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The Will to Enclose

Foucault's Archive in the Era of Cold War Big Data

This article explores Foucault's concept of the archive within the context of archival practices emanating during the early Cold War. This period witnessed the feverish acquisition of "big data" (cross-cultural surveys, databases, etc.) as well as the technological innovations to facilitate it (computer punch cards, cybernetic networks), in service of revealing key factors and drivers that would lead all so-called "backwards peoples" through universal phases of modernization. As Foucault's thinking on the archive was taking shape, the global behavioral sciences were compiling the archives that would produce compelling understanding of human's true nature, considering everything from competitiveness to creativity to economic outlook. How can Foucault's concerns about the archive be read within the context of the early Cold War and the globalizing behavioral sciences?

KEYWORDS

archive, big data, cold war, cybernetics, foucault, lévi-strauss, structuralism

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The idea of accumulating everything, of establishing a sort of general archive, the will to enclose in one place all times, all epochs, all forms, all tastes, the idea of constituting a place of all times that is itself outside of time and inaccessible to its ravages, the project of organizing in this way a sort of perpetual and indefinite accumulation of time in an immobile place, this whole idea belongs to our modernity.¹

By the mid-1960s, Michel Foucault had largely sketched out his concept of the "archive" as "system[s] of discursivity" — the sedimentary and stratigraphic layers that required an archaeology to follow power-laden genealogical pathways. While the concept is typically understood to belong to his methodological toolkit, Foucault also hinted at the potential political implications of the mass collection and codification of data. In the quote above, taken from a 1967 speech delivered before a group of architects, Foucault suggested various possible connections between knowledge's accumulation and the project of modernity. This article explores Foucault's fashioning of the concept of the archive as a product of modern power by situating it within the context of archival practices emanating out of the early Cold War. This period (from roughly 1949 to 1970), as much recent historical scholarship explores, was overshadowed less by contests over military power and more squarely focused on competing styles (Soviet and US) of how best to development and modernize the global South. Such geopolitical concerns catalyzed a feverish acquisition of "big data" (cross-cultural surveys, databases, etc.) as well as the technological innovations to facilitate it (computer punch cards, elaborate filing systems, cybernetic networks, etc.), all in the service of revealing the key factors and drivers that would lead all so-called "backwards peoples" through universal phases of modernization.²

To be sure, as Foucault's thinking on the archive was taking shape (developed most fully in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* [1966]), movements within the early evolution of the global behavioral sciences (political science, psychology, and anthropology, among others) were compiling the archives that would produce compelling understanding of human's true nature, considering everything from competitiveness to creativity to economic outlook. This article explores how we might read Foucault's concerns about "infinite accumulation" within the context of the early Cold War and the globalizing behavioral sciences. It does so by probing the ways Foucault's writing about the archive, often interpreted as a commentary on the nineteenth century, emerge from the context of mid-twentieth century, and particularly within the processes of decolonization and the "total history" of modernization theory's promises. It primarily addresses a midcentury French intellectual context, the example of the Laboratory of Social Anthropology and the enthusiasm of its founder, Claude Lévi-Strauss, for the employment of cultural databases, and big data generally. In doing so, I am interested in ways the development of Foucault's thinking about the archive arose in response to new approaches — and technologies

¹ Michel Foucault: *Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias* [French 1984], trans. Jay Miskowiec, in: *Diacritics*, 16/1 (1986), p. 26.

² On the Cold War development and modernization, see, among others, Odd Arne Westad: *Bernath Lecture: The New International History of the Cold War: Three (Possible) Paradigms*, in: *Diplomatic History*, 24/4 (2000), pp. 551–565 and David C. Engerman and Corinna R. Unger: *Introduction: Towards a Global History of Modernization*, in: *Diplomatic History*, 33/3 (2009), pp. 375–385.

that made them possible — to accumulate data in ways previously unheard of. At the same time, I seek to relate these historical developments in the early Cold War to a more standard understanding of Foucault's reconceptualization of the archive in discursive terms, as a product of his slow rejection of doctrinaire structuralism and the kinds of big data analyses that enamored many structuralist theorists (especially linguists) in the name of scientific rigor.

