

## 6 From the Repressive Hypothesis to Bio-Power

The return to an analysis of social practices is found in the lectures, interviews, and books that Foucault published in the 1970s. In *Discipline and Punish* (1975) and *The History of Sexuality* (1977), he presents important parts of a far-reaching interpretation of modernity. In this section of our book, we lay out a synoptic overview of Foucault's general story, an account which, not surprisingly, follows the broad line of argumentation used here. We should stress that Foucault has never presented his work in quite this form. His work is still very much in a process of change and refinement. There are areas of uncleanness and sketchiness which can be read either as confusion or, more sympathetically, as problems he has opened up for further exploration, either by his subsequent work or by others.

The relations between the historical details Foucault chooses to emphasize and the more standard historiography also remain problematic and controversial.<sup>1</sup> As we are in no position to evaluate the detailed

1. There is obviously no simple appeal to the facts involved in evaluating Foucault's historical theses. Within the historical profession in France the evaluation of his work is sharply divided. In *L'Impossible Prison* (Paris: Editions de Seuil, 1980) a group of nineteenth century specialists discuss *Discipline and Punish*. Their reactions vary from cautious to condescending although they succeed in demonstrating very few places where Foucault is not in control of "the facts." As Foucault caustically points out, most of these historians have misunderstood his argument and hence even their minor factual corrections are simply beside the point. This was clearly an occasion missed; one would hope for a more fruitful and perceptive historical attention to detail than the one presented there. On the other hand, Paul Veyne, Professor of Roman History at the Collège de France, in an essay entitled "Foucault révolutionne l'histoire" (in *Comment on Ecrit L'Histoire*, Editions de Seuil, 1978) praises Foucault as a historian for his brilliance, his precision, and his historical acumen.

historical particulars of Foucault's account, we attempt to outline Foucault's historical material in as clear a form as seems appropriate. This entails leaving out the great quantity of minutiae and the meticulous layering by which Foucault, the genealogist, seeks to demonstrate specificity, local variation, and texture. It also omits some of the labyrinthine presentation with which Foucault covers his historical tracks. Our aim is not to resolve matters of fact but to be clear about the type of approach Foucault is pursuing. If this is made more accessible, then perhaps some of the debate about the idiosyncrasies of Foucault's presentation of events might at least take place in a context whose contours are known to participants on both sides.

Foucault clearly owes us a more explicit account of how he is proceeding in many areas. The limits and standards of evidence, refutation, and interpretation presumably exist for his interpretive analytics or his history of the present, but they can only be guessed at if one uses Foucault's own books as exemplars. This does not mean that Foucault owes us a theory of history or a manual of methodology. But as his interpretations gain more adherents and become—as they already have—stimuli to research, these problems will have to be thematized more explicitly or else they will all too likely be incorporated into empiricist historical procedures. (This latter eventuality is not something Foucault can prevent, but he obviously does not want to lend his support to this development. His silence does not help his cause. What may be an effective tactic in the intellectual field of Paris takes on a rather different function in the halls of American academia.)

The two interconnected concepts around which Foucault organizes his writing of the 1970s are the *repressive hypothesis* and *bio-technico-power* (or *bio-power*). In *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault argues against the *repressive hypothesis* (the view that truth is intrinsically opposed to power and therefore inevitably plays a liberating role). This position is not directly attributed to any particular individual or school. It is set up as a kind of Nietzschean parody of current received opinion—at least for French leftist circles. (As with the historical accounts Foucault gives us, there is also a form of French provincialism in his theoretical claims. Although other countries are certainly mentioned—examples are drawn from England and America, among others—the bulk of the historical material, its real frame of reference, and the theoretical opponents Foucault secretly jousts with are all French.) But it should also be understood that *The History of Sexuality* is a broad overview of a larger project that will take many years to complete. Therefore the general interpretation Foucault presents should be considered to be an interpretive exaggeration, a way of setting out markers of terrain to be covered, issues to be confronted, commonplaces to be recast, and figures to be reevaluated.

Against the foil of the repressive hypothesis, Foucault develops a strikingly different interpretation of the relations of sex, truth, power, the body, and the individual. He calls this alternative synthesis biotechnico-power or bio-power. The juxtaposition of the repressive hypothesis and bio-power serves us here as a means of laying out the main issues one encounters in Foucault's work. Gilles Deleuze has said cryptically that Foucault should be seen not as a historian, but as a new kind of map-maker—maps made for use not to mirror the terrain.

### The Repressive Hypothesis

Stated broadly, the repressive hypothesis holds that through European history we have moved from a period of relative openness about our bodies and our speech to an ever-increasing repression and hypocrisy. During the seventeenth century, or so the story goes, a lively frankness still prevailed: "It was a time of direct gestures, shameless discourse, and open transgressions, when anatomies were shown and intermingled at will, and knowing children hung about amid the laughter of adults" (HS 3). By the middle of the nineteenth century things had altered dramatically—and for the worse. The laughter was replaced by the "monotonous nights of the Victorian bourgeoisie." Sexuality, or what was left of it, was now confined to the home, and even there it was restricted to the parents' bedroom. A rule of silence was imposed. Censorship reigned. What sex there was became joyless and utilitarian. In the nuclear family, it was geared only to reproduction. The exclusion of all acts, speech, and desires which did not conform to a strict, repressive, and hypocritical code was strictly enforced. The law, repression, and the basest of utilities held sway. This logic obtained even at the fringes of Victorian society where concessions to licentiousness and debauchery were grudgingly made. Even there, or especially there, a policed and profitable trade was allowed to be the exception which confirmed the rule. The counter-Victorians only reaffirmed the triumph of the dour moralism represented by the unsmiling queen.

For those who hold it, the great attraction of this view of repression is that it is so easily linked with the rise of capitalism. "The minor chronicle of sex and its trials is transposed into the ceremonious history of the modes of production; its trifling aspect fades from view" (HS 5). Sex was repressed because it was incompatible with the work ethic demanded by the capitalist order. All energies had to be harnessed to production. The dialectic of history neatly weaves the trivial and the profound into one whole cloth. Sexuality is only an appendage to the real story of history—the rise of capitalism—but it is an important one, since repression is the general form of domination under capitalism.

Still, the tables could be turned on Foucault rather easily here. If one

substituted the word "power" for the word "production" in the above quotation it would not be an unjust characterization of Foucault's project. Though Foucault is not attempting to uncover the laws of history, nor to deny the importance of capitalism, (he is trying to show us the importance that sexuality has recently attained in our civilization, precisely because of its links with power.) Since, as we shall see, he does not think that there is a transhistorical, cross-cultural sexuality, he will be at pains to show that our sexuality is linked to something else. This "something else" turns out, at least in part, to be specific forms of power. How to develop a view of power that does not turn into an underlying essence, a metaphysical notion, or an empty catchall is the central problem confronting Foucault's recent work.

(Another inherent appeal of the repressive hypothesis is the conclusion that sexual liberation or resistance to repression would be an important battle to fight, albeit a hard one to win.) (Even Freud made only minor gains in this view, for his work was quickly recuperated through its inclusion in the scientific establishment of medicine and psychiatry.) It is certainly the case that, since the nineteenth century, (speaking openly and defiantly about sexuality has come to be seen in and of itself as an attack on repression, as an inherently political act. After all, sexual liberation and the overthrow of capitalism are still considered to be on the same political agenda. By this argument, when we speak of sex we are denying established power. We offer ourselves the "opportunity to speak out against the powers that be, to utter truths and promise bliss, to link together enlightenment, liberation and manifold pleasures; to pronounce a discourse that combines the fervor of knowledge, the determination to change the laws, and the longing for the garden of earthly delights" (HS 7). Who could resist?

(The repressive hypothesis is anchored in a tradition which sees power only as constraint, negativity, and coercion. As a systematic refusal to accept reality, as a repressive instrument, as a ban on truth, the forces of power prevent or at least distort the formation of knowledge. Power does this by suppressing desire, fostering false consciousness, promoting ignorance, and using a host of other dodges. Since it fears the truth, power must suppress it.)

It follows that power as repression is best opposed by the truth of discourse. When the truth is spoken, when the transgressive voice of liberation is raised, then, supposedly, repressive power is challenged. Truth itself would not be totally devoid of power, but its power is at the service of clarity, nondistortion, and one form or another of higher good, even if the higher good is nothing more substantive than clarity. Even though Foucault is presenting parodies here, they are often close to the

target. Perhaps the most sophisticated counter-project available today, that of Jürgen Habermas, argues for a quasi-transcendental concept of reason as a means of criticizing and resisting the distortions of domination.

Foucault calls this view of power the "juridico-discursive" (HS 82). It is thoroughly negative; power and truth are entirely external to each other. Power produces nothing but "limit and lack." It lays down the law, and the juridical discourse then limits and circumscribes. Punishment for disobedience is always close at hand. Power is everywhere the same: "It operates according to the simple and endlessly reproduced mechanisms of law, taboo and censorship" (HS 84). Power is domination. All it can do is forbid, and all it can command is obedience. Power, ultimately, is repression; repression, ultimately, is the imposition of the law; the law, ultimately demands submission.

Foucault offers two additional reasons why this view of power has been so readily accepted into our discourse. First, there is what he calls the "speaker's benefit" (HS 6). In the pose of the universal intellectual who speaks for humanity, the speaker solemnly appeals to the future which, he tells us, will surely be better. The tone of prophecy and promised pleasure neatly mesh. After all, "to utter truths and promise bliss" is a not unattractive position from which to speak. The intellectual as spokesman for conscience and consciousness locates himself in this privileged spot. He is outside of power and within the truth. His sermons—statements of oppression and promises of a new order—are pleasurable to pronounce and easy to accept. Of course, this could be taken as a description of Foucault's own privileged stance and to some extent he is not exempt from this charge. However, as genealogist he is certainly not claiming to be outside of power, nor to promise us a path to utopia or bliss.

(2) The ease of acceptance is Foucault's second point. He argues that modern power is tolerable on the condition that it mask itself—which it has done very effectively. If truth is outside of and opposed to power, then the speaker's benefit is merely an incidental plus. But if truth and power are not external to each other, as Foucault obviously will maintain, then the speaker's benefit and associated ploys are among the essential ways in which modern power operates. It masks itself by producing a discourse, seemingly opposed to it but really part of a larger deployment of modern power. As Foucault puts it, "Power as a pure limit set on freedom is, at least in our society, the general form of its acceptability" (HS 86).

The root of this is historical. According to Foucault, before it took sex as a key target, power in fact acted through prohibition and restraint. The major institutions of power—the monarch and the state—arose from a sea of local and conflicting forces. Out of myriad local bonds and battles

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the rise of monarchy operated, *grosso modo*, to regulate, arbitrate, and demarcate. At the same time, it sought to break the bond of feudal tradition and custom. It worked to establish a more centralized order from these multilocal fiefdoms. "Faced with a myriad of clashing forces, these great forms of power functioned as a principle of right that transcended all the heterogenous claims, manifesting the triple distinction of a unitary regime, of identifying its will with the law, and of acting through mechanisms of interdiction and sanction" (HS 87). The power that emerged was far from unified. It operated with many weapons, but its language was that of the law. The law justified the sovereign both to himself and to his subjects. The particular historical realities of such legal legitimization of power are, of course, extraordinarily complex. Given the recent work of Georges Duby and his students on this period, and given the centrality of these themes, we expect a rich elaboration of these points in later volumes.

One of Foucault's main points is that the discourse of law as legitimization found a form which is still in use. He points out that even the opponent of a political regime speaks the same discourse regarding the law as the regime itself. During the Classical Age, criticism of the French monarchy was cast as an attack on the monarchy's abuse of the law. Later radical critiques of the state tried to demystify the way bourgeois regimes manipulated legal codes to their own advantage. What was wrong with this manipulation, presumably, was that it distorted the rule of law. In a sense, this also applies to Foucault himself, who challenges the modern institutions and discourses of power by hinting that ideals of the law are in permanent tension with the social order established by political technologies.

Foucault has clearly set up the concept of the repressive hypothesis as a deception to be revealed. He will not succeed in his attack simply by proposing the reverse, by merely changing the terms of the discourse, for the issue is not which discourse is true or even truly critical of power. Nor does he claim that the concept of the repressive hypothesis ignores the latest empirical advances, and so can be corrected by the right information. Rather, Foucault takes seriously the positions that were, at the time, taken seriously by their adherents; his aim is to give a genealogy of how the repressive hypothesis came to be and what functions it has played in our society. He reads the various components of the repressive hypothesis not as evasions, but as fundamental parts of the modern interplay of truth and power that he is seeking to diagnose. However, the analytic dimension is still undeveloped in *The History of Sexuality*. Presumably the contours will be clearer after the publication of the later volumes.

Where Foucault himself stands, in relation to his descriptions of the repressive hypothesis, is not explicitly clear. He coyly sidesteps the

problem of whether he is exempt from the descriptions he is providing. It seems clear that he is presenting his analyses of power and truth because he thinks that there is something problematic about their relationship in our society. He is genealogically problematizing the way that others have related the terms as a means of showing us that these relationships are not at all absolute. This might lead to the assumption that Foucault sees himself as beyond the hold of these terms. But, as we have been arguing, Foucault considers himself, as an intellectual, to be no longer external to what he is analyzing. The archaeological method enables him to achieve a partial distancing—but only a partial one. Further, the genealogical method is one of commitment. But trying to show that the relations of truth and power have for good reasons been mistakenly held to be opposed is still a matter of applying a new and modified form of reason against a more highly complex version of power (which includes a component of truth as one of its most characteristic elements). In this, Foucault is not so terribly far from Adorno, or even from Weber.

Foucault does differentiate himself from Weber methodologically. For him, Weber's ideal type is a device which retrospectively brings together a variety of historical considerations, so as to highlight the "essence" of the historical object being studied, for example, Calvinism, capitalism, worldly asceticism. It is the ideal type which brings disparate phenomena into a meaningful model from which the historian can explain them. Foucault maintains that his approach differs in that he is interested in isolating "explicit programs" like the Panopticon, which functioned as actual programs of action and reform. There is nothing hidden about them; they are not invented by the historian to bring together an explanation. Hence, as he told a group of French historians, "discipline is not the expression of an 'ideal type' (that of the disciplined man); it is the generalisation and the connection of different techniques which are themselves responses to local objectives (apprenticeship in school, the formation of troops capable of handling rifles)" (IP 49). At the same time, these explicit programs were never directly and completely realized in institutions. This is not because reality never totally imitates an ideal, but rather because there were counter-programs, local conflicts, and other strategies which were perfectly analyzable, even if they were finally distinct from the initial program. Foucault's effort, as genealogist, is to stay as much as possible on the surface of things, to avoid recourse to ideal significations, general types, or essences. However, if one skips from the few methodological pronouncements Weber wrote—the several lines about ideal types have been given a vastly disproportionate attention—to his historical analyses, the gap between Foucault and Weber diminishes considerably.

Substantively, Foucault's assertion that the "problem of reason"

has to be treated historically and not metaphysically is certainly something with which Weber and Adorno would agree. Foucault is clear: "I think that we must limit the sense of the word 'rationalisation' to an instrumental and relative use... and to see how forms of rationalisation become embodied in practices, or systems of practices" (IP 47). Foucault's advance over Nietzsche, Weber, and Adorno is to have taken this prescription to heart and to have produced concrete analyses of specific historical practices in which truth and power are the issue. He has isolated and identified the mechanisms of the power of rationalization with a finer grained analysis than Weber. But this should be seen as an advance, not a refutation of the Weberian project.

Finally, Foucault is not attacking reason but rather showing how a historical form of rationality has operated. As he says, "to see in this analysis a critique of reason in general is to postulate that reason can only produce the Good and that Evil can only flow from a refusal of reason. This would have little sense. The rationality of the abominable is a fact of contemporary history. But this does not give to irrationality any special rights" (IP 31). As we argue throughout this book, Foucault's method of interpretive analytics was constructed as a powerful and necessary tool to avoid the dilemma of value-freedom which haunted Weber or the temptation of irrationalism and despair (or a recourse to art) which was never far from the Frankfurt thinkers. Foucault is eminently reasonable; this has led him to center his work on the practical operation of "the truth" in modern regimes of power.

### Bio-Power

Foucault genealogically recasts the repressive hypothesis by historically locating its components. These components extend back to the Greek polis, the Roman army, the Roman Republic, the Roman Empire, and to the Oriental bases of Christianity. However, it was only in the seventeenth century that bio-power emerged as a coherent political technology, and even then it was not actually the dominant technology during the Classical Age. Yet this was a period when the fostering of life and the growth and care of populations became a central concern of the state, when a new type of political rationality and practice found a coherent form. Foucault compares the import of the new modality of political rationality to the Galilean revolution in the physical sciences. In the sciences of nature, the freeing of things from the traditional structures of understanding produced a successful theoretical change of the greatest magnitude. In the political realm, however, philosophers continued to espouse and take seriously traditional theories of sovereignty, natural law, and social contract. Foucault argues that this discourse helped mask the radical shifts that were in fact taking place at the level of cultural

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practices. Modern "power is tolerable only on condition that it mask a substantial part of itself. Its success is proportional to its ability to hide its own mechanisms" (HS 86).

Parallel with the persistence of earlier political theories, the Classical Age developed a new technical and political rationality. In the middle of the seventeenth century, the systematic, empirical investigation of historical, geographic, and demographic conditions engendered the modern social sciences. This new knowledge was unmoored from older ethical or prudential modes of thinking and even from Machiavellian advice to the prince. Instead, technical social science began to take form within the context of administration. This was not a general, context-independent, universal and "tending towards formalization" knowledge such as what was emerging in the physical sciences. It was instead a mode of understanding aimed at particulars. The modern social sciences branched off from traditional political theory which sought practical wisdom, and from the Hobbesian line which sought a general theory of society imitative of the physical sciences. In chapter 7 we will consider what this alliance between the sciences of man and the structures of power entails for contemporary social sciences. Here we are specifically concerned with the way in which certain social sciences came to be connected with technologies of bio-power. "Bio-power brought life and its mechanisms into the realm of explicit calculations and made knowledge/power an agent of transformation of human life . . . Modern man is an animal whose politics places his existence in question" (HS 143).

In Foucault's story, bio-power coalesced around two poles at the beginning of the Classical Age. These poles remained separate until the beginning of the nineteenth century, when they combined to form the technologies of power which still recognizably characterize our current situation.

