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Discourse, Science, and the Ideology of Race:

The Concept of Race Struggle in Michel Foucault's 1975-1976 Lectures

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Abstract of the Thesis

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In Michel Foucault's 1975-6 lectures at the Collège De France, collected in David Macy's English translation as *"Society Must Be Defended"* (Picador, 2003), Foucault insists that the discourse of race struggle used by various social groups in Europe in the 17th through 19th centuries was not an ideology. He labels it a tactical discourse. This is a polyvalent epistemic structure that underlies basic historical forms of understanding. Foucault celebrates this discourse for fostering diversity and being anti-authoritarian.

Foucault's conception of ideology, I argue, is too limited. Louis Althusser

described a more useful theory of ideology, in which the theory of race struggle would surely be ideological. This conception is preferable because it helps contribute to a more accurate understanding of history: the discourse in question was an ideological misrecognition of class conflict.

These two perspectives have differing consequences for political action. Foucault's ideas would lead to the support of irrational and irresolvable conflicts, while a view that recognizes the 17th through 19th century discourse of race struggle as limited and ideological would leave open the possibility of equality and peace.

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I. Introduction

In the 17th Century in Europe, some historians began to understand their history as a series of race wars. Through a series of migrations and conquests, racially unique peoples would interact with other such groups. Europe contained the remnants of such racial forces, still locked in an ancient and sometimes secret battle for control. This understanding ran counter to an official history, in which a sovereign ruled over a united people. The theorists of race war saw this official story as little more than a ploy to draw attention away from the conflict that threatened to reignite.

Their thesis did have some basis in historical fact—as an early example, we can cite the Norman invasion of 1066. William the Conqueror defeated King Herald at the Battle of Hastings, ushering in a long period of Norman control over the vanquished Saxons. Certain cultural elements associated with French Normandy were infused into the language and elite culture of England, and the descendents of the Normans went on to constitute the bulk of the feudal aristocracy while the descendents of the defeated Anglo-Saxons were more likely peasants.

It is my contention, however, that the geographic or racial origins of the people constituting the various classes were merely an accidental factor in the social development of Europe. The real motor of development was class war. While it is true that different peoples in England and France struggled and changed their society, it is not true that the primary motivation for those struggles was race. The understanding of

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history as a series of race wars was therefore an ideological misunderstanding of economic development.

In this thesis, I will argue against Michel Foucault's claim that the discourse of race struggle, as it appeared in Europe between the English Civil War and the middle of the 19th century, was not an ideology. In order to do this, it will be necessary to explain why Foucault says this, examine what an ideology is, and determine if the discourse in question fits the criteria.

This question is important because Foucault's purpose for claiming that the discourse of race struggle in that time period was not ideological is to rehabilitate it. He gives it the status of a tactical discourse rather than an ideology, and one that serves to disrupt entrenched and totalizing power relations. Because of these qualities, he sets up the discourse of race struggle—this is not to say racism, which, according to Foucault's theory, is a mutation that comes much later—as a model to be reproduced by people who wish to fight against social injustice in the form of stultifying and normalizing power. The key aspect of these anti-authoritarian discourses is that they focus on diversity and particularity rather than unity and universality.

While recognizing the importance of the critique of totalizing power, I believe that Foucault goes too far in rejecting any discourse that claims to be universal. Some of the most valuable inheritances of the Enlightenment project, including the idea of progress and the possibility of the world's workers and oppressed peoples uniting on a rational basis for liberation, cannot function without being allowed to make definite claims on universality.

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In addition, it is important to recognize that the discourse of race struggle was ideological because this means that it was not, strictly speaking, true. It was at best an adumbration of the fully developed theory of class struggle that Karl Marx worked out in the 1840s. The people who believed that history is a series of race wars did not understand the deeper truth, which is that, as Marx and Engels wrote in the Communist Manifesto of 1848, "the history of all hitherto existing societies is the history of class struggles."

This last point will make it necessary to discuss in some detail the status of knowledge in Foucault's theory. Foucault does not think that knowledge can ever attain universal truth. In this he follows Nietzsche. In contrast to this view, I will deploy some theoretical observations from Louis Althusser. Althusser holds that Marxism is a method that is capable of producing true statements. This is what separates it from ideology. I believe that the discourse of race struggle was an ideology and that, in a limited, Althusserian sense, Marxism is a science. Unlike Foucault, I do not think that any discourse that claims to be universally true (that is, a science) is intrinsically, and for that reason, pernicious.

The first section sets up the question by explaining what Foucault means when he discusses different kinds of discourse. At this point, I do not advance an adequate definition of ideology, but rather stay within the limits of Foucault's theory. I show how Foucault divides the world of discourse into various parts and I indicate his hostility to certain ostensibly totalizing, power-mongering discourses he calls 'scientific.'

In the second part, I attempt to clarify what it means for a discourse to be

ideological. I rely heavily on Louis Althusser's concept of ideology, which is probably the most sophisticated Marxist account available. For Althusser, ideology is inseparable from, and runs coextensively with, subjectivity. They are both products of certain social apparatuses or institutions that function to guarantee the reproduction of the means of production. In order to establish the exact limits of ideology in discourse, I investigate in depth the process of subject-formation as it is understood by Althusser. This investigation includes a short discussion of the Novel, which is meant to illustrate how the ideological state apparatuses, to use Althusser's term, determine the subjectivity—and therefore the ideology—even of individuals who may seem to escape their direct control.

The upshot of the second section is the conclusion that the discourse of race struggle is, in fact, an ideology in that it is both illusory and allusive, two terms which will be explained fully. It does not produce true statements, yet it does point to the truth that helps form it: class struggle.

The third section addresses some of the consequences of adopting the ideology of race war, or a discourse similar to it, as a guiding discourse. This would lead to the desire to struggle against other races or groups without end, since unity and universality are never a possibility. In contrast to this, I examine the possibility of accepting that war is necessary, but holding that the goal of war should be equality.

Through all of this it is important to remember that the discourse in question is specific to Europe in the time, roughly speaking, between the English Civil Wars of 1642-1651 and the Revolutions of 1848. I am not claiming that all instances of racial conflict are merely class conflict in disguise. I am merely saying that certain narratives

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from that time that understood world history as a series of race wars missed the essential

driving force of those historical conflicts. It is no doubt true that race and class

intertwine in a complex relationship. In this paper I do not address racism properly

speaking.

II. Knowledge and Discourse

In Michel Foucault's 1975-6 lectures at the Collège De France, collected in

English translation as *"Society Must Be Defended*,*"* Foucault insists that the discourse of

race struggle is not an ideology, but something different. This is allegedly due to its

polyvalence in regard to the social groups that adopt it as an instrument for combat.   Its

origin in modern form, he points out, was with the anti-royalists of the English civil war;

it was soon taken up by French aristocrats, however, as a justification for the rights

specific to the Second Estate. These rights were based not in reason or God, but rather in

custom and ages of conflict. The discourse of race struggle was therefore adopted by two

groups that would be understood as, on the long view and usual account, on opposite

sides of the barricades. This model seems to contradict the standard 20th century leftist

notion that an unbroken (if unstable) system of belief and knowledge, one that was not

shared by their enemies except as those enemies lost their own political will,

accompanied the bourgeoisie as they swept to power throughout this period.

Consequently, the discourse of race struggle cannot be an ideology in the commonsense use of the word. An ideology is specific to a particular social formation; the dominant ideology belongs to the dominant class, and so forth. The ideology of the bourgeoisie would have been one that began as an oppositional perspective and ended up constituting the ruling ideas as capitalism took firm root and its masters secured political supremacy. The discourse of race struggle, however, as it appears in the seventeenth century in England and the following century in France, resembles more closely an organon for tactical gain than a consistent but possibly misleading system of beliefs that obfuscates a process of domination. The latter would be an ideology in the usual sense—although it is not an adequate definition—and it is surely the case that the theories of sovereignty that Foucault opposes to the discourse of race struggle are rooted in ideology. The different classes did not and could not share the same ideas about the place of the individual in the constitution of society. They each held competing theories of sovereignty.

We have, then, two different kinds of discursive models interacting in a complex way. The field is further desimplified by the related development of techniques of domination and exploitation specific to industrial capitalism, which Foucault terms disciplinary power. These various, incommensurable elements that constitute the field of (among other things) social practice in a very general sense mutually condition each other and rely on an intricate distribution of joint support. In order to approach a complete view of the process (in Foucault's view), it is then necessary to map the relations and directions of three qualitatively different elements: the discourse of race struggle (a

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tactical attitude), the theory of sovereignty (any formulation of which is an ideology) and disciplinary power (a practice). Their interrelations and co-dependencies must also be indicated. Each one, moreover, not only obeys different rules but must be conceived as thoroughly different kinds of games, although this should not be taken as anything more than a metaphor resorted to in order to avoid the misleading vocabulary of dimensionality. The criteria for evaluating these elements and the kinds of epistemic or functional standards internal to each differs accordingly. They are often associated with each other in a way that precludes simple analysis, resulting in much confusion.

