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MICHEL FOUCAULT
(1926–1984)

Luanne Frank

Born Paul-Michel Foucault on October 15, 1926, at Poitiers, France, Michel Foucault was the second of three children of Dr. Paul Foucault, a surgeon and professor at Poitiers University's medical school, and Ann Malapert, daughter of a surgeon. He grew up in well-to-do circumstances. To remain with his sister, he began informally attending the Lycée Henri-IV in 1930 at age four. An excellent student, he remained there until 1939, then transferred to the Collège Saint-Stanislas in 1940, finishing there, and remaining in Poitiers for the two-year preparation for entrance exams for Paris's École Normale Supérieure (ENS). He was not admitted. To prepare again, he entered a Paris Lycée Henri-IV; studied under Jean Hippolyte, among others; and was fourth among admittees for 1946. At ENS, conflict characterized his life with other students, and difficulty accepting his homosexuality may have prompted an apparent suicide attempt in 1948 and possibly others. He failed the *agrégation* in 1950. In 1951, he tied for third place, the topic for his oral examination, sexuality, having been chosen by Georges Canguilhem, who had examined him for admission. Rather than request a lycée post, for which he was now qualified, Foucault spent the 1951–1952 school year as 1 of 10 recipients of a three-year research stipend at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (a subject he proposed for research: "the problem of human sciences in post-Cartesian philosophers"). Leaving after one year, but continuing to live in Paris, he became an assistant lecturer in psychology at the University of Lille in 1952.

Interested in psychology since his first year at ENS, he began studying for a degree immediately after receiving his *licence* in philosophy from the Sorbonne in 1948. From the Sorbonne he then received a *licence*, and from the Institut de Psychologie de Paris a diploma, in psychology in 1949. In 1952 he received a diploma in pathological psychology from the same institute. In 1952 and 1953

he assisted a family friend, Jacqueline Verdeaux, with a translation of a small book by Ludwig Binswanger, Swiss developer of existential psychoanalysis via Martin Heidegger's *Being and Time*, and friend of Carl Gustav Jung, Sigmund Freud, Karl Jaspers, and Heidegger. Foucault and Verdeaux visited the analyst several times and talked with him of Heidegger, phenomenology, and psychoanalysis. Such was Foucault's interest in the translation, and in Binswanger's method as an antidote to the psychiatry Foucault saw practiced as he assisted Verdeaux with encephalographic work in asylum and prison venues, that Verdeaux suggested he do a preface for the book. It appeared in 1954 as the introduction to Binswanger's *Dream and Existence*.

In 1955, Foucault was appointed director of the French (cultural) Institute in Uppsala, where he taught French literature and language, and availed himself of unmatched special collections in Uppsala's great library, the *Carolina rediviva*, to do research for his doctoral thesis, begun in Sweden and destined to become *Madness and Civilization* (1961), the work with which he first became known on the French intellectual scene. In 1958 and 1959 he took similar appointments in Warsaw—seeing communism at first hand—and in Hamburg.

In 1960, he taught psychology at the University of Clermont-Ferand, received his *doctorat d'etat*, the highest French degree, in 1961, and received tenure in 1962. In 1963 he published both *Death and the Labyrinth: The World of Raymond Roussel* and *The Birth of the Clinic*. Encouraged by Canguilhem, recently his thesis director, Foucault took administrative leave after the academic year 1965–1966 to teach philosophy at the University of Tunis. He had published *The Order of Things* in the spring of 1966 to great acclaim. He remained in Tunis for two and one-half years, political unrest prompting his accepting an August 1968 position in psychology at Nanterre, invited by Didier Anzieu. Before beginning to teach, he resigned to become director of the philosophy department at the new University of Vincennes, where the campus was disrupted by student actions of solidarity with revolutionary events in Paris, and Foucault's own radicalization, developed over a long period, accelerated. For now, it expressed itself in demonstrations and manifestos. His academic work remained unpoliticized.

In 1969 he published *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, a hyperstructuralist theoretical treatise clarifying the methodology behind *Order*. In 1970, nominated and presented by Jules Vuillemin, and supported by Hippolyte, Georges Dumézil, and Fernand Braudel, he was elected to the Collège de France, the most prestigious French academic institution. The title of his chair, proposed by himself, was The History of Systems of Thought. He would be required to offer new courses annually. Five years later, in 1975, after a radical shift in methodology—a return to the general modality of *Madness*—he published his most influential work, *Discipline and Punish*. In 1976 there followed the first volume of *The History of Sexuality* and, in 1984, the second and third volumes: *The Use of Pleasure* and *The Care of the Self*. A fourth, "Les Aveux de la Chair," was close to final form at the time of his death. From 1966 Foucault was in

