#### There is no one, abstract truth of the situation. These truths become ossified, dead, and inert when not discussed in terms of lived human experience. Our genealogy is a crucial form of epistemic interrogation.

(Jose **Medina**, October **2011**, Associate Professor of Philosophy at Vanderbilt, Toward a Foucaultian Epistemology of Resistance: Counter-Memory, Epistemic Friction, and Guerrilla Pluralism, 6/26/12,K.H.)

The genesis amnesia with respect to the truths circulated in our discursive practices is problematic because it forces us to accept inherited truths independently of the life-experiences from which they were drawn. James warns us against the danger of relying uncritically on fixed truths, for this means relying on the experiences and valuations of others or of our past selves, which may have lost their force and appropriateness in our current experiential contexts. Fixity is a property that human truths cannot have. Those recalcitrant truths that take the appearance of being permanent and fixed simply hide ossified valuations and rigidified beliefs. Our body of truths always has to be critically revisited in the light of new expe-riences. On James’s view, truths cannot simply be taken for granted, because they become inert or dead truths, i.e. truths that have been removed from the stream of life and are presented in complete independence from particular experiential contexts and particular experiential subjects.52 Truths have to be related to the subjects in whose life they make a difference, to their experiences and valuations. According to James, when truths are detached from the life-experiences that gave them birth, they lose their vital force and they become rigid, ossified, dead. Truths cannot be simply found; they have to be created or recreated to be alive. Living truths are truths of our own making. Of course, the living truths we make today will be the dead truths of tomorrow. Our truths lose their action-guiding value and productivity when they are detached from concrete life-experiences, becoming ossified by habitual use. But this does not mean that we cannot rely on those beliefs that have been previously accepted as true. Our epistemic activities need to rely on a stock of truths that have been previously established in our transactions with the world (our own as well as those of others). But the older truths on which we rely cannot be simply taken for granted; they have to be subject to a critical epistemic examination that traces them back to their experiential sources. This is why James claims that, besides a method, pragmatism is ‚a genetic theory of what is meant by truth.‛53 We have to uncover how truths have been made. We need to recover ‚the trail of the human serpent‛ that is left ‚over everything‛54 and is often erased or forgotten. It is in this sense that the Jamesian approach to truth is essentially genealogical.55 On James’s view, the epistemic analysis of our beliefs requires the genealogy of those ideas and thoughts that have been made true in our practices. But of course genealogies are driven by present concerns and interests and, therefore, they are both backward-looking and forward-looking simultaneously. Jamesian genealogies trace the vital trajectories of our truths within our practices, presenting them at the cross-roads between the life-experiences and actions of the past and those of the present and future. The critical task, for James, is to trace the practical trajectories along which the life of those truths have run their course, trying to determine if there is still some life left in them and what paths their present and future life can take. But notice that the exclusive focus of Jamesian genealogies is on continuities and convergences in alethic trajectories within our practices. A Jamesian genealogy tries to uncover what our truths have done so far and what they can still do for us. A Foucaultian genealogy goes much further and its attention to epistemic diffe-rences is more radical. A Foucaultian genealogy tries to uncover what our truths have never done for (some of) us and never will; and it tries to connect the truths generated within a given practice with the un-truths that are also generated along-side them, digging up all sorts of epistemic frictions and struggles that reveal the competing and alternative truths that may lie in the interstices of a discursive practice or in counter-discourses. Thus, as argued above, in Foucault we find a more radical and uncompromising epistemic pluralism, a guerrilla pluralism. Grounded in this pluralism, Foucaultian genealogical investigations have their primary focus on discontinuities and divergences in alethic trajectories that can interrogate the con-tinuities and convergences that we take for granted, and thus produce ‚an insur-rection of subjugated knowledges.‛ Foucaultian genealogy is not only a way of re-freshing or reviving our past in the light of our present; it is the more radical attempt to make our present and our past alien to us, to look at historical trajectories with fresh eyes, with different eyes, so that they appear as strange artifacts. And this pro-cess of self-estrangement in which Foucaultian genealogies consist involves the un earthing of the radical differences that lie within our practices and within ourselves, but have been silenced, marginalized, stigmatized, excluded, or forgotten. A genea-logy animated not simply by a melioristic pluralism, but by a guerrilla pluralism, re-quires more than merely revisiting the past to see how and why things were settled in the way they were. It requires interrogating and contesting any settlement, ma-king the past come undone at the seams, so that it loses its unity, continuity, and na-turalness, so that it does not appear any more as a single past that has already been made, but rather, as a heterogeneous array of converging and diverging struggles that are still ongoing and only have the appearance of having been settled. When social divisions and social struggles become the focus of attention, genealogies lead to the splintering of the present and the past into irreducibly heterogeneous presents and pasts that resist unification and contain multiple cross-roads full of friction.

