

INTRODUCTION

Foucault did not characterize himself as a political theorist or philosopher and wrote no text intended to sum up his political thought. As Isaiah Berlin correctly observed, Foucault was not a Left intellectual at all, if by that one means a thinker with a political manifesto to put forward. Foucault was, however, a person whose work contains a powerful, original, and coherent body of political ideas, which it is well worth trying to see in full and as a whole, for he was a courageous, ingenious, and creative political actor and thinker. This volume assembles Foucault's own writings and interviews on the questions of power and the political from the last twelve years of his life, when he became, in France and sometimes beyond, an increasingly influential figure as a thinker with a public voice—what in France is called an “intellectual.” “Power” was not the rubric of a separate compartment in Foucault's work, so it is preferable by far to read this volume in company with *Essential Works of Foucault, 1954–1984* volumes I and II, *Ethics and Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology*. Later on we will try to sketch the intrinsic links between Foucault's thinking about these other axes of concern.

The pieces collected here fall into an interesting variety of categories. There are interviews where Foucault is explaining a recent book (see pp. 429, 435, and 443)—and, sometimes, as in the extended discussion with Trombadori (see pp. 239), answering to a critical inquisition on a much longer passage of his career. These papers stand as small but strategic connecting blocks within the

edifice of Foucault's research—the paper on the “Dangerous Individual,” for example, and the Tanner lectures (see pp. 298) setting out the notions of “pastoral power” and “governmental rationality.” The four Brazilian lectures from 1974 on (“Truth and Juridical Forms,” published here in English for the first time) fill a different kind of gap by providing a Nietzschean prologue and variant working draft for the book *Discipline and Punish*, published in France a year later. The 1976 interview with two Italian friends, “Truth and Power,” and the 1982 papers on “The Subject and Power,” published by two American friends, are successive, classic statements—the latter certainly definitive—of Foucault's whole interest in the topic of power and his view of how power can be studied. There are debates, like the discussion with the group of historians in “Questions of Method,” where critical thrusts are parried or sidestepped but, more importantly, where positions are cogently argued on the way intellectual and ethico-political ends and responsibilities can, and should, connect with one another. Another group of discussion-interviews features exchanges of ideas about what is to be done in some problem areas of public policy touched on in his critical and investigative writings, such as penal justice or the reform of the welfare state (see pp. 365, 394, 459, and 462).

One thread running through these discussions is a series of statements on the role of intellectuals—what Foucault thinks they may or should not do, what should and should not be expected from them. He considers how the public function and the utterance of expert or thinker may be connected at the deepest or most universal level, at least within the Western tradition, to the vocation of philosophy and the public role of the “truth-teller” (the theme explored in some of his last lectures, entitled “The Courage of Truth”), to the problems of power (including the power of truth) and to what he views as the persistent idea in Western culture of a necessary linkage between the “manifestation of truth” and the “exercise of sovereignty.” In some of these pieces Foucault discusses, in immediate and practical terms, how intellectuals and citizens should deal with the holders of governmental power (see pp. 394, 443, 454, and 474).

Last but not least, we have included a series of some of Foucault's

shortest (and potentially most ephemeral) writings, the writing of the intellectual in action: letters, manifestos, or newspaper articles published to intervene in or address a live political issue—such as the right to abortion, the death penalty and judicial scandal, revolts and liberties in Spain, Poland, and Iran, a political extradition, law-and-order policy, the boat people. Some contextual information, compiled by Foucault's excellent French editors, François Ewald and Daniel Defert, has been included to set the contemporary and local background of some of these interventions. It is never easy to predict how far such writings will retain their original force across distances of time and space. Moreover, anyone who cares for Foucault and his work must feel some diffidence about the risks of any hagiographic commentary that glamorizes or attributes exemplary status to the intellectual role as he practiced it. But the issues Foucault wrote about are still quite recognizable and relevant. Some of the stereotyped views of Foucault still current in the English-speaking academic world have portrayed him as a thinker incapable of coherent practical action or viable moral utterance. The comprehensive curriculum vitae documented in *Dits et écrits* clearly shows the opposite to be the case. It is a matter of history that the Socialist government elected in 1981 abolished the death penalty, liberalized the law of political asylum, and introduced reforms to penal justice and the rule of law. Foucault was, by general consent, one of the voices within France over the previous decade that seemed to have most effectively stirred the Left politicians' reforming will around these subjects.