increasing demand for lectures, articles, and interviews. He was in the United States often, drawing increasingly large crowds, from 1970 through 1993. He lectured for the French department at Buffalo in 1970 and 1972, visited Attica prison, lectured in New York, at Berkeley, and again in New York (for *Semiotext[e]*), in 1973. He gave the Tanner Lectures at Stanford in 1979, met and worked with Berkeley professors Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, who were writing a book about him, and was visiting professor there in French in 1980, also giving the Howison Lectures, entitled "Truth and Subjectivity." He lectured to the Humanities Institute at New York University in 1980, at University of California in Los Angeles in 1981, the University of Vermont in 1982, and Berkeley again in spring and fall 1983. Foucault's courses at the Collège de France in his final years were "Subjectivity and Truth" (1981); "The Hermeneutics of the Subject" (1982); "The Government of Self and Others" (1983); and "Parrhesia, the Practice of Truth-Telling" (1984).

Foucault died of AIDS at age fifty-seven in the Salpetrière—the Paris hospital whose numerous roles he had described in his first major work—on June 25, 1984. In a group of testimonials published by *Le Monde*, Paul Veyne called his work "the most important event of thought in our century"; Braudel, in *Le Nouvel Observateur*, called his mind "one of the most dazzling . . . of the epoch" (Eribon 328).

FOUCAULT'S RHETORICAL THEORY

The canonic philosophers of the West, from the pre-Socratics forward, are the foundation for Foucault's thought. He rigorously grounded himself in their writings. But he was always adding to his foundations, and they came to include much else, in history, literature, art, and especially psychology. It has been said—it was thought by his fellow ENS students—that he read everything. By his own acknowledgment at the end of his life, two influences were paramount: "My entire philosophical development was determined by my reading of Heidegger. . . . It is possible that if I had not read Heidegger, I would not have read Nietzsche." "These are the two fundamental experiences I have had" (qtd. in Eribon 30). Still, among other masters of truth, Immanuel Kant, Friedrich Hegel, Karl Marx, and Freud are indispensable to his development; among professors, Maurice Merleau-Ponty; among professor–mentors, Hippolyte, Canguilhem, Louis Althusser, and Dumézil; among contemporary movements of thought, phenomenology, Heideggerian hermeneutics, and structuralism. Gaston Bachelard, Georges Bataille, Maurice Blanchot, and Pierre Klossowski are also important in later years.

The work of Foucault is part of that great surge in twentieth-century Western thought, said to stem from Ferdinand de Saussure and now called "the linguistic turn," that suddenly sees in language the foundation of the analyzable world. The idea is not new to the twentieth century, but rendered newly apprehendable via Saussure, it enjoys there an efflorescence unparalleled by its earlier emer-

gences. By the century's second half it has become the new cultural truth through which other such truths are filtered and from which they take their comprehensibility. Fostered at first by the flourishing young sciences of linguistics and anthropology, this suddenly revised awareness of language spreads rapidly to humanistic thought in general, setting it alight with new insights, rendering it newly transparent, filling it with a new urgency, endowing it with a mighty, new legitimacy. New movements, or modes of understanding, evolving out of the turn come to be known as structuralism, semiotics, and in a succession rapid for cultural evolution, poststructuralism. Even inert corners of humanistic studies are vivified at the sight of the new vistas of understanding these movements open up.

With the linguistic turn, humanistic thought advances to within a step of recognizing itself as through and through rhetorical thought. It will be Foucault who, after rigorous demonstrations that the step is avoidable, reverses himself and closes the gap—between humanism's assumption that its discourses are pure and the Nietzschean recognition, which Foucault recovers, that such purity is a ruse. The new age's new masters of truth become "masters of discursivity." The phrase is Foucault's, and inadvertently or not, with it he describes himself: All of his major works, whatever they seem to do, uncover the development of rhetorical systems as historical forces. They describe the burgeoning of rhetorics in the human sciences and in related discourses and practices as these constitute, shape, and control the social world—and the natural world as well in its availability to consciousness. From the point of view of the turn, though again via Foucault's phraseology, there are no natural objects. This explains in large part his famous refusals to discuss given entities except across what has been said of them, that is, except as they have been rhetoricized. It may explain as well his well-known indifference to nature.

Foucault is not himself partial to the term *rhetoric*. Perhaps because he is a philosopher–historian. Perhaps because the word already shelters, and thus gives away, one of his grounding assumptions, which on methodological grounds he avoids thematizing, preferring to let it dawn gradually: the Nietzschean insight that no humanistic discourse wears but one face, that each masks another, a will to power. Again speaking Foucauldian, one could thus say: Rhetoric makes Foucault possible. For both Foucault and rhetoric understand that the less value-laden a humanistic discourse seems, the more value-laden it is.

