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Reading Foucault as a Conservative

Chua Beng Huat

Dr CHUA Beng Huat is a Senior Fellow with the Department of Sociology. He was Associate Professor of Sociology at Trent University, Canada and later Principal Researcher in Housing Development Board, Singapore.

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Readers of Foucault are often left with a discomfort about the political direction to which his work may point. His analysis of the institutionalization of knowledge in the practices of the agencies of normalization which in turn provide the concrete arenas for further penetration and accumulation of knowledge are radical critiques of all these normalization practices. Nevertheless, readers want more. The dissatisfaction with critiques alone, devastating though they may be, is usually framed within the demand that critiques should generate guidance to radical political practices.

Lemert and Gillian, for example, highly praise what they called Foucault's transgressive strategy that at once thoroughly undermines the truth-claim, truth-value and uncovers the will to power of any modern normalization discourse. They are left asking, "Is a via negativa sufficient for politics? Can a critical perspective be introduced into political practice solely through the field made available by a history of dispersed events and radical transformation?"(1) As they see it, Foucault has never given satisfactory answers to these questions, rather his is "a theory of politics and of a political reading of history that claims for itself all the prerogatives of freedom while avoiding the necessity of examining its epistemological and practical conditions."(2)

These nagging dissatisfactions have now been formulated and named, albeit eliptically. Habermas, on the auspicious occasion when he was awarded the Adorno Award in Frankfurt, suggests that Foucault may be read as a "young conservative".(3) It is surprising that this should come from Habermas. For if the political implications of

Foucault's analysis stops at the level of mere negation, the same may be said of the Frankfurt School of which Habermas is its current proud spokesman. Indeed, for contemporary Anglo-American social theorists, the politics of negation was initially installed in their terrain by Adorno, Horkheimer and Marcuse. Foucault is decidely a late comer.

The eliptical fashion in which the suggestion is made, coming as it did at the close of Habermas' critique of the anti-modernist tendencies in various spheres of cultural production including contemporary social theories, makes it necessary for us to first, attempt to uncover the grounds of Habermas' reading of Foucault, and second, to locate instances in Foucault's writing that would support such a reading. These are the specific concerns of this essay.

Delineating the task at hand this way does not, of course, preclude any critical responses from the side of Foucault's writings to Habermans' reading. Nor does it preclude alternative readings of Foucault, particularly those that read him a radical thinker. Such responses, however, lie beyond the specific focus and boundary of the present essay. The place to begin for the tasks at hand is Habermas' conceptualization of modernity.

According to Habermas, in its long history in Europe, the term "modern" had almost always appeared and reappeared "when the consciousness of a new epoch formed itself through a renewed relationship to the ancients - whenever, moreover, antiquity was considered a model to be recovered through some kind of imitations."(4) This historicist conceptualization was replaced in the nineteenth century by one engendered by the French Enlightenment. Inspired by modern science and the belief "in the infinite progress of

knowledge and infinite advance towards social and moral betterment,"(5) the term "modern" from then on progressively detached itself from any reference to the past, culminating most recently to a simple "abstract opposition between tradition and the present."(6) Habermas argues that it is within the spirit of Enlightenment that contemporary cultural modernity develops and its contours formalize.

The project of the eighteenth century Enlightenment philosophers as delineated by Habermas, had a two-fold aim: (i) to develop objective science, universal law and morality, and autonomous art, according to their inner logic; and (ii) to use the accumulated knowledge in all these domains for the rational organization of everyday life, an organization that is for the betterment of all.(7) The three autonomous and independent realm of cultural activities are to have their own validity claims: for science it is truth; for morality it is normative rightness and for arts, it is authenticity and beauty. To these validity claims, Habermas has added a set of differentiated interests and rationalities to each realm: for scientific discourse, it is cognitive-instrumental rationality; for jurisprudence and theories of morality, it is moral-practical rationality; and for art and its criticism, it is aesthetic-expressive rationality.(8) This conceptualization of different rationalities is of significance for Habermas because it avoids the collapsing of all the three spheres into a one dimensional totality.

Within these three spheres, aesthetic modernity in its strive for authenticity of expression and experience comes progressively to stand for the "new", for the immediate present, which will be immediately surpassed and replaced by the next new development. The avant-garde

sings the praise of "the transitory, the elusive and the ephemeral", each one surpassing the one prior, without looking back, without any reverance for any tradition and its attending authority. The avant-garde "understands itself as invading unknown territory, exposing itself to the dangers of sudden, of shocking encounters, conquering an as yet unoccupied future...(finding) a direction in a landscape into which no one semms to have yet ventured."(9)

Let loose into the world of everyday life, this modernist aesthetics emphasizes the inner logic and authenticity of self-expression and self-experience, it opposes the constraints imposed by socially accumulated traditions and normality, it provides the rational grounds for social rebellion and social subversion; "modernity lives on the experience of rebelling against all that is normative."(10) The standards of morality and utility are replaced by "the principle of unlimited self-realization, the demand for authentic self-expression, and the subjectivism of a hyperstimulated sensitivity"(11) i.e. an "adversary culture", which are not restrained by the rationality of purposive behaviour of everyday life defined by the economic and administrative exigencies. Indeed, activities are often motivated by the desire to undermine the very exigencies themselves. In short, aesthetic modernity in everyday life unleashes what may now be called "the neo-conservative's nightmare"!