It will be necessary, then, to distinguish between the type of discourse that race struggle discourse typifies, which certainly is used as a tool in real struggles, and ideology, which is also an instrument in struggle, if such a distinction is in fact possible. Foucault gets at this by asserting, "this historical instrument [i.e. the historical mode of discourse of which the discourse of race struggle is a special case] must not be seen as the ideology or an ideological product of the nobility or its class position...[it might be termed] a discursive tactic, a deployment of knowledge and power which, insofar as it is a tactic, is transferable and eventually becomes the law functioning the formation of knowledge and, at the same time, the general form of political battle" (Foucault 2003). Foucault holds that the discourse of race struggle is a special mutation of a historical discourse that is not ideology because it operates at different coordinates of the social/semiotic network than an ideology: rather that being a certain story (of sovereignty, for example) or *Zeitgeist*, it is a set of rules and assumptions that produce a form of knowledge; in other words, it sets its own standards for truth. What Foucault's

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concept of ideology and this type of discourse have in common is that they are instruments of control and domination; they differ in what kinds of rules or propositions they produce and accept. They operate on different spaces of the total system of discursive practice, the latter occupying what might guardedly be understood as coordinates once removed, since it pertains to what counts as knowledge on the side of form, not merely content. That such positions exist--and that they have previously not been considered ideology, even within orthodox Marxism—can be ascertained by recalling Stalin's evaluation of the structural status of language in his 1950 treatise "Marxism and the Problems of Linguistics". In response to the question, "*Is it true that language is a superstructure on the base,"* Stalin answers (significantly, in the wake of the Lysenko debacle, during which a specious distinction was drawn between bourgeois and proletarian biological science): "*No, it is not true.* The base is the economic structure of society at the given stage of its development. The superstructure is the political, legal, religious, artistic, philosophical views of society and the political, legal and other institutions corresponding to them," and goes on to relate the standard account of the base/superstructure model in relation to different social systems (Stalin 1950). He stresses the point that changes in the superstructure supervene on changes in the base, and consequently that a complete revolution in the base would utterly transform the superstructure. Things stand differently with language: there is a continuity that bridges disparate historical epochs, even when every element of the superstructure properly speaking is exchanged. It will be useful to quote at greater length:

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Language is not a product of one or another base, old or new, within the given society, but of the whole course of the history of the society and of the history of the bases for many centuries. It was created not by some one class, but by the entire society, by all the classes of the society, by the efforts of hundreds of generations. It was created for the satisfaction of the needs not of one particular class, but of the entire society, of all the classes of the society. Precisely for this reason it was created as a single language for the society, common to all members of that society, as the common language of the whole people. Hence the functional role of language, as a means of intercourse between people, consists not in serving one class to the detriment of other classes, but in equally serving the entire society, all the classes of society. This in fact explains why a language may equally serve both the old, moribund system and the new, rising system; both the old base and the new base; both the exploiters and the exploited. (Stalin 1950)

Language, then, is a deep structural level that underlies understanding and practice. Foucault, while rejecting the habit of interpreting these problems using metaphors of depth, theorizes an intermediate position that evolves at a pace quicker than language's glacial development over the course of 'hundreds of generations,' yet still stands independent of the superstructure, that is, does not automatically change with a revolution in the mode of production (one of the reasons for his cynicism toward the prospects of revolutionary transformation). This is the formulation of broad epistemic forms and rules of knowledge production. Additionally, it is important that rather than serving *all* classes of a society, these structures may serve *any* group in society. This inherently antagonistic yet nonspecific quality is precisely what gives the historical form of discourse its status as polyvalent tactic.

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The surprise in Foucault's account is that a tactical ploy can be inserted into the discursive structure so extensively. The discourse seems to be consciously developed by certain partisans (we can ignore, for the moment, the specific details, since the key point is the mere fact of conflict) and then disseminated, presumably due to its success in battle. This would mean that people have a fairly wide range of control over forms of discourse, this process being somewhat akin to the evidently futile task of proliferating Esperanto—a purposeful reworking of the formal conditions for discourse in order to achieve specific social goals. The attribute that might make it possible in the case in question is that instead of acting on the language itself, as Esperanto does, it acts on the rules of knowledge production, which are more amenable to short-term manipulation. This follows from the fact that the same language is used in different discursive systems, which also accounts for the difficulty in distinguishing them and for their 'fuzzy edges.' Despite the possibility of conscious manipulation, these systems are also subject to aleatory mutation, which may go unnoticed to the subjects caught in their net.

This process of unconscious (or, rather, nonsubjective) and non-dialectical transformation is the first point to be considered that reveals Foucault's similarity and indebtedness to Nietzsche, whose work Foucault calls "the best, the most effective, the most pertinent of the models that one can draw upon" (Foucault 2000, 5). In the same lecture, collected under the title 'Truth and Juridical Forms,' Foucault draws out a distinction between origin (*Ursprung*) and invention (*Erfindung*) in Nietzsche's thought. The term 'origin' suggests that the practice or discourse in question develops as a matter of course from an essential property of the world or humanity, that it could not be

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otherwise: its genesis is inscribed in its ancestry. To speak of invention, on the other hand, is to recognize the contingency of discursive and practical formations. Nietzsche's philosophical model focuses on locating inventions rather than origins. Because of the way certain instincts or historical trends just so happen to interact, differing forms of knowledge are produced, with correlative changes in the subject and object of knowledge. Foucault argues that the death of God announced by Nietzsche signifies the illusory character of any transcendent basis for the object of knowledge, recalling Descartes' reliance on God to assure the knower of the reality and permanence of the external world, and taking this move as essential to, if often hidden in, subsequent epistemological systems, including that of Kant. We have then a twofold break with previous western philosophy that Foucault traces to Nietzsche: first, changes in the field of knowledge do not develop out of a given, universal subject as they do in Kant and especially Hegel, whose dialectic brings otherness into its fold by the inexorable power of its internal mechanism. For Nietzsche the seeds of future shapes are not held within a thing in *potentia*. Mutations are therefore unforeseeable and chaotic, as well as necessarily obscure to contemporary witnesses. Second, such changes alter the object of knowledge itself, since that object is no longer taken to be the expression of a transcendent thing-in-itself or the unfolding of a dialectical process. Since the solid mooring of objectivity is lost, modulations in the conditions of knowledge ramify well into the object of knowledge. The task of the Nietzschean philosopher will be to review the disruptions knowledge has undergone and build a model of discursive transformations, often with the aid of an archive.

Foucault's task of tracing such mutations must include a sorting of the resultant surface confusion; discourse operating within substantially different and even contradictory epistemic systems may nonetheless share the same language *and apparently the same content*. To stay with a provisional model of a tripartite overall linguistic/discursive complex (language/epistemic system/object of discourse), it may be asserted that although the causality in this chain is certainly not unidirectional, language itself changes most slowly, and the object of discourse changes along with the epistemic system, since for Foucault it is largely constituted by it. Foucault often uses the word 'discourse' as a rough equivalent for the middle term; much of his work is an attempt to come to terms with the very problem of the constitution of the object of discourse by its presuppositions, rules, and other procedures. "It would be quite wrong to see discourse as a place where previously established objects are laid one after another like words on a page," he warns in *The Archeology of Knowledge* (Foucault 1972, 42-3), suggesting the inseparability, even conceptually, of the discursive levels 'epistemic system' (or discourse proper) and 'objective field.' It is therefore essential to understand the tripartite model as an imperfect heuristic device rather than an accurate reflection of distinct phenomena. A transformation in discourse will reconstitute its object.

This does not mean, however, that the change in, or replacement of, the object, even accompanying a radical epistemic break, will be apparent: after all, the language used to describe the thing remains common, not to mention (at this point) the thorny problem of the ontological status of the object itself. Foucault analyzes archival texts in order to map the mutations in discourse. In *Discipline and Punish*, for example, he cites

two descriptions of punishments in order to illustrate the change in techniques of social

control and the underlying discourse of subjectivity. The first is the torture and execution

of Robert-François Damiens, who attempted to assassinate King Louis XV in 1757. The

second is an account of the disciplinary routine within a French prison in the 1830's.

The former shocks with its gruesome attention to the details of physical, bodily

mutilation:

> '[I]n the said cart, [Damiens will be taken] to the Place de
> Grève, where on a scaffold that will be erected there, the
> flesh will be torn from his breasts, arms, thighs and
> calves with red-hot pincers. His right hand holding the
> knife with which he committed the said parricide, burnt
> with sulfur, and, on those places where the flesh will be
> torn away, poured molten lead, boiling oil, burning resin,
> wax and sulfur melted together and then his body drawn
> and quartered by four horses and his limbs and body
> consumed by fire, reduced to ashes and his ashes thrown
> to the winds.' (Foucault 1995, 3)

Which is juxtaposed with the banality of the latter:

> Art. 18. *Rising*. At the first drum-roll, the prisoners must
> rise and dress in silence, as the supervisor opens the cell
> doors. At the second drum-roll, they must be dressed
> and make their beds. At the third, they must line up and
> proceed to the chapel for morning prayer. There is a
> five-minute interval between each drum-roll. (Foucault
> 1995, 6)

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The examples are supposed to illustrate the complete difference in punishment, social control and the understanding of the human body that occurred around the time of the Revolution. Foucault writes of the types of punishment described,

> We have, then, a public execution and a time-table. They do not punish the same crimes or the same type of delinquent. But they each define a certain penal style. Less than a century separates them. It was a time when, in Europe and the United States, the entire economy of punishment was redistributed...It was a new age for penal justice. (Foucault 1995, 7)

Of course, this "new age for penal justice" is but a single current in a wide river of transformation. What is being indexed here are practices, not discourses, but this alteration in practice runs coextensively with a wider change in discursive systems. In both cases there are common elements: the texts relate how criminals are to be treated under the law. The obvious difference is in the 'style' of punishment, as Foucault puts it. The change in style is indicative of structural transformations that, according to Foucault's theory, pervade every aspect of society, actually reconstituting the objects of discourse. This means that when a criminal is spoken of within the discursive system supporting the first, older practice, something very different is meant from when a criminal is spoken of in the newer, disciplinary mode—which acts on a new object, a soul rather than a mere body.

This relation between discourse and practice will become more important later,

but for now a second example might help clarify the process specific to discourse. Although the two levels will always change concurrently, it is nonetheless possible to focus on one aspect of this process. Foucault discusses a shift in the discourse surrounding medicine and the body in his book *The Birth of The Clinic.* This book focuses on texts that typify two different discourses and the change in the medical and social gaze (*regard*) around the same time as the development of the modern penal system and the surveillance society. Both of these events are inseparable from a basic overall epistemic rupture. This rupture is the one that occurs around the time of he French Revolution, and is in fact the most frequently handled subject in all of Foucault's research. Foucault asserts that a new, statist and disciplinary form of both power techniques and discursive structures are born at this time; this is unsurprising as it is the key political event in the transference of power from the aristocracy to the bourgeoisie in France. *The Birth of the Clinic*, written earlier than *Discipline and Punish*, while pertaining to modifications of institutions, deals more explicitly with discourses than practices or techniques. It focuses more, that is, on ways we think and talk about the body than about specific medical procedures or even institutions. These discourses are supposed to be determinative of what in the body is knowable and subject to manipulation. The new discourse, however, has a fundamental connection to method, since the emergence of a way of talking and thinking about the body brings with it a new gaze that alters the demarcation between visibility and invisibility (Foucault 1988, 195). The entire vocabulary and theoretical apparatus of medicine changes accordingly. This new balance allows new techniques to develop that are aimed at the newly visible regions

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of the body. Before a process is articulable it is also inconceivable that it can be the region of a conscious practice and that practice is therefore impossible. Foucault's work here is an example of the identification of a discursive structure (episteme) as the condition of possibility for a kind of knowledge and its coextensive practices.

