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### 3 Cultural studies: The Foucault effect

*C.S. Definition*  
 The range of uses and meanings associated with the term 'cultural studies' is now so large that venturing any definition is risky. Nonetheless, I shall offer one. If we wish to find, or to produce, some common ground between the different national and theoretical schools of cultural studies that are now available, we shall best do so if we say, simply, that cultural studies is concerned with the analysis of cultural forms and activities in the context of the relations of power which condition their production, circulation, deployment and, of course, effects. We might, however, also add that its inquiries into such matters are guided by a practical interest in the ways in which culture functions or operates within, and as a part of, those relations of culture and power.

That, though, is about as far as it is possible to go in defining cultural studies without introducing contentious aspects into the definition that will close the shutters on debate. For there are many different ways in which relations of culture and power might be theorised, and just as many views regarding the kinds of practical interests that should guide the analysis of those relations. I shall, then, stick with this relatively open definition and, by way of stimulating debate, draw on Foucault's work to outline one way of interpreting this definition. This, naturally enough, is the interpretation I favour—or, I should say, have come to favour—in view both of the new theoretical insights it offers into the makeup and functioning of relations of culture and power and of the kinds of practical orientations towards these that it suggests and enables. This is what I mean by 'the Foucault effect': the influence Foucault's work has exerted in problematising the understandings of the relations of culture and power associated with earlier phases in the development of cultural studies and in proposing useable alternatives.

If, however, 'cultural studies' is now a floating signifier that has been cut loose from its 'original' moorings in Birmingham (although I doubt it can accurately be described as ever having had a single anchorage of that kind), the same is true of the signifier 'Foucault'. There are many Foucaults and, as he would be the first to argue, we should not seek to meld these into one in subjecting the name 'Foucault' to the unifying impulse of 'the author effect'. To be clear about which Foucault I have in mind, I have borrowed my title from the collection of essays on and by Foucault edited by Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon and Peter Miller under the title *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*. This is not the Foucault much loved by libertarian thinkers. To the contrary, the essays collected in this volume share an acceptance of those aspects of Foucault's work which point to the increasing governmentalisation of social relations as a necessary and inescapable horizon of contemporary social and political life which, as such, conditions both the kind of practical influence intellectuals can reasonably expect to have and the manner in which that influence can be exercised. The implications of this for cultural studies, I shall argue, are, first, to suggest that the relations of culture and power which most typically characterise modern societies are best understood in the light of the respects in which the field of culture is now increasingly governmentally organised and constructed. This entails recognising that changing how cultural resources function in the context of relations of power usually involves modifying the ways in which cultural forms and activities are governmentally deployed as parts of programs of social management. This, in turn, requires that intellectuals lower the threshold of their political vistas in a manner that will enable them to connect with the debates and practices through which reformist adjustments to the administration of culture are actually brought about.

To conjure with such mundane prospects as the end-points of cultural politics is, of course, a long way from some of the better known clarion-calls of cultural studies: the call to a politics of resistance, for example; the commitment to organising an alliance of popular forces in opposition to the state; or the strategy of forming affective alliances around changing cultural nodal points. Yet these—or at least some of them—are positions associated with the traditions of cultural studies which have been important in the development of my own work but which now seem increasingly vulnerable to criticism—and which are certainly quite limited in their capacity to be translated from one national context to another. With this in mind, my purpose in addressing Foucault's influence on cultural studies is to indicate why it now

seems to me important that work in cultural studies should be unravelled from the positions with which it has earlier been associated and to outline how this might be done. I shall do so by showing why, from the point of view of understanding how culture works in the service of power—or, better, how culture works as power—Foucault is better to 'think with' than Gramsci.

This will involve consideration of three issues. First, by comparing Gramsci's arguments concerning the role of the ethical state with the Foucaultian perspective of liberal government, I shall argue the respects in which the latter offers a more useable characterisation of the functioning of culture–power relations in modern societies. This will prepare the way for a contrastive analysis of the implications of these two different analytical perspectives for our understanding of state–civil society relations and the place and role of culture within such relations. Finally, I shall illustrate these theoretical and historical concerns by comparing and contrasting the implications of the two perspectives for the terms in which the roles accorded women in the emergence of modern forms of cultural governance might be accounted for.

It is not just that Foucault is better to 'think with' than Gramsci; he is also better to 'do with'—better, that is, in enabling intellectual work to be rendered appropriately and practically relevant to the circumstances in which it is produced. For, at the end of the day, my own passage from Gramsci to Foucault has been prompted as much by practical concerns as by theoretical ones: by Foucault's much greater 'useability' in the contexts in which, today, intellectual work has and needs to be done.

#### THE ETHICAL STATE, LIBERAL GOVERNMENT AND CULTURAL MANAGEMENT

My argument so far has perhaps been misleading in suggesting that it is only recently that cultural studies has been subjected to a 'Foucault effect'. Many would dispute this. In his now classic essay 'Cultural studies: Two paradigms', for example, Stuart Hall cites Foucault's work as one of the founding sources of inspiration for British cultural studies. Indeed, writing in 1981, Hall went so far as to say that 'Foucault and Gramsci between them account for much of the most productive work on concrete analysis now being undertaken in the field' (Hall, 1981: 35). Having said that, however, Hall goes on to chastise Foucault for failing to see how the various transitions he had been

concerned to chart in the fields of penalty, sexuality, psychiatry, language and political economy 'all appear to converge around exactly that point where industrial capitalism and the bourgeoisie make their fateful, historical rendezvous' (1981: 36). Foucault, in other words, was in error in failing to see how the economic relations of capitalism constituted a unifying principle of the social formation such that these different historical transitions could be seen as corresponding to one another as parts of a connected set of processes occasioned by the development of capitalism. He was also in error in not seeing how the forms of power that were exerted in the spheres of the economy, penalty and sexuality were derived from, or in some way related to, the class power of the bourgeoisie.

