NIETZSCHE, FOUCAULT, AND GENEALOGY AS METHOD

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ABSTRACT

While not all of Foucault's work is directly related to Nietzsche, it is productive to investigate the genealogical connection between them, and the implications their work has on contemporary educational theory. Neither Foucault nor Nietzsche wrote very much specifically on education. Nevertheless, as an epistemological shift, their work indicates a possible direction of the education of the future. As yet, not many contemporary educational theorists have explored the implications of this work and as a result, the institutional settings are yet to react with any coherency to the conceptual shifts about the nature of truth, language, subjectivity and knowledge that is heralded by Nietzsche and Foucault.

The impact of Nietzsche and Foucault's theories is yet to be overtly discerned in educational practise or even to any great extent in educational theory. However in some ways that is overstating the case. One of the cornerstones of Nietzsche's thought was to overcome belief in God. In a nineteenth century context this was radical, not to mention heretic and offensive. Nowadays however, secular education could almost be described as the norm. In important ways though, Nietzsche's ideas are very familiar to us, re-investigating their implications is rewarding and far-reaching.

A simple atheistic principle is not the point of this paper. The absence of an all-knowing god displaces the ideal of absolute Truth. The implications of the boundaries of truth and its associated re-valuation of knowledge, authority and even morality is the pressing concern. Nietzsche's is a philosophy without metaphysics. That is, he looks for the parameters of truth, morality and subjectivity within the bounds of the material world. By positioning himself as the heralder of an epistomological shift, Nietzsche reinterprets past, present and future. He is indicating the need for a 're-valuation of values.' His perspective, while never absolutist, zooms from the global to the minute.

Instead of an essential subject, which can be exposed, Nietzsche proposes that subjectivity is a result of genealogical processes. This places education in a particularly important position, as students are not pre-defined, irrespective of time and place, as traditional metaphysics would have it. Nietzsche focuses on the production of subjectivity as genealogical and creative. The implications are surprisingly far reaching. The presumed authority of existing institutional and pedagogical relations are re-interpreted as one option amongst many valid and viable possibilities. It is an opportunity to re-evaluate existing practices, instead of relying on Enlightenment assumptions. Nietzsche's theory decentres humanism and concentrates on the adaptive principles of Life.

Nietzsche and Foucault make connections between knowledge, meaning and power, and the bearing these have on constituting the subject. Foucault's theory focuses on the relation between structure and agency, the genealogical, historical and discursive practices which

constitute the subject, and the creative agency with which each person can engage with these material givens. Again, within these complex processes, education plays a crucial role, partly as an apparatus of the state, and partly as deconstructing the meanings of the dominant discourses through processes such as self development and critical theory.

It is important not to position Nietzsche himself as a miraculous source for Foucauldian and post-structuralist theory. He was a singular man who negotiated and reacted to his genealogy and his times. The son of a Lutheran clergyman, his strong anti-Christian sentiments were influenced by Greek polytheism and by embracing the scholarship of scientists' biological exploration of vital 'Life' forces. Nietzsche's abandonment of metaphysics combined in a unique and sophisticated revitalisation of the empirical world. Friederich Nietzsche was born in 1844, in the Saxon town Röcken in Germany. His father was a Protestant clergyman, but he died when Nietzsche was only five, 'the attending physician attributed it to softening of the brain.' (Mandel, in Salome, 1988: xii) Consequently, Nietzsche and his sister grew up with their mother, grand-mother and two maiden aunts in Naumburg. He went to university at Bonn and Leipzig where he studied philology and read Schopenhauer. He was made a Professor of classical philology at Basle University when he was 24. He had consistent problems with his health and eyesight, which might have resulted during his stint in the army, as an ambulance orderly during the Franco-Prussian war. There is some speculation that he then contracted syphillis. In 1880 his health forced him into reclusion. He retained an income from Basle University and lived mostly in small pensions' in France, Italy and Switzerland. Eventually he went insane in 1889, after which, his mother cared for him. He died in 1900.

It might seem a little unusual to consider Nietzsche's relationship with Foucault when he died 26 years before Foucault was born. In the preface to the *Genealogy of Morals,* Nietzsche speaks specifically about his search for intellectual heirs. He requires of his readers deciphering, more even; *exegesis* or interpreting layers of meaning.

> One thing is necessary above all if one is to practice reading as an *art* in this way, ...something for which one has almost to be a cow and in any case *not* a 'modern man': *rumination* (Nietzsche, 1969: 23).

Foucault was born in Poitiers, France, in 1926. His mentors at the prestigious Ecole Normale Superieure were the philosopher, Jean Hyppolite and the historian of science, Georges Canguilhem. He was also influenced by Merleau-Ponty in phenomenological philosophy, Jaques Lacan in psychoanalysis and Louis Althusser in Marxist structuralism. Foucault began reading Nietzsche in 1953. Foucault's work has been characterized as not fitting tidily into one particular discipline. Like Nietzsche, his work dissolves and exceeds the conventional notions of philosophical metaphysics, teleological history, strict political science, amongst many other subjects. Correspondingly, his work has had an enormous impact on a wide variety of subjects, from science to the social sciences. Although his scope was tremendous, Foucault was bound by a eurocentric and masculinist focus. He died of Aids related causes at the age of 57.

Foucault's relationship to Nietzsche is quite interesting. He is not a 'Nietzsche scholar.' In fact he only wrote two essays directly on Nietzsche at all; 'Nietzsche, Genealogy, History" and 'Nietzsche, Freud, Marx.' Instead, of using Nietzsche as a 'subject' or even a

'prototype', Foucault became pre-occupied with the Nietzschean elements: the relationship between language, truth, power and the subject. Following Deleuze, Foucault used Nietzsche's theories as a 'tool-box' in quite a direct way (Deleuze in Schrift, 1995: 59). For example, Foucault's book, *Discipline & Punish*, is a topic in the second essay of Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morals* section 12. Nietzsche re-occurs in Foucault's ouvre. Foucault examines the relationship between language, truth, power and the subject, emphasizing different aspects at different stages of his writing. As Alan Schrift puts it, 'Nietzsche's power to transform appears, albeit in different guises, at every stage of Foucault's thought and career' (Schrift, 1995: 35).