#### The permutation solves best: incorporating your counter-perspective increases total friction with the dominant narrative. That’s guerilla pluralism at its finest.

*We don’t need to commit to one perspective or interpretation – that’s a Western science-based way of thinking. Our history does not lie on the “truth” axis, but rather on the “discourse-power” axis. Your perspective is another subjugated knowledge. Our form of knowledge production denies the notion of mutual exclusivitiy because that is borne out of seeking truth. “Mine is true, so yours cannot be”. The ultimate goal is NOT “truth” but rather disunity. For this, a multiplicity of perspectives are key.*

(Jose **Medina**, October **2011**, Associate Professor of Philosophy at Vanderbilt, Toward a Foucaultian Epistemology of Resistance: Counter-Memory, Epistemic Friction, and Guerrilla Pluralism, 6/26/12,K.H.)

In the 1975-76 lectures ‚Society Must Be Defended,‛ Foucault draws a contrast be-tween ‚the genealogy of knowledges‛ and any kind of linear intellectual history such as the history of the sciences: whereas the latter is located at ‚the cognition-truth axis,‛ ‚the genealogy of knowledges is located on a different axis, namely the discourse-power axis or, if you like, the discursive practice—clash of power axis.‛6 Genealogy traces the development of discursive formations that give rise to certain forms of knowledge and power relations. Through their meaning-generating acti-vities, through a grammar of meanings that makes certain things intelligible, sur-veyable, and the proper objects of investigation and knowledge (and others unintel-ligible, unsurveyable, and epistemically opaque), discursive practices have both (and simultaneously) epistemic and power effects. And it is of course crucial that we re-gard power and knowledge not only as intimately related but as inseparable, which is why Foucault and Foucaultians have used the cumbersome expression ‚power/ knowledge.‛ One may naively think that the opposite of power/knowledge would be powerlessness/ignorance, so that those excluded or marginalized in the discursive practices that produce certain epistemic and power effects would be simply subjects without any knowledge and any power, quasi-non-agents. But the pluralistic genea-logical approach that Foucault sketches goes completely against those views that portray the oppressed as merely powerless and ignorant. In fact, this approach un-masks as an important misconception the view that the oppressed simply lack power and knowledge because of the forms of exclusions and marginalization they suffer. That distorted characterization plays in the hands of the dominant ideologies and grants too much to them: namely, it grants the very definition of what counts as legitimate power and legitimate knowledge. Instead, a more accurate characteriza-tion would be the one that describes oppressed groups as those whose powers and knowledges have been demeaned and obstructed. This is why, after drawing the contrast between genealogy and history of knowledge, Foucault goes on to say that the critical task that genealogy confronts us with is ‚an immense and multiple battle, but not one between knowledge and ignorance, but an immense and multiple battle between knowledges in the plural—knowledges that are in conflict because of their very morphology, because they are in the possession of enemies, and because they have intrinsic power-effects.‛7 How do we fight against power on this view? Not by trying to escape it (as if liberation consisted in standing outside power altogether), but rather, by turning power(s) against itself(themselves), or by mobilizing some forms of power against others. Similarly, how do we fight against established and official forms of know-ledge when they are oppressive? Not by trying to escape knowledge altogether, but rather, by turning knowledge(s) against itself(themselves), or by mobilizing some forms of knowledge against others. The critical battle against the monopolization of knowledge-producing practices involves what Foucault calls ‚an insurrection of subjugated knowledges.‛ When it comes to knowledge of the past and the power associated with it, this battle involves resisting the ‚omissions‛ and distortions of of-ficial histories, returning to lost voices and forgotten experiences, relating to the past from the perspective of the present in an alternative (out-of-the-mainstream) way. And this is precisely what the Foucaultian notions of ‚counter-history‛ and ‚coun-ter-memory‛ offer. Official histories are produced by monopolizing knowledge-producing prac-tices with respect to a shared past. Official histories create and maintain the unity and continuity of a political body by imposing an interpretation on a shared past and, at the same time, by silencing alternative interpretations of historical experien-ces. Counter-histories try to undo these silences and to undermine the unity and continuity that official histories produce. Foucault illustrates this with what he calls ‚the discourse of race war‛ that emerged in early modernity as a discourse of resis-tance for the liberation of a race against the oppression of another, e.g. of the Saxons under the yoke of the Normans. Foucault argues that in Europe—and especially in England—‚this discourse of race war functioned as a counter-history‛8 until the end of the 19th Century, at which point it was turned into a racist discourse (aimed not at the liberation of an oppressed race, but at the supremacy of an allegedly superior race that views all others as an existential threat). In lecture IV of ‚Society Must Be Defended” Foucault sets out to analyze the ‚counterhistorical function‛ of the race-war discourse in early modernity.9 Part of what the race-war discourse did was to retrieve the untold history of a people which could be used as a weapon against the official history that legitimized their oppression. This counter-history tapped into the subversive power of a silenced historical experience and reactivated the past to create distinctive knowledge/power effects: new meanings and normative attitudes were mobilized, so that what was officially presented as past glorious victories that legitimized monarchs and feudal lords as the rightful owners of the land to whom taxes were owed, now appeared as unfair defeats at the hands of abusive conquerors who became oppressors and had to be overthrown.

