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# Foucault Circle

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# ABSTRACTS

**"Rights, Revolution, and Race"**

**Joanna Crosby, Morgan State University**

In *Society Must Be Defended*, Foucault articulates an understanding of history and the workings of power that focus the concept of race and explore its plasticity over three centuries. While he states clearly that the series of lectures does not have race as its main topic, race, race war, and racism are essential to Foucault's elucidation of political power in 16th-19th century Europe. This text is a product of his work on power between *Discipline and Punish* and *The History of Sexuality*. While the major themes have been set, these lectures allow us to witness his developing account of power relations.

My first goal in this paper is to understand Foucault's account of 'race war' as a new kind of history, and the purpose he says it served. I assume that my colleagues at the Foucault Circle will provide helpful critique of such an account. My second goal is to then see to what use this account can be put. Many different modes of dividing societies have been posited as the primary or essential divisions: Marx said it was economic divisions, DuBois claimed it was the race line, feminists have characterized gender as The Source of inequality. It seems to me that each of these modes of subjectification have been deployed within institutions in order to manage populations. Sexuality can be added to this dubious set.

The lectures begin with an inversion of Clausewitz's aphorism, 'War is politics by other means.' Foucault has as his goal proof of the claim that politics is war by other means. This is not merely a reformulation of the Hobbes. Rather, Foucault calls for us to abandon the model of Leviathan. "We have to study power outside the model of Leviathan, outside the field delineated by juridical sovereignty and the institution of the State (pg. 34)."

Foucault describes a break between the Middle Ages and the 16th-19th centuries characterized by the use and effect of history. The use of history throughout antiquity and the Middle Ages glorified the present through its account of the past. What Foucault calls 'race struggle' reveals the break between the two periods. History no longer celebrates and unifies, rather it presents "a binary perception and division of society and men; them and us, the unjust and the just, the masters and those who must obey them (pg. 74)." Racial division makes room for practices of normalization and disciplinary power. The discourse of racial struggle or race war "is not a clash between two distinct races. It is the splitting of a single race into a superrace and a subrace (pg. 61)."

The concept of race has been used, like sexuality, by governmental institutions to manage populations. Establishing what is deviant and tying deviance to danger nomativizes society. State institutions can then work within a standard of what is good for the continuation of the society, via said institutions, involving them in a process of self-perpetuation.

Foucault's account of race will disappoint some; for others it will smack of racism. Slavery does not appear in his account, and color-based racism Foucault characterizes as but one facet the discourse of race has taken. Race struggle is not about the oppressed (pg. 76), rather it is a tool for the preservation of State sovereignty, "a sovereignty whose luster and vigor were no longer guaranteed by magico-juridical rituals, but by medico-normalizing techniques (pg. 81)." We widely recognize the role of sexuality in social normalization, but it is not alone. The racial discourse has become "one of the basic dimensions of social normalization (pg. 62)."

This, then, is what is most significant in *Society Must be Defended*: race as another form of normalization, as another cog in the disciplinary wheel. The discourse on race demands that a DuBois identifies race as the problem for the 20th century, and that a Charles Mills reissues that claim at the beginning of the 21st century. Race may not be at the heart of the struggle, though. Foucault says, "Truth to tell, if we are to struggle against disciplines, or rather against disciplinary power, in our search for a nondisciplinary power, we should not be turning to the old right of sovereignty; we should be looking for a new right that is both antidisciplinary and emancipated from the principle of sovereignty (pg. 40)."

## "The Rise of State Racism in Europe and the United States"

### Ladelle McWhorter, University of Richmond

About ten years ago while spending a summer in Austria, I had several experiences that made me acutely aware that many European intellectuals believe the US as a nation suffers from a pathological level of sexual repression and actively promotes virulent forms of race hatred. Numerous examples of these traits and conducts were recited at dinner parties, in lecture halls, and on board various sorts of public transportation. After a while, I became annoyed.

I myself am quite vocal regarding this country's shortcomings. The fact that right wing religious organizations anxious to end adolescent sexual exploration, homosexuality, and any form of "free love" pull numerous strings at the White House has not escaped my notice. Nor has the fact that racism is alive and well and dictating a great deal of social and economic policy. What annoyed me, especially in regards to the question of racism, was that Europeans—Austrians, no less!—were doing the finger-pointing. I am a polite interlocutor, dinner guest, and rider of buses and trains, so I did not ask my Austrian, German, and Dutch colleagues the sarcastic question that was on the tip of my tongue for the better part of eight weeks, namely: Who invented racism, after all? But I have thought about that question a good bit over the last ten years.

At that time I believed that the answer was obvious. Europeans invented racism. The Portuguese and Spanish initiated the process, with the Dutch furthering it when they became dominant over the Spanish in the African slave trade. The English gave it a metaphysical underpinning in the eighteenth century and, together with the Prussians, solidified it in biological theory through the nineteenth. The state racism that arose as fascism in the twentieth century was a direct outcome of that process. Sure, Americans participated in the violence and American capitalists grew fat on the windfall, but racism was the child of European imperialism. And you can't blame Americans for that.

You might think reading Foucault's *"Society Must be Defended"* would only have confirmed my position, for in that book (as you all know) Foucault gives a detailed genealogy of the development of European racism from what he calls the discourse of race war in the early seventeenth century through biological racism in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, to the scientific state racism of relatively recent times. It is clear from his account that modern racism was born in Europe and that Europe certainly had not freed itself from racism by that time of Foucault's analysis in the mid-1970s. But over the past year I have changed my mind about one thing: European racism was not simply transported to the American colonies where it gradually adapted to the new climate. Anglo-America and the young United States also contributed their very own racist innovations, which were exported back to Europe and employed to further the development of European race theory and state practice.