To speak of 'conditions of possibility' in this sense, as Jacques Ranciére points out, is to indicate Foucault's project's limited similarity to Kantian critical philosophy. Foucault works toward historicizing Kant's *a priori* forms of human experience. Steps in this direction can be seen most clearly in Foucault's early discussions of Kant's *Anthropology*, which show a concern on Foucault's part with returning transcendental epistemic truths to human history. Kant attempted to investigate what made human experience possible, deducing the *a priori* structures of thought and perception by determining what those structures must be to allow for experience to happen. This investigation is carried out in the three great *Critiques*, with most of the epistemological issues hashed out in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. This is where Kant deduces the basic categories of experience, basing them on the kinds of logical judgments that are operative in human thought. If this deduction is carried through correctly, the structures identified must be universal, because if any element in them were lacking human experience would no longer be possible. This means that we would be able to know with certainty what the world would be like, if not in itself or independently of human experience, at least for any human experiencing it in any time or place, irrespective of that person's historical situation.

Foucault also wants to determine what epistemic structures must exist to account

for human experience. He believes along with Kant that certain basic ways of processing experience are necessary for the cohesive functioning of the human organism in its environment. Rather than originating in a transcendental subject, however, these structures are themselves historical, and therefore not universal (at least not between time periods). This is a radical break with Kantian critical philosophy. For Foucault, these structures are not necessary conditions for the possibility of human experience as such, since other humans produced in different social circumstances will make no use of them, but merely draw the delimitations of understanding and action in one way among other possible ways, and they can and do change over time. They are determined not be the necessary constitution of humans as such or of each individual human, but are social products that coalesce as discourses common to specific groups and periods. Discourses, similar to what Ranciére more consistently refers to as 'regimes,' a term Foucault only sometimes employs, provide the condition for what is thinkable and doable by defining zones of visibility and invisibility, meanings of objects, and the general semiotic horizon of a given period. They can therefore be understood as constituting the *a priori* conditions for experience pertaining to many different spheres: the connection between disciplinary practice and the modern medical gaze is discernible from this angle, as they both occur within a discourse that allows for the possibility of regarding humans in what can only be thought of as an intrusive manner (the new visibility of the patient interrogated by the doctor, the panopticon's ubiquitous supervision), especially as it would be viewed in comparison to the older type of discourse. Foucault's project is to locate the emergence of the conditions for the possibility of this knowledge historically;

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the importance and limits of his approach are revealed by Ranciére when he is asked

about discursive regimes in his methodology of art history:

> (My approach) is a bit similar to Foucault's. It retains
> the principle from the Kantian transcendental that
> replaces the dogmatism of truth with the search for
> conditions of possibility. At the same time, these
> conditions are not conditions for thought in general, but
> rather conditions immanent in a particular system of
> thought, a particular system of expression. I differ from
> Foucault insofar as his archeology seems to me to follow
> a schema of historical necessity according to which,
> beyond a certain chasm, something is no longer
> thinkable, can no longer be formulated. The visibility of
> a form of expression as an artistic form depends on a
> historically constituted regime of perception and
> intelligibility. This does not mean that it becomes
> imperceptible with the emergence of a new regime. I
> thus try at one and the same time to historicize the
> transcendental and de-historicize these systems of
> condition of possibility...At any given point in time,
> several regimes coexist and intermingle in the works
> themselves. (Ranciére 2006, 50)

Note the stress Ranciére places on Foucault's assumption that things are 'no

longer thinkable' beyond a radical epistemic rupture. Ranciére softens this stance by

theorizing the coexistence of regimes. It is certainly impossible to anticipate the exact

effects of a way of understanding the world before it develops, but older regimes are not

immediately lost: they continue to reverberate along with newer models. Of course, this

brings us even farther from Kant's conception of *a priori* forms of knowledge that remain

immutable and guaranteed for all possible human experience, as he so often repeats.

Ranciére risks sacrificing the decisive weight of each regime by opening the field to a multiplicity of coexisting formations, while Foucault at least tacitly assumes that each discursive formation, while not entirely allergic to the existence of others, will tolerate only limited competition; it seems to be in the nature of discourse as such to propagate its own rules. This tendency is amplified by the tactical gains accruing to a social group by the victory of its correlative discourse. The benefit of Ranciere's move is analogous to the one Foucault reaps vis-a-vis Kant: a more supple and nuanced set of tools for analyzing semiotic elements and their mutations.

It is evident that Foucault's position is threatened on two fronts. On one hand, the properties of the structures he identifies as determining the conditions for the possibility of knowledge seem tenuously impermanent. Compared with Kant's universal *a priori*, even if more nuanced, their usefulness and explanatory power pales. In fact, they must in turn rely on a more fundamental set of conditions. Language is one of these, as discussed above. Additionally, they cannot do away with the philosophical need for categories in the Kantian sense: there must, after all, be *some* necessary and universal characteristics of human experience as such. And if this is the case, there will also be constants on the side of objectivity. For Foucault, however, objects as we know them are conditioned by discourse. This leads inexorably to a circle in which human experience relies on its emergence from materiality, yet also determines that source. This paradox should not be dismissed out of hand as an unacceptable philosophical position, but it does reveal certain problems that Foucault perpetually refuses to directly address.

On the other hand, Foucault's epistemic formations might seem too rigid and

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exclusive. Why can't many such systems coexist, as Ranciére suggests? If social classes

can choose to mold these systems to their advantage, can individuals abandon and create

new ones at will? What are the mechanisms that forge the new rules and eliminate the

old ones? There does not seem to be any good reason to reject the possibility of an

anarchy of discourse, in which a chaotic collection of varying discourses coexist. On

closer inspection, it turns out that only an intrinsic drive toward domination within the

general rules of discourse as such can account for this collapsing of the field to only a

limited number of players. This would continue one important strand of Nietzsche's

approach, and in fact, Foucault does lean this way. An alternative conception is simply a

positive coexistence of different sets of epistemic rules that come into conflict only at

certain points of strategic social importance. In this case, however, mutations in the

discourses must be referred back to social or economic causes, and the formations

themselves would lose the explanatory power that Foucault wants to give them. I

believe, then, that Foucault relies here, as in so many other places, on an unarticulated

Nietzschean metaphysics. Foucault's conception of discourse is inextricably tied to his

conception of power, and this always refers back to Nietzsche's conception of the will to

power. Conflict and strife are really basic categories for Foucault, and his rejection of

Marxist dialectics runs parallel in all its great contours with Schopenhauer's rejection of

the Hegelian dialectic. This is not simply a negative move. Both Foucault's and

Schopenhauer's arguments rely on a positive idea of what the world is like, and these

ideas are certainly linked. Schopenhauer hands on to Nietzsche intact a metaphysics of

the will in which the inner core of the world is composed of conflict and suffering.

Nietzsche's brilliant alteration of this inheritance consists not merely in subverting the value given to this battle, but also in eliminating the wall between the phenomenal and noumenal aspects of it retained from Kant. The basic character of the world as a battlefield of striving and competing forces, and the ethical consequences of this view, are accepted by Nietzsche and then taken up wholesale by Foucault. This accounts for the frustratingly slippery quality of the concept 'power' in Foucault's work. It serves the place of a metaphysical category—or rather, it *is* one—and can therefore not be defined in the language demanded by twentieth century structuralist or post-structuralist theory (which is but one manifestation of a contradiction in the latter that is insoluble on its own terms). The concept of power becomes entangled with the concept of discourse. The function of the panopticon, for example, is both a power relation that replaces the practices that accompany sovereignty and a process that relies on the construction of a soul responsive to surveillance. This accords with a general antagonism inherent in discourse. This antagonism is the key ingredient for power to emerge at all. In order for power relations to be established, competition must occur. Since a general climate of competition is assumed by Foucault to operate universally, power can take on such a broad and deep significance in his work. This, again, is owed to Nietzsche.

Before discussing yet another similarity to Nietzsche, involving the ethics of perspectivism and conflict versus 'totalization' in power (this will be done in the third section), we must further examine the antagonistic play of discursive regimes in Foucault's historical model. We have seen that there seems to be an inherently combative character in discursive regimes—they all make a claim for themselves against other

epistemic systems. This is true partly because morality is founded on ways of

understanding and knowing the world, and the moral rules particular to each regime will

lend to that regime the right to exist and perpetuate itself, and often the right to fight

against competing regimes, which will, likewise, seem wrong from the perspective of the

combatant. But here we can draw a distinction between discursive regimes with two very

different kinds of claims on truth. One views the world in terms of eternal conflict and

the other has pretensions to universality, believing that conflict is merely a surmountable

stage preparing the way for its own millennial victory. Foucault sometimes refers to the

latter as 'science', and this form of discourse might be traced back to Socratic philosophy,

as Nietzsche does early on in his *Birth of Tragedy*. The other, more properly

'perspectival' type of regime is championed by Foucault, especially in the form of the

discourse of race struggle. This type of regime will judge and hierarchize objects of

knowledge always with reference to its own bellicosity. This is why Foucault considers

historical narratives based on war (factual, historical wars, that is, not imaginary ones like

that constructed in Hobbes's *Leviathan*) to provide the best basis for understandings of

history, and by extension contemporary power struggles. In this Foucault, following

Nietzsche, cannot stand in greater contrast to Kant, who, typifying Enlightenment values,

anticipated an age of 'perpetual peace' following the victories of humankind's

acculturation rooted in the empirical and theoretical—and, naturally, universal—

achievements of the Enlightenment. In a total inversion of the goals of the

Enlightenment, Foucault not only deems this goal a foolish illusion, but warns that it is

positively dangerous, tying it to the so-called 'totalitarian' tribulations of Stalinism.

