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Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics. by Hubert L. Dreyfus; Paul Rabinow

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“sociology”) as an applied science that could profitably inform social policy on the basis of thorough and painstakingly exact empirical research of *real* social groups, not, as the Enlightenment thinkers believed, on the basis of speculation and preconceived, highly abstract ideas which take so-called reason rather than observation as their starting point. Le Play's strongly inductive approach also provides an alternative to the Comtean tradition of system building, determinism, and deductive reasoning. Le Play's comparative studies were mostly directed at finding the “secret of social happiness”: namely, the kinds of social institution that could, in a rapidly changing world, best provide the individual with both freedom and security. He asked how different *degrees* of individual freedom and social stability are combined in the different types of social organization found around the world and what principles could be discovered and put in the service of current policymaking. Whether one is inclined to agree or disagree with the policy suggestions Le Play drew from his research, it is clear that his analytical powers were very considerable indeed.

The selections are good and sometimes contemporary in impact. In one, for example, Le Play gives an incisive account of the limitations inherent in the use of social statistics. In another, written over 130 years ago, he observes: “Social science . . . is made up for the most part of theories and counter-theories proposed by mutually antagonistic authors. It can truly be said that the most ardent enemies of this science are its own proponents” (p. 153). There are also many apt examples of careful sociological analysis, for instance, of the effect of inheritance laws on both the structure and social psychology of the family, the relationship between social mobility and family organization, the nature of occupational subcultures and life-styles, and the larger social (as well as individual) effects of a gradual change in the organization of work from a “system of long-term voluntary work agreements” to a “system of temporary work agreements and work with no agreements.”

In conclusion, this is a very well done book and a valuable addition to the University of Chicago's highly regarded Heritage of Sociology series.

*Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics.* By Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982. Pp. xxiii + 231. \$25.00.

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*Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* is the latest and so far most ambitious attempt to present the works of the French philosopher Michel Foucault to an English-speaking audience. It is also likely to be taken as the authoritative “translation” of Foucault, since it carries an afterword by Foucault himself and since the authors, Hubert

L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, stress throughout their direct contact with the subject (“We tried this version out on Foucault and he agreed that . . .”).

The book falls into two discrete parts which seem to reflect a sharp division of labor between the two authors—one a philosopher, the other an anthropologist. The first part surveys Foucault’s earlier works in chronological order up to and including *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (London: Tavistock, 1972). It is manifestly philosophical in its concerns as it follows the ex-student of Merleau-Ponty through a complicated (and implicit) encounter with Heidegger. The second part discusses *Discipline and Punish* (London: Allen Lane, 1977) and Foucault’s later writings and is far more sociological in both tone and content, treating the growth of “disciplinary” institutions and new, pervasive forms of power and domination. The philosophical preoccupations of the first part do not totally fall away, but they are considerably displaced.

Throughout both parts the authors provide clear summaries of Foucault’s major works as well as some helpful sketches of the cultural background against which they were written. The brief discussion of philosophical currents in France since the war is likely to be of particular use to American readers. The summaries themselves are short and generally skillful, although to some readers they may seem more a digest of citations from Foucault than a translation of his themes into more conventional (or accessible) terms. In some places the summaries are rather too bald and risk parodying Foucault’s style rather than presenting his substance; a passage on the historic rationales of prison discipline, for example, reads: “The body was to be trained, exercised, and supervised. The production of a new apparatus of control was necessary, one which would carry out this program of discipline. It was to be an apparatus of total, continuous, and efficient surveillance” (p. 152). Such a passage, with its concision, hints of functional necessity, and abstraction from human agency may compound misunderstandings instead of helping clarify Foucault’s historical arguments.

The greater ambition of the book is, however, not to summarize but to interpret Foucault’s work. Here the authors focus not so much on particular texts as on Foucault’s career as a whole; this is their rationale for moving chronologically through Foucault’s different writings, showing how each leads to the next. The clear intent is to vindicate Foucault’s progress through these works, which culminate with what the authors take to be the most advanced position and method available in philosophy or the social sciences. The twists and turns, shifts, inconsistencies, and contradictions in Foucault’s earlier career are hence less to be criticized than interpreted as an exemplary series of “experiments,” always at the cutting edge of research, moving “beyond structuralism and hermeneutics.”

