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Ernesto Laclau reading Michel Foucault:
Foucault as a target for hegemony

Δεκέμβριος 2015

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Introduction

In contrast to the tendency of other presently celebrated post-structuralist[1] intellectuals, such as Giorgio Agamben and up to a certain extent Judith Butler, who make persistent efforts to support their work through the provision of frequent references to the work of Michel Foucault, Ernesto Laclau, the first popular post-structuralist theorist on British soil, opted to provide only a few references to Foucault, which actually were not always equally approbatory of the latter's work. By drawing attention to these few references, this article aims to thematize Laclau's relationship with Foucault as a quite interesting case for the understanding of present-day flows in the exchange of ideas of contemporary intellectual life. In these respects, the article begins with a brief presentation of the methodological framework of our work. Subsequently, we focus on the relevant part of Laclau's work by dividing it into

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[1] The demarcation of 'post-structuralism' has been a contested topic in present-day academic discussion. We maintain that 'post-structuralism' can be used as an appropriate name for a distinctive intellectual trend that groups together authors and discussions that have been decisively influenced by the first post-war generation of French intellectuals who retained a critical relation with the structural linguistics of the time (e.g. Jacques Derrida, Gilles Deleuze, and Foucault, as well as other intellectuals who gradually developed critical distances from structuralism, such as Roland Barthes and Jacques Lacan). This use of "post-structuralism" seems to be more plausible than the one that used to prevail in anglophone academics of earlier decades and tended to group together practically all 20th century important continental intellectuals that supposedly do not emphasize individual action or individual liberty. It is worth pointing out that our analysis will show that, aside from the proper use of 'post-structuralism', Laclau occasionally uses this second signification as 'post-structuralism conceived in a broad sense' in order to engage in the anglophone debates of his time. Relevant issues on the partly overlapping demarcation of "postmodernism" and its consequences on Laclau and wider academic debates will be dealt with later on in this article.

two chronological periods,[2] whereas the article ends up with the elaboration of a few more general conclusions.

Methodological framework

As far as the methodology of this article is concerned, it should be noted that we choose not to proceed to a complete historical overview of Laclau's work.[3] This choice has to do with the fact that, one the one hand, since Laclau's work continues to occupy the agenda of present-day academic debates, we may be allowed to take a basic familiarity of readers with Laclau's basic ideas for granted, as well as with the wider historical and intellectual context of his activities. Consequently, our references on these topics are limited to the cases where they are judged to be significant from the perspective of our object.[4] Furthermore, the main interest of this article rests on a focus on quite specific features of Laclau's work, for which we maintain that they may indicate a characteristic motive that seems to underlie Laclau's relevant choices. Hence, we may direct readers interested for more detailed vindications of our method to Max Weber's "disclosure of *possible* 'evaluative standpoints' and points able to support an 'evaluation' "[5] or – according to a probably more accurately translated passage – his call for an analysis that "creates the 'valued' points of attachment […] for the regressive tracing of the web of causal connections and the provision of the

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[2] The article is not concerned with Laclau's late works, i.e. those published after the year 2000, since they include no relevant references.

[3] Literature on Laclau already includes numerous titles. See Doxiadis (1992), Best (1997), Stavrakakis (1997), (2013), Torfing (1999), Howarth (2000), Howarth, Norval & Stavrakakis (2000), Butler, Laclau & Žižek (2000), Jørgensen & Phillips (2002), Nielsen (2006). For works that examine Laclau's work in fuller extent, at least for the period under examination, see Smith (1998), Critchley & Marchart (2004). Critiques of greater interest appear at Boucher (2008), Doxiadis (2008). In the former of these last two tiles, the reader may seek further bibliography. For more recent titles see Stavrakakis (2013), pp. 8-15.

[4] In all cases, the dues of the substantial work that has been undertaken in this article to the well-known methods and practices that have been initiated by the so-called "Cambridge School" in the history of political thought as well as by the history of concepts or *Begriffsgeschichte* cannot be understated.

[5] See Weber (1949b), p. 144, (1991), p. 223. Having been widely acknowledged as presently inadequate, the old 1949 translation of Weber's article in English has been modified according to the Greek 1991 translation of the same article, especially at the second part of this sentence so that readers do not miss Weber's suggestion regarding the focus on selected *points* out of which a claim of a comparative 'evaluation' from one or more specific "standpoints"/"viewpoints" can be reasonably maintained (The use of brackets for the aforementioned terms is Weber's). For an overview of the history of Weber's translations in English and the problems that early American translations of Weber have caused to our present-day common understanding of Weber, see Scaff (2014), pp. 10-19. As for Weber's classical defense of the role of 'one-sided viewpoints' for the claim of 'objectivity' by the social sciences, which seems to bear substantial affinities with Friedrich Nietzsche's so-called "perspectivism", it can be found in Weber (1949a).

causal analysis with its decisive 'viewpoints'".[6] Quite similarly, readers may turn to the way in which Foucault focused on "strategic points" of discourses under examination in his academic lectures,[7] whereas other similar ways to work are suggested through the turn to "indices" (or "clues" or "evidence") as presented in the classical article of the famous historian Carlo Ginzburg,[8] or from the recent attempt by Agamben, a student of Ginzburg, for the transformation of these "indices" into a philosophical instrument called "signaturae", drawing among other things from Agamben's peculiar readings of Foucault.[9] Along these lines, our analysis is primarily concerned with the cases in which we either find explicit references of Laclau to Foucault or may quite plausibly accept that such references should exist.

Laclau's early work and the turn to hegemony

It seems that perhaps one of the best starting-points for a fuller understanding of Laclau's treatment of Foucault may be provided through a brief overview of Laclau's early academic period, even though no references of our interest appear in it. In particular, the first essay collection of the young Argentinean immigrant theorist in Britain, originally published as a whole set in 1977 and including four essays dating from 1971 onwards,[10] indicates Laclau's gradual advance to a promising Althusserian Marxist,[11] with further basic interests in the Italian Marxism of the time,[12] as well as the crucial Argentine experience of Peron's populism,[13] which seems to have had a decisive impact in all the phases of Laclau's career.[14] In these respects, and as Laclau

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[6] See Weber (1949b), p. 149, (1991), p. 227. Furthermore, the way Weber gradually introduces his argument in the same article through criticism of specific features of Eduard Meyer's work serves as another reference point for our method. See Weber (1949b), passim, particularly pp. 113-132, (1991), passim, particularly pp. 197-213.

[7] In particular, see Foucault (2008), pp. 106-107.

[8] Ginzburg (1989).

[9] See Agamben (2009).

[10] Laclau (1977b).

[11] To be precise, after the first article of the collection, in which Laclau is occupied with criticism of the popular at that time in South America Marxism-influenced theorists of sub-development (1977a), Althusser and the "Althusserian revolution" serve as the basic point of reference of Laclau's articles, as well as of his introductory note to the book. See Laclau (1977c), (1977d), (1977f), (1977e).

[12] See Laclau (1977d), (1977e). Probably, Laclau's interest in Italian Marxism drew from Chantal Mouffe's relevant interests during the same time. See Stavrakakis (2004), p. 8.

[13] See Laclau (1977d), (1977f).

