On Foucault's Work: Continuity Rather Than Rupture

The Notions of 'The Subject' and 'Resistance' as Examples of Methodology, Indicating the Need to Understand Foucault's Oeuvre as a Continuity

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ABSTRACT

The early and late publications of the French philosopher Michel Foucault are customarily studied in isolation from each other. It is assumed that there exists a rupture between Foucault's early analysis of knowledge and power mechanisms that shape and form subjects and his later analysis of subjects constituting themselves (Harrer 2005). Whereas Foucault in his early work seems to have focussed on existing power relations in a more direct manner, through expressing them in practices of direct domination, his later work concentrates on the presence of indirect power relations in practices where people legislate and govern themselves according to (unconsciously) given rules of ethical conduct. In this view, it is not only 'the subject' that seems to come forward differently. Foucault's use and understanding of 'resistance' seems to have changed as well. What was a direct backlash against domination became a more indirect and subtle form that arises out of freedom practiced by people. One way to argue against this division is by pointing at Foucault's methodology. Whereas it is customary to divide Foucault's work into an archaeological and genealogical part corresponding to the division of the early and late period mentioned above, it can by contrast be argued that the methodology of his work should always be understood as a combination of both methods and must therefore be regarded as continuous. In this way, one can make Foucault's seemingly changing use and understanding of 'the subject' and 'resistance' comprehensible within a continuous whole.

A popular way to look at Foucault's work is to divide it into an early and late period. Roughly, his 'early' period includes works such as *Madness and Civilization* and *The Birth of the Clinic.* The 'middle' or 'transitionary' period encompasses works like *The Order of Things* and *The Archaeology of Knowledge* and his 'late' period is often identified with works like *Discipline and Punish,* the three volumes of *The History of Sexuality* and his *Collège de France Course Lectures.* Foucault has always been clear about the methodologies he relied on (see the reflective consideration of the methodology of archaeology at the end of *The Archaeology of Knowledge,* 1969). Nevertheless, scholars have found it difficult to analyse and characterise his work using a clear understanding of the continuous use of the methodologies applied. Instead of suddenly changing his approach, Foucault rather built on the methodological tools he already used before. His analyses were always mainly focused on the relationship between different conceptions of

freedom stemming from his understanding of the notion 'power'. Although there are many authors who emphasise only one form of this notion, we can open a new dimension in understanding Foucault's work by seeing this development and dynamic continuity between different usages of the notion 'power'. For example, in the first-mentioned camp, one can think of authors like Charles Taylor (1986) and Kevin Thompson (2003), but also Alessandro Fontana and Mauro Bertani (2003). While the second camp on the other hand will exist of authors like Sebastian Harrer (2005) and Maria Tamboukou (1999), but for instance also Mark Kelly (2013) and Rosi Braidotti (2011). Although it is beyond the scope of this article to go through all the positions of both camps, naming this list of authors does make clear that one should not be deterred by the changing connotation of 'the subject', 'resistance' and the underlying notion of 'power' as Foucault's ideas develop, but rather embrace this dynamic in order to understand his argumentation and body of thought.

In this article I will argue that, by focusing on Foucault's methodology and his notions of 'the subject' and 'resistance', we find continuity instead of rupture traversing the whole of his oeuvre and therefore should not divide his works into an early and late period. To investigate this, I will mainly concentrate on the notions of 'the subject' and 'resistance'. Can we speak of a 'return of the subject' in the late works of Foucault and a different use of the term 'resistance' in comparison with his earlier work, or can and should we understand these notions as existing in coherence with each other? In order to answer this question I will proceed here as follows. In the first section of this article I will clarify Foucault's archaeological and genealogical method and how these two are entangled with one another. In the second section I will show how these methods are both present throughout his work. Taking this perspective of co-operation of the two methods, the third section concentrates on how we should reinterpret the so-called 'return of the subject' in Foucault's later writings. The fourth section on its turn, concentrates on how we should reinterpret his use of the notion 'resistance' throughout his work.