That Foucault's grounding emphasis in his works is, in fact, rhetorical may be less than immediately apparent, not because attention to an agendaed discursivity is absent but because he fails to thematize, as such, the rhetoricity of the discourses whose emergence and efficacy he traces, instead leaving the truths he is uncovering—the nondisinterestedness of "objective" discourses, their manipulativeness and coerciveness—to make this point about themselves through his vast accumulations of historical detail. Though agendaed discursivity is characteristically a chief object of his thought, only two of his works, *Order* and *Archaeology*, make discourse their almost single-minded concern.

TRAJECTORY OF THOUGHT

Foucault's great, overriding theme throughout his work, less than apparent as the oeuvre begins to unfold, is power. Whatever the names of his well-known interests as his thought evolves—dividing practices, knowledge in the human sciences, *épistèmes*, discursive formations, truth, games of truth, individualization, normalization, identity, the subject, technologies of the self, surface discourses, nondiscursive social practices, institutions, disciplines and disciplinary spaces, governmentality—they are forms and effects of power. His concerns lie early with certain obvious, unrecognized, and thus clandestine forms power takes and the ways it is deployed, exercised, visited upon human subjects—the guises in which it dominates, represses, "subjects" them, typically without their knowledge, only sometimes against their will.

Upon these follow concerns with power's also unrecognized but generally unrecognizable epistemic forms, in which it shapes the thought of entire periods—thought exemplified for Foucault by knowledge in the human sciences—and thus shapes all human subjects. Then, to the earlier concern with power as repression, is added explicit, thematized recognition of power's productive, self-proliferating aspect and an awareness of the ubiquity of points of resistance to it. Eventually, there are added concerns with the personal measures a demystified contemporary subject—a subject steeped in Foucauldian thought—might take in anticipation of a certain sort of freedom, a freedom achievable in the face of power but also by means of it, and not alone in the given subject's name.

In his earliest thought, before the Foucauldian voice is yet full throated, the pessimism unyielding, the immaculate distancing achieved, an explicit Foucauldian theme is in fact freedom, the human's immutable desire for it. But the word's meaning is not divulged. This theme fades to implicitness in the major works, where freedom is an almost unspoken luminescence, an inadmissible yearning behind their darkness, the unidentified and shifting place from which Foucault speaks (and perhaps an explanation for what some observers call his optimism). But freedom in its Foucauldian form, if it yet exists in the early, middle, and late major works, remains indescribable, unknown—a word no longer or not yet able to speak its name. The form in which it at first knew itself now seems unsuitable, if not unseemly—naive. A quasi-Heideggerian freedom, it hangs baggy on Foucault, not yet cut to fit. Then, unexpectedly, after three decades of near silence, of yielding pride of place to power, Foucauldian freedom, power's opposite but also one of its forms, finds a voice. After 30 years, it knows itself. It reemerges as a focus of the late courses and a final interview. This is the general trajectory of Foucault's thought. Clearly, it is a circular one, ending approximately where it began but freighted with what lies between its beginnings and its final stages—and much altered.

The question of what to do about power that subjects, a question everywhere implicit in his work, is never answered: Foucault prescribes no solutions. More typically, he questions them. Still, his own understanding of power as primarily

monolithic no longer, now capillary-like in its modern pervasiveness, everywhere existent and exercised in the most minute remotenesses of the social, spiritual, and physical body; his understanding that resistance is likewise everywhere ("wherever there is power, there is resistance" [*Sexuality* 95]); the improbable load of specific detail in his works, suggesting each site of power's deployment as a potential point of resistance; and his own much publicized involvements in local struggles—all point a direction: Disciplinary power is resistable; it is resistable locally; and the agents of resistance are human subjects, however implacably disciplinary practices and discourses (the human sciences and their close relatives) have limited these subjects' possibilities for action.

Initially optimistic, devoting himself (in *Dream*) to uncovering the dreaming subject's deepest desires, Foucault is moved to pessimism by his encounters with mental patients during his psychological studies. He comes to recognize these subjects as thoroughly and abjectly subjected, specifically by the discourses and practices of psychiatry and medicine. Thence he moves (in *Madness*) to an understanding of the modern subject in general as a function of these and other discourses, notably the knowledges making up the burgeoning discourses of the human sciences. Assuming (in *Order* and *Archaeology*) he has found in structuralism a benign discourse that can be used to describe without dominating, Foucault eventually becomes aware that the very knowledge he is developing out of it (a structuralism more radical than Levi Strauss's via a phenomenology more radical than Husserl's, both practiced in the name of a radical objectivity) is itself subjecting—objectifying, disciplinary. Long able to see himself as one of the abject he describes in *Madness* and *Birth*, he must now identify himself as, worse yet, an archdisciplinarian.

