Radical Orthodoxy:
Theology, Philosophy, Politics

FOUCAULT'S POLYPHONIC GENEALOGIES AND RETHINKING EPISTEME CHANGE VIA MUSICAL METAPHORS

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I. FOUCAULT: A POSTMODERN KANTIAN OR PARODIC NIETZSCHEAN?

Under the pseudonym Maurice Florence, Foucault writes that if it is possible for him to find a "home in the philosophical tradition," then his at least semi-comfortable dwelling place is "within the *critical* tradition of Kant, and his undertaking could be called *A Critical History of Thought*."[1] "Florence" then explains what comprises a Foucauldian critical history of thought. To begin with, such a history must not be equated with a history of

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[1] Maurice Florence [Foucault's pseudonym], "Foucault, Michel, 1926–," in *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault*, trans. Catherine Porter and ed. Gary Gutting (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 314.

ideas; rather, if we understand thought as "the act that posits a subject and an object in their various possible relations," then Foucault's project is "an analysis of the conditions under which certain relations between subject and object are formed or modified, to the extent that these relations are constitutive of a possible knowledge."[2] Clearly, with his choice of terminology, Foucault is evoking Kantian resonances. Reference, for example, to "conditions" in conjunction with what constitutes "possible knowledge," brings to mind Kantian concerns; yet, as "Florence" continues his explanation we realize that the Kantian terminology has been infused with new meanings. For example, in contrast with Kant's focus upon stable, transcultural structures of the human mind that make possible and intelligible the objects of our experience, Foucault's critical history of thought is not concerned with "defining the formal conditions of a relation to objects"; nor is it "a matter […] of determining the empirical conditions that at a given moment might have permitted the subject in general to become conscious of an object already given in reality."[3] Rather, with an emphasis on historical specificities, local context, and the contingent, mutable nature of our existence, Foucault is interested in how a subject comes to be a particular kind of subject at a particular moment in history. As he explains,

> the question is one of determining what the subject must be, what condition is imposed on it, what status it is to have, and what position it is to occupy in reality or in the imaginary, in order to become the legitimate subject of one type of knowledge or another. In short, it is a matter of determining its mode of "subjectivization."[4]

Correlative to this process of subjectivization is the process of objectivization. That is, the subject itself, as the result of the emergence of various truth games– the rules structuring discursive fields and practices and thus creating the context

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[2] Ibid., 314.

[3] Ibid., 314–15.

[4] Ibid.

for statements to be seen as true or false–becomes an object of possible knowledge. Here the idea is to analyze why, for instance, certain practices, institutions, and disciplines give rise to specific objects of knowledge. The principal objects in view are, of course, subjects. As "Florence" explains, "Foucault also tried to analyze the constitution of the subject as it might appear on the other side of a normative distribution and become an object of knowledge–as an insane, ill, or delinquent individual."[5] Since institutions, along with established disciplinary practices, tend to produce and to articulate norms, Foucault's study of the subject-turned-object of knowledge involves examinations of psychiatric practices, the penal system, and other related fields that problematize subject-objects. Determining a subject's mode of objectivization thus entails "determining under what conditions something can become an object of a possible knowledge, how it could be problematized as an object to be known, to what procedure of division it could be subjected, and what part of it is considered pertinent."[6] In short, such an approach once again recalls Kantian themes, but themes re-harmonized, transposed, and translated in order to address post-Kantian philosophical concerns.

In addition to his Kantian lineage, others emphasize Foucault's Nietzschean heritage. Often when his Nietzschean notes are stressed, a dissonant and somewhat sinister Foucault emerges, one whose portrayal of power relations is more or less a postmodern variation on the will to power and the death of "Man" themes, both of which in some sense presuppose the death of "metaphysics."[7] For example, in his essay, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," Foucault opposes the genealogist to the metaphysician, or at least to the

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[5] Ibid., 316.

[6] Ibid., 315.

[7] I am not, of course, denying Nietzsche's influence on Foucault. After all, Foucault himself acknowledges his indebtedness to Nietzsche, whose insights no doubt aided the development of Foucault's project.

historian whose account depends upon metahistorical criteria. The task of the genealogist it *not* "an attempt to capture the exact essence of things, their purest possibilities, and their carefully protected identities";[8] nor does it presuppose the "existence of immobile forms that precede the external world of accident and succession."[9] Rather, the genealogist attentive to the contours, fissures, fractures, and rugged topography of various historical landscapes must, for the sake of accurate analyses, recoil from placing his "faith in metaphysics."[10] If he does so, he will find that not only do the purported static essences "behind things" not exist as assumed, but likewise "their essence was fabricated in a piecemeal fashion from alien forms."[11] As if these claims are not sufficiently scandalous, Foucault continues,

> [e]xamining the history of reason, he [the genealogist] learns that it was born in an altogether "reasonable" fashion–from chance;[12] devotion to truth and the precision of scientific methods arose from the passion of scholars, their reciprocal hatred, their fanatical and unending discussions, and their spirit of competition–the personal conflicts that slowly forged the weapons of reason.[13] Further, genealogical analysis shows that the concept of liberty is an "invention of the ruling classes"[14] and not fundamental to man's nature or at the root of his attachment to being and truth.[15]

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[8] Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon, 1984), 78.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Friedrich Nietzsche, "Reason," in *The Dawn of Day* (New York: Gordon Press, 1974), no. 123.

[13] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human* (New York: Gordon Press, 1974), no. 34.

[14] Friedrick Nietzsche, *The Wanderer and His Shadow* (1880), in *Complete Works* (New York: Gordon Press, 1974), no. 9.

[15] Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," 78–9.

With this passage it appears that not only does reason itself have a history, a narrative of its various emergences and culturally contingent instantiations, but freedom as well is a ruse and is in no way constitutive of what it is to be a human. For those who have not condemned metaphysics to the flames, these statements paint a rather bleak and despairing picture. However, one of the difficulties with this passage–and the essay as a whole–is discerning precisely where Nietzsche ends and Foucault begins. In other words, is every conclusion voiced in the text an expression of Foucault's own position, or is he offering a detailed, sympathetic reading of Nietzsche? If the latter is the case (and I tend to favor this suggestion), then one need not equate every aspect, perspective, and stance articulated therein with Foucault's own position, much less with his later views on freedom, resistance, and the interrelation between freedom and thought.

So within what genealogical line should one situate Foucault with respect to the Western philosophical tradition? Those wanting an unambiguous, univocal answer to this question shall no doubt be disappointed with my response and even frustrated with my improvisational "methodology." That is, my purpose in mapping out the diverse interpretations of Foucault that follow is not to come to a definitive stance as to which one gets Foucault "right." Rather, it is to highlight the complexity of Foucault's thought and the rich, polysemous texture of his writings, to show the diverse philosophical traditions upon which he draws to develop his own distinctive, and not easily categorized project, and lastly, to identify key Foucauldian themes worthy of continued reflection and dialogical development. My own contribution to the Foucauldian problematic which surfaces consists in offering various musical analogies–some concrete, others quite abstract–so that we might hear new ways of harmonizing philosophical problems dating back (at least) to Plato. That is, how ought we harmonize the

relationship between the universal and the particular–or as our dialogue partners put it, the transcendental and the historical?

II. A Methodological Sketch

In addition to Kantian and Nietzschean undertones, others, as we shall see, interpret Foucault in relation to the phenomenological tradition, comparing and contrasting his expanded archaeology-plus-genealogy project with key themes in Husserl, as well as later thinkers influenced by, yet departing from, Husserl in significant ways. As my brief sketch of some of Foucault's sources and influences suggests, understanding Foucault's relationship with the Enlightenment, modernity, and various thinkers associated with these socio-political movements, as well as the wide-ranging intellectual currents constituting them, is a notoriously difficult task. In what follows, I shall engage three of Foucault's commentators, summarizing and critically interacting with their very different interpretations of his work. I begin with Béatrice Han-Pile, whose book, *Foucault's Critical Project: Between the Transcendental and the Historical*, has become standard reading in Foucault scholarship.[16] In addition, I engage two more recent and lesser-known commentators, Kevin Thompson and Colin Koopman. I have chosen Thompson and Koopman as dialogue partners because both challenge crucial elements constituting a rather entrenched and negative interpretation of Foucault–what one might call the "consensus" view. Specifically, neither Thompson nor Koopman views Foucault's late work as a radical departure from

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[16] Although it may seem counterintuitive given Han-Pile's prominence in the literature and the fact that my present purposes intersect more with the problem that the lesser figures foreground, I devote significant space to explaining their positions. In addition, because the Thompson/Koopman exchange brings to the fore a crucial theoretical tension in Foucault's project, a detailed mapping of their respective views is required. Having exposited and commented upon their interpretations, I am poised to offer my own contribution as a possible way forward.

his earlier analyses, nor do they interpret his notion of power as merely or primarily repressive.[17] Likewise, as will eventually become clear, both highlight themes that allow me to develop my own "musical corrective" as new metaphor for thinking through the complex of problem related to *epistemai* change. Koopman, for example, draws our attention to Foucault's emphasis on the contingent and thus potentially transformable character of subjectivities. Thompson, like Koopman, sees Foucault as concerned with how we have come to be who we are at present. Yet, contra Han-Pile, Thompson argues for a more integrative view of the transcendental and historical. Though all three thinkers present diverse and at times incompatible readings of Foucault's texts, each provides helpful explications of essential Foucauldian themes–for example, his understanding of power as productive and not simply repressive, his introduction of the historical *a priori*; his relation to the phenomenological tradition and the Kantian tradition, the relationship of archaeology to genealogy, and his notion of problematizations.

