POWER AND FREEDOM IN THE SPACE OF REASONS

ELABORATING FOUCAULT'S PRAGMATISM

Tuomo Tiisala

Routledge

"Power and Freedom in the Space of Reasons transforms our understanding of Foucault and opens up a wholly new perspective on the features of modernity he made visible. Tiisala boldly and deftly develops an account of the master idea that unifies Foucault's thought, both developmentally and thematically. The leitmotif the author discerns brings Foucault's multifarious writings into contact and conversation with the Sellarsian neopragmatist strand of contemporary Anglophone philosophy of language, freshly illuminating both currents of thought."

Robert B. Brandom, *University of Pittsburgh, USA*

"Tiisala's book is a brilliant, timely contribution to a renewed understanding of Michel Foucault's philosophical and critical project. By emphasizing the enduring relevance of the archaeology of knowledge for Foucault's problematization of the relationships between power and freedom, it compellingly reveals a pragmatist dimension in his thought. It thus masterfully shows the—still underappreciated—importance of Foucault's work for current debates in social and political philosophy, ethics, and the philosophy of language."

Daniele Lorenzini, *University of Pennsylvania, USA*

Power and Freedom in the Space of Reasons

This book argues that the received view of the distinction between freedom and power must be rejected because it rests on an untenable account of the discursive cognition that endows individuals with the capacity for autonomy and self-governed rationality.

In liberal and Kantian approaches alike, the autonomous subject is a self-standing starting point whose freedom is constrained by relations of power only contingently because they are external to the subject's constitution. Thus, the received view defines the distinction between freedom and power as a dichotomy. Michel Foucault is arguably the most important critic of that dichotomy. However, it is widely agreed that Foucault falls short of justifying the alternative view he develops, where power and freedom are essentially entangled instead. The book fills out the gap by investigating the social preconditions of discursive cognition. Drawing on pragmatist-inferentialist resources from the philosophy of language (Wittgenstein, Sellars, and Brandom), it presents a new interpretation of Foucault's philosophy that is unified by his overlooked idea of "the archaeology of knowledge." As a result, the book not only explains why and how power and freedom must be entangled but also what it means ethically to pursue and gain autonomy with respect to one's own understanding.

Power and Freedom in the Space of Reasons will appeal to scholars and advanced students working in social and political philosophy, critical theory, ethics, philosophy of language, and the history of 20th-century philosophy.

Tuomo Tiisala is a Postdoctoral Researcher at the University of Vienna, Austria. He has taught at the University of Helsinki, New York University Abu Dhabi, and New York University, where he was a Bersoff Faculty Fellow after earning his PhD from the University of Chicago.

Routledge Studies in Twentieth-Century Philosophy

Henri Bergson and the Philosophy of Religion
God, Freedom, and Duration
Matyáš Moravec

Kripke and Wittgenstein
The Standard Metre, Contingent Apriori and Beyond
Edited by Martin Gustafsson, Oskari Kuusela, and Jakub Mácha

Between Wittgenstein and Weil
Comparisons in Philosophy, Religion, and Ethics
Edited by Jack Manzi

The Turing Test Argument
Bernardo Gonçalves

Wittgenstein and Nietzsche
Edited by Shunichi Takagi and Pascal F. Zambito

The Event of Meaning in Gadamer's Hermeneutics
Carlo DaVia and Greg Lynch

Heidegger's Alternative History of Time
Emily Hughes and Marilyn Stendera

Power and Freedom in the Space of Reasons
Elaborating Foucault's Pragmatism
Tuomo Tiisala

Power and Freedom in the Space of Reasons

Elaborating Foucault's Pragmatism

Tuomo Tiisala

Contents

Introduction

Michel Foucault's reputation as a champion of discontinuity has made it virtually unthinkable that his apparently disparate studies of knowledge, power, and ethics, in fact, might be unified by one core problem. Yet that is what I undertake to show in this book. My claim is not that Foucault was only ever concerned with this one problem, nor that everything he wrote was somehow related to it. But I want to highlight a previously overlooked intellectual continuity, which reflects Foucault's commitment to a distinctive philosophical outlook that can be presented in the form of a problem. I call it the problem of *structural heteronomy*. It is an ethical problem that concerns understanding, specifically the role of concepts in enabling, organizing, and limiting what is intelligible. This book presents an interpretation of Foucault's philosophy as an attempt to reply to the problem of structural heteronomy. It is an exegetically ambitious undertaking that makes the archaeology of knowledge, which has been widely marginalized in the scholarship, the centerpiece of the philosophical project Foucault came to present in the form of his original conception of critique. In addition, my aim is to show that the problem of structural heteronomy merits systematic philosophical attention. I seek to establish this goal by explaining in detail how the problem emerges and noting, in outline, how it transforms the ethical landscape around the ideal of autonomy.

The limits of intelligibility are, by the same token, limits of freedom because they define what kinds of thought and intention are available to us as thinkers and agents. But what if the limits of intelligibility changed? Or if they could change even when they appear inevitable? According to the new interpretation of Foucault's philosophy this book formulates, its guiding concern is to identify and help people overcome such contingent but apparently inevitable limits for thought and action. This is a well-known theme in the secondary literature, but it has not been explored systematically. Specifically, what has not been explained is why there should be any such limits, what they consist in, and why they appear

inevitable if they are not necessary. This book answers all these questions in terms of the problem of structural heteronomy, combining exegetical detail with a systematic philosophical argument Foucault himself never formulated. The key idea is that such limits are structurally inevitable because they arise from the preconditions of discursive cognition, namely of the distinctively rational type of understanding we have as concept-users. Despite this structural heteronomy, Foucault's conception of critique illustrates the ethical importance of working on the given configuration of the "present limits of the necessary" for the sake of gaining an enlarged scope of freedom, not a complete liberation, but a transformed space of discursive possibilities for the exercise of autonomy.[1] Thus, the new interpretation of Foucault's critical project is meant to show how autonomy as an ethical ideal extends from agency to the domain of understanding.

There is no reason to deny that some limits of intelligibility are indeed necessary. Foucault uses the term "historical a priori" to designate the changing limits of intelligibility he studies and cautions that "nothing would be more amusing, but more inaccurate, than to conceive of this *historical* a priori as a *formal* a priori that was, in addition, endowed with history."[2] By means of the archaeology of knowledge, Foucault seeks to disclose and map different configurations of intelligibility as distinct systems of thought in history. But when Foucault begins to frame his overarching project in terms of critique, anchoring its motivation in the historical present, he nonetheless says explicitly that critique is archaeological.[3] Even to those familiar with the secondary literature, this is likely to seem odd, at least for three reasons. First, following David Owen's crucially illuminating separation between Foucault's conception of critique, on the one hand, and ideology critique, on the other, it is now commonplace to classify the former as *genealogical* critique.[4] When Foucault states that critique is archaeological in its method, he immediately adds that it has a genealogical aim [*finalité*].[5] So, critique, on Foucault's view, is certainly genealogical, although not *only* genealogical or even primarily so, as far as the method is concerned, but its archaeological dimension has been effectively eclipsed by the predominant focus on "genealogical critique" in the literature. Second, Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow argued influentially against the very idea of the archaeology knowledge in their 1982 monograph on Foucault that has shaped the reception of his philosophy in the English-speaking world probably more than any other book.[6] As I will show, however, this argument is flawed, so archaeology can be vindicated. Third, as a consequence of the two previous points, there are no attempts, to my knowledge, to even try to understand what it would mean that "critique is archaeological in its method."[7] My interpretation

of Foucault's philosophy that foregrounds the importance of the archaeology of knowledge, especially for the critical project, will not only show that the scholarship is severely incomplete in this respect. Reclaiming the archaeological perspective will result in a transformed, more unified vision of Foucault's work overall.

The pivotal idea at the heart of this book is that discourse is a social practice whose conceptual rules are by default implicit and therefore unknown to the participating subjects whose discursive possibilities they nonetheless shape. The archaeology of knowledge charts changing configurations of intelligibility precisely by uncovering transformations at the level of such implicit rules in discursive practices. On the one hand, this key idea helps to explain why the critique's response to the problem of structural heteronomy needs to be archaeological. In short, the limits of intelligibility that constrain us contingently do so in virtue of us not knowing what they are. Therefore, critique needs to archaeologically reveal "the present limits of the necessary" to undo the constraint they exert on thought and action. On the other hand, the same key idea will be used to ground Foucault's account of critique in a theory of discursive practice that draws on pragmatist-inferentialist resources in the philosophy of language, especially from Ludwig Wittgenstein, Wilfrid Sellars, and Robert Brandom. Two ideas are particularly important in this respect. The first, as already implied, is that discursive cognition depends on implicit norms of a discursive practice that constitute, at least in part, the concepts one has available for thinking and acting. The second idea is that concept-users can gain rational control over concepts they use by coming to know given implicit norms of a discursive practice as representations of rules that can be assessed and revised.

Beyond the interpretation of Foucault's work, then, the systematic goal of this book is to identify a new line of ethical work that is required if one endorses the ideal of autonomy as self-governing. Instead of agency, the domain for this practice of self-governing is understanding. But the means of self-governing — the vehicle of autonomy — is the same, namely representations of rules. Sellars and especially Brandom have shown that rules of inference enable concept-users to exert rational control over the concepts they use. Thus, analogously to principles of action through which one can govern one's own will as an agent, one can use rules of inference to govern one's understanding as a concept-user, of course, nonetheless as a member of a linguistic community. But the ethical significance of this possibility remains virtually unexplored. The overarching argument of this book merges the pursuit of "semantic self-consciousness" that enables control over concepts, as laid out by Sellars and Brandom, with the ethical outlook of Foucault's critical project.[8] Thus, the book extends the reign of

autonomy as an ethical ideal to the domain of understanding. Importantly, the resultant new line of ethical work should not be conflated with concept choice as an ethical question. It is widely recognized that choosing, creating, and improving the concepts we use to make sense of the world and ourselves in it often requires an ethical perspective.[9] In contrast, however, the topic of this book is how to make concepts available for assessment and revision, to begin with. As we will see, the need for such work, in turn, depends on what we think concepts are.

Overall, this book aims to revise the core distinction between freedom and power in moral and political philosophy by grounding it in a proper account of the preconditions of the discursive cognition, which endows individuals with the capacity for autonomy, namely self-governed rationality. In liberal and Kantian approaches alike, the autonomous subject is a self-standing starting-point, whose freedom is constrained by relations of power only contingently because they are external to the subject's constitution. But the problem of structural heteronomy shows that the distinction between power and freedom should be redrawn inside the space of reasons instead. By acknowledging this problem, one acquires a new perspective to social ontology, and, consequently, to moral and political philosophy, in which power and freedom are essentially entangled.

Notes

1 Michel Foucault, "Qu'est-ce que les Lumières?," in *Dits et écrits II, 1976–1988*, eds. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 1391.
2 Michel Foucault, *L'archéologie du savoir* (Paris: Gallimard, 1969), 169.
3 Michel Foucault, "Qu'est-ce que la critique?," in *Qu'est-ce que la critique? Suivi de La culture de soi*, eds. Henri-Paul Fruchaud and Daniele Lorenzini (Paris: Vrin, 2015), 53; Foucault, "Qu'est-ce que les Lumières?," 1393.
4 David Owen, "Criticism and Captivity: On Genealogy and Critical Theory," *European Journal of Philosophy* 10, no. 2 (2002); Colin Koopman, *Genealogy as Critique: Foucault and the Problems of Modernity* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013); Daniele Lorenzini, *The Force of Truth: Critique, Genealogy, and Truth-Telling in Michel Foucault* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2023).
5 Foucault, "Qu'est-ce que les Lumières?," 1393.
6 Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982), Chapter 4.
7 Foucault, "Qu'est-ce que les Lumières?," 1393.
8 Robert B. Brandom, *Making It Explicit: Reasoning, Representing, and Discursive Commitment* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), xix–xx, 384. Cf. Wilfrid Sellars, "Meaning as Functional Classification: A Perspective on the Relation of Syntax to Semantics," in *In the Space of Reasons: Selected Essays of Wilfrid Sellars*, eds. Kevin Scharp and Robert B. Brandom (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 88–89.

9 See, for example, Sally Haslanger, "Gender and Race: (What) Are They? (What) Do We Want Them To Be?," *Noûs* 34, no. 1 (2000); Sally Haslanger, "What Are We Talking About? The Semantics and Politics of Social Kinds," *Hypatia* 20, no. 4 (2005); Miranda Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), Chapter 7; Alexis Burgess and David Plunkett, "Conceptual Ethics I," *Philosophy Compass* 8 no. 12 (2013); Alexis Burgess, Herman Cappelen, and David Plunkett, eds., *Conceptual Engineering and Conceptual Ethics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020).

1   Structural heteronomy

The goal of this chapter is to show how the problem of structural heter-
onomy emerges from the pragmatist solution to the regress of rules. In the
wake of Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*, the consequences of
the rule-following regress have been studied extensively in connection with
theories of conceptual content in the philosophy of language and the phi-
losophy of mind, but little attention has been paid to the regress of rules on
the side of practical philosophy.[1] It is a guiding thought of this book that
thinking through the regress will have thoroughgoing consequences also
in moral and political philosophy. Specifically, I will argue that the distinc-
tion between autonomy and heteronomy – freedom and power – needs to
be relocated *inside* the space of reasons where it is grounded in a contrast
between representational understanding and dispositional understanding,
which is structurally necessary for the discursive cognition that enables
autonomy, namely self-governed rationality.

I use "discursive" to designate conceptual cognition that is intrinsically
related to the capacity to reason. Throughout this book, I will be using
"concept" and "conceptual" in this sense of discursivity, but the above
explication is needed to acknowledge that it is controversial whether dis-
cursiveness is a requirement for conceptual cognition as such.[2] The au-
thors whose views I discuss and develop belong to a broad tradition that
identifies the conceptual and the discursive.[3] Following this approach, I,
too, maintain that conceptual competence essentially involves a capac-
ity to reason with concepts, in addition to a partitioning of the logical
space. I borrow the expression *logical space of reasons* from Sellars to
highlight the requirement that, on this view, conceptual competence is in-
separable from reasoning.[4] Not all concept-use is reasoning, of course,
but the connection with reasoning illustrates that, in general, conceptual
competence is informed by an understanding of reasons – reasons for and
reasons against – that pertain to the use of a concept in the given circum-
stances. As concept-users, we do not merely respond appropriately to cir-
cumstances, but our responses are informed by an understanding of what

kinds of response are required or forbidden in the relevant circumstances, which include situations of perceiving, inferring, and acting.[5] This understanding of reasons, in part, constitutes conceptual competence. What the regress of rules reveals, then, is a structural requirement regarding the preconditions of such understanding.

It is an appealing idea to define concept-use as rule-following because that would explain the understanding of reasons that is required for conceptual competence as knowledge of rules.[6] Moreover, this approach helps to make sense of autonomy, the distinctive type of freedom concept-users exercise, not as a lack of constraint but, on the contrary, as a constraint that is self-imposed by endorsing representations of rules.[7] The key idea is that principles, representations of rules, are the *vehicle* of autonomy.[8] As rule-followers, concept-users enjoy a distinctive capacity for self-determination because they can assess and revise the rules of reasoning they use. This reflexive process is rational because it can be conducted by means of argument. By doing so, concept-users exercise autonomy over the concepts they use, which are constituted, in part, by the rules of reasoning under evaluation. Thus, concept-use as rule-following is, at the same time, an account of freedom as autonomy.

As we will see, however, the regress of rules undermines this account of freedom because it shows that the understanding of reasons that is required for conceptual competence cannot consist in rule-following, specifically, not on acting on the basis of *representations* of rules. In other words, the regress of rules reveals that conceptual competence as rule-following cannot be based on the reflexive model of autonomy alone. It is worth emphasizing that this issue is orthogonal to the debate on whether autonomy is compatible or not with nature as a system of causality.[9] The longstanding focus on autonomy in terms of the problem of determinism has eclipsed this independent challenge to the metaphysics of autonomy as a model for conceptual competence. As we have seen, this challenge arises from the essential role that understanding plays in the view of conceptual competence as rule-following. To follow a rule, it is not enough that the action conforms to the rule. The conformity must be intentional, resulting from an attempt to follow the rule that is informed by a correct understanding of the rule. The requirement may seem like a platitude, but it creates the regress that reveals that the space of reasons presupposes something other than representations of rules. This result has been recognized, but only narrowly, because its consequences with respect to the distinction between power and freedom remain chiefly unexplored.[10] However, given the link I have identified between autonomy and rule-following, it should not come as a surprise that the regress of rules results in a revised account of freedom. Because the regress shows that conceptual competence rests on an understanding of reasons that is something other than rule-following, also

freedom as autonomy must be dependent on something else. Autonomy, it turns out, presupposes heteronomy.

The problem of structural heteronomy, then, arises from a tension between the ethical ideal of autonomy as rational control, on the one hand, and the practice-based preconditions for discursive cognition, on the other. I will argue, following Brandom and Sellars, that the bedrock of understanding consists of a set of socially coordinated dispositions to enact norms that are not represented as such. Because these norms are constituted by normative attitudes that concept-users enact as patterns of concept-use, the norms are not fixed for good. They can be assessed and revised, however, only insofar as concept-users know what the norms are. Therefore, gaining rational control over such implicit norms requires that they be represented as rules. As concept-users, we can thus acquire "semantic self-consciousness" about a given concept whose inferential structure we explicate, and thereby gain rational control over the concept.[11] Since we can thus increase our autonomy in the domain of understanding, it appears, in the light of the ethical ideal of autonomy, that we ought to pursue semantic self-consciousness. As concept-users we are ethically required to seek a representational grasp of the normative basis of our own understanding, in order to bring it into the purview of rational control. At the same time, however, the implicit normative bedrock of a discursive practice remains a necessary structural requirement for discursive cognition. How should concept-users as ethical subjects navigate that tension? This is the problem of structural heteronomy.

1.1   Autonomy as the ethical ideal

As I have already said, the problem of structural heteronomy is predicated on a commitment to autonomy as an ethical ideal. Therefore, it is important to begin by clarifying what this commitment consists in, and especially what other meanings of the term "autonomy" it does not involve. The commitment is to autonomy as a *value*, specifically as a moral good. This is not to deny that autonomy might also be an epistemic good. However, let me put that possibility to the side and discuss from now on the ideal of autonomy only as a moral good. Autonomy is positive freedom, namely self-governing on the basis of principles one endorses. There are many moral goods, but an ethical ideal is the highest good, the final end that structures an entire ethical outlook. We can say, roughly, that besides the ethical outlook organized around the ideal of autonomy, there are two well-known alternatives. One aims to maximize welfare or happiness. The other seeks a unity of virtues that manifests itself in practical wisdom. The problem of structural heteronomy, however, can only emerge within the ethical outlook that aims at autonomy. It would be misleading to call

this outlook "Kantian" since authors as varied as Karl Marx, John Stuart Mill, and Friedrich Nietzsche, as well as their respective followers, build different projects around the ideal of autonomy as self-governing.[12] While these philosophers, and many others, recognize autonomy as the ethical ideal, they need not, and often do not, share Immanuel Kant's metaphysical view about what makes autonomy as positive freedom possible. In general, the commitment to autonomy as the ethical ideal should be separated from metaphysics altogether. In particular, it does not entail a commitment to Kant's metaphysics of autonomy as a self-standing capacity of rational beings.[13] Another meaning of "autonomy" that should be distinguished from the commitment to the ethical ideal concerns autonomy as a criterion of legitimacy, especially in political philosophy.[14] The problem of structural heteronomy presupposes nothing about justification, in general.

The scope of the ideal of autonomy need not be limited to the principles of action that apply to the will, if one understands concepts, too, in terms of representations of rules. In this regard, Kant's account of concepts as rules for making judgments provides an early formulation of the key idea which others, especially Sellars and Brandom, have elaborated.[15] The idea is that the content of a concept is determined, at least in part, by inferential relations between different statements in which the concept is used.[16] In a discursive practice, in contrast to a formal language, these are typically material inferences, not deductively valid formal ones. Nevertheless, the inferences are governed by norms. Some but not all patterns of inference are permissible, and some but not all are mandatory. Along these lines, the vehicle of autonomy, namely representations of rules, is extended to the domain of understanding, where it enables concept-users to assess and revise the concepts they use.[17] Accordingly, the ethical ideal of autonomy also applies to understanding, alongside the will, as a domain of freedom where rational control can be exercised.

1.2   The regress of rules: From representational to dispositional understanding

Now, let me turn to discuss what the regress of rules reveals about the limits of representational understanding and why it motivates an account of discursive cognition in terms of an implicit normative bedrock in a discursive practice. Following Wittgenstein's discussion of the regress, I take it as a reductio of a representationalist account of understanding.[18] The upshot is that the *representationalist* account of understanding as *interpretation* cannot constitute a complete, self-standing account of understanding because, in its basic form, understanding is something other than representing. I will designate this basic, non-representational mode of understanding as *dispositional* understanding. The revised account of

understanding, in turn, which is based on dispositional understanding, I will call the *pragmatist* account of understanding.

Let us consider how Wittgenstein presents the threat of an infinite regress and the solution to it:

> 198. "But how can a rule show me what I have to do at *this* point? Whatever I do is, on some interpretation, in accord with the rule." – That is not what we ought to say, but rather: any interpretation still hangs in the air along with what it interprets, and cannot give it any support. Interpretations by themselves do not determine meaning. [...]
>
> 201. This was our paradox: no course of action could be determined by a rule, because any course of action can be made to accord with the rule. The answer was: if *any* action can be made out to accord with the rule, then it can also be made out to conflict with it. And so there would be neither accord nor conflict here.
>
> It can be seen that there is a misunderstanding here from the mere fact that in the course of our argument we give one interpretation after another, as if each one contented us at least for a moment, until we thought of yet another standing behind it. What this shows is that there is a way of grasping a rule which is *not* an *interpretation*, but which is exhibited in what we call "obeying the rule" and "going against it" in actual cases.
>
> Hence there is an inclination to say: any action according to the rule is an interpretation. But we ought to restrict the term "interpretation" to the substitution of one expression of the rule for another.[19]

Here Wittgenstein considers and ultimately rejects the representationalist view, according to which understanding consists in representing, specifically of substituting one representation for another as its interpretation. The regress emerges as an infinite hierarchy of representations that are solicited as additional interpretations in the hope of providing the correct understanding of *r*. The regress is infinite because the problem iterates on each level: to understand a representation *r* consists in substituting another representation *r2* for *r* as its interpretation, but understanding *r2* requires a new representation *r3* as its interpretation, and so *r3* requires a new interpretation *r4*, and so on. No additional interpretation can secure correct understanding because any representation might be misapplied. Therefore, the conclusion Wittgenstein draws from the infinite regress is that something that is *not* a representation is needed for understanding.[20]

It is not enough for the pragmatist view to deny that understanding consists in representing. To show that the regress can be avoided, the pragmatist needs to formulate an alternative account of the basic understanding in non-representational terms. Because understanding/misunderstanding is

an activity governed by standards of correctness, the challenge is specifically to formulate an account of norms without appealing to representations. The criteria of adequacy for the account, indeed for any account of understanding, can be stated as two conditions: (1) *Conformity*: In understanding something, one conforms to the relevant standard of correctness; (2) *Non-accidentality*: This conformity is not accidental, but one conforms to the standard because it is the relevant standard of correctness in the given circumstances. What the non-representational approach excludes, then, is the straightforward answer that one conforms to the relevant standards of correctness because one is following a rule that represents this conformity as something that ought to be done. As Sellars notes, the regress argument undermines an entrenched yet false dichotomy between *intentional* and *accidental* conformity to standards of correctness.[21] The argument shows that understanding in its basic form is not intentional because it involves no representing. Nor is it merely accidental, however, that understanding conforms to the relevant standards. Understanding, in its basic form, conforms to standards of correctness neither intentionally nor accidentally. In some way, which needs to be specified below, understanding conforms to normative standards *because* of those standards but *without* representing them.

Before responding to this challenge, I want to caution against a widespread characterization of the non-representational understanding as "blind."[22] This is potentially confusing because it threatens to deprive the basic type of understanding of its status as an understanding. Following Wittgenstein's own remarks, however, the characterization has become customary.[23] It does convey that dispositional understanding is logically prior to representational understanding and therefore cannot be guided by representations. But it is misleading if one takes the blindness of dispositional understanding to imply that conformity to standards of correctness is accidental. Episodes of understanding do not merely conform to the relevant standards of correctness, but they do so because of those standards. The regress argument shows that these two features of understanding are independent of *representations* of the normative standards, but this does not mean that dispositional understanding is "blind" in any stronger sense.

Another cautionary note concerns the learnability of non-representational understanding. It is learnable, even though it cannot be taught by means of instruction by representations of rules. Notably, Kant overlooks this alternative when he uses the regress of rules to argue that the power of judgment cannot be taught.[24] According to Kant, "it becomes clear that although the understanding is certainly capable of being instructed and equipped through rules, the power of judgment is a special talent that cannot be taught but only practiced."[25] Otherwise, if judging were determined

by the rules of understanding that subsume objects under concepts, an infinite regress of representations of rules would ensue that prevents the formation of a judgment. But, contrary to what Kant claims, the regress argument does not rule out the possibility that judging correctly is a learnable skill.[26] It only shows that judging cannot be taught by means of instructions by representations of rules.

The more plausible alternative is to conclude that judging is acquired by means of *training*, a particular kind of teaching that does not use representations of rules.[27] This is the conclusion Sellars draws from the regress of rules regarding the learnability of language as a system of rules.[28] Training, a particular kind of teaching, is needed to explain how "an organism might come to play a language game […] without having to *obey rules*, and hence without having to be playing a *meta*language game (*and a meta- meta*language game, and so on)."[29] The transmission of conceptual competence from one generation to the next requires a mechanism that does not presuppose conceptual competence from the latter. Whatever innate potential for concept use human beings have, no individual can actualize those capacities without linguistic training in a social practice. But since linguistic training makes individuals concept-using subjects in the first place, it cannot rely on the trainee's yet-to-be-actualized capacity to understand conceptually articulated instructions.

Finally, before developing an account of dispositional understanding, it is important to note that the structural requirement for a non-representational basic mode of understanding does not, as such, define what type of social structure, if any, is needed. As I will show, the need to locate the dispositional bedrock of understanding in a social practice arises from a meta-normative challenge to make sense of the constitution of normative standards without representations of rules. This meta-normative challenge, too, is a consequence of the regress argument, assuming, as I do, that norms are attitude-dependent.[30] On the level of dispositional understanding, there are no representational resources for the expression of normative attitudes. Therefore, the view that normative statuses are constituted by normative attitudes can be maintained on the basic level of normativity only if the attitudes can be expressed without representing anything. We can represent the meta-normative challenge in Figure 1.1.

Thus, the limits of representational understanding, which the regress argument reveals, apply also to the understanding of norms and,

Form of understanding	Normative attitude
Representational	Endorsement
Dispositional	?

Figure 1.1 The explanandum: Dispositional understanding of normative attitudes.

consequently, to the metaphysics of normativity. In Brandom's words, this consequence of the pragmatist view of understanding can be summed up, thus: "Norms that are *explicit* in the form of rules presuppose norms *implicit* in practices."[31] At this stage, however, nothing has been said yet about a social practice, so, strictly speaking, the fundamental distinction holds between norms that are represented, and constituted by rendorsing them, on the one hand, and norms that are expressed and thus constituted by doing something else, on the other. But, as we will see next, upholding this distinction requires a specific social structure for dispositional understanding.

1.3 I-thou, I-we, you-we sociality

I will argue in this section that an account of dispositional understanding requires a view of discourse as a social practice that involves three kinds of social relations. The argument proceeds as a transcendental argument that enriches the ontology of social relations in a discursive practice in two steps. First, I will argue that I-thou sociality, exemplified by Brandom's account of deontic scorekeeping, presupposes I-we sociality, namely group membership. Second, I will show that membership in a discursive community, in the relevant sense, can be produced only by means of the distinctive type of you-we social relations that are established in linguistic training. This second requirement has been illustrated in the well-known discussions of training by Wittgenstein and Sellars, but, to my knowledge, it has not been previously systematized as a necessary structural element in the social ontology of discursive practices.

After concluding from the regress of rules that understanding, in its basic form, must be something other than representing one item as an interpretation of another, Wittgenstein adds that, therefore, rule-following is possible only in the context of a practice: "And hence also 'obeying a rule' is a practice. And to *think* one is obeying a rule is not to obey a rule. Hence, it is not possible to obey a rule 'privately': otherwise thinking one was obeying a rule would be the same thing as obeying it."[32] Since Wittgenstein defines rule-following in the same context as a custom and an institution, it seems clear that the practice of rule-following, as he intends it, must be a *social* practice.

> Is what we call "obeying a rule" something that it would be possible for only *one* man to do, and to do only *once* in his life? – This is of course a note on the grammar of the expression "to obey a rule."
>
> It is not possible that there should have been only one occasion on which only one person obeyed a rule. It is not possible that there should have been only one occasion on which a report was made, an order

given or understood; and so on. – To obey a rule, to make a report, to give an order, to play a game of chess, are *customs* (uses, institutions).

To understand a sentence means to understand a language. To understand a language means to be master of a technique.[33]

This oft-quoted passage sketches out contours for the non-representationalist alternative I have undertaken to develop: understanding is a practical ability that can only be exercised in a practice with several participants. Sociality as a requirement for multiple perspectives follows from the need to uphold the distinction between correct and incorrect performances. Otherwise, in Wittgenstein's words, "thinking one was obeying a rule would be the same thing as obeying it."[34] But how exactly does the social structure of a discursive practice have to look like, so that the meta-normative challenge can be met and the constitution of norms explained in terms of normative attitudes that are expressed, but not represented, in a discursive practice?[35]

It is a common proposal to explain a social practice in terms of I-thou relations between the participants.[36] In response to the meta-normative challenge, Brandom's account of deontic scorekeeping provides the most elaborate development of this approach. "Deontic scorekeeping is the form of understanding involved in communication. It is a kind of interpreting. But it is implicit, practical interpretation, not explicit theoretical hypothesis formation."[37] Contrary to what the metaphor of scorekeeping might suggest, this passage clarifies that deontic scorekeeping belongs to the basic level of understanding that involves no representing. Brandom explains, in a different context, that he shares a commitment with "the early Heidegger, the later Wittgenstein, and Dewey's pragmatism" to hermeneutical (non-representational) understanding as a structurally necessary background for algebraic (representational) understanding.[38] Therefore, it is crucial to Brandom's account that a concept-user who participates in deontic scorekeeping by default does not *represent* the normative scores, her own and her interlocutors', that she is tracking. Participation in scorekeeping is not a choice, however, but deontic scorekeeping is the activity of understanding and interpreting that, according to Brandom's account, endows individuals with conceptual competence, to begin with. It is a matter of knowing how one is entitled, obligated, and forbidden to move in "the logical space of reasons".[39] In addition to one's own normative score, a concept-user keeps score on the interlocutors' normative scores, namely the entitlements, obligations, and prohibitions they incur due to the assertions they make. Thus, scorekeeping involves two dimensions: *understanding* one's own normative score and *interpreting* the normative scores of one's interlocutors. Deontic scorekeeping is "the form of understanding in communication […] that is implicit, practical interpretation."[40]

In Brandom's account, the social structure of a discursive practice consists in I-thou relations between concept-users as scorekeepers. "This is an *I-thou* sociality rather than an *I-we* sociality. Its basic building block is the relation between an audience that is attributing commitments and thereby keeping score and a speaker who is undertaking commitments, on whom score is being kept. The notion of a discursive *community* — a we — is to be built up out of these *communicating* components."[41] Each concept-user interprets others from the perspective of her own understanding. Thanks to this social-perspectival structure the account manages to uphold the distinction between performance and its assessment. On the basic level, doing something is a way for one to *take* oneself to be entitled to what one does. Paradigmatically, by making an assertion I take myself to be entitled to it. Whether I am entitled to the assertion, however, is not decided by the positive normative attitude I enact by making the assertion. In this way, in virtue of the social-perspectival structure of deontic scorekeeping, Brandom can maintain that normative statuses such as entitlement are constituted by normative attitudes, but not reducible to them.[42] However, as Danielle Macbeth has argued, the lack of any coordination between the different perspectives makes it unintelligible how communication and interpretation between scorekeepers gets off the ground.

> On Brandom's account, […] there need be no essentially shared public language, no shared set of norms, even implicit in practice, governing the correctness and incorrectness of responses. Each player keeps his or her own set of books, according to his or her own rules, in what is in effect a private language. Nor could Brandom reply that, on his account, although what I do may be perhaps vacuously correct by my own lights, it may nonetheless be incorrect by your lights, and that this is what is essential to his account; for what is at issue is whether any content can be given to the idea that I in acting, or indeed you in assessing, do something normatively significant at all. […] The point is not that what we do is the criterion of correctness (it need not be), but rather that it is only within the context of an *essentially* social practice, as it contrasts with one that is essentially individualized or private, that it makes sense to talk of correctness, and incorrectness, at all. The worry is that the practices Brandom describes are, in the relevant sense, individualized, private, and therefore cannot fund any notion of correctness, hence of content (whether objective or not), at all.[43]

Put differently, the criticism is that Brandom's account can meet the meta-normative challenge only at the expense of losing grip of the original topic, namely understanding. In Brandom's account, implicit normative attitudes

are unexplained explainers. Not only are they thus susceptible to the full range of variance and contingency human psychology allows for, but, according to Macbeth, they have no significance to begin with because there is no common ground between the different perspectives of concept-users that makes communication and interpretation between them intelligible in the first place. What is missing is a shared, public language that functions as a common ground between the individuals.

Ultimately, the problem is that Brandom's account of deontic score-keeping relies on the activity of communication to explain the normative statuses in reasoning that define conceptual contents, while communication, in fact, already requires shared concepts. Communication is crucially different from a host of other activities that can be coordinated between partners. It essentially involves understanding and interpretation. Therefore, communication requires that the speaker and the audience share, roughly, the same concepts, including a background of dispositional understanding. This is because communicating is an activity conducted by means of concepts, whereas activities like dancing, shaking hands, and driving on the right side of the road can be coordinated between partners without any concept use. We often do communicate to make the social coordination of these activities easier, but the activities themselves can be performed and coordinated without speaking. So, why is Brandom committed to a social ontology of I-thou relations? "Assessing, endorsing, and so on, are all things we individuals do and attribute to each other, thereby constituting a community, a 'we'. But this insight is distorted by *I-we* spectacles — perhaps the same that have always been worn by political philosophers in conceiving their topic."[44] To be sure, groups can have normative attitudes and perform assessments only derivatively, if at all, namely based on the assessments and attitudes of their members. And Brandom is right to reject the approach that tries to explain the attitude-dependence of normative statuses in terms of communal assessment.[45] But from the fact that normative attitudes fundamentally belong to individuals, it does not follow that the individuals are ontologically self-standing. Yet Brandom's account of deontic scorekeeping relies on individuals as though they were self-standing sources of understanding and normativity.

To be charitable, however, this criticism only shows that a successful account of dispositional understanding, including normative statuses, cannot be formulated in terms of I-thou relations *alone*. Coordination of dispositional understanding must be built into the social structure of the account to enable communication and interpretation between individuals. Moreover, it is important to recognize that the shortcoming of Brandom's account pertains to social coordination at the level of dispositional understanding, not to the meta-normative challenge itself. This means that Brandom's account will provide an adequate response to the

meta-normative challenge if the account can be otherwise vindicated. And there is a plausible prospect for vindication by means of enriching Brandom's I-thou ontology. Thus, if the ontological expansion I will articulate succeeds, then the meta-normative challenge can be met essentially in terms of Brandom's account. Indeed, this is what I seek to show.

The social structure that is needed is one of membership, not between individuals, but between an individual and a group, in this case a linguistic community as a group of concept-users. This is I-we sociality. What makes an account of a discursive practice *essentially* social is the indispensable role of I-we social relations in it. Wittgenstein and Sellars link the pragmatist conclusion of the regress of rules to an account of understanding that is essentially social in this sense. Sellars sums up the point, thus: "As Wittgenstein has stressed, it is the linguistic community as a self-perpetuating whole which is the minimum unit in terms of which conceptual activity can be understood."[46] The crucial idea, however, is ontological. Not only is I-we sociality required to make sense of conceptual activity, but it is also a requirement for the *existence* of individuals who are concept-users. No doubt, it is this stronger claim that makes Wittgenstein and Sellars interested in the practice of linguistic training. Recall that training is the type of teaching that does not rely on instruction by representations of rules. Specifically, the interest in training is motivated by the view that conceptual competence is acquired through linguistic training. Not yet a concept-user, a trainee cannot enter into I-thou relations of communication and interpretation. Those I-thou relations are possible for the trainee only once she has become a member, through a long and piecemeal process, of the linguistic community of her trainers. This I-we relation in turn, comes about only insofar as there are trainers who make it their goal to train someone and thus transform her from someone endowed with innate conceptual capacities to an individual with conceptual competence. Thus, we can see that training, understood as an early of the longer process of *Bildung*, requires a particular type of social relation between the trainers and the trainees. I call this you-we sociality. The trainer treats the trainee as a potential group member, as a *you* that ought to be and will become, one of *us*, but only as a result of trainers' actions.

Coordination and transmission are two aspects of the same core problem the ontology of I-thou relations faces concerning the social structure of understanding. Embracing the I-thou perspective, Stephen Turner sums up, unwittingly, its inadequacy by noting that a central task for a philosophical theory of practices is to solve the following puzzle: "Practices are supposed to be 'shared', and it should be the case that the same practice can be transmitted to another person. But no account of the process of transmission could explain how the same thing got into different people. Dropping the notion of 'sameness', however, reduces the practices to

habits."[47] The solution is to see why the coordination and transmission of understanding are inseparable. This is illustrated, as I have shown, by the fact that I-we sociality presupposes you-we sociality. The common ground of a shared language is what is being transmitted to new members of the linguistic community through training. Therefore, it is not a mystery how "the same thing got into different people," if the people are concept-users in the same linguistic community.[48] Now, with respect to the meta-normative challenge, however, the fact that deontic scorekeeping rests on a common ground of a shared language does not jeopardize the possibility of disagreement, including disagreements about concepts. On the contrary, such discrepancies of perspective are only intelligible against the background of socially coordinated dispositions of understanding.