To divine a unity or continuity across Foucault’s career is something of a tour de force. Given the difficulty of Foucault’s works and their apparently wide-ranging diversity, it will also undoubtedly be appealing and attractive to some readers to seek a single, unfolding research program

behind this bewildering array. There are, however, some signal difficulties with the continuous interpretation the authors propose:

1. By their own account there is a sharp break in Foucault's career, around 1968; indeed the very structure of their book reflects the break, with the chronologically earlier half given over to philosophical emphases and the later to more sociological ones. The authors themselves do not manage to achieve a single voice in the book; their attempt to bridge what they see as the gulf between Foucault's earlier and later works is even less successful and quite unconvincing. They note simply, "The reversal that will provide the framework for the analyses in part II of this book is the inversion of the priority of theory to that of practice" (p. 102). This banal formula—from theory to practice after 1968—is asked to carry far too much weight. A simple inversion in priorities hardly serves to characterize the novel approach of *Discipline and Punish* and later works. If there is a case to be made that the new departure in *Discipline and Punish* grows out of the impasse in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, the authors do not make it here.

2. In their interpretation of Foucault's career the authors hope to do for Foucault something he has refused to do for himself. They try to construct or to make explicit his overarching method and position, which they term "interpretive analytics," and which they then claim is "currently the most powerful, plausible, and honest option available . . . for studying human beings" (p. 125). What the authors do not consider is that Foucault's writings and current interests may not add up to a coherent philosophical program; indeed his critical stance may foreclose the very possibility, and this may be a strength as well as a weakness in his work. If this makes Foucault a nihilist, the new coinage "interpretive analytics" is not adequate to save him from that charge.

3. More fundamentally, there is the problem of what exists beyond structuralism and hermeneutics. In trying to make a case for the "beyond" the authors are perhaps a trifle cavalier in dismissing other views. They suggest early on that hermeneutics and structuralism are "the two dominant methods available for the study of human beings" (p. xxiii) and then catalog various "impasses . . . inherent in modern humanism" (p. 43). They describe Foucault as seeking to move beyond the alternatives—"the only alternatives left to those still trying to understand human beings within the problematic left by the breakdown of the humanistic framework" (p. xix). The exposition of these points may serve to spell out explicitly what Foucault tends to leave unstated and implicit and therefore provide an aid in reading Foucault, particularly for those unfamiliar with his immediate French environment. However, the authors' exposition presents very few arguments; there are certainly not enough to convince critics of Foucault that his writings are indeed "beyond" structuralism and hermeneutics. Neither are there nearly enough to inform the uninitiated what the discussion is about.

As a serious and ambitious book *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structural-*

*ism and Hermeneutics* undoubtedly deserves the wide audience it is likely to have, but it would be unfortunate if it were accepted uncritically as the authoritative American reading.

*Memories of Class: The Pre-History and After-Life of Class.* By Zygmunt Bauman. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982. Pp. viii + 209. \$21.95.

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At the center of Marx's sociological analysis of the rise and supposedly inevitable fall of capitalist civilization—a historical drama in which the bourgeoisie and the proletariat assume the chief roles—lies the concept of class and class interests. It has often been pointed out that Weber's use of class in *Economy and Society* represents his specific adaptation of a Marxist concept. In Weber's case, however, the discussion is extended to include "class, status and power"; not only is Weber more cautious regarding predictions but his discussion is also grounded empirically. In the Weberian analysis and prognosis, the Marxian iron laws of historical necessity and inevitability are replaced by the terms possibility and probability. In the follow-up discussions, sociologists became deeply divided on the issue of class concept: some refined it and still others refined it out of existence." Be that as it may, classes go on proliferating and so do debates about them. Interestingly, many recent discussions in both the East and the West revolve around Marxian and Weberian themes with the intended aim of clarification and continuation in some cases and in others—definitely the more imaginative ones—an attempt at further refinement and synthesis. This is especially true of the controversy about the concept of "the new class," be it that of managers (Burnham), technocrats (Galbraith), party bureaucrats (Trotsky, Djilas), or intellectuals (Konrád and Széleányi, Gouldner); the choices depend on the specificity of the socioeconomic structure under investigation.

Zygmunt Bauman joins the fray with his new book, *Memories of Class*. He needs no introduction: his *Zarys marksistowskiej teorii społeczeństwa* (1964), written and published during his tenure at Warsaw University, was widely disseminated through translation and served as *the* text among a whole generation of sociologists in Eastern Europe in the 1960s, the time of the reemergence of their disciplines. Since his emigration to the West in 1968, he has written many fine studies on such diverse topics as socialism, hermeneutics, culture, and critical sociology. He brings to the discussion on the concept of class an impressive range of historical and sociological knowledge of Eastern and Western societies.

*Memories of Class* has as its major theme the transition from feudalism to capitalism, that is, the restratification from an estate to a class society, extensively dealt with by the classics of the social sciences, albeit with