Before directly engaging my first commentator, let me sketch briefly how my dialogue with these three thinkers will facilitate my own improvisations on Foucault. Han-Pile, as we shall see, concludes that Foucault has so redefined the transcendental by historicizing the *a prioris* as to evacuate it of its traditional meaning, thus effectively reducing it to the historico-empirical dimension. Thompson agrees that Foucault has in fact historicized the *a prioris*; nonetheless, he views these structures as retaining a transcendental function. After all, they, like Kantian *a priori* structures, serve as the conditions for the possibility of objects of experience appearing intelligibly to us. The difference, however, is that Foucauldian *a priori* structures are mutable and *episteme*-specific. Thompson

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[17] See, for example, Kevin Thompson, "Historicity and Transcendentality: Foucault, Cavailles, and The Phenomenology of the Concept," *History and Theory* 47 (2008): 1–18. See also, Colin Koopman, "Revising Foucault: The History and Critique of Modernity," *Philosophy & Social Criticism* 36 (2010): 545–65.

concludes that one ought not construe the relation between the transcendental and the historical as a rigid dichotomy, but one ought instead interpret it, as he claims Foucault does, in a more integrative manner. Koopman, in contrast to both Han-Pile and Thompson, sees Foucault as ridding his project completely of any transcendental tainting and rendering it all the better for having done so. According to Koopman's interpretation, Foucault's expansion of archaeology to include genealogy allows him to account for how *epistemai* change over time. In an exchange between the two, Thompson challenges Koopman's reading of Foucault, with the former claiming that purely historicized *epistemai* would seem to unfold like a series of efficient causes describable in the language of pure physics; yet, given Foucault's affirmation–particularly in his later works–of human freedom and the reciprocal relations between freedom and power and freedom and resistance,[18] such a conclusion is less than desirable, as it renders Foucault's position incoherent. Koopman responds to Thompson's charge by asserting that one need not understand the transformations of *epistemai* over time merely in terms of efficient causality à la pure physics; rather, they can be understood as historical states of affairs providing the conditions of possibility for the emergence of various discourses, practices, and so forth. With this reply, Koopman has not explained precisely how Foucault's genealogical method sufficiently addresses Thompson's critique. Toward the end of my essay, I build upon Koopman's insights and attempt to clarify the role of genealogy via a series of musical analogies in order to address Thompson's concerns. With these introductory remarks in view, I begin with the first commentator, Béatrice Han-Pile.

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[18] See, for example, Michel Foucault, "The Subject and Power," *Critical Inquiry* 8 (1982): 777–795.

III. Foucault: A Failed Phenomenologist?

Han-Pile reads Foucault as a failed transcendental phenomenologist of sorts, one who attempted to solve certain tensions bequeathed by Kant and taken up by the phenomenological tradition.[19] Principal among these tensions is how to make sense of the relation between the ever-shifting historico-empirical realm, the phenomena, and the ever-fixed transcendental realm, the noumena. In a move that simultaneously places him within a Kantian trajectory and yet clearly distinguishes his project from Kant's, Foucault historicizes the *a prioris*.[20] That is, for Foucault, the *a prioris* of each historical epoch or *episteme* are neither ahistorical nor transcultural but are instead subject to change and in fact do change; the *a prioris* are not static but rather are dynamic. As Han-Pile puts it, Foucault sets forth "the hypothesis of an *a priori* fully given in history, which transforms itself with it, and which nevertheless somehow lies beyond it in defining the conditions of possibility, themselves variable, from which the knowledge of an epoch can and must form itself."[21] Given the at least seemingly puzzling, yet no doubt innovative, character of his proposal, a crucial part of Foucault's project becomes a quest to provide a compelling account of his unique formulation of historical *a prioris* of experience.

According to Han-Pile, both his archaeological and his genealogical methods prove unsuccessful for the task. During his archaeological phase, a central aim of which was to provide "a coherent response to the question of the conditions of

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[19] See, for example, Béatrice Han [now, Han-Pile], *Foucault's Critical Project: Between the Transcendental and the Historical*, trans. Edward Pile (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002).

[20] See also, Amy Allen's helpful discussion of Foucault's relationship to Kant in her book, *The Politics of Our Selves: Power, Autonomy, and Gender in Contemporary Critical Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), esp. chapter two, where she offers insightful interpretations of Foucault's earlier work on Kant's *Anthropology*, as well as *The Order of Things*.

[21] Han [Han-Pile], Foucault's Critical Project, 4.

the possibility of knowledge,"[22] Foucault's failed attempts to theoretically ground his project led him to abandon this method of inquiry and to develop a new one, a genealogical method. During his genealogical phase, we encounter the power-knowledge couplet and are introduced to topics now considered as standard Foucauldian themes: disciplinary practices, socio-political mechanisms and apparatuses, biopower, regimes of truth, and normalization. Whereas the archaeological period had a distinctively, at times narrowly qualified and discursive epistemological character and focus, the genealogical period broadens the field of inquiry to include the ways in which socio-cultural practices shape and form knowledge, the objects of knowledge, institutions, power complexes, and subjectivities. Although acknowledging that "the genealogical reinterpretation of the historical *a priori* is one of the most fertile elements in Foucault's work," Han-Pile nonetheless concludes that it too "display[s] the same lack of coherence" as his failed method of archaeology.[23] In short, despite his efforts to escape the dichotomy thematized by Kant, Foucault's re-articulations remain Janus-faced, torn in two opposing directions, one transcendental, the other historico-empirical. Stated more precisely, his attempts to reintroduce the transcendental are unmasked as little more than the empirical in transcendental disguise.[24]

In the third part of her book Han-Pile discusses Foucault's final phase, variously labeled in the literature as the care of the self, the aesthetics of existence, the technologies of self, and the (re)turn to the subject. On Han-Pile's reading, Foucault's late work on the active self-constituting subject cannot be

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[22] Ibid., 68.

[23] Ibid., 144, 145.

[24] For a different reading of Foucault's notion of historical *a prioris*, see Philipp W. Rosemann, "The Historicization of the Transcendental in Postmodern Philosophy," in *Die Logik des Transzendentalen: Festschrift für Jan A. Aertsen zum 65. Geburstag*, ed. Martin Pickavé, 701–13 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2003), esp. 74.

reconciled with his view of the (expelled) subject and the (socially constructed) subjectivities in the archaeological and genealogical periods. Not only are these different subjects un-harmonizable, but likewise the self-constituting subject brings us once again to the irreconcilability of transcendentality and the historico-empirical realm. In the last phase of his work, Foucault focuses his analyses on an active subject which constitutes itself through the non-coerced activities of self-reflexivity and self-recognition. For Han-Pile, the articulation of this new subject presents us with a seemingly irresolvable issue, namely, Foucault's final "definition of the subject and of subjectivation seems implicitly to revive the transcendental understanding that archaeology had always sought to banish, […] How is it possible to return to the idea of a constitutive subjectivity without reopening the aporiae of transcendentalism?"[25] In other words, it appears that once again, Foucault's attempts to ground the historical *a prioris* fail because here he makes the very ahistorical or suprahistorical move that he had condemned in his archaeological works with respect to Kant and the later phenomenological tradition. Summarizing her findings in the final pages of chapter six, Han-Pile states,

> Foucault's constant insistence on the historicity and plurality of the different understandings of truth, as well as the attention he gives to the study of the historical development of their relations with power, have as a paradoxical counterpart an ahistorical and monolithic conception of *recognition* as the agent of the constitution of the self. […] Despite his efforts, his last work remains haunted by a pseudo-transcendental understanding of the subject, in which the structure of recognition, although experiencing different historical contents, nonetheless appears to function *in itself* as an unthematized *a priori*.[26]

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[25] Han [Han-Pile], Foucault's Critical Project, 11.

[26] Ibid., 186–7.

IV. Foucault: A Semi-Successful Phenomenologist?

Kevin Thompson also places Foucault within the phenomenological tradition; yet, contra Han-Pile, he argues that Foucault's efforts to bridge the gulf between pure transcendentality and historico-empirical banality produce a sound project whose coherence

lies in its development of a historical methodology to unearth the stratum of experience that governs the thought and practice of the epochs that have shaped the present age. […] Foucault's research is dedicated to unearthing the transcendental-historical conditions in and through which we have come to be what we are. It therefore stands squarely within the broader tradition of transcendental philosophy. It seeks to isolate the strictures that govern knowledge and practice, the work of critique, so that we can clearly see where and how we might begin to constitute ourselves otherwise, the task of enlightenment.[27]

Several aspects of this passage are worth highlighting. Thompson references Foucault's emphasis on the "transcendental-historical conditions in and through which we have come to be what we are."[28] Although there are many ways one might engage Foucault's contributions with respect to these conditions, Thompson singles out the historical *a priori* and defines the concept as follows: "[it is] the historical set of rules that serve as the conditions for the emergence and interrelations of the experience of discursive and nondiscursive bodies."[29] As Thompson explains, as principles, the historical *a prioris* are "neither physical causes nor empirical realities." Rather, they are best understood as

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[27] Thompson, "Historicity and Transcendentality," 18.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Ibid., 2.

the set of requirements that various kinds of knowledge and ways of acting had to fulfill in order to be counted as valid instances of knowing and acting, and that the objects and events involved in these forms of knowledge and action had to meet in order to be counted as existing entities and occurrences at all. In this sense, what Foucault's historical studies tracked were the necessary structures by virtue of which thinking, doing, and being become possible. In a word, then, the rules Foucault sought were transcendental.[30]

Here problems enter for many commentators and critics of Foucault's work, Han-Pile included. In the Western philosophical tradition, by and large, to claim that structures–the *a prioris*–are "transcendental" has meant that they are atemporal, immutable, universal, and necessary. Thus, for many, it seems that Foucault's coupling of "historical" and "*a priori*" produces a confused, muddled, contradictory concept–or he has simply redefined the notion of transcendental structures to such a degree that a new concept has been introduced. There is a real sense in which Foucault has in fact developed a new concept; nonetheless, it is not without reason that he retains the term *a priori*. In light of Foucault's own placement of his work within the Kantian tradition, one can see how he is both indebted to and distinguished from Kant. That is, just as Kant emphasizes the necessity of positing *a priori* structures–the two forms of intuition and the twelve concepts of the understanding–as the *conditions* for the possibility of objects of experience appearing intelligibly to us, Foucault also stresses the need for *a priori* structures *as conditions* for the same reason; yet Foucault, in contrast to Kant, claims that these structures are not transcultural or immutable but rather are dynamic and specific to particular historical periods.[31] As Thompson observes,

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[30] Ibid.

[31] See also, Rosemann, "The Historicization of the Transcendental in Postmodern Philosophy." Rosemann provides a helpful description, as well as an analogy elucidating Foucault's improvisation on the transcendental theme, see esp. 705.