One of the most arresting of these documents to reread today is "Letter to Certain Leaders of the Left," written in 1978. This concerns the West German lawyer Klaus Croissant, who defended the members of the Baader-Meinhof left-wing terrorist organization. On being charged by the West German authorities with complicity with his own defendants, Croissant sought asylum in France. The conservative French government, with minimal procedural delay, extradited Croissant to the West German police, and proceeded to prosecute the private French citizens who had sheltered the fugitive lawyer in France. Foucault asked the (unnamed) French politicians of the Left—principally, no doubt, François Mitterrand—to declare their position, as a would-be government, on this affair.

His article emphasized, with feeling, the fundamental value and sanctity of actions of private solidarity and moral comfort to political fugitives.

THE EMERGENCE OF POWER

Foucault's work in the seventies was an innovation, and perhaps the most real and important one of its time. It was, perhaps, so innovative that its contribution could be accepted and used only within a Left transformed and renewed beyond recognition. In the short term, political events seemed to take a different turn. The period around 1977–80 in France was one in which the politico-intellectual space formed by the Communist Party, its Maoist, anarchist, and Trotskyist rivals, and their respective cadres, fellow travelers, dissidents, and renegades, passed through a process of rapid contraction, not to say implosion. Although Foucault did not like to play the role of ideological traffic policeman, he was one of the most prominent thinkers to make clear during this period the view that Left values do not prohibit one from being anticommunist or compel one to desire revolution.

Discipline and Punish brought Nietzsche to the aid of Marx; what *Capital* had done for the study of relations of production, it proposed to do for relations of power—duly recognizing, of course, the profoundly material interconnection of the two factors. In his analysis of trends of penal-reform thought in England and France in the late eighteenth century, Foucault is explicit about the economic interests driving the pursuit of more efficient policing and penal policies, for example, in the London docks. What, however, was controversial about an analysis suggesting that techniques of power such as discipline and supervision have, as techniques, their distinct existence as historical factors was the readily available inference that the same techniques of power may be made to serve more than one political or social interest. The fateful point in Foucault's analysis of the origin of the modern penitentiary prison is the quote from Jeremy Bentham, remarking that his model Panopticon prison would work equally well to control its prisoners regardless of who occupied the darkened supervisory space of its central control tower. The relevance of the point to the history of communist states and parties did not need further spelling out to be grasped by Fou-

cault's readers. Yet Foucault's main point was not about the nature of communist power but, rather, about the presence in modern history of a repertoire of techniques of power which do not bear the distinctive emblem of the regime—socialist, communist, fascist—that uses them. From legislation against dangerous minorities to concentration camps, Foucault points out that the liberal, democratic West has generally been in the vanguard of technical invention, and its experts—for example in criminology—have not uncommonly shared their expertise with other regimes concerned with the same problems. One of the messages of Foucault's book is, therefore, that the apparent neutrality and political invisibility of techniques of power is what makes them so dangerous.

In nineteenth-century France, he argues, bourgeoisie and police used a "divide and rule" tactic against the urban masses, cultivating and heightening the gap between the respectable proletarianized "pebs," who had passed through the training school of factory discipline, and the lumpen category of the criminal, marginal, and precarious fringes of the reserve army. Prisons and police, Foucault argued, worked deliberately to create a well-defined criminal subclass that could be drawn upon when needed for strike-breaking or counterrevolutionary violence. Encouraged by Marx and Engels, the working class came to value the regime of the factory as its training school as a disciplined political force, while taking correspondingly less interest in the fate of the lumpen marginals and the problems of penal justice. In the France of the early seventies, Foucault evidently saw as consequences of this historical legacy the marked lack of sympathy of the old communist Left for some of the causes and struggles in which he then found himself actively involved.