In truth, the issues here are somewhat clouded since, in Hall's work at this time, discussions of Foucault often served as a coded reference to what was widely regarded, within cultural studies, as the baleful influence of the uses to which Foucault was put in the work of Barry Hindess and Paul Hirst. This was especially true of their polemical contention, which Hall rightly took issue with, regarding the necessary non-correspondence of the different levels of a social formation. Although his target was thus somewhat skewed, Hall's arguments were nonetheless typical of the ways in which, in the 1970s, the more influential tendencies within British cultural studies sought to deal with the troubling grit of Foucault's work. Taken one by one, it was suggested, Foucault's accounts of contemporary forms of power could be admitted as useful, but with the then crippling rider that they had first to be dissociated from those theoretical positions which most marked Foucault's work as distinctive. Foucault was 'OK'—but he had no theory of the state; his substitution of the couplet knowledge/power for the distinction between truth and ideology committed him to a politically paralysing epistemological agnosticism; his conception of the micro-physics of power allowed no way in which little struggles might be connected to form the basis for a society-wide struggle with revolutionary potential. In short, all those aspects of Foucault's work which he had directed, polemically and strategically, against Marxism were directed back at him as criticisms because they were not Marxist! In effect, Foucault was admitted into the cultural studies roll-call only on the condition that he brought no troublesome Foucaultian arguments with him. The role accorded his work was not that of reformulating received problems so much as being tagged on to arguments framed by the very formulations he questioned, lending them a spurious Foucaultian pedigree. Quoted extensively, he was used very little.

✓ The reasons for this are not difficult to fathom. For what this strategy amounted to was an attempt to fashion a Foucault who could be fitted into a Gramscian mould. If, at the time Hall was writing, Foucault and Gramsci could be allowed to share the field of 'concrete analysis', no similar division of the field was contemplated at the theoretical level where the formulations of Gramsci were granted more or less undisputed sway. This is neither surprising nor reprehensible. The 'Gramscian moment' in British cultural studies was an important and remarkably productive one and the process of distinguishing its concerns and formulations from those of contending theoretical positions was, as is always true of intellectual movements, central to its formation. The difficulty, however, was that enlisting Foucault for this project was made possible only by erasing from his work all those historical and theoretical arguments which made it distinctive—and distinctive precisely because it called into question much of the theoretical apparatus on which the Gramscian theory of hegemony depends. This much, perhaps, may be easily conceded. What I also want to argue, however, is that it is precisely those aspects of Foucault's work which were thus exorcised in favour of Gramsci that give us a better understanding of the mechanisms of culture and power in modern western societies than do the Gramscian concepts to which they were obliged to defer.

It will be helpful, in the first instance, to approach these matters historically. For both Foucault and Gramsci, the early modern period in western Europe sees a significant transformation in the ways in which relations of culture and power were organised. In Gramsci's case, this is expressed in his account of the emergence of what he variously describes as the ethical, cultural or educative functions of the modern state. In the case of Foucault, the argument takes the form of a more general account of the transition from juridico-discursive to disciplinary and, in his later writings, governmental forms of power. On the face of it, these two accounts have much in common. Both agree that the period from the late eighteenth through to the mid-nineteenth centuries witnessed the development of new institutions and practices which embodied a more detailed interest in the cultural activities and values of the population as a whole as well as more effective—in the sense of more detailed and regular—ways of directing and regulating those activities. However, while these similarities are important, it is, I shall suggest, the differences that matter more.

In the case of Gramsci, the key to this historical transformation consists in the historical peculiarity of the bourgeoisie as a class which, obliged to govern by and with the consent of the governed, must

dedicate its energies and resources to the ongoing task of organising that consent. It is this that provides the basis for his view that 'the State has become an "educator"' (Gramsci, 1971: 260), dedicated to the task of raising 'the great mass of the population to a particular cultural and moral level which corresponds to the needs of the productive forces for development, and hence to the interests of the ruling class' (1971: 258). It is worth noting the historical contrast Gramsci draws in introducing this conception of the state:

The previous ruling classes were essentially conservative in the sense that they did not tend to construct an organic passage from the other classes into their own, i.e. to enlarge their class sphere 'technically' and ideologically: their conception was that of a closed caste. The bourgeois class poses itself as an organism in continuous movement, capable of absorbing the entire society, assimilating it to its own cultural and economic level. (1971: 260)

This was, for Gramsci, a crucial historical divide. Unlike other ruling classes before it, the bourgeoisie has need of an active interest in the culture of subordinate classes in view of the requirement that it recruit active popular support for the incessantly expansive projects to which the imperatives of accumulation commit it. Active leadership of society rather than coercive rule becomes the hallmark of the bourgeoisie's aspirations, if not always of its achievements. For the ruling classes of earlier modes of production, by contrast, the cultural values, standards and practices of the population at large—while fully capable of provoking political alarm and intrusive forms of regulation—were not matters requiring the kind of sustained, systematic and, above all, developmental attention that Gramsci attributes to the bourgeoisie.

The historical contrasts which organise Foucault's account of the emergence of modern western forms of government are, at first sight, quite similar. The absolutist systems of rule which had prevailed in most of Europe prior to the French Revolution were, Foucault argues, in what is certainly a vast over-generalisation, characterised by a form of power which he calls the juridico-discursive. In this conception of power, Foucault argues, everything is given over to a singular function: the maintenance and extension of the prince's power as an end in itself. There is, accordingly, little interest in the conditions of life or culture of the population, or in carrying the power of the state into these except insofar as doing so might contribute to the pursuit of the singular end of extending the prince's power. It is for this reason, Eugene Weber notes, that the French crown exhibited little concern with the languages spoken in the regions under its administration.