One of Nietzsche's profound thoughts was to direct scholars away from metaphysical assumptions about human morality and history, replacing absolute Truth with layers of genealogical interpretation. The socio-political situation of truth places ontology itself in a particular historical context. Nietzsche wrote

> For it must be obvious which color is a hundred times more vital for a genealogist of morals than blue: namely *gray*, that is, what is documented, what can actually be confirmed and has actually existed, in short the entire long hieroglyphic record, so hard to decipher, of the moral past of mankind! (Nietzsche, 1966: 21).

Foucault responded;

> Genealogy is gray, meticulous, and patiently documentary. It operates on a field of entangled and confused parchments, on documents that have been scratched over and recopied many times (Foucault, 1977: 139).

Foucault's 'Nietzsche, Genealogy, History' article was an analysis of Genealogy as method, whereas Nietzsche's *Towards a Genealogy of Morals* was genealogy in practice, incorporating and blurring method, psychology, philosophy, philology into one tale. While Nietzsche may be attributed as a 'founder of discursivity' or the author of an epistomological shift, in Foucault's hands genealogy takes on a form appropriate to the 20th century.

Foucault owes his transformation of genealogy as much to Canguilhem and Deleuze who have themselves followed up Nietzsche's conception. Genealogy retains its Nietzschean focus on language and style. Canguilhem sharpened the empirical relationship of genealogy to Life, and the biological sciences with an emphasis on chance and adaption. Deleuze's book on Nietzsche *Difference and Repetition* influenced Foucault's genealogy too. Emphasizing the Nietzschean tendency which refuses linear development, the disruption of logic, the challenge of the totalizing word with its unequivocal meaning. These aspects are complemented with Deleuze's concept of interruptions, refusals, reversals of any historical continuity.

> (The) world of speech and desires has known invasions, struggles, plundering, disguises, ploys. From these elements, however, genealogy retrieves an indispensable restraint: it must record the singularity of events outside of any monotonous finality; it must seek them in the most unpromising places, in what we tend to feel is without history – in sentiments, love, conscience, instincts, it must be sensitive to their recurrence, not in order to trace the gradual curve of their evolution, but to isolate the different scenes where they engaged in different roles (ibid: 139-40).

Foucault discusses Nietzsche's use of the terms *Ursprung*, *Herkunft* and *Entstehung*. *Ursprung* is the ultimate original source, something along the lines of metaphysics; Kant's ideal 'Thing-In-Itself.' Whereas *Herkunft* is less definitive, a positioning of place and time, a genealogical descent in relation to diverse other angles, *Entstehung* is translated as 'emergence', not necessarily from one origin, but a complex of things that emerge, tie together at a particular time and place. The terms were often used synonomously in Nietzsche's work. Foucault notes that by 1886, in the *Genealogy*, and in his later writing, Nietzsche makes quite a strong distinction between the terms.

By disparaging a pure origin, Nietzsche abandons metaphysics. The absolute origin makes possible a field of knowledge designed to recover its Truth. However there is never an accurate recognition, due to the 'excesses of its own speech.' Truth outside of time and space can only ever be partially recovered, 'the site of a fleeting articulation that discourse has obscured and finally lost' (ibid: 143). The 'adolescence' of such a search gives way to its impossibility. It is an error, naturalised by long usage, into an 'unalterable form.' Foucault draws on the image of Zarathustra awakening to illusion at noon, 'in the time of the shortest shadow.' Rejecting 'the history of the error we call truth' (ibid: 144).

Foucault draws attention to Nietzsche's outline of his own project in *Towards a Genealogy of Morals*. To begin with, when he was 13, Nietzsche wished to discern the *origin* of evil. He attributed it to the creator of all things; God. However, his mature thinking approaches the question of the constitution of 'evil' quite differently. Foucault writes 'He now finds this question amusing and properly characterizes it as a search for *Ursprung*' (ibid: 141).

According to Foucault,

> ...if the genealogist refuses to extend his faith in metaphysics, if he listens to history, he finds that there is 'something altogether different' behind things: not a timeless and essential secret, but the secret that they have no essence or that their essence was fabricated in a piecemeal fashion from alien forms (ibid: 142).

Having rejected the notion of an essential origin, Foucault utilysed Nietzsche's method of etymology to draw distinctions between *Ursprung* and *Herkunft*. Genealogy is an alternative method of constructing truth(s) and by extension, morals.

GENEALOGY

Herkunft – translates to stock, descent, or the affiliation to a group by tradition, social class, or blood, it intimates race and type. These terms I had to glean directly from Foucault, because my dictionary just translated *Herkunft* to 'origin.' However, Foucault does not detail the implications of such lineages of blood. This is part of the objectionable Nietzsche, taken up by the Nazis, which Foucault cleans up, without exactly silencing. Distance from racism

is attainable by sophisticated language, and framing with dissonance, interruptions, alternatives;

> He must be able to recognize the events of history, its jolts, its surprises, its unsteady victories and unpalatable defeats – the basis of all beginnings, atavisms, and heredities (ibid: 144-5).

Herkunft is genealogy, familiar to us here in Aotearoa/New Zealand as *whakapapa;* the knowledge and recital of ancestors. They position the subject in terms of status, marriageability, tribal affiliations, politics, access to specialised knowledge, and rights to public speaking. *Whakapapa* overtly positions a person's status and rights. On the other hand, in Maori history, those without *whakapapa*, were almost invisible. Slaves had no facial tattoo that inscribed and displayed their subjectivity to society. Similarly, the working classes in England did not know the names of their foreparents by more that two or three generations. Genealogy belonged to the nobility. Nietzsche disparages democracy because, by regarding everybody as equal, they refuse the legitimacy of genealogical status. Foucault makes Nietzsche more palatable to us modern readers. The feudal elements we regard as immoral. Genealogy is both a critique of modernity, (its blind presumption that everyone is the *same*) and distasteful to us, because of its feudal despotic roots. It is, in itself, an example of an epistomological take-over of meaning and rules. Foucault wrote

> Rules are empty in themselves, violent and unfinalized; they are impersonal and can be bent to any purpose. The successes of history belong to those who are capable of seizing these rules, to replace those who had used them, to disguise themselves so as to pervert them, invert their meaning, and redirect them against those who had initially imposed them... (ibid: 151).