One pole was concern with the human species. For the first time in history, scientific categories—species, population, and others—rather than juridical ones became the object of political attention in a consistent and sustained fashion. Efforts to understand the processes of human regeneration were closely tied to other, more political ends. These regulatory controls of the vitality of life, will be the focus of the sixth volume of Foucault's history of sexuality. We in turn will take up Foucault's present analysis of sex and sexuality in more detail in chapter 8.

The other pole of bio-power centered on the body not so much as the means for human reproduction, but as an object to be manipulated. A new science, or more accurately a technology of the body as an object of power, gradually formed in disparate, peripheral localizations. Foucault labels this "disciplinary power" and he analyzes it in detail in *Discipline and Punish* (see chapter 7). The basic goal of disciplinary power was to

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produce a human being who could be treated as a "docile body." This docile body also had to be a productive body. The technology of discipline developed and was perfected in workshops, barracks, prisons, and hospitals; in each of these settings the general aim was a "parallel increase in the usefulness and docility" of individuals and populations. The techniques for disciplining bodies were applied mainly to the working classes and the subproletariat, although not exclusively, as they also operated in universities and schools.

Disciplinary control and the creation of docile bodies is unquestionably connected to the rise of capitalism. But the economic changes which resulted in the accumulation of capital and the political changes which resulted in the accumulation of power are not entirely separate. The two depend on each other for their spread and their successes. For example, "the massive projection of military methods into industrial organization was an example of the modelling of the division of labor following the model laid down by the schemata of power. But this schemata did not arise in the economic sectors and it was not restricted to it" (DP 221). Foucault places the two major alterations in a noncausal parallelism but clearly indicates that the development of political technology, in his interpretation, preceded the economic. He contends that it was the disciplinary technologies which underlay the growth, spread, and triumph of capitalism as an economic venture. Without the insertion of disciplined, orderly individuals into the machinery of production, the new demands of capitalism would have been stymied. In a parallel manner, capitalism would have been impossible without the fixation, control, and rational distribution of populations on a large scale. These techniques of discipline, Foucault argues, supported and underlay the grander and more visible changes in the production apparatus. At least in France, the slow growth of disciplinary technology preceded the rise of capitalism—in both a temporal and a logical sense. These technologies did not cause the rise of capitalism but were the technological preconditions for its success.

As we said earlier, Foucault maintains that disciplinary technologies remained relatively hidden while they spread. They did not simply eliminate the discourse of political theory, of law, of rights and responsibilities, of justice. Practitioners of disciplinary technologies in fact used several distinct theories of the state, each of which had been elaborated at a particular time in the past. These different theories could coexist in different settings of power: in factories, in schools, in universities, in state administrative offices. This does not mean that such theories were unimportant. Rather, the intricacy and indeed even the competition between theoretical positions masked the fact that radically new practices of the time, those of bio-power, were gaining widespread acceptance. To take an example, the eighteenth-century humanist discourse of equality fired

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political movements of an unprecedented scale. But at the same time, in a quieter way, tighter discipline in manufacturing workshops, regimented *corvées* of vagabonds, and increased police surveillance of every member of the society assured the growth of a set of relations which were not and could not be ones of equality, fraternity, and liberty. Whereas a certain progress in terms of political representation and equality is unquestionable in the institutions of the state, the disciplines assured that all members of society were neither equal nor equally powerful: "The real, corporeal disciplines, constituted the foundation of the formal, juridical liberties. The contract may have been regarded as the ideal foundation of law; disciplinary technology constituted the technique, universally widespread of coercion and subjection" (*DP* 222, translation modified).

Although this political technology escaped from the grid of traditional political theory, it was not irrational or unthematized. Indeed it had its own distinctive political rationality. It is precisely that rationality, in association with the new technologies of bio-power, which Foucault is attempting to analyze. To understand this distinctive political body of thought, one must contrast the position that emerged during the Classical Age with earlier theories of politics and knowledge.

*①* Traditionally in Western culture, political thinking was concerned with the just and good life. Practical reason sought to change character, as well as communal and political life, based on a larger metaphysical understanding of the ordered cosmos. Christian versions, like those of Saint Thomas, were in a line with Aristotle. Thomas was concerned with an order of virtue that was anchored in an ontotheoretical world view. Politics served a higher goal. This higher goal rested on a larger order, which could be known. Political thinking was that art which, in an imperfect world, led men toward the good life, an art which imitated God's government of nature.

*②* A second type of political rationality emerged during the Renaissance and is usually associated with the name Machiavelli. The prince was given counsel on how best to hold onto his state. The link between the power of the prince and the type of state he ruled became the object of examination. This was, as many others have remarked, a major break from the earlier Western tradition of political thought. There were no metaphysical considerations, nor any serious attention paid to goals beyond that of the prince's power. The increase and solidarity of this power—not the freedom or virtue of the citizens, nor even their peace and tranquility—was the ultimate goal set by these treatises. Practical, technical knowledge was raised above metaphysical considerations, and strategic considerations became paramount.

A third development in political thought, usually referred to as the

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theory of *raison d'état*, differentiated itself from the other two. Although the earliest of these theorists appeared at the same time as Machiavelli and are often grouped together with him, Foucault sees them in a decisively different light, for he looks particularly to the authors of the police and technical manuals of the age. His point is that these men, whose names are not familiar to most of us, laid down policies for actual application. They elaborated precise techniques for ordering and disciplining individuals, while still using the mainstream Western tradition of political thought to mask their particular tactics. Yet they also represent a change in political philosophy. The tacticians of the *raison d'état* were concerned with the state as an end in itself; the state freed from a larger ethical order and from the fate of particular princes. Their aim, Foucault argues, was the most radical and modern of all. For them, political rationality no longer sought to achieve the good life nor merely to aid the prince, but to increase the scope of power for its own sake by bringing the bodies of the state's subjects under tighter discipline.

The first principle of this new political rationality was that the state, not the laws of men or nature, was its own end. The existence of the state and its power was the proper subject matter of the new technical and administrative knowledge, in contrast to juridical discourse, which had referred power to other ends: justice, the good, or natural law. This does not mean that the law became irrelevant or disappeared, only that it gradually came to have other functions in modern society.

*③* The object to be understood by administrative knowledge was not the rights of people, not the nature of divine or human law, but the state itself. However, the point of this knowledge was not to develop a general theory; rather, it was to help define the specific nature of a specific historical state. And this required the gathering of information on the state's environment, its population, its resources, and its problems. As we saw earlier, a whole array of empirical methods of investigation had to be developed or advanced to generate this knowledge. The history, geography, climate, and demography of a particular country became more than mere curiosities. They were crucial elements in a new complex of power and knowledge. The government, particularly the administrative apparatus, needed knowledge that was concrete, specific, and measurable in order to operate effectively. This enabled it to ascertain precisely the state of its forces, where they were weak and how they could be shored up. The new political rationality of bio-power was therefore connected with the nascent empirical human sciences. What was first a study of population, for instance, soon became political arithmetic. One thinks here of the numerous sections in Montesquieu's *Spirit of the Laws* on climate, geography, population, and so on, sections that are often

abridged or avoided by modern commentators. In Foucault's optic, these passages, and not the ones on virtue, are the most significant ones in the treatise.

It follows that the administrators would need such detailed knowledge not only about their own state, but about other states as well. If the end of this political rationality was the power of the state, then it had to be measured in terms of force. Since all other states were playing the same political game, comparison between them was crucial. Welfare and even survival were functions not of virtue, but of strength. Here too empirical knowledge, not moral theory, was the essential component.

Politics thus became bio-politics. Once the politics of life was in place, then the life of these populations, and their destruction as well, became political choices. Since these populations were nothing more or less than what the "state cares for for its own sake," the state was entitled to relocate them or to slaughter them, if it served the state's interest to do so. In sum,

from the idea that the state has its own nature and its own finality, to the idea that man is the true object of the state's power, as far as he produces a surplus strength, as far as he is a living, working, speaking being, as far as he constitutes a society, and as far as he belongs to a population in an environment, we can see the increasing intervention of the state in the life of the individual. The importance of life for these problems of political power increases; a kind of animalization of man through the most sophisticated political techniques results. Both the development of the possibilities of the human and social sciences, and the simultaneous possibility of protecting life and of the holocaust make their historical appearance. (SL)

In his analysis of this new type of political rationality, Foucault isolates a new relationship between politics and history. A wise legislator could no longer bring together and relate all the elements of the state to create a situation of perfect harmony. Instead he must continually oversee a set of changing forces that are periodically strengthened or weakened by the political choices a regime makes. Since there is no longer any external principle of harmony or limit that can be imposed, so there is no inherent limit to the possible strength a state might achieve. Power, unmoored from the limitations of nature and theology, enters into a universe that is capable, at least in principle, of unbounded expansion. Expansion—or destruction—takes place on the stage of history. There are, of course, material forces acting on the course of history. The emergence of this political era is obviously related to major economic and demographic changes, above all the rise of capitalism. Yet, after more than a century of Marxist historiography, the specific importance of this particular political

rationality remains relatively unanalyzed. It is the identification and analysis of these distinctive political practices which are at the center of Foucault's project.

For instance, although the new breed of administrators concerned themselves largely with populations, there was, at the same time, a concomitant administrative definition of politics and the individual. In the expanding arena of the modern state and its administrative apparatus, human beings within a given domain were considered as a resource. The individual was of interest exactly insofar as he could contribute to the strength of the state. The lives, deaths, activities, work, miseries, and joys of individuals were important to the extent that these everyday concerns became politically useful. Sometimes what the individual had to do, from the state's point of view, was to live, work, and produce in certain ways; and sometimes he had to die in order to enforce the strength of the state. The emergence of the modern individual as an object of political and scientific concern and the ramifications of this for social life now become Foucault's major problematic.

The job of the police was the articulation and administration of techniques of bio-power so as to increase the state's control over its inhabitants. While the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century French police were part of the juridical administration, they dealt with individuals not as juridical subjects but as working, trading, living human beings. (This dimension was treated archaeologically in detail in *The Order of Things*.) Through a reading of administrative manuals of the age, Foucault shows that the chief role of the police, which took more and more precedence over time, was the control of certain individuals and of the general population as they related to the state's welfare. The functions of the police were therefore very broad indeed: "Men and things envisioned as to their relationships to property, what they produce, men's coexistence on a territory, what is exchanged on the market. It also includes how they live, the diseases and the accidents which can befall them. What the police see to is a live, active, productive man. Under Louis XIV one manual says, 'the true object of the police is man'" (SL). State power had previously centered on men as subjects with rights and duties. Now the police were concerned with men in their everyday activities, as the essential components of the state's strength and vitality. It was the police and its administrative adjuncts who were charged with men's welfare—and with their control.

The administrative apparatus of the state posed welfare in terms of people's needs and their happiness. Both of these were, of course, goals to which previous governments had dedicated themselves. But the relations have been reversed. Human needs were no longer conceived of as ends in themselves or as subjects of a philosophic discourse which sought

to discover their essential nature. They were now seen instrumentally and empirically, as the means for the increase of the state's power. Foucault thus demonstrates the relationship between the new administrative concept of human welfare and the growth of bio-power. State administrators expressed their concepts of human welfare and state intervention in terms of biological issues such as reproduction, disease, work, or pain.

The two poles of bio-power—control of the body and control of the species—which had developed separately in the eighteenth century, were brought together in the nineteenth-century preoccupation with sex. In addition to the state, other forms of power came into play, and they too used a discourse about sexuality and new tactics for controlling sexual practices. Sex became the construction through which power linked the vitality of the body together with that of the species. Sexuality and the significance invested in it was now the principal medium through which bio-power spread.

We will discuss Foucault's important insights about the topic of sex (what he calls the deployment of sexuality) in chapter 8. At this point, we simply want to emphasize the emergence of this topic as part of the growing field of bio-power. This discourse on sexuality should not be understood in the Weberian manner as the rise of a secular asceticism. In the interpretive grid of bio-power, the deployment of sexuality led not to a decreased interest in sexuality but to an enormous explosion of discourse and concern about the vitality of the body. There was, Foucault claims, "an intensification of the body, a problematization of health and its operational terms: it was a question of techniques for maximizing life. The primary concern was...the body, vigor, longevity, progeniture, and descent of the classes that 'ruled'" (HS 123). Never, it seems, had so much attention been focused on every aspect of the body and every dimension of its sexuality. Sex became the object of a major investment of signification, of power, and of knowledge.

By the end of the nineteenth century the general deployment of sexuality had spread widely through the social body. Just as the middle classes had differentiated themselves at the beginning of the century from the nobility and its "symbolics of blood," they now differentiated themselves from the working classes who were being drawn into the web of sex and bio-power. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, bourgeois moralists exhorted their classmates to pay careful attention to sex, calling attention to the life hidden in it as well as the dangers it held. By the end of the century, the dangers came in for increased attention; repression and secrecy were advised. As Foucault characterizes the new discourse: "Not only is sex a formidable secret, as the directors of conscience, moralists and pedagogues, and doctors always said to former generations, not only must we search it out for the truth it conceals, but if it carries

with it so many dangers, this is because—whether out of scrupulousness, an overly acute sense of sin, of hypocrisy, no matter—we have too long reduced it to silence" (HS 128, 129). Once the sexualization of individuals and populations had spread through the society, the differentiating mark of class could no longer be the bourgeois preoccupation with sexuality. Sex as meaning now expands to sex as administrative control.

It is at this point in the spread of bio-power that social welfare programs became professionalized. While the bourgeoisie were talking and writing about incestuous fantasies, they were now organizing social welfare programs in rural areas and in urban slums. Various reform societies sought to eradicate the actual practices of incest and other unallowable perversions among the working classes. Innumerable reports and journalistic exposés alerted the public to these ever present dangers. In addition, municipalities set up dispensaries to treat venereal disease, while an elaborate system of medical dossiers and licensed houses attempted to regulate prostitution. This extension of a disciplinary grid was carried out in the name of public hygiene and the fear of racial degeneracy. Appeals to the very fate of the race and the nation seemed to turn in large part on its sexual practices.

Shortly after, psychoanalysis entered—that is, for the bourgeoisie. It was the crown of the repressive hypothesis, the purest linking of desire and the law, of secret and wonderful signification; it was the remedy for repression, at least for some. Psychoanalysis announced that the connection between sexuality and the law as repression was absolutely universal: it was the basis of civilization. But the incestuous desires which founded all societies in the act of repression could, via psychoanalysis, safely be put into discourse. When the bourgeoisie gave up its exclusive hold on the discourse on sexuality, it invented another privilege for itself: the ability to talk about repressed sexuality, the deepest desires. "The task of truth was now linked to the challenging of taboos," at least for this class. Confession became linked to the command to talk about that which power forbade one to do.

Both the disciplinary and the confessional components of bio-power, although differentiated by their class applications, were unified by their common assumptions about the significance of sex. One of Foucault's examples clarifies the point. At the turn of the century, the incest taboo was scientifically pronounced as the universal law of all societies; at the same time, the administrative apparatus attempted to stamp it out in the rural and working class populations; and, through psychiatric science, intellectuals convinced themselves that by talking about this taboo they were resisting repression. The circle had been closed. The repressive hypothesis became the cornerstone for the advance of bio-power.

Thus, to return to the rhetorical question Foucault posed at the beginning of *The History of Sexuality*, the question of whether critical discourse about repression was a block to power or a part of the power mechanism it denounced, we can now answer that it was a central part. Foucault sums up this point: "Thus the law would be secure, even in the new mechanics of power. For this is the paradox of a society which, from the eighteenth century to the present, has created so many technologies of power that are foreign to the concept of the law: it fears the effects and proliferations of those technologies and attempts to recode them in forms of law" (*HS* 109).

Foucault's argument has come full circle, too. Bio-power has incorporated the repressive hypothesis. The historical conditions for the emergence of the repressive hypothesis—the cultural practices from which this theory of sexuality emerged—now dovetail with the conditions for its acceptance. In good interpretive fashion, both can only be understood when they are placed in a more comprehensive "grid of historical decipherment." Given this grid, we can now backtrack and look at these technologies and their associated rationality in more detail.

## The Genealogy of the Modern Individual as Object

In *Discipline and Punish* Foucault presents the genealogy of the modern individual as a docile and mute body by showing the interplay of a disciplinary technology and a normative social science. As he puts it, "This book is intended as a correlative history of the modern soul and of a new power to judge; a genealogy of the present scientifico-legal complex from which the power to punish derives its basis, justifications and rules, from which it extends its effects and by which it masks its exorbitant singularity" (*DP* 23). Foucault's book is obviously not a litany of progress. Rather, it is a somber recounting of the growth of disciplinary technology within the larger historical grid of bio-power. For Foucault the rise of the modern individual and that of the concept of society (as understood in the social sciences) are joint developments. The story Foucault is telling, however, is not the triumphant scientific one of Durkheim, in which the emergence of a science of society announces the increasing autonomy of the individual and the objectivity of the social. It is rather the other way round. Foucault tells of the emergence of an objective science of society—one which treats social facts as things—and of the "mute solidity" of the modern individual, in order to show that both developments are what he calls instrument-effects of specific historical forms of power.

In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault proposes that we approach punishment and prisons as a complex social function, not merely a set of repressive mechanisms. Punishment should be considered not as a purely juridical matter nor as a reflection of social structures nor as an indication of the spirit of the age. Rather, Foucault's approach to the prison is a way of isolating the development of a specific technique of power. Punishment is political as well as legal; it is important to be clear about this point.

Although *Discipline and Punish* is subtitled *The Birth of the Modern Prison*, its object of study is not really the prison; it is disciplinary technology. Foucault is explicit in response to his French historical critics:

What is at issue in the "birth of the prison"? French society in a given period? No. Delinquency in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries? No. Prisons in France between 1760 and 1840? Not even. Rather something more tenuous: the reflected intentions, the type of calculation, the "ratio" which was put in place in prison reform when it was decided to introduce in a new form the old practice of incarceration. In sum, I am writing a chapter in the history of "punitive reason." (*DP* 33)

Foucault's object of study is the objectifying practices of our culture as they are embodied in a specific technology.