With this he abandons a rigorous structuralism. From the human sciences narrowly defined he then expands his focus (in *Discipline*) to a broader, still related range of discourses and practices, those of prisons, asylums, hospitals, workhouses, schools, and the military, recognizing contemporary Western society in general as disciplinary and carceral. From here he focuses (in *Sexuality*) on a set of predominant discourses of the present, those proliferating around sexuality, and the disciplines deriving from them, eventually tracing these to Christian practices of confession and, (in *Care*) farther back, to ancient technologies of the self. In these latter he finds self-practices—training and government of self, care of self—long trivialized, forgotten, and thus preserved, that contain suggestions fruitful for present-day subjects' possible self-production.

But these practices, developed as means of governing others, are lacking in what Foucault now sees as a necessity if the exercise of power as domination is to be avoided. Partly on the basis of what he finds in these ancient techniques, partly on what he fails to find, Foucault in a final interview ("The Ethic of Care for the Self as a Practice of Freedom" ["Freedom"]) hazards a description of how power, exercisable by the long-subjected Western subject and now spoken of as freedom, might be claimed. This "practice of freedom" would not do away with power: It would include two forms of it rather than one—care of the self,

care for the other. Retaining power as an inevitable component of social practice, Foucault nonetheless suggests something between its poles (the poles of self and other) that the forms of power he has genealogized did not know and failed to find: reciprocity. In engaging in power relationships in a reciprocal way, the self's practice of its own freedom—its power—becomes a form of ethics. As ethics, power becomes eligible for another name: freedom.

In summary: Foucault achieves a brief dream of freedom (*Dream*), then constructs historicizations (*Madness, Birth, Discipline, Sexuality*) and rigorously structural, layered orderings (*Order, Archaeology*) of the forms power has taken in exercising itself upon human subjects in the modern West, often in the name of "humanity"; finally (in *Care* and *Use*), via ancient forms of self-production linked historically to the contemporary self, he catches a brief glimpse (in "Freedom") of how one form of freedom might be claimed (through care *of* the self), to which another form (care of the other) could be added.

In working out his ideas, Foucault avails himself of the most powerful intellectual tools of his age: cause-effect history, phenomenology, hermeneutics, and structuralism. Each is indispensable, each unsatisfactory. Foucault rings significant changes on each, coming to practice a Nietzschean form of history—"genealogy"—and a phenomenologically rigorized form of structuralism—"archaeology"—and even a structuralist hermeneutics. He eschews a history that explains rather than describes, a phenomenology that transcendentalizes the subject (eventually he abandons his own transcendentalizing of discourse), a hermeneutics that seeks deep meaning beneath discourse and practice. Nonetheless, Foucault ongoingly employs aspects of all these methodologies. Much ink has been spilled over whether Foucault was a structuralist. Certainly structuralism, in its recognition of the sovereignty of language in producing the subject and society, remains one of the pervasive methodological influences on Foucault.

It explains his onetime, nearly single-minded focus on discourse and his retention of it as one of the two poles of his own developing methodology after his hyperstructuralist phase. The other pole is made up of social practices other than the discursive. An important part of his methodology is to divide the innumerable concrete forms he shows power taking into these two macroforms: serious discourses—those of authorities, especially in the human sciences, and nondiscursive practices, also of a serious sort. Rarely explaining his methodology or thematizing its categories, he places more or less emphasis on discourse or on nondiscursive practice in every major work, sometimes achieving a nearly balanced mix. With the exception of a period in the mid-1960s, when (in *Order* and *Archaeology*) his focus is primarily discourse, he recognizes a tight mutual dependence between discourse and practice, occasionally envisioning explanations of their relation as eventual goals of his work. An indefatigable researcher into discourses as his means of laying practices bare, he is acutely aware that discourses lay down, lay out, express, order, categorize, and preserve social practices, and his partiality appears to rest with them.

His attention focuses on discourses of two types: those known or knowable

to their practitioners, and that describe, prescribe, order, rationalize, render comprehensible, and preserve knowledge-based social practices (his late work devotes itself exclusively to these); and conceivable discourses (*épistèmes* or discursive formations) unknown and unknowable by their practitioners that nonetheless determine the forms their knowing takes and, especially when that knowledge has to do with human subjects, determines these, including the knowers themselves. At the point that Foucault emphasizes discourse almost exclusively, he does so implacably, making it the a priori, the sine qua non, of social practice.