[14] In particular, the crucial intellectual innovation Laclau puts forward in the last two articles of the volume, i.e. the supplementation of Althusser's class ideological interpellations with populist-democratic interpellations, is apparently influenced by the experience of Peron's regime. Following the rise in power of the governments of Thatcher and Reagan in Britain and the USA in 1979 and 1980 respectively, Laclau ceases to refer to the advance of populism, as one already observes from his writings in the early 1980s. On the last topic, see Doxiadis (1992), pp. 19-20. The book of 1985

emerged as one of the basic theorists involved in the debates on Marxism's present and future,[15] it makes no impression that these essays have no reference to the most advanced post-structuralist authors of the time, e.g. Derrida, Deleuze or Foucault, who would be considered too distanced from Louis Althusser's dominant views and any other intellectual works that could be regarded as compatible with them as 'structuralism'. However, this situation was about to change soon afterwards, since the following year in France Nicos Poulantzas, another Althusserian Marxist, would acknowledge – albeit in a quite polemic manner, which will be crucial as well for Laclau's relevant readings – Foucault as a theoretical interlocutor.[16] Poulantzas' suicide one year later and Althusser's closure at a psychiatric clinic in 1980 seem to have turned Althusserianism out of fashion in the beginnings of the upcoming decade, particularly in Britain. Therefore, Laclau and Mouffe seem to be particularly troubled with Marxism and their own relation with it, as one can tell from an article of theirs in 1981, in which they put forward an appeal for a "Copernican turn of Marxism",[17] whereas the argumentation of this article and Laclau and Mouffe's explicit departure from Marxism is developed more extensively in their work *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*, which was originally published in 1985, i.e. one year after Foucault's death, and seems to have consolidated Laclau's popularity as an intellectual.[18]

The book of 1985 calls for a particularly extensive analysis, since, aside from the fact that Laclau constantly refers to this book throughout his career, this work includes an important number of features of interest. In particular, beyond terminological innovations drawn from Althusserian and Italian Marxism, the reader of the book can observe the use – usually without references by Laclau and Mouffe to

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provides references only to "right-wing populism" and advances in politics the renovated claim of hegemony from a Radical Left, which is actually considered for a few more years by Laclau to be able to draw contents from a wider 'liberal-democratic matrix'. This well-known demarcation of hegemony, which comes from Italian Marxism and had already been used by Laclau in his articles from the 1970s, seems to serve at that point as a more acceptable substitute for Laclau's earlier advance of populism. One may be led to the same interpretative direction as well by the fact that since 2005 Laclau's more recent works returned to the straightforward, and in fact emblematic, advance of populism. See Laclau (2005a). Cf. Nielsen (2006). In all cases, the turn of the Argentine intellectual throughout his entire career to theoretical debates produced in other countries of a Roman-Catholic background is also a topic worth pointing out by itself. This cultural affinity facilitates an interpretation of Laclau's convenience and prioritizing in associating authors and traditions that seem to be so divergent at first sight.

[15] See Laclau (1977c), Poulantzas (2008), Laclau (1977d).
[16] See Poulantzas (2000), pp. 146-153.
[17] Laclau & Mouffe (1981).
[18] Laclau & Mouffe (2001a).

original authors – of several motives and terms characterizing Foucault's work, a few terms present at that time in Foucault's associate Jacques Donzelot, Derrida's famous "deconstruction",[19] the critique of "essentialism" associated with Deleuze,[20] as well as the more specific and explicit loan involving Jacques Lacan's "points de capiton", which Laclau transforms into his 'nodal points'.[21]

The basic structure of the book and the introductory pages of the first chapter indicate the extent of the impact of Foucault's work. As far as the former is concerned, the first three (in a total of four) chapters of the main part of the book bear in their titles quite recognizable Foucauldean terms: "genealogy",[22] "emergence"[23] and "positivity".[24] Quite similarly, in the first sentence of the first chapter the authors state that they will endeavour the "tracing [of] the genealogy of the concept of hegemony", for which concept they accept that it is "not endowed from the beginning with full positivity".[25] For the authors, this means that their research may be also described as an "archaeology of silence", an expression they declare to have drawn "somewhat freely" from Foucault.[26] This initial absence of a full positivity is then explained as an initial analytical focus on cases in which the concept of hegemony was called to fill up "*faults* (in the geological sense)", "fissures" and "voids" in order to make possible "for struggles to be given a meaning and for historical forces to be

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[19] In a quite characteristic tone for the rest of the book, the authors note at the Introduction of the work that they will proceed to "a critique and a deconstruction of the various discursive surfaces of classical Marxism" and that they will "operate deconstructively within Marxist categories". Laclau & Mouffe (2001a), p. 3. Also, see Laclau & Mouffe (2001a), pp. 85, 98-100, 103-104, 193. Moreover, the authors feel the need in retrospect at the "Preface to the Second Edition" to describe their work in terms of deconstruction. See Laclau & Mouffe (2001b), pp. ix, xi.

[20] The references of the book to essentialism are numerous. For the most elaborate treatment of essentialism, with references to Italian Marxism, see Laclau & Mouffe (2001a), pp. 69-88.

[21] Laclau & Mouffe (2001a), p. 112.

[22] Laclau & Mouffe (2001a), chap. 1: "Hegemony: The Genealogy of a Concept".

[23] Laclau & Mouffe (2001a), chap. 2: "Hegemony: The Difficult Emergence of a New Political Logic". For the "genealogy" and the "emergence" in Foucault see Foucault (1984a).

[24] Laclau & Mouffe (2001a), chap. 3: "Beyond the Positivity of the Social: Antagonisms and Hegemony". For Foucault's treatment of "positivity" see Foucault (1989), pp. 142-148.

[25] Laclau & Mouffe (2001a), p. 7. It is worth pointing out that, quite on the contrary, positivity serves for Foucault rather as the 'commune locum' in which one may provisionally accept that the various items of a discourse may be set as found in "a limited space of communication", in which e.g. "so many authors who know or do not know one another […] meet without knowing it and obstinately intersect their unique discourses in a web of which they are not the masters, of which they cannot see the whole, and of whose breadth they have a very inadequate idea", whereas in the next pages of his chapter Foucault advances his presentation of positivity through the gradual introduction of concepts highlighting more and more the particularity of the objects under examination (historical a priori, archives, differences). See Foucault (1989), pp. 142-148. Consequently, Laclau and Mouffe's statements that they begin without accepting a "full positivity" for hegemony and, afterwards, that they wish to end up their analysis through an "overcoming of the positivity of the social" suggest a problematic understanding of positivity.

[26] Laclau & Mouffe (2001a), p. 7.

endowed with full positivity" across the entire history of Marxism,[27] whereas it is also noted that this analysis, which will mainly cover the first two chapters of the book, avoids the reduction of hegemony to a single "origin" and turns instead to an "arbitrary beginning, projected in a variety of directions".[28]

The third chapter of the book seems to be more important for our interests. A first reason for this particular weight has to do with the fact that a significant number of terms and motifs that either characterize Foucault's work or are common in both Foucault and the work of Althusserian linguist Michel Pêcheux[29] are introduced (or demarcated more precisely) in this chapter, since Laclau and Mouffe claim that their research has brought in the foreground "diverse surfaces of emergence" that indicate "a space in which bursts forth a whole [earlier] conception of the social".[30] Furthermore, the authors centre upon "discourse", "discursive formations" and "discursivity",[31] "subject positions",[32] the affirmation of contradictions as a starting-point for analysis,[33] whereas they do not neglect to refer to the shifting "limits" of discourse through hegemony,[34] which they quite properly distinguish from the static notion of "frontiers".[35] It should also be pointed out that two of the most significant

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[27] Laclau & Mouffe (2001a), pp. 7-8. For one of the best-known among Foucault's similar calls for a focus on "lacunae", "gaps" and "defects", always viewed in their positivity, see Foucault (1989), p. 205.

[28] Laclau & Mouffe (2001a), p. 8. For this critique of "origin" see Foucault (1984a).

[29] The author of this article owes the information that certain terms are found both in Foucault's *Archaeology of Knowledge* and Pêcheux's *Automatic Discourse Analysis* (*Analyse automatique du discours*) (both works were originally published in 1969) to Prof. Stavrakakis. For short overviews of Pêcheux's work see Ifversen (2008), pp. 246-247, Howarth (2000), pp. 95-97.

[30] Laclau & Mouffe (2001a), p. 93. Cf Foucault (1976), p. 15: "*This is not a pipe* was the incision of discourse in the form of things, was its ambiguous power to deny and to double", (1989), p. 147: "where anthropological thought once questioned man's being or subjectivity, it [the description of the archive] now bursts open the other, and the outside".

