

# Foucault, Power, Left Politics

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Foucault is useful. For those of us who are interested in understanding and contributing to at least some of the objectives often aggregated under the heading 'Left politics in Australia', we can gain a great deal from some of the work of this increasingly influential French thinker.

But we must be careful. In Australian political analysis, it seems to me, the work of Foucault has taken on the status of a magical elixir. There are those who scorn its advertised benefits claiming they have always gotten by without it. There are those who drink it freely and regard it as genuinely magical, able to provide a ready cure for all the ills of political analysis. And there are those who are tempted to try it and who, when they have had no more than a sip, quickly adopt one or other of the above positions.

In this essay I aim to avoid treating Foucault's work as such an elixir. I intend to present a brief reading of some of Foucault's work on power, and to use this reading as the basis for formulating an alternative mode of political analysis and in turn for introducing some arguments about Left politics in Australia. I will *use* Foucault rather than being for or against Foucault. This goes some way down the path recently suggested by Bob Connell<sup>1</sup> — to examine the relevance of marxism *vis à vis* 'difference theory', including the work of Foucault.

Connell argues that Australian political analysis must focus on present Australian political situations and should employ any

concepts which helps it to do so. He suggests that difference theory can and should be used alongside some of the ideas of Australian marxists and some of those of the 'libertarian socialists and cultural radicals'. He warns against caricaturing ideas, stressing that we should be always on the look-out for 'what is useful, helpful, admirable and worth building on'.<sup>2</sup> He sums up:

... the literature of 'difference' may be a fruitful and enriching one, diversifying and complicating our view of this world. Taken as a slogan and erected into a strategic guideline, its effects are likely to be the reverse: it can become a code-word for separation and mutual indifference: for refusal of the hard questions, of the complexities and frustrations of mass politics, coalitions, mutual learning and transformation.<sup>3</sup>

My introductory reading of some of Foucault's ideas on power will involve both points of explication and critique. On this basis, in the second section I will argue that the notion of power itself is not worth retaining, that political analysis is best undertaken without it, and that thereby an alternative mode of political analysis can be presented. In the third and final section I will attempt to define Left politics in Australia and discuss the ramification for it of replacing existing modes of analysis with the alternative mode informed by my critical reading of Foucault. I will conclude by expressing a few doubts about the role of political analysis, including the role of this essay.

## 1. *Foucault and Power*

The most convenient first step is to present some propositions from Foucault about what power is not. Power is not a possession, it is not something which is owned or exercised by a class, a group or an individual.<sup>5</sup> Power is not a process of the subjugation of independently existing individuals.<sup>6</sup> Power is not simply the act

1. Bob Connell, 'Marxists and Anti-Marxists: Reflections on Similarity and Difference', *Intervention* 18, n.d.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 79, 80.

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 82-3.

4. This section is based mainly on my 'Power and Power Analysis: Beyond Foucault?', *Economy and Society* 12, 4, 1983. Any material in the section not sourced in this *Economy and Society* article will be acknowledged separately and/or will be contained in footnotes.

5. Michel Foucault, 'Power and Norm: Notes', in M. Morris and P. Patton eds, *Michel Foucault: Power, Truth, Strategy*, Sydney, Ferral Publications, 1979, p. 59.

6. Foucault, 'Power and Strategies', in C. Gordon ed., *Power-Knowledge: Michel Foucault*, New York, Pantheon Books, 1980, p. 140.

of saying 'no', the act of saying 'thou shalt not'. Power is not the prohibitions of a Monarch, or a State, or the Law, or the General Will.<sup>7</sup> Power is not monolithic or one-sided, it is not 'controlled' from 'one point of view'.<sup>8</sup>

The second step is to present some propositions from Foucault about what power is. Power is 'co-extensive with the social body', it is a set of relations which are 'interwoven with other kinds of relations'. It 'starts' in the 'smallest elements of the social body' (family, sexual relations, neighbourhoods) and 'works its way up'. He stresses that power must be studied 'from the bottom up'. To help in this endeavour he uses the notion of technologies, mechanisms for the specific operation of power. Simple examples might be the clock and its role in power relations in the workplace, and the contraceptive pill and its role in power relations in homes and in medicine. Foucault concentrates though on the more complex example of disciplinary technology. This technology is, for him, the dominant technology of power in the modern era. It is a technology by which many are controlled by few. His exemplar is Bentham's Panopticon, an ideal prison in which a limited number of guards in a central tower watch and control a large number of prisoners. This principle he suggests is now in use in contemporary institutions such as schools and factories.