ARCHAEOLOGY AND GENEALOGY IN FOUCAULT'S WORK

In his reconstruction of the history of science from the Renaissance onwards, Foucault (1966) has noted that different periods of time carry different ideas regarding the 'order of things' in the world. These conceptions produce a certain notion of what knowledge is, which influences and changes the way in which people shape science as a method to reach objective truth. These ideas about the order of things enable us to see certain ethical and political conventions as neutral knowledge or objective truth. In this way, new power systems of thought and knowledge emerge, which Foucault calls 'discursive formations' or 'epistèmes'. Within such an epistème certain things are seen as neutral knowledge and objective truth, while these things are not acknowledged

as such in other epistèmes. In his analysis, Foucault clarifies that things are ordered differently in different periods of time and that notions such as 'knowledge' and 'science' thus bear different meanings (Leezenberg and De Vries 2001).

In order to exemplify the discursive formations, Foucault makes use of what he calls an archaeological method. This term contains the Greek word 'archè', which can be translated as 'principle' or 'origin' and is often considered as organising principle. This enabled Foucault to investigate a certain stratification in terms of a linear and chronological development (Quadflieg 2009). However, it is not Foucault's intention to see the different discursive formations as parts of a linear stratification and determinate development (Visker 1990). In his attempt to find an origin in all these discursive formations, Foucault started expressing his archaeology as 'an-archaeology' (Visker 1990). His goal was to provide a spatial representation of a time period in which people thought and acted in a certain way and to give this period its own temporal meaning. This temporal meaning indicates that the objective interpretation present-day (social) sciences give to their scientific results is contingent and bears a certain meaning within the whole of a specific *epistème* (Visker 1990).

With this archaeology, Foucault attempts to work on the level of meaning of the historical, namely the historiographical. This indicates the profound structure and meaning of concepts like knowledge and scientific results within different epistèmes (Leezenberg and De Vries 2001). In this way, the archaeological approach works as a criticism. It shows that our view of science, knowledge and truth is not absolute, but unconsciously shaped by a historical contingent shaped episteme, which raises a certain regime of rules that works as an unchangeable and true structure without the subjects being aware of it (Gutting 2013). It realises a linguistic turn, which shows that position one has adopted as a subject in the course of the history of science has been an unfounded assumption (Leezenberg and De Vries 2001).

Foucault wanted to indicate the epistèmes from the inside and offer a description of the fact that present-day practices, which developed from these epistèmes, have a hermeneutic rather than an objective, explanatory relevance. This hermeneutic relevance is not about asking for the historical causes or truth, but about the meaning of the descriptions of the discursive formations in light of the current situation. Present-day practices are, according to Foucault, no longer characterized as being real, a necessary advance in science to objective truth. Instead, they mainly consist of power structures that, together with the historical emergence of objective knowledge, pervasively structure, provide direction and determine a society. This 'hermeneutics of power' indicates the historical structures in terms of the way in which power is generated as meaningful aspect. Thanks to Foucault, practices have been given a different meaning. They are not objective in an absolute sense, that is, as practices that produce neutral knowledge. Rather, these practices are

based on historical contingencies. As such, they shape, give direction and control subjects within a society in a way that is not in line with objective truth.

By introducing these power relations within scientific practices, Foucault introduced a new method, called 'genealogy'. This term, coined by Nietzsche, stands for the approach that an epistemic system of thoughts is not part of a big continuous advancement of science towards the objective truth, but rather a contingent historical order (Visker 1990).[1] As a philologist, Nietzsche used the genealogy as a method to replace a traditional objectifying history of moral language by a critical reconstruction. While the traditional historian was looking for the pure origin of terms and the absolute truth in history (Tamboukou 1999), Nietzsche wanted to create a reconstruction of the contingencies that shaped history and explained the development of the meaning of moral terms (Nietzsche 1887). In his genealogies he searched within a cultural-historical context for the derivation and development of key concepts of morality. Foucault was inspired by these thoughts to come to his own genealogical history of science, which could substantiate his views on contemporary scientific power practices. The way in which Foucault makes this Nietzschean method his own, can be well illustrated by the following quote from the article 'Writing Genealogies: an exploration of Foucault's strategies for doing research' by Maria Tamboukou (1999, 208): "the genealogist does not look beyond or behind historical practices to find a simple unity of meaning or function, or a changeless significance of ourselves and the world around us. The aim is rather to look more closely at the workings of those practices in which moral norms and truths about ourselves have been constructed". By this interpretation of Foucault's genealogical approach, it becomes clear how we can understand it as a method by which Foucault can emphasize that the world and ourselves have no simple and unambiguous meaning and that what we assume to be true is determined by practices in which we act.