1.4   From training to pattern-governed behavior

Sellars develops a useful account of the socially coordinated background of dispositional understanding in terms of *pattern-governed behavior*. Recall that there is no dichotomy between intentional and accidental conformity to a rule. One can also conform to a rule *because* of the rule, thus non-accidentally, *without* knowing the rule. Pattern-governed behavior exhibits this third type of conformity to rules. "The key to the concept of a linguistic rule is its complex relation to pattern governed linguistic behavior. The general concept of pattern governed behavior is a familiar one. Roughly, it is the concept of behavior which exhibits a pattern, not because it is brought about by the intention that it exhibit this pattern, but because the propensity to emit behavior of the pattern has been selectively reinforced, and the propensity to emit behavior which does not conform to this pattern selectively extinguished."[49] The goal of linguistic training is to produce pattern-governed linguistic behavior. Because trainees do not understand instructions by representations of rules, training must proceed by means of selective reinforcement of behavioral dispositions.[50] In this respect, Sellars notes, the starting point is the same for humans and dogs, for instance: "we learn habits of response to our environment in a way which is essentially identical with that in which the dog learns to sit up when I snap my fingers. And certainly these learned habits of response – though modifiable by rule-regulated symbol activity – remain the basic tie between all the complex rule-regulated symbol behavior which is the human mind in action, and the environment in which the individual lives and acts."[51]

A trainee must learn to conform to an up-and-running pattern of concept-use, without representing as rules the normative statuses that define the pattern. Therefore, when the trainee learns to conform to a given pattern, the conformity is not intentional. Nor is it accidental, however, that it is this particular pattern, as opposed to other alternatives, the trainee

learns to reproduce. Unlike trainees, it is trainers who know what ought to be the case, namely what trainees ought to do: "They [the trainers] can be construed as reasoning: Patterned behavior of such and such a kind *ought to be* exhibited by trainees, hence we, the trainers, *ought to do* this and that, as likely to bring it about that it *is* exhibited."[52] The trainers' knowledge of a rule, a representation of what ought to be, gives them a reason to make it so that trainees conform to the rule. Making this conformity hold is what *the trainers* ought to do. The result is that "[t]rainees conform to *ought-to-be's* because trainers obey corresponding *ought-to-do's*."[53] Assuming that the trainers apply the same ought-to-be's to their own behavior as well, a uniformity of behavioral patterns gets produced not just among the trainees but also between the trainees and trainers. Thus, it is such "*ought-to-be's* which are actualized as uniformities by the training that transmit language from generation to generation."[54] Sellars summarizes the shift, which linguistic training brings about, as follows: "the members of a linguistic community are *first* language *learners* and only potentially 'people', but *subsequently*, language *teachers*, possessed of the rich conceptual framework this implies. They start out by being the *subject-matter* subjects of the ought-to-be's and graduate to the status of agent subjects of the ought-to-do's. Linguistic ought-to-be's are translated into *uniformities* by training."[55]

But pattern-governed behavior is not merely of genetic importance. As we have seen already, it structures the space of reasons throughout as a socially coordinated dispositional basis for concept use. Every concept user is ontologically dependent on a group of concept users, but this does not entail an implausibly monolithic view of linguistic communities. A group in the relevant sense is constituted by the trainers and a trainee. A linguistic community as a whole is made out of many such groups that overlap, which leaves room for some divergence of patterns without undermining mutual intelligibility. However, the crucial point pattern-governed behavior displays is that understanding is essentially socially coordinated. In general, one does not acquire a capacity in abstraction from some particular way to use that capacity. Learning to play the piano involves learning a repertoire, although there is no particular repertoire one must acquire in order to learn to play the piano. Similarly, linguistic training does not make human beings concept users who autonomously decide how to use the acquired capacity, as though it were available in a purely abstract form. Instead, the conceptual competence of any individual is necessarily an element of a social network of patterns of judging, inferring, and acting by means of the given concepts. This level of dispositional understanding is required for both genetic and structural reasons: "It is the pattern-governed activities of perception, inference, and volition, themselves essentially non-actions, which underlie and make possible the domain of actions, linguistic and

non-linguistic. […] The linguistic activities which are perceptual takings, inferences and volitions *never* become *objeyings* of *ought-to-do* rules. […] [N]ot only are the abilities to engage in such thinking-out-loud *acquired* as pattern governed activity, they *remain* pattern governed activity. The linguistic activities which are perceptual takings, inferences and volitions *never* become *obeyings* of *ought-to-do* rules."[56]

1.5   Semantic self-consciousness

Because of the regress of rules, pattern-governed behavior is not only the medium of linguistic training but also structurally necessary for concept-use as the background of dispositional understanding. It is this structurally necessary dispositional background that gives rise to the problem of structural heteronomy, because, as Sellars acknowledges, concept-users can nonetheless gain rational control over the given patterns of reasoning and intentionally change them. Sellars indicates this possibility, as follows:

> It is the pattern-governed activities of perception, inference, and volition, themselves essentially non-actions, which underlie and make possible the domain of actions, linguistic and non-linguistic. Thus the trainee acquires not only the repertoire of pattern-governed linguistic behavior which is language about non-linguistic items, but also that extended repertoire which is language about linguistic as well as non-linguistic items. He is able to classify items in the linguistic kinds, and to engage in theoretical and practical reasoning about his linguistic behavior. […] The trainee acquires the ability to language about languagings, to criticize languagings, including his own; he becomes one who trains himself.[57]

This passage describes a qualitative shift from dispositional understanding as pattern-governed behavior to a representational understanding that enables concept-users to assess and revise the concepts they use. Thanks to the reflexivity of thought enabled by the linguistically acquired capacity for discursive representation, a subject need not endlessly repeat the given patterns of dispositional understanding. Those patterns, including crucially their implicit normative structure, can become objects of thinking as representations of rules whose legitimacy can be scrutinized and content modified by means of giving and asking for reasons. Thus, as Sellars puts it, through a shift from dispositional to representational understanding one "reach[es] […] the level at which [one] can formulate new and sophisticated standards in terms of which to reshape [one's] language and develop new modes of thought."[58]

Thus, against the background of pattern-governed behavior as a socially coordinated basis of dispositional understanding, Sellars introduces the idea that concept-users can gain autonomy with respect to their own understanding. The key idea is, as I have put it, that representations of rules constitute the vehicle of autonomy. The task of making it explicit, a guiding theme in Brandom's philosophy, can be seen as an elaboration of this view of freedom as autonomy. In Brandom's terminology, it is a question of gaining "semantic self-consciousness" that enables rational control over the formation of concepts.

> Logic is the organ of semantic self-consciousness. It brings out into the light of day the practical attitudes that determine the conceptual contents members of a linguistic community are able to express – putting them in the form of explicit claims, which can be debated, for which reasons can be given and alternatives proposed and assessed. The formation of concepts – by means of which practitioners can come to be aware of anything at all – comes itself to be something of which those who can deploy logical vocabulary can be aware. Since plans can be addressed to, and intentional practical influence exercised over, just those features of things of which agents can become explicitly aware by the application of concepts, the formation of concepts itself becomes in this way for the first time an object of conscious deliberation and control.[59]

Semantic self-consciousness is achieved by turning implicit norms of dispositional understanding into representations of rules. Once the normative standards of dispositional understanding are represented as rules of inference, one can begin to assess and revise them. This reflexive ability to rationally revise the conceptual makeup of one's understanding constitutes an increase in autonomy. As one gains knowledge of the patterns of one's dispositional understanding, always locally with respect to some specific patterns of concept-use, that activity is no longer dispositional but a new object of self-governing. When one brings new knowledge of normative standards to self-consciousness by making norms of a practice explicit as statements of rules, the scope of one's responsibility and freedom expands in two ways. One becomes responsible to an explicit standard of correctness, but one is now also responsible for the correctness of that standard. The decisive point is that by means of thus exercising the expressive power of reason, concept-users can transform unknown forces they are subjected to in a discursive practice into forces they authorize autonomously and wield intentionally. Thus, one's freedom increases within a space of reasons as one's knowledge of its normative structure grows.

Following Brandom, we can call the tools of linguistic representation that enable this shift *logical vocabulary*: "Logic is the linguistic organ of semantic self-consciousness and self-control. The expressive resources provided by logical vocabulary make it possible to criticize, control, and improve our concepts."[60] Rational evaluation of a concept becomes possible only once norms governing its inferential structure are *represented* as statements that can function as premises or conclusions of an argument. This is typically achieved by means of conditional statements that represent inferential patterns in the up-and-running practice of reasoning and thereby turn those regularities into objects of rational assessment and revision. By evaluating and readjusting the inferential patterns, one is in effect revising the concepts involved because their content is defined, at least in part, by the inferential patterns in which they are used. To elucidate this process, let me discuss two examples.

BOCHE

The first example, originally by Michael Dummett, is used by Brandom himself to illustrate how logical vocabulary, paradigmatically the conditional, can be used to increase semantic self-consciousness by representing hitherto implicit norms of reasoning as statements of rules.[61] Consider the concept BOCHE, which applies to all and only persons of German nationality and entails an unusually high disposition to cruelty. By using BOCHE, speakers established an inferential pattern, which can be described by means of the following two rules. The Rule of Introduction: "If x is German, then x is a Boche." The Rule of Elimination: "If x is a Boche, then x is cruel." The inferential pattern, however, is enacted as pattern-governed behavior. This means that the activity of reasoning is guided by a dispositional understanding *of* Germans *as* cruel, but that understanding remains unavailable for a rational assessment until it is represented *that* Germans are cruel. As long as the pattern from "x is German" to "x is cruel" recurs in the practice of reasoning without the transition itself being represented as something that ought to be the case, the putative propriety of this pattern of reasoning eludes the participants' powers of rational evaluation. To represent the inferential transition, then, one needs the conditional: "If x is German, then x has an unusually high disposition to cruelty." By thus representing a norm of pattern-governed behavior, one turns it into an object of rational control and self-governing. For one now needs to ask whether there are any counterexamples to the universal statement about Germans the conditional expresses. One must either endorse or reject the universal statement, but in each case one is exercising a rational control over BOCHE. Endorsement of the conditional amounts to acceptance of BOCHE, whereas the conditional cannot be rejected

without thereby also repudiating BOCHE. Either way, one is exercising a rational control over the concept, scrutinizing its status in the light of one's other commitments. Thus, acquiring semantic self-consciousness consists in coming to understand one's understanding as one's own.

The pivot on which the possibility of assessing and revising concepts turns is the pragmatically ambiguous role of statements that express material conditionals that link two or more empirical predicates. The logical form of the proposition "If x is German, then x is cruel" allows for two kinds of treatment. The statement can be a description that is either true or false, depending on whether all Germans are cruel or not. But the statement can just as well be treated as a representation of a rule for how the concepts GERMAN and CRUEL ought to be used. In Wittgenstein's words: "It is clear that our empirical propositions do not all have the same status, since one can lay down such a proposition and turn it from an empirical proposition into a norm of description."[62] There is nothing in the logical form of this kind of proposition that determines whether it is to be treated as an empirical or a normative statement in a discursive practice. However, there is no choice to be made so long as no statement has been formulated about a relationship between Germans and cruelty. Crucially, so long as the given pattern of reasoning is being reproduced as pattern-governed behavior, the connection it articulates between the concepts GERMAN and CRUEL appears inevitable.

SEXUAL PERVERSION

The second example comes from Arnold Davidson's work in the history of psychiatry that investigates the conceptual conditions for a theory of sexual perversion in the second half of the 19th century.[63] In Davidson's words, he studies the emergence of the conceptual space in which it became intelligible to define sexual perversion as an illness.[64] Historically, Davidson argues, this conceptual space for psychiatric reasoning about sexual perversion emerged between two alternative conceptual frameworks that exclude, in two distinct ways, the intelligibility of the very concept SEXUAL PERVERSION. There are two things in particular that I want to illustrate by means of Davidson's account of this conceptual history. First, as the example of BOCHE, it illustrates how a concept can perpetuate problematic normative attitudes while those attitudes remain unarticulated. Secondly, with the example of Sigmund Freud's *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, Davidson's account illuminates the value of semantic self-consciousness.

The emergence of sexuality as a site of illness was precluded through the first half of the 19th century by Broussais's principle, according to which every disease must be localized in some organ. The conceptual framework

of this anatomical style of reasoning makes diseases of sexuality literally unintelligible, unless they are in effect diseases of the reproductive organs.[65] Therefore, Broussais's principle had to be jettisoned in the psychiatric discourse for a conceptual space to open up for SEXUAL PERVERSION as a disease category. Not only had the requirement for an organic seat to be rejected, however, but concurrently a new, functional, understanding of illness needed to be articulated. The emergence of sexuality as a site of pathology was grounded in a functional understanding of the sexual instinct as geared towards the reproductive aim. This understanding enabled the application of the distinction between the normal and the pathological to the individual's *sexuality*, in contrast to the anatomy of reproductive organs, which at the same time became understood as a privileged site of access to the individual's personality. As a result, sexual perversions, understood as various deviations of the sexual instinct, became seen as symptoms of pathological *psychic* constitution, indeed as evidence of abnormal personality.[66]

Davidson's account suggests that the crucial conceptual shift, namely psychiatry's adoption of the functional understanding of the sexual instinct, took place without semantic self-consciousness: "Nineteenth-century psychiatry silently adopted this conception of the function of the sexual instinct, and it was often taken as so natural as not to need explicit statement."[67] Instead of explicit conceptual articulation and argument, SEXUAL PERVERSION came into being as a tactically useful instrument for harnessing and perpetuating normative attitudes regarding sexual propriety that needed no articulation precisely because they were so widespread in the culture. Through the inferential patterns that came to define SEXUAL PERVERSION those normative attitudes concerning sexual conduct congealed into a new concept that eventually could be made explicit under the guise of psychiatric authority. As one might expect from a treatise titled *Psychopathia Sexualis*, published to a large acclaim by Richard von Krafft-Ebing in 1886, it makes the dispositional understanding of sexual impropriety explicit by representing the inferential structure of the new concept of perversion: "With opportunity for the natural satisfaction of the sexual instinct, every expression of it that does not correspond with the purpose of nature – i.e., propagation – *must* be regarded as perverse."[68] The obligation Krafft-Ebing here designates by "must" is in fact an "ought" that is built into the inferential structure of SEXUAL PERVERSION and hereby made explicit.

Once made explicit, however, SEXUAL PERVERSION was quickly undermined, namely in Freud's *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* from 1905, whose argument makes the decisive conceptual link between the sexual object and the reproductive aim undone. Davidson argues that Freud's theory of sexual development, especially the account

of infantile sexuality, articulates a novel conceptualization of the sexual instinct whose inferential reconfiguration undermines SEXUAL PERVERSION, even if Freud does not fully acknowledge this. Freud argues that the sexual instinct begins its development from a child's auto-erotic experiences that explore different regions of one's own body as a source of pleasure, and only in puberty does the instinct find an object that is suitable for the reproductive aim in the genitalia of the opposite sex.[69] Thus understood, the aim of the sexual instinct is pleasure. But this aim is compatible with a multitude of sexual objects, none of which need to be suitable for the reproductive aim. Consequently, the distinction between the normal and the pathological can no longer be combined with this new understanding of the sexual instinct. As we have seen, a functional understanding of the reproductive aim provides the basis for classifying different sexual objects as normal or pathological. But Freud's theory severs that normative connection between the sexual object and the reproductive aim, and, in doing so, it in effect undermines SEXUAL PERVERSION, the concept itself. Therefore, it is puzzling that Freud should characterize the child, an auto-erotic explorer, as "polymorphously perverse."[70] But this only betrays, as Davidson suggests, the limits of Freud's own semantic self-consciousness. In *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, Freud continues to describe the topic of childhood sexuality in the very terms his novel theory undermines.

1.6   Structural heteronomy

The two examples show not only how semantic self-consciousness can be obtained, but they also illustrate its value thus motivating structural heteronomy as an ethical problem. To be sure, semantic self-consciousness is epistemically valuable. Given that knowledge is intrinsically good, and therefore something one ought to pursue, semantic self-consciousness, too, constitutes an end in itself for an epistemic agent. Moreover, semantic self-consciousness is required for the rational revision of concepts that are epistemically or normatively defective. In fact, Brandom characterizes the function of semantic self-consciousness in terms of the rectification of defective concepts: "The rational enterprise, the practice of giving and asking for reasons that lies at the heart of discursive activity, requires not only criticizing *beliefs*, as false or unwarranted, but also criticizing *concepts*. Defective concepts distort our thought and constrain us by limiting the propositions and plans we can entertain as candidates for endorsement in belief and intention. This constraint operates behind our backs, out of our sight, since it limits what we are so much as capable of being aware of. Philosophy, in developing and applying tools for the rational criticism of concepts, seeks to free us from these fetters, by bringing the distorting influences out into the

light of conscious day, exposing the commitments implicit in our concepts as vulnerable to rational challenge and debate."[71] Gaining a representational understanding of the inferential structure of a concept enables one to identify and rectify what makes the concept epistemically or normatively defective. The problem can be addressed by making revisions to the concept's inferential structure, at the limit by rejecting the concept altogether.

In Brandom's account, however, the quest for semantic self-consciousness has no explicitly ethical motivation. In fact, it remains unclear whether, on Brandom's view, making explicit concepts' inferential profiles is something one *ought* to do. Relatedly, it is not entirely clear why, according to Brandom, the rational control over concepts that semantic self-consciousness enables is worth pursuing. The two questions are related. For instance, one might think that semantic self-consciousness is worth pursuing because knowledge is worth pursuing. Semantic self-consciousness is a special type of self-knowledge, and acquiring knowledge is good. But are we obligated to pursue knowledge? If so, knowledge about what? We would still somehow choose semantic self-consciousness from an infinite list of all possible objects. On the other hand, semantic self-consciousness enables a subject to exercise autonomy over understanding. Assuming the ethical ideal of autonomy, then, semantic self-consciousness is worth pursuing as a means to increase autonomy. Moreover, since representations of rules constitute the vehicle of autonomy, the same ideal demands that concept users pursue semantic self-consciousness. Thus, the ideal of autonomy creates an ethical obligation to seek semantic self-consciousness as a precondition for exercising autonomy over understanding. This ethical motivation does not preclude epistemic motives for the pursuit of semantic self-consciousness. But the ethical motivation is crucially independent of any epistemic benefits since it is grounded in the ideal of autonomy.

Thus, the ethical value of the autonomy which semantic self-consciousness provides is not derivative from the epistemic benefits it provides. Semantic self-consciousness is required for rational control over the concepts one uses and thus for the exercise of autonomy in the domain of understanding. To recognize the ethical value of semantic self-consciousness, one does not need to reject any given concept as defective. As recent work in conceptual ethics and conceptual engineering illustrates, concept choice involves thorny issues susceptible to reasonable disagreement.[72] It would be naïve to claim that semantic self-consciousness must result in better concepts. And even if it did invariably produce concepts that are unquestionably better than their predecessors, the ethical obligation to pursue semantic self-consciousness, as I defend it, would remain independent of these results.

The structurally necessary requirement for dispositional understanding is not ethically significant as such, but I have argued that it creates a new

ethical problem for those who are committed to the ideal of autonomy. Since one can, locally, make explicit the implicit normative structure of dispositional understanding, one ought to do so. For only that way does one acquire rational control over norms that are implicitly guiding one's use of concepts and thus shaping the understanding these concepts articulate. Alternatively, if one endorses a representationalist solution to the regress of rules, then the problem of structural heteronomy would not arise.[73] Following the pragmatist solution to the regress of rules, however, a new line of ethical work emerges whose task is to promote autonomy with respect to the concepts that define one's understanding. In the light of the ideal of autonomy, the quest for semantic self-consciousness constitutes an ethical task that is distinct from the unification of the will in moral psychology. And, as I will show in the following chapters, this problem of structural heteronomy constitutes a core of Foucault's philosophical work, linking his seemingly disparate studies of knowledge, power, and ethics. To recognize this unappreciated unity in Foucault's philosophy, however, it will be crucial to reconsider and vindicate his idea of the archaeology of knowledge. For, as we will see, archaeology's subject matter is precisely the implicit system of rules in a discursive practice that unbeknownst to concept-users defines changing limits of intelligibility that, however, can be intentionally transformed only if critique cancels their apparent inevitability. *Savoir* is Foucault technical term for this implicit bedrock of rules in a discursive practice. In the next chapter, then, I will argue that concept-users' essential dependence on *savoir* does not undermine their capacity for autonomy, but instead it gives rise to the problem of structural heteronomy in Foucault's work.

Notes

1 Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophische Untersuchungen / Philosophical Investigations: The German Text, with a Revised English Translation*, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001). Saul Kripke's interpretation has inspired a large body of literature, which, however, tends to move away from the lesson Wittgenstein himself draws from the regress of rules. See Saul Kripke, *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language: An Elementary Exposition* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982). In this respect, John McDowell provides an incisive corrective to Kripke's approach. See John McDowell, "Wittgenstein on Following a Rule," *Synthese* 58, (March 1984). Cf. Hannah Ginsborg, "Primitive Normativity and Skepticism about Rules," *Journal of Philosophy* 108, no. 5 (2011).

2 The issue depends, in part, on the meaning of "conceptual" and the different philosophical projects that motivate the different views in this regard. For an overview of alternative approaches, see Eric Margolis and Stephen Laurence, eds., *Concepts: Core Readings* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999).

3 For a historical account of this approach, see J. Alberto Coffa, *The Semantic Tradition from Kant to Carnap: To the Vienna Station* (Cambridge: Cambridge

University Press, 1991). Cf. Robert B. Brandom, *Making It Explicit: Reasoning, Representing, and Discursive Commitment* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), Chapters 1–2; Michel Foucault, "Sur l'árchéologie des sciences. Réponse au Cercle d'épistémologie," in *Dits et écrits I*, 1954–1976, eds. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 2001); Arnold I. Davidson, *The Emergence of Sexuality: Historical Epistemology and the Formation of Concepts* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 196.

4 Wilfrid Sellars, *Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 76. I leave to the side the complex question as to how the relationship between the epistemological and semantic views of Sellars should be understood. For an overview, see Willem A. deVries and Timm Triplett, *Knowledge, Mind, and the Given: Reading Wilfrid Sellars's "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind," Including the Complete Text of Sellars's Essay* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2000).

5 Wilfrid Sellars, "Meaning as Functional Classification: A Perspective on the Relation of Syntax to Semantics," in *In the Space of Reasons: Selected Essays of Wilfrid Sellars*, eds. Kevin Scharp and Robert B. Brandom (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 87–88.

6 Immanuel Kant presents the general idea, when focusing on rational agency, thus: "Everything in nature works in accordance with laws. Only a rational being has the capacity to act *in accordance with the representation* of laws, that is, in accordance with principles […]." Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, in *Practical Philosophy*, trans. and ed. Mary J. Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 66.

7 Robert B. Brandom, "Freedom and Constraint by Norms," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 16, no. 3 (1979). Cf. Robert B. Brandom, *Reason in Philosophy: Animating Ideas* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009), Chapters 1–2.

8 The metaphysical point about representations of rules as the *vehicle* of autonomy is independent on the *justification* of any given representations of rules a concept-user might be relying on. Relatedly, the central distinction in Kant's moral philosophy between representations of rules and representations of laws presupposes that human agents act on the basis of representations of rules, that is, maxims, that might or might not be objectively valid. See Immanuel Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals*, in *Practical Philosophy,* trans. and ed. Mary J. Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 379–380.

9 For a review of challenges to the metaphysics of autonomy in the reception of Kant's philosophy by his contemporaries and the following generation in German philosophy, see Karl Ameriks, *Kant and the Fate of Autonomy: Problems in the Appropriation of Critical Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

10 As we will see, Wittgenstein, Sellars, and Brandom all recognize this result, but they do not explore its significance to the *distinction* between autonomy and heteronomy in moral and political philosophy. Cf. Brandom, *Reason in Philosophy*, Chapter 2.

11 Brandom, *Making It Explicit*, xix–xx, 384.

12 Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, trans. Martin Milligan (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1959); John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*, in *On Liberty and Other Writings*, ed. Stefan Collini (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science: With a Prelude*

in German Rhymes and an Appendix of Songs, trans. Josefine Nauchkoff (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

13 Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Section III.

14 John Locke's doctrine of implicit consent and Jean-Jacques Rousseau's account of the general will are two versions of this strategy to appeal to the autonomy of political subjects as the ultimate ground of legitimacy in the constitution of legal constraints. See John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Of the Social Contract; or Principles of Political Right,* in *The Social Contract and Other Late Political Writings*, ed. and trans. Victor Gourevitch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

15 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. and ed. Paul Guyer and Allen Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 232. My approach to the conceptual norms of understanding is decidedly different from the focus in recent scholarship on Kant's account of moral principles governing the faculty of understanding. See Alix Cohen, "Kant on the Ethics of Belief," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 114, no. 3 (2014); Markus Kohl, "Kant on Freedom of Empirical Thought," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 53, no. 2 (2015); Melissa Merritt, *Kant on Reflection and Virtue* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018). Thanks to Sabina Vaccarino Bremner for drawing my attention to this strand in Kant scholarship.

16 According to strong inferentialism, inferential relations are sufficient to determine conceptual content. However, I am only committed to a weaker version of inferentialism, which maintains that inferential relations are necessary for determining conceptual content. See Robert B. Brandom, *Articulating Reasons* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press: 2000), 28–29. Cf. Brandom, *Making It Explicit*, 131.

17 Sellars emphasizes this role of rules of inference by calling them "rules of criticism." See Wilfrid Sellars, "Language as Thought and as Communication," in *In the Space of Reasons: Selected Essays of Wilfrid Sellars,* eds. Kevin Scharp and Robert B. Brandom (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 59–65; Wilfrid Sellars, "Some Reflections on Thoughts and Things," in *In the Space of Reasons: Selected Essays of Wilfrid Sellars,* eds. Kevin Scharp and Robert B. Brandom (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 271–272.

18 The debate on rule-following has been extensive, especially in the wake of Kripke's interpretation of Wittgenstein's discussion as "a skeptical challenge" about meaning. See Kripke, *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language*. As McDowell was quick to point out, however, Kripke's interpretation, and therefore also the ensuing debate on skepticism about rules, misconstrue the structure of Wittgenstein's argument. See McDowell, "Wittgenstein on Following a Rule".

19 Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, §198, §201.

20 Here the representationalist alternative is to conclude that there must be a special set of representations with a fixed content that brings the regress of interpretations to a halt. Indeed, this is how Jerry Fodor uses the regress of rules to motivate the hypothesis that meaning is based on the language of thought that is a biologically evolved system of fixed semantic primitives in the human brain. See Jerry Fodor, *The Language of Thought* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1975), Chapter 2.

21 Wilfrid Sellars, "Some Reflections on Language Games," in *In the Space of Reasons: Selected Essays of Wilfrid Sellars*, eds. Kevin Scharp and Robert B. Brandom (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 32.

22 Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, §219; Kripke, *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language*, 17; Crispin Wright, "Rule-following Without Reasons: Wittgenstein's Quietism and the Constitutive Question," *Ratio* 20, no. 4 (2007). Cf. Paul Boghossian, "Blind Rule-Following," in *Mind, Meaning, and Knowledge: Themes from the Philosophy of Crispin Wright*, ed. Annalisa Coliva (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

23 Ibid.

24 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 268.

25 Ibid. Original emphasis.

26 Immanuel Kant, "On the Common Saying: That May Be Correct in Theory, But It Is of No Use in Practice," in *Practical Philosophy*, trans. and ed. Mary J. Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

27 Meredith Williams, *Wittgenstein, Mind, and Meaning: Towards a Social Conception of the Mind* (New York: Routledge, 1999); Wolfgang Huemer, "The Transition from Causes to Norms: Wittgenstein on Training," *Gratzer Philosophische Studien* 71, no. 1 (2006). Cf. John McDowell, *Mind and World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), 88.

28 Sellars, "Some Reflections on Language Games," 35.

29 Ibid.

30 For a discussion of attitude-dependence, see Brandom, *Making It Explicit*, 46–52.

31 Brandom, *Making It Explicit*, 20.

32 Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, §202.

33 Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, §199.

34 Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, §202.

35 It is not obvious that the multiplicity of perspectives requires sociality, namely perspectives that belong to several individuals. For instance, Brandom defines the requirement strictly as a multiplicity of perspectives that might belong to the same individual at different moments in time. See Brandom, *Making It Explicit*, 37n45.

36 For influential accounts of social coordination and linguistic interpretation with an I-thou structure, see David Lewis, *Convention: A Philosophical Study* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1969); David Lewis, "Scorekeeping in a Language Game," *Journal of Philosophical Logic* 8, no. 1 (1979); Donald Davidson, "Radical Interpretation," *Dialectica* 27, no. 1 (1973). Cf. Brandom, *Making It Explicit,* 180–198.

37 Brandom, *Making It Explicit*, 508.

38 Robert B. Brandom, *Between Saying and Doing: Towards an Analytic Pragmatism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 212. Brandom here calls this type of understanding "hermeneutic," in contrast to the algebraic understanding that consists in representing.

39 Sellars, *Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind*, 76. For a view of conceptual competence as know-how, see Mark Greenberg and Gilbert Harman, "Conceptual Role Semantics," in *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Language*, eds. Ernest Lepore and Barry C. Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

40 Brandom, *Making It Explicit*, 508.

41 Ibid.

42 It seems more challenging to apply the same approach to negative normative attitudes that are enacted but not represented in a discursive practice.

In particular, Brandom's view that a negative attitude is enacted by sanctioning performances by others, instead of correcting them, for instance, raises important questions I cannot, but also do not need to, discuss here. For a discussion of related issues, with a focus on Brandom's reliance on the notion of responsibility, see Frieder Vogelmann, "Keep Score and Punish: Brandom's Concept of Responsibility," *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 46, no. 8 (2020).

43 Danielle Macbeth, "Inference, Meaning, and Truth in Brandom, Sellars, and Frege," in *Reading Brandom on Making It Explicit*, eds. Bernhard Weiss and Jeremy Wanderer (New York: Routledge, 2010), 201. Added emphasis.

44 Brandom, *Making It Explicit*, 39.

45 Brandom, *Making It Explicit*, 37–42.

46 Sellars, "Language as Thought and as Communication," 63–64. Cf. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, §§198–99.

47 Stephen Turner, *The Social Theory of Practices: Tradition, Tacit Knowledge, and Presuppositions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 79.

48 Ibid.

49 Sellars, "Meaning as Functional Classification," 86–87. Cf. Sellars, "Some Reflections on Language Games,"34.

50 Sellars names "verbal behaviorism" the application of this method to the acquisition of conceptual competence through linguistic training. See Sellars, "Meaning as Functional Classification," 83–93.

51 Wilfrid Sellars, "Language, Rules and Behavior," in *Pure Pragmatics and Possible Worlds: The Early Essays of Wilfrid Sellars*, ed. Jeffrey Sicha (Atascadero, CA: Ridgeview Publishing, 2005), 195–196.

52 Sellars, "Meaning as Functional Classification," 87.

53 Ibid.

54 Wilfrid Sellars, "The Role of Imagination in Kant's Theory of Experience," in *In the Space of Reasons: Selected Essays of Wilfrid Sellars*, eds. Kevin Scharp and Robert B. Brandom (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 451.

55 Sellars, "Language as Thought and as Communication," 63–64.

56 Sellars, "Meaning as Functional Classification," 88–89.

57 Ibid.

58 Sellars, "Meaning as Functional Classification," 86.

59 Brandom, *Making It Explicit*, xix–xx.

60 Brandom, *Making It Explicit*, 384.

61 Michael Dummett, *Frege: Philosophy of Language* (London: Duckworth Overlook, 1973), 454; Brandom, *Reason in Philosophy*, 121–125.

62 Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Über Gewissheit / On Certainty*, trans. Denis Paul and G. E. M. Anscombe (Oxford: Blackwell, 1969), §167.

63 Davidson, *The Emergence of Sexuality*, Chapters 1–3.

64 Davidson, *The Emergence of Sexuality*, 37, 50.

65 Davidson, *The Emergence of Sexuality*, 10–12.

66 Davidson, *The Emergence of Sexuality*, 13.

67 Davidson, *The Emergence of Sexuality*, 15.

68 Richard von Krafft-Ebing, *Psychopathia Sexualis: A Medico-Forensic Study*, trans. Harry E. Wedeck (New York, NY: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1965), 108.

69 Sigmund Freud, *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, trans. James Strachey (New York: Basic Books, 2000).

70 Freud, *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, 57.
71 Brandom, *Reason in Philosophy*, 114.
72 Alexis Burgess and David Plunkett, "Conceptual Ethics I," *Philosophy Compass* 8, no. 12 (2013); Alexis Burgess, Herman Cappelen, and David Plunkett, eds., *Conceptual Engineering and Conceptual Ethics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020).
73 Fodor, *The Language of Thought*. Ginsborg's account of "primitive normativity" is an attempt to articulate a third alternative. See Ginsborg, "Primitive Normativity and Skepticism about Rules".

2 Replacing the Sovereign Subject with *savoir*

In "The Subject and Power," published in 1982, Foucault summarizes the twofold nature of being a subject, as follows: "There are two meanings of the word 'subject': subject to someone else by control and dependence, and tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge."[1] What is at stake, however, is not just the meaning of the word "subject" but a tension between two aspects of subjectivity, which motivates Foucault's philosophical work throughout its shifting points of focus. On the one hand, the preconditions of understanding make concept-users essentially dependent on discourse as a social practice. On the other, self-consciousness enables concept-users to control and revise their own thinking and agency. As we saw in the previous chapter, this tension between the two aspects of subjectivity can be established as a consequence of the pragmatist solution to the regress of rules, and it is recognized, but only in passing, by Sellars and Brandom who pursue a practice-based theory of discursive cognition. In Foucault's terminology, the distinction between "assujettissement" (subjection) and "subjectivation" (subjectivation) marks the contrast between these two aspects of subjectivity. Through the following chapters, I seek to show that it is illuminating to interpret Foucault's philosophy as a consistent engagement with this tension at the heart of subjectivity from the changing perspectives of knowledge, power, and ethics.

I will argue that these three perspectives are linked by the essential role of understanding in the constitution of subjectivity and, therefore, by the problem of structural heteronomy. Because the basic mode of understanding is not representational, a concept-user is constitutively dependent on something she does not know, specifically on something other than principles she endorses. In Foucault's vocabulary, this background understanding is *savoir* in contrast to the representational *connaissance*, which is a set of truth-claims and corresponding beliefs.[2] But, as we know already, this distinction can give rise to the problem of structural heteronomy only insofar as one is committed to the ethical ideal of autonomy. Therefore, it is crucial for my interpretation of Foucault's philosophy as a response to the

problem of structural heteronomy to show that the conception of critique he develops is motivated by this commitment. I will focus on the topic of critique, including Foucault's commitment to autonomy as the ethical ideal, in Chapter 5. Since I will be there explicating and defending Foucault's claim that critique "is archaeological in its method," it is necessary that I first vindicate the very idea of the archaeology of knowledge. That will be the task in Chapter 3. To begin with, however, it is important to clarify in what sense exactly Foucault rejects the subject as a self-standing source of meaning and knowledge. As I have already explained, autonomy as a value, and specifically as the ethical ideal, need not presuppose the autonomy of the subject in the metaphysical sense one finds in Descartes and Kant, for instance, but which Foucault denies. On the other hand, I need to show that Foucault's view that meaning and knowledge are based on *savoir*, an implicit system of rules in a discursive practice, does not cancel his entitlement to autonomy as the ethical ideal. Therefore, in this chapter, I will investigate why and how Foucault replaces the self-standing subject with *savoir* as the basis that enables meaning and knowledge.