We saw above that Foucault rejects the idea that power works on independently existing individuals. As Martin puts it: 'Power does not just happen to people, people happen to it.'<sup>9</sup> For Foucault the subjects of power are formed in power relations. He sometimes refers to these subjects of power by the term 'bodies'. He says 'bodies are produced in power'.<sup>10</sup> Equally he says that resistance,

7. Foucault, 'The Eye of Power', in *ibid.*, p. 158.
8. Foucault, 'Power and Norm: Notes', *op. cit.*, p. 60.
9. Bill Martin, 'Foucault: Power/Counter-Power', *Arena* 73, 1985, p. 140. Foucault does not deny the existence and operation of individuals, only that individuals are the natural and sole focus of power.
10. In an interview given not long before his death (and after the publication in France of the second and third volumes of the history of sexuality project) Foucault suggests a further arm to his ideas on subjects of power when he advances some propositions about 'the self'. Here, the idea of individuals as entities which pre-exist power relations seems to be somewhat resuscitated as Foucault discusses 'techniques of governing the self' which are adopted by individuals and which form the basis of sexuality (Foucault, 'The Regard for Truth', preface by Paul Patton, *Art and Text* 16, 1984). Faced with suggestions like these from Foucault we can do one of two things. We can dump everything Foucault has previously said about subjects and return easily to the notion of individuals as unproblematic foci of political

like power itself, is everywhere. Martin calls this opposite of power, 'counter-power'. While Foucault tells us that power may control resistance — resistance is the 'counter-stroke' to power — Martin stresses that this does not mean we can find a single origin of resistance, of 'counter-power', and then build a politics of resistance around it. He says that just as power for Foucault does not 'emanate from a sovereign, a state, or a ruling class', so resistances, 'counter-powers', 'do not fit this framework'.<sup>11</sup>

The third step in our summary is to present some points of criticism/development. The major problem with Foucault's understanding of power is the way the concept takes on a life of its own. It is widely acknowledged, (Foucault acknowledges this himself) that his project is aimed at allowing power analysis to consider objects like sexuality and prisons in their own right. These have tended to be ignored or marginalized by various forms of marxist analysis which concentrate, either immediately or ultimately, on objects central to economic production. This for me is a laudable and crucial aim. But I cannot see how Foucault's conception of power can help achieve it. We are being asked to replace analyses which eventually end up at the Economy or the State with analyses which eventually end up at Power or Discipline. This does not seem a particularly useful move if we want power analysis to address objects in their own right. In other words it is the necessary 'ending up' which is the real problem, not the ending up at the economy or the state, as Foucault seems to be saying.

One way in which we can readily develop Foucault's insights in relation to the location of power is to concentrate on particular sites of power relations rather than on their supposed aggregation or climax in a society or state. I do not want to place too much weight on the concept of sites, for if it is given too much to carry it will become effectively the same thing as what is often currently understood as society or the state. We might loosely define a site as an intersection of particular objectives (with the forces trying to achieve them), but a definition, or this particular term itself, is

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action. Or, alternatively, we can concentrate on the 'techniques' aspect of his formulation, assume that individuals are a separate set of techniques from those of the self, not pre-existing entities, and continue our reworking of Left politics to which the problematization of the notion of pre-existing individuals is central. Hopefully my arguments in this essay will demonstrate the wisdom of the latter choice.

11. Martin, *op. cit.*, pp. 144, 147.

not as important as the task of sharpening the picture gained in constructing the object of any analysis.

Power analysis should be about analysing the way particular objectives are operating (crudely, whether they are succeeding or failing, in their own terms and in relation to other objectives) in particular places or sites at particular moments (analysis must be an ongoing process). It has to be stressed at this point that this call for a concentration on particular objectives in particular sites does not mean a call for a concentration on *small* objectives in *small* sites. It is an attempt to avoid the problems of the general, assumed to be general or interconnected through the operation of some mysterious, automatic principles of aggregation. It is not an attempt to avoid the big or the global. It is a call for a concentration on *specific* objectives in *specific* sites — objectives with definite conditions of operation. In this way control of the world economy can be a specific objective, with definite conditions of operation in procedures of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the United Nations, a range of inter-nation trading agreements, and so on, just as control of a classroom can be a specific objective, with definite conditions of operation in the use of certain pedagogic techniques, implementation of certain rules of classroom behaviour, and limiting decisions about curriculum design.