[31] Laclau & Mouffe (2001a), pp. 105-114.

[32] Laclau & Mouffe (2001a), pp. 114-122. Cf. Foucault (1989), pp. 58-61. The absence at this point of Althusser's "interpellation" from the work has been noted. See Doxiadis (1992), p. 33.

[33] Laclau & Mouffe (2001a), pp. 109-110. Foucault's respective position in Foucault (1989), pp. 166-173.

[34] Initially, the authors maintain that their theoretical contribution highlights the challenging of "limitations" and of the logic of the fully "delimited". See Laclau & Mouffe (2001a), pp. 110-122. Nonetheless, as their argument progresses and they begin to outline the traits of their own theoretical suggestions (e.g. the "antagonisms" and the "social"), the latter are steadily presented in terms of shifting "limits". See Laclau & Mouffe (2001a), pp. 122-145. Foucault's best-known reference to "limits" is found at the emblematic concluding sentence on the "work on our limits" in his article on the Enlightenment. See Foucault (1984d), p. 50. We should keep in mind this statement of Foucault for a later view of Laclau on Foucault's relations with "limits" and "frontiers" as well. In all cases, Laclau and Mouffe seem to perceive that they draw their use of "limit" from the older views of the major Austrian philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein on language and its limits. See Laclau & Mouffe (2001a), p. 125.

[35] Particularly, see Laclau & Mouffe (2001a), pp. 126-127.

terms sustaining the main argument of the same chapter, i.e. the "social" [36] and "antagonisms",[37] are the basic concluding points of theoretical emphasis of Donzelot's most popular article of the time.[38] However, the more explicit way in which the two authors introduce Foucault in their narrative is of equal importance for our presentation.

Laclau and Mouffe leave their explicit treatment of Foucault for the part of the same chapter in which they return to their overview of Marxism in order to reach to the vindication of their own intellectual intervention. At this point, right after the critical treatment of Althusser, who is presented as providing an unsuccessful combination of his depiction of society (or "social formation") as a changeable "overdetermination" – a feature that the authors perceive as similar to their own advance of "hegemony" – with the determination of society from economy in the last instance,[39] the British Althusserians are presented as restricting their critique of Althusser at the "rationalistic" or "logicist" indication of logical contradictions of his scheme thus losing the chance to indicate in full scale the consequences arising from the advance of the fluidity of the social through overdetermination.[40] Right afterwards, the two authors introduce their own conception of discourse, which they consider to approximate Foucault's analysis of "discursive formation", which they compress in the expression "regularity in dispersion".[41] On the same lines of their

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[36] E,g, see Laclau & Mouffe (2001a), pp. 125-127.
[37] See Laclau & Mouffe (2001a), pp. 122-125.
[38] See Donzelot (1978), pp. 578-582. The article was translated and published in a journal of British Althusserians just the following year (1979), indicating thus that Laclau must have had it directly in mind. See Donzelot (1979), particularly pp. 80-82. However, it should be noted that Laclau emphasizes "antagonisms" up to a significant extent in his two Marxist articles of 1977 as well, but those "antagonisms" were not conceived at that time to be able to act independently of their articulation, in one way or another, with "class struggles". See Laclau (1977c), pp. 104-142, (1977e), pp. 157-198. As for Foucault *lui-même*, the French intellectual retained on similar topics the Nietzschean term "agonism". See Foucault (1982), pp. 790, 792. In fact, several years later and under quite different circumstances Mouffe turned to a shift of emphasis from "antagonisms" to "agonism", citing relevant uses from several authors from Nietzsche onwards on her side, but not Foucault. See Mouffe (2004), pp. 183-191. Even though the motive of agonism is more central to other authors Mouffe cites, such as Hannah Arendt, Foucault's introduction of "agonism" remains quite emphatic, since it seems to serve as Foucault's effort to isolate an exegetical sub-level for power relations, i.e. a level of relations that is more clearly open to the agents' own individual workings and whose particular units seem to consist in "strategies". Moreover, the advance of the "political" vis-à-vis the "social" that is maintained in Laclau and Mouffe's work of 1985 seems to be based on the older advance of the "Political" by Laclau already from 1975 (1977b), which in turn seems to have been influenced from the work of Claude Lefort, or perhaps Carl Schmitt. On the former, see Lefort (1986). In all cases, in the theoretical part of the 1985 book which we presently examine the authors thematize only the "antagonisms" and the "social", before they move to their conception of "hegemony".
[39] See Laclau & Mouffe (2001a), pp. 97-99.
[40] See Laclau & Mouffe (2001a), pp. 99-105.
[41] See Laclau & Mouffe (2001a), pp. 105-106.

presentation of Althusser and the British Althusserians, the authors accept that Foucault is susceptible in part to "regularity" vis-à-vis "dispersion", claiming that "regularity in dispersion" "constitutes a configuration, which in certain contexts of exteriority [which ones?] can be signified as a totality".[42] However, instead of providing a single actual case from Foucault's work, the authors try to support their case through an extensive quote of a similar linguistic interpretation of Saussure by Émile Benveniste,[43] without explaining any actual association of the quoted argument with Foucault as well.

The next point on which the two authors criticize Foucault has to do with Foucault's distinction between discursive and non-discursive practices, which they reject.[44] Through this distinction, Foucault tried to emphasize the relations of the discourse under examination with all other human activities that are considered to interact with this specific discourse and are principally taken for granted from the perspective of the latter.[45] Foucault's specific examples at this point suggest that Foucault had primarily in mind activities whose characteristic peculiarity was not discursive but rather more physical, or what is usually called "material".[46] As for Laclau and Mouffe, even though they also do not deny the material existence of the world beyond human thought, they simply consider this to be irrelevant to their object

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[42] Laclau & Mouffe (2001a), p. 106.

[43] Βλ. Laclau & Mouffe (2001a), p. 106. For the inadequacies of this reading of Saussure by Benveniste, as well as for the inadequacy of Laclau and Mouffe's understanding of Benveniste's argument on Saussure see Doxiadis (2008), pp. 21-27.

[44] See Laclau & Mouffe (2001a), pp. 107-110. It is worth pointing out that Laclau and Mouffe present their rejection of the distinction between discursive and non-discursive practices as a general statement and introduce Foucault later in the same paragraph as a sort of "example" of an "inconsistent" use of the distinction (apparently based on the aforementioned critical attribution to Foucault of a susceptibility to "regularity" and "totality"), without providing any other reference to an author using or accepting the distinction. See Laclau & Mouffe (2001a), p. 107. The inadequacy and the explanation of this and the previous reading of Foucault will be exposed later in this article on occasion of a later text of Laclau in which he returns on the same topics in greater length. For the time being, it can be noted that an accusation of Foucault for "inconsistence" would mean that the two authors are equally susceptible to the "logicist" analysis for which they blamed the British Althusserians. Besides, the two authors have no problem to cite at this point a similar critique of Foucault by British Althusserians. See Laclau & Mouffe (2001a), p. 145.

[45] See Foucault (1989), pp. 75-77, 174: "[Archaeological analysis must] relate them [discursive formations], on the basis of their specificity, to the non-discursive practices that surround them and serve as a general element for them", 179-182, 193. Cf. Doxiadis (2008), pp. 137-151.