Foucault was interested in the possibility of gaining, helped by historical analysis, new and more effective political ways of seeing. These new ways of seeing concerned, in particular, the relations of power and knowledge, and their respective relation to "the subject." He said in 1975: "I have been trying to make visible the constant articulation I think there is of power on knowledge and of knowledge on power. We should not be content to say that power has a need for a certain discovery, a certain form of knowledge, but we should add that the exercise of power creates and causes to emerge new objects of knowledge and accumulates new bodies of

information. . . . The exercise of power perpetually creates knowledge and, conversely, knowledge constantly induces effects of power.”¹ The knowledges that Foucault particularly studied within this scenario were the theories and disciplines that, in French parlance, had come to be grouped over the past two centuries under the heading of the “human sciences”—knowledges such as psychology, sociology, psychiatry, psychoanalysis, and criminology, together with some aspects of medicine. In *Discipline and Punish* and *The History of Sexuality* Volume One, as earlier in *Madness and Civilization* and *The Birth of the Clinic*, he was intent to show how closely the emergence of these forms of knowledge was enmeshed in the problems and practices of power, the social government and management of individuals. Early in his work, Foucault had pointed out that the idea of a scientific knowledge of the person as an individual is a relatively recent modern project. Here, he set out to show how in recent Western history the knowable individual has been the individual caught in relations of power, as that creature who is to be trained, corrected, supervised, controlled.

This analysis was not without a perceptible and astringent critical edge. Foucault wrote as an admirer and continuer of Nietzsche’s genealogy of morals, tracing the mundane and ignoble historical origins of Western ideas and values. Foucault’s project was certainly not the discrediting or devaluation of science in general. Indeed one of his aims was to break with a Marxist theory of ideology that denounced those forms of false bourgeois knowledge designed to mask the realities of exploitation in capitalist society (while, conversely, identifying the true path of Marxist science with the just cause of the proletariat). Foucault was interested in the role of knowledges as useful and necessary to the exercise of power because they were practically serviceable, not because they were false. He had developed for this purpose an analysis of “discourses,” identifiable collections of utterances governed by rules of construction and evaluation which determine within some thematic area what may be said, by whom, in what context, and with what effect.

In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault draws from this kind of analysis some caustic conclusions about our ways of existing and knowing ourselves as individuals. The dignity and gravity of our self-concern as human “subjects,” knowing and knowable beings, coexists with and is rooted in a less noble aspect of our modern

condition as individuals whose conduct and normality is subject to constant and pervasive supervision.

Foucault's work subverts and challenges a certain modern version of enlightenment, made up of morally and intellectually validated schemes of social improvement, therapy and order, which operate by identifying and correcting various forms of individual deviation from a norm. From the viewpoint of a contemporary culture where the right to deviate is being vigorously asserted by a set of new social constituencies, his analysis casts a new and sometimes cold light on a series of modern alliances between moralization, science, and power. It is, in a way that is characteristic and perhaps paradigmatic of its time, an exercise in extending our capacity for suspicion, or at least for vigilance and doubt.

