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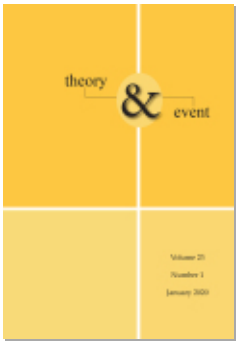

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Abstract This article examines the force and limitations of genealogy in order to develop a practice of counter-history that is capable of both overcoming its inherent problems and providing a more trenchant mode of critico-historical engagement. Using Foucault's well-known essay on Nietzsche as its methodological centerpiece, it begins by elucidating the latter's powerful contribution to the historical analysis of values, while also foregrounding the quasi-naturalized morality of genealogy that structures it. Against this backdrop, it examines Foucault's symptomatological distinction between two opposed and normativized conceptions of origin in Nietzsche—*Herkunft* and *Ursprung*—in order to both explicate Foucault's unique appropriation of Nietzschean genealogy and demonstrate its limits through the striking fact that this originary textual symptom of "properly Nietzschean" genealogy does not actually exist in the text. The remainder of the article draws on certain genealogical resources while challenging the historical order undergirding them in order to propose an alternative logic of history that takes into account its constitutive multidimensionality and the multiplicity of agencies at work in any conjuncture. It dismantles, in this way, the very framework that renders historical origins possible, as well as streamlined moral narratives of genealogical inversion, thereby parting ways with the moralities of genealogy in favor of the politicization of values.

"Alle Wahrheit ist einfach." – Ist das nicht zweifach eine Lüge? –
—Friedrich Nietzsche

Genealogy and Counter-History

Genealogy works in black and white. It is guided by a structural opposition that orients its gaze away from the valorized victors in the limelight toward the long and weighty shadows cast over those who have lost their historical battles and are sequestered in the darkness. Rejecting the grandiose narratives of the conquerors, with their ample dose of self-aggrandizing mythology and its requisite ethereal abstrac-

tions, it casts light on the vanquished, the downtrodden and the marginalized, while simultaneously elucidating both the actual—in the sense of *wirkliche*—history of their demise and the historiographical *legerdemains* that have obfuscated it. Genealogies are thus histories of inversion, in which the world is abruptly turned upside down. What had appeared to be good is suddenly revealed, in the shadow play of genealogy, to be bad, and what had been castigated as evil reappears as good. A shade is cast over the purportedly pristine innocence of the vanquishers at the same time that those sullied and subjugated by the battles of history emerge from their caverns of obscurity.

In his now canonical essay on the subject matter, Michel Foucault demonstrates the power of genealogical inversion and directly performs it himself by situating a figure who had been marginal to standard histories of philosophy at the core of an unprecedented historiographical overturning. Friedrich Nietzsche, he argues, developed a unique form of history that abandoned the metaphysical quest for an origin (*Ursprung*) in favor of a genealogical examination of the archive and the singular contingency of any origin (*Herkunft*). This seemingly insignificant distinction in German between two types of origin is thus identified, by Foucault, as a symptom of a major methodological inversion.

Foucault's enactment of genealogy, however, is plagued by a performative contradiction: the symptomatic difference that he identifies does not actually exist in Nietzsche's text. In order to develop his genealogy of a genealogy without *Ursprung*, he thereby constructs an *originary* discursive distinction out of the blue—like the hypothesis-mongering English genealogists condemned by Nietzsche—revealing genealogy's ongoing dependence on certain forms of origin discourse and ideal significations in order to spin its black and white tales of dramatic overturning. If genealogy is supposed to be grey in its meticulous engagement with the contingencies of documentary archives, its stark opposition of values and grand histories of moral inversion often obfuscate the material nuances of its objects of analysis.

To bring them out and definitively part ways with origin discourse, it is necessary to go to the heart of the historical order governing genealogy in order to identify its limitations and perform a tectonic shift, which will lead to counter-history. The latter draws on and radicalizes some of the major contributions of genealogy, while also overcoming the chronological order of history that structures it, as well as its proclivity for individual moral inversions rather than collective political transformations. By foregrounding the geographic and social dimensions of history along with the chronological, and simultaneously insisting on the fact that each of these is multidimensional, counter-history breaks with the historical order undergirding the very distinction between epochs and events, and thus the possibility of ori-

gins—discursive or otherwise—in history. Understanding the past as a dynamic and multi-agential force field distributed across time, space and social stratification, counter-history proposes a complex cartography and topography that maps out the multiple agencies at work in the ongoing political struggles over the immanent formation of values and their potential collective transformation.

In what follows, I will begin by elucidating Nietzsche's understanding of genealogy, foregrounding his denaturalization of the dominant system of morality as well as his attempt to resuscitate a more originary set of values that have been inverted in the very unnatural history of 'the West.' This will prepare the groundwork for examining Foucault's failed attempt to excise origins from Nietzsche and genealogy more generally, thereby opening a broader inquiry into both the force and limitations of genealogy. The article concludes with an outline of the tectonic shift proposed by counter-history, which renders origins inoperative, dismantles the ideal significations plaguing the genealogical chiaroscuro of value inversion, and brings to the fore the ongoing social and political struggles over the immanent constitution of collective values.

Genealogy of the Prehistorical Origin of Values

In the final note at the end of the first essay of *On the Genealogy of Morality* (1887), Nietzsche parenthetically refers to the issues discussed in the book as problems regarding "the *value* of all previous valuations [*vom Werte der bisherigen Wertschätzung*]."[1] This subtle distinction between *Wert* and *Wertschätzung* points to a key theme in his analysis: values—or, at least, the culturally dominant ones—do not simply exist as such; they are produced through historical acts of valorization.

It is for this reason that he examines the forgotten prehistory [*Vorgeschichte*] of values and the "ethical life of convention [*Sittlichkeit der Sitte*]" that has forged "humanity" as such by fabricating its moral armature and its deeply rooted meta-values.[2] Prehistory, which precedes world history and is "the longest period in the history of mankind," is the "genuine and decisive main historical period [*Hauptgeschichte*] that determined man's character."[3] Nietzsche's genealogical intervention consists, among other things, in historicizing this prehistorical archive of meta-values in order to show that they too are the result of past acts of valuation.

Morality is thus understood to be a historical product whose origin has been forgotten, and genealogy labors to unearth its prehistory in order to reveal how our supposed moral nature is only the sedimentation of an imposed second nature. At the same time, genealogy seeks to create, for some, new habits that overwrite the past with an original second nature that might one day become first nature. It is in this

regard that one aspect of the "critical" use of history described in his *Untimely Meditations* (1876) anticipated an important feature of genealogy:

> The best we can do is to confront our inherited and hereditary nature with our knowledge, and through a new, stern discipline combat our inborn heritage and implant in ourselves a new habit, a new instinct, a second nature, so that our first nature withers away. It is an attempt to give oneself, as it were *a posteriori*, a past in which one would like to originate [*stammen*] in opposition to that in which one did originate.[4]

This endeavor to transform calcified habits into one's own creative palimpsest is rendered particularly difficult, however, due to a fundamental inversion that characterizes the history of values. In *On the Genealogy of Morality*, Nietzsche juxtaposes an earlier era in which the nobles or masters boldly affirmed the good as that which they instinctively did (and denigrated the bad as the opposite), with a more recent period in which the herd or slaves have sought—through their powerlessness—to identify the good of the masters with evil itself, and to redefine the good as the opposite of evil.[5] Slave morality has thereby reversed the values of the nobles and their bitter *ressentiment* has succeeded, at least in part, in making this overturning disappear into oblivion, thereby naturalizing their morality. In other words, the "moral facts" engrained in modern culture are actually the result of a past—and present—power struggle and a *revaluation of values* that slave morality has endeavored to conceal behind a veil of innocence. By lifting the veil, Nietzsche seeks to reveal that values are promoted and fought for qua *values-in-struggle*—hence the need for a new, heightened revaluation of values.

On the Morality of Genealogy

Nietzsche's insistence on historical processes and actions does not keep him from invoking certain stable reference points. The very figures of master and slave, as well as their respective moralities suggest that there are identifiable "subjects" that can be taken as markers for specific types of action. Moreover, these two "agents" form a polarized normative and racialized opposition that has dominated history for centuries according to Nietzsche. In drawing his conclusions in the first essay of *On the Genealogy of Morality*, he writes:

> The two *opposing* values "good and bad," "good and evil" have fought a terrible battle for thousands of years on earth […]. The symbol of this fight […] is "Rome against Judea, Judea against Rome":—up to now there has been no greater event than *this* battle, *this* question, *this* contradiction of mortal enemies.[6]

His corpus is, of course, as variegated as it is complex, and he did not necessarily maintain a single position throughout. Nevertheless, in his *Genealogy* and other similar texts, it is regularly affirmed that there are only two major groups of people, or two races, and each of them has its own understanding of morality. This decisive opposition provides the over-arching evaluative framework for his genealogical account.[7] To a certain extent, the basis for this polarization is to be found in nature itself.[8] In the section of *Twilight of the Idols* entitled "Morality as Anti-Nature," he writes:

> I formulate a principle. All naturalism in morality [*Moral*], that is all *healthy* morality, is dominated by an instinct of life […]. *Anti-natural* morality [*Die* widernatürliche *Moral*], that is virtually every morality that has hitherto been taught, reverenced and preached, turns on the contrary precisely *against* the instincts of life.[9]

It is the inversion of the natural hierarchy of masters over slaves that is instigated by the perverse *ressentiment* of the latter, leading to what he calls in *The Anti-Christ* (1894) a denaturalization of values: "The history of Israel is invaluable as a typical history of the *denaturalizing* of natural values [Entnatürlichung *der Natur-Werte*]."[10] This alienation from nature is what motivates his revaluation of all values and his attempt to resuscitate or reinvent their *originary* relation.

It is in this sense that his genealogy could be understood in the strict sense of the term as an account of the lineage of two distinct and opposed races of people. It provides us with a linear history of inversion and decline, in which he strives to trace both races back to their primordial origins.[11] Whereas the masters manifested their morality instinctively, the slaves are the unnatural ones who, due to their powerlessness, revolted against the natural order. This rebellion is ultimately rooted in their own will to power as the sickest animals of history: those who are so weak that they can only conquer through their cleverness by inverting master morality and striving to surreptitiously naturalize their own slave morality.