2.1   Foucault's rejection of the Sovereign Subject

"Death of the man" is the provocative slogan associated with Foucault's 1966 study *The Order of Things*, which made him famous as the main proponent of "anti-humanism" in the pivotal intellectual debate of the 1960s in France.[3] Whereas the humanist camp denounced Foucault for having denied freedom and thereby the prospect of historical progress, Foucault's target was a particular view of the subject, namely the subject as a metaphysically self-standing source of meaning and knowledge. In 1969, Foucault explains that he repudiates specifically "the Subject with a capital 'S', the subject as the origin and foundation of Knowledge, Freedom, Language, and History."[4] Foucault continues: "One may say that the entire Western civilization has been subjugated, and philosophers have only certified this by relating all thought and all truth to consciousness, the Self, the Subject. In the rumbling that shakes us today, one may have to recognize the birth of a world where it will be known that the subject is not one, but split, not sovereign, but dependent, not the absolute origin, but a function that is constantly modifiable."[5] Instead of rejecting the subject as a thinker and agent *tout court*, which would be odd indeed, this statement already expresses the same twofold picture of the subject as both essentially dependent and capable of reflection and self-determination, which Foucault later presents in "The Subject and Power." Foucault is objecting to the metaphysically self-standing status of the subject in modern philosophy, namely to the unified, sovereign, and originary status which the Cartesian cogito and the Kantian rational subject share, despite other metaphysical

differences. Therefore, as Foucault explains in 1973, "on the level of generalities where I situate myself, I do not make a difference between the Cartesian and Kantian conceptions."[6] From Foucault's perspective, they are but two particularly influential articulations of the key metaphysical commitment that has defined the orientation of modern philosophy but needs to be rejected, namely the view of the Sovereign Subject. "Two or three centuries ago Western philosophy postulated, explicitly or implicitly, the subject as the foundation, as the core source [*noyau central*] of all knowledge [*connaissance*], as that in which and starting from which freedom revealed itself and truth could emerge."[7] In sweeping statements, Foucault claims occasionally, quite inaccurately, that this postulate has remained unchallenged until his day: "since Descartes until Sartre […] it seems to me that the subject was indeed understood as something fundamental but something one left untouched: it was that which was not called into question. […] The idea that the subject is not the fundamental and originary form, but the subject is being formed starting from a number of processes that are not of the order of subjectivity […] but more fundamental and more originary than the subject itself, did not emerge."[8] This statement is a major oversimplification, at the very least, if not downright false. The rejection of the metaphysically self-standing status of the subject is a guiding theme in post-Kantian philosophy, shared by canonical authors such as G. W. F. Hegel, Karl Marx, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Martin Heidegger.[9]

However, Foucault's narrative is more nuanced and plausible when he interprets the history of French philosophy. Foucault contrasts "philosophy of the subject," running from René Descartes to Jean-Paul Sartre, with "philosophy of the concept" developed in the epistemological tradition from Auguste Comte through Gaston Bachelard to Georges Canguilhem.[10] Thus, Foucault indicates that his rejection of the subject with a capital "S" is informed by this alternative approach of French epistemology, even though the metaphysical status of the epistemic subject was never explicitly its topic. However, by studying the formation of knowledge on the basis of specific conceptual frameworks and their transformations in the history of sciences, this approach shifts the focus from the subject as a self-standing starting point to a system of concepts as the source of meaning. Crucially, here concepts are not understood as private mental items, innate ideas, or intentional acts, but as elements of reasoning, to be identified and studied by reference to the formation and transformations of specific rationalities in the history of sciences.[11]

According to Foucault, the idea that meaning is constituted by a system of concepts, not by a self-standing subject, is the crucial insight that is shared by a motley crew of authors who object to the metaphysics of the Sovereign Subject. Referring to his own generation in the context of French philosophy, Foucault sums up: "we found something else, another

passion: the passion of the concept and of what I would call the 'system'."[12] The insight is that language is the system that constitutes meaning, and the existence of a thinking subject therefore depends on language.[13] Acknowledging this essential dependence marks a sharp departure from Sartre's philosophy of the subject as the source of meaning, which had defined the outlook of the previous generation: "The breaking point was the day when Lévi-Strauss and Lacan showed us, respectively, that *meaning* for societies and for the unconscious was probably but a surface effect […] and what deeply pervaded us, what was before us, what we sustained in time and space, was the *system*."[14] Thus, as Foucault elaborates in a different context, it was not only the structuralists but also authors such as Maurice Blanchot, Georges Bataille, and Pierre Klossowksi, who "showed indeed that there was not this originary and self-sufficient form which philosophy classically presupposed."[15] They, as well as Foucault himself, "all agreed on this point that one must not depart from the subject […] in the sense of Descartes as the originary point starting from which everything was to be generated, that the subject itself has a genesis."[16] It may seem surprising that the objection Foucault makes to the self-standing subject as a source of meaning and knowledge is not very radical as such and, again, something many philosophers outside of the French context had already argued. After all, Foucault argues that a linguistic turn in philosophy undermines the idea of a metaphysically self-standing subject.[17] This is why Foucault also recognizes Gottlob Frege as a predecessor and ally in this respect.[18] Bertrand Russell and Ludwig Wittgenstein, too, are featured on Foucault's list of allies because they locate the source of meaning in language, not in the mind of a self-standing subject.[19]

However, it is not only the subject's dependence on language, but specifically a pragmatist approach to language that comes to inform Foucault's philosophy, especially the project of the archaeology of knowledge. In 1967, when working on the systematic presentation of the archaeological project in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault emphasizes that instead of structuralist abstractions he is approaching language as a discursive practice that can be located and studied in a concrete historical context.

> Personally, I am rather obsessed by the existence of discourses, by the fact that utterances have been made [*que des paroles ont eu lieu*]: these events have functioned in relation to their original situation, they have left traces behind, they remain [*subsistent*] and exert, due to this very existence [*subsistance*] in history, a certain number of manifest or secret functions. […] It is starting to be understood, especially among logicians, students of Russell and of Wittgenstein, that one could not analyze the formal properties of language but on the condition of taking its concrete functioning into account. Language may well be a set of structures, but the discourses are units

of functioning, and the analysis of language in its entirety [*totalité*] cannot fail to meet this essential requirement. To this extent, what I do belongs to the general anonymity of all the studies that currently revolve around language, that is, not only around the linguistic system that enables something to be uttered, but around discourses that have been uttered.[20]

We know from Foucault's correspondence with Daniel Defert that "the English analysts" provided him with a crucial example of how to study language in terms of its functioning, as a discursive practice, in contrast to the structuralist vogue in the 1960s. When writing *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, after struggling to find a conception of language that would be adequate to his approach, Foucault reports success, in May 1967: "I am rather delighted by the English analysts; they allow one to see well how to do non-linguistic analyses of statements. Treat statements in their functioning."[21] Foucault discovered this pragmatist approach to language in the works of "Wittgenstein, Austin, Strawson, Searle," as he later explains.[22]

Unlike "the English analysts," however, Foucault only investigates language as a practice of making truth-claims or, as he later puts it, as "truth games."[23] This game metaphor has multiple aspects, but most fundamentally it expresses the insight that meaning and therefore knowledge depend on language as a system of rules. In 1968, Foucault sums up this essential dependence, thus: "What matters to me is to show that there are not, on the one hand, discourses that are inert, already more than half-dead, and, on the other, an omnipotent subject who manipulates them, shakes them up [*les bouleversent*], renews them; but that the discoursing subjects belong to the discursive field, where they have their place (and their possibilities and displacements), their function (and their functional possibilities and mutations). Discourse is not the place of irruption of pure subjectivity; it is a space of differentiated positions and functions [*fonctionnements*] for the subjects."[24] Although Foucault also acknowledges differences in speaker positions, or "enunciative modalities," that depend on social status or group membership, the fundamental dependence holds between a concept-user and the rules of intelligibility of a discursive practice.[25]

To explain this essentially dependent status of the subject is a new central task for philosophy, as Foucault notes in 1971:

> The philosopher's question is no longer to know how something [*tout cela*] is thinkable, nor how the world can be lived, experienced, passed through by the subject. Now the problem is to know what conditions are imposed on a subject of some sort so that it could enter [*s'introduire*], function, and serve as a node in the systematic network that surrounds us. With that starting point, the object of description and analysis will no longer be the subject in its relations

with humanity and formality, but the mode of existence of certain objects, such as science, which function, develop, and undergo transformations without any reference to something like *the foundation of intuition* in a subject. The subjects that succeed one another are limited from the start by the side doors [*ports lateral*], so to speak, inside a system which not only has been in place since a certain time, with its own systematicity that in a sense is independent of people's consciousness, but that also has its own and independent existence in relation to the existence of this or that subject.[26]

This new topic arises from the realization that a subject is not a metaphysically self-standing source of meaning but instead essentially dependent on language. In the end, however, Foucault never addresses the topic on the level of abstraction at which he describes it here. In *The Order of Things*, Foucault registers the subject's essential dependence by noting, in Cartesian terms, that all thought presupposes a remainder of "unthought."[27] And *savoir* is precisely a background that remains unthought as such because it involves no representations.

But how individuals become thinking subject in virtue of acquiring *savoir* is not something Foucault ever undertakes to explain, even though he announces in 1973 the historical constitution of the subject as a central topic of his own research, thus:

> It would be interesting to try to see, through history, how is being produced the constitution of a subject that is not pregiven [*donné définitivement*], that is not the starting point from which truth arrives to history, but of a subject that is constituted within history itself, and that is formed and reformed by history at every moment. One needs to advance toward this radical critique of the human subject by history.
>
> A certain tradition of Marxism at universities or in academia has not yet given up this traditional philosophical conception of the subject. But, in my sense, that is what needs to be done: to show the historical constitution of a subject of knowledge [*connaissance*] through a discourse understood as a set of strategies that belong to social practices.[28]

One might think that Foucault's subsequent analysis of techniques of disciplinary power elaborates this approach, and in a sense it does, but not at the level of generality that is required to address the constitution of a concept-using subject as philosophy's new problem. The crucial point is that training [*dressage*] in Foucault's analysis of disciplinary power is not *linguistic* training.[29] The people in prisons, armies, factories, and schools are already concept-users. In this regard, Foucault's philosophy remains

incomplete, but this is not a problem for two reasons. As we saw in the previous chapter, an account of linguistic training can be formulated in terms of pattern-governed behavior. And this account can be provided as a supplement to Foucault's historical analyses. Moreover, as we will see, Foucault's philosophy has a diagnostic orientation, which culminates in his conception of critique. The practice of critique does not require an account of linguistic training, although, as I will show, it is precisely *savoir* as the socially coordinated background of dispositional understanding that critique, according to Foucault, needs to target. However, the account of *savoir* Foucault formulates in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* indicates, by the same token, what it is that individuals must learn in order to be able to participate in a discursive practice. *Savoir* provides Foucault's account of conceptual competence, which is based on rules that are implicit in discourse as a social practice.

2.2   Foucault's inferentialism

Foucault's topic in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* is not the formation of subjects as concept-users, but his account of the formation of concepts as an element of *savoir* indicates indirectly that linguistic training, as discussed by Sellars and Wittgenstein, is the right model for addressing the new philosophical problem, namely how individuals become concept-users. In a sense, the connection is plain to see: since concepts on Foucault's account are constituted by rules of *savoir*, individuals must become concept-users by learning these rules. As we saw in the previous chapter, the rules have to be learned as pattern-governed linguistic behavior that is produced by training.[30] Accordingly, it is not surprising that Foucault's account of the formation of concepts is both inferentialist and pragmatist. I will discuss Foucault's pragmatist turn in the next chapter, but let me first show how the practice-based approach to the formation of concepts in terms of rules for making statements is articulated in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*.

In 1973, when Foucault's focus is shifting to power as an element that intersects with discourse as a social practice, he notes explicitly that he adopted the practice-based approach to discourse from "the studies conducted by the Anglo-Americans."[31] In this context, the game metaphor serves Foucault to conceptualize discursive practices as a *strategic* element in relations of power. Instead of studying facts of discourse linguistically, which was the default approach of French structuralism, Foucault says that he is following the Anglo-Americans and approaching discourse as "strategic games."[32] However, it is in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, published in 1969, that "the English analysts" are featured as a recurring reference. In this discussion, Foucault's topic is not power, but the

distinctive object of study he has singled out for archaeology, namely *savoir*. Yet it is not explicit what Foucault's approach owes to "the English analysts," besides the general idea to study discourse "on the level of its existence" as a social practice.[33] Therefore, it is worth quoting at length how Foucault approaches the formation of concepts in this context. Not only will the passages support the continuity I suggested above between Foucault's account of *savoir* and linguistic training as the process of subject formation. What is more, the discussion of the formation of concepts in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* provides a concrete illustration of the throughgoing influence the pragmatist approach of "the English analysts" had on Foucault's conception of the archaeology of knowledge.

"Rather than wanting to locate the concepts in a virtual deductive edifice, one should describe the organization of the field of statements where they appear and circulate."[34] This statement at the outset of the discussion on the formation of concepts makes it concrete what it means, for Foucault, to study discourse, and the concepts involved, "on the level of its existence."[35] Instead of treating concepts as abstract entities that defy history, Foucault seeks to explain the formation and transformations of concepts in the history of thought by means of an analysis of discourse as a rule-governed practice. "Such an analysis therefore concerns, at a level that is in a sense *preconceptual*, the field where the concepts can coexist and the rules to which this field is subordinated."[36] Now, consider how clearly Foucault then presents the view that concepts are constituted by the rules that govern their use in discourse as the practice of making truth-claims:

> The preconceptual level that has been thus circumscribed refers neither to a horizon of ideality nor to an empirical genesis of abstractions. […] In fact, one poses the question at the level of discourse itself which no longer translates concepts from outside but is the site where the concepts emerge. One does not attribute that what is constant in the discourse to the ideal structures of the concept, but one describes the conceptual network starting from the internal regularities of the discourse. One does not subordinate the multiplicity of utterances to the coherence of concepts, and this to the silent repository of a meta-historical ideality. One establishes the inverse series: one locates the pure intentionality [*les visées pures*] of non-contradiction in the network in which conceptual compatibility and incompatibility intersect [*reseau enchvêtré de compatibilité et incompatibilité conceptuelles*]; and one relates this intersection [*enchevêtrement*] to rules that characterize a discursive practice. […] In the analysis that is proposed here, the rules of formation have their place not in the "mentality" or consciousness of individuals, but in

the discourse itself; they are consequently being imposed, according to a sort of uniform anonymity, to all the individuals who undertake to speak in this discursive field.[37]

Thus, the discursive practice itself is identified as the site of the formation of concepts. It is clear that, on Foucault's view, to become a concept-user is to acquire *savoir*, namely a set of rules whose mastery constitutes conceptual competence in the given discursive practice. The anonymity of these conceptual rules is twofold. The rules have no identifiable author nor are they expressed as statements of rules but implicitly enacted in a discursive practice. Therefore, as I showed in the previous chapter, these rules must be both acquired and enacted as pattern-governed behavior.

The rules of *savoir* constitute limits of intelligibility. It depends on these rules what kinds of statements can be intelligible truth-claims. Foucault sums up the inferentialist idea that meaning depends on rule-governed patterns of use, thus: "The patterns of use [*schemes d'utilisation*], the rules of use, the constellations in which the statements can play a role, their strategic potential, constitute a *field of stabilization* that enables, despite all the different utterances, the same statements to be repeated in their identity."[38] The identity in question pertains to the assertable content, namely to that which can be said to be true or false. Because conceptual content is an element of the assertable content, the field of stabilization has the same stabilizing effect with respect to both. Conversely, the patterns of use that stabilize the contents depend on the rules for the formation of concepts. But because these rules are implicit, they are, in fact, enacted as patterns of use. "The constancy of a statement, the maintenance of its identity through the singular events of utterances, its doublings across the identity of forms, all of this depends on the *field of utilization* in which it finds itself invested."[39] Following Arnold Davidson, one might summarize Foucault's view by saying that "the field of utilization of a statement constitutes its field of stabilization."[40]

The replacement of the Sovereign Subject by *savoir* opens a historical perspective to meaning and knowledge that is bound to remain closed so long as one maintains that the same conceptual resources are available to people always and everywhere independently of discourse as a social practice and specifically of the rules that constitute concepts in it. Davidson makes the point succinctly, thus: "Many analytic philosophers have recognized that a bad picture of concepts can have profoundly obfuscating consequences in the philosophy of mind and the philosophy of language. But many fewer have seen that a fixated picture of concepts, as free-standing, self-identifying entities, can have, and does have, deep consequences on how one writes the history of systems of thought. The idealization and de-contextualization of concepts strips the history of thought of its different

possibilities, draws one to a historiography of the everlasting, as if to write the history of thought is to write a history of the successive instantiations of the same, as though a clearly circumscribed number of thoughts, our thoughts now, must eternally recur."[41] Here Davidson has in mind theories that seek to define concepts detached from patterns of reasoning and, therefore, in abstraction from the history of discursive practices. However, I have shown that in this respect Foucault's archaeological approach to concepts, in fact, finds its strongest support and a formidable repository of additional resources from pragmatist-inferentialist strand within the tradition of analytic philosophy, broadly construed, which I have discussed with reference to the works of Wittgenstein, Sellars, and Brandom.

2.3   An external history of truth

The picture of thought that takes shape after the Sovereign Subject has been replaced with *savoir* is one of both dependence and freedom.

> In all historical periods, people's way of thinking, writing, judging, speaking (including the most everyday conversations and writings on the street) and even people's way of experiencing things, the reactions of their sensibility, all their conduct, is ordered by a theoretical structure, a system, that changes with the ages and societies—but that is present in all ages and in all societies…. One thinks inside an anonymous and constraining system of thought [*d'une pensée anonyme et contraignante*] of a historical period and of a language…. It is the ground on which our "free" thinking emerges and sparkles for a moment.[42]

Here the quotation marks are for those who insist that freedom means complete independence and the capacity for concept-use must be free in this sense. But I have already argued against that presumption in the previous chapter. Appreciating that "[k]nowledge [*connaissance*] liberated from the subject-object relationship is *savoir*,"[43] one might ask how the subject-object relationship itself is constituted in a discursive practice. Indeed, Foucault emphasizes that one needs "to think knowledge [*connaissance*] as a historical process before the topic of truth [*problématique de la verité*], and more fundamentally than in terms of the subject-object relationship." Thus, following Nietzsche's genealogical urge to "watch out for [events] where one least expects them and in what is taken to have no history at all," Foucault undertakes to study how the semantic access to truth, which philosophy of the subject takes for granted, is constituted historically in the field of social practices.[44] What in the philosophy of the subject is taken as a pregiven semantic relation between the subject and

objects needs to be accounted for. This is the task behind the project Foucault first calls "the history of truth," but which, as we will see, would be more accurately described as "history of the emergence of truth games."[45]

The question of truth, as Foucault understands it, becomes topical when one views *savoir* and its transformations in a historical perspective: "The subject of knowledge itself has a history, the relation of the subject with the object, or, more clearly, truth itself has a history."[46] Foucault's phrasing here might be rather confusing, but, as I will show, for him the question of truth concerns indeed the *constitution* of "the relation of the subject with the object," not the *justification* of truth-claims. History of truth, then, seeks to identify changing conditions of intelligibility in the history of thought and to account for them by studying relations between discursive practices and other social practices. In 1968, Foucault sketches out this practice-based approach, underscoring that he seeks to "make appear the polymorphous network of correlations" between different kinds of social practice, including discursive practices:[47] "Discourse would thus appear in a describable relation with a set of other practices. Instead of being a matter of an economic, social, or political history that envelops a history of thought (that would be its expression and double), instead of being a matter of a history of ideas that would be referred (either by a play of signs and expressions, or by causal relations) to external conditions, it would be a question of a history of discursive practices in the specific relations that link them to the other practices."[48]

Foucault notes explicitly that by approaching the question of truth within this framework of social practices, he adopts a perspective that is *external* with respect to the justification of truth-claims in the discursive practices he studies.

> The hypothesis I would like to propose is that there are two histories of truth. The first type is an internal history of truth, the history of truth that rectifies itself on the basis of its own principles of regulation. That is the history of truth as it happens in the history of sciences or as it is written with that starting point. On the other hand, it seems to me that there are in society, or at least in our societies, several other places where truth is formed, or a certain number of rules of a game are defined – rules of a game that give birth to certain forms of subjectivity, certain fields of objects, certain types of knowledge [*savoir*] –, and as a result one can do, with this starting point, an external history of truth from the outside.[49]

In other words, the approach is external because it is *critical* in the Kantian sense of an inquiry into the constitution of intelligibility as a preconditions of

knowledge. That is why Foucault can provide an alternative description of the same project as "critical history of thought," as follows.[50]

> In sum, critical history of thought is neither a history of the acquisition nor a history of the occultations of truth. It is a history of the emergence of truth games, that is, a history of "truth-telling" [*véridictions*] understood as the forms according to which discourses that can be said to be true or false are connected with a field of things: what were the conditions of this emergence, the price that was somehow paid for it, its effects on the reality and the way in which, relating a certain type of object to certain modalities of the subject, it constituted for a given time, area, and individuals, the *historical a priori* of a possible experience.[51]

In both passages, Foucault unequivocally contrasts the approach of his project with an epistemological perspective that focuses on justification. But the difference between that epistemological perspective and Foucault's alternative approach reflects a division between two different topics that do not exclude but complement one another.

This clarity of perspective is required for not to misunderstand Foucault's non-standard and readily misleading uses of "truth" [*vérité*]. In 1976, in the context of further elaborating the project of an external history of truth, Foucault explains that he wants "to understand by truth a set of regulated procedures for the production, law, distribution, circulation, and functioning of statements," which means that "truth is connected in a circular fashion to systems of power that produce and support it, and to effects of power it induces and that transmit it."[52] This suggests that Foucault uses "truth" to designate simply a discursive practice in which the question of the true and the false can be raised and adjudicated. The interpretation is confirmed by the following passage from 1981: "The reality of the world is not its own truth. Or in any case, let's say that the reality of a true thing is never the reason why the truth of this thing is said in a discourse of truth. When I talk about this epistemic wonderment that consists of asking, 'why is there, in addition to reality, truth,' *I don't mean truth understood as the truth of a proposition*, but as a certain game of the true and the false, a game of making truth claims that comes to be added to the reality and transforms it."[53] In other words, Foucault means by "truth" a discursive practice that functions as a truth game, and the external history of truth is precisely the history of the emergence of truth games.

When Foucault then, within this historical outlook, characterizes truth as a division [*partage*], this is yet another way to describe the changing limits of intelligibility.[54] The division operates by constituting the limits of intelligibility that function as a historical a priori for the experience in a

given historical and geographical context. In *The Order of Things*, Foucault characterizes the historical a priori as that which, "in a given period, carves out in experience a field of possible knowledge, defines the mode of being of the objects that appear in it, endows everyday perception with theoretical powers, and defines the conditions under which a discourse that is recognized as being true can be held about things."[55] Again, it bears emphasizing that Foucault, who bypasses questions of justification, by no means suggests that the essential role of a historical a priori would somehow threaten the possibility of knowledge. On the contrary, it is what enables knowledge, not in general, but about a specific field of objects in a particular context. Nevertheless, the given configuration of *savoir*, by the same token, rules out alternative conceptual possibilities. Therefore, from the external perspective of Foucault's history of truth, the operation of *savoir* as a historical a priori can be seen as an enabling constraint. "To be sure, if one situates oneself at the level of a proposition that is internal to a discourse, the division between the true and the false is neither arbitrary, modifiable, institutional, nor violent. But if one situates oneself on a different scale, if one poses the question to know what has been, what continues to be, through our discourse, this will to truth that has run through so many centuries of our history, or what is, in the very general form, the type of division that rules our will to know, then it is perhaps something like a system of exclusion (a historical, modifiable, institutionally constraining system) one sees to take shape."[56]

2.4   Archaeology and genealogy of *savoir*

Within Foucault's overarching project of the history of truth, in the specific sense I have just explained, there are two lines of inquiry, which are customarily called *the archaeology of knowledge* and *genealogy of power*, respectively. Yet this description of the division risks misleadingly suggesting that the object of study for Foucault's genealogy of power is completely distinct from *savoir*, which is the object of the archaeology of knowledge. Therefore, it is important to underscore that *savoir* is an object in common between the two lines of analysis, namely archaeology and genealogy. They focus, respectively, on two complementary tasks of disclosing different configurations of *savoir* and accounting for their historical transformations. The archaeology of knowledge [*savoir*] unearths its discontinuous *forms* that succeed one another in the history of thought, whereas the genealogical axis studies their *formation* by analyzing the field of social practices in terms of relations of power.[57]

Thus, power becomes a central topic in Foucault's history of truth because the project undertakes to explain, in addition to simply identifying, transformations in the rules of *savoir* that constitute limits of intelligibility.

This means that the intelligibility of truth-claims is constitutively dependent on something that cannot be assessed in terms of truth and falsity. Something other than truth-claims is needed to explain why delinquency and sexual perversion, for instance, were constituted as new fields of inquiry in the 19th century. Foucault uses the expression "the will to know" to underscore the fundamental role of action and interests in this regard. "It all happens as though […] the will to know had its own history, *which is not that of constraining truths*: history of the fields of objects to know, history of the functions and positions of the knowing subject, history of the material, technical, instrumental investments of knowledge [*connaissance*]."[58] Foucault elaborates this line of analysis into the analytic of power, but already designates the approach as "genealogical" in the inaugural lecture at the Collège de France, in 1970: "The genealogical part of the analysis addresses instead the series of the effective formation of discourse: it tries to grasp it in its power of affirmation, and by this I do not mean a power that would oppose that of denying, but the power to constitute fields of objects about which one can affirm or deny propositions that are true or false."[59] However, once Foucault's usage of "truth" has been properly detached from the perspective of justification, his emphatic claim that truth games are based on relations of power is likely to not live up to its controversial reputation.[60] The claim is simply that the possibility of inquiry into some specific field of objects is not inherent in subjectivity, but it depends on the given configuration of *savoir*, which receives its shape as an element in a broader constellation of social practices that is organized by multifarious aims and interests that can be analyzed in terms of tactics and strategies. For instance, as Foucault explains in *Discipline and Punish*, in 1975, "it is not that the activity of the subject of knowledge produced knowledge, which is either useful or indisposed for power, but power-knowledge, the processes and struggles that permeate and constitute it, determines the forms and the possible fields of knowledge [*connaissance*]."[61]

Although Foucault presents the dependence of *savoir* on other social practices as a consequence of Nietzsche's radical insight that truth is based on something other than truth, in fact, this point is also known in a more sober formulation as Wittgenstein's anti-foundationalist conclusion that it is "our acting that lies at the bottom of the language-game."[62] For Foucault, Nietzsche's insight in this respect is that our semantic access to questions of truth and falsity does not rest on an epistemically unassailable foundation. The question of the true and the false is intelligible to us, not because there is a privileged set of truth-claims we cannot but know, but because of non-epistemic motives that give rise to "a will to know."[63] According to Foucault, Nietzsche revealed that our semantic access to truth is based on something that is altogether different in kind from truth-claims. However, as Foucault emphasizes, this basis of inquiry

does not imply that inquiry cannot discover truths. "Truth *survives*, being preceded by the not-true, preceded rather by something about which one can neither say that it is true nor that it is false, since it is antecedent to truth's own division. Truth emerges out of what is foreign to the division of the true."[64]

Even this brief overview of *savoir* as the basis of meaning and knowledge that is historical because it is located in discourse as a social practice suffices to show that one is hard-pressed to find any distinctively problematic ideas in Foucault's remarks on truth, knowledge, and power. In Chapter 4, I will further explain how the archaeology of knowledge and the analytic of power diagnose *savoir* in two distinct but complementary ways. But now, with this background, let me turn to assess the influential line of criticism that the subject has an untenable, even contradictory, status in Foucault's philosophy.

2.5   The charge of lost autonomy

Perhaps most famously, Jürgen Habermas claims that "[f]rom [Foucault's] perspective, socialized individuals can only be perceived as exemplars, as standardized products of some discourse formation – as individual copies that are mechanically punched out."[65] The implied charge is that because subjects are formed in relations of power, as Foucault maintains, they cannot be autonomous. This criticism seems to assume that the capacity for autonomy as rational self-determination requires metaphysical autonomy and cannot be a result of heteronomous training. It is an odd assumption because training would be superfluous if the trainee already had the capacity for autonomy. Moreover, if this is Habermas's criticism, then it does not only apply to Foucault, but to any account of conceptual competence as being socially acquired through linguistic training. Nevertheless, in the reception of Foucault's philosophy, this point has been persistently identified as a crucial problem. Richard Bernstein repeats it, in the context of a generally more sympathetic discussion, thus: "But Foucault not only fails to explicate *this* sense of agency, his genealogical analyses seem effectively to undermine any talk of agency which is not a precipitate of power/knowledge regimes."[66] Again, the assumption is that Foucault is not entitled to attribute the capacity for autonomy to subjects, if he maintains that subjects are formed in relations of power – or, at least, that he should, but fails, to explicate how the acquired capacity for autonomy is compatible with its acquisition through relations of power. Most thoroughly, Béatrice Han develops this point into a systematic and potentially devastating criticism of Foucault's philosophy. Han argues that the capacity for autonomy, whose exercise in practices of the self is the main topic in Foucault's ethics, is incompatible with the conception of the

subject in his archaeological and, especially, genealogical analyses: "The Foucauldian analysis of subjectivity […] appears to oscillate in a contradictory manner, between a definition of subjectivity as 'self-creation', on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the need, in order to understand the games of truth through which recognition itself operates, to go back to the practices of power of which subjects are not masters and are usually not even aware."[67]

In response, some of Foucault's defenders and followers, most notably Judith Butler, have insisted that this line of criticism is based on a naïve and untenable conception of autonomy, precisely the kind of sovereignty of the subject Foucault repudiates. Whereas Han and others are worried that Foucault's thought leaves no conceptual room for autonomy, Butler insists that we ought to jettison the notion of autonomy instead. Becoming a subject, Butler maintains, always involves subordination to relations of power: "within subjection the price of existence is subordination."[68] From the thought that there is "a primary subordination or, indeed, a primary violence" in the process through which individuals become subjects in the first place, Butler concludes that also the apparently autonomous actions of a subject are, in fact, determined by this subordination. Thus, Butler's view is the mirror image of the charge that Foucault's conception of the subject undermines the notion of autonomy. It indeed does, according to Butler, but this claim makes it hard to find conceptual room in her account for understanding why subjects are nonetheless tactically invested in the relations of power that shape their social existence. If any constellation of relations of power involves "a primary subordination or, indeed, a primary violence" with respect to the subject, as Butler argues, then why bother pursuing the ends one endorses and resisting those that only others seek to impose on one's action?

The challenge, then, is to avoid the excess of repudiating the notion of autonomy altogether, as Butler does with her view of subjection as subordination, without harking back to the conception of autonomy as a metaphysically self-standing capacity that seems to implicitly motivate Han, Habermas, and others in their criticisms of Foucault. In other words, how to rethink autonomy after repudiating the metaphysics of autonomy as a self-standing capacity of rational beings? In response, Amy Allen convincingly argues that "Butler fails to distinguish adequately between dependence and subordination."[69] On pain of assuming that our ability to use concepts is independent of language acquisition through training in social practices, one must admit that, as subjects, we are ontologically dependent on essentially social practices whose normative structure is independent of our endorsement. Endorsing or rejecting a norm is something one is able to do only as a result of linguistic training. That is why training must proceed, as we have seen, by other means than a shared conceptually articulated

understanding between the trainers and the trainees. For the same reason, however, it is a mistake to characterize this relationship between trainers and trainees as "subordination" in any normatively loaded sense, as Butler clearly does, instead of acknowledging it simply as a relation of constitutive dependence. Again, I concur with Allen, who argues against Butler that "what is required is a distinction between subordination as a normatively problematic relationship and dependency as a normatively neutral one, albeit a relationship that is fraught with danger insofar as it renders us vulnerable to subordination."[70]

The argument I presented in the previous chapter helps us see why Allen is right in insisting on the importance of this distinction. The upshot was that the capacity for autonomy cannot be metaphysically self-standing because it requires a background of dispositional understanding, which is produced and socially coordinated through linguistic training. In the absence of an alternative, it is not apt to characterize that relation of dependence as morally or politically problematic as such by characterizing it as subordination. Once we accept that every concept-user is constitutively dependent in this way, it makes little sense to argue that this requirement as such constitutes a problem. The fact that both Han and Habermas, on the one hand, and Butler, on the other, nevertheless describe that relation of dependence as subordination reveals a failure to fully appreciate the lack of a plausible alternative. I do not mean to suggest that Foucault adequately explains how the capacity for self-determination emerges from linguistic training. As I have already said, it seems clear that Foucault never even tries to formulate such an explanation. Instead, the point is that this influential line of criticism is predicated on a view of the capacity for autonomy that must be rejected as incoherent. To present an alternative account of the capacity for self-determination, however, we need to look beyond Foucault's work and resort to conceptual resources he never utilized but that are available to one who seeks to elaborate his view.

Although we have already seen in the previous chapter how concept-users can attain semantic self-consciousness and thereby extend autonomy over the concepts they use, let us briefly revisit the topic now from the perspective of the charge that Foucault is not entitled to attribute autonomy, in any sense, to subjects because he maintains that individuals are formed into subjects through relations of power. Recall that Foucault never provides an account of the acquisition of conceptual competence through linguistic training, but in this regard, his view of *savoir* can be supplemented with the account of pattern-governed behavior Sellars formulates. And despite Foucault fails to provide a philosophically adequate account of how "the subject is being formed starting from a number of processes that are not of the order of subjectivity," he is right to identify *savoir* as the socially coordinated background of implicit norms that enables understanding and

thus subjectivity, in the first place.[71] The realization that conceptual competence must be acquired and exercised against a background of dispositional understanding may seem to reinforce the charge that subjects must be determined in their use of concepts. But there is something peculiarly implausible about this idea. In a sense, we are forced to use the concepts we have, which are not originally of our own making, but why should that mean that it is impossible, in principle, for us to assess and revise them?

Conceptual competence is fundamentally dispositional, but this does not mean that we exercise the capacity randomly. As far as concept-use goes, what one is doing is essentially an activity that is informed by an understanding of norms. And what one is doing, including what one is doing with words, can become an object of discourse and reflection. Brandom sums up this point, as follows: "As concept users, we are beings who can make explicit how things are and what we are doing – even if always only in relief against a background of implicit circumstances, conditions, skills, and practices. Among the things on which we can bring our explicating capacities to bear are those very concept-using capacities that make it possible to make anything at all explicit."[72] There is nothing mysterious about the emergence of the capacity for semantic self-consciousness. It is simply an application of the capacity for linguistic representation to the activity of using that capacity. As concept-users, we can talk and think about how others use language, and we can do the same with respect to our own talk and thought.

In closing, it is helpful to cast the charge of lost autonomy against the background of Miranda Fricker's diagnosis of what she calls "the *rational* postmodern malaise."[73] Fricker argues convincingly that the signature postmodernist thesis that there is no distinction between reason and power is best seen as the wrong conclusion drawn by philosophers holding onto an unreasonably demanding standard for rationality, namely reason's presumed capacity for complete self-vindication. Upon recognizing that reason cannot completely vindicate itself, they concluded that nothing is rational, after all, instead of rejecting complete self-vindication as an unrealistic criterion. My defense of Foucault's claim that subjects are both essentially dependent on *savoir* and capable of autonomy has proceeded analogously, namely by pointing out that the alternative is to maintain, highly implausibly, that a concept-user must be metaphysically self-standing.

Notes

1 Michel Foucault, "The Subject and Power," in *Essential Works of Foucault 1954–1988, Volume 3: Power*, ed. James D. Faubion (New York: The New Press, 2000), 331. Foucault wrote in English the first half of this essay "Why Study Power: The Question of the Subject," while the second half "How

is Power Exercised?" he wrote in French. Therefore, I will be referring to the English and French versions of the essay, depending on which part I cite. See Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982), 208.

2 Michel Foucault, *Les mots et les choses: Une archéologie des sciences humaines* (Paris: Gallimard, 1966); Michel Foucault, *L'archéologie du savoir* (Paris: Gallimard, 1969).

3 Michel Foucault, "L'homme, est-il mort?," in *Dits et écrits I, 1954–1975*, eds. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 2001).

4 Michel Foucault, "La naissance d'un monde," in *Dits et écrits I, 1954–1975*, eds. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 816–817.

5 Ibid.

6 Michel Foucault, "La vérité et les formes juridiques," in *Dits et écrits I, 1954–1975*, eds. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 1408.

7 Ibid.

8 Michel Foucault, "La scène de la philosophie," in *Dits et ecrits II, 1976–1988*, eds. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 590.

9 It is a question for another study why Foucault's narrative fails to acknowledge this, in particular, why he singles out Nietzsche's rejection of the subject's metaphysical autonomy as the exception, but overlooks the same move in Hegel, Marx, and Heidegger. Despite the common rejection of the subject as a self-standing site of semantic and epistemic access, there are crucial differences between these philosophers, some of which can be mapped, schematically, thus: Hegel, unlike Foucault, rejects the ideal of autonomy, and for Heidegger authenticity is not an ethical ideal but an ontological requirement, whereas Nietzsche is closest to Foucault, but primarily focuses on values, not on understanding and subjectivity in general.

10 Michel Foucault, "Introduction par Michel Foucault," in *Dits et écrits II, 1976–1988*, eds. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 430.

11 For a discussion of Foucault's relationship to this tradition, see Gary Gutting, *Michel Foucault's Archaeology of Scientific Reason* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989). For a comparison of French epistemology and Thomas Kuhn's work that introduced the notion of discontinuity into the mainstream of Anglophone philosophy of science, see Gary Gutting, "Thomas Kuhn and French Philosophy of Science," in *Thomas Kuhn*, ed. Thomas Nickles (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

12 Michel Foucault, "Entretien avec Madeleine Chapsal," in *Dits et écrits I, 1954–1975*, eds. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 542. Cf. Michel Foucault, "Qu'est-ce que la critique?," in *Qu'est-ce que la critique? Suivi de la Culture de soi*, eds. Henri-Paul Fruchaud and Daniele Lorenzini (Paris: Vrin, 2015), 46.

13 Again, Foucault completely overlooks the centrality of this idea in 19th-century German philosophy, downstream from Johann Gottfried von Herder. See Michael Forster, *After Herder: Philosophy of Language in the German Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Michael Forster, *German Philosophy of Language: From Schlegel to Hegel and Beyond* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

14 Foucault, "Entretien avec Madeleine Chapsal," 542.

15 Foucault, "La scène de la philosophie," 590.

16 Ibid.

17 In the history of analytic philosophy, Michael Dummett has influentially attributed the linguistic turn to Frege. See Michael Dummett, *Origins of Analytical Philosophy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993). For a collection of papers that exemplify the methodological significance of the linguistic turn in the development of analytic philosophy, see Richard Rorty, ed., *Linguistic Turn: Essays in Philosophical Method* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967). However, Frege's relative importance in this respect should be considered in the broader context of 19th-century German philosophy of language. See Forster, *After Herder*; Forster, *German Philosophy of Language*; J. Alberto Coffa, *The Semantic Tradition from Kant to Carnap: To the Vienna Station* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

18 Michel Foucault, *Le discours philosophique* (Paris: EHESS/Gallimard/Seuil, 2023), 205.

19 Foucault, "L'homme, est-il mort?," 569–570.

20 Michel Foucault, "Sur les façons d'écrire l'histoire," in *Dits et écrits I, 1954–1975*, eds. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 623.

21 Daniel Defert, "Chronologie," in *Dits et écrits I, 1954–1975*, eds. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 40.