The discourse in question, that of race struggle, begins, according to Foucault, as a truly perspectival discourse. In "*Society Must Be Defended"*, he endorses what he calls its "counterhistorical function" (Foucault 2003, 66). While traditional, 'Roman' style history tended to justify the rule of those in power by showing that rulers follow from a legitimate line, remembering their glorious deeds, and giving examples of appropriate actions, the discourse of race struggle "show[s]...that power, the mighty, the kings, and the laws have concealed the fact that they were born of the contingency and injustice of battles" (Foucault 2003,72). Therefore, these counterhistories always serve to disrupt entrenched patterns of power relations, irritating the status quo and challenging centralized rule. There is, of course, a link here between the Roman history and scientific discourse, in the sense theorized by Foucault. They both lay down rules meant to ossify their rule, to make other forms of knowledge or power (two terms, remember, that pass over silently into one another in Foucault's work) illegitimate and paralyzed. Foucault interrogates regimes that have pretensions to scientificity:

> "What types of knowledge are you trying to disqualify
> when you say that you are a science? What speaking
> subject, what discursive subject, what subject of
> experience and knowledge are you trying to minorize
> when you begin to say: 'I speak this discourse, I am
> speaking scientific discourse, and I am a scientist.' What
> theoretico-political vanguard are you trying to put on the
> throne in order to detach it from all the massive,
> circulating, and discontinuous forms that knowledge can
> take?" (Foucault 2003, 10)

The throne metaphor is well chosen, as it shows the similarity to the power-

claiming discourse of centralized sovereignty. In both cases, the discourse in opposition

is meant to seem illegitimate: a monopoly is claimed on truth. So we have, on one side, a

centralizing and oppressive regime, compared to, on the other, "the massive, circulating

and discontinuous forms that knowledge can take"--a phrase that might have come from a

gloss on Nietzsche's will to power. Nietzsche's method, too, is celebrated; Foucault

asserts that "genealogy is, then, a sort of attempt to desubjugate historical knowledges to

set them free or in other words to help them to oppose and struggle against the coercion

of a unitary, formal, and scientific theoretical discourse" (Foucault 2003, 10). The

underlying assumption is, of course, that science is really *not* intrinsically more

legitimate—that is, more true—than the discourses Foucault calls 'antiscience'. One

tactic that helps support this assumption is an unstated analogy drawn between people

and knowledge. It is of course true that people are often subjugated by people and ought

to be set free. It is not immediately obvious that the same is true for knowledges. Does it

even make sense to talk about 'subjugated knowledges'? I think it might, but only if we

recognize that we are merely using a figure of speech; when we lose sight of this we slip

into errors, like assuming that forms of knowledge should be granted the same positive

rights we, as a society, grant to people. In other words, there is no valid ethical

imperative that urges us to choose a condition of anarchy in discourse to one that is well-

ordered and centralized. This is but a manifestation of the same reactionary spirit that

stands sentimentally against the standardization of weights and measures, another

achievement, not accidentally, of the French Revolution. It is the truth claims that

discursive regimes are capable of making and their effects on people that should be

considered, not their abstract shape. Despite a veneer of sophistication, it can readily be seen that Foucault's thought all too often rests on complete relativism. Like Nietzsche, Foucault judges truth-claims by their power effects vis-a-vis other discourses, when it would be better to judge them (in addition, at any rate!) by their accuracy, dependability, and, in a word, their correspondence with reality.

I will conclude this first section with a summary of the place of the discourse of race struggle in Foucault's overall theory. We are discussing a particular way of understanding the world that emerged in the 17th century in Europe. This mode of understanding views history as a series of race wars and conquests of peoples—the Normans invading England in 1066, the Franks and the Gauls battling in France, and so forth. This understanding qualifies as a discourse in the sense explained above, that it determines the historically alterable conditions for the possibility of knowledge, because it provides a lens through which to interpret the place of individuals in the world, the development of social formations, and the value given to those situations and events. When Foucault claims that this kind of discourse is not an ideology, he tacitly relies on a very limited concept of ideology. I believe that it is necessary to investigate more fully what ideology is in order to decide whether or not such a discourse is ideological. This will be the goal of the next section.

III. Ideology and Subjectivity

Foucault, as we have seen, contrasts discourse to ideology, on one hand, and anti-authoritarian discourses to scientific ones, on the other. He celebrates the discourse of race struggle as a model of anti-authoritarian, perspectival discourse. We will now examine an alternate, Marxist view, in which discourses themselves can either be ideological or scientific, and which hold up science as preferable. This is in many ways the inverse of what Foucault holds—for the good reason that Foucault inverts this theory on purpose, in order to attack Marxism.

Foucault's attack on 'science' might best be understood, along with much of his polemical material, as a swipe at Louis Althusser, the French Communist Party theorist, and one of Foucault's early influences. There are elements in Althusser's theory that correspond roughly with some of Foucault's ideas. Althusser also thinks about ideology and science, and his term 'problematic' covers much of the same ground as Foucault's 'discourse' or 'epistemic regime'. Terry Eagleton makes this comparison explicitly, with special reference to the conditions of possibility of knowledge:

> Althusser holds that all thought is conducted within the
> terms of an unconscious 'problematic' which silently
> underpins it. A problematic, rather like Michel
> Foucault's 'episteme', is a particular organization of
> categories which at any given historical moment
> constitutes the limits of what we are able to utter and
> conceive. (Eagelton 1991, 137)

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A problematic, then, is more basic than ideology or science: it is what makes the particular forms of these latter possible in any given instance. As a matter of fact, as Althusser stresses repeatedly in the essays collected in *For Marx*, a problematic may be either scientific or ideological, thus carving the field of discourse into two parts in a way that is rejected by Foucault. By asserting that the discourse of race struggle, for example, is not an ideology, Foucault introduces at least one other possibility; this shows where the conception of an episteme or discursive regime diverges from the problematic: a problematic underlies an ideology or a science, but must always have the character of one or the other, depending on what kind of discourse it produces. This is where the essential difference between Althusser and Foucault becomes clear: for Althusser, a scientific discourse is one that is capable of producing true statements, while for Foucault a scientific discourse is one that produces a certain kind of truth, one that marginalizes or oppresses knowledges that do not meet its criteria. Stated in that way, the full implications of the distinction may not be obvious. It is important to add that for Foucault, different, non-scientific regimes produce different kinds of truth. For Althusser, a resolute anti-historicist, this proposition is simply absurd. Before a science is developed, it is not the case that its propositions were untrue or even in some way lacking in meaning. Scientific truths were simply not producible or verifiable by that particular, prescientific society. The people living in that society certainly could not understand the true propositions of science even if faced with them; the problematic underlying their understanding of the world would not allow it. This does not mean that

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these statements would therefore be untrue at that time. On the contrary, this situation

only proves the objective limitations of that society regarding intellectual production.

Just as economic and historical development is required for the working out of ways to

manipulate the material world and organize society for the possibility of, say, inventing

the wheel, the spinning jenny or the Internet, the very same development is a prerequisite

for producing true statements about that world that advance to the level of scientific

theory.

　　　Ideology, for Althusser, precedes science and then, after the development of a

science, accompanies it (ideology will never be eliminated). Ideology is, strictly

speaking, untrue; at the same time, it is the representation in the mind of reality in a

transfigured form. Althusser formulates this in his great 1970 essay "Ideology and the

ideological State Apparatuses" by writing "*ideology = illusion/allusion*" (Althusser

1970), meaning that while being illusory, ideology does correspond in a special way to

reality, makes an allusion to it, and may be interpreted in this way. This is similar to the

interpretation of dreams in psychoanalysis: dreams are not taken to be true in their

explicit content, yet they do express hidden truths. In addition, we cannot say that

ideologies are simply false; despite not providing scientific knowledge, they do reflect

true situations in a different way. They also engage aspects of human experience that

science cannot. The layer of human experience that is engaged by ideology extends

much farther than that directly engaged by theory. Ideology, in part at least, dictates our

habits, reactions, emotions and other non-intellectual experiences. Theory can tell us *why*

we experience things in such ways, but it would make no sense to feel theoretically in

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love, for example, or afraid. These feelings do fall within the purview of ideology.

   And while not all ideology is theoretical, it is certainly possible to have an ideological theory (as opposed to a scientific one). As a matter of fact, every prescientific theory is just that. Consider any philosophical system that predates the modern sciences. Underlying any of these (it is especially easy to see with Medieval scholasticism, for example) is a problematic that reflects class domination, and skews the propositions of that theory accordingly. The same is true for the problematic that underlies the discourse of race struggle. It is ideological, not scientific.

   For Althusser, the key distinction between ideology and science is that ideological discourse contributes to the subjectivation of its participants, while science is a subject-less discourse. An understanding of this point requires a fuller explanation of the relation between ideology and subjectivity in Althusser's theory. The best explication can be found in "Ideology and the Ideological State Apparatuses," especially in the section "Ideology Interpellates Individuals as Subjects." The essay attempts to give an account of the reproduction of relations of production, not simply in capitalism but in general. Central to this process is ideology, which is always rooted in material practices; practices determined, if in the last instance by economic imperatives, more directly by institutions. The most important of these institutions in the current epoch is the school, but this is variable. In European feudalism, for example, the church was by far the most influential of these institutions, which Althusser refers to as 'ideological state apparatuses'. Not every institution that has ideological effects is part of the state, only the most important ones during specific historical periods. For Althusser, ideology will

always be with us (practice depends upon it), but the state will not—as Lenin

demonstrates in *The State and Revolution*, the state only exists where there are

irreconcilable class antagonisms (Lenin 1971, 266-268). Under capitalism, though, as

well as feudalism, the guiding institutions—including the church, schools, family, legal

system, political party system, trade-unions, media, and cultural institutions, are state

institutions (Althusser 1970). These institutions, along with the more obviously

governmental 'repressive state apparatuses' (prisons, police, army, etc.), are considered

part of the state complex because they serve to bolster and reproduce the existing power

relations that find their main political expression and guarantee in the state, and whose

continuation relies, as Althusser points out, following the Italian theorist Antonio

Gramsci, on the existence of the entire complex, which is therefore more fundamental

than the private/public legal distinctions based in it.