EMERGENCE

Nietzsche's refusal of an essential origin is related to his statement 'God is Dead.' *Herkunft* and *Entstehung,* descending and emerging, are evolutionary principles of Life. Chance and adaption are composites of this theme. 'Life' replaces 'god' in Nietzsche's criteria for evaluating morals.

Enstehung, or emergence draws attention to the adaptable, changing utility that occurs during history. This is not a Darwinian teleological process, where the utility value today explains the evolution of a particular characteristic. Nietzsche's classic sentence is 'the eye was not always intended for contemplation' (Foucault, 1969: 148). Nowadays the concept of perception is deep understanding; the Will to Knowledge. Today's utility, however, does not explain the evolutionary emergence of the eye. The eye was once for hunting, gathering, escaping. Foucault explains

> These developments may appear as a culmination, but they are merely the current episodes in a series of subjugations.....Genealogy, seeks to re-establish the various systems of subjection: not the anticipatory power of meaning, but the hazardous play of dominations (ibid: 148).

This relates to Nietzsche's profound insight that the hardened rules and regulations of society – laws – are not so much a desire for justice, or in the case of the state, a Keynsian equitable redistribution of wealth. They are not the culmination of the wisdom of generations. Domination is termed the Will to Power by Nietzsche, and he ascribes it as permeating every interaction; interpersonal, inter-group, inter-societal. Rather than a utopian vision of society, 'Liberty' and the law are tools of dominance by the ruling classes. Nietzsche writes

> guilt, conscience, and duty had their threshold of emergence in the right to secure obligations; and their inception, like that of any major event on earth, was saturated in blood (Nietzsche, *Genealogy,* essay II, section 6).

Foucault goes on

> Humanity does not gradually progress from combat to combat until it arrives at universal reciprocity, where the rule of law finally replaces warfare; humanity installs each of its violences in a system of rules and thus proceeds from domination to domination (Foucault, 1977: 151).

The unending, oscillating flow of power is the source of Life, the constitution of history. There is no humanist 'balance' which we are aiming toward. There can be no 'end of history.'

At the micro-level, the subject is juxtaposed at the turnstile of genealogy and history. These are three relational terms. They contradict Enlightenment epistomology in three ways, Firstly it refutes the a-historical essentialist self (that I, Ruth, would be exactly the same person, no matter where or when I was born, and no matter what events I passed through during my lifetime). Secondly, that objective history is possible. Thirdly, the concept of equal and democratic genealogies (in the familial or atavistic sense). In Foucault's terms;

> Genealogy, as an analysis of descent, is thus situated within the articulation of the body and history. Its task is to expose a body totally imprinted by history and the process of history's destruction of the body (ibid: 148).

> ...descent attaches itself to the body. It inscribes itself in the nervous system, in temperament, in the digestive apparatus; it appears in faulty respiration, in improper diets, in the debilitated and prostrate body of those whose ancestors committed errors (ibid: 147).

Enstehung, or emergence is the chance laiden interplay of force and environmental adaption. In the Nietzsche-Foucaudian model, power is neither simply repressive nor simply productive. Foucault writes that history is not a long chain of events, objectively, or even subjectively described, but that it serves a contemporary purpose. History itself is subject to the power plays of emergence.

> Only by being seized, dominated, and turned against its birth. And it is this movement which properly describes the specific nature of the *Entstehung:* it is not the unavoidable conclusion of a long preparation, but a scene where forces

> are risked in the chance of confrontations, where they emerge triumphant, where they can also be confiscated (ibid: 159).

History is of increased importance when genealogy rather than universal truth legitimises claims to status, wealth, resources and knowledge. A tyranical genealogy is avoided by contesting history itself.

REAL HISTORY

How then, does genealogy, *Herkunft* and *Enstehung* interpellate traditional history? Nietzsche calls it *wirkliche Historie*. For a start, it rejects a fixed, closed, 'objective' history. *Herkunft* and *Enstehung* are integrated into a historical method in an open-ended manner. The name '*wirkliche*' itself connotates material reality as opposed to Idealism, but it is not a fixed or closed meaning, it will generate contested historiography. *Wirkliche Historie* is contrasted with 'suprahistory' which Nietzsche and Foucault criticize for its absolute perspective, which stands in some objective position, outside time and space.

> a history whose function is to compose the finally reduced diversity of time into a totality fully closed upon itself....implies the end of time, a completed development...This is only possible, however, because of its belief in eternal truth, the immortality of the soul, and the nature of consciousness as always identical to itself (ibid: 152).

Both Nietzsche and Foucault argue for a type of history that has given way to a pseudo-objective stance and recognises the implications of the inevitable subjectivity of the epistemological. That is the atavism of the author produces a perspective – probably not 'original' in itself – a perspective shaped by class, ethnicity, time period, place, amongst countless other transient things, breakfast, esteem, influences...No history can escape its own historiography.

What Foucault calls 'effective' History can evade absolutes. The absolute position suggests an objective history. Objective history tends towards a concluding utopia, a millennium. In turn, 'effective' history offers –

> The acuity of a glance that distinguishes, separates, and disperses, that is capable of liberating divergence and marginal elements – the kind of dissociating view that is capable of decomposing itself, capable of shattering the unity of man's being through which it was thought that he could extend his sovereignty to the events of his past (ibid: 153).

Foucault has translated '*wirkliche Historie*' as something along the lines of 'effective' history instead of the more common translation of wirkliche into 'real.' Foucault's desire to avoid the term 'Real' is understandable, because the word has a controversial philosophical etymology itself. Ever since Descartes disconcertingly reduced the world to an image in the lense of man – 'I think', then 'real' has been problematic. Nietzsche's denial of this type of metaphysics, is exactly why the translation of '*wirkliche*' into 'real' could be justified. What Nietzsche was aiming at was a materialistic history, Marxist in its acknowledgement of a physical, biological reality, if not in a materialist teleology ending in a utopian communist society. 'Real' in the rejection of metaphysics, and its associated concept that the ideal world is outside our comprehension. An Aristotlean rejection of Platonic 'Forms' which humans limited by time and space, are only capable of catching glimpses of, before they disintegrate and corrupt into the short-lived examples of the everyday. The Platonic is the origin finding, *Ursprung* type of history. Real history, *Wirkliche Historie*, is the elevation of each and everyday as unique and vital. This is Life. Valued in history, revalued as adaptive principles which project into an unknowable future.