Just like his archaeology, Foucault's genealogical method has a temporal meaning as well, albeit in a different way. His genealogy is employed as an approach that has its origin in the present and lets people search through an interpretation of history to its own trajectory or path from which they can understand themselves. In the next section it will become clear that this approach is not only characteristic for Foucault's later work (from 1975 and beyond), but can already be noticed in an early work such as *The Birth of the Clinic* (1963). In this last-mentioned work, Foucault not only invited us to think about the meaning of the concept 'disease' in an earlier time period, but

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also about the contingent meaning this concept bears today. Foucault's genealogy enables it to think about the meaning of a historical contingent concept from a distance, as if it can explain and clarify our own time, our understanding of science and our self-understanding. Foucault demonstrated that scientific disciplines do not consist of practices with an unchangeable and objective understanding of knowledge and truth, but rather work within all kinds of power relations that define a temporarily meaning of what is knowledge and truth.

It seems fair to conclude that the linguistic turn in Foucault's archaeology is supplemented by the practical turn in his genealogical method (Leezenberg and De Vries 2001). His genealogical description illuminated how practices got an alternative meaning and how a regime of rules within a discursive formation can determine our view on science, knowledge and truth. According to Foucault, the scientific practices are not grounded in neutral knowledge, but are being shaped by far-reaching, often anonymous and invisible power structures, which subsequently give direction and determine the society in a pervasive, anonymous and invisible way.

ARCHAEOLOGY AND GENEALOGY THROUGHOUT FOUCAULT'S WORK

Now that it is clear what Foucault's archaeological and genealogical method consist of and how they are entangled, we can take a closer look on how they are both present throughout his work. Taking examples from one of Foucault's earlier works – *The Birth of the Clinic* (1963) – and one of his later works – *The Use of Pleasure* (1984) – I will show that both methods are applied and work together.

First of all, a general remark should be made about how Foucault considered his own methodology. Even though archaeology and genealogy seem to have different effects, the two elements should not be considered as two separate methods: "No, no, no, … no, no, I never stopped doing archaeology. I never stopped doing genealogy. Genealogy defines the target and the finality of the work and archaeology indicates the field with which I deal to make a genealogy" (in Tamboukou 1999, 206).[2] As the quote shows, Foucault declares that there is no clear difference between his methods and that there is no methodological shift within the time he wrote his different works. This indicates that his texts can better be understood as a coherent whole wherein these two elements cooperate.

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[2] Maria Tamboukou. 1999. "Writing Genealogies: an exploration of Foucault's strategies for doing research," in *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 20 (2): 206.

In *The Birth of the Clinic* (1963), which often is considered to be an archaeological work, we can Foucault's genealogy is present. In his description of the third spatialization in the chapter 'Spaces and Classes', the connection between knowledge and power within medicine is marked on the basis of social space:

> But to a greater extent than the other forms of spatialization, it is the locus of various dialectics: heterogeneous figures, time lags, political struggles, demands and utopias, economic constraints, social confrontations. In it, a whole corpus of medical practices and institutions confronts the primary and secondary spatializations with forms of a social space whose genesis, structure, and laws are of a different nature (Foucault 2003, 17).

