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REVIEW

Michel Foucault, *Introduction à l'«Anthropologie présentée par Daniel Defert, François Ewald et Frédéric Gros, suivi de *Anthropologie du point de vue pragmatique* d'Emmanuel Kant, traduit et annoté par Michel Foucault (Paris : Vrin « Bibliothèque des Textes Philosophiques », 2008)*

Michel Foucault, *Introduction to Kant's Anthropology*, Edited and with an afterword and critical notes by Roberto Nigro, translated by Roberto Nigro and Kate Briggs, Semiotext(e), Los Angeles, CA, 2008.

The recent publication of the complete text of Foucault's "Complementary Thesis" is an important and welcome development for anybody interested in his work because this text was known more by hearsay than by direct acquaintance. The history of the *Introduction* is well known. The regulations of the French university in the 1960's required the submission of two works for a *Doctorat d'Etat*: a major thesis, which had to be published, and for which Foucault presented *Madness and Civilization*; the translation and introduction of Kant's *Anthropology* was his secondary submission. This "*Thèse Complémentaire*" was up to now only accessible at the Sorbonne's library in a microfiche of the original typescript or through unauthorized transcriptions on the Internet. In 1964 Foucault published his translation of Kant's *Anthropology* together with a *Notice historique* which reproduced a few of the initial pages of his thesis, the full text of the *Introduction* having been considered too interpretative to be published together with the translation.¹ At the end of the *Notice*, Foucault announced that "The relationships of the critical thinking and the anthropological reflection would be studied in a subsequent work".² Instead of reworking the *Introduc-*

¹ Didier Eribon reproduces in his *Michel Foucault (1926-1984)*, 2nd edition (Paris: Flammarion, 1991), 138-139, the official report of the thesis examination, which includes the objections of the Jury both to the *Introduction* and to the translation.

² Michel Foucault, *Dits et Écrits, 1954-1988*, Bibliothèque des sciences humaines. (Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1994). I, 293.

tion, Foucault went on to write a new book altogether, which would become *The Order of Things*.³

Beyond the fact of the availability of the text, a positive event in itself, there is an additional reason to rejoice, because we may see in its publication a relaxation of the policies enforced up to now by Foucault's literary executors. According to the prevalent interpretation to Foucault's will, only writings that he himself had revised and approved for publication would be released to the public. This rule has been somewhat tweaked for some materials in the *Dits et Ecrits* collection, and the "Lectures in the Collège de France". Coincidentally, this year a new volume of the "Lectures" was released, and this time the editors reported that the transcript of the audio tape had been supplemented to some extent with Foucault's original notes.⁴ Such information was not given in the other volumes, which were supposed to be actual transcripts. Furthermore, in the editors' presentation to the *Introduction*, they refer to a course given at the University of Lille in 1952-1953, with "ninety-seven manuscript pages, Foucault's oldest surviving philosophical text" (8; 10)⁵, a text not listed in the inventory of the IMEC where Foucault's papers have been deposited. A recent article by Foucault's long-time companion and literary executor Daniel Defert seems to indicate that we could see more releases in the future.⁶

Although no official text of the *Introduction à l'Anthropologie* was available until now, a number of doctoral theses, papers and books had already discussed Foucault's text.⁷ This, and the fact that the existing transcriptions were considered unre-

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- ³ Michel Foucault, *Les Mots et les Choses: une archéologie des sciences humaines* (Paris : Éditions Gallimard, 1966). Chapter. ix : ("L'Homme et ses doubles") is closely related to the *Introduction*.
- ⁴ Michel Foucault, *Le Gouvernement de soi et des autres : Cours au Collège de France, 1982-1983* (Paris : Gallimard - Le Seuil, 2008), 7-8.
- ⁵ Parenthetical references indicate first the pages of the original French text, followed by the corresponding page number in the English translation. If only one set of pages is mentioned, it corresponds to the French edition, except in the last section, where it would refer to the English translation.
- ⁶ Cf. « Je crois au temps... »: Daniel Defert légataire des manuscrits de Michel Foucault, interview by Guillaume Bellome, *Revue Recto/Verso*, no. 1, Juin 2007.
- ⁷ S. Watson, "Kant and Foucault: on the Ends of Man", *Tijdschrift voor filosofie*, 1985, 47, 1, 71-102; Frederic Gros, *Théorie de la connaissance et histoire des savoirs dans les écrits de M. Foucault*, Université de Paris XII, 1995 (unpublished PhD thesis); Béatrice Han. *L'ontologie manquée de Michel Foucault: entre l'historique et le transcendantale*,. Grenoble, SP: Millon, 1998 (English translation: Béatrice Han, *Foucault's Critical Project* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002); Ricardo Ribeiro Terra, "Foucault lecteur de Kant: de l'anthropologie à l'ontologie du présent", In Ferrari, J., éd., *L'année 1798. Kant et la naissance de l'anthropologie au Siècle des Lumières* (Paris, Vrin, 1997), 159-171; Amy Allen, "Foucault and Enlightenment: A Critical Reappraisal", *Constellations*, 10, 2, 2003, pp. 180-198; Arianna Bove, *A Critical Ontology of the Present : Foucault and the Task of our Times*, University of Sussex, 2007 (unpublished PhD thesis). See additional references in Roberto