In this paper I hope to demonstrate my thesis by first explicating Foucault's genealogical account of modern racism and then, drawing on some US historians such as Theodore Allen, show that the chronology of development that Foucault outlines does not apply to the US. Specifically, I will argue that in the US state racism is not an outgrowth of biological racism, as Foucault suggests it is in Western Europe; rather, state racism precedes both European and American biological racism by decades and what Foucault calls scientific racism by more than a century, making the United States the first racist nation-state in the Western world.


## "Sea-Foam Scattering as Critical Enterprise"

### Benjamin S. Pryor, University of Toledo

Foucault describes his method as "instrumental and…dreamlike," and at another time says "I can't help but dream about a kind of criticism that would…light fires, watch the grass grow, listen to the wind, and catch the sea foam in the breeze and scatter it."[1] Now, honestly: inspiring as this might be, it is very difficult to understand in a general way what it means to dream of a criticism that "scatters sea foam" or that "watches the grass grow." Whitman's poetry watches grass grow, and it is entirely possible that this is enough for a poem.[2] Yet from the point of view of philosophy, what could it mean to identify one's critical work and method as "instrumental and dreamlike" at the same time? That is, how is instrumentality not utterly compromised by dreaminess, and how can dreaming—unless overcome by forgetting, consciousness, interpretation, or the light of day—ever rise to the status of a method?

What is most striking in Foucault's description is that it is opposed in its language, thought, and direction to what is most definitive of contemporary critical theory, which gives us an abiding concern with real, actual, and effective institutional structures that produce possibilities of thought and action. In turn this concern is bound up with and inseparable from a critical gesture that separates the false from the true, the actual from the deceptive, the authentic from the inauthentic, "what things claim to be" versus "what they are."[3] Foucault proposes a "method" that is apparently at an immeasurable distance from an abiding concern with or even initial contact with the real and actual. Foucault's work seems unconcerned with the distinctions between the false and true, deceptive and actual, or what things are in opposition to what they claim to be and, at least this is what Foucault says, the method is no less "instrumental" for it. There is obviously a concern for the real, the actual, and the effective, but always insofar as "effective" means that something new and different is introduced into what is taken to be identical and unchanging. Here we turn away from dialectical and "rejectionist" critique and toward something positive, affirmative, or what we will come to understand as fully "instrumental and dreamlike." The difficult thing, and this is the other task of this presentation, is to see this as not only a challenge to but more importantly as a new taking up of the libratory and diagnostic enterprises that characterize critical theory. This discussion will incorporate and investigate Foucault's quest to formulate a mode of criticism that would "scatter sea foam" as central to and inseparable from a fundamental attitude that is not reducible to a claim or a theoretical commitment (as two recent accounts of Foucault's "critical" enterprise seem to have it). It is an enactment of a freedom that is not only hard-earned, but that is given in, by, and to modern thought as such, to one who explores thought from the inside in order not to prescribe new ways of thinking, but to do what modern thought has always promised to itself: to gain a little freedom.

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[1] Michel Foucault, "The Masked Philosopher," in <u>Ethics, Subjectivity and Truth, 323</u>

[2] "Loafe with me on the grass, loose the stop from your throat,/Not words, not music or rhyme I want, not custom or lecture,/not even the best,/Only the lull I like, the hum of your valved voice." Whitman, "Song of Myself"

[3] See, for example, Adorno and Horkheimer's "Enlightenment as Mass Deception," in <u>Dialectic of Enlightenment</u> (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 94-136, passim; Cf. Adorno, <u>Negative Dialectics</u> (New York: Seabury Press, 1973);

<center>**"Foucault's Critical Project"**</center>

<center>**Keith Robinson, Davenport University**</center>

The context for my paper is the recently translated book '*Foucault's Critical Project*' by Beatrice Han (Stanford, 2002). In her book Han argues –correctly in my opinion – that Foucault's work aims to critically rethink the status of the transcendental. Indeed, Han argues that the central and unifying theme of Foucault's entire work is the effort to *historicize the transcendental*, modifying Kant's project by attempting to detach it from his 'anthropological' solution while retaining the form of the 'critical question'. The 'slalom' of Foucault's constantly changing methodological frameworks are explained as various attempts to find a working version of this historical transcendental that is coherent and consistent in its rejection of 'man and his doubles'. The Foucaultian apriori, Han says, 'is given in history, …transforms itself with it, and which nevertheless lies beyond it in defining the conditions of possibility, themselves variable, from which the knowledge of an epoch can and must form itself' (4). Han tries to show how this definition is variously transposed, reworked and refocused as Foucault's thought responds to the internal demands and aporia of holding the historical and the transcendental together and apart. Thus the 'historical apriori' is retained in different forms and given different types of work to do as Foucault's thought swings from a purely archaeological transcendental to a genealogical version and then finally a subject-centred 'ethical' framework as he struggles with the tensions that each new version throws up. Han argues that Foucault is ultimately unsuccessful in these attempts and falls back into a form of the 'doubling' or reductive oscillation between the transcendental and the historical that Foucault himself had uncovered as one of the characteristic problems of modern thought. My objective here is to critically evaluate some of Han's discussions and contrast them with a version of the transcendental that has been developed in relation to Foucault that addresses some of Han's criticisms.