Foucault wanted to generate doubt and discomfort, and to help stimulate a wider process of reflection and action leading to other and more tolerable ways of thinking and acting. Not surprisingly, especially in the period of his growing international celebrity following the publication of *Discipline and Punish*, all this generated considerable controversy and criticism, some of it acrimonious and polemical. One section of international academia is content to this day to assert that Foucault considered truth to be no more than an effect of power, that his thought is a wholesale and nihilistic rejection of the values of the Enlightenment, that he and his work are incapable of contributing to any form of rational and morally responsible action. Readers can find in this volume Foucault's own responses to such charges, and reach their own conclusions, but I will provide a few basic clarifications here. Foucault convincingly disavows any general intention through his analyses of discrediting or invalidating science in general, or any specific science: the implication of psychiatry, for example, in institutions and practices of power "in no way impugns the scientific validity or the therapeutic effectiveness of psychiatry; it does not endorse psychiatry, but neither does it invalidate it."² Some of his work in the sixties is about the definition of the successive thresholds of scientificity which a discourse or domain of knowledge may pass through in the course of its historical development. For a large part of his work, Foucault is demonstrably in close intellectual proximity to the kind of history and philosophy of science practiced in France by his predecessor and mentor Georges Canguilhem. Foucault is not a relativist or a

solipsist, but he does not believe that knowledge confers ultimate acquaintance with reality, or that means of verification used to determine truth are available to us in forms which we know to be definitive. Truth, Foucault says, is “a thing of this world”—meaning that truth exists or is given and recognized only in worldly forms, through actual experiences and modes of verification; and meaning also that truth is a serious matter and a serious force in our world, and that there is work for us to do in investigating the presence and effects of truth in the history of our societies.

From time to time, as we have seen, Foucault found it necessary to disavow any direct attempt through his work to refute or discredit currently existing forms of knowledge or disciplines such as psychiatry or criminology, whose historical origins are touched on in *Madness and Civilization* and *Discipline and Punish*. He does on occasion express a clear opinion that the human sciences are not, and are probably not capable of becoming, sciences in the same epistemological sense as the physical sciences, and *The Order of Things* contains a famous speculation that the human sciences as we know them could disappear. Even here, though, it is important to realize that Foucault is not using scientificity as a judicial category. The human sciences are not to be condemned because they are not sciences like physics, and their possible disappearance is not predicated on the emergence of a more genuinely scientific alternative. Foucault insists that a historical analysis of its origins has no forensic bearing on the evaluation of a form of knowledge. Commenting on the irate reactions of some psychiatrists or criminologists to his book, he remarks that a physicist might be intrigued if a historian were able to demonstrate the implication of his science’s beginnings in some odious or sordid episode of human history but would by no means feel thereby threatened in terms of the scientific value or status of his own work.

One of the key clarifying points Foucault makes is that what is most interesting about links between power and knowledge is not the detection of false or spurious knowledge at work in human affairs but, rather, the role of knowledges that are valued and effective because of their reliable instrumental efficacy. Foucault often uses the French word *savoir*—a term for knowledge with connotations of “know-how” (a way to make a problem tractable or a material manageable)—for this middle sort of knowledges, which

may fall short of rigorous scientificity but command some degree of ratification within a social group and confer some recognized instrumental benefit. The reason the combining of power and knowledge in society is a redoubtable thing is not that power is apt to promote and exploit spurious knowledges (as the Marxist theory of ideology has argued) but, rather, that the rational exercise of power tends to make the fullest use of knowledges capable of the maximum instrumental efficacy. What is wrong or alarming about the use of power is not, for Foucault, primarily or especially the fact that a wrong or false knowledge is being used. Conversely, power and the use of knowledge by power are not guaranteed to be safe, legitimate, or salutary because (as an optimistic rationalist tradition extending from the Enlightenment to Marxism has inclined some to hope) the knowledge that guides or instrumentalizes the exercise of power is valid and scientific. Nothing, including the exercise of power, is evil in itself—but everything is dangerous. To be able to detect and diagnose real dangers, we need to avoid equally the twin seductions of paranoia and universal suspicion, on the one hand, and the compulsive quest for foundationalist certainties and guarantees, on the other—both of which serve to impede or dispense us from the rational and responsible work of careful and specific investigation.

