Article:
Allen, Ansgar (2009) Foucauldian Peacekeeping: On the Dispersion of Power and the Futility of Change. Power and Education, 1 (2). pp. 226-237. ISSN: 1757-7438

https://doi.org/10.2304/power.2009.1.2.226

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Published in:

Power and Education 1 (2) 2009

http://www.wwwords.co.uk/power/

The Foucauldian Peacekeeper:

On the Dispersion of Power and the Futility of Change

Ansgar Allen

Foucault is widely known for the radical nature of his work, for his idiosyncratic approach to history, and for his reconfiguration of the concept of power. Curiously though, his conceptions of history and power might act to undermine their potential to incite radical critique of systems of education and wider society; resulting in a more patient, restrained and ultimately conservative scholarship than you would at first expect. The apparent points of similarity between Michel Foucault, Herbert George Wells and the reformist, statistician and eugenicist, Karl Pearson, will be outlined in order to exemplify this apparent danger. Whilst Foucault would be at odds with Pearson's authoritarian view of education, the Foucauldian account of power seems, oddly, to lead to agreement with Pearson on the futility of revolutionary change.

Introduction

> Genealogy does not resemble the evolution of a species (Michel Foucault 1971: 374) [1].

Following on from Nietzsche, Michel Foucault developed an approach to history that was far from ordinary. Indeed the name it chooses is immediately misleading - it is called 'genealogy'. We are not concerned here with clearing ivy from forgotten tombs. Rather, as a mode of historical research genealogy is intended as a challenge to conventional wisdom. It is a type of analysis that provokes us to reconsider our view of the world. It aims to show us the profound historical contingency of all that we hold to be true and proper. And sometimes it allows us to perceive danger in what was formerly a noble lineage of descent. Ultimately, this is an approach to our past that seeks to reorient our view of the present. Genealogy is part of a radical project that undermines the inevitability of things, and allows us to redirect ourselves towards the possibility of radical change.

In this paper I shall argue that such ambition is in danger of decay from within, that it promotes within itself a gradual withdrawal from the struggle it once perceived. My claim is that in certain important respects, the genealogical project resembles evolutionary thought, and is at risk of adopting the gradual reformism such thought can inspire.

My intention is not to reveal timeless flaws in the genealogical project; merely it is to hint at some potential consequences. Foucault's radical desire is not in question here, nor is the coherence of his work. As a thinker he was always in motion and so it makes little sense to critique a grand plan that was never properly formulated. My point of entry is rather at the level of

interpretation. I wish to explore the potential effects of a genealogical worldview insofar as it influences our work. Genealogy is based upon the dispersion of power, and this fact of dispersion might act to switch analysis from feisty departures towards more conservative conclusions. This would be deeply ironic given the nature of Foucault's work. In the text that follows, such irony will be deployed as a tactic, in an attempt to recover what is radical within.

In order to make this case I shall first deliver a brief account of genealogy as developed by Foucault, alongside a short treatment of those notions of power and conflict upon which genealogy rests. Similarities will be identified between genealogy, and a pre-modern form of historical work that Foucault labels 'counterhistory'. If these similarities are compelling then the dangers that beset counterhistory must be considered as potential threats to genealogy. I shall argue that like counterhistory, genealogy faces reduction to evolutionary thinking. The practical consequence of this is that we are tempted to adopt a reformist attitude - a position that advocates calm acceptance in the face of existing dispositions of power. Overall, this argument will be presented in terms of the apparent connections between Foucauldian genealogy, the changing perspectives of Herbert George Wells, and the early work of the eugenicist and statistician Karl Pearson[2].

Genealogy and Power

> Knowledge is not made for understanding; it is made for cutting (Foucault 1971: 380).

Foucault provides some early hints of his line of attack in an essay on Nietzsche, genealogy and history: Traditional modes of historical inquiry, we are told, hope to achieve objectivity by reducing the 'diversity of time into a totality fully closed upon itself'. Genealogy on the other hand, refuses the possibility of neutral overview and works towards the decomposition of any such historical unity. It 'reintroduces into the realm of becoming everything considered immortal in man' (Foucault 1971: 379). Nothing of sufficient stability has endured throughout time upon which we might build the foundations of historical understanding. There is nothing universal or transcendental to which we can appeal. Understanding is in flux for we exist without constants, or so the genealogist claims. And so we are tasked with unfurling complexity and demonstrating the fluidity of our being... Of course, the genealogical account must also be heavily perspectival and genealogy happily 'acknowledges its system of injustice'. But this acknowledgement does not act as a restraint for 'it is not given to discrete effacement before the objects it observes' (Foucault 1971: 382). Genealogy is a bold and militant activity.