1. Enclosing Culture

In the late 1950s, France's preeminent cultural anthropologist, Claude Lévi-Strauss, laid the foundation of what would become the celebrated *Laboratoire d'anthropologie sociale* in the heart of Paris' fifth *arrondissement*. After previous failed attempts to secure funding for a new center for the study of anthropology from donors such as the Rockefeller Foundation, Lévi-Strauss was eventually able to cobble together resources from the various positions he held, including his role as an assistant director of ethnology in the Paris Museum of Man and, likely more significantly, his ascendancy to Secretary-General of UNESCO's International Social Science Council. The Laboratory of Anthropology would serve in part as a museum, with an eclectic collection of cultural artifacts (most of them procured by amateur explorers), but its main focus would be as a center for the kinds of comparative cross-cultural study that Lévi-Strauss was making a name for himself through under the label "structural anthropology."³ The choice of naming his center a "laboratory," as opposed to simply a museum or a library, was deliberate. At the time, as Paul Rabinow has shown, the idea of a laboratory conjured positive and celebrated images of experimentation and innovation, and was frequently employed to describe France's colonies as places where new ideas and applications could be tested.⁴

In other words, laboratories were places where things got done, and as such could justify their financial needs in the name of scientific rigor and demonstrable results. For Lévi-Strauss, the laboratory was also a place to attend to the messiness of the anthropologist's field. It was an imaginative space where the boundaries of what constituted culture were fluid and amorphous, and the parsing of different aspects of culture from one another — religion from economics, kinship from cosmology, and the like — could, at least in the abstract, be kept in tight organization. Lévi-Strauss described the edifice as perfectly suited to the search for "small islands of organization" within a "vast empirical stew."⁵ And while the walls and the ordered spaces of the lab froze culture long enough to be observed, in the precepts of structuralism, Lévi-Strauss was developing a kind of metascience. This new science promised the discovery of not just the

³ Between the late 1940s and early 1950s, Lévi-Strauss produced a series of notable articles that, cumulatively, laid out his new approach to cultural anthropology. He solidified his prominence with the 1958 publication of his collected work to date, *Anthropologie structurale* (Paris: Plon). A translated version for an English-speaking audience (*Structural Anthropology*, trans. Claire Jacobson and Brooke Grundfest Schoepf, New York: Basic Books 1963) appeared five years later.

⁴ Paul Rabinow: *French Modern. Norms and Forms of the Social Environment*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1995, p. 117. For other interpretations and applications of the laboratory metaphor, see Helen Tilly: *Africa as a Living Laboratory: Empire, Development, and the Problem of Scientific Knowledge, 1870–1950*, Chicago: University of Chicago 2011.

⁵ Didier Eribon: *Conversations with Claude Lévi-Strauss*, trans. Paula Wissing, Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1991 [French 1988], quoted in: Patrick Wilcken: *Claude Lévi-Strauss. The Father of Modern Anthropology*, New York: Bloomsbury 2010, p. 191.

foundations of human sociality, but also the "deep" laws that governed all thought and behavior.

At the heart of the *Laboratoire d'anthropologie sociale* sat a massive physical database (a gift from UNESCO) that, in appearance, resembled a vacuous bank vault with its interior walls stud- ded with safety deposit boxes. The boxes, really file drawers, were stuffed to the gills with 5 × 8 index cards (in millimeters, 127 × 203). Each card contained a snippet of cultural information drawn from over 400 putative and so-called 'cultures' from around the world as well as refer- ence numbers and codes for cross-tabulation with other entries. The collection, officially called the "Human Relations Area Files" or HRAF for short, got its start in the in the early 1940s as a key tool of US military intelligence. From its headquarters at Yale University, the lead anthropologist George Murdock actively solicited cultural information in the form of fieldnotes from ethnog- raphers working in far-flung corners of the world; otherwise data was extracted word-for-word from published books (ethnographies, histories, as well as traveler and missionary accounts) on cultures and societies past and present. HRAF was more than a giant storehouse of cultural curios, however.⁶