With his reconstruction of the way in which the development of medicine can be understood within the social space, Foucault points at the social power relations that operate within medical institutions and radically change the knowledge of diseases on the basis of a concrete manifestation of the power/knowledge construct (Foucault 2003). Foucault's reconstruction gives a deeper meaning to this systematic discursive formation as consisting of power relations. It invites us to think about the contingent interpretation people have given to a certain system which gave rise to medicine and where people had a certain self-understanding. Moreover, it helps to rethink how people can understand and change their own contingent system and self-understanding. When the reader interprets this process of discursive power formations and connects this to his own frame of reference, it becomes apparent that he too could have been different as a subject. The concept of freedom hidden in this hypothetical reconstruction is Foucault's genealogical goal within his archaeological method. As he said himself: "Genealogy defines the target and the finality of the work and archaeology indicates the field with which I deal to make a genealogy" (quoted in Tamboukou 1999).

As for Foucault's later works I will take *The Use of Pleasure,* which was first published in 1984. This later work is mainly considered to be genealogical, but I will show that it makes use of the same composite methodology as his earlier work. In order to show why we should understand this work as archaeological as well as genealogical, consider how Foucault explains the aim of his study on sexuality:

> I now had to undertake a third shift, in order to analyze what is termed "the subject." … What were the games of truth by which human beings came to see themselves as desiring individuals? … The studies that follow, like the others I have done previously, are studies of "history" by reason of the domain they deal with and the references they appeal to; but they are not the work of a "historian." … It was a philosophical exercise. The object was to learn to what extent the effort to think one's own history can free thought from what it silently thinks, and so enable it to think differently (Foucault 1990, 6-7).

This quote shows that Foucault wants the reader to understand this work, just like his earlier writings, as a study that comprises both an archaeological and genealogical part. He appoints here clearly that the historical analysis as we know them from his investigations are also supplemented by a step that connects it to our own framework of reference. This combination of steps enables the reader to understand how the notion of sexuality developed over time and meant different things for people's perception of themselves and the world around them. Without creating a historical stratification by means of an archaeological method, this genealogical understanding of the changing meaning of sexuality and therewith the possibility to think it differently today is not even possible. Thus, Foucault's archaeology and genealogy should be understood as a cooperating whole throughout his analyses.

REINTERPRETING THE 'RETURN OF THE SUBJECT' IN THE 'LATE' FOUCAULT

In this section I will discuss how one should reinterpret the often suggested 'return of the subject' in Foucault's later work. It is often stated that Foucault denied the existence of a free and autonomous subject that constitutes itself in his early work. Here, people were presented as determined and subjected by external power structures only. In his later work, however, Foucault appears to refer to this notion on a regular base.[3] I will argue that these two seemingly different notions of the subject exist in coherence with each other and thus do not point at a rupture in his oeuvre.

In order to make this reinterpretation clear, I will start with an explanation of the 'return of the subject'. What was, according to those authors who claim this return, the difference between Foucault's notion of the 'subject' in his earlier and later writings? Commentators who hold Foucault's subject consists of two different notions, often point at his use of 'power'. For example, Charles Taylor equals Foucault's 'power' with 'domination' (Wisnewski 2000). In his critique on Foucault, Taylor marks that the concept of disciplinary power does not imply a notion of direct resistance to this power only (as he think Foucault puts it). At the same time, however, it also implies a notion of liberation and thus of freedom. By understanding Foucault's use of the term disciplinary power as the presence of practices of domination that fabricate subject as docile bodies only, Taylor misses the real meaning of Foucault's use of the term and the way it can explain the role of a continuous use of 'the subject' in his analyses. As a result, Taylor sees a

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[3] In this article I will only use Charles Taylor's critique on Foucault, but Jeremy Wisnewski's gives some more examples in his article of commentators that criticize Foucault. For example, see Jürgen Habermas. 1987. *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity.* Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, chap. 9 and 10; Axel Honneth. 1991. *The Critique of Power: Reflective Stages in a Critical Social Theory.* Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, chap. 4.6; Thomas McCarthy. 1991. 'The Critique of Impure Reason: Foucault and the Frankfurt School.' In *Ideals and Illusions: On Deconstruction and Reconstruction in Contemporary Critical Theory,* ed. Thomas McCarthy. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press; Michael Walzer. 1986. 'The Politics of Michel Foucault.' In *Foucault: A Critical Reader*, ed. David Hoy. Oxford: Blackwell; Charles Taylor, "Foucault on Freedom and Truth," *Foucault: A Critical Reader*.