Nietzsche's normative stringency and his embrace of a linear history of decline are particularly salient in his denigration of modern socialist and democratic movements, as well as in his condemnation of major social revolutions. He situates the triumph of modern so-called democracy in his deep but schematic history of the clash of antithetical values: "Judea once again triumphed over the classical ideal with the French Revolution: the last political nobility in Europe, that of the *French* seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, collapsed under the *ressentiment*-instincts of the rabble."[12] He summarizes this setback by claiming that we need to acknowledge the fact that the herd has won: "'The Masters' are deposed; the morality of the common people has triumphed."[13]

Nietzsche thus advocates for a resuscitation of the originary and natural relation between nobles and slaves, which has been perverted by a pernicious historical inversion that defines the very unnatural history of descent in the "Western world," and potentially beyond. Genealogy is the historical practice that—in the service of life—diligently traces out this masked history of moral transposition and the decadence it has produced. It tells the secret history of nihilism and the overturning of values that slave morality seeks to obfuscate in order to pass itself off as natural (rather than historical).

In endeavoring to reveal the true origin of slave morality, genealogy simultaneously seeks to resuscitate the original sovereign power of master morality that predates this psycho-historical distortion. The project that Nietzsche describes as moving beyond good and evil is thus not one of definitively moving outside good and bad, but rather one of a liberation from the yoke of slave morality through a revival of the affirmative character of masterly values.[14] Genealogy is thus fundamentally a matter of elucidating the origin of slave morality by tracing it back to the more originary source of master morality, thereby contrasting the *bad* origin of modern morality to the *good* archi-origin it seeks to displace.[15]

In all of these ways, Nietzsche's discourse remains haunted by the risks of *selective historicism*, by which I mean a form of historicism that selects certain elements that escape the flow of time. Whereas the values of his enemies are clearly historicized, he at times appears to juxtapose them to a naturalized, suprahistorical version of his own. It is thus often as if master morality transcended and structured his entire genealogy, functioning as the *morality of genealogy* that is both the origin and the transcendental frame of his *genealogy of morality*.

In foregrounding this aspect of his work, the point is not to condemn all of Nietzsche's writings for ultimately succumbing to a naturalizing genealogy that passes immanent values off as transcendent. It is rather to highlight a fundamental risk, while also insisting on the fact that there are other resources in his motley corpus that one might be able to mobilize against it. For instance, given his insistence on values themselves being practical acts of valuation, it would be possible to argue that the values promulgated by Nietzsche himself are *interventionist* in the sense that they are the ones that he actively creates and seeks to impose—rather than naturalize—even if it means appealing to nature and instinct as a rhetorical strategy. For he often insists on a form of *radical historicism* that goes all the way down by situating human beings themselves and everything they have created in the flow of time. The natural would thus actually be historical, and there would be no first nature, but only palimpsestic processes of sedimentation and varying time scales. Moreover, his important critiques of the hypostatizing power of language suggest that he was intimately

aware of the ways in which his own discourse could lend itself to processes of reification that needed to be resisted. We might therefore want to understand his key notions—master morality, slave morality, will to power, and so forth—as *autophagic concepts* that ingest themselves in the very process of being deployed, precisely as if they had no *being* but their own *becoming*. Let us recall, in this regard, the "true but deadly" doctrines that he announced in his *Untimely Meditations*: "the doctrines of sovereign becoming, of the fluidity of all concepts, types and species, of the lack of any cardinal distinction between man and animal."[16] Such openings in his work do not eliminate, of course, the risks and problems that have been highlighted, but rather they show that his corpus is variegated and his own discourse is sometimes in productive conflict with itself.

Foucault's Originary Symptom of Genealogy

In his widely read essay, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," Foucault asserts that the author of *On the Genealogy of Morality* made a distinction between two types of origin. Whereas *Herkunft* refers to a contingent provenance that is unmasked through genealogical excavation, *Ursprung* indexes a primordial identity or essence behind historical appearances. It is this latter notion of origin that, according to Foucault, Nietzsche the genealogist dismisses as a myth:

> A genealogy of values, morality, asceticism, and knowledge will never confuse itself with a quest for their "origin [*origine*]." On the contrary, it will cultivate the details and accidents that accompany every beginning [*commencement*]. [...] The genealogist needs history to dispel the chimeras of the origin [*origine*].[17]

Foucault wisely embeds this terminological distinction in a series of important provisos and qualifications. He emphasizes, for instance, that there are two different uses of the word *Ursprung* in Nietzsche: one that is marked and the other that is not. By unmarked he simply means that Nietzsche occasionally uses it as a term that is more or less equivalent to similar words like *Herkunft*, *Entstehung*, *Abkunft*, and *Geburt*. The word is marked, however, when it is employed in a conceptual opposition or is invoked ironically or deceptively.[18] With this distinction in mind, he turns to the preface of the *Genealogy* as "one of the most significant texts for the use of all of these terms, and for the variations in the use of *Ursprung*."[19] He claims that Nietzsche begins by describing his object of analysis as the *Herkunft* of moral prejudices, and then he recounts the story of his personal involvement with this question by describing how he had wondered if God was responsible for the *Ursprung* of evil. A little further on, "he evokes the analyses

that are properly Nietzschean [*proprement nietzschéennes*], which began with *Human, All Too Human*. He speaks of *Herkunfthypothesen* [*sic*.] to characterize them."[20] "This use of the word *Herkunft*," Foucault stresses, "is certainly not arbitrary: it serves to designate several texts in *Human, All Too Human* devoted to the origin [*origine*] of morality, asceticism, justice, and punishment. And yet, in all of these passages, the word used then had been *Ursprung*. It is as if, at the moment of the *Genealogy*, and at this precise point in the text, Nietzsche wanted to emphasize an opposition between *Herkunft* and *Ursprung*, which he had not made use of some ten years earlier."[21] Finally, Foucault maintains that Nietzsche reverted to an unmarked use of the term *Ursprung* as neutral and equivalent to *Herkunft* at the end of the preface (and he remarks in a note that they are used more or less synonymously in a number of other passages in the *Genealogy*).

This passing distinction in a brief text provides Foucault with the opportunity of formulating a provocative and rhetorically dramatic thesis regarding the originary moment of non-originary genealogy, which he describes as the meticulous and well-documented investigation into the contingent singularity of events and the dissimulated or disavowed historicity of that which appears to have no history. It is opposed to the "metahistorical deployment of ideal significations and indefinite or undefined teleologies [*des indéfinies téléologies*]."[22] The genealogist's objection to origins is thus a refusal to assume that there is an original essence or truth behind each thing, or that every historical element began in a pristine state of perfection. In turning away from this metaphysics of history, genealogy scrutinizes both the source (*provenance* / *Herkunft*) and emergence (émergence / *Entstehung*) of historical phenomena. Whereas the examination of the source demonstrates the fragmentary heterogeneity at work in the accidental formation of that which appears to be unchanging, the analysis of emergence reveals the interstitial struggle of forces out of which specific "things" develop. In both cases, genealogy operates as a *wirkliche Historie* in the following senses: *i*) it reintroduces becoming into that which is purportedly immortal *ii*) it reveals discontinuous events behind supposed continuities *iii*) it analyzes that which is closest to us by cultivating a profound distance from it *iv*) it embraces perspectival knowledge in the dissolution of absolute truth.

In spite of the importance Foucault places on this distinction between what we might call a good origin (*Herkunft* or *Entstehung*) and a bad origin (*Ursprung*), a normative difference that frames his entire argument, the diligent reader familiar with Nietzsche's preoccupation with origins cannot help but wonder if his genealogy of genealogy has been thoroughly grey enough, by working through the contingent singularities of the material body of the text. The first thing to note is that Nietzsche explicitly uses the terms *Herkunft* and

Ursprung as synonyms at precisely the originary watershed moment in the text where Foucault claims that he opposes them. He opens section four of the preface by writing: "I was given the initial stimulation to publish something about my hypotheses on the origin of morality [*von meinen Hypothesen über den Ursprung der Moral*] by a clear, honest and clever, even too-clever little book."[23] This work, Paul Rée's *The Origin [Ursprung] of the Moral Sensations*, provided a perverse back-to-front form of genealogical analysis criticized by Nietzsche. After a very brief description of his relationship to Rée's work, he writes: "as I said [*wie gesagt*], I was, at the time [*damals*], bringing to the light of day those hypotheses on descent [*Herkunfts-Hypothesen*] to which these essays are devoted."[24] This sentence unmistakably refers back to what was said just a few lines earlier (*wie gesagt*), in the first phrase of section four, where he described his initial stimulation to disclose his theories. The expression "hypotheses on descent [*Herkunfts-Hypothesen*]," which Foucault wants to identify as the original flash point in the text where Nietzsche inscribes a crucial and "marked" distinction between *Herkunft* and *Ursprung*, is thus actually an overtly synonymous rewording of "hypotheses on the origin of morality [*Hypothesen* über *den Ursprung der Moral*]." If the choice of the word *Herkunft* "is certainly not arbitrary," as Foucault would have us believe, it is because it is clearly inscribed within a chain of equivalent formulations that Nietzsche uses to describe his project.

This synonymous relationship is further reiterated in the opening line of the following section of the preface, in which he directly refers back once again to this time [*damals*] and to "the nature of hypotheses, *mine* or anybody else's, on the origin of morality [*Ursprung der Moral*]."[25] The supposedly originary instant of distinction between *Ursprung* and *Herkunft* actually appears, then, in a tight, grey sequence of equivalent reformulations in which the terms are used interchangeably. It is surprising, then, that Foucault would go to such great lengths to distinguish between them, not only by reading over the *wie gesagt*, which distinctly links the first two formulations together, but also by elliptically suggesting that the use of *Ursprung* in the opening line of section four was related to a critical dismissal of Rée's book, when in fact Nietzsche is obviously talking about his own origin-hypotheses (as is also evident from the opening line of section five cited above).