In view of Han's thesis perhaps the most curious and conspicuous absence in her book is any mention of - let alone sustained engagement with - the work of Gilles Deleuze. Deleuze's book on his friend explicitly describes Foucault's work as a unique sort of neo-Kantianism that attempts to seek out the apriori conditions of experience, of what makes something visible or readable, sayable or seeable, etc. Thus, a 'statement' for Deleuze is precisely not to be confused with propositions or phrases since it is the condition of propositions. Equally, the 'visible' in Foucault according to Deleuze is not what can be seen but the condition of what can be seen. What really sets Deleuze's analysis apart though is that he thinks that Foucault's 'neo-Kantianism' is precisely the problem of the 'mutual presupposition', reciprocal determination and 'coadaptation' of these two forms, of seeing and saying, light and language – *without one being reducible to or simply collapsing into the other*. Deleuze articulates a 'transposition of the transcendental theme' and a logic of thought in Foucault that directly challenges Han's thesis. In other words, Deleuze offers an account of the apriori in Foucault that engages the problems diagnosed by Han yet displaces the aporetic logic of reduction and the issues of internal consistency and methodology that Han identifies. Contrasting these two accounts will renew the question of what is at stake in Foucault's critical project 20 years on.

<center>**"Creation and Intervention: The Status of Concepts in Foucault's Work"**</center>

<center>**Daniel W. Smith, Purdue University**</center>

I would like to explore a particular epistemological question in Foucault's work that concerns the status of concepts. Deleuze has famously defined philosophy itself as an activity of creating concepts. In Foucault's work, by contrast, concept formation is obviously not limited to philosophy, but is a component of *any* epistemic formation. Several contemporary thinkers have taken up this theme,

particularly in the wake of the project Foucault sketched out (but never completed) in the first volume of *The History of Sexuality*. Arnold Davidson, for instance, has expanded on Foucault's work by analyzing the emergence the psychiatric concept of "sexuality" in the nineteenth century (linked the the concept of the sexual "instinct"), and the related concepts of "perversion" that appear in Krafft-Ebing and others as "deviant" forms of this newly-defined sexuality. Strictly speaking, Davidson argues, *there were no perverts* before the end of the nineteenth-century, precisely because the very concept of perversion did not yet exist.[1]

Foucauldian conceptual analyses such as Davidson's raise several complex epistemological questions (which Davidson himself attempts to address). First, and most obviously, what are the conditions that allow for such conceptual innovation? Second, and perhaps more importantly, what is the epistemic status of such created concepts? A theory such as Russell's theory of definite descriptions (new concepts provide new descriptions, or new senses for a common referent) only goes part way in answering this question. The reason is that created concepts not only provide new descriptions of the world, or objects in the world, but also have the effect of *intervening* in "experience" as such, and effectively altering that experience (what Deleuze called an "incorporeal transformation"). David Halperin, for instance, has not only shown that the concept "homosexuality" was created (by Chaddock in 1892), but in addition that it had an effect on human bodies in such a way that it made possible a new "mode of existence," with its own ontological and even political status.[2] More broadly, Ian Hacking has shown how the creation of concepts such a "child abuse" and "split personalities" can not only be dated, but have the effect of "making up people" or *creating phenomena* through an act of what he calls "dynamic nominalism."[3] (In *Representing and Intervening*, Hacking goes even further, and ascribes this effect of "intervening" and "creating phenomena" to science itself, and its effect on nature.)

Moreover, it seems possible that such "conceptual interventions" are not merely local interventions. Arthur Danto writes, "The paradigm of a philosophical difference is between two worlds, one of which is sheer illusion, as the Indians believed this one is, and the other of which is real in the way we believe this very world is. Descartes' problem of distinguishing waking experience from dream experience is a limited variation of the same question....A world of sheer determinism might be imagined indistinguishable from one in which everything happens by accident. A world in which God exists could never be told apart from one in which God didn't....Carnap would have said that such a choice is meaningless precisely because no observation(s) could be summoned to effect a discrimination...Whatever the case, it is plain that philosophical differences are external to the worlds they discriminate."[4] It is not clear that the later statement is a straightforward as it seems. In *Difference and Repetition*, for example, Deleuze invites us to consider two formulas—"only that which resembles differs" and "only differences can resemble each other"—and then makes the following observation: "What we have to ask is whether these two formulas are simply two ways of speaking that do not change

[1] Arnold I. Davidson, "Closing Up the Corpses: Diseases of Sexuality and the Emergence of the Psychiatric Style of Reasoning," in <u>Meaning and Method: Essays in Honor of Hilary Putnam</u>, ed. George Boolos (Cambridge: CUP, 1990), pp. 295-325; "Sex and the Emergence of Sexuality," in <u>Critical Inquiry</u> 14, pp. 16-48; "How to Do the History of Psychoanalysis: A Reading of Freud's <u>Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality</u>," in <u>The Trial(s) of Psychoanalysis</u>, ed. Françoise Meltzer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), pp. 39-64.
[2] David M. Halperin, "One Hundred Years of Homosexuality," in <u>One Hundred Years of Homosexuality and Other Essays on Greek Love</u> (New York: Routledge, 1990), pp. 15-53.
[3] Ian Hacking, "Making Up People," in <u>Reconstructing Individualism: Autonomy, Individuality, and the Self in Western Thought</u>, ed. Thomas C. Heller, Morton Sosna, and David E. Wellbery, with Arnold I. Davidson, Ann Swidler, And Ian Watt (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1986), pp. 222-236; "The Invention of Split Personalities," in <u>Human Nature and Natural Knowledge</u>, ed. Alan Donagan, Anthony N. Perovich, Jr., and Michael V. Wedlin (Dordrecht, 1986), pp. 63-85; "Biopower and the Avalanche of Printed Numbers," in <u>Humanities in Society</u> 5 (1982), pp. 279-295.
[4] Arthur Danto, <u>The Philosophical Disenfranchisement of Art</u> (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), p. 171.

much; or if they are applied to completely different systems; or if, being applied to the same systems (at the limit, to the system of the World), they signify two incompatible interpretations of unequal value, one of which is capable of changing everything."[5]