What the neo-conservatives, like Daniel Bell, see in this revolt is the collapse of social discipline brought about by the spread of anarchist life-style, characterized by the incessant search for authentic self-experience and self-realization; an anarchy grounded in the unattached subject. Faced with this perceived anarchy, the neo-

conservatives are falling over each other to propose remedial action to the general question of "how can norms arise in society which will limit libertinism, reestablish the ethic of discipline and work."(12) The proposed solutions range from calling for the revival of certain traditions, including religious revival, to suggesting that the state machinery impose more control over the funding of selected social activities, such as welfare or education.(13)

Within Habermas conceptualization of modernity, the neoconservative response constitutes an analytic failure to see the revolt itself as primarily grounded in individual and collective reactions against the constrictions imposed on social life by the exigencies of economic growth and administrative efficiency. This analytic failure is intentional. It allows the neo-conservatives to keep the fruits of societal modernization measured in terms of the expansion of productivity, achieved through cognitive - instrumental rationality of scientific knowledge; while simultaneously refusing the responsibilities for the negative social consequences that result from this expansion, namely the rationalization of the conventions and virtues of everyday life under the pressures of economic and administrative imperatives. It is via this intentional split of the whole of social life that the neo-conservatives could call for the revival of values of social discipline as a way to combat the "subjectivism" of cultural modernism. It is in this specific strategy for passing through cultural modernism that they are simultaneously conservative and post-modern.

The neo-conservative position is not, of course, the only possible response to the revolt of aesthetic modernism. The most

obvious other response is that which takes a diametrically opposite direction. Instead of condemning it and be repelled by it, one embraces this aesthetic modernism, and turn it against modernism itself as it manifests itself in science (knowledge and truth) and morality (normative rightness, justice, humanism.)

This latter response, Habermas argues, is one which seeks to intensify the autonomy of the aesthetic sphere, an autonomy constituted by its freedom from the imperatives of work and usefulness, and holds it up as the critical mirror that reflects the social world, the better to emphasize the "irreconcilable nature of the aesthetic and the social world".(14) In so doing, any interests, spawned by the Enlightenment, to reunify the aesthetic sphere with the "whole of life" and its betterment is jettisoned. The resulting stance is, as Habermas characterises it, one that embraces aesthetic modernism, highlights its irreconcilability with the modernized social world, and through this insistence of the divide try to step out of the modernized social world. It is this position that Habermas calls "young conservative," and uses it to characterize the writings of many contemporary French writers, including Foucault. There can be no mistaking to whom the following statement refers: "To instrumental reason, they (he) juxtaposed in manichean fashion a principle only accessible through evocation, be it the will to power or sovereignty..."(15)

It is now necessary to locate instances of Foucault's writings which lend themselves to this reading.

II

From the way Foucault draws on modernist literature as resource for his genealogical analysis of different socially constituted objects and institutions, it is obvious that far from condemning aesthetic modernism, he embraces it and contributes to it.(16)

It has been argued that Foucault is able to maintain a critical distance between his own analysis with all previous analyses only by privileging "the disruptive, excessive, transgressive role he assigns to a certain poetic or fictional practice of writing, and with which he identifies his own critical perspectives."(17) Carroll points out that when Foucault selects Pierre Riviere's triple murder narrative for analysis on the basis of its "beauty", it was not the beauty in traditional aesthetics that Foucault has in mind; instead its beauty is in its disruption of all traditional philosophical, political, historical, moral, medical and aesthetics categories; i.e. disruptive of all existing discourses on murder.(18)

In Madness and Civilization, Foucault locates and conceptualizes the increasingly widening fissure between madness and reason in the history of literature from the sixteenth century till the present: on the one hand, there are a limited number of texts that disclose and preserve a "tragic or cosmic experience of madness," and on the other is the large body of critical, moral experience. The limited texts resist the desire of reason to speak on the behalf of madness - to depict, judge, analyze or interpret - to silence madness. Their very presence shows that this silencing is not complete.

> Alone, several pages of Sade and the work of Goya witness that this disapperance is not a total destruction; underneath the critical consciousness of madness and its philosophical and scientific, moral or medical forms, a

> hidden, tragic consciousness never ceasing to remain vigilant. This is what the last words of Nietzsche and the last vision of Van Gogh revoke... It is this experience, this consciousness, finally that come to be expressed in the work of Artaud.(19)

The Order of Things itself opens with the fantastic classification scheme of "a certain Chinese encyclopedia" in Borges' fiction. This, to the Western eye groundless and impossible classification, strategically serves as the point of departure to raise the general question of order for western history of knowledge. Strategically this confrontation of the two different classification or ordering schemes enables Foucault to bring into focus how every ordering creates its own limits which act as boundary for inclusion and exclusion, for reason and unreason. By privileging the outside of the Western conceptualization of order, this order is disrupted. In this double strategy, Foucault recaptures the essential relations of limit and transgression: "Transgression is simply an affirmation of division; but only insofar as division is not understood to mean a cutting gesture, or the establishment of a seperation or the measuring of a distance, only retaining that in it which may designate the existence of difference."(20)

If Borges' fictional text served to raise the question of order in general, other literary texts serve in similar epistemological space to view the order of discourse - the episteme - of specific periods. Thus Cervantes' Don Quixote is used to reveal the sixteenth century episteme, the writings of Sade is used to delimit the classical period, and finally, those of Mallarme and Nietzsche serve to point beyond the modern episteme, to the "end of man". What all these literary texts have in common, in the way Foucault deploys them,

is that they each stand outside and beyond the limits of the episteme of their own historical time, which is the source of their criticalness. Put generally,

> It is as if the minute analysis of each period, whose explicit goal is to convince the reader that all of the discourses of the various "human sciences" in each period can be read in terms of one and only one episteme and therefore one irreparably cut off from the discourses of the periods preceding and following them, has another purpose ... to highlight the radical nature of those disruptive texts and everything that escapes archaeological classification and are thus extra-epistemological. In this sense, The Order of Things would be as much about the disorder of these disruptive texts and everything that escapes determination by an episteme, as about the order of words or things determined by the episteme."(21)

Finally in Discipline and Punish rather than appealing to a specific text, it is the aesthetics of the theatre of the supplice, the "great, tragic theatre" of public torture and execution that is used to maintain a critical distance from the pervasive series of petty, secret theatres of punishment that replace the former. In the theatre of public torture, the spectators themselves are part of the play - the play of forces - whose presence at the execution are absolutely essential for the performance, they take part in the execution as testimony to their rights to know who is being punished. This play of forces in the open does not guarantee automatically victory to the powerful, not even the absolute power of the King. Rather it is a theatre in which the power can be combated, resisted and even reversed, as in the example given by Foucault, where in Avignon at the end of the eighteenth century, the spectators drove the executioner off the stage and reversed the outcome, saving the condemned and condemning the executioners.(22) This theatre of the supplice lies beyond the limits of the discourses of philosophers,

educationists, social reformers, psychologists and penologists of modern, hidden punishments of the prison.