This is, however, only the first sign that Foucault's discursive origin, meaning the symptomal moment in the text when Nietzsche "proper"—the "original" Nietzsche—appears in the suddenly marked use of a term that purportedly demarcates a positive from a negative form of origin, was pulled out of the blue. Just as the *Herkunfts-Hypothesen* that Foucault wants to distinguish from hypotheses regarding an origin (*Ursprung*) are simply another way of saying *Hypothesen* über *den Ursprung*, the same is true of his supposedly

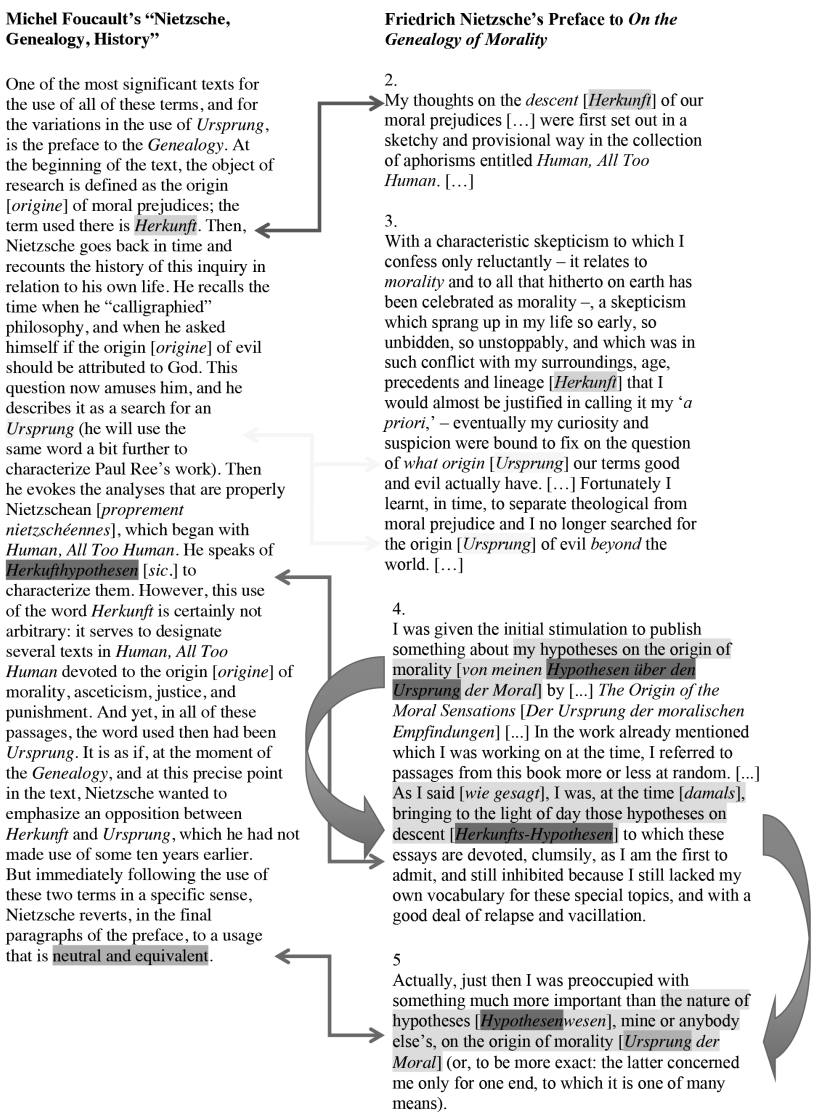

Figure 1. A line-by-line comparison between key passages in Michel Foucault's "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History" and Friedrich Nietzsche's Preface to *On the Genealogy of Morality*. Image by author.

ironic use of *Ursprung* to refer to how he had earlier identified God as the "origin of evil [*Ursprung des B*ösen]."[26] For even after Nietzsche's realization that this was slightly misguided, he once again uses the term *Ursprung* to refer to what are apparently—in Foucault's vocabulary—"analyses that are properly Nietzschean"[27]: "Fortunately I learnt, in time, to separate theological from moral prejudice and I no longer searched for the origin [*Ursprung*] of evil *beyond* the world."[28] This suggests that he continued to pursue its *Ursprung*, just not beyond the world.

As a matter of fact, in the opening line of this section of the preface (section three), he emphatically refers to the search for an "origin [*Ursprung*]" as being so fundamental to his life that it would almost make sense to call it his "*a priori*." What is more, this *a priori* is described as being in direct conflict with his age, as well as his lineage or descent (*Herkunft*). If anything, then, he intimates, at least in this passing statement, that genealogy breaks with historical tendencies and extant lines of descent (*Herkunft*) by undertaking an untimely quest for origins (*Ursprünge*):

> With a characteristic skepticism to which I confess only reluctantly—it relates to *morality* and to all that hitherto on earth has been celebrated as morality—, a skepticism which sprang up in my so early, so unbidden, so unstoppably, and which was in such conflict with my surroundings, age, precedents and lineage [*Herkunft*] that I would almost be justified in calling it my "*a priori*,"—eventually my curiosity and suspicion were bound to fix on the question of *what origin* [*Ursprung*] our terms good and evil actually have.[29]

It is very telling that Foucault's mischaracterizations of Nietzsche's writings persist throughout his article. In purporting to provide additional textual evidence for his claims regarding Nietzsche's use of *Ursprung*, he quotes paragraph three of "The Wanderer and His Shadow," where Nietzsche actually uses *Anfang* and *Entstehung*, but Foucault surreptitiously leaves the latter term out of his quotation in order to suggest that the "origin" under discussion is an *Ursprung* (a term that Nietzsche does not use in this paragraph). He repeats the same basic operation in his next quote to imply that Nietzsche was using *Ursprung* in *Daybreak* §49, when the terms employed were actually *Abkunft* and *Anfang*. He also references *Beyond Good and Evil* §242 as an example of his use of *Herkunft*, but the term is not employed there (the verb *entstehen* is). He points to §244 of the same book for the same reason, even though Nietzsche actually uses both *Ursprung* and *Herkunft* in this passage. He oddly references *Genealogy* III, §7 in his discussion of *Herkunft*, adding an elliptical footnote reference to *Abkunft*, which is the term that Nietzsche actually uses in this passage. In the context of claiming that Nietzsche often associates *Herkunft* and

Erbschaft, he refers to *Daybreak* §247, where *Herkunft* appears, but not *Erbschaft*. Finally, in his documentation of Nietzsche's use of *Entstehung*, he refers to *Genealogy* III, §13, where the term does not appear.[30]

On the Differential Repetition of the Morality of Genealogy

Ironically, then, Foucault goes to great lengths to find an originary, value-laden distinction between *Herkunft* and *Ursprung*—between "good" and "bad" origins—that does not, in fact, exist. He is intent on deceptively inscribing a normative opposition into the material archive in order to clearly demarcate the *wirkliche Historie* of genealogy from the ideal significations and teleologies of the history of origins. At stake, for him, is the very value of historical research, as well as the need to valorize genealogy over and against the essentializing tendencies of metaphysical chronicles. It must not be lost on us, then, that Foucault is telling a history of values, a genealogy of the emergence of a more valuable mode of history. He is attempting to tease out from the *Genealogy of Morality* the *morality of genealogy*.

According to Foucault, genealogy emerges from the underside of dominant history, as an untimely accident of sorts, which contests the value system of metaphysical historiography. The latter valorizes a long series of intertwined concepts over and against their opposites: continuity versus discontinuity, totality versus fragmentation, global versus local, sameness versus difference, spirit versus body, necessity versus contingency, and so forth. Genealogy is the art of inverting this morality of history. What the latter identifies as "good," the former takes to be "bad" by advancing an anti-essentialist and non-teleological historiography that privileges and valorizes discontinuity, fragmentation, difference, chance, accident and so on. The morality of genealogy, in other words, is an anti-morality that overturns the hierarchies of dominant history. In his opening lecture for his 1976 course "*Society Must Be Defended*," Foucault defined genealogy as follows:

> In relation to the project of inscribing knowledges [*savoirs*] in the hierarchical order of power, which is characteristic of science, genealogy would thus be a sort of undertaking aimed at de-subjugating historical knowledges [*désassujettir les savoirs historiques*] and rendering them free, meaning capable of opposing and struggling against the coercion of a unitary, formal and scientific theoretical discourse. A reactivation of local knowledges [*savoirs*]—of minor knowledges [*savoirs*], as Deleuze might call them—in opposition to the scientific hierarchization of knowledge [*connaissance*] and its intrinsic effects of power: this, then is the project of these disordered and fragmentary genealogies. In brief, I would say the following: archaeology would be the appropriate method for the analysis of local discursivities, and genealogy would be the tac-

> tic that, on the basis of the descriptions of these local discursivities, would bring into play the de-subjugated knowledges [*savoirs désassujettis*] that are released.[31]

It is noteworthy in this regard that the entire normative opposition between metaphysical historiography and genealogy "as critique" is summed up in its totality, we might say, in the symptom that Foucault identifies as the linchpin of his argument regarding Nietzsche. The manifest distinction between *Ursprung* and *Herkunft* (or *Entstehung*) is the fragmentary and apparently haphazard detail that indexes the latent content that is the systemic division between two moralities of history: the meta-historical chronicle that valorizes a unified chronology of ideal significations, and genealogy that inverts this framework by elevating the infinitesimal details of local and contingent relations. This little difference is thus one that makes all of the difference precisely because it sums up, in microcosm, the macrocosmic system of values that frames Foucault's entire analysis. It is, we might say, an originary difference because it marks, in a symptomal fragment, the fundamental dividing line that Foucault wants to inscribe between two different historical systems of value. In endeavoring to reestablish the "proper use [*utilisation propre*]" of these key terms, he seeks to inscribe an originary discursive and normative distinction.

This is indicative of his approach to archives more generally, as well as of one of his most widespread hermeneutic strategies: symptomatology. Foucault often searches for little differences that signal macroscopic shifts in a corpus, an archive, an episteme or an era. The smaller the symptom and the larger the consequences, the more dramatic his metonymic narrative and its rhetorical impact. His analysis of a passing and seemingly unimportant distinction in a few lines of Nietzsche's original German text is thus genealogically of the same family as his interpretation, for instance, of a line in Descartes' *Meditations* that is supposed to have signaled an epochal shift in historical understandings of madness, or again his reading of an essay by the later Kant that purportedly inaugurated event-based thinking and the "ontology of contemporary reality." In all three of these cases, like many others, an infinitesimal textual detail is used as the index of a historical sea change, an event, thereby capturing the smallest of differences within the broadest of historical narratives. In spite of all of his insistence on dispersion, accidents, singularities, and so forth, it is important to critically examine the extent to which his discontinuist logic of history and his overwhelming proclivity for massive events of structural inversion ultimately subsume the details of microscopic differences within a systematic historiographical armature. The latter is the site of conceptual subsumption where differences and accidents are transformed into symptoms and signifiers of a system or systemic

change. In a certain sense, there is no singularity or contingency so minor or marginal as to escape systemic capture and integration. Foucault is, in fact, so intent on valorizing infinitesimal differential symptoms of evental eruptions that, when they do not exist in the grey of the text, he pulls them straight out of the blue.

