality." While the example is simple, it adequately explains the problem.

In dealing with the mental world, what matters is outward behavior. The man talking to a mailbox believes the projections of his brain to be externally real. The problem Foucault sees is that the concepts science uses to create its claim to knowledge and expertise are also projections: they are impositions upon the world. They are not the mere uncovering of what is really "out there." It's not to say that speaking with mailboxes is healthy behavior, but only that the process in which this is understood isn't necessarily rational. He writes,

> [Science] made it possible to turn the principle of the analogy of forms into the law of the production of essences; and, secondly, it allowed the perceptual attention of the doctor—which, here and there, discovers and relates—to communicate with the ontological order which organizes from the inside, prior to all manifestation—the world of disease. The order of disease is simply a 'carbon copy' of the world of life; the same structures govern each, the same forms of division, the same ordering. The rationality of life is identical with the rationality of that which threatens it (Foucault, 1988: 6-7).

Behind the arcane language is a clear statement: truth is rationality in the modernist myth, and consequently, the irrational is the insane. "The law of the production of essences" refers to the universal causality among things that lie at the base of the scientific method. The argument is

that, for example, the medical professional has insight into the world of disease by a specialized training in the identification of the causal nexus of pathology. It's the existence of this socially generated ontology that creates a stratum of professionals who, in turn, can place the patient in his position of dependence.

In the *Birth of the Clinic*, Foucault explains how medical science is an imposition of a conceptual grid onto the body and, in the case of mental illness, human behavior. This mythic structure is taken as identical to what is real.

> What was fundamentally invisible suddenly offered to the brightness of the gaze, in a movement of appearance so simple, so immediate that it seems to be the natural consequence of a more highly developed experience. It is as if for the first time for thousands of years, doctors, free at last of theories and chimeras, agreed to approach the object of their experience with the purity of an unprejudiced gaze (Foucault, 1988: 195).

This is the nature of deconstruction and hence, the critique of scientific objectivity and its application in the treatment of disease. Here, the myth is that the "unprejudiced gaze," for the first time, was permitted to see the human body in all its forms and pathologies as an objective thing: a whole that could be broken down into parts. In this way, the body was seen as it "really is." Without this conception of themselves, the ability of the medical professional to place itself in a position of power over the patient would not exist. The power that the doctor has over the patient has no analogue in politics. It is totalitarian to the extreme. This is especially the case of mental illness, since it deals with the most foundational motives for human behavior. The mentally ill person must believe that he has no control over his actions and, at a minimum, has no idea what his motives are. The relation between a priest and penitent is a voluntary one and can be carried out on the grounds of the free will. In modernity, there is no voluntary relation at all.

In Foucault's epistemology, there are three stages in the way that a science relates to the object of its concern. First, as the modern age dawned, the word corresponded to the object. That is, when the word "brain" was used, it referred to that organ encased by the skull. Soon, however, the terms used in a science take on a life of their own. The knowledge described above creates its own world through language. This is the foundation of "knowledge." The objects to which the words refer are taken for granted.

Rather than objects, the sciences are based on abstract forces and causes. Concepts such as "heat" or "pressure" are not empirically verifiable objects. They are abstractions invented to explain the why healthy tissue, for example, becomes unhealthy. These words and descriptions are their own world with their own history.

It might be very difficult to argue that the medical field refers to things that don't exist. If a diseased liver causes death, then the identification of a diseased liver is not an invention. The cause of the problem might be debated and the separation of the liver from other organs likewise, but the pathology itself is not a creation or an imposition. Mental illness is another matter. Mental illness is singled out by Foucault for special treatment in several works because it deals with social behavior rather than the condition of a physical organ.

When a patient is admitted to the hospital with jaundice, the liver (among other organs) is

directly observed for any signs of degeneracy. When a patient is admitted to the hospital with headaches and nausea, the doctor will x-ray the head looking for any abnormalities. If a tumor is discovered, it is biopsied to discover if it contains cells that are multiplying out of control. If this is discovered, then a course of treatment is recommended.

On the other hand, when a patient is admitted to the hospital because he was seen talking to his mailbox, he might be diagnosed as "schizophrenic." All other variables being ruled out (such as mineral deficiencies or drugs), the diagnosis of "schizophrenia" is granted the same status as a tumor being termed malignant after a biopsy. The term "schizophrenic" is meant to be a scientific diagnosis of an illness of the brain, but this cannot be true, because there is no "insanity tumor" that can be biopsied (Szasz, 2006). The only source for the diagnosis is observed symptoms, the testimony of the patient himself. This is the equivalent of a patient complaining of unexplained headaches and nausea being immediately put on a regimen of chemotherapy. Cancer would be assumed. If this were common practice, the carnage would be incomprehensible.