In each of Foucault's genealogical analyses, an analytic space is constituted on the "outside" of the discourses of "reason" in every region of knowledge placed under critique. It is an outside space made available by the aesthetic dimension of the texts used as counter-texts to the texts of "reason". Where such aesthetic texts are not readily at hand, a historical phenomenon is aestheticized, as in the case of Discipline and Punish. The possibility of using the literary text as counter-text to rationalizing and normalizing discourse is already present in the different and autonomous internal logic of modernist aesthetics in contrast to the internal logics of science and morality.(23)

By privileging the aesthetic dimension, i.e. by not subjecting this dimension itself to critique, Foucault both embraces it and exploits its motivation to question, to shock, to disrupt and to attack discourses in science, morality and traditions and their attendant interests to rationalize and normalize. Indeed, Carroll goes so far as to suggest that Foucault's works amount to "an aesthetic solution to serious philosophical, historical and political problems, no matter how negative, transgressive, or cruel the aesthetics,"(24) thus lending support to Habermas' critique.

The aestheticized attack takes its aim from the furthest limits, the margins of the prevailing discourses. The privileged aesthetic texts exist precisely to light up these limits; they exist as the Other voice, keeping vigil in the darkness. A voice suppressed but not annihilated, by its very suppression discloses the

authoritarianism of the "authority" of the rational, the scientific and the normalizing discourses themselves. Through this disclosure, the ground for reason and its derivative knowledge's claim to truth is undermined; the authority of reason turns into the authoritarianism of reason. Herein lies the "negative" features of Foucault's work.(25)

III

Significantly, Foucault's critique of the authoritarianism of reason parallels that of the Frankfurt School's critique of Enlightenment. That the grand vision of the Enlightenment - "arts and science would promote not only the control of natural forces, but would also further understanding of the world of the self, would promote moral progress, the justice of institutions, and even the happiness of human beings"(26) - has gone awry in the twentieth century has been analyzed by none others than Horkheimer and Adorno in Dialectic of Enlightenment.(27)

As Horkheimer and Adorno, see it, behind the high proclamation of the Enlightenment is the hidden intention of self-preservation of the individual and of the human species. Guided by this intention, scientific knowledge is instrumentalized, measured only in terms of technical efficacy and administrative efficiency in either the domination of external nature or the suppression of the inner nature of human beings. This instrumentalization of knowledge reaches its zenith with the common acceptance of positivism in scientific discourse and of technological rationality in all realms of social life. All the three speheres of autonomous social activities - science, morality and art - come to be conceived in terms of the logic by which the external nature has been understood and mastered. Faced with the authoritative (authoritarian) claims to truth of modern scientific rationality all normative moral standards, according to Horkheimer and Adorno, lost their credibility and validity claims.

This perversion of reason as a result of the hidden intention of self-preservation radically undermines Enlightenment's self-

understanding as one of achieving the replacement of old modes of cognition which are inextricably tied to and serve other interests such as religion or morality by a knowledge that is freed from external guidance and interests. Pressed into the service of self-preservation, instrumentalized reason inevitably delivers itself and aligns itself with power. "The critical ability to take a "yes" or "no" stand, to be able to distinguish between what is valid and invalid, is undercut by the unfortunate fusion of power and validity claims," according to Habermas.(28) This conclusion parallels Foucault's assertation that knowledge and power are inextricably intertwined as they circulate within the social body.

The parallels between Foucault's work and the Dialectic of Enlightenment is not accidental because as Foucault points out, they are all pursuing the Kantian question of "What is Enlightenment?"(29)

This question, according to Foucault, opens up to philosophy two related questions:

> On the one hand, to discover what was [in its chronology constituent elements, historical conditions] the moment when the West for the first time affirmed the autonomy and sovereignty of its own rationality - Lutheran reform, "Copernican revolution," Cartesian philosophy, Galilean mathematization of nature, Newtonian phisics? On the other hand, to analyse the "present" moment and to seek, in terms of what the history of this reason had been, and also in terms of what its current balance sheet may be, what relation it is necessary to establish with this founding gesture: rediscovery, recapture of forgotten meaning, completion, or rupture, return to an anterior moment, etc.(30)

Perhaps, it is in the interstices of these two related questions that Foucault formulates his own geneological studies as studies in the "history of present."(31) In any event, the specific questions

that the general issue of Enlightment gives rise to are different for the French and the German thinkers.(32)

In France, the questions are framed and explored under the auspices of the history of sciences. Within this French tradition, Foucault particularly credits Canguilhem with effecting a significant displacement in the discipline by focusing his attention on the "middle region" of the "positivistic hierarchy of sciences"; a hierarchy conceived in terms of the age of the foundation, the degree of formalization and susceptibility to mathematization of the sciences.(33) In this hierarchy where mathematics and physics rank supreme, Canguilhem focuses his attention on the history of biology and medicine, "where knowledges are much less deductive, more dependent on external processes [economic incitement, institutional support] and where they remained much longer in thrall to the prestige of the imagination".(34) Following this lead and taking up the conceptual and methodological innovations, such as discontinuity, recurrence, focus on formation of concepts, Foucault focuses his attention on the histories of the "immature" sciences.(35)

These investigations of the history of sciences inevitably spill over into the general domain inhabited by questions on the nature and rationality of scientific knowledge and those of the passage from pre-scientific forms of representation to scientific knowledge. Thus it is short step from the specific issues in particular sciences to the general questions: "What is the moment when reason acceeds to autonomy? What is the meaning of history of reason in modern world, through these three great forms: scientific thought, technical apparatus and political organizations?"(36) And these questions are

precisely those that frame all of Foucault's geneological analyses of the history of madness, of the clinic, of the prison and of sexuality.