According to this view, the course of history moves forward in a tumble, regulated by no other system than the 'luck of the battle' (Foucault 1971: 381). History is an 'endlessly repeated play of dominations', where the events of history are the product of points of intersection between multiple, contending forces (Foucault 1971: 377). Events are produced on the frontier so to

speak. So the genealogist is faced with a task that is grey and meticulous (as well as bold and militant) for these entangled forces are what must be prised apart through careful analysis.

This account of history is based upon a certain conception of power as an entity that is more radically dispersed than conventional thought admits. 'Power is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere' (Foucault 1976b: 93); it is a relational activity of exertion and manoeuvre, a constant flux of human realignment and pragmatic calculation. But despite this dispersion of power throughout the social body, our freedom to act and react is nevertheless constrained by channels of power that have gradually coalesced to become overarching strategies that direct and constrain our world of possibilities. We live within an endlessly superseding play of dominations that vie for the control of our thoughts, our truths and our actions.

Counterhistory, biopower and eugenics

A key resource for this interpretation of power and history is Foucault's eleven part lecture series of 1976. These lectures tell a history of history, beginning with its ritual use in ceremonies intended to demonstrate a sovereign's right to rule. This ritual use was challenged when at various points back in time a form of counterhistory emerged. Histories of sovereigns were gradually replaced by multiple, perspectival histories of races. There was no longer one history for all; rather history became an oppositional tool by which the status quo could be challenged…

As Foucault traces this history of counterhistorical work - that is, the history of history before it became a respectable academic discipline - one is tempted to insert 'proto-genealogy' wherever 'counterhistory' finds mention. For alongside this history of history runs an ongoing attempt to reconceptualise power. Indeed, Foucault seems to celebrate this perspectival, embattled use of history, as he leans towards an interpretation of power that is based upon a metaphor of warlike relations. Foucault appears to situate himself in this world of perpetual conflict, where historical work is something 'in which truth functions as a weapon to be used for partisan victory' (Foucault 1976a: 270). Thus in his exploration of 'counterhistory' we find the general conditions of all historical work. Whether consciously or not, the historian is involved in this interplay of force relations; historical truth is a mere deployment from a combat position.

But this does not open the door to utter fiction, for even though the historian becomes partisan, historical truths are still deployed from a combat *position*, rather than from empty space. This position is one at which historical discourses intersect, forming a closely woven web of common resource and understanding. It is only because historical knowledge is to some extent regularised that it becomes possible to disagree along strict lines of confrontation[3]. And so scholarship must be as diligent, perhaps more so than normal, for the (counter)historian requires great erudition to enter the field, master it, and then tactically subvert it in all its detail.

Whilst Foucault comes out in praise of counterhistorical work, in the final lecture he also interrogates its dangers by associating it with a deviant offshoot, one that degenerated into racist discourse. Counterhistorical work degenerated when it became coupled to evolutionary thought, as historical conflict was replaced by biological struggle. Warring binaries gave way to monisms, as threats were reduced to internal dangers to the overall welfare of society.

This was associated with the rise of biopower, a strategy of control that promotes population health as its ambiguous aim. Concerned with population-level phenomena, biopower seeks to regulate the internal dynamics of a population that it takes as its special object of study. It observes and calculates, finding trends and cycles in characteristics that are to be found only at the macroscopic level. Concerned with the maintenance of overall life; death, confinement, compulsion or any form of imposed hardship may be justified now in terms of overall wellbeing. Those infamous strategies of social hygiene promoted within eugenic thought, provide a case study in this sort of biopower, and exemplify the danger of transforming conflict into a state discourse of self-defence. Confinement, sterilisation and execution were all justified in terms of population health in a scheme that takes life as its organising principle. It is important to add however, that although eugenics is used to exemplify the principles of biopower in this paper, I do not wish to suggest that eugenics is anything more than a case study in biopower. Biopower itself is not essentially 'bad', it is merely ambiguous and this is where its danger lies.

To conclude, if counterhistory is viewed as a sort of proto-genealogy, then the dangers Foucault identifies for counterhistory become potential defects for genealogy. According to Foucault, counterhistory degenerated into racist discourse when it encountered evolutionary thinking. Although this coupling resulted in great brutality, it also allowed for the taming of counterhistorical work as it became absorbed within 'technical' issues of population regulation… Now the merits of this argument are, of course, open for debate. I only wish to suggest that we apply Foucault's analysis of counterhistory to our analysis of genealogy. As I shall argue, a similar danger might face the radical intent within genealogical work: Genealogy is at risk of inspiring reformist tendencies due to its structural affinities to the sort of evolutionary thinking that once captured counterhistory and turned it into an internal, technical concern of state governance.