THE PRODUCTIVITY OF POWER

The two ideas that came to guide Foucault's own investigation were those of the *productivity of power* (power relations are integral to the modern social productive apparatus, and linked to active programs for the fabricated part of the collective substance of society itself) and the *constitution of subjectivity through power relations* (the individual impact of power relations does not limit itself to pure repression but also comprises the intention to teach, to mold conduct, to instill forms of self-awareness and identities). In addition to contesting the neo-Marxian idea, current at the time, that (bourgeois, capitalist) power is maintained partly through the propagation of pseudo-knowledges or ideologies, Foucault also wanted to challenge the neo-Freudian idea that power acts like a lawgiver that forbids and represses.

For some, this seems to lend itself to the objection that Foucault

so far exaggerates the effectiveness or success of the panoptic schemes of society's would-be programmers as to produce a dystopian vision of modern society in which aspirations for progress are either hopeless or discredited. Foucault's answer was already implicit in the closing words of *Discipline and Punish*: "In this central and centralized humanity . . . we must hear the rumble of battle." Awakening ourselves to the real world of power relations is awakening ourselves to a world of endemic struggle. The history of power is also a memory of struggles and therefore, potentially at least, a reawakening to refusals and new struggles—not least by showing how contingent and arbitrary the given conditions of the present are which we so readily take for granted.

Much could be, and has been, written about the method of inquiry Foucault practiced since *Discipline and Punish*. One can identify some of the features of this method which Foucault himself felt were important. One key point is the emphasis on the *mobility* of the objects analyzed: specific kinds of human practice that change over time and the events that punctuate and shape their history. A second feature is the *multiplicity* of objects, domains, layers, and strata involved in the network of cause and determination Foucault tries to trace—as well as the absence of a privileged or fundamental causal factor. A third important feature of the power-knowledge frame of analysis was the *intentionality* and *reversibility* of the social realities that power-knowledge relations contribute to producing and shaping: these realities, as Foucault put it, always contain in themselves a certain necessary ingredient of thought—thought that analysis can show to be contingent and contestable. Foucault was always at pains to say that resistance is an endemic fact in the world of power relations. Yet, for some readers' tastes, he did not give the right answers about who or what resists power, and why. Although he was passionately exercised by the question, he may have thought it had no single, definitive answer, because the answer is everywhere: There is always something in the social body, and in each person, which evades or wrestles with others' attempt to act on our own ways of acting. Foucault annoyed some political commentators with his Nietzschean refusal to say, in general terms, what principle legitimates a just resistance—here as elsewhere, he was an anti-foundationalist. But we may guess he did not entirely agree with Tocqueville who, reflecting on "the source of this passion for po-

litical liberty,” concluded that the question must in some sense necessarily remain unanswered: “Do not ask me to analyse this sublime taste: it is one which can only be experienced.” Foucault’s need to understand, for instance, what motivated a dissident in the Soviet bloc to risk his or her life in a nonviolent act of refusal was, as we will try to show, a powerful motive of his later political and ethical investigations.

THE HYPOTHESIS OF WAR

The question Foucault set out to explore in his 1976 lectures at the Collège de France was, indeed, characteristic of the political conjuncture of the period and the intentions of his preceding work to contribute to it. It was the testing of the validity of what might be called the “hypothesis of war”—the idea that the notion of war or struggle could serve as the tool par excellence of political analysis. These remarkable and astonishingly rich and original lectures are due to appear shortly in a complete English-language edition (following earlier editions in Italy and France) and cannot be adequately summarized here.⁵

The course began with two lectures (subsequently well-known, through publication in Italian and English) in which Foucault defined his current positions in methodology, criticized the dominance in political theory of juridical notions of legitimation, political justice, and rights, and rehearsed in sympathetic terms the heuristic idea, already developed in *Discipline and Punish*, that politics can be regarded as war continued by other means.