> History has a more important task than to be a handmaiden to philosophy, to recount the necessary birth of truth and values; it should become a differential knowledge of energies and failings, heights and degenerations, poisons and antidotes. Its task is to become a curative science (ibid: 156).

Wirkliche Historie is not merely a resistance to an objective teleological history with a predictable endpoint. It confirms the interpretative function of knowledge and power that reacts, adapts, interposes in the rational assumptions of the Enlightenment. Foucault describes how

> 'Effective' history deprives the self of the reassuring stability of life and nature, and it will not permit itself to be transported by a voiceless obstinacy toward a millenial ending. It will uproot its traditional foundations and relentlessly disrupt its pretended continuity. This is because knowledge is not made for understanding; it is made for cutting.... An event, consequently, is not a decision, a treat, a reign, or a battle, but the reversal of a relationship of forces, the usurpation of power, the appropriation of a vocabulary turned against those who had once used it, a feeble domination that poisons itself as it grows lax, the entry of a masked 'other' (ibid: 154).

Knowledge as 'cutting, not understanding...' refers to Nietzsche's theory the 'Will to Knowledge', which he describes as the creation of new knowledge by reacting against the domination of previously existing material power relations. The self idealisation, the self stylisation of the 'active' colonising class or ethnicity or gender... is re-interpreted by the 'reactive', under-privileged peoples, whose creativity is thwarted and therefore directs itself against those who control and dominate society. Inequal power relations generate the will to create new knowledge. This is the play of dominations. In the *Genealogy,* Nietzsche writes,

> Whatever exists, having somehow come into being, is again and again reinterpreted to new ends, taken over, transformed, and redirected by some power superior to it; all events in the organic world are a subduing, a *becoming master*, and all subduing and becoming master involves a fresh interpretation, an adaptation through which any previous 'meaning' and 'purpose' are necessarily obscured or even obliterated (Nietzsche, 1977: 77).

My feeling is, that all this antagonism towards absolutism and millenianism turns rapidly into unequivocal anti-teleology, but at the same time there is an undercurrent that genealogy is not entirely chance-met change. There is a hint of *development*. Are the 'disruption' quotes merely an overstated case in reaction to the objective universal truths of the 'suprahistorical perspective'? Therefore, as we decipher Foucault's ontology, his entire argument rather than

his eminently quotable phrases, we find many threads of ideas tangled and to some extent continuous: global perspectives, not universal ones. An episteme may be too short a *Herkunft*. As Nietzsche and Foucault, along with most other modern philosophers hark back to Plato and Aristotle, we can say – 'Look, a string of thought, the dialectic for example, re-interpreted certainly, but a connecting fibre, crossing time, space and the written word.' At the same time we need to acknowledge the warning; the string is not infinite, it is enveloped in space and time. This is not absolute Truth. It is a rewarding and profound perspective, that emerged from a sophisticated civilisation, from inspired individuals, and it has contributed to the shaping of modern discourses, from which we ourselves emerge.

The dialectic in Nietzsche is one means amongst the plethora of possibilities for producing change. The dialectic is deprivileged from its assumptions of origin, the *Ursprung* of Becoming, as Becoming pre-existed it. In Hegel, the dialectic is the ontological beginning of time and space. Metaphysics preserving its ability to escape empirical materiality. By the time the concept reaches Nietzsche, Foucault and Derrida, it has been reinterpreted by Nietzsche's epistomological shift. God is dead. Absolute Truth has been sidelined. The dialectic is transposed to the material realities of Oppositional forces, characteristics – Active and Reactive. According to Deleuze, the play of a double affirmative, rather than Hegel's double negative producing a positive synthesis. Neither Nietzsche nor Foucault attributes *Entstehung* or emergence as the dialectic, but I suspect there is a genealogical connection. It is the productive space between two opposing groups for which neither is responsible. It is the 'emergence from the interstice between warring factions';

> ...not specifically the energy of the strong or the reaction of the weak, but precisely this scene where they are displayed superimposed or face-to-face. It is nothing but the space that divides them, the void through which they exchange their threatening gestures and speeches....emergence designates a place of confrontation but not as a closed field offering the spectacle of a struggle among equals (Foucault, 1977: 150).

Either way, genealogical interpretation would have it that the dialectic has a utility value today that is unrelated to its origin. Seeking the genealogical/historical shifts and turns, reinterpretations, disruptions, political ends to which the dialectic, as an example, would effect a revaluation of modern values; a parody, rather than a resemblance to such values. Genealogy itself, then, has its own force, its own Will to Power. It is an alternative to the nihilism and the void.

The Will to Power implies that the rules are empty, new powerful people can take over the mechanism, '...disguise themselves so as to pervert them, invert their meaning, and redirect them against those who had initially imposed them...' (ibid: 151). Substitutions, displacements, disguised conquests, and 'systematic reversals': interpretation is not an exposure of hidden truth but a genealogy of domination and appropriation of a system of rules.

Foucault evaluates the notions of active and reactive peoples in the production of social discourse on the arguments of the *Genealogy* in its entirety. Nietzsche himself identifies so strongly with the proud, hard, and active master type (Nietzsche, 1966: 205), that he fails to perceive the significance and deepening that is produced by the reflective, reactive 'weak, slaves.' The deepening of consciousness and production of social arts, philosophy etc. that results in such 'womanly' sites is a creativity designated by confrontation; the vanquisher and the vanquished producing an unlooked for third term, an emerging, a Becoming[1].

DEMOCRATIC HISTORY

Foucault's final point about history is that, in Nietzschean terms, modern history is 'a sensitivity to all things without distinction, a comprehensive view excluding differences' (ibid, 157). Here is the Nietzschean disparagement of the egalitarian modern man;

> His apparent serenity follows from his concerted avoidance of the exceptional and his reduction of all things to the lowest common denominator (ibid: 159).

Following Nietzsche, Foucault describes history as the 'base curiosity of plebs.' Further, they both describe the 19th century as a degenerate one, which, having produced no monuments worth admiring, looks with unprecedented keenness at the remnants of other civilizations. Not only have the humble historians excavated the past, but they are purported to have done it indiscriminately. This refusal to discern between 'high' and 'low' is made in the name of objectivity. It emerges from the equal nature of modern man. The humble pleb ignores the excessive, the superior, the aristocratic in the name of democracy. Rendering the past devoid of grandeur or greatness puts the hollow shell of modernism on an equal par with every other epoch: universally mundane.

