Michel Foucault's Analytics of War: The Social, the International, and the Racial

Vivienne Jabri

King's College London

The absence of the *international* as a distinct socio-political sphere in Michel Foucault's work forms a major part of the postcolonial critique of his writings. The absence of the international has a number of consequences for any critical engagement with Foucault in the context of global politics. The significance of these consequences becomes apparent when we consider Foucault's analytics of war and power, situate these in relation to the particularity of the international, consider the very pertinent critiques of Foucault emanating from postcolonial writings, and finally re-locate Foucault in the international not, as is the predominant approach in International Relations, through the *application* of Foucaultian concepts, but through Foucault's own political writings on the non-western arena, specifically his engagement with the Iranian Revolution. While limited in their scope, an evaluation of these writings appears to vindicate postcolonial critiques of Foucault, though with some revealing qualifications.

Iran is in the news once again. Having categorized it as a member of the so-called "axis of evil," George Bush was in effect placing Iran on notice; having dealt with Iraq, Iran was next on the list. Bordering Iraq's Shi'ite population to the south and the Kurdish population to the north, Iran would witness not just the liberation of these populations from tyranny, but the transformation of a sovereign state into an arena of liberal democracy, open to the global market place, and eventually self-legislating in the institutionalization of liberal modes of governance. That Iran was next on the list seemed to vindicate voices in Washington that had long perceived Iran, the seat of the Islamic Revolution, as the primary threat to the security of the United States and the West more widely conceived. Now in more recent times, with statements from the IAEA that Iran's behavior within the nuclear non-proliferation regime has been anything but cooperative, the discourse from Washington and other capitals in Europe is of Iran's determination to possess nuclear weapons, giving material force to representations that construct Iran as the most recent threat facing humanity.

This, then, is but one fragment of the international arena, a place that many of us subject to analyses informed by Foucault's writings on war and power. Such analyses suggest that what at first sight appears to form a geo-strategic concern is more

properly located in the dynamics that most concerned Foucault, namely govern-mentality and biopolitics. While Foucault himself said relatively little about the sphere of the international as a distinct sphere, concentrating on operations of power within specifically western societies and their liberal modes of government, his analytics of war and power have enabled crucial insights into our understanding of the workings of power globally. A number of us draw on these analytics to, for example, understand the present practices associated with the so-called "war against terrorism," with international policing regimes against the trafficking of drugs and people, with the representation and treatment of migrants, with recent efforts at so-called state-building and reconstruction, all constituting Foucaultian-inspired applications that take Foucault in directions that would perhaps have surprised him, though we can never know this (Dillon and Reid 2001; Bigo 2002; Huysmans 2004; Jabri 2005, 2006).

Iran has been in the news in another, more philosophically pertinent sense. A recent publication deals with a set of articles and interviews by Michel Foucault that covered his visit to Iran as this country was going through its revolution against the former Shah of Iran and the Pahlavi dynasty (Afary and Anderson 2005). While the onslaught of the Bush Administration is aimed at the Islamic Republic and its theocracy, the onslaught of this publication is aimed at Michel Foucault and what is assumed to be his rather uncritical attitude to the Islamic character that the Iranian Revolution quickly took once the Shah's reign began to unravel and ultimately came to its end. Despite the many short-comings of this publication (Toscano 2006), it draws attention to a valuable set of writings that Foucault published and that provide some insight into what are in effect very rare engagements with what might be called the non-western and the non-liberal.

Delving into Foucault's engagement with the Iranian Revolution at this juncture of history is especially valuable in a context that, despite protestations to the con-trary, variously constructs Islam and regions and communities associated with Islam, the Arab world, and South Asia, as the enemy, posing an existential threat, through terrorist activities, to the western "way of life," to liberal democracy, and to everyday safety.[1] In this context, it is not too surprising to find that Foucault's writings on war and power have been used in analyses of global articulations of power, from the invasion of Iraq to the incarceration and torture of prisoners in Camps from Guantanamo to Bagram, and elsewhere.[2] This is then a context in which a global confrontation is deemed by those engaged in its throes as consti-tuting the human and the inhuman, the peaceful and the violent, the universal and the reactionary particular, the lawful and the lawless, the modern and the pre-modern. There is running through the discourses and the practices centered around this confrontation a distinctly cultural and racial construction that has

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[1]Prime Minister Blair provides a subtle reading of representations of Islam in the current context. In a speech addressed on the 21st of March 2006 to the Foreign Policy Centre in London, Blair states, "There is an interesting debate going on inside government today about how to counter extremism in British communities. Ministers have been advised never to use the term 'Islamist extremist'. It will give offence. It is true. It will. There are those—per-fectly decent-minded people—who say the extremists who commit these acts of terrorism are not true Muslims. And, of course, they are right. They are no more proper Muslims than the Protestant bigot who murders a Catholic in Northern Ireland is a proper Christian. But, unfortunately, he is still a 'Protestant' bigot. To say his religion is irrelevant is both completely to misunderstand his motive and to refuse to face up to the strain of extremism within his religion that has given rise to it." In "Not a Clash Between Civilisations, but a Clash About Civilisation," available at http://www.fpc.org.uk/events/past/231 (Accessed 12/4/2006). Significantly, the United Kingdom's anti-terror legislation is seen as disproportionately affecting the Muslim community in, for example, the rise by over 300% since 2001 of police stop and search operations directed against young Asian men.