The ideological effects proceed from the material level, taking materiality here,

in a rather expanded sense, to include the *actions* of bodies and therefore ritual. This

inverts a common-sense idealist view that envisions practices and rituals as dependent on

ideas. It is the material fact of meeting in a certain place, saying certain words, and

enacting a certain script that molds and reinforces consciousness. This ideological

training of the individual is identical with the process that creates subjectivity. It is the

material ritual and trained behavior introduced to the individual by society that make her

a subject, that is, a bearer of ideology. It is in this sense that Althusser can claim that

'ideology has no history,' which does not mean that a certain ideological content will

always be with us (Althusser 1970). It simply means that whenever practice is found,

ideology will be coexistent with it, as the two terms imply each other: there can be no practice without ideology that gives us a reason to do anything, and material practices of complex groups give rise automatically to ideologies, which have no internal dialectic. It is therefore always subjects who act. Ideology is in this sense universal. Similarly, individuals are 'always-already' subjects, who are 'hailed' by the material processes in their given society. It is this seeming paradox that Eagleton instructively mistakes as a weakness in Althusser, writing,

> There are a number of logical problems connected with this theory. To begin with, how does the individual human being recognize and respond to the 'hailing' which makes it a subject if it is not a subject already? Are not response, recognition, understanding, subjective faculties, so that one would need to be a subject already in order to become one? To this extent, absurdly, the subject would have to predate its own existence. Conscious of this conundrum, Althusser argues that we are indeed 'always-already' subjects, even in the womb: our coming, so to speak, has always been prepared for. But if this is true it is hard to know what to make of his 'moment' of interpellation, unless this is simply a convenient fiction. And it seems odd to suggest that we are 'centered' subjects even as embryos.
> (Eagelton 1991, 143)

Yet is it really so absurd to claim that we, *qua* subjects, predate our own existence? As he sometimes does, Eagleton falls into the trap of the ideology of individualism at this point, apparently thinking of individuals as discreet and atomistic. The other alternative is to understand individuals in society as largely molded by social forces, as bearing the pre-existent semiotic complex, in Lacanian terms, entering into a

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given symbolic order. We should look more closely at the passage from Althusser to

determine if Eagleton's accusation that "Althusser argues that we are indeed 'always-

already' subjects, even in the womb...we are 'centered' subjects even as embryos" hits its

mark. Althusser writes in the section "Ideology Interpellates Individuals as Subjects,"

> That an individual is always-already a subject, even
> before he is born, is nevertheless the plain reality,
> accessible to everyone and not a paradox at all. Freud
> shows that individuals are always 'abstract' with respect
> to the subjects they always-already are, simply by noting
> the ideological ritual that surrounds the expectation of a
> 'birth', that 'happy event', Everyone knows how much
> and in what way an unborn child is expected. Which
> amounts to saying, very prosaically, if we agree to drop
> the 'sentiments', i.e. The forms of family ideology
> (paternal/maternal conjugal/fraternal) in which the
> unborn child is expected: it is certain in advance that it
> will bear its Father's Name, and will therefore have an
> identity and be irreplaceable. Before its birth, the child
> is therefore always-already a subject, appointed as a
> subject in and by the specific familial ideological
> configuration in which it is 'expected' once it has been
> conceived.   (Althusser 1970)

Eagleton fails to register the import of the word 'abstract' here. What does it

mean to say that that individuals are abstract in relation to their subjectivity? In part, at

least, that the individual as such can be separated from its concrete social context and yet

be incomplete as a person; this is precisely the status of the embryo. Eagleton assumes

that if subjectivity precedes birth, it must also inhere in the individual body before birth,

which is simply not the case. This inseparability of the body and soul (even to the point

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that the dead will physically rise at the Last Judgment!) is a specifically Christian myth.

Its blind acceptance, when carried to its logical consequences, can only result in the worst

kind of ideological error about the 'rights of the unborn' and 'sanctity of unborn life'. In

truth, of course, it is people as subjects to which rights adhere (which is not to say that

this process itself does not fall within ideology), not as individuals as such. Pushing the

socially-constructed subject back into the womb is an analogous move to imagining an

individual existing in a state of nature or enjoying natural rights, which is to say it's

bogus. That other ideological systems, not to mention scientific ones, have had a

different (and perhaps more sound) view of this question is illuminated by the historian

Peter Brown, who describes how, in ancient Rome,

> [t]he family and the city determined the degree to which
> the results of the body's connection with the natural
> world was acceptable in organized society. The mere
> fact of physical birth, for instance, did not make a
> Roman child a person. Its father must lift it from the
> floor. If not, the little bundle of ensouled matter, as
> much a fetus as if it were in its mother's womb, must
> wait for others to collect it from a place outside its
> father's house. The fetus could be aborted in the womb;
> and it might yet die, if no one picked it up and made it a
> part of their own family, when left out in a public place
> to be claimed by passers-by. (Brown 1988, 28)

The only fault to be found in this account is the use of the word 'ensouled', since

we take a soul to be a form of subjectivity. It is precisely because the baby as of yet has

no soul, which is an effect of an ideological institution (the effect is in this example

signified by the picking up by the father) that it has no right to life. Otherwise, this is an

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elegant account of the process by which, at least in one society, an individual becomes a subject by the action of ideological apparatuses (in this case, the family and the city), or, better, is melded with the subjectivity she already was, from which she was abstracted. Although the process is not as obvious in other ideological systems, especially ones that obscure the firm line between people and fetuses, something similar is always operative. Incidentally, Brown notes later that "Christian families regarded it as sinful to expose their children" (Brown 1988, 261).

It will be helpful to investigate further the process of subjectivation in order to determine the extensiveness of ideology in our understanding and discourse, remembering that subjectivity and ideology are two sides of the same coin—where you find one, you also find the other. This will ultimately support the thesis that the discourse of race struggle is, indeed, ideological. An analysis of mythological and fictional narratives will be a convenient method for indicating the process of subject formation as it is reflected in consciousness. After all, even ideological stories allude to reality.

One might consider the mythological/ideological coding of the forging of a new subjectivity suitable to an entirely unprecedented social formation related in the Romulus and Remus myth. Rome envisions itself both arriving on a tide of the most exalted tradition (descended from Aeneas) and at the same time *sui generis* and rooted outside history, bypassing the institutions responsible for conferring subjectivity, in our terminology, on the individual. Reflected in this story we can identify a radical shift in problematic or regime, an epistemic rupture that leads, at this point, not to a science but rather a new subjectivity, and also a number of beliefs typical of self-reflecting subjects.

Not least of these is the insistence on the natural foundation of one's discourse: abandoned by humans, just as the baby whose father refuses to lift it off the floor, the twins Romulus and Remus are instead welcomed into the order of nature when they are fed by wild animals and suckled by a wolf. This presumably gives them the advantage of a return to universality from the accidental particularity of foregoing history; similarly, the bourgeoisie of the early capitalist period will justify their practice with the myth of the noble savage, a move to which the ideology of sovereignty is closely related, and which also signifies an ascension to the universal (incarnate as the Third Estate) against the narrow claims of the particular (the 'historical' right of the aristocracy and clergy). The Romulus myth contains another 'allusion' to reality: an illustration of the violence at the birth of the social order. Remus must die for Romulus to set the boundaries of his city on the Palatine hill, that is, earn a new form of subjectivity, which is an event far too rich in psychoanalytic suggestion to treat with justice here (a single indication: "Being of non-being, that is how *I* as subject comes on the scene, conjugated with the double aporia of a true survival that is abolished by knowledge itself, and by a discourse in which it is death that sustains existence," says Lacan [Lacan 1982, 300]), and the reintegration with the pre-existing social world requires its partial subjection in the plundering of the Sabine women—as Lenin says of the Parisian Communards of 1871, "the decisive battle was *forced* upon them" (Lenin 1971, 288; the emphasis is his), which is to say, for both sides, entirely unavoidable—preceding a final reconciliation (from the viewpoint of the victor). We also see here the founding of the Roman state apparatuses. What can be seen here is the connection between material institutions and consciousness, and the rupture in

the problematic that accompanies a rupture in the social formation—all as this is reflected in the ideological consciousness, just as the reality of class struggle is reflected in the consciousness of English Roundheads and French aristocrats as a narrative of race war.

It might be argued that that claim that the soul or subject is a product of ideological institutions is weak because of the contingency of the institution functional in the presumed instance of interpellation. This weakness would be inherited directly from psychoanalysis, with its focus on the Victorian nuclear family and its typical set of mores. Indeed, Althusser, strongly influenced by psychoanalysis, repeats unaltered the story of the expected birth, the Name of the Father, and so forth. It is safe to assume, however, that people who were not joyfully expected, and who have no father, are also subjects. An investigation of this question is essential if we are to advance the claim that all discourses other than scientific ones are ideological, that is, mediated by subjectivity, and that this subjectivity originates in the actions of the ideological apparatuses.

Are we to believe that the subjectivity of individuals from non-traditional families, or from no families at all, will be radically different from the norm? Yes and no. No, because the effect of the particular institutions undergoes a process of mediation and mutual co-ordination with other apparatuses. We might say that, in an Althusserian sense, the institutions in question are overdetermined by the structure, a fact closely related to the predominantly social character of the symbolic order. *That* the family unit is the primary accepted form of child production in a particular society, not the individual's particular experience over and against that of the other individuals, has the decisive weight in the formation of the subjectivity of each individual; the primary

influence is conducted to all by the characteristics of the other apparatuses. On the other hand, the individual's personal experience clearly does have a determinative though secondary impact on her subjectivity, and one that is mappable psychoanalytically. It is precisely this space between the contingent and the historically necessary that must be opened and interrogated in the psychoanalytic process.

This discrepancy and the mechanisms of subjectivation with respect to the problematic individual is also perhaps the greatest single problem set to the novel, so we can examine relevant fictional characters to get an idea of how the system of ideological institutions determines the consciousness of problematic individuals. This method will also allow us to distinguish between the category of subjectivity in its universal sense, and the narrower instance of it that appears in bourgeois society. This is important because the postmodern critique of subjectivity often identifies the two, resulting in the belief that subjectivity as such is less permanent and universal than it really is. This will, of course, have consequences for the prevalence of ideology.