'Language,' as he puts it, 'was relevant merely as an instrument of rule.' (Weber, 1976: 70) Although French was enforced as the language to be used at court and for the administration of state affairs, no attempt was made to establish it as a national language shared by all regions and all classes:

The King's speech had precedence over those of his subjects, and all who engaged in public affairs were bound to use it or pay others to use it on their behalf. But linguistic unity hobbled far behind even the incomplete administrative unity of the Ancien Régime; nor does it seem to have been a policy goal. (Weber, 1976: 70)

Indeed, the disjunction between the language of power and that of everyday usage had a distinctive political value of its own. In the ascending set of power-knowledge relations associated with juridico-discursive systems of rule, Foucault argues, power is exercised with a view to magnifying and enlarging the distinctions between classes, and especially to exaggerate the differences between king and populace. In such a regime, power exercises its sway in being symbolised and magnified before the populace in ways that are calculated to allow the populace to acquire a knowledge of power via an exhibition of its effects—in the form of palaces, royal entries and the scene of punishment or, less spectacularly, the distinctive sumptuary and linguistic codes of the court. The reverse, however, is not true. For if, in juridico-discursive systems of rule, it is important that the populace should acquire a knowledge of power, there is no equivalent stress placed on the need for a knowledge of the populace on the part of government. The subordinate classes—their conditions of life and culture—do not, at this stage, constitute an object of knowledge.

It is in reversing the axis of individuation produced by this earlier set of power-knowledge relations, Foucault argues, that the historical distinctiveness of governmental forms of power is most clearly discerned. In late eighteenth century cameralist conceptions of the functions of the state; in the formulations of the science of police from the same period; and in nineteenth century programs of liberal government—in all of these formulations, the art of governing is seen to be more and more dependent on the acquisition of an increasingly close and detailed knowledge of the conditions of life of the population. There are, of course, important differences between the roles accorded this knowledge within these different conceptions of government. In the formulations of police, the need to acquire a knowledge of the conditions of life of the population is connected to the fantasy of a totally administered society, and a society which has therefore to

be known in its every detail. Liberal government, by contrast, posits the existence of spheres of life and freedom which are, and are to remain, autonomous of itself but which still need to be rendered knowable in order that government 'will not be arbitrary government, but will be based upon intelligence concerning those whose well-being it is mandated to enhance' (Rose, 1993: 290). That said, there is a common tendency between these conceptions of government. The exercise of power is now thought of as being as closely tied up with the process of knowing as it is with that of making known; power is dispersed and applied through mechanisms which make the population an object as well as a subject of knowledge; and power itself, rather than being blazoned forth in an attempt to augment its effects in making them manifest, now also hides behind, or within, the processes of its own exercise.

For both Foucault and Gramsci, then, modern systems of rule are distinguished from their predecessors in terms of the degree and kind of interest they display in the conditions of life of the population. There is the further consideration that both attribute to modern systems of rule a new kind of concern with, and attentiveness to, the subjective lives of the subordinate classes. Foucault's concept of liberal government thus shares some affinities with Gramsci's concept of consent in the stress it places on the need for governmental objectives to be accomplished by developing these in the form of self-acting imperatives which individuals will voluntarily follow in pursuing their own ends rather than via the impositional logic of rule *d'état*. Both thus see the way in which power is exercised being subjected to a fundamental change in the early modern period in view of the degree to which it comes to be caught up in a more thorough and extensive set of relations and practices aimed at bringing about a more extensive knowledge of, and voluntary transformations within, popular forms of thought, feeling and behaviour by inscribing these in new contexts and apparatuses. It is for this reason that both accord culture an enhanced role in the structure and functioning of modern systems of rule.

However, that is about as far as the similarities go. For the nature of the transformations in popular forms of belief and conduct that are to be effected via new mechanisms of cultural governance, and the actual nature of such mechanisms themselves, are viewed quite differently between the two cases.

In Gramsci's case, for example, the crucial change concerns the degree to which the exercise of power in bourgeois-democratic forms of rule aims not merely at exacting the obedience of the popular classes

To what degree is Gramsci's culture a reformer's science to see Foucault as a counter to Gramsci's to Gramsci.

but further aspires to win their active support for, and participation in, the projects of the ruling classes. It is to this singular end, Gramsci argues, that all of the major ideological apparatuses of both state and civil society—from popular schooling through the media to the institutions of art and culture—are dedicated. 'The school as a positive educative function, and the courts as a repressive and negative educative function, are the most important State activities in this sense,' Gramsci argues. But, he continues, 'in reality, a multitude of other so-called private initiatives and activities tend to the same end—initiatives and activities which form the apparatus of the political and cultural hegemony of the ruling classes' (Gramsci, 1971: 258). Moreover, and insofar as this is so, this end is to be accomplished by means of an invariant mechanism whose operative principles are, in the final analysis, psychological ones. For consent is a psychological state and the means through which such consent is to be organised are, for Gramsci, primarily mental ones. Inducing the popular classes to consent to bourgeois forms of rule and leadership is to be accomplished by exposing those classes, regularly and routinely, to bourgeois ideologies and values whose capacity to command popular support depends on their ability to acquire a greater degree of social weight, influence and persuasiveness than the contending class ideologies and values with which they must compete.

It may be true, as Renate Holub has suggested, that Foucault and Gramsci share an understanding of how power operates 'within the systems and subsystems of social relations, in the interactions, in the microstructures that inform the practices of everyday life' (Holub, 1992: 200). However, it would be misleading to see the Gramscian position as a variant of Foucault's understanding of 'the microphysics of power' in view of the degree to which, in the former, power is understood as arising from a highly unified and centralised origin rather than being dispersed in its operation and constitution. Positioning a centre of and for power in the ruling class or power bloc, the Gramscian theory of hegemony is concerned to analyse the descending flows of cultural and ideological power and the degree to which these are successfully countered by countervailing cultural and ideological influences arising from the conditions of life of the popular classes. The field of culture is thus viewed as being structured by the bipolar contest between, on the one hand, the descending flows of hegemonic ideologies as they are transmitted from the organising centres of bourgeois cultural power and relayed through society via the ideological apparatuses of the state and civil society and, on the other, the putatively

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ascending flows of counter-hegemonic ideologies arising out of the situation of the subordinate classes.