[2]For various applications of Foucaultian analyses to the so-called war against terrorism, see, for example, Hardt and Negri (2004), Butler (2004), Jabri (2006), and Neal (2006).

consequences not just on the battlefield of warfare but permeates the social sphere and lived experience.[3]

Apart from the context of a global confrontation that invites a Foucaultian analysis, there is also a distinctly political dilemma that faces those broadly on the left of politics, critical of the Bush Administration and of wider legislative measures that seek to limit human rights and civil liberties in the name of security. While an analysis of the Left's response to the rise of Islamist politics is beyond the scope of this article, what is important to highlight is that this Left has its roots in secular modernity where any penetration of the political sphere by the discourses of religiosity, whether this takes place in the White House, 10 Downing Street, or the Middle East, is viewed as constituting a threat to long-fought-for individual freedoms and the right to equality of treatment irrespective of political affiliation, culture, religion, sexuality, gender, and other modes of differentiation. Thus, when Foucault found himself writing of resistance to the oppressive rule of the former Shah of Iran, the challenge that faced him was that this resistance took on an Islamic character, one that sought to transform Iranian society into an exclusionist theocracy. His response to the Iranian Revolution and its Islamic character provides us with some significant clues as to his understanding of societies beyond the West, and hence an understanding of his approach to the international sphere.

I have argued elsewhere that drawing on Foucault's analytics of the social sphere provides some indications as to how we might understand the uses of war in the present. Here, we find that while Foucault's analytics seek to shift away from a juridico-political discourse of violence—where the concept of sovereignty reigns supreme—and toward historico-political relations of power, any move into the international blurs the boundary between these locations, suggesting war as a technology of control that seeks the pacification of populations beyond the domestic sphere (Jabri 2006, 2007). Articulations of power in the late modern context are predominantly transnational in their workings, involve war as well as other tools of social control, and have consequences that, as a number of authors have argued, are redrawing the sphere of the international and the location of sovereignty therein (Hardt and Negri 2004; Walker 2006). It is precisely this context, one that focuses specifically on the international domain and the workings of power therein, that draws attention to Foucault's engagements with this domain and its distinct particularities.

This article revisits the postcolonial critique of Michel Foucault and argues that this critique comes into force when explored through Foucault's interpretation of the Iranian Revolution. This critique is highly significant for our present considerations of how the global articulation of power is at one and the same time implicated in redrawing the sphere of the international *and* in generating particular forms of resistance to such power. As we will see below, it was precisely the absence of imperialism, its practices, and modes of resistance against it, in Foucault's analytics of power, that drew much of the postcolonial critique of his work, even as this critique is largely sympathetic to Foucault's overall work. This article will draw on this critique, but seeks to move beyond it in two different, but as we will see, interrelated ways.

The first provides a background investigation of Foucault's analytics of war and power, analytics that, as I seek to argue, while lacking reference to the *international* as a spatial terrain and its impact on practices of governmentality, a lack the consequences of which precisely invite the postcolonial critique, nevertheless provide indications of how Foucault understood this sphere. The second reveals Foucault's

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[3]The racial and cultural construction surrounding practices associated with the "war on terrorism" and their impact on lived experience cover, in the United States for example, the banning of Muslim academics such as Tariq Ramadan under the "ideological exclusion" provision of the U.S.A. Patriot Act to the clandestine detention of thousands of Muslim men, as reported by the American Civil Liberties Union. See www.aclu.org.

move into social spheres that lay beyond the modern liberal governmentalities of western society, his particular formulations of the subjectivity of the ''other'' of the West, a subjectivity that he saw as forming a mode of resistance to the modernizing imperatives that had previously denied the "other" their own distinctive subjectivity.

What is significant about Foucault's engagement with the Iranian Revolution is that we gain some insight into Foucault's understanding of the effects of power upon those located beyond the West and subject to its dominating practices. The overwhelming element in Foucault's rendition on Iran is that the form that the Iranian Revolution took was constitutive of a subjectivity of resistance, that its Islamic articulation was expressive of a mode of being that sought to locate itself beyond western rationality, and in so doing to generate its own distinctive self-consciousness, one that stood beyond such rationality. Once again, the postcolonial critique becomes relevant here, for it highlights, if only in suggestive form, the political implications of Foucault's seemingly uncritical interpretation of the Iranian Revolution. At the same time, however, a more nuanced reading of Foucault's statements on Iran highlights the context within which he places this event, namely his understanding of the temporal trajectory of power in modernity, its material connotations in practices of modernization, and its rationalizing imperatives. The consequences of Foucault's engagement are monumental, for they tell us a great deal about the subjectivity of current forms of resistance, about Foucault's analytics and his understanding of resistance, about modern subjectivity and its late modern counterparts. Ultimately, this exploration vindicates the postcolonial critique of Michel Foucault, but seeks to qualify these in light of recent translations of Foucault's work, ones that are of significance to any international political sociology that seeks an understanding of current operations of power and their global consequences.