The broad strategic development which Foucault is analyzing is summarized by the imperative: "Make the technology of power the very principle both of the humanization of the penal system and of the knowledge of man" (*DP* 23). In this strategy, the body is the central target. So, Foucault analyzes "a political technology of the body in which might be read a common history of power relations and object relations" (*DP* 24). Clearly, these relations are complex. It is their mutual production, their historical linkages, their genealogy which Foucault describes in *Discipline and Punish*.

Prisons are nonetheless the principal figure Foucault uses to highlight the West's changing attitudes toward discipline itself. A succinct way to present this history of power relations and object relations is to summarize the three figures of punishment Foucault gives us. They are torture as a weapon of the sovereign, correct representation as a dream of humanist reformers in the Classical Age, and prison and normalizing surveillance as an embodiment of the modern technology of disciplinary power. In each case, the type of punishment illustrates the society's dealings with criminals as "objects" to be manipulated. In all three, a major goal is to shift the balance of power relations in the larger society, while a minor but related goal—at least in the second and third figures—is the transformation of the criminal. Let us recapitulate the tactics and the aims of the three forms of punishment.

### Three Figures of Punishment

#### SOVEREIGN TORTURE

In the first figure, that of the sovereign, torture was the paradigmatic form of punishment. Why, Foucault asks, were criminals put on the rack, drawn and quartered, covered in boiling oil, hacked to pieces? Why, at the moment before death, were they made to confess their crimes to "the people" in a public spectacle?

This public torture was a political ritual. The law, it was held, represented the will of the sovereign; he who violated it must answer to the wrath of the king. A breach of the law was seen as an act of war, as a violent attack on the body of the king; the sovereign must respond in kind. More precisely, he must respond with excessive force; the sheer strength and magnitude of the power underlying the law must be publicly displayed as awesome. In this ritual of violence, the criminal was physically attacked, beaten down, dismembered, in a symbolic display of the sovereign's power. Thus, the power and integrity of the law were reasserted; the affront was righted.

This excessive power found its form in the ritual of atrocity. But the same ritual also displayed its own limits: "A body effaced, reduced to dust and thrown to the winds, a body destroyed piece by piece by the infinite power of the sovereign constituted not only the ideal, but the real limit of punishment" (*DP* 50). This was a battle, albeit a ritualized one, between two people. The sovereign would almost surely triumph, but the devastated body of the challenger at the same time avenged the spent force of the sovereign, exposing its limits. Although the king's power was great, each time the law was broken, each time the power was challenged, it had to be reactivated and reapplied. Should the display fail, an even greater display of power would be necessary to reestablish the sovereign's might.

Even though the final act of punishment was this "carnival of atrocity," there were formal legal proceedings which led up to the final theatrical performance. The establishment of an accusation and the proceedings to verify the accusation were the absolute prerogative of the magistrates. They followed an extremely elaborate code of procedure, requiring evidence, proof, and so on, the details of which need not concern us here. What is important is that the accused was totally removed from these proceedings, which were held in secret. "Written, secret, subjected, in order to construct its proofs, to rigorous rules, the penal investigation was a machine that might produce the truth in the absence of the accused" (*DP* 37).

Having satisfied itself as to the truth of its accusations, the law, logically, could have stopped its proceedings at this point. However, the law demanded a confession. "The confession, an act of the criminal, responsible and speaking subject, was the complement to the written, secret preliminary investigation" (*DP* 38). It was obtained through the ritual of public torture. Torture, Foucault points out, is not some uncontrolled act of animal rage but, quite the contrary, a controlled application of pain to the body. There were elaborate procedures developed to measure and control precisely the application of pain. "Torture rests on a whole quantitative art of pain.... Death-torture is the art of maintaining

life in pain, by subdividing it into a 'thousand-deaths', by achieving before life ceases the most exquisite agonies' (DP 33, 34). The development of this finely tuned art was directly linked with the codes of the law. Particular categories of crimes demanded particular degrees of torture; the pain of the body should fit the crime. Finally, torture was a judicial ritual. The victim had to have his punishment inscribed on his body.

But it is not only the power of the sovereign which was ritualized here. Supposedly, the truth of the accusation was demonstrated by torture leading to confession. By the eighteenth century, this production of truth had become a consistent ritual. As the criminal was tortured, he was made to confess. As the power of the law was inscribed on his body, he was made to validate the truth of the justice of the torture and the truth of the accusations. The culmination of the ritual, execution, would also be the culmination of the investigation: truth and power combined.

In sum, the figure of torture brings together a complex of power, truth, and bodies. The atrocity of torture was an enactment of power that also revealed truth. Its application on the body of the criminal was an act of revenge and an art. The power of the sovereign, however, was discontinuously applied in each of these demonstrations. The site of the application—the body—and the public place had to be retheatralized anew with each break of power.

The ritual confession of truth which accompanied and completed the enactment of power was also vulnerable. Its particularity of technique and location suggested a specific form of resistance. In the figure of power as torture, resistance as well as power relied on the audience watching the spectacle of atrocity. Without a public assemblage the whole intent of the ceremony would be annulled. Yet the presence of large masses of people at enactments of power was double-edged. Instilling awe was the intended result, but protest and revolt were also incited at these public demonstrations. If the execution was considered unjust—either because of the accusations against the criminal or because of the art of the executioner—the criminal might be freed and the officials pursued by the mob. The criminal, in the act of confessing, might—and apparently often did—seize the occasion to proclaim his innocence and denounce the authorities. In sum, at these spectacles of atrocity, "there was a whole aspect of the carnival, in which rules were inverted, authority mocked and criminals transformed into heroes" (DP 61). The site of power could easily become the site of social disturbance, or even revolt.

This resistance is embodied in a literature of "death speeches." In this curiously ambivalent genre, either the repentance of the criminal or the majesty of the crime took on epic proportions. In either case, Foucault cautions, the glorification of the criminal was neither simply the popular expression of protest nor an imposed "moralization from above." Rather,

it should be understood as "a sort of battleground around the crime, its punishment and its memory" (DP 67). Clearly, these curious orations were tolerated by the authorities, who could have blocked their publication. The funeral orations define a field of power and resistance; both justice and its violation find their glorification in them. Foucault holds that power needs resistance as one of its fundamental conditions of operation. It is through the articulation of points of resistance that power spreads through the social field. But it is also, of course, through resistance that power is disrupted. Resistance is both an element of the functioning of power and a source of its perpetual disorder. At this level of generality, Foucault is offering us little more than a provocative assertion. While his proposition is certainly compelling, in the examples he gives these historical illustrations are hardly sufficient for a general theory of power. Although Foucault claims that he is not trying to construct such a theory, others often assume him to be doing so, and he obviously is quite interested in power as a general issue. We will return to the specific place of resistance as a central component of the spread of bio-power in our last chapter.

#### HUMANIST REFORM

During the course of the eighteenth century, a group of humanist reformers articulated a new discourse, one which attacked the excess of violence, the flaunting of sovereign power, the glories of mob revenge. A growing legion of observers noted that public executions frightened less and incited more than they were intended. In the name of humanity, reformers condemned the "expiation of atrocity in torture" as an evil to be cured, an immoderation which must be excised in the name of a more rational distribution of power and justice. Petitions at the time of the French Revolution, summarized by the chancellery, proclaimed: "Let penalties be regulated and proportioned to the offenses, let the death sentence be passed only on those convicted of murder, and let the tortures that revolt humanity be abolished" (DP 73). With this discourse, we see the appearance of a new interpretation of punishment.

The humanist reformers demanded the abolition of the theater of atrocity. In their view, the essence of this ceremony was violence—excessive violence, both of the sovereign and of the people. According to the reformers, "in this violence, . . . tyranny confronts rebellion; each calls forth the other . . . Instead of taking revenge, criminal justice should simply punish" (DP 74). Further, there was such excess on both sides that the system failed to function effectively. The spectacular but personal and irregular power of the sovereign showed that his ceremonies were increasingly failing to deter crime. There was also an excess of violence and illegality on the side of the people who, despite a tangled and elaborate set

of legal codes, had established innumerable procedures for ignoring and circumventing them. This was particularly true when the crimes concerned property, and particularly the property of those highly placed in the social hierarchy. In the reformers' eyes, there was excess and insufficiency at every level in the old system. They proposed a new style of punishment which combined leniency with a greater efficiency of application.

Their chief theoretical justification lay in the theory of the social contract, that society is made up of individuals who have come together and through a contractual arrangement formed a society. Crime became not an attack on the body of the sovereign but a breach of contract in which the society as a whole was the victim. Society therefore had a right to redress this wrong, and punishment became the obligation of society. The standard by which justice operates was no longer the power of the sovereign and the truth of the confession but rather the "humanity" which all parties to the social contract share. Punishment, accordingly, must be modulated, made more lenient, for it is not only the criminal who is implicated in each of his actions, but the whole of society. Hence the limit of punishment—and its target—is the humanity of each subject.

The new form of punishment, then, must both redress the wrong done to society and bring the offender back to his rightful and useful place in society. This requalification of the subject relied on "a whole technology of representations" (DP 104). As we saw in chapter 1, representation in the Classical Age was the medium through which all things could be known. It follows that an art of manipulating representations could provide a technology for the correct ordering and reordering of social life.

The reformers developed a series of prescriptions based on this theory of judicial representations. First, punishment must be as unarbitrary as possible if it was to function efficiently. A perfect punishment would be "transparent to the crime it punishes" (DP 105). A representational punishment would immediately bring to mind, for those who observed it, both the nature of the crime itself and the remedy which had been imposed to correct it. Such a punishment would function as a deterrent, a recompense to society, and a lesson, all immediately intelligible to criminal and society. No longer would punishment flow from the arbitrary will of the sovereign, but henceforth it would correspond to the true order of society. New criminal legislation proposed in 1791 stated: "Exact relations are required between the nature of the offense and the nature of the punishment; he who has used violence in his crime must be subjected to physical pain; he who has been lazy must be sentenced to hard labour; he who has acted despicably will be subjected to infamy" (DP 105). Once a transparency is achieved between the act committed and the corrective

procedure applied, then the punishment could be considered efficient, effective, and humane.

Second, according to the reformers, this new technology of appropriate representations should function so as to decrease the possibility of the crime being repeated. It should operate as a deterrent in society. And it should also operate on the criminal himself, so as to requalify him as a juridical subject who can be recuperated for society. The means to achieve this end were found in the application of appropriate punishments, which were adjusted to the supposed motivating root of the crime in the criminal subject. Punishment would work effectively either by attacking the wellspring of the crime itself, by making it seem less desirable to the criminal in a calculus of pleasure and pain, or by mechanistically setting the force that motivated the crime to work against itself. This would set into motion a set of representations in which the good overpowered the bad in the mind of the criminal. In sum, "the penalty that forms stable and easily legible signs must also recompose the economy of interests and dynamics of passions" (DP 107).

But clearly, for all this to function correctly, it had to be based on a precise knowledge. The reformers in the eighteenth century sought to construct a comprehensive table of knowledge in which each crime and its appropriate punishment would find its exact place. The remedies had to be brought together in a code of law. The various species of criminals had to be classified in great detail. It became clear from these classifications that the same crime could have substantially different effects on criminals from different social groups or with different character structures. Hence a much greater degree of individuation in the classification of criminals was demanded: "Individualization appears as the ultimate aim of a precisely adapted code" (DP 99). At the same time this push towards individuation led towards the objectification of crimes and criminals. The appropriate application of correct punishment required an object who was fixed as an individual and known in great detail. We have here an important step in the growth of the sciences of society and of the disciplines which will later treat men as objects.

The humanist reformers in France claimed that they applied their knowledge to the "souls" of men. They did not ignore the body, but their principal goal was to operate successfully on the soul. The correct manipulation of representations should be able to perform all the tasks demanded of it. The theory of representation, linked with the social contract view and with the imperative of efficiency (and utility), produced "a sort of general recipe for the exercise of power over men: the 'mind' as a surface of inscription for power, with semiology as its tool, the submission of bodies through the control of ideas" (DP 102).

The ideal form of punishment for the humanists was not public torture of the criminal or, as in the next period, incarceration. It was public works. The criminal should perform works on the roads, canals, and public squares of France. He should be visible and travel throughout the land bearing with himself the representations of his crimes. The society would benefit from his work and from his lesson. "Thus, the convict pays twice, by the labour he provides and by the signs he produces.... The convict is a focus of profit and signification" (DP 109). In the eyes of the reformers, the profit was good, but the morality was better. Punishment became a kind of public morality lesson. The society reinforced its system of justice by parading these convicts throughout the realm. The more perfectly the law functioned, the more appropriately constructed the remedies, the better for all. The more effectively the lesson was carried through, the better it was for the citizen gone astray, for those who might err from justice and for the society as a whole. "The publicity of punishment must not have the physical effect of terror; it must open up a book to be read" (DP 111).<sup>1</sup>

In the process, the type of popular resistance which had turned on praise of the criminal would also be undercut. For if the criminal was himself a source of instruction, a moral lesson for all, publicly displayed, then popular discourse about his actions theoretically reinforced the lessons which were meant to be learned: "The poets of the people will at last join those who call themselves the 'missionaries of eternal reason'; they will become moralists" (DP 112). Through strict economy a lesson would be taught to all. The end of punishment would be the reform of souls and the moralization of society at the same time. All of society would become a theater of punishment, if only the correct representations were artfully manipulated to produce the right habits in the citizenry; for "on the soft fibres of the brain is founded the unshakable base of the soundest of Empires" (DP 103).

Whereas in the first figure the site of punishment was localized and only activated discontinuously, in the second the aim was the maximum circulation of signs, as continuously and widely as possible. In the first figure the power of the sovereign was inscribed directly on the body of the criminal; in the second a technique of correct manipulation of representations was applied to the mind. With torture, knowledge of the crime was acquired totally in secret by the magistrates and then displayed publicly through confession by the criminal; humanist reformers collected a vast elaboration of knowledge in order to construct a code in which all variations of criminals and punishments would be objectively, exhaustively, and publicly known. The criminal spoke his crime in his confession during torture; the juridical subject proclaimed his moral lesson by the signs society forced him to circulate throughout the country.

In the first figure resistance as social upheaval and glorification of power accompanied the theater of atrocity; in the second the stubborn refusal of the criminal to play his role with enthusiasm undermined this moral theater. More importantly, resistance to the humanist reformers never really got a chance to develop, as their myriad plans were never fully carried out. Although the period surrounding the Revolution witnessed their manifold proposals, the dramatic course of the Revolution, its aftermath, and the rise of Napoleon created a historical foreshortening in which these plans were never more than minimally implemented. All the same, elements of the humanist proposals were incorporated in the third figure of criminal punishment, that of disciplinary technology.

#### NORMALIZING DETENTION

The sudden emergence of the prison as the paradigmatic form of punishment is not entirely without predecessors in the Classical Age. By the middle of the eighteenth century, several Dutch correctional workhouses had incorporated a system of social and individual rehabilitation based on the rock of economic imperatives. The most famous of these institutions was the Maison de Force at Ghent. Here, criminals and vagabonds were rounded up and put to work. This served to reduce the spreading fear of criminality among the Dutch, but the political-social imperative was combined with an economic one. Prisons were expensive; therefore the prisoners should be put to work to pay for their own correction. Not only would it be economical in the short run, but from these prisons new workers would emerge, ready to contribute to the productivity and welfare of society. Recalcitrant youths would be taught the joys of labor. They would also be paid for labor done in the prison, for all work had to be remunerated in this Protestant society. In this ideal reformatory the economic and the moral, the individual and the social could all be happily combined. Yet at its time, the model found only limited application, for it seems that the humanists' distrust of detention still outweighed the utility of this northern model.

The Dutch-work model was refined by English reformers, whose efforts culminated in the principles of prison reform articulated by Blackstone and Howard in 1779. To work they added isolation. The individual would discover "in the depths of his conscience the voice of good; solitary work would then become not only an apprenticeship, but also an exercise in spiritual conversion; it would rearrange not only the complex of interests proper to *homo oeconomicus*, but also the imperatives of the moral subject" (DP 123). The aim of such techniques, at least in these settings, was not primarily "subjective." They were considered an efficient means to bring the prisoner into a state where he would carry on the reform work on his own behavior.

In the Philadelphia model of the Quakers, the Walnut Street prison which opened in 1790, the most important lessons of the Dutch and English systems were combined into a total institution. The economic imperative was present; the prison would be supported by the work of the prisoners. Each individual would be carefully supervised, his time organized in the most efficient way possible, his day partitioned into productive segments. The moral imperative also operated: guidance and spiritual direction were provided to each prisoner. In addition the Quakers provided some new dimensions of their own. The punishment for a crime was now carried out in secret, behind prison walls. The public entrusted the right of punishment to the correct and most suitable authorities. These authorities were free to accomplish not only the transformation of the recalcitrant into the dutiful, but a complete and total rehabilitation of all aspects of a prisoner's life. Knowledge, detailed observation, complete dossiers, and scrupulous classification were the key. Detailed grilling as to the circumstances of the crime, the behavior of the criminal, his progress under detention, and an increased knowledge of the criminal and of criminality in general, combined with the economic moral reform imperatives, comprise the component elements of this new figure of punishment.

The appearance and the rapid acceptance of preventive detention as the main form of criminal punishment is striking, not because it incorporated some of the principles proposed by the Enlightenment reformers, but because it violated, reversed, or contradicted so many others. These contrasts can be summed up as follows: Punishment no longer sought significant public representation and didactic moral insight but rather attempted behavioral modification—both of the body and of the soul—through the precise application of administrative techniques of knowledge and power. Punishment would have succeeded when it produced "docile bodies." The application of punishment was once again inscribed on the body, but its aim was no longer to crush, dismember, and overpower it. Rather, the body was to be trained, exercised, and supervised. The production of a new apparatus of control was necessary, one which would carry out this program of discipline. It was to be an apparatus of total, continuous, and efficient surveillance. Whereas the ritual of torture and confession and the punitive city of the reformers were carried out in public, this new technique of punishment required secrecy. It also required an increasing autonomy of operation, free of meddling influences. "A meticulous assumption of responsibility for the body and the time of the convict, a regulation of his movements and behaviour by a system of authority and knowledge; a concerted orthopaedy applied to convicts in order to reclaim them individually; an autonomous administration of this power that is isolated both from the social body and from the judicial power in the strict sense" (DP 130).

