

Technologies of Truth: peeling Foucault's triangular onion

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Introduction

Foucault might with reason be characterized as a philosophical nomad, always on the move, shifting between at least three areas: knowledge, subjectivity and power. Foucault described these shifts by rhetorics that make his work seem as a continuous escape from promising themes.¹ However, we should not let this rhetorical veil prevent us from seeing that, like a nomad, he was practising the same trade. The name of the trade, we want to argue in this article, was the *history of truth*. In the following, we try to show that reading Foucault as a historian of truth is one possible way to summarize his work. This will reveal a coherence and continuity that might vanish otherwise, in an emphasis on his intellectual fluidity and thematic opulence. We admit that this is a risky procedure given the variations in Foucault's career. What we are trying to do is simply to find out if it is possible to reconstruct a theme connecting these variations. Therefore, this article should be seen as an experiment rather than the final interpretation of Foucault's scholarship.

By characterizing Foucault's work as a 'history of truth', we mean that truth was the main object of his studies, truth in its positivity, 'as something that can and must be thought' (Foucault, 1984a, p. 7).² It is not unusual to find Foucault labelled as an advocate of the 'subjectivist theory of truth' (Lloyd, 1988, p. 262) or even as an irrationalist or nihilist. Notions of this kind are, in our opinion, based on a fundamental misunderstanding of his work. Since he was not a philosopher searching for an 'eternal' truth but a historian analysing specific 'truths', bound in time and place, he could not have any 'theory of truth', only limited explanations of certain 'truths'. To simplify, we should treat truth rather as Foucault's object than as his objective.

Foucault was thus studying actual truths of various kinds, but he was not interested in whether they were true or false. The focus of his studies is not on the content of the statements but on their status as truths. The question Foucault asks is not 'What is true?' but 'How is truth created?' It was not an accident that he named his chair at the *Collège de France* 'history of systems of thought'. To study systems of thought is to study techniques of truth-production, the procedures separating true and false, and the constitution of the truth-willing subject. Or as Foucault himself formulated his own aim: to study 'how the human subject enter[s] into games of truth' (1984b, p. 1).

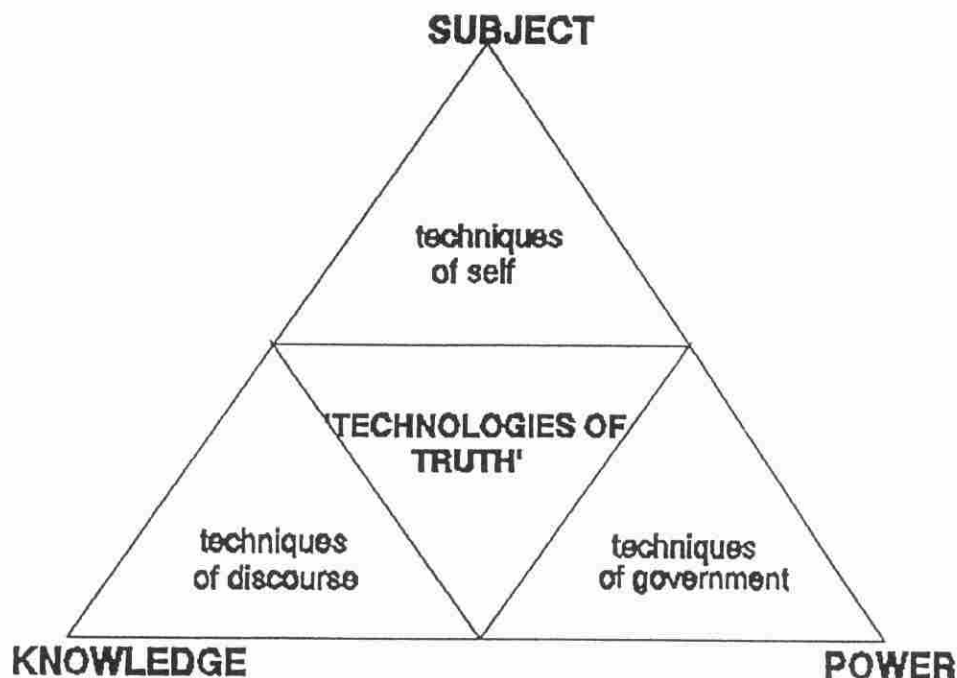


Fig. 1. Foucauldian history of truth.

I. Technologies of Truth

A Foucauldian history of truth is a history of 'games of truth'. He analyses these games in a three-dimensional space of knowledge, subjectivity and power. These dimensions of Foucault's work are well known, but what we want to emphasize is that they should not be treated separately but in relation to each other. We have called the totality of these three dimensions *technologies of truth*³ consisting of techniques of discourse, self and government. Our aim in this article is not to list the various themes Foucault dealt with or to take a stand on his empirical findings. We are moving on a more general level, trying to find what is common to his works. In the following, we first examine the three corners of the 'Foucauldian triangle' separately; that is, the techniques of discourse, self, and government (see Fig. 1).⁴ Each of these techniques is further divided into more elementary *relational* particles constructed through our reading, combining dimensions of knowledge (K), subjectivity (S) and power (P).⁵ Thereafter we summarize our interpretation of the history of truth twice, first synchronically as a Foucauldian history, and second, in a more cursory way, diachronically, as a history of Foucault.

1. *Techniques of Discourse (K)*

A field of knowledge is to Foucault a twilight zone between or beyond several dichotomies conventional in the history of ideas or sciences: those of true and false, science and ideology, logic and linguistics, words and things. From the point of view of the history of truth, the central question is not whether the truth is true or false, scientific or ideological, but how it is produced, used and maintained. Foucault treats truth in an

absolutely objectivist manner, as a phenomenon to be studied, not as a transcendental essence, or as the subjective achievement of a scholar.

Because Foucault's history of truth is an explicit history of divisions between true and false, he cannot speak of it in its own language, with the language that has produced that division and is maintained by it, with the language of truth. Foucault's solution to this problem is the analysis of discourses, which makes it possible to illuminate the twilight zone of knowledge, 'to reveal a *positive unconscious* of knowledge (Foucault, 1970b, p. xi). Discourse, in Foucauldian sense, is first and foremost a collection of techniques, practices and rules, which can be divided into three sets: those internal to discourse itself, those concerning the speaking subject, and those connected with power relations.