[46] E.g. see Foucault (1989), pp. 75-77: "pedagogic practice" "the political and economic decisions of governments", "the scarcely conceptualized, scarcely theoretized, daily practice of emergent capitalism" "social and political struggles", "decisions, institutions, practices", "practices, appropriation, interests, and desires", 179: "institutions, political events, economic practices and processes", 193: "the circulation of goods, monetary manipulations and their effects, the system of protecting trade and manufactures, fluctuations in the quantity of metal coined". Cf. Doxiadis (2008), pp. 152-164.

and therefore they leave it aside.[47] Consequently, in order to support their case for the rejection of the distinction between discursive and non-discursive practices, the authors occupy themselves with an effort to prove the "materiality" of discourse through the provision of an argument which initially acknowledges that discourse includes both linguistic and non-linguistic elements,[48] then proceeds to the position that discourse is material due to its association with its external references,[49] and finally concludes that the materiality of discourse is the only one that is crucial because it may extend to all descriptions of the social.[50]

The final interesting comments of the work of 1985 on Foucault are found at the last chapter of the book, in which the political proposal of the authors is presented. Aside from the fact that, in accordance with Foucault's well-known explicit starting-point, the authors declare that their political analysis begins from the multitude of the struggles taking place at any given moment,[51] Laclau and Mouffe unexpectedly quote Foucault on the affirmative (retaining some distance, of course), assigning to him the position that "wherever there is power there is resistance", without providing, however, reference to a primary source.[52] In fact, this passage is found at the methodological chapter of the *Will to Knowledge*, i.e. the famous first volume of Foucault's *History of Sexuality*,[53] and is also one of the most basic passages that Poulantzas' polemic to Foucault aggressively isolates at the time we noted that the

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[47] See Laclau & Mouffe (2001a), p. 108. The authors return to this topic two years later with an article that insists on this position in greater length, whereas it has been noted that their defense of their exclusive interest for the variable discursive "truth" of objects seems to be a verbal turn to Foucault. See Stavrakakis (2013), pp. 4-5.

[48] See Laclau & Mouffe (2001a), p. 108.

[49] See Laclau & Mouffe (2001a), pp. 108-109. It is quite possible that, at this point of development of their argument, the authors are influenced by Raymond Williams' "cultural materialism". See Williams (1980).

[50] See Laclau & Mouffe (2001a), pp. 109-110. For critiques on the theoretical components and consequences of the positions of the authors on this topic, which also compare the final outcome of the authors with the holistic Hegelianism from which they try to depart see Boucher (2008), pp. 77ff, Doxiadis (2008), pp. 13-41. Moreover, the projection of the material discourse to the social as an adequate analytical perspective to the latter seems to have been contested as well by the next discourse analyst to gain popularity in Britain, i.e. Norman Fairclough, who suggested the combination of discourse analysis with sociological research. E.g. see Fairclough (2006). Finally, it is also worth pointing out that this position of the authors seems to make Laclau and Mouffe's circle, actively engaged in leftist politics, politically susceptible to exhaustion in the construction of elaborate slogans instead of more physical initiatives. E.g. the political persistence on the transformation of discourse, no matter up to what extent the latter is presented as "material", may possibly lead to the misunderstanding that such claims as the combat against wage inequality, the elimination of unemployment, illegitimate physical violence, inflectional diseases and famine are dealt with through a simple change of verbalization. Also see Boucher (2008), pp. 81-84.

[51] See Laclau & Mouffe (2001a), p. 152. Respectively, see Foucault (1982), pp. 780-781.

[52] See Laclau & Mouffe (2001a), pp. 152-153.

[53] See Foucault (1978), pp. 92-96.

former was obliged to acknowledge the latter as an interlocutor.[54] In this part of the *Will to Knowledge*, Foucault explains that he will approach the "form of knowledge" (a term which is quite close to "discourse" in the argument of the text) under examination in terms of "power". In order to demarcate the latter, Foucault is interested in accentuating the difference of his approach of power from Louis Althusser's overtly politicized approach of state and ideology, noting among other things in the form of short emblematic statements that "where there is power, there is resistance".[55] Nonetheless, Poulantzas, Laclau and Mouffe disregard the continuation of Foucault's passage under discussion, in which the latter notes right afterwards that he is interested in differentiating himself from a perspective of a permanent subjection "inside" power with no way "escaping" it (the reference here is apparently Althusser[56]) and explains that he is referring more specifically to multiple "points of resistance", which probably are not meant to be taken as activated at all moments, but instead seem to be put forward as a sort of a call to his readers to mind for potentials, since Foucault notes, among other things, that there are different "resistances that are possible, necessary, improbable".[57] This means that a following up of Foucault's argument by Laclau and Mouffe after the former's emblematic counter-statement vis-à-vis Althusser would actually lead them to approach Foucault in the distances from the position they attributed to him. Laclau and Mouffe's easy dependence on the appeal of the established Left authority of Poulantzas can also be maintained from the fact that the authors of the book of 1985 disregard Foucault's subsequent and more elaborate works on power, which could also lead them more directly to the same conclusion.[58] In all cases, the tendency of the two authors to approximate Foucault, even though not quite whole-heartedly, in so many points of their book of 1985 indicates a basic intellectual influence on Laclau and Mouffe at this crucial point in time.

Laclau's interests in the 1990s

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[54] Poulantzas (1980), p. 146.
[55] Foucault (1978), p. 95.
[56] See Althusser (1971).
[57] See Foucault (1978), pp. 95-96.
[58] See Foucault (1982), particularly p. 794: "Every power relationship implies, at least *in potentia*, a strategy of struggle".

The momentum of the turn from the 1980s to the 1990s seems to have been quite favourable for Laclau. This can be explained, one the one hand, by the intellectual retreat of Marxism as a consequence of the collapse of the Soviet Union, which could be regarded at that time as a vindication of Laclau's theoretico-political choices, and, on the other hand, by the fact that Laclau worked at the British University of Essex and therefore could make use of all conveniences available to anglophone intellectuals for the circulation of their works. Besides, already from 1989 Laclau and Mouffe direct their own book series at Verso under the title *Phronesis*, which secures a stable flow for the production of anglophone works under their auspices, whereas during the same years Laclau, on the one hand, meets Slavoj Žižek, who turns decisively Laclau's interests for continental thought towards other directions (mainly Lacan), and, on the other hand, starts collaborating more closely with American universities.

A consequence accompanying this state of affairs seems to have been Laclau's lack of interest for further references to Foucault in his major works during the new decade. For instance, Foucault is totally absent from Laclau's next book after 1985, i.e. *New Reflections on the Revolution of our Time* (1990),[59] as well as from the decisive article of 1991,[60] in which Laclau seals his departure from Marxism, or from his well-known 1996 article on the theory of ideology.[61] Nonetheless, three cases in which Laclau refers to Foucault during these years are of particular interest.

A first reference of Laclau to Foucault in this period of the former's career is found in a lecture of Laclau in the USA in 1989, which was originally published for the first time as an article in 1991.[62] The article consisted of a critical commentary to a recently [at that time] published book of Richard Rorty,[63] an American intellectual who was, among other things, a leading figure in the acquaintance of the American academic audience with French post-structuralism. In these respects, Laclau devotes the first part of his article to a summary of Rorty's book before moving to his criticism. In that first part,[64] Laclau, following the line of argumentation of Rorty's book quite consistently, presents Rorty's argument of the "liberal ironist" as a mediation between the "ironist" Foucault, who is presented to possess "an exclusive

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[59] Laclau (1990).
[60] Laclau (1991b).
[61] Laclau (1997).
[62] Laclau (1991a).
[63] Rorty (1989).
[64] See Laclau (1991a), pp. 84-89.

emphasis on self-realization, self-enjoyment" and the "liberal" Jürgen Habermas, who is presented to suggest the "opposite situation", advancing in an equally problematic way "a democratic society's self-image" under "an element of universalism", originating from the German philosopher's classic normative ideal of a "domination-free communication".[65] In the following pages, Laclau begins his case with an outright approbation of Rorty's critique to Habermas[66] and then harmonizes his critique on Rorty with the basic positions of the work of 1985 without providing any comment on Rorty's view of Foucault or returning to Foucault in any other way in general.[67]

The republication of the previous article in a collection of Laclau's essays in 1996 under the title *Emancipation(s)* is also quite interesting.[68] Even though the article on Rorty is the earliest one included in the collection from a chronological point of view, the collection places it at the end, whereas the included reference to Foucault in the summary of Rorty's argument is the only reference to Foucault in the whole publication. However, readers come up with a very interesting suggestion in Laclau's preface for the collection,[69] in which the author notes that the essays included constitute a "hegemonic mediation" between, on the one hand, "universalism", attributed in a parenthesis to Habermas, and, on the other hand, the "celebration of pure particularism and contextualism, [which] proclaims the death of the universal".[70] This "particularism" is attributed in a parenthesis to "some forms of postmodernism", which remain anonymous.[71] Taking into consideration our analytical findings up to this point on Laclau's treatment of Foucault, as well as the fact that the disapprobatory definition that has prevailed for "postmodernism" comes from the work of Habermas,[72] in which Foucault seems to be gradually turned to Habermas' basic critical target – with an exchange of several replies from both sides

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[65] See Laclau (1991a), p. 88.

