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REVIEW

Derek Hook, *Foucault, Psychology and the Analytics of Power* (Houndsmill, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), ISBN: 978-0230008199

I deeply admire what Derek Hook is attempting to accomplish in *Foucault, Psychology and the Analytics of Power*, yet I cannot help but think that this book should be read as a starting point, not a final destination. Accordingly, I recommend this book for undergraduates in psychology or social theory who have previously studied some of Foucault's work. Building on such notable books as Nikolas Rose's *Inventing Our Selves*,¹ this book attempts to rethink Foucault's critical approach to "psy" thought by taking into consideration his *Lectures at the Collège de France*.

Explaining Foucault's conception of the discourse surrounding human nature, Hook says that "Foucault has pronounced concerns, in this respect much like Nietzsche, about what it means for certain notions to become normalized, to enter the world of human knowledge and practice not merely as operational constructs but as universal "truths of being." (68)

The last chapter tends to drift into emerging discourses surrounding Foucault's theory of state racism, and it attempts to draw a provocative connection between this discourse and the "psy" sciences. Are these human sciences implicated in constructing a discourse that oppresses the mad? Readers of this text could study Foucault to discover that the epistemological conception of madness is a historical construction that leads to oppression much like that of race. These questions are only beginning to emerge in Foucault studies, and it is wonderful that a book like this exists so that connections that once were unthinkable can now be drawn between seemingly disparate social fields.

My reading of Foucault is that there is no clear or definitive distinction between "sovereign" and "disciplinary" power. Hook illustrates a point that Foucault made many times in several different places: "In political theory, we have yet to cut off the head of the king." Perhaps the same could be said of the discourses produced by the "psy" sciences that it has yet to cut off the head of the king. This book may begin that process, at least theoretically.

¹ Nikolas Rose, *Inventing Our Selves: Psychology, Power, and Personhood* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996).

As Foucault often pointed out, more often than not it happens that a discursive practice brings together various disciplines or sciences. Discursive practices are not purely and simply modes of manufacturing discourse, but also have a tendency to take shape in institutions and behavioral schemes, precisely because of their transmission and mass dissemination through pedagogical forms that maintain them. If this book can be used to deconstruct some of those unreflectively accepted pedagogical forms, then I think Hook's attempt to transform psychology and psychiatry will be successful.

Currently, it seems as though the field of psychiatry has forgotten about talk therapy, instead favoring pharmacological conceptions of how to "cure" a person. This is one contemporary episteme that Hook barely mentions, yet there are very precise ways in which this episteme inflicts its power upon the human body at the level of regulating affects. One could draw inferences from the chapters in this book about the problem of excessive pharmacology; however, the problem of over-prescribing pharmaceutical drugs is largely neglected by Hook. The purpose of Hook's analysis is to focus on the power dynamics underlying psychology and psychiatric practices by linking them to the discursive practices of various states from around the world.

Hook shows that power is often affected in discontinuous ways that may be realized in unstructured formations that never coalesce into a whole. Hook agrees with the basic Foucauldian position that no knowledge is formed without a system of communication, registration, accumulation, and displacement that is in itself a form of power, linked in its existence and its functioning to other forms of power. No power is exercised without the extraction, appropriation, distribution or restraint of knowledge. Yet for some reason, and I am not sure why, Hook tends to periodize the distinction between sovereign and disciplinary power. My reading of Foucault is that sovereign power overlaps historically with the epoch of disciplinary power, and that the advent of disciplinarity never fully extinguished sovereign power, insofar as our contemporary assumption about power is that it still resonates from the hands of "the king."

Hook's analysis of Foucault enables us to spell out a series of complex linkages between psychology and power; to understand how psychology is itself an indispensable vector of modern power. Hook examines how certain technologies of subjectivity implemented by various "psy"-disciplines and institutions enable certain governmental agendas insofar as these apparatuses perpetuate particular rationalities of the state. Hence, he devotes a sizable portion of the book to exploring these connections in a way that is fresh, precisely because he does so from a psychology background. He offers insights from within the field of psychology that attempt to break down some institutional blind spots in the mental health field, e.g., how these technologies of the self become articulated through the ethical self-knowledge and self-practices of subjects.

Hook argues that "Foucault's analytics of power does not necessarily follow the route of "grand theory," nor the project of writing power's ontology, of outlining its overall structure." (3) Hook believes that Foucault was forwarding a "de-theorizing project that aims to resist final formulations of power in favor of an attempt to generate solid analytic grounds from which we may fix aspects of its operational force and logic." (3) Hence, he stresses the importance of Foucault's "critical legacy." I like that Hook draws extensively from many of the various influences that shaped Foucault's eclectic ideas, although a few glaring exceptions should be noted, namely, there are no references to Martin Heidegger, Ludwig Binswanger, and the influence of R.D. Laing. Perhaps future books on the topic of Foucault's analysis of the psy-sciences might benefit from contextualizing Foucault with other such notable influences. As a forerunner for subsequent explorations on critical approaches to psychology, this book provides a good starting place because it allows Foucault's critical legacy to stand on its own.

For Hook, power is to be understood within the analytical parameters of a "dynamic relation," a force in flux that no one owns and that can be exercised from innumerable points in the interplay of non-egalitarian and mobile relations. (78) Thus, power results from superseding the notion of appropriation with the idea of power as a disposition. Rather than conceptualizing power as a property (ontological or material), Hook argues that Foucault's conception of power is tied to conceptions of strategies, tactics, and maneuvers. This makes for an uneven set of relations that underlie the field of psychology. Overall, Derek Hook provides a sustained, profound, and deeply insightful reading of Foucault's work on the "psy" sciences. I enjoyed reading this book and I would highly recommend it to anyone interested in grappling with the complex overlapping power dynamics that emanate from the discursive practices of the state through disciplinary power.

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