According to George Murdock and his principle collaborator, Clellan Ford, HRAF's novelty rest in its ability for "rapid examination of suspected relationships."⁷ Thus, for instance, if a researcher wanted to query the violent tendencies of an Amazonian group that also practices plural mar- riage, HRAF could provide this data. And typically, specific queries were run for places in the world where the United States had distinct security concerns.⁸ In France, HRAF's use varied from basic anthropology to Simone de Beauvoir's reliance on the database for her sociological work, *The Coming of Age* (1973). In all cases, HRAF afforded a new and putatively objective way to "make up people" to borrow Ian Hacking's language.⁹ The answers could also be both sugges- tive and predictive. For Lévi-Strauss, HRAF was nothing short of a "fabulous documentary" — a "scientific machine" essential to the humanities similar to the ways that "a telescope or an elec- tron microscope is in the field of experiential sciences."¹⁰ However, the sheer weight of the col- lection — which was added to as quickly as new information could be extracted sources in monthly installments from Yale — proved to be a more immediate concern for the anthropolo- gist's staff; they feared that the banks of the ever-filling file drawers might actually collapse the floor below it. The danger factor aside, the project had as many skeptics and champions. For instance, Margaret Mead, America's most celebrated anthropologist at the time, derided HRAF

⁶ On the history of HRAF, see Rebecca Lemov: *World as laboratory. Experiments with Mice, Mazes, and Men*, New York: Hill & Wang 2005, especially pp. 178–187 and Matthew Farish: *The Contours of America's Cold War*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press 2010.

⁷ Clellan S. Ford: Human Relations Area Files: 1949-1969 A Twenty-Year Report, in: *Cross-Cultural Research*, 5/1 (1970), pp. 1–61.

⁸ David H. Price: Counterinsurgency and the M-VICO System: Human Relations Area Files and Anthropology's Dual-Use Legacy, in: *Anthropology Today*, 28/1 (2012), pp. 16–20.

⁹ Ian Hacking: Making up People, in: *London Review of Books*, 28/16-17 (2006), pp. 23–26.

¹⁰ Lévi-Strauss: Letter to Marcel Bataillon, Administrator of Collège de France, 29 March 1962 (FLAS B. S2. 01 O1 29, Papers of the Laboratoire d'anthropologie sociale (LAS), Paris).

as "instant anthropology, like instant coffee."¹¹ The Human Relations Areas Files in Paris, now housed in the Claude Lévi-Strauss Library, is the only one of its kind in Europe, and one of only four paper versions outside the United States.

In my current book project, titled *Culture's Laboratory*, I track the rise of big data in the postwar and emerging Cold War Era. The book looks at one specific case — The Cornell-Peru Project in the highland Peruvian Andes, a study of how in the 1950s and early 1960s, a group of Cornell University anthropologists and a bevy of other self-styled behavioral scientists assumed control of a hacienda in the Peruvian Andes, transforming the community of Vicos and its 2,000-plus Quechua-speaking indigenous residents into what they envisioned as a living ethnographic "laboratory" for the study of modernization and culture change, in part using HRAF.¹² Yet, its larger questions are positioned to address what historian of science Rebecca Lemov has dubbed the era of "big anthropology" and what Mary Poovey more expansively calls the age of "universal knowledge projects."¹³ In the postwar era, various projects spawned by the US National Research Council and the National Academy of Sciences joined in the ethos of HRAF to create proto-databases — archives — to "capture" what Gregory Bateson in 1942 referred to as the "meticulous collection of masses of concrete observations of native life."¹⁴ These projects include Lemov's example of the Committee on Primary Records' 'Database of Dreams', the University of Chicago's Committee on Human Development, the many data-gathering ventures of the Harvard Social Relations Department, as well as scattered examples from sociology such as the Lazarsfeld-Stanton Program Analyzer, a device made to capture radio listeners' emotional responses to political speeches.¹⁵ Many of these efforts were aimed at the goals of defining Cold War others — peasants, newly urbanized slum dwellers, and generally "backwards people" with an eye toward best describing and predicting their trajectory toward a certain model of modernization predicated on the assumptions of liberal capitalism and *homo economicus*.