Although it is clear that a discourse/nondiscursive-social-practice binary is inevitably circular (discourse becomes practice, becomes discourse), clear also that practice is possessed of its own rhetoric, it is Foucault's characteristic attentiveness to discourse itself as a primary—sometimes as the ultimate—social fact (not necessarily an isolated one) that in part explains his significance for rhetoric. He knows that the role of language is incommensurable (1) as the figure of what one can know *in itself* ("saying" is the only form in which a truth is knowable); (2) as the figure of what one can know *about* (truth in its objective form—truth once removed from itself); (3) as the figure of what one can *be*, ongoingly (an identity, an individual, a "subject"); (4) or as the figure of what one can be but fleetingly ("I am doubtless not the only one who writes in order to have no face" [*Archaeology* 17]). But only when these insights turn Nietzschean, when Foucault exposes the ruses of truth, does his significance for rhetoric become incalculable. (Such revelations explain in part what will later become an emphasis on "telling the truth.")

With Nietzsche, Foucault sees the incorrigible rhetoricity of all humanistic discourses, their inevitable nonobjectivity and nondisinterestedness, and focuses his attention on some whose power is equaled by their deleteriousness—discourses conventionally regarded as pure, objective, humane. He has decided that, except possibly in the pure sciences, pure discourse is nonexistent, is *"das Tier, dass es nicht gibt"* (the animal that doesn't exist [Rilke, "Das Einhorn," in *Sonnets to Orpheus*]). Foucault has become the rhetorician's rhetorician.

Although his work challenges the reader, Foucault's significance—decided by his usefulness—is not restricted to scholar–theorists and others willing to move with him through his often tortuously dense, complex, multileveled, switching, folding, often confusing, sometimes repetititive or contradictory, often exhilarating works, which, like the discourses and practices he studies, typically withhold their underlying intent (his interviews reveal that what he was after was sometimes unclear to him). His thought is relevant to the multiple levels at which the discipline of rhetoric functions, especially wherever it is concerned with what drives discourses—the subject? a discourse speaking through the subject? one that is speaking through *that* one? an authority? a society's monolithic value systems? an economy's drive to productivity?—or with discourses' effects on human subjects, or with innumerable other possible permutations of the subject-discourse relation.

It is typically across the so-called problem of the subject that rhetoric encounters Foucault, and not incorrectly, since late in his life he notes the subject's having been his project all along. Also typically, his dazzling *Order* and stunning *Archaeology*, but also his revelatory *Discipline* and breathtaking *Sexuality*, are presumed the measure of his thought on the question of the subject, and his dark vision in these works is regarded as disempowering, a threat to a subject's vision of itself as potentially self-determining (whether student of composition or teacher–theorist). Although outside of rhetoric it has been said that Foucault took his deconstructions of neither the subject nor power far enough, the charge of the subject's disempowerment is a serious one in a rhetoric traditionally conceived.

But, perhaps fortunately, it is also a false charge, as Foucault's latest works and courses, as well as the interview noted above, indicate. Thus, his influence on rhetoric enlarges as rhetoricians become able to see themselves in Foucault. In doing so, they come to see him not narrowly, as an intractable personage much of whose work in identifying them as but functives implicitly denies them being, self-definition, and autonomy—and predicts their dissolution—but broadly, as a teacher-by-example. His teaching: a sort of radical mutability, evolving and writing in the name of its own and social change, and suitable for the closest study. Again and again this mutability focuses its gaze on sets of established, subject-constituting discourses and social practices; seeks, finds or constructs, describes, and follows routes to their undoing; contributes its insights to the ends of knowledge or social change; itself changes, aligning itself with its own latest discoveries; disabuses itself of the accuracy of the truths it has just espoused; subjects them to deconstruction; and begins again.

Some late twentieth-century rhetoricians recognize themselves here and their discipline as well. It remains to be seen how many spirals through deconstructions of its own myths of itself rhetoric will be willing to trace if being Foucauldian points it beyond these immutable visions. (Thus far, rhetoric has sometimes sought to wrench Foucault into forms of itself, or, by limiting itself to a single segment of his thought, refute him, who so often refutes himself.) Then again, having become Foucauldian, rhetoric may be able to go beyond Foucault, in a Foucauldian way and at his direction, to expose the potential dangers to self and other in his most advanced rhetorics—in his formulas for harnessing power as a form of freedom in the service of self *and* other and thus as an ethics. Foucault emphasized that every solution to a social problem carried its own dangers, which would have to be resisted as they became evident. It is possible that the sorts of power relationships to which his late suggestions point with tentative approval must themselves be unmasked, as he himself might soon have discovered, as new forms of disciplinary practice, and that all such solutions, developed in a regime of thought constructed across a subject/object binary, will necessarily resolve themselves into a version of it. Rhetoric is a child of such a regime.