Foucault on the Social, the International, and the Racial

Any methodological reflection in international political sociology suggests the element of the spatial and its articulations through time. Indeed, so powerful and constitutive of modernity is the distinctly spatial articulation of the international that core political concepts such as sovereignty and power are but meaningless without some understanding and appreciation of their spatial connotations. Modern conceptions of politics, political organization, and representations thereof are constitutively spatial and hence territorial. As Mark Neocleous (2003:99) has highlighted, ''The 'modernisation' of politics was thus as much a process of territorialization as it was a process of secularization and rationalization.'' Any transcendence of territorial limits, whether this occurs through intervention and the imperial projection of power, through transnational institutional practices aimed at the government of populations, through the movement of peoples and imposed practices of exclusion, or through modes of transnational affiliation, is but a confirmation of the primacy of the spatial imaginary in modern life and its effects in institutional practices and lived experience.

Michel Foucault's corpus, as is now well recognized, is replete with a spatial imaginary. Indeed, his understanding of modern power and the constitution of the social sphere relies centrally on revealing the processes through which the modernization of European societies relied upon the distribution of bodies and their subjection to disciplinary and surveillance practices. However, there is a sense in which we could argue that Foucault's spaces are distinctly local, not just national, but rather apparent in the minute interstices of social life wherein modern power operates. The methodological question this raises in relation to Foucault is whether indeed his archival and genealogical explorations limit his ability to engage with the relationship between, on the one hand, the government of social space and its

trajectory in European history and, on the other, the modern sphere of the international and the projection of European power therein.[4] It is in this context that Foucault's analytics of war and power come under scrutiny in the present context, for a question that is ever present in relation to any exploration of the articulations of power through modernity is exactly centered on the relationship between the inside and the outside, the sphere of the domestic, and that of the international.

Foucault's analytics seek to move discourse away from sovereignty and toward the microcosmic working of power in social and political life. This shift has profound implications, for it seems at first hand to deny investigation into the limits of governmental space and their transformations through time. A question that must be asked in relation to Foucault's work, therefore, is the extent to which it takes into account the sphere of the international as a space of operations that is intricately linked to the workings of societies and their internal state institutions. Foucault's lecture series (2003), *Society Must Be Defended*, provides some, if peripheral, indication of how Foucault conceives of the relationship between the social sphere and the role of the state in the international system. He reveals here a genealogy of the presence of war in historical analyses of social relations, moving the remit of analysis beyond this term's traditional battlefield sense. The term "war" in Michel Foucault blurs the boundary between war and peace, the battlefield, and social sphere. Seeking to shift the terms of debate away from what he referred to as the "philosophico-juridical discourse of law and sovereignty," a discourse that stressed law as the pacifying third force that arbitrates between different forces in society, and toward what he calls a "historico-political discourse of war" (2003:49–62), Foucault sought to place emphasis on practices that constituted the actuality of relations of force. Foucault, from henceforth, structures his analysis both at the level of representation (historical discourses on the social sphere) and at the level of practices (the actuality of the workings of power), so that both are present as we move in his historical analysis, from war as the signifier of the social sphere, to discipline as a form of power directed at bodies, and ultimately toward biopolitics, as a distinct form of power, the remit of which is the government of populations. This trajectory of Foucault's thought is significant in that while its central concern is the social, the realm of the *international* as a spatial sphere does not appear as an element that impacts upon the *social*. Nevertheless, even as Foucault shifts from sovereignty to biopolitics, he clearly sees the state as centrally implicated in practices of racial division and domination, suggesting that his conception of the international system is interlaced with what he refers to as "race wars."

Foucault's primary mode of investigation into relations of power is temporal even as the spatial distribution of bodies is core to his archaeological and genealogical investigations (Neocleous 1996).[5] Moving from the seventeenth to the twentieth century, the transformations in the workings of power that Foucault highlights are from the sovereign power to kill, to the disciplinary power that targets bodies, and ultimately toward relations of power in liberal societies that have the life of populations as their ultimate function. As Foucault states: "Unlike discipline, which is addressed to bodies, the new nondisciplinary power is applied not to man-as-body but to the living man, to man-as-living-being; ultimately, if you like, to man-as-species" (Foucault 2003:242). Where discipline seeks the division of the multiplicity into individual bodies "that can be kept under surveillance, trained, used, and, if need be, punished," this other technology addresses a "global mass," a "biopolitics" of the "human race" (Foucault 2003:243).

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[4] I am grateful to one of my anonymous referees for highlighting the "methodological nationalism" that perhaps results from Foucault's archival and archaeological approach.

[5] As Mark Neocleous highlights, the aim of Foucault's work is to "draw out some differences in regimes of power (compared across time rather than space . . .)" (1996:54).