This is particularly important in the case of his interpretation of Nietzsche, and I have elsewhere made similar arguments regarding his readings of Descartes and Kant.[32] As we have seen, Nietzsche is indeed preoccupied with discovering the origin of good and bad or evil. In fact, he opens the first essay of the *Genealogy* by castigating the lack of historical spirit at work in the historians of morality who identify the origin of the concept of the good—the term he uses happens to be *Herkunft*—with the praise bestowed upon unegoistic acts. He inverts this thesis by categorically claiming:

> The pathos of nobility and distance, as I said, the continuing and predominant feeling of complete and fundamental superiority of a higher ruling kind of relation to a lower kind, to those "below"—*that* is the origin [*Ursprung*] of the antithesis "good" and "bad."[33]

While purporting to excavate—but in fact discursively constructing—an originary moment of normative distinction, Foucault argues that there is no origin in the sense of a true or essential beginning. This is particularly important since the originary site that he attempts to isolate in Nietzsche's text is itself quintessentially non-originary: he is simply reformulating what he had already said. It is quite literally a copy, a repetition, a synonymous reworking of what was stated in the text. The fact that Foucault constructs an ideal normative signification with no material reality to support his claim at the precise moment at which he wants to mark the emergence of the *wirkliche Historie* that is non-originary genealogy, should give us pause to consider what is at stake in this performative contradiction. Indeed, Foucault's origin, which we might want to qualify as *discursive* or *discontinuist* rather than *essentialist*, is nearly as abstract as the ones he criticizes, thereby ironically proving his thesis that the quest for origins—including his own—is quixotic and misguided.

The Limits of Genealogy

The term *genealogy* suggests a linear chain of descent. This is precisely one of the reasons why Foucault avoided using it in his early work. Unlike archaeology, which he defined in 1967 as "the analysis of discourse in its modality of *archive*," a genealogy is a "description of beginnings [*commencements*] and what follows."[34] Not unlike a family tree, historical genealogy identifies clear starting points in the

social life of a collective and charts out their heritage over time. In this regard, it maintains a certain proximity to a model of history according to which a society's past would be structured like the life of an individual human being (at least according to common sense): it has sharp beginning and end points.

Foucault acknowledged his personal debt to Nietzschean genealogy early on, but once he began using the term himself, he insisted on distinguishing it from "genetic analysis by filiation."[35] He wanted to avoid, at least to a certain extent, linear histories of descent, and he often pays attention to the unique histories of particular discursive series or practical registers, some of which come into conflict. Nevertheless, it is important to recognize that his historical research remains relatively well circumscribed within very specific cultural and geographic coordinates. France obviously dominates his work, and the issue of Franco-centrism is an important one. Moreover, the western European triumvirate of France, Germany and England governs most of his early and middle writings, whereas ancient Greece and Rome become increasingly prominent in his later work. His histories are thus deeply inscribed in what is called the Western world, and more specifically within the contemporary geo-cultural conception of this world (with its supposed origin in ancient Greece and its modern forms primarily in western Europe).[36] It is true that Foucault occasionally provides detailed and delicate accounts of geographic variability across these regions. However, the governing framework of western Europe or the West is maintained across his corpus (with a few exceptions, which themselves arguably sink into forms of orientalism).[37] This is partially what allows him to construct streamlined, and often bi-dimensional narratives of structural inversion. In some general sense, his historical accounts might be described as genealogies of "a people," or what he would later call "ontologies of ourselves." This should give us pause to reconsider the racial component of genealogy as it morphs from Nietzsche's preoccupation with an originary master race into Foucault's attempt to avoid this type of overt racialization while nonetheless maintaining clear geo-cultural parameters to most of his analyses.

Foucault not only recognizes but he also sometimes defends the fact that his writings abide by a particular cultural delimitation. In his work on prisons, for example, he admits that it is largely centered on France, even though he did not want to strictly delimit it due to overlap with developments elsewhere in Europe (or the US).[38] His justification for this is that there are limitations to what one person can do. While this is certainly true, and it would be naive to look to Foucault for a complete history of the world, we should nonetheless be attentive to the ways in which the very delimitation of what one person can or should do is directly embedded within specific sociohistorical and cul-

tural practices of knowledge production. Indeed, one of the lessons of genealogy according to Foucault himself is that historical knowledge is forged within institutional power relations, which surely include the delimitation and *modi operandi* of disciplines, the hierarchization of cultures, and the racialization of archives. In this regard, Foucault is unmistakably participating, in his own unique way, in the institutionalized activity of historical writing as it came to be defined in France in his day and age. Working within the confines of a specific cultural territory was, at least for certain historians, the very *lingua franca* of history itself. In this sense, there was nothing remiss in Foucault's genealogies of French or Western phenomena. In spite of his splendid appeal to the "common labor of people who seek to 'de-discipline' themselves [*se 'dé-disciplinariser'*]," he was simply conforming, in this aspect of his theoretical practice, to the norms of the institutionalized discipline of history.[39]

This raises a number of crucial methodological questions. To begin with, it is often assumed that one can meaningfully speak of cultural units such as France, Germany or the West, as if they made *a priori* sense. However, their delimitation has been, and continues to be, a site of struggle, and the very idea of a relatively unified geographic space remains highly contestable. The supposed borders of these spaces are not only porous, but they are often founded on the attempt to impose limits where there are, in fact, no strict frontiers. This is not simply due to the movement of people, things and ideas, but also to the regular interplay of cultural, political, social and economic forces. It is rather revealing, in this regard, that Foucault—like many of his fellow French historians—rarely engages with the question of the larger Francophone world and the spaces of colonization.[40] This is particularly striking for someone who began teaching in France at the height of the Algerian War, and who was living in Paris, for instance, during the October 1961 massacre of dozens, and likely hundreds, of pro-National Liberation Front (FLN) protestors, who were shot, beaten by the police and thrown into the Seine around the city.[41] For someone researching the historical practices of punishment, confinement, governmentality and biopolitics emanating from the western European world, how could one justify sidelining and generally ignoring imperialism and colonialism, particularly when its effects were right in front of one's eyes?

In raising this question, I do not simply mean to suggest that Foucault should have extended his investigation to "elsewhere," as if the colonies were necessarily distinct realities from France (according to the standard colonial geography, which Foucault himself respects). Instead, I mean that if we are intent on talking about the geographic or cultural unit of France, for instance, we need to recognize that it extends beyond its borders, but also that, within its frontiers, it is

always already enmeshed with elements from "elsewhere." "Europe," wrote Frantz Fanon, "is literally the creation of the Third World."[42] To separate out and privilege, within supposed French borders, the cultural spaces of "the French," is to participate in a colonial logic of space. Foucault's massive valorization of the French Revolution as a watershed moment in history is a case in point, particularly because he does not make, to my knowledge, a single reference in his published work to the Haitian Revolution, whose world-historical significance is as important as its contribution to reconfiguring the "French Revolution," to the point of problematizing these geographic and cultural categories.

It is true, of course, that Foucault sought, to a certain extent, to dismantle a number of the overarching historical narratives regarding "the West" "from the inside," so to speak, by upending structural pillars in established chronicles of reason, truth, subjectivity, sovereignty and ethics, as well as of practices such as madness, the human sciences, punishment, sexuality, and so forth. This is, in part, what justified, at least in his eyes, his focus on the Western world. In doing so, he generally maintained a historical logic of epoch and event, or sequence and rupture, that nonetheless required presupposing a minimum of geographic and social homogeneity. To speak of an era with set characteristics, or a break that cuts across the thread of history and introduces a new age or series, one must compress the geographic as well as the social dimensions of history into a temporal continuum capable of being broken. While there is certainly some spatial and social variability in his accounts, this tends to be restricted to chronological staggering, the delimitation of series with their own temporalities, or latencies and resistances within history, which do not seriously contest the general arc of his script.

In fact, given that Foucault shares Nietzsche's preoccupation with historical inversion, defining an event as "the reversal of a relation of forces [*un rapport de forces qui s'inverse*],"[43] his histories often require that any geographic or social variability be encased within this general historical framework. Although they each have their own unique patterns and internal configurations, many of his books are organized around deep structural reversals. These are not properly speaking dialectical, as Foucault himself was fond of pointing out, but they are instead *discontinuous inversions*: what appears one way from our current vantage point is actually turned upside down, or at least seriously problematized, once we revisit the archive from his perspective. The historical accounts of these overturnings often constitute, moreover, anti-morality tales à la Nietzsche by showing that what is generally considered to be good—if it be the purportedly enlightened liberation of the mad around the turn of the nineteenth century, or modern

forms of so-called humane punishment—is revealed to be inimical in various ways. Or, on the contrary, what is generally presumed to be negative—such as sexual repression in the modern age—is shown to have a productive side: a burgeoning discourse on sex and a "desire to know." Although Foucault frequently avoids explicit normative statements in favor of purportedly descriptive claims, it is rarely difficult to discern in his work a resolute struggle against the slavish morality of common sense. His histories are fundamentally driven by a revaluation of values.[44]

His moral diagnoses do not generally lead, however, to political remedies in the sense of collective projects that seek to transform the socio-economic order and its system of values.[45] Foucault regularly castigated projects of revolutionary change, particularly in his later work, and his unquestioned axiology led him to classify them as "totalizing" (which is normatively understood as "bad"). Take, for example, his definition of genealogy in a well-known 1984 essay on Kant. He explains that it is a form of critique that "will separate out, from the contingency that has made us what we are, the possibility of no longer being, doing, or thinking what we are, do, or think."[46] By way of clarification, he hastily adds:

> The historical ontology of ourselves must turn away from all projects that claim to be global and radical. In fact, we know from experience that the claim to escape from the system of contemporary reality so as to provide the overall programs for another society, another way of thinking, another culture, another vision of the world, has actually led only to the replication of the most dangerous traditions.[47]