22 Foucault, "La vérité et les formes juridiques," 1499. Cf. Arnold I. Davidson, "Structures and Strategies of Discourse: Remarks Towards a History of Foucault's Philosophy of Language," in *Foucault and His Interlouctors*, ed. Arnold I. Davidson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997).

23 Michel Foucault, "Foucault," in *Dits et écrits II, 1976–1988*, eds. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 2001). For a helpful discussion of the relationship between truth games and regimes of truth, see Daniele Lorenzini, *The Force of Truth: Critique, Genealogy, and Truth-Telling in Michel Foucault* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2023).

24 Michel Foucault, "Réponse à une question," in *Dits et écrits I, 1954–1975*, eds. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 708. Cf. Michel Foucault, "Les problèmes de la culture. Un débat Foucault-Preti," in *Dits et écrits I, 1954–1975*, eds. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 1241.

25 Foucault, *L'archéologie du savoir*, 68–74.

26 Michel Foucault, "Entretien avec Michel Foucault," in *Dits et écrits I, 1954–1975*, eds. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 1033.

27 Foucault, *Les mots et les choses*, 333–339.

28 Foucault, "La vérité et les formes juridiques," 1408.

29 Michel Foucault, *Surveiller et punir: Naissance de la prison* (Paris: Gallimard, 1975).

30 Wilfrid Sellars, "Some Reflections on Language Games," in *In the Space of Reasons: Selected Essays of Wilfrid Sellars*, eds. Kevin Scharp and Robert B. Brandom (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 27–35.

31 Foucault, "La vérité et les formes juridiques," 1407.

32 Ibid.

33 Michel Foucault, "Foucault explique son dernier livre," in *Dits et écrits I, 1954–1975*, eds. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 806.

34 Foucault, *L'archéologie du savoir*, 75.

35 Foucault, "Foucault explique son dernier livre," 806.
36 Foucault, *L'archéologie du savoir*, 81. Original emphasis.
37 Foucault, *L'archéologie du savoir*, 82–84.
38 Foucault, *L'archéologie du savoir*, 136.
39 Foucault, *L'archéologie du savoir*, 137.
40 Arnold I. Davidson, *The Emergence of Sexuality: Historical Epistemology and the Formation of Concepts* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 185.
41 Davidson, *The Emergence of Sexuality*, 187–188.
42 Foucault, "Entretien avec Madeleine Chapsal," 543.
43 Ibid.
44 Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, la généalogie, l'histoire," in *Dits et écrits I, 1954–1975*, eds. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 1004.
45 Foucault, "Foucault," 1451.
46 Foucault, "La vérité et les formes juridiques," 1407.
47 Foucault, "Réponse à une question," 708.
48 Foucault, "Réponse à une question," 714–715. Cf. Foucault, "Foucault," 1453–1454.
49 Foucault, "La vérité et les formes juridiques," 1408–1409.
50 Foucault, "Foucault," 1450.
51 Foucault, "Foucault," 1451.
52 Michel Foucault, "Entretien avec Michel Foucault," in *Dits et écrits II, 1976–1988*, eds. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 160.
53 Michel Foucault, *Subjectivité et vérité: Cours au Collège de France 1980–1981* (Paris: EHESS/Gallimard/Seuil, 2014), 240. Added emphasis.
54 Michel Foucault, *L'ordre du discours: Leçon inaugurale au Collège de France prononcée 2 décembre 1970* (Paris: Gallimard, 1971), 16.
55 Foucault, *Les mots et les choses*, 171.
56 Foucault, *L'ordre du discours*, 16.
57 Michel Foucault, *Histoire de la sexualité 2*: *L'usage des plaisirs* (Paris: Gallimard, 1984), 17–18.
58 Foucault, *L'ordre du discours*, 19. Added emphasis.
59 Foucault, *L'ordre du discours*, 71–72.
60 For a further discussion of this point, see Lorenzini, *The Force of Truth*.
61 Foucault, *Surveiller et punir*, 32. Cf. Foucault, *L'ordre du discours*, 71–72.
62 Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Über Gewissheit / On Certainty*, trans. Denis Paul and G. E. M. Anscombe (Oxford: Blackwell, 1969), §204.
63 Foucault, *L'ordre du discours*, 19. Cf. Michel Foucault, *Leçons sur la volonté de savoir: Cours au Collège de France 1970–1971* (Paris: Gallimard/Seuil, 2011); Michel Foucault, *Histoire de la sexualité 1: La volonté de savoir* (Paris: Gallimard, 1976).
64 Michel Foucault, "Leçon sur Nietzsche," in *Leçons sur la volonté de savoir: Cours au Collège de France 1970–1971* (Paris: Gallimard/Seuil, 2011), 200. Added emphasis.
65 Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures*, trans. Frederick G. Lawrence (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1987), 293.
66 Richard Bernstein, *The New Constellation: The Ethical-Political Horizons of Modernity/Postmodernity* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992), 164.
67 Béatrice Han, *Foucault's Critical Project: Between the Transcendental and the Historical*, trans. Edward Pile (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002), 172.

68 Judith Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997), 20.
69 Amy Allen, *Politics of Ourselves: Power, Autonomy, and Gender in Contemporary Critical Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 74.
70 Allen, *Politics of Ourselves*, 84.
71 Foucault, "La scène de la philosophie," 590.
72 Robert B. Brandom, *Reason in Philosophy: Animating Ideas* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009), 127.
73 Miranda Fricker, "Feminism in Epistemology: Pluralism without Postmodernism," in *The Cambridge Companion to Feminism in Philosophy*, eds. Miranda Fricker and Jennifer Hornsby (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 152–159. Added emphasis.

3 Keeping it implicit

A defense of the archaeology of knowledge

A major challenge to my interpretation of Foucault's archaeology of knowledge is constituted by the influential and putatively devastating line of criticism by Dreyfus and Rabinow, who argue that Foucault's archaeological project is based on an incoherent conception of the rules of the discursive practices it purports to study.[1] Therefore, before further elaborating my interpretation of Foucault's philosophy as a response to the problem of structural heteronomy, my goal in this chapter is to vindicate the very idea of an archaeology of knowledge. Still today, over four decades after Dreyfus and Rabinow published their book, its argument against archaeology continues to play a pivotal role in the interpretation of Foucault's philosophical work. On the one hand, the argument has convinced many that Foucault's archaeology of knowledge was an ill-conceived project, whose distinctive goal and method were supplanted by his later analyses of power and ethics. Symptomatically, one finds no extensive discussion of archaeology in the recent surge of philosophical scholarship on Foucault's work.[2] On the other hand, none of the sympathetic interpreters of Foucault's archaeology have adequately explained how it could avoid the charge of incoherence Dreyfus and Rabinow level against it.[3] This situation is particularly problematic for two reasons. Firstly, Foucault's widely discussed ideas regarding relations of power and practices of the self can be fully understood only against the background of the distinctive view of *savoir* that informs archaeology. Secondly, Foucault's archaeological project remains an unexplored repository of insight for debates in philosophy today concerning the relationship between practice and reflection in the structure of thought.[4] However, neither of these claims is viable, unless one can vindicate archaeology of knowledge from the charge of incoherence. That is why the argument by Dreyfus and Rabinow merits particular attention.

The central idea motivating Foucault's notion of an archaeology of knowledge is that our discursive possibilities – what kinds of thought one can intelligibly entertain as being true or false – are partially shaped

behind our backs, as it were, by a system of normative determinations we fail to recognize as such. As we have seen already, Foucault maintains that this unconscious yet constitutive element of thought is not a psychological feature of a thinking subject, but a structural component of discourse as a social practice. As such, "the positive unconscious of knowledge" is susceptible to historical transformations.[5] Specifically, Foucault conceptualizes this historically dynamic unconscious dimension of thought in terms of rules of discursive practices that are unknown to the subjects whose discursive possibilities they shape. Archaeology aims to uncover historically specific systems of such unconscious rules and thus to identify changing systems of thought, each with a distinctive set of discursive possibilities. Therefore, the very idea of an archaeology of knowledge stands or falls with the specific conception of the rules it purports to study.

In Chapter 1, I already introduced the notion of rules that are implicit yet efficacious in a discursive practice and defended it as an outcome of the pragmatist solution to the regress of rules. Let us call it *the pragmatist conception of rules*. Despite it may seem that Dreyfus and Rabinow attack archaeology's commitment to the pragmatist conception of rules as such, I will show that, in fact, their argument only calls into question Foucault's entitlement to it. In particular, Dreyfus and Rabinow claim that Foucault's entitlement is canceled by "the structuralist move," which they attribute to his archaeological project.[6] My strategy to defend archaeology against this line of criticism consists of three main steps. First, I will explain Foucault's motivation for holding that the rules of discursive practices archaeology studies are both implicit and efficacious. In the second place, I will briefly revisit the regress of rules argument to provide an independent justification for this pragmatist conception of rules. Finally, I will vindicate Foucault's entitlement to the pragmatist conception of rules by explaining how the charge of its incompatibility with a structuralist move is based on a throughgoing misunderstanding about the nature and aspiration of the archaeology of knowledge. Specifically, I will argue that the misinterpretation arises from Dreyfus's own decidedly different philosophical concerns that focus on the constitution of intentionality. In contrast, I will show that Foucault's archaeology of knowledge is a diagnostic project with an expressive goal, which makes it suitable for the task of critique to expand the scope of autonomy in the domain of understanding.

3.1 The charge of "regularities which regulate themselves"

To make intelligible the specific type of rules that archaeology of knowledge studies, Dreyfus and Rabinow consider and reject several alternatives. Since the rules are historically changing, Dreyfus and Rabinow reject a view of them as social laws based on physical laws that operate in the

brain.[7] They reject the model of rule-following, in turn, because the rules must be unrecognized as such by the subjects whose thoughts they shape. It seems more promising, at first, to understand the rules as descriptive regularities of a discursive practice because one could thus meet the requirement that the rules be unconscious. However, the conception of the rules as descriptive regularities cannot be reconciled with Foucault's other central commitment, namely that the rules archaeology studies were, in fact, operative with specific effects in particular historical circumstances. As Dreyfus and Rabinow see it, Foucault must choose between attributing historical efficacy to the rules, on the one hand, and holding that the rules are not recognized as such by the thinking subjects, on the other. Since Foucault rejects neither of these two commitments, Dreyfus and Rabinow conclude that he commits himself to an incoherent view that conflates the descriptive and normative registers by attributing causal efficacy to the very descriptions of regularities archaeology arrives at through a retrospective analysis of discursive practices.

> Foucault cannot look for the regulative power which seems to govern the discursive practices outside of these practices themselves. Thus, although nondiscursive influences in the form of social and institutional practices, skills, pedagogical practices, and concrete models constantly intrude into Foucault's analysis […] he must locate the productive power revealed by discursive practices in the regularity of these same practices. The result is the strange notion of regularities which regulate themselves. Since the regularity of discursive practices seems to be the result of their being governed, determined, and controlled, while they are assumed to be autonomous, the archaeologist must attribute causal efficiency to the very rules which describe these practices' systematicity.[8]

Dreyfus and Rabinow draw this conclusion at the end of a discussion of the explanatory power of Foucault's archaeological analyses. As they correctly emphasize, archaeology of knowledge is not merely a descriptive enterprise in the history of thought. Foucault's distinctive idea, which is expressed by his use of the notion of a historical a priori, is to identify historically specific systems of thought, "discursive formations," on the basis of different sets of rules archaeology uncovers by analyzing discursive practices.[9] By thus circumscribing different systems of thought, each governed by a distinct set of rules that were unknown to the thinking subjects, Foucault seeks to account for systematic patterns in the history of thought without reliance on individual psychology or some metahistorical notion of rationality.[10] Obviously, this explanatory connection requires that the rules of discursive practices archaeology studies were in fact historically efficacious.

By insisting that Foucault must choose between the requirements of implicitness and efficaciousness, Dreyfus and Rabinow suggest that archaeology's explanatory ambitions rest on an incoherent conception of the rules of discursive practices it purports to study. Their diagnosis is that "in his account of the causal power of discursive formations, Foucault illegitimately hypothesized the observed formal regularities which describe discursive formations into conditions of these formations' existence."[11] In order to save archaeology, Dreyfus and Rabinow recommend that Foucault relinquish the idea that his archaeological analyses possess any explanatory power. In their view, Foucault's "unclearness concerning the question of causal efficacy surely shows that the archaeologist should never have raised this problem in the first place."[12] In fact, however, a choice between implicitness and efficaciousness is mandatory only if the alternative that combines them has been excluded. And that independent alternative is provided, as I will show next, by the pragmatist conception of rules.

3.2   Foucault's pragmatist turn

For Foucault, the task of finding a conception of rules that can combine the requirements of implicitness and efficaciousness is motivated by the notion of *savoir* as an unconscious system that, as I explained in the previous chapter, enables semantic access to truth. The implicit rules constitute and constrain a set of discursive possibilities that are actualized as truth claims in specific fields of empirical knowledge, *connaissances*. For instance, Foucault explains, in *History of Madness* "it was this knowledge [*savoir*] that I wanted to examine, as condition of possibility of knowledge [*connaissances*], institutions, and practices" that identify mental illness as an object of theoretical investigation and practical intervention.[13] As we already have seen, Foucault contrasts this view with the philosophical tradition that treats the subject as a self-standing source of meaning and knowledge. Instead, Foucault maintains, discursive possibilities depend on language as a system of meaning, whose historical formations and transformations he undertakes to analyze in terms of discourse as a social practice. Again, as we have already seen, Foucault explicitly distinguishes this pragmatist orientation from structuralism: "Unlike those who are called structuralists, I am not that much interested in the formal possibilities offered by a system like language [*la langue*]. Personally, I am rather obsessed by the existence of discourses, by the fact that utterances have been made [*que des paroles ont eu lieu*]: these events have functioned in relation to their original situation, they have left traces behind, they remain [*subsistent*] and exert, due to this very existence [*subsistence*] in history, a certain number of manifest or secret functions."[14]

Archaeology of knowledge studies the "secret function" of statements [*énoncé*] to constitute a system of *savoir* that, unbeknownst to the speaking subjects, defines a particular set of discursive possibilities for their thought and action while, by the same token, excludes others. Foucault's decidedly pragmatist key idea is that the rules of *savoir* are created, sustained, and sometimes transformed through the very activity of making statement without representing the rules as such.[15] In short, the rules are simultaneously both implicit and efficacious. Focusing on the history of the human sciences, Foucault illustrates this requirement by saying that the rules function as "a *positive unconscious* of knowledge [at] a level that escapes the scientist's consciousness and nevertheless partakes of the scientific discourse instead of contesting its validity and seeking to decrease its scientific nature."[16] On Foucault's view, these systems of constitutive rules are not merely theoretical constructions, but it is crucial for his archaeological project that "the development of this knowledge [*savoir*] and its transformations […] put in play complex relations of causality" in the history of thought.[17] In other words, it is crucial that a system of *savoir* functions as a historical a priori. "It is this a priori," Foucault explains in *The Order of Things*, "that, in a given historical period, carves out in experience a field of possible knowledge, defines the mode of being of the objects that appear in it, endows everyday perception with theoretical powers, and defines the conditions under which a discourse that is recognized as true can be held about things."[18] In *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, then, Foucault notes explicitly that his use of the notion of a historical a priori serves to mark an explanatory connection between the rules of a discursive practice and a particular system of thought: "The reason for using this a little barbarous term [historical a priori] is that this *a priori* must *account for* statements in their dispersion."[19] The explanatory connection is underwritten by the constitutive dependence between a particular set of discursive possibilities and the rules of a given discursive practice. For Foucault, a historical a priori "is defined as the groups of rules that characterize a discursive practice," and he indicates that constitutive dependence by underscoring that "these rules are not imposed from outside onto the elements they connect [*mettent en relation*]," but the rules "partake in the very thing they connect [*sont engages dans cela même qu'elles relient*]."[20] As we will see, grasping how Foucault combines this Kantian view of objects of knowledge as conceptually constituted with a decidedly pragmatist conception of the constitutive rules that function as a system of *savoir* will be the key to a proper understanding of his archaeological project.

To fully appreciate the importance of the pragmatism approach, it is instructive to consider how Foucault's understanding of the rules of *savoir* change in the course of writing *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, his systematic presentation of archaeology. In the book, published in 1969,

Foucault presents his considered view that the rules are not articulated as statements of rules but instead enacted implicitly in a discursive practice.[21] However, in the unpublished manuscript of *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault instead defines *savoir* as a historically changing group of statements that play a constitutive function in a discursive practice. In the manuscript, Foucault argues that "[t]he grid that constitutes, for a given period […] the system of *savoir*, may be called the grid of determining assertions. This set of assertions cannot be said to be true or false within the scientific discourse they make possible."[22] In other words, in the manuscript, Foucault understands *savoir* in terms of statements, indeed as a special set of assertions whose role is to define what types of statement can be formulated as intelligible empirical claims to be verified or falsified. Foucault articulates the view clearly: "This network of assertions is what I call *savoir*."[23] Thus, both specific bodies of empirical knowledge, *connaissances*, and the system of rules that constitutes the particular discursive possibilities they realize, *savoir*, are understood as statements. "The *savoir* [is] the network of assertions that give rise to scientific statements in their possibility, it is the space of their emergence."[24]

Ultimately, however, this conception of *savoir* as an explicitly articulated historical a priori defeats the purpose of an archaeology of knowledge to unearth a system of rules that goes unrecognized by those whose discursive possibilities it shapes. Statements of rules cannot make up a positive unconscious of knowledge. It is therefore not surprising that in the published version of *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault underscores that the rules of discursive practices archaeology studies are not to be understood as statements. Foucault states that a discursive practice is governed by "a group of anonymous, historical rules,"[25] and he is very clear about rejecting the view he had endorsed in the manuscript: "These rules are never given in a formulation, they traverse formulations and constitute for them a space of coexistence; therefore one cannot find a single statement that would articulate them as such."[26] Given the very idea of *savoir* as an *unknown* system of rules, this considered view is indeed what Foucault ought to maintain.

This shift from an explicit to an implicit conception of the rules of *savoir* marks a pragmatist turn in Foucault's philosophy. The central role of the concept of practice in Foucault's thought was noted early on by some of his most astute interpreters, but only more recently has the topic received the wider attention it merits.[27] I agree with those who have emphasized that already in Foucault's doctoral work on Kant's *Anthropology*, one can recognize an attempt to approach the topic of the constitution of experience, in Kant's own words, from a pragmatic point of view, namely by investigating social practices.[28] To be sure, this is the approach Foucault develops in the contemporaneous *History of Madness*.[29]

What I name Foucault's "pragmatist turn" is more specific, however. It is best seen as an extension of the practice-based approach to discourse as a social practice and, crucially, to the rules that constitute the objects of discourse. Foucault later expressed his pragmatist orientation as "a third principle of method: address 'practices' as the field of analysis, conduct the study by privileging what 'was done'."[30] What is *done* in a discursive practice – the activity of making statements, in contrast to their representational content – assumes a fundamental role in Foucault's account of thought when he begins to conceptualize *savoir* as a system of rules that are implicit in a discursive practice. Implicit rules cannot be attributed to subjects as propositional knowledge, that is, as knowledge that something is (or may or ought to be) thus and so. Instead, conformity to implicit rules must be understood as a practical ability, namely as conceptual competence that is exercised as knowledge-how, without invoking representations of rules. Thus, although Foucault does not mention the distinction between "knowing that" and "knowing how," his own distinction between *connaissance* and *savoir* needs to be drawn in terms of a contrast between representational content, on the one hand, and a practical ability, on the other.[31] Or, as I have put it, we can see now that *savoir* must function as the background of dispositional understanding that enables discursive cognition. According to this pragmatist conception of thought, as Brandom puts it, "believing *that* things are thus-and-so is to be understood in terms practical abilities to *do* something."[32] This means that the basic mode of understanding the normative standards that govern the use of concepts is not representations of rules but, as I have argued, socially coordinated dispositions. As we have seen, this means that the intelligibility of propositionally articulated thought rests on a background of dispositional understanding whose norms the thinking subjects do not know as such.

To be sure, Foucault never presented an adequate philosophical argument for the pragmatist approach he adopted. But, as I have already shown, that argument is provided by the regress of rules. Therefore, to vindicate Foucault's pragmatist turn, which the archaeology of knowledge presupposes, let us rehearse the lesson from that argument and connect it with the criticism Dreyfus and Rabinow level against archaeology. The pragmatist upshot of the regress is that normativity does not fundamentally exist in a representational form. Brandom helpfully sums up the ensuing challenge, thus: "how to understand proprieties of practice, without appealing to rules, justifications, or other explicit claims that something is appropriate?"[33] The challenge arises from the twofold requirement that the rules must be both implicit and efficacious, as Foucault, too, insists. On the one hand, the regress argument undermines the view that all normative standards exist in a representational form. Following Brandom's

terminology, I call this view *regulism*. On the other hand, it might be tempting to try to avoid the regress by opting for an approach that is independent of the understanding of norms by concept-users. According to this approach, the claims about the rules of a discursive practice should be understood as descriptions of regularities one identifies by observing a practice. Specifically, these claims attribute no understanding of norms to the participants of the practice. As a result, no regress of rules would ensue, but the descriptions of regularity would have no explanatory power either. In keeping with Brandom's terminology, I call this alternative conception of rules *regularism*. The problem with the regularist strategy, however, is that by replacing an account of norms with descriptions of regularities, it loses the very idea that there are normative forces operative in a discursive practice. The strategy therefore has no resources to make sense of the fundamental fact of our discursive lives that we are susceptible to error when applying concepts because concepts have standards of correct application.

The challenge, then, as Brandom explains, is to "make sense of a notion of norms implicit in a practice that will not lose either the notion of implicitness, as regulism does, or the notion of norms, as simple regularism does."[34] But this twofold requirement for understanding the normative structure of a discursive practice corresponds to the two criteria of adequacy I have identified for Foucault's conception of the rules of a discursive practice on the basis of the specific concerns that motivate his archaeological project. Therefore, it is all the more striking to see Dreyfus and Rabinow insist that Foucault must choose between regulism and regularism: "If rules that people sometimes follow account for what gets said, are those rules meant to be descriptive, so that we should say merely that people act *according to* them, or are they meant to be efficacious, so that we can say that people actually *follow* them. Foucault certainly does not want to say that the rules are followed by the speakers. The rules are not in the minds of those whose behavior they describe. [...] One might suppose, then, that since they are not rules subjects follow, they must be rules that serve to systematize phenomena; that statements can be given coherence according to them."[35] That is indeed what Dreyfus and Rabinow suppose when they proceed to conclude that Foucault is committed to a conceptual confusion of "regularities which regulate themselves," a confusion that conflates the descriptive and normative registers by attributing normative force and causal efficacy to regularist descriptions that map regularities of discourse.

But why do Dreyfus and Rabinow overlook the pragmatist conception of rules, which not only provides an independent alternative and thus enables one to avoid a choice between regulism and regularism but also, as I have shown, constitutes a conceptual centerpiece of Foucault's archaeological project? This appears especially perplexing given that Dreyfus

himself is a long-standing advocate of the pragmatist conception of discursive cognition, which he traces back to Heidegger's view in *Being and Time* that Zuhandenheit (and Umgang) have an ontological priority over Vorhandenheit (and Erkenntnis).[36] I believe that the most charitable explanation for this omission is that Dreyfus and Rabinow fail to recognize the pragmatist approach in Foucault's conception of rules because they interpret archaeology, mistakenly, as I will show, as a type of structuralism. As they see it, Foucault himself rejects the pragmatist alternative by making "a structuralist move." Therefore, rather than calling into question the pragmatist conception of rules as such, Dreyfus and Rabinow are in fact only arguing against Foucault's entitlement to it jointly with the "structuralist move" they attribute to archaeology. Curiously enough, Dreyfus and Rabinow are thus criticizing Foucault for abandoning the pragmatist approach that he, in fact, endorses. But is Foucault's entitlement to the pragmatist conception of rules threatened by this line of criticism? I will argue next that Foucault is entitled to his considered, pragmatist view of the rules of a discursive practice because this criticism stems from a failure to grasp the specificity of his archaeological project. To show that, I will consider the charge of "a structuralist move" and then explain how it misattributes ontological ambitions to archaeology and overlooks its nature as a diagnostic project.

3.3   The charge of "a structuralist move"

According to Dreyfus and Rabinow, Foucault's "structuralist move" makes archaeology of knowledge diametrically opposed to the pragmatist approach, which they favorably attribute to the early Heidegger, the later Wittgenstein, and others.[37] Dreyfus and Rabinow believe that Foucault, as well as Heidegger and Wittgenstein, are all "interested in the practical background that makes objectivity possible."[38] As we saw in the previous chapter, in an important sense, that is indeed Foucault's guiding concern after his rejection of the self-standing subject as the source of meaning and knowledge. According to Dreyfus and Rabinow, however, the crucial issue is whether the background practices themselves are discursive or not: "Hermeneutic thinkers such as Heidegger and Kuhn would agree with Foucault that subjects are surely not the source of discourse. All would agree that the source is 'an anonymous field of practices.' But those doing hermeneutics would insist that this field is not purely discursive. [...] Changing *nondiscursive skills* sustain the changing styles of statements, the modalities of enunciation, and the kinds of subjects which are possible."[39] In contrast, Dreyfus and Rabinow argue, "Foucault [...] makes a structuralist move which sharply distinguishes his account of the background practices from that of Wittgenstein and Heidegger. Although he is clearly aware that

nondiscursive practices play a role in 'forming' objects, he insists that the crucial role is played by what he calls *discursive* relations."[40]

As Dreyfus and Rabinow put it, correctly, Foucault "claims that discursive relations have a certain effect on all other relations."[41] Thus, for them, Foucault's "structuralist move" is "the extreme and interesting (if ultimately implausible) claim that discourse unifies the whole system of practices, and that it is only in terms of this discursive unity that the various social, political, economic, technological, and pedagogical factors come together and function in a coherent way."[42] To Dreyfus and Rabinow, this primacy of "discursive relations" means that "Foucault is not satisfied to accept social practices as a level of explanation."[43] As a result, they conclude that Foucault embraces a diametrically opposite view of the background practices than the view of "the existential-pragmatic philosophers," exemplified by Heidegger and Wittgenstein: "In sum, archaeologists make exactly the opposite use of the social-background practices than the existential-pragmatic philosophers do. For thinkers like Heidegger, Wittgenstein, Kuhn, and Searle it is precisely the nondiscursive background practices that enable us to encounter objects and to speak about them. […] In this broadly hermeneutic view the regularities of discursive practice are influential but are themselves explained by the purposes served by specific discursive practices in everyday meaningful human activities. Contrary to Foucault, these thinkers argue, each in his own way, that practical considerations determine which theoretical strategies will be taken seriously."[44]

Let me explain now why this line of criticism is motivated by philosophical concerns that are alien to Foucault's archaeological project and, therefore, irrelevant to a judicious assessment of its merits and shortcomings. Specifically, I want to show that Dreyfus and Rabinow understand the distinction between discursive and nondiscursive practices differently than Foucault does and that this divergence reflects a decisive discrepancy between their respective philosophical outlooks. To show this, I will first explain why Foucault's notion of discursive relations needs to be understood from within his generally Kantian epistemological outlook and then why it is plausible, within Foucault's philosophical approach, to maintain that all nondiscursive practices depend on discursive practices.

3.4 Foucault's Kantian pragmatism

It is important to note that Foucault's discussion of discursive relations belongs to a section of *The Archaeology of Knowledge* titled "The Formation of Objects" where he consistently distinguishes between objects of discourse [*objet*] and prediscursive things [*chose*], explicitly excluding things thus understood from the scope of an archaeology of knowledge.[45]

Foucault's generally Kantian epistemological outlook is clearly pronounced: "in short, one wants to get rid of 'things' altogether, to de-present them. […] To substitute for the enigmatic treasure of 'things' that precede discourse, the rule-governed formation of objects that take shape only in it. To define these *objects* without referring to the *ground of things*, but by relating them to the set of rules that allow them to be formed as objects of a discourse and thus constitute their conditions of historical emergence."[46] In contrast to things, thus understood, Foucault underscores that "the object does not wait in a limbo for the order that will set it free and enable it to be embodied in a visible and sayable [*bavarde*] objectivity; nor does it pre-exist in itself, kept by some obstacle at the edges of light. It exists under the positive conditions of a complex bundle of relations."[47]

It is these relations, which play a constitutive role with respect to objects of discourse, that Foucault calls "discursive relations." In contrast to relations between things (not objects), on the one hand, and relations between linguistic-cum-semantic entities (not statements), on the other, Foucault underscores the specificity of the discursive relations by saying that they belong to discourse as a practice: "These relations characterize not the language [*la langue*] the discourse uses, not the circumstances where it unfolds, but the discourse itself as a practice."[48] Foucault's interpreters have widely failed to grasp the full significance of this claim, because they have not realized that his notion of discursive relations is a pragmatic category, specifically that these relations are generated by the activity of making statements understood as "connecting [*une mise en relations*] that characterizes the discursive practice itself."[49] In contrast to relations between things, on the one hand, and relations between linguistic abstractions one can find in a discourse already pronounced, on the other, discursive relations are "at the limit of discourse, as it were: they provide it with the objects it can talk about."[50] Foucault, who has already stated that "an object […] does not pre-exist itself,"[51] is quick to clarify that "rather (for this picture of offering presupposes that objects are formed on one side and discourse on another), they [the discursive relations] determine the bundle of relations that discourse must bring about [*effectuer*] to be able to talk about such and such objects."[52] Thus understood, the discursive relations are constitutive of the objects of knowledge in a given discursive practice, and the configuration of these constitutive relations is governed by the given rules of *savoir*, understood as "a group of *rules* that are immanent in a practice and define it in its specificity."[53]

This view of discursive relations is an expression of Foucault's decidedly pragmatist elaboration of the Kantian thought that objects of knowledge are actively constituted by conceptual determinations. According to Foucault, the constitutive relations themselves are created and organized by what is done in a discursive practice, namely by the activity of making

statements. Given this outlook, it should come as no surprise that Foucault is not concerned with prediscursive things but with objects of discourse. As Marc Djaballah emphasizes in his study of Kantian aspects in Foucault's thought, "the objects of discourse have the basic structure of sensible objects in Kant's theoretical philosophy. They are not less than the objects of which Kant deduces the conditions of possibility, but more."[54] Whereas Kant inquires into the necessary conditions for any object of knowledge, Foucault's focus lies in the additional sufficient conditions for particular types of objects to become intelligible. Instead of asking how the pure concepts of the faculty of understanding determine the transcendental object X, Foucault studies the historical articulation of further conceptual determinations that specify particular types of objects for thought, and he takes these further determinations to be constituted through the activity of making statements in a discursive practice.[55]

But why does Foucault maintain that the organization of all social practices depends on a given configuration of discursive relations understood in this way? Here it is crucial to recognize two versions of the distinction between discursive practices and nondiscursive practices – a broad and a narrow sense of that distinction. For Foucault, all constellations of social practices are discursive in the broad sense that they involve the use of concepts. A system of thought, as Foucault understands it, is a network [*reseau*] that correlates practices of making statements and practices of doing (other) things as two dimensions of a historically particular form of experience.[56] According to this view, "thought is understood as the very form of action,"[57] and therefore social reality is always discursive in the broad sense: "discourse must not be understood as the set of things that are said, nor as the manner of saying them. It is just as much in what is not said, or what is marked by gestures, attitudes, ways of being, patterns of behavior, spatial arrangements. Discourse is the set of constrained and constraining meanings that pass through social relations."[58] Thus, when Foucault draws a distinction between "discursive practices" and "nondiscursive practices," is it a narrow distinction within this already essentially concept-involving outlook. In the narrow sense, then, discursive practices consist of the activity of making statements, whereas nondiscursive practices consist of other actions that nonetheless involve an application of concepts. In other words, this narrow distinction marks theoretical and practical uses of reason as two kinds of practice within a system of thought.

The narrow sense of the discursive/nondiscursive distinction escapes Dreyfus and Rabinow because they believe, overlooking some decisive differences, that Foucault as well as the early Heidegger and the later Wittgenstein are all simply "interested in the practical background that makes objectivity possible."[59] Moreover, Dreyfus and Rabinow believe

that Foucault is specifically concerned with the preconditions for scientific knowledge about human beings. They urge that "like Kant who woke up from his dogmatic slumber and deduced the categories which were to put physics on a sure footing, Foucault wishes to wake us from our 'anthropological sleep' in order to open our eyes to a successful study of human beings."[60] And they hold that "*The Archaeology of Knowledge* presents this new method in detail and sketches the theory of discourse on which it is based."[61] However, as Gary Gutting has argued compellingly, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* is a methodological treatise for conducting analyses of a specific type in the history of thought, and neither these analyses nor Foucault's presentation of their distinctive methodology involve a concern with the preconditions of knowledge, in general, or for the human sciences, in particular.[62] On the contrary, Foucault emphasizes that his methodological choices are informed by philosophical commitments that are geared toward the goal of "making the history of thought overcome its transcendental subjection,"[63] namely its conceptual and methodological dependence on the notion of transcendental conditions of experience.[64] And Foucault gladly admits that "for the time being, and without being able to see an end to it, my discourse, far from determining the place from which it speaks, evades the ground where it could find support. It is a discourse on discourses, but it does not mean to find in them a hidden law, a covered origin that is only to be set free; nor does it mean to establish on its own and starting from itself the general theory whose concrete examples they would be."[65]

Here Dreyfus's own preoccupation with a transcendental inquiry into the preconditions of discursive cognition occludes the specificity of the concerns that motivate Foucault's archaeological analysis. If one assumes that finding an ontological foundation for essentially concept-involving experience in some prediscursive activities is the philosophical problem that Foucault, among others, should be addressing, then archaeology of knowledge indeed seems to fail due to its lacking ontological foundation.[66] Most recently, Dreyfus has defended these ontological concerns in his debate with John McDowell regarding the extent to which human experience is conceptually structured. Dreyfus is dissatisfied with "conceptualists" like McDowell – and Foucault – who overlook the topic of a prediscursive foundation of experience because doing that, so Dreyfus argues, makes the conceptualist view unavoidably incomplete. In contrast, Dreyfus insists that an adequate account of human experience must be based on a prediscursive foundation of skillful coping.

> Following Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, I claim that affordances can indeed be experienced as data or features in a world of facts permeated by mindedness but that this objective world and its

conceptual order presupposes a preobjective/presubjective world – a world opened up by our body's responses to solicitations drawing it to maintain and improve its grip on what, on reflection, we understand to be the determinate, unified, namable, and thinkable, objective world.[67]

Only once our background coping has disclosed a world of stable objects with constant properties, can conceptualism spell out the conceptual content that enables our minds to open onto what, according to Merleau-Ponty, we can't help but take to be a self-sufficient rationally structured world.

The world of solicitations, then, is not foundational in the sense that it is indubitable and grounds our empirical claims, but it is the self-sufficient, constant, and pervasive background that provides the basis for our dependent, intermittent, activity of stepping back, subjecting our activity to rational scrutiny, and spelling out the objective world's rational structure.[68]

However, neither Foucault nor McDowell is striving to formulate a philosophical theory of human experience, and without that ambition, Dreyfus's point, however valid it may be, loses its force. As McDowell states laconically in his response to Dreyfus, "[n]o doubt we acquire embodied coping skills before we acquire concepts, in the demanding sense that connects with rationality."[69] Nevertheless, McDowell argues, the experience of concept-using subjects is thoroughly discursive because the embodied coping skills become animated by rationality once we become full-fledged concept users: "I do not have to ignore embodied coping; I have to hold that, in mature human beings, embodied coping is permeated by mindedness," namely by the use of concepts in thought and action.[70]

As I have already indicated, Foucault understands social reality similarly as a constellation of practices that essentially involve the use of concepts. In a 1981 interview, Foucault makes the point, as follows: "One must overcome the sacralization of the social as the only site of reality [*seule instance du réel*] and stop considering as thin air this essential thing in human life and human relations, namely thought. Thought, it exists, well beyond and below the systems and edifices of discourse. It is something that is often hidden, but always animates everyday behavior. There is always a little bit of thought even in the most foolish of institutions, there is always thought even in silent habits."[71] For Foucault, then, as he once put it succinctly, "there is thought everywhere."[72] And, to borrow Foucault's own words, one might say of Dreyfus and Rabinow that their "mistake consists of forgetting that people think, and that their behaviors, their attitudes, and their practices are animated by thought [*habités par une pensée*]."[73]

It is clear now that the specific orientation of Foucault's archaeological project stems from his pragmatist elaboration of the Kantian thought that human experience is conceptually constituted. Like many others, Foucault rejects, or simply overlooks, Kant's transcendental framework by investigating the conceptual form of experience in historically dynamic terms instead. What makes the archaeological approach stand out among the many elaborations of the notion of a historical a priori in 20th-century epistemology is Foucault's decidedly pragmatist view that the rules performing the constitutive function are implicit in the very practice they shape.[74] Within Foucault's generally Kantian philosophical outlook, there is nothing specifically structuralist or anything particularly controversial about his commitment to the primacy of discursive practices over nondiscursive practices. To be sure, one might seek to explain from this pragmatist perspective how propositionally articulated knowledge, or semantic content, is possible at all. For example, Dreyfus develops his own philosophical work chiefly in response to this challenge.[75] Similarly, Brandom's *Making It Explicit* deploys a pragmatist strategy at this level of explanatory ambition, where the very capacity for propositionally articulated content is to be accounted for, as we have seen, in terms of deontic scorekeeping that is exercised as a prediscursive know-how.[76] But Foucault's philosophical orientation belongs to a different level, where it is a historically given fact that we use concepts, make truth-claims, and perform actions in the constellation of practices where we live our lives. The motivation for unearthing the implicit bedrock of *savoir* that underlies and shapes our concept-use is ultimately *diagnostic* and, therefore, as I will argue in Chapter 5, critical in Foucault's specific sense of the term.

