

"Truth and Power" (Interview, 1977). *Power*, 111-33 / *DE2*, 140-160.

#### I. Trajectory of research from *MC* to *DP*

- A. Political status of science: question of power and knowledge [*pouvoir / savoir*]
  - 1) It's too much to ask this question of "hard sciences": physics or chemistry
  - 2) So F asked it of the human sciences
    - a) Psychiatry in *MC*
    - b) Medicine in *BC*
- B. No one else saw the interest of these questions
  - 1) Marxist intellectuals wanted to offer new answers to same old questions posed by the liberal university tradition, so they went to the "classic" questions of philosophy of science
  - 2) "Post-stalinist Stalinism" insisted on repetition of Marxist / 19<sup>th</sup> C discourse
    - a) Post-1968, there was a new discursive regime possible
  - 3) The PCF directors refused to pose questions to psychiatry bcs of the gulag

#### II. Discontinuity and structuralist history

- A. F admits that in *Order of Things (Les Mots et les Choses)* he wasn't as clear as he could have been. [He uses his work in *AK* to explain]:
- B. In some sciences, change is not smooth and continuous, but somewhat abrupt
  - 1) A "discontinuity" changes the manner of saying (*mots*) and seeing (*choses*)
  - 2) Change in "rules of formation of statements"
    - a) What counts as possibly true or false, as a scientific statement
    - b) In other words, a change in the "internal regime of power" of statements
      - (1) That is, which statements are admissible and which are excluded
      - (2) This issue is what is common to *MC* and *OT*, but badly formulated

#### III. Relation of event and structure

- A. An "event" cannot be pure surd opposed to pure intelligibility of structure
  - 1) Thus, F says "no one could be more anti-structuralist than me"
  - 2) We have to see the networks and levels of events, and how they are connected
- B. Thus F adopted the genealogical approach using the war model
  - 1) Relations of events are relations of power, not of "meaning" [*sens*]
  - 2) This doesn't mean they are not intelligible, but genealogy is
    - a) Neither dialectic (which evades contingency of history)
    - b) Nor semiotics (which evades violence of history)

#### IV. Relation of discourse and power

- A. Inability of left or right to properly pose question of power's specific mechanisms
  - 1) Right was tied to sovereignty
  - 2) Left was tied to the State

B. The everyday and local struggles of 1968 allowed F to question micro-power

#### V. Didn't the hegemony of Marxism and structuralism help obscure micro-power?

A. Yes.

#### VI. Genealogy and constitution

- A. Rather than simply historicize the subject, we have to get rid of it altogether [as centralizing constitutive power]
- B. Genealogy shows how the subject is itself constituted in a historical framework

- VII. Ideology and repression [as ways of analyzing power] vs "positive history" of *DP*
  - A. Three problems with ideology
    - 1) Always in virtual opposition to truth; we have to show "production of effects of truth" interior to a discourse which is neither true nor false
    - 2) Always refers to a subject
    - 3) Always derivative of a economic or material determinant
  - B. Repression is more difficult to get rid of
    - 1) *MC* implicitly used a concept of repression
    - 2) Repression implies a juridical / negative notion of power
      - a) But if power always only said "no," how could it ever get us to obey it?
      - b) We have to see power as productive of pleasure, knowledge, discourse
  - C. *DP* tried to show a great technological "release" [*déblocage*] of power
    - 1) Not just the great state apparatuses of army, police, financial administration
    - 2) But a new "economy" of power
- VIII. Repression and sexuality
  - A. F agrees that *dispositif* of sexuality looks repressive, but is productive
    - 1) By putting parents and children on the lookout for masturbation
    - 2) We saw a great "electrification" of infant bodies, a "sexualization"
  - B. Why did we see power as juridical-negative vs positive-technical-productive?
- IX. Juridical / philosophical theories of power
  - A. Medieval monarchies posited themselves as impartial arbiters
  - B. Sovereignty, law, prohibition = "representation of power" transmitted by theories of right [*droit*]; to understand power, we have to "cut off the head of the king"
- X. The modern state
  - A. Posing question of power in terms of state = sovereignty / law / repression
  - B. The state is important, but power goes beyond the state
    - 1) The state doesn't saturate the field of power relations
    - 2) The state only functions on a base of pre-existing power relations;
      - a) It is super-structural re: series of networks of micro-power:
      - b) The state is thus a "metapower"
- XI. The state and revolution
  - A. States are "codifications" of multiple power relations
  - B. Revolutions are re-codifications
    - 1) There are as many types of revolutions as there are subversions of power
    - 2) Some revolutions change the state w/o changing power relations
- XII. Inverting Clausewitz's formula so that politics is continuation of war
  - A. Object of F's current research ["Society Must Be Defended"]
  - B. NB that F does not simply endorse this view, but makes it a problem
- XIII. Relation of disciplines and populations
  - A. Feudal power tended to work by signs and levies [*prélèvements*]
  - B. New power tended to work by production and "social service" [*prestation*]
    - 1) An "incorporation" of power: training of bodies
    - 2) A direction of the population
  - C. Sex is the junction of discipline of bodies and control of populations
- XIV. The role of intellectuals
  - A. Form of struggle

- 1) Universal intellectual: individual, self-conscious form of the universality the proletariat only embodied darkly and collectively
  - 2) Specific intellectual: concrete and immediate knowledge of struggles
    - a) Sometimes these are different from the problems of the proletariat
    - b) But sometimes these struggles are another form of the struggles of the proletariat or peasantry or the masses against multinationals, prison-industrial system, housing market speculation, etc.
- B. Type of knowledge:
- 1) The universal writer opposed himself to specialized competence
  - 2) But the specific intellectual uses his specialized knowledge
    - a) This is why the university is such a political flashpoint
    - b) Example of Oppenheimer
- C. Historical antecedents and contemporary examples
- 1) Antecedents:
    - a) Universal intellectual as man of justice: e.g., Voltaire
    - b) Specific intellectual as "expert" [*savant*] intervening in politics:
  - 2) Contemporary examples:
    - a) Biologists and physicists as "absolute experts": strategies of life and death
    - b) Need for integration of struggles: lapse into anarchism by prison struggle alienates public, lets them be manipulated by fear
- D. Rethink function of specific intellectual re: truth / power nexus
- 1) "Truth is a thing of this world"
  - 2) Five traits of our "political economy of truth"
    - a) Centrality of scientific discourse
    - b) Economic and political incitement
    - c) Object of diffusion and consumption
    - d) Non-exclusive, but dominant, control of political / economic apparatuses
    - e) Truth is what's at stake in political debate and social struggle
  - 3) Three aspects of the specific intellectual tied to our regime of truth
    - a) Class position
    - b) Conditions of life and work
    - c) Position within the regime of production of truth
  - 4) Thus the problem is not to fight for truth but to question its production
- E. Four propositions / hypotheses for future work
- 1) "Truth" = ensemble of regulated procedures for production of statements
  - 2) Truth is linked to systems of power
    - a) Production of truth
    - b) Power effects of truth
  - 3) The regime of truth is not ideological or super structural
    - a) It was a condition of formation and development of capitalism
    - b) But it is also that which functions in the socialist countries
  - 4) The political problem of truth for intellectuals
    - a) Is not to disentangle ideology from science
    - b) But to see if we can construct a new political regime of truth production
    - c) It's not a matter of freeing truth from power (for truth has its own power)
    - d) But detaching power of truth from its current hegemonic forms