It is neither accidental nor purely for dramatic purposes that, from the form's conception, protagonists of many of the greatest novels have been orphaned or otherwise troubled in their origins. We might suspect either that the inherent interiority of the novel encouraged these topics or that the topics demanded the novel to open the psychic life of its characters. Either way, the novel became a tool for investigating and laying down the boundaries between the normal and the deviant, the criminal and the lawful, and the forms of subjectivity appropriate to each gender, class, race, and so on. In turn, the novel provides us with a privileged view on the process of ideology and subject creation.

Marginal or hybrid cases offer the richest material for its task. *Tom Jones* (1749)

provides a good early example, featuring the foundling incorporated into an upper class

household as an eye for a storm of class antagonism to whip around the meaning of

individual identity and the origin of social distinction. The question was very much alive

as to whether the decisive characteristics of one's personality were passed on through

heredity, as Tom's detractors held, or if the habits and institutions of one's upbringing

were determinative, which his friends surely hoped. I suspect that Fielding's own

position on this question was to view the protagonist's flip heroism and casual gallantry

as a result of the infusion of the old social order with a fresh gust from below, a vitalizing

principle, which indicates the complexity of subjectivation and character development in

the interstices of class and the multi-directional interrelation of ideological apparatuses.

An even better and earlier example is Richardson's *Pamela* (1740), arguably the first true

(that is, bourgeois) novel. The eponymous heroine, a favored servant separated from her

poor parents who were themselves once fairly wealthy, is subject to an unusual set of

influences in her development. Her class position is inherently undecidable, and the

complexity is only increased when her young master, Mr. B., imprisons and attempts to

rape her (because of both class and gender, she is relatively powerless), courts her, and

eventually convinces her to marry him (she is simultaneously raised up to the position of

a 'lady'). The narrative is delivered by means of Pamela's own letters, extremely rich in

psychological detail and insight. It is such hybrid cases that acted as a laboratory for the

isolation of mechanisms of ideology investigated in the novel, especially as we take

them as pertaining to the term 'subjectivity' in the narrow sense of its modern form.

These early novels are still working at mapping the phenomena of subjectivity in a stable

set of institutions, which are newborn and strong, just as the class they support. This task

of the novel continues, with a similar strategy, developing the figure of the orphan, for

well over a hundred years. Characters fitting our criteria abound; a few that spring

immediately to mind are the Frankenstein monster, Huck Finn, Will Ladislaw, and Pip.

However, the conservative bemoaning of the crisis of western institutions and the related

postmodern rallying cry about the de-centering or dissolution of the subject, beginning, as

Derrida tells it, in the late nineteenth century, were more than just hot air. Capitalism's

continuous revolution does, of course, undermine its own institutional support, and the

novel turned toward chronicling the correlative transformation in subjectivity; the high

tide of this project in the English language bringing in Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow*

(1975). This is not, however, the end of the story. The postmodern critique typically

fails to note the underlying permanence of subjectivity in its wider sense. To quote

Althusser again:

> By this I mean that, even if it only appears under this
> name (the subject) with the rise of bourgeois ideology,
> above all with the rise of legal ideology, the category of
> the subject (which may function under other names: e.g.
> As the soul in Plato, as God, etc.) is the constitutive
> category of all ideology whatever its determination
> (regional or class) and whatever its historical date – since
> ideology has no history. (Althusser 1970)

This means also that any decay of subjectivity must be referred to the subject of

bourgeois ideology, leaving the category itself intact. The contemporary novel has

continued to describe the ideological process, but now with the added charge of tracing

the effects of mutating and often decaying institutions beyond the point of simply

registering their disintegration. The very materiality of the conditions determining the

characters' development and self-consciousness, though metonymical, is often

remarkable. Consider Ryu Murakami's *Coin Locker Babies* (1980), an apocalyptic

Bildungsroman of two orphans born in 1972 in Japan. The predominant fact of their

psychic lives is their abandonment as infants inside coin lockers, the stifling physicality

of heat, sweat, hunger and accumulating excrement standing in for the equally material

condition of the handling of the unwanted or misplaced individual in an advanced

capitalist nation. No-one is uncalled. The totality of the mechanism includes rituals or

subroutines for the subjectivation of all marginal cases, and the ruptures in the key loci of

the system reverberate throughout the whole: in this instance as well structural

overdetermination allows the seeming exception (the orphanage, the adoptive family, the

street) to reveal transformations and crises unthinkable on the surface of "normal" life. A

novel that helps us push these thoughts further is Katherine Dunn's *Geek Love* (1983/89).

In a significant inversion of the pattern we have been observing, just at a time when the

family ideological apparatus reaches its true crisis in the United States, the hybrid and

marginalized individual is written as emerging into a stable nuclear family. The

preparation for each child becomes both hyper-rational and at the same time beyond

reason, mirroring the tension between the 'design' dictated by the laws of capital and the

inhuman disregard for the elements of that 'design'. In the upside-down world of carnival

freaks, the 'norm' is seen as the unfathomable other, feared and pitied. To ensure that

their children turn out 'different', 'individual', 'special', that is, as real subjects (and valuable ones too), opposed to the gelatinous mass of dumb, herd-like desire akin to Nietzsche's Last Man, the Binewski family prepares for their coming by manipulating their biological development with amphetamines, cocaine, and radioactivity. The results are an albino dwarf, a boy with fins instead of arms and legs, and Siamese twins: but what is really described here is the contradictory tension within late twentieth century ideology and subjectivity; the necessary measures of benevolence and evil, the inner contortions of every subject, threatened by non-existence yet always secretly assured of its subjectivity, which is determined by the very apparatuses that seek to nullify it (not least the cultural ideological apparatus).   And yet the grotesqueness of the account indicates the intransigent permanence of the underlying form of subjectivity, recalling Lacan's ruminations on Hieronymus Bosch and the "vital dehiscence that is constitutive of man" (Lacan 1982, 21). The subject, to borrow Dunn's words, "soars and stomps and burns through her days with no notion of the causes that formed her. She imagines herself isolated and unique. She is unaware that she is part of, and the product of, forces assembled before she was born" (Dunn 1989, 40).

Essentially, the foregoing remarks point to the relationship between material processes governed by institutions and the emergence of the subject that we recognize not as the individual in the abstract, or as abstractable from its social context, as can be imagined either with the *object* of ideology which is the subject of sovereignty or the raw and unmeaning body (which, and here we agree with the Christian Right, differs at any age not in the least from the fetus in terms of sanctity or rights) but rather the "I" of

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subjectivity. This "I" is an addition, though en empty one, to its contents; as Slavoj Žižek

writes, ""I" am not directly my body, or even the content of my mind; "I" am, rather, that

X which has all these features and properties" (Žižek 2006, 245), designating this 'I' the

Lacanian "subject of the signifier." Properly speaking, then, the subject is not simply

composed of the ingredients thrust into it by the ritual of the ideological apparatuses, but

rather the "I" that emerges as the center of those elements, in this sense homonymous

with the 'subject' of power but formally identical with the grammatical 'subject'. To

speak of the fictitiousness of the centered subject in this regard, a post-structuralist

truism, is to say exactly the same thing as Althusser's claim that ideology is illusion.

That the subject is an effect of ideological processes means that it is quite true that it

emerges from a social network, but one must insist on the semiotic basis of this

development. When linking Freud's famous statement "*Wo es war, soll Ich werden*" to

the importance of dreams, Lacan says, "The *Ich* is the complete, total locus of the

network of signifiers, that is to say, the subject, *where it was*, where it has always been,

the dream, including, on occasion, messages from the gods—and why not?" (Lacan 1998,

44). This chain of signifiers might be transposed to the field of ideological production, of

which the "I" of the subject is then the binding subject of the "total locus of the network

of signifiers." So just as ideology is illusory because its beliefs do not correspond to

reality except through a kind on fun-house mirror reflection, subjectivity is illusory in

that it is an unreal addition to existing realities and significations. Nonetheless, it serves

a real purpose and can tell us a lot about reality when interrogated in the proper way. The

purpose it serves is to act as a fulcrum for the action of the ideological apparatuses, and

thereby provide various material forces a point around which to crystallize in order to be marshaled for the continuation of a particular socio-economic formation.

It is the very hesitation on Foucault's part in identifying the subject, one not shared by Althusser, that disqualifies it from serving this function of gathering the various ideological institutions into a totality that allows Foucault to treat them as if each institution operated independently of the other, pulling inward rather than working in concert, due, not least, to the blind will to survive inherent in an institution as such--"the fact that an important part of the mechanisms put into operation by an institution are designed [but by whom?] to ensure its own preservation brings with it the risk of deciphering functions that are essentially reproductive, especially in power relations within institutions," Foucault says in a lecture (Focault 200, 343)--rather than theorizing them in their underlying totality, which would also result in understanding them as 'designed' (but no more so than nature is 'designed' for Kant) with an essentially reproductive purpose, but, more insightfully, aimed at the reproduction *of the relations of production*.

Because we have concluded, with Althusser, that subjectivity is a basic requirement for practice, and that subjectivity entails ideology, this is as much as to reject Foucault's distinction between ideology and tactical discourses, including the discourse of race struggle. These discourses will be ideological both in there *raison d'etre* and in there content when failing to achieve scientific methods. Foucualt's own tactical purpose for drawing the distinction between the discourse of race struggle and ideology is to find an alternate model to Althusser's model, in which everything that is not science is

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ideology—if that is accepted, how could anyone argue against science? The existence of a third possibility is what gives Foucault a foothold to battle both. This foothold crumbles. The distinction is revealed to be unfounded if we accept Althusser's definition of ideology, which is far more convincing than Foucault's account—fundamentally because Foucault has no thorough theory of ideology, only of discourse in general. When speaking of ideology he seems to revert to a pre-Althusserian account, merely that an ideology is a world view that obfuscates a process of domination, without coming to terms with Althusser's advance on this inadequate definition. Because Althusser develops a more sophisticated model of subjectivity, based on the insights of psychoanalysis, he is able to locate the emergence of subjectivity from the various modalities of materiality, and at the same time delimit ideology with precision. It turns out that its scope is very wide. The discourse of race struggle is indeed an ideology and fulfills both of ideology's roles, illusion and allusion.