It is also typically the case that Gramscian analysis tends to look *through* rather than *at* the ideological apparatuses of the state and civil society. Moreover, the essential function of those apparatuses—that of serving as vehicles for carrying bourgeois ideologies to the subordinate classes—is taken as pre-given. The family, the media, popular schooling, the art and culture industries: these tend to be viewed, in the Gramscian tradition, very much as neutral carriers of ideologies with the result that the analysis focuses less on the properties of these institutions as institutions than on the content of the ideologies they relay. Given the stress the theory of hegemony places on the psychological mechanism of consent—on the winning of hearts and minds—it is the battle of ideas that matters most and, given that ideas are viewed as deriving their provenance and currency from their position and role in relation to the conflict between the two fundamental classes in society, this battle of ideas is viewed as taking much the same form and posing much the same issues for analysis no matter what the fields of its occurrence. The Gramscian tradition within cultural studies has accordingly been little concerned with the specific properties of particular cultural institutions, technologies or apparatuses, preferring to look through these to analyse a process (the organisation of hegemony) which is seen as taking place in an invariant manner (the psychological mechanism of consent) within, across and between these apparatuses in spite of what their manifold differences in other regards might be. It is this that explains the marked importance accorded the theorisation of generalised forms of linguistic, ideological or discursive articulation within Gramscian cultural studies as part of an attempt to provide a generalised theory of consent whose mechanisms remain the same across the whole of the cultural field.

Foucault's work differs from this analytical program in almost all particulars. Those modern forms of rule which Foucault calls governmental are thus characterised by the multiplicity of the ends which they pursue and the diversity of the instruments that are developed in the pursuit of such ends. In his discussion of Machiavellian conceptions of the art of governing, Foucault argues that the prince constitutes a transcendental principle which gives to the state and governing a singular and circular function such that all acts are dedicated to securing political obedience as a necessary condition of the exercise and extension of the prince's sovereignty as an end in itself. By extension, of course, the same is true of Marxist theories of the state, since these interpret the state as embodying a singular

principle of power—albeit one derived from outside itself in the sphere of class relations—and view the activities of all branches of the state and, in Gramsci's case, of civil society too as contributing to the reproduction and extension of that power. Governmental power, by contrast, has no such singular anchorage, authorisation or function, but is rather characterised by the diversity of the objectives which it pursues, objectives which derive from and are specific to differentiated fields of social management rather than resting on some unifying principle of central power (the sovereign, the state).

For Gramsci, as we have seen, the singular and circular problematic of political obedience is replaced, in bourgeois-democratic societies, by the equally singular problematic of consent. For Foucault, by contrast, the development of modern forms of government—which, it is important to remember, can be evident in the procedures of private associations and organisations just as much as in those of the state—goes beyond the problematic of political obedience to replace it with a concern with knowing, regulating and changing the conditions of the population in potentially limitless ways, the logics of which, depending on the circumstances, may or may not tend in the same direction, may or may not correspond to and further class interests, and so on.

Perhaps more important, however, are the respects in which the Foucaultian optic focuses on precisely those matters which tend to be neglected within the Gramscian paradigm. As Colin Gordon has argued, Foucault's main criticism of legitimation theory—of which I take the Gramscian account of consent to be a variant—is that it 'cannot be relied upon as a means of describing the ways in which power is actually exercised under such a sovereignty' (Gordon, 1991: 7). It is, so to speak, too 'heady' in its approach to power, sees it in terms that are too intellectual, and so fails to take adequate account of the more mundane and technical means through which power is routinely exercised. Foucault's interest has accordingly focused more on the technological aspects of the mechanisms of power where these are understood to include the field of subjectivity but in ways which (i) do not attribute any necessary or invariant form (consent) to the relations between individuals and power, and (ii) do not equate the field of subjectivity with that of consciousness.

In his essay 'Technologies of the self', Foucault defines governmentality as the 'contact between the technologies of domination of others and those of the self' where technologies of domination are defined as concerned to 'determine the conduct of individuals and submit them to certain ends or domination' and technologies of the

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self are defined as permitting 'individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality' (Foucault, 1988: 18–19). This conception directs our attention to the ways in which the relations between persons and cultural resources are organised within the context of particular cultural technologies, and to the variable forms of work on the self, or practices of subjectification, which such relations support. In their turn, such practices have as their product not the subject of a consciousness so much as the operators of particular forms of life which constitute particular zones of a person's existence.

The implications of this perspective for cultural studies are to suggest that its attention should concentrate on the variable relations to different forms of power that are produced for individuals within the contexts of such technologies. From such a perspective, the Gramscian emphasis placed on the content of ideologies-in-struggle emerges as of less importance than the institutional mechanisms which provide for a particular organisation of the relations between persons, positions, symbolic resources, architectural contexts, etc. within the framework of a particular technology. Foucaultian work on the history of schooling is thus typically concerned to stress the similarities between the pedagogical and technological environments of the popular school and those envisaged by the alternative schemas of radical working-class education, seeing in these a basis for grouping them together as parts of a technology of culture and power in spite of the different curricula arising from their different educational philosophies (see Hunter, 1994). This, in turn, leads to a quite different way of framing political issues and priorities within the sphere of culture. 'The problem,' as Foucault put it, 'is not changing people's consciousness—or what's in their heads—but the political, economic, institutional régime of the production of truth.' (Foucault, 1980: 133)

I shall return to these considerations later. For a fuller understanding of the contrasting implications of the Foucaultian and Gramscian paradigms for the role played by culture in modern forms of governance, however, we need to look more closely at Gramsci's and Foucault's conceptions of civil society and of its relations to, in the first case, the state and, in the second, government. Again, at first sight, there seems to be much in common between their positions on this matter inasmuch as both introduce a certain fluidity into the state-civil society relationship, transforming it from a categorical

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distinction into a more permeable divide. On further inspection, however, this apparent similarity serves only to mask the radical incommensurability of their approaches.