In relation to the production or constitution of subjects in power we need firstly to make use of one of Foucault's interventions against certain modes of writing history, to reformulate the idea of the *production* or *constitution* of subjects. This intervention is in opposition to the dominance of the concept of origin in much history writing and thus is in opposition to the search for origins. Rather than going into detail here we need only to note that these arguments add up to the position that as we can only ever know the past as constructs in the present, any search for origins has to be fruitless.<sup>12</sup> We can establish lines of formation for any object, establish a genealogy for it, shed light on 'clues' about it, as Donzelot puts it,<sup>13</sup> but only in the present, only — in Donzelot's words again — in the present tense. We cannot seriously grant the status of origin to what must be part of a contemporary construction (which we might see as continual

12. Probably the best account to appear so far on Foucault's arguments against the notion of origins is Mark Poster's *Marxism, Foucault and History*, Cambridge, Polity, 1984, ch. 3.

13. Jacques Donzelot, 'The Poverty of Political Culture', *Ideology and Consciousness* 5, 1979, pp. 78-9.

reconstruction) process. Foucault suggests, though he never directly acknowledges this, that we are better to think of the objects of any investigation in a way made popular by Althusser, as always-already existing. So in short we cannot readily accept the idea of the production or constitution of our object of investigation — the subjects of power. We are better off considering the *operation* of subjects rather than their production or constitution.

Having done this we can move on to make another reformulation of Foucault's treatment of the subjects of power. We need to put more emphasis on the *different* ways in which *different* specific forms of subjects operate in *different* specific sites, and less emphasis on the operation of subjects in relation to Power or Discipline. This formulation of Foucault's is both too general and too negative. It is too general in that it suggests that all subjects operate in the same way and it is too negative in that it suggests, despite his own warnings that theories of the subject should not do so, that all subjects operate in subjection — they are subjects of Power or Discipline, whether they are controllers or controlled.

An example of the way we might see the operation of subjects in difference is the operation of different specific subject-forms in Australian schools. Within schools we have the operation of the subject-form 'child' in ways similar to those in which it operates in other sites, like families, government agencies and medical institutions. The child has no necessary biological or psychological status — whether it is a 'real, breathing, feeling human being' is not relevant. The 'child' is a construct of knowledges which often overlap: in families, knowledges about what stage the child is at, about what the child needs; in government agencies, knowledges about paying the parent welfare payments for the child, about regulations to prevent the child from undertaking most forms of paid employment; in medical institutions, knowledges about the 'special' illnesses which the child might suffer, about the need for special treatment facilities required to treat the child.<sup>14</sup> In other words the child is a specific subject-form which operates via the use of certain techniques of knowledge. In schools this specific subject-form operates via techniques of knowledge such as those concerned with developmental stages, but it is also transformed through pedagogic and administrative techniques like segregating, testing and keeping records on pupils into other specific subject-

14. An excellent account of the way knowledges of the child operate is provided by Donzelot's *The Policing of Families*, New York, Pantheon, 1979.

forms: for instance, boy or girl, slow learner or prodigy, problem pupil or co-operative pupil.

The operation of subjects in difference might also involve the transformation of non-person subject-forms. The subject-form 'family business', operating via techniques of knowledge concerned with running a small business, might be transformed via techniques of knowledge concerned with expanding businesses, especially certain legal techniques, into the subject-form 'limited liability company'.<sup>15</sup>

A further step involves questioning Foucault's treatment of resistance or opposition. If resistance is controlled by power, it is not really resistance at all, resistance cannot exist. Add to this the problem of seeing resistance in a general way, of the same form, in all places, and we obviously are in need of a further reformulation. It is better not to seek any general form for resistance, but to examine the way objectives come into opposition with each other and/or with the objective (or objectives) which has (or have) achieved a dominance in a particular site (or perhaps with the way they do *not* come into opposition). For example we can analyse the way the objective of improving the pay and conditions of untenured university staff comes into opposition with the objective of universities retaining flexibility in their staffing policies, without the need to resort to a general theory of resistance. And we can do the same when we are analysing the way the objective of shifting the burden of taxation away from low- and middle-income earners comes into opposition with the objective of maintaining a high level of profitability for multi-national corporations in Australia. As long as the sites and objectives involved are seen in their specificity we run into little difficulty and we keep our analysis at the level of the conditions of operation of power. We will see in the third section what this argument means for the idea of Left politics or socialist politics.