The argument is not difficult to grasp. Mental illness merely implies the existence of a disease based on observed symptoms, and these "symptoms" are often self-reported problems. The diagnosis of a mental illness is neither scientific nor objective. The point is that the scientific elite have so long been in a position of cultural power that its claims, regardless of how they are generated, are taken as objective truth. Further, the diagnosis of mental illness shows that actual organs are not needed for science to function. Mere inference is sufficient (Szasz, 2006).

The essential argument is that truth claims come from a social status deriving from specialized knowledge of some important field. Foucault rejects the idea that a "field" even exists at all. The field under analysis is created by the very act of trying to grasp its functioning. It's created in that the field being analyzed has a social function. In the case of medicine, the social importance of the body needs no elaboration.

Mental illness becomes a crucial aspect of the social because it's about how societies function. Part of this functioning is what constitutes normal behavior. Hence, psychiatry is the science of regulating human behavior for the sake of a smoothly functioning social whole. In itself, this isn't a problematic goal. However, the status of psychiatry comes from its claim to have insight into a workings of the brain that have objectively been discovered, but the two concepts here are at cross purposes. The demand for a functional social whole contradicts the idea that the brain (or anything else) can be objectively analyzed. The very fact that psychiatry is socially significant means that it's no longer objective; it's the result of specific requirements (for the person to be a good worker, etc).

From this, Foucault uncovers the real truth: social utility is more important than objectivity. The brain is constructed because its regulation is essential to society and those it serves. The discipline of psychiatry is not isolated. This embedded "logic" which links all aspects of the social universe together and serves as the criterion of what is considered "sane." No action or idea is immune from this sort of analysis (Noiriel, 1994, 550).

The sociology of scientific knowledge does not focus exclusively on the institutional structure of science, but also on that which makes itself "scientific." His analysis of science advances the thesis that what comes to be seen as "scientific" is both subject to a method and also connected to the emergence of social truths, practices and institutions. There are social processes within which ideas emerge, tested and developed further if they show their usefulness.

What counts as true belief among the Positivists isn't itself scientific. This is the heart of

the Foucaultian analysis. The fact that a certain researcher has a belief he thinks is true cannot be explained simply by the fact that it's "good science," but derives from the way in which the framework of public knowledge is established. In this case, it derives from certain practices which in turn are related to normative idea of truth and accuracy accepted by all. This "acceptance" is crucial but cannot be understood outside a specific history (Borch, 2005, 160).

Foucault reconstructs this historical formation using the interplay of language, sensual, technical and social practices. Truth in a scientific sense thus refers to a field within which something can be understood as true or false according to the field's own standards. Discourses, at least implicitly, exhibit argumentative structures that must be able to harmonize with the state of the discipline, its methods, theoretical horizon, and background beliefs of the entire society (Steinmetz, 2002, 112-115). The value of this is explained by Foucault in his work on Madness. The question is what constitutes insanity and how does one know it when seen? He replies

> Everything was organized so that the madman would recognize himself in a world of judgment that enveloped him on all sides; he must know that he is watched, judged, and condemned; from transgression to punishment, the connection must be evident, as a guilt recognized by all (Foucault, 1988:267).

In all but the most extreme forms of psychosis, the abnormal sees himself as such because he's a part of the same society that will condemn him. Criminals are usually aware they're criminals. The differentiation of scientific and non-scientific knowledge is an expression of the historical constellation of practices that all partake of a single, universal field of "knowledge," and thus their claims to truth. This of course, also is a claim to what is real, what exists, and what constitutes the parameters of sanity and moral behavior. Since social power is holistic, as it presses "on all sides," the real power of the society is that the irrational, or the insane, or the immoral knows her own action to be such and condemns herself internally (Dalgliesh, 2013: 70ff).

Discourses differ in the way they express truth. A discourse is similar to a practice. It's historical and contains its own language that is mostly opaque to outsiders. An authoritative examination in court, in therapy, or in the practice of political argument expresses the regulatory parameters of what is true and, by definition, what is real. Knowledge is based on a normative education. Despite its diversity, what constitutes "knowledge" is not arbitrary, but connects itself to objectivity. Knowledge, science, the real and the normative are all the same concept seen from different points of view. It cannot be just a subjective opinion, but requires social recognition (Hunt, 1992: 2-4). If the criteria were to be exposed as mostly subjective, it would collapse as criteria. The same is true if it's intersubjective. This is quite different from objective.