In my paper, I would like address these questions by considering the distinction Deleuze makes, at several points in his work, between "pure events" and "states of affairs." Concepts can intervene in states of affairs, Deleuze suggests, because in themselves they express pure events that are irreducible to their spatio-temporal actualization. "The concept is an incorporeal, even though it is incarnated or effectuated in bodies. But it must not be confused with the state of things in which it actualized. It does not have spatio-temporal coordinates, but only intensive ordinates....The concept expresses the event, not the essence or the thing."[6] In this sense, concepts themselves do not have a reference, but are self-referential and constructivist: they create their object at the same time as they are created. ""The concept is obviously knowledge, but knowledge of itself, and what is knows is the pure event, which must not be confused with the state of affairs in which it Otto embodied."[7]


## "What are 'Normative Foundations'? Does Foucault Have Any? Why Should He?"

### Matthew King, York University

Habermas charges that Foucault's work is guilty of the "arbitrary *partisanship* of a criticism that cannot account for its normative foundations." Habermas further claims that Foucault's work is "cyptonormative", meaning that it relies on normative assumptions to which Foucault is not entitled on the terms of the explicit content of his work. In my paper I examine two kinds of response that have been made on Foucault's behalf, and argue that both are inadequate. The first kind of response attempts to defeat the charge of "cryptonormativism" by showing that a coherent account *can* be given of Foucault's normative foundations. The second, generally more recent kind of response attempts to defend Foucault, or to suggest that no defence is necessary, by attacking or dismissing Habermas's own foundationalist project.

Exemplifying the first kind of response, Todd May suggests that Foucault's foundations are *anti-representationalism* and *difference*; Michael Kelly suggests that his foundation is *freedom*; and James Johnson suggests that his foundation is actually essentially the same as Habermas's own. I argue that all three suggestions fail to meet Habermas's challenge. Johnson's fails because his proposed foundation does not cohere with some of Foucault's explicit position, and thus, even if it were actually an assumption of Foucault's, it would succumb to the charge of cryptonormativism. The other two fail because they do not meet Habermas's requirements for what counts as a normative foundation.

The second kind of response, exemplified in its attacking mode by many of the articles collected in *Foucault Contra Habermas*, particularly James Tully's, and in its dismissive mode by Barry Allen in his "Foucault and Modern Political Philosophy", situates itself within the recent philosophical movement of anti-foundationalism more generally, a movement to which Foucault is an important impetus. I argue that abstract anti-foundationalist attacks on and dismissals of Habermas's foundationalism miss the significance of Habermas's challenge to Foucault. Habermas's challenge is not merely an abstract one aimed at showing that Foucauldian political criticism fails to be properly systematic. Habermas does not uphold systematic, logical consistency as an ideal in itself. Rather, Habermas's challenge requires Foucauldian political criticism to demonstrate that it can be *convincing* in discourse and that it is not forced to rely on strategic manipulation of its audience to be effective.

To demonstrate what is required by Habermas, I examine the foundation—namely, the "discourse ethics" worked out by Habermas and Karl-Otto Apel—underlying the political critique Habermas carries

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[5] Difference and Repetition, p. 117.
[6] What is Philosophy?, p. 21.
[7] What is Philosophy?, p. 33.

out in *The Theory of Communicative Action*. I show how, by founding their theory of morality in the presuppositions to which speakers are necessarily committed in argumentative discourse, Habermas and Apel claim to have avoided the trilemma on which typically founder other attempts to construct foundational moral principles. That trilemma is this: normative foundations either (1) are subject to infinite regress, which turns out to be the problem with the foundations May suggests for Foucault; (2) commit a petitio principii; or (3) consist of the arbitrary "dogmatization of a principle (axiom) that one is not prepared to justify any further" (Apel), which turns out to be the problem with Kelly's proposal.

I argue that the attempts to identify normative foundations in Foucault's work have failed largely because they have not taken into account Habermas's distinction between the moral and the ethical, which is crucial to understanding Habermas's conception of normative foundations. For Habermas, a normative foundation must be *moral* rather than *ethical* in his sense of these words. For Habermas, the *moral* is concerned with the *right* and is necessarily universal; the *ethical* is concerned with the *good* and is necessarily relative to some community or individual. Foucault indeed has an *ethic* (or several), but for Habermas an ethic is necessarily *partisan*; it is in principle impossible to *convince* others to accept an ethic they do not already share.

Although, as I will show, Foucault can be seen as coming surprisingly close to answering Habermas's challenge—Kelly's proposed foundation, in particular, almost achieves the form Habermas requires—he is ultimately unsympathetic to the project of morality as Habermas conceives it, and thus no sound case can be made to defend Foucault, on the basis of the explicit content of Foucault's work, against Habermas's charge on its own terms. Foucauldian political criticism is, then, necessarily partisan, as indeed he sometimes says himself: his work is for the benefit of those engaged in struggle.

On the other hand, it is evident—and Foucault also says this himself—that his work often makes the struggle more *difficult* for those whose side one expects Foucault to take. For example, *Discipline and Punish* calls into question the humanization of the prison by revealing humanization as a technique for involving subjects in their own subjugation, and *The History of Sexuality* vol. 1 calls into question the foundation of the gay rights movement by revealing homosexuality as a constructed and possibly constrictive identity. Thus while Foucauldian criticism is indeed partisan, it is not directly determined by, and does not seek strategically (in Habermas's sense) to advance, the practical interests of a certain party of persons. Foucault does seek to convince rather than manipulate his audience. Where he departs from Habermas is in refusing the requirement that one's audience consist of the entire universe of rational persons. However, I suggest that Habermas cannot consistently meet this requirement either; in fact, an un-Habermassian motto of Habermas's work might be "communicative action in my community; strategic action against others."