Foucault's analytic of biopower is indicative of his understanding of the international and practices that constitute humanity in terms of racial division. Foucault identifies a number of domains in which biopower intervenes, from birth control, to old age, to insurance policies. There is, however, another domain in which this technology of power applies, namely relations between human beings "in so far as they are living beings" (Foucault 2003:245) and their environment, the latter including what might be referred to as the interhuman environment, relations between human beings sharing spaces. We might understand such spaces as defining the "urban problem," as Foucault does (2003:245), or expand this yet further to include neighborhoods, communities, and populations linked across state boundaries, taking place at the level of "general phenomena," the "mass" of population. The remit of biopower is then "the security of the whole from internal danger," so that wars fought are fought in "the name of life necessity" (Foucault 2003:249). The population in whose name war is fought, however, is a distinct population, one that is racialized as the predominant race, inaugurating in its wake what Foucault understands as state racism, a mechanism "introducing a break into the domain of life that is under power's control: the break between what must live and what must die . . . a way of establishing a biological type caesura within a population that appears to be a biological domain" (2003:254–255). It is then through race that the "relationship of war" becomes "compatible with the exercise of biopower" (2003:255).

What, however, are the spatial connotations of biopower? While Foucault sees the modern state as centrally implicated in generating the compatibility between war (the power to kill) and biopower (the power to give life), the material and representational effects of the distinct territoriality of the state and its limits bring to the fore issues relating to how the sphere of the international has historically been a determining force in "internal" social relations constituting the domestic sphere of European societies and the capacities of different states to project power globally.

The inauguration of biopower suggests for Foucault distinct transformations in the place of war in social relations so that from henceforth wars come to be fought in the name of the population. Foucault suggests that the "death of the other" as a guarantee of "my life" is "not . . . a military, warlike, or political relationship, but a biological relationship," in that "the enemies who have to be done away with are not adversaries in the political sense of the term; they are threats, either external or internal, to the population and for the population" (2003:255–256). For Michel Foucault, the right to kill in the context of biopower is a right that is enabled by racism, that the killing of the other "sub-species" is aimed at the survival of the species as a whole. At the level of representation, "killing, or the imperative to kill, is acceptable only if it results not in a victory over political adversaries, but in the elimination of the biological threat to or the improvement of the species or race" (2003:256). According to Foucault, this form of discourse enabled relations to be drawn between colonization, "colonising genocide," and responses relating to criminality, madness, and mental illness. When the above statement is understood at the level of practices, the enemy can no longer be conceived in biological terms, as is implied by Foucault, but comes to acquire a political subjectivity. Racism as a practice can only be understood in political terms.

The spatial reappears; it is international, but it remains juxtaposed with a generalized terrain that links colonialism with responses to madness, criminality, and mental illness. The issue, however, is that if biopower is conceived as a generalized terrain of humanity, its logic is the production of political space that extends well beyond the limits of the state, thereby reframing the sphere of the international in imperial terms. Invocations of humanity as the purpose of war seek to reconstitute the international beyond the interstate system of sovereign states and into a terrain that is imperial in its workings. While Foucault might acknowledge the continuities of sovereignty, disciplinarity, and biopower, when this last term is understood in

terms of its spatial connotations, it is sovereignty that is transformed, not in terms of its diminution, but rather in terms of its *spatial* articulation (Walker 2006; Jabri 2007). The postcolonial critique of Michel Foucault comes into force precisely in relation to the question of the international connotations of biopower and the relationship between practices of governmentality within and imperial domination. As David Harvey (2003) has pointed out, imperial domination constitutes a re-inscription of the landscape of power, focusing attention on the relationship between the projection of state power through war and the changing dynamics of capital accumulation. While Foucault neglects the imperial, his discussion of governmentality has resonances for our understanding of its contemporary forms: "The ensemble formed by the institutions, procedures, analyses, and reflections, the calculations and tactics that allow the exercise of this very specific albeit complex form of power, which has as its target population, as its principal form of knowledge political economy, and as its essential technical means apparatuses of security" (Foucault 2001:219–220). However, as we will see below, the postcolonial critique focuses on the absence of imperialism and its implications in Foucault's analytics of power.

The Political, the Cultural, and the Racial

Foucault's (1977:308) conception of the social is based on war and battle, but this is a "silent" battle running through the institutions of liberal governmentality.[6] The shift in regimes of power from discipline to biopolitics is a shift that remains unexplored in terms of its implications for the distinctly spatial articulation of power and its extension beyond the limits of the sovereign state. When Foucault renders the human species as the object of power, he opens the door for our understanding of how liberal governmentality's international consequences include wars conducted in the name of humanity, wars that, in representational terms, constitute the enemy other as an existential threat to the well-being of humanity at large, and in material terms reinscribe power beyond the boundaries of the state, thereby redrawing the dynamics of political space globally. Where Foucault's analytics provide an understanding of the racialized underpinnings of biopower, its spatial connotations, in terms of the political organization of humanity, remain unexplored. The core question is how the biologization of power relates to politics. This question is especially problematic in two senses: first, in conceiving of the effects of biopower globally, and second, in conceptualizing modes of resistance to such power. The postcolonial critique of Michel Foucault's analytics of power comes into force on both counts, but can be subjected to further scrutiny and reflection in light of Foucault's rather peripheral venture into the sphere of the international through his engagement with the Iranian Revolution.