3.5   Archaeology as a diagnosis of the present

It is important to note, however, that, strictly speaking, the archaeology of knowledge can have three different functions. The basic function is to *disclose* an implicit system of norms that both enables and constrains a given system of thought. The *diagnostic* function is something archaeology acquires by directing its basic function to the historical present, as opposed to a system of thought that is no longer active. The *ethical* function, in turn, belongs to archaeology insofar as the diagnosis of the present is conducted for the sake of the ethical ideal of autonomy, as illustrated by Foucault's conception of critique, which I will present in Chapter 5. Thus, archaeology need not be diagnostic or ethically motivated, but it can be both, and it is this ethically motivated diagnostic use of the archaeology of knowledge that I am interested in as a response to the problem of structural heteronomy. I do not claim that Foucault explicitly formulates this critical usage of archaeology in the course of the 1960s, when he

developed archaeology as an original method for research in the history of thought – indeed, as he sometimes put it, as a study of the archive.[77] Moreover, in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault explicitly distinguishes the archive from the historical present: "The analysis of the archive thus involves a privileged domain: at once close to us, but different from our present [*actualité*]."[78]

However, when Foucault in the same period defends a diagnostic conception of philosophy, he links it explicitly to the archaeological orientation of his own work.[79] It is well known that Foucault defined the historical present as the focus of his philosophical attention in a series of discussions of Kant's essay "What Is Enlightenment?," ranging from 1978 to 1984, but virtually no one has noted that Foucault explicitly endorses a diagnostic conception of philosophy already at the peak of his reflections on the archaeology of knowledge in the second half of the 1960s. This earlier series of remarks reveals that for Foucault a diagnostic conception of philosophy was initially a bequest from Nietzsche and that the archaeology of knowledge is meant to take up that diagnostic task. In 1966, when Foucault replies to a question about philosopher's role in contemporary society, he invokes Nietzsche's diagnostic conception of philosophy, thus: "But, speaking of Nietzsche, we can return to your question [what is the role of a philosopher in society]: for him, a philosopher was a diagnostician of the state of thinking. Actually, one can envisage two kinds of philosophers, one who opens up new paths for thought, like Heidegger, and one plays the role of an archaeologist, who studies the space in which thought unfolds, as well as the conditions of this thinking, its mode of constitution."[80] If Foucault adopts the role of an archaeologist, he does it for the sake of pursuing this diagnostic task, and, as he explains in 1967, it is this diagnostic orientation that confers a decidedly philosophical character to his historical investigations: "It is very much possible that what I do has something to do with philosophy, especially to the extent that, at least since Nietzsche, philosophy's task is to diagnose and it no longer seeks to tell a truth that would be valid for everyone and everywhere. I try to diagnose, to realize a diagnosis of the present: to say what we are today and what it means, today, to say what we say. This work of digging under our feet characterizes contemporary thought since Nietzsche, and in this sense I might declare myself a philosopher."[81]

The two passages I have quoted belong to a longer series of rarely discussed remarks in which Foucault repeatedly endorses a diagnostic conception of philosophy and presents the archaeology of knowledge as a diagnostic project, importantly before starting in 1978 to frame the diagnosis of the present in terms of the Enlightenment.[82] What is at stake, however, is not only Foucault's conception of archaeology as a diagnostic project but also his understanding of the role of philosophy in general.

For Foucault, the diagnostic task he undertakes by means of the archaeology of knowledge is not external or even marginal to philosophy. On the contrary, Foucault maintains that the role of philosophy has decisively changed, and its new role is essentially diagnostic.

> I believe that, in fact, the situation of philosophy has changed a lot during the past century. First of all, philosophy has formed an allegiance with an entire series of studies that constituted the human sciences, and that was the first change. On the other hand, philosophy has lost its privileged status with respect to knowledge [*connaissance*] in general, and to science in particular. It has ceased to legislate, to judge. The third change, which usually receives no attention, is very characteristic and important. Philosophy has ceased to be an autonomous speculation about the world, knowledge [*connaissance*] or the human being. It has become a type of activity that is engaged in a certain number of domains. When mathematics underwent its great phase of a crisis in the beginning of the 20th century, it was by means of philosophical acts that new foundations were sought. It was also by means of philosophical acts that linguistics was founded around 1900-1920. It is also a philosophical act that Freud accomplished in discovering the unconscious as the meaning of our behavior.[83]

That is why, according to Foucault, it is only those with an outdated conception of philosophy who view the new situation as philosophy's decline or disappearance. "It is commonplace to talk about an impoverishment of philosophical thinking; an assessment that is predicated on outdated concepts. Today there is extremely rich philosophical reflection in a field that previously did not belong to philosophical reflection. The ethnologists, linguists, sociologists, and psychologists perform philosophical acts."[84] What is distinctive about these philosophical acts, according to Foucault, is their orientation to diagnose a given configuration of thought, in a specific discipline, that shapes, in part, the historical present.[85] They are acts of reflection in which thought becomes its own object, which can be rationally evaluated and deliberately elaborated.

Instead of scrutinizing the justification for specific truth-claims, it is characteristic of these philosophical acts that they take the very concepts that articulate the given understanding as their object of study. While such conceptual work is the specialty of philosophy, Foucault underscores that it is not a disciplinary prerogative of philosophers but a type of work that also plays a key role in sciences at moments in which the field of inquiry is reorganized. Indeed, the conceptual shifts Thomas Kuhn calls "scientific revolutions" are brought about by such philosophical acts.[86] While Foucault maintains that this diagnostic task of philosophy has replaced,

or ought to replace, the traditional epistemological and ontological projects of philosophy as a self-standing discipline, this does not mean that philosophers are no longer needed. "The role of the philosopher who is the one to say 'what is happening' consists today perhaps in showing that the humankind begins to discover that it can function without myths. No doubt, the disappearance of philosophies and religions would correspond to something of this sort. […] I have spoken to you about the disappearance of philosophies, and not of a disappearance of the philosopher. I believe that in determinate fields there is a certain number of 'philosophical' activities that in general consist of diagnosing the present of a culture. This is the true function that the individuals we call 'philosophers' can have today."[87] As an archaeologist of knowledge, then, Foucault, too, is a philosopher in this sense, to the extent that he uses archaeology to unearth configurations of *savoir* in the present. As I will show in Chapter 5, this is the task of critique, as Foucault understands and promotes it.

Notes

1 Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982).
2 Timothy O'Leary and Christopher Falzon, eds., *Foucault and Philosophy* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010); Christopher Falzon, Timothy O'Leary, and Jana Sawicki, eds., *A Companion to Foucault* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013).
3 Ian Hacking, "Michel Foucault's Immature Science," *Noûs* 13, no. 1 (1979); Ian Hacking, "The Archaeology of Foucault," in *Foucault: A Critical Reader*, ed. David Couzens Hoy (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986); Arnold I. Davidson, "Archaeology, Genealogy, Ethics," in *Foucault: A Critical Reader*, ed. David Couzens Hoy (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986); Gary Gutting, *Michel Foucault's Archaeology of Scientific Reason* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Martin Kusch, *Foucault's Strata and Fields: An Investigations into Archaeological and Genealogical Science Studies* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1991); Arnold I. Davidson, *The Emergence of Sexuality: Historical Epistemology and the Formation of Concepts* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001).
4 Bernard Williams, *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 1985); Robert B. Brandom, *Making It Explicit: Reasoning, Representing, and Discursive Commitment* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994); Robert B. Brandom, *Between Saying and Doing: Towards an Analytic Pragmatism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); Alva Noë, "Against Intellectualism," *Analysis* 65, no. 4 (2005); Crispin Wright, "Rule-following Without Reasons: Wittgenstein's Quietism and the Constitutive Question," *Ratio* 20, no. 4 (2007).
5 Michel Foucault, "Foreword to the English Edition," in *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (London: Routledge, 2001), xi. Cf. Michel Foucault, "Foucault répond à Sartre," in *Dits et écrits I, 1954–1975*, eds. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 693–694.
6 Dreyfus and Rabinow, *Michel Foucault*, 62.

7 Dreyfus and Rabinow, *Michel Foucault*, 82–83.

8 Dreyfus and Rabinow, *Michel Foucault*, 84–85.

9 Michel Foucault, *L'archéologie du savoir* (Paris: Gallimard, 1969), 45–54.

10 Foucault, "Foucault répond à Sartre," 693–694; Foucault, *L'archéologie du savoir*, 82–83; Cf. Foucault, "Foreword to the English Edition," xii–xiv.

11 Dreyfus and Rabinow, *Michel Foucault*, 83.

12 Ibid.

13 Michel Foucault, *Les mots et les choses: Une archéologie des sciences humaines* (Paris: Gallimard, 1966), 526.

14 Michel Foucault, "Sur les façons d'écrire l'histoire," in *Dits et écrits I, 1954–1975*, eds. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 623.

15 Foucault, *L'archéologie du savoir*, 136–137, 192.

16 Foucault, "Foreword to the English Edition," xi. Cf. Foucault, "Foucault répond à Sartre," 693.

17 Michel Foucault, "Titres et travaux," in *Dits et écrits I, 1954–1975*, eds. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 872.

18 Foucault, *Les mots et les choses*, 171.

19 Foucault, *L'archéologie du savoir*, 167. Added emphasis.

20 Foucault, *L'archéologie du savoir*, 168.

21 Foucault, *L'archéologie du savoir*, 192.

22 Michel Foucault, "L'archéologie du savoir," NAF 28284 (1): 558, Bibliothèque nationale de France. "Cette grille qui constitue, pour une période et un [*] donnés, le système du savoir, c'est ce qu'on pourrait appeler la grille des assertions déterminants. Cet ensemble d'affirmations ne peut pas être dits vrais ou faux, à l'intérieur des discours scientifique qu'il permet." *I could not decipher this word.

23 Foucault, "L'archéologie du savoir," 556. Original emphasis. "Ce reseau d'affirmations […], c'est ce que j'appelle le <u>savoir</u>." Original emphasis.

24 Foucault, "L'archéologie du savoir," 563. "Le savoir […] la reseau d'assertions qui donne lieu aux énoncés scientifiques dans leur possibilité; c'est leur espace d'émergence."

25 Foucault, *L'archéologie du savoir*, 153–154.

26 Foucault, *L'archéologie du savoir*, 192.

27 See, especially, Paul Veyne, "Foucault Revolutionizes History," trans. Catharine Porter, in *Foucault and His Interlocutors*, ed. Arnold I. Davidson (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997); Mark Maslan, "Foucault and Pragmatism," *Raritan Quarterly* 7, no. 3 (1988). Thanks to David Halperin for bringing Maslan's article to my attention. See also Colin Koopman, *Genealogy as Critique: Foucault and the Problems of Modernity* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013); Sabina Vaccarino Bremner, "Anthropology as Critique: Foucault, Kant and the Metacritical Tradition," *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 28, no. 2 (2020); Daniele Lorenzini, *The Force of Truth: Critique, Genealogy, and Truth-Telling in Michel Foucault* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2023). Cf. Colin Koopman, "Foucault and Pragmatism: Introductory Notes on Metaphilosophical Methodology," *Foucault Studies*, 11 (February 2011). See also other contributions to this special issue on Foucault and Pragmatism.

28 Béatrice Han, *Foucault's Critical Project: Between the Transcendental and the Historical* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002); Vaccarino Bremner, "Anthropology as Critique." Cf. Elisabetta Basso, *Young Foucault: The Lille Manuscripts on Psychopathology, Phenomenology, and Anthropology, 1952–1955* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2022).

29 Michel Foucault, *Folie et déraison: Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique* (Paris: Plon, 1961).
30 Michel Foucault, "Foucault," in *Dits et écrits II, 1976–1988*, eds. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 1453–1454.
31 Gilbert Ryle, "Knowing How and Knowing That: The Presidential Address," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 46, no. 1 (1946).
32 Robert B. Brandom, *Perspectives on Pragmatism: Classical, Recent, and Contemporary* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), 9.
33 Brandom, *Making It Explicit*, 25.
34 Brandom, *Making It Explicit*, 29.
35 Dreyfus and Rabinow, *Michel Foucault*, 81. Original emphasis.
36 Hubert L. Dreyfus, *What Computers Can't Do: The Limits of Artificial Intelligence* (New York,: Harper & Row, 1972), 173; Hubert L. Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World: A Commentary on Heidegger's Being and Time, Division 1* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), 60–87. Cf. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), sections 15–16.
37 Dreyfus and Rabinow, *Michel Foucault*, 57, 94.
38 Dreyfus and Rabinow, *Michel Foucault*, 62.
39 Dreyfus and Rabinow, *Michel Foucault*, 69. Added emphasis.
40 Dreyfus and Rabinow, *Michel Foucault*, 62. Original emphasis.
41 Dreyfus and Rabinow, *Michel Foucault*, 64.
42 Dreyfus and Rabinow, *Michel Foucault*, 65.
43 Dreyfus and Rabinow, *Michel Foucault*, 82.
44 Dreyfus and Rabinow, *Michel Foucault*, 77–78.
45 Foucault, *L'archéologie du savoir*, 64–67.
46 Foucault, *L'archéologie du savoir*, 64–65. Original emphasis.
47 Foucault, *L'archéologie du savoir*, 61.
48 Foucault, *L'archéologie du savoir*, 63.
49 Ibid.
50 Ibid.
51 Foucault, *L'archéologie du savoir*, 61.
52 Foucault, *L'archéologie du savoir*, 63.
53 Ibid. Original emphasis.
54 Marc Djaballah, *Kant, Foucault, and Forms of Experience* (London: Routledge, 2008), 239.
55 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. and ed. Paul Guyer and Allen Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 233–234.
56 Foucault, "Titres et travaux," 874; Michel Foucault, "Un problème m'intéresse depuis longtemps, c'est celui du système pénal," in *Dits et ecrits I, 1954–1975*, eds. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 1075; Michel Foucault, "Le jeu de Michel Foucault," in *Dits et écrits II, 1976–1988*, eds. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 299; Michel Foucault, "Table ronde du 20 mai 1978," in *Dits et écrits II, 1976–1988*, eds. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 845–846; Michel Foucault, Préface à l'*Histoire de la sexualité*, in *Dits et écrits II, 1976–1988*, eds. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 1397–1400.
57 Foucault, "Préface à l'*Histoire de la sexualité*," 1399.

58 Michel Foucault, "Le discours ne doit pas être pris comme…," in *Dits et écrits II, 1976–1988*, eds. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 123.

59 Dreyfus and Rabinow, *Michel Foucault*, 62.

60 Dreyfus and Rabinow, *Michel Foucault*, 44.

61 Ibid.

62 Gutting, *Michel Foucault's Archaeology of Scientific Reason*, 261–272.

63 Foucault, *L'archéologie du savoir*, 264.

64 Foucault, *L'archéologie du savoir*, 21–27, 264–265.

65 Foucault, *L'archéologie du savoir*, 267–268.

66 For an interpretation that explicitly criticizes Foucault for a missing ontological foundation, see Béatrice Han, *L'Ontologie manquée de Michel Foucault* (Grenoble: Jêrome Millon, 1998).

67 Hubert L. Dreyfus, "The Return of the Myth of the Mental," *Inquiry* 50, no. 4 (2007), 360.

68 Dreyfus, "The Return of the Myth of the Mental," 363.

69 John McDowell, "What Myth?," *Inquiry* 50, no. 4 (2007), 345.

70 McDowell, "What Myth?," 339.

71 Michel Foucault, "Est-il donc important de penser?," in *Dits et écrits II, 1976–1988*, eds. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 999.

72 Michel Foucault, "L'âge d'or de la lettre de cachet," in *Dits et écrits II, 1976–1988*, eds. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 1170. Cf. Michel Foucault, "Michel Foucault, 'Les mots et les choses'," in *Dits et écrits I, 1954–1975*, eds. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 531–532.

73 Michel Foucault, "Le style de l'histoire," in *Dits et écrits II, 1976–1988*, eds. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 1473.

74 For other accounts of the historical a priori, see Michael Friedman, *Reconsidering Logical Positivism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Michael Friedman, *Dynamics of Reason: The 1999 Kant Lectures at Stanford University* (Stanford, CA CSLI Publications, 2001); David J. Stump, *Conceptual Change and the Philosophy of Science: Alternative Interpretations of the A Priori* (New York: Routledge, 2015).

75 Dreyfus, *What Computers Can't Do*; Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World*; Dreyfus, "The Return of the Myth of the Mental."

76 Brandom, *Making It Explicit*, xviii.

77 Michel Foucault, *Le discours philosophique* (Paris: EHESS/Gallimard/Seuil, 2023), Chapter 13.

78 Foucault, *L'archéologie du savoir*, 172.

79 For an extensive account of this diagnostic conception of philosophy, see Foucault, *Le discours philosophique* (Paris: EHESS/Gallimard/Seuil, 2023). This Foucault's book manuscript from 1966, immediately preceding *L'archéologie du savoir* was first published in 2023. Thanks to Daniele Lorenzini for drawing my attention to this.

80 Michel Foucault, "Qu'est-ce qu'un philosophe?," in *Dits et écrits I, 1954–1975*, eds. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 581.

81 Michel Foucault, "Qui êtes-vous, professeur Foucault?," in *Dits et écrits I, 1954–1975*, eds. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 634.

82 Foucault, *Les mots et les choses*, 10; Michel Foucault, "La philosophie struc-turaliste permet de diagnostiquer ce qu'est 'aujourd'hui'," in *Dits et écrits I, 1954–1975*, eds. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 609; Foucault, "Qui êtes-vous, professeur Foucault?," 641, 648; Foucault, "Foucault répond à Sartre," 693; Michel Foucault, "Le monde est un grand asile," in *Dits et écrits I, 1954–1975*, eds. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 1302. In 1978, then, Foucault begins to develop the diagnostic theme in terms of a critical attitude that characterizes the Enlighten-ment. See Michel Foucault "Qu'est-ce que la critique?," in *Qu'est-ce que la critique? Suivi de La Culture de soi*, eds. Henri-Paul Fruchaud and Daniele Lorenzini (Paris: Vrin, 2015).

83 Foucault, "La philosophie structuraliste permet de diagnostiquer ce qu'est 'aujourd'hui'," 608.

84 Michel Foucault, "Michel Foucault et Gilles Deleuze veulent rendre à Nietzsche son vrai visage," in *Dits et écrits I, 1954–1975*, eds. Daniel Defert and Fran-çois Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 580.

85 For a discussion of the relationship between philosophical and scientific dis-course, including the distinctively diagnostic role of the former, see Foucault, *Le discours philosophique*, Chapter 3.

86 Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: The Uni-versity of Chicago Press, 1962). For Foucault's remark on Kuhn's indebtedness to Canguilhem, see Michel Foucault, "Foucault répond," in *Dits et écrits I, 1954–1975*, eds. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 1108.

87 Foucault, "Qui êtes-vous, professeur Foucault?," 648.

4 Against power?

In his 1978 lecture "What is Critique?" Foucault notes that the interconnected topics of the Enlightenment and power emerged for his generation of French philosophy as a result of thinking through the question of meaning as it had been posed in phenomenology: "How does it happen that there should be meaning [*sens*] starting from no meaning? How does meaning come about?"[1] According to Foucault, the relationship between reason and power emerged as a topic from the realization that meaning can be constituted only as an element of a system, "that there is no meaning except in virtue of constraints that belong to structures."[2] Through Chapters 2 and 3, I have interpreted and defended the specific version of this insight Foucault himself presents in his account of *savoir*. In this chapter, then, I turn to examine whether, and under what conditions, it makes sense to characterize and study the constraints of *savoir* in terms of power. Freedom and power are interdependent concepts and, specifically, so are the concepts of autonomy and heteronomy, which provide a particular way to understand that distinction. Therefore, as I have said, the problem of structural heteronomy is predicated on a commitment to the ethical ideal of autonomy. In the next chapter, I will show how Foucault's conception of critique connects that ideal with the limits of intelligibility the archaeology of knowledge investigates. But before discussing the task of critique, I want to examine the feasibility of thinking about the constraint that operates on the level of *savoir* as power. Thus, the discussion of power in the present chapter is an extension of the argument for structural heteronomy presented in Chapter 1, but specifically framed within the context of Foucault's philosophy.

I will argue that the line of diagnostic work Foucault calls "the analytic of power" receives its motivation from a normative outlook that is grounded, often only implicitly, in the ethical ideal of autonomy. Similarly to the expressive role of the archaeology of knowledge, this diagnostic work aims to make social practices intelligible to their participants, but specifically with respect to a given strategic situation in the field of action.

The increased understanding of the strategic situation increases autonomy because it enables new tactics of resistance. This means that Foucault's analytic of power is not against the strategies of power it studies as such. Instead of promoting resistance against a specific strategy of power, the analytic of power seeks to increase people's ability to devise effective tactics of resistance that are informed by the increased understanding of the strategic situation Foucault's diagnosis provides. Along these lines, power will be identified similarly for the analytic of power and the archaeology of knowledge, namely as a limitation to autonomy that operates implicitly on the level of *savoir*. This requires showing that the scope of *savoir* extends from a discursive practice to an entire system of thought, including, as Foucault puts it, both "what is said and what is done."[3]

Thus understood, rules of *savoir* exert a power over us as thinkers and agents, but diagnostic work can bring these constraints into discursive awareness and thus under rational control. However, I do not claim that power in this specific sense is what Foucault even primarily studies in the analytic of power, which focuses on the conduction of conduct, namely actions that aim to organize the social field of agency.[4] My focus lies instead in the problem of structural heteronomy. In this chapter and the next, I seek to show that it is this problem, not the exercise of power as such, that motivates the diagnostic work of critique that interrogates a given system of thought at the level of *savoir*. In fact, Foucault sometimes uses the term "power" to designate also this constraint: "I call 'power' everything that actually tends to make immobile and untouchable what is given to us as real, true, and good."[5] By combining this statement with Foucault's rarely discussed remarks on the habitual, I will argue that the diagnostic work of Foucault's analytic of power indeed functions "against power,"[6] as he says, but only specifically in the sense of structural heteronomy. In the next chapter, then, I will complete this normative outlook by showing that Foucault's account of critique is motivated by a commitment to autonomy as the ethical ideal.

I am not the first to assign an ethical or political significance to the limits of intelligibility Foucault studies. When David Owen helpfully contrasts Foucault's critical project with the approach of ideology critique, he shows that these two types of critique target, respectively, two different ways in which people can be unfree due to a self-imposed, non-physical constraint.[7] According to Owen, "aspectival captivity," as he names the constraint Foucault studies, is a "state of unfreedom."[8] Similarly to what I have noted about the problem of structural heteronomy, Owen makes this judgment from the perspective of "self-government" as an ethical ideal.[9] However, Owen does not try to explain the source of aspectival captivity, and his description of the condition as "captivity to a picture or to a perspective" may seem to suggest that it is, in principle, avoidable.[10] If my argument so far is cogent, however, then it is structurally necessary that

we as concept-users are constrained by limits of intelligibility we enact and reproduce without knowing what those limits are. Therefore, while my argument through this chapter and the next overlaps with Owen's account of aspectival captivity, I take a step further by seeking to show that Foucault's account of critique is motivated as an ethical response to a limitation to the scope of autonomy that is built into the preconditions for discursive cognition.

However, this structural necessity creates a complication. It makes no sense to ethically disparage a necessary structural feature as such. As I argued in Chapter 2, we are as concept-using subjects constitutively dependent on a background of dispositional understanding, but this as such does not make us "subordinated" in any meaningful sense.[11] By applying evaluative terms such as "subordination" or "distortion" to necessary preconditions of discursive cognition, one implies that those conditions are not necessary after all. Only if one can change a situation, does it make sense to imply that it ought not to be as it is. Therefore, it would be equally confused for me to suggest that we should liberate ourselves from the heteronomous predicament of dispositional understanding altogether. So why talk about power at all in this connection, then? To be clear, "the problem of structural heteronomy" is shorthand for a problem of heteronomy that is caused by structurally necessary features of the space of reasons we navigate by means of concepts. While it makes no sense to apply the distinction between autonomy and heteronomy to the background of dispositional understanding as such, it can be employed locally with respect to any given concepts. The structure as such is not heteronomous, but any given patterns of dispositional understanding are. They are heteronomous, unlike the structure, because they embody and reproduce unknown and, therefore, alien norms that nevertheless can be brought into discursive awareness and thus under rational control. Again, this problem is not limited to the use of concepts in truth-claims, but, as I will show, it arises equally in connection with practical reasoning, on the field of action, which is the domain of study for Foucault's analytic of power.

4.1   The analytic of power *against* power

One aspect of the influential criticism that Foucault's work lacks a normative foundation is the claim that he describes and explains but does not criticize and denounce, although he should, the relations of power he studies.[12] On the basis of Foucault's insistence that he is not developing a theory of power but a method for analyzing how power is exercised, it might seem plausible to reply that the analytic of power is indeed merely a diagnostic enterprise, and that is why it ought not to be criticized for failing to do something else than what it purports to do. But things are more

complicated because Foucault explicitly states that the analytic of power is *both* diagnostic *and* against power. Here is the key passage from 1978:

> But perhaps there would still be another path. That is what I would like to talk to you about. Perhaps one could still conceive a certain possibility for philosophy to play a role in relation to power that is not a role of giving power a foundation or transmitting it. Perhaps philosophy can still play a role on the side of counter-power, on the condition that this role no longer consists of validating, in front of power, the very law of philosophy, on the condition that philosophy stops understanding itself as prophecy, on the condition that philosophy stops understanding itself as either pedagogy or legislation, and that it undertakes to analyze, to elucidate, to make visible, and thus to intensify the struggles that unfold around power, the strategies of adversaries within relations of power, the tactics used, the sites of resistance, all in all, on the condition that philosophy no longer poses the question of power in terms of good and evil, but in terms of existence. Do not ask: is power good or is it bad, legitimate or illegitimate, a legal or a moral question [*question de droit ou de morale*]? But, simply, try to relieve the question of power of all the moral and legal baggage it has been charged with until now, and pose this naïve question, which has not been posed so often, even if it has been posed since long ago by a certain number of people: at bottom, what do relations of power consist of?[13]

What is so striking about this passage is Foucault's clear formulation of the idea that philosophy can function *against* power *without* scrutinizing the justification for the exercise of power. One does not need to think that Foucault thus denies the importance of the question of justification with respect to power, no more than appreciating the archaeology of knowledge requires one to deny the value of epistemology. In both cases, the specificity of Foucault's inquiry requires a new perspective that is simply not available so long as one approaches knowledge and power, respectively, on the level of belief in terms of justification.

But the crucial question that arises is this: How can philosophy function against power by merely offering a diagnosis of how power is exercised? I do not think that philosophy can play this dual role if power is understood, following Foucault, merely as "actions on the actions of others."[14] As Nancy Fraser was quick to observe, Foucault's analytic of power describes how power is exercised, but says nothing about what, if anything, makes power problematic and objectionable, indeed something that philosophy should be working against.[15] On the contrary, Foucault maintains that we ought to accept that there are relations of power as actions on the actions of others, alongside relations

of communication and relations of production, as a third type of relation in the social fabric, in general.[16] It may seem that the only two ways to understand philosophy's role as being against power are to either think that philosophy should scrutinize the justification for the exercise of power or to seek liberation from relations of power once and for all. But, as is well known, these are precisely the two approaches Foucault rejects.[17]

Instead of looking for the answer in the analytic of power as a method, it is helpful to consider how Foucault frames and motivates the diagnostic work as a critique. In what sense, then, is Foucault's conception of critique against power, if the goal is neither to scrutinize the justification for the exercise of power nor to liberate us from power altogether? In other words, what is the normative outlook of "the critical attitude," which Foucault discusses as an object of historical study in "What is Critique?" and eventually explicitly identifies as his own attitude in "What is Enlightenment?"[18] As I have indicated, I seek to show that this normative outlook is defined by the problem of structural heteronomy. In this respect, philosophy can be against power only by disclosing the implicit and therefore unknown constraints of *savoir*. Indeed, from this perspective the work of critique is both diagnostic and against power at the same time. Consider how Foucault expresses his attitude against power in this extraordinarily explicit statement from 1981:

> I am a moralist to the extent that I believe that one of the tasks, one of the points [*sens*] of human existence, that in which human freedom consists, is to never accept anything as definitive, untouchable, obvious, immobile. Nothing in reality has to make a definitive and *non-human* law for us. To that extent, one can think that we need to rise against all the forms of power, but not understood simply in the narrow sense of power of the type of government, or of one social group over another; this is but an element among others. I call "power" everything that actually tends to make immobile and untouchable what is given to us as real, true, and good.[19]

What makes this passage particularly interesting is the functional definition of power as anything that makes the scope of human freedom seem narrower than it really is. What is, in fact, impossible for humans is not a constraint in the relevant sense and hence not an instance of power. Instead, Foucault's characterization of power entails that power is a constraint that can be overcome. It is what "tends to make immobile and untouchable what is given to us as real, true, and good."[20] This is problematic and therefore an instance of power because what comes to seem inevitable, beyond our control, is something we nonetheless could intentionally seek to transform, if we chose to do so. Clearly, Foucault is here using the concept

of power as a normative concept that receives its meaning from the ideal of freedom, whose actualization power obstructs or constrains. Power, thus understood, is a limitation to freedom.

This understanding of power captures what Owen calls "the condition of unfreedom," when he writes that the aim of critique in Foucault's philosophy is to liberate us from aspectual captivity.[21] It also applies to the constraint of dispositional understanding that gives rise to the problem of structural heteronomy. This normative concept of power in Foucault's work makes it possible to begin to answer our question: How can the analytic of power be against power when it only provides a diagnosis of what is happening in relations of power? I will provide an answer by showing that Foucault's diagnostic work has essentially the same motivation and target in the case of the archaeology of knowledge and the analytic of power, namely a constraint that operates on the level of *savoir* and "tends to make immobile and untouchable what is given to us as real, true, and good."[22] In this outlook, power is problematic because it constrains the scope of freedom. Let us further explore this normative outlook by considering Foucault's decidedly negative attitude toward the habitual.

4.2 Who's afraid of the habitual?

In Foucault's French philosophical milieu, it may have been rare and controversial to maintain that discursive cognition depends on a social practice, specifically that it rests on a bedrock of socially coordinated dispositions, although this is essentially the view Hegel and his German followers had already embraced.[23] In the Hegelian outlook, however, the fundamental role of *Sittlichkeit* as dispositions that rest on socially acquired habits is not a source of an ethical problem.[24] On the contrary, this socially coordinated and habitually enacted second nature is the very form of ethical life.[25] In contrast, Foucault's negative and consistently critical attitude toward the habitual reveals a decidedly different ethical outlook, which, as I will show in the next chapter, is instead based on the ideal of autonomy. What troubles Foucault, I believe, is the semiautomatic execution of habit, its unreflectivness, which makes it a source of heteronomy as a force that operates below discursive awareness. The production and exercise of habits require no representation of what one is doing, and this character of the habitual brings with it the distinctive danger of doing out of habit something one would not do upon reflection, namely after representing and evaluating the action and one's reasons for and against it. We saw in Chapter 1 that it must be in this way, habitually, that the dispositional understanding of pattern-governed behavior is acquired and, crucially, also enacted. But even if the habitual is structurally necessary, it is a source of a constraint to our freedom as thinkers and agents, as Foucault suggests,

thus: "The work of thought is not to denounce the evil that would secretly inhabit everything that exists, but to anticipate the danger that threatens in everything that is habitual, and to make problematic everything that is solid."[26] If the habitual is problematic, that is because it solidifies practices and thus threatens to make "immobile and untouchable" parts of our understanding as concept-users.[27] In other words, Foucault views the habitual as a permanent danger because it results in obviousness (*les évidences*), which, in turn, congeals patterns of concept-use into "the present limits of the necessary" that constitute the obstacle critique targets, as I will show in the next chapter.[28]

It is no accident, therefore, that reflections on the habitual play a central role in the conception of power Foucault developed in a line of inquiry through the early 1970s that culminates in *Discipline and Punish*.[29] These reflections on the role of the habitual in the historical development of the techniques of disciplinary power provide also the most comprehensive illustration in Foucault's work of the philosophical point that the habitual is inherently dangerous and calls for a critical attention. When summing up his 1972–73 course at the Collège de France, Foucault introduces the notion of disciplinary power, as follows: "It seems to me that we live in a society of disciplinary power, that is, of power that is endowed with devices whose form is sequestration, whose aim is to constitute a labor force, and whose instrument is the acquisition of disciplines or of habits. It seems to me that since the 18th century these devices for the fabrication of disciplines, imposition of coercions, inculcation of habits have been constantly multiplied, refined, and specialized. I wanted this year to do the very first history of the *power of habits*, the archaeology of these devices of power that serve as the basis of the acquisition of habits as social norms."[30] Foucault then argues that the habitual plays a key role in the functioning of disciplinary power because, unlike the legal system of rights that defines relations only between property owners, techniques for inculcating habits can be used to establish relations of power between all members of society regardless of legal status.[31] The following year, Foucault elaborates this point by describing how the formation of habits, among other things, is a technique by which these relations of power that escape the juridical framework can have an effect on subjects by being literally invested in their bodies: "I would like to advance the hypothesis that something like disciplinary power exists in our society. By this I mean no more than a particular, as it were, terminal, capillary form of power; a final relay, a particular modality by which political power, power in general, finally reaches the level of bodies and gets a hold of them, taking actions, behavior, *habits*, and words into account […]."[32]

Through such techniques of power, a second nature is being produced, a set of acquired dispositions a subject learns to repeat and perpetuate

almost automatically by the force of habit: "Disciplinary power […] looks forward to the future, towards the moment when it will keep going by itself and only a virtual supervision will be required, when discipline, consequently, will have become *habit*."[33] This analysis of disciplinary power culminates in *Discipline and Punish* where Foucault again contrasts the subject that is fabricated by techniques of disciplinary power with the legal subject by underscoring the habitual relation these techniques create between a subject and patterns of the subject's conduct. With disciplinary power, it is a question of techniques that are "trying to reconstitute not as much the legal subject [*le sujet de droit*] which is captured by the fundamental interests of the social contract, but the obedient subject, the individual who is subjected to *habits*, rules, orders, an authority that is continuously being exercised around him and over him, and that he must let function *automatically* in him."[34]

As I said, I believe that the importance of these discussions is not merely historical. Combined with Foucault's explicit identification of the habitual as a permanent source of danger that needs to be resisted by means of "thought's work on itself," they illuminate how the diagnostic work of the analytic of power can function, at the same time, against power. For the target of critique is the power arises from socially coordinated habits that threaten to make parts of our understanding "immobile and untouchable."[35] Already in 1971, but without mentioning the habitual, Foucault explains the overarching goal of his work as a critique that is needed because we are trapped by an implicit system of constraints. Here it is especially noteworthy how the historical studies Foucault conducted while developing the archaeological method are now motivated explicitly from the perspective of the present.

> But if I'm interested – actually, deeply interested – in these phenomena, it is because I have seen in them *ways of thinking and behaving that are still ours*. I try to bring into view, finding my basis in their constitution and historical formation, *systems that are still ours today and inside of which we find ourselves trapped*. Fundamentally, it is a question of presenting a critique of our times, on the basis of retrospective analyses.[36]
>
> What I try to do is grasp the *implicit* systems that determine, without us being aware of them, our most familiar forms of conduct. I try to assign an origin to them, to show their formation, the constraint they impose on us. I thus try to take a distance with respect to these systems and to show in what way it would be possible to escape them. […] One must "put in play," display, transform, reverse the systems that peacefully order us. That is, as far as I'm concerned, what I try to do in my work.[37]

This view of a systemic constraint that operates below discursive aware-
ness helps to explain Foucault's strikingly negative attitude toward the
habitual. If we are "trapped" by a current form of thought, it is because
it contains elements that "peacefully order us."[38] And this ordering takes
place peacefully, without any resistance, because we are not so much as
aware of it taking place. The implicit system of constraints is embodied
in "our most familiar forms of conduct" as habit.[39] Thus, what makes
the habitual dangerous is the tendency of habits to congeal into pat-
terns of obviousness that constitute, as I will show in the next chapter,
the "present limits of the necessary" the critique seeks to identify and
destabilize.[40]

Although Foucault does not do so explicitly, the remarks on the habit-
ual can be applied to the formation of *savoir*, specifically to the acquisition
of conceptual competence through linguistic training. This is what Sellars
does, in an early article from 1950, where he notes that a habitual basis
is both necessary for concept-use and an unknown constraint that can be
overcome by means of representations of rules.