This purported threat of the gulag, which is reaffirmed elsewhere (such as in his praise of the reactionary writings of the revisionist historian François Furet and of the *nouveau philosophe* André Glucksmann), is what made him skeptical of anti-capitalist movements.[48] It is as if there was a necessary and inevitable historical link—that is assumed rather than rigorously demonstrated—between mass political mobilizations on the hard left and violent repression on a grand scale, in part through a tendency to collapse the multidimensional history of anti-capitalist revolutionary experiments into a one-dimensional narrative based on a particular depiction of Stalinism (while also generally ignoring the global violence of capitalist exploitation and its state orchestrated wars of repression).[49]

Some readers of Foucault might point to his unique interest in the Iranian Revolution in 1978 and 1979 as a potential exception to this tendency in his work. After all, this was one of the key moments in his career when he engaged extensively with current events and

publicly supported a revolutionary movement. While this is certainly true, it is important to clarify the reasons for this support. To begin with, it is noteworthy that Foucault showed more interest in a distant revolution in "the East" than in the Algerian Revolution at his French doorstep and all of the anti-colonial revolutionary struggles against imperial France that were taking place during his lifetime. Secondly, this penchant for exoticism seamlessly merged with a unique form of orientalism, which is perhaps most visible in his temporal reading of geography. The promise of Iran was that it held within it a future that Europe never had, which was actually a *future past* in the sense that it showed a remarkable proximity to the past of Europe. There is thus a form of revolutionary atavism in his interpretation of Iran: he saw the political spirituality of Europe's past being reborn in the East, in a future the West had never had because of modernization (and, presumably, the tragic consequences of *its* revolutions). It is not the least bit surprising, then, to see Foucault praising François Furet's anti-Marxist *Penser la revolution* and drawing on it to frame his understanding of Iran, all the while ignoring the material history of international relations and the role of the Euro-American imperial powers in destroying Iranian democracy in 1953 and propping up the pro-business, authoritarian government that was overthrown in 1979.[50] As a matter of fact, what interested Foucault in the Iranian Revolution was precisely the way in which, according to him, it broke with two key aspects of the Marxist model of revolution (which he claimed was in crisis): class conflict and a revolutionary vanguard.[51] The Iranian Revolution was a way of resuscitating a political spirituality of the past and reinventing every facet of existence in order to devise a future with the potential of leaping beyond the tragic limitations of European modernization and Marxist class struggle.

The distance that Foucault maintained from anti-capitalist revolutionary politics thus has a lot to do, of course, with his relationship to Marxism. Although this would require an independent study, Michael S. Christofferson has provided a useful heuristic outline. Bracketing his relatively brief and unorthodox adherence to the communist party during his student years (which Foucault would later describe as a form of "Nietzschean" communism[52]), Christofferson maintains that Foucault generally rejected Marxist analysis prior to 1968 and was only briefly inclined to engage with it seriously in the early 1970s, before openly repudiating it once again as of 1975–1976.[53] It is in this context that his relationship to Glucksmann needs to be understood, because their political evolution followed a similar path, as their "anti-totalitarian" critique of communism bled into an increasing interest in liberalism. In the case of Foucault, which Michael C. Behrent has convincingly situated within an overall shift in certain sectors of the French intelligentsia, this took the form of a fascination with economic liber-

alism due to its critique of the state and its insistence on freedom.[54] In his analysis of neoliberalism in his lectures on biopolitics in 1978–1979, Foucault goes so far as to claim that, in contrast to the model of a disciplinary and repressive society, neoliberalism brings with it the idea of "a society in which there is an optimization of systems of difference, in which the field is left open to fluctuating processes, in which minority individuals and practices are tolerated."[55] Moreover, it is true that Foucault was much less concerned with analyzing economic exploitation, class warfare and revolutionary struggle than providing diagnoses of forms of social marginalization and exclusion.[56] Edward Said has convincingly argued that his microphysics of power, which not only ignores the macrophysics of global class warfare but has at times sought to banish it to the dustbin of history,[57] is linked to his political defeatism: "Foucault takes a curiously passive and sterile view not so much of the uses of power, but of how and why power is gained, used, and held onto. This is the most dangerous consequence of his disagreement with Marxism, and its result is the least convincing aspect of his work. Even if one fully agrees with his view [...], the notions of class struggle and of class itself cannot therefore be reduced—along with the forcible taking of state power, economic domination, imperialist war, dependency relationships, resistances to power—to the status of superannuated nineteenth-century conceptions of political economy."[58] Foucault's unwillingness to seriously engage with the question of global class warfare and Western imperialism is, moreover, one of the reasons why the US National Security State identified him as an asset.[59]

In a 1978 interview, Foucault defined himself, in opposition to those involved in student and worker protests, as a non-active rebel invested in "silence" and "total abstention."[60] Although he obviously enjoyed indulging in autobiographical fictions, his direct political involvement in strong leftist organizing was minor and intermittent when compared to figures like Jean-Paul Sartre, Daniel Guérin and Frantz Fanon. While it is true that the events of 1968 had a radicalizing effect on him, his shift to the hard left in their wake would not last, and as Didier Eribon has convincingly argued:

> One should refrain, above all, from projecting the image of a later Foucault onto the Foucault of that period [prior to 1968]. His colleagues from that time are in general agreement in placing him "more to the left," although this description is not unanimous. They describe him primarily as someone who was relatively distant from any militant involvement [*tout engagement militant*], despite his very real interest in politics. They were all very surprised, to put it mildly, by his swing to the far left and by the radical positions he took in the 1970s. "I never managed to believe

> it really," says Francine Pariente, who was his assistant for four years, from 1962 to 1966. One thing is certain: there was nothing to make them suspect that he would evolve in this direction.[61]

Moreover, after this moment of apparent radicalization, he returned to a more distant and dismissive attitude toward political organizing later in the 1970s. For instance, in the same interview from 1978 quoted above, he criticized the women's liberation and gay liberation movements for being organized around sexual categories and demanding "subordination to specific ideals and objectives."[62] Describing these movements as forming private and exclusionary clubs, he drew the following conclusion: "True liberation means knowing oneself [*La véritable libération signifie se connaître soi-même*] and can often not be realized by the intermediary of a group, whichever one it may be."[63] Given this individualist, libertarian tenor of his work, his genealogical anti-morality tales are more keyed to personal, local and partial modifications than to systemic political changes, particularly those that are revolutionary and anti-capitalist.[64] Care of self, we might say, generally superseded care of society, at the risk of developing parasitic practices that could only work within given systems rather than radically reconfigure them. Indeed, he preferred the interstitial work of the "specific intellectual" who intermittently drew on his particular areas of expertise to intercede in public debate (rather than being consistently dedicated to collective political organizing).[65] In this sense, he follows Nietzsche in understanding genealogy as a moral project of historical introspection. Although it might, and often does, contain certain political elements in its diagnoses, it is generally opposed to—and normatively codes as "bad"—the systemic remedy of collective social action. He flatly claimed in a late interview: "I would more or less agree with the idea that in fact what interests me is much more morals than politics or, in any case, politics as an ethics."[66]

Counter-History and the Politicization of Values

Let us be clear about the stakes of this critical reassessment of Foucault's attempt to provide a genealogy of non-originary genealogy by studying its supposed emergence in Nietzsche. It is not simply a matter of claiming that Foucault put forth a faulty interpretation of the author of *On Genealogy of Morality*. It is that he raised a fundamentally important question concerning the writing of history by underscoring the need to develop narratives that are not beholden to origin discourse. In doing so, however, his own essay nonetheless succumbs to this very discourse, to such an extent in fact that he constructs an ideal signification devoid of material reality, an *Ursprung* in his vocabulary (not Nietzsche's). This does not mean, then, that he simply provided

a bad commentary subject to scholarly repudiation, but that what he does with Nietzsche merits close critical scrutiny precisely because it raises crucial problems that it is unable to solve within the parameters of genealogy.[67]

This is one of the reasons why it is important to tease out various dimensions in his work rather than evaluating it *en bloc* based on the moral imperative of being *for* or *against* Foucault. This type of variegated hermeneutics situates itself beyond moral binaries and simplistic filial arrangements, and it also foregrounds the dynamic complexity of bodies of work. It is worth noting in this regard that one of the motivating factors for calling into question the very idea of an origin is Foucault's powerful dismantling of the "natural objects" of history. Rather than understanding history itself as a description of the changes undergone by particular elements over time, he inverts the relation between being and time in order to demonstrate that the beings of the world are in fact the result of time rather than the governing agents of particular histories. This allows him to develop a form of *intransitive history*, or a history without objects, a history of actions and practices that produce "beings," which are themselves only the precarious, and ultimately transitory results of temporal processes.

If history is not undergirded by natural objects, it makes perfect sense that this would call into question the existence of essentialist origins. Foucault's critique of the metahistorical deployment of ideal significations is crucially important in this regard, as well as his analysis of history as a site of struggle à la Nietzsche. Understanding the writing of history as inscribed within a broad series of complex power relations lifts the epistemological veil that often presents history as simply a descriptive and verifiable account of the objective nature of reality. Moreover, it draws attention to the ways in which archives themselves are always already structured by value judgments and culturally dominant narratives. There are thus certain aspects of Foucault's genealogical project, coming out of Nietzsche, that merit being worked through, extended and developed.

The persistence of origins in Foucault's own discourse, however, points to the failings and limitations of genealogy more generally. By largely compressing history into its chronological dimension, relying on relatively homogenous geographic units of analysis whose histories remain uninterrogated, and generally compressing the multi-agential force fields of social stratification, Foucault tends to remain, like Nietzsche, within the chronological order of history, which downplays the complex geographic and social dimensions of historical developments (as well as the multiplicity of agencies operative in any conjuncture). This is precisely what allows for his well-known oracular pronouncements on the birth or demise of particular historical phenomena.