Finding in Foucault innumerable revelations of its own necessarily discipli-

nary nature, rhetoric is prompted to put this rhetoricians' rhetorician's thought to work to identify dangers to the subject (as subject *and* object) inherent in its operating modes and to develop its own solutions. There are at least two essentials for approaching him to these ends: (1) aliveness to the ranges and shifts of his oeuvre, which are functions of a radically evolving thought (there is no single, stable Foucault; thus, to depend on a single set of his texts for ultimate conclusions about his thought is risky). (2) awareness of his willingness to reverse himself, to turn his back on his own emotions and assumptions and even his magnificent thought edifices once their questionable foundations surface. Here are several examples. From having been the best of methodological hopes for the study of human beings, structuralism becomes a form of domination. Once a last refuge of freedom, sex, when understood as part of disciplinarity, becomes "boring" (Dreyfus and Rabinow 229). Care of the self, the latter an entity once scarcely mentionable, becomes paramount, once choosing self care comes to seem possibly a choice rather than a requirement ("I am going to take care of myself" [231]).

BY TITLE: DEVELOPING METHODOLOGIES, FOCI, RHETORICAL PERSPECTIVES

Supplanting what was to have been a history of psychiatry, *Madness*, Foucault's doctoral thesis and his first major work, traces the history of a definitive social practice shaping the modern West and developing into the burgeoning category systems, discourses, and practices that constitute contemporary psychology and psychiatry and literally create the objects they study. Rhetorics of humaneness claim for these disciplines an ever more refined humanity; rhetorics of scientificity, an ever closer faithfulness to what they find. Foucault shows via 943 thickly documented pages that neither humaneness nor science finally drives these human sciences but rather reason's sudden need for an object against which to define (and from which to distinguish) itself, as Enlightenment dawns. This work is prophetic in laying out in rudimentary and unthematized form three techniques that will characterize much of Foucault's work henceforth: (1) Historicizing the present, or genealogy, to some extent patterning every work but *Archaeology*, eschews explaining in favor of describing and, by piling up evidence of the historicity of given discourses and practices, disproves their claims to natural, necessary, noncontingent (here, humane or scientific) truth. (2) Archaeology discerns "discursive formations" (in this case, rhetorics of reason) that lie beyond the perception of consciousness *and* the unconscious and nonetheless determine what gets said and done in given periods and guarantee it a sense. Discursive formations are conditions of possibility for knowledges and inaccessible by their practitioners as these knowledges are developing. Only retrospectively can thought discern them. Having discerned the existence of discursive formations, Foucault can show three levels of rhetorics determining human being as it evolves in a given period: a surface level, an unthought but

thinkable one (a preconscious of science, as it were), and a not-yet-thinkable level (that of discursive formations, which, in *Order*, are called "the positive unconscious of science"). Although it fades in Foucault's later thought, archaeology in some form characterizes every work henceforth. (3) Identifying discontinuities, a practice first encountered in the work of Canguilhem and Dumézil, reveals, in Foucault's hands, an added archaeological dimension. History becomes a story of disconnected periods whose character is determined more vertically, by the shifting discursive formations that ground them, than horizontally, in tracing a progressive course of reason.

Since they are not identified or explained, it is only in retrospect, after he has later named and refined them, that these techniques come to stand out, though Foucault was generally aware of his protomethodologies throughout *Madness*, as he was of his aim. For Canguilhem, in attempting to recruit him as thesis director, Foucault stated explicitly what in the work itself he presents only in a diffused way: that he would show their historical antecedents, and present-day psychology and psychiatry themselves, to have been manufacturers of their own objects.

Birth analyzes the discourses and practices of a medicine of the body in a way closely related to that used for the medicines of the mind in *Madness*. The rhetorics—in a way, pure mythologies—are similar—increasing humaneness and objectivity—as are their concrete results: increasing control and domination; incarceration; separation of subjects from one another and from their own bodies. The underlying discursive formation is a rhetoric of reason, which fails to recognize its own coercive character. Foucault's increasing control over his technique is marked here. Recognizing it in his title, Foucault emphasizes the growing significance of archaeology for his work.

Both *Birth* and *Madness*, as will *Discipline* and *Sexuality*, identify and emphasize what Foucault calls "dividing practices," the great modern divisions of subjects from one another and from themselves, in both body and mind, that are demonstrable results of certain enlightened rhetorics purporting to improve the lot of human beings but, more important, performing the demeanings and entrapments essential to the efficient and productive management of society.

With *Order* Foucault reaches the pinnacle of his analytical achievement. He also finds his voice. This work is his most splendid, from the point of view of its literary style, the rigor of its determining rhetoric—which Foucault does not yet think to analyze—its authoritative abandon, and, quite literally speaking, its depth—the discursive depths it operates at persistently. Every other work pales in comparison.