The discourse of race struggle is an illusion. This is to say that its claims are not theoretically consistent and accurate. They do not correspond with reality; they interpret reality in a twisted, mythological fashion. This is inevitable with any discourse that deploys the rhetoric of either natural or historical rights. As Foucault describes it, the discourse of race struggle does the latter. This is not merely a descriptive account of positive or legal rights conferred on people by any number of institutions. This in itself is not incompatible with an objective account; we can talk, for example, with clarity and sense about women's right to an abortion, understanding that this means that our legal system guarantees access to this medical procedure. Once we start saying that women

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should be guaranteed access to this procedure by law because the right precedes the legal

sanction, we step into ideology (which is not to say that this is necessarily or for that

reason inadvisable). It is certainly in the interest of women as a group, and by turn

humanity in general, that this legal right exists, but these interests rest on radically

different grounds than natural or historically forged Rights. Similarly, any discourse of

race struggle that considers rights to emerge from war and conquest clearly has an

illusory dimension insofar as such rights are not real. It treats imaginary entities as real

entities. Here I am reminded again of the relationship between ideology and individual

psychological processes. To quote Alain Badiou,

> As Althusser observed, we are in the presence of a
> symptomal set-up; representation is a symptom (to be
> read or deciphered) of a real that it subjectively localizes
> in the guise of misrecognition. The power of ideology is
> the power of the real inasmuch as the latter is conveyed
> by this misrecognition...
>   ...The word 'unconscious' precisely designates the
> set of operations whereby the real of a subject is only
> consciously accessible via the intimate and imaginary
> construction of the Ego. In this sense, the psychology of
> consciousness is a personal ideology, what Lacan calls
> the 'myth of the individual neurotic'. (Badiou 2007, 49)

And, conversely, we might add, ideology is a mass version of the psychology of

consciousness. The Ego rests on illusion and so does ideology. In each case, the process

of understanding includes a fundamental and entirely inescapable misrecognition,

inescapable in the same way that the dialectical errors associated with the cosmological

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ideas are inescapable for Kant—we can become aware, through analysis/theory or critical philosophy, respectively, of the error, but this knowledge can never dispel the error itself because that error emerges as a matter of course from a more fundamental level and the knowledge must therefore be constantly renewed through a repetition its procedure. Freud himself, incidentally, first draws this comparison in regard to the system of consciousness, noting that the difference between phenomena in Kant and the psychic material available to the conscious mind is that the latter provides the information necessary to know what exists beyond it, mainly as presented in dreams. Ideology also offers these codes. The discourse of race struggle is an illusion in the sense that it misrecognizes something real. This brings us to the second function of ideology.

The discourse of race struggle is an allusion. Badiou points out that for the Ego, "the real system of drives is only legible by means of all sorts of decenterings and transformations" (Badiou 2007, 49). What is it that is the equivalent of the system of drives when the thought is transposed to ideology? We have accepted Althusser's hypothesis that the purpose of ideology is the reproduction of the means of production. If ideology also alludes to the real, it cannot simply be a fiction. It must be a misrecognition that reworks a given reality in a way that encourages said reproduction. Althusser's formula runs: "Ideology is a 'Representation' of the Imaginary Relationship of Individuals to their Real Conditions of Existence" (Althisser 1970). It is, then, the people's conditions of existence that are misrecognized in the imaginary representation that is ideology. The manner of this reflection varies. This can be ascertained simply by taking a quick mental survey of the variety of religions, beliefs, myths, and so on that

have sprung up over human history. They are all ideology and they all follow the same general pattern of imaginary reflection, but they differ in what real conditions the imaginary ones reflect and also, therefore, in exactly how they support the reproduction of the relations of production. Tribal society will surely require a very different set of ideas to buttress it than advanced capitalism (and, observably, it does have a very different set). It is probably not accidental that the discourse of race struggle, or rather the ideology of race struggle, takes on the form in question in western Europe in the middle of the seventeenth century. It is then that the first decisive battle between the aristocracy and the middle class occurs, and when the proletariat begins to cohere as a class and a recognized political force; in other words, this period witnesses the destruction of the feudal order and the genesis of modern class struggle. While the intellectual tools required for an objective description and theory of this historical process would not be forged for another two hundred years, until the 1840s, that is, it hardly went unnoticed to contemporaries. These transformations were real and evident facts bearing on the relations of production, on individuals' "real conditions of existence." Without the scientific tools to theorize this real process in terms of class conflict, it was understood ideologically in terms of race struggle. This is not to say, as Foucault suggests, that the rectification of this illusion involves the suspension or sublation of race as an analytic category, or of the nation as a category, for that matter. On the contrary, it is only by understanding class relations and how they intersect with questions of race and nationality that the latter can be appreciated in their full complexity and momentous consequence.

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IV. War and Equality

To conclude, I would like to add a few words on war as a schema for historical understanding. This will help focus the broad implications of the position taken by Foucault, and perhaps indicate why one might wish to challenge it. Recognizing that ideology is unavoidable, it remains possible to evaluate the desirability of different ideologies based on their consequences and implications for practice. Here I discuss three such ideologies: a standard bourgeois ideology, the one Foucault recommends, and a third that is compatible with Marxism.

There are three ways of understanding history through the lens of war. The first might be called, following Foucault's lead, Hobbesian. The second is the one Foucault lauds, that of historical race struggle and national conquest. The third anticipates a total and final war that will end all war. Each deserves a brief consideration.

Foucault's interpretation of Hobbes's *Leviathan* in "*Society Must be Defended*" is generally acceptable. Foucault focuses on the fact that, for Hobbes, "[t]he primitive war, the war of every man against every man, is born of equality and takes place in the element of that equality" (Foucault 2003, 90). By this is meant that the individuals in the state of nature are all equal in at least one respect: everyone is at danger of death or pain from everyone else. It is this fact of real equality that motivates the alienation of

individual rights to the sovereign, who is then the "author" of all social power; since

everyone is equal in the respect of having a great amount of personal risk, everyone

should, in theory, agree to be ruled by the sovereign, and if they do not, it is permissible

to compel them (remember that sovereignty through conquest is perfectly legitimate for

Hobbes). After this deal is done, war still threatens to retake society. Foucault says:

"...even when the state has been established, the threat of war is there: there is war in any

case" (Foucault 2003, 90). Unlike, for example, in the work of Rousseau, individuals

never really mutate beyond their original nature. In Rousseau's theory, the historical

configuration of society amplifies or suppresses certain natural qualities in its individuals,

leading ultimately to what amounts to a recognition of the plasticity of human nature,

following from various social forces. This is why he recognizes not one but two phases

of the state of nature and then a stage of civil society that contains within it changes both

in degree and kind. This is not the case in Hobbes. In the beginning, life was "solitary,

poore, nasty brutish and short" (Hobbes 2004, 92), and though we take measures to fix

this situation, we may yet revert to that state—at any time. The only force keeping the lid

on is the power of the sovereign, and this power is therefore always justified by the very

same mechanism that justified it at its conception. In this light, it is obvious why

Foucault would want to dismiss Hobbes as a "false paternity" to the discourse of race

struggle. Hobbes and Foucault differ on the most fundamental question: is human nature

static or changeable? For Foucault, of course, it makes little sense to talk about human

"nature" at all. Because, as discussed in an earlier section, the conditions for the

possibility of human knowledge—and therefore understanding and practice—shift

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violently and completely over relatively short periods of time, the entire composition of the human soul or subjectivity, including aggressiveness, pliancy, the proclivity to cooperate, and so on, may not be taken as universal. This is why Hobbes's founding war is the opposite of Foucault's founding war. The latter changes humans in a way that the former cannot, that is what legitimates the historical right of conquest.

Foucault does overstate his case when, in a lecture in *"Society Must be Defended"*, he reduces Hobbes war in the state of nature to "a certain state of the interplay of representations" (Foucault 2003, 93). His point is that physical battle is not the essence of Hobbes's war. Instead, since everyone knows that they are always threatened, they will rely on a series of threats and bluffs without every really resorting to arms, much as—in a different form and with different stakes—the cold war theorists developed the idea of Mutually Assured Destruction. Because war is ubiquitous and utterly deadly, it will never really fulfill its threat. This is what allows Foucault to say that "Basically, Hobbes's discourse is a certain 'no' to war" (Foucault 2003, 97). This is going a little too far. In one of the passages from *Leviathan* in question, Hobbes proclaims, "[f]or as the nature of Foule weather, lyeth not in a showre or two of rain, but in an inclination thereto of many dayes together: So the nature of War, consisteth not in actual fighting; but in the known disposition thereto, during all the time there is no assurance to the contrary" (Hobbes 2004, 91). The analogy suggests that in the state of nature—whether this is taken to be historical or a thought experiment—battle did indeed break out, just as rain does often fall in periods of foul weather; what else would make weather foul besides actual instances of rain, intermittent though they may be? Foucault

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wants to reduce to zero what must have really occurred for a war to exist at all.

This does not affect the central thesis, however. Hobbes's war truly is the perfect inverse of the one Foucault champions. Hobbes's is rooted in a permanent, underlying human equality. Foucault's is legitimated by the fact that real conquests change people, giving them new rights that other people do not have. In addition, Hobbes recommends the submission of all to a single ruler as the only possible remedy. Foucault recommends the continual struggle of different factions.

This brings us to the second way war is used as a schema for understanding history, the one that in fact is the subject of Foucault's lectures. We have been referring to this model as "the discourse of race struggle." The central points of this discourse are already familiar. What remains is to draw the connections between them and Nietzsche's conception of law and power, on one hand, and certain mid-century developments in Marxist theory, on the other. The two will prove to be related in some significant ways.