15. Note that I am using the term 'subject-form' instead of 'subject'. While I do think it is a more useful way of discussing the details of the processes of subject operation, I am fully aware that it leaves many of the problems of definition (such as differences between person, type of person and non-person forms, relationship to objectives involved in sites) unresolved. Many people working in this area (including me) have tried, among others, the terms 'agent', 'actor', and 'force' to try to overcome these problems, but with little real success. It seems now that the best thing to do is to opt for one term or another, acknowledge the difficulties, and proceed.

## 2. *Problematizing Power*

I argued above that the main problem with Foucault's treatment of power is the way the concept takes on a life of its own. I now want to extend this argument to show that this problem is a problem with the concept itself not just with Foucault's treatment of it.

There are two closely related aspects to the problem with the concept of power itself — one involves its ontological status and the other involves its singular status. When I say that power takes on a life of its own in Foucault's hands, I am saying that it takes on an ontological status of its own — it becomes its own reality. But Foucault should not be singled out here; he is doing no more than following a long tradition in understanding power as a real entity, something which can be known in itself. This tradition is particularly strong within most modes of political analysis, certainly those predominantly British-style marxist and liberal modes used in Australia.<sup>16</sup>

The major ramification for political analysis and the consequent political actions of this aspect of the problem with power is that analysts end up spending a lot of unproductive time trying to know power itself. It is an especially widespread instance of the problem of essentialism criticized earlier. While some marxist modes of political analysis can and should be criticized for unnecessarily imposing an essence like the Economy, the State or the Class Struggle on specific objects of analysis, while liberal modes should be criticized for imposing an essence like the Individual, and while Foucault should be criticized for imposing an essence like Discipline, Foucault should not be the only one criticized for imposing power as an essence. We may well say that power too readily becomes *Power* in his hands, but we should not say it at the cost of realizing that this must happen in anyone's hands, given that the concept currently has this status in most sites of political analysis; power in effect is always being spelt with a capital P.

Of course I am touching on a much larger problem here,

16. Consider Steven Lukes's book *Power: A Radical View* (Oxford, OUP, 1974, esp. Chs. 1, 2 and 3) which has been quite influential in Australia and which addresses itself to both marxist and liberal modes of political analysis. Lukes sets up his entire book in terms of *views* of power with *dimensions*, on the assumption that power is something that is so real it can be seen, at least in theoretical terms.



sometimes called the problem of knowledge. Attempts to know Power in itself, like attempts to know the State or the Individual, might best be seen as inspired by, or even as the remnants of, the Enlightenment project. This project, which envelops much Western science, suggests that grand meta-knowledge is possible and moreover that it is the key to grand social and political reforms. While it would be fair to say that much of this essay is an encouragement to abandon this project and its remnants as futile and unproductive, for other less ambitious political projects with clearer and more achievable objectives, all I intend to do here is acknowledge the influence on my thinking of the debate currently taking place between Habermas, arguing for the retention of a sophisticated version of the Enlightenment thesis, and Lyotard, arguing that this is not possible.<sup>17</sup>

The other aspect of the problem with power itself — its singular status — means that not only is power being investigated as a real entity but also that it is being investigated as the *one* and only entity ultimately worth investigating. All sites of politics and the different objectives and forces involved are brought under the umbrella of the one great concept.

The singular status backs up the ontological one. A futile and counter-productive project becomes even more so. Why not just stick with the concept of politics and forget about power. Perhaps it too will eventually fall victim to the Enlightenment euphoria in sites of political analysis and political action in the same way as has power. But for the time being at least politics is a concept which allows the investigation of the operation of different objectives and different forces, in particular sites, without opening up a grand umbrella to unify them. At the moment politics is a concept which lends itself far more readily than power to the analysis of and within different sites without it becoming an umbrella. We can have the politics of prisons in its own right, we can have the politics of child-care in its own right. Nothing is lost, in fact a lot is gained.