#### The permutation is the BEST option: the plurality of subjugated knowledge is the ONLY way to exert continued friction against the status quo, create a bulwark against co-option and spur disunity in hegemonic knowledge systems.

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#### As Foucault puts it, genealogies can be described as the ‚attempt to de-subjugate historical knowledges, to set them free, or in other words to enable them to oppose and struggle against the coercion of a unitary, formal, and scientific theoretical discourse.‛40 But, as he emphasizes, genealogies do not simply ‚reject knowledge, or invoke or celebrate some immediate experience that has yet to be cap-tured by knowledge. This is not what they are about. They are about the insur-rection of knowledges.‛41 Genealogical investigations proceed by ‚way of playing lo-cal, discontinuous, disqualified, or nonlegitimized knowledges off against the uni-tary theoretical instance‛ that filters them out or absorbs them by putting them in their proper place within a hierarchy. Genealogies are insurrections of subjugated knowledges. And the plurals here are crucial, for the plurality of insurrections and of subjugated knowledges has to be kept always alive in order to resist new hegemonic unifications and hierarchizations of knowledges. The danger that the critical work of genealogies can be reabsorbed by hegemonic power/knowledges is brilliantly described by Foucault: Once we have excavated our genealogical fragments, once we begin to exploit them and to put in circulation these elements of knowledge that we have been trying to dig out of the sand, isn’t there a danger that they will be recoded, recolonized by these unitary discourses which, having first disqualified them and having then ignored them when they reappeared, may now be ready to reannex them and include them in their own discourses and their own power-knowledge? And if we try to protect the fragments we have dug up, don’t we run the risk of building, with our own hands, a unitary discourse? 42 Insurrections of (de-)subjugated knowledges and their critical resistance can be co-opted for the production of new forms of subjugation and exclusion (new hege-monies) or for the reinforcement of old ones. The only way to resist this danger is by guaranteeing the constant epistemic friction of knowledges from below, which—as I have argued elsewhere43—means guaranteeing that eccentric voices and perspec-tives are heard and can interact with mainstream ones, that the experiences and concerns of those who live in darkness and silence do not remain lost and un-attended, but are allowed to exert friction. Genealogies have to be always plural, for genealogical investigations can unearth an indefinite number of paths from for-gotten past struggles to the struggles of our present. And the insurrections of sub-jugated knowledges they produce also need to remain plural if they are to retain their critical power, that is, the capacity to empower people to resist oppressive power/knowledge effects. In the next section I will put this Foucaultian pluralism in conversation with other epistemological pluralistic approaches to memory and knowledge of the past. 2. Epistemic Friction, Guerrilla Pluralism, and Counter-Memory What we need in order to maintain possibilities of resistance always open is epistemic friction. As Wittgenstein puts it: ‚We want to walk: so we need friction. Back to the rough ground!‛44 I want to define epistemic friction as follows: epistemic friction consists in the mutual contestation of differently normatively structured knowledges which interrogates epistemic exclusions, disqualifications, and hegemonies. Episte-mic friction is acknowledged and celebrated in pluralistic views of our epistemic negotiations and our cognitive lives, but not every kind of epistemic pluralism makes room for epistemic friction in the same way. In this section I want to explore the implications of a thoroughgoing epistemic pluralism for genealogical investiga-tions. For this purpose, I will compare and contrast Foucault’s pluralism with two different kinds of epistemic pluralism that can be found in American philosophy, ar-guing that Foucaultian pluralism offers a distinctive notion of epistemic friction that has tremendous critical force.