A Wellsian Transition

Any tradition that embraces conflict comes with its associated dangers, as do traditions that hide strategies of power behind claims of neutrality. By aligning himself with the former tradition Foucault was candid enough to explore its dangers: Whatever Foucauldian 'genealogy' may be, it must resist any cooption of struggle by dominant forces such as biopower, which reduced conflict to a logic of state control. By situating itself within a world of conflicting forces, genealogy seeks to undermine domination by participating in perpetual agitation. Committed to

the repeated unveiling of power, it constantly creates and discards truth-weapon-deployments in an 'undefined work of freedom' (Foucault 2000: 316).

Now my reduction of power to metaphors of war/combat/bellicosity and so on might be viewed as excessive. After all, this emphasis only finds prominence in one series of lectures and a slim volume published shortly after; that is, within *Society Must Be Defenced* and *The Will to Knowledge* (Foucault 1976a, 1976b). In addition, three months after his last lecture Foucault was expressing doubts remarking; 'it is astonishing to see how easily and self-evidently people talk of warlike relations of power' (Foucault 1977: 124). By 1980 his stance had altered significantly:

> Discussions on political subjects are parasitized by the model of war: a person who has different ideas is identified as a class enemy who must be fought until a final victory is won. This great theme of ideological struggle makes me smile a little, given that each individual's theoretical ties, when they are examined in their history, are tangled and fluctuating and don't have the clear definition of a border beyond which an enemy could be forced to flee. Isn't this struggle one tries to conduct against an enemy basically a way of giving a degree of seriousness to little disputes that don't have much importance? Don't intellectuals hope to give themselves, through ideological struggle, a greater political weight than they really have? Wouldn't it be more serious, instead, to do research side by side, if in rather divergent directions? If one always insists on saying that one is fighting an enemy, if a day comes when one finds oneself in a situation of actual warfare, which can always happen, will one then be tempted to actually treat him as such? That route leads directly to oppression; it is dangerous. I understand that an intellectual can manifest a desire to be taken seriously by a party or in a society by simulating warfare against an ideological opponent – but that looks dangerous to me. It would be wiser to consider those with whom one disagrees have made a mistake, or that one hasn't understood what they were trying to do (Foucault 1980: 297).

It would seem that Foucault is engaging reverse gear here and is withdrawing from his earlier more combative emphasis. But we are still faced with a decision as to which Foucault we choose to emphasise in our work. In this text he seems almost weary of combative statements, perhaps even a little weary of his former self. We however are not in 1970s Paris, and the same sense of fatigue might be disturbingly absent from our minds. In a context that sometimes appears strangely pacified and muted, the earlier Foucault might be more appropriate.

Somewhat later he suggested: 'Rather than speaking of an essential antagonism, it would be better to speak of an "agonism" - of a relationship that is at the same time mutual incitement and struggle; less of a face-to-face confrontation that paralyses both sides than a permanent provocation' (Foucault 1982: 342). Whether Foucault has entirely abandoned the war metaphor by this point, or whether he has merely refined it, is an open question. It is certainly possible that we risk exaggeration by locating our understanding of Foucauldian power within a narrative of combat. Perhaps though, we might view this more favourably as an exercise in reassessing power, or as a tactical manoeuvre aimed at rendering our use of Foucault more directly political.

However appropriate this bellicose view of the world may be, my claim is simply this; whether power is viewed to be warlike or not, an element of conflict remains within its Foucauldian

definition. Genealogy - an approach to history that turns on the analysis of power - must situate itself within the world it perceives, and genealogy tends to perceive the world in terms of interacting force relations. But it would seem to face difficulties in this respect: There is a possible sticking point within it that has the potential to generate mismatch between perceived world and chosen action. By its own standards genealogy is faced by a menace from within; its own conceptions of history and power threaten to reduce tireless activity to a state of near paralysis. I propose to demonstrate this potential for self-emasculation by charting the changing perspectives of Herbert George Wells, from a eugenicist, and hence proponent of biopower - that degenerate heir of counterhistory - to a position not altogether divorced from the genealogical resolve described above.

My story begins with a time-traveller, trapped eight hundred thousand years in the future: The human race has become two separate species; the carnivorous Morlock and the defenceless Eloi upon whom the Morlock feast. A degeneration of the elite into mere beautiful frailty and of the poor into parasitic savagery, this chilling extension of the evolutionary metaphor, provided by Wells in *The Time Machine* of 1895, was a plausible scenario for its time.