Internal Rules of Discourse (K-K). Foucault rejects the notions defining knowledge purely as a linguistic or logical phenomenon. There is a domain where discourse 'exercises its own control', which is not the domain of pure ideas but that of internal rules of discourse (Foucault, 1970a, p. 12), which Foucault classifies into three identities controlling and regulating discourse.

(k-k-k) There is an identity of 'repetition and sameness' (1970a, p. 15) effected by the *rule of commentary*, the play between primary texts and secondary texts. Commentary makes it possible 'to create new discourses ad infinitum' and to say 'for the first time, what has already been said, and repeat tirelessly, what was, nevertheless, never said' (p. 13).

(k-k-s) There is the identity of 'individuality and the I' (p. 15), achieved by the *principle of the author*, not the author as an individual, but 'as the unifying principle in a particular group of writings or statements' (p. 14).

(k-k-p) There is the identity 'taking the form of a permanent reactivation of the rules' of discourse, produced by the *rule of disciplines* (pp. 15-17).

Rarefaction Among Speaking Subjects (K-S). Foucault rejects 'the philosophy of a founding subject' (1970a, p. 21; 1966, 1981), i.e. the absolute priority of the knowing subject (1970b, p. xiv), and defines the subject in discourse as 'a particular, vacant place that may in fact be filled by different individuals' (1969a, p. 95). But that place cannot be filled by anyone. There are certain mechanisms of social appropriation, rules of rarefaction among speaking subjects regulating the access to subject status (1970a, pp. 17-19), which Foucault divides into three categories.

(k-s-k) There are verbal rituals, which determine 'individual properties and the agreed roles of the speakers' required: qualifications, gestures, and behaviour (1970a, p. 18).

(k-s-s) There are fellowships of discourse, whose function is to preserve and to reproduce discourse, but in order that it should circulate within a closed community (p. 18).

(k-s-p) There are doctrinal groups the effect of which is 'a dual subjection, that of speaking subjects to discourse, and that of discourse' to the doctrinal groups (p. 19).

Procedures of Exclusion (K-P). Foucault rejects the presumption that the relationship between knowing subject and knowledge could be immediate. It is always mediated by power relations says Foucault, who thus abandons the assumption that 'knowledge can exist only where power relations are suspended' and claims that there is no 'knowledge that does not presuppose' power relations (1975, p. 27). He emphasizes that power relations are not external to the field of knowledge but immanent in it: 'Indeed, it is in discourse that power and knowledge are joined together' (1976a, p. 100). Functioning of

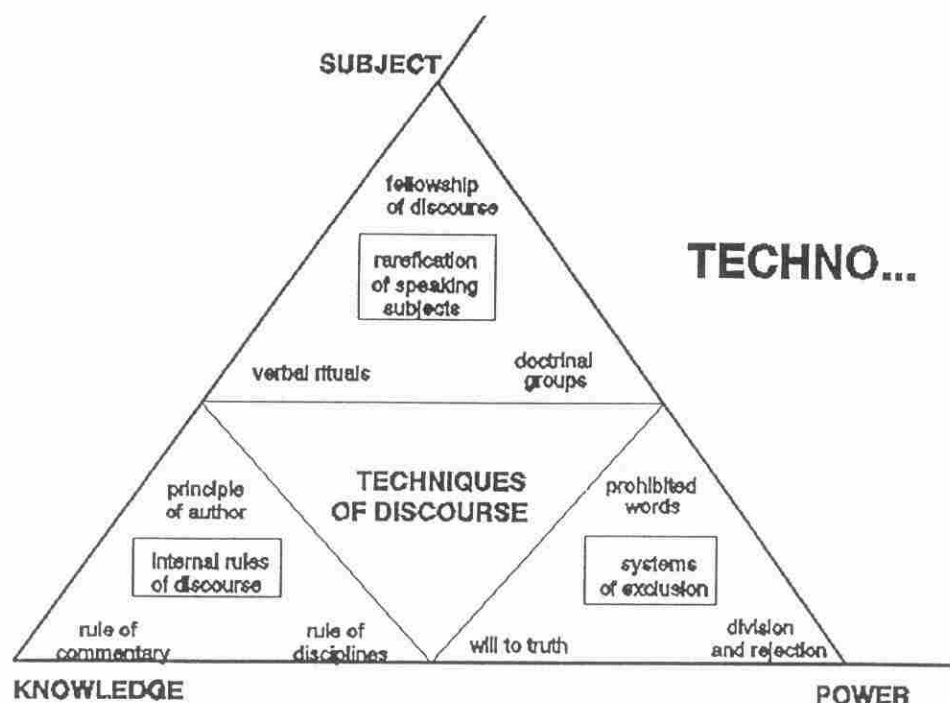


Fig. 2. Techniques of discourse

power relations on the field of knowledge takes its most distinct shape in those discursive techniques which Foucault calls procedures of exclusion (1970a, p. 8). These procedures he divides into three categories.

(k-p-k) There is the *will to truth*, which is not the same as the 'will to knowledge', but a form of it, 'a historically constituted division' (1970a, p. 10).

(k-p-s) There are *prohibited words*, which with their heavy silence draw the boundaries of possible speech, making it obvious, 'that we cannot simply speak of anything, when we like or where we like' (1970a, p. 8). Silence 'is an element that functions alongside the things said, with them and in relation to them within over-all strategies ... There is not one but many silences, and they are an integral part of the strategies that underlie and permeate discourses' (1976a, p. 27; 1965, pp. x-xi).

(k-p-p) There is the principle of *division and rejection*, 'the division of madness', that defines the border between reason and folly (1970a, p. 9; 1965).

In Fig. 2 we present techniques of discourse, a part of our greater Foucauldian triangle, in the form of three sub-triangles. Each sub-triangle focuses on one of the three aspects of knowledge, subjectivity and power but at the same time contains all aspects in its internal relationality.

2. Techniques of Self (S)

Foucault stated in 1982 that the aim of his work during the previous 20 years had been 'to create a history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects' (Foucault, 1982a, p. 208). He rejected an *a priori* theory of the subject, regarding him/her not as a substance but as a form. His basic question is how the subject

constitutes him/herself through practices that are related to power and knowledge. We are looking in the following for techniques, practices and procedures of that subjectivation in three dimensions: modes of subjectivation, the art of governmentality and the will to knowledge.