In this current exploration, I am occupied with exploring ways these arguably Cold War-inspired and driven projects reflect Foucault's treatment of the 'the will to enclose.' Throughout his life, Foucault pursued various inquiries into enclosure practices — for example, explorations of labyrinths, prisons, and museums — to get at modernity's "perpetual and indefinite accumulation of time in an immobile place."¹⁶ While now commonplace among scholars, Foucault's suspicions of the archive was a critical step to transfer the understanding of data gathering from simply the

¹¹ Quoted in Wilcken: *Claude Lévi-Strauss*, p. 371, note 33.

¹² See, e.g., Jason Pribilsky: Development and the 'Indian Problem' in the Cold War Andes: Indigenismo, Science, and Modernization in the Making of the Cornell-Peru Project at Vicos, in: *Diplomatic History*, 33/3 (2009), pp. 405–426 and Jason Pribilsky: Developing Selves: Photography, Cold War Science and 'Backwards' People in the Peruvian Andes, 1951–1966, in: *Visual Studies*, 30/2 (2015), pp. 131–150.

¹³ Rebecca Lemov: *Database of Dreams: The Lost Quest to Catalog Humanity*, New Haven: Yale University Press 2015; Mary Poovey: The Limits of the Universal Knowledge Project: British India and the East Indiamen, in: *Critical Inquiry*, 31/1 (2004), pp. 183–202.

¹⁴ Gregory Bateson: Social Planning and the Concept of Deutero-Learning, in: *Steps to an Ecology of Mind: Collected Essays in Anthropology, Psychiatry, Evolution and Epistemology*, New York: Ballantine Books 1972, p. 161.

¹⁵ Lemov: *Database of Dreams*, p. 233.

¹⁶ Foucault: *Of Other Spaces*, p. 26.

production of a depository of cultural materials increasingly sedimentary through time, to a more concrete investigation incorporating the use of that information in the production of new knowledge. In the postwar era, the archive — in the form of databases, computer punchcards, and elaborate filing systems — began to reflect what Paul Erickson and his colleagues demarcate as a "Cold War rationality" — a loosely held set of assumptions that favored algorithmic and analogical modeling to understand complex social processes, systematic breakdown of problems into simple sequential steps, a penchant for generalizations, and a fresh reliance on technology as superior to human reason.¹⁷ Let me begin to explore these points with respect to Levi-Strauss and Foucault.

2. Diverging Perspectives

Claude Lévi-Strauss and Michel Foucault's intellectual trajectories were remarkably similar, yet their ideological affinities were few. They ran in similar intellectual, political, and social circles and clearly had mutual respect for one another. Early in his career, Foucault recognized his debt to the anthropologist, especially Lévi-Strauss's insistence that "meaning" was just the surface of human experience, and that what really mattered was the underlying system or structure.¹⁸ Foucault also took it upon himself to send copies of everything he wrote to Lévi-Strauss. Professionally, both ascended, after multiple failed attempts, to positions at the *Collège de France* and both published their key works with popular printing houses; at the zenith of their careers, they enjoyed a similar international notoriety. At the core, however, Foucault subscribed to a Kantian rendering of 'Anthropology' (a different term altogether from the standard disciplinary definition) focused on how "Man" became an objective self, shaped by particular experience.¹⁹ In his secondary doctoral thesis on Kant's work of the same title, Foucault drew out the distinction: "The Anthropology [in the Kantian sense] will then not only be a science of man and a horizon of all sciences of man, but also science of what grounds and limits Man's knowledge."²⁰ Over the course of his life, Foucault would ultimately come to reject Lévi-Strauss' 'Science of Man' anthropology as an "illusion". In *The Order of Things*, Foucault took a number of swipes at cultural anthropology's "assumptions of a "historical apriori" of mankind. In his conception, assumptions about man were an "episteme" to be unpacked genealogically, not ordered into a database.²¹ For his part, Lévi-Strauss had little concern for the formation of man or Foucault's more general critical archaeology of the human sciences. His immediate attention, emanating from the French sociological tradition of Émile Durkheim and Marcel Mauss, was "the life of signs at

¹⁷ Paul Erickson et al.: *How Reason Almost Lost Its Mind. The Strange Career of Cold War Rationality*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press 2013.

¹⁸ Eribon: *Conversations with Claude Lévi-Strauss*, p. 161.