"Foucault held that specific sets of transcendental rules, different conditions for thought, action, and being, can be shown to define different historical epochs."[32]

If transcendental *a priori* structures change from one historical period to the next, have they not in the end been reduced, as Han-Pile might say, to historico-empirical regularities? According to Thompson, one need not understand the relationship between transcendentality and historicity in such a rigid, dichotomous manner. Rather than set the two in opposition to one another, Foucault's project attempts "to grasp the simultaneity of historicity and transcendentality."[33] Thompson goes so far as to say that the "philosophical soundness of Foucault's project" rests on whether or not he successfully charts a "way of passage between the Scylla of the timeless universality of the transcendental and the Charybdis of the mundane contingency of the historical, a pathway that integrates the necessity of the transcendental with the bounded specificity of the historical."[34] Though I will not rehearse the all the details here, Thompson makes a strong case for situating Foucault within the Cavaillèsian strand of the Husserlian phenomenological tradition.

In short, Thompson argues that Foucault himself, as is evidenced in the Introduction he wrote for the English translation of Canguilhem's book, *The Normal and the Pathological*, distinguishes between a "philosophy of experience, of sense and of subject," whose representatives include Sartre and Merleau-Ponty, and a "philosophy of knowledge, of rationality and of the concept,"[35] whose representatives include Cavaillès, Koyré, and Canguilhem.[36] Having made his

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[32] Thompson, "Historicity and Transcendentality," 2.

[33] Ibid., 3.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Michel Foucault, "Introduction by Michel Foucault," in *The Normal and the Pathological*, by Georges Canguilhem, trans. Carolyn R. Fawcett and Robert S. Cohen, 7–24. Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1978, repr. (New York: Zone Books, 1989), 8.

[36] Thompson, "Historicity and Transcendentality," 6.

initial division between a philosophy of experience and a philosophy of the concept and marking Husserl's *Cartesian Meditations* as the event and text through which "phenomenology entered France," Foucault underscores the differences between the Sartrean and the Husserlian inflections of phenomenology. "Whatever they may have been after shifts, ramifications, interactions, even rapprochements, these two forms of thought in France have constituted two philosophical directions which have remained profoundly heterogeneous."[37] With respect to Husserl, Foucault locates a defining moment in a question posed by the former in two of his texts, *Cartesian Meditations* and *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Philosophy*. In these texts, Husserl raises questions about "the relations between the 'Western' project of a universal development of reason, the positivity of the sciences and the radicality of philosophy."[38] Along the same lines, in his essay, "What is Critique?," having just discussed the Frankfurt School and the Hegelian Left's critique of positivism, rationalism, *technè,* and the ways in which these are connected to modern forms of domination, Foucault highlights the fact that "Husserl, in 1936, referred the contemporary crisis of European humanity to something that involved the relationships between knowledge and technique, from *épistèmè* to *technè*."[39] In other words, in Husserl we find already a calling into question of a supposed "pure reason" and "objectivity," and a recognition that knowledge, power relations, and socio-political technologies are intimately related.

Foucault, of course, situates his project within the trajectory of the philosophy of the concept. That is, he embraces Cavaillès's critique of Husserl's static notion of consciousness and thus opts for a dynamic consciousness and a modified

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[37] Foucault, "Introduction," in *The Normal and the Pathological*, 8–9.

[38] Ibid., 11.

[39] Foucault, "What is Critique?", in *The Politics of Truth*, ed. Sylvère Lotringer, 41–81 (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2007), 51, 52.

methodology that is "able to get at the profoundly eruptive historicity of science [as well as other disciplines] itself."[40] In contrast to a philosophy of consciousness (Husserl), Cavaillès's approach, a philosophy of the concept, posits an isomorphic structural relation between the nature of scientific knowledge and its transcendental foundation.

> [S]ince the eruptive movement of historical mutation is endemic to the very nature of scientific knowledge, it must also be inherent in the transcendental field that grounds such knowledge, for otherwise this stratum would not be the foundation for a form of knowing that develops in this way. It follows from this that the transcendental must itself be alterable, changeable, and historical for it to be the condition for the possibility of scientific inquiry.[41]

Thus, on Cavaillès's view the relation between the historical and the transcendental is not one of segregation but one of integration.

Granting the potential benefits of a more integrated view, does not Cavaillès's position once again bring us back to a critique à la Han-Pile, namely, that the transcendental has lost its exalted status and has been reduced to the historical? Thompson does not seem to think so and paints a more optimistic picture for the fate of the transcendental, claiming that Cavaillès's historically-friendly phenomenology of the concept does not forsake the transcendental field. Rather, instead of turning to Husserl's "concept of intentionality conceived as a tranquil stream,"[42] it looks to a new kind of archaeology in which phenomenology unveils "the seemingly timeless domain of science to expose the movement of transcendental historicity at work within it,"[43] and in so doing forges a path for "a new form of eidetic description: a phenomenology of ruptural development."[44]

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[40] Thompson, "Historicity and Transcendentality," 10.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Ibid., 11.

[43] Ibid.

[44] Ibid., 12.

In no way discounting his methodological contributions and broadening of the phenomenological tradition, Cavaillès's project, as Thompson notes, remains sketchy and in need of further elaboration.

Both Canguilhem and Foucault, albeit in distinctive ways, take up Cavaillès's phenomenology of the concept, improvising upon and developing Husserlian-Cavaillesian motifs for their respective purposes. In particular, I want to focus upon two significant motifs: the historical *a priori* and archaeology as method. In contrast with Canguilhem, who was concerned with the immanent rules of scientific discourse for determining which statements count as true, Foucault was concerned not only with whether a statement counts as true or false but also with what makes possible its showing up as a statement that can be counted as true or false. As a result, Foucault's inquiries focus upon the circumscriptive background "space" that allows various discourses and statements to emerge in the first place. This circumscriptive space–or, to use Foucault's terminology, the historical *a prioris* of various epochs–consists of sets of rules or standards which determine not which statements are veridical (*dire vrai*) but which statements (and ultimately non-discursive practices as well) are in the true (*dans le vrai*).[45] Because this distinction highlights an important difference between Foucault and Canguilhem, as well as some of Foucault's distinctive philosophical contributions, I shall devote a fair of amount of textual "space" to a more sustained reflection on it.

For Foucault, to be in the true is intimately connected with what he calls the "acceptability" of truth and the "acceptability of a system" (for example, the penal system, the mental health system, etc.).[46] Acceptability conditions are those conditions that allow a statement to show up as a recognizable statement

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[45] Ibid.

[46] See, for example, Foucault, "What is Critique?", 61.

while abstracting from the statement's truth value; as Han-Pile puts it, they are the "conditions of possibility of predication itself."[47] Thus, for Foucault, a proposition *dans le vrai* belonging to a particular discipline–biology, music, physics, etc.–can be either true or false. Understanding the function of acceptability conditions and what it means for a statement to be *dans le vrai* provides a hermeneutical lens for interpreting Foucault's claim, "[a] discipline is not the sum total of all the truths that may be uttered concerning something; it is not even the total of all the truths that may be accepted, by virtue of some principle of coherence and systematization."[48] For example, the claim that race is a bio-behavioral essence determinative of one's intellectual and moral value, while considered true in the past but in reality was false then (as well as now) and thus did not have the actual status of *dire vrai*, nonetheless, qualified as *dans le vrai*. Moreover, because of the claim's widespread acceptance across several disciplines, even though false, its detrimental influence upon society was significant. Lastly, a statement qualifying as *dire vrai*, the notion of which suggests Foucault's openness to the possibility of some kind of objective truth, can, paradoxically, be both true (*dire vrai*) and not in the true (*dans le vrai*).[49] For example, the widely accepted (as true, and in my opinion, actually true) contemporary claim that race is a social construction–a claim also made by minority voices a century earlier but "unheard" by the dominant discourses–in contrast with the dominant nineteenth-century belief of racialized essentialism, would have been an example of a statement qualifying (given what we know now) as both *dire vrai* yet not *dans le vrai*. That is, the claim that race is a social

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[47] Han [Han-Pile], Foucault's Critical Project, 81.

[48] Michel Foucault, "The Discourse on Language," in the Appendix to *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon, 1972), 223.

[49] It is also the case that a statement can be false and yet in the true (*dans le vrai*); such was the case with the aforementioned dominant view of race as a bio-behavioral racialized essence in the nineteenth century. It passed the "acceptability test," yet it was clearly false.

construction would not have "shown up" as a serious possibility given the acceptability criteria of the relevant disciplines of the past era. Today, of course, the statement holds the status of both a statement *dans le vrai* (in the truth) and an instance of *dire vrai* (saying the truth).[50] All this simply highlights the fact that, as is the case with many scientific, religious, philosophical, and artistic discoveries and innovations, genuinely true statements can be and have been rejected in their own time. That is, true propositions uttered in one historical period may be rendered unacceptable and thus are unable to be heard and given serious consideration; yet, it is possible that in a subsequent historical period, when the acceptability conditions have been reconfigured so as to allow such statements to sound, the statement can and will at that time be judged as true and may even actually be true.[51]

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[50] As Han-Pile notes, Foucault seems to allow for the possibility of objective truth at least in the realm of scientific discourse (see, for example, *Foucault's Critical Project*, 80). In addition, she states that although Foucault does not discuss the traditional notion of truth as "*adequatio rei et intellectus*," he in no way forecloses the possibility of an historical referent to which propositions may refer (ibid., 81). Han-Pile goes on to say, "[i]t is rather surprising to find in an apparent relativist like Foucault the underlying idea that such an 'objective' truth exists; but in fact, this conception was already partially presupposed by the archaeological method. Indeed, Foucault never denied that the claims he examined had different truth values; his point was that these truth-values were not relevant to archaeological analysis. The bracketing of all normative judgments, which is the initiatory act of archaeology, is not in itself a *denial* of the possibility of a norm. On the contrary, it only makes sense as a *bracketing* by assuming that there is indeed a norm, but that, methodologically speaking, it should not be taken into account" (ibid., 81).

[51] This is how Foucault describes Mendel's at first unacceptable, yet true statements about "hereditary traits" forming a "new biological object" ("The Discourse on Language," in the Appendix to *The Archaeology of Knowledge,* 224). "Here was a new object, calling for new conceptual tools, and for fresh theoretical foundations. Mendel spoke the truth, but he was not *dans le vrai* (with the true) of contemporary biological discourse. […] A whole change in scale, the deployment of a totally new range of objects in biology was required before Mendel could enter into the true and his propositions appear, for the most part, exact" (ibid., 224).