#### CIVIL SOCIETY, CULTURE AND 'THE STATE'

Most commentators are agreed that the view of the state as educator which Gramsci advanced as a part of his theory of hegemony significantly revised the Hegelian construction of the state-civil society relation—on which Marxist theories of the state depended—while still remaining within its orbit. The significance of the Hegelian conception of civil society compared with the earlier tradition of social contract theory, which had included the family in its conception of civil society, consists in its limitation of civil society to the sphere of private and clashing interests arising out of the field of economic relations, (see Pateman, 1989). When translated into Marxist terms, the divisions of interest which arise from the organisation of civil society give rise to class divisions. These, in turn, are governed by an immanent dynamic of power arising from the structure of the relations of production. The role accorded the state within this conception is to reinforce those relations of power which arise spontaneously from and are immanent to the organisation of class relations in civil society. In this conception, as Graham Burchell summarises it, 'the state's exercise of governmental power can be seen as in continuity with, or as grafted on to, society's immanent relations of power' (Burchell, 1991: 140).

Gramsci's innovation concerns less his conception of the state's function (he was by no means the first to think of the state as combining coercive and educative functions) than where and how he sees that function being performed. For he sees the state as itself a part of society's immanent relations of power, as inserted within these in a manner which helps to form and constitute them rather than being simply grafted onto pre-existing relations of class power. This was what Christine Buci-Glucksmann had in mind when she referred to the 'methodological duplication of the superstructures' associated with Gramsci's expansion of the state concept. In the elasticity he introduced into the conception of the state—an elasticity that is fully stretched in his most expansive formulation of the state as 'the entire complex of practical and theoretical activities with which the ruling class not only justifies and maintains its dominance, but manages to win the active consent of those over whom it rules' (Gramsci, 1971:

244)—Gramsci sought to disentangle the concept of the state from that of 'the government' or 'political society'. He did so by producing for the state an enlarged sphere of operations which trespassed significantly, if not entirely, on the fields of activity normally associated with the separated domain of civil society. The state, he argues, has to be understood as 'not only the apparatus of government' but also 'the "private" apparatus of "hegemony" or civil society' (1971: 261). If this formulation extends the state's reach into the ideological and cultural apparatuses of hegemony, other formulations extend it into the constitution of the social relations of economic production. Fordism is thus, for Gramsci, simultaneously an economic, a political, an ideological and a cultural phenomenon, thus overcoming any essentialist state/civil society division in its complex combination of productive and educative functions.

What consequences follow from this expansion of the state concept? The main ones, as Buci-Glucksmann glosses them, consist in the replacement of the rigid hierarchies of determination associated with the base-superstructure conceptions of classical Marxism by a more fluid and interactive conception of the relations within and between economic, political, ideological and cultural relationships. The state, in its educative role, comprises the totality of those activities that are involved in the production of consent. As such, it straddles the economic, political, ideological and cultural spheres of social activity in a manner which renders incoherent their conception as separate realms. This permeability of the state-civil society relation is paralleled by a double splitting as the functions of the state are split into two (coercion plus consent) while, at the same time, the state itself is divided into two parts (political society and the cultural and ideological apparatuses). In moments of crisis, this double splitting gives way to a more simple form of bipolar opposition as the state acts coercively in relation to a civil society which it locates outside of itself. In more normal times, however, the mediating and connecting role that is allowed to the cultural and ideological apparatuses means that the state's role in the organisation of consent is targeted, in good measure, at itself owing to its capacity to 'pop up' again, as an object of its own strategies, in the sphere of civil society. The way in which the state thus operates on the relations between its own constituent parts, however, is a matter that is itself specified by the immanent relations of power from which the state arises and in which it is embedded. As Gramsci puts it, the educative and formative role of the state is always that 'of adapting the "civilisation" and morality of the broadest masses to the necessities of the continuous development of the economic

apparatus of production' (1971: 242). The restriction Gramsci places on the social forces which can aspire to become hegemonic has much the same consequence. His contention here is that only a fundamental class exercising a 'decisive function' in the 'decisive nucleus of economic activity' (1971: 161) can realistically aspire to recruit the support of other social forces for its hegemonic projects. This is because only fundamental classes—the proletariat and the bourgeoisie in capitalist societies—are able to construct totalising social programs that are rooted in the immanent relations of economic power.

No matter how much Gramsci thus reserves what Hindess and Hirst (1975) usefully call a matrix role of determination for the economy, his writings on the state, civil society and hegemony entail an enormous expansion of the importance accorded the role of culture in the organisation of social life owing to the degree to which, so to speak, culture seems to crop up everywhere. As a consequence of the expansiveness of Gramsci's concepts and of his tendency to blur the boundary lines between them in providing for their overlapping and merging into one another, culture is not, for Gramsci, a separate realm (a superstructure) but an element in the constitution of each and every realm (the state, civil society, the economy). It is in this way, if I may be allowed a clumsy neologism, that Gramsci effects a 'culturalisation' of social relations. He does so, however, not in the sense of inverting the hierarchies of determination of classical Marxism in making the economy an effect of a determining cultural superstructure. Rather, culture for Gramsci functions more as a connective salve which, as a consequence of its dispersal, of its capacity to crop up everywhere, bestows a cohesiveness on the social in interconnecting its diverse parts. At the same time, of course, the construction or contestation of hegemony is, for Gramsci, mainly a cultural matter depending on the suasive capacity of different class-based hegemonic projects whose form is, essentially, that of different rhetorical constructions of the social pitted against one another in their competition to recruit popular consent.