[66] See Laclau (1991a), p. 89.

[67] See Laclau (1991a), pp. 89-98.

[68] See Laclau (2007a).

[69] Laclau (2007c).

[70] See Laclau (2007c), p. viii.

[71] Op.cit.

[72] See Habermas (1981), (1987). The author has been informed that Laclau used to express his disagreement with the last of these two titles; such a stance could be expected from a leftist towards a social democrat back in those years. Nonetheless, the impact of this last book – and particularly of its demarcation of postmodernism – on academics since its publication cannot be understated. This seems to be also the case with Laclau himself as well, as we will further maintain on a following occasion.

until Foucault's death,[73] the main author Laclau must have had in mind at this point could be no other than Foucault.[74] Besides, the same hypothesis can be maintained as well judging from the fact that the reference to the "death of the universal" is probably drawn from Barthes' "death of the author",[75] which in turn usually predisposes the common understanding of Foucault's almost following lecture "What is an Author?",[76] whereas Rorty as well, whom Laclau apparently bears in mind at that time and who accepted for himself the characterization of "postmodernist",[77] moves in a similar way with Habermas from an interest for Lyotard to Derrida and Foucault.[78]

The second and most extensive occupation of Laclau with Foucault during this period takes place in a short article of 1993. We refer to Laclau's contribution to a popular (in retrospect) anglophone introductory handbook of political philosophy, in which Laclau was asked to provide an entry on "Discourse".[79] Laclau begins his article maintaining that "contemporary theories of discourse" have distant roots in transcedentalism, which is attributed to Kant and Husserl,[80] and then proceeds to distinguish the theories of discourse from this tradition on the basis of two differences. The first of these differences has to do with the fact that Laclau claims that "in a philosophy like Kant's the '*a priori*' constitutes a basic structure of the mind which transcends all historical variations", whereas contemporary theories of discourse, even though they retain "their transcendental role", are characterized by Laclau as "eminently historical".[81] This statement cannot but bring to one's mind Foucault's well-known reference to the "historical a priori" in the *Archaeology of Knowledge*,[82] which probably affects Laclau in the formulation of his argument at this

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[73] E.g. see Foucault (1984d), Habermas (1987). Besides, the fact that Foucault is turned to Habermas' basic target can be also seen from the effort for their mediation in the first book of one of Habermas' most popular students. See Honneth (1991).

[74] It should be noted that the author has been informed that Laclau usually reserved the overt characterization of the "postmodernist" for such authors as Jean-François Lyotard and mainly Jean Baudrillard.

[75] See Barthes (1977).

[76] See Foucault (1984b). In fact, both this and the previous text theorize the ongoing at that time intellectual debate on the enigmatic suicide of the literary author Raymond Roussel in 1933, which had occupied Foucault in earlier texts as well. See Gros (2007), pp. 47-50.

[77] Rorty's classical self-characterization as a "postmodernist bourgeois liberal" is found in Rorty (1983).

[78] See Rorty (1989).

[79] See Laclau (2007b).

[80] See Laclau (2007b), p. 541.

[81] Op.cit.

[82] See Foucault (1989), pp. 142-148.

point. In all cases, what seems to be more crucial is the second difference of theories of discourse vis-à-vis transcedentalism, which Laclau situates in the integration by the former of "a notion of structure which has received the full impact of Saussurean and post-Saussurean linguistics",[83] since this feature is also used in turn, right afterwards, in order to maintain a key distinction within the theories of discourse.[84] In particular, the theories of discourse are divided by Laclau into "those theories of discourse that are strongly related to transformations in the field of structural linguistics", which Laclau calls "post-structuralism conceived in a broad sense" and will include in his analysis a great number of authors (Saussure, Hjemslev, Wittgenstein, Barthes, Lacan, Derrida, Kristeva as well as Laclau and Mouffe themselves), and to those "whose links to structural analysis are more distant and do not pass through an internal critique of the Saussurean notion of the sign", in which Laclau names only "the work of Michel Foucault and his school".[85] Aside from the fact that this move of Laclau seems to undermine the force of the quote on the critique to Saussure that was used as a critique to Foucault in the book of 1985, which probably implied that Foucault had remained a more rigid "structuralist" than appropriate, and to disregard Foucault's intellectual relations with most francophone authors named, the presentation of Foucault as a theory of discourse that is more distant to one of the two basic distinctive features of the object seems to bias the reader's choice.

The more precise arguments in the presentation of Foucault as a theory of discourse (which is actually described at this point as the "theory of what he [Foucault] calls 'discursive formations'")[86] seem to provide further insights on Laclau's intentions. Laclau maintains that, in contrast to the interest of the other theories of discourse to subvert the logic of the sign, Foucault introduces a "second-level phenomenology".[87] This means that Foucault is presented as if he were interested in a simple isolation of "totalities" independently of their referents, that he calls "discourses", in order to set them as preconditions for the understanding of both referents and the production of the referents' meaning (a view that is described by Laclau as "quasi-transcedentalism"), without possessing thus a similar interest to

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[83] See Laclau (2007b), p. 541.
[84] Op.cit.
[85] Op.cit.
[86] See Laclau (2007b), p. 544. We remind that in 1985 Laclau and Mouffe introduced their approach to discourse in terms of its proximity with Foucault's "discursive formations".
[87] Op.cit.

subvert the discourses.[88] Laclau then claims that Foucault attempted to search for the unifying element that constitutes discourses as these decisive totalities by trying two solutions. The first one, for which Laclau cites both Foucault's famous *Les Mots et les Choses* of 1966 and the *Archaeology of Knowledge* of 1969, is considered to have been the reference to a common "episteme" that characterized the scientific discourses of an epoch as a whole,[89] whereas the second solution, in which Foucault is considered to have settled his mind in his quest for a unifying element for discourses, was the more fluid "regularity in dispersion", for which Laclau provides no reference for his readers and accepts that it exposes Foucault to the "inability to give any precise answer to the question of the frontiers between discursive formations".[90]

Laclau's claims at this point, which we also came across in the book of 1985, deserve more extensive analysis. In the first place, it is worth pointing out that the reference to "dispersion" and its "regularities" (nowhere is the expression "regularity in dispersion" used) appears at a significant portion of the *Archaeology of Knowledge*,[91] before Foucault refers towards the end of the same work to "episteme"