Thus my conclusion is that the Habermassian challenge to Foucault and Foucauldians is both stronger and weaker than it appears: stronger because its *practical* import has been poorly understood and needs to be taken seriously; weaker because its apparent *abstract* requirement is not met by Habermas himself (nor indeed could it be met by any political criticism).


**"Normativity and Normalization"**


**Dianna Taylor, John Carroll University**


The ethical and political significance of Michel Foucault's work has been criticized, most notably by feminists and Habermasians, on the grounds that it fails to provide the normative foundations that ethics and politics are said to require. I've often responded to such critiques by endeavoring to show that there *are* norms in Foucault's work – the man goes so far as to say he holds values and to identify what they are, in fact. Yet despite these efforts (which are by no means unique to me) the critiques of Foucault persist. I've been thinking for some time about this whole phenomenon, and it seems to me that my approach is to at least some extent wrongheaded. That is, I believe that a Foucauldian perspective calls

not for the validation of norms as feminists and Habermasians conceive of them, but rather the critical analysis of the concept of normativity and its function within philosophical discourse.

In Volume I of *The History of Sexuality* Foucault presents the concept of "sex" as a key component in the creation, proliferation, and establishment of sexual norms within society ("the deployment of sexuality"). While sexual norms generally possess normalizing potential, Foucault sees the norm of "sex" itself as particularly problematic in this regard: oppression may stem not only from particular constructions of sexuality in terms of, for example, the "normal" and the "abnormal," but also and perhaps most importantly from the uncritical acceptance of the norm of sex as a "natural" and necessary foundation upon which individual sexualities and subjectivities are based. The concept of sex, for Foucault, functions as a mode of legitimation for and delimits the boundaries of sexuality – it renders us intelligible to ourselves and to one another – and, as such, is in particular need of critical interrogation: "it is precisely the idea of sex *in itself* that we cannot accept without examination," he argues (Foucault 1990, 154; Foucault's emphasis). Moreover, insofar as sex is seen as fundamental to who one is, generating and obtaining knowledge about and categories of sex is synonymous with having access to truth. The interconnection of sex and truth, in turn, encourages the acceptance and internalization of sexual norms and thus masks their normalizing character: persons perceive the proliferation of sexual identities and discourses as signifying freedom from sexual repression when in fact it situates subjects squarely within in relations of power. "We must not," Foucault argues, "think that by saying yes to sex one says no to power" (1990, 157).

In this paper I suggest that the concept of normativity functions in a manner analogous to that of the concept of sex. What I want to examine, more specifically, is the way in which the concept of normativity functions as a mode of legitimation for and thus delimits the boundaries of philosophical discourse, particularly in the areas of ethics and politics. Just as "sex" simultaneously renders subjects intelligible as sexual subjects and circumscribes the forms that subjectivity may take, so "normativity" simultaneously functions as a condition for the possibility of ethics and politics and thereby delimits ethical and political forms and discourse. My point here, then, is that it is not merely particular ethical and political norms or discourses that may function in normalizing ways, but more specifically the norm of normativity itself and, therefore, that "it is precisely the idea of normativity *in itself* that we cannot accept without examination." My inclination is that there are not in fact norms in Foucault's work, if norms are defined in particular (Habermasian) terms. Certainly, Foucault has ethical and political *commitments*, but what I want to show is that these commitments function in a different manner than Habermasian norms and, hence, are not recognized as sufficient grounds for ethics and politics: norms for Habermas are "backward looking," in the sense that, to borrow from Foucault, they function to "legitimate what is already known." Foucault's ethical and political commitments, on the other hand, are "forward looking" in the sense that they open up possibilities for new modes of existence. My intention here is not to attack Habermas (and thus revisit the "Foucault/Habermas debate"), but rather to identify the potentially normalizing effects of the uncritical acceptance of his work.

### "Spaces of Invention"

### Kevin Thompson, DePaul University

Foucault often remarked that extricating human capacities from increasingly more rigid and severe forms of power requires the creation of sites wherein such relations can not only be contested but genuinely transformed. He called these "spaces of invention" and argued that such forums needed to enable various sorts of groups to undertake experimentation in forms of collective decision-making and begin the work of renovating the conceptual framework within which social issues and dilemmas are currently posed. The fundamental goal of such sites, he said, would be to enable associations to be forged in and through which people could truly take up the task of fashioning themselves, the never-ending work of autonomy. Beyond this sketch, however, Foucault left this provocative proposal largely undeveloped;

this despite the fact that his own work provides ample resources for thinking through just what sort of institutions would make possible such spaces. The aim of the paper, then, is to begin to work out the basic constitutive features of institutions of self-formation.

Two models of transformation have tended to dominate discussions of the political import of Foucault's thought. The first looks to the ways in which different sorts of identities are contingently constituted and advocates performing these categorizations in ways that subvert the very project of classification itself ("parodic performance"). The second takes its bearings from the essentially contested nature of identity and urges the cultivation of such productive conflictuality through the promotion of agonistic engagements between different forms of life ("an agonistic democratic sensibility"). Both of these models can be traced back to Foucault's own concern with, on the one hand, transgressive practices that seek to strip the formation of identities out of dominant modes of categorization, and, on the other, with the emergence of the possibility of new forms of social relations, e.g., friendships, that create alliances in and through the mutual giving and taking of a variety of different sorts of pleasures. The former model is obviously the source for the strategy of parodic performance, while the latter could be said to be the impetus for the cultivation of agonistic sensibilities. What both of these approaches miss, however, is Foucault's insight that insofar as power relations necessarily operate through specific forms of institutionalization, the work of transforming such relations such that they enable genuine self-constitution requires a rethinking of the very nature of institutions. That is to say, both of the currently dominant models of transformation are decidedly agent focused schemes and they thus fail to consider sufficiently the ways in which the field of action—the spaces that shape, orient, and even make possible performance and sensibility—must be reconfigured in order to make projects of true self-fashioning even possible.