If these other dimensions are taken into account, then the very opposition between continuity and discontinuity, epoch and event, is rendered inoperative. Unless one compresses and homogenizes—at least minimally—the geographic and social axes of history, it is not possible to establish a temporal trajectory that is either broken at points or uninterrupted. The streamlined logic of descent falls apart, as well as the bi-dimensional logic of structural inversion, and the very possibility of a singular commencement crumbles with them. This is ultimately why it was important to diligently track Foucault's moves in his attempt to document an originary moment in the materiality of Nietzsche's text. In undertaking a genealogy of the origin of genealogy without origins, Foucault was endeavoring to provide a historical account of his own operative methodology, which he would return to years later in his essays on Kant and the Enlightenment. In order to do so, however, he ends up constructing an originary symptom by subsuming the specificity of Nietzsche's text into his governing morality of genealogy and reading him as someone who is opposed to world-historical totalities (even though Nietzsche provides his reader with some of the most grandiose and totalizing narratives imaginable). Foucault thereby both overshoots and undershoots his target, missing—or ignoring—both the grand historical claims made by Nietzsche and the microscopic differences and contingences that do not fit within Foucault's own conceptual and normative framework. He also reads Nietzsche in a purely hagiographic light, indulging in the hero history so characteristic of the morality of genealogy, where the true champions, who are often the vanquished or excluded, can do no wrong, even if they promote—like Nietzsche—an aristocratic history of the master race.[68] This latter point is particularly important because Foucault's unwillingness to criticize Nietzsche's politics (the same could be said of Kant's) reveals important aspects of his own political orientation, as well as the historical role of genealogy in political struggles.[69]

Taking into consideration the three dimensions of history requires a complex cartographic and topographic approach that recognizes that at each supposed moment in time, there is a plurality of occurrences across space and society. The notion of a *phase* is particularly helpful for engaging with history across these vectors of analysis. Unlike the concepts of epoch or time period, a phase is always uniquely distributed across time, space and society. It is a dynamic formation that can spread and recede within and across these dimensions. It develops in unique foyers, which are not necessarily sequential, contiguous or even connected. A phase forms a three-dimensional constellation that morphs over time as a *metastatic transformation*. Unlike an event or an originary moment of rupture, a historical metastasis changes in all three dimensions of history. This does not mean that it cannot intro-

duce a deep reconfiguration, only that this change will inevitably vary across chronology, geography and social practice.

The variegated mapping of phases and historical metastasis is an integral part of counter-history. This is not a form of oppositional chronicle that seeks to simply invert given stories, nor is it an alternative narrative that attempts to construct novel scripts based on the same basic phenomena. Counter-history reworks the deep structural givens of historical practice by proposing a different historical order, by which I mean a distinctive practical mode of intelligibility of history. In this regard, it labors against the geo-cultural parameters and rampant social homogenization of many established modes of historical writing. It advances a multidimensional account of temporality, denaturalizes space in order to develop radical geographies attentive to a multiplicity of overlapping and intersecting spaces, and it puts forth a multi-agential account of social struggles that significantly parts ways with the traditional binaries of social theory.[70] Moreover, counter-history contests the implicit ontological parameters that structure the very distinction between the human and social sciences, on the one hand, and the natural sciences on the other. Not unlike Nietzsche (but very unlike Foucault), it is critical of the truncated chronology of history, which is based on an anthropocentric time-scale and the metaphysical assumption of a relatively clear demarcation between human beings and nature, which gives birth to static ontologies.[71]

If there are no origins in history, it is because there are complex force fields of agencies distributed across multiple dimensions. We might occasionally decide to use the vocabulary of "beginning" and "end" as useful shorthand for indexing a complex metastatic transformation whose details we do not want to take the time to rehearse. However, history does not ultimately abide by the logic of streamlined trajectories, if they be paths of progress, decline, dialectical overturning or Nietzschean inversion. History is not genealogy in the sense that it does not follow a single line of descent—even if it is characterized by internal tensions, reversals, regressions or returns of the repressed—and it knows no strict commencements or conclusions. As long as one attempts to avoid origins within genealogy, which Nietzsche defined in many ways as the historical study of origins,[72] one remains locked within a specific chronological order founded on discreet beginnings that compress the spatial and social dimensions of history (which is precisely what allows for the spinning of moral yarns opposing *the good* and *the bad*).

Counter-history works against grand historical morality or anti-morality tales by resituating values and the battle over them within a multi-agential force field and a multidimensional history. Nietzsche and Foucault have powerfully demonstrated that histories are always value-laden and bound up with power struggles, but they have not

provided us with a detailed, reflexive account regarding the historical constitution of the values operative in their own histories. Instead, they have developed genealogies that rely on values that largely stand outside of and frame their critical gaze, thereby constituting the uncritical governing normative framework that is used to judge history. Whereas Nietzsche often appeals to the naturalized values of master morality, Foucault frequently indulges in an implicit—but no less obvious—promotion of the transgressive, the disruptive, the marginalized, the heterogeneous, the accidental, and so forth. In both cases, the morality guiding genealogy produces a *transcendental value history* where the values of genealogy—if it be those of master morality or those of differential contingencies—are not subjected to historical critique precisely because they frame and determine it as its very conditions of possibility. It is under a gaze structured by these values that history itself is written as *wirkliche Historie*, either to propose a revaluation of the values that have subverted the natural order, or to unearth and privilege the disruptive singularities that have been suppressed by the dominant moral narratives. The genealogy of morality depends upon the governing morality of genealogy.

Counter-history definitively parts ways with transcendental value history and the implicit moralism that structures so much intellectual work from behind the scenes. It counters the moralization of history by developing a multidimensional account that is recalcitrant to categorical moral judgments from a single vantage point within a system of values that is at least partially de-historicized. In other words, it resituates *all* values within ongoing collective struggles. Grand narratives of historical progress, like those of decline, require such a moralizing point of view and extra-historical reference points insofar as they presume that an extremely complex force field of agencies, distributed across the three dimensions of history, can be reduced to simple narratives of evolution or devolution based on fixed values (which is not to say that one cannot, in circumscribed fields of analysis, appeal to immanent values and speak of advances and retreats in relation to them). The same is true for other similar proclamations founded on a single, unchanging logic of dialectics or genealogical inversion that purports to sum up the totality of historical dynamics, or an expansive subset thereof. One does not have to look far to find *Geist* lingering in these proclamations insofar as the material complexities of the past can only be reduced to a single internal logic if they are subjected to the *geistig*—intellectual and spiritual—sieve of history, which filters out anything that does not conform to its dictates.

In my book, *Counter-History of the Present*, for example, one chapter provides an intransitive counter-history of democracy that begins by rejecting the widespread contemporary normative blackmail according to which one can only speak of democracy if one is favorable toward

it. Far from simply being against democracy, however, I demonstrate how the implicit normative framework undergirding this predominant attitude is at once historically conditioned and obfuscating. It is in this context that I outline four phases of an intransitive history of "democracy" in the so-called Western world, while simultaneously revealing the ways in which this problematic geo-cultural unit is a historical construct bound up with the contemporary history of democracy and its retroactive postulation of a Greek origin.[73] I show how, in ancient Athens, there was a practice of democracy that had little or nothing to do with modern instantiations, and that this practice was defined by the rule of an infinitesimal minority of the population (approximately 2.4%). I also demonstrate how the practice largely disappeared between the end of antiquity and the modern age, a phase during which the term democracy was generally used to refer to the ancients. When it did come back into use in order to depict a contemporaneous practice, it was widely employed as a term of denigration akin to "mob rule." It is in this light that I examine the predominant normative framing operative in the Enlightenment by showing how the major so-called democratic thinkers at the time—including the purported Founding Fathers—were rabidly opposed to democracy. It was only in the middle third of the nineteenth century that the term slowly came to be used in a more positive sense in certain sectors, but this was largely to refer to the modern republics that had been founded in the United States, France and elsewhere. The structure of these republics, which were oligarchic, did not change along with their name, however. In other words, they were repackaged as democracies as this term was given its contemporary positive valuation, and this normative shift was part of the modern Euro-American political project of disguising the elite rule of oligarchic, capitalist republics invested in colonialism and the slave trade as progressive forms of democratic integration in which the state increasingly serves the needs of "the people." Far from a transcendental value history or a genealogical account of structural inversions in which the author is implicitly or explicitly aligned with one side of a moral history, this counter-history of democracy teases out very specific and complex immanent systems of value that are enmeshed in collective political struggles and cannot be encased within a single over-arching moralizing tale (because the values themselves *change over time*), while also insisting on the fact that these phases operate in multi-agential force fields unequally distributed across time, space and society.

This does not mean that counter-history shuns value judgments. On the contrary, it rejects *transcendental value history* by subjecting the valuations of genealogy to historical critique, and it shuns *covert methodological moralism* in favor of explicit pragmatic interventions into multi-agential fields of values. In other words, it follows gene-

alogy in re-situating values in the history of acts of valuation and the power struggles over them, but it rejects the naturalization or quasi-naturalization of values at work in binary moral histories. This is precisely how *methodological moralism* operates: it determines, from behind the scenes, the practical coordinates of one's work by making it subservient to a series of unquestioned preferences that are largely conditioned by social forces operative in one's conjuncture.[74] Counter-history, by contrast, subjects these proclivities to socio-historical and normative critique, thereby reflexively revealing their material histories and identifying interstices and bracing points that could be used to transform them.

Using these terms heuristically, counter-history allows us to distinguish between transcendent, immanent and interventionist values. Transcendent values are those that purport to stand above the flow of time and determine it as if from the outside, and they are the implicit or explicit reference points for transcendental value histories, meaning histories determined by a value system that functions as their unquestioned condition of possibility. The radical historicism of counter-history rejects their existence in the name of recognizing that *all* values are immanent in the sense that they have been produced over time by particular collectivities. Their sedimentation in social systems often produces the illusion that they are transcendent and unchangeable, but one of the roles of counter-history is precisely to resituate them in sociohistorical fields of struggle, and hence to politicize them. For counter-history recognizes that immanent values are the result of repeated interventions on the part of different forms of agency. Rejecting, then, the abstract conceptual opposition between universalism and relativism, counter-history demonstrates that values do not stand above history, nor are they simply arbitrary standards relative to individuals or homogenous social systems. They are *contingent* in the precise sense that they have been produced by certain agencies and imposed with the force of necessity, but they remain within fields of struggle and could thereby be transformed. This is precisely why counter-history explicitly undertakes pragmatic interventions into the immanent fields of values that it maps, in order to promote or construct interventionist values as part of the very real historical project of emancipatory politics.