Foucault's temporal trajectory of power, the changes in regimes of power that take place in the European West between the seventeenth and twentieth centuries, leaves much of its international ramifications out (Stoler 1995). Even as Foucault recognizes the biopolitics involved in colonial genocide, redundant there is a distinct absence of any analysis of the differential as well as the mutually constitutive implications of regimes of power when applied here and over there, so to speak. Gayatry Chakravorty Spivak provides a devastating critique of the absence of this international manifestation of Foucault's analytic of power, and specifically the emergence of biopower. In Foucault's terms, "In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, we have the production of an important phenomenon, the emergence, or

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[6]Foucault (2001:219–220) seeks to stress that the shift in relations of power from sovereignty to discipline to biopolitics is not a matter of replacement, but one of co-presence: "in reality one has a triangle, sovereignty-discipline-government, which has, as its primary target the population and as its essential mechanism the apparatuses of security."

rather the invention, of a new mechanism of power possessed of highly specific procedural techniques . . . which is also I believe, absolutely incompatible with the relations of sovereignty. This new mechanism of power is more dependent upon bodies and what they do than the Earth and its products" (Foucault 1980:104). According to Spivak: "The topographical reinscription of imperialism never specifically informed Foucault's presuppositions. Notice the omission of the fact . . . that the new mechanism of power in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries . . . is secured by means of territorial imperialism—the Earth and its products—'elsewhere'" (Spivak 1999:279). In terms of the spaces of concern in Foucault's analytic of power, Spivak provides a vivid picture of its occlusions:

> Sometimes it seems as if the very brilliance of Foucault's analysis of the centuries of European imperialism produces a miniature version of that heterogeneous phenomenon: management of space—but by doctors; development of administrations—but in asylums; considerations of the periphery—but in terms of the insane, prisoners, and children. The clinic, the asylum, the prison, the university—all seem to be screen allegories that foreclose a reading of the broader narratives of imperialism (Spivak 1999:279).

The spatial articulation of power appears, at first sight, to be confined to the distribution of bodies through the locales of governmentality within European society. The shift in regimes of power is a shift that remains independent of Europe's expansive and acquisitive articulation of power elsewhere upon the global arena. Like Spivak, Paul Gilroy similarly seeks to relate the here and the elsewhere of regimes of power in Foucault's analytics:

> A far as orthodox histories of European statecraft are concerned, problems like the disappearance of public torture are often understood to identify a significant stage in the development of a new type of power: capillary, biopolitical, and primarily directed toward the management of population. Against this assumption, the history of colonial power overflows with evidence that suggests that a distinctive association of governance with military power and martial law should be identified and that this association with distinctive forms of governmental calculation changed the workings of institutional complexes like the army and medical practice, as well as the professional thinking of colonial administrators, planners, and managers. There were different biopowers at work in these colonial histories, and they did not remain sealed off from the mainstream at the distant ends of the imperial system (Gilroy 2004:47).

I argue elsewhere that modernity and its late manifestations are experienced differently when looked at from the angle of the colonized, past and present. While Europe's colonial past bears testimony to the intricate links between the government of social space internally and the methods of imperial domination in the colonies, the late modern reinscription of imperial power and the "racial ordering of the world" are currently being articulated in twenty-first century colonizations and their displays through military power, carceral power, confinement, administration, acquisition through dispossession, and the "training" of local populations into societies amenable to self-discipline, self-regulation, and self-government (referred to variously as "state-building" or "nation-building"). Late modern interventions into the societies of others come ultimately to serve the acquisitive logic of structures of domination, whether these are expressed regionally or globally. Race is as much part of this logic as it was in the colonial past (Jabri 2007).

The postcolonial reinscription of the imperial in Foucault's account of regimes of power, including the emergence of biopower, confers a spatiality that is distinctly geopolitical in its articulation, placing the spotlight on the implications of biopower for the sphere of the international and its transformations. However, to relocate the

regimes of power that constitute Foucault's analytics globally is to raise questions relating to resistance, the second and related element in the postcolonial critique of Foucault. As I state above, the concept of biopower, referring as it does to the human as a species being, is so generalizable and so all encompassing that it does not immediately lend itself to a specific mode of resistance, unless, as in Hardt and Negri, resistance itself is generalized into the human, the human in all its "singularities" (Hardt and Negri 2004). However, even here, Foucault's understanding of "localised resistance," while suggestive of the intersubjective nature of matrices of power (so that the other is always in a sense present as a subject capable of resistance) comes, in Spivak's terms, to represent a "dangerous utopianism" lacking in a "theory of ideology" (Spivak 1999:279). Edward Said appears to make a similar point when considering anticolonial struggle:

> Foucault is certainly right—and even prescient—in showing how discourse is not only that which translates struggle or systems of domination, but that *for which* struggles are conducted . . . What he seemed not quite as willing to grant is, in fact, the relative success of these counter-discursive attempts first to show the misrepresentations of discursive power, to show, in Fanon's words, the violence done to psychically and politically repressed inferiors in the name of an advanced culture, and then afterwards to begin the difficult, if not always tragically flawed, project of formulating the discourse of liberation (Said 1986:153).