At the turn of the century *Anticipations* was a Wellsian attempt at predicting the more immediate future: He speculates that a 'World State of capable rational men' will come to pass, in which they have been freed from tradition and notions of transcendent morality (Wells 1901). Under this new rational order they will determine a fresh ethical scheme that is based upon nothing but evolutionary reality. Acting in 'harmony with the universal will' of nature (Wells 1901: 253), recognising 'that the scheme of being in which we live is a struggle of existences' (Wells 1901: 254), these capable rational men will 'check the procreation of base and servile types' and 'all that is mean and ugly and bestial in the souls, bodies, or habits of men', by the method 'that nature has followed hitherto', that of death (Wells 1901: 256-7).

In this bleak eugenic futurology, we find a good example of biopower and its ambiguous morality, in which a form of power that is oriented towards life, can justify death in the name of the self-defence and health of the whole.

Two years later in 1903 Wells published *Mankind in the Making* in which he began to doubt the practicality of eugenics. His work was now intended as a 'direct challenge' to a eugenic movement that was threatening 'much rash interference' (Wells 1914a: ix-x). Wells was still in search of an organising principle for political and social affairs and still looked towards life as a core idea, rather than more conventional notions such as right, liberty, happiness or duty. But the problem with eugenics, he claimed, is that we do not really know what points to breed for and what points to breed out, for we do not seek homogeneity of the human form, rather we require a wide mixture of personalities. Indeed, removing the criminal from the breeding chain

might also remove 'the possession of a bold and enterprising character, of a degree of pride and energy above the needs of the position his social surroundings have forced upon him' (Wells 1914a: 54-5). Reading between the lines; this 'criminal' motivation to resist one's immediate social surroundings, to boldly perforate our social enclosure, might be of use.

After another two years came the publication of a Utopian tract, different in quality we are told, from all the predecessors in its genre. The ideal world depicted here is a post-Darwinian place for it does not represent a static end-state. Instead a modern, post-Darwinian utopia must adopt the programme of a dynamic and evolving world. *A Modern Utopia* is a place where the dissident tendencies of the Criminal Mind are put to more constructive use, for this society is to be built upon the presumption that 'we accept this world of conflict' (Wells 1905: 13) thereby allowing the law of struggle for existence to rule over our utopian dreams. In *A Modern Utopia* it is recognised that evolution depends upon variability *as well as* struggle. Thus, social evolution is a relentless process of change that requires continuous human activity, along with a range of human aptitude that is diverse enough to cope. *A Modern Utopia* requires 'all and more of the mental contrariety we find in the world of the real' (Wells 1905: 87).

But Wells seems unable to escape visions of a highly stratified society, ruled by a benevolent dictatorship of voluntary noblemen, the Samurai. Self-denying and motivated towards the common good, this group of philosopher-kings must effect the containment of and bring together into unity of purpose, that necessary though fragmentary 'mental contrariety'.

From the Samurai to the lowest class there is a gradual movement of people; those who display poor qualities move downwards, and those who display promise ascend. Those who find themselves at the bottom, struggling in the trials of life, would receive state assistance, and, for as long as they remain at such a level, they would be encouraged not to breed. Self-selection of breeding partner would occur for all those above a minimum wage, though each party would be made aware of the calibre of their partner by a central record office before the deed is done, having the opportunity thus to withdraw. Social surgery is to be reserved for only the most perverse and dangerous types who would be removed to distant islands and segregated by sex.

With basic provision taken care of the struggle for existence ceases to operate at the subsistence level, taking place instead between individuals on a higher, more civilised plane. Rough classifications divide people into groups in order to determine the broad lines of social organisation: 'Four main classes of mind are distinguished' into which people 'drift of their own accord', these are the 'Poietic, the Kinetic, the Dull and the Base. The former two are supposed to constitute the living tissue of the State; the latter are the fulcra and resistances' (Wells 1905: 179). The Dull and the Base have already been mentioned, being the types to gravitate towards prohibited breeding or export to distant islands.

Found at the other end, members of the Poietic class exhibit a diverse range of mental contrariety, unified only by virtue of their great creativity and imagination. They are able to look beyond popular opinion and current practice - a fundamental resource for an ever-changing State. Against this, the Kinetic class is a source of stability for the Kinetics have imaginations that do not range beyond the known. These are what we would call 'normal' human beings on earth, whilst the Poietics are renowned for their slight 'abnormality'. Working vigorously within the boundaries of their imagination, the Kinetics tend to be 'more moral and more trustworthy than the Poietic types', but the combination of these two forms allows for a State that is 'rapidly progressive and adaptable, and yet coherent, persistent, powerful and efficient' (Wells 1905: 182).