> Certainly, we learn habits of response to our environment in a way
> which is essentially identical with that in which the dog learns to
> sit up when I snap my fingers. And certainly these learned habits
> of response – though modifiable by rule-regulated symbol activity –
> remain the basic tie between all the complex rule-regulated symbol
> behavior which is the human mind in action, and the environment
> in which the individual lives and acts. Yet above the foundation of
> man's learned responses to environmental stimuli – let us call this
> his *tied behavior* – there towers a superstructure of more or less de-
> veloped systems of rule-regulated symbol activity which constitutes
> man's intellectual vision. […] Such symbol activity may well be char-
> acterized as free – by which, of course, I do not mean *uncaused* – in
> contrast to the behavior that is learned as a dog learns to sit up, or
> a white rat to run a maze. On the other hand, a structure of rule-
> regulated symbol activity, which as such is free, constitutes a man's
> understanding of this world, the world in which he lives, its history
> and future, the laws according to which it operates, by meshing in
> with his tied behavior, his learned habits of response to his environ-
> ment. To say that man is a rational animal, is to say that man is a
> creature not of *habits*, but of *rules*.[41]

If one wonders why Foucault, or anyone, should find the habitual prob-
lematic, this passage by Sellars elucidates the force of the habitual as a kind
of unknown power in contrast to freedom as autonomy that relies on rep-
resentations of rules instead. While Sellars here explicitly denies freedom

in the sense of uncaused causality, which corresponds to the Sovereign Subject Foucault repudiates, he does not conclude that one is doomed to repeat the patterns of dispositional understanding one has habitually acquired. Therefore, as I already argued in Chapter 2, those who make that accusation against Foucault's view of the subject would do well to address their objections instead to Sellars and others who in fact discuss the constraints on autonomy in connection with the acquisition of conceptual competence, unlike Foucault.[42]

Furthermore, if Foucault's negative attitude toward the habitual betrays an implicit commitment to the ethical ideal of autonomy, he is by no means alone to embrace this normative outlook in the milieu of French philosophy. In 1939, Georges Canguilhem, who later became the supervisor of Foucault's doctoral dissertation, published with Camille Planete a philosophy textbook for the French lycée, in which the authors underscore the *moral significance* of the contrast between "automatic reactions" and "real decisions," as follows: "it remains true, from the moral point of view as well as from a completely other critical point of view, that what weighs on us and limits our power, or rather transforms this power to its opposite, is the automatism of our thoughts, the routine of our judgments, which makes the world that is most immediately close to us *seem but an accident and a necessity*. Let us assume that our representation comes to take a conscious and precise analytical form with respect to this world very close to us. That amounts to assuming that our automatic reactions to this world, *which contribute to making it the way it is,* will intervene in it from now on as real decisions."[43] This remarkable passage concisely presents the contours of the problem of structural heteronomy I will locate at the heart of Foucault's conception of critique in the next chapter. Although Canguilhem and Planete do not explicitly mention habits, the automatic and routine features of concept-use they address are clearly not permanently fixed in the constitution of human cognition, but instead based on the habitual. These constraints are problematic because they limit the scope of freedom for "real decisions" and can be overcome.

Now let us reconsider the question: How does the analytic of power work *against* power? Here, the normative conception of power refers to a type of heteronomy that operates below the level of discursive awareness and thus limits the possibilities for thought and action. However, if both the archaeology of knowledge and the analytic of power offer diagnoses that function against power in this particular sense, then *savoir* must extend from discursive practices to the field of agency in other social practices. Therefore, let me next show that the scope of *savoir* is not limited to the practice of making truth-claims, which is the focus of archaeology, but that it indeed extends to what is done in strategies of power as well.

4.3   Systems of thought: The scope of *savoir*

The full scope of *savoir* has been rarely recognized, no doubt partially due to the common conceptualization of Foucault's philosophy in terms of three axes of analysis: knowledge, power, and ethics. This analytic framing is philosophically superior to the other widespread mapping, which divides Foucault's philosophy into three discontinuous periods.[44] Nevertheless, both approaches make it hard to recognize that *savoir* is the basis for *a system of thought*, which includes concept-use both in theoretical and practical reasoning. Therefore, let me show how consistently Foucault defines a system of thought as a constellation of social practices that include "what is said and what is done," and that it is *savoir* that establishes the system between these heterogeneous elements.[45]

We already saw in the previous chapter that, according to Foucault, thought permeates social practices. In the following statement, which constitutes perhaps the most systematic articulation of that view, Foucault defines thought as the form of action: "'Thought,' thus understood, is not to be searched only in theoretical formulations, as those of philosophy or science; it can and must be analyzed in all the ways of saying, doing, conducting oneself where the individual appears and acts as a subject of knowledge [*connaissance*], as an ethical or a legal subject, as a subject conscious of the self and of others. In this sense, *thought is understood as the very form of action*, as action involves the play of the true and the false, acceptance or rejection of the rule, the relation to oneself and to others."[46] In other words, as Foucault sometimes puts it, one needs to include both what is said and what is done in a study of systems of thought. Foucault states the view clearly already in 1966, thus: "I have tried to do, in a style that is evidently somewhat peculiar, not history of thought in general but history of everything that 'contains thought' in a culture, history of all that in which there is thought. For there is thought in philosophy, but also in a novel, in jurisprudence, in law, even in a system of administration, in prison."[47] The goal of archaeology, Foucault explains, is to disclose the *savoir* that relates the different elements together as parts of a system: "I treat on the same level, and according to their isomorphisms, practices, institutions, and theories, and I search the knowledge [*savoir*] in common that made them possible, the layer of knowledge [*savoir*] that is constitutive and historical."[48]

When Foucault was appointed to the Collège de France and his chair was named "history of systems of thought," he submitted an outline of research that identifies and elaborates the systematic link between what is said and what is done as the distinctive object of study, which had gradually taken shape in the course of his archaeological investigations into the history of the human sciences in the 1960s.[49] Referring to the studied

constellations of social practices, including discursive practices, Foucault notes that "this network, once one examines its functioning and how it was justified at the time, seems very coherent and very well balanced: a whole body of precise and articulate knowledge is invested in it. An object took shape for me, then: the knowledge that is invested in the complex systems of institutions."[50] This "knowledge [*savoir*]," Foucault continues, "characterizes, regroups and coordinates an ensemble of practices and institutions," and it is its distinct forms and historical transformations that he proposes to study under the rubric *history of systems of thought*:[51] "Insofar as, in a given epoch, it [savoir] has well specified forms and fields, it can be composed into several systems of thought. One can see, then, that in no way is it a question of determining *the* system of thought of a defined period, or of something like its 'world view.' On the contrary, it is a question of locating the different ensembles that each carry their particular type of *savoir*; that relate behaviors, rules of conduct, laws, customs or prescriptions; that thus configurations take shape that are both stable and susceptible to transformation."[52]

One finds a concrete instance of this model, when Foucault retrospectively, in 1971, describes the historical constitution of the experience of madness, his topic in *History of Madness*, by linking what was said and what was done: "It was a twofold phenomenon: on the one hand, you have institutions, practices, something like customs, for example the way in which the police, families or the court classified, singled out the mad, and placed them aside; it was a practice with few words [*qui s'énonçait à peine*], and so one has all the difficulty in the world to find its forms, the rules of these customs that have left no trace because they were never formulated. They went without saying [*Elles étaient sans énoncé*]. And, on the other hand, these institutions, these practices of madness were nevertheless up to a certain point linked and sustained by a discourse that was philosophical, religious and legal, and especially medical. And it is this ensemble of 'practices and discourse' that constituted what I have called the experience of madness […]."[53]

Finally, to appreciate how this view of systems of thought informs the analytic of power Foucault develops in the course of the 1970s, consider how the same mapping is articulated in terms of "a regime of practices" that is unified by its own, distinctive rationality.[54] As Foucault explains, he seeks to analyze "how forms of rationality are embedded in practices, or in systems of practices, and what role they play therein. For it is true that there are no 'practices' without a certain regime of rationality."[55] Foucault is not contrasting "rationality" with "irrationality," but his guiding idea is to analyze configurations of practices and identify different systems of thought, each marked by its distinctive rationality.[56] Importantly, in this formulation from 1978, Foucault explicitly connects the coordination between what is said and what is done to the theme of obviousness

(*les évidences*). Foucault begins with "the hypothesis […] that the types of practices are not only institutionally ordered, ideologically prescribed or guided by the circumstances […], but that up to a certain point they have their own regularity, their logic, their strategy, their obviousness [*leur evidence*], their 'reason'."[57] The coordination is to be analyzed and made intelligible on the level of social practices. "It is a question of analyzing a 'regime of practices' – the practices being understood as the site of linking what is said and what is done, the rules that are posed and the reasons that are given, the projects and that which appears obvious [*des évidences*]."[58] In the light of the concern with "the *implicit* systems that determine, without us being aware of them, our most familiar forms of conduct [*conduits*]," then, it is striking, but not surprising, that Foucault here refers to shared "programs of conduct" that underlie the coordination between the practice of making truth-claims (veridiction) and the practice of governing the conduct of others (juridiction).[59] "To analyze 'regimes of practices' is to analyze the programs of conduct [*programmations de conduite*] that have at the same time effects of prescription with respect to what is to be done (effects of 'juridiction') and effects of codification with respect to what can be said (effects of 'veridiction')."[60]

4.4   Implicitness of great anonymous strategies

Since *savoir* covers an entire system of thought, including thought and action, we can now appreciate that the analytic of power functions against power the same way that the archaeology of knowledge does when it is used in a diagnosis of the present. In both cases, the diagnosis reveals implicit constraints that operate on the level of social practices, but whereas archaeology focuses on what can be said, the analytic of power investigates the possibilities for action. For exercising power, as Foucault defines it, is to "structure the field of possible action of others [*structurer le champ d'action éventuel des autres*]".[61] "It is a set of actions on possible actions [*sur des actions possibles*]: it operates on the field of possibility where the behavior of agents [*sujets agissants*] comes to be inscribed."[62]

Despite the difference in focus between the analytic of power and the archaeology of knowledge, consider how Foucault describes the diagnostic task in almost identical terms between the two contexts. When discussing archaeology in 1969, Foucault emphasizes that the metaphor is misleading if it suggests that the object of study is somehow hidden from sight: "And then I'm also disturbed by the idea of excavations [*fouilles*]. What I search is not relations that would be secret, hidden, more silent or deeper than people's consciousness. On the contrary, I try to define relations that are on the very surface of discourses; I seek to make visible that which is invisible only because it is too much on the surface of things."[63] The implicit

norms are on the surface of a discursive practice in the sense that they can be read off from what the participants do. The archaeologist performs no excavations but needs to "describe statements, entire groups of statements, making appear the relations of implication, opposition, exclusion that could link them together."[64] What needs to be described is not what people say, but the network of inferential relations between these statements that enact patterns of dispositional understanding the participants share. In 1978, when Foucault is focused on the analytic of power instead, he describes the diagnostic task in strikingly similar terms, thus:

> It has been known for a long time that the role of philosophy is not to discover what is hidden, but to make visible that which precisely is visible, that is, to make appear that which is so close, that which is so immediate, that which is so intimately tied to ourselves that because of this we do not perceive it. Whereas the role of science is to make us know what we do not see, the role of philosophy is to make us see what we see. After all, to this extent, this could well be the task of philosophy today: the relations of power in which we are caught and in which philosophy itself has been entangled for at least 150 years, what are they about?[65]

In the light of the two passages, Foucault's view of diagnostic work remains remarkably consistent through a shift of focus from knowledge to power. What explains this stability is Foucault's consistent view of a system of thought, as I showed above, as a constellation of discursive and nondiscursive practices that are coordinated on the level of *savoir*. Against this backdrop, the diagnostic task is always to disclose and make intelligible elements of the underlying implicit system that are not known as such by the subjects who participate in the given practices. What the diagnosis discloses can be implicit conceptual rules or, in the analytic of power, as Foucault notes, "the stakes and objectives" of a strategic situation in the field of action.[66] In particular, Foucault's analytic of power aims to disclose "great anonymous strategies" that are by default implicit in the field of action, shaping the possibilities for action without the agents fully understanding it.[67]

Indeed, it is a familiar idea that a social practice or a wider constellation of practices is partially opaque, even unintelligible to the participants whose actions nonetheless, at the same time, constitute the practice.[68] We have seen how the archaeology of knowledge explores one aspect of this idea, but now we can see that the analytic of power, too, does it, although with respect to the field of action instead of the production of truth-claims. Foucault notes that, on the level of social practices, the analytic of power encounters the "implicitness of great anonymous strategies" that have a determinate orientation but no single author.[69] As Foucault puts it, these strategies of power are "intentional but non-subjective," in contrast to

relations of force between individuals, which are the basic units of analysis.[70] These are relations between agents, put into play by an attempt by one to affect how the other acts.[71] Thus, relations of force as such are intentional, shut through by "the local cynicism of power."[72] But the conditions for agency are always structured by the given broader configuration of social practices, which, too, are made out of actions. Therefore, the analytic of power must operate on multiple levels, analogously to the archaeology of knowledge that considers both individual statements and the conditions of their intelligibility as moves in a discursive practice. With the benefit of hindsight, Foucault notes that there are three levels of organization in the analytic of power, roughly, (1) relations of force between individuals, (2) strategies of power on the level of social practices, and (3) states of domination one might describe as exceptionally congealed configurations of strategies.[73] Therefore, the relations of power on the tactical level between individuals are always conditioned by a strategic configuration, which in turn depends on support from tactical relationships between individuals.[74]

It is well known that Foucault is especially interested in diagnosing relations of interdependence between the practice of making truth-claims and strategies of governing people.[75] One can already see from the complexity of the framework why diagnostic work is often needed to make intelligible the stakes and objectives, not between two agents, but on the strategic level that structures the field of action in social practices. Thus, the analytic of power functions against power because it enables and catalyzes resistance by making intelligible the stakes and objectives on the strategic level. For instance, individuals demanding better conditions in French prisons and others resisting homophobia in the 1970s needed not, and typically would not, understand that these two independent struggles are targeting the same carceral system whose rationality of governing relies on the authority of human sciences to normalize individuals. However, not only does an improved understanding of stakes and objectives help resistance to improve tactics against a given strategy. In addition, merely the visibility of a strategy makes it harder to be sustained since it is now exposed to assessment and revision. If "power is tolerable at the condition of masking an important part of itself,"[76] as Foucault holds, then diagnostic work has the potential to short-circuit the strategies of power it studies simply in virtue of making explicit their intentionality. "To make the relations of power appear is, to my mind, in any case, to try to somehow restore them between the hands of those who exercise them."[77]

4.5   Two paths for critique in the context of "politics of truth"

The interpretation I have advanced in this chapter has also the advantage that it helps to explain why there should be two paths along which critique can proceed. This is a central claim Foucault makes in "What is Critique?"

but only recently has it received the scholarly attention it merits.[78] Foucault argues in this lecture that "[c]ritique would essentially have as its function the desubjugation of the subject [*désassujettissement*] in the play of what could be called, in a word, the politics of truth."[79] The main idea here is that critique enables a subject to reject an identity through which she is subjugated to a strategy of power, namely to a specific rationality of governing that organizes possibilities for action on the level of social practices. What Foucault means by "the politics of truth," then, is essentially the *nexus* between a practice of making truth-claims and a practice of governing people.[80] It is not hard to see that a nexus between two kinds of practice can be undone from either direction. And Foucault states clearly in "What is Critique?" that, in the context of politics of truth, the process of desubjugation can proceed by "interrogating" either "a discourse of truth about its effects of power" or "power about its discourses of truth."[81] This bifurcation suggests that critique can find an obstacle to target and remove both on the side of the practice of making truth-claims and on the side of a strategy of governing. Given that critique is to Foucault diagnostic work that interrogates a given system of thought on the level of *savoir*, the bifurcation indicates, as I have argued above, that *savoir* extends to the field of action.

Thus, in response to the nexus between truth and power, critique involves two distinct lines of diagnostic work that, in a crucial sense, are methodologically unified. We have seen that the analytic of power functions against power in the same way that the archaeology of knowledge does. Despite the difference in focus, both lines of diagnosis seek to disclose and make intelligible elements of a given system of thought that function implicitly on the level of *savoir* and therefore cannot be objects of assessment, revision, or resistance. In "What is Critique?" Foucault states that critique targets the implicit nexus of acceptability upon which the given constellation of practices rests.[82] We have seen, however, that on the level of *savoir* there is no acceptability in the sense of endorsement. Instead, the acceptability is a result of congealed patterns of dispositional understanding, "our most familiar forms of conduct," through which discourse is organized and coordinated with other social practices.[83] Foucault explains that, therefore, critique proceeds from the fact that something is accepted in the present "to the system of acceptability that is analyzed starting from the play of knowledge-power [*savoir-pouvoir*]. Let us say that this is, roughly, the archaeological level."[84] This statement confirms that, as I have argued in this chapter, Foucault's diagnostic work probes the implicit level of *savoir* from two complementary perspectives, focusing on the practices of making truth-claims and practices of governing people, respectively as well as the connections between them.

By bringing these two lines together under the banner of critique, Foucault sharpens his focus on the topic of subjectivity, or, put differently, on the relationship between power and freedom. The guiding question is how the two kinds of practice are connected around subjectivity and how, with the help of critique, can they become disconnected: "my problem is to know how people govern (themselves and others) through the production of truth (I repeat it again, by the production of truth I don't mean the production of true statements but the configuration of fields where the practice of the true and the false can be at the same time rule-governed [*réglée*] and relevant)."[85] It is the link between a practice of making truth-claims and a strategy of governing that subjugates individuals and whose questioning by means of critique, in turn, enables desubjugation. The two paths of critique then lead to the questioning of the *nexus* from two opposite directions. For instance, it is an overarching aim of Foucault's *History of Sexuality* to show that the governing of sexual conduct need not be based on a will to know what different kinds of sexual identity people have.[86] From the other side, critique can enable a subject to question the inevitability of the conceptual framework in which a given strategy of governing is grounded. For example, despite Gary Becker was no archaeologist of knowledge, his reconceptualization of crime in terms of rational behavior contradicts the 19th-century criminological framework and thus undermines the basis for extending the strategy of normalization to penal practices. As I have argued elsewhere, this is what explains Foucault's salutary response to Becker's theoretical work on crime and punishment, which should not be confused with a blanket endorsement of neoliberal economic theory or policy.[87]

But notice that, in contrast to many accounts of social critique and ideology critique, Foucault does not maintain that it is the task of critique to do the questioning.[88] According to Foucault, "critique is the movement by which the subject gives herself the right to question truth about its effects of power and power about its discourses of truth. Critique will be the art of voluntary inservitude, that of reflected indocility."[89] Critique enables a subject to question something whose questioning was not possible for her previously. As I will show in the next chapter, "the right to question" is something subjects claim only because critique enables them to recognize a *possibility* for questioning that was previously blocked by an implicit obstacle that resides on the level of *savoir*. But why is it that something that is not inevitable cannot be questioned? That is the topic for the next chapter, where I will complete my account of critique by explaining Foucault's account of "the present limits of the necessary" as a constraint whose overcoming should be promoted for the sake of the ethical ideal of autonomy.[90]

Notes

1 Michel Foucault, "Qu'est-ce que la critique?," in *Qu'est-ce que la critique? Suivi de La culture de soi*, eds. Henri-Paul Fruchaud and Daniele Lorenzini (Paris: Vrin, 2015), 46.
2 Ibid.
3 Michel Foucault, "Le jeu de Michel Foucault," in *Dits et écrits II, 1976–1988*, eds. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 299.
4 Michel Foucault, "Le sujet et le pouvoir," in *Dits et écrits II, 1976–1988*, eds. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 1056.
5 Michel Foucault, "Interview de Michel Foucault, 3 novembre 1980," in *L'origine de l'herméneutique de soi: Conférences prononcées à Dartmouth Collège, 1980*, eds. Henri-Paul Fruchaud and Daniele Lorenzini (Paris: Vrin, 2013), 143.
6 Michel Foucault, "La philosophie analytique de la politique," in *Dits et écrits II, 1976–1988*, eds. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 540. Cf. Foucault, "Le sujet et le pouvoir," 1058.
7 David Owen, "Criticism and Captivity: On Genealogy and Critical Theory," *European Journal of Philosophy* 10, no. 2 (2002).
8 Owen, "Criticism and Captivity," 227.
9 Owen, "Criticism and Captivity," 218.
10 Ibid.
11 Judith Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997), 10–18; Amy Allen, *Politics of Ourselves: Power, Autonomy, and Gender in Contemporary Critical Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 72–95.
12 Nancy Fraser, "Foucault on Modern Power: Empirical Insights and Normative Confusions," *PRAXIS International 1*, no. 3 (1981).
13 Foucault, "La philosophie analytique de la politique," 540.
14 Foucault, "Le sujet et le pouvoir," 1056.
15 Fraser, "Foucault on Modern Power."
16 Michel Foucault, "Radioscopie de Michel Foucault," in *Dits et écrits I, 1954–1975*, eds. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 1667. Cf. Foucault, "Le sujet et le pouvoir," 1052–1054.
17 Foucault, "La philosophie analytique de la politique," 540.
18 Foucault, "Qu'est-ce que la critique?"; Michel Foucault, "Qu'est-ce que les Lumières?," in *Dits et écrits II, 1976–1988*, eds. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 2001).
19 Foucault, "Interview de Michel Foucault, 3 novembre 1980," 143.
20 Ibid.
21 Owen, "Criticism and Captivity," 221–223.
22 Foucault, "Interview de Michel Foucault, 3 novembre 1980," 143.
23 Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Philosophy of Mind*, trans. W. Wallace and A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), §§409–410; Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, trans. H. B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), §§142–157. Thanks to Thimo Heisenberg for these references.
24 See, for example, Andreja Novakovic, *Hegel on Second Nature in Ethical Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

25 For an alternative reading of Hegel that comes close to the interpretation of Foucault I defend in this and the next chapter, see Christoph Menke, "Hegel's Theory of Liberation," *Symposium: Canadian Journal of Continental Philosophy* 17, no. 1 (2013); Christoph Menke, "Hegel's Theory of Second Nature," *Symposium: Canadian Journal of Continental Philosophy* 17, no. 1 (2013).

26 Michel Foucault, "À propos de la généalogie de l'éthique: un aperçu du travail en cours," in *Dits et écrits II, 1976–1988*, eds. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 1431.

27 Foucault, "Interview de Michel Foucault, 3 novembre 1980," 143.

28 Foucault, "Qu'est-ce que les Lumières?," 1391.

29 Michel Foucault, *La société punitive: Cours au Collège de France 1972–1973* (Paris: EHESS/Gallimard/Seuil, 2013); Michel Foucault, *Le pouvoir psychiatrique: Cours au Collège de France 1973–1974* (Paris:Gallimard/Seuil, 2003); Michel Foucault, *Surveiller et punir: Naissance de la prison* (Paris: Gallimard, 1975).

30 Foucault, *La société punitive*, 240. Added emphasis.

31 Foucault, *La société punitive*, 242.

32 Foucault, *Le pouvoir psychiatrique*, 42.

33 Foucault, *Le pouvoir psychiatrique*, 49.

34 Foucault, *Surveiller et punir*, 131–132. Added emphasis. See also 134, 137–138.

35 Foucault, "Interview de Michel Foucault, 3 novembre 1980," 143; Foucault, "À propos de la généalogie de l'éthique: un aperçu du travail en cours," 1431.

36 Michel Foucault, "Conversation avec Michel Foucault," in *Dits et écrits I, 1954–1975*, eds. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 1051. Added emphasis.

37 Foucault, "Conversation avec Michel Foucault," 1060–1061. Added emphasis.

38 Foucault, "Conversation avec Michel Foucault," 1051, 1061.

39 Foucault, "Conversation avec Michel Foucault," 1061.

40 Foucault, "Qu'est-ce que les Lumières?," 1391.

41 Wilfrid Sellars, "Language, Rules and Behavior," in *Pure Pragmatics and Possible Worlds: The Early Essays of Wilfrid Sellars*, ed. Jeffrey F. Sicha (Atascadero, CA: Ridgeview Publishing, 2005), 195–196.

42 Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*: *Twelve Lectures*, trans. Frederick G. Lawrence (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1987).

43 Georges Canguilhem and Camille Planete, *Traité de logique et de morale*, in Georges Canguilhem, *Oeuvres Completes, Volume I: Écrits philosophiques et politiques (1926–1939)* (Paris: Vrin, 2011), 814. Added emphasis.

44 For the three axes of analysis in Foucault's philosophy, see Arnold I. Davidson, "Archaeology, Genealogy, Ethics," in *Foucault: A Critical Reader*, ed. David Couzens Hoy (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986). The periodization was made influential by Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982).

45 Foucault, "Le jeu de Michel Foucault," 299.

46 Michel Foucault, Préface à l'*Histoire de la sexualité*, in *Dits et écrits II, 1976–1988*, eds. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 1399. Added emphasis.

47 Michel Foucault, "Michel Foucault, 'Les mots et les choses'," in *Dits et écrits I, 1954–1975*, eds. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 531–532.

48 Foucault, "Michel Foucault, 'Les mots et les choses'," 526.
49 Michel Foucault, "Titres et travaux," in *Dits et écrits I, 1954–1975*, eds. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 2001).
50 Foucault, "Titres et travaux," 870.
51 Foucault, "Titres et travaux," 874.
52 Ibid.
53 Michel Foucault, "Un problème m'intéresse depuis longtemps, c'est celui du système pénal," in *Dits et écrits I, 1954–1975*, eds. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 1075.
54 Michel Foucault, "Table ronde du 20 mai 1978," in *Dits et écrits II, 1976–1988*, eds. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 841.
55 Foucault, "Table ronde du 20 mai 1978," 845.
56 Ibid.
57 Ibid.
58 Foucault, "Table ronde du 20 mai 1978," 841.
59 Foucault, "Conversation avec Michel Foucault," 1060–1061. Added emphasis.
60 Ibid.
61 Foucault, "Le sujet et le pouvoir," 1056.
62 Ibid.
63 Michel Foucault, "Foucault explique son dernier livre," in *Dits et écrits I, 1954–1975*, eds. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 800.
64 Michel Foucault, "Sur les façons d'écrire l'histoire," in *Dits et écrits I, 1954–1975*, eds. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 616.
65 Foucault, "La philosophie analytique de la politique," 540–541. Cf. Foucault, "Radioscopie de Michel Foucault," 1667.
66 Foucault, "La philosophie analytique de la politique," 542.
67 Michel Foucault, *Histoire de la sexualité I: La volonté de savoir* (Paris: Gallimard, 1976), 125.
68 For instance, consider Hegel's view of philosophy as "its own time comprehended in thoughts," which aims at a rational reconciliation with the given historical reality. Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, 21.
69 Ibid.
70 Foucault, *La volonté de savoir*, 125.
71 Foucault, "Le sujet et le pouvoir," 1055–1056.
72 Foucault, *La volonté de savoir*, 125.
73 Michel Foucault, "L'éthique du souci de soi comme pratique de la liberté," in *Dits et écrits II, 1976–1988*, eds. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 1547.
74 Foucault, *La volonté de savoir*, 131–132.
75 For an account of the relationship between a regime of truth and truth games, see Daniele Lorenzini, *The Force of Truth: Critique, Genealogy, and Truth-Telling in Michel Foucault* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2023).
76 Foucault, *La volonté de savoir*, 113.
77 Foucault, "Radioscopie de Michel Foucault," 1667.
78 Daniele Lorenzini and Tuomo Tiisala, "The Architectonic of Foucault's Critique," *European Journal of Philosophy* 32, no. 1 (2024).
79 Foucault, "Qu'est-ce que la critique?," 39.

80 Michel Foucault, "Entretien avec Michel Foucault," in *Dits et écrits II, 1976–1988*, eds. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 160. Cf. Michel Foucault, *L'archéologie du savoir*, 240–243.
81 Foucault, "Qu'est-ce que la critique?," 39.
82 Foucault, "Qu'est-ce que la critique?," 53.
83 Foucault, "Conversation avec Michel Foucault," 1061.
84 Ibid.
85 Foucault, "Table ronde du 20 mai 1978," 846.
86 Cf. David M. Halperin, *Saint Foucault: Towards a Gay Hagiography* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995); David M. Halperin, "Foucault's Queer Critique," in *The Routledge Companion to Queer Literary Studies*, ed. Melissa E. Sanchez (New York: Routledge, forthcoming).
87 Tuomo Tiisala, "Foucault, Neoliberalism, and Equality," *Critical Inquiry* 48, no. 1 (2021). Cf. Michel Foucault, *Naissance de la biopolitique: Cours au Collège de France 1978–1979* (Paris: Gallimard/Seuil, 2004).
88 For a discussion of Foucault's conception of critique in comparison with recent work on ideology critique, see section 5.5. in the next chapter.
89 Michel Foucault, "Qu'est-ce que la critique?," 39.
90 Foucault, "Qu'est-ce que les Lumières?," 1391.

5 Overcoming the present limits of the necessary

In "What Is Enlightenment?" Foucault makes explicit the normative outlook whose exploration I began in the previous chapter by reference to his negative attitude toward the habitual. Instead of any doctrine or body of beliefs, Foucault argues, it is the critical *attitude* that characterizes the ethos of the Enlightenment.[1] And Foucault explicitly presents his own philosophical work as a cultivation of this critical attitude.[2] It is well-known that Foucault characterizes the critical attitude as "a limit attitude," but the nature of the limits whose overcoming Foucault's critique seeks to enable remains poorly understood in the secondary literature.[3] This is not a coincidence, because, as I will show in this chapter, these limits, which Foucault characterizes as "present limits of the necessary," belong to the level of *savoir*.[4] Indeed, that is why Foucault says in the same key passage that critique, as he understands it, "is archaeological in its method."[5] Accordingly, the nature of the obstacle Foucault's critique aims to remove can be properly understood only from the distinctive perspective of the archaeology of knowledge. Therefore, it is one of the longstanding consequences of archaeology's falling into disrepute, largely due to the criticism by Dreyfus and Rabinow, that Foucault's distinctive conception of critique has not been fully appreciated in the secondary literature.[6] In particular, even in the most detailed discussions of Foucault's critique, there is no adequate, or even any, account of the specific nature of the limits that constitute the obstacle which critique seeks to remove. Building on the account of *savoir* I have formulated, however, I will give an account in this chapter of the present limits of the necessary as the obstacle that calls for critique in Foucault's specific sense of the term.

The present limits of the necessary are historically formed and therefore contingent limits of intelligibility that as such also constrain the discursive possibilities in the present. In response to this constraint, which I have called structural heteronomy, the aim of Foucault's critique is to increase the scope of autonomy in the domain of understanding. Here, again, my interpretation largely overlaps with David Owen's argument

that Foucault's critique aims to liberate us from aspectival captivity.[7] But Owen, too, as many others, characterizes Foucault's project, in contrast to ideology critique, as *genealogical* critique.[8] This is not wrong, since Foucault says that critique is "genealogical in its aim," but it is incomplete and potentially misleading, given that, in the very same sentence he says that critique is "archaeological in its method."[9] By taking this claim seriously and grounding it in the account of *savoir* I have developed, I will explain in this chapter how concept-users are constrained by limits of intelligibility that appear inevitable despite they can be overcome and intentionally transformed. As I will show, this fake inevitability appears to concept-users as obviousness (*les évidences*) that patterns of concept-use acquire through habitual repetition in discourse as a social practice. Because conceptual competence rests on this dispositional basis of pattern-governed behavior, as we saw in Chapter 1, the goal of critique cannot be to liberate concept-users from structural heteronomy altogether. Yet, as I will argue, the ethical ideal of autonomy requires that we as concept-users cultivate the critical attitude, locally, as a virtue that enables us to exercise autonomy over those regions of our understanding we most care about.

5.1   Obviousness

In the introduction to the second volume of *History of Sexuality*, Foucault states that for him the goal of philosophical activity, which he characterizes as "thought's critical work on itself," is to examine "how and to what extent it would be possible to think otherwise."[10]

> What would be the value of the relentless pursuit of knowledge if it should only ensure the acquisition of knowledges [*connaissances*], and not, in a certain way and to the largest possible extent, the distraction of the one who knows? There are moments in life when the question of knowing if one can think otherwise than one thinks and perceive otherwise than one perceives is indispensable for continuing to see or to think [*regarder ou à réfléchir*]. Perhaps I will be told that this playing with oneself is but to rest on backstage, and that it belongs at best to this preparatory work that makes itself useless once it has had its effects. But what is then philosophy today — I mean the philosophical activity — if it is not thought's critical work on itself? And if it does not consist, instead of justifying what is already known, of undertaking to know how and to what extent it would be possible to think otherwise?[11]

This is one of the most quoted passages in Foucault's works, but, as far as I know, it has not been connected explicitly with the archaeology of

knowledge. In the light of the interpretation I have advanced, however, it is clear that Foucault here presents his own work and the task of philosophy as a response to the constraint on intelligibility that lies in the precondditions of concept-use on the level of *savoir*. The task of philosophy as "thought's critical activity on itself" is not to evaluate the given beliefs, but to make their conceptual preconditions, too, available for rational control that enables revision and, in that sense, the overcoming of limits that appeared originally inevitable. Therefore, to distinguish critique in this sense from ideology critique, one might call it *the critique of constitution*.[12] As Owen clarifies, these are two different projects that aim to liberate understanding from a self-imposed non-physical constraint. The two lines of critique are distinct because they correspond to two different kinds of constraints that operate on the level of belief and concepts, respectively. This is a crucial difference Foucault does not register when he notes that a central task for both German critical theory and French *épistémologie* is to investigate "a reason that […] does not have an effect of overcoming but on the condition that it comes to liberate itself from itself."[13]

Foucault's conception of the constraint as limits of intelligibility is built into the very idea of the archaeology of knowledge. In "What Is Enlightenment?" this idea appears in the key discussion of critique as "a limit attitude" whose task is to examine "what is the part of that which is singular, contingent, and due to arbitrary constraints in that which is *given* to us as universal, necessary, mandatory."[14] A few pages earlier, Foucault designates these limits as "the present limits of the necessary."[15] Thus, we encounter the guiding idea of the archaeology of knowledge at the center of the task of critique, in the specific sense in which Foucault promotes it. In other words, the present limits of the necessary function as a *historical a priori*. They constitute the conceptual *form* of a particular mode of experience.[16] As we saw in [Chapter 3], this need not contradict Kant's conception of transcendental conditions because they are necessary for all human experience, but not sufficient for any. Therefore, the claim that Foucault historicizes or naturalizes the transcendental is not, strictly speaking, accurate.[17] Indeed, Foucault cautions against such a reading in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* that "nothing would be more amusing, but more inaccurate, than to conceive of this *historical* a priori as a *formal* a priori that was, in addition, endowed with history: a great figure that is empty and does not move that emerged one day on the surface of time, that actualized [*faire valoir*] a tyranny on people's thought no one could escape, that then disappeared all of a sudden in an eclipse no event could have anticipated, a syncopated transcendental, a play of forms flashing on and off [*clignotantes*]. The formal *a priori* and the historical *a priori* have neither the same level nor the same nature: if they intersect, it is because they belong to two different dimensions."[18] Therefore, to understand

Foucault's critical project, it is crucial to explain why and how something in thought is "*given* to us as universal, necessary, mandatory," if it is, in fact, "singular, contingent, and due to arbitrary constraints."[19]

Because Foucault's conception of critique involves a historical dimension, it has become commonplace to characterize it as genealogical critique.[20] To be precise, what Foucault says is that critique has a genealogical "aim" [*finalité*], which is to increase the scope of freedom by revealing the contingent constitution of such elements in our thought that appear inevitable.[21] Historical work, then, specifically a technique Foucault calls *événementalisation*, is the way to reveal and destabilize the fake inevitability of the present limits of the necessary. From the perspective of this genealogical aim, Foucault's critique investigates "to what extent the work of thought to think its own history can enable thought to overcome what it thinks silently and to think otherwise."[22] But if the obstacle critique aims to overcome is "silent," however, that is because it resides on the level of *savoir*. In fact, Foucault consistently employs the term "*les évidences*" to designate the elements of thought that constitute the obstacle that functions as the present limits of the necessary. It is important not to confuse *les évidences* with the concept of evidence in its standard epistemological use. Foucault's topic is neither the justification of beliefs nor what people judge to be necessary, but, as we have seen, limits of intelligibility that are unknown as such but that appear inevitable although they can change in the history of thought. Therefore, what Foucault means by *les évidences* are elements of *obviousness* that are congealed in our practices on the level of *savoir*. These are patterns of dispositional understanding that have acquired the status of obviousness, not because some proposition is evidently necessary but as a result of repetition in discourse and other social practices.

Thus, obviousness is the experiential correlate of the habitual, a structural blind spot where the exercise of judgment goes without saying as dispositional understanding and escapes rational control. If Foucault deems that the habitual is permanently dangerous, as we saw in the previous chapter, that is because it produces obviousness that congeals into the present limits of the necessary. Thus, *History of Sexuality*, for instance, undertakes "to confront this very everyday notion of sexuality, step away from it, put into test its familiar obviousness [*éprouver son évidence familière*]."[23] Critique's archaeological task is to *disclose* the limits of intelligibility that appear inevitable due to obviousness, whereas the role of genealogy is to *deprive* these limits of their obviousness. To achieve these two correlated ends, archaeology studies the *form* of a given system of thought and genealogy its historical *formation*.[24] From this perspective, one is right to find the habitual problematic because the task of critique is a battle against obviousness, a mission Foucault once praised as follows: "I dream of the

intellectual destroyer of obviousness [*des évidences*] and universalities, of the one who in the inertias and constraints of the present discerns and points out the weak points, the openings, the lines of force, the one who is incessantly moving and knows neither exactly where he will be nor what he will think tomorrow, for he is too attentive to the present […]."[25]

Foucault never mentions, as far as I know, that obviousness (*les évidences*) is a central theme in Louis Althusser's theory of ideology.[26] Consider the following passage from Althusser's essay "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" in 1970: "It is indeed a peculiarity of ideology that it imposes (without appearing to do so, since these are 'obviousnesses') obviousnesses as obviousnesses, which we cannot *fail to recognize* and before which we have the inevitable and natural reaction of crying out (aloud or in the 'silence of consciousness'): 'That's obvious! That's right! That's true!' At work in this reaction is the ideological recognition function which is one of the two functions of ideology as such (its inverse being the function of misrecognition [*méconnaissance*])."[27] By framing critique in terms of the present limits of the necessary, Foucault detaches it from "the function of misrecognition" and thus from the task of evaluation that constitutes ideology critique. Thus, Foucault rejects ideology critique that is grounded in a conception of justice and only develops a conception of critique that addresses the obviousness that constrains our autonomy as thinkers and agents.[28] In Althusser's terms, this means that Foucault's critique focuses exclusively on "the recognition function," which operates on the level of *savoir*, as I have described it, in terms of dispositional understanding. Instead of acknowledging Althusser's discussion of obviousness, however, Foucault notes that the concern with obviousness is a bequest from Maurice Merleau-Ponty. In 1979, at the end of a text that includes one of Foucault's earliest discussions of Kant's essay on the Enlightenment, he invokes this theme in Merleau-Ponty explicitly as "the ethics of obviousness."[29] Indeed, in contrast to ideology critique that is grounded in a conception of justice, Foucault targets critique to obviousness with an ethical motivation that is based on the ideal of autonomy.