In Germany, on the other hand, the specific questions raised by the Enlightenment are: "What is the history of reason, of rational forms in Europe. How do matters stand with the history of reason and with different forms from which the escendency operates?"(37) These questions of nature, forms and history of reason are in turn fastened on to, according to Foucault, "a historical and political reflection on society [with a privileged moment - the Reformation; and a central problem - a religious experience in relation to the economy and the State]; from the Hegelians to the Frankfurt School and Lukacs, Feurbach, Marx Nietzsche, and Max Weber all testify to this preoccupation."(38)

Yet, even with these differences, there is nevertheless a substratum of similarities between the two traditions that results form having taken the Kantian question seriously.(39) The questions raise in both traditions are those which address

> a rationality which claims universality whilst developing itself in the contingent, which affirms its unity yet proceeds only by piecemeal modifications or general reorganisations, which validates itself by its own sovereignty but which cannot be dissociated in its history from the inertias, sluggishness, and coercions to which it is subject. In the history of the sciences in France, as in German critical theory, it is a matter at bottom of examining a reason, the autonomy of whose structures carries with it a history of dogmatism and despotism - a reason, consequently, which can only have an effect of amancipation on condition that it manages to liberate itself from itself.(40)

This dogmatism and despotism of reason, namely the inner destructiveness of the Enlightenment project, had already been exposed by the nineteenth century thinkers like Sade and Nietzxche. It is

consequently not suprising that it is to these thinkers, particular Nietzsche, that both Horkheimer and Adorno and Foucault would turn for guidance and resource.(41)

The differences in specific questions, nevertheless, have their consequences in the respective responses of Foucault and Horkheimer and Adorno to the eclipse of reason in modern industrial societies. It is in these differrence that Habermas locate what is for him a significant departure of his own intellectual heritage from Foucault's position.

Faced with the ascendency of instrumentalized reason, whose path and trajectory had already been worked out by Weber's sociological analysis, Horkheimer and Adorno embraced a principled "ad hoc determinate negation" that opposes "that fusion of reason and power which fills in all the cracks".(42) Behind this practice of negation, Wellmer suggests correctly, is a vision of a liberated rational society that escapes the strangled hold of the negative dialectics of progress, and where the good life of a truly free society, one in which the Universal of the Particular is reconciled; "the particular is no longer sacrificed to the universal, the idea of freedom, truth and justice are reconciled with the desire for happiness."(43) Indeed, it is this sometime explicit sometime implicit affirmation of the possibility of a rational and free society, which provides the ground for their critique of instrumental reason and their principled negation.

Furthermore, for the Critical Theorists, this Other of the modern industrial society shot through with instrumental reason is,

significantly, to be found in the inner logic and execution of art. Thus according to Wellmer,

> The aesthetic synthesis achieved by the work of art is different from that of conceptual thinking in that it does not do violence to the particular, the suppressed, the non-identical. It is for this reason that the work of art becomes for Adorno the pre-eminent medium of a non-reified cognition and, at the same time, the paradigm for a non-repressive integration of elements into a whole. Both these functions of art are intimately connected with each other: through the configuration of its elements the work of art reveals the irrational and false character of existing reality and, at the same time, by way of its aesthetic synthesis, it prefigures an order of reconciliation. Correspondingly instrumental (and conceptual) rationality is "sublated" in a twofold sense in the work of art: It owes its specific, aesthetic rationality to the merging of mimetic impulses with elements of rational construction; and it represents a transfiguration of the elements of empirical reality, making reality appear in the light of reconciliation: the work of art as the semblance of reconciliation.(44)

It is for this possible reconciliation that the Frankfurt theorists hold out even if they were unable to articulate theoretically the exact nature of this reconciliation of the aesthetic and instrumental rationalities in the modern society. This preservation of the differentiated rationalities and the affirmation of their possible reconciliation in order to arrive at an emancipated rational society constitutes a significant portion of the theoretical space from which Habermas continued to carry on the Enlightenment project of progress in human betterment; albeit with a displacement of the aesthetic dimension as the model for the reorganization of the society by his own conceptualization of communicative rationality.(45)

Foucault, on the other hand, uses strategically the aesthetic dimension as the outside of rational analytic discourse to mount his critique of the latter but at no time attributes any utopian vision to

the aesthetic dimension itself. The strategic privileging of the aesthetics dimension enables Foucault, the genealogist operating under the auspices of history of science, to investigate the concrete instances of the ascendency of rationality in different social regions. This attention to specific instance marks, for Foucault, a significant difference between his own approach and that of the Frankfurt School:

> Shall we investigate this kind of rationalism which seems to be specific to our modern culture and which originates in Aufklarung? I think that was the approach of some of the members of the Frankfurt School. My purpose, however, is not to start a discussion of their works, although they are most important and valuable. Rather, I would suggest another way of investigating the links between rationalization and power.
>
> It may be wise not to take as a whole the rationalization of society or of culture, but to analyze such a process in several fields, each with reference to a fundamental experience: madness, illness, death, crime, sexuality, and so forth.
>
> I think that the word rationalization is dangerous. What we have to do is analyze specific rationalities rather than always invoking the progress of rationalization in general.
>
> Even if the Aufklarung has been a very important phase in our history and in the development of political technology, I think we have to refer to much more remote processes if we want to understand how we have been trapped in our own history.(46)

What he discovers in each of the histories of the human sciences is the necessary linkage between knowledge production and the exercise of power, of domination rationalized and justified through the truth-claims of the knowledge so produced. "The exercise of power perpetually creates knowledge and, conversely, knowledge constantly induces effects of power."(47) With this conclusion, his work can be read not merely as descriptions of the power/knowledge nexus in the

development of the sciences but also as a questioning of knowledge's claim to truth and a critique of the power strategies that this claim put into play in order to sustain itself. Knowledge's claim to truth is thus exposed as a "will to knowledge" and a "will to truth".