The Criminal Mind, so long as it does not commit criminal act, and become classified as Base, will become an asset to the Poietics as they tirelessly work to uncover the limits imposed upon society and experiment with the possibility of transcendence. Returning to Foucault; theirs would be 'a philosophical life in which the critique of what we are is at one and the same time the historical analysis of the limits imposed upon us and an experiment with the possibility of going beyond them' (Foucault 2000: 319).

But the relation between genealogist and Poietic can only extend so far, as the former would doubt the efficacy of such a highly regulated system of creative reform, one that is so very dependent on the benevolence and openness of its ruling Samurai. Though more advanced than the sort of 'piecemeal social engineering' Popper (1972: 66) would advocate several decades later, this sort of controlled reform would be antithetical to genealogical work, and yet as I shall argue, reformism is the position that genealogy is at risk of falling into. That is, a position of calm acceptance in the face of existing dispositions of power.

By 1914 Wells was expressing doubts about regulated mental contrariety, as he had earlier come to doubt eugenics; claiming that there is 'in the affairs of mankind something unorganised which is greater than any organisation'. Attempts at control bring with them the danger of paralysis. Indeed, the worst enemies this freedom can have 'are a swarm of busy little bureaucrats professing to direct or protect it and working in its name. Order is a convenience, but Anarchism is the aim and outcome of that convenience' (Wells 1914b: 280-1).

It should be recognised that Wells is still far from genealogy here; indeed he remains firmly within the modern tradition: His views on education are based upon the dissemination of universal knowledge, with educational textbook works such as *The Outline of History* and *The Science of Life* intended to further this project. In *World Brain* he imagines a network, facilitated by advances in microfilm that would provide an encyclopaedic digest of all knowledge to all who required it. Wells hoped that such a collective, and authoritative index of knowledge would

promote mutual understanding and world peace (Wells 1938). Drawing connections between Wells and genealogy is obviously problematic, and so all I wish to suggest is a general affinity.

Wells exists within the limits of objective knowledge; Foucault looks for the limitations that objectifying knowledge creates. Returning to *A Modern Utopia* we should remember that alongside its rigid hierarchical structure it also contains a sub-structure of scientific endeavour and refinement. Though Wells later doubts the bureaucratic form of his utopia, the high status of science is left unchallenged. When he invokes anarchism, it is opposed to the excessive regulation of human affairs but not to scientific knowledge. However, if Wells had the nineteenth century philosopher Bakunin in mind when he mentioned anarchism, the limiting framework of science becomes less absolute, and the affinity between Wells and genealogy becomes a little less controversial. For Bakunin 'science is the compass of life; but it is not life. Science is unchangeable, impersonal, general, abstract… Life is wholly fugitive and temporary, but also wholly palpitating with reality… Science creates nothing; it establishes and recognises only the creations of life… It follows that the only mission of science is to enlighten life, not to govern it' (Bakunin 1916: 55). Thus Bakunin affirms a place outside science, whilst also placing a limit upon scientific intervention.

We have travelled far since the stark eugenic proposals of *Anticipations*. Tamed subversions operating within the most regulated of social systems have been superseded within the Wellsian imagination. If we are to fully accommodate ourselves to a world in flux, we must realise that no measure of planning will be able to cope. We cannot foresee the problems that will arise and thus we cannot create mechanisms that will fully guard against their dangers. Trapping Poietics within a system of control and attempting to tap their creativity will fail. Constant flux and realignment demands we accept the essential role that anarchic thought has to play...

How we can travel from eugenic thought - the supposed perversion of counterhistory - to a position that begins to resemble the genealogical project, is a problem that requires attention. If evolutionary thinking can be found within genealogy, we might have an answer.

Pearson and Biopower

> The order of Mind is one with the order of Matter; hence that Mind alone is free which finds itself in Nature, and Nature in itself (Pearson 1888).

More than a decade before *Anticipations* was published there appeared a collection of essays by Karl Pearson entitled *The Ethic of Freethought*. Within this collection we discover the sort of rational man prophesied by Wells, one who will 'not be squeamish' as he engages in the project of reconfiguring ethics and wider society upon a more rational basis (Wells 1901: 258). As with Wells' *Anticipations* we find within *The Ethic of Freethought* some of the crucial traits of biopower.

According to Pearson (1888: x) a 'rational basis for morals' is 'the only safe guide to action'. It is time to separate morality from rite and dispense with conceptions of 'good and evil, as if they had an absolute or abstract value'. For that which is immoral is 'simply another term for what is anti-social', and that which is antisocial can be decided on rational terms based upon a human science that takes the overall 'welfare of society' as its primary concern (Pearson 1888: 105). There ought to be no limits, no social conventions that can stand in the way of rational advancement. For example, if this rational code can justify in the name of overall social welfare, the 'interference of society (the state) in the heart of the family,-at least in the family of the anti-social propagators of inefficient and unnecessary human beings', then so be it (Pearson 1888: 417).