In 1981, Foucault explicitly identifies obviousness as the target of critical work, as follows:

> Critique does not consist of saying that things are not well the way they are. It consists of seeing on what types of obviousness [*évidences*], familiarity, modes of thinking that are acquired and not thought through [*non réfléchis*] the practices one accepts are based.
>
> One must overcome the sacralization of the social as the only site of reality [*seule instance du réel*] and stop considering as thin air this essential thing in human life and human relations, namely thought. Thought indeed exists beyond and beneath systems and edifices of

discourse. It is often hidden, but always animates everyday behavior [*comportements*]. There is always a little bit of thought even in the silliest of institutions, there is always thought even in the silent habits.

Critique consists of driving out [*débusquer*] this thought and of trying to change it: showing that things are not as obvious [*aussi évidentes*] as people believe, making it somehow the case that what is accepted as going without saying would not go without saying anymore. Doing critique is to make difficult gestures that are too easy to make. [...][30]

Accordingly, in the same year, Foucault retrospectively sums up the overarching aspiration of his work like this: "I wanted to reintegrate a lot of the obviousness [*évidences*] of our practices into the historicity of some of these practices and thereby rob them of their obviousness, in order to give them back the mobility which they had and which they should always have."[31] This, of course, is the critical task of scrutinizing "what is the part of that which is singular, contingent, and due to arbitrary constraints in that which is *given* to us as universal, necessary, mandatory."[32] Foucault does not systematically attribute obviousness to the level of *savoir*, but this connection is explicit when he explains how historical inquiry destabilizes obviousness. *Évenementalisation* is Foucault's name for the historiographical technique he uses for that purpose. "What does *événementalisation* mean? First, breaking the obvious [*les évidences*]. It is a question of making a 'singularity' emerge, where one is quite tempted to refer to a historical constant or to an immediate anthropological trait, or furthermore to something that similarly seems obvious to everyone. To show that it was not 'as necessary as that'. ... Breaking the obvious, these obvious elements [*les évidences*] on which our *savoir*, our acceptance, our practices rely. Such is the first theoretical-political function of what I call *événementalisation*."[33] This genealogical dimension of Foucault's critical task consists of "rediscovering the connections, encounters, supports, obstacles, plays of force, strategies, and so on, that have, in a given moment, given shape to that which subsequently will function as obviousness [*évidence*], universality, necessity."[34]

5.2 Present limits of the necessary

I have argued that Foucault's critique seeks to undermine the obviousness of the present limits of the necessary that function as a historical a priori and are created and sustained through socially acquired, habitually perpetuated patterns of concept-use in thought and action. In this connection, it is illuminating to cast Foucault's conception of a critique against the background of Gaston Bachelard's epistemological work, where

epistemological obstacles are understood as conceptual blindspots that arise from within the specific conceptual architecture of a given scientific theory. As Gary Gutting notes, Bachelard locates epistemological obstacles precisely on the unconscious habitual level of scientific practices: "The attitudes that constitute given concepts and methods as epistemological obstacles are not explicitly formulated by those they constrain but rather operate at the level of implicit assumptions or cognitive and perceptual habits. Consequently, Bachelard proposed to develop a set of techniques designed to bring them out to our full reflective awareness. He spoke of these techniques as effecting a 'psychoanalysis' of reason."[35] Foucault's archaeology of knowledge, too, is such a technique, and it is in this sense that "critique is archaeological in its method."[36] By means of archaeology Foucault aims to uncover the current historically specific *form* of thought, "the present limits of the necessary," whereas genealogy is a technique for revealing the contingency of that seemingly obvious form by tracing its *formation* through multifarious events in the historical field of social practices.[37] But Foucault's critique extends Bachelard's project of a psychoanalysis of reason from the epistemology of specific sciences to the everyday experience of human subjects, specifically to the historical ontology of ourselves, and anchors the project, somewhat implicitly, in the ideal of autonomy.

Ian Hacking was the first to note the role of Foucault's archaeology as a technique for overcoming epistemological obstacles, thus understood. Already in 1973, Hacking concluded his Dawes Hicks lecture at the British Academy on Descartes and Leibniz and the problem of eternal truths, thus: "The flybottle was shaped by prehistory and only archaeology could display its shape."[38] But whereas Wittgenstein used the metaphor of a flybottle to illustrate his view of philosophical problems as conceptual confusions that are created by an *illegitimate* use of concepts, characteristically by philosophers themselves, for Foucault and Bachelard alike, there is nothing illegitimate about the use of concepts that generates the epistemological obstacles that call for a psychoanalysis of reason or a critique by means of archaeological and genealogical techniques. However, there is another simile in Wittgenstein's rich repository that captures exactly how the call for a critique, as Foucault understands it, arises from the structure of reasoning as a discursive practice. In one of the most striking passages of *On Certainty*, Wittgenstein describes how the limits of necessity are partially a result of historical transformations in the normative structure of a discursive practice, as follows:

94. But I did not get my picture of the world by satisfying myself of its correctness; nor do I have it because I am satisfied of its correctness. No: it is the inherited background against which I distinguish between true and false.

95. The propositions describing this world-picture might be part of a kind of mythology. And their role is like that of rules of a game; and the game can be learned purely practically, without learning any explicit rules.
96. It might be imagined that some propositions, of the form of empirical propositions, were hardened and functioned as channels for such empirical propositions as were not hardened but fluid; and that this relation altered with time, in that fluid propositions hardened, and hard ones became fluid.
97. The mythology may change back into a state of flux, the river-bed of thought may shift. But I distinguish between the movement of the waters of the river-bed and the shift of the bed itself; though there is no sharp division of the one from the other.
98. But if someone were to say 'So logic too is an empirical science' he would be wrong. Yet this is right: the same proposition may get treated at one time as something to test by experience, at another as a rule of testing.
99. And the bank of that river consists partly of hard rock, subject to no alteration or only to an imperceptible one, partly of sand, which now in one place now in another gets washed away, or deposited.[39]

In this simile, the dynamic status and historical transformations of the riverbanks, which define the current scope of empirical inquiry, represent the present limits of the necessary that Foucault's critique aims to disclose and make mobile again. The convergence between Foucault's and Wittgenstein's thoughts is striking regarding the *contingent* status of these limits, as well as the *functionally* necessary structural role such limits play in a discursive practice. As Wittgenstein puts it, "the river-bed of thought [that] may shift" is "the *inherited* background against which I distinguish between true and false," but which itself is *not* propositionally articulated. It is unconscious. This unrepresented background, which Wittgenstein also designates as a world-picture, "Weltbild," constitutes the fundamental level in the normative structure of a discursive practice, where reasons come to an end but "the end is not an ungrounded presupposition, but an ungrounded way of acting."[40] Wittgenstein, too, registers that this habitual repetition of patterns of reasoning confers a status of obviousness to them in a given discursive practice: "I say world-picture and not hypothesis, because it is the matter-of-course [*selbstverständliche*] foundation […] and as such also goes unmentioned."[41] Here Wittgenstein's choice of word, "selbstverständliche," corresponds precisely to Foucault's use of "les évidences" – both are plausibly translated into English as "obvious." Wittgenstein notes that if the implicit background of a world-picture *were* represented as a set of propositions, these propositions *would* express rules. But, crucially, in that case, the rules will express rules of a practice that were originally operative without being represented as such.

For though Wittgenstein says about these rules that "their role is like that of rules of a game," he underscores immediately that "the game can be learned purely practically, without learning any explicit rules."[42] And it is this implicit status of the fundamental norms of a discursive practice that makes them function as "the matter-of-course foundation" of reasoning. Whereas Wittgenstein articulates this pragmatist epistemological view and discusses in detail its consequences with respect to the very idea that knowledge has foundations, we have seen that Foucault's adoption of this pragmatist approach gives rise to the problem of structural heteronomy. But, a As I have said, the problem presupposes a commitment to an ethical outlook that is organized around the ideal of autonomy.[43]

5.3 Foucault's commitment to the ideal of autonomy

In "What Is Enlightenment?" Foucault says that the goal of critique is "to relaunch as far and as widely as possible the indefinite work of freedom."[44] Thus understood, critique is "a historico-practical test of the limits we can overcome, and thus […] work of ourselves on ourselves as free beings."[45] Both remarks underscore a conception of freedom as an activity, which involves a reflexive dimension, that is also repeated in Foucault's characterization of philosophy as "thought's critical work on itself."[46] Thus, critique itself is an element of the work of freedom it promotes. There is no question about Foucault's high esteem for the value of such work. As we have already seen, Foucault maintains that "one of the tasks, one of the points [*sens*] of human existence, that in which human freedom consists, is to never accept anything as definitive, untouchable, obvious, immobile."[47] This work of freedom is "indefinite" because the present limits of the necessary cannot be transcended once and for all.[48] As I have argued, these limits arise from the preconditions of concept-use as a discursive practice, which is why, as Foucault says, critique needs to be archaeological in its method. Since the freedom for the sake of which critique is conducted is never achieved once and for all, it is inaccurate, or at least highly misleading, to describe it as "liberty" or "emancipation."[49] Instead, "autonomy" is the term Foucault uses, when he characterizes critique and the work of freedom it promotes. This is not surprising since autonomy is positive freedom, an ongoing activity of self-governing, including the potential for deliberate self-transformation.[50] What the present limits of the necessary constrain is the scope of this activity because what can be intentionally done depends on what is thinkable. Given Foucault's view that the limits of intelligibility are constituted by rules that are implicit in a discursive practice, the concept of autonomy can be used to explain, as we have seen, how freedom can be exercised in the domain of understanding by assessing and revising these rules. Although the archaeology of knowledge is built

around a view of implicit conceptual rules, I do not claim that Foucault's conception of critique invokes a notion of autonomy as acting on the basis of representations of rules as the goal it promotes. Foucault's characterizations of autonomy are less determinate. However, in general, the central idea of freedom as an activity of self-governing will be plausibly elaborated in terms of representations of rules if one asks in virtue of what freedom as autonomy is exercised.

Autonomy, understood as self-governing, is that for the sake of which Foucault's critique is undertaken. In other words, the critical project is motivated by Foucault's commitment to autonomy as the ethical ideal. In claiming this, I do not mean to suggest that Foucault subscribes to Kant's view of the content of autonomous lawgiving or to Kant's account of the metaphysical foundations of the capacity of rational beings to be the source of the representations of rules they follow in reasoning. And yet I believe that Foucault nevertheless wholeheartedly embraces the ideal of autonomy as the source of value. This commitment to autonomy consists in an endorsement of the unconditional *value* of a subject's self-determination – that is, of the value of one's use of one's *own* understanding. This commitment is independent of any particular view about how the capacity for self-determination *ought* to be exercised and what makes this capacity possible.

Once we attribute to Foucault this commitment to the value of autonomy, one can see that his somewhat notorious refusal to propose normative principles for action can be charitably seen as a *consequence* of that commitment. In an interview conducted in 1975, Foucault links this refusal to the very task of a critique, as follows:

> *What are the tasks of the critique today?*
> What do you mean by this word? Only a Kantian can attribute a general meaning to the word "critique."
> *Yesterday, you said that your thinking is fundamentally critical [fondamentalement critique]. What does it mean for work to be critical?*
> I would say: it is an attempt to unmask as much as possible, that is, as deeply and generally as possible, all the effects of dogmatism that are related to knowledge [*savoir*], and all the effects of knowledge [*savoir*] that are related to dogmatism. […] I don't want to conduct a critique that prevents others from speaking, to exercise in my name a terrorism of the purity of truth. Nor do I want to speak in the name of others and pretend to say better what they have to say. My critique has as its goal to enable others to speak, without putting limits to their right to speak.[51]

If it has been hard for Foucault's critics to take seriously this idea of a critique as *merely* enabling others to speak, it is because they have not

adequately understood the nature of the obstacle whose overcoming requires the special effort of thought's critical work on itself. But once the obstacle is recognized as obviousness that is congealed on the level of *savoir* into present limits of the necessary, then Foucault's refusal to articulate normative principles appears in a radically different light. After all, the ideal of autonomy assigns value to *self*-determination. And the conceptual point that needs to be stressed here is that autonomy cannot be achieved or even promoted by legislating rules or plans for others. The idea of autonomy does not represent just an ideal of conformity to rules, but an ideal of a distinctive type of conformity that is a result of one's own reasoning, so that the conformity to rules is something one endorses. That is why the ideal of autonomy can be pursued only from first-personal perspective. The work of freedom, whose scope Foucault's critique seeks to expand, simply cannot be externalized. It cannot be delegated to others, even though they might be "intellectuals."[52] Therefore, the goal of enabling others to think differently for themselves is exactly what Foucault *ought* to pursue, given his commitment to the value of autonomy. The whole point of this task and what gives it value is that one undertakes it from one's own perspective.[53]

5.4   The critical attitude as virtue

By characterizing the critical attitude as virtue, then, Foucault's point is to deny two conceptions of its source of value. "[W]hatever pleasures or benefits might accompany this curious activity of critique, it seems that it carries quite regularly, almost always, not only some value of utility it claims, but that underlying it there is a more general imperative – even more general than that of avoiding errors. There is something in critique that is akin to virtue."[54] Critique is ethical work that enlarges the scope of freedom that subjects are able to recognize in the present. To be sure, it may result in a range of pleasures and other benefits, but it also might not. Similarly, critique may help to promote knowledge through the rational reflection it enables, but this, too, is contingent with respect to its value. On Foucault's view, the value of critique is instrumental, but it is anchored in the ideal of autonomy. In the light of this ideal, critical work is required as a response to structural heteronomy. Importantly, as I have emphasized, the obstacle that requires critical work belongs to understanding. And yet the motivation is decidedly ethical, since it is independent of the epistemic value of correcting errors and promoting knowledge.

   To sum up, I want to organize three main components of my discussion – thought's critical work on itself, the present limits of the necessary, and the ideal of autonomy – within the framework Foucault developed for analyzing the history of ethics. This way of applying Foucault's analytical tools

to his own work will illuminate the specificity of his own ethical outlook. Foucault defines ethics as subject's relation to itself and he suggests that changes in the history of ethics can be accordingly analyzed in terms of four distinct yet interdependent aspects of this reflexive relationship: (1) ethical substance, (2) mode of subjection, (3) ethical work, and (4) telos.[55] Ethical substance is the part of the moral subject that is the object of ethical attention (thoughts, actions, desires, memories, feelings). Ethical work, in turn, is what a subject undertakes in order to transform the chosen ethical substance. The telos is the final end a subject aspires to obtain by means of performing ethical work on the ethical substance. And, finally, the mode of subjection is the way in which the subject recognizes itself as bound by a moral obligation to perform this ethical work (through divine command, pure practical reason, utility maximization, natural law, obligations of a social role). Accordingly, the structure of the ethical project that envelops Foucault's conception of a critique can be presented as follows. The *ethical substance* consists in habitual patterns of concept-use that make up an unconscious of knowledge and thus become congealed into present limits of the necessary that appear obvious, although they are, in fact, contingent. The *telos* is the ideal of autonomy understood as subject's complete self-determination. Critique, understood as thought's work on itself by using the techniques of archaeology of knowledge and genealogy, is the *ethical work* that identifies the present limits of the necessary and unmasks their contingency, thus enlarging the scope we recognize for the exercise of our autonomy as subjects. The *mode of subjection*, finally, is simply our nature as thinking beings, whose capacity to think is essentially socially acquired through linguistic training and therefore always exercised in some historically particular form whose normative structure cannot be made fully explicit at once.

We can see now why Foucault's conception of critique cannot be fully understood but on the basis of the specific view of *savoir* that underlies his notion of the archaeology of knowledge. In his inaugural lecture at the College de France, in 1970, Foucault argued that the order of discourse is organized by three principles of exclusion, the most familiar being simply the prohibition to say certain things while the second principle is the line we draw between reason and madness. Yet it is the third principle of exclusion, namely the division between a discourse that is true-or-false, on the one hand, and the space of unintelligible possibilities, on the other, that constitutes the sustained point of focus Foucault examines from different perspectives throughout his work. In the inaugural lecture, Foucault states that this division between a well-defined conceptual space and an outside terrain of semantic unintelligibility is "a historical, modifiable, and institutionally constraining system."[56] *This* is the unconscious system that functions as a historical a priori of particular modes of experience, the implicit system of

norms that peacefully orders us to a particular mode of experiencing what is possible and what is obvious. The task of a critique as thought's work on itself must be understood vis-à-vis the distinctive type of obstacle that arises from this structural constraint in the order of discourse.

Once we appreciate this archaeological basis of Foucault's conception of a critique, it becomes evident how decidedly different the resulting picture of ethics is from the problem of self-incurred minority in Kant's original discussion of the Enlightenment. While both Kant and Foucault are concerned with overcoming obstacles that limit one's autonomy as a subject, the sources and characters of the obstacles they identify result in a radical divergence concerning the respective remedies they propose. For Kant, the problem is fundamentally *psychological*, even though it is deeply embedded in a social and political context, because it concerns the extent to which an individual relies on her own faculty of understanding. "It is because of laziness and cowardice that so great a part of humankind, after nature has long since emancipated them from other people's direction […], nevertheless gladly remains minors for life," according to Kant.[57] Correspondingly, the task of exiting this state is a psychological challenge. Kant writes that "it is difficult for any single individual to extricate himself from the minority that has become almost nature to him. He has even grown fond of it and is really unable for the time being to make use of his own understanding, because he was never allowed to make the attempt."[58] To be sure, these psychological challenges and the underpinning relations of power are not to be belittled, but nevertheless, there is an important sense in which the solution Kant offers is remarkably simple and straightforward: *use* your own understanding! "Have *courage* to make use of your *own* understanding" is the motto of the Enlightenment Kant proposes as a solution to the state of self-incurred minority.[59]

In contrast, for Foucault, the issue has nothing to do with psychological features like "cowardice," "laziness," and "courage," but it arises with an inevitability from the structure of thought itself. The Foucaultian subject is trapped within "the present of limits of the necessary," which silently, unbeknownst to the subject, order the subject's ways of thinking and acting through those patterns of reasoning that have assumed the status of obviousness as a result of habitual repetition in a practice. Thus, even when the subject *is* using its own understanding, the subject does not know exhaustively, and never can, the normative underpinnings of the concepts that are being used. This limitation to the full autonomy of the subject is not a psychological problem but an epistemological obstacle that is constitutive of the structure of thought as a discursive practice. The insight that animates Foucault's work is that no subject can make its ways of understanding completely its own. Thus, the "minority" of the Foucaultian subject is not self-incurred and, in fact, it is misleading to characterize it

as a state of minority at all. According to Kant, "[m]inority is inability to make use of one's own understanding without direction from another."[60] But the epistemological obstacle which the present limits of the necessary constitute emerges regardless of the extent of self-reliance one exhibits in reasoning. Nor is this obstacle a manifestation of alienation, understood as a contingent psychological phenomenon that exhibits, as Rahel Jaeggi argues, a "relation of relationlessness" between an agent and her actions. Instead, the problem is structural heteronomy.[61] Therefore, because the limitation to full autonomy is not a psychological problem for Foucault, the remedy he proposes is not the virtue of courage but, as he states, "the critical attitude as virtue."[62]

5.5 Critique of concepts: Constitution and ideology

The task of critique, as I have defended it, following Foucault, as a response to the problem of structural heteronomy is not to be confused with ideology critique. As Owen has shown, the divergence between two kinds of critique and especially a failure to recognize it largely explains the rather myopic reception of Foucault's work among critical theorists.[63] Foucault's account of critique is faithful to Kant's conception of critique as an inquiry into the constitution of the limits of experience, although, as we have seen, Foucault shifts the focus from transcendental conditions to the present limits of the necessary. To highlight this shared conception of critique as an investigation into limits that play a role in the constitution of experience, I choose to name the type of critique Foucault presents as "the critique of constitution." In addition to ideology critique, it should be contrasted with varieties of immanent critique.[64] What ideology critique and immanent critique share, but the critique of constitution rejects, is the idea that critique aims to identify and rectify something that is *wrong*. Instead, the critique of constitution does not evaluate the concepts it studies but makes them available for assessment and revision. Its goal is not justice but freedom, understood as autonomy, and extended from the will to understanding. It is important not to lose sight of this distinction when one compares the account of critique as ethical work that I have defended with recent work in the theory of ideology which recognizes the critique of concepts as a component of ideology critique.

Sally Haslanger's work provides an influential articulation of this new, "non-cognitivist" approach to the theory of ideology.[65] In contrast to the traditional approach to ideology as a set of beliefs that, roughly, produce or sustain unjust social conditions, Haslanger locates ideology on the level of socially coordinated dispositions instead. If ideology is a network of socially coordinated dispositions that organize cognition, agency, and affect, then every culture has an ideology. Haslanger maintains, building on

J. M. Balkin's work, that in this *descriptive* sense, ideology is "a cultural techne," namely a depository of public meanings that enable social co-ordination and interaction.[66] Accordingly, in the *pejorative* sense, which is used in ideology critique, Haslanger argues that ideology is cultural techne *gone wrong*, specifically cultural techne that produces "unjust consequences."[67] Thus, although ideology has no propositional content, it can be evaluated, indeed critiqued, by using a conception of justice to assess the consequences a given cultural techne produces. Haslanger notes that the unjust consequences involve both epistemic and moral failures, but she argues that a theory of ideology is needed to explain the prevalence and persistence of such failures as a systemic injustice people unwittingly produce and sustain in a given social context.[68] From this perspective, concepts, too, can be objects of ideology critique.[69] And the task of critique is to evaluate, revise, and reject concepts, roughly, based on the demands of social justice. Thus understood, the critique of concepts is conducted as conceptual ethics and conceptual engineering, as illustrated by Haslanger's ameliorative account of WOMAN.[70]

Now, to sharpen the contrast between the critique of constitution and ideology critique as two distinct but complementary ways to understand the critique of concepts, let me point out a related ambiguity in the notion of "conceptual dogmatism" which Haslanger uses to explain why a critique of concepts is needed.[71] Haslanger adopts the notion from Elizabeth Anderson, who defines it as lack of conceptual alternatives, thus:

> A critique of a concept is not a rejection of that concept, but an exploration of its various meanings and limitations. One way to expose the limitations of a concept is by introducing new concepts that have different meanings but can plausibly contend for some of the same uses to which the criticized concept is typically put. The introduction of such new concepts gives us choices about how to think that we did not clearly envision before. Before envisioning these alternatives, our use of the concept under question is dogmatic. We deploy it automatically, unquestioningly, because it seems as if it is the inevitable conceptual framework within which inquiry must proceed. But envisioning alternatives, we convert dogmas into tools; ideas that we can choose to use or not, depending on how well the use of these ideas suits our investigative purposes.[72]

Notice that Anderson does not discuss here the assessment, rejection, and revision of concepts on the basis of justice or some other values. The problem of conceptual dogmatism is different. It is not that we are using concepts that produce and sustain injustice. Instead, the problem is that we seem to have no choice but to use the given concepts because we lack

conceptual alternatives. This is clearly how Haslanger also understands the problem when she adds the qualification: "in order to create the critical distance that gives us 'choice,' critique need not introduce a wholly new concept, but can just suggest a revision to a concept or a new understanding of a concept."[73] There are two points I want to make with the help of this passage on conceptual dogmatism. First, as already noted, conceptual dogmatism as lack of concept choice should be distinguished from conceptual ethics and conceptual engineering as a separate problem. The problem of dogmatism is not how to evaluate and improve the given concepts but how to make them available for rational control in the first place. Second, how one understands and addresses the problem of conceptual dogmatism depends, unsurprisingly, on the theory of concepts one is working with.

What I have named the problem of structural heteronomy is, in effect, one way to explain and address conceptual dogmatism. If we use concepts "automatically, unquestioningly," as Anderson describes the problem of conceptual dogmatism, that is because it is structurally necessary for concept-users to rely on dispositional understanding.[74] The dogmatism is structurally built into the preconditions of discursive cognition, but it can and should be resisted, as I have argued, by means of the critique of constitution that aims at semantic self-consciousness. As we have seen, this account rests on two commitments that might be challenged. First, it relies on a view of concepts as partially constituted by rules that govern their use in reasoning. Second, the account holds that by default concept-users understand these rules implicitly as norms of a discursive practice that as such escape discursive awareness, but they can be made explicit as representations of rules that enable rational control. However, this is not how Haslanger and, I think, Anderson either view the problem of conceptual dogmatism. Haslanger is working with a representationalist theory of concepts.[75] If one understands a concept as a partition of logical space instead of an inferential role, the problem of conceptual dogmatism appears as a lack of alternatives. One is stuck with the given conceptual repertoire if there is no menu of alternatives. But there is no obstacle in principle to the creation of new concepts that can be compared with the ones already in use. Thus, conceptual engineering is the way to tackle conceptual dogmatism if the source of the problem is an unduly narrow menu of options.

I hope that this brief discussion helps to position the account of critique I have defended in relation to recent work on ideology critique as well as conceptual ethics and conceptual engineering. In principle, the critique of constitution and ideology critique are not in competition, but they respond to two different tasks. The first is to make concepts available for rational control. The second is to evaluate and improve the given concepts. As we have seen, it depends on the theory of concepts

which form the first task will take. For those who deny that a concept is partly defined as an inferential role, it might still be possible to accept my argument for structural heteronomy in a revised form that focuses on the understanding of concepts instead of concepts as such. However, the exploration of such alternatives is a task that falls beyond the scope of the current study.

Notes

 1 Michel Foucault, "Qu'est-ce que les Lumières?," in *Dits et écrits II, 1976–1988*, eds. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 1393–1394.
 2 Ibid.
 3 See, especially, Judith Butler, "What Is Critique? An Essay on Foucault's Virtue," in *The Political: Readings in Continental Philosophy*, ed. David Ingram (London: Basil Blackwell, 2002); Béatrice Han-Pile, "Foucault, Normativity and Critique as a Practice of the Self," *Continental Philosophy Review* 49, no. 1 (2016).
 4 Foucault, "Qu'est-ce que les Lumières?," 1391.
 5 Foucault, "Qu'est-ce que les Lumières?," 1393.
 6 Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982).
 7 David Owen, "Criticism and Captivity: On Genealogy and Critical Theory," *European Journal of Philosophy* 10, no. 2 (2002).
 8 Others include Colin Koopman, *Genealogy as Critique: Foucault and the Problems of Modernity* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013), and Daniele Lorenzini, *The Force of Truth: Critique, Genealogy, and Truth-Telling in Michel Foucault* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2023).
 9 Foucault, "Qu'est-ce que les Lumières?," 1393.
10 Michel Foucault, *Histoire de la sexualité 2: L'usage des plaisirs* (Paris: Gallimard, 1984), 14–15.
11 Ibid.
12 I make this argument in more detail with Sakari Säynäjoki in the context of critical theory, broadly construed. See Sakari Säynäjoki and Tuomo Tiisala, "Revisable A Priori as a Political Problem: Critique of Constitution in Critical Theory," *Journal of Social and Political Philosophy* 2, no. 2 (2023).
13 Michel Foucault, "Introduction par Michel Foucault," in *Dits et écrits II, 1976–1988*, eds. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 433.
14 Foucault, "Qu'est-ce que les Lumières?," 1392–1393. Added emphasis.
15 Foucault, "Qu'est-ce que les Lumières?," 1391.
16 Foucault, *L'usage des plaisirs*, 17.
17 Cf. Johanna Oksala, *Foucault on Freedom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 20–22, 37; Han-Pile, "Foucault, Normativity and Critique as a Practice of the Self".
18 Michel Foucault, *L'archéologie du savoir* (Paris: Gallimard, 1969), 169.
19 Foucault, "Qu'est-ce que les Lumières?," 1393. Added emphasis.
20 Owen, "Criticism and Captivity."; Koopman, *Genealogy as Critique*; Lorenzini, *The Force of Truth*.
21 Foucault, "Qu'est-ce que les Lumières?," 1393.
22 Foucault, *L'usage des plaisirs*, 15.

23 Foucault, *L'usage des plaisirs*, 9. Added emphasis.
24 Foucault, *L'usage des plaisirs*, 17–18.
25 Michel Foucault, "Non au sexe roi," in *Dits et écrits II, 1976–1988*, eds. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 268–269.
26 Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," trans. Ben Brewster, in *On the Reproduction of Capitalism: Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses* (London: Verso, 2014). Thanks to Verena Erlenbusch-Anderson for drawing my attention to Althusser's use of "les évidences".
27 Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," 262–263.
28 Foucault briefly notes in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* that the relationship between science and ideology should be studied on the level of *savoir* with a focus on the ways in which science functions as a discursive practice with other social practices. When Foucault later redescribes this topic as "politics of truth," he no longer uses the term "ideology" to present his own approach, but only to describe the approach it opposes. See Foucault, *L'archéologie du savoir*, 240–243; Michel Foucault, "Entretien avec Michel Foucault," in *Dits et écrits II, 1976–1988*, eds. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 158–160.
29 Michel Foucault, "Pour une morale de l'inconfort," in *Dits et écrits II, 1976–1988*, eds. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 787. Cf. Michel Foucault, "L'intellectuel et les pouvoirs," in *Dits et écrits II, 1976–1988*, eds. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 1569.
30 Michel Foucault, "Est-il donc important de penser?," in *Dits et écrits II, 1976–1988*, eds. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 999.
31 Michel Foucault, "Entretien de Michel Foucault avec André Berten, 7 mai 1981," in *Mal faire, dire vrai: Fonction de l'aveu en justice. Cours de Louvain, 1981*, eds. Fabienne Brion and Bernard E. Harcourt (Louvain and Chicago: Presses universitaire de Louvain and University of Chicago Press, 2012), 242.
32 Foucault, "Qu'est-ce que les Lumières?," 1393.
33 Michel Foucault, "Table ronde du 20 mai 1978," in *Dits et écrits II, 1976–1988*, eds. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Galimard, 2001), 842.
34 Ibid.
35 Gary Gutting, *Michel Foucault's Archaeology of Scientific Reason* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 17.
36 Foucault, "Qu'est-ce que les Lumières?," 1393.
37 Foucault, *L'usage des plaisirs*, 17.
38 Ian Hacking, "Leibniz and Descartes: Proof and Eternal Truths," in *Historical Ontology* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 213.
39 Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Über Gewissheit / On Certainty*, trans. Denis Paul and G. E. M. Anscombe (Oxford: Blackwell, 1969), §§94–99.
40 Wittgenstein, *On Certainty*, §110. Added emphasis. Translation modified.
41 Wittgenstein, *On Certainty*, §167.
42 Wittgenstein, *On Certainty*, §95.
43 Another illuminating point of comparison would be Heidegger's discussion of obviousness and the leveling down of possibility due to the shared understanding of the world. See Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), 238.

44 Foucault, "Qu'est-ce que les Lumières?," 1393.
45 Foucault, "Qu'est-ce que les Lumières?," 1394. Added emphasis.
46 Foucault, *L'usage des plaisirs*, 14.
47 Michel Foucault, "Interview de Michel Foucault, 3 novembre 1980," in *L'origine de l'herméneutique de soi: Conférences prononcées à Dartmouth Collège, 1980*, eds. Henri-Paul Fruchaud and Daniele Lorenzini (Paris: Vrin, 2013), 140.
48 Foucault, "Qu'est-ce que les Lumières?," 1393.
49 When Koopman groups "autonomy" together with "liberty" and "emancipation" as conceptions of freedom Foucault rejects, I take it that he has a more substantive view of autonomy in mind than the one I attribute to Foucault. What Foucault rejects, according to Koopman, is "freedom as a doctrinal right to private autonomy at the heart of liberation practices." See Koopman, *Genealogy as Critique*, 174–175.
50 For the distinction between negative and positive concepts of freedom, see Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, in *Practical Philosophy*, trans. and ed. Mary J. Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 94–95.
51 Michel Foucault, "Michel Foucault. Les responses du philosophe," in *Dits et écrits I, 1954–1975*, eds. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 1683–1684.
52 Michel Foucault, "Les intellectuels et le pouvoir," in *Dits et écrits I, 1954–1975*, eds. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 2001).
53 To see how radically Foucault here departs from the privileged role assigned to the intellectual in the Marxist tradition of a critique, it is instructive to review his exchange in 1973 with "José," a worker who maintains that it is the task of an intellectual to make the working class fully self-conscious of its exploited status. See Michel Foucault, "L'intellectuel sert à rassembler les idées mais son savoir est partiel par rapport au savoir ouvrier," in *Dits et écrits I, 1954–1975*, eds. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 1289.
54 Michel Foucault, "Qu'est-ce que la critique?," in *Qu'est-ce que la critique? Suivi de La culture de soi*, eds. Henri-Paul Fruchaud and Daniele Lorenzini (Paris: Vrin, 2015), 34–35.
55 Foucault, *L'usage des plaisirs*, 33–35.
56 Michel Foucault, *L'ordre du discours: Leçon inaugurale au Collège de France prononcée 2 décembre 1970* (Paris: Gallimard, 1971), 16.
57 Immanuel Kant, "An Answer to the Question: What Is Enlightenment?," in *Practical Philosophy*, trans. and ed. Mary J. Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 17.
58 Ibid.
59 Ibid. Added emphasis.
60 Ibid.
61 Rahel Jaeggi, *Alienation*, trans. Frederick Neuhouser and Alan E. Smith (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), 1–42.
62 Foucault, "Qu'est-ce que la critique?," 35.
63 Owen, "Criticism and Captivity."
64 Säynäjoki and Tiisala, "Revisable A Priori as a Political Problem."
65 For the formulation of a non-cognitivist theory of ideology, see Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," and for its more recent elaborations, see J. M. Balkin, *Cultural Software: A Theory of Ideology* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998); Robin Celikates, "From Critical Social Theory

to a Social Theory of Critique: On the Critique of Ideology after the Pragmatic Turn," *Constellations* 13, no. 1 (2006); Rahel Jaeggi, "Rethinking Ideology," in *New Waves in Political Philosophy*, eds. Boudewijn de Bruin and Christopher F. Zurn (New York: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2009); Sally Haslanger, *Resisting Reality: Social Construction and Social Critique* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); Sally Haslanger, *Critical Theory and Practice* (Amsterdam: Koninklijke Van Gorcum, 2017); Sally Haslanger, *Ideology in Practice: What Does Ideology Do?* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2021).

66 Balkin, *Cultural Software*. As we saw in Chapter 1, Wittgenstein defends essentially the same view: "To understand a sentence means to understand a language. To understand a language means to have mastered a technique." Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophische Untersuchungen / Philosophical Investigations: The German Text, with a Revised English Translation*, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), §199.

67 Haslanger, *Critical Theory and Practice*, 39.

68 Haslanger, *Critical Theory and Practice*, 39–41.

69 Haslanger, *Resisting Reality*, 17–18.

70 The approach of conceptual ethics and conceptual engineering is explicitly developed in Sally Haslanger, "Going On, Not in the Same Way," in *Conceptual Engineering and Conceptual Ethics*, eds. Alexis Burgess, Herman Cappelen, and David Plunkett (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020). For the ameliorative account of WOMAN which illustrates the approach, see Sally Haslanger, "Gender and Race: (What) Are They? (What) Do We Want Them to Be?," *Noûs* 34, no. 1 (2000).

71 Haslanger, *Resisting Reality*, 17.

72 Elizabeth Anderson, "Unstrapping the Straitjacket of 'Preference': A Comment on Amartya Sen's Contributions to Philosophy and Economics," *Economics and Philosophy* 17, no. 1 (2001), 22. Added emphasis.

73 Haslanger, *Resisting Reality*, 18.

74 Anderson, "Unstrapping the Straitjacket of 'Preference," 22.

75 Haslanger works with a representationalist theory of concepts. See Haslanger, "Going On, Not in the Same Way," 238–244.

Epilogue

Consequences of the problem of structural heteronomy I have presented should be examined against the backdrop of the venerable idea that for beings endowed with rational capacities an unexamined life is not worth living. A particular way to lead an unexamined life is to never scrutinize the concepts that orient one in thought and action. And if concepts by default escape rational control, then one should make them available for assessment and refinement, given that this increase in autonomy is within one's capacity. Thus, as I have argued, the expressive use of reason acquires an ethical significance because it enables a concept-user to gain control over concepts that articulate her understanding. By undertaking such work, concept-users can perform a particular type of critique, which brings the constitution of concepts into discursive awareness. I have argued that from the perspective of the ethical ideal of autonomy, this ought to be recognized as a line of ethical work that focuses on understanding instead of agency, namely on the formation of concepts instead of the determination of the will. Though thinking through the consequences of structural heteronomy as an element of an ethical framework is a major task for future research, I want to conclude by laying out the contours of a central tension it introduces to the ethical outlook that is oriented toward autonomy. As I will explain, it is a tension between the competing demands of the will and understanding.

But first it is important to dispel a potential misunderstanding regarding the goal of semantic self-consciousness that enables autonomy over concepts. It is not yet another iteration of the foundationalist impulse in modern moral philosophy, as Bernard Williams diagnosed it.[1] On the contrary, the importance of the line of ethical work I have identified is only highlighted once we appreciate, following Williams, that the *ideal* of rational transparency remains intact despite the failure of the foundationalist project. Even though "ethical thought will never entirely appear as what it is, and can never fully manifest the fact that it rests on human dispositions," Williams rightly insists that "ethical thought should stand

up to reflection, and [...] its institutions and practices should be capable of becoming transparent."[2] This discrepancy between the ideal of autonomy as rational self-determination, on the one hand, and the dispositional basis of understanding, on the other, is precisely the source of the problem of structural heteronomy, as I have argued, a problem that requires an ethical response even though it cannot be permanently eliminated. However, instead of focusing on ethical thought in particular, I have identified this structure in discursive cognition as such and argued that it therefore requires ethical attention.