His *Archaeology of Knowledge* explores the word games that constitute the universe of the real (and hence the true) by which the subject is set off as an object of possible knowledge (Foucault, 1994: 297). Prison, punishment or sexuality are hybrid objects placed between the "norm" and the fact. Discourse within any scientific subject can never be a purely "natural" science because it includes moral and normative evaluations and interpretations as well. The biologist's task is to understand the variables in living things, but it cannot externalize this as an attitude to the morality of a life. It cannot, in other words, make sense out of its own origin. Why care at all about how living things function? There can only be one answer: it is a good thing that life processes are understood so that life can be prolonged and changed both qualitatively and

quantitatively. Yet, the biologist cannot say that and remain a scientist (Foucault, 1988a: 189ff).

To summarize, Foucault and his school stress that modernity is totalitarian in that all things are the result of power and thus, can be regulated. For each set of objects ("fields") there are authorized groups of experts that not only define what is true, but what is real. It's not just that the madman places himself entirely in the hands of a doctor, but that the field of psychiatry exists within a social whole such that the madman knows himself to be such. Coercive power is at the root of all modern truth claims.

> This occurs, then, in two different ways. In an institution like the factory, for example, the worker's labor and the worker's knowledge about his own labor, the technical improvements – the little inventions and discoveries, the micro-adaptations he's able to implement in the course of his labor – are immediately recorded, thus extracted from his practice, accumulated by the power exercised over him through supervision. In this way, the worker's labor is gradually absorbed into a certain technical knowledge of production which will enable a strengthening of control. (Foucault, 2000: 83-84)

This summarizes Foucault view of power. The concept of coercion is radically misunderstood by the educated peoples in "advanced" societies. They see it as manifest primarily in the colossal, administrative agencies such as law enforcement, the military, or the prison system. Power is far more effective than these well known agencies. It's an unvarying appropriation of the "micro-adaptations" in human life which means that even the most microscopic action of human life is ordered, organized and and rendered "normal" by those who control the technocracy. To be more precise, it is organized by technocracy as such, while the people staffing it aren't essential to it. Rather, they're initiated into it.

Further, postmodernism is how the technocracy is reproduced in human action and speech. Power is not the clear-cut, blatant "violence" that imposes itself upon humanity, but refers to the definitions of words, norms and what is considered "normal" speech. It refers to the strictures and orders created when accepting a specific discourse and its sense of what is real. Education is the transmission belt of acceptance.

The Positivist mind has created a technical society which reduces everything to that which can be quantified. It means that the society of the "fact" is completely mechanized. A "fact" is a form of power internalized by its victims – for better or worse – so that its very mechanism is part of how its both perceived and understood. Therefore, power is something internalized rather than imposed. Something that is "true" constrains action, since to act on what is false makes no sense. Freedom, in the libertarian sense, only refers to areas of life that are uncertain. Positivism claims that filling in these blanks is just a matter of time. To exist in a purely mechanized world, so long as its "objective," is to live in the totality of realness.

As always, trendy theories leave themselves out of their criticism. The critique of Positivism has been done many times before, using similar language to Foucault. Academia, however, is largely unaware of them, knowing only liberal or Marxist critiques. Postmodernism is dominant in academia, or at least large chunks of it largely because, if all relations are socially generated, then all of these are amenable to legislative or juridical regulation. The university is a miniature version of the mechanized, leftist utopia the Regime seeks for the whole society.

The problem is that he uses conventional reason to dethrone reason. He uses words that ostensibly refer to realities to say they refer to nothing. Somehow, refusing to cite a single source in *The History of Sexuality* is considered acceptable. He was being promoted by very powerful people. If Foucault is correct, then there's no good reason to read Foucault. What happens when Foucault's words are subject to the same critique as others? How can he have become one of the most celebrated intellectuals of the 20th century?

In an otherwise very poor paper on Foucault, Patrick West wrote:

> Michel Foucault was not just wrong; he erased any possibility for proving himself to be right. He asserted that "the author" did not exist, that he or she is condemned to produce a work defined by customs of literature, and created through a language imposed on the mind from without. How can we believe an author who tells us the author does not exist, who writes in an objective prose that objectivity does not exist, this historian who tells us that we cannot write history? His canon is self-invalidating (West, 2004)

At the beginning of this paper, I wrote that a professor riding around in a Jaguar is hardly an outsider. This was Foucault's car of choice, and he demanded from the universities that promoted him that it always had to be beige and appointed the way he wanted. He drank and drove it recklessly, oddly never really getting into trouble for it. Despite some potent insights, postmodernism was never a critical school, but a slavishly establishmentarian one. Its purpose was to further remove words from referents so those who control reality, especially in media, could not only tell people what was true, but also what was real. They put themselves in the position of God, as the creators of all things. No monarch or military dictator ever had this power, though these elites continuously claim that their existence is necessary for liberty to exist. The Postmodern idea makes this possible. If all is fluid, then only the Will to Power can create reality. Since not all wills are equal, then only the most powerful can crate realty.

That's certainly worth buying a spoiled professor a new Jaguar every year.

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