In the event, the continuation and conclusion of the course did not quite provide the philosophical celebration of a Nietzschean-Leftist militant ideal that the opening lectures might have led one to expect (or fear). Foucault’s way of showing the “hypothesis of war” at work was to do a genealogy of its proponents, starting from the English and French authors of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (notably John Lilburne, Henri Comte de Boulainvilliers, and Abbé de Mably) who produced militant rewritings of national history focused on interpretations of historical conquests (Roman, Frankish, and Norman) and the historical wrongs committed and suffered in and following these warlike episodes by the ancestors

of the social classes and estates of the contemporary nation. Characteristic of these authors was the denunciation of the false legal titles to sovereignty claimed by the victors, and the call for a final battle to throw off the yoke of conquest. Foucault succeeds in tracing a strand of influence from these writers, by way of the ideas of the French Revolution, down to the French historians of class struggle who influenced Marx, but also down to nineteenth-century theories of racial struggle. By their conclusion, then, the lectures not only provided the promised historical celebration of militant thought but also exposed the limitations and immense dangers of that style of thought through its implication for the history of revolutionary class warfare and state racism. As Foucault makes it into the object of a historical analysis (albeit one couched as a “eulogy” [*éloge*]) the idea of a militant critique that exposes power relations in their nakedness and uncovers as their actual basis the arbitrariness of a primal act of usurpation becomes problematic as to both its reliability and its consequences. *Discipline and Punish* contains a line of argument in which one might sense a faint trace of Lilburne or Boulainvilliers, to the effect (crudely summarized) that progressive Western societies have ostensibly operated for two centuries on principles of liberty and the rule of law, while effectively operating on a basis of coercive *dressage* and disciplinary order. Foucault continued for several years to develop in both analytical and polemical modes his concern—especially during the continuing period of conservative government in France up to 1981—that the coupling of “law” and “order” in current governmental practice and policy was incoherent and uncontrolled, and therefore both unworkable and dangerous. For a polemical statement, see the *Le Monde* piece “Lemon and Milk;” for a historical analysis, see “About the Concept of the ‘Dangerous Individual’ in Nineteenth-century Legal Psychiatry.”

On the other hand, though, beginning around the time of the socialist–communist Left’s defeat in parliamentary elections in 1978, Foucault’s work carries a message to a constituency on the Left that an oppositional discourse of pure denunciation was likely to prove neither analytically effective nor electorally convincing.

GOVERNMENTALITY

Foucault's lectures at the Collège de France in 1978 and 1979, one of which, "Governmentality," is reproduced here (together with some later American lectures—"Omnes et Singulatim" and "The Political Technology of Individuals"—which recapitulate much of this material), were in part an immediate response to a contemporary political fact, namely, the striking simultaneous ascendancy in Western Europe in the governments of Helmut Schmidt and Valéry Giscard d'Estaing of the discourse and doctrine of economic neoliberalism. After a period around 1970 when conservatives had diagnosed symptoms of a "crisis of governability" in the discrediting of elected politicians and the expansion of civil disobedience and protest, and following the impacts on Western economies of the two oil price "shocks" of 1973 and 1976, these governments appeared in a striking fashion to have reconquered a kind of pedagogical ascendancy and a claim to lead, confronting their citizens with the realities and disciplines of the market and tutoring them in the duties of economic enterprise.

Three ideas or shifts of thought come together in these lectures. First, Foucault shifts the focus of his own work from specialized practices and knowledges of the individual person, such as psychiatry, medicine, and punishment, to the exercise of political sovereignty by the state over an entire population. Second, he addresses *government* itself as a practice—or a succession of practices—animated, justified, and enabled by a specific rationality (or, rather, by a succession of different rationalities). In the context of modern Europe, this leads him to particularly attentive analyses of liberalism and neoliberalism. Lastly, he advises his audience that socialism historically lacks a distinctive concept and rationale for the activity of governing, a fact that places it at a damaging disadvantage in confronting its contemporary political adversary. A Left that cannot show it knows how to govern or has a clear conception of what governing is will not be likely to achieve power.