It is here that that the morality of genealogy comes into full relief against the politics of counter-history. The former tends to subsume the past within a transcendental system of values, and its critical dimension is oriented toward potentially provoking personal awareness and individual liberation.[75] The latter resituates all values within collective historical struggles over the construction of common worlds, and it pragmatically intervenes to contribute to the remaking of values. Such interventions, far from being a matter of simply knowing oneself or

endeavoring to be or think otherwise, are explicitly dedicated to socio-political transformation. More specifically, counter-history historically emerges from the underside of capitalist and colonial historiographies, and it intervenes to promote and push forward the immanently constituted values of socioeconomic equality against the onslaught of the modern capitalist world-system. Whereas the morality of genealogy is oriented toward local and personal changes, and its political orbit includes strong opponents of equality like Nietzsche and Kant, the politics of counter-history is invested in an egalitarian social transformation via a radical reconfiguration of the collective imaginaries that produce the very values that individuals cultivate or reject.

Conclusion

Genealogy produces bi-dimensional histories of descent that are value-laden and marked by originary events of structural inversion. Counter-history—while drawing on certain resources like intransitive history, the rejection of ideal significations, and understanding history as a site of struggle—challenges the historical order operative in genealogy and proposes an alternative logic that takes into account the multidimensionality of history and the multiplicity of agencies at work in any conjuncture. Rather than opposing origins, then, it dismantles the very framework that renders them possible. Instead of moralizing history from an individual vantage point, it politicizes it by resituating values within multi-dimensional force fields that it maps and in which it intervenes. It does not allow values to float above material histories by becoming the transcendental armature used to judge and script these histories from the outside in terms of black-and-white narratives of opposition and inversion. Instead, it develops a complex historical and sociological geography of immanent values while also mobilizing interventionist values to collectively reconfigure the normative horizons of a world-in-struggle, in which there is no beginning to values, and there is no end to politics. Counter-history thereby responds to the moralization of genealogy with the politicization of values.

Notes

1. Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, ed. Keith Ansell-Pearson, trans. Carol Diethe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 34.
2. Ibid., 36 (translation slightly modified).
3. Ibid., 54 and 83.
4. Nietzsche, *Untimely Meditations*, ed. Daniel Breazeale, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 76–77.
5. In *The Anti-Christ* (1894), Nietzsche writes: "What is good?—All that heightens the feeling of power, the will to power, power itself in man. What is

bad?—All that proceeds [*stammt*] from weakness" (*Twilight of the Idols* and *The Anti-Christ*, trans. R. J Hollingdale [London: Penguin Books, 2003], 127).

6. Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, 31–32.
7. The values that structure and motivate his genealogy approximate what he had called in the second of his *Untimely Meditations* (1874) the "suprahistorical [überhistorisch]," which he defined as "the powers which lead the eye away from becoming [*Werden*] towards that which bestows upon existence the character of the eternal and stable" (ed. Daniel Breazeale, trans. R.J. Hollingdale [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997], 120). It is the suprahistorical and the unhistorical, by which he means "the art and power of *forgetting*," that constitute "the *natural* antidotes to the stifling of life by the historical, by the malady of history" (ibid. 120 and 121, my emphasis). Foucault simplifies the latter's argument by ignoring the unhistorical and claiming that he is purely critical of the supra-historical (see "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History" in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow [New York: Pantheon Books, 1984]).
8. In *Beyond Good and Evil*, he describes valuations as organically rooted in specific life instincts: "Behind all logic and its seeming sovereignty [*Selbstherrlichkeit*] of movement there also stand valuations [*Wertschätzungen*], or more plainly spoken, physiological demands for the preservation of a certain type of life" (*Beyond Good and Evil / On the Genealogy of Morality*, trans. Adrian Del Caro; Vol. 8 of *The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche*, eds. Alan D. Schrift and Duncan Large [Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2014], 7, translation slightly modified).
9. Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols* and *The Anti-Christ*, 55.
10. Ibid., 147.
11. See, for instance, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, 15 and 25.
12. Ibid., 33.
13. Ibid., 19. Nietzsche's virulent rejection of socialism and his racialization of an inferior slave class to be suppressed in favor of the natural superiority of masters are inscribed, historically, in the colonial-capitalist project of imperial domination elucidated perhaps most clearly by Domenico Losurdo in *War and Revolution: Rethinking the Twentieth Century*, trans. Gregory Elliott (London: Verso, 2015). "Late Nietzsche's relentless polemic against socialists," he writes, "must not lead us to forget the motif of the 'destruction of the decadent races.' The philosopher expressed the hope that the ''barbarism' of the methods' used by the conquistadors 'in the Congo and wherever,' and an awareness of the need to maintain 'mastery of barbarians,' would end up putting paid to the habitual, hateful 'European sentimentality'" (179–180).
14. "*Beyond Good and Evil*… at least this does *not* mean 'Beyond Good and Bad'" (*On the Genealogy of Morality*, 33).
15. Gilles Deleuze cogently writes that "Genealogy means both the value of origin [*origine*] and the origin [*origine*] of values" (*Nietzsche and Philosophy*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson [London: The Athlone Press, 1983], 2).
16. Nietzsche, *Untimely Meditations*, 112.

17. Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," 80 (translation slightly modified).
18. To illustrate the latter case, Foucault refers to *Daybreak* §62, where Nietzsche clearly uses *Entstehung* as a synonym for *Ursprung*, and §102 where he suggests that the shameful *Ursprung* of morality is to be found in the judgment that what harms me is evil, and what is useful is good. He also cites *On the Genealogy of Morality*, I, §14 where Nietzsche does not actually use the term (although he does use it in I, §13 to distinguish the *Ursprung* of "good" in slave morality from his own account of it).
19. Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," 77 (translation slightly modified).
20. Ibid., 78 (translation slightly modified).
21. Ibid. (translation slightly modified). Of the five passages that Nietzsche references from *Human, All Too Human*, three of them do not actually contain the noun *Ursprung*, and the two that do use the verb *entstehen* in close connection with it. Moreover, in order to illustrate his claim, Foucault furtively highlights in a footnote that paragraph 92 of Nietzsche's book was entitled *Ursprung der Gerechtigkeit* (Origin of Justice). Although this is true, it was not one of the examples referenced by Nietzsche himself, so it does not actually support Foucault's assertion.
22. Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," 77 (translation slightly modified).
23. Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, 5.
24. Ibid., 6.
25. Ibid. (my emphasis).
26. Ibid., 4.
27. Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," 78 (translation slightly modified).
28. Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, 5.
29. Ibid., 4. In *Beyond Good and Evil* §32, Nietzsche provides an interesting sketch of the history of morality centered on a critique of origins (*Herkünfte*). A "*premoral* period" in which the consequences of actions were alone important and not their origin (*Herkunft*), was followed by a long moral era in which the *Herkunft* of an activity—rather than its consequences—became the source of its value (35). He then imagines and calls for a third, extra-moral period in which this *Herkunft* would be overcome.
30. These discrepancies persist in Foucault's re-visitation of Nietzsche's supposed critique of *Ursprünge* in the lectures that he presented in Rio de Janeiro in 1973 ("La vérité et les formes juridiques" in *Dits et* écrits *I, 1954–1975*. Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1994, 1406–1514). For instance, he references *The Gay Science* §151 as an example of the fact that religion does not have an *Ursprung*, only an *Erfindung*, even though Nietzsche does not use the latter term and explains that the origin (*Ursprung*) of religion is not a metaphysical need but an error in the interpretation of natural phenomena. He also asserts that Nietzsche argues in §353 that there is no *Ursprung* of poetry (only an invention), but the text in question is enti-

tled "The Origin [*Ursprung*] of Religions" and focuses on the inventions (*Erfindungen*) of their founders, with no discussion of poetry.

31. *Power/Knowledge*, 85 (translation modified). Earlier in the same lecture, Foucault provided the following definition: "Let us call, if you will, 'genealogy,' the coupling of erudite knowledges [*connaissances*] and local memories, which allows for the constitution of a historical knowledge [*savoir*] of struggles and the use of this knowledge [*savoir*] in contemporary tactics" (ibid. 83, translation modified).
32. See *Logique de l'histoire: pour une analytique des pratiques philosophiques*. Paris: Éditions Hermann, 2010, as well as "Comment penser le temps present? De l'ontologie de l'actualité à l'ontologie sans l'être," *Rue Descartes* 75 (2012/13): 114–26 (English translations of the latter and one chapter of the former are available in *Interventions in Contemporary Thought: History, Politics, Aesthetics* [Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016]).
33. Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, 12.
34. Michel Foucault, *Dits et écrits*, Vol. 1 1954–1969 (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1994), 595.
35. Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France 1977–1978*, ed. Michel Senellart, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Picador, 2009), 177 (translation slightly modified). In "What Is Critique?" he juxtaposes genealogy to genesis by defining the former as an attempt "to restore the conditions for the appearance of a singularity from multiple determining elements of which it is not the product, but rather the effect" (*The Politics of Truth*, ed. Sylvère Lotringer, trans. Lysa Hochroth and Catherine Porter [Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2007], 64, translation slightly modified).
36. "Foucault," Gayatri Spivak writes, "is a brilliant thinker of power-in-spacing, but the awareness of the topographical reinscription of imperialism does not inform his presuppositions. He is taken in by the restricted version of the West produced by that reinscription and thus helps to consolidate its effects" (*Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, eds. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg [Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1988], 290). Although it is arguable that she mischaracterizes him as having an "essentialist agenda" and "methodologically presupposing a Subject-of-power," her assessment is nevertheless a welcome critique of his Eurocentrism (ibid. 285 and 289).
37. See, for instance, his interview on Zen in *Dits et* écrits, Vol. III 1954–1969 (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1994), 618–624, as well as his writings on Iran in Janet Afary and Kevin B. Anderson, *Foucault and the Iranian Revolution: Gender and the Seductions of Islamism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).
38. For an important critique of his Eurocentrism—among other things—in his work on prisons, see Angela Davis, *The Angela Y. Davis Reader*, ed. Joy James (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 1998). This issue of the geographic parameters of his work is at the center of a 1976 interview entitled "Questions à Michel Foucault sur la géographie" (*Dits et* écrits *III*, 28–40). He concludes the conversation by admitting that he has changed his mind

because geography should indeed be at the core of his preoccupations. Unfortunately, it is not clear that he significantly revised his methodology in his subsequent writings.