Said is himself prescient when we apply these words in reflection of contemporary struggles against colonial domination. Indeed, prescient even more when he highlights (Said 1986:154) the "resignation or spectatorial indifference after the Iranian revolution" in Foucault and others.

We see from the above "postcolonial" critique that Foucault's analytics of power may inform in terms of the temporal trajectory of regimes of power and their implications in the production of subjectivity, including subject positions that resist. These very analytics are devoid of a distinctly international rendition, so that the reinscription of the imperial, the colonial and the racial, comes to suggest not just a mutually constitutive relationship between the social, and the international, the social and the imperial, but a call for a differentiated understanding of both power *and* resistance, so that the *choices* made in resistance to power are appreciated in all their complexities and flaws. The "dangerous utopianism" that Spivak attributes to Foucault's understanding of resistance in all its generality becomes apparent when we consider Foucault's response to the Iranian Revolution. However, as we will see in the final section to this article, Foucault's response has a number of complex elements not easily reducible to a simple acceptance or even complicity in the legitimization of the Islamic character that this particular revolution took. Furthermore, his response suggests that while he neglected imperialism in the vast corpus of his writings, nevertheless, here in these relatively smaller reflections, Foucault manages to locate the story of Iran precisely in the wider context of modernity, practices of modernization, and their implications for societies that he interpreted as being historically subjected to western domination. The postcolonial critique must hence be revisited in light of this context to Foucault's responses to the Iranian Revolution.

Foucault and the Iranian Revolution

Foucault's understanding of resistance is primarily resistance against oppressive practices; Vietnam, Cambodia, the Vietnamese boat people, his support for Amnesty International, his responses to the violations of human rights by the Shah and the subsequent Islamic regime in Iran all suggest primarily a liberal commitment to human rights, understood in terms of the rights of the individual against group and

institutional tyranny. There is no totalizing discourse here, no code as such, but a concern with social formations that ultimately allow individual modes of expression, the articulations of self free of oppressive practices.

Foucault's understanding of the locations of such oppressive practices is revealing, for contrary to the discussion provided above, when Foucault intervenes in political discussion, his international or geopolitical understanding comes to the fore. For here we see an understanding that is distinctly cultural in its orientation, cultural in the sense that philosophies and practices relating to politics have a specificity in relation to the social formation of which they are a part. In an interview published by the Centre of Iranian Writers, Foucault draws a distinction between the philosophies that emerged in western Europe in the eighteenth century, philosophies that aspired toward a "vision of a non-alienated, clear, lucid, and balanced society," from others informing political cultures elsewhere. Where those of the west had led to industrial capitalism "as the harshest, most savage, most selfish, most dishonest oppressive society one could possibly imagine," the "painful experience" of the east had emerged from the "revolutionary thinkers and socialist states we know today," rational systems of thought that led in actuality to formations that "ought to be discarded" (Foucault 1979a, 1979b, in Afary and Anderson 2005:185). Given the failures of the Vietnamese and the Cambodians to construct their systems, in the aftermath of their struggle against American imperialism, into ones based on freedom, and classless and non-alienated societies, there was a need for "another political thought, another political imagination" (Foucault 1979a, 1979b, in Afary and Anderson 2005:185), and Iran presented to the western intellectual a new vision that could not be ignored, namely Islam.

Foucault clearly interprets the Iranian Revolution in terms of its opposition, or resistance, to modernization. This is the crucial element that links his understanding of this monumental event (monumental in terms of its global ramifications) with his wider understanding of the trajectory of governmental rationality and the subjectivizations that emerge from its practices. In a statement that has resonance in contemporary antiglobalizations discourses, Foucault provides his core interpretation of the Iranian situation: "recent events did not signify a shrinking back in the face of modernisation by extremely retrograde elements, but the rejection, by a whole culture and a whole people, of a *modernisation* that is itself an archaism." The fall of the Pahlavis was taking place in Iran not solely because of the despotic and corrupt practices of this regime, but because of the very "principle" (196) of modernization, the "attempt to modernise the Islamic countries in a European fashion" (Foucault 1978a, in Afary and Anderson 2005:195–197).

In highlighting modernization as the target of what he saw as the "common will" of the Iranian population, Foucault understands present events in terms of the historical trajectory that led to such rejection: the imposition by the British of Reza Khan as ruler, Reza Khan's determination to follow Ataturk's modernization program, one that was informed by secular nationalism, and one that—a matter not referred to by Foucault—had intellectual and ideological force in the rest of the Middle East as it sought to free itself from colonial rule. For Foucault, revolutionary Iran was testimony to his view that modernization itself as a governmental and social rationality constituted the "dead weight" that had, throughout the twentieth century, not only denied the Iranian population its character as an Islamic culture, but subjected it to "a long period of dependency without direct colonisation" (Foucault 1978b, in Afary and Anderson 2005:220).