We head into the next section then, armed with an argument that political analysis like the political actions it enforces is not a single enterprise. It (and obviously I can do no more than use the figure 'it' in this essay for purposes of theoretical discussion — a point to which I shall return in my concluding remarks) is

17. See especially Jürgen Habermas, 'Modernity Versus Postmodernity', *New German Critique* 22, 1981, and Jean-François Lyotard, *The Post Modern Condition*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1984.

different ways of assessing the operation of different objectives with different forces intersecting at what I call sites at particular moments. These ways of assessing may or may not be connected to one another and may or may not change from moment to moment. For this alternative mode (or modes) of political analysis there is no single grand site of politics, no single, grand intersection of objectives.

### 3. *Defining and Redefining Left Politics in Australia*

A term like 'Left politics in Australia' is very difficult to define. There is no single organization or activity to which it can be simply equated. To the best of my knowledge there is no entry in any Australian telephone directory under the heading Left Politics. Having regard to these limitations, the best definition I can offer is: groupings of definite and commonly-held political objectives such as revealing and overcoming oppression and revealing and overcoming exploitation and the forces which are trying to achieve them in Australia.

What is important about this definition for us here is not the underlying objectives and the possibility of achieving them, it is the operation of these objectives as unifiers, the fact that they are *thought and said to be common*. It is this commonality which forces the groupings of definite political objectives and their forces; without it there would be no groupings. To complete my definition of Left politics in Australia I need to point to the mechanisms through which the thinking and saying of commonality operate — such thinking and saying obviously does not just get done by individuals in a vacuum. These mechanisms are quite specific and specifiable. They include: certain journals (such as *Arena*, *Intervention*, and *Thesis Eleven*); certain publishing ventures and their products (Kibble Books, Local Consumption Publications, etc.); certain newspapers (*Tribune*, etc.); certain political groups and factions; certain discussion groups; and certain university and college departments, parts of departments and courses. In other words Left politics in Australia is a device or series of devices used by certain organizations to think and say commonality between different political objectives and their forces.

I should stress that my definition of Left politics in Australia is not offered by way of denigration of these mechanisms. I write from the position that specific attempts to achieve definite political

objectives are all that political theory can reasonably address.<sup>18</sup> As such I offer my definition by way of careful assessment of the possibility of achieving at least some of the objectives grouped under the term. I will discuss the mechanisms in this spirit.

For the alternative mode of political analysis I am suggesting, any grouping of definite objectives is useful and worth encouraging if it helps achieve one or more of the objectives involved without restricting the possibility of any other one of them being achieved. On the other hand any grouping should be discouraged if it restricts the achievement of any of these objectives. This latter, I suggest, will always occur where the mechanism doing the grouping imposes a meta-objective (like winning the class struggle) on the objectives involved<sup>19</sup> or imposes any one or more of the objectives on any of the others.

Any mechanism of Left politics in Australia needs to be very carefully organized if it is to avoid this weakness. The CPA or the ALP or *Arena* or certain feminist groups may well discuss objectives concerned with child-care centres, prison reforms and the Accord as 'Left' objectives and/or 'socialist' objectives. They may well be able to see Left or socialist connections between them and on the basis of this to draw up and act on policies which enhance the prospects of achieving all of them. If they do there is obviously no problem. Indeed, such aggregations are to be encouraged. But if any one of these particular mechanisms sees a Left or socialist connection between these objectives on the basis of some meta-objective, like socializing the means of production, and then draws up and acts on policies which privileges one of these objectives at the expense of one of the others, say the objective concerned with the Accord at the expense of the objective concerned with child-care centres, then this mechanism is clearly in need of re-organization.

18. In this I very much agree with Foucault's position. As Martin (*op. cit.*, p. 141, n. 12) puts it, quoting bibliographer Michael Clark: 'Foucault defends himself against [Sartre's] demand for political engagement (as opposed to theoretical contemplation); that demand . . . he opposes by trying to bring theoretical work and political action closer together.'
19. An example of this tendency can be found in Doug White's editorial in *Arena* 74, 1986, where he says that at the Broad Left Conference in Sydney the expression of objectives — specifically about US nuclear arms policy in the Pacific and Aboriginal land rights — was 'not formulated within a Left perspective. These objectives are no longer situated in a context of anti-imperialist struggle or a struggle for the rights and determinations of small nations and peoples', pp. 5-6. Specific objectives are marginalized in favour of meta-objectives.