If we turn, now, to Foucault's writings on governmentality, we find that none of these concepts is in the same place or performs the same function. For while these also call into question the dichotomous constructions of the relations between state and civil society inherited from social contract theory, the manner in which they overcome these is quite different. This is not done, as in Gramsci, by blurring the state-civil society distinction. Rather, Foucault's step is the (to my mind) more interesting one of arguing for the historical and artefactual nature of the distinction, seeing it as an effect of particular strategies

of government which have organised civil society as an interface between the projects of government and the objects which those projects construct. Graham Burchell puts the point succinctly when, glossing Foucault, he argues that civil society should be viewed neither as an aboriginal reality, 'a natural given standing in opposition to the timeless essential nature of the state', nor as 'an ideological construct or something fabricated by the state'. Rather, he suggests, civil society should be regarded as the 'correlate of a particular technology of government'. He continues:

The distinction between civil society and the state is a form of 'schematism' for the exercise of political power. Foucault describes civil society as in this sense a 'transactional reality' existing at the mutable interface of political power and everything which permanently outstrips its reach. (Burchell, 1991: 141)

The context for these remarks is a discussion of Foucault's concept of liberal government and its construction of civil society as a realm of individuals with independent interests whose autonomy has to be recognised as both setting limits to government as well as ordaining the means through which its objectives must be pursued. These comprise those techniques of 'governing at a distance' which, eschewing the impositional logic of rule *d'état*, aim to induct individuals into programs of self-management through which specific governmental objectives will be realised or carried through in and by the voluntary activities of individuals who are thus conscripted as agents for the exercise of power on and through themselves.

Yet, to return to an earlier point, the similarity between this position and the Gramscian conception of consent in the stress both place on the need for modern forms of government to organise and work through the voluntary compliance of the governed is more apparent than real. This is partly because, in the Foucaultian case, the mechanisms of liberal government do not depend on the production of a generalised form of consent through the mechanisms of ideological articulation via which, in an expansive hegemony, the ideologies and beliefs of subordinate classes are connected to those of the ruling bloc as represented by the state. The state, as we have seen, does not possess any such general class character or unity. Nor for Foucault, are the realms of government and the state coterminous. However, the manner in which he disentangles these differs quite markedly from that proposed by Gramsci.

As we have seen, Gramsci's methodological duplication of the superstructures extends the state back into civil society. Foucault

speaks, instead, of a 'governmentalisation of the state' through which techniques of governing aimed at shaping and directing the conduct of individuals that were initially developed in a range of non-state organisations (professional bodies, cultural institutions, voluntary associations) come to form a part of state-based programs of government. In an earlier phase of his work, Foucault argued—discussing the nineteenth century swarming of disciplinary projects that occurred throughout the social body—that the state rarely initiated these projects which, to the contrary, rested on highly dispersed conditions of existence and operated in an uncoordinated manner. However, he did suggest that the state functioned to codify and cohere those disciplinary projects so as to lend to them a class character. By the time of his writings on governmentality, this residual influence of the Marxist problematic had disappeared. The 'governmentalisation of the state' does not produce any essential or even articulated class (or any other kind of) unity for the forms of government which thus find a place in the programs and operating procedures of state institutions any more than it entails the equation of government with the state. Rather, the stress on what Colin Gordon calls the 'modes of pluralisation of modern government' directs attention to the diversity of the ends to which government is directed, the diversity of the means it employs and of the forms of voluntary involvement it aims to organise, as well as to the dispersal of these varied practices of governing across the state-civil society relation which thus emerges as a permeable and fluid boundary line rather than an essential divide.

Government, viewed from this perspective, is, as Peter Miller and Nikolas Rose put it, 'the historically constituted matrix within which are articulated all those dreams, schemes, strategies and manoeuvres of authorities that seek to shape the beliefs and conduct of others in desired directions by acting upon their will, their circumstances or their environment' (Miller and Rose, 1992: 175). As such, Miller and Rose suggest, the dualisms of earlier political vocabularies—state-civil society, public-private, government-market—lose their force as descriptions of separated realms and come to function, instead, as discursive elements in programs of government which, in spanning these divides, nonetheless continue to mobilise their currency in the processes through which they specify their aims, delimit their fields of application and identify their targets.

This system of concepts does not support any places that culture might occupy or any functions that it can perform that are analogous to the places and functions it has been accorded within Gramscian cultural studies. The role of connective salve mediating between and

interconnecting the different levels of a social formation into a cohesive whole is not a function which, in the problematic of governmentality, needs to be performed. Equally, there is no role for culture to play as part of a set of broader ideological processes through which generalised forms of consent to the hegemonic projects of a ruling bloc are to be organised. This much is, perhaps, evident. What matters rather more, however, are the respects in which the deeper structure of the analytical topographies of the two positions differ. For there is nowhere in the Foucaultian position where immanent relations of power might be located from which cultural divisions expressive of different class positions and values might first emerge and then, through the state, be hierarchically organised in a manner which will subordinate one part of an already divided cultural field (the culture of the subordinate classes) to another (the culture of the ruling bloc) through the general mechanisms of social control, legitimation or consent. Rather, culture emerges as a pluralised and dispersed field of government which, far from mediating the relations between civil society and the state or connecting the different levels of a social formation, operates through, between and across these in inscribing cultural resources into a diversity of programs aimed at directing the conduct of individuals toward an array of different ends, for a variety of purposes, and by a plurality of means.

What distinguishes this sphere of government from others? The answer, in part, consists in the way in which it organises distinctive fields and instruments of action by means of the discursive antinomies which are peculiar to it. Robert Young has argued that the concept of culture 'must paradoxically always take part in an antithetical pair or itself be divided into two'. He illustrates this splitting that is inherent in the structure of the concept by means of the following oppositions which have constituted the organisation of the concept in the modern period:

*culture versus nature;*  
*culture versus civilisation;*  
*culture versus anarchy;*  
*high culture versus low culture* (in rough historical sequence: folk/working-class/mass/popular culture). (Young, 1995: 29)

For Young, writing from the perspective of postcolonial theory, this antithetical structure of the concept is part of a general historical process through which 'the externality of the category against which culture is defined is gradually turned inwards and becomes part of culture itself' (1995: 30). It is for this reason, he suggests, that 'culture

is always a dialectical process, inscribing and expelling its own alterity' as the concept 'does not so much progress as constantly reform itself around conflictual divisions, participating in, and always a part of, a complex, hybridised economy that is never at ease with itself' (1995: 30). From this perspective, culture is to be understood as a crucial conceptual operator in the history of difference, endlessly caught up in practices of othering by defining itself against what it constructs as outside itself only, later, to absorb that excluded as a part of its own internal tensions. As he puts the point later in the same essay:

Culture never stands alone but always participates in a conflictual economy acting out the tension between sameness and difference, comparison and differentiation, unity and diversity, cohesion and dispersion, containment and subversion. Culture is never liable to fall into fixity, stasis or organic totalisation: the constant construction and reconstruction of cultures and cultural differences is fuelled by an unending internal dissension in the imbalances in the capitalist economies that produce them. (1995: 53)

Young's primary concern in developing this argument is to insist on the role that the dynamics of colonialism have played in the formation of the concept of culture. Culture, he argues, 'has always marked cultural difference by producing the other' in a historical and, following Homi Bhaba, psychoanalytic dialectic in which racism has both played an integral role and been a model for other (class and gender) kinds of othering. His conclusion is that the modern concept of culture has always 'carried within it an antagonism between culture as a universal and as cultural difference, forming a resistance to Western culture within Western culture itself' (1995: 54).

There is, however, another way of looking at the matter, one which—rather than rooting the antithetical structure of the concept of culture in a general historical dialectic of othering and integration characterising the relations between 'the west and the rest'—would see it as the result of a number of different histories in which the 'splitting' of culture emerges from the construction of a number of different fields of government and the relations these establish between, on the one hand, culture as a set of resources for governing and, on the other, culture as the domain(s) to which those resources are to be applied with a view to enacting some change of conduct. There need not, from this point of view, be any general kind of historical-cum-psychoanalytic dialectic rooted in the dynamics of western civilisation to account for the different oppositions or antagonisms which have governed the construction of this field. These rather result

*cultural tech.*

from the establishment of different targets for different programs of government and from the different ways in which cultural resources are deployed in pursuit of those programs. What matters most about these antagonisms, viewed from this perspective, is that they group together, within the same field, the object of government (working-class culture, the colonised) and its means (high culture, western culture). Indeed, what the antithetical structure of culture—when looked at as a field of government—establishes is not the separation of different kinds of culture into categorially or ontologically distinct spheres so much as a way of connecting them within a particular field of government. The relations that are established between the different parts of this field, moreover, more typically take the form of a gradient which allows the cultural means of government to function as parts of a program through which the object will be progressively adjusted to the norm which those means of government represent. Rather, for example, than speaking of a contest of high culture versus low culture, the logic of culture, viewed governmentally, organises a means for high culture to reach into low culture in order to provide a route from one set of norms for conduct to another.

#### GENDER, CULTURE, GOVERNMENT

To let the argument rest here would be to leave it somewhat abstractly stated. It will therefore be useful to consider the role that was accorded women in the part that specifically cultural concepts and rhetorics were called on to play in mid-nineteenth century programs of liberal government. The literature on this subject is both rich and considerable. Much of it has been written in the context of feminist engagements with debates concerning the relations between the public and the private spheres (see, for example, Ryan, 1990; Landes, 1992) while the work of Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall integrates feminist perspectives with a Gramscian account of the role of gendered norms of conduct in the formation of a middle-class hegemony (Davidoff and Hall, 1987). Fortunately, however, Nancy Armstrong's account of the role of conduct books in the formation of particular gendered capacities for moral self-regulation suggests a perspective that resonates well with the arguments sketched in above, as well as offering a convenient point of connection with our earlier discussion of Gramsci's and Foucault's contrasting accounts of the new modalities of power and its exercise associated with the development of modern western societies.

Armstrong's concern is with the part played by conduct books in shaping new norms of conduct for women in Britain over the period from 1760 to 1820. The model of the domestic woman which these conduct books fashioned provided a basis for shifting moral authority from the aristocracy to the formative middle classes long before that was accomplished, in the public realm of economic life, by the emergence of *homo economicus*. In aristocratic culture, Armstrong argues, images of femininity were articulated to power through sumptuary codes regulating the display of the body of the aristocratic woman. Within these codes, the aristocratic woman was to function as 'an ornamental body representing the family's place in an intricately precise set of kinship relations determined by the metaphysics of blood' (Armstrong, 1987: 108). The construction of the new ideal of the domestic woman entailed a critique of 'the ornamental body of the aristocrat' while, at the same time, organising a new norm of femininity that was divorced from that embodied in the image of the labouring woman. Whereas the value of both the aristocratic woman and the labouring woman resided in the surfaces of their material bodies—the one valuable as the ornamental body, the other as the labouring body—the new ideal of domestic woman fashioned by the conduct books resided in a newly sculpted, self-regulating interiority. As Armstrong puts it:

Conduct books attacked these two traditional notions of the female body in order to suggest that the female had depths far more valuable than her surface. By implying that the essence of the woman lay inside or underneath her surface, the invention of depths in the self entailed making the material body of the woman appear superficial. The invention of depth also provided the rationale for an educational program designed specifically for women, for these programs strove to subordinate the body to a set of mental processes that guaranteed domesticity. (1987: 114)

For Armstrong, the new forms of moral self-inspection promoted by the conduct books helped bring about a 'cultural change from an earlier form of power based on sumptuary display to a modern form that works through the production of subjectivity' (1987: 120). Christine Barker-Benfield's discussion of the culture of sensibility points in a similar direction in showing how the gendered aesthetic discourses of the mid-eighteenth century which, still in thrall to the politics of display, attributed to women a naturally more delicate taste for the ornaments of life subsequently gave way to a more spiritualised sensibility in which woman's value consisted in her power as an agent for the moral reformation of self and others. For both Armstrong and Barker-Benfield, however, this new woman's sphere of moral operation

is initially confined to the home where her role is to regulate and restrain the desires of economic man and to convert the results of his labour into an aesthetically and morally desirable form of domestic life. 'If "his" aim is "to accumulate",' Armstrong says of economic man, 'then "hers" is "to regulate", and on "her conduct in these concerns" depends the success of all "his labours".' (1987: 120)