The difference which, for Habermas, puts the Frankfurt School and Foucault on opposite sides of a political divide is to be located here. While the Frankfurt theorists preserve a vision of the transcendence of reason from its instrumental form through its reconciliation with the other aspects of reason, despite its history in modern industrial societies so far, Foucault may be said to be at least indifferent to such a vision or maximally to reject it. Either reading of Foucault's stance contra the Frankfurt school must be gleaned from his conceptualization of the power/knowledge relation.

IV

The power/knowledge linkage is already present in Foucault's conceptualization of discourse as a practice:

> It is a question of what governs statements, and the way in which they govern each other so as to constitute a set of propositions which are scientifically acceptable, and hence capable of being verified or falsified by scientific procedures... it's not so much a matter of knowing what external power imposes itself on science, as of what effects of power circulate among scientific statements, and what constitutes, as it were, their internal regime of power, and how and why at certain moments that regime undergoes a global modification.(48)

The power relations within a discourse govern productively and repressively simultaneously. Power is productive because it constitutes objects of analysis, forms knowledge and produces discourses. It is this productive feature that is emphasized and theorized in the more recent works of Foucault. Nevertheless, power also governs by screening and castigating statements to the outside of the discourse and, by this exclusion - procedure attempts to silence these statements. In this case, it has its repressive tendencies, which are emphasized in Foucault's earlier work.

Discursive rules also specify the discursive space within which speakers may occupy; such as the confessing subject, the listening subject, or the interrogating subject in the discourses on sexuality. In all these discourses, confession remains the mode for the extraction of "truths", the power relation intrinsic to confession is duplicated: the receiver of the confession performs a hermeneutic function in order to disclose the "truths" about sexuality, and the confessant would be required subsequently to undergo therapy to cure oneself of the perversity that is inscribed as the constitutive centre

of one's whole being. The receiver-confessant dyad includes parent-children; doctor-patient; expert-delinquent and educator-student. The institutional site that these individuals occupy is co-terminous with the discursive space allocated by the discursive rules themselves.

Through this isomorphism of discursive and institutional site, the power relation is invested in the social body. It also discloses both the necessary embedding of discourse in institutional practices and the determining, at some level, of the institutional arrangements by discourse itself.(49) "It is this discursive determinism, the view of discourse with its techniques and practices sanctioned by knowledge claims and conducted within local foyers of power - the consulting room, the school room, the courtroom, the sick bed, the child's body, the banacles, and so on - that allows us to view its practitioners as conforming to a strategy of domination 'yet without hypocrisy'".(50) On the one hand, discourse provides the institutions with the authority of knowledge as the ground for the institutional exercise of power; on the other hand, the institutions provide discourse with concrete social sites from which to pursue truth and knowledge.

The transformation, multiplication and redistribution of knowledge/power relations in all kinds of institutional sites suggest that the exercise of power is not a totalizing act from the outset. Rather the power/knowledge relation is effective precisely by the way this relation is, motivated by the pursuit of knowledge (a "will to knowledge"), strategically insinuated and diffused into the entire social space, as in the medicalization of social space and the panopticism of criminal surveillance. "The manifold relationships of force that take shape and come into play in the machinery of

production, in families, limited groups, and institutions, are the basis for wide ranging effects of cleavage that run through the social body as a whole."(51)

Foucault thus conceptualized power as having a "capillary form of existence",(52) a network of ever-shifting, non-egalitarian relations of force practiced at different local centres of power; a network which through a series of sequences eventually enters into an overall strategy of hegemony.

> Power must be understood in the first instance as the multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organization; as the process which, through ceaseless struggles and confrontations, transforms, strenghthens, or reverses them; as the support which these force relations find in one another, thus forming a chain or a system, or on the contrary, the disjunctions and contradictions which isolate them from one another; and lastly, as the strategies in which they take effect, whose general design or institutional crystallization is embodied in the state apparatus, in the formation of the law, in the various social hegemonies.(53)

The emphasis on discursive practice serves to dispense with "things". Thus Foucault argues methodologically:

> what we wish to do is to dispense with 'things'... to substitute for the enigmatic treasures of 'things' anterior to discourse, the regular formation of objects that emerge only in discourse. To define these objects without reference to the ground, the foundation of things, but by relating them to the body of rules that enables them to form as objects of discourse and thus constitute the conditions of their historical appearance. To write a history of discursive objects that does not plunge them into the common depth of a primal soil, but deploys the nexus of regularities that governs their dispersion.(54)

For example, in the sexualization of children in the nineteenth century, the idea of sex is constituted through a series of presences and absences: present in the anatomy, absent in physiology; present in

practice, absent in reproductive capacity; present in possible manifestations, absent in showing eventual results. Furthermore, this series of formulations was different from that for the constitution of women's sexuality through conceptualization of female hysteria. Sex is therefore not the unitary object to which the various analytic discourses returned, again and again, for their verification. Sexuality itself is the surface of a network of discourses, the surface for the formation of specialized knowledge, and the point for exercising power.

In this move, the question of the ontological reality of the objects of analysis is completely displaced. This "reality" no longer serves as the final instance, as the final arbiter of the "truth" of any statements. "Truth", on the other hand, is already always the effect of the governance of the discursive regime. This "dispensing" with "things", and the absorption of "objects" and "truth-claims" into the rules of discourse undermines one possibility of grounding any epistemologically "rational" choice between two competing sets of claims.

Foucault's stylistic device of opening every genealogical study with a forceful juxtaposing of two completely different sets of practices in a particular region of knowledge serves immediately to indicate that a sudden change of discursive regime has taken place. The study then unfolds by explicating the "rationality" of each set of practices on its own discursive-institutional terms; the effect here is to demonstrate that "rationality" and "truths" are necessarily "topical and dated"(55). The two modes of rationality are placed on equal grounds, leaving us the possibility to choose one over the other, rendering it impossible to claim any overall progress in the

march of knowledge towards some "universal truths", and undermining the presumed rationality of the present.