Modes of Subjectivation (S-S). Foucault emphasizes in *The History of Sexuality* that he is not writing a history of moral behaviour or moral codes but rather 'a history of "ethics" and "ascetics", understood as a history of the forms of moral subjectivation and of the practices of self that are meant to ensure it' (1984, p. 29). His focus is on 'the kind of relationship you ought to have with yourself, *rapport à soi*', which he calls ethics and which 'determines how the individual is supposed to constitute himself as a moral subject of his action' (1983, p. 352). In this process of self-formation as an 'ethical subject' the individual acts upon himself, monitors, tests, improves and transforms himself (1984a, p. 28). By the term 'telos' Foucault means the goal of the ethical life. It determines 'the kind of being to which we aspire when we behave in a moral way' (1983, p. 355). It is the moral teleology (1984a, p. 32), a mode of ethical fulfilment. We can find at least three modes of subjectivation in Foucault's texts: practices of the self, mode of subjection and ethical substance.

(s-s-s) *Practices of the self* are 'all this elaboration of ourselves in order to behave ethically', 'the self-forming activity', 'the means by which we can change ourselves in order to become the ethical subjects' (1983, pp. 353–355).

(s-s-p) The *mode of subjection* determines 'the way in which people are invited or incited to recognize their moral obligations' (p. 353). This way might be formulated by a divine law, natural law, a cosmological order or a rational rule.

(s-s-k) *Ethical substance* refers to 'the way in which the individual has to constitute this or that part of himself as a prime material of moral conduct' (1984, p. 26). It is like the material that is going to be worked on by ethics (p. 353).

Art of Governmentality (S-P). Subjectivation also involves being 'subject to someone else by control and dependence' (Foucault, 1982a, p. 212), with all the processes of individuation and modulation which power installs, acting the daily life and the interiority of those it calls its subjects, as Deleuze (1988, p. 103) states. 'This we call the art of governmentality. It is a capacity simultaneously to govern and to be governed. It concerns those practices that 'are frequently linked to the techniques for the direction of others' as for example in educational institutions' (Foucault, 1983). The question is of (moral) behaviours that will always be realized in relations between forces or in power-relations (Foucault, 1984a, pp. 25–26). We can find three modes here: stylistics of existence, governmentality and mastery of norms.

(s-p-s) *Stylistics of existence* (1984c, p. 71) are a mode of being (1984a, p. 86) as one's response to certain relationships with others in an extensive and complex field of power. As an example, Foucault analyses these relations in the two institutions of marriage and politics (1984c, pp. 71–95).

(s-p-p) The link between the technologies of domination of others with those of the self Foucault calls *governmentality* (1978, p. 102). It refers to 'the totality of practices, by which one can constitute, define, organize, instrumentalize the strategies which individuals in their liberty can have in regard to each other.' (1984, pp. 19–20).

(s-p-k) By *mastery of norms* we mean both subjection to rules of social games and the ability to capitalize on them.

Will to Knowledge (S-K). The third dimension of subjectivation, its truth axis, is defined by techniques for constituting the self, both as a subject of knowledge and as a knowing subject. It is not possible to construct oneself as a knowing subject without having a certain (practical and material) attitude to knowledge. This ties the subject 'to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge', through all the techniques of moral and human sciences that go to make up a knowledge of the subject (Deleuze, 1988, pp. 102–103). This stance is called here will to knowledge. We can divide this will into three elements: will to self-examination, will to confession and will to codification.

(s-k-s) The subject is to be willing and able to undergo *self-examination*, ready to produce knowledge from the self for him/herself. Types of self-examination can be distinguished with respect to thoughts in correspondence to reality, to rules and to the relation between the hidden thought and an inner impurity (Foucault, 1982b, p. 46).

(s-k-p) The subject has to have the will for *confession*, be ready to produce individual knowledge for the institutions of knowledge. The most typical forms of confession might be the Christian confessional and the psychotherapeutic session but we can see all the various forms of questioning, testing and hearing utilised by modern institutions as techniques for producing knowledge concerning the individual.

(s-k-k) One cannot become a subject without a certain number of rules of conduct or of principles which are at the same time truths and regulations. The object is to fit one's self out with these truths (Foucault, 1984, p. 5). In the modern era, the truth comes ready-made from moral and human sciences, especially from psychological and psycho-analytical science 'which is supposed to be able to tell you what your true self is' (1983). This is a question of the relation of the subject with the institutionally (scientific, professional) produced knowledge of the subject: Thus the subject has to be amenable to *codification*.

In Fig. 3 we present techniques of self, a part of our greater Foucauldian triangle, in the form of three sub-triangles. Each sub-triangle focuses on one of the three aspects of subjectivity, power and knowledge, but at the same time contains all aspects in their internal relationality.

3. *Techniques of Government (P)*

Although often seen as a theoretician of power, Foucault tried rather to outline an 'analytics' of power than to create a general theory of it (1976a, p. 82). Power according to him is not only negative, ruling and prohibiting domination but also productive and creative. It is exercised over free subjects, and only insofar as they are free. This kind of power is not a substance but a more-or-less organized cluster of relations of government. What is needed then is an analytics of these relations, of the actions, strategies and tactics, which constitute the field of power as government (Foucault, 1977, pp. 198–199). In the following, we would like to summarize the domain of power in three techniques of government: The ordering of forces, disciplining practices and individualizing practices.