Mechanisms should be organized so that they can cope with a diversity of objectives *in their own right*. This may mean changing internal decision-making procedures. Some mechanisms have already begun to do so. *Arena* is clearly heading in this direction, as is the CPA, as Connell points out:

[C]ommunist parties would have liked to establish control over other 'social movements'. The plain fact is that they failed. The more intelligent communist parties (e.g. the CPA) have given up the attempt and are trying to live with diversity.<sup>20</sup>

Perhaps what is needed in the case of the ALP is not so much internal organizational change as greater awareness of its possibilities by the forces trying to achieve specific objectives.

So the alternative mode of political analysis means that mechanisms of Left politics in Australia, those organizations which connect different objectives, cannot work with a universal, eternal agenda. There is no longer a single set of priorities. They must be prepared to accommodate many different agendas if they are to be helpful to the different objectives they connect.

As for these different objectives themselves and the forces involved in trying to achieve them, the alternative mode of political analysis means there is no longer a need to justify activities in terms of any meta-objective or in terms of any other objective. To take just one example, consider the objective of penal reform in New South Wales. This objective, as David Brown shows in an excellent recent paper, is best achieved by concentrating on the specific issues which effect the operation of the penal system in NSW, completely free of the constraints imposed by a meta-objective. Brown argues that this objective needs to address the recent increase in prison populations, attacks on various executive forms of release, the activities of the NSW Parole Board, the activities of some sections of the NSW judiciary, the role of the media and access to the media in debates about reform, the role of certain conservative commentators as 'experts', the role of the NSW Opposition, the current weakness of and internal divisions within reform groups, the neutralization of internal prisoner protest activity, the role of the NSW ALP, and the role of the NSW Government (not necessarily the same), among other issues. He explicitly rejects meta-objectives to do with individuals and blueprints.<sup>21</sup>

20. Connell, *op. cit.*, p. 82.

21. David Brown, 'Preconditions for Sentencing and Penal Reform in NSW: Some Suggestions Towards a Strategy for Contesting an Emerging Law and Order Climate', unpublished paper, University of NSW, 1986.

For specific objectives and their forces in Australia the mechanisms of Left politics, the mechanisms of connection, have no necessary or automatic function. They, or at least any one of them, may or not be useful for any particular objective and its forces, its subjects. The forces involved in objectives about the Accord or the deregistration of the BLF for instance are likely to see much more value in activities within the ALP than are those involved in objectives about the role of women in senior academic positions or the training of medical practitioners, although in all cases the forces may see value in activities within *Arena*.

This diversity and unevenness should neither be condemned nor celebrated. Specific objectives and the possibility of achieving them, including the possibility of achieving some of them by connecting them, should be the focus of political theory and debate, not the patterns of any connections.

Two potential objections to the alternative mode of political analysis have to be briefly countered before I conclude. The first is reformism. This charge only has relevance if we maintain the meta-objective of revolution and hence the revolution/reform dichotomy. I have argued against the involvement of any meta-objective, so I see no relevance to this charge. Of course those dramatic shifts or potential shifts in governmental, economic and industrial arrangements which are sometimes referred to as revolutions may well be analysed, but as specific objectives, not as meta-objectives. The second potential objection is empiricism. This charge is also irrelevant. It relies on a meta-objective in political theory to do with the operation of an independent reality (all forms of empiricism share this objective, albeit not in the same way or to the same degree). I have already made it clear that this objective does not have a place in the alternative mode of analysis for which I am arguing. This type of political analysis is not informed by an epistemological distinction between theory and reality. Rather it is informed by an explicit rejection of any such distinction in favour of specific considerations of different objectives in different places. Tactical assessments which have no necessary connection with one another take the place of a unified epistemological project.

## Conclusion

If political analysis is about tactical assessments which are not necessarily connected, there is no sense in which political analysis can be a single knowledge enterprise which connects them. Indeed, as I suggested earlier, even the status of political analysis as an 'it' is problematic. This means that this essay cannot have a unifying, universal status. Theoretical essays, like theoretical journals, have definite effects only in certain specific places where they operate, where they are read and used. It is important to remember that an essay, like any writing, cannot be a universal unifier, no matter how widely it is read and used and no matter whose name is attached to it.<sup>22</sup>

22. Having said that I would like to acknowledge the influence on this essay of some other work which has not been acknowledged elsewhere in the essay, particularly the work of Barry Hindess, and the work of Ernesto Laclau and Chantalle Mouffe (*Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, London, Verso, 1985). Their work, like Foucault's has helped enormously in formulating the alternative mode of political analysis discussed, though of course the alternative discussed is not the same as any of those used in this work.

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