### Disciplinary Technology

It should be emphasized that prisons are only one example among many others of this technology of discipline, surveillance, and punishment. One of the central points Foucault is making is that the prisons themselves, as well as the tracts on the ideal form of punishment, are only the clearly articulated expressions of more generalized practices of disciplining both individuals and populations. Throughout the eighteenth century and with a vengeance in the nineteenth, these tactics extended to other sectors of the population, other places of reform, other administrations of control. The institution of the hospital or the school is not really Foucault's target, no more than the prison was. Rather, he is concerned with disciplinary procedures themselves. We can now turn to these practices and isolate their general characteristics.

Discipline is a technique, not an institution. It functions in such a way that it could be massively, almost totally appropriated in certain institutions (houses of detention, armies) or used for precise ends in others (schools, hospitals); it could be employed by preexisting authorities (disease control) or by parts of the judicial state apparatus (police). But it is not reducible or identifiable with any of these particular instances. Discipline does not simply replace other forms of power which existed in society. Rather, it "invests" or colonizes them, linking them together, extending their hold, honing their efficiency, and "above all making it possible to bring the effects of power to the most minute and distant elements" (DP 216).

How does it work? According to Foucault, discipline operates primarily on the body, at least in the early stages of its deployment. Of course, the imposition of a form of social control over the body is found in all societies. What is distinctive in disciplinary societies is the form that this control takes. The body is approached as an object to be analyzed and separated into its constituent parts. The aim of disciplinary technology is to forge a "docile [body] that may be subjected, used, transformed and improved" (DP 136).

How does this work? First, the body is divided into units, for example, the legs and arms. These are then taken up separately and subjected to a precise and calculated training. The aim is control and efficiency of operation both for the part and the whole. One thinks of the drills royal armies expend so much effort in performing. Scale is crucial; the greatest, most precise, productive, and comprehensive system of control of human beings will be built on the smallest and most precise of bases. The construction of a "micropower," starting from the body as object to be manipulated, is the key to disciplinary power.

Second, the signifying dimension is progressively ignored, minimized, and silenced. During the Classical Age, while so much attention

was being devoted to the correct manipulation of representations, while the public confession still capped the rituals of sovereign power, disciplines—notably the army and the schools—were quietly developing techniques and tactics to treat human beings as objects to be molded, not subjects to be heard or signs to be circulated and read. No longer did the body seem so important as a carrier of signification. For instance, the military courage which Foucault calls “a bodily rhetoric of honour” declined; instead the focus was on the formal organization and disciplined response of the constituent parts of the body, the automatic reflex of hands, legs, or eyes. Foucault also gives the example of military exercises. While he traces back the earliest forms of such exercises to the Roman army, they were far more generalized in the eighteenth century. Exercise of bodies became an integral part of the workings of power because it concentrated primarily on the economy of internal coordination of motions of the soldiers’ bodies. The rule at work here might well read: Take small units, strip them of all signifying dimensions, formalize the operations which relate these units, apply them on a large scale.

(3) Third, micropower is directed towards a different use of time. If disciplinary power, “dressage,” is to work efficiently and effectively it must operate on the bodies it seeks to reduce to docility as continuously as possible. Control must not be applied sporadically or even at regular intervals. Standardization of operation, efficiency, and the reduction of signification necessitate a constant and regular application. Moreover, the goal desired and the techniques designed to achieve it merge. To achieve this dream of total docility (and its corresponding increase of power), all dimensions of space, time, and motion must be codified and exercised incessantly. Therefore, throughout the Classical Age, disciplinary techniques were becoming more economic, analytic, technical, specific, and utilitarian. “The historical moment of the disciplines was the moment when an art of the human body was born, which was directed not only at the growth of its skills, nor at the intensification of its subjection, but at the formation of a relation that in the mechanism itself makes it more obedient as it becomes more useful, and conversely.... The human body was entering a machinery of power that explores it, breaks it down and rearranges it.... Discipline produces... docile bodies.... [It produces] an increased aptitude and an increased domination” (DP 137, 138).

The control of space was an essential constituent of this technology. Discipline proceeds by the organization of individuals in space, and it therefore requires a specific enclosure of space. In the hospital, the school, or the military field, we find a reliance on an orderly grid. Once established, this grid permits the sure distribution of the individuals to be disciplined and supervised; this procedure facilitates the reduction of

dangerous multitudes or wandering vagabonds to fixed and docile individuals.

In disciplinary technology, the internal organization of space depends on the principle of elementary partitioning into regular units. This space is based on a principle of presences and absences. In such a simple coding, each slot in the grid is assigned a value. These slots facilitate the application of techniques of discipline to the body. Once the grid is established, the principle reads, “Each individual has a place and each place has its individual” (DP 143). Individuals are placed, transformed, and observed with an impressive economy of means. For the most efficient and productive operation, it is necessary to define beforehand the nature of the elements to be used; to find individuals who fit the definition proposed; to place them in the ordered space; to parallel the distribution of functions in the structure of space in which they will operate. Consequently, all of the space within a confined area must be ordered; there should be no waste, no gaps, no free margins; nothing should escape. “In discipline, the elements are interchangeable, since each is defined by the space it occupies in a series, and by the gaps that separates it from the others” (DP 145). The success of disciplinary space turns therefore on the coding of this “structural” organization.

One cannot help but remark that this description of spatial organization is an almost perfect analogy to the definitions of elements, transformations, and series which French structuralist thinkers were finding as universal principles. As we saw earlier, Foucault wrote *The Order of Things* as an archaeology of structuralism. We are reading *Discipline and Punish* broadly as a genealogy of structuralist discourse and associated practices.

Foucault gives two examples of this “structuralist” organization of space: a military hospital and a factory. The military hospital at Rochefort served as one of the earliest experiments in disciplinary space. Military ports were particularly appropriate locales for disciplinary experiments, since they served the most dangerous types of mixing of bodies. Here, sailors, deserters, and vagabonds came together with diseases and epidemics from all over the world. The task of the medical hospital was to regularize and control these dangerous interminglings. In such a port, rigorous partitioning of space would accomplish a number of objectives at the same time. Contagious diseases could be quarantined. Deserters could be captured. Commodities could be watched. The order of the hospital operated first on control through medicines. Then the grid extended to identify the patients and to keep them under an analytic observation. Their separation into categories was based on age, disease, and so on. “Gradually, an administrative and political space was articulated upon a

therapeutic space; it tended to individualize bodies, diseases, symptoms, lives and deaths.... Out of discipline, a medically useful space was born" (DP 144).

In the factories at the end of the Classical Age the organization of space and operations was more complex. It was a question not only of controlling a population but of linking this control to production. Foucault gives the example of the Oberkampf manufactory at Jouy. The factory was divided up into a series of specialized workshops separated by function (printers, handlers, colorists, engravers, dyers). The largest building, erected in 1791, was enormous, 110 meters long and three stories high. On its ground floor there were 132 tables arranged in two rows. Each printer worked at a table with an assistant, hence 264 workers total. The finished products were carefully stacked at the end of each table. A careful supervision was possible simply by having a supervisor walk up the central aisle between the two rows of tables. The operation of the whole could be carefully watched and the specific production of each pair of workers could be easily compared to all the others. More than a hundred years before Taylorism, elementary operations were defined, each variable of this force—strength, promptness, skill constancy—was observed, compared, and assigned a particular weight. "Thus, spread out in a perfectly legible way over the whole series of individual bodies, the work force may be analysed in individual units. At the emergence of large-scale industry, one finds, beneath the division of the production process, the individualizing fragmentation of labour power; the distributions of the disciplinary space often assured both" (DP 145). In such a system, the individual worker, patient, or schoolboy would be precisely observed and compared to others. At the same time and by the same means, the ordering of the whole multiplicity could be successfully carried out. This control of the cell was concomitant with the order of the whole operation.

Discipline, then, operates differentially and precisely on bodies. "Discipline 'makes' individuals; it is the specific technique of a power that regards individuals both as objects and as instruments of its exercise" (DP 170). It does this not by crushing them or lecturing them, but by "humble" procedures of training and distribution. It operates through a combination of hierarchical observation, and normalizing judgment. These combine into a central technique of disciplinary power: the examination.

Hierarchical observation is a key element in the examination. The goal is to make surveillance an integral part of production and control. The act of looking over and being looked over will be a central means by which individuals are linked together in a disciplinary space. The control of bodies depends on an optics of power. The first model of this control through surveillance, efficiency through the gaze, order through spatial

structure, was the military camp. Here total organization and observation were possible. The functions performed here were limited, but the model worked; and later it spread to the construction of grand urban schemes, working class housing projects, prisons, schools, and so forth. On a broad scale, the model of the military camp provided control through hierarchy and observation. But it first had to be refined in other settings.

Increased internal visibility, allowing for ongoing examination, became a general problematic for the architect of the Classical Age. Plans proliferated for schools, hospitals, and utopias in which visibility was increased to a maximum. For example, take the construction of the Parisian Ecole Militaire. The purpose of the Ecole was still rigor: "Train vigorous bodies, the imperative of health; obtain competent officers, the imperative of qualification; create obedient soldiers, the imperative of politics; prevent debauchery and homosexuality, the imperative of morality" (DP 172). The means for accomplishing this were in part architectural. The building was constructed with long halls of monastic cells. Each ten cells had an officer. Each individual was given a sealed compartment separating him from his neighbors—but with a peephole so that he could be observed. In the dining room, the tables were arranged so that the inspector's tables were higher for better observation of the recruits. The latrines had half-doors but full side walls. These and many other details seem petty, but they were an essential part of disciplinary technology. Individualization and observation were linked within this structural space.

A further degree of complication entered when these observational details were integrated into a productive apparatus. Fraud, laziness, sabotage, bad workmanship, illness, and incompetence could be extremely costly when multiplied by the increasing size of the industrial apparatus. The *Encyclopédie* article on "Manufacture" defined specialization in surveillance as an indispensable part of the means of production. Supervisors were hierarchically distinct from the workers, but internal to the new organization of production. Surveillance took on a crucial economic function, while at the same time performing its disciplinary role. Power, through the refinement of surveillance in these factories, became organized as "multiple, automatic and anonymous" (DP 176)—or nearly so. People, of course, carried it out, but it was the organization that made it work the way it did. "Supervisors, perpetually supervised" meant that, from an early date in industrial history, power and efficiency were joined in a system; space and production were linked through an optics of surveillance.

In order for this disciplinary system to operate, it had to have a standard that unified its operations and further solidified its punishments down to an even finer level of specification. This standard was "nor-

malizing judgment." Foucault characterizes this as a kind of "micro-penalty" in which more and more areas of life, too trivial and local to have been included in the legal web, were now captured by power. There was "a whole micro-penalty of time (lateness, absences, interruptions of tasks), of activity (inattention, negligence, lack of zeal), of behavior (impoliteness, disobedience), of speech (idle chatter, insolence), of the body (incorrect attitudes, irregular gestures, lack of cleanliness), of sexuality (impurity, indecency)" (DP 178). Through the specification of the most detailed aspects of everyday behavior, almost anything could be potentially punishable. The nonconformist, even the temporary one, became the object of disciplinary attention.

All behavior, then, lay between two poles, the good and the bad. Between these two poles there was a precise and gradated series of steps which could be identified. One could quantify and rank a particular petty offense. The possibility of a "penal accountancy" was brought into play. Through these quantifiable analytic methods an objective dossier could be compiled on each individual. Hence, "by assessing acts with precision, discipline judges individuals 'in truth'; the penalty that it implements is integrated into the cycle of knowledge of individuals" (DP 181). An objective hierarchy could be established by which the distribution of individuals was justified, legitimated, and made more efficient.

The effect of the normalizing judgment is complex. It proceeds from an initial premise of formal equality among individuals. This leads to an initial homogeneity from which the norm of conformity is drawn. But once the apparatus is put in motion, there is a finer and finer differentiation and individuation, which objectively separates and ranks individuals.

The procedure which brings surveillance and normalizing judgment together is what we recognize more easily as an examination. In this ritual, the modern form of power and the modern form of knowledge—that of individuals in both cases—are brought together in a single technique. At its heart, the examination "manifests the subjection of those who are perceived as objects and the objectification of those who are subjected" (DP 185). This can be, at least at first glance, a relatively benign development. Take the example of the hospital. In the seventeenth century the physician visited the hospital but had little or no say in its administration. From this he moved to a position of increasing involvement by the very nature of the kind of knowledge he sought and the methods he employed to get that knowledge. As the hospital became a locus of training and of experimental knowledge, the physician played a greater role in its operation; he had more assistants; the very form of the hospital changed to facilitate his rounds and his examinations, which had become the central focus of hospital administration. As Foucault has analyzed cogently in *The Birth of the Clinic*, the

well-disciplined hospital became the physical counterpart of medical discipline. These changes were neither benign, insignificant, nor inconsequential.

The importance of the examination in the hospital or other institution is based first on a subtle but important reversal. In traditional forms of power, like that of the sovereign, power itself is made visible, brought out in the open, put constantly on display. The multitudes are kept in the shadows, appearing only at the edges of power's brilliant glow. Disciplinary power reverses these relations. Now, it is power itself which seeks invisibility and the objects of power—those on whom it operates—are made the most visible. It is this fact of surveillance, constant visibility, which is the key to disciplinary technology. "In this space of domination, disciplinary power manifests its potency, essentially, by arranging objects. The examination is, as it were, the ceremony of this objectification" (DP 187). It is through this reversal of visibility that power now operates.

Second, through the compilation of dossiers the examination makes each individual into a case to be known. For Foucault, this represents a major shift. The minutiae of everyday life and of individual biography had previously escaped the web of the formal legal system and of any genre of writing. They are now showered with great attention. What had once been a device for lauding heroes—luminous attention to their lives, fixed in writing—is now reversed. The most mundane activities and thoughts are scrupulously recorded. The function of individualization thereby shifts its role. In regimes like the feudal one, individuality was most highly marked at the top. The more one exercised power, the more one was marked as an individual—by honors, prestige, even by the tombs in which burial takes place. In a disciplinary regime, individualization is descending. Through surveillance, constant observation, all those subject to control are individualized. The ritual of the examination produces dossiers containing minute observations. The child, the patient, the criminal are known in infinitely more detail than are the adult, the healthy individual, and the law-abiding citizen. The dossier replaces the epic.

Not only has power now introduced individuality in the field of observation, but power fixes that objective individuality in the field of writing. A vast, meticulous documentary apparatus becomes an essential component of the growth of power. The dossiers enable the authorities to fix a web of objective codification. More knowledge leads to more specification. This accumulation of individual documentation in a systematic ordering makes "possible the measurement of overall phenomena, the description of groups, the characterization of collective facts, the calculation of gaps between individuals, their distribution in a given population" (DP 190). The modern individual—objectified, analyzed, fixed—is a historical achievement. There is no universal person on whom power has

performed its operations and knowledge, its inquiries. Rather, the individual is the effect and object of a certain crossing of power and knowledge. He is the product of the complex strategic developments in the field of power and the multiple developments in the human sciences.

*Mineral Sciences*

With the emergence of the clinical sciences of the individual, a major step was taken for the sciences of man as we know them today. This vast compilation of data, the proliferation of dossiers, and the continuous expansion of new areas of research developed concurrently with a refinement and flourishing of disciplinary techniques for observing and analyzing the body, so as to make it more available for manipulation and control. For Foucault, it was not a glorious moment: "the birth of the sciences of man... is probably to be found in... ignoble archives, where the modern play of coercion over bodies, gestures and behavior had its beginnings" (DP 191).

Foucault asserts that the very self-definition of the human sciences as scholarly "disciplines," as we so easily call them, is closely linked to the spread of disciplinary technologies. This is more than simply a rhetorical convergence. The social sciences (psychology, demography, statistics, criminology, social hygiene, and so on) were first situated within particular institutions of power (hospitals, prisons, administrations) where their role became one of specialization. These institutions needed new, more refined and operationalized discourses and practices. These discourses, these pseudo-sciences, these social-science disciplines developed their own rules of evidence, their own modes of recruitment and exclusion, their own disciplinary compartmentalizations, but they did so within the larger context of disciplinary technologies.

This is not to say that the sciences of man are a direct reflex of the prison, but only that they arose in a common historical matrix and have not separated themselves from the power/knowledge technologies which have invested the prison. The disciplinary technology of power to produce docile, useful bodies "called for a technique of overlapping subjection and objectification.... The carceral network constituted one of the armatures of this power/knowledge that has made the human sciences historically possible. Knowable man (soul, individuality, consciousness, conduct, whatever it is called) is the object-effect of this analytic investment, of this domination-observation" (DP 305).

#### The Objectifying Social Sciences

Foucault's account of the construction of the individual as object raises important questions about the social sciences. Once we see that the social sciences have developed in a matrix of power we are immediately led to ask: Can the social sciences separate themselves from this matrix, as did the physical sciences? But if we follow Foucault, we shift the

emphasis here to two different questions: Would an autonomous and objective social science, which systematically excluded all questions concerning its own possibility, be able to come up with significant and general insights concerning human activity? And, more importantly, what is the source and the effect of this striving for autonomy and objectivity? Another question Foucault might then seem obliged to answer is: Could the social sciences recognize their dependence for their possibility upon a background of social practices, and then treat this background scientifically? Again he would turn the question around: If one could have a theory of the background practices that make specific social sciences possible, could such a theory account for the social role played by such theories themselves?

These systematic shifts in what we take to be the relevant questions might seem to be simply evasions of the fundamental philosophical issues involved, but they in fact follow from the logic of Foucault's position. To begin with, Foucault consistently refuses to become involved in a debate as to which position is true. By the time of the *Archaeology* (see chapter 3) he had radicalized phenomenology by bracketing all specific truth claims, and also all attempts to justify or ground the serious enterprise of seeking objective theory. Furthermore, from the beginning Foucault has also gone beyond phenomenology in bracketing the meaning the subject himself gives to his experiences. For the archaeologist, questions of seriousness and meaning simply cannot arise. With the addition of genealogy, however, Foucault can again raise questions concerning seriousness and meaning. The kind of seriousness involved is not the claim to objective theory, but a serious concern with the role that those theories which claim objectivity have played. We call this the analytic dimension. And the kind of meaning Foucault now finds pertains to the significance of the spread of the so called objective social sciences for our society. Spelling out this meaning requires Foucault to engage in what we call interpretation.