Foucault's voice and its eloquence are everywhere retained in the work; otherwise, the book splits into two distinct halves, their different character and insights and degrees of accessibility in part explainable across the fact that discursive formations, whose possibilities this work is the first to exploit fully, are inaccessible except in retrospect. Thus for the first two of the historical periods Foucault analyzes—Renaissance and Classical (Enlightenment)—which are be-

hind him, the underlying discursive formations are identifiable, and they clarify the points he would make. For the third, the Modern (historical-organic), in which he still to an extent stands, they are unclear; the points they determine, elusive. In its brokenness, the work necessarily matches the radically discontinuous history it surveys.

Order is the work that has elicited the most controversy and is perhaps most notorious, since it makes much clearer than the two previous ones the questionableness, if not the emptiness, of a number of claims dear to humanism: the progress of reason in history and thus history's progressiveness, its relatively smooth linearity; its meaningfulness; the objectivity of the human sciences and the solid objectness of their objects; and any subjective function whatever, if by the phrase is meant human autonomy and self-determination. Foucault shows instead history's discontinuity, its chronologies composed of sudden and inexplicable shifts, or lurches, from one way of knowing to a quite different one, each determined by conditions of possibilities, or "laws," unperceivable by its inhabitants and making up "the positive unconscious of science." These determine what can be said and done in a given age by appearing to give it meaning. He shows "known" objects to have been constructed by a period's *ways* of knowing—shows subjects to be, like objects, products of discursive formations.

Rhetorics of reason, and thus of difference, again characterize the discursive formations of the central period, the Classical, Foucault's chief focus here and his target in all three major works to date, whereas rhetorics of sameness characterized those of the Renaissance. (Thus are explainable the "dividing," differentiating discourses and practices he has uncovered in the two earlier works and that, as he also shows here, appeared suddenly, as if out of nowhere: A lurch in history had occurred; a new, underlying discursive formation had replaced the old.)

Order is the work in which Foucault first operates across a rigorous near-structuralism. In demonstrating here the less autonomous than automatonous character of the human subject, Foucault also sets aside, sets out of consideration, the subject's rhetorics of truth and meaning. In bracketing both, he becomes more phenomenological than phenomenology. The loss of truth and meaning, and of the subject as well, has exercised Foucault's critics most.

To make his position and his methodology in *Order* clear, Foucault writes *Archaeology*, his only purely theoretical text. He writes it in the face of critics' puzzlement and incomprehension at *Order*, seeking to lay out the structuralist-inspired theory informing his thought. As incomparable in its austerity as is *Order* in its baroque splendor, the work theorizes the power of discursive formations, their unseeable controlling influence over all subjects, events, reality. No other work looks back to schematize its forerunner's methods in this way. The rhetoric that is its own condition of possibility, however, remains unspoken and apparently unseen as the book goes to press.

At some point during or after the composition of *Archaeology*, however, Foucault steps out of structuralism and, looking back, recognizes that the discursive

formation he has allowed to determine his findings in *Order* and *Archaeology* much resembles the very one he had exposed as coercive in *Madness* and *Birth*. Its superobjectivity, he sees, is finally objectifying: It is a discourse of domination. It must be abandoned. This does not yet lead him to generate a quasi-unsubjectified subject, but it does lead him back to a reemphasis on genealogy as his method of choice—to working out a new and much expanded history of the present in *Discipline*, which exposes some of the modern West's most trusted discourses as rhetorics that in disciplining objectify, subjugate, and coerce human subjects. Exposure of these rhetorics' effects becomes an exposure of the larger society that employs them—as disciplinary, dividing, punitive, carceral.

In *Sexuality*, Foucault narrows his focus to a single, quintessentially modern discourse, that of sexuality, and the associated practices and discourses—many of the latter, pathologies—it has spawned, especially in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Thought to be the natural secret of every subject's identity, because, eventually, the certain source of her freedom, sexuality, as it is hounded by Foucault to its birthplaces, is exposed as a historical construct, a thick umbilical cord through which a host of social requirements are fed to a subject kept ravenous via alternating rhetorics of repression and incitement.

Extending his history of contemporaneity further back, in *Use* and *Care*, Foucault traces it to the practices of unremitting focus on the self organized around Christian confession—practices of persistent self-examination required by rhetorics of purity and undertaken for self-purification and its maintenance. These derive, Foucault discovers, from ancient "technologies of the self," techniques apparently freely applied to the self by male citizens (as opposed to women and slaves) of the ancient Greek world for purposes of self-mastery and government of others (the members of one's household and also the larger institutions of state if required). With the second of these works, attention to underlying discursive formations fades: Disciplinary societies seem but nightmares of the future.