¹⁹ On this distinction, see Patrick R. Frierson: Kant, Immanuel, Influence on the Origins and Development of Anthropology, in: Hilary Callan (ed.): *The International Encyclopedia of Anthropology* (Malden, MA forthcoming). Also see Patrick R. Frierson: *What is the Human Being?*, New York: Routledge 2013, p. 5.

²⁰ Michel Foucault: *Introduction to Kant's Anthropology*, trans. Roberto Nigro and Kate Briggs, Los Angeles: Semiotext(e) 2008.

²¹ Michel Foucault: *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, trans. Alan M. Sheridan, New York: Pantheon Books 1970 [French 1966].

the heart of social life." In one of his synthetic works, *The Scope of Anthropology* (1967), he described his professional goal this way: "to classify types, to analyze their constituent parts, and to establish correlations between them."²²

Archival databases like the Human Relations Area Files delivered on this goal, especially for an anthropologist notorious for his disdain for actual fieldwork and never leaving his office and lab. To be fair, in its purest form, Foucault saw French anthropology — more precisely called 'ethnology' — as one of the few "counter sciences" within the vast human sciences. Again, in *The Order of Things*, he spoke positively of Lévi-Strauss' anthropological quest to "dissolve man."²³ Yet, by the time Foucault began to refashion the notion of the archive, structural anthropology was already amidst change. In the early 1960s, the critical dynamics of French ethnology and structural anthropology were moving toward a politics of knowledge that enabled new research technologies and instruments to study culture in a manner seemingly unhindered by historical, political, or disciplinary difference. HRAF files, in the way they extracted cultural facts from context, were just one of these technologies. Lévi-Strauss' fascination with big data also stemmed from developments in the field of cybernetics, primarily through his long-time association with the linguist Roman Jakobson.²⁴

If HRAF provided the organized data for an archive, cybernetics provided both the algorithms and the "boundedness" of the experiment. Jakobson's particular interests in cybernetics braided together his refined approach to structural linguistics, which argued for a conception of language as a system of oppositely distinguished sounds (phonemes) whose order exposed the core of human thought, with a fascination with media technologies from telephony, radio and sound film. For the linguist, the mimetic qualities of these technologies served as analogies to the study of speech, namely as discrete units distributed in time. As an émigré to the US, Jakobson found himself the darling of Cold War behavioral scientists and their large caches of research monies, especially Rockefeller-funded work on communication engineering and, later, cybernetics. For instance, he was contracted to analyze the distribution and frequency of Russian phonemes as a bounded cybernetic thought system in hopes that the results might furnish American diplomats strategic tools to undercut Russian speech and thought, as well as train intelligence operatives and students in the cultural nuances and cues of the Russian language.²⁵

Lévi-Strauss' funders also had deep Cold War ideological leanings that encouraged structuralists to become the archivists of big data. For example, with Jakobson's aid, Lévi-Strauss secured monies from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Center for International Study (CENIS), a key node of covert cybernetic research funded by the US Central Intelligence Agency, in order to bring cybernetics to France. His ideas for the Laboratory of Social Anthropology were directly

²² Both quotes appear in: Claude Lévi-Strauss: *The Scope of Anthropology*, London: Cape Editions 1967, pp. 12, 16.

²³ Foucault: *The Order of Things*, pp. 379–380.

²⁴ This section has benefited greatly from Bernard Dionysius Geoghegan: From Information Theory to French Theory: Jakobson, Lévi-Strauss, and the Cybernetic Apparatus, in: *Critical Inquiry*, 38/1 (2011), pp. 96–126.

²⁵ Geoghegan: From Information Theory to French Theory, p. 110.

modeled on CENIS which, following Jakobson, sought to develop a laboratory for the study of language that would operate like the natural sciences. By 1962, Lévi-Strauss' new anthropology, a "science of the concrete," reflected the penchant his big data and the technophilia of Cold War social science: "[P]rinciples of interpretation whose heuristic value and accordance with reality have been revealed to Westerners only through recent inventions: telecommunications, computers, and electron microscopes [...]. The entire process of human knowledge thus assumes the character of a closed system."²⁶