Returning now to our first question: Can the social sciences, like the physical sciences, free themselves from the background of social practices that makes them possible; and if they could, what would be the significance of the scientific results they could then attain? To be clear about the special role of the background practices in the study of man, we must first remember that the natural sciences too presuppose a background of techniques, shared discriminations, and a shared sense of relevance—all those skills picked up through training which form part of what Kuhn calls the "disciplinary matrix"<sup>11</sup> of a science.

1. Kuhn, *Scientific Revolutions*, p. 182.

Foucault briefly and incompletely develops a connection and a comparison between the evolution of the sciences of nature and that of the sciences of man. He draws a parallel between the growth of disciplinary techniques in the eighteenth century and the development of juridical techniques of investigation during the Middle Ages. From their roots in the newly formed courts of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the techniques for the independent establishment of facts have ramified in many directions.<sup>2</sup> "It is perhaps true to say that, in Greece, mathematics was born from techniques of measurement; the sciences of nature, in any case, were born, to some extent, at the end of the Middle Ages, from the practices of investigation" (*DP* 226). It was during the Inquisition that investigation developed its operating model. Practitioners refined the procedures of investigation of natural science and separated them off from these early connections to power. Still, it was in a matrix of royal and ecclesiastical power that techniques of inquiry which observe, describe, and establish "facts" were born.

For the sciences of man, the story is different. The human sciences "which [have] so delighted our humanity for over a century, have their technical matrix in the petty, malicious minutiae of the disciplines and their investigations" (*DP* 226). But until now they have failed to break away from this birthplace. There has been no "Great Observer" for the social sciences comparable to Galileo for the natural ones. The procedures of examination and inscription have remained linked, if not totally, at least closely, to the disciplinary power in which they were spawned. There have been, of course, great changes, advances of technique. New disciplinary methods have seen the light of day and taken on complicated links with power. Foucault maintains, however, that these are mere refinements, not the long awaited unmooring, the crossing of the threshold into an independent science.

Why is there a historical difference in the way the disciplinary matrix functions in the natural and the social sciences?<sup>3</sup> To answer this question we must first look in more detail at the way background practices work in the natural sciences. Increasingly, sophisticated skills and techniques have enabled modern scientists to "work-over"<sup>4</sup> objects so as to fit them into a formal framework. This allows modern scientists to isolate properties from their context of human relevance, and then to take the

2. The philosophical issues involved in answering this question are dealt with in H. Dreyfus, "Holism and Hermeneutics," *Review of Metaphysics*, Sept. 1980.

3. According to Heidegger the objects with which science deals are produced by a special activity of refined observation which he calls *bearbeitung*. "Every new phenomenon emerging within an area of science is refined to such a point that it fits into the normative objective coherence of the theory." See "Science and Reflection" in *The Question Concerning Technology* (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), pp. 167, 169.

meaningless properties thus isolated and relate them by strict laws. Like any skills, the practices which make natural science possible involve a kind of know-how which cannot be captured by strict rules. Kuhn (as we have seen in chapter 3) stresses that these skills are acquired by working through exemplary problems, and Polanyi adds that often these skills cannot be learned from textbooks but must be acquired by apprenticeship. Moreover, these scientific skills presuppose our everyday practices and discriminations, so the skills cannot be decontextualized like the context-free physical properties they reveal. For both these reasons the practices of scientists cannot be brought under the sort of explicit laws whose formulation these practices make possible. They are, according to Kuhn, "a mode of knowing that is less systematic or less analyzable than knowledge embedded in rules, laws, or criteria of identification."<sup>4</sup> But the important point for the natural sciences is that natural science is successful precisely to the extent that *these background practices which make science possible can be taken for granted and ignored by the scientist*.

The human sciences constantly try to copy the natural sciences' successful exclusion from their theories of any reference to the background. Their practitioners hope that by seeking a shared agreement on what is relevant and by developing shared skills of observation, the background practices of the social scientist can be taken for granted and ignored, the way the natural scientist's background is ignored. For example, researchers now take for granted background analogies such as the computer model, and are trained in shared techniques such as programming, in the hope that they can relate by strict rules the meaningless attributes and factors which are revealed from this perspective. Given such formalizing techniques, normal social science might, indeed, establish itself; it would only do so, however, by leaving out the social skills, institutions, or power arrangements which make the isolation of features or attributes possible. However, such skills and the context of social practices they presuppose are *internal* to the human sciences, just as the laboratory skills of scientists are internal to the history and sociology of science, for *if the human sciences claim to study human activities, then the human sciences, unlike the natural sciences, must take account of those human activities which make possible their own disciplines*.

Thus, while in the natural sciences it is always possible and generally desirable that an unchallenged normal science which defines and resolves problems concerning the structure of the physical universe establish itself, in the social sciences such an unchallenged normal science would only indicate that an orthodoxy had established itself, not through scientific achievement, but by ignoring the background and eliminating all

4. Kuhn, *Scientific Revolutions*, 2d ed., p. 192.

competitors. It would mean that the basic job of exploring the background of practices and their meaning had been suppressed. The point is that the natural sciences can only exist as normal sciences. Of course, normal science must allow for revolutions or science would not be open to radically new ideas, but revolution means that there is a conflict of interpretations—a lack of agreement on significant questions and procedures of justification—without which normal scientific progress is impossible. On the other hand, normalcy for any particular social science would mean that it had successfully managed to ignore the social background which made its objects and disciplinary methods possible, and one might suppose that such a systematically self-limiting science would only come up with highly restricted predictive generalizations. Charles Taylor seeks to argue this point in his important paper, "Interpretation and the Sciences of Man" (1971).<sup>5</sup> He points out that objective political science, with its systematic grid of socioeconomic categories, itself presupposes our Western cultural practices which have produced us as isolated individuals who enter into contractual relations with other individuals to satisfy our needs and form social collectivities. Taylor argues that, because it uncritically takes for granted these background practices, objective social science is necessarily unable to predict and explain such a phenomenon as the hippie movement and the pervasive cultural agitation to which it gave partial expression. Taylor contends that only by understanding what the background cultural practices mean to the actors involved could a social science come to, if not predict, at least retroactively understand the significance of such a phenomenon.

Taylor is certainly right that a hermeneutic social science such as he advocates would have the edge over the objective social sciences in understanding movements such as those which took place in the late sixties. But, as we have seen in chapter 5, from Foucault's point of view, the hermeneutic sciences, or sciences of intersubjectivity, have intrinsic limitations as serious as those of the objective social sciences.

Indeed, if he is right, substituting the actor's point of view as to the significance of the background practices for an objective grid which excludes the background practices, while an advance, runs into equally fundamental methodological difficulties. For, from the point of view of interpretive analytics, social actors such as the hippies, even more than objective scientists, are out of touch with the progressive objectification taking place in society. The countercultural movement was no doubt correct in its self-understanding. These actors were, indeed, calling attention to and contesting a certain consensus that the rest of society and the social

5. Reprinted in *Interpreting Social Science*, ed. by Paul Rabinow and William Sullivan (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1979).

sciences took for granted as natural and desirable. But they were quite mistaken about their own significance, and so a hermeneutics which attempted to get inside and explicate their point of view would necessarily be equally mistaken. According to Foucault's analysis, the background practices cannot be understood hermeneutically in terms of their intersubjective meaning. Just as the objects of the social sciences are products of the progressive ordering of things in the name of welfare (what Foucault calls bio-power), so too, the intersubjective or common meanings which Taylor appeals to as a basis of his analyses, are themselves products of the long-range subjectifying trends in our culture.

Taylor's hermeneutic attempt to include the background of practices in his analysis is an important corrective to the objective social sciences' attempt to exclude their own disciplinary matrix. But his overestimation of the social importance of the countercultural movement—to which his attempt to share the actor's point of view led him—shows that one cannot suppose that the actors are lucidly or even dimly aware of what their activity means—at least in Foucault's sense of "means," that is, how their activity serves to further "a complex strategical situation in a given society" (HS 93). Only an interpretive analytics such as Foucault's would enable one, at least retroactively, to understand how easily the counterculture movement was coopted and made to serve the very trends in the culture it opposed—those trends which produce both the objective and subjective social sciences, and which these sciences therefore inevitably fail to grasp.

Once one recognizes the importance of the background practices, the second question that arises is: Can these practices themselves be the object of a social theory? The most powerful modern answer to this question finds expression in Max Weber's attempt to develop a theoretical account of rationality and the increasing objectification of our social life. Weber saw that rationality, in the form of bureaucratization and calculative thinking, was becoming the dominant way of understanding reality in our time, and he set out to give a rational objective account of how this form of thinking had to come to dominate our practices and self-understanding. He was led, through this scientific analysis, to see that the "disenchantment of the world" that calculative thinking brings about had enormous costs. He even saw that his own theorizing was part of the same development he deplored, but, as so many commentators have pointed out, there was absolutely no way his scientific method could justify his sense that the cost of rationality was greater than any possible benefit it could bring. Given Weber's starting point, all he could do was point out the paradoxical results of his analysis and the increasing perils to our culture.

Heidegger and Adorno avoid Weber's paradoxical conclusions by

asserting that one cannot have a fully objective account of the cultural background practices which make theory possible, and that therefore one does not have to contribute to objectification when doing social analysis, although, of course, one can, and most social scientists still do. Moreover, as Heidegger and Adorno saw, one is always already in a particular historical situation, which means that one's account of the significance of one's cultural practices can never be value-free, but always involves an interpretation. The knower, far from being outside of all contexts, is produced by the practices he sets out to analyze. This claim is backed up not so much by arguments as by detailed analysis: in Heidegger's case, by analyses of the general structures of the situatedness of human beings, and in Adorno's, by critical historical accounts of the production of knowledge.

In our retroactive reconstruction of Foucault's thought, the next important move was made by Merleau-Ponty, who pointed out that knowers were necessarily situated because knowledge grows out of perception, which is the work of an embodied and therefore essentially situated perceiver. However, as we have already noted, Merleau-Ponty's account of embodiment was so general that his appeal to the body as an explanation of situatedness is little more than a locating and renaming of the problem. Moreover, by approaching the question of objective knowledge from its basis in perception, Merleau-Ponty ignored, and thus was in no way able to illuminate, the historical and cultural dimensions of being a body in a situation.

Foucault, in our account, takes the best of each of these positions, while mentioning none of them, and develops them in a way that enables him to overcome some of their difficulties. From Weber he inherits a concern with rationalization and objectification as the essential trend of our culture and the most important problem of our time. But by converting Weberian science into genealogical analytics, he develops a method of rigorous analysis which has a central place for pragmatic concern, and presupposes rather than paradoxically opposes it as a necessary part of the intellectual enterprise. Like Heidegger and Adorno he emphasizes that the historical background of practices, those practices which make objective social science possible, cannot be studied by context-free, value-free, objective theory; rather, those practices produce the investigator and require an interpretation of him and his world. Having learned from Merleau-Ponty that the knower is embodied, Foucault can find the place from which to demonstrate that the investigator is inevitably situated.

This demonstration of situatedness takes the form of showing how the embodied investigator, as well as the objects he studies, have been produced by a specific technology of manipulation and formation. It also

enables Foucault to account for the fact, left mysterious by Adorno, that the investigator has a position from which to criticize these practices, a position which is more than simply an irrational rejection of rationality. If the lived body is more than the result of the disciplinary technologies that have been brought to bear upon it, it would perhaps provide a position from which to criticize these practices, and maybe even a way to account for the tendency towards rationalization and the tendency of this tendency to hide itself. Merleau-Ponty already argued that the lived body was a "nascent logos" and that its attempt to get a maximum grip on the world both produced theory and objectification and hid this production. He projected a "Genealogy of Truth" based on the body. Obviously, Foucault's genealogy of truth based on the body would look quite different, but nonetheless the project is the same. Although Merleau-Ponty died before he could carry out his project, Foucault's recent work seems to be heading in this direction.

## The Genealogy of the Modern Individual as Subject

Foucault as genealogist poses the question of sexuality in strictly historical terms; sexuality is a historical construct, not an underlying biological referent. He disputes the widely accepted notion of sex as the underlying essence, as an archaic drive, by showing that this concept, too, arose in a particular historical discourse on sexuality. He is careful to tie his choice of words and his analysis of their meaning to the course of changing policies about the body and its desires: "We have had sexuality since the eighteenth century, and sex since the nineteenth. What we had before that was no doubt the flesh" (CF 211).

During the eighteenth and especially the nineteenth centuries, sexuality became an object of scientific investigation, administrative control, and social concern. For physicians, reformers, and social scientists it seemed to provide the key to individual health, pathology, and identity. As we have seen (chapter 6), it was through the elaboration of a new symbolics of sexuality that the bourgeoisie demarcated themselves from the noble code of "blood" and from the working classes, carriers of various sexual dangers. In Foucault's terms, sexuality emerged as a central component in a strategy of power which successfully linked both the individual and the population into the spread of bio-power.

Foucault's thesis is that sexuality was invented as an instrument-effect in the spread of bio-power. He does not actually dispute the standard historical chronology which sees a turning in the eighteenth and especially the nineteenth century from a sexuality that is relatively free, an undifferentiated part of daily life, to one that is controlled and guarded. His point is that with these controls there came a dramatic, unprecedented rise in discussing, writing, and thinking about sex. Rather

### *The Genealogy of the Modern Individual as Subject*

than seeing the last several centuries as a history of increasing repression of sexuality, Foucault suggests an increasing channeling, "a regulated and polymorphous incitement to discourse" (HS 34). This discourse posed sex as a drive so powerful and so irrational that dramatic forms of individual self-examination and collective control were imperative in order to keep these forces leashed.

Through the deployment of sexuality, bio-power spread its net down to the smallest twitches of the body and the most minute stirrings of the soul. It did this through the construction of a specific technology: the confession of the individual subject, either in self-reflection or in speech. It was through the technology of confession that several factors we have encountered in our analysis of bio-power—the body, knowledge, discourse, and power—were brought into a common localization. Broadly speaking, this technology applied primarily to the bourgeoisie, just as disciplinary technology, broadly speaking, had evolved as a means of controlling the working classes and sub-proletariat. (In both instances, this schematic simplification should be taken heuristically.) In the genealogy of the modern subject Foucault is juxtaposing the technologies of the subject and subjectification to his earlier analysis of the technologies of the object and objectification.

Foucault analyzes the particular technology and the discourse of the subject involved in the confession, just as he has analyzed those which rely on discipline. He places both within a broader grid of interpretation, that of bio-power. Therefore it is important to realize that he does not see sexual identity or sexual liberation as inherently free from or necessarily opposed to domination within our society. He has frequently been misunderstood on this point, particularly by those who claim that movements of sexual self-expression are necessarily tied to a "meaningful" political resistance to current forms of power. It is quite the opposite for Foucault, who argues that forms of domination which are tied to sexual identity are in fact characteristic of recent developments in our society and are, for that reason, harder to identify. As we saw in our discussion of the repressive hypothesis, Foucault argues that repression itself is not the most general form of domination. In fact, the belief that one is resisting repression, whether by self-knowledge or by speaking the truth, supports domination, for it hides the real working of power.

### Sex and Bio-Power

The historical construction of sexuality, that is as a distinctive discourse connected to discourses and practices of power, coalesced at the beginning of the eighteenth century. A "technical incitement to talk about

sex" developed as an adjunct to the administrative concern for the welfare of the population. Empirical, scientific classifications of sexual activity were carried out in the context of a concern for life. At this early stage they were still very much in the shadow of the earlier religious discourse which linked the flesh, sin, and Christian morality. But gradually demographers and police administrators began to explore empirically such issues as prostitution, population statistics, and distribution of disease. "Sex was not something one simply judged; it was a thing one administered. It was in the nature of a public potential; it called for management procedures; it had to be taken charge of by analytic discourses. In the eighteenth century, sex became a police matter" (HS 24).

The growing concern with statistical studies of population can serve as an example. Throughout the eighteenth century demography and its associated fields were gradually formed into disciplines. Administrators, as we have seen, approached the population as something to be known, controlled, taken care of, made to flourish: "It was necessary to analyze the birthrate, the age of marriage, the legitimate and illegitimate births, the precocity and frequency of sexual relations, the ways of making them sterile or fertile, the effects of unmarried life or of the prohibitions, the impacts of contraceptive practices" (HS 25, 26). From general pieties about the importance of population, French administrators in the eighteenth century gradually began to institute procedures of intervention in the sexual life of the population. Starting from these politico-economic concerns, sex became an issue involving both the state and the individual.

During the eighteenth century the link of sexuality and power had turned on matters of population. At the beginning of the nineteenth century a major shift occurred, a recasting of discourse about sexuality into medical terms. It was this change which triggered an explosion of discourse on sexuality throughout bourgeois society. The key turning point was the separation of a medicine of sex from the medicine of the body, a separation based on the isolation of "a sexual instinct capable of presenting constitutive anomalies, acquired deviations, infirmities or pathological processes" (HS 117). Through these "scientific" breakthroughs sexuality was linked to a powerful form of knowledge and established a link between the individual, the group, meaning, and control.

Here Foucault contrasts sex and sexuality. Sex is a family matter. "It will be granted no doubt that relations of sex gave rise, in every society, to a deployment of alliance" (HS 106). Up until the end of the eighteenth century the major codes of Western law centered on this deployment of alliance: a particular discourse about sex by means of articulating the religious or legal obligations of marriage together with codes for the transmission of property and the ties of kinship. These codes created statuses, permitted and forbade actions, and constituted a social

system. Through marriage and procreation alliance was tied to the exchange and the transfer of wealth, property, and power.

The historical form of discourse and practice which Foucault labels "sexuality" turns on an unmooring of sex from alliance. Sexuality is an individual matter: it concerns hidden private pleasures, dangerous excesses for the body, secret fantasies; it came to be seen as the very essence of the individual human being and the core of personal identity. It was possible to know the secrets of one's body and mind through the mediation of doctors, psychiatrists, and others to whom one confessed one's private thoughts and practices. This personalization, medicalization, and signification of sex which occurred at a particular historical time is, in Foucault's terms, the deployment of sexuality.

Within the generalized spread of the production and proliferation of discourses on sexuality, Foucault isolates four "great strategic unities" in which power and knowledge combined in specific mechanisms constructed around sexuality. Each of the strategies in the deployment of sexuality began separately from the others, and each was at first relatively isolated. The details await Foucault's promised volumes of *The History of Sexuality*; however, the main themes clearly relate to the interpretation of bio-power we have been developing.