When morality is 'a question not of feeling but of knowledge and study' (Pearson 1888: 110), education becomes central to the organisation and stability of society. The computation of what is social/anti-social according to the overall welfare of society is demanding, indeed, very few are 'capable of being really moral'. This sort of person 'must be in possession of the highest knowledge of his time, so he will be in possession of all that is known of the laws of human development. He, and he only, is capable of fulfilling his social instinct in accordance with those laws.' The 'ignorant and the uneducated cannot be freethinkers' and they 'cannot be moral' for morality 'is not the blind following of a social impulse, but a habit of action…moulded by that knowledge of truth which must become an integral part of our being' (Pearson 1888: 107).

The ignorant are not wicked, they are just ignorant and in need of education. The labouring classes fall into this category, and 'incapable of moral action' they are a significant threat to social stability. Ignorant and driven by mere passion, the 'blind feeling of the masses' is open to manipulation by those who use tools other than reason. And so 'all real social reform can only proceed step by step with the slow, often hardly perceptible, process of popular education' in the hope that revolutionary threat might be abated (Pearson 1888: 116). Only education can endow people with the sense to act in ways that accord with the overall welfare of society (as defined by those few who are 'capable of being really moral'). Calculation of the conditions favourable to overall welfare is however 'a problem requiring the careful and scientific investigation of the state itself - only by such investigation shall we be able to determine what is social or anti-social, what is healthy or unhealthy, in the proposals of both old and new Malthusians' (Pearson 1888: 429).

In this highly authoritarian scheme we can find echoes of Foucauldian biopower, in which not only 'life' but also the 'nature of things' becomes the object of concern. A certain naturalness is now discovered in human affairs, and this naturalness becomes the principle for a new mode of power (and a new code of ethics). As Pearson exemplifies, a moral effect is to be found in this switch. Good judgement is no longer opposed by wickedness; instead it finds its opponent to be ignorance, ignorance of the 'nature' of things. We must now respect and investigate natural

processes in order to nurture them, for if we fail to abide by what is natural there will be negative consequences. 'In other words, there will either be success or failure'. Success or failure, 'rather than legitimacy or illegitimacy, now become the criteria of governmental [and moral] action' (Foucault 1979: 16). The justification for action is now to be found within the nature of the objects of government.

This is where we find Pearson who was providing back in 1888 some key extensions to the notion of biopower (that perversion of counterhistory). A rational basis for morals, and the principle of social order was to be found in the pursuit of knowledge, in the scientific unmasking of the nature of humanity.

For us the task remaining is to uncover whether Pearson advances aspects of Foucauldian genealogy alongside his moral scheme. My claim is that the evolutionary metaphor that underlies both Pearson's moral naturalism and the genealogical approach is what makes this double connection between Pearson and biopower and Pearson and genealogy possible. I shall illustrate the connection between Pearson and genealogy below.

Pearson and Genealogy

Though evolution is best thought of as a cluster of interrelated concepts that have changed configuration throughout time, and even though the translation of the evolutionary metaphor into the social realm has been wide-ranging (see for example Bowler 2003, Hawkins 1998), there are some fairly basic characteristics that can be identified: The notions of relentless mortal pressure and incessant struggle are reasonably core. Adaptation tends to be the source of change (whether by the use and disuse of organs or by natural variability), and change tends to be gradual. Evolutionary outcomes are the result of confrontation where the fitter survive and the weaker fail.

Pearson connects these ideas to his preference for gradual reform. His champion is the 'freethinker' who exercises restraint, unlike those 'socialists of the old school, who think that revolutionary agitation, paper schemes of social reconstruction, and manifestoes appealing to class passion, are the only possible means of action' (Pearson 1988: 117). What they fail to realise is that 'human progress, like Nature, never leaps; this is the most certain of all laws deduced from the study of human development' (Pearson 1888: 110). 'Human society cannot be changed in a year, scarcely in a hundred years; it is an organism as complex as that of the most differentiated type of physical life; you can ruin that organism as you can destroy life, but remould it you cannot without the patient labour of generations, even of centuries' (Pearson 1888: 109). For there 'is a principle lying at the basis of all growth' one that was 'first made manifest by the naturalist, but will one day receive its most striking corroboration from the scientific historian' (Pearson 1888: 411): 'Social growth takes place by evolution not by revolution' (Pearson 1888:

110). If we are to work towards change, we must first reduce our expectations in face of the slow pace of evolutionary reality. As we come to appreciate 'the laws which have dictated the rise and decay of human societies' we shall realise how gradual is the pace of change and we shall feel the heavy burden of historical inertia.