Foucault's thinking about "governmentality" was advanced by an important intellectual friendship with his contemporary and fellow professor at the Collège de France, Paul Veyne. Veyne, a historical sociologist of classical antiquity, had recently published *Le Pain et le Cirque*, a study of the practice of public benefactions in Hellenic

and Roman society. Veyne's key idea was that, even if comparative analyses show that human societies manifest a certain number of shared, universal structures and behaviors, the meaning of some of these seeming universals is an extremely variable, contingent, and local construction, which it is a task of empirical and historical analysis and interpretation to reconstruct in its various constitutive aspects—the identity and role of the actor, the perceived content of the activity, its intended goal, and the human or other material objects on which it is conceived to work and act.

Foucault had been working, in the footsteps of Nietzsche, on just such a differentiating, decomposing, periodizing form of analysis of such apparently timeless and universal practices as the management of the insane, or the practice of punishment. At this point in his career, he was (as he publicly acknowledged) stimulated and encouraged by Veyne's work to address in a similar way the historical meanings of the "macro" practice of government. Veyne, in turn, credited Foucault with an important contribution to the methodology of his own profession, in an essay called "*Foucault révolutionne l'histoire.*"⁴ Veyne's essay stresses, in particular, the anthropological variability Foucault discerns between the way different historical practices of government identify their human objects—a flock to be herded or tended, the inhabitants of a territorial possession, a human population, or a civil society. Applied in this field, this type of analysis has the same effect as elsewhere—it increases our awareness of the role of construction and the constructed in governmental landscapes and institutions, and of the way in which habit leads us to accept these constructions as facts of nature or universal categories.

The new way of analyzing power which Foucault had proposed in *Discipline and Punish* and *La Volonté de savoir* was described and framed as a "microphysics"—a study of the forms and means of power focused on individuals and the details of their behavior and conduct. As a choice of method this was, in large part, a function of the material and questions examined, and therefore not—a caveat Foucault was often obliged to repeat—a universal recipe prescribed for every form of political analysis. Foucault was interested here in showing that power "comes from below," that is, that global and hierarchical structures of domination within a society depend on and operate through more local, low-level, "capillary" circuits

of power relationship.⁵ Another methodological principle was a refusal to treat “power” as a substantive entity, institution, or possession, independent of the set of relationships in which it is exercised. This did not mean that Foucault regarded the forms of sovereign political power operating on a global social scale as derivative or in some sense illusory phenomena. In *La Volonté de savoir*, for instance, continuing earlier discussions of this theme in *Madness and Civilization* and *Birth of the Clinic*, he discusses the developing concern in early modern Europe for coordinating the government of individuals with the government of a human collectivity understood as a *population*; part of the privileged role of the theme of sexuality in the knowledge–power of modern societies, he argues, is as a junction point between individual regulation of conduct and questions of demographics.

Often in his books Foucault makes connections between criticism and transformation at the level of political institutions and innovation and reform within local practices of regulation and normalization—the different effect of the French Revolution on public health and the government of the insane, for example, and the linkage of late eighteenth-century criticisms of despotic government to proposals for more effective forms of penal justice and social assistance. Foucault’s sure and confident touch in tracing this kind of connection set a new standard for an important area of historical inquiry, thoroughly informed by research but with a sharpness of focus and a range of synthesis seldom previously found in professional historiography. Introducing into his work the theme of governmental rationalities was partly a matter of providing himself with a fully satisfactory way of drawing together the levels of “micro” and “macro” analyses of power. The “microphysical” emphasis of the seventies books was, in part, an argument for the primacy of analyses of practice over analyses of institutions—explaining the origin of the prison, for example, on the basis of analysis of the changing meaning assigned to the practice of punishing. Analyzing governmental practices and their rationalities, he argued, could provide similar gains in empirical understanding, beyond a political analysis focused only on the study of state institutions. But this was not the only innovative feature of these analyses.