liable, seems to have influenced the editors and executors to finally publish this text, together with Foucault's translation of Kant's *Anthropologie*. The volume comprises a short editorial presentation, followed by Foucault's introduction (pp. 11-79), his translation of Kant's *Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht* (pp. 83-262), and concludes with a discussion of textual differences between the manuscript and Kant's published text (263-267).

This book will mainly interest the student of Foucault's work since it documents Foucault's interest in and attachment to the philosophy of Kant, the extent of Nietzsche's and Heidegger's influence in shaping his understanding of Kant, and one of the earliest formulations of the ideas further developed in *The Order of Things*. It will also be of interest to historians of philosophy interested in the reception of Kant, Heidegger and Nietzsche in postwar French philosophy.

How did Foucault present the *Anthropology* to his readers? His text—which does not have any heading or titles and is only separated into sections marked in the French version with asterisks—begins by discussing the origins of the *Anthropology* in the lectures given by Kant for more than twenty years. Only upon reaching retirement did Kant decide to publish this text, of which Foucault wishes we could have more information about its “geology” or “archaeology”. What is at stake here is, according to Foucault, whether underlying the development of Kant's philosophy there is a certain concept of man already shaped in the pre-critical period that remained basically unchanged and unchallenged during the elaboration of the critical philosophy, only to surface again in his last published work (12; 19). Or, maybe Kant modified his *Anthropology* over the years, while elaborating his overall philosophy. Foucault seems to adopt a mixed and three-pronged position regarding the text. He claims that, from a chronological as well as a structural point of view, the *Anthropology* is “...contemporary with what come before the *Critique*, with what the *Critique* accomplishes, and with what would soon be rid of it” (14; 22). To substantiate the first remark, Foucault points out the similarities between the *Anthropology* and other texts of the pre-critical period. Regarding the second, he stresses that the *Anthropology* not only belongs to the period in which Kant begins developing his critical position (17; 28), but at least in one major point, it already evidences a post-Copernican turn. The *Anthropology* studies man not from a cosmological but from a cosmopolitan perspective, i.e., one in which the world is a city to be built rather than a cosmos already given (20; 33). In the *Anthropology*, man “is neither *homo natura* nor a purely free subject” (34; 54-55). Man, in Kant's *Anthropology*, is always entangled with the word. And regarding Foucault's third remark, it finds its briefest and most poignant formulation in Foucault's final sentence: “The trajectory of the question: *was ist der Mensch?* in the field of philosophy reaches its end in the response which both chal-

lenges and disarms it: *der Übermensch* "(79; 124). This last remark points out the issues central to *The Order of Things* and supports the thesis of continuity between this essay and the later claims about the "death of man" and the criticism of the human sciences. It also shows that Foucault already at this stage embraced and was fond of waving a Nietzschean flag.

What is the relationship between *Anthropology* and Critical Philosophy? Foucault points out the apparent lack of contact between the two aspects of Kant's work. This *Anthropology* is not the answer to the question 'What is man?' that Kant presented in his *Logic*. In these sections, Foucault's interpretation seems to echo Heidegger's *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*. Both the notion of finitude as an essential problem (67; 105), and the recurrent use of the word "repetition" lead in that direction. But even if Foucault was inspired by Heidegger, their philosophical objectives seem to diverge. Heidegger wants to show that Kant was unable or unwilling to take the step of grounding metaphysics, thereby mapping his own philosophical direction simultaneously as a continuation of and also a break with Kant's enterprise. Foucault's concern, already at this stage, is more historically oriented. According to Foucault, if Kant's *Anthropology* is related to Critical philosophy, it is also related to a "whole series of anthropological researches being undertaken, primarily in Germany, in the second half of the eighteenth century" (69; 109). This is a complex relationship, one by which Kant was influenced, but also in which he was himself a very influential figure, well before his lectures were finally printed. In this section (68-79; 108-124) Foucault is developing an archeological reading (in the sense Foucault gives to this term in his later works⁸). Methodologically, this is a break with an "internalist" reading, one in which the text itself, in its internal inconsistencies, in the failure to draw a conclusion, and in other "symptoms", provides a key to its own interpretation. Foucault proceeds by locating Kant's argument in a complex web of contemporary arguments and discussions. The meaning of the *Anthropology* is established not (or not solely) on the basis of its place in Kant's work, but primarily in relationship to the general discussion about a science of man which is unfolding at that time. Foucault claims that there is a fundamental ambiguity in this attempt to consider man: "it is the knowledge of man, in a movement that objectifies man on the level of his natural being and in the content of his animal determinations; at the same time, it is the knowledge of the knowledge of man, and so can interrogate the