A scientific appreciation of human history in evolutionary terms allows us to realise that confrontations only result in the gradual attrition of the human project into a smoother, more perfect form. And so we come to hold a more limited set of hopes that are more in tune with human possibility. Indeed we begin to realise that no 'single man, no single group of men, no generation of men can remodel human society; their influence when measured in the future will be found wondrously insignificant'. There may be "revolutions" but 'when the historian…comes to investigate that phase of society' he finds a 'great deal of human pain, a great deal of destruction', but of 'human creation' the 'veriest little'. New forms might have arisen through such "revolutions" but under them we find 'the old slave turning the old wheel; humanity toiling on under the old yoke', old forms enduring (Pearson 1888: 109).

In revolutionary times it 'is the duty of those who have the leisure to investigate, to show how by gradual and continuous changes we can restrain these [threatening] forces within safe channels, so that society shall emerge strong and efficient again' (Pearson 1888: xi). If nothing else, the freethinker will teach us all a little humility.

As I shall argue, similarities begin to emerge here between Pearson's outlook and Foucauldian genealogy. It is therefore with a deliberate sense of irony that I now quote Foucault, drawing from a text in which he directly criticises the sort of 'bourgeois' reformist history that Pearson exemplifies above:

> [I]f history is indeed caught up in a time frame analogous to that of life forms, if the same evolutionary processes are at work in life and in history, then human societies have no particular specificity, and they have no other lawfulness, no other determination or regularity than life itself. And just as there is no violent revolution in life, but simply a slow accumulation of tiny mutations, in the same way human history cannot really have the potential for a violent revolution; it can never harbor within itself anything more than imperceptible changes. By metaphorizing history in the analogy of life, one thus guaranteed that human societies would be incapable of revolution (Foucault 1972: 431).

In contrast, we are told that history should become 'detached' from this 'ideological system'. It should become involved in change through deliberate analytic work in a project that is free of the evolutionary metaphor. Historical effort is to be concerned with a very specific sort of analysis, one that seeks to investigate 'the transformations societies are actually capable of' (Foucault 1972: 423).

Now Foucault is at odds with Pearson in many respects. The appeal to science that is to be found in Pearson is clearly antithetical to someone who calls for 'the insurrection of knowledges',

an insurrection that sets itself against the 'centralizing power-effects that are bound up with the institutionalization and workings of any scientific discourse'. Genealogy is an 'antiscience' (Foucault 1976a: 9). Indeed, it will always resist such disciplinary regularisation, for to be effective, it must retain its ability to shift position in a tactical game. It must retain room for manoeuvre, in order to respond with appropriate flexibility to any regime of power and knowledge that comes into focus. Genealogy adopts a fragmentary gnawing action.

But in other respects I sometimes find myself hearing Pearson in Foucault, or Foucault in Pearson. On socialist revolution, Foucault takes a similar line: We are told that it 'inevitably reaffected or reinvested the very power-mechanisms constituted by the capitalist State or the industrial State' (Foucault 1976a: 260). For Pearson, revolutions fail to instil fundamental change because human evolution is a process of gradual attrition. And so we always find 'the old slave turning the old wheel' once revolution has passed (Pearson 1888: 109). According to Foucault, revolutions fail when systems of power are not adequately perceived, allowing them to continue after a process of transformation that failed to achieve sufficient depth. Thus Foucault accepts the theoretical possibility of revolution, whilst Pearson rules it out on evolutionary terms. Nevertheless, those familiar with the intricacies of Foucauldian power analysis must sometimes wonder if it would ever be possible to conduct a revolution at the necessary level of detail. And so, in effect we find ourselves in a similar position, believing in gradualism and the impossibility of rupture.

The genealogical concept of 'emergence' also sounds familiar when reading Pearson once we recognise the extent to which Pearson's writing is infused with evolutionism, where outcomes are the result of confrontation and change is gradual. According to 'emergence' historical events are the result of 'a particular state of forces', they occur where forces intersect, at their frontier. And as a result of such irreducible complexity, no one agent can be held 'responsible for an emergence; no one can glory in it, since it always occurs in the interstice' (Foucault 1971: 376-7). No 'single man, no single group of men, no generation of men can remodel human society; their influence when measured in the future will be found wondrously insignificant' (Pearson 1888: 109).

