

The Foucaultian Relationship between Power and Knowledge: Genealogy as a Method for Epistemic Resistance

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Abstract : The primary aim of this paper is to analyze the relationship between power and knowledge suggested in Michel Foucault's theory. Taking into consideration the role of power in knowledge production, the goal is to evaluate to what extent genealogy can be presented as a practical method for epistemic resistance. To do so, the methodology used consists of a revision of Foucault's literature concerning the topic discussed. In this sense, conceptual analysis is applied in order to understand the effect of the double dimension of power on knowledge production. In its negative dimension, power is conceived as an organ of repression, vetoing certain instances of knowledge considered deceitful. In opposition, in its positive dimension, power works as an organ of the production of truth by means of institutionalized discourses. This double declination of power leads to the first main findings of the present analysis: no truth or knowledge can lie outside power's action, and power is constituted through accepted forms of knowledge. To second these statements, Foucaultian discourse formations are evaluated, presenting external exclusion procedures as paradigmatic practices to demonstrate how power creates and shapes the validity of certain epistemes. Thus, taking into consideration power's mechanisms to produce and reproduce institutionalized truths, this paper accounts for the Foucaultian praxis of genealogy as a method to reveal power's intention, instruments, and effects in the production of knowledge. In this sense, it is suggested to consider genealogy as a practice which, firstly, reveals what instances of knowledge are subjugated to power and, secondly, promotes aforementioned peripheral discourses as a form of epistemic resistance. In order to counterbalance these main theses, objections to Foucault's work from Nancy Fraser, Linda Nicholson, Charles Taylor, Richard Rorty, Alvin Goldman, or Karen Barad are discussed. In essence, the understanding of the Foucaultian relationship between power and knowledge is essential to analyze how contemporary discourses are produced by both traditional institutions and new forms of institutionalized power, such as mass media or social networks. Therefore, Michel Foucault's practice of genealogy is relevant, not only for its philosophical contribution as a method to uncover the effects of power in knowledge production but also because it constitutes a valuable theoretical framework for political theory and sociological studies concerning the formation of societies and individuals in the contemporary world.

Keywords : epistemic resistance, Foucault's genealogy, knowledge, power, truth

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