Given the impossibility of grounding epistemologically rational choices in terms of some conceptualization of "universal truths", the authority practiced by any knowledge based on such claims is exposed in its nakedness as political domination; this conclusion is already present in the logic of the power/knowledge nexus. Instead of the authority of knowledge which justifies all its practices, it is the authoritarianism of knowledge as practice. Furthermore, it is a domination from which there is no sustained liberation because Foucault argues:

> basically in any society, there are manifold relations of power which permeate, characterize, and constitute the social body, and these relations of power cannot themselves be established, consolidated nor implemented without the production, accumulation, circulation and functioning of a discourse ... We are subjected to the production of truth through power and we cannot exercise power except through the production of truth ... we are forced to produce the truth of power that our society demands, of which it has need, in order to function: we must speak the truth; we are constrained or condemned to confess or to discover the truth ... In the end, we are judged, condemned, classified, determined in our undertakings, destined to a certain mode of living or dying, as a function of the true discourses which are the bearers of the specific effects of power.(56)

Foucault's conceptualization of the inextricable power/knowledge relation and its truth effect as intrinsic to all socially necessary discourses forecloses any possible way forward from the present condition of the domination that results from all current discursive practices. Any supposed move forward will only turn out to be domination by another system of discursive-institutional practice.

Habermas is therefore quite correct to suggest that in Foucault's theoretic stance, the "plurality of power/discourse formations" uncovered in his genealogical analyses cannot be differentiated and legitimated in terms of validity. Taking Foucault's later work as examples, Habermas argues that Foucault had

> replaced the model of repression and emancipation developed by Marx and Freud with a pluralism of power/discourse formations. These formations intersect and succeed one another and can be differentiated according to their style and intensity. They cannot, however, be judged in terms of validity (in term of at least one criterion), which was possible in the case of the repression and emancipation of conscious as opposed to unconscious conflict resolution.(57)

Furthermore, Foucault's own stance towards this plurality is one of "indifference". This is most succinctly put by Rorty:

> It takes no more than a squint of the inner eye to read Foucault as a stoic, a dispassionate observer of the present social order, rather than its concerned critic. Because the rhetoric of emancipation - the notion of a kind of truth which is not one more production of power - is absent from his work, he can easily be thought of reinventing American "functionalist" sociology. The extraordinary dryness of Foucault's work is a dryness produced by a lack of identification with any social context, any communication. Foucault once said that he would like to write "so as to have no face." He forbids himself the tone of the liberal sort of thinker who says to his fellow-citizens: "We know that there must be a better way to do things than this; let us look for it together." There is no "we" to be found in Foucault's writings, nor in those of many of his French contemporaries.(58)

At the political level, the same conclusion that Foucault forecloses any way forward can also be drawn even if he persistently argues that resistance is always possible because domination exercised through "true" discourses is unavoidable. It is always possible because:

> Resistance is integral to power. The existence of power relationships depends on a multiplicity of points of resistance which are present everywhere in the power network. Resistances are the odd term in relations of power; they are inscribed in the latter as an irreducible opposite.(59)

Foucault asserts, "If there are societies which hold firm and live, that is to say, if there are powers that are not "absolutely absolute", it is due to the fact that behind all the submissions and the coercions, and beyond the menace, the violence, the persuasion, there is the possibility of that moment when life will no longer barter itself, when the powers can no longer do anything, and when, before the gallows and the machine guns, men revolt."(60) This possibility of revolt is always present in "all those on whom power is exercised to their detriment."(61)

The question that arises is "In what direction will the revolt take?" Foucault had once held out that such resistance may be "radical, uncompromising and non-reformist" and "refuse any attempt at arriving at a new disposition of the same power with, at best a change of masters."(62) However, his conceptualization of power/knowledge relations logically commits him otherwise. It commits him, according to Philp, to at best argue that "we have no ground for believing that the critique of one power will not simply implicate us in another;" and at worst that "we will act from resistance and revenge but we can only ever install a new regime of power and a new tyranny of truth."(63) This critique of Foucault rejoins Habermas argument on the lack of grounds for validity claims in a plurality of discourse/power.

Faced with this impasse, Foucault amends his position on the future of revolts. He rejects any suggestion that "it is useless to revolt" and continues to assert that "there are revolts and that is a fact"(64) in what some critics called a "naturalistic"(65) or even a "metaphysical"(66) fashion. Beyond this "fact" level little can be said:

> A delinquent puts his life into the balance against absurd punishments; a madman can no longer accept confinement and the forfeiture of his rights; a people refuses the regime which oppresses it. This does not make the rebel in the first case innocent, nor does it cure in the second, and it does not assure the third rebel of the promised tomorrow. One does not have to be in solidarity with them. One does not have to maintain that these confused voices sound better than the others and express the ultimate truth. For there to be a sense in listening to them and in searching for what they want to say, it is sufficient that they exist and that they have against them so much which is set up to silence them. A question of morality? Perhaps. A question of reality? Certainly.(67)

Alas, much is conceded by Foucault in this statement, not the least of which is the recognition that he has no logically rational ground to take side in the struggle against domination.

Where sides are taken, and Foucault clearly in both his writings and political activities sides with the dominated in each instant of struggle, such choices are arguably strictly preferential rather than logically necessary. Thus Rorty argues that Foucault's "own efforts at social reform (eg. of prisons) seem to have no connection with his exhibition of the way in which the "humane" approach to penal reform tied in with the needs of the modern state."(68) In this choice to side with the dominated, Foucault has chosen the side of "resentment" rather than glorifying the heroic acts of the strong, in this he and Nietzsche are on opposite sides.(69) However, he must refrain from

speaking on behalf of those who revolt so as to avoid the further entrappment of the latter in another regime of truth.