The critique of the 'norm' is mediated in Foucault's work, by Canguilhem's interpretation of Nietzsche. The norm represents stasis, not in itself offensive, but unable to respond to change. It is the deviation, which modern society has excluded as 'sick' or 'insane', that takes the risks needed for evolving new modes of Being[2]. Effectively modernism is normal to the point of obliteration.

Clearly, the genealogical relationship to history is to expose one's own epistemological method while interrogating aspects of history that are relevant in some (possibly obscure) way to the present, the potential of Life; 'it is necessary to master history so as to turn it to genealogical uses, that is, strictly anti-Platonic purposes' (ibid: 159).

WILL TO NOTHINGNESS

In the last section of Foucault's article 'Nietzsche, Genealogy, History', there is a shift back to the relationship between writer and reader, and the process of genealogical history. Nietzsche had warned us against ourselves, we future genealogical/historians. The Will to Knowledge is itself a form of destruction, because it stops at nothing. Whereas Nothingness was harnessed by ascetism, the Will to Knowledge knows no limits. This is the *Ubermensch* gone mad.

The profusion of history in the nineteenth century is the site where Nietzsche directs us to be wary of the Will to Knowledge. Nineteenth century historical methodology – the parody of monumentalism, the conservative antiquarianism with its associated dissociation, the knowledge generated by past injustices – they all leave no respect for the (past) other.

Will to Knowledge is rendered 'techniques of interpretation' by Foucault. He explores the concept in detail in his essay 'Nietzsche, Freud, Marx.' The Will to Knowledge has a deconstructive relationship with the existing modes of domination. Thus new knowledge is produced, showing up the ways individuals as subjects are interpellated into cultural practices, discourses and institutional structures, which in turn support particular groups and subordinate others. As the cycles of domination can never be arrested, neither can the Will to Knowledge.

The historian's disregard for 'others' is where I situate the problem of the destructive capabilities, the risk taking, of the Will to Knowledge, rather than the inability of identities to synthesize or comprehend the multitudinous aspects of the self. Such self-obsession and lack of empathy can only lead to greed. This inability to self-regulate in relation to others is akin to the individualistic, modern capitalist approach to others. It is hardly the optimum direction for internalised subjectivity in psychological terms. I believe it is the individualistic nature of Foucault and Nietzsche's Will to Knowledge that is nihilistic in this instance. My critique loops into Irigaray's criticism of the 'eternal recurrance' and *Ubermensch* as being the product of the Christian and Greek 'God in the image of man' mentality, which is self-reflecting, self-obsessed, self-overcoming[3]. In such a closed system, 'others' only enter the equation as a tool for self-understanding. Nietzsche glamorised a 'hard heart' and disparaged pity, (with good reason) but he did not replace these concepts with anything such as nurturing or reciprocity;

> ...it is a sign of superior culture to maintain, in a fully conscious way, certain phases of its evolution which lesser men pass through without thought. The initial result is that we can understand those who resemble us as completely determined systems and as representative of diverse cultures, that is to say, as necessary and capable of modification. And in return, we are able to separate the phases of our own evolution and consider them individually[4].

To me, sensitised perhaps by my existence in a semi-colonial nation, it is astounding that Foucault should choose this quote, surround it by genealogical themes of disruption, dissipation and emergence, without noticing its colonising character. The passage is a result of Nietzsche's strong identification with the active side of the master/slave dualism. The 'diverse cultures... necessary and capable of modification' is the 'formless and nomad populace', the pre-social society which it is almost tempting to colonise, mould, into modern democracy. This idea has been productive in a praeter-modern sense. That is to say, that many contemporary writers have taken up the modification of diverse cultures as a project entitled 'the politics of difference.' The idea of a discursive structure of language which has de-centred people, and is almost a self-constituting system adds to the assumptions that values, society, culture is completely arbitrary, and 'modifiable.' It is the same exposition of Nietzsche's hierarchically approved-of dualism, 'noble and *ressentiment*', 'master and slave', that set the Nazis alight with 'modificatory' passion.

This individualism seems to me to be encouraged, even exacerbated by modernity. It leaves no room for an 'other.' In the *Genealogy*, Nietzsche warned us against the nihilism of the ascetic consciousness. The Will to Nothingness that men indulge in, because at least, in a meaningless world, human Will retains some power.

NIETZSCHE, FREUD, MARX

In the article 'Nietzsche, Freud, Marx', Foucault focuses on their 'Techniques of Interpretation' as the limits of truth; truth in itself. Foucault uses Nietzsche in particular to interrogate the notion of universal absolute Truth. This thesis refutes the last several thousand years of metaphysics. In this ancient story Truth is like god; external, over-arching humanity, superceding time and space. Techniques of Interpretation displaces the Idea, (still prevalent in Liberal democracy) that there is a hidden truth, which the philosopher, the psychologist, or the sociologist can uncover. That is, if we plumb the depths of the soul, we will discover the hidden and essential self. The ambiguity of language has to be clarified in this schema, to divine a direct correlation with the original meaning. A resemblance between the sign and the signified, the word and the object. If we strip away social conventions we will expose the state of nature from which we originally contracted to set up civil society. The presumption is that, with stripping away social convention, it is possible to derive an essential origin; we can arrive at a commencement, an originating foundation of Truth.

Foucault queries the application of this authority of Truth as it applied to Nietzsche, Freud, Marx. He interrogates this interpretation of 'consciousness', 'false consciousness', and the 'unconscious' as essential underlying Truths. Instead Foucault recalls Nietzsche's description of the depths of psychology as surface layers that have folded and creased into an interiority. The psychologist excavates and 'the depth is now restored as an absolutely superficial secret.' Thus the interpretor is the 'truth' teller.

Any interpretation is expounded through language, and here Foucault points to an associated epistemological shift. Words as signs were thought to designate direct meaning. According to the Technique of Interpretation, the sign and the signified become reinstated as a hermeneutic device, rather than a vector of absolute Truth. Words are no longer presumed to have a direct relationship with An Exact concept or thing. There is an uncloseable gap between the desired framework and the ability to express it. The sharpness of direct resemblance is thickened as each sign is excavated layer upon layer. Each sign or word is interpellated without beginning or end with other meanings and other signs. No longer solitary or fixed, but reverberating, pulsing, fusing in a complex co-habitation of meaning.