Foucault's posture on this topic, both pertaining to struggle and science, is rooted in Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morals*. Consider the following passage from the *Genealogy*, essay two:

> "Just" and "unjust" exist, accordingly, only after the institution of the law (and *not*, as Dühring would have it, after the perpetration of injury). To speak of just or unjust *in itself* is quite senseless; *in itself*, of course, no injury, assault, exploitation destruction can be "unjust," since life operates *essentially*, that is, in its basic functions, through injury, assault, exploitation and destruction and cannot be thought of at all without this character. One must indeed grant something even more unpalatable: that, from the highest biological standpoint,

legal conditions can never be other than *exceptional conditions*, since they constitute a partial restriction to the will of life, which is bent upon power, and are subordinate to its total goal as a single means: namely, as a means of creating *greater* units of power. A legal order thought of as sovereign and universal, not as a means in the struggle between power-complexes but as a means for *preventing* all struggle in general—perhaps after the communistic cliché of Dühring, that every will must consider every other will its equal—would be a principle *hostile to life*, an agent of the dissolution and destruction of man, a sign of weariness, a secret path to nothingness.--   (Nietzsche 1989, 76)

I find this text alarming. It is essentially an argument against "a legal order thought of as sovereign and universal" (and it is *a fortiori* against the idea of a communist order after the "withering away" of law and sovereignty in the form of the state).   In the same way, Foucault's anarchistic arguments attack Roman-style history and law, and the associated discourses that claim to be scientific. Both positions follow from the belief that "life operates *essentially*, that is, in its basic functions, through injury, assault, exploitation and destruction." There is a syllogism operative here that might be put like this: life is essentially assault, exploitation, etc., that is, assault, exploitation, etc. are necessary conditions for life (we can change Nietzsche's "operates" to an "is" here because, according to his own philosophy, there is no underlying subject behind or underneath an action or a force—life very much *is* how it operates). A sovereign and universal legal order aims at eliminating assault, exploitation, etc, from human affairs (and, for exactly the same reasons just given, humans are nothing other than their affairs). Therefore, A sovereign and universal legal order tends to eliminate human life. This is

what is meant by nihilism, a "principle *hostile to life*, an agent of the dissolution and destruction of man, a sign of weariness, a secret path to nothingness." This is why Nietzsche so often equates socialism with nihilism and Buddhism. The "withering away of the state" would be, for him, the final stage of the death of Man's Will.

There is one basic error here. It is the smuggling in of a metaphysics of power, really a variation on the Schopenhauerian will. As touched upon earlier, Nietzsche does subvert the value given to the will, becoming an "optimist" against Schopenhauer's "pessimism" (if he didn't, he would have to be a socialist because that would lead to a calming of the will, and eventual its negation in Perpetual Peace). But in truth, there is no good reason to equate all of life with injury, assault, exploitation, and destruction. It is, of course, true that life as we know it, and probably as we always will know it, includes those phenomena in varying degrees; but they are not essential or necessary to what life is and there is absolutely no good reason why we should not try to minimize them in respect to the social life of humans. We can certainly *imagine* life without these, and even without death—this is a common theme of spiritual literature from Gilgamesh to Raymond Kurzweil. The fact that none of these ideas will never actually come to pass does not militate against the fact that if they did, *there would still be life*. On this point Hobbes got it right: life need not be solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short.

Foucault's return to Nietzsche is not unrelated to a certain tendency of dialectical theory in structuralist Marxism. He takes an argument that is present in Althusser, the anti-revisionist attack on humanism, and walks so far with it that Foucault's thought ceases to be dialectical altogether. It may at first seem strange to associate communist

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anti-revisionism with a step toward arresting the dialectic. The reason this is so is that the form it took was as an attack on the Marxists humanists who wished to return to Hegel and therefore overstated the working of the Hegelian dialectic in Marxism. Althusser's collected essays in *For Marx* basically constitute a sustained polemic against this tendency. Relying on his structuralist theory of the "problematic", Althusser claims that an epistemological break occurs in Marx's thought in the early to mid-1840s, and at this point his work stops being ideological and becomes a science—the problematic is entirely new. Because of this, the elements of the new structure, due to the theory of overdetermination, can no longer be fruitfully compared to the Hegelian/Feurbachian elements of the work of the young, humanist Marx. For help in forming a newer, more scientific account of dialectics, an anti-Hegelian one, Althusser turns to Mao Zedong. Mao, as Žižek discusses in his introduction to a selection of Mao's writings, rejects the Hegelian category of the negation of the negation. This, claims Žižek, correlates with the impasse of Hegel's 'bad infinity' (Žižek 2007, 10-11). However this may be, it was certainly the theoretical equivalent of the practical measures that culminated in the Cultural Revolution, following from the idea that the Revolution must continue indefinitely, or, like in Hobbes's civil society, the old way would threaten to return. The leader's job was to encourage a special kind of permanent revolution, one that, unlike in Trotsky's conception of permanent revolution, would continue until the end of the world, a task that Mao's biographer Jonathan Spence points out was a "strangely apocalyptic mission" (Spence 1999, 157). Without the negation of the negation—that is, the return to order after revolution—constant fighting would, paradoxically, be the only way to

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maintain universal equality. For Mao and his followers, however, this conflict would not retain the form of war. It would rather continue as criticism and vigilance, and would allow war to be abolished by guaranteeing equality.

Foucault retains the notion of perpetual battle from this tendency but drops the notion of universal equality. From certain locations on the philosophical map, the step from Mao to Nietzsche is a small one. Foucault celebrated the Black Panthers, for example, who were in every way Maoist revolutionary cadre, yet, evidently because of their black nationalism, could be pointed to by Foucault as "developing a strategic analysis that has emancipated itself from Marxist theory" (Quoted by Fontana and Bertani in Foucault 2003, 282). This "emancipation" presumably involves the scuttling of pretensions universality and a regrouping under the banner of race, although this is not at all an accurate portrayal of the activities or intentions of the Black Panther Party, who engaged in national liberation struggle as a precondition for socialism, just as Mao did for the Chinese when he worked against imperialism with the Kuomintang.[i] In reality, their theory tended the opposite way, moving away from early cultural nationalism and towards stricter adherence to Marxist theory and language—by 1969, the last year of Fred Hampton's life, he could announce that they were revising the "What We Want, What We Believe" tract and changing every occurrence of the word "white" to "capitalist" (Foner 2002, 143). Foucault reads his own theory of race struggle into the Panthers' theory and practice. In reality, the Black Panthers employed a variation of the third type of war discourse, as does Maoism in general.

The third type of war discourse is a discourse of total war. This is not to be

confused with total war in the Clausewitzian sense, which is merely unrestrained war that is nonetheless still an "extension of politics by other means," and therefore still only an exceptional and perhaps even avoidable occurrence. The third war discourse, contrastingly, sees war as necessary and final. It must come in order to end an intolerable state of affairs and it will end all war. The term 'millennial' might be preferable to 'total;' in any case, it is not 'perpetual.' The modern version of this thesis appears with modern socialism, with the Conspiracy of Equals that acted against the Thermidorian reaction following the death of Robespierre. Babeuf writes in their Manifesto, "[t]he French Revolution was nothing but a precursor of another revolution, one that will be bigger, more solemn, and which will be the last" (Babeuf 1796). This statement encapsulates the discourse of millennial war.

Obviously, this is no less an ideology than the other forms of war discourse; the difference is that it is an ideology that can be consistently held by people engaged in scientific theory. Everyone, remember, engages in and is engaged by ideology. And although it is in certain senses illusory, this third type of war discourse syncs up the best with Marxist theory because it shares the belief in the injustice and one-sidedness of war itself; it tries to bring it to an end. It is an ideology that attempts to cancel and go beyond itself with its own ideological tools, just as it wants to end war with war, and just as Marxism recognizes that class struggle is the path to the abolition of classes, or, in other words, equality.

The problem with Foucault's war is that it goes on forever without achieving equality. Do we want war? Yes. Do we want it ever to end? Yes. But even if it does

not, at least we can use it to make people free.

V. Conclusion

Discussing the habit of certain 17th through 19th century Europeans of understanding history as a series of race wars, including the correlative observation that "[a] binary structure runs through society" (Foucault 2003, 51), Michel Foucault asserts that this discourse of race struggle acts as an antidote to official, homogenizing and normalizing discourse and for this reason "praises" it (Foucault 2003, 65). In order to protect this type of discourse from the Marxist claim that it is merely an ideological misunderstanding of economic development and class struggle, Foucault argues that it is not an ideology at all. He does this by theorizing that it is a tactical mode of knowledge production that is more fundamental than a set of beliefs that protect particular class interests. In doing this, Foucault misjudges the scope of ideology, which, as Althusser explains, pervades every aspect of consciousness that is mediated by subjectivity. Unlike language, which operates more as a material component of a discourse or problematic, the narrative of race war is created from the perspective of limited subjectivity. It has not freed itself from ideology as the objective study of economic conditions does.

The idea of a perpetual war of races appeals to Foucault because it mirrors his

conception of a healthy sate in power relations: not out of balance and ossified or stultified by an imperative to make every element artificially equal, but rather rippling in a chaotic, unpredictable and essentially antagonistic dance. This vision accords with the general postmodern concern for particularity and irreconcilable diversity. It is the child of Nietzsche's meditations on the will to power.

The problem with this ideal is that it leaves little space for united action or solidarity when it comes to issues that require a global understanding rather than merely a local one. In fact, Foucault's attack on 'science' attempts to preclude this possibility altogether. If we are to understand and fight a system that manipulates and regulates society as a totality, we must have the courage to believe that the totality is graspable in its truth by our discourse. Our discourse must achieve universality, at least in a few core claims.

These epistemological and interpretational concerns have serious implications for social practice. Both Foucaultian 'anarchism' and more progressive views, Marxism included, urge the sharpening of social antagonisms in order to overturn oppression and exploitation. The best Foucault's viewpoint can agitate for is a perpetual war in which no group has the upper hand for too long. It would be better to try and fundamentally alter society and try to achieve real equality. The struggle toward this goal can only be hindered by the belief that it is undesirable or impossible.

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i For a sophisticated understanding of nationalism and class struggle, Stalin's 1912 treatise "Marxism and

 the National Question" remains the key work. Available in the Marxist Internet Archives Stalin archive

 at http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/stalin/works/1913/03.htm