Ordering of Forces (P-P). We call the first dimension of power ordering of forces. Here the focus lies on how power as power is exercised as a tactical and strategic game from innumerable points; from below, immanently in other relationships, both intentionally and non-subjectively (Foucault, 1976a, pp. 92–102). The techniques of this specific

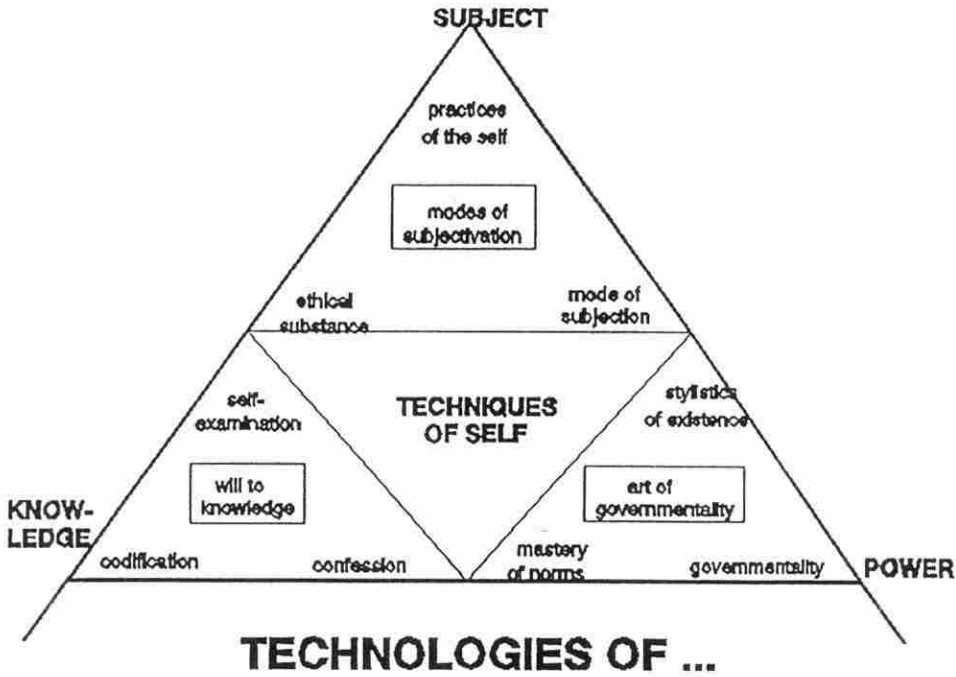


Fig. 3. Techniques of self.

domain of power are here called levels of domination, disciplines and control, and the political technology of individuals.

(p-p-p) Power is a mode of action which does not act directly and immediately on others but upon their actions. It is a structure of actions brought to bear upon possible actions (Foucault, 1982a, p. 220). Therefore, power even in its 'purest' form is rather *domination* than repression.

(p-p-k) There are blocks in which the adjustment of abilities, resources of communication and power relations constitute regulated and concerted systems, a block of capacity-communication-power as techniques of *disciplines and control* (pp. 218–219).

(p-p-s) The modern state should not be considered as an entity which was developed above individuals, ignoring what they are and even their very existence, but as a very sophisticated structure, in which individuals can be integrated through the *political technology of individuals* (1982a, p. 214).

Disciplining Practices (P-K). The second dimension of the techniques of government, called here disciplining practices, relates power and knowledge as 'regime of truth', as power-knowledge. Discipline, according to Foucault, means both being subjugated under a certain specialized domain of knowledge and under a certain regime and order. Disciplining refers not so much to an increase in obedience and allegiance as to ordering and organizing the mutual relation between the basic relationships so that they become more sophisticated, rational and economical as they are increasingly examined. Discipline may not be identified either with an institution or with an apparatus; it is a type of power, a modality for its exercise comprising a whole set of instruments, techniques and procedures—it is the 'physics of power' (Foucault, 1975, p. 215). The examination,

documentation and manoeuvres of normativity are most important techniques of this domain of power.

(p-k-p) *Examination*, as used in modern institutions like hospitals and the schools, make it possible to transform an individual biography into the description of an individual by his/her numeric relation to the normal, characterized by features, measures and deviations (1977).

(p-k-k) *Techniques of documentation* bring individuals into the classifying and serializing, categorizing and comparing field of knowledge. The individual is placed in the systems of social exclusions through expanding documentation (1977).

(p-k-s) Manoeuvres of *normativity* refer here to the practices dividing the mad and the sane, the sick and the healthy, the criminal and the good both within themselves and from the others (1982a, p. 208).

Individualizing Practices (P-S). The last dimension of techniques of government connects self and power. We call these techniques individualizing practices while producing facts, subject domains and rituals of truth. The modern regime of power works rather inside the social communities than from outside or from the top down. There are three elements constituting these techniques of individualizing practices (Foucault, 1980, p. 75): individual control, the hierarchy of observations and pastoral power.

(p-s-p) Authorities exercising *individual control*, distributing individuals in the field of control and observations, function according to the double mode of binary division and of differential distribution (1975, p. 199).

(p-s-k) *The hierarchy of observations* is the apparatus that produces the field of knowledge, where knowable man (soul, individuality, consciousness, conduct, whatever it is called) is the object-effect of an analytical investment, of a domination-observation (1975, pp. 177, 305).

(p-s-s) *Pastoral power* is a historically unique, tricky combination of individualizing techniques and totalizing procedures in the same political structures. According to Foucault, pastoral power was born with Christianity, and its modernized form could be seen as a basic technique of the Western states, as a vital technique of the process of governmentalization which is the essence of the modern state (1982a, pp. 213–216).

In Fig. 4 we present techniques of government, a part of our greater Foucauldian triangle, in the form of three sub-triangles. Each sub-triangle focuses on one of the three aspects of subjectivity, power and knowledge, but at the same time contains all aspects in their internal relationality.

II. A Triangular Onion

We have thus constructed the three corners of the 'Foucauldian triangle'. In the following we try to summarize our findings in two different fashions: on the one hand synchronically, as a coherent system, and on the other hand, but very briefly, diachronically, as the evolutionary history of Foucault's work.

1. Synchronic Reading: an archeology of relational layers

We have tried to demonstrate above that it is reasonable to read Foucault as a historian of truth. We have tried to show that the domain of a Foucauldian history of truth can be summarized in the form of a knowledge-subject-power (k-s-p) triangle, which illustrates the mechanisms of truth-production which we have called technologies of