> In this sense, it can be said that *Allegoria, Hypnoia,* are *at the foundation of language and before it,* not what are slid under the words afterwards in order to displace them and make them vibrate, but what give birth to words, what cause them to whine with a brilliance that is never fixed (Foucault, 1990: 83).

The signs' 'new function of covering up, recovering, the interpretation' displaces its disciplined correlation with absolute Truth to redundancy. Truth now derives from the perspective of the interpreter. The method of narration, or exploration, is going to define the degree of truth, the terms in which it can be true. No longer can truth claim divine authority, or indeed *any* absolute authority, as any interpretation can be re-interpreted. Nietzsche notes that a result of ruling is the ability to define meaning. New knowledge is created by displaying the Will to Power of the god-fathers; the existing assigners of systems of interpretation.

The rebuke of unquestionable authority is an indication in itself of our new age's undermining of authority figures. This is one of Nietzsche's themes; that democracy is the

disintegration of civilisation as we know it. Democratic equality challenges the rights of a noble class to fix meaning, and with it structure. The parody of a straight forward resemblance, or attachment between signifier and signified exposes instead the genealogy of the meaning of the word as a Will to Power. Each signification is now interrogated – Whose purpose does it serve? How? When? Where? This has extensive implications for educational organisation, curriculum, assessment and pedagogy.

STASIS

Foucault is affected by Nietzsche's warning that the Will to Knowledge is the most perilous of paths. At the centre of the interpretation of interpretation (ad infinitum) is, Nietzsche contends, chaos and potential madness. As the interpreter passes through the boundaries of inter-relational knowledge s/he is exposed to a vortex of possibility. The dangers of probing the inevitable gaps and spaces, the unlimited oscillation of the sign, is to lose grip on stasis. Stasis is defined as the underlying stable, even stagnant commonality of the community, or system. However, stasis is not a fixed closed cosmology in the manner of Ptolomy, but a slowly moving aspect of stability within infinity. The binds of community can be exposed by the Will to Knowledge as the arbitrary interests of a reproducing structure of hierarchies, such as class. But exposure and disbelief leaves a nothingness, which, while possibly the last ultimate accurateness, is also the place of disillusioned paralysis. As we lose our universal, absolutist idealism, the danger of narcissism, or worse, nihihilism, is apparent.

This goes some way to explain the tendency over the last ten years towards greater consumerism, the slowing of political participation, the wariness of once active emancipatory activities for those of us who doubt our own authority.

At the risk of turning the profound into something quite mundane, I wish to utilise the Technique of Interpretation, Nietzsche's attention to philology and analyse the words these men of undoubted wisdom have generated.

Foucault's article 'Nietzsche, Freud, Marx' traces the shift from absolute truth to an interpretation of the already-interpreted. Freud, for instance, illuminates the *fantasies* of his analysands. He invents the 'super-ego.' The problematic endlessness of analysis turns into 'transference.' In other words, the theory is actually correlational. Foucault, along with Nietzsche, Freud and Marx individualise interpretation. They take complete responsibility. Freud forgot that he forged his theories on the confessions of women.

Nietzsche directs us to a philology that is never fixed, an unpositable play with words, implying that at most words have a tendency to certain conceptual frameworks. Word and meaning shift according to juxtaposition, and the speakers' interpretation of each others intentions: the intonation, the body language and so forth. But philology should not be understood as the individual expert delving, developing language in isolation. Language pre-exists us. It is a product of society. The genealogy of a word may uncover historical shifts in power, interpretation, reversals, slides... but these interlocutions are not arbitrary. They are a result of politics, war, creative thrusts and reversals of power: the life of community.

The Philologist, the Psychologist, the Sociologist do not expose absolute knowledge, thus Nietzsche's warning – 'to perish from *absolute knowledge* might be a basic characteristic of existence' – might be understood as the reversion, the fear, the incomplete integration of his own theory of open-ended history, to that enveloping, totalising perspective that has shaped the Ancient and modern world. A closed system with an Ideal Nothingness at its boundaries.

In short, there is a problem with Nietzsche's concept of the infinite vortex as intrinsic to the Will to Knowledge. It assumes there remains a fundamental dialectic, an Absolute beneath any truth: Nothingness. We need to throw into question the ascetic totality of the individualised genius as a product of a particular historical metaphysical ontology. In other instances, Nietzsche rejects this pessimistic nihilism, and insists on an optimistic relationship of the individual with the world. The problem of Nothingness is associated with the fact that humans are sociable animals. Language is sociable interaction. We have developed technologies and ideologies that privilege isolation and individualism rather than inter-relational co-operative constitution or generation of knowledge. Going out on a limb to the extent that no-one in the vicinity comprehends the new knowledges one has created left Nietzsche in a lonely (and eventually insane) predicament. Books proved a means of reaching across time and space to an unknown, barely predictable generation in the future. Interpretations and knowledge do not create madness in themselves, but the isolation extant by the lack of intellectual peers may have contributed to Nietzsche's anomy. Perhaps we 'future historians' can consider ourselves lucky, there's more of us, and we have the internet!

Foucault's only direct work on Nietzsche both revolved around method; Genealogical method, and Techniques of Interpretation. Both these concerns displace the humanist assumption that man is at the centre of the Universe, and Truth (in man's image) is 'out there.' Nietzsche signaled an epistomological shift, which maintained Foucault's interest throughout his career. This paradigm shift is beginning to announce itself in society in general, and will undoubtedly affect educational theory profoundly.

The re-conceptualisation of truth, subjectivity, language, creativity, and the introduction of the theories of the Will to Power and Knowledge will have far-reaching (and unending) effects on education. Genealogy as a method of re-valuing education may offer constructive perspectives.

In the absence of Absolute Truth, the nature of knowledge and its relationship to schooling is open to question. This question is fundamentally a genealogical one – whose knowledge is being valued, institutionalised, documented as curriculum? Whose authority is assumed to be valid, how and why?