Power is everywhere, it comes from everywhere, and these multiple, interacting forces have been the formative stuff of history. Indeed, the study of history reveals such interminable complexity. And so we come to believe that it is the duty of those who have the leisure to investigate, to reveal these forces so that we may act with greater caution in the present. Pearson would look for laws of human progress, Foucault would look for tactical pointers, but either way, our hopes face a terrible reduction in the face of 'reality'. This is both the lesson of evolution, and the apparent lesson of dispersed power, when a worldview is based on scattered confrontation and a

process of change that is *dependent upon the interactions of all*. It is at this point that Foucault and Pearson meet, for this is the source of the above claimed futility of change.

According to the Foucauldians Paul Rabinow and Nikolas Rose, we shall never 'enter the utopias or dystopias of futurology'. Rather, in order to 'understand and intervene in possible futures we need an analytic which is more modest and empirical, attuned to all the small mutations where today is becoming different from yesterday' (Rabinow and Rose 2006: 205). We must become piecemeal in our criticisms. And if only, in some small way, we manage to 'increase the "thinkability" of the relations of force that shape our present' we have served our purpose (Barry, Osborne & Rose 1996: 2). We are to leave being 'for' or 'against' the present to others:

> [T]he imperative discourse that consists in saying "strike against this and do so in this way," seems to me to be very flimsy when delivered from a teaching institution or even just on a piece of paper. In any case, it seems to me that the dimension of what is to be done can only appear within a field of real forces, that is to say within a field of forces that cannot be created by a speaking subject alone and on the basis of his words, because it is a field of forces that cannot in any way be controlled or asserted within this kind of imperative discourse. So, since there has to be an imperative, I would like the one underpinning the theoretical analysis we are attempting to be quite simply a conditional imperative of the kind: If you want to struggle, here are some key points, here are some lines of force, here are some constrictions and blockages. In other words, I would like these imperatives to be no more than tactical pointers. Of course, it's up to me, and those who are working in the same direction, to know on what fields of real forces we need to get our bearings in order to make a tactically effective analysis (Foucault 1978: 3).

Is Genealogy to be Kinetic or Poietic?

It can be no bad thing to question the imperative discourses of a teaching institution. Certainly, genealogy is not about delivering commands or issuing instructions, and as a genealogist Foucault would rightfully rebel against such discourse. Addressing itself to relations of force genealogy has a far more subversive and destructive intent.

But should we be satisfied if we make things a little more thinkable? Or should we, in the light of potential correlations between Foucault's genealogy and Pearson's reformism, suspect that improving the thinkability of relations of force is a strangely pacified idea, pacified by what it perceives to be the surrounding reality of power. By acknowledging 'emergence' and the dispersion of power - where change becomes dependent upon the interactions of all - do we not reduce in size and increase in humility to become rather small in our desires? Is the follower of Nietzsche not gradually tamed by the genealogical worldview?

According to my account, this twist in the genealogical project does seem to be at the very least a plausible scenario. So my claim is this: Though it begins with Poietic intentions, genealogy becomes Kinetic if it is reduced to mere empirical revelations of power. It becomes less radical than it might otherwise have been when it derives the futility of change from the dispersion of power. In terms of educational research, genealogy is faced with a similar scenario; it can either

temper its criticisms of power in education to what is deemed realistic, favouring gradual internal reform and amelioration; or it can connect its criticisms of education to a level of imagination that allows itself to believe in the possibility of broader social change and the more fundamental adjustments in education that this might allow.

The Foucauldian approach to power risks convincing us that reformism is the sensible option. In the terminology of *A Modern Utopia* - it appeals to our Kinetic disposition. To remain Poietic is to refuse such reasonable and pragmatic conclusions. The Poietic Foucauldian recalls that genealogy 'is not given to discrete effacement before the objects it observes' (Foucault 1971: 382). And this requires traits of the criminal/transgressive mind; that is, a degree of boldness and energy that exceeds the apparent needs of our social environment. It requires a large amount of imagination, and a belief in something 'unorganised which is greater than any organisation' (Wells 1914b: 280). To be Poietic is to retain the ability to dream. Genealogy is certainly 'gray, meticulous, and patiently documentary' (Foucault 1971: 368) but it also 'disturbs what was previously considered immobile' where nothing is considered sacred (Foucault 1971: 375). Of course, genealogy is not sacred either, and if evolutionism is to be found in its depths then we must ask of it a question: What then is the mode of genealogy to be? Will it be Kinetic or Poietic?

Notes:

1. Wherever possible, references refer to date of first publication. The publication date of the consulted text appears in the references in square brackets.
2. I am greatly indebted to recent article by Roy Goddard (forthcoming) who arrives at conclusions of a similar nature though from a very different angle.
3. For more detail on this point see Foucault (1976a: 208).

Acknowledgments:

I would like to extend my thanks to Roy Goddard for his close and penetrating reading of earlier drafts. My thanks also to the two anonymous reviewers.

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