rupture between Foucault's earlier and later writings. He believes that the earlier writings focus on how the dynamic relation of knowledge and power leads to different forms of domination. That is, fabricating 'the subject' on the basis of a top-down normalizing power within all sorts of social structures. In Foucault's later works, however, he believes that ideas of freedom and self-constitution appear outside the power of domination. In that case, 'the subject' doesn't fit into Foucault's 'old' theory of power anymore. This is, however, not the case. Disciplinary power does not solely appear as the practice of domination. When reading Foucault's early writings through the lens of the later ones, we can see that the notion of domination as well as freedom is part of his analyses on power relations all along. What Foucault did in earlier works such as *Archaeology of Knowledge* and *Discipline and Punish* was not only posing different kinds of top-down disciplinary power structures against each other in order to show how practices of domination fabricated 'the subject'.[4] He also showed on the basis of an archaeological and genealogical method that the past is not able to provide a solid foundation for our knowledge claims. What truth is and what it means to be human is historically situated within rules that govern in that particular period of time. What it is to be human is to exist within power relations all the time, without the possibility to escape from it. According to Foucault, there is always room for free choice and making own decisions, as well as for domination and fabrication within these relations to create a specific understanding of 'the subject'. The structures that give form to such an understanding should thus be understood as the dynamic composition of top-down and bottom-up disciplinary power relations, which contain practices of both domination and freedom.

Existing in these power relations is the same as acting from a particular discursive formation. In both cases, one accepts certain rules that are related to what people in that specific period of time see as truth. As Jeremy Wisnewski (2000, 424) puts his understanding of this existence: "we are these differences [of rules] in the sense that an individual is nothing more than the product of existing discursive practices". Although this quote seems to suggest that people in the end are still dominated by external forces with no room left for freedom, liberty and autonomy at all, we should understand this existence, the discursive formation we live in, as something that is also positive and productive. "What defines a relationship of power is that it is a mode of action which does not act directly and immediately on others. Instead it acts upon their actions" (Foucault 1983). Power in this sense is thus not only a pure limit or the act of repressing individuals directly, but can also open up spaces to be free and productive in answering the domination that blocked the dynamic relation between both.

How people can practice freedom and answer to domination can be seen in Foucault's later writings when he introduces the emerging of a new understanding of 'the subject'. According to

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[4] These works are published respectively in 1969 and 1975. While the first is mainly regarded as one of Foucault's early writings, the second is regarded as a work that stands for the transition from his early to late period.

Foucault, people still exist within power relations. The difference is that people are no longer subjectivated mainly through top-down practices of direct domination, but much more through bottom-up practices of indirect self-governing. From the work of Foucault, it can be observed that disciplinary power has undergone an internal change. It transformed from a power directly posed upon the collective into a governmental mode of power that is internalized within individuals of society.[5]

There is no ontological difference between the earlier and later 'subject' presented by Foucault. Subjectivation always expresses itself in terms of disciplinary power, albeit in different forms (Harrer 2005).[6] With his archaeological and genealogical method, Foucault showed us how always-present disciplinary power works, which components it contains and how these relate to each other. By means of his method we can see that there will always be different, contingent modes of subjectivation throughout history, formalised in discursive formations, defining the way we understand ourselves. Throughout all his writings, Foucault makes a historical stratification of time periods wherein the subjectivation of individuals takes place and puts these stratifications next to our own time to demonstrate how this leads to an understanding of 'the subject' that is different from our own understanding (and thus how our understanding could have been different too). He shows how spaces open up continuously so that a specific notion 'the subject' will come forward within this ever-existing game of power relations in which we live. It helps us understand that there is no 'return of the subject' as being free and autonomous with respect to the time in which it seemed dominated, because the content of this notion 'the subject' just changed in time and will change again. Instead of looking for a 'subject' which is real, essentially free and autonomous again, we should understand ourselves as existing within dynamic power relations and a particular truth-conception that is historically contingent and shaped our understanding of ourselves and the world around us.