Foucault's studies of military, medical, educational, and industrial bodies show that institutions produce sustained, sanctioned, and uniform behavior through the specific ways in which they distribute space and the procedures and rituals by which they organize time. To govern conduct is thus a function of the spatio-temporal logic of institutions. To resist and transform the often times intolerable conditions that develop under such rule in ways that enable their inhabitants to become self-formative therefore requires a rethinking of both the spatiality and temporality of institutions. A new logic of institutions is needed and this is precisely what Foucault was pointing to when he called for the creation of new "spaces of invention". The paper seeks to begin to sketch this new logic by working out of Foucault's analyses of discipline, governmentality, and the history of space.

The essay is divided into three parts. Part I examines the relationship between power relations and institutions. It tries to understand the precise role institutions play in shaping conduct in accordance with schemes of governing. Its focus is the distinctive spatiality and temporality of such institutions. Part II takes up the problem of how the present regime of governance can be reconfigured in order to establish sites for experimentation in collective decision-making and conceptual renovation. In particular, it seeks to lay out the spatial and temporal logic, the institutional infrastructure, that would foster and make sustainable continual repositionings in power relations. Finally, following from the preceding analyses, Part III sets out several concrete proposals for the design of decentralized and participatory institutions of self-formation: devolution of power, coordinational centralization, and the transformation of existing state and social agencies in accordance with these principles. In the end, the paper argues that "spaces of invention" require anarchic spatiality and temporality, a heterotropic logic of sociality, in order to foster and nurture genuine alliances of self-formation..

**"Impoverished Bodies and the Aesthetics of Existence: Foucault's Genealogy of Poverty"**

**Edward McGushin, Boston College**

The persistence of poverty – both in the post-industrial and the "developing" world – is one of the great problems of our times. In this paper I want to show how Foucault's work recasts this problem

through a genealogy of the political rationality within which it appears.  My goal is to discover alternative rationalities and practices that allow us to resist the dangers of modern political reason.  One of these dangers is the very way that modern forms of power, discourse and subjectivity constitute poverty as an object of knowledge and control.  Foucault's genealogies present us with at least three different and opposed deployments of poverty: 1) the religious sacralization of the poor and charity; 2) the bio-political project in which poverty is a social disease to be cured or purged; and, 3) the philosophical care of the self in which poverty is a technology and a goal, the fullness of human existence and the proper relationship to oneself.  Multiplying the forms of rationality and practice through which poverty exists and takes on a meaning, Foucault offers us the hope of resisting the danger of bio-politics, the cynical logic that stigmatizes the poor for their poverty and places them in apparatuses that treat them like a disease, an evil or a subhuman form of life.

My paper has four sections.  In the first section I present a brief sketch of bio-politics as a discursive formation and a set of relations of power. Bio-politics is a mode of power that functions by organizing the ensemble of knowledges and institutions necessary to care for and nurture healthy, happy and productive populations. In dealing with populations, bio-political reason integrates politics and economics with biology – it is a form of medicine and not merely an executive, legislative, juridical, or economic apparatus.  In this framework, poverty is constituted for knowledge and power as a kind of social problem or disease that infects the body politic.

In the second section I examine the historical a priori upon which bio-politics establishes itself – the great confinement. The confinement is a complex event that transforms not only the social landscape (and in particular urban space) but also deploys a new technology of control – the police – and a new formation of political reason.  What's more, it also brings into being a new relationship of the self to itself. The exteriorization and confinement of the poor result in social and political bodies that can no longer tolerate coming into contact with the humanly inevitable facts of deterioration and death, extreme physical suffering and deprivation, with human bodies that are not happy, healthy, productive or sanitary.  Impoverished bodies – because of their isolation and stigmatization – come to be experienced as intolerable and even inhuman.  The bio-political isolation and containment of the poor as a social disease is the continuing effect of the great confinement – the photo negative of the production of aesthetic, strong, healthy and (re)productive bodies as the social norm and goal.

I turn, in the third section, to Foucault's excavation of care of the self in ancient Greek philosophy. The theme of poverty returns here in a new and surprising way.  Poverty is not an object of discourse or political control, but a technology of the self deployed by ancient philosophers and early Christians.  Poverty is a practice through which the self is transformed in its being as a subject and through which it attains its fullness, truth and freedom. It is a means of resisting formations of power and knowledge at work in the social and political body and as such it has a critical, aesthetic and ontological value – truth.

The conclusion of my paper suggests how the multiplication of political and ethical dispositives opens up new possibilities for our relationship to poverty and the poor.  One of these is the development of service learning programs.  By combing real contact with the impoverished and philosophical meditation on power, discursive practices and subjectivity, we create the basis of new discourses, relations, practices and subjectivities.


**"The Delinquency of Time: A Foucauldian Reading of Augustine's *Confessions*"**

**Cynthia D. Coe, Central Washington University**

ure of confession enacted in Augustine's *Confessions* and its conception of time illuminate the relationship between two central Foucauldian ideas: the analysis of the demand for truth in the *History of Sexuality* and the analysis of the ordering of time in *Discipline and Punish*.  Both of these discussions

address fundamental issues in the philosophy of history — namely, the possibility of giving order to the past by representing it truthfully, and what "truthfully" would mean in that context.