The political domain constituted as changing regimes of truth is one in which "power is 'always already there,' that one is never outside it, that there are no margins for those who break with the system to gamble in"(70) Within a domain so constituted "transgression" is an apt concept for describing theoretical and political acts of those who revolt, who at the moment of revolt, "stands outside history"(71) but nevertheless always belonging in it: "The play of limits and transgression seems to be regulated by a simple obstinacy: transgression incessantly crosses and recrosses a line which closes up behind it in a wave of extremely short duration, and thus it is made to return once more right to the horizon of the uncrossable."(72) The "flash of lightning" is one of the apt metaphors of transgression: "like a flash of lightning in the night which, from the beginning of time, gives a dense and black intensity to the night it denies, which lights up the night from the inside, from top to bottom, and yet owes to the dark the stark clarity of its manifestations, its harrowing and poised singularity; the flash loses itself in this space it marks with its sovereignty and becomes silent now that it has given a name to obscurity."(73)

In the end, one is forced to conclude that Foucault's conceptualization of knowledge/power nexus and his politics of resistance both fail to posit a way forward because it "lacks any clear sense of historical development, qualitative change, or positive freedom, (and) leaves at best unresolved the question of whether such resistance is something more than an ironic drive from one domination to another."(74)

This theoretically grounded "inability" to point to a future, other than one which is equally thoroughly, and even more efficiently policed by a new regime of truth is the conclusion that leaves Foucault's readers, appreciative and critical alike, dissatisfied. It is also in this failure that Foucault's position may be read as a conservative; for conservatism is not limited to a position that desires to bring back a mythical past, nor to that of desiring to preserve the present, but also includes the position which provides no rational ground for changing the present.

CONCLUSION

This essay attempts to explicate the grounds for Habermas reading of Foucault as a "young" conservative. The analytic moves for such a reading involves first, separating Foucault from the neoconservatives by their different responses to the penetration of aesthetic modernity into the world of everyday life. The neoconservatives see this penetration as tending towards an unmanageable anarchy and therefore recoil from it, the latter embraces it and utilizes it to dissect the modern world.

In the subsequent dissection of the modern world, Foucault discloses the authoritarianism of historically dated and topical modes of rationality that appropriate for themselves the veil of universal truth, and govern through this self-serving appropriation. Having so disclosed the inextricable nexus of knowledge/truth/power and the political authoritarianism it practices not only in discourse but also in the institutionalized social body, any liberation from the domination of the nexus is totally foreclosed. It is in this inability to point to an emancipated future, to give good reasons for any changes from the dominated present despite his assertion that resistance and revolt is ever present in the discursive-institutional network, that Foucault's position may be labelled conservative.

FOOTNOTES

1. Charles Lemert and Scott Gillian, Michel Foucault: Social Theory as Transgression, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), p. 109.

2. Ibid.

3. Jurgen Habermas, "Modernity versus Postmodernity," New German Critique, 22 (Winter, 1981), p. 13; see also "The Entwinement of Myth and Enlightenment: Re-reading Dialectic of Enlightenment", New German Critique, no. 22 (Summer, 1982), pp. 28-29; "Neoconservative Culture Criticism in the United States and West Germany: An Intellectual Movement in Two Political Cultures," Telos, 56 (1983), p. 89.

4. Habermas, "Modernity versus Postmodernity," p. 3-4.

5. Ibid., p. 4.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid. p. 9.

8. For a synopsis of Habermas' scheme of rationalities see John B. Thompson, "Rationality and Social Rationalization: An Assessment of Habermas' Theory of Communicative Action," Sociology, vol. 17 (1983).

9. Habermas, "Modernity versus Postmodernity," p. 4.

10. Ibid., p. 5.

11. Ibid., p. 6.

12. Ibid., p. 6.

13. On neoconservativism, see Daniel Bell, The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism, (New York: Basic Books 19); Amartya Sen "Neopersuasion: Review of Irving Kristol's Reflections of a Neoconservative", New York Review of Books, vol. 31 (1984); Peter Steinfels, The Neo Conservatives (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979).

14. Habermas, "Modernity versus Postmodernity", p. 10.

15. Ibid. p. 13.

16. It must be noted here while it is possibile to read Foucault as a "postmodernist" as Habermas does, it nevertheless remains a puzzle whether he did conceive of his own position in terms of modernity/postmodernity/anti-modernity. This question arise in two specific instances: (i) he expressed a conceptual incomprehension regarding the debates couched in these terms in the interview with Gerard Raulet, "Structuralism and Post-Structuralism: An Interview with Michel Foucault "Telos, no. 55 (Spring, 1983), p. 200; (ii) in Vol. 2 and Vol. 3 of the History of Sexuality project, he had clearly extended his genealogical analysis all the way back to pre-Christian, Greek and Roman cultural formations; see Michael Ignatieff, "Anxiety and Asceticism," Times Literary Supplement (Sept. 28, 1984 p. 1071). Our task in this essay is, of course, to follow through Habermas' reading rather than taking up the issue.

17. David Carroll, "Disruptive Discourse and Critical Power: The Conditions of Archaeology and Genealogy," Humanities in Society, Vol. 5 (1982), p. 176, original empahsis.

18. Ibid., p. 177. Michel Foucault (ed.), I, Pierre Riviere, having slaughtered my mother, my sister, and my brother... . (New York: Pantheon, 1975).

19. Foucault quoted in Carroll, "Disruptive Discourse and Critical Power," p. 181.

20. M. Foucault, "Preface to Transgression," in Donald F. Bouchard (ed.) Michel Foucault: Language, Counter-Memories and Practice (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977) p. 36. This way of posing the question of order is diametrically opposed to that posed by Levi-Strauss. The latter aims to show that different ordering schemes are essentially expressions of the "same sort of mental operations," and to seek an accommodation between the different schemes. See The Savage Mind (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966) Chapter 1, pp. 1-35.