Opening up and re-investigating the subject as genealogically produced rather than essentially fixed has vast implications for schooling. It challenges the notion of 'teacher' as bearer of a fixed commodity, variously called knowledge or skills. Genealogical subjectivity also challenges the definition of students as blank slates who absorb and regurgitate the knowledge thrown at them. I would emphasize a relational production of knowledge in the classroom as a counter to the Nietzsche-Foucauldian emphasis on individualised creation of genius.

Briefly, during the modern period, education could be understood, traditionally, as producing docile citizens. A certain level of self-development is necessary for participatory democracy to work. Autonomous individuals need to make rational choices when they vote. This prompted universal education as a normative measure, and an egalitarian one. Everybody has needed equal access to information, so they all need to be able to read. Assumptions about an essential subject and absolute Truth lead to particular types of educational institutions. Thus the Liberal principles of equality, freedom and the rational individual has underpinned our education system.

The shift towards a skills-based education started in New Zealand with the introduction of *Tomorrow's Schools* in 1988. This process is justified by the neo-liberal free market as the best means of 'equitable exchange.' In reaction to the growth of the Welfare state, and its' increasing emphasis on universal inclusion and equity, neo-liberals swung towards an efficiency model of the school. They wished to maximise 'output' while minimalising 'input' from the state. This production line metaphor permeated the organisation, structure, curriculum and to some extent pedagogy of education in New Zealand. Whence the marketisation of schools, and the translating of a broad 'knowledge' based curriculum to a skill based one, which enhances the opportunities of the individual in the market-place. The concept of 'value added' students is a result of the structure of 'Unit Standards' which rely on measureable outputs as demonstrating school efficiency. Self-development in order to make rational democratic decisions has been sidelined. Government mandate itself is no longer important to neo-liberals as it has been demonstrated on numerous occasions since the Labour government swallowed this ideology in 1984, and reneged on the Party's manifesto completely. Neo-liberalism has escaped the Keynesian settlement as the terms for legitimation of the state, by devolving responsibility to local bodies, such as the school Board of Trustees. At the same time, the government has retained policy, funding and regulation as means of control (Dale, 1989).

The Will to Knowledge does not rely on either universal citizenship or equal skills in the free market as a justification for education. This is because neither the state nor capitalism are understood as monolithic institutions or global Absolutes to which education is subordinate. Education is doubly important when the self is not understood as an essential underlying truth, and must be developed, over-come, through the expansion of a Will to Knowledge. At a time of massive upheaval and challenge of interpretations in order to overcome disciplinary modes of discourse and institutional practices, education stands in a crucial relationship to forming future modes of meaning and values. Education multiplies interpretations of society and the self. In a particular fashion, it is the means to freedom. The general approach to education has changed.

Within the Will to Knowledge model, education emphasizes the 'who, how, where and when', contextual questions about knowledge and validity. It puts students in a better position to understand the structure of their society, the way it affects the lives of themselves as individuals and any group whose interests they may be affiliated with. Thus students are able to analyse the given situation in terms of the Will to Power of the dominant group, and how this may advance or contradict their own position. Further, if their analysis is guided by

adaption to Life, they can decide whether the status quo effectively responds to the needs of the moment or the future.

This has and will entail self-reflection on the part of sociologists of education. It foregrounds the affect of whose knowledge is valued, how it structures organisation, pedagogy, overt and hidden curriculum, and assessment. Education for citizenship could be interpreted as including and shaping subjects who are rational and consensual along given boundaries, imposed by the state. It situates students as 'insiders' or 'outsiders' according to liberal norms.

The vocational aspect of education reduces every student to an equal sameness, also along rational lines, with an added interpretation that individuals will 'utility maximise.' The neo-liberal concept that 'choice' is at the root of subjectivity can be disrupted by an interpretation of humans as genealogically produced social animals. A system of rational choice between 'a' and 'b' disregards the unconscious constraints of years of socially produced values, the multiple and conflicting layers of meaning attributed to each 'choice', the short versus long-term economic constraints, the needs of others within the individual's family and social group, let alone the socially constructed system which makes only these two items 'available' when infinite options could be presented.

The individualisation of all branches of liberalism is a relic of a patriarchal past. The feminist Will to Knowledge and other emancipatory Will to Knowledge derives (in part) from the liberal principles of 'equality' and 'freedom.' 'Equality' as a moral principle that defines or justifies modes of regulation and discourse may be critiqued as an impossible Ideal. Alternatively 'liberty' and 'equality' could be understood as a tool of the ruling classes to co-opt the 'plebs' while covertly reproducing existing hierarchical relations. We may well choose to disregard Nietzsche's élitism and Foucault's Eurocentism and retain an egalitarian perspective. At the same time Techniques of Interpretation and the acknowledgement of the power/knowledge nexus as simultaneously the product and the de-construction of the dominance of particular groups in society could become the purpose of education.

Education could then be demoted from its universal supervisory role. It is not directly responsible for producing individuals capable of citizenship or vocations. Instead the Nietzsche-Foucauldian model of education emphasizes the Will to Knowledge which has been legislated as 'the critic and conscience of society.' Education could be available to anyone interested in learning and developing their Will to Knowledge. This is a political, subjective and genealogically positioned standpoint, constrained by space and time. It has no recourse to objective idealisation of Absolute Truth, nor to the masked Will to Power of the dominant group in society.

Post-structuralist views on governmentality, subjectivity and discourse reinforce some existing sociological views and offer new ways of reflecting on education. Education has traditionally been criticized for reproducing existing class, gender and ethnic inequality. Education's purpose has been described as adhering to the modernist project of producing citizens and members of the workforce. It has also been advocated in terms of self-develoment and as education for its own sake; the *desire* for education.

The ethics, the architecture, the structure of teaching has always been authoritive. The disjunction between the concept of equality and the pedagogic relation has therefore been ignored, in order to continue schooling at all. In Lise Bird's research, she noticed that girls translate and model the nurturing authoritive role of 'mother' to the masterful role of 'teacher.' Letting go of a simplistic model of 'equality' in favour of an ethics of research and pedagogy where power is acknowledged and productive, nurturing, creative and so forth, effectively repositions the teacher as legitimately authoritive and 'professional.'