In short, for Foucault, in contrast with Canguilhem, the criteria for acceptability differ from the criteria for determining the truth of a proposition.[52] More importantly, with his distinction between statements *dans le vrai* and *dire vrai,* wherein the possibility of the truth or falsity of a proposition presupposes its being in the true (*dans le vrai*) and consequently its having fulfilled "some onerous and complex conditions" in order to be "admitted within a discipline," Foucault unearths a realm undetected by Canguilhem and exceedingly important for his analytical purposes.[53] In other words, Foucault helps us to see that there is a rather thick socio-political layer to, as Han-Pile puts it, "the effective predication of truth."[54] If a specific discursive community will not allow the truth to be heard, even though it may in reality be an instance of saying the true (*dire vrai*), it has fallen prey to the policing, exclusionary, controlling practices of disciplines. As Foucault puts it, though we have a proclivity to focus upon the "author's fertility" as evidenced by the "multiplicity of commentaries" on his or her works and the seemingly "infinite resources available for the creation of discourse,"[55] the multiplicity of texts and discourses constituting a discipline nonetheless give evidence to "principles of constraint, and it is probably impossible to appreciate their positive, multiplicatory role without first taking into consideration their restrictive, constraining role."[56]

Lastly, on Thompson's reading, Foucault builds upon Canguilhem's insights, while also advancing his project and overcoming some of its limitations. For

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[52] For Canguilhem the idea seems to be as follows: if one *is* in the truth, then the proposition of which one speaks must be true. See Han-Pile's extremely lucid discussion of Canguilhem and Foucault on this matter in chapter three of her book, *Foucault's Critical Project,* 82–5.

[53] Foucault, "The Discourse on Language," in the Appendix to *The Archaeology of Knowledge,* 224.

[54] Han [Han-Pile], Foucault's Critical Project, 81.

[55] Foucault, "The Discourse on Language," in the Appendix to *The Archaeology of Knowledge,* 224.

[56] Ibid.

example, Foucault's notion of historical *a prioris* and his archaeological method enable him, unlike Canguilhem, to explain the coherence and movement or dynamism within the various discursive disciplines.

V. POSITIVITIES, DISCURSIVE FORMATIONS, AND ANALOGOUS JAZZ PRACTICES

One might also reflect upon Foucault's unique analytical and methodological contributions, as well as his divergences from Canguilhem, in the following way: Foucault's archaeological method unearths lower-level strata, *savoir*, whereas Canguilhem's analyses are concerned with the upper-level strata of various *connaissances* and, as it were, fail to reach *savoir*. In *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault devotes several pages to his particular understanding and deployment of these two terms.[57] As he explains, archaeology sets its sights on "discursive formations" and "positivities," both of which, though differing in certain respects, fall under the larger category of historical *a prioris* and play a definitive role in the overall shape of an *episteme*.[58] By "positivity," Foucault has in view those "elements" formed by discursive practices that, given the right configuration of contingent causes, give rise to scientific (and other) discourses within a particular *episteme*.

Put somewhat simply, positivities are relational configurations forming, metaphorically speaking, grids of varying complexities and densities that allow actual concrete sciences, disciplines, and discourses (*connaissances*) to become manifest. Positivities function as conditions for what may emerge "as an item of knowledge or an illusion, an accepted truth or an exposed error, a definitive

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[57] See, esp. Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, 178–95.

[58] See, for example, Foucault's discussion in chapter five of *The Archaeology of Knowledge* concerning positivities as historical *a prioris*, 126–31.

acquisition or an obstacle surmounted."[59] Knowledge (*savoir*) in the Foucauldian sense is shot through with positivities, that is, various intersecting historically and contingently formed grids consisting of elements shaped and unified into regular patterns via discursive practices giving rise to specific discourses and discourse "spaces."

Elaborating on his multivalent view of knowledge, Foucault offers four perspectives on knowledge, each of which underscores his broad, expansive understanding of the term—an understanding that includes both discursive and non-discursive practices. First, "[k]nowledge is that of which one can speak in a discursive practice, and which is specified by that fact: the domain constituted by the different objects that will or will not acquire a scientific status."[60] Second, knowledge is "the space in which the subject may take up a position and speak of the objects with which he deals in his discourse."[61] Third, "knowledge is also the field of coordination and subordination of statements in which concepts appear, and are defined, applied and transformed."[62] Fourth, "knowledge is defined by the possibilities of use and appropriation offered by a discourse."[63] With each of these descriptions, we are not dealing merely with those statements in a particular domain (for example, psychiatry) thought to be true; rather, knowledge encompasses the "whole set of practices" specific to a circumscribed discipline.[64] Such practices might include interrogation procedures, confessional technologies, the use of drugs on patients, soldiers, orphans, etc., with a view as to how these practices have been affected by the various domain-specific discourses (for example, science, politics, etc.).

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[59] Ibid., 182.

[60] Ibid., 182.

[61] Ibid.

[62] Ibid.

[63] Ibid.

[64] Ibid. See also, 183.

In his dialogue with a hypothetical critical interlocutor in the concluding chapter of *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault provides additional clarifying remarks about positivities and how they relate to human subjects as agents. He begins by stating, "[t]he positivities that I have tried to establish must not be understood as a set of determinations imposed from the outside on the thought of individuals, or inhabiting it from the inside, in advance as it were."[65] That is, on the one hand, positivities are neither external patterns nor structures to which cognitive–and I would add volitional–activities of individual humans must conform, lest they be disqualified or relegated to a pre-history status à la Hegel. On the other hand, neither are they latent possibilities that *must* unfold in a determinate way in individual or collective thought. Rather, as we have seen, they are "sets of conditions in accordance with which a practice is exercised, in accordance with which that practice gives rise to partially or totally new statements and in accordance with which it can be modified."[66]

Here it might be helpful to consider a microcosmic analogy drawn from the world of music–namely, jazz. Jazz improvisation is a practice sharing common theoretical rules (positivities) such as identifiable harmonic and melodic patterns that give rise to specific genres within the larger field. These genres are analogous to discursive formations and include cool jazz, be-bop, fusion, and so on. Within these more circumscribed genres or discursive formations there are additional rules or positivities that constitute the style of each particular genre– for instance, be-bop–and distinguish it from others–say, cool jazz. Be-bop typically consists of complex harmonies involving several key changes or temporary tonal shifts within a relatively small number of measures. Likewise, be-bop tunes tend to be played at lightning fast tempos with rapid, complex, arpeggiated, technically challenging melodic lines comparable in structure to

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[65] Ibid., 208.

[66] Ibid., 208–9.

lines in a Bach solo cello suite. Cool jazz, in contrast, is characterized by its harmonic sparseness. For example, an entire cool jazz piece may contain only two chords, each of which is played for eight or more measures consecutively. The melodic lines in cool jazz are also easily distinguishable from those of bebop and tend to emphasize long legato notes as opposed to rapid staccato lines (although they may employ the latter in improvised solos). All of these rules, while allowing jazz and its varied "discursive formations" to manifest, are *both* stabilizing *and* flexible. That is, they provide the stability needed for a particular practice to gel and form an identifiable discourse or genre with its attendant stylistic characteristics; yet they are not inflexible and can be bent, re-shaped, transformed, and re-articulated, creating new "statements" and practices which can at some point be taken up and perhaps even function as positivities for future discursive formations.

Related to this idea of transforming practices, Foucault adds that the "positivities are not so much limitations imposed on the initiative of subjects as the field in which that initiative is articulated […], rules that it puts into operation (without it having invented or formulated them), relations that provide it with a support."[67] Moreover, Foucault makes explicit that subjects are not trapped, determined, or stifled by positivities or discursive formations such that their agency is extinguished and creative innovations and renovations become impossible. Quite the contrary, because these positivities function as *historical a prioris*, they not only provide the "support" needed for distinct practices to appear and be developed, they themselves are dynamic, allowing for (1) transformations in specific practices and discourses, and (2) their own subsumption into a new field wherein they give up their *a priori* status, become part of a newly elaborated practice, and yield place to their own structuring by new, equally contingent, and thoroughly historical *a prioris*. Though this second

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[67] Ibid., 209.

claim may be surprising to some, it is consonant with what Foucault himself says regarding the historical *a priori* in chapter five of *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. He begins by noting that the *a prioris* are themselves caught up in the movement of history. "This *a priori* does not elude historicity."[68] He then goes on to describe the mutability of *a prioris* given their embeddedness within and connectedness to the practices that they structure. The historical *a priori*

> is defined as the group of rules that characterize a discursive practice: but these rules are not imposed from the outside on the elements that they relate together; they are caught up in the very things that they connect; and if they are not modified with the least of them, they modify them, and are transformed with them into certain decisive thresholds. The *a priori* of positivities [and discursive formations] is not only the system of a temporal dispersion; it is itself a transformable group.[69]

An additional musical example may help us understand how the *a prioris* can be altered over time, rearticulated, and take on different meanings and functions as new discursive formations arise. In early expressions of jazz in the 1920s, to improvise outside the harmony of the piece would have been heard as a mistake, perhaps even the mark of an unaccomplished improviser. The rules of improvisation governing the practices of the jazz of the 1920s had no place for what is today called playing "out." In short, one plays "out" when, during an improvised solo, one intentionally plays a melodic pattern first within the given harmony (for example, C major) and then plays the exact same pattern a minor step above (B major) or below (D^b major) the original key. Performing this "musical act" produces an extremely dissonant sound which, especially for those unaccustomed to modern jazz, has a startling and rather jarring effect. Although one may do otherwise, one can choose to resolve this tension within the solo by simply repeating the pattern again within original tonal center (C major). Once

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[68] Ibid., 127.