In a final interview ("Freedom") Foucault, speaking out of his recent course work, outlines forms of power that characterize relations between self and other. Except for friendship, self-other relations are typically subject-object relations. Either side of the relationship may be individual or collective. Self-other relations may be either "relationships of power" or "states of domination." The differences between them have to do with reciprocity, with the relation's reversibility. Relationships of power permit reversibility of movement, are "variable and [allow the] different partners a strategy that alters them" ("Freedom" 3). States of domination are the reverse: "When an individual or a social group manages to block a field of relations of power, to render them impassive and invariable and to prevent all reversibility of movement . . . we are facing . . . a state of domination. It is certain that in such a state the practice of liberty does not exist" (3). One cannot both practice one's own and endanger the other's freedom at the same time. With this, Foucault turns the practice of freedom into an ethics, insisting that the practice of freedom must be first of all care of the

self but that this must at the same time be care for the other. Thus his final formula: The practice of freedom is care for the self as an ethics (as care for the other).

Care, in emphasizing care of the self by the self, and the late courses, in suggesting possible subject-chosen ethical practices for consideration—truth telling and care for the other—also suggest the recovery of an uncompromised rhetoric of freedom for the subject that some rhetoricians may welcome in Foucault. But even these, as well as other rhetoricians now more cautionary than Foucault himself, will already have begun asking of rhetoric whether it will face down its own long history of involvement in manipulative discursivities, face down even the historical necessity that explains its own birth in objectifications of those it would persuade, in order to explore its potential role in furthering the possibilities for transforming states of domination into relationships of power.

INTERVIEWS

Foucault's numerous interviews are important sites of his thought-in-progress and of his assimilation and understanding of his earlier thought. Apart from their development of specific complexes of ideas, their importance lies in the succinct, straightforward, but also reinterpretive accounts they offer of Foucault's intents and achievements in given periods and works. Such accounts are available chiefly *in* the interviews (notably also in his summary of his work to date for admission to the Collège de France [Eribon 214–16]), most obviously because these elicit a brief, bare-boned directness atypical of his writing; equally important because his labors achieve their most explicit focus for Foucault in retrospect; also because a predominant theme from a present interview can metaleptically alter the identity of past works: A current thought becomes the real meaning of earlier discourses. Thus, a June 1976 interview recognizing the problem of power as Foucault's concern in *Discipline* (1975) can only retrospectively identify this idea as also the key to both *Madness* (1961) and *Birth* (1963): "I ask myself what else it was that I was talking about [in those works] but power. Yet . . . scarcely ever used the word and never had such a field of analyses at my disposal." And the late courses' focus (from 1981) on the problem of the subject and truth comes, in a January 1984 ("Truth and Power," in Foucault, *Power/Knowledge* 115) interview, to seem the unrecognized preoccupation of the entirety of Foucault's prior thought. Q: "[Is] your present philosophical research . . . still [as in 1981–1982] determined by the poles subjectivity and truth[?]" A: "In fact, that has always been my problem" ("Freedom" 1). Thus, in the interviews Foucault uncovers the unthought in his own thought. Additional examples abound. The interviews, indispensable as interpretive aids, are, then, not merely straightforward accounts. They also alter, and enrich, the written works by multiplying and layering, or transforming, their possibilities for interpretation. In so doing, the interviews emphasize for the

rhetorician the crucial effects of new language (here, "naming") for bringing new, or latent, entities (here, new layers of thought) to light. As it is by viewing it from the point of view of power, or of truth, or of the subject, much of Foucault can be further illuminated by pointing to its fundamentally rhetorical consciousness.

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ERNESTO GRASSI
(1902–1992)

Karen A. Foss

Ernesto Grassi was born in Milan, Italy, on May 2, 1902, the son of Giovanni Battista Grassi and Caterina Luce Grassi. He studied philosophy and literature at the University of Freiburg in Germany, earning his doctorate from the University of Milan in 1925. He married Elena Stigler in the same year. In 1929, Grassi became a lecturer in Italian literature at the University of Freiburg, a position he held until 1939, when he was named director of the Italian Institute for Humanist Studies in Berlin.

Grassi was advised to leave Germany during World War II and went first to Florence, Italy, and then to the University of Zurich, where he served as a visiting professor in philosophy from 1943 to 1946. Grassi returned to Germany in 1948 to become a professor and director of the Center for the Study of Philosophy and Humanism at the University of Munich. He also served as the president of the International Center for the Study of Humanism in Rome and held visiting appointments at the University of Buenos Aires, the University of San Paolo, and the University of Caracas. Upon his retirement, Grassi continued his association with the University of Munich as an emeritus professor, spending winters in Munich and summers at his home on the island of Ischia, Italy. He died on December 22, 1992, in Munich.

GRASSI'S RHETORICAL THEORY

Circumstances of birth and education largely were responsible for Grassi's rhetorical perspective, centered in the advocacy of Italian humanism as a philosophical and rhetorical movement of contemporary significance. Grassi's Italian heritage clashed with the assumptions of superiority accorded German philosophical thought. Italian humanism generally was rejected as without philo-