3. Foucault and the Politics of the Archive

At the same time that Lévi-Strauss was busying himself with "closed systems" — filling file cabinets with notes from the world's cultures and running queries based on cross-tabulations of the data — Foucault was sketching out the chapters that would eventually become *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, including his tentative ideas on the "will to enclose." It was 1966 and Foucault was in Tunisia, teaching at the University of Tunis and stealing personal time, in equal measure as his biographers like to stress, for sunbathing and writing.²⁷ Foucault laid out 'The Archaeology' as a treatise on method and historiography, and more pointedly, a guide to the specific terminology that was starting to populate his works — a lexicon of terms like episteme, discursive formations, and genealogy, as well as the title term, archaeology. The term 'archive' shows up preciously few times in the work, despite a chapter devoted to it, and it is clear that Foucault takes playful liberty with the term's etymology to link it directly to his conceptual understanding of archaeology. The idea of archaeology is closely related for Foucault methodologically, but curiously not etymologically. As Foucault biographer, David Macey notes, the word archive derives from *archia* — meaning a magisterial office or public office; archaeology, by contrast, stems from the root *archaeo-* (ancient, primitive).²⁸ On the book's jacket, Foucault pithily summarized it this way: "The domain of things said is what is called the archive; the role of archaeology is to analyze that archive."²⁹

Foucault's archive is neither the sum of all texts that a culture preserves nor those institutions that allow for that record's preservation. Instead, the archive is "a system of statements," and those "rules of practice" that shape the specific regularities of what can and cannot be said. He also rejected that it was "the library of all libraries" nor is it "that which collects the dust of statements that have become inert once more, and which may make possible the miracle of their resurrection." It is instead "the first law of what can be said, the system that governs the

²⁶ Claude Lévi-Strauss: *The Savage Mind*, trans. anonym, London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson 1966 [French 1962], p. 269.

²⁷ See, e.g., David Macey: *The Lives of Michel Foucault* (New York: Vintage Books 1995; for a treatment of the influence of Tunisia on Foucault's theoretical writings, see Pal Ahluwalia: Post-Structuralism's Colonial Roots: Michel Foucault, in: *Social Identities*, 16/5 (2010), pp. 597–606.

²⁸ Macey: *The Lives of Michel Foucault*, p. 162.

²⁹ Michel Foucault: *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. Alan M. Sheridan Smith, London: Routledge 2002 [French 1969].

appearance of statements as unique events."³⁰ Foucault's description of the archive as both the "system of utterability" and the "law of what can be said" is, as Laermans and Gielen argue, inseparable from his conception of "discursive formation."³¹ The archive, then, does not merely reproduce but actually produces meaning through institutionalization and classification — indeed a key goal shared with the Cold War archive. But the archive was not completely devoid of materiality for Foucault, an idea arguably brought home to him during his tenure in Tunisia. Foucault's move to North Africa in 1966 is often regarded as a key turning point in his advancement towards politics and activism, primarily shaped by his firsthand experiences with his students' political entanglements. Before this time, in the early 1950s at the *École Normale Supérieure*, Foucault approached politics with suspicion, if not vocal derision. He reluctantly headed up a group of student communists whose meeting space he jokingly called the "psychological laboratory" — although its only "equipment" was a mouse in a shoebox. And to the emerging Cold War Manichean ideologies, he found little place to hang his political hat. In a 1978 interview, he recollected his ambivalence, if not outright frustration: "What could politics represent for those who were twenty when the war was over [...]? What could politics mean when it was a question of choosing between Stalin's U.S.S.R. and Truman's America?"³²

Foucault's time in Tunisia proved to be a wholly different political experience. Shortly after his arrival to teach at the University of Tunis in September, clashes between students and police grew incendiary. Nearly without reprieve until his return to France in the heady days of 1968, the country experienced riots, attacks on key embassies, and innumerable student demonstrations. So great was the wreckage, that the president exacted a tax to pay for the riot damage.³³ Foucault's support for the rebels included hiding a printing machine used to run off anti-government leaflets in his garden. At one point he was badly beaten up in an attack presumably launched by plain-clothes police. The whole experience had a radicalizing effect on Foucault. He recalled, "I was profoundly struck and amazed by those young men and women who exposed themselves to serious risks for the simple fact of having written or distributed a leaflet, or for having incited others to go on strike. Such actions were enough to place at risk one's life, one's freedom and one's body."³⁴ Foucault witnessed the escalation of tensions in the global 1960s through the lens of his Tunisian experience, from which he drew wider conclusions:

What was the meaning of that outburst of radical revolt that the Tunisian students had attempted? [...] I think my answer is that the dissatisfaction came from the way in which a kind of permanent oppression in daily life was being put into effect by the state and by other

³⁰ Foucault: *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, p. 145.