When Foucault enters the realm of the international, his emphasis is on the global domination emergent from the modernizing imperatives of global capital. While it is indeed the case that his wider corpus is lacking in analysis of the global ramifications of the trajectories of power in modernity, as the postcolonial critics have shown all too clearly, Foucault's understanding of the Iranian situation must be placed in the context of the far wider concern of his work, namely the social and

political ramifications, in all their archival detail, of the story of modernity. This story, as he shows in these minor writings on Iran, is also a story of a global political economy that has domination at its core. His critique is, however, also informed by a distinct cultural sensibility, one that understands modernizing rationalities as essentially emergent from the West and as possessing an expansive dynamic that has the historical effect of diminishing other cultures. In his preface to the 1961 edition of *History of Madness*, Foucault located western rationality in relation to its other:

> We could write of the history of limits—of those obscure gestures, necessarily forgotten as soon as they are accomplished, through which a culture rejects something which for it will be the Exterior . . . In the universality of the Western ratio, there is this division which is the Orient: the Orient, thought of as the origin, dreamt of as the vertiginous point from which nostalgia and return are born, the Orient offered to the colonising reason of the Occident, but indefinitely inaccessible for it always remains the limit (Foucault 2006:xxx).

This cultural sensibility can also be located in his views on what he refers to as the "spiritual" aspect of life, an aspect that in itself has, according to him, been diminished by modern rationality. His seeming initial reification of the Islamic character of the Iranian Revolution must be situated in his understanding of the spiritual aspect of the hermeneutics of the subject, an aspect that, in what he calls the "Cartesian moment," was lost (Foucault 2005:17). In his analysis of the Iranian Revolution, it is as if he seeks to retrieve the spiritual in the formation of the subject:

> It is first and foremost about a movement that aims to give a permanent role in political life to the traditional structures of Islamic society. An Islamic government is what will allow the continuing activity of the thousands of political centres that have been spawned in mosques and religious communities in order to resist the Shah's regime . . . But one dreams also of another movement, which is the inverse and the converse of the first. This is one that would allow the introduction of a spiritual dimension into political life, in order that it would not be, as always, the obstacle to spirituality, but rather its receptacle, its opportunity, and its ferment (Foucault 1978c, in Afary and Anderson 2005:207).

The Islamic character of the rebellion, or revolution, was then an effort both "to politicize structures that are inseparably social and religious in response to current problems," and an "attempt to open a spiritual dimension to politics" (Foucault 1978c, in Afary and Anderson 2005:208).

It is not too difficult to read a certain reification of Islam, and particularly its Shi'ite variety (almost 90% of the Iranian population is born into this sect) in Foucault's rendition of the Iranian Revolution. As others have rightly commented, while being critical of the secular forces of opposition to the Shah's rule in Iran, Foucault was not equally critical of a movement that had its basis in opposition not just to the rule of the Pahlavi dynasty, but to any secular rule, any mode of social and political expression that sought forms of political emancipation, including that related to women, that already had a long history in the Middle East. Foucault's essentialist understanding of Islam and its attribution to very different and diverse cultures in the Middle East can be open to strong critique, as indeed it was at the time of the publications of his articles.[7] According to Ian Almond (2004:21),

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[7] Maxime Rodinson's critique of Foucault is reprinted in Afary and Anderson (2005:267–277). According to Rodinson, "Michel Foucault, part of a line of radically dissident thought, placed excessive hopes in the Iranian Revolution. The great gaps in his knowledge of Islamic history enabled him to transfigure the events in Iran, to accept for the most part the semitheoretical suggestions of his Iranian friends, and to extrapolate from this by imagining an end of history that would make up for disappointments in Europe and elsewhere" (Afary and Anderson 2005:270).

"Foucault's conviction of the Orient's immobility, untameable nature and essential homogeneity are all gestures which come straight out of the nineteenth century, out of a hegemonic European tradition of comment on the Orient."

However, Foucault's understanding of the Islamic Revolution in Iran must also be placed within the wider context of his writings. His appreciation of the revolution as a revolt against modernization and its rationalities is especially informative and provides some insight into his thought when specifically the international dimension is brought forth into his analytics on regimes of power from the seventeenth to the twentieth century. However, once again, his failure to differentiate the effects of modernization or its different articulations in different cultural locales gives credence to postcolonial critiques of Foucault's renditions on power and resistance. Where he saw modernization as an imposed structure on the "Islamic societies" of the Middle East, those very societies possess their own experiences and interpretations of the modernizing imperatives of national identity, imperatives that were central to their liberation from colonial rule as well as being core to the transformation of the lived experience of many, essentially, transformations expressive of liberation from religious doctrine.