The tension I already mentioned comes into focus once we consider the role of self-conceptions in self-constitution. One aspect of self-constitution concerns agency. It is a familiar existentialist idea that one constitutes oneself through the actions one performs for the sake of the projects one pursues. Christine Korsgaard develops this idea into an argument that aims to show that agents are ethically required to have stable practical identities that exhibit integrity over time.[3] The argument deploys a new, constitutivist strategy to defend the core idea of rationalist moral psychology that reason ought to unify the self. Given that self-constitution is the constitutive aim of action, Korsgaard argues that an agent is ethically required to constitute herself as a unified rational agent through her actions. "So, on this conception, 'action' is an idea that admits of degrees. An action chosen in a way that more successfully unifies and integrates its agent is more authentically, more fully, an action, than one that does not."[4] Thus, the argument presupposes that the unity of the self is defined as the integrity of one's practical identity over time, including personal projects and social roles, which is taken to manifest the authenticity of the self.[5] According to Korsgaard, the value of integrity lies in the unity of the self it secures over time, indeed a lifetime: "Action is self-constitution. And, accordingly, [...] what makes action good or bad is how well they constitute you. The task of self-constitution involves finding some roles and fulfilling them with integrity and dedication. It also involves integrating those roles into a single identity, a coherent life."[6] With the plausible assumption that people's self-conceptions usually track their practical identities, Korsgaard's argument entails that an agent is ethically required to have a stable self-conception.

Now, consider understanding as another aspect of self-constitution. As essentially self-conscious beings, concept-users are partially self-constituting beings.[7] My self-conception, even if false, is part of the self that I am, simply in virtue of being my conception of myself. Brandom notes that this fact opens "the possibility of a distinctive kind of self-transformation" for essentially self-conscious beings: "making themselves be different by taking themselves to be different. [...] Because what they are in themselves is at any point the outcome of such a developmental process depending on their attitudes, essentially self-conscious beings do not have natures, they have

histories. Or, put differently, it is their nature to have not just a past, but a history: a sequence of partially self-constituting self-transformations, mediated at every stage by their self-conceptions, and culminating in their being what they currently are."[8] Ian Hacking makes the same point in terms of descriptions and intentional action.[9]

Self-conceptions can change for many reasons, but the kind of case I want to discuss is one where the change in a self-conception is a result of conceptual change. What propels such a transformation is not one discovering about a specific concept that it does not, after all, apply to oneself. Instead, it follows from a discovery one makes about a given *concept*, namely that the concept is defective and objectionable in a way one had not understood before despite having used it to make sense of oneself. To use the example of SEXUAL PERVERSION, the discovery is not that, perhaps after all, one is not a sexual pervert, but that the concept of sexual perversion should be rejected.[10] Such cases reveal that the quest for semantic self-consciousness is pregnant with surprises that change us because, as a result, one comes to reject or revise a concept one was accustomed to use to understand who one is. What is at stake is not only one's self-conception, of course, but also the different roles it requires and excludes in the fabric of social relations with others. Thus, I am using a narrow focus on self-conceptions as a convenient way to discuss identity, involving both reflexive and social dimensions. For some, the prospect of losing familiarity with oneself is precisely the goal that calls for celebration. Foucault writes, as a comment on Nietzsche's remarks on historical knowledge that is real, effective (*wirkliche Historie*): "To know, even in the field of history, does not mean 'to rediscover', and especially not 'to rediscover ourselves'. History will be 'effective' to the extent that it introduces the discontinuous to our very being."[11]

There is a tension between the task of self-unification in the moral psychology of agents, on the one hand, and the effects of disruption and disunification which the quest for semantic self-consciousness is bound to cause to one's understanding of oneself, on the other. What is remarkable is that both sides of the tension, despite pulling the subject in two opposite directions, are motivated as ethical work for the sake of two different aspects of the same goal. The tension emerges because both the task of self-unification in moral psychology and the quest for semantic self-consciousness that enables control over concepts are grounded in the ethical ideal of autonomy as self-governing. The problem is independent of any potentially controversial details of Korsgaard's constitutivist argument. It is one, but certainly not the only strategy to defend the core idea of rationalist moral psychology that reason ought to unify the agent. As one might expect, therefore, Korsgaard registers "threats to our psychic unity or integrity" that "spring from our own desires and impulses," in

contrast to the principles we endorse as rational agents and ought to use to unify our projects and thereby also ourselves.[12] Thus, the ethical demand for self-unification stems from the idea that rational agency is governed by principles one endorses. And acting on a principle, Korsgaard claims, is inevitable for rational agents: "[…] I don't believe that, at least for a rational agent, there is any option to acting on principle. To believe in a principle is just to believe that it is appropriate or inappropriate to treat certain considerations as counting in favor of certain acts. Because that's what a principle is: a principle is a description of the mental act of *taking* certain considerations to count in favor of certain acts."[13]

On the contrary, however, I have shown that all concept-use, including practical reasoning, rests on dispositional understanding, whose norms by default are not known as such and therefore cannot be endorsed, rejected, or revised unless they are made explicit. Recall that the structural necessity of dispositional understanding was established by showing that endorsing a principle cannot be the basic form of taking something to be correct. Consequently, the contrast Korsgaard draws between reasons as principles one endorses, on the one hand, and forces that are operative in agency without endorsement, on the other, cannot be sustained as she intends: "Movements that result from forces working on me or in me constitute things that happen to me. […] For a movement to be my action, for it to be expressive of myself in the way that an action must be, it must *result* from my entire nature working as an integrated whole."[14] I have shown, however, that this view of the rational self as an essentially unified rule-follower has to be abandoned due to the structural requirement that concept-use be based on dispositional understanding instead. In Foucault's words, this means that "the subject is not one, but split, not sovereign, but dependent, not the absolute origin, but a function that is constantly modifiable."[15] Critique, as a line of ethical work, then, is a technique of self-modification that works in virtue of acquiring knowledge about the social practices one depends on for one's conceptual competence to understand anything at all.

Relocating the distinction between power and freedom thus inside the space of reasons was the goal of this book. I have done that by interpreting, defending, and elaborating a set of ideas in Foucault's philosophical work that jointly, as I have shown, constitute the problem of structural heteronomy. The guiding idea throughout has been that it is crucial for moral and political philosophy to scrutinize and, if needed, to revise the individualistic metaphysics of subjectivity that continues to frame, in different ways, the approach in Kantian and liberal traditions alike. Another shared tenet among liberals and Kantians is the ideal of autonomy. Therefore, it is especially with that audience in mind that I have formulated the argument of this book. In response to a metaphysical correction regarding what is

required for the discursive cognition that endows us with the capacity for autonomy as self-governed rationality, my argument is meant to amplify the importance of autonomy as an ethical ideal whose reign extends from the will that is expressed in agency also to the understanding our concepts articulate.

Notes

1 Bernard Williams, *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 1985).
2 Williams, *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy*, 199–200.
3 Christine Korsgaard, *Self-Constitution: Agency, Identity, and Integrity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).
4 Korsgaard, *Self-Constitution*, 25.
5 For a different account of the unity of a subject, namely as consistency of one's commitments at a given moment in time, see Robert B. Brandom, *Reason in Philosophy: Animating Ideas* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009), 48.
6 Ibid.
7 Robert B. Brandom, "The Structure of Desire and Recognition: Self-Consciousness and Self-Constitution," *Philosophy & Social Criticism* 33, no. 1 (2007): 127–128.
8 Ibid.
9 Ian Hacking, "Making Up People," in *Reconstructing Individualism: Autonomy, Individuality, and the Self in Western Thought*, eds. Morton Sosna, Thomas C. Heller, and David Wellbery (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1986). Cf. Ian Hacking, *Chaire de Philosophie et Histoire des Concepts Scientifiques: Leçon inaugurale faite le jeudi 11 janvier 2001* (Paris: Collège de France, 2001).
10 Arnold I. Davidson, *The Emergence of Sexuality: Historical Epistemology and the Formation of Concepts* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001).
11 Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, la généalogie, l'histoire," in *Dits et écrits I, 1954–1975*, eds. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 1015.
12 Korsgaard, *Self-Constitution*, 26.
13 Christine Korsgaard, "Acting for a Reason," in *The Constitution of Agency: Essays in Practical Reason and Moral Psychology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 228–229.
14 Korsgaard, *Self-Constitution*, 18–19.
15 Michel Foucault, "La naissance d'un monde," in *Dits et écrits I, 1954–1975*, eds. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 817.

Acknowledgments

References

Allen, Amy. *Politics of Ourselves: Power, Autonomy, and Gender in Contemporary Critical Theory*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2008.

Althusser, Louis. "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses." Translated by Ben Brewster. In *On the Reproduction of Capitalism: Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses*, 232–272. London: Verso, 2014. Originally published in 1970.

Ameriks, Karl. *Kant and the Fate of Autonomy: Problems in the Appropriation of Critical Philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Anderson, Elizabeth. "Unstrapping the Straitjacket of 'Preference': A Comment on Amartya Sen's Contributions to Philosophy and Economics." *Economics and Philosophy* 17, no. 1 (2001): 21–38.

Balkin, J. M. *Cultural Software: A Theory of Ideology*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998.

Basso, Elisabetta. *Young Foucault: The Lille Manuscripts on Psychopathology, Phenomenology, and Anthropology, 1952–1955*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2022.

Bernstein, Richard J. *The New Constellation: The Ethical-Political Horizons of Modernity/Postmodernity*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992.

Boghossian, Paul. "Blind Rule-Following." In *Mind, Meaning, and Knowledge: Themes from the Philosophy of Crispin Wright*, edited by Annalisa Coliva, 27–48. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Brandom, Robert B. "Freedom and Constraint by Norms." *American Philosophical Quarterly* 16, no. 3 (1979): 187–196.

———. *Making It Explicit: Reasoning, Representing, and Discursive Commitment*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994.

———. *Articulating Reasons*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000.

———. "The Structure of Desire and Recognition: Self-Consciousness and Self-Constitution." *Philosophy & Social Criticism* 33, no. 1 (2007): 127–150.

———. *Between Saying and Doing: Towards an Analytic Pragmatism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

———. *Reason in Philosophy: Animating Ideas*. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009.

———. *Perspectives on Pragmatism: Classical, Recent, and Contemporary*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011.

Burgess, Alexis, and David Plunkett. "Conceptual Ethics I." *Philosophy Compass* 8, no. 12 (2013): 1091–1101.

Burgess, Alexis, Herman Cappelen, and David Plunkett, eds. *Conceptual Engineering and Conceptual Ethics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020.

Butler, Judith. *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997.

———. "What Is Critique? An Essay on Foucault's Virtue." In *The Political: Readings in Continental Philosophy*, edited by David Ingram, 212–228. London: Basil Blackwell, 2002.

Canguilhem, Georges, and Camille Planete. *Traité de logique et de morale*. In Georges Canguilhem, *Oeuvres Completes, Volume I: Écrits philosophiques et politiques (1926–1939)*, 633–924. Paris: Vrin, 2011. Originally published in 1939.

Celikates, Robin. "From Critical Social Theory to a Social Theory of Critique: On the Critique of Ideology after the Pragmatic Turn." *Constellations* 13, no. 1 (2006): 21–40.

Coffa, J. Alberto. *The Semantic Tradition from Kant to Carnap: To the Vienna Station*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

Cohen, Alix. "Kant on the Ethics of Belief." *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 114, no. 3 (2014): 317–334.

Davidson, Arnold I. "Archaeology, Genealogy, Ethics." In *Foucault: A Critical Reader*, edited by David Couzens Hoy, 221–233. Oxford: Blackwell, 1986.

———. "Structures and Strategies of Discourse: Remarks Towards a History of Foucault's Philosophy of Language." In *Foucault and His Interlouctors*, edited by Arnold I. Davidson, 1–17. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997.

———. *The Emergence of Sexuality: Historical Epistemology and the Formation of Concepts*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001.

Davidson, Donald. "Radical Interpretation." *Dialectica* 27, no. 1 (1973): 314–328.

Defert, Daniel. "Chronologie." In Michel Foucault, *Dits et écrits I, 1954–1975*, edited by Daniel Defert and François Ewald, 13–90. Paris: Gallimard, 2001.

deVries, Willem A., and Timm Triplett. *Knowledge, Mind, and the Given: Reading Wilfrid Sellars's "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind." Including the Complete Text of Sellars's Essay*. Indianapolis: Hackett, 2000.

Djaballah, Marc. *Kant, Foucault, and Forms of Experience*. London: Routledge, 2008.

Dreyfus, Hubert L. *What Computers Can't Do: The Limits of Artificial Intelligence*. New York: Harper & Row, 1972.

———. *Being-in-the-World: A Commentary on Heidegger's Being and Time, Division 1*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991.

———. "The Return of the Myth of the Mental." *Inquiry* 50, no. 4 (2007), 352–365.

Dreyfus, Hubert L., and Paul Rabinow. *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982.

Dummett, Michael. *Frege: Philosophy of Language*. London: Duckworth Overlook, 1973.

———. *Origins of Analytical Philosophy*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993.

Falzon, Christopher, Timothy O'Leary, and Jana Sawicki, eds. *A Companion to Foucault*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013.

Fodor, Jerry. *The Language of Thought*. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1975.

Forster, Michael. *After Herder: Philosophy of Language in the German Tradition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.

———. *German Philosophy of Language: From Schlegel to Hegel and Beyond*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Foucault, Michel. *Folie et déraison: Histoire de a folie à l'âge classique*. Paris: Plon, 1961.

———. *Les mots et les choses: Une archéologie des sciences humaines*. Paris: Gallimard, 1966.

———. "Michel Foucault, 'Les mots et les choses.'" In *Dits et écrits I, 1954–1975*, edited by Daniel Defert and François Ewald, 526–532. Paris: Gallimard, 2001. Originally published in 1966.

———. "Entretien avec Madeleine Chapsal." In *Dits et écrits I, 1954–1975*, edited by Daniel Defert and François Ewald, 541–546. Paris: Gallimard, 2001. Originally published in 1966.

———. "L'homme, est-il mort?" In *Dits et écrits I, 1954–1975*, edited by Daniel Defert and François Ewald, 568–572. Paris: Gallimard, 2001. Originally published in 1966.

———. "Michel Foucault et Gilles Deleuze veulent rendre à Nietzsche son vrai visage." In *Dits et écrits I, 1954–1975*, edited by Daniel Defert and François Ewald, 577–580. Paris: Gallimard, 2001. Originally published in 1966.

———. "Qu'est-ce qu'un philosophe?" In *Dits et écrits I, 1954–1975*, edited by Daniel Defert and François Ewald, 580–581. Paris: Gallimard, 2001. Originally published in 1966.

———. "L'archéologie du savoir." NAF 28284 (1), Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris. Unpublished manuscript from 1967.

———. "La philosophie structuraliste permet de diagnostiquer ce qu'est 'aujourd'hui.'" In *Dits et écrits I, 1954–1975*, edited by Daniel Defert and François Ewald, 608–612. Paris: Gallimard, 2001. Originally published in 1967.

———. "Sur les façons d'écrire l'histoire." In *Dits et écrits I, 1954–1975*, edited by Daniel Defert and François Ewald, 613–627. Paris: Gallimard, 2001. Originally published in 1967.

———. "Qui êtes-vous, professeur Foucault?" In *Dits et écrits I, 1954–1975*, edited by Daniel Defert and François Ewald, 629–648. Paris: Gallimard, 2001. Originally published in 1967.

———. "Foucault répond à Sartre." In *Dits et écrits I, 1954–1975*, edited by Daniel Defert and François Ewald, 690–696. Paris: Gallimard, 2001. Originally published in 1968.

———. "Réponse à une question." In *Dits et écrits I, 1954–1975*, edited by Daniel Defert and François Ewald, 701–723. Paris: Gallimard, 2001. Originally published in 1968.

———. "Sur l'árchéologie des sciences. Réponse au Cercle d'épistémologie." In *Dits et écrits I, 1954–1975*, edited by Daniel Defert and François Ewald, 724–759. Paris: Gallimard, 2001. Originally published in 1968.

———. *L'archéologie du savoir*. Paris: Gallimard, 1969.

———. "Foucault explique son dernier livre." In *Dits et écrits I, 1954–1975*, edited by Daniel Defert and François Ewald, 799–807. Paris: Gallimard, 2001. Originally published in 1969.

———. "La naissance d'un monde." In *Dits et écrits I, 1954–1975*, edited by Daniel Defert and François Ewald, 814–817. Paris: Gallimard, 2001. Originally published in 1969.

———. "Titres et travaux." In *Dits et écrits I, 1954–1975*, edited by Daniel Defert and François Ewald, 870–874. Paris: Gallimard, 2001. Originally published in 1969.

———. "Foreword to the English Edition." In *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, ix–xv. London: Routledge, 2001. Originally published in 1970.

———. *L'ordre du discours: Leçon inaugurale au Collège de France prononcée 2 décembre 1970*. Paris: Gallimard, 1971.

———. "Nietzsche, la généalogie, l'histoire." In *Dits et écrits I, 1954–1975*, edited by Daniel Defert and François Ewald, 1004–1024. Paris: Gallimard, 2001. Originally published in 1971.

———. "Entretien avec Michel Foucault." In *Dits et écrits I, 1954–1975*, edited by Daniel Defert and François Ewald, 1025–1042. Paris: Gallimard, 2001. Originally published in 1971.

———. "Conversation avec Michel Foucault." In *Dits et écrits I, 1954–1975*, edited by Daniel Defert and François Ewald, 1050–1061. Paris: Gallimard, 2001. Originally published in 1971.

———. "Un problème m'intéresse depuis longtemps, c'est celui du système pénal." In *Dits et écrits I, 1954–1975*, edited by Daniel Defert and François Ewald, 1073–1077. Paris: Gallimard, 2001. Originally published in 1971.

———. "Foucault répond." In *Dits et écrits I, 1954–1975*, edited by Daniel Defert and François Ewald, 1107–1108. Paris: Gallimard, 2001. Originally published in 1971.

———. "Les intellectuels et le pouvoir." In *Dits et écrits I, 1954–1975*, edited by Daniel Defert and François Ewald, 1174–1183. Paris: Gallimard, 2001. Originally published in 1972.

———. "Les problèmes de la culture. Un débat Foucault-Preti." In *Dits et écrits I, 1954–1975*, edited by Daniel Defert and François Ewald, 1237–1248. Paris: Gallimard, 2001. Originally published in 1972.

———. "L'intellectuel sert à rassembler les idées mais son savoir est partiel par rapport au savoir ouvrier." In *Dits et écrits I, 1954–1975*, edited by Daniel Defert and François Ewald, 1289–1291. Paris: Gallimard, 2001. Originally published in 1973.

———. "Le monde est un grand asile." In *Dits et écrits I, 1954–1975*, edited by Daniel Defert and François Ewald, 1301–1302. Paris: Gallimard, 2001. Originally published in 1973.

———. "La vérité et les formes juridiques." In *Dits et écrits I, 1954–1975*, edited by Daniel Defert and François Ewald, 1406–1514. Paris: Gallimard, 2001. Originally published in 1974.

———. *Surveiller et punir: Naissance de la prison*. Paris: Gallimard, 1975.

———. "Radioscopie de Michel Foucault." In *Dits et écrits I, 1954–1975*, edited by Daniel Defert and François Ewald, 1651–1670. Paris: Gallimard, 2001. Originally published in 1975.

———. "Michel Foucault. Les responses du philosophe." In *Dits et écrits I, 1954–1975*, edited by Daniel Defert and François Ewald, 1673–1685. Paris: Gallimard, 2001. Originally published in 1975.

———. *Histoire de la sexualité I: La volonté de savoir*. Paris: Gallimard, 1976.

———. "Le discours ne doit pas être pris comme…" In *Dits et écrits II, 1976–1988*, edited by Daniel Defert and François Ewald, 123–124. Paris: Gallimard, 2001. Originally published in 1976.

———. "Entretien avec Michel Foucault." In *Dits et écrits II, 1976–1988*, edited by Daniel Defert and François Ewald, 140–160. Paris: Gallimard, 2001. Originally published in 1977.

———. "Non au sexe roi." In *Dits et écrits II, 1976–1988*, edited by Daniel Defert and François Ewald, 256–269. Paris: Gallimard, 2001. Originally published in 1977.

———. "Le jeu de Michel Foucault." In *Dits et écrits II, 1976–1988*, edited by Daniel Defert and François Ewald, 298–329. Paris: Gallimard, 2001. Originally published in 1977.

———. "Introduction par Michel Foucault." In *Dits et écrits II, 1976–1988*, edited by Daniel Defert and François Ewald, 429–442. Paris: Gallimard, 2001. Originally published in 1978.

———. "La philosophie analytique de la politique." In *Dits et écrits II, 1976–1988*, edited by Daniel Defert and François Ewald, 534–551. Paris: Gallimard, 2001. Originally published in 1978.

———. "La scène de la philosophie." In *Dits et écrits II, 1976–1988*, edited by Daniel Defert and François Ewald, 571–595. Paris: Gallimard, 2001. Originally published in 1978.

———. "Pour une morale de l'inconfort." In *Dits et écrits II, 1976–1988*, edited by Daniel Defert and François Ewald, 783–787. Paris: Gallimard, 2001. Originally published in 1979.

———. "Table ronde du 20 mai 1978." In *Dits et écrits II, 1976–1988*, edited by Daniel Defert and François Ewald, 839–853. Paris: Gallimard, 2001. Originally published in 1980.

———. "Est-il donc important de penser?" In *Dits et écrits II, 1976–1988*, edited by Daniel Defert and François Ewald, 997–1001. Paris: Gallimard, 2001. Originally published in 1981.

———. "The Subject and Power." In *Essential Works of Foucault 1954–1988, Volume 3: Power*, edited by James D. Faubion, 326–348 (New York: The New Press, 2000). Originally published in 1982.

———. "Le sujet et le pouvoir." In *Dits et écrits II, 1976–1988*, edited by Daniel Defert and François Ewald, 1041–1062. Paris: Gallimard, 2001. Originally published in 1982.

———. "L'âge d'or de la lettre de cachet." In *Dits et écrits II, 1976–1988*, edited by Daniel Defert and François Ewald, 1170–1171. Paris: Gallimard, 2001. Originally published in 1982.

———. *Histoire de la sexualité 2: L'usage des plaisirs*. Paris: Gallimard, 1984.

———. "Qu'est-ce que les Lumières?" In *Dits et écrits II, 1976–1988*, edited by Daniel Defert and François Ewald, 1381–1397. Paris: Gallimard, 2001. Originally published in 1984.

———. "Préface à l'*Histoire de la sexualité*." In *Dits et écrits II, 1976–1988*, edited by Daniel Defert and François Ewald, 1397–1403. Paris: Gallimard, 2001. Originally published in 1984.

———. "À propos de la généalogie de l'éthique: Un aperçu du travail en cours." In *Dits et écrits II, 1976–1988*, edited by Daniel Defert and François Ewald, 1428–1450. Paris: Gallimard, 2001. Originally published in 1984.

———. "Foucault." In *Dits et écrits II, 1976–1988*, edited by Daniel Defert and François Ewald, 1450–1455. Paris: Gallimard, 2001. Originally published in 1984.

———. "Le style de l'histoire." In *Dits et écrits II, 1976–1988*, edited by Daniel Defert and François Ewald, 1468–1474. Paris: Gallimard, 2001 Originally published in 1984.

———. "L'éthique du souci de soi comme pratique de la liberté." In *Dits et écrits II, 1976–1988*, edited by Daniel Defert and François Ewald, 1527–1548. Paris: Gallimard, 2001. Originally published in 1984.

———. "L'intellectuel et les pouvoirs." In *Dits et écrits II, 1976–1988*, edited by Daniel Defert and François Ewald, 1566–1571. Paris: Gallimard, 2001. Originally published in 1984.

———. "Qu'est-ce que la critique?" In *Qu'est-ce que la critique? Suivi de La Culture de soi*, edited by Henri-Paul Fruchaud and Daniele Lorenzini, 33–80. Paris: Vrin, 2015. Originally published in 1990.

———. *Le Pouvoir psychiatrique: Cours au Collège de France 1973–1974*. Paris: Gallimard/Seuil, 2003.

———. *Naissance de la biopolitique: Cours au Collège de France 1978–1979*. Paris: Gallimard/Seuil, 2004.

———. "Leçon sur Nietzsche." In *Leçons sur la volonté de savoir: Cours au Collège de France 1970–1971. Suivi de Le savoir d'Œdipe*, edited by François Ewald, Alessandro Fontana, and Daniel Defert, 195–213. Paris: Gallimard/Seuil, 2011.

———. *Leçons sur la volonté de savoir: Cours au Collège de France 1970–1971. Suivi de Le savoir d'Œdipe*. Paris: Gallimard/Seuil, 2011.

———. "Entretien de Michel Foucault avec André Berten, 7 mai 1981." In *Mal faire, dire vrai: Fonction de l'aveu en justice. Cours de Louvain, 1981*, edited by Fabienne Brion and Bernard E. Harcourt, 235–246. Louvain and Chicago: Presses universitaire de Louvain and University of Chicago Press, 2012.

———. "Interview de Michel Foucault, 3 Novembre 1980." In *L'origine de l'herméneutique de soi: Conférences prononcées à Dartmouth Collège, 1980*, edited by Henri-Paul Fruchaud and Daniele Lorenzini, 143–155. Paris: Vrin, 2013.

———. *La Société punitive: Cours au Collège de France 1972–1973*. Paris: EHESS/Gallimard/Seuil, 2013.

———. *Subjectivité et vérité: Cours au Collège de France 1980–1981*. Paris: EHESS/Gallimard/Seuil, 2014.

———. *Le Discours philosophique*. Paris: EHESS/Gallimard/Seuil, 2023.

Fraser, Nancy. "Foucault on Modern Power: Empirical Insights and Normative Confusions." *PRAXIS International* 1, no. 2 (1981): 272–287.

Freud, Sigmund. *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*. Translated by James Strachey. New York: Basic Books, 2000. Originally published in 1905.

Fricker, Miranda. "Feminism in Epistemology: Pluralism without Postmodernism." In *The Cambridge Companion to Feminism in Philosophy*, edited by Miranda Fricker and Jennifer Hornsby, 146–165. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

———. *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Friedman, Michael. *Reconsidering Logical Positivism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

———. *Dynamics of Reason: The 1999 Kant Lectures at Stanford University*. Stanford, CA: CSLI Publications, 2001.

Greenberg Mark, and Gilbert Harman. "Conceptual Role Semantics." In *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Language*, edited by Ernest Lepore and Barry C. Smith, 296–322. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Ginsborg, Hannah. "Primitive Normativity and Skepticism about Rules." *Journal of Philosophy* 108, no. 5 (2011): 227–254.

Gutting, Gary. *Michel Foucault's Archaeology of Scientific Reason*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

———. "Thomas Kuhn and French Philosophy of Science." In *Thomas Kuhn*, edited by Thomas Nickles, 45–64. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Habermas, Jürgen. *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures*. Translated by Frederick G. Lawrence. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1987. Originally published in 1985.

Hacking, Ian. "Leibniz and Descartes: Proof and Eternal Truths." In *Historical Ontology*, 200–213. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002. Originally published in 1973.

———. "Michel Foucault's Immature Science." *Noûs* 13, no. 1 (1979): 39–51.

———. "The Archaeology of Foucault." In *Foucault: A Critical Reader*, edited by David Couzens Hoy, 27–40. Oxford: Blackwell, 1986.

———. "Making Up People." In *Reconstructing Individualism: Autonomy, Individuality, and the Self in Western Thought*, edited by Morton Sosna, Thomas C. Heller, and David Wellbery, 222–236. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1986.

———. *Chaire de philosophie et histoire des concepts scientifiques: Leçon inaugurale faite le jeudi 11 janvier 2001*. Paris: Collège de France, 2001.

Halperin, David M. *Saint Foucault: Towards a Gay Hagiography*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.

———. "Foucault's Queer Critique." In *The Routledge Companion to Queer Literary Studies*, edited by Melissa E. Sanchez. New York: Routledge, forthcoming.

Han, Béatrice. *L'Ontologie manquée de Michel Foucault*. Grenoble: Jêrome Millon, 1998.

———. *Foucault's Critical Project: Between the Transcendental and the Historical*. Translated by Edward Pile. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002.

Han-Pile, Béatrice. "Foucault, Normativity and Critique as a Practice of the Self." *Continental Philosophy Review* 49, no. 1 (2016): 85–101.

Haslanger, Sally. "Gender and Race: (What) Are They? (What) Do We Want Them to Be?" *Noûs* 34, no. 1 (2000): 31–55.

———. "What Are We Talking About? The Semantics and Politics of Social Kinds." *Hypatia* 20, no. 4 (2005): 10–26.

———. *Resisting Reality: Social Construction and Social Critique*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.

———. *Critical Theory and Practice*. Amsterdam: Koninklijke Van Gorcum, 2017.

———. "Going On, Not in the Same Way." In *Conceptual Engineering and Conceptual Ethics*, edited by Alexis Burgess, Herman Cappelen, and David Plunkett, 230–260. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020.

———. *Ideology in Practice: What Does Ideology Do?* Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2021.

Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich. *Philosophy of Mind*. Translated by W. Vallace and A. V. Miller. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010. Originally published in 1817.

———. *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*. Translated by H. B. Nisbet. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991. Originally published in 1820.

Heidegger, Martin. *Being and Time*. Translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson. New York: Harper & Row, 1962. Originally published in 1927.

Huemer, Wolfgang. "The Transition from Causes to Norms: Wittgenstein on Training." *Gratzer Philosophische Studien* 71, no. 1 (2006): 205–226.

Jaeggi, Rahel. "Rethinking Ideology." In *New Waves in Political Philosophy*, edited by Boudewijn de Bruin and Christopher F. Zurn, 63–86. New York: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2009.

———. *Alienation*. Translated by Frederick Neuhouser and Alan E. Smith. New York: Columbia University Press, 2014. Originally published in 2005.

Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of Pure Reason*. Translated and edited by Paul Guyer and Allen Wood. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998. Originally published in 1781/1787.

———. "An Answer to the Question: What Is Enlightenment?" In *Practical Philosophy*, translated and edited by Mary J. Gregor, 17–22. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. Originally published in 1784.

———. *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*. In *Practical Philosophy*, translated and edited by Mary J. Gregor, 43–108. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. Originally published in 1785.

———. "On the Common Saying: That May Be Correct in Theory, But It Is of No Use in Practice." In *Practical Philosophy*, translated and edited by Mary J. Gregor, 279–309. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. Originally published in 1793.

———. *Metaphysics of Morals*. In *Practical Philosophy,* translated and edited by Mary J. Gregor, 363–603. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. Originally published in 1797.

Kohl, Markus. "Kant on Freedom of Empirical Thought." *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 53, no. 2 (2015): 301–326.

Koopman, Colin. "Foucault and Pragmatism: Introductory Notes on Metaphilosophical Methodology." *Foucault Studies*, 11(February 2011): 3–10.

———. *Genealogy as Critique: Foucault and the Problems of Modernity*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013.

Korsgaard, Christine. "Acting for a Reason." In *The Constitution of Agency: Essays in Practical Reason and Moral Psychology*, 207–229. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

———. *Self-Constitution: Agency, Identity, and Integrity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Krafft-Ebing, Richard von. *Psychopathia Sexualis: A Medico-Forensic Study*. Translated by Harry E. Wedeck. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1965. Originally published in 1886.

Kripke, Saul. *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language: An Elementary Exposition*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982.

Kuhn, Thomas S. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1962.

Kusch, Martin. *Foucault's Strata and Fields: An Investigations into Archaeological and Genealogical Science Studies*. Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1991.

Lewis, David. *Convention: A Philosophical Study*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1969.

———. "Scorekeeping in a Language Game." *Journal of Philosophical Logic* 8, no. 1 (1979): 339–359.

Locke, John. *Two Treatises of Government*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988. Originally published in 1698.

Lorenzini, Daniele. *The Force of Truth: Critique, Genealogy, and Truth-Telling in Michel Foucault*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2023.

Lorenzini, Daniele, and Tuomo Tiisala. "The Architectonic of Foucault's Critique." *European Journal of Philosophy* 32, no. 1 (2024): 114–129.

Macbeth, Danielle. "Inference, Meaning, and Truth in Brandom, Sellars, and Frege." In *Reading Brandom: On Making It Explicit*, edited by Bernhard Weiss and Jeremy Wanderer, 197–212. New York: Routledge, 2010.

Margolis, Eric, and Stephen Laurence. *Concepts: Core Readings*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999.

Marx, Karl. *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*. Translated by Martin Milligan. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1959. Originally published in 1932.

Maslan, Mark. "Foucault and Pragmatism." *Raritan Quarterly* 7, no. 3 (1988): 94–114.

McDowell, John. "Wittgenstein on Following a Rule." *Synthese* 58 (March 1984): 325–363.

———. *Mind and World*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994.

———. "What Myth?" *Inquiry* 50, no. 4 (2007): 338–351.

Menke, Christoph. "Hegel's Theory of Liberation." *Symposium: Canadian Journal of Continental Philosophy* 17, no. 1 (2013): 10–30.

———. "Hegel's Theory of Second Nature." *Symposium: Canadian Journal of Continental Philosophy* 17, no. 1 (2013): 31–49.

Merritt, Melissa. *Kant on Reflection and Virtue*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018.

Mill, John Stuart. *On Liberty*. In *On Liberty and Other Writings*, edited by Stefan Collini. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. Originally published in 1859.

Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Gay Science: With a Prelude in German Rhymes and an Appendix of Songs*. Translated by Josefine Nauckhoff, edited by Bernard Williams, poems translated by Adrian Del Caro. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001. Originally published in 1882/1887.

Noë, Alva. "Against Intellectualism." *Analysis* 65, no. 4 (2005): 278–290.

Novakovic, Andreja. *Hegel on Second Nature in Ethical Life*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017.

O'Leary, Timothy, and Christopher Falzon, eds. *Foucault and Philosophy*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.

Oksala, Johanna. *Foucault on Freedom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Owen, David. "Criticism and Captivity: On Genealogy and Critical Theory." *European Journal of Philosophy* 10, no. 2 (2002): 216–230.

Rorty, Richard, ed. *Linguistic Turn: Essays in Philosophical Method*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967.

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. *Of the Social Contract; or Principles of Political Right*. In *The Social Contract and Other Late Political Writings*, translated and edited by Victor Gourevitch. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997. Originally published in 1762.

Ryle, Gilbert. "Knowing How and Knowing That: The Presidential Address." *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 46, no. 1 (1946): 1–16.

Säynäjoki, Sakari, and Tuomo Tiisala. "Revisable A Priori as a Political Problem: Critique of Constitution in Critical Theory." *Journal of Social and Political Philosophy* 2, no. 2 (2023): 138–157.

Sellars, Wilfrid. "Language, Rules and Behavior." In *Pure Pragmatics and Possible Worlds: The Early Essays of Wilfrid Sellars*, edited by Jeffrey F. Sicha, 190–208. Atascadero, CA: Ridgeview Publishing, 2005. Originally published in 1950.

———. "Inference and Meaning." In *In the Space of Reasons: Selected Essays of Wilfrid Sellars*, edited by Kevin Scharp and Robert B. Brandom, 3–27. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007. Originally published in 1953.

———. "Some Reflections on Language Games." In *In the Space of Reasons: Selected Essays of Wilfrid Sellars*, edited by Kevin Scharp and Robert B. Brandom, 28–56. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007. Originally published in 1954.

———. *Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997. Originally published in 1956.

———. "Some Reflections on Thoughts and Things." In *In the Space of Reasons: Selected Essays of Wilfrid Sellars*, edited by Kevin Scharp and Robert B. Brandom, 258–281. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007. Originally published in 1967.

———. "Language as Thought and as Communication." In *In the Space of Reasons: Selected Essays of Wilfrid Sellars*, edited by Kevin Scharp and Robert B. Brandom, 57–80. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007. Originally published in 1969.

———. "Meaning as Functional Classification: A Perspective on the Relation of Syntax to Semantics." In *In the Space of Reasons: Selected Essays of Wilfrid Sellars*, edited by Kevin Scharp and Robert B. Brandom, 81–100. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007. Originally published in 1974.

———. "The Role of Imagination in Kant's Theory of Experience." In *In the Space of Reasons: Selected Essays of Wilfrid Sellars*, edited by Kevin Scharp and Robert B. Brandom, 454–466. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007. Originally published in 1978.

Stump, David J. *Conceptual Change and the Philosophy of Science: Alternative Interpretations of the A Priori*. New York: Routledge, 2015.

Tiisala, Tuomo. "Foucault, Neoliberalism, and Equality." *Critical Inquiry* 48, no. 1 (2021): 23–44.

Turner, Stephen. *The Social Theory of Practices: Tradition, Tacit Knowledge, and Presuppositions*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994.

Vaccarino Bremner, Sabina. "Anthropology as Critique: Foucault, Kant and the Metacritical Tradition." *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 28, no. 2 (2020): 336–358.

Veyne, Paul. "Foucault Revolutionizes History." Translated by Catharine Porter. In *Foucault and His Interlocutors*, edited by Arnold I. Davidson, 146–182. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997. Originally published in 1978.

Vogelmann, Frieder. "Keep Score and Punish: Brandom's Concept of Responsibility." *Philosophy & Social Criticism* 46, no. 8 (2020): 922–941.

Williams, Bernard. *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy*. London: Routledge, 1985.

Williams, Meredith. *Wittgenstein, Mind, and Meaning: Towards a Social Conception of the Mind*. New York: Routledge, 1999.

Wittgenstein, Ludwig. *Philosophische Untersuchungen / Philosophical Investigations: The German Text, with a Revised English Translation*. Translated by G. E. M. Anscombe. Oxford: Blackwell, 2001. Originally published in 1953.

———. *Über Gewissheit / On Certainty*. Translated by Denis Paul and G. E. M. Anscombe. Oxford: Blackwell, 1969.

Wright, Crispin. "Rule-Following without Reasons: Wittgenstein's Quietism and the Constitutive Question." *Ratio* 20, no. 4 (2007): 481–502.

Index