First, a hysterization of women's bodies. The body of the woman was analyzed as being fully saturated with sexuality. Through this medical "advance" the female body could be isolated "by means of a pathology intrinsic to it" and placed "in organic communication with the social body (whose regulated fecundity it was supposed to ensure)" (HS 104). All of the elements of the full deployment of sexuality are here: a mysterious and pervasive sexuality of the utmost importance resides somewhere and everywhere in the body; this mysterious presence is what brought the female body into the analytic discourses of medicine; through these medical discourses, both the personal identity of the woman and the future health of the population are linked in a common bond of knowledge, power, and the materiality of the body.

Second, a pedagogization of children's sex. The tactics employed in the fight against masturbation offer a clear example of the spread of bio-power as production, not restriction, of a discourse. This discourse was built on the belief that all children are endowed with a sexuality which is both natural and dangerous. Consequently, both the individual and collective interest converged in efforts to take charge of this ambiguous potential. Enfantile onanism was treated like an epidemic. "What this actually entailed, throughout this whole secular campaign that mobilized the adult world around the sex of children, was using these tenuous pleasures as a prop, constituting them as secrets (that is, forcing them into hiding so as to make possible their discovery)" (HS 43). Elaborate sur-

veillance, techniques of control, innumerable traps, endless moralizing, demands for ceaseless vigilance, continual incitement to guilt, architectural reconstruction, family honor, medical advance were all mobilized in a campaign obviously doomed to failure from the start—if its goal was, in fact, the eradication of masturbation. However, if that campaign is read as the production of power and not as restriction of sexuality, it succeeded admirably: "Always relying on this support, power advanced, multiplied its relays and its effects, while its target expanded, subdivided, and branched out, penetrating further into reality at the same pace" (HS 42).

(3) Third, a socialization of procreative behavior. In this strategy, the conjugal couple was given both medical and social responsibilities. The couple, in the eyes of the state, now had a duty to the body politic; they must protect it from pathogenic influences that a careless sexuality might increase and limit (or reinvigorate) the population by a careful attention to the regulation of procreation. Maladies or lapses in the couple's sexual vigilance would easily lead, it was held, to the production of sexual perverts and genetic mutants. The failure to monitor one's sexuality carefully could lead to the dangerous decline of health for both the individual family and for the social body. By the end of the nineteenth century, "an entire social practice, which took the exasperated but coherent form of a state-directed racism, furnished the technology of sex with a formidable power and far-reaching consequences" (HS 119).

The eugenics movements can certainly be understood in this light. However, not all the sciences that emerged to deal with human sexuality took this role of biological monitor. Foucault points out that particularly in its early days, whatever its normalizing role later on, psychoanalysis demonstrated a persistent and courageous resistance to all theories of hereditary degeneracy. Of all the medical technologies developed to normalize sex, it was the only one to vigorously resist this biologism.

(4) Fourth, a psychiatrization of perverse pleasures. By the end of the nineteenth century sex had been isolated or, in Foucault's reading, constructed as an instinct. This instinctual drive, it was held, operated both on the biological and psychic level. It could be perverted, distorted, inverted, and warped; it could also function naturally in a healthy manner. In each case, the sexual instinct and the nature of the individual were intimately connected. Science—sexual science—constructed a vast schema of anomalies, of perversions, of species of deformed sexualities. The psychiatrists at the end of the century were particularly adroit in this species game. "There were... mixoscopophiles, gynecomasts, presbyophiles, sexoesthetic invert, and dyspareunist women" (HS 43). In establishing these species on a scientific basis, the specification and detailing of individuals was supposed greatly facilitated. A whole new arena was opened for the detailed chronicling and regulation of individual life.

For the psychiatrists, sexuality penetrated every aspect of the pervert's life; hence every aspect of his life must be known. Whereas "the sodomite had been a temporary aberration; the homosexual was now a species" (HS 43). What had been a set of prohibited acts now turned into symptoms of a signifying mix of biology and action. Once again, "the machinery of power that focused on this whole alien strain did not aim to suppress it, but rather to give it an analytical, visible, and permanent reality" (HS 44). All behavior could now be classified along a scale of normalization and pathologization of this mysterious sexual instinct. Once a diagnosis of perversion was scientifically established, corrective technologies—for the good of the individual and of society—could and must be applied. A whole new "orthopedics" of sex found its justification. So, as in the other three strategies, the body, the new sexual science, and the demand for regulation and surveillance were connected. They were brought together in a cluster by the concept of a deep, omnipresent, and significant sexuality which pervaded everything it came into contact with—which was almost everything.

All of these strategies lead to a curious linking of power and pleasure. As the body was the locus of sexuality, and sexuality could no longer be ignored, science was impelled to know in minute detail all of the biological and psychic secrets which the body held. The result was, certainly, a scientific advance, but also "a sensualization of power and a gain of pleasure". Scientific advance was given an added motivation, a hidden stimulation, that became its own intrinsic pleasure. The examination, the technical heart of these new procedures, was the occasion for putting an underlying sexual discourse into acceptable medical terminology. Since the medical problem was hidden, the examination required the patient's confession. It "presupposed proximities... required an exchange of discourses, through questions that extorted admissions and confidences that went beyond the questions asked" (HS 44). Further, the person examined was also invested with a specific form of pleasure: all this careful attention, this caressing extortion of the most intimate details, these pressing explorations. "The medical examination, the psychiatric investigation, the pedagogical report, and family controls may have the overall and apparent objective of saying no to all wayward or unproductive sexualities, but the fact is that they function as mechanisms with a double impetus: pleasure and power" (HS 45). The medical power of penetration and the patient's pleasures of evasion seduced both parties.

#### Confessional Technology

For Foucault, the nineteenth-century medical examination, like other forms of circumscribed confession, exposed to figures of authority the individual's deepest sexual fantasies and hidden practices. Moreover,

the individual was persuaded that through such a confession, it was possible to know himself. Sex was only one, albeit the major, theme of this confessional outpouring which has only increased in scope since the nineteenth century. "The confession has spread its effects far and wide. It plays a part in justice, medicine, education, family relationships and love relationships, in the most ordinary affairs of everyday life, and in the most solemn rites; one confesses one's crimes, one's sins, one's thoughts and desires, one's illnesses and troubles.... One admits to oneself, in pleasure and in pain, things it would be impossible to tell anyone else, the things people write books about.... Western man has become a confessing animal" (HS 59).

Foucault sees the confession, and especially the confession about one's sexuality, as a central component in the expanding technologies for the discipline and control of bodies, populations, and society itself. As genealogist he wants to explore the history of the confession, its ties to religion, to political power, to medical sciences. In volume I of *The History of Sexuality* he contrasts those cultures which seek to know about sex through erotic arts and our own culture, which employs a science of sex. In forthcoming volumes he will analyze the evolution of the confession, the particular techniques and types of discourse used by the Greeks, the Romans, the early Christians, and the Reformation. In this "history of the present," the aim is not to discover the moment at which the confession, and specifically the confession about one's sexuality, emerged full-blown as a technology of the self, but rather to understand the workings of this technology of the self—the particular type of discourse and the particular techniques which supposedly reveal our deepest selves. This was a promise so appealing that it enmeshed us in relations of power which are difficult to see or to break. At least in the West, even the most private self-examination is tied to powerful systems of external control: sciences and pseudosciences, religious and moral doctrines. The cultural desire to know the truth about oneself prompts the telling of truth; in confession after confession to oneself and to others, this *mise en discours* has placed the individual in a network of relations of power with those who claim to be able to extract the truth of these confessions through their possession of the keys to interpretation.

In volume I of *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault is specifically interested in the role of science in this interplay of confession, truth, and power. For one, scientific norms and a discourse of impartial scientific analysis (particularly medical discourse) have become so dominant in Western society that they seem almost sacred. In addition, through the expansion of the methods of science the individual has become an object of knowledge, both to himself and to others, an object who tells the truth about himself in order to know himself and to be known, an object who

learns to effect changes on himself. These are the techniques which are tied to the scientific discourse in the technologies of the self.

Clearly, this process is similar to the technologies of discipline in which an authority effects changes on "mute and docile bodies." One clear difference is that the modern subject is not mute; he must talk. Foucault is now seeking to show the rapport between these two types of technologies, to show how they are integrated into complex structures of domination. Again, for Foucault power is not strict violence or pure coercion, but the interplay of techniques of discipline and less obvious technologies of the self. The task of the genealogist of the modern subject is to isolate the constituent components and to analyze the interplay of those components.

*Say - evan*

The key to the technology of the self is the belief that one can, with the help of experts, tell the truth about oneself. It is a central tenet not only in psychiatric sciences and medicine, but also in the law, in education, in love. The conviction that truth can be discovered through the self-examination of consciousness and the confession of one's thoughts and acts now appears so natural, so compelling, indeed so self-evident, that it seems unreasonable to posit that such self-examination is a central component in a strategy of power. This unseemliness rests on our attachment to the repressive hypothesis; if the truth is inherently opposed to power, then its uncovering would surely lead us on the path to liberation.

This conviction that confession reveals the truth finds its most powerful expression in our attention to sexuality: the belief that the body and its desires, seen through a prism of interpretation, is the deepest form of truth about a particular individual and about human beings in general. From the Christian penance to the present day, the desires of the body have held center stage in the confession. Beginning in the Middle Ages, then during the Reformation, and continuing in the present day, the language and techniques employed in religious confession have become more refined and their scope increasingly widened. Foucault will analyze the long, complex evolution of the confession in the church in the forthcoming volumes of *The History of Sexuality*. For now, it suffices to say that he characterizes that evolution as a general imperative to transform every desire of the body and the soul into discourse. "The Christian pastoral prescribed as a fundamental duty the task of passing everything having to do with sex through the endless mill of speech" (HS 21). The individual was incited to produce a proliferating oration on the state of his soul and the lusts of his body. This oration was elicited and then judged by the delegated representative of authority, the priest.

Both the quantity and quality of this incitement to confess have flourished. Foucault uses the example of the order given to Christians at the beginning of the thirteenth century that they must confess all of their

sins at least once a year; things have changed considerably since then. He also shows that the field and locale of confession have expanded. As early as the sixteenth century, the confessional techniques unmoored themselves from a purely religious context and began to spread to other domains, first pedagogy, then to prisons and other institutions of confinement, and later, in the nineteenth century, to medicine. The details of this confessional spread await Foucault's later volumes, but the tendency he is describing is clear enough. From its Christian origins, confession became a general technology. Through it, the most particular individual pleasures, the very stirrings of the soul could be solicited, known, measured, and regulated. From the Christian concern with sex came the presupposition that sex is significant and that sexual thoughts as well as actions must be confessed in order to learn about the state of the individual soul. The major move toward placing confession, and especially sexual confession, in a power nexus occurred in the nineteenth century, when the individual was persuaded to confess to other authorities, particularly to physicians, psychiatrists, and social scientists.

However, Foucault is not claiming that an interest in sex is necessarily caught up in the technologies of the self and relations of power. There have been two wide-spread methods for dealing with sex: the erotic arts, the *ars erotica*; and a science of sex, *scientia sexualis*. In the great civilizations other than our own, sex is treated as an *ars erotica* in which "truth is drawn from pleasure itself, understood as a practice and accumulated as experience" (HS 57). Pleasure is its own end. It is not subordinated to utility, nor to morality, and certainly not to scientific truth. Nor is sexuality a key to the individual self, but rather a set of practices and an esoteric doctrine which a master teaches an initiate. These rituals promise "an absolute mastery of the body, a singular bliss, obliviousness to time and its limits, the elixir of life, the exile of death and its threats" (HS 58).

The West has followed the other path, that of the science of sexuality. Its focus is not the intensification of pleasure, but the rigorous analysis of every thought and action that related to pleasure. This exhaustive articulation of desires has produced a knowledge which supposedly holds the key to individual mental and physical health and to social well-being. The end of this analytic knowledge is either utility, morality, or truth.

In the nineteenth century the discourses on sexuality intersected with the modern sciences of man. Gradually a "great archive of pleasure" was constituted. Medicine, psychiatry, and pedagogy turned desire into a systematic scientific discourse. Systems of classification were elaborated, vast descriptions scrupulously collated, and a confessional science, one dealing with hidden and unmentionable things, came into being. The

problem for these sexual scientists was how to handle the outpouring from below. There was no difficulty, it seems, in producing a discursive explosion. The problem was how to organize it into a science.

Foucault makes an important distinction at this point. He remarks that the medical sciences of sexuality branched off from the biological sciences. The sciences of sexuality were marked by a "feeble content from the standpoint of elementary rationality, not to mention scientificity, [which] earns them a place apart in the history of knowledge" (HS 54). These muddled disciplines conformed to a very different set of criteria than those operative in the biology of reproduction, which followed a more standard course of scientific development. The medicine of sex remained mired in political concerns and practices. These medical discourses on sexuality used the advances of biology as a cover, as a means of legitimization. But there was very little conceptual interpenetration: "It is as if a fundamental resistance blocked the development of a rationally formed discourse concerning human sex, its correlations, and effects. A disparity of this sort would indicate that the aim of such a discourse was not to state the truth but to prevent its very emergence" (HS 55).

Foucault at times sounds—and his critics frequently misread him here—as if his intention was to situate all science as a mere product of power. This is false. Instead his goal has consistently been to isolate the interconnections of knowledge and power. Throughout his intellectual itinerary it has been exactly those "pseudosciences" or "near sciences"—fundamentally the human sciences—which he has chosen as his object of study. Others, notably Georges Canguilhem and Gaston Bachelard, have devoted their attention to the "successful" sciences. Foucault has chosen another object of study, those discourses which, claiming to be advancing under the banner of legitimate science, have in fact remained intimately involved with the micropractices of power.

The medical discourses on sexuality in the nineteenth century are a perfect example of such pseudoscience. Foucault is analyzing the ways in which practitioners linked a discourse of truth with practices of power through their object of study: sex. "The truth of sex became something fundamental, useful, or dangerous, precious or formidable: in short, ... sex was constituted as a problem of truth" (HS 56). Sex is the alleged object which unifies our modern discussions of sexuality, making it possible to group together anatomical elements, biological functions, comportments, sensations, knowledges, and pleasures. Without this deep, hidden, and significant "something," all of these discourses would fly off in different directions. Or, more accurately, and this is the crux of Foucault's argument, they would not have been produced in anything resembling their current form. Since the nineteenth century, sex has been the hidden causal principle, the omnipotent meaning, the secret to be

discovered everywhere. "It is the name that can be given to a historical construct; not a furtive reality that is difficult to grasp, but a great surface network in which the stimulation of bodies, the intensification of pleasures, the incitement to discourse, the formation of special knowledges, the strengthening of controls and resistances, are linked to one another in accordance with a few major strategies of power and knowledge" (HS 105, 106).

Sex is the historical fiction which provides the link between the biological sciences and the normative practices of bio-power. When sex was categorized as an essentially natural function that could be disoperative, it followed that this drive had to be contained, controlled, and channeled. Being natural, sex was supposedly external to power. But, Foucault counters, it is exactly the successful cultural construction of sex as a biological force which enabled it to link up with the micropractices of bio-power. "Sex is the most speculative, most ideal, and most internal element in a deployment of sexuality organized by power in its grip on bodies and their materiality, their forces, energies, sensations and pleasures" (HS 155).

### The Subjectifying Social Sciences

At the end of the discussion on disciplinary technology (chapter 7), we saw a range of objectifying social sciences which emerged with the spread of the disciplines. In a parallel fashion, a wide range of interpretive sciences emerged with the spread of confessional technology. The aims and techniques of the two kinds of science are quite distinct. The construction of sex as the deepest underlying meaning and of sexuality as a web of concepts and practices is associated with—in fact, needs—a series of subjectifying methods and procedures to interpret confessions, rather than an objectifying set of procedures to control bodies.

The examination and the confession are the principal technologies for the subjectifying sciences. It was through the clinical methods of examining and listening that sexuality became a field of signification and the specific technologies developed. As opposed to other forms of medical examination which continued in a parallel but separate development of medical science, certain nineteenth-century medical and psychiatric examinations required the subject to speak and a duly recognized authority to interpret what the subject said. Hence, in a fundamental way, these procedures were hermeneutic.

The first requirement was a change of locale for the confession. In a clinical setting the doctor could combine the discussion of confession with the techniques of examination. These techniques, as we saw earlier, had already produced results on the "object" side. The task was now to elaborate procedures of examination which could code and control the signify-

*Mute  
subject  
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ing discourse of the subject. While the interventions enacted on the mute and docile bodies were essentially corrective, the interventions on the side of the subject were essentially therapeutic. Sexuality was now a medical question: "Spoken in time, to the proper party and by the person who was both the hearer of it and the one responsible for it, the truth healed" (HS 67).

Still, there were theoretical dilemmas about what to do with these techniques for confessions: How should one treat the material gained through introspection? What kind of evidence did experience provide? How does one treat consciousness as the object of empirical investigation? In short, was a science of the subject possible? Posed in Foucault's terms, the problem was, "Can one articulate the production of truth according to the old juridico-religious model of confession and the extortion of confidential evidence according to the rules of scientific discourse?" (HS 64). How could all this talk be incorporated into a science, even a bastard one?

*subject  
talks  
or is forced to talk  
more science knows  
scope of legitimate examination of consciousness grows  
finer and wider  
web of confessional technology  
power spread  
subject himself could not be the final arbiter of his own discourse  
sex was a secret  
subject himself was not simply hiding it because of reserve, moralism, or fear  
subject did not and could not know the secrets of his own sexuality*

The need to create a scientific structure to explain sex in turn meant that only the trained scientist, not the individual subject, could understand what was being said. In the confessional paradigm, the more the subject talks (or is forced to talk), the more science knows; the more the scope of legitimate examination of consciousness grows, the finer and wider the web of confessional technology. As this power spread, it became clear that the subject himself could not be the final arbiter of his own discourse. Since sex was a secret, the subject himself was not simply hiding it because of reserve, moralism, or fear; the subject did not and could not know the secrets of his own sexuality.