[69] Ibid.

the genre of jazz-fusion emerged in the 1960s and 1970s, playing "out" became a standard practice. The rules that had governed the practices of improvisation of a previous era no longer apply as they did in early jazz. Rather, their *a priori* status is demoted, and a new set of rules takes their place. Yet, a basic "truth" of the original rule still holds–namely, playing outside the harmony produces great dissonance. However, the dissonance in view is no longer seen as a novice's mistake but rather as the mark of an experienced player using dissonance in a purposed, controlled manner. With this example we can see how rules structuring certain practices can be changed by other practices via a "transgressive" act–that is, a breaking of the established rule. If the transgression, so to speak, catches on or gains a following, it then becomes a recognized practice, a "statement" both *dans le vrai* and *dire vrai,* structured by new acceptability conditions and a reconfigured set of *a priori* rules.

As he wraps up the dialogue with his hypothetical interlocutor in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault once again clarifies and specifies the subject which has been the focus of his most stringent criticism. "I have not denied–far from it–the possibility of changing discourse: I have deprived the sovereignty of the subject of the exclusive and instantaneous right to it."[70] Although one can certainly point to statements in which Foucault appears to sign the death certificate of the subject, it is worth noting that many such statements, when analyzed more closely, can be interpreted as a condemnation not of the subject *per se* but of a particular socio-historical construction of the subject and subjectivity. Here we should recall Foucault's comment in his 1984 interview with Alessandro Fontana: "I do indeed believe that there is no sovereign, founding subject, a universal form of subject to be found everywhere. I am very skeptical of this view of the subject and very hostile to it."[71] That is, Foucault's

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[70] Foucault, The Archaeology of Knowledge, 209.

[71] Foucault, "An Aesthetics of Existence," 50.

critique is directed expressly to the modern subject as sovereign originator of meaning, as sovereign "lord" of his destiny, as subject with special immunity to cultural and socio-historical shaping.[72] With respect to the passage above, Foucault does not deny the subject's role, his or her agency and participation in the transformation of discourses. What he does deny is the modern construction of an autonomous subject who acts as a kind of world-historical figure to bring about seismic transformations in discursive practices, discourse formations, and even new *epistemai.*

Having discussed positivities at some length, let us return to a much briefer, though equally important, examination of discursive formations. Approaching the topic by indicating what they are not, Foucault writes, "[d]iscursive formations can be identified […] neither as sciences, nor as scarcely scientific disciplines, nor as distant prefigurations of the sciences to come, nor as forms that exclude any scientificity from the outset."[73] Unlike a traditional understanding of Platonic Forms, or static ideational structures in certain versions of phenomenology, discursive formations do in fact change over time; they are not timeless, fixed structures that give rise to specific disciplines or sciences, nor do their objects remain the same. As an example, Foucault points to the concept "madness," which does not remain the same across distinct historical *epistemai* but is instantiated differently in a wide range of discourses. Not only was madness as it emerged in distinct *epistemai* "constituted by all that was said in all the statements that named it, divided it up, described it, explained it, traced its developments" and so forth, but also the "madman" constituted by

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[72] For a lucid and informative discussion on Foucault's solution to modernity's dichotomizing tendencies specifically with respect to the transcendental/empirical and subject/object binary oppositions, see Rosemann, "The Historicization of the Transcendental in Postmodern Philosophy," esp. 705.

[73] Foucault, The Archaeology of Knowledge, 181.

medical discourses of one historical period was not identical to the "madman" constituted by legal discourses of the same period.[74]

In short, discursive formations are more focused or delimitative of a particular "space" than positivities; they make possible the appearance of discourses born of socio-political practices temporarily congealed in particular historical epochs, existing in varying types of relations (similar, dissimilar, analogous, etc.) and manifesting constitutive functions and discernable patterns within a specified *episteme*.[75] Foucault's archaeological method, and his elaboration of historical *a prioris,* allows him to overcome some of the drawbacks of Canguilhem's project. That is, because Canguilhem's method is confined to the level of *connaissance*, he cannot account for "the regularities and shifts–the rarity, exteriority, and accumulations of disciplines–that are governed by the principles of *savoir*."[76] Beyond an ability to chart breaks and shifts within various disciplines, Foucault discerns the need for an archaeology capable of more profound levels of excavation–one able to "unearth the fields *by which and in which* such knowledge is able to arise, the historical a priori that regulate the constitution of disciplines"[77] and establish "the conditions for being in the true."[78]

VI. FOUCAULT: AN ANTI-PHENOMENOLOGIST?

Colin Koopman offers a third interpretation of Foucault, one differing from Han-Pile and Thompson in its refusal to wed Foucault's appropriation of Kantian critique with transcendental critique. In short, for Koopman, Foucault is

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[74] Ibid., 32.

[75] See, for example, Foucault's discussion of discursive formations in chapter two of *The Archaeology of Knowledge* where he describes them as a "system of dispersion" (see esp., 38).

[76] Thompson, "Historicity and Transcendentality," 13.

[77] Ibid., 14.

[78] Ibid., 15. See also, Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, 127.

rightly situated within the Kantian critical tradition; however, he abandoned the project of transcendental critique in favor of a thoroughgoing historical project. Moreover, to approach Foucault through the problematic and even paradoxical phenomenological concepts of historico-transcendentality results in irresolvable philosophical tensions and shrouds what Koopman sees as one of Foucault's most significant contributions: "the development of a modality of inquiry that both preserves a link to the Kantian project of critique as inquiry into conditions of possibility and does not for that reason chain itself to a transcendental inflection of the critical project."[79]

Koopman begins with a textual case against employing a phenomenological hermeneutical lens to interpret Foucault's project; second, he provides a theoretical elaboration of why Foucault's abandonment of the transcendental project was a good philosophical move and explains why we should embrace a reading of Foucault detached from transcendental forms of critique. First, Koopman foregrounds texts from *The Order of Knowledge* and *The Archaeology of Knowledge* in which Foucault speaks explicitly and slightly mockingly against phenomenology.[80] I find this line of argument less convincing than other aspects Koopman engages. Thompson, it seems, would likely counter by appealing to other passages that speak more favorably of Foucault's relation to the phenomenological tradition, and would highlight Foucault's place in the Cavaillèsian-Canguilhemian phenomenological line which departed from, and transformed in significant ways, the Husserlian "phenomenology of experience" line.

Next, Koopman references Foucault's 1978 interview "What is Critique?" He first cites a passage in which Foucault refers to Cavaillès and Canguilhem,

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[79] Koopman, "Historical Critique," 105.

[80] See, for example, Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, 203.

describing them as part of the phenomenological tradition but underscoring that they "belong to another history altogether."[81] Interpreting this as an indicator that Foucault has abandoned transcendental phenomenology in favor of historical inquiries, Koopman adds that work in the history of science–having of course Canguilhem in mind–has enabled us to return to the kinds of historical questions which intrigued Foucault, questions such as who we are at this present moment and how have we become what we are. Here we arrive full circle, returning to the issue with which this essay began but from a slightly different angle: what is Foucault's relationship to the Enlightenment, and to the Kantian tradition in particular?

In the interview, Foucault devotes a great deal of space to what he calls the "critical attitude" and elaborates one possible way of tracing its history. Foucault points first to Christianity or the "Christian pastoral," as it was here that a unique idea emerged–namely, that the individual candidate for ecclesial service, regardless of socio-political status, was called to enter into a relationship of obedience with a spiritual superior. As he explains, "each individual […] had to be governed and had to let himself be governed."[82] This power relation, as is the case with all such relations, is productive of knowledge and operates in conjunction with specific truth games. In this particular case, we have a threefold relation to truth: "truth understood as dogma, truth also to the degree where this orientation implies a special individualizing knowledge of individuals; and [...truth] in that this direction is deployed like a reflective technique comprising general rules, particular knowledge, […] confessions," and so forth.[83] However, each discourse has different truth games and power-knowledge complexes. When the Christian pastoral began to give way to modern secular visions–a

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[81] Foucault, "What is Critique?", 54.

[82] Ibid., 43.

[83] Ibid.

process whose beginning Foucault locates in the fifteenth century, prior to the Reformation–the art of governing is transposed into a secular key. Instead of having a somewhat restrictive and limited domain (for example, monasteries), these governing practices, now divorced from significant theological teachings, become increasingly diffused within the broader socio-political sphere via educational, legislative, penal, economic, and other institutional apparatuses.

Closely related and intimately tied to this ever-growing governmentalization, characterizing Western European societies in early modernity is the concern of "how not to be governed," that is, "how not to be governed *like that*, by that, in the name of those principles, with such and such an objective in mind and by means of such procedures."[84] Foucault then situates the "critical attitude" within this understanding of governmentalization–an attitude challenging prevailing governing structures and practices, and attempting to limit and to transform them.[85] Whether we are dealing with divine revelation, law, one's ethical relationship to others and oneself, science, governmental as well as religious authority, "the interplay of governmentalization and critique has brought out phenomena […] of capital importance in the history of Western culture."[86]

At the center of critique as Foucault understands it is the relational complex of power, truth, and the subject. Power relations, as Foucault says explicitly in his later works, involve *free* subjects; power and resistance and power and freedom are correlative concepts.[87] Governmentalization with its attendant companion, "how not to be governed," lands us immediately in the midst of questions about resistance possibilities, constructing and re-constructing subjectivities, agency,

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[84] Ibid., 44. Foucault admits that his formulation, "the art of not being governed quite so much," is overly broad and proceeds over the next few pages to elaborate upon it (ibid., 45). See, esp. 45–7.

[85] Ibid., 44.

[86] Ibid., 47.

[87] See, for example, Foucault, "The Subject and Power."

and so forth. Thus, critique gives us another point of entry into major Foucauldian themes. As he explains,

> [i]f governmentalization is indeed this movement through which individuals are subjugated in the reality of a social practice through mechanisms of power that adhere to a truth, well, then! I will say that critique is the movement by which the subject gives himself the right to question truth on its effects of power and question power on its discourses of truth. Well then!: critique will be the art of voluntary insubordination, that of reflected intractability. Critique would essentially insure the desubjugation of the subject in the context of what we could call, in a word, the politics of truth.[88]

Foucault recounts this brief history of critique in order to help us understand not only what he means by critique and critical attitude, but also how he views Kant as participating in and highlighting this *ethos* in the latter's discussion of the *Aufklärung* in his 1784 essay, "An Answer to the Question: 'What is Enlightenment.'" Kant is of course concerned with establishing the limits of what is (humanly) knowable. Foucault readily acknowledges that fact and links Kant's understanding of critique to his interrogation of reason and its limits, that is, what it can rightfully claim to know without transgressing its own limits. However, he is also drawn to the way in which Kant, in the essay just mentioned, connects knowledge, power relations, and resistance possibilities, specifically the possibility of freeing oneself from a state of "self-incurred immaturity."[89] According to Kant, if we allow religious, state, or other expert authorities to think for us, in place of us, then we remain immature; we are like minors dependent upon guardians to make decisions on our behalf. Thus, Kant issues an exhortation to embrace the Enlightenment call to be courageous and to

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[88] Foucault, "What is Critique?", 47.