In summary, then, the domestic woman of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries functioned as a moral-cum-aesthetic reformatory apparatus whose sphere of operation was restricted largely to the domestic sphere. In the mid-century period, by contrast, as a clear example of the processes Foucault has in mind when he speaks of 'the governmentalisation of the state', this reformatory apparatus is relocated into the public realm via a series of programs which seek to enlist the gendered and, of course, classed virtues of the domestic woman as a means for the moral reformation of men in general and of the workingman in particular. In museums, art galleries, public parks, gardens and promenades, women were, in the schemes of cultural reformers, portrayed as aesthetic-cum-moral exemplars whose presence and influence would help transform the codes of male conduct. The domestic woman was, in short, the very model of the auto-inspecting, self-regulating forms of individuality required by liberal forms of government. The intelligibility of her functioning in this regard, however, depended precisely on her placement at the intersections of a series of overlapping antinomies (female-male; high-low; private-public; state-civil society) and her ability, in relation to each of these, to function as part of a reformatory gradient through which that which lies outside the sphere of culture and government (male boisterousness) is to be brought into it and refashioned.

These conditions, of course, were highly specific ones depending on a number of conjunctions which, although they have had long-term effects, were soon to fly apart. The waning influence of Romanticism in the late nineteenth century was to prove critical in this regard. As Ursula Vogel has shown, the gendered aspects of Romantic aesthetic discourse enabled women to be represented as exemplars for the processes of self-harmonisation which the Romantic aesthetic project required. This was because women were regarded as being naturally, by their very disposition, closer to the forms of wholeness and completion which it was the obligation of every person to strive to achieve (Vogel, 1987). The emerging ascendancy of modernism from the 1870s, however, witnessed an increasing attenuation of women's role as aesthetic-cum-moral exemplars in view of modernism's critiques of both Romanticism and the earlier culture of sensibility, and its

construction of a significantly more masculinised canon of high culture in their place (see Sparke, 1995). Even so, it is no accident that public cultural and educational institutions—like libraries (see Garrison, 1976)—should have proved among the more significant fields for the employment of women in professional roles in view of the continuing aesthetic-cum-moral functions that it was expected—by both women and men—they would be able to perform by virtue of their gendered constitution.

### THE FOUCAULT EFFECT

The distinctive aspects of the ways in which gendered attributes were deployed in nineteenth century programs of cultural management, then, consist in their close association with the development of new governmental forms of power. These achieved their effects much less spectacularly than the forms of power they displaced through the attention they accorded the studied manipulation of the relations between social agents in specific institutional contexts. This is what I mean by 'the Foucault effect' in cultural studies: the way in which Foucault's perspectives, in encouraging us to focus on the detailed routines and operating procedures of cultural institutions, allow us to see how cultural resources are always caught up in, and function as parts of, cultural technologies which, through the ordering and shaping of social relations which they effect, play an important role in organising different fields of human conduct. The business which culture is caught up in, looked at in these terms, goes beyond the influence of representations on forms of consciousness to include the influence of institutional practices, administrative routines and spatial arrangements on the available repertoires of human conduct and patterns of social interaction.

However, it is equally important—and this brings us to the second aspect of 'the Foucault effect' in cultural studies—that the role of culture in the organisation and regulation of different fields of conduct is seen to be disaggregated from those kinds of singular politics which see all fields of cultural struggle as being connected to a generalised struggle of the subordinate against a single source of power (the state, the ruling class, patriarchy) or an agglomerated source of power (the patriarchal imperialist state). Let me go back to Stuart Hall for a moment. It was, in Hall's view, impossible for Foucault to theorise a social formation or the state adequately since his view that the relations between practices are contingent meant that he was 'deeply

committed to the necessary non-correspondence of all practices to one another' (Hall, 1981: 36). It is difficult to see why this would be so: to say that practices do not necessarily correspond with one another is not to say that they necessarily do not correspond. My interest here, however, is less in the accuracy of Hall's criticism (this is where his merging of Foucault and Hindess and Hirst shows through most clearly) than in the fact that, over the period since Hall offered this assessment, the balance of opinion within cultural studies—including Hall's own views—has shifted so that this aspect of Foucault's work is now more likely to be cited as a positive asset rather than a disadvantage. A stress on the fluidity of social relations and practices, and on the contingent ordering of their connectedness as, now, necessary ways of theorising the social has become something of a commonplace within cultural studies as its earlier formulations have been adjusted in the light of what have been variously described as post-structuralist, postmodernist or post-Marxist critiques.

A key issue for cultural studies concerns how this contingency of the social is to be theorised. One tendency—and it is the tendency that has emerged out of the dialogue between the Gramscian tradition within cultural studies and, as Dick Hebdige puts it, the world of 'the posts' (Hebdige, 1988), as well as being the position with which Hall's later work has been most closely aligned—views the processes through which social relations acquire a degree of provisional fixity as being primarily discursive: a result of the ways in which social actors are induced to view their relations to one another as a consequence of the conduct of ideological struggle. This, in rough summary, is the position that the politics of articulation has now arrived at: a position in which the effective forms of social alliance and division are held to derive from the forms of connectedness, or articulations, that have been established, by discursive means, between different ideological and cultural values. If this produces a practical role for the intellectual, this is achieved at the price of only being able to conceive cultural politics as taking a discursive form, a struggle waged solely on the field of representations. Where all that was once solid has 'melted into air', it is not surprising that, where this view prevails, conceptions of both the ends that intellectuals should pursue in the cultural sphere and the means by which to pursue them should have become increasingly 'airy' in tone.

For Foucault, by contrast, the order of relations that is contingently established between practices can only be discerned through the application of a dense materialism which charts the relations, similarities and migrations between different fields of practice. By the same

token, the Foucaultian perspective suggests that any effective involvement of intellectuals in the cultural sphere must rest on a 'politics of detail' that entails ways of addressing and acting effectively in relation to the governmental programs through which particular fields of conduct are organised and regulated. In these ways, the 'Foucault effect' I have sought to identify should serve, at the levels of both theory and practice, as an effective antidote to the headier forms of thought and action that now too often go under the label of cultural studies.