³¹ Rudi Laermans and Pascal Gielen: "The Archive of the Digital An-archive, in: *Image and Narrative* 17 (April 2007), URL: http://www.imageandnarrative.be/inarchive/digital_archive/laermans_gielen.htm.

³² Michel Foucault and Duccio Trombadori: *Remarks on Marx. Conversations with Duccio Trombadori*, trans. R. James Goldstein and James Cascaito, New York: Semiotext(e) 1991 [Italian 1981], p. 47.

³³ Ahluwalia: *Post-structuralism's Colonial Roots*, pp. 597–606; Richard Wolin: *The Wind from the East: French Intellectuals, the Cultural Revolution, and the Legacy of the 1960s*, Princeton: Princeton University Press 2010.

³⁴ Foucault and Trombadori: *Remarks on Marx*, p. 134.

*institutions and oppressive groups [...] And not only state power but also that which was exercised within the social body through extremely different channels, forms and institutions. It was no longer acceptable to be "governed" in a certain way. I mean "governed" in an extended sense; I'm not just referring to the government of the state and the men who represent it, but also to those men who organize our daily lives by means of rules, by way of direct or indirect influences, as for instance the mass media.*³⁵

These reflections clearly foreshadow Foucault's later formulation of governmentality, yet the mention of "mass media" also hint at the will to enclose. In particular, they arguably speak to Foucault's historical quest to precisely date the turning point when the threshold of what was considered "important" information worthy of archiving (i.e., information regarding sacred or important secular figures and the narratives of their lives) was lowered so as to add the quotidian facts of common people. In his later work, *Discipline and Punishment* (1975), Foucault elaborates, "What is archived is no longer a monument for future memory, but a document for possible use. And this new descriptibility is all the more marked in that the disciplinary framework is a strict one: the child, the patient, the madman, the prisoner were to become [...] the object of individualization and subjectivization."³⁶ In the early Cold War context, we will want to add other potentially dangerous others: peasants, backwards people, slum dwellers, etc. Yet, for Foucault, his investigation of the archive, as his life's work makes clear, would not be a trenchant, pointed critique of the rise of Cold War big data. Instead, he would direct his interests to modernity's earlier impulses toward the will to enclose, especially the ones close to home that made him a self-aware and knowing subject as well.

In the final paragraph to the introduction of *Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault wrote his famous admonishment of the author: "Do not ask me who I am, and do not tell me to remain the same." The quote goes on though and the second part is more germane to my argument here. He concludes: "Leave it to our bureaucrats³⁷ and our police to see that our papers are in order."³⁸ Much of the concern and worry for "papers being in order" during the earlier years of the Cold War pertained to the throngs of "backwards people" in the recently termed 'Third World' who were awakening out of decolonization and demanding to be heard. If the efforts of students in Tunisia did not completely drive home this sea change for Foucault, perhaps the writing of other French intellectuals would. Witness, for instance, the foreboding tone of Jean-Paul Sartre's 1961 preface to Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*: "Not so very long ago, the earth numbered two thousand million inhabitants: five hundred million men and one thousand five hundred million natives. The former had the Word; the others merely had use of it."³⁹ For anthropol-

³⁵ Ibid., pp. 143–145.

³⁶ Michel Foucault: *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan, New York: Vintage Books 1977 [French 1975], pp. 191–192.

³⁷ 'Bureaucrats' is frequently rendered by different translators as the civil registry [*états civils*].

³⁸ Foucault: *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, p. 17.