We can see some of the latter more clearly after considering one of the major new texts translated in this volume, dating from a few

years earlier. In his 1974 lectures in Brazil, "Truth and Juridical Forms," Foucault gives an introduction to his work of that period on power and knowledge through a commentary on a passage in Nietzsche, and on Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*. He draws on the work of his mentor Georges Dumézil on the social structure of early Indo-European societies to interpret the drama of Oedipus as enacting the fall of a certain model of political power—the rule of the early Greek "tyrant," which Foucault considers a Western offshoot of the Assyrian model of kingship in which knowledge (wisdom, expertise) and the function of political rule are conceived as an indivisible unity. Sophocles' drama, like the philosophy of Plato, is a rebuttal of the claim of the ruler to an intrinsic and proprietary form of knowledge. Greek philosophy asserts the autonomy of truth from power, and affirms the permanent possibility of an external, critical challenge to power in the name of truth.

Foucault never defines his own position as subversive of philosophy. But he does position himself in this discussion within the heritage of Nietzsche presented as the thinker who transforms Western philosophy by rejecting its founding disjunction of power and knowledge as a myth. Foucault does not mean by this, as some of his critics have chosen to suppose, that power cannot be criticized, or that there are no intrinsic criteria for establishing claims to know; he is saying, rather, that the actual forms of Western politics and Western rationality have both, from the time of the Greeks to our own present, incorporated features not dreamed of (or at any rate only intermittently perceived and investigated) in the pre-Nietzschean canon of Western philosophy.

Some of these features are directly addressed in Foucault's 1978–79 lectures on the forms of rationality intrinsic to Western practices of government. One of these is the concept of pastoral power. Plato's dialogues consider but discard the conception of political rule (known to Greek culture as a concept of older Eastern monarchies) as an individualized care for the ruled, like the care of the shepherd for his flock. Such an individualized care, Plato writes in *Statesman*, exceeds the capability of the mortal sovereign. The "shepherd game" of pastoral care remains incompatible, in Greek political thought, with the "city game" of the polis and the free citizen. Foucault thinks it is the special accomplishment of the West, through the penetration of the pastoral ecclesiastical government

of the Church into secular political culture, to have merged or hybridized these two traditions. Key topics of Foucault's analyses here (afterward summarized in the Stanford lectures "*Omnes et Singulatim*: Toward a Critique of Political Reason") are the doctrines of government in early modern Europe of *raison d'état* and the *Polizeistaat* or "police state." *Raison d'état* has in Foucault's interpretation something of the character of the expertise of the Greek tyrant: it is the reason that is intrinsic to the state and the practices of governing, not derived from the transcendent rule of wisdom or justice, and not assimilated to the conventions of custom or tradition which legitimate sovereign rule. The *Polizeiwissenschaft* (science of police), elaborated especially in the new German territorial states in the period following the Thirty Years' War, is reason of state translated into a program of exhaustive, detailed knowledge and regulation of a population of individual subjects. It amounts to a secularized pastoral (equipped, in some of its proposed forms, with a secular version of the Christian confessional), but where the care of the individual's life and happiness is attuned to maximizing the health and strength of the state. This is government with the motto *omnes et singulatim*—of all and of each. It represents the modern, biopolitical and "daemonic" fusion of pastoral and polis. As Foucault puts it, it is a power that both individualizes and totalizes.

It is very easy to see the historical and thematic continuity of some of this discussion with the chapters in *Discipline and Punish* in which Foucault traces the genesis of techniques of discipline and exhaustive surveillance (such as the police regulations for plague-infested cities) later found in their fullest elaboration in penitentiaries and other closed carceral spaces of the nineteenth century. One of the more provocative implications of that book was that carceral order might be the underside, or the unacknowledged truth, of liberal societies characterized by individual rights, constitutional government, and the rule of law. One of the most interesting elements of Foucault's lectures on governmental rationality is his recognition of the original and durable impact of liberalism, considered precisely as an innovation in the history of governmental rationality.

Foucault in fact takes the meaning of liberalism in governmental thought to be the equivalent of a Kantian critique. Liberalism is a critique of state reason, a doctrine of limitation, designed to mature