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[88] Op.cit. The shift from the attempt of the book of 1985 to maintain that Foucault's conception of discourse may "in certain contexts of exteriority" be signified as a "totality" to Laclau's absolute certainty that Foucault is interested to advance phenomenological "totalities" is impressive. It is worth pointing out that this was also one of the main criticisms of Habermas' best-known work in his debate with Foucault, in which almost all other positions Laclau ascribes to Foucault in the examined entry appear as well, even though this work is not cited by Laclau as well. See Habermas (1987), pp. 242-286. Moreover, as far as Kant is concerned, whom Foucault persistently quotes in the affirmative throughout his entire career, it should be noted that the "transcendental philosophy" of Kant's classic *Critique of Pure Reason* advances the "synthetic a priori" judgments as a mediation between the "synthetic" judgments of experience and the "analytic" or "a priori" judgments of the traditional logic associated with Leibniz' followers at that time (mainly C. Wolff and A. G. Baumgarten), whereas Kant's subsequent "political" writings as well as his *Critique of the Power of Judgment* present an even more varying conception of mediation in Kant's transcendental project, highlighting the latter's association with changes in historical circumstances and the wider psychic disposition of human subjects. Hence, accusations of "quasi-transcedentalism" seem to be somewhat problematic. See Kant (1998), pp. 127-152. A 1-16 / B 1-30, (1991), (2000). Besides, Laclau himself and his interlocutors in the collective volume of 2000 to be examined afterwards try to investigate the extent to which they could acknowledge their own intellectual endeavours as "quasi-transcendental". See Butler, Laclau & Žižek (2000).
[89] See Laclau (2007b), pp. 544-545.
[90] See Laclau (2007b), p. 545.
[91] See Foucault (1989), pp. 34-85. Particularly, see p. 11: "A total description draws all phenomena around a single centre — a principle, a meaning, a spirit, a world-view, an overall shape; a general history, on the contrary, would deploy the space of a dispersion", 41: "[The suggested analysis] instead of reconstituting chains of inference (as one often does in the history of the sciences or of philosophy), instead of drawing up tables of differences (as the linguists do), it would describe systems of dispersion.", "Whenever one can describe, between a number of statements, such a system of dispersion, whenever, [between statements], one can define a regularity (an order, correlations, positions and functionings, transformations), we will say, for the sake of convenience, that we are dealing with a discursive formation".

rather as a sort of generalization for a "regularity of a dispersion" that one could situate as valid for the ensemble of the scientific discourses of an epoch.[92] Hence, "regularity in dispersion" and "episteme" do not challenge one another, nor were they used as such by Foucault. We should also examine more closely Laclau's central claim that Foucault was not interested in undermining the discourses and discursive formations that he set for analysis.[93] In reality, as Foucault himself later explains concerning his early works, we may suggest that the vocabulary and writing of this book, which was worked mainly before the famous student riots of May 1968, are intentionally "timid and hesitant" in terms of their practical aims.[94] The successive searches and falsifications of simpler unifying elements for the discourses by Foucault end up more precisely than "regularity in dispersion" to the "rules of formation" that subjects accept for a discursive formation at a given moment.[95] Consequently, in full correspondence to the intellectual trend Laclau characterised as "post-structuralism conceived in a broad sense", Foucault seems to be equally strongly concerned to place discourses under the assessment of interested subjects, who are left to judge if and which rules of formation they will maintain or subvert.[96] This also seems to be the case if one judges from Foucault's immediately next workings, which refer to discourse in sharper characterizations,[97] and then to the confrontation of heterogeneous subjects having no common ground and described as tending to write a

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[92] See Foucault (1989), pp. 211-212. Particularly, see p. 211: "The analysis of discursive formations, of positivities, and knowledge in their relations with epistemological figures and with the sciences is what has been called, to distinguish it from other possible forms of the history of the sciences, the analysis of the episteme".

[93] Cf. Foucault (1989), p. 29: "of course, I shall take as my starting-point whatever unities are already given […] but […] I shall accept the groupings that history suggests only to subject them at once to interrogation; to break them up and then to see whether they can be legitimately reformed; or whether other groupings should be made; to replace them in a more general space which, while dissipating their apparent familiarity, makes it possible to construct a theory of them".

[94] See Foucault (1984c), p. 53.

[95] See Foucault (1989), pp. 42-85. In particular, right after the aforementioned definitions of the "system of dispersion", its "regularities" and "discursive formations", see p. 42: "The conditions to which the elements of this division […] are subjected we shall call the rules of formation. The rules of formation are conditions of existence (but also of coexistence, maintenance, modification, and disappearance) in a given discursive division". The association of this passage with the "interrogation" of the "already given" discursive formations we indicated above, as well as of their rules, seem to confirm Foucault's subtle interest to leave the examined objects open to the judgment of subjects, as one may also tell from the multiple alternatives to "existence" which are discretely sided to the latter within parenthesis and which may also be outlined by the rules instead of it.

[96] One may be lead to the same direction from Foucault's somewhat retrospective perception of his early work in the aforementioned interview, in which the intellectual stated that these writings focused on power as well in spite of his impotence to isolate this theme with that word during that time. See Foucault (1984c), pp. 57-58.

[97] See Foucault (1981).

history of constant dominations.[98] Therefore, discourses and discursive formations do not serve as a phenomenology producing totalities to be accepted by subjects interested in obtaining a more complete understanding of the world that surrounds them, but serve instead as materials for the subjects' working *with* this world, an attitude to which we have already noted that Foucault emblematically referred as the "work on our limits". This means that the accusation that Foucault did not manage to determine precise "frontiers" between his discourses is severely misguided, as well as Laclau's relevant critique later in this article that Foucault did not cut across the "frontier" between the linguistic and the non-linguistic.[99]

The entry of 1993 closes with a similar demarcation of the contributions of the theories of discourse to politics.[100] The argument follows again the same internal division of the theories of discourse, placing in the first category the works of Laclau and Mouffe, as well as the recent at that time first anglophone book of Žižek,[101] For this last book, Laclau notes that it is an "attempt to reintroduce the category of the subject without any kind of essentialist connotation",[102] which is actually a perspective not quite distant from Foucault's depiction of the "decentred subject".[103] More importantly, the second category includes solely Foucault's later work (with references to Foucault's books of 1975 and 1976), which is presented as a new approach called "genealogy" that tries to resolve the dead-ends of his previous occupation with discourses and discursive formations, which is summarized as "archaeology".[104] According to Laclau, in contrast to the failure of Foucault's archaeology to identify a principle of unity within discourse, genealogy suggested that the "elements entering a discursive configuration" should be located as segments of a "discontinuous history".[105] In reality, this presentation of genealogy appears in Foucault's emblematic article of 1971,[106] i.e. published just two years after the *Archaeology of Knowledge* and which Laclau did not cite for his readers at this point.

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[98] See Foucault (1984a).
[99] See Laclau (2007b), p. 546.
[100] See Laclau (2007b), pp. 545-546.
[101] Op.cit.
[102] Laclau (2007b), p. 546.
[103] See Foucault (1989), pp. 14-16. It should be noted that this affinity between Foucault's decentred and Žižek's 'non-essentialist' subject would require more extensive documentation in order to be accepted as a valid claim, since the work of these two authors is not usually examined from a point of view focusing on potential similarities.
[104] See Laclau (2007b), p. 546.
[105] Op.cit.
[106] See Foucault (1984a).

In any case, Laclau then tries to associate Foucault's genealogy with the latter's work on power as found in the books of 1975 and 1976. In these respects, Laclau notes:

> The external character of the unifying forces behind the genealogical dispersion of elements is at the basis of the Foucauldian conception of power: power is ubiquitous because elements are discontinuous, and their being linked is nothing that we can explain out of the elements themselves.[107]

The passage makes clear that Laclau projects to Foucault a confounding view of power, which tends to equalize power with everything extra-discursive, as one may tell from the reference to the "external dispersion" of the "discontinuous elements" of genealogy.

We may test and explain this reading of Foucault by Laclau in a way similar to the one indicated at the political conclusions of the book of 1985. Foucault's reference to the "omnipresence of power" appears again in the same chapter of the *Will to Knowledge*,[108] and serves as one more effort for an emblematic counter-statement vis-à-vis Althusser's perspective, which situated power in the "superstructure" of the state and the state's interconnected mechanisms. This is again quite obvious from Foucault's overall presentation of his argument,[109] whereas the

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[107] Laclau (2007b), p. 546.