[89] Immanuel Kant, "An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?", in *Kant's Political Philosophy*, trans. H. B. Nisbet and ed. H. Reiss, 54–60 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 54.

reason for oneself, which for him also entails recognizing reason's limits. "In his attempt to desubjugate the subject in the context of power and truth, as a prolegomena to the whole present and future *Aufklärung*, Kant set forth critique's primordial responsibility, to know knowledge."[90] For Foucault, Kant was not unaware of the intimate relation between knowledge and power.

Foucault marks this critical ethos embodied by the *Aufklärung* as a "critical attitude which appears as a specific attitude in the Western world starting with what was historically […] the great process of society's governmentalization."[91] As was the case with many Enlightenment thinkers, freedom was a major theme for Kant. If one were to remain in a state of immaturity in which one merely obeys mechanically, allowing someone else to reason for oneself, then one has in some genuine sense forfeited one's freedom; hence, the immaturity is, as Kant puts it, "self-incurred." However, if one takes up the critical attitude and comes to a clearer idea of what reason can legitimately claim to know, a principle of autonomy comes into play, mitigating a relation of excessive dependence or "sheer" heteronomy. "One will then no longer have to hear the *obey*; or rather, the *obey*, will be founded on autonomy itself."[92] Of course, not all will agree with Foucault's interpretation of Kant; however, Kantian interpretative discrepancies with respect to the issues at hand are irrelevant. What is more important for my present purposes is to elucidate Foucault's understanding of Kant's project so that we might better grasp how and why Foucault situates himself within the Kantian critical tradition.

As Foucault explains, in the nineteenth and well into the twentieth century, three features converged that set the stage for a new variation on the critique of

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[90] Foucault, "What is Critique?", 50.

[91] Ibid., 48.

[92] Ibid., 49. Here we should at least point out, as Foucault does, that it is not difficult to show that "for Kant, autonomy is not at all opposed to obeying the sovereign" (49–50). See, for example, the section of Kant's essay, "What is Enlightenment?", esp. 56–8.

reason theme inaugurated by Kant: (1) "positivist science," (2) a state or "state system which justified itself as the reason and deep rationality of history and which, moreover, selected as its instruments procedures to rationalize the economy and society," and (3) the interplay of the first two, creating a situation in which science begins "to play an increasingly determinant part in the development of productive forces and, such that, in addition, state-type powers are going to be increasingly exercised."[93] Given the interconnections between reason, knowledge, and power that Kant *already* identified in his 1784 Enlightenment essay and the historical convergences just mentioned, the new question becomes: "for what excesses of power, for what governmentalization, all the more impossible to evade as it is reasonably justified, is reason not itself historically responsible?"[94] Stated slightly differently and in a mode reminiscent of the Frankfurt School,[95] is there something inherently flawed with the particular shape that reason or rationality has taken such that it leads to excesses of power? Does this modern inflection of reason somehow contain within itself the seeds of its own destruction? Does its attempt to fully realize itself and its political program lead to the obliteration of the other? That is, does this kind of instrumental reason involve constructing certain groups as unworthy, impure, and dangerous others who must be eradicated or at least confined to a separate socio-political, geographical, and even lawless, space?

Foucault then moves into a discussion of the growing suspicions in the twentieth century of Enlightenment rationality and its relation to power, as well

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[93] Foucault, "What is Critique?", 50–1.

[94] Ibid., 51.

[95] The connection with the Frankfurt School is not mine; Foucault himself refers to the Frankfurt School at least three times in his essay, noting that "an era has arrived where precisely this problem of the *Aufklärung* can be re-approached in significant proximity to the work of the Frankfurt [S]chool" and that his project shares "fellowship with the Frankfurt [S]chool" ("What is Critique?", 53, 55, see also, his comments on the Frankfurt School and the Hegelian Left, 51).

as the political ramifications of this conjunction. According to Foucault, French intellectuals have acquired a more critical attitude toward Enlightenment narratives of progress. That is, in addition to the questions of meaning raised by phenomenology and applicable to studies of the Enlightenment, "an era has arrived where precisely this problem of the *Aufklärung* can be re-approached in significant proximity to the work of the Frankfurt School."[96] In other words, particularly in light of the horrific events of the twentieth century–for example, the Holocaust, which no ethically conscious contemporary thinker can ignore– questions of sociopolitical and existential import must be addressed. In light of such calculated cruelty and inhumane violence against our fellow human beings, questions such as how ought we reason about (Enlightenment) unreason, or as Foucault puts it, "how is it that the great movement of rationalization has led us to so much noise, so much furor, so much silence and so many sad mechanisms,"[97] become philosophical questions of utmost importance. In short, if the *Aufklärung* is concerned with the movement from heteronomous irrationality ("self-incurred immaturity") to autonomous rationality, and our casting off the shackles of the former paves the way to Enlightenment and progress, how do we explain the ironic, paradoxical, even cruel surprise ending to this narrative? We have moved through the Enlightenment only to be confronted with "the reciprocal and inverse problem of that of the *Aufklärung*: how is it that rationalization leads to the furor of power?"[98]

Just as Kant was concerned with unearthing how we have come to be who we are at a particular point in history, so too is Foucault; however, according to Koopman, the latter has given up on the former's claims regarding universal and necessary structures, opting instead for *epistemai*-specific and contingent

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[96] Ibid., 53.

[97] Ibid.

[98] Ibid., 54.

conditioning structures or historical *a prioris*. This abandonment of the transcendental for the historical leads Foucault to investigate more "localized" connections between knowledge and power as they appear in particular historical contexts. Having set forth his textual arguments against the Foucault-via-phenomenology position, Koopman proceeds to elaborate philosophical or theoretical reasons for his own reading of Foucault.

VII. A Musical Corrective to "Koopman's Foucault"

According to Koopman, because Foucault himself realized the shortcomings of his archaeological method in his earlier works and expanded his methodology to include genealogy, attempts to interpret Foucauldian archaeology as both historical and transcendental are not only misguided, but they also direct our attention away from the unique contributions Foucault brings to the current philosophical milieu. One such contribution is the notion of problematization, which Koopman sees as central to Foucault's critical historical-philosophy. The two central components of "[c]ritique as problematization" are contingency and complexity.[99] With respect to the first component, as we examine the emergence of and the conditions making possible historical networks, apparatuses, socio-political institutions, discourses—all of which shape us and give rise to context-specific issues—"we can come to recognize our problems as contingent complexes rather than necessary givens."[100] Although Koopman does not link Foucault's emphasis on contingency with his productive notion of power, such a connection would enhance his account and would help to stave off a common criticism and misperception of Foucauldian power as merely limiting or constraining. That is, if what we have become as the result of a particular socio-

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[99] Koopman, "Historical Critique," 110.

[100] Ibid.

political configuration, imposed hegemonic discourses, and a myriad of other intersecting networks in which we find ourselves are all contingent realities producing contingent, rather than necessary, effects, then we–as free beings in power relations with ourselves and others–are not rendered completely passive. Because power relations presuppose free subjects and entail resistance possibilities[101]–that is, a field of possible options available to us that enable us to re-script and reconstitute social narratives and socio-political structures–we are not condemned to accept our present situation or social identity as fated, irrevocable, irreversible, or necessary.

With respect to the second component, complexity, Koopman turns to the relationship between problematization and the different functions of archaeology and genealogy in order show how Foucault's expanded methodology allows him to analyze vertical and horizontal fields themselves composed of multiple complex layers and intersecting nodes. Another way to conceptualize the relation between these two modes of inquiry is to view archaeology as synchronically-oriented and focusing upon rules and conditions that make fields of possibility possible; genealogy, in contrast, is diachronically-oriented, directing its attention to the movement of the diverse, non-homogenous practices, discourses, disciplines, and subjectivities emerging from the multiple fields of possibility mapped by archaeology.[102] More specifically, Koopman explains how precisely he understands the failure of Foucault's early archaeology-minus-genealogy.

> The archaeologist describes conditions that constrain one
> period of thought; they next describe the quite different

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[101] See, for example, Foucault's discussion of power relations and freedom in his late essay, "The Subject and Power."

[102] This is not to say that there is no overlap in orientation (diachronic versus synchronic) between these two methods. An important point in Koopman's account that my synchronic/diachronic analogy does not capture is his talk of vectors. See, for example, "Historical Critique," 112.

> conditions constraining another period of thought; finally, they infer historical difference on the basis of an underlying incommensurability between the two sets of conditions. This procedure indeed demonstrates difference but it does not explicate difference *historically*. Archaeology only offers up incommensurable historical conditions and an inexplicable gap between them. This is history in that it concerns the past but it is not historical history in that it does not engage change, mobility, and transition.103

That is, archaeology alone has no way to account for the movement between *epistemai*. We have one *episteme* with its own particular set of historical *a prioris*, then another *episteme* with a different set of historical *a prioris*. The conditions are, on Koopman's reading, incommensurable. If this is the case, then the diverse disciplines, institutions, and subjectivities made possible by the conditions and structures specific to an *episteme* are likewise incommensurable.