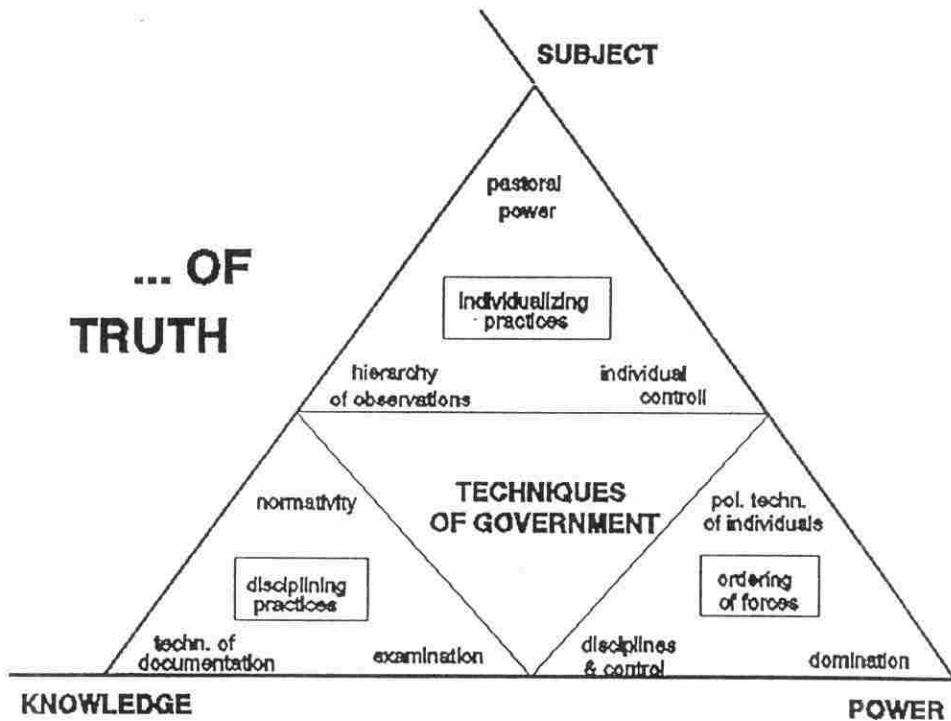


Fig. 4. Techniques of government.

truth. This triangle of technologies of truth consists of three K-S-P subtriangles, each of which is further divided into three dimensions (Fig. 5). Our Foucauldian triangle has the 'magical' property that each of its elements, 'corners', also turns out to include a totality of three dimensions.

Thus, for example, techniques of self is an element of technologies of truth, but at the same time it contains the three dimensions of knowledge (will to knowledge), power (art of governmentality) and subject (modes of subjectivation). But we may say as well that will to knowledge as a technique of self for instance has its knowledge-axis (codification), subject-axis (self-examination) and power-axis (confession), and so forth (see Fig. 3). Hence, in our interpretation Foucauldian technologies of truth resemble the onion of Peer Gynt: endlessly revealing layer after layer when peeled.

A Foucauldian historian of truth, in our sketch, is a person asking 'How?' in the middle of a 'What-Who-Why' triangle. S/he is trying to answer the following questions: what is the truth that 'can and must be thought'? What is the field of knowledge in which the truth is produced? Who occupies the place of the truth-speaking subject? Why is that truth produced? How is the truth produced? What are its technologies? In what way are techniques of discourse, of subjectivation and of government related to each other to produce simultaneously certain 'fields of knowledge, types of normativity and forms of subjectivity' (Foucault, 1984a, p. 4)?

It should be emphasized that we see not the Foucauldian triangle as a Theory in the strict deductive sense of the word, but rather as a 'catalogue of possibilities', as a tool to raise and analyse new problems, as 'heuristic' or as a 'meta-methodological device'. The aim of the device is not to be a decontextualized, universal model for answers but rather to unfold space for new ways to ask questions. It is not a method for concrete empirical

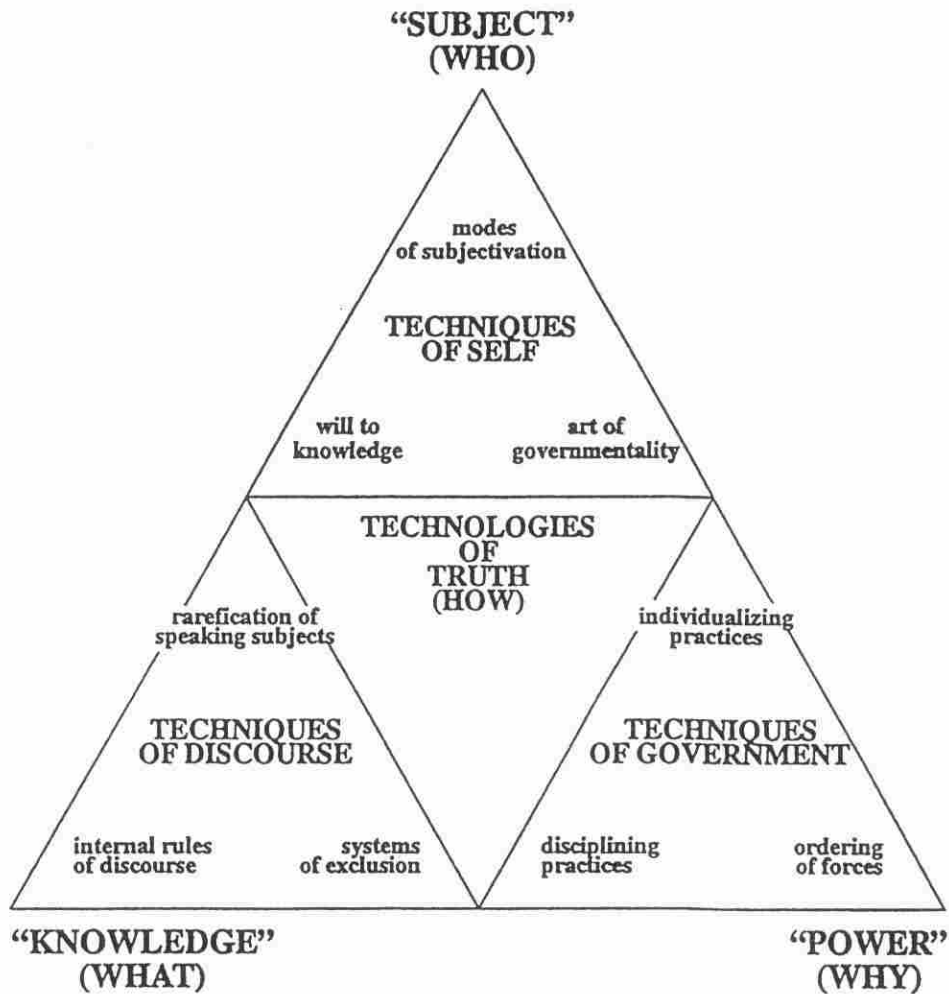


Fig. 5. Technologies of truth.

research, but rather a way to ask questions about conditions of empirical inquiry, going beyond dichotomies of essentialism and nominalism or deduction and induction. As such, it is compatible with different types of empirical methods and applicable to various kinds of material and permissive to deviating theoretical likings.

