

# Evaluation of the Usefulness of Selected Examples of Foucault's Theory Essay

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Within this paper, I shall evaluate the usefulness of selected examples of Foucault's theories from a feminist perspective. To begin, a short introduction will outline the era in which Foucault wrote, as this has been seen as influential to his work, inspiring him to move away from the former ideological ways of thinking about the world (Taylor and Vintges 2004, Mills 1997). I shall then go on to consider the changing nature of [feminism](#), which has moved on from viewing patriarchy and men as the oppressors of women, and is persistently developing more complex analyses of the ways in which gendered power relations operate. I wish to discuss the ways in which Foucault's theorisation of power and his methodology of [discourse](#) analysis have been of use to feminists. I shall finally address some criticism of Foucault's works, that of it being nihilistic, and of a gender blind nature, while also highlighting some of the similarities between the goals of feminism and the preoccupations of Foucault (King 2004). Due to space limitations here, this will not be a major critique of Foucault's work, or an in-depth analysis of his complete epistemology. It will however highlight the ways in which some of his concepts have been utilised by contemporary feminists in order to develop a more complex analysis of gendered power relations (Mills 1997, Howe 2008, Smart 1989). To focus on the areas selected should by

no means detract from the importance of other aspects of his work which have not been included here.

Foucault lived through the rise of Stalinism, and the Second World War (Mills 1997). He was living in a post-totalitarian era which had fundamentally changed the world, and he saw that new ways of making sense of society were necessary. Lik...

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