If Koopman and, for that matter, Foucault have in mind a weak rather than a strong notion of incommensurability, then I can and will happily follow them for a considerable distance along this path. Put more candidly, I find strong incommensurability–the claim that there are absolutely no common points of contact between *epistemai*, no common basis upon which to make comparisons, contrasts, analogies, etc.–to be indefensible and incoherent. After all, holding such a position, how can one even speak of different *epistemai* or historical conditions? I understand weak incommensurability, in contrast, to mean (at minimum) that no precise one-to-one equivalence obtains between the objects in view, as the meanings of objects or concepts are intimately related to their larger context. Yet, with respect to the topics at hand, to claim that historical *a prioris* are incommensurable in the weak sense is to claim more than the obvious point– namely, that no two *epistemai* are identical because no two *epistemai* share the exact same historical conditions. Though this is true, it is something that we

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103 Ibid., 114. Italics added.

observe "after the fact," that is, after a sufficient amount of time has passed for particular historical epochs to be recognized as distinct *epistemai.* Here it is important to keep in mind that the set of historical conditions specific to an *episteme* does not function as an iron-clad mold stamping out homogenous objects, discourses, or subjectivities. Rather, Foucault's historical *a prioris* allow for the possibility of multiple subjectivities and variations within a single *episteme* and even within the smaller context of a particular discipline or discourse.[104] The more significant aspect of weak incommensurability is rather its rejection of atomism and commitment to some variation of holism[105]–that is, the claim that the parts (for example, concepts, disciplines, etc.) derive their meanings from their relation and connection to larger contexts and ultimately to the whole *episteme.*

To illustrate, the concept of "black" or "blackness" does not retain a single, unchanging meaning from nineteenth-century America to twenty-first-century America. During the period of chattel slavery, a common pro-slavery discourse influenced by religious and pseudoscientific arguments (bio-behavioral racial essentialism) constructed the term "black" to mean subhuman and naturally inferior to white people. Today, however, bio-behavioral racial essentialism is no longer credible; the mainstream religious and political discourses on slavery have changed, as have the major "race"-producing institutions. Consequently, the term "blackness" takes on new meanings. A number of race theorists and cultural critics, including sociologist Loïc Wacquant, argue that in the twenty-first

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[104] Toward the end of this essay, I mention capitalistic and anti-capitalistic subjectivities as an example of how multiple subjectivities can exist within the same *episteme.*

[105] I am neither interested nor qualified to enter into the complex debates in philosophy of language and philosophy of mind regarding holism. For my purposes, I shall distinguish between moderate and extreme holism and opt for the moderate version. Moderate holism allows for the possibility of other influences (for example, metaphysical or logical principles) besides the network of relations to shape meaning, whereas extreme holism claims, for example, that the meaning of a word is derived *solely* from its relational configuration in a particular network.

century the term "black" has come to mean "dangerous," "deviant," "delinquent." Wacquant traces this new variation on the "black" theme or the contemporary American construction of "blackness" to the U.S. carceral system, which holds top rank in a long line of race-making apparatuses, that is, institutions which have "successfully operated to define, confine, and control African-Americans in the history of the United States."[106]

Returning to the issue of incommensurability, whether we have in view a weak or a strong notion of incommensurability between *epistemai*, Koopman's question is still relevant: how does one explain the in-between space, the gaps, the transitions between historical epochs? Are these transitional spaces also governed by historical *a priori* structures? "If not, then it follows that there are historical periods which an archaeological analytic cannot engage. If so, then it follows that the historian needs another analytic in addition to […] archaeology in order to wield a more complete historiographical toolkit."[107] Here genealogy enters to deal quite literally with the "gaps." The genealogist examines the myriad linear, moving, diachronic discursive and non-discursive practices and structures that intersect and morph, giving rise to *new* concepts, practices, and ultimately new *epistemai*; however, so long as one holds a weak view of incommensurability, I see no reason why one must deny that elements, vestiges, and traces of *previous* epochs are taken up and reconfigured in the new and quite distinct historical period.

Koopman uses the image of a series of circles to explicate the "gaps" between *epistemai*, with each circle representing a different historical epoch or *episteme*. The circles are horizontally arranged, but they do not touch each other; a spatial

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[106] Loïc Wacquant, "From Slavery to Mass Incarceration: Rethinking the 'Race Question' in the US," *New Left Review* 13 (2002): 41.See also, for example, Loïc Wacquant, *Punishing the Poor: The Neoliberal Government of Social Insecurity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009).

[107] Koopman, "Historical Critique," 114.

gap from the past as well as the future separates each circle. Perhaps there is a problem with Koopman's image. Instead of gaps, what if we think in terms of musical modulations or transitions. Consider the way in which modulations function in the sonata form. Although there are numerous variants on the sonata form, the basic structure is as follows: introduction, exposition, development, recapitulation, and coda. The introduction and the coda are somewhat optional and do not constitute the core of the sonata form; however, they have become so commonplace that today they are included in nearly every current definition of the Sonata form. In the exposition section, the main musical themes are introduced in the tonic key. Then in the development section the themes are expanded melodically, harmonically, and rhythmically. Completing the cycle the recapitulation section, in which the main themes from the exposition reappear and often, but not always, resolve the tensions created in the development section.[108] As I mentioned earlier, there are multiple variations of the Sonata form itself, as well as variations with respect to what occurs within each major section; nonetheless, the three main movements–exposition, development, and recapitulation–are easily identifiable, as each part or movement exhibits

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[108] Analogies, of course, have their limits. There are aspects, implications, and possible interpretations of my analogy that Foucault would reject. For example, composers often write symphonies in which a clear final resolution occurs in the recapitulation section suggesting a *telic* completion. (This, however, is not always the case; twentieth- and twenty-first-century atonal compositions are clear counterexamples). Foucault would demur any hint of an overarching teleological movement to history as Hegelian, totalizing, and in a sense the opposite of his project of a "general history." See, for example, Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, 10. Also, when analyzing the completed symphony, the particular movements are understood *as* organically related; if by the term "organic," one means that the elements of a prior stage lead *necessarily* to a particular unfolding configuring in the minutest detail the stage which follows, Foucault would not claim that *epistemai* exhibit this kind of relationship. However, there is no reason to view any particular, concrete instantiation of the Sonata form in those terms. That is, although when analyzing a symphonic work in its totality, one may discern how themes in one movement are taken up and developed in the next; no predetermined pattern or design exists forcing the movement to unfold and conform to a fixed and singular mold. On the contrary, there are myriad ways in which the contents of the movement might take shape. Whatever final movement we have today is the result of creative choice or artistic freedom, not necessary imposition.

harmonic and melodic patterns and practices according to the general rules of its particular role in the sequence.

Modulations or transitions connect the movements; they are the "gaps," so to speak, between clearly defined principal sections. Similar to the variations occurring with the main movements, modulations also vary. One finds common-tone, common-key, chromatic, sequential, and parallel-key modulations (to name a few). In common-key modulations, the composer creates harmonic sequences based on chords shared or held in common between the tonal center, for example, of the first movement and the tonal center of the second movement.[109] These modulations are relatively smooth, yet there comes a point in the transition itself where it is difficult to discern whether a chord is functioning as part of the tonal center of the first movement or of the second movement. In other words, a nebulous area emerges that defies clear categorization in one movement or the other. At the other end of the spectrum, we have chromatic modulations. Because these modulations consist of non-traditional harmonic patterns progressing in minor seconds (half-steps) rather than the more common tonic–subdominant–dominant (I–IV–V) harmonic progression, there is no way to connect the chromatic sequence to a specific tonal center.[110] Between these two extremes–common-key and chromatic–exist a wide variety of modulatory

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[109] For instance, common-key modulations often occur by moving up a perfect fifth. If one begins in the key of C major, the target key becomes G major (the interval from C to G is a perfect fifth). This particular modulatory movement is common is because any two keys separated by a perfect fifth share four common chords. Because the two keys have so many notes in common, they likewise share many common chords.

[110] In major scales, the tonic chord is the I chord, the subdominant is the IV chord, and the dominant is the V chord. For example, in the key of C major, we have the notes: C, D, E, F, G, A, B, C. The I chord, in this case C Major, is the "home" chord functioning as the tonal center. The C major triad consists of the notes C,E,G. A perfect fourth above C is F, which is the bass note of the subdominant triad, F major formed by the notes F, A, C. A perfect fifth above C is G, which is the bass note of the dominant triad, G major formed by the notes G, B, D. Generally speaking, Western tonal music moves in ascending and descending harmonic patterns of perfect fourths and perfect fifths.

manifestations. Generally speaking, however, each modulation type has a similar function: it plays a structuring role, demarcating the boundaries between movements. The *transition itself*, in other words, foregrounds the primary movements such that they stand out as self-contained units. In fact, what marks a modulation as such is that it resists, subverts, and often transgresses the theoretical rules and thematic musical patterns of the movements that it precedes and follows. Its very transitory nature seems to result from its resistance to both the rules and the melodic and harmonic figures that structure and define the main movements of the piece. The upheaval or prolonged tension a modulation creates owing to its in-between status seeks resolution in something more stable, which is *not* to say that the stability it may find is itself rigidly fixed and incapable of change.

Bringing the musical image back into conversation with Koopman and Foucault, we have the following analogical equivalences. A movement corresponds to an *episteme*, and a modulation replaces Koopman's talk of "gaps." The general harmonic, melodic, and rhythmic rules and practices structuring the particular content of each movement are analogous to Foucault's historical *aprioris*. Because modulations, as it were, fall outside the rules of the movements they connect, a different analytic is required for their analysis that enables us to make sense of the dynamic nature of the modulations ("gaps"), the main movements (*epistemai*), and the diverse components constituting the main movements (disciplines, discourses, etc.). This new analytic corresponds to the genealogical method.

Before bringing this essay to a close, I want to present one additional matter discussed in the published exchange between Thompson and Koopman in response to Koopman's original essay.[111] Thompson takes issue with Koopman's

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[111] See, for example, Kevin Thompson, "Response to Colin Koopman's 'Historical Critique or Transcendental Critique in Foucault: Two Kantian Lineages'," Foucault Studies 8 (2010):

account of Foucault's problematizations. According to Thompson, Foucault is concerned with the conditions or forms of problematizations–"the historically specific structures in and through which various kinds of matters have been put at issue";[112] however, Koopman takes these conditions to be "contingently forged antecedent states of affairs or processes," whereas Thompson views them as "historical eidetic structures."[113] For Thompson, Foucault's historical *a prioris* are anterior to the empirical processes of which they are the conditions. To "treat these conditions as prior historical complexes conditioning what follows from them" creates a problem for Foucault which, for Thompson, cannot be solved; how, he asks, are we to understand the (historical) causal efficacy of these conditions?[114] Koopman responds by denying that Foucault has in mind mere "causal conditioning";[115] rather, the historical *a prioris* create the space, so to speak, for practices to appear (or not to appear), for events to happen (or not to happen). Such conditions do not function as efficient causes (as when, for example, one billiard ball hits a second ball, forcing it into the side pocket). As Koopman explains,

> [c]onditions of possibility are more like the entire ensemble of ball, cue, stick, felt-topped table, and spirits of friendship and competition in which a certain practice is made possible. On my reading the entire ensemble itself is indeed the product of "antecedent states of affairs" but only so long as we understand "states of affairs" capaciously to involve all things at play in a practice rather than narrowly as referring to structures of causality describable in the language of a perfect physics.[116]

122–28; Colin Koopman, "Historical Conditions or Transcendental Conditions: Response to Kevin Thompson's Response," Foucault Studies 8 (2010): 129–35.