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[5] For example, we see a big change in medicine and the way how people should cope with health issues. While people first were treated as a collective in the sense that it was the doctor (and above the doctor, the state) who had direct power over sick people in order to make them healthy again, it is now the case that these rules about how to live healthy are internalized within every individual, so that it is expected that everyone can (and should, due to the way society presents itself in institutions) take care of their own individualised health. This example clarifies that we should not understand people as subjects that are saved from domination and return as free and autonomous 'again' (see Marcelo Hoffman. 2011. 'Disciplinary power.' In *Michel Foucault, Key Concepts*, ed. Dianna Taylor. Durham: Acumen. 36). Instead, we should understand the notion of 'the subject' that emerges here as a different way of being within the dynamics of power structures; as being disciplined differently and not as Foucault's solution to practices of domination. Instead, we can see spaces open up, which produce and practice new ideas and ways of being.

[6] As example, one can take Foucault's notion of *assujettissement,* which can be translated as 'the submitting to a rule'. Within the mode of subjectivation Foucault talks about in his earlier writings, we see this notion coming up in the form of direct normalising powers upon individuals, which then fabricate 'the subject' (such as doctors, prison guards and school teachers as part of the state power in *Discipline and Punish*). In the mode of subjectivation Foucault writes about in his later writings we still see this notion, but then in the form of ethical self-constitution by way of ascetic practices or technologies of the self, which one first practices under supervision of a master and then is being bend back on the subject itself as a governmental mode of power (see Sebastian Harrer, 'The Theme of Subjectivity in Foucault's Lecture Series *L'Herméneutique du Sujet.'* 81). Examples of these 'care of the self' practices are the training of reflexivity over oneself, the curbing of your needs, beliefs and desires and the proper use of speech (see Mark G.E. Kelly. 2013. *Foucault, Subjectivity and Technologies of the Self,* in *A Companion to Foucault*, eds. Christopher Falzon, Timothy O'Leary and Jana Sawicki. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing. And Cressida J. Heyes. 2011. 'Subjectivity and Power.' In *Michel Foucault: Key Concepts*, ed. Dianna Taylor. Durham: Acumen.) The same can be seen with Foucault's notion of 'surveillance'. While it first came up in the form of the visible or invisible presence of the supervisor's gaze in for example *Discipline and Punish*, it later came up in the form of a direct or indirect presence of spiritual guidance that disciplined individuals within their ethical self-constitution.

REINTERPRETING RESISTANCE IN EARLY AND LATE FOUCAULT

Foucault's use of the term 'resistance' is closely related to the above-mentioned interpretation of the 'return of the subject'. In this section I will show that Foucault uses this term consistently throughout his work as well.

In his article *Forms of Resistance*, Kevin Thompson observed that the concept of resistance underwent a profound shift in Foucault's work and that the reason can be found in a fundamental change of the conception of power itself (2003, 113). Thompson made a distinction between 'tactical reversal' and 'aesthetics of existence' and argued that Foucault's earlier writings fall back on a conception of 'strategic power'. He defines this "as a process of continuous struggle immanent within a variety of different sorts of social relations (economic, epistemic, pedagogical, erotic, etc.)" (Thompson 2003, 113). Power is here understood as the struggle between all kinds of intentional dominating forces that try to set up and maintain a certain social order. "In short," Thompson says (2003, 117), "power relations are relational to the extent that the ascendency of one force is resisted by the exercise of another". Resistance is in this case not opposed to power, but intrinsic to it. While it is true that Foucault thinks that we cannot act outside the dynamic set of power relations, he refutes that it only consists of struggling suppressing forces that call for liberation of those under the sway of power's domination (Thompson 2003, 118). To understand power in Thompson's 'strategic' sense, one only sees resistance in a negative way as "the great refusal of enslavement" (2003, 118). One only sees resistance as tactically reversing the dominating structure with its own dominating strategy in order to create a new social order. Thompson (2003, 120) states that, because this understanding of strategic power failed to capture the "necessarily creative character of resistance and critique", Foucault (2010) comes up with this different use of power that he calls 'governmentality'. In this view, power relations are not seen as direct dominating forces from state power, but as a strategy to guide people's behaviour indirectly, something which Foucault called 'the conduct of conduct'. Thompson marks that the central point in such practices of governmentalization is that 'the other' is no longer regarded as an object of domination, but in (a minimal way) as an agent, "who is capable to act in and through such structuring, as one able to exercise precisely their capacities" (2003, 122). What thus seems to be fundamentally different in this form of power is that *freedom* appears as the condition of the exercise and that *freedom practices* rather than only *direct tactical reversal* are intrinsically apparent as power's mode of resistance.