⁸ While Foucault is here doing "archaeology" in the sense of his later work, he uses the word "archaeology" in a different way: "Leaving aside the archaeology of a term the form of which, if not the fate, had already been fixed by the sixteenth century. What can these new anthropologies mean in relation to a science of man of the Cartesian type?" (71). Cf. also the following utterance: "Would the archaeology of the text, if it were possible, allow us to see the birth of 'homo criticus', whose structure would essentially differ from the man who preceded him?" (13). For a contemporaneous use of "archaeology", see Foucault's 1961 preface to *Histoire de la Folie* (Cf. *Dits et Écrits*, I, 160).

subject himself, ask him where his limitations lie, and about what he sanctions of the knowledge we have of him" (74; 117). The *Anthropology* is not "applied pure reason" and does not have the same status as Kant's *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*, an essay that applies the concepts of pure reason to physics. On the contrary, the entanglement between object and subject seems endemic in the science of man; furthermore, the accomplishments of Kant's philosophical revolution seem to have tightened this entanglement. To offer the appearance of a solution is the role of the *Anthropology*, and for Foucault that explains Kant's stubborn attachment to this work, his patient repetition of the lectures over the years, and their final publication at the end of his life.

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While the editors did an important job delivering this text to a wide audience, they fell short in a number of areas that one hopes will be corrected in a second edition. First, if the original text was difficult to read and transcribe as we are told in the presentation (9; 12), the absence of footnotes explaining possible alternative readings or editorial decisions is surprising. We also regret the lack of an index to this volume. A discussion of Foucault's translation of Kant, the extent of changes between the original 1961 typescript and the 1964 edition, an index to the translation and a glossary discussing choices made by Foucault would also have been useful. But these are minor matters when compared to the joy of finally being able to read Foucault's text in its authorized version.

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It is unusual for a translation to be published almost simultaneously with the original. The translation of the *Introduction* by Roberto Nigro and Kate Briggs not only allows a wider public to gain access to this early work by Foucault, but also improves on the original publication. Nigro based his translation both on the published French version and on the original, annotated, and with a few missing references in the text inserted. The English translation also has a very useful "Afterword" that places this work in context.

In a short Introduction, Nigro shares with the reader some of the underlying assumptions guiding the translation. The *Introduction* refers to Kant in three different ways, all of which represent a challenge for the potential translator. Foucault quotes Kant in the original German language, paraphrases him, and also quotes him in his own translation, which this work was supposed to introduce. Nigro and Briggs choose to leave the original German, but to use a standard English translation for both the translations and the paraphrasing, trying at the same time not to lose altogether the flavor of Foucault's rendering of the Kantian text.

The translation itself is very down to earth, making great efforts to deliver Foucault's ideas if not his somewhat convoluted style in a clear and readable prose. Sometimes they underplay Foucault's rich prose a little too much. Where Foucault writes: "...celle d'une structure qui s'offre, en ce qu'elle a de plus radical que toute 'faculté' possible, *a la parole enfin libérée* d'une philosophie transcendentale", the English text renders: "...that of a structure, more radical than any possible 'faculty' lends itself to transcendental philosophy, liberated at last" (54; 86 emphasis added).

The notes to the text (142-150) give a glimpse of the difficulties involved in reading and transcribing Foucault's original. The French edition silently corrected or glossed over such problems as missing, illegible words and typos. Nigro also provides information on some of the less known thinkers who corresponded with Kant during the period in which he was writing the *Anthropology* and to which Foucault refers as background for Kant's project.

Finally, the "Afterword" deals with the history of Foucault's *Introduction*. This short essay (127-139) deals with the history of the text, and provides useful hints for his interpretation. Nigro warns the reader not to see in the *Introduction* the source of Foucault's later ideas, because these took "unforeseen directions and resonated with each other in different ways" (130). He notes the often-discussed influence of Heidegger, in particular, of his *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, which Heidegger dedicated to the memory of Max Scheler, one of the leading figures of philosophical anthropology in the early twentieth century. But he also notes that the *Introduction* can best be understood in the context of contemporaneous philosophical discussions. In particular, he stresses Foucault's closeness to Althusser. Nigro sees a parallelism between Foucault's interest in Kant's anthropology and Althusser's research on Feuerbach (133). This is an interesting lead, which need to be developed further. Nigro concludes his essay by suggesting that Hyppolite's criticism of Foucault's complementary thesis as being too Nietzschean points to Foucault's combat against "the immense all-encompassing resources of Hegelian thinking" (137), a combat for which he enlisted as allies not only Nietzsche but also Artaud, Bataille, Roussel and many others.

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