*active  
specialist in meaning  
adept at the art of interpretation  
master of the truth  
judgmental, moralizing role was transformed into an analytic, hermeneutic one  
With regard to the confession, his power was not only to demand it before it was made, or to decide what was to follow it, but also to constitute a discourse of truth on the basis of its decipherment, and by making sexuality something to be interpreted the nineteenth century gave itself the possibility of causing the procedures of confession to operate within the regular formation of a scientific discourse* (HS 67). Hermeneutics—that discipline which deals with deep meaning, meaning necessarily hidden from the subject, but nonetheless accessible to interpretation—now occupied one pole of the sciences of man.

For Foucault, the modern development of these hermeneutic sci-

ences passed, *grosso modo*, through two stages. In the first, the subject was capable, through confession, of putting his desires into an appropriate discourse. The listener provoked, judged, or consoled the subject, but the essential intelligibility of the discourse was still accessible, at least in principle, to the subject himself. Foucault gives the example of a mid-nineteenth-century psychiatrist, Luria, who used the technique of cold showers; not only confessions of madness, but also the patient's own recognition of madness were the essential dimension of the cure. In the second stage, roughly contemporary with Freud, the subject was no longer considered capable of making his own desires fully intelligible to himself, although he still had to confess them in speech. Their essential meaning was hidden from him, either because of their unconscious nature or because of deep bodily opacities which only a specialist could interpret. The subject now needed an interpretive Other to listen to his discourse and also to bring it to fruition, to master it. Yet despite this fundamental detour, the subject still had to acknowledge, and thus establish for himself, the truth of this expert interpretation. Individuality, discourse, truth, and coercion were thereby given a common localization.

Interpretation and the modern subject imply each other. The interpretive sciences proceed from the assumption that there is a deep truth which is both known and hidden. It is the job of interpretation to bring this truth to discourse. This is obviously *not* to say that all of the interpretive sciences can be accounted for by this schematic account of confessional technology in the deployment of sexuality. Just as Foucault was not claiming that the role of the objective social sciences was a simple reflex of the prisons, so too he is not reducing the arts and sciences of interpretation, which had such a prominent role in nineteenth- and twentieth-century thought, to psychiatric examination. It would be an important and rewarding task to analyze the growth of other interpretive practices and to show their relations with and differences from those Foucault has discussed. (One only has to think of the sudden importance given to participant observation in anthropology at roughly the same period. But one could not simply transfer Foucault's scheme.)

Nonetheless, part of the power of these interpretive sciences is that they claim to be able to reveal the truth about our psyches, our culture, our society—truths that can only be understood by expert interpreters. Foucault ends *The History of Sexuality* by saying, "The irony of this deployment is in having us believe that our liberation is in the balance" (*HS* 159). As long as the interpretive sciences continue to search for a deep truth, that is, to practice a hermeneutics of suspicion, as long as they proceed on the assumption that it is the Great Interpreter who has privileged access to meaning, while insisting that the truths they uncover lie outside the sphere of power, these sciences seem fated to contribute to

the strategies of power. They claim a privileged externality, but they actually are part of the deployment of power.

There is a striking parallel here between the methodological problems raised by the hermeneutic study of the subject and the would-be objective and social sciences. In both cases we find a "superficial" kind of social science which takes human beings uncritically, simply as subjects or objects, and studies their self-interpretations or their objective properties as if these gave the investigator access to what was really going on in the social world. In both cases too, there is a critical perspective which points out that one cannot take at face value the subject's account of what his behavior means, or the objective social scientist's account of the social world. Critical reflection consequently leads, on the one hand, to a deep interpretation of the subject which attempts to get at what his behavior really means, a meaning unknown to him; and, on the other, to the attempt to develop an objective theory of the historical background practices which make objectification and theory possible.

In both cases, this attempt to save subjective and objective social science by going "deeper" runs into problems. As Nietzsche and Foucault have pointed out, the very project of finding a deep meaning underlying appearances may itself be an illusion, to the extent that it thinks it is capturing what is really going on. The hermeneutics of suspicion rightly has the uneasy suspicion that it has not been suspicious enough. The objective social sciences, insofar as they want to have a theory of the whole, run into the problem that the meaning of the practices they study seems to be part of the whole story but falls outside their domain. This forces them to treat the actor's point of view and, more importantly, the meaning of the background practices themselves, as if they were objectively graspable. This leads to programmatic assertions that all this "meaning" will eventually be taken into account in terms of "belief systems," "genetically based programs," or "quasi-transcendental constitutive rules." We have seen in our discussion (chapter 4) how Foucault's *Archaeology*, one of the most sophisticated versions of this third alternative, fails; the other two alternatives (cognitive science and sociobiology, respectively) have their serious problems as well.<sup>1</sup> Not that these fundamental methodological problems in any way diminish the output and impact of all forms of the social scientific enterprise, but the truth of their assertions is not what keeps them going.

1. For a criticism of the cognitive sciences see H. Dreyfus, *What Computers Can't Do* (New York: Harper and Row, 1979). For a critique of sociobiology see several of the essays in *Sociobiology and Human Nature*, ed. by Anita Silvers et al. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Press, 1978).

There are also definite limits for the interpretive social sciences, even within their own terms of supposedly being outside the matrix of power. The objective social sciences cannot account for their own possibility, legitimacy, and access to their objects because the practices which make objectification possible fall out of their range of investigation. So too, the "subject" social sciences must remain unstable, and can never become normal, because they attribute the final explanatory power either to everyday meaning or to deep meaning, while that which makes subjectivity and meaning possible escapes them. Both surface meaning and deep significance are produced within a particular set of historical practices and therefore can only be understood in terms of those practices.

The cultural practices which tend toward objectification are not at all necessarily doomed to failure, however. This leads us back to bio-power. As we have seen, one of the distinctive characteristics of modern power is the portrayal of knowledge as external to power. Again, the repressive hypothesis—the lynchpin of bio-power—rests on this assumption of externality and difference. The conditions of the rise of the objectifying human sciences were such that it seems that the only logical way to achieve a fully objective science of human beings would be with the totally successful production of human beings as objects. Foucault does not foreclose this possibility. But even if this were to occur (and there are good reasons to think it hasn't and won't), even then such a theory would still mask the practices that had produced its very actuality.

Each type of social science develops an important partial insight. Individual subjects in their everyday affairs do know, with an appropriate pragmatic degree of accuracy, what they are saying and what they are doing. But (and this is the insight of the hermeneutics of suspicion) this same behavior may have another significance of which the actor is unaware. On the objective side, many aspects of social life are indeed mechanically regimented, and are therefore appropriately treated by objective social science. But—here those social scientists who want to have a theoretical account of the overall pattern, including the background practices, have a point—the particular objective characteristics studied by "naïve" objective social science is part of a larger organized and structured pattern.

Finally, if Foucault is right, the very difficulties which plague the social sciences are a rich source of anomalies. The promise that these anomalies will eventually yield to their procedures justifies the grant proposals, enlarged research facilities, and government agencies by which the social sciences nourish themselves and spread. As in the case of prisons, their failure to fulfill their promises does not discredit them; in fact, the failure itself provides the argument they use for further expansion. The inverse relationship between their cognitive advances and their

social success can only be understood when one sees the role of social sciences in our society and the way that role is made necessary and significant by the long term development of confessional and disciplinary background practices.

But the parallel between the object side and the subject side of Foucault's story stops there. In *Discipline and Punish* Foucault holds out no promise of a better objective social science. What he does offer in *The History of Sexuality* is an incisive example of what a better interpretation looks like. By taking the story of the historical construction of the interpretive sciences as a component of bio-power—one in which their function is to construct a nonexistent object, sex, which they then proceed to discover—Foucault is offering us an interpretation of these events which is not a theory, nor is it an interpretation based on deep meaning, a unified subject, signification rooted in nature, privileged access of the interpreter. If we label the misguided kind of interpretive method "hermeneutics," then we can call Foucault's current method "interpretive analytics." Interpretive analytics avoids the pitfalls of structuralism or hermeneutics by proceeding to analyze human seriousness and meaning without resort to theory or deep hidden significance. Just as Foucault attempted in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* to reflect on the method in his earlier works and to give us a theoretical description of the right way to do theory, he now owes us an interpretive description of his own right way to do interpretation. He has not provided one yet, although *The History of Sexuality* and *Discipline and Punish* are certainly examples of what such a method could produce. While waiting for Foucault to produce this interpretation of interpretation, in the sections which follow we sketch the contours of the questions it would have to confront, and the kind of positions it would have to articulate.

## Power and Truth

We have highlighted three methodological themes in Foucault's inquiries. The first is his shift from an exclusive emphasis on discursive formations during the mid-1960s to a broadening of analytic concerns to include once again nondiscursive issues: the move to cultural practices and power. Second is his focus on meticulous rituals of power, centering on certain cultural practices which combined knowledge and power. Third is his isolation of bio-power, a concept which links the various political technologies of the body, the discourses of the human sciences, and the structures of domination which have been articulated over the last two hundred and fifty years (and particularly since the beginning of the nineteenth century). Each of these themes, and particularly the third, raises questions about the nature of this articulation, its significance, and its implications. What is power? How does it relate to truth? What implications does Foucault's position have for thinking and acting?

### Power

Foucault's account of power is not intended as a theory. That is, it is not meant as a context-free, ahistorical, objective description. Nor does it apply as a generalization to all of history. Rather, Foucault is proposing what he calls an analytics of power, which he opposes to theory. He says, "If one tries to erect a theory of power one will always be obliged to view it as emerging at a given place and time and hence to deduce it, to reconstruct its genesis. But if power is in reality an open, more-or-less coordinated (in the event, no doubt, ill-coordinated) cluster of relations, then the only problem is to provide oneself with a grid of analysis which makes possible an analytic of relations of power" (CF 199).

Toward this end Foucault presents a series of propositions about power in *The History of Sexuality*, and he has extended some of these ideas in his afterword to our book. These propositions are really cautionary rules of thumb, rather than theses which have been spelled out. First, power relations are "nonegalitarian and mobile." Power is not a commodity, a position, a prize, or a plot; it is the operation of the political technologies throughout the social body. The functioning of these political rituals of power is exactly what sets up the nonegalitarian, asymmetrical relations. It is the spread of these technologies and their everyday operation, localized spatially and temporally, that Foucault is referring to when he describes them as "mobile." If power is not a thing, or the control of a set of institutions, or the hidden rationality to history, then the task for the analyst is to identify how it operates. The aim, for Foucault, "is to move less toward a theory of power than toward an analytics of power: that is, toward a definition of a specific domain formed by power relations and toward a determination of the instruments that will make possible its analysis" (HS 82).

Foucault's aim is to isolate, identify, and analyze the web of unequal relationships set up by political technologies which underlies and undercuts the theoretical equality posited by the law and political philosophers. Bio-power escapes from the representation of power as law and advances under its protection. Its "rationality" is not captured by the political languages we still speak. To understand power in its materiality, its day-to-day operation, we must go to the level of the micropractices, the political technologies in which our practices are formed.

Foucault's next proposals follow from this first one. Power is not restricted to political institutions. Power plays a "directly productive role;" "it comes from below;" it is multidirectional, operating from the top down and also from the bottom up. We have seen that political technologies cannot be identified with particular institutions. But we have also seen that it is precisely when these technologies find a localization within specific institutions (schools, hospitals, prisons), when they "invest" these institutions, that bio-power really begins its take-off. When the disciplinary technologies establish links between these institutional settings, then disciplinary technology is truly effective. It is in this sense that Foucault says power is productive; it is not in a position of exteriority to other types of relationships. Although relationships of power are imminent to institutions, power and institutions are not identical. But neither are their relationships merely pasted-on, superstructural detail. For example, the school cannot be reduced to its disciplinary function. The content of Euclid's geometry is not changed by the architecture of the school building. However, many other aspects of school life are changed

by the introduction of disciplinary technology (rigid scheduling, separation of pupils, surveillance of sexuality, ranking, individuation and so on).

*B* Power is a general matrix of force relations at a given time, in a given society. In the prison, both the guardians and the prisoners are located within the same specific operations of discipline and surveillance, within the concrete restrictions of the prison's architecture. Though Foucault is saying that power comes from below and we are all enmeshed in it, he is not suggesting that there is no domination. The guards in Mettray prison had undeniable advantages in these arrangements; those who constructed the prison had others; both groups used these advantages to their own ends. Foucault is not denying this. He is affirming, however, that all of these groups were involved in power relations, however unequal and hierarchical, which they did not control in any simple sense. For Foucault, unless these unequal relations of power are traced down to their actual material functioning, they escape our analysis and continue to operate with unquestioned autonomy, maintaining the illusion that power is only applied by those at the top to those at the bottom.

*A* Domination, then, is not the essence of power. When questioned about class domination, Foucault gives the example of social-welfare legislation in France at the end of the nineteenth century. Obviously, he does not deny the realities of class domination. Rather, his point is that power is exercised upon the dominant as well as on the dominated; there is a process of self-formation or autocolonization involved. In order for the bourgeoisie to establish its position of class domination during the nineteenth century, it had to form itself as a class. As we have seen, there was first a dynamic exercising of strict controls primarily on its own members. The technologies of confession and the associated concern with life, sex, and health were initially applied by the bourgeoisie to itself. Bio-power was one of the central strategies of the self-constitution of the bourgeoisie. It was only at the end of the century that these technologies were applied to the working class. Foucault says,

One could say that the strategy of moralisation (health campaigns, workers' housing, clinics, etc.) of the working class was that of the bourgeoisie. One could even say that it is this strategy which defined them as a class and enabled them to exercise their domination. But, to say that the bourgeoisie at the level of its ideology and its projects for economic reform, acting as a sort of real and yet fictive subject, invented and imposed by force this strategy of domination, that simply cannot be said. (CF 203)

Unless the political technologies had already successfully taken hold at the local level, there would have been no class domination. Unless the political technologies had succeeded in forming the bourgeoisie in the first

place, there would not have been the same pattern of class domination. It is in this sense that Foucault views power as operating throughout society.

This leads us to what is probably Foucault's most provocative proposal about power. Power relations, he claims, are "intentional and non-subjective." Their intelligibility derives from this intentionality. "They are imbued, through and through, with calculation: there is no power that is exercised without a series of aims and objectives" (HS 95). At the local level there is often a high degree of conscious decision making, planning, plotting and coordination of political activity. Foucault refers to this as "the local cynicism of power." This recognition of volitional activity enables him to take local level political action fairly literally; he is not pushed to ferret out the secret motivations lying behind the actors' actions. He does not have to see political actors as essentially hypocrites or pawns of power. Actors more or less know what they are doing when they do it and can often be quite clear in articulating it. But it does not follow that the broader consequences of these local actions are coordinated. The fact that individuals make decisions about specific policies or particular groups jockey for their own advantage does not mean that the overall activation and directionality of power relations in a society implies a subject. When we analyze a political situation, "the logic is perfectly clear, the aims decipherable, and yet it is often the case that no one is there to have invented them, and few who can be said to have formulated them" (HS 95).

This is the insight, and this is the problem. How to talk about intentionality without a subject, a strategy without a strategist? The answer must lie in the practices themselves. For it is the practices, focused in technologies and innumerable separate localizations, which literally embody what the analyst is seeking to understand. In order to arrive at "a grid of intelligibility of the social order... one needs to be nominalistic, no doubt: power is not an institution, and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with; it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategical relationship in a particular society" (HS 93). There is a logic to the practices. There is a push towards a strategic objective, but no one is pushing. The objective emerged historically, taking particular forms and encountering specific obstacles, conditions and resistances. Will and calculation were involved. The overall effect, however, escaped the actors' intentions, as well as those of anybody else. As Foucault phrased it, "People know what they do; they frequently know why they do what they do; but what they don't know is what what they do does" (personal communication).

This is not a new form of functionalism. The system is not in any way in equilibrium; nor is it, except in the most extended of senses, a

system. There is no inherent logic of stability. Rather, at the level of the practices there is a directionality produced from petty calculations, clashes of wills, meshing of minor interests. These are shaped and given a direction by the political technologies of power. This directionality has nothing inherent about it and hence it cannot be deduced. It is not a suitable object for a theory. It can, however, be analyzed, and this is Foucault's project.

Foucault's refusal to elaborate a theory of power follows from his insight that theory only exists and is only intelligible when it is set against and among particular cultural practices. This is perhaps why he so often restricts his general comments on power. Instead he has presented a systematic analysis of technologies of power for which he claims a certain significance and generality, although as a characterization these comments still appear to be rather all-encompassing and mysterious. Let us therefore return to Foucault's analysis of disciplinary technology as exemplified in Bentham's Panopticon, to see how this normalizing power works and what general inferences can be drawn from this analysis.

#### Meticulous Rituals of Power

Foucault picks out Jeremy Bentham's plan for the Panopticon (1791) as the paradigmatic example of a disciplinary technology. It is not the essence of power, as some have taken it to be, but a clear example of how power operates. There are other technologies which function in similar ways and could have served Foucault as illustrations. The Panopticon, *Panopticon*, Foucault tells us, is "a generalizable model of functioning; a way of defining power relations in terms of the everyday life of men.... It is the diagram of a mechanism of power reduced to its ideal form.... It is in fact a figure of political technology that may and must be detached from any specific use.... It is polyvalent in its applications" (DP 205).

Bentham's Panopticon might appear to be simply a minor individual scheme or an idealistic proposal for the reform and perfection of society. However, this viewpoint would not be quite accurate. Bentham was not the first to explore the techniques he used, although his was the most perfected, and the best known version. His Panopticon was not a utopian setting, located nowhere, meant as a total critique and reformulation of all aspects of society, but a plan for a specific mechanism of power. Bentham presented this instrument as a closed and perfect design, not for the satisfaction of designing an ideal form, but precisely for its applicability to a large number of diverse institutions and problems. The very genius of the Panopticon lies in its combination of abstract schematization and very concrete applications. It is, above all, flexible.

Let us briefly review the architectural functioning of the Panopticon. It consists of a large courtyard with a tower in the center and a set of

buildings, divided into levels and cells, on the periphery. In each cell, there are two windows: one brings in light and the other faces the tower, where large observatory windows allow for the surveillance of the cells. The cells are like "small theatres in which each actor is alone, perfectly individualized and constantly visible" (DP 200). The inmate is not only visible to the supervisor, he is only visible to the supervisor; he is cut off from any contact with those in adjoining cells. "He is the object of information, never a subject in communication" (DP 200). The major benefit Bentham claimed for his Panopticon was a maximum of efficient organization. Foucault stresses that it did this by inducing in the inmate a state of objectivity, a permanent visibility. The inmate cannot see if the guardian is in the tower or not, so he must behave as if surveillance is constant, unending, and total. The architectural perfection is such that even if there is no guardian present the apparatus of power is still operative.