Let us give an example of a use of the triangle as a *catalogue of possibilities* to empirical study in education. Education as a social phenomenon is tightly linked with Michel Foucault's basic themes mentioned above: knowledge, subjectivity and power. For us it is now evident that Foucauldian problematic of knowledge is relevant in studying the systems of education, whose main purpose is precisely to transmit knowledge. It is also quite as clear that education is one of the 'modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects' (Foucault, 1984c, p. 208), which again leads us to Foucauldian techniques of self. Further, it would be naive to dispute the claim that education as a social apparatus is itself a game of power and is dependent on other relations of power.

One might, thus, apply Foucault's ideas to education research using some of these three aspects, e.g. by examining educational systems as promoters of knowledge subordinated to games of power, or scrutinizing how schooling produces the modern individual, or analysing school as a disciplining and punishing institution, as a crypto-prison. Without denying the possibilities of these kind of approaches, however, we would like to emphasize another kind of usage of Foucault's work, that is the *interaction* of themes of knowledge, subjectivity and power, which in our interpretation is the central and most fruitful angle of his work.

Our methodological example deals with the birth of the modern Finnish teacher in state educational discourse (Simola, 1995; Simola *et al.*, in press). The modern Finnish teacher came into being in the 1970s—sometimes described as the 'Golden Era of Educational Reforms'.⁶ Discursive changes accompanying these reforms, both as their product and their producer, were no less dramatic. The established comprehensive school presented itself as the New School and did its best to distinguish itself from the old elementary school. In the same manner, new teachers and educational scientists distanced themselves from their predecessors. It is not an exaggeration to say that a new 'truth' about both school and teacher was created.

Where are the truths of the modern teacher to be found? In the case of Finland, the institution of governmental committees is a central instrument in planning and justifying reform policy—and in producing and articulating truth. This is especially true in the case of education.⁷ Committee and curricular texts are serious and authoritative verbal acts of experts who speak as experts and who with their speech form the official truth on teaching. They are—to quote Foucault—discursive 'practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak' (1972, p. 49). Although they are products of individuals, they have (especially when circulating as law texts or as administrative orders but also as state documents) an appearance of anonymity, of an official truth. We may assume that in these texts there are to be found traces and marks of what is the 'true' knowledge about teaching, what is the 'good' teacher like, and what kind of power is 'right' in the field of schooling.

The Foucauldian k-s-p triangle was used as a 'catalogue of possibilities' to formulate the following questions and subquestions with the help of which the text material was 'interviewed' (Fig. 6). These questions formed a springboard for research process, to start a hermeneutic circle between the empirical data and the theoretical framework, where the questions were reformulated again and again and where truths on modern Finnish teacherhood were finally distilled. (See, in more detail, Simola, Heikkinen & Silvonen, in press.)

2. Diachronic Reading: a genealogy of analytical dimensions

We have now read Foucault's work synchronically and reconstructed it in an abstract triangular form. One might ask now if this triangular onion is only a hallucination caused by a severe tripartite obsession; the result of an intentional and self-realizing reading. We believe it is more than that. It seems to us that the coherence implied by our triple formulation is an essential feature in Foucault's work shifting from one theme to another (1977, p. 113; 1984a, pp. 11–13; see also 1984c). The continuity in Foucault's thinking, which he emphasized on several occasions (1970a, 1982a, 1984b), is derived, apart from the links between his themes, from the analytical dimensions inherent in his work. In the following, we try to show this through a diachronic reading.

Foucault's analytical dimensions are conventionally characterized as *archaeology* and *genealogy*. In *The Use of Pleasure* (1984a) Foucault stated that he was interested in the

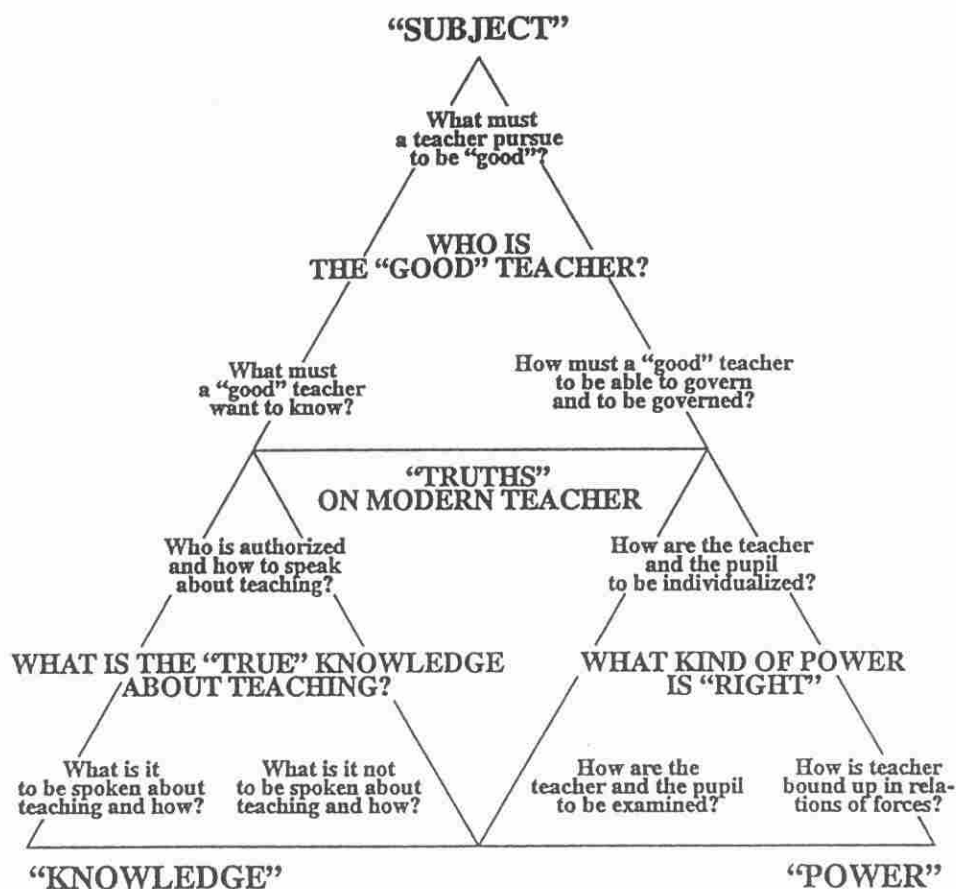


Fig. 6. Truths on modern teacher: an initial questionnaire.

problematizations 'through which being offers itself to be [...] thought' on one hand and in the practices 'on the basis of which these problematizations are formed' on the other hand (1984a, p. 11). While archaeology of problematizations is a way to examine the problematizations themselves, the genealogy of practices is a matter of analysing the practices on the basis of which these problematizations are formed and modified.