The *Confessions* is a narrative of conversion, oriented dramatically around the moment at which Augustine hears the voice of a child saying, "Take it and read" (VIII: '12). A confession, as Foucault tells us, gains its power from its commitment to truth-telling, and yet this confession takes on the contours of a fictional narrative, in its reorganization of time around this central turning point. The narrative ordering of one's history seems to be in tension with the truthful telling of that history. And yet that narrative ordering is precisely the imperative Augustine deciphers in his ruminations on the relationship between the mortal and the eternal: to capture the passing of time within the reflective presence of consciousness.

Contained within Augustine's confessional narrative is a well-known meditation on the nature of time and of temporality, as that which stigmatizes mortal beings and separates them from the divine. Time indicates a falling away from eternity, and it is only through the godlike faculty of consciousness that the past and the future can *be* anything at all. This disciplining of time through representation simultaneously constructs unrepresented time as disorderly, which is the precise relationship between civil society and delinquency described in *Discipline and Punish*. As "controlled illegality," delinquency is the specter of disorder that guarantees the law-abiding habits of the general public (DP 277). The nature of time is neither naturally nor necessarily unstable, as Augustine understands it; this conception of time, and the attendant need to impose order on its passing, is itself contingent.

In the activity of confessing, then, Augustine displays the symptoms of a fabricated and contingent way of ordering time and truth-telling: the demand for a truthful representation of one's life or a part of it becomes conditioned by fictional emplotting by which time becomes intelligible and orderly. In this way, Foucault's claim that the demand for truth is continuous between religious confession and psychoanalytic therapy, itself an echo of Nietzsche's emphasis on the internal alliance between faith and science, is linked to his earlier analysis of the ordering of time. In both discussions, Foucault uncovers the contingency behind the ways that we conceptualize the subject's relation to truth and to temporality.

**"Abnormals, Freaks, and Michael Jackson:
Foucault, Baldwin, and the truth of the grotesque"**

**Brad Elliott Stone, Loyola Marymount University**

With the 2003 English translation of Foucault's 1974-1975 Collège de France lecture course *Abnormal*, one finds Foucault offering an archaeological account of the creation of three "abnormal" discursive objects: the monster, the masturbator, and the incorrigible "individual to be corrected." These lectures echo points made not only in *Discipline and Punish* and *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1*, but also in the compiled dossiers, edited by Foucault, of Pierre Rivière and Herculine Barbin, respectively a parricide and a hermaphrodite. Although the ones classified as "abnormal" are often considered "grotesque," Foucault reverses the power game, showing that the power-knowledge that classifies the abnormal is itself grotesque, or to use his phrase, "Ubu-esque."

Anyone who watches the popular news from a Foucauldian point of view is interested in the Michael Jackson case, given that Jackson is famous for being the epitome of abnormality. The accusations against him fall into all three discursive categories of the abnormal archaeologically described by Foucault in *Abnormal*. First, Jackson is viewed as a monster: his nose and skin make him appear monstrous, and, if the allegations are correct, he is a sexual predator who preys on young boys (another Foucauldian issue no less). Second, Jackson is a masturbator: he grabs his crotch while dancing, and, if the allegations are correct, masturbation is the extent of sexual activity with the victims. Finally, Jackson seems to have learned nothing from the 1993 allegations from a different boy (the correctness of those allegations will never be known), and still invites boys to spend the night with him and sleep in his bed with him; this makes him incorrigible. For these reasons, Michael Jackson is already "guilty" of being weird, which will play against him in a psychiatry-driven court system (a system described in detail by

Foucault in the opening lectures of *Abnormal*). A Foucauldian can only hope (futilely) that Jackson will be tried solely on the alleged crime, and not on his abnormal personality.

The Jackson predicament was foretold by James Baldwin in 1985. In his *Playboy* article "Freaks and the American Ideal of Manhood" (sometimes published in anthologies as "Here Be Dragons"), Baldwin worries about the American obsession with Jackson's androgyny (and, of course, Baldwin's). For Baldwin, androgyny serves as a cruel reminder of America's flawed understanding of sexuality, which is tied to America's flawed understanding of race. In this essay, Baldwin recalls growing up as a "nigger" and "faggot" simultaneously and how the only way out of one label was to enter fully into the other. The existence of freaks, not just sexual freaks but any type of freaks, forces one to confront one's fears that make one label another as a "freak" to begin with. Or, to use a term from Cornel West, freaks present to us "the night side" of regulated life.

This paper explores what is really at stake with the abhorrence of abnormality. In the first section, I outline Foucault's archaeology of the abnormal found in the lecture courses. Next, I explicate Baldwin's similar position concerning freaks, including his analysis of Michael Jackson. I then upgrade Baldwin's article to the Michael Jackson debacle of 2004, offering a Foucauldian analysis of the "archive" of Michael Jackson (I doubt that the case will be over by March 5, but I will discuss it as far as it has gotten to that moment). I conclude by raising the issue of the grotesque and what we should learn about normality from it. I argue that both of Foucault's translated lecture courses offer us opportunities for reversals. If society is the grotesque fight against the "grotesque" abnormals, *faut-il defendre la société?*

## "On the birth of autonomy: Possibilities for a Foucaultian study of the construction of the autonomous moral subject"

### Sabrina Hom, SUNY Stony Brook

This paper will focus on the Foucaultian challenge to a central claim of Kantian (and post-Kantian) moral philosophy: that of moral self-governance. Schneewind's landmark *Invention of Autonomy* neatly draws out the changes in moral thought in the 16th-18th centuries, when the philosophical discussion of morality moved from one of obedience to a higher governing power to one of self-governance. According to the teleological history presented by Schneewind, the development of morality in the modern era is a move toward emancipation from the law of the sovereign, culminating in Kant's reconceptualization of the moral agent as self-sovereign: somewhere in between we find Bentham. Schneewind's Bentham still conceives of the moral agent in thrall of sovereign power, but this power has moved from the unique, paramount sovereign to the sovereignty of pain and pleasure, whose domination is all-pervasive and immediate. It is easy enough, at least in the context of a broad and carefully directed survey such as Schneewind's, to read Bentham as a figure of transition toward self-governance: the dispersion and dis-individualization of sovereign power can be understood, albeit through the lens of later thought, as a stage in the process of a sort of moral regicide through which the sovereign will finally vanish, his power appropriated by the individual moral agent.