[108] See Foucault (1978), p. 93: "the omnipresence of power", "power is everywhere".

[109] Particularly see Foucault (1978), p. 92: "By power, I do not mean 'Power' as a group of institutions and mechanisms that ensure the subservience of the citizens of a given state. [...] The analysis, made in terms of power, must not assume that the sovereignty of the state, the form of the law, or the over-all unity of a domination are given at the outset; rather, these are only the terminal forms power takes. It seems to me that power must be understood in the first instance as the multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organization". A few additional remarks on Foucault's views at this point seem to be necessary. In the first place, it is worth pointing out that at this part of his work, in which Foucault is not limited to the examination of discourses and further moves to the treatment of more physical objects, the analysis that is put forward is carried out in terms of "mechanisms", not in terms of "formations" as the 1985 perspective of Laclau and Mouffe on the fertility of describing the "social" in terms of "material discourse" would suggest. Moreover, we should note that Foucault uses a different term in French for "mechanism": «dispositif», i.e. a term that emphasizes the possibility of its use by a subject, in relation to the term used for "mechanism" by Althusser, i.e. «appareil», which rather signifies automation beyond the subject's range. Cf. Agamben (2009a), where, in spite of the absence of reference to Althusser, the use of a German term similar to «dispositif» by Martin Heidegger is recorded. One last issue has to do with the indication that Foucault used four times in this book the (non-Althusserian) Marxist term "hegemony". See Stavrakakis (2013), p. 25. Aside from the wider issue of Foucault's relations with Marxism, which, as Poulantzas' reading of Foucault two years later also suggests, is a sensitive topic that cannot be properly analysed in this place, this use seems to refer to a "terminal" meeting point of local relations and mechanisms of power in an overall unity during the examined circumstances. In all cases, "hegemony" does not seem to be a key concept for Foucault, who would focus on relevant topics in the following years in terms of "government" and "governmentality". E.g. see Foucault (2007), pp. 126-208.

immediately following lines in Foucault's two references to the "omnipresence of power" make clear once again that power (with the aid of which the discourse of sex is studied in this book, as we have already noted) does not include everything outside discourse, but rather seems to serve as a methodological call for being alert to the identification possibly "everywhere" (i.e. both beyond as well as possibly at the level of the state) of "points" of multiple and variable relations of power as one dimension of the more general "sphere" of human relations.[110] Therefore, in full agreement with the influence we suggested for the respective interpretation in the book of 1985, Laclau seems to follow persistently at this point as well Poulantzas' polemic reading of Foucault from the now distant year of 1978, who had isolated a relevant part from an interview of Foucault in order to present the latter as if he acknowledged in a confounding way the "plebs" as the revolutionary subject (according to the demands of classical Marxism)[111] and to project a similarly confounding picture of ubiquitous power relations that do not provide substantial contributions to intellectual clarity.[112] Laclau seems to be facilitated to adopt a similar view of Foucault without more specific references, whereas Foucault is further intellectually weakened through the suggestion of two inconsistent periods in his work, which Laclau draws from the widely popular at that time American distinction of an archaeological and a genealogical period in his work,[113] thus undermining the seeming identification of archaeology and genealogy that we found in the first lines of the book of 1985.

The last memorable reference of Foucault by Laclau takes place on occasion of a well-known collective volume containing the exchange of theoretical arguments among Butler, Laclau and Žižek. In this set, one observes Butler attempting twice, once in her first contribution and a second time in her second contribution, to persuade Laclau to acknowledge that the *Archaeology of Knowledge* served as a

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[110] See Foucault (1978), p. 93: "The omnipresence of power: not because it has the privilege of consolidating everything under its invincible unity, but because it is produced from one moment to the next, at every point, or rather in every relation from one point to another. Power is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere".

[111] See Poulantzas (1980), p. 151.

[112] See Poulantzas (1980), pp. 148-152.

[113] We refer to the well-known book by Dreyfus & Rabinow (1983). Laclau already had this book in mind from an earlier time, since it appears as a reference in the work of 1985. It is worth pointing out that throughout most of his career Foucault had no problem placing archaeology and genealogy side by side as compatible perspectives. To be precise, in his so-called first period, Foucault is interested to develop archaeology in public, without neglecting to refer occasionally as a sort of a "hint" to the relevant possibilities for a development of genealogy, whereas in the following period of his work Foucault takes the circulation of his archaeology for granted and turns to the development of genealogy, occasionally reminding again the analytical confluence of both perspectives. E.g. see Foucault (1998), pp. 293-295, (1989), pp. 14-15, (2003), pp. 10-11, (1984d), p. 46.

major influence for the book of 1985, in fact presenting in both cases the relation between the two books as taken-for-granted.[114] Laclau does not respond to the comment in his first or his second contribution to the volume, leaving instead his response for his concluding article, in which he denies the relation by referring to his critique of Foucault on the distinction between discursive and non-discursive in the same book.[115] "Moreover", Laclau adds, "the work of Foucault has had only a very limited influence on my own approach, and I feel towards it only a very qualified sympathy".[116]

Conclusions

The wide number of the cases of Laclau's readings of Foucault indicated across this article allows us to try to generalize on Laclau's relation with Foucault, as well as judge a few wider consequences of this relation. In this respect, we choose to refer, in turn, to theoretical and disciplinary consequences.

The best way to judge the theoretical consequences of Laclau's relations with Foucault seems to pass through a summary of Laclau's relevant trajectory. The Argentine intellectual turned to Foucault and the other French post-structuralists at a time in which his earlier intellectual points of reference were seriously challenged.[117] The book of 1985, in which Foucault is presented as a contemporary successor of Marxism with whom Laclau acknowledges a certain proximity and from whom he tries to maintain a critical differentiation, establishes Laclau's reputation, who then, taking advantage of the circumstances of that time, turns to other interests with minimal further references to Foucault, However, we should note that, as we have already explained in the case of the entry "Discourse", Laclau begins at that time to be interested in acknowledging a number of origins for his venture by associating it with a multitude of disciplines and earlier authors, simultaneously constituting for the

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[114] See Butler (2000b), p. 34: "Laclau's argument is based on the Saussurean model of language and its early appropriation by Foucault in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, one [work] that has surely influenced my work and that of Zizek also.", Butler (2000a), p. 170: "the notion of a grammar is not fully coincident with the notion of discourse developed by Foucault and elaborated in Laclau and Mouffe's *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*. Even for the Foucault of *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, it is unclear whether 'a discourse ' can be referred to as a static unity in the same way as a logic or a grammar can be. Moreover, that text also establishes discourse at a significant distance from both the structuralist account of 'language' and the Lacanian symbolic".

[115] See Laclau (2000), p. 285.

[116] Op.cit.

[117] A similar turn to post-structuralism in general, and principally to Foucault, can be observed to a significant portion of Althusser's French students (e.g. Badiou, Rancière), which seems to be continued until present days. For a characteristic case, see Macherey (2013).

same reason a whole intellectual field under the label of "post-structuralism". In fact, Laclau is strongly concerned to repeat these origins of post-structuralism several times, as one may find them at the introductory front-page of the series of Phronesis,[118] to pedagogical material Laclau circulated to his students,[119] as well as to the preface to the second edition of the book of 1985.[120] As we have already noted, these origins cite a wide number of authors, from which Foucault is characteristically absent, being commemorated only once, at the entry "Discourse" as a target of critique.