Education has participated in Foucault's theory of a 'technology of domination' by surveillance and disciplining students into 'docile bodies.' Surveillance is achieved through compulsory attendance, the architectural layout, the time management of bells, age, stage, regulations, and monitored examinable results. There is also a normative aspect of education; streaming the 'competent' students from the 'others', and examinations based on the Bell Curve etc. Foucault defines the normative practises of schools as precise and mathematical:

> ...instead of the simple division of the prohibition, as practised in penal justice, we have a distribution between a positive pole and a negative pole; all behaviour falls in the field between good and bad marks, good and bad points...Through this micro-economy of a perpetual penality operates a differentiation that is not one of acts, but of individuals themselves, of their nature, their potentialities, their level or their value. By assessing acts with precision, discipline judges individuals 'in truth'; the penality that it implements is integrated into the cycle of knowledge of individuals (Foucault, 1977: 180-81).

This produces students both as a 'subject of knowledge', and as individuals who co-operate (to a certain and varying extent) as 'subjects in a field of power.'

PEDAGOGY

The post-structuralist re-conceptualisation of truth, subjectivity, language, creativity, and the Will to Power and Knowledge will have far reaching open-ended effects on education. Jones sums it up succinctly;

> Feminist post-structuralism takes up a 'positive' uncertainty through a focus on complexity and diversity in thinking about gender....They seek to understand how children are both 'made subject' by/within the social order and how they are agents/subjects within/against it (Jones, 1993: 158).

Bill Readings analyses and critiques three types of pedagogical relation bearing in mind the post-structuralist critique of absolute knowledge. Firstly the authoritarian 'master of truth and justice' (Foucault in Lather, 1991: 92), secondly the 'demagogue' (Readings in Peters, 1996: 199), an exactly equal relation between teacher and student, thirdly the transference of pre-given material by the teacher/technocrat.

The 'master of truth and justice' assumes the teacher is an essential subject, and holds absolute knowledge, and the student is a blank slate, who absorbs and replicates the knowledge. The student eventually gains the position of authoritarian autonomy (usually him)self.

The 'demagogue' positions both teacher and students as already autonomous. This relationship emphasizes an essential equality, so the pedagogic relation becomes de-authoritised and consensual. Thus knowledge cannot be questioned 'because it might question the presumption of an indifferent egalitarianism' (ibid). Exact equality results in no flow of knowledge. Readings has described it as 'the redescription of that addressee as always already the sender of any message, able to listen to a message only insofar as her or she has in fact (or *in potentia*) already sent it to him or herself'(ibid: 200).

Thirdly, is the training, technocratic model, where students are the 'active' learners. The teacher is reduced to the passer on of skills and materials. Knowledge is a given in each of these scenario's. None of these conceptualisations of the pedagogic relation leaves room for open-ended inquiry, 'thought', or in Nietzche's terms, the Will to Knowledge.

The striking thing about Patti Lather's pedagogical style is the mutual respect between teacher and students. This is not to deny the authority of the teacher's position. Her authority derives from experience and continual learning. Her writing itself is an oscillation between exploration of ideas and passing on those ideas. The method of data gathering for assessing the class was quantitative as well as qualitative. The qualitative material set up the parameters for enquiry. The quantitative statistics allowed patterns and theorising to emerge, from an individual particularity towards a population perspective. She used quotes to create a kind of 'dialogical dynamism', where 'voices are juxtaposed and counterposed so as to generate something beyond themselves'[5]. Here in her model of post-structuralist research and pedagogy:

> its elements of legislation and prescription are few; its policing of the boundaries of legitimate practice moves against an alternative canon characterized by totality, closure and coherence. Rather, its move is toward the ambivalence and open-endedness characteristic of non-dominating, non-coercive knowledges which are located, partial, embodied (Lather, 1991: 134-135).

Lather advocates a non-prescriptive form of praxis, which explores 'difference' in the production of new knowledges. 'A deconstructive reading...encourages her to formulate her responses and then re-think her formulations' (ibid: 140). This configures the self as her own object, partly by exposing the subjective complicity with the processes of governmentality. 'The trick is to see the will to power in our work as clearly as we see the will to truth.' (ibid: 119)

> To avoid the 'master's position' of formulating a totalizing discourse requires more self-consciousness about the particularity and provisionality of our sense-making efforts, more awareness of the multiplicity and fluidity of the objects of our knowing (ibid: 142).

CONCLUSION

Can post-structuralism be political? The question revolves around the decentering of Universal Truths, and the corresponding relativism of cultural authority. Post-structuralism simultaneously deconstructs the authority of Enlightenment principles, while making use of them – our example here is egalitarian and emancipatory education. Emancipatory education seeks to evaluate dominant forms of power, and self reflexively perceive our own complicity and shape within that framework. Here Lather advocates,

> a curriculum designed not so much to oppose a counter-hegemonic meaning system against a dominant one as to ask us to insert ourselves into the discourses that envelop us. Here, we deconstructively explore the relation between ourselves and how we negotiate the search for meaning in a world of contradictory information. Such a pedagogy has no prescriptions (Lather, 1991: 145-146).

Equality is one of the ways universal liberal schooling empowered particular traditionally marginalised groups, and at the same time equality has legitimised and extended liberalisms' parameters.

In terms of subjectivity, post-structuralist education has an increasingly important role to play. The subject is shifting, multiple, contradictory and education shapes and creates new ways of understanding ourselves and our world. However the praeter-liberal's assumption that the historical traces of cultural traditions are fragile and subordinate to liberal universals is patently a colonising ethic; it is the liberal Will to Power re-valuing post-structuralist concepts of the subject.

Foucault explains how technologies of the self are complicit in liberal governmentality. That is the subject classified as an object, and operating in a field of power. Subjectivity both exceeds governmentality and is indispensible for it. He also explores the manner in which subjectivity is capable of agency and change.

Education plays a part in all three of these aspects of subjectivity. The institution engages in surveillance of, classifies and directs students in a manner which supports liberal capitalism. Pedagogy is a subjective experience of relating within a framework of irreducible difference. It is a relationship which explores, creates, exposes and self-reflects in a way that is non-prescribable and always surprising.

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NOTES

1. Similarly, in his later work on sexuality, Foucault ignores women's specificity, or mentions women only in relation to a valorised male homosexuality.
2. Foucault explores this theme in *Discipline and Punish.*
3. Irigaray, *Marine Lover of Frederick Nietzsche.*
4. Nietzsche *Human, All Too Human,* 274 quoted in Foucault, 1977:161-2.
5. Lather quoting Stam, 1991:134.

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