39. *Dits et écrits*. Vol. IV 1980–1988. Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1994, 19.
40. Edward Said poignantly writes in this regard: "ignoring the imperial context of his own theories, Foucault seems actually to represent an irresistible colonizing movement that paradoxically fortifies the prestige of both the lonely individual scholar and the system that contains him. […] Foucault, perhaps because of his disenchantment with both the insurrections of the 1960s and the Iranian Revolution, swerves away from politics entirely" (*Culture and Imperialism* [New York: Vintage Books, 1993], 278).
41. In one of his rare references to the Algerian War, Foucault disingenuously claimed in a 1980 interview that he experienced it as a foreigner because he was abroad (he returned to France in 1960, and the war did not end until 1962). Although he asserted that he was against the war, even though he had rarely discussed it, he added: "But being abroad and not living directly what was happening in my country, even if clarity was not difficult for me, I did not have to show much courage; I did not personally participate in one of the decisive experiences of modern France" (*Dits et* écrits *IV*, 59). As a side note, he did, however, insist in 1971 on the fact that almost no one ever discussed the 1961 massacre of Algerians in Paris (see *Dits et* écrits *I, 1954–1975*, 1050).
42. Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Richard Philcox (New York: Grove Press, 2004), 58.
43. Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," 88 (translation slightly modified).
44. This is one of the reasons why he maintained a compelling interest in counter-cultural activities that resist dominant practices within a given time period, as is the case, for instance, in his account of the counter-discourse of literature in the modern age of the human sciences. Nevertheless, his social account of history tends to remain bi-dimensional insofar as it foregrounds a culturally dominant mode, which defines the nature of the era and its values, and forms of resistance that beckon toward a potential age to come, or the return of a past age.
45. "The questions I am trying to ask," stated Foucault in 1983, "are not determined by a preestablished political outlook and do not tend toward the realization of some definite political project" (*The Foucault Reader*, 375).
46. Foucault, *The Politics of Truth*, 114.
47. Ibid. (translation slightly modified).
48. Foucault flatly asserted in the first volume of the *History of Sexuality*, in stark opposition to those who have rigorously documented the class war opposing the owners of the means of production to the mass of workers, that "power comes from below; that is, there is no binary and all-encompassing opposition between rulers and ruled at the root of power relations, and serving as a general matrix" (trans. Robert Hurley [New York: Vintage Books, 1990], 94).

49. For more nuanced, materialist and well-researched accounts of actually existing socialism and its struggles against capitalism, see Domenico Losurdo's *War and Revolution* and Michael Parenti's *Blackshirts & Reds: Rational Fascism & the Overthrow of Communism* (San Francisco, CA: City Lights Books, 1997).
50. See Foucault, *Dits et écrits III*, 745. For a rigorous account of the British and US imperial intervention in Iran, see William Blum's *Killing Hope: US Military and CIA Interventions since World War II* (London: Zed Books, 2014), 64–72.
51. See Foucault, *Dits et écrits III*, 623.
52. See Didier Eribon, *Michel Foucault*, trans. Betsy Wing (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 52.
53. See Michael S. Christofferson, "Foucault and New Philosophy" in *Foucault and Neoliberalism,* eds. Daniel Zamora and Michael C. Behrent (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2016), 6–23. Also see Nicos Poulantzas' detailed assessment of Foucault's relationship to Marxism in *State, Power, Socialism*, trans. Patrick Camiller (London: Verso, 2014).
54. See Michael C. Behrent, "Liberalism without Humanism" in *Foucault and Neoliberalism*.
55. Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978–79*, ed. Michel Senellart, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 259–260.
56. See Nicos Poulantzas' trenchant and poignant critique of Foucault, in which he takes him to task for his reduction of the rich, ongoing history of Marxism to either a simplistic caricature or to the particular Marxism of the Third International, as well as for his remarkable underestimation of classes and class struggle in favor of "a vision which dilutes and scatters power among innumerable microsituations" (*State, Power, Socialism*, trans. Patrick Camiller [London: Verso, 2014], 44). Also see Daniel Zamora, "Foucault, the Excluded, and the Neoliberal Erosion of the State" in *Foucault and Neoliberalism*.
57. See, for instance, *Dits et* écrits *I, 1954–1975*, 1674.
58. Edward Said, *The World, the Text, and the Critic* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983), 221.
59. See my article "The CIA Reads French Theory: On the Intellectual Labor of Dismantling the Cultural Left" *Los Angeles Review of Books*, "The Philosophical Salon" (February 27, 2017) <http://thephilosophicalsalon.com/the-cia-reads-french-theory-on-the-intellectual-labor-of-dismantling-the-cultural-left/>.
60. Foucault, *Dits et écrits III*, 670.
61. Eribon, *Michel Foucault*, 132, translation modified (entire passages were oddly left out of the English translation).
62. Ibid., 677. Foucault's reticence to embrace pragmatic political ideals comes out in his 1971 debate with Noam Chomsky. In his discussion with Gilles Deleuze in 1972, he uncharacteristically links certain social struggles to the revolutionary movement of the proletariat (see *Language,*

Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews, ed. Donald F. Bouchard [Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986], 216). In some of his later interviews, Foucault discusses the need to struggle to establish homosexual lifestyles, advocating for the invention of new cultural forms and ethical relations (see for instance *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*. *The Essential Works of Foucault*, Vol. I, ed. Paul Rabinow, trans. Robert Hurley and Others [New York: The New Press, 1997], 137–8, 157–60, 163–4).

63. Foucault, *Dits et* écrits *III*, 678.

64. In "What Is Critique?" (1978), Foucault sketches a history of the "critical attitude" by situating it in opposition to the explosion and multiplication of all of the arts of governing since the fifteenth century. Whereas the latter is described as a social and institutional project involving religion, law and science, the latter is defined as "the movement by which the subject gives himself the right to question truth on its effects of power and question power on its discourses of truth. Well, then!: critique will be the art of voluntary insubordination [*l'inservitude volontaire*], that of reflected intractability [*l'indocilité réfléchie*]. Critique would essentially insure the desubjugation of the subject in the context of what we could call, in a word, the politics of truth" (*The Politics of Truth*, 47). It is not surprising in this regard that Foucault takes a sympathizer with the doctrine of enlightened despotism, Immanuel Kant, as an exemplar for this form of critique since his reflections on the Enlightenment—at least according to Foucault—manifested this individualist conception of critique in which one "dared to know" with public reason but obeyed the dictates of the social order when it came to the private use of reason in a civil post or office. Indeed, Kant concluded his reflections on the nature of the *Aufklärung* by praising the "enlightened" monarch who—backed up by "a numerous and well-disciplined army"—proclaims: "Argue as much as you will, and about what you will, only obey!" (*On History*, ed. Lewis White Beck, trans. Lewis White Beck, Robert E. Anchor, Emil L. Fackenheim [New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1963], 10).

65. See *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, 205–217, as well as *Power/Knowledge*, 109–133, where he candidly states the numerous risks run by the specific intellectual: "Above all, the risk of being unable to develop these struggles for lack of a global strategy or outside support; the risk too of not being followed, or only by very limited groups" (130).

66. *The Foucault Reader*, 375.

67. "I am tired of people studying him [Nietzsche]," Foucault claims in a 1975 interview, "only to produce the same kind of commentaries that are written on Hegel or Mallarmé. For myself, I prefer to utilize the writers I like. The only valid tribute to thought such as Nietzsche's is precisely to use it, to deform it, to make it groan and protest. And if commentators then say that I am being faithful or unfaithful to Nietzsche, that is of absolutely no interest" (*Power/Knowledge*, 53–54). Let us note in passing that Foucault often relies on a form of double-edged hermeneutics as a highly questionable defense strategy against those who questioned his findings. On the one hand, he regularly insists that his work is rigorously documented and maintains an intimate relationship to the archives that he studies. On

the other hand, as soon as there are discrepancies between his claims and the archive, he retorts that he wants his books to function as iconoclastic bombs that ignore scholarly conventions. On his own terms, then, there is little or no space for material refutation: either he is right, or he does not care about being right.

68. Foucault's gloss on Nietzsche's racial classifications is somewhat misleading insofar as he claims that the traits that he attempts to identify in his "analysis of *Herkunft* […] are not the exclusive generic characteristics of an individual, a sentiment, or an idea, which permit us to qualify them as 'Greek' or 'English'; rather, it seeks the subtle, singular, and subindividual marks that might possibly intersect in them to form a network that is difficult to unravel" (*The Foucault Reader*, 81).
69. On this issue, see Domenico Losurdo's astute critique of Nietzsche and—by extension—Foucault as theorists of "aristocratic radicalism" whose "identification of reason with domination" serves as a bulwark against the rational and scientific critique of class hierarchies, which are thereby naturalized: "Those (one thinks particularly of Michel Foucault) who have discovered a more radical critique of domination in Nietzsche than Marx, who supposedly stopped half-way, as demonstrated by his genuflection to reason and science, argue in mistaken and misleading fashion. In reality, in the theorist of aristocratic radicalism [Nietzsche], the non-transcendability of conflict through reason ultimately refers to the irreparable naturalistic rift splitting the human community into masters and slaves, successes and failures" (*Class Struggle: A Political and Philosophical History*, trans. Gregory Elliott [New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016], 69).
70. I have developed a number of these themes in *Radical History & the Politics of Art* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014).
71. Foucault's "ontology of ourselves" is an account of how the "being" of certain Westerners has been modulated by relatively recent historical developments, rather than an attempt to plumb the temporal depths of the ontological constitution of "homo sapiens." In other words, his *ontology of historical beings* is far from being a *historical ontology* of those very beings. On this topic, see my debate with Ádám Takács at the Critical Theory Workshop / Atelier de Théorie Critique 2016: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rsoy-TVXWXU>.
72. In *Human, All Too Human*, Nietzsche describes his "moral dissecting table" by claiming that "here there rules that science which asks after the origin [*Ursprung*] and history [*Geschichte*] of the so-called moral sensations" (trans. R. J. Hollingdale [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989], 32).
73. Although I will avoid the repetition of scare quotes in what follows, it goes without saying that, for counter-history, there are no fixed and natural objects behind history, such as "democracy," "the West," etc.
74. On this point, see my essay entitled "Is Difference a Value in Itself? Critique of a Metaphilosophical Axiology" in *Interventions*, 117–138.
75. There are at least a few passing references to a "collective" critical attitude in Foucault's variegated corpus (see, for instance, *The Politics of Truth*, 67).