A point of entry to the theoretical assessments of Laclau's shifts could be provided through a comparison with the earlier intellectual intervention of the founding figures of the British New Left, with whom Laclau was closely associated from his early steps. In particular, whereas the older generation of British Marxists (e.g. Christopher Hill, Eric Hobsbawm) consisted of historians, the New Left was the one to bring to Britain the Continental theoretical innovations on Marxism, trying to combine them with historical work. What is interesting from our point of view is the fact that the British New Left gradually placed Althusser as a critical target, earning recognition in this way, both within Marxism and in wider academics.[121] We may claim that a similar move seems to be present in Laclau's case twenty years later, who begins as an Althusserian, gradually places Foucault as a target of critique, before starting sidestepping him, reserving only selective critical references. Consequently, following the well-known vocabulary Laclau himself advanced in methodology and politics, we may suggest that the Argentine intellectual attempted to construct a hegemonic picture for post-structuralism, maintained through a wide chain of

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[118] See Butler, Laclau & Žižek (2000), front-page, in which the two editors of the series declare that the original purpose of the series was to bring together "left-wing politics and the theoretical developments around the critique of essentialism" and present as component parts of the latter "deconstruction", "psychoanalysis" and "the philosophy of language as initiated by the later Wittgenstein and post-Heideggerian hermeneutics".

[119] See Laclau (2005b), in which the theory of discourse is associated solely with the book of 1985 and its theoretical origins are situated in later Wittgenstein's analytical philosophy, "Heidegger's phenomenology of the existential analytic", as well as the post-structural critique of the sign (Barthes, Derrida and Lacan are those listed), which is presented to succeed structuralism (in the latter, Saussure, Hjemslev, and, in more general terms, the schools of Prague and Copenhagen are mentioned).

[120] See Laclau & Mouffe (2001b), pp. viii-xi. The relevant origins listed as sources of inspiration for the book are Husserl (with some distances), late Wittgenstein, Heidegger, structuralism and post-structuralism; the main dues in the authors' acknowledgements fall to the latter, which is further analyzed in Derrida's deconstruction and Lacanian theory.

[121] For overviews of the British New Left see Dworkin (1997), McLellan (2014), pp. 362-371.

intellectual equivalences for his own venture, placing Foucault antagonistically against it as its difference.[122]

Aside from the theoretical implications for Laclau's personal constitution as an intellectual, Laclau's choices seem to have had substantive disciplinary impact for the international contemporary diffusion of discourse analysis, since the anglophone textbooks of discourse analysis, academically related with Laclau's circle, place the work of 1985 as the base of their suggestions.[123] Aside from the provision of a few detached ideas from Saussure and Althusser,[124] the reader of these textbooks observes that Foucault is presented as an inconsistent theorist vis-à-vis the consistent Laclau,[125] whereas two quite striking absences are the limited references to the quite popular in the French 1970s Pêcheux's Althusserian textbook of discourse analysis,[126] as well as the total absence of the even earlier American discourse analysis of Zellig Harris, recorded already from 1939 at least.[127] Even though these absences certainly do not exhaust the intellectual production of "discourse analyses", they still indicate significant points of orientation for a change of emphasis.

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[122] Nonetheless, this silence or rejection of Foucault in principle by Laclau does not stop him from occasionally turning to Foucault when confronted with topics lying beyond the intellectual domains in which he had personally worked. E.g. in an interview with experts on radical pedagogy, when Laclau is asked on the roles of literacy projects in the struggles against oppression, the theorist tries to answer claiming that he perceives a literacy project as "close to what Foucault called a 'proliferation of discourses'". See Worsham & Olson (1999), p. 8. In fact, responding to a subsequent question, Laclau refers to the possibility to draw ideas on the strategy of hegemony from Wittgenstein, Derrida and Lacan, adding right afterwards, as "complementary", that "One should not dismiss the work of Foucault (or, for the matter, of Deleuze and Guattari) too easily, as some people tend to do". See Worsham & Olson (1999), p. 31.

[123] See Howarth (2000), pp. 101-125, Jørgensen & Phillips (2002), pp. 24-59. It is worth pointing out that in the work of 1985 Laclau and Mouffe noted that they did not provide a complete theory of discourse and that they rather provided only a few "basic points in order to obviate the more common misunderstandings", without returning at any time later in their careers to a fuller elaboration on discourse. See Laclau & Mouffe (2001a), pp. 107-108. As a consequence, even if the textbook of their student David Howarth may be considered as a possible fulfillment of this gap, the persistence of the following textbook to the book of 1985 as the first complete methodology of discourse analysis available to its readers probably validates the argument of this article for Laclau's advantages in terms of convenient circulation for his work and the respective importance of the consequences of his choices.

[124] See Howarth (2000), pp. 10-12, 18-23, Jørgensen & Phillips (2002), pp. 9-10, 15-16.

[125] See Howarth (2000), pp. 48-84, Jørgensen & Phillips (2002), pp. 12-18,

[126] A limited treatment is found at Howarth (2000), pp. 95-97.

[127] The severely disregarded in Europe discourse analysis of Zellig Harris' "structural linguistics", a student of the first American scientific founder of linguistics Herbert Bloomfield, is associated with the older groundbreaking anthropological work of Franz Boas on the peculiarities of the languages of North American natives. A possible reason for Harris' absence from European debates (with the exception of linguist specialists) could have to do with the complete reorientation of his intellectual legacy from his best-known student, i.e. Noam Chomsky. See Robbins (1967), pp. 210-230, Matthews (2001), pp. 24-25, 97-99, 144-145, Watt (2005).

To close this short essay, we may suggest, in a similar spirit with our immediately previous suggestion, that, to the extent that the analysis above has suggested the presence of instances of a rather questionable reading of Foucault by Laclau, highlighting its consequences for contemporary academic debates not only in intellectual history but in every other academic field as well, in which all of us can think of more satisfying accounts than those presented as "established" within particular contexts, a greater effort for fairness by all persons involved may contribute not only to a wider or an innovative understanding of examined topics, but to useful lessons for everyone's academic and social conduct.

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Ελληνική Εταιρεία Πολιτικής Επιστήμης
Δίκτυο Ανάλυσης Πολιτικού Λόγου

Στόχος του ερευνητικού δικτύου για την «Ανάλυση του Πολιτικού Λόγου» είναι: (α) η προαγωγή του επιστημονικού προβληματισμού γύρω από την έννοια και τις θεωρίες του λόγου (discourse – discours - diskurs) και (β) η συστηματική εξέταση του πολιτικού λόγου και των επιχειρημάτων που αρθρώνουν οι πολιτικοί δρώντες (κόμματα, κινήματα, ΜΜΕ, κ.λπ.) καθώς εμπλέκονται σε σχέσεις αντιπαράθεσης ή συναίνεσης.

Η δημοσίευση σειράς «Κειμένων Εργασίας» (Working Papers), τα οποία αναρτώνται στον ιστότοπο του δικτύου και της Ελληνικής Εταιρείας Πολιτικής Επιστήμης (ΕΕΠΕ), αποτελεί αξονική προτεραιότητα του δικτύου για την «Ανάλυση του Πολιτικού Λόγου». Τα κείμενα εργασίας λειτουργούν ως παρεμβάσεις στο δημόσιο διάλογο είτε και ως ερεθίσματα για περαιτέρω επιστημονικό προβληματισμό. Βοηθούν δε τους συγγραφείς τους να ελέγξουν «υπό κατασκευή» επιχειρήματα και υποθέσεις εργασίας πριν λάβουν την τυπική μορφή επιστημονικών δημοσιεύσεων. Εξέχουσα θέση στο πλαίσιο του πρώτου κύκλου «Κειμένων Εργασίας» κατέχει η θεματική που αφορά σε «Λόγους της Κρίσης», σε πολιτικούς λόγους δηλαδή οι οποίοι αρθρώνονται με αναφορά στην τρέχουσα οικονομική -αν και όχι μόνο- κρίση στην Ελλάδα και την ΕΕ.

Τα κείμενα εργασίας που κατατίθενται προς δημοσίευση αξιολογούνται από τουλάχιστον δύο μέλη του δικτύου. Σε κάθε περίπτωση, τα κείμενα εργασίας εκφράζουν τις απόψεις των συγγραφέων τους και δεν απηχούν θέσεις του δικτύου ή της ΕΕΠΕ.