These criticisms aside, Foucault's journalistic writings on the Iranian Revolution are also of value in seeking to understand the contemporary context. His understanding of what he persistently called the "collective will" or the "political will" that drove the revolution against the Shah is that this will was not simply spiritual, but in being so was formative of the very subjectivity of the Iranian people. This then is what I want to call Foucault's Fanon moment, the moment wherein Foucault conceives of rebellion as bringing the subject into being, into history. In a statement that has profound salience for our current context, a context that witnesses the emergence of Islam as a political moment in that most secular of protracted conflicts, namely the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, Foucault suggests:

> It is . . . important to recognise that the demand for the "legitimate rights of the Palestinian people" has hardly stirred the Arab peoples. What would happen if this cause experienced the dynamism of an Islamic movement, something much stronger than the effect of giving it a Marxist, Leninist, or Maoist character? Additionally, how strong would Khomeini's "religious" movement become, if it were to put forward the liberation of Palestine as its objective? The Jordan no longer flows very far from Iran (Foucault 1979b, in Afary and Anderson 2005:241).

It would be short-sighted indeed to dismiss this statement as yet another instance of Foucault's reification of the Islamist character of the Iranian Revolution. However, as a comment on the Palestinian question and its mobilizing potential, it is also ahistorical, for this particular conflict, on both sides of the divide, finds its articulations in both religious and secular terms.

Conclusion

Foucault's entry into the scene of the international is a complex one, and perhaps a very incomplete one. It is important to state that he confessed to having "changed" his opinions of the Iranian Revolution once the newly instituted Islamic regime came into power and began the process of incarceration, torture, and killing of its enemies (Foucault 2000a, 2000b:452). In his criticism of the Iranian authorities and what he saw as their disregard of the rights of those incarcerated and tortured, Foucault invokes a very modern concept, namely the "universality" of these rights and the "obligations" that every authority has in respect of these rights (Foucault 2000a, 2000b:439–442).

Foucault's analytics of war and power is strikingly silent about the sphere of the international, but it does make an occasional appearance, if in peripheral form. In general, Foucault wants to shift the analytic of power away from sovereignty and toward the minutiae of the workings of power in the interstices of social life. This shift is as enabling of a wider conception of the presence of power in the assemblages of control throughout the social sphere, as Deleuze points out, as it is constraining of a conception that enables an understanding of the very limits of power, for it is these limits that provide some indication of the political moment (Walker 1993). Relocating Foucault in the sphere of the international through his own engagement with this sphere rather than the application of his concepts to our analyses of international relations raises important questions relating to his analytics of war, power, and political agency. The absence of the international in Michel Foucault's corpus has a number of implications for our "applications" of his analytics of war and power in International Relations. These analytics, as many both in the discipline and in the humanities more generally have shown, are crucial in our understanding of the trajectory of relations of power in modern societies, a trajectory that in late modernity becomes manifest in governmental practices, now increasingly transnational, aimed at the regulation and welfare of populations. However, in his conception of the historical shift from sovereign power to biopower, from the right to kill to the "government" of the life of populations and their productivity, Foucault faces difficulties relating to his analytic of war, which he acknowledges but fails to resolve, and relating to his analytic of power and resistance, which others highlight, but that find their strongest articulation in the postcolonial critique of Foucault.

While Foucault recognizes the copresence of the three modes of power he analyzes, namely sovereignty, disciplinarity, and biopower, nevertheless in the absence of any reflection on imperialism and its reinscription of political space, the relationship between a mode of power, the object of which is humanity at large (biopower), and sovereign power remains unexamined. This relationship becomes apparent when we consider the projection of power beyond the territorial state, a projection that raises fundamental questions relating to the distinctly spatial connotations of biopower. Nevertheless, as we see above, Foucault's analytics are centered on the effects of western modernity, in practices that he associates with the trajectory of modernization in modern European societies. While we in the contemporary era might extrapolate from Foucault's writings in our analyses of the international domain and its transformations, seeing the logic of imperialism as the spatial connotation of his concept of biopower, Foucault himself only makes minor reference to the political economy of this form of power.

Foucault's engagement with the international comes in minor writings, and specifically in his interpretation of the Iranian Revolution, the analysis of which relocates Foucault in the international sphere, a relocation that both underpins the postcolonial critique while raising significant points of departure relating to Foucault's distinctly culturalist understanding of the international, an understanding that pits the modernizing imperatives of western rationality against what he saw as the resistance(s) of the other. While Foucault's postcolonial critics are vindicated in their attempts to reinscribe the imperial in Foucault's analytics of power, Foucault's location of his engagements with Iran and other sites in the non-western world in the context of his wider understanding of modernization provides some, if minor, response to this critique.

The postcolonial reinscription of the imperial, the colonial, and the racial highlights the mutually constitutive relationship between the social and the international, as well as underlining the need for a differentiated understanding of both power and resistance. Such a differentiated understanding in turn relocates the focus of attention, important for any consideration of the workings of power in international relations, back to the political and its different modes of articulation,

including those expressed in different forms of state in the international arena as well as those expressive of choice in different sites of resistance. It is only through such differentiation that an international political sociology is possible, for it enables an understanding of the differential articulations and effects of power, from sovereignty to biopolitics, as these traverse the terrain of the global.

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