This new power is continuous, disciplinary, and anonymous. Anyone could operate it as long as he were in the correct position and anyone could be subjected to its mechanisms. The design is multipurpose. The surveillant in the tower could easily be observing a criminal, a madman, a worker, or a schoolboy. If the Panopticon functioned perfectly, almost all internal violence would be eliminated. For if the prisoner is never sure when he was being observed, he becomes his own guardian. And, as the final step, through the use of this mechanism one could also control the controllers. Those who occupy the central position in the Panopticon are themselves thoroughly enmeshed in a localization and ordering of their behavior. They observe, but in the process of so doing, they are also fixed, regulated, and subject to administrative control.

The Panopticon is not merely a highly efficient and clever technique for the control of individuals; it is also a laboratory for their eventual transformation. Experiments could easily be carried out in each of the cells and the results observed and tabulated from the tower. In factories, schools or hospitals, the surveillant could observe with great clarity the encoded and differentiated grid which lay before his gaze.

In Foucault's terms, the Panopticon brings together knowledge, power, the control of the body, and the control of space into an integrated technology of discipline. It is a mechanism for the location of bodies in space, for the distribution of individuals in relation to one another, for hierarchical organization, for the efficient disposition of centers and channels of power. The Panopticon is an adaptable and neutral technology for the ordering and individuating of groups. Whenever the imperative is to set individuals or populations in a grid where they can be made productive and observable, then Panoptic technology can be used.

The Panopticon effects its control over bodies in part through its

efficient organization of space. An important distinction must be made here. This is not so much an architectural model which represents or embodies power, but a means for the operation of power in space. It is the techniques for the use of the structure, more than the architecture itself, that allows for an efficient expansion of power.

A digression to another of Foucault's examples may help clarify this point about space and architecture. The leper colony and the quarantined city were two ancient European methods for controlling individuals in space. In the seventeenth century, the quarantine as a method of plague control proceeded through a strict spatial partitioning. Officials divided the entire town and the surrounding countryside into administrative quarters. Under penalty of death no movement beyond the house was allowed; only the officials and those wretched enough to be assigned the duty of moving the bodies were allowed to circulate through the streets. There was a constant alert, a daily surveillance down to each of the houses and its occupants; those who did not appear had to be accounted for. The information collected was passed up through a hierarchy of officials. They even had the right to appropriate private property in the case of death: procedures of purification entailed evacuation of a contaminated dwelling, followed by fumigation. All medical care was carefully supervised; all pathologies had to be known by the central authorities; all space was controlled by them; all movement was regulated.

*Control of Space*

This was a disciplinary mechanism carried out in space. It entailed the analysis of a geographical area; the supervision of its inhabitants; the control of individuals; a hierarchy of information, decision making, and movement down to the regulation of the smallest details of everyday life. "The plague as a form, at once real and imaginary, of disorder had as its medical and political correlative discipline. Behind the disciplinary mechanisms can be read the haunting memory of contagions, of the plague, of rebellions, crimes, vagabondage, desertions, people who appear and disappear, live and die in disorder" (DP 198). The ordering of space in the quarantined city was a technology which claimed to contain such disorder.

The leper colony offers the counterimage of population control through spatial enforcement of power. The leper was excluded from society, separated out and stigmatized. He was thrown with his suffering brothers into an undifferentiated mass. The authority to locate and exile lepers into separate communities where they were required to live and die was an act of "massive, binary division between one set of people and another" (DP 198). The point here is the authority's right to exclude lepers from one space and restrict them to another, for the ordering of space within the leper colony itself was never very rigorous, even if

Foucault links it with the political dream of "a pure community" (DP 198).

Taken together, the discipline through space in the quarantine model joins the exclusion developed for the leper colony to provide insights into new "Panoptic" technologies of control. These technologies exercised power through space. The resulting spatial forms included temporary emergency laws on movements and property, strictly differentiated boundaries between populations, architectural prototypes like the Panopticon, and institutional settings that were in fact built and used. Each legal definition of space and each architectural model provided increasingly sophisticated and complex ways of exercising power. They were also the evidence that power was being enforced and hence the basis for the expansion of that enforcement.

Treat lepers as plague victims, project the subtle segmentations of discipline onto the confused space of internment, combine it with the methods of analytic distribution proper to power, individualize the excluded, but use procedures of individualization to mark exclusion—this is what was operated regularly by the disciplinary power from the beginning of the nineteenth century in the psychiatric asylum, the penitentiary, the reformatory, the approved school, and to some extent, the hospital. (DP 199)

When the fear of the plague had been successfully transferred to the fear of the abnormal and the techniques for isolation of abnormalities had been developed, then the disciplinary paradigm had triumphed.

To return to the Panopticon as a schema of power, we can see it as a place perfectly designed for its purpose: that of constant surveillance of its inhabitants. It operates through a reversal of visibility, one of the principal components of modern power that is perfectly expressed in its form. Whereas in monarchical regimes it was the sovereign who had the greatest visibility, under the institutions of bio-power it is those who are to be disciplined, observed, and understood who are made the most visible. Bentham's Panopticon captures and manifests this reversal of visibility in its organization of space. The architecture itself is a means for that visibility and the subtle forms of control it entails. The Panopticon is not a symbol of power; it doesn't refer to anything else. Nor does it have any deep, hidden meaning. It carries within itself its own interpretation, a certain transparency. Its function is to increase control. Its very form, its materiality, every aspect down to the smallest detail (here Bentham is totally explicit, carrying on for many pages about numerous petty details of construction) yields the interpretation of what it does. The mechanism itself is neutral and, in its own fashion, universal. It is a perfect technol-

ogy. It is only when it "invests" and undermines other institutions that it takes on its own momentum.

*Visual j. histories  
Spur  
imp*

The Panopticon presents us with a precise connection between the control of bodies and spaces, while it makes clear that this control was exercised in the interest of increasing power. At this point, let us recapitulate the fundamental components of power which Foucault has drawn from the example of the Panopticon. His major insight is that power is exercised, not simply held. The tendency for power to be depersonalized, diffused, relational, and anonymous, while at the same time totalizing more and more dimensions of social life, is captured, made possible, and summed up in the Panoptic technology. Bentham observed that in the Panopticon, "each comrade becomes a guardian." As Foucault puts it, "Such is perhaps the most diabolical aspect of the idea and of all the applications it brought about. In this form of management, power is not totally entrusted to someone who would exercise it alone, over others, in an absolute fashion; rather this machine is one in which everyone is caught, those who exercise this power as well as those who are subjected to it" (EP 156).

*everyone  
caught  
in it*

The Panopticon then is an exemplary technology for disciplinary power. Its chief characteristics are its ability to make the spread of power efficient; to make possible the exercise of power with limited manpower at the least cost; to discipline individuals with the least exertion of overt force by operating on their souls; to increase to a maximum the visibility of those subjected; to involve in its functioning all those who come in contact with the apparatus. In sum, Panopticism is a perfect example of a meticulous ritual of power which, by its mode of operation, establishes a site where a political technology of the body can operate; here rights and obligations are established and imposed.

The final component in Panopticism is the connection between bodies, space, power, and knowledge. The widespread interest in the Panopticon provided the mechanism for the insertion and activation of a new form of continuous administration and control of everyday life. The Panopticon itself must be understood as "the diagram of a mechanism of power reduced to its ideal form; its functioning abstracted from any obstacle, resistance or friction, must be represented as a pure architectural or optical system; it is in fact a figure of political technology that may and must be detached from any specific use" (DP 205). Even if, as Foucault himself points out, the Panopticon was never actually constructed, the numerous discussions about its operations and its potentialities served to formulate ideas about correction and control. It therefore represents for us the schematization of modern disciplinary technology: "The automatic functioning of power, mechanical operation is absolutely not the thesis of *Discipline and Punish*. Rather it is the idea, in the eighteenth century, that

such a form of power is possible and desirable. It is the theoretical and practical search for such mechanisms, the will, constantly attested, to organize this kind of mechanism which constitutes the object of my analysis" (IP 37).

Panoptic technology was designed to generalize the various disciplines which had emerged during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. At first highly localized and isolated in functionally specific settings, disciplinary technology now gradually overflowed its institutional bounds. The techniques of the Panopticon were applied, in admittedly less fully articulated form, in numerous kinds of institutions, and these institutions in turn kept close surveillance not only on the individuals within their walls but on those outside as well. The hospital, for example, not only organized the care of its own inmates; it became a center for observing and organizing the general population. As we have seen, disciplinary measures had their most impressive successes in those sectors of society concerned with the integration of production, utility, and control: "factory production, the transmission of knowledge, the diffusion of aptitude and skills, the war machine" (DP 211). Here, too, authorities came to see workers as individuals who needed to be studied, trained, and disciplined, first where they worked and later in their homes and schools and clinics, too. The technology of discipline linked the production of useful and docile individuals with the production of controlled and efficient populations.

There is a particular rationality, too, which goes along with the Panoptic technology, one which is self-contained, nontheoretical, efficient, and productive. The Panopticon seemed to pose no standard of judgment, only an efficient technique for distributing individuals, knowing them, ordering them along a graded scale in any of a number of institutional settings. Therefore the Panopticon had the effect of focusing the practices of the culture: it provided a paradigmatic form for their visibility. People—or at least educated reformers—could agree: a factory, school, prison, or even a harem (think of the Fourierists, or Bentham) should be run efficiently, without overt violence, with as much individuation as possible, scientifically and successfully. "The Panopticon arrangement provides the formula for this generalization. Its programs, at the level of an elementary and easily transferable mechanism, the basic functioning of a society penetrated through and through with disciplinary mechanisms" (DP 209).

As disciplinary technology undermined and advanced beyond its mask of neutrality, it imposed its own standard of normalization as the only acceptable one. Gradually the law and other standards outside of power were sacrificed to normalization. We see this tendency most clearly in the prisons. "The theme of the Panopticon—at once surveil-

lance and observation, security and knowledge, individualization and totalization, isolation and transparency—found in the prison its privileged locus of realization" (*DP* 249). This concentration of Panoptic procedures in turn allowed for the emergence of particular intellectual disciplines that were successfully applied in the prisons. The new penitentiary system that suddenly appeared in Europe at the beginning of the nineteenth century served, among other things, as a laboratory for the constitution of a body of knowledge about the criminal and his crimes. Following the twin imperatives of the newly emergent episteme of man and the technological "take-off" of disciplinary power, this was the ideal locale for a subject who was simultaneously the object of new scientific research and the object of disciplinary power. Scientific psychology was born, and it was quickly taken up in the prisons. "The supervision of normality was firmly encased in a medicine or a psychiatry that provided it with a sort of 'scientificity'; it was supported by a judicial apparatus which, directly or indirectly, gave it legal justification" (*DP* 296). It was between these two impeccable guardians that the "normalization of the power of normalization" advanced.

Foucault is not reductionistic about the relations of knowledge and power. Sometimes, as we have seen in the case of the natural sciences, knowledge separates itself from the practices in which it was formed. Combinations must be analyzed in each instance, not assumed beforehand. He explains: "I am not saying that the human sciences emerged from the prison. But, if they have been able to be formed and to produce so many profound changes in the episteme, it is because they have been conveyed by a specific and new modality of power...[which] required definite relations of knowledge in relations of power.... Knowable man (soul, individuality, consciousness, conduct, whatever it is called) is the object-effect of this analytic investment, of this domination-observation" (*DP* 305). This is not to say, obviously, that each aspect of each social science has a direct disciplinary effect—and Foucault never takes such a position. Yet, in the case of many human sciences there was a continuous, mutual, and prolonged interplay and reinforcement of these relationships.

In just such an instance, hybrid fertilization produced the delinquent: "The delinquent is to be distinguished from the offender by the fact that it is not so much his act as his life that is relevant in characterizing him" (*DP* 251). The criminal became a quasi-natural species, identified, isolated, and known by the newly emergent human sciences of psychiatry and criminology. Hence, it was no longer sufficient merely to punish his crime; the criminal had to be rehabilitated. To be rehabilitated, he had to be understood and known in his individuality, as well as classified as a certain type of criminal. Under the banner of normalization,

knowledge was brought foursquare into the fray. It was through this tactic that crime, which had been primarily a legal and political matter, became invested with new dimensions of scientific knowledge and normalizing intent.

The delinquent and the new penitentiary system appeared together; they complemented and extended one another. "The delinquent makes it possible to join [moral and political monsters and juridical subjects] and to constitute under the authority of medicine, psychology or criminology, an individual in whom the offender of the law and the object of scientific technique are superimposed" (*DP* 256). Modern power and the sciences of man found their common point of articulation; there would be many others to follow. The truly effective spread of normalizing power began with this coupling.

However, an extremely important dimension of the functioning of the prison system is that it never succeeded in living up to its promises. From its very inception through the present, prisons have not worked. Foucault's recounting of the numbers of recidivists and the uniformity of reform rhetoric is compelling. They have not done what their advocates claimed they were uniquely qualified to do: produce normal citizens out of hardened criminals. Yet this does not mean that prison reformers necessarily failed to achieve their goals. During the last century and a half, spokesmen have consistently offered the prison system as the remedy for its own ills. The question, therefore, is not, Why have the prisons failed? It is rather, What other ends are served by this failure, which is perhaps not a failure after all? Foucault's answer is direct: "One would be forced to suppose that the prison, and no doubt punishment in general, is not intended to eliminate offenses, but rather to distinguish them, to distribute them, to use them: that it is not so much that they render docile those who are liable to transgress the law but that they tend to assimilate the transgression of the laws in a general tactic of subjection" (*DP* 272). Penitentiaries, and perhaps all normalizing power, succeed when they are only partially successful.

An essential component of technologies of normalization is that they are themselves an integral part of the systematic creation, classification, and control of anomalies in the social body. Their *raison d'être* comes from their claim to have isolated such anomalies and their promises to normalize them. As Foucault has shown in great detail in *Discipline and Punish* and *The History of Sexuality*, the advance of bio-power is contemporary with the appearance and proliferation of the very categories of anomalies—the delinquent, the pervert, and so on—that technologies of power and knowledge were supposedly designed to eliminate. The spread of normalization operates through the creation of abnormalities which it

then must treat and reform. By identifying the anomalies scientifically, the technologies of bio-power are in a perfect position to supervise and administer them.

This effectively transforms into a technical problem—and thence into a field for expanding power—what might otherwise be construed as a failure of the whole system of operation. Political technologies advance by taking what is essentially a political problem, removing it from the realm of political discourse, and recasting it in the neutral language of science.<sup>1</sup> Once this is accomplished the problems have become technical ones for specialists to debate. In fact, the language of reform is, from the outset, an essential component of these political technologies. Bio-power spread under the banner of making people healthy and protecting them. When there was resistance, or failure to achieve its stated aims, this was construed as further proof of the need to reinforce and extend the power of the experts. A technical matrix was established. By definition, there ought to be a way of solving any technical problem. Once this matrix was established, the spread of bio-power was assured, for there was nothing else to appeal to; any other standards could be shown to be abnormal or to present merely technical problems. We are promised normalization and happiness through science and law. When they fail, this only justifies the need for more of the same.

Once the hold of bio-power is secure, what we get is not a true conflict of interpretations about the ultimate worth or meaning of efficiency, productivity, or normalization, but rather what might be called a conflict of implementations. The problem bio-power has succeeded in establishing is how to make the welfare institutions work; it does not ask, What do they mean? or, as Foucault would put it, What do they do?

Foucault gives a perfect example of this conflict of implementations when he discusses the early nineteenth-century debates about which of the American model prison systems—Auburn or Philadelphia—provided a better solution to the problems of isolating prisoners. The Auburn model drew on the monastery and the factory for elements of its solution. Hence, prisoners were assigned to sleep in separate individual cells but were allowed to eat and work together, although in both situations they were strictly forbidden to speak to one another. The advantage of the system, according to the Auburn reformers, was that it duplicated in a pure form the conditions of society—hierarchy and surveillance in the name of order—and hence prepared the criminal's return to social life. In contrast, the Philadelphia model of the Quakers stressed individual reform of conscience through isolation and self-reflection.<sup>2</sup> Kept in continual

1. Habermas and many others have addressed this point. Their general analytic framework is more systematically presented than is Foucault's. Foucault, however, has been more successful in pinpointing the concrete mechanisms by which this process works.

confinement, the criminal would supposedly undergo a deep and pervasive change in character, rather than a superficial alteration of surface habits and attitudes. The Quakers believed he would discover his moral conscience through the elimination of sociality.

Foucault has isolated two different models of implementation; two different models of society and the individual; two different models of subjection. Each is based on an implicit acceptance of disciplinary technology per se. Advocates of either system agreed that there should be isolation and individualization of prisoners. The only conflict was how this individualization and isolation should be carried out.

A whole series of different conflicts stemmed from the opposition between two models: religious (must conversion be the principle element of correction?), economic (which methods cost less?), medical (does total isolation drive convicts insane?), architectural and administrative (which form guarantees the best surveillance?). This, no doubt, was why the argument lasted so long. But, at the heart of the debate, and making it possible, was this primary objective of carceral action: coercive individualization by the termination of any relation that is not supervised by authority or arranged according to hierarchy. (DP 239)

The project itself was not a topic of dispute. It was the unquestioned acceptance of hierarchical, coercive individualization which made possible a wide range of techniques of implementation. Through these differences and these agreements (however tacit and embedded in the practices), under the guidance of science and the law, normalization and discipline advanced.

#### Paradigms and Practices

Readers familiar with Kuhn's account of how sciences are established and proceed will recognize a striking similarity between Kuhn's account of normal science and Foucault's account of normalizing society. According to Kuhn a science becomes normal when the practitioners in a certain area all agree that a particular piece of work identifies the important problems in a field and demonstrates how certain of these problems can be successfully solved. Kuhn calls such an agreed-upon achievement a paradigm or exemplar, and points to Newton's *Principia* as a perspicuous example. Paradigms set up normal science as the activity of finding certain puzzling phenomena which seem at first to resist incorporation into the theory, but which normal science, by its very definition, must ultimately account for in its own terms. The ideal of normal science is that all these anomalies will eventually be shown to be compatible with the theory. Kuhn notes that "perhaps the most striking feature