Thompson sees the notion of freedom and domination within Foucault's understanding of resistance (and thus power) as necessarily incompatible with each other. While resistance or critique first had the function of directly thwarting the dominating social order, it later had the function of us as free individuals, who tried "to promote new forms of subjectivity through the

refusal of the type of individuality that has been opposed on us" (Foucault 1997, 336). Although Thompson is right that Foucault emphasizes power relations that establish certain techniques to govern people's behaviour and a notion of freedom to critique this indirect control, it is however not grounded in a different conception of power. Foucault's notion of power still consists of the dynamic composition of top-down and bottom-up approaches. In his earlier writings, where the top-down, dominating sort of power is most visible within his analysis, the sort of resistance that seems to be possible is what Thompson (2003) calls 'tactical reversal'. Foucault's later writings are still working with this same notion of power, albeit that the bottom-up approach comes more prominent. Power relations are now better seen in governmentalizing practices and the way resistance appears to us is in the form of freedom practices that Thompson (2003) calls 'aesthetics of existence'. This internal shift within one and the same idea of power only shows us the possibility to constitute new forms of subjectivity or agency and to create alternative ways of being through self-formation or self-governing.

Now, a critical attitude to form and govern ourselves is still at work in the practices of governance under which we presently live. When we bear in mind Foucault's analysis of power, which not only gives us an understanding of how its internal form changed over time, but also makes us understand that this form could have been different from what we experience today, how can we still make use of this notion of resistance? Once we see and acknowledge that we presently still live in a more bottom-up power structure of governmentalization, we can make use of this insight and our productive power to create new ideas.[7] From our position we can open up spaces that give room to freedom practices that can generate new ways of being in order to replace the old, stigmatised governmentalizing rules. Foucault's archaeology and genealogy forces us to constantly check who we are and should become (Franek 2006). We are, after all, part of the dynamics of power structures and capable of producing, creating and forming new ideas. It offers us the possibility to challenge and change the current regime and to partly re-create and free ourselves from the definitions and limitations it poses upon us.

CONCLUSION

In this article I have showed that, by focusing on Foucault's methodology and the notions of 'the subject' and 'resistance', we find continuity instead of a rupture traversing the whole of his oeuvre and therefore should not divide his works into an early and late period. In order to come to this conclusion I first analysed Foucault's used methodology of archaeology and genealogy. After that I focused on the notions of 'the subject' and 'resistance' and clarified why we should understand these notions as being used continuously throughout Foucault's work. Briefly it can be

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[7] For further ideas about freedom practices as creative ideas or fictions, see Zachary Simpson. 2012. *Life as Art: Aesthetics and the Creation of Self.* New York: Lexington Books.

said that Foucault analysed how inescapable power structures, as being a dynamic relation, has gone through an internal change over time and can help us understand ourselves and the world around us in a different way.

However, there is an important remark that needs to be made. Throughout this article, I have spoken about an internal change or shift within Foucault's continuous use of the term 'power'. While it can be argued according to my reading that Foucault indeed uses the term in all of his work as if they mean the same thing (namely an inescapable dynamic relation structure), it can be questioned whether these usages are compatible with each other. To what extent is it still reasonable to conceive the contraries of domination and freedom as two parts belonging to this one term 'power'? In this article I have tried to clarify that it is a fruitful idea par excellence to combine these two extremes, to see their co-dependency and to counteract our tendency to conceive a term like 'power' as something that can only have one meaning in order to be meaningful.

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