21. Carroll, "Disruptive Discourse and Critical Power," p. 183.

22. Michel Foucault, Discipline and Punish (New York: Pantheon 1977), pp. 63-65.

23. See Schoshana Felman, "Madness and Philosophy or Literature's Reason", Yale French Studies, no. 52 (1975); John Rajchman, "Foucault, or the Ends of Modernism," October, no. 24 (1983).

24. Carroll, "Disruptive Discourse and Critical Practive," p. 197.

25. Lemert and Gillian, Michel Foucault: Social Theory as Transgression, p. 108.

26. Habermas, "Modernity versus Postmodernity," p. 9.

27. Max Horkheimer and Theodore W. Adorno, Dialectic of Enlightenment (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972).

28. Habermas, "Entwinement of Myth and Enlightenment", p. 18.

29. Gerard Raulet, "Structuralism and Post-Structuralism: An Interview with Michel Foucault," Telos, no. 55 (Spring 1983), p. 200.

30. M. Foucault, "Georges Canguilhem: Philosopher of Error," I and C no. 7 (1980) p. 53.

31. Foucault, Discipline and Punish, p. 31.

32. I can only state the difference as Foucault characterizes it but it must be noted that there is a large concern here that he has alerted us to: "It would doubtless be necessary to enquire why this question of the Enlightenment has had, without ever disappearing, a different destiny in Germany, France and the Anglo-Saxon countries, why in different countries, it was invested in such diverse domains and according to such varied chronologies," in "George Canguilhem," p. 53.

33. Ibid. p. 55.

34. Ibid.

35. Ian Hacking, "Michel Foucault's Immature Science," Nous, no. 13 (1979) p. 41.

36. Gerard Raulet, "Structuralism and Post-Structuralism," p. 200.

37. Ibid.

38. Foucault, "Georges Canguilhem," p. 53.

39. Significantly, Richard Rorty argues that it is precisely because both traditions take Kant too seriously that they are locked into the current debate. He suggests a displacement of Kant and the taking up of Dewey, the American pragmatist, seriously instead. See Rorty," Habermas and Lyotard on Post-Modernity," Praxis International, 4(1984) pp. 32-44.

40. M. Foucault, "Georges Canguilhem." p. 54.

41. See Peter Putz, "Nietzsche and Critical Theory", Telos, no. 50 (1981-82), pp. 108-109.

42. Habermas, "Entwinement of Myth and Enlightment," p. 29.

43. Albrecht Wellmer, "Reason, Utopia, and The Dialectic of Enlightenment," Praxis International, 3(1983) p. 91.

44. Ibid., p. 93.

45. Habermas' own position on the aesthetic dimension is yet unclear. See Martin Jay, "Habermas and Modernism," Praxis International, 4(1984) pp. 1-14.

46. M. Foucault, "The Subject and Power," in Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics (Chicago: University of Chicago press, 1982) p. 210.

47. M. Foucault, "Prison Talk," in Colin Gordon (ed.) M. Foucault: Power/Knowledge (New York: Pantheon, 1980), p. 52.

48. M. Foucault, "Truth and Power," in Power/Knowledge, pp. 112-113.

49. It should be noted that Foucault allows for the autonomy of institutional relations beyond discourse, and argues that this autonomous level of relations may be a source of change of the discourse itself; see "History of System of Thought", in Donald F. Bouchard (ed.) Michel Foucault: Language, Counter-Memories and Practice, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press 1977), p. 200.

50. Mark Philp, "Foucault on Power: A Problem in Radical Translation?" Political Theory, vol. 11 (1983), p. 37.

51. Michel Foucault, History of Sexuality Vol. 1 (New York: Pantheon, 1978), p. 94.

52. Foucault, "Prison Talk," p. 39.

53. Foucault, History of Sexuality, pp. 92-93.

54. M. Foucault, The Archaeology of Knowledge (London: Tavistock, 1972) pp. 47-48. See also, Beng-Huat Chua, "Following Foucault out of Positivism," Reflections: Esays in Phenomenology 1(1980) pp. 77-85.

55. Hacking, "M. Foucault's Immature Science," p. 41.

56. Foucault, Power/Knowledge, p. 93.

57. Habermas, "Entwinement of Myth and Enlightenment," p. 29.

58. Richard Rorty, "Habermas and Lyotard on Post-Modernity," p. 40.

59. Philp, "Foucault on Power," p. 35.

60. Foucault, "Is It Useless to Revolt?", Philosophy and Social Criticism, vol. 8 (1981), p. 5.

61. Foucault, "Intellectual and Power," in Language, Counter-Memory and Practice, p. 216.

62. Ibid.

63. Richard T. Peterson, "Foucault and the Politics and Social Reproduction.," Humanities in Society, vol. 5 (1982), p. 238.

64. Foucault, "Is It Useless to Revolt," p. 8.

65. Philp, "Foucault on Power," p. 48.

66. Peterson, "Foucault and the Politics of Social Reproduction." p. 240.

67. Foucault, "Is It Useless to Revolt," p. 8.

52. Foucault, "Prison Talk," p. 39.

53. Foucault, History of Sexuality, pp. 92-93.

54. M. Foucault, The Archaeology of Knowledge (London: Tavistock, 1972) pp. 47-48. See also, Beng-Huat Chua, "Following Foucault out of Positivism," Reflections: Esays in Phenomenology 1(1980) pp. 77-85.

55. Hacking, "M. Foucault's Immature Science," p. 41.

56. Foucault, Power/Knowledge, p. 93.

57. Habermas, "Entwinement of Myth and Enlightenment," p. 29.

58. Richard Rorty, "Habermas and Lyotard on Post-Modernity," p. 40.

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66. Peterson, "Foucault and the Politics of Social Reproduction." p. 240.

67. Foucault, "Is It Useless to Revolt," p. 8.

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MATERIAL DEPENDENCE AND SYMBOLIC INDEPENDENCE: CONSTRUCTIONS OF MELAYU ETHNICITY IN ISLAND RIAU, INDONESIA

Vivienne Wee

Dr Vivienne Wee is a Lecturer in the Department of Sociology

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