[112] Thompson, "Response to Colin Koopman," 126.

[113] Ibid., 127.

[114] Ibid.

[115] Colin Koopman, "Response to Kevin Thompson's Response," 133.

[116] Ibid.

For Koopman, the entire ensemble or "complex states of affairs" *qua* "conditioning ensembles"–including the conditioning structures themselves–is mutable, dynamic, and historically conditioned through and through;[117] hence, when Foucault transforms Kant's transcendental *a prioris* and renames them accordingly as historical *a prioris*, we must feel the force of the adjectival modification. The *a prioris* still function as conditions of possibility; however, their scope, contra Kant's formulation, is neither universal (that is, transhistorical and transcultural) nor is their modality that of necessity; rather, Foucauldian *a prioris* are contingent structures congealing for a time and providing the requisite stability for practices, traditions, discourses, and the like to become recognizable as such. Yet, historical *a prioris* are also porous, not rigidly fixed, and thus able to change over time as shifts occur in the nodes constituting the multiple intersecting networks of a particular *episteme*. Lastly, the discourses, practices, and subjectivities produced by historical conditioning structures are heterogeneous, not homogenous. In other words, the porosity, contingency, and mutability of Foucauldian stabilizing structures allow for the possibility of diverse discourses and subjectivities not simply across *epistemai* but also within each of the recognized practices and disciplines in a particular *episteme*. For instance, with respect to America's current capitalistic configuration, the structures making possible this particular socio-economic ensemble exhibit a relative stability and sameness. However, we find multiple subjectivities creating different discourses and practices and responding to life within capitalistic America in disparate rather than uniform ways: some strongly oppose it and seek various strategies to fend off its totalizing effects; others try to reform it and make it more humane, while yet others believe it is the model that should be embraced by all countries and thus are willing to implement aggressive strategies to that end.

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[117] Ibid.

The crucial question brought front and center via the Thompson and Koopman exchange is how our practices can be simultaneously "*constrained* by conditions of possibility and also *contingent* in being amenable to historical transformation?"[118] Here again we bump up against the "double construction of the subject," or Foucault's answer to the incomplete, one-sided (ahistorical) subject bequeathed to us in large part via the rationalistic strand of the Enlightenment. In contrast, the Foucauldian subject is simultaneously socially constructed and self-constructed, simultaneously constrained and free.

Though I agree with many aspects of Koopman's position, his response to Thompson's criticism is somewhat thin. That is, it does little more than assert what historical conditioning of subsequent *epistemai* by prior ones is *not*– namely, it is not a type of efficient causality "describable in the language of a perfect physics."[119] Because Koopman fails to provide a positive account regarding what historical conditioning actually *is*, Thompson's concerns have not been adequately addressed. Moreover, what precisely is the difference between Koopman's appeal to "*conditioning ensembles*" and Thompson's articulation of historical *a prioris*?

Here I turn to my final set of music analogies in order to assuage Thompson's concerns by providing a more positive construal of genealogy. The world of music is replete with images, analogies, and comparisons highlighting how our both/and situation is neither incoherent nor reducible to an either/or–either we are free or we are constrained. Consider the jazz musician, who for many people is associated with the artistic free spirit par excellence. However, the jazz musician creates and improvises *within* strictures, limits, rules, and musical practices that demarcate jazz from other musical styles. These strictures and

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[118] Ibid., 134.

[119] Koopman, "Response to Kevin Thompson's Response," 133.

communally accepted traditions include playing syncopated melodic lines, emphasizing the second and fourth beats in standard four-four time when performing swing, be-bop and related styles, and quoting melodic lines from well-known jazz performers. In addition, a jazz musician's improvised solos often consist of melodic lines that demonstrate–by way of arpeggiated lines, easily identifiable harmonic (for example, II-V-I) patterns, and so on–his or her grasp of the harmonic structure of the piece. These and other conditions making possible the jazz "world" arose contingently and became congealed and stable over time; yet they are flexible, porous, and dynamic, giving rise to different conditions that will come to structure a "new" jazz world. As members of a community and participants in a tradition, jazz musicians must agree to work within these limits. Contrary to popular opinion, improvisation is not a free-for-all; instead, what we find are identifiable patterns, communally-accepted practices, and theoretical rules structuring jazz improvisation, all of which provide the space for distinct musical subjectivities to emerge: John Coltrane, Miles Davis, Sonny Rollins, and Wes Montgomery, to name a few. What jazz connoisseur would deny John Coltrane's innovations and unique creative contributions to jazz? Yet, Coltrane was subject to the same conditioning factors as every other jazz musician of his day. Freedom and constraint are not mutually exclusive categories. In fact, one might even say that creative innovation and the transformation of existing practices, disciplinary standards, genres, and accepted styles require intimate knowledge of our limitations, strictures, and constraints.[120]

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[120] This particular jazz analogy corresponds to the inner workings and dynamism that occurs *within* an *episteme*. In order to address the movement *between epistemai*, I would need to amend the analogy. For example, the entire complex "jazz" would be analogous to an *episteme*, and other complexes–such as European classical music, blues, etc.–would be analogous to other *epistemai*. Then I would have to show how the various elements from European classical music and, for example, blues, were appropriated and transmuted into the new *episteme*, jazz.

VIII. Foucault: All of the Above (And Then Some)

As I stated at the beginning of my essay, my purpose has been to bring to the surface at least some of the significant, not to mention diverse, philosophical sources influencing Foucault's thought, highlighting along the way noteworthy Foucauldian themes and suggesting possible avenues for development via the world of music. In closing, I offer a brief recap of the key themes examined, and I conclude with a summary of my contribution to the dialogue.

As we have seen, Han-Pile pushes us to question whether Foucault's ontology is sufficient. With his late work in mind–particularly Foucault's explicit statements linking freedom and power relations, his rather traditional description of thought as "what allows one to step back from this way of acting or reacting,"[121] and his linking of thought to freedom–I share Han-Pile's concerns regarding the adequacy of Foucault's ontology; however, the ontological corrective which I would recommend (and which I can only mention in the present essay) differs from Han-Pile's in that it points to an historically attuned yet more robust philosophical anthropology that provides a basis for strong moral critique of practices that violate human freedom and flourishing.[122]

The next commentator, Thompson, shows us how Foucault travels through Husserlian and, more specifically, Cavaillèsian-Canguilhemian phenomenological pathways, while simultaneously carving new paths. Contra Han-Pile, Thompson challenges the traditional rigid division between transcendentality and historicity, characterizing Foucault's project as an attempt integrate the two notions. Lastly,

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[121] Michel Foucault, "Polemics, Politics, and Problemizations: An Interview with Michel Foucault," in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow, 381–90 (New York: Pantheon, 1984), 388. Foucault goes on to add, "[t]hought is freedom in relation to what one does, the motion by which one detaches oneself from it, establishes it as an object, and reflects on it as a problem" (ibid.).

[122] For a detailed presentation of an anthropology along these lines, see, Cynthia R. Nielsen, *Foucault, Douglass, Fanon, and Scotus in Dialogue. On Social Construction and Freedom* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

Koopman brings Foucault's unique contributions front and center, particularly his notion of problematization and the ways in which his expansion of the archaeological method to include genealogy results in analytical payoffs. This methodological augmentation affords us powerful theoretical tools that enable us to see both *that* our present situation is constituted by contingent, historical, multilayered complexes and to trace *how* these formations emerge.

Then we discussed the Koopman/Thompson exchange, wherein the latter highlights a significant problem with "Koopman's Foucault": if, as Koopman argues, *epistemai* are historical "all the way down," then their movement, it seems, comes about through efficient causality describable in the language of physics. If this is the case, then Foucault's affirmations in his later works regarding human freedom and the reciprocal relations between freedom and power and freedom and resistance become incoherent. Koopman denies that the change in view involves efficient causality; however, his response does not explain how Foucault's genealogical expansion of his archaeology addresses Thompson's critique.

Here I offer a series of musical analogies as a fresh interpretive lens enabling us to highlight the analytical benefits of Foucault's genealogical addition while simultaneously deflecting charges of incoherence. That is, my musical analogies make possible a way to conceive the "gaps" between *epistemai* and *episteme* changes–both of which move us into domain of genealogy–via a path having much in common with "Koopman's Foucault," yet responding more directly to Thompson's concerns. For example, my analogies help us to see how various structures and elements of past *epistemai* or historical periods are re-harmonized in new periods, wherein what emerges within the new paradigm is neither a mere repetition of the past nor completely unconnected with it. The image of re-harmonization and thus of occupying a different function and "place" within a new whole is compatible with a weak incommensurability but in no way requires

a strong or total incommensurability across historical paradigms. In short, by employing my musical analogies and thus embracing "my Foucault," one can go a long way with Koopman and yet answer Thompson's critique more satisfactorily. Stated otherwise, my model places Foucault's archaeological-genealogical methodology and his insights regarding historical *a prioris* on firmer, even if, contingent ground. Returning to our opening question, perhaps Foucault shows himself as a kind of variation on what Abdul JanMohamed calls a "specular border intellectual."[123] That is, while able to operate within many (philosophical) cultures, the specular intellectual never quite finds a (philosophical) home. Perhaps this also helps one to understand why our historically-attuned, postmodern "Kantian," at times indulges his parodic Nietzschean side.

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[123] See Abdul JanMohamed, "Worldliness-without-World, Homelessness-as-Home: Toward a Definition of the Specular Border Intellectual," in *Edward Said: A Critical Reader*, ed. Michael Sprinker, 96–120 (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), esp. 97.