But there is also a third analytical dimension which is much less discussed, obviously because its development was cut short by Foucault's untimely death. This may be called the *ethics* of experience (cf. Fink-Eitel, 1992). While Foucault denied 'the philosophical recourse to a constitutive subject', he did not mean 'behaving as if the subject did not exist nor to setting it aside in favor of a pure objectivity'. The aim of this refusal was 'to bring to light the processes proper to an experience in which subject and object form and transform themselves in relation to and functions of one another' (1981, p. 317). In his late works, Foucault developed an approach which he called the 'hermeneutics of the self' (1984b, p. 19). It is in *The Use of Pleasure* that Foucault explicitly elaborates the concept of subjectivity as the new dimension that cannot be reduced to power/knowledge relations. He even stated that the objective of his work over the last 20 years had not been an elaboration of power analysis but 'to create a history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects' (1984a). In his early works,

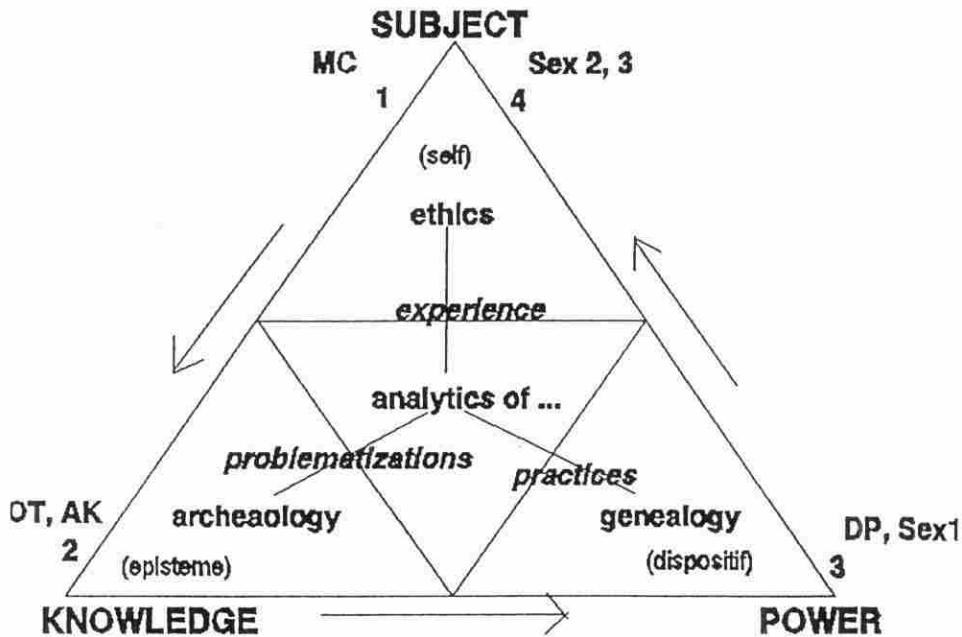


Fig. 7. Methodological aspects of history of truth.

‘through studying madness and psychiatry, crime and punishment’, he tried to show ‘how we have indirectly constituted ourselves through the exclusion of some others’, while later his focus shifts to question ‘how did we directly constitute our identity through some ethical techniques of the self which developed through antiquity down to now’ (1982c, p. 146).

In Fig. 7 we summarize Foucault’s analytical dimensions, his main works and key ‘meta-concepts’ in the form of our k-s-p triangle transformed into a diachronic mode. If we gaze at the triangle hard enough, we may see Monsieur Foucault moving within it: starting from subject corner (1) with *Madness and Civilization*, moving then to knowledge corner (2) with *Order of Things* and *Archaeology of Knowledge*. He writes *Discipline and Punish* in power corner (3), where he also starts his unfinished project of the *History of Sexuality*, the last two volumes of which manifest the return to the subject corner (4).

Conclusion

Although the first impression of reading Foucault may be a multitude of ideas escaping all sequential logic, we have, however, emphasized the coherence of his work. We have read it as a systematic whole consisting of three basic themes of knowledge, subjectivity and power. We do not claim that Foucault’s scholarship was a monolithic whole without contradictions and *cul-de-sacs* but we do see a curious logic in the dispersion of his ideas. We do not deny the fruitfulness of studying his main themes separately, but we do wonder whether such an approach does justice to the actual potency of Foucault’s original and divergent thinking. In fact, we believe that the analytical power of Foucault’s work comes precisely from bringing these three dimensions together, from seeing knowledge, power and subjectivity in their immanent relationality.

It seems that we have made ourselves guilty of the 'methodological codification' of Foucault which Dean (1994, p. 2) compares with M.C. Escher's 'ascending stairs or cascading waterfalls', possible on paper but not in the real world. We gladly give readers freedom to regard our Foucauldian triangle as such an Escherian image. And since we have stepped on this dangerous ground, we may as well take one step further and claim that our triangle could be even more than a summary of Foucault's work, that it might even serve as an analytical device in empirical research. It should be emphasized that this tool is only applicable to the field of history of truth or problematizations.

It should also be emphasized that we see the Foucauldian triangle not as a Theory in the strictly deductive sense of the word, but rather as a 'catalogue of possibilities', as a tool to raise and analyse new problems, as a 'heuristic' or a 'meta-methodological device'. The aim of the device is not to be a decontextualized, universal model. Rather it is a tool for unfolding space for new questions, for setting out the conditions of empirical inquiry, for going beyond dichotomies of essentialism and nominalism or deduction and induction. As such, it is compatible with different types of empirical methods and applicable to various kinds of material and accommodates divergent theoretical preferences. It is not the only possible approach to history of systems of thought, not to mention other fields of research.