³⁹ Jean-Paul Sartre: Preface, trans. Rixhard Philcox, in: Frantz Fanon: *The Wretched of the Earth*, New York: Grove Press 1963 [French 1961], p. xiii.

ogists — and behavioral scientists more broadly — the burning question would become: what would happen when the "savage mind" obtained the west's tools for emancipation, including literacy? Would they be discerning consumers of mass media who would repel the illusions of Soviet development models, rooted in retrograde collectivism at best, or violent revolution at worst? Or would their very nature as *homo economicus* lead them to be self-maximizing, self-actualizing individuals? Foucault's overt political stance on such a question would come over time though both his local and international activism. Yet, pre-1968, his focus would stay decidedly bookish — focused on distinguishing his historical method from the prevailing trends of structuralism.

4. Conclusion

With respect to anthropology, which I have focused on here to the exclusion of other developments in structuralism, key projects carried the whiff of Cold War fears and preoccupations, combined with a healthy dose of neo-positivism and an unabashed reliance on technology. Foucault's reconceptualization of the archive as a set of processes that did not merely reproduce domains of knowledge, but actually produced them, arguably serves as a partial response to the algorithmic and cybernetic impulses that enamored anthropology and the larger behavioral sciences in the 1950s and early 1960s. However, it is difficult to tease out, given the ways Foucault's commentators in the 1960s continually lumped him, often uncritically, with France's structuralist vanguard. Maurice Henry's famous cartoon that accompanied a 1967 interview with Foucault illustrates this point.⁴⁰

The cartoon shows, from left to right, Foucault enthusiastically lecturing to his colleagues — Lacan, arms crossed looking indifferent, Lévi-Strauss with his head in his papers, and Roland Barthes seemingly the only one listening and following along. While all are separated in their thoughts, what collectively defines them is their dress — the peculiar grass skirts. Why this nod to primitivism and, perhaps, anthropology? The cartoon's popularity and frequent reproduction is, arguably, a testament to its ambiguity and the different ways in which structuralism was conceptualized. Is the aloofness on his colleagues' part significance of boredom with something they have all heard before — a preaching to the choir? Or is it disdain for Foucault's loosening of the structuralism paradigm against what Dreyfus and Rabinow label the more "atomistic" form represented by Lévi-Strauss.⁴¹ If so, is Lévi-Strauss lost in the pages of the Human Relations Area Files? Such exaggerations aside, to locate Foucault's critique of the archive in this particular Cold War moment, as well as his critique of a new atomistic structuralism, would require a closer investigation of his commitment to the underlying assumptions of structural anthropology. Clearly Foucault did not outright disagree with the structural anthropologist's commitment to

⁴⁰ Maurice Henry: *La Quinzaine Littéraire* (1 July 1967).

⁴¹ Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow: *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, 2nd ed., Chicago: Chicago University Press 1982, pp. 53–56.

the search for underlying meaning networks. In a popularly reprinted interview from 1966, notable for Foucault's candid critique of Sarte, Foucault attributed his move away from the existential philosopher to "the day Lévi-Strauss demonstrated about societies that "meaning" was only a surface effect [...] what sustained us in time and space was a system." Yet, it was the closed nature of the system for Lévi-Strauss — a model heavily influenced by US cybernetics — that did not sit well with Foucault. He said of Lévi-Straussian approach, "It let us stop being forced to hope for anything."⁴²

In other words, it was a kind of vacuum that was without time or context. The same political forces at work that legitimized archiving big data also served to validate the ethnological enterprise of structural anthropology. Foucault rebuffed this: "Ethnology," he argued, "is possible only on the basis of a certain situation, of an absolutely singular event which involves not only our historicity but also that of all men who can constitute the object of an ethnology." When the same interviewer from 1966 pushed Foucault to elaborate by asking, "Who Secretes the system"? He answered: "What is this anonymous system without a subject, what thinks? The I has exploded and we are left with 'there is'."⁴³ The rise of Cold War big data — mystified by its unimaginable, its anonymous authorship as in the case of the Human Relations Area files that stripped identifying or contextual information from the cultural "facts," and its veil of objectivity, presented itself as the era's "there is" all in the will, if not the need, to enclose.

⁴² Quoted in Wilcken: *Claude Levi-Strauss*, p. 337.

⁴³ Quoted in Wilcken: *Claude Levi-Strauss*, p. 337.