This supposed movement toward moral self-governance can be piquantly juxtaposed upon Michel Foucault's account of the changing technologies and structures of power within the same period in his study of the development of contemporary penality, *Discipline & Punish,* as well as his discussion of confession in *The History of Sexuality Vol I.* Foucault's allegation that the modern subject is constructed by the Panoptic apparatus suggests that the movement away from the authority of the sovereign in modern moral philosophy is not, in fact, a movement toward liberation and autonomy but rather a result of the increasing subtlety and dispersion of domination in the period. If the individual, self-governing subject is in fact constructed through external processes of social control—that is, if the subject of autonomy is an artifact of heteronomous manufacture—the universalizing and absolute claims of the moralities of autonomy are undermined. Furthermore, Foucault's work, by putting both the construction of the moral

subject and the moral law into question in relation to power and society, leads naturally to the question of the status of claims of moral truth—like any truth claim, these appear to Foucault as consequences of contingent flows of power and not results of universal necessity or rational processes.

Even as Foucault's work on power structures in *Discipline and Punish* calls into question a central claim of modern moral philosophy, that of moral self-governance, the same juxtaposition of Foucaultian and Schneewindian history seems to present the possibility of, at least, the beginnings of the very moral-philosophical project that Foucaultian historiography seems to destroy: that of evaluating and judging competing moral claims. A Foucaultian approach can escape ethical relativism by recognizing that, if we cannot accept all of the self-justifying claims of Kantian or Benthamite morality, we can nonetheless recognize their extraordinary suitability and usefulness to the local circumstances: both are far better-adapted to the modern practices of power and normalization than those moralities that presuppose a static and singular sovereign. I will argue that it is possible to understand Foucault's undermining of the modern moral-philosophical tradition in a constructive way, that is, that a Foucardian approach can allow us to take these moralities seriously, albeit not on their own terms, whilst offering the possibility of fruitful investigations into new forms of subjectivity (Haraway's cyborgs, perhaps) and the new moralities suited thereto.

**"Interiority, Exteriority, and Foucault's General Economy"**

**Erinn Gilson, University of Memphis**

This paper concerns Foucault's critique of a traditional notion of subjective interiority and its relation to bodily and material exteriority, as well as what one might consider to be his reconceptualization of interiority, exteriority, and the relation between the two in "Preface to Transgression" and "The Thought from Outside." The paper begins with an exemplary instance of Foucault's understanding of the problem of the relation between interiority and exteriority, namely his consideration of economies of punishment in *Discipline and Punish*. By explicating the disparity between the economy of atrocity, exemplified by the *supplice*, and the later economies of humanity, I show that the shift from that classical mode of punishment, which is characterized by its excessive, unproductive, and public nature, to the later modes of punishment, which function systematically, symbolically, and with utility clearly in mind, can be understood as a movement of interiorization. With the individualizing tendencies of the coercive and punitive systems of punishment, the soul or self at which punishment is aimed serves to dissociate the body from its forces, hence rendering exteriority, in the form of bodily materiality, a secondary element that mediates between the punishment and its hoped for effects. Interiorization, in this sense, effects a mediation in which the aim of punishment is not the direct, unconcealed effect on the body but rather is some other profitable and useful end, such as the disciplining of the body or the implantation of guilt in the soul. The suggestion, then, is that what might seem to be Foucault's inexplicable valorization of the classical form of punishment is perhaps simply a preference for power relations that functioned with a certain immediacy and visibility.

The second part of the paper draws a parallel between Foucault's account of the contrasting economies of punishment and Bataille's understanding of two types of political economy – general and restricted – in the *Accursed Share: Vol. I*. I argue that Foucault's discussions of punishment in *Discipline and Punish* can be understood through Bataille's distinction between general and restricted economies. The restricted economy, which is characterized by rational calculation and an emphasis on production and utility, coincides with the later economies of punishment while the general economy, which affirms the exuberant, irrational, and non-teleological expenditure of energy, is consistent with the spirit of the *supplice* and the economy of atrocity. Moreover, in Bataille's schema the general economy is much preferable to the restricted economy, which tends to fall prey to economic misconceptions such as the presupposition of scarcity, and the theory of the general economy also supplies an "economic ethics" in which a community-wide

intimacy and self-consciousness is vitiated by, but can also rectify, the harm of an economy motivated by utility.  These notions of intimacy and self-consciousness that pertain to the idea of the general economy return us to the question of interiority.  Bataille's conception of self-consciousness, understood as a form of pure interiority, is remarkably akin to what Foucault describes in *The Thought from Outside* as a void, gap, or opening for thought – that is, a space that is perhaps more a fissure or borderline between interiority and exteriority than interiority proper.  Such an understanding of interiority also finds its instantiation in Foucault's reading of erotic transgression and here I will rely upon his essay on Bataille, "Preface to Transgression."  Thus, what one might read as Foucault's critique of interiority is, it seems, a critique of a specific kind of interiorizing movement, a specific kind of fixity and certainty that coincides with the restricted economy rather than with the generous open space of the general economy.