The triangle is a device like a cloud chamber used in elementary particle physics to make the traces of the particles visible. The Foucauldian triangle is a device making the study of the elementary particles of truth possible—not words, not things—which may be as difficult to observe directly as elementary particles are.⁸ Stretching the analogy further we may argue that Foucault's history of truth makes 'traditional' history of ideas or sciences (analysis of words, things, objects, concepts, theories, authors etc.) obsolete as much or as little as elementary particle physics makes the classical physics obsolete. Thus, we believe that it is misguided to read Foucault's work as a Grand Theory or a philosophy of history. He does not offer an overarching, omnipotent theory, but a theoretically inspiring space in which to be a 'happy positivist'.

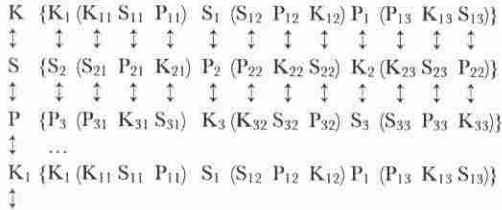
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NOTES

1. In his rhetoric Foucault liked to turn well-known aphorisms into their contraries, e.g. Plato's idea of the body as 'prison of the soul' to 'the soul as the prison of the body' (Foucault, 1975), Clausewitz's idea of war 'as a continuation of politics' to 'politics as continuation of war' (1976b), Bacon's 'knowledge as power' to 'power as knowledge' (1975), Freud's idea of 'culture as repression of sexuality' to 'a discursive explosion around of sex' (1976a), etc.
2. Our text is a reconstruction based on English translations of Foucault's works. We will refer in the text to the year when the original work appeared (Foucault, 1984a is Foucault 1984a/1990 in bibliography).
3. In the introduction to *The Use of Pleasure* Foucault speaks of 'games of truth' (*jeux de vérité*) and of a 'history of truth' (1984a, p. 6). In his 'autobiography' in 1981 he uses the concept of 'critical history of thought' (1981, p. 314) and in 1984 writes about 'history of thought' (1984d). Flynn writes about Foucault's 'project of the history of the production of truth' (Flynn, 1988, p. 104) which is also accurate. History of truth is, however, shorter and easier to use, so we prefer it. In our reading, a history of truth is a general concept including 'games of truth' or 'technologies of truth'. There are of course shifts and even ruptures in Foucault's work. What we try to do is to discover a point of view which makes it possible to see at least the implicit coherence and system in Foucault's way of writing the history of truth.
4. We are of course not the first to present Foucault's ideas in a triangular form. Fink-Eitel (1992) used almost the same form in his study of Foucault's thinking. The point of our text is not in the visual form but

(a) in the relational logic we seek and (b) in the concept of technologies of truth. There are of course other possible ways to outline the structure of Foucault's concepts—Deleuze uses a fourfold model of (1) enunciation, (2) light and visibility, (3) power and (4) subjectivation (Deleuze, 1992, pp. 159–160). Kusch investigates in detail methods used in genealogy and in archaeology (Kusch, 1991) etc. It would in any case take too much space to make a 'critical comparison' between our interpretation and all others, so we concentrate on the positive mode of representation with an explication of our conception.

5. It is also possible to present the triangle—if you will—as a more 'scientific' presentation:



6. First, in the *Comprehensive School Reform* (1972–1977), the dual-track school system of an 8-year compulsory school and the parallel grammar school was replaced by the single comprehensive school in which the whole cohort of pupils were schooled together for nine years. Secondly, the *Teacher Education Reform* (1973–1979) was carried out, particularly changing primary school teacher training radically for those who now teach at the lower level, grades from 1 to 6, of the comprehensive school. Their training was removed from teacher training colleges and small-town 'teacher preparation seminaries' to the brand-new university faculties of education established as part of the reform. In 1979, the training of primary school teachers was raised to Master's degree level. This dramatically up-graded the role of educational studies in teacher training, and education as an academic discipline expanded rapidly. All this was due, at least in part, to the third reform, the *General Syllabus and Degree Reform in Higher Education* (1977–1980) which abolished the Bachelor's degree that was brought back only recently (see Simola, 1993a, b).
7. According to a Finnish study, education 'has traditionally been an area in which government committees have played a particularly central role in the planning and preparation of government action and in drafting government policy for the sector as a whole. It is through the institution of the committee that education has been brought under strict governmental control, and the committee has become a vital instrument of educational policy as practiced by the state' (Hovi, *et al.*, 1989, p. 243).

In some cases committee proposals have become the official curriculum, both in the strict and in the broader meaning of the term. Committee reports are also scientifically legitimated because of the important role that educational scientists have attained in the committees since the late 1960s. Besides the committee texts on schooling and teacher education, the material of the study consists of the national curriculum documents for elementary and comprehensive school from 1925, 1952, 1970, 1985 and 1994. These were written to be models for national model curriculum for more precise curricular documents that were to be formulated at the local level: in 1925 and 1952 by the school, in 1970 and 1985 by the municipal authorities, and in 1994 again by the school.

In accordance with the Finnish state-centred and centralized administrative tradition, the national curricula are very comprehensive documents. Their extent varied from 300 to 700 pages. The exception was the 1994 curriculum with only 111 pages. In 1952, the curriculum was ambitiously defined as 'a series of those experiences that the pupil meets in his/her school work' (Curriculum, 1952, p. 40). The definition of the 1970 curriculum was even more complete. The curriculum must consist of 'the explanations of all the most important measures and procedures by which the school pursues to reach the aims imposed for it ... [T]he curriculum includes all those learning experiences that the pupils have under the guidance of the school, including outside the classrooms' (Curriculum, 1970, p. 56).

8. Not quite seriously but half, we might formulate instructions for use as follows: (1) make sure that the subject of your study is located in the realm of history of truth. *Warning:* If you are scrutinizing the progress of science, the role of genius subjects in history, ideologies as false consciousness, power as an repressive action only, subjectivity as anthropological standard or individual as a unique psychological phenomenon, never use the triangle. (2) Put your research material into the triangle, shake carefully and check if something has been gathered in the corners. *Warning:* Do not push oversized pieces of material into the triangle—all the material must be preworked. (3) Collect the material found in the corners of the triangle and start thinking. *Warning:* Remember that the triangle cannot be used as explanation, theory, system etc. You have to create those by yourself.

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