CHAPTER 4

POWER/KNOWLEDGE
A. POWER/KNOWLEDGE AND SUBJECT

Between Madness and Civilization and The Order of Things, Foucault wrote a small book on Raymond Roussel. In this work he describes Roussel's works in terms of a "process". According to Foucault, Roussel's narrative exploitations reflect his observations and his actual death upon the locked threshold of his room. His narrative technique exploits the semantic differences between homographic phrases and the origin or limit of that process in the gap between words and the things they represent. The procedure of the "process" is the constitutive principle of Roussel's works. According to Foucault, his narrative explanations always hide the origins and causes of the spectacles in a labyrinthine play of shadows and enigmas. Roussel had shown how language draws power from its very weakness, its inability to provide a separate and unambiguous description for each and every object encountered in the world because language used the same words to describe different things. There was "no system common to existence and to language". To Roussel, Foucault attributed the understanding that "in the conforming play of history and existence", we simply discover the general law of the game of significance in which is pursued our reasonable history.

It was precisely such a view that led Foucault in The Order of Things to link his analysis of knowledge "not to a theory of the knowing subject but to a theory of discursive practice" (OT: xiv). The things he said about himself in The Archaeology of
Knowledge, that he lived in a labyrinth and that he spoke out of a "blank space", he first said about Roussel. He writes:

It is Roussel's linguistic space, the void from which he speaks, the absence which binds and mutually excludes his work and his madness. The void is not to be understood as a metaphor. It is the insolvency of words which are fewer in number than the things they designate, and due to this principle of economy must take on meaning (PL : 185).

Again in a 1983 interview with the American translator of his book, Foucault also attributed to Roussel the same attempt:

And it could also be said about Roussel, it is not surprising that he hides it (his sexuality) completely since he is a homosexual. In other words, of the three possible modes of behaviour—hiding it entirely, hiding it while revealing it or flaunting it—all can appear as a result of sexuality, but I would say that it is related to a way of living ... (PL : 183, 185).

According to Foucault, Roussel's understanding of language was tied to the conflicts and difficulties his sexual nature created for him. These tensions made him see how the weakness of language was also its strength. He writes:

This illuminating flaw of language was experienced by Roussel as an anguish, as an obsession, if you will. In any case, quite unique forms of experience (quite deviant which is to say quiet disorienting) were required to expose this bare linguistic fact: that language speaks only from something essential that is lacking. From this lack is experienced the "play"—in both senses of the word (the
limit and the principle simultaneously) in the fact that the same word can designate two different things and the same sentence repeated can have another meaning (DL: 165).

So conceived language appeared as a "thin blade" that slits the identity of things, showing them as hopelessly double and self-divided. His vision made him "the inventor of language that speaks only about itself". When his American translator asked whether working on the history of madness created his interest in Roussel, Foucault replied:

It wasn't because of the cultural, medical scientific, institutional problems of madness that I became interested in Roussel. No doubt what could be said is that perhaps the same reasons which in my perverseness claus? and in my own psychopathological makeup made me pursue my interest in Roussel on the other (DL: 170).

Later in the same interview Foucault explained that a persons sexuality could take three different forms in relationship to his work: "hiding it entirely, hiding it while revealing it or flaunting it." He writes:

The private life of an individual, his sexual preference and his work are interrelated not because his work translates his sexual life but because the work includes the whole life as well as the text (DL: 184).

Roussel owed this position to a series of enigmatic stories and dramas. These works revolved around a fascination with power of language to create relationships between things otherwise unconnected. His works were attempts to construct narratives in which the verbal links became the underlying substructure of a
world. In *Impressions of Africa*, we can see the fascination for the power of language in more complex directions. They rested on linguistic transformations. Roussel was a man obsessed by rules. It is not hard to see what *The Order of Things* owes to Roussel. The hidden power of language created the connections between things that we later come to think we have discovered in the world itself. Foucault acknowledged this connection in his book, when he declared that it was to give Roussel "only a small part of what is still his due". He mentioned Roussel in connection with the double sense he found in the word "table". Table means first the surgical operating table on which Lautreamont had imagined the encounter of an umbrella and a sewing machine. But it was equally the table of knowledge. Foucault writes:

> A tabula, that enables thought to operate upon the entities of our world, to put them in order to divide them into classes, to group them according to names that designate their similarities and differences - the table upon which, since the beginning of time, language has intersected space (OT: xvii).

This may be the table of Roussel. In his book on Roussel, Foucault declared that the procedures described in *How I Wrote Certain of My Books* "had the power of creating a whole world of things never seen, impossible, unique". It was language that "forms the system of existence". Along with the space that it defines, it constitutes the place of forms. Foucault writes:

> In the confusing play of history and existence, we simply discover the general law of the game of significance, in which is pursued our reasonable history. Things are
perceived because words are lacking; the light of their being is the fiery crater where language breaks down (PA: 166).

Although the encounter with Roussel is most visible here, its effects on Foucault did not begin only with The Order of Things. He actually discovered Roussel in 1957 on a brief return from Sweden to France, "I was reading Roussel at the time I was working on my book about the history of madness" (PA: 174). Foucault also attributed to Roussel the same attempt to seek through his writing "a transformation of his way of being" that he perceived behind his own work.

In The Order of Things Foucault not only invoked the appearance of modern literary figures in whom madness and writing were closely joined. He also hailed the madness of Don Quixote as a "homo semanticism", a protest against "the cruel logic of identities and differences". Foucault seems to join that protest when he proposes to see modern thought as "advancing towards that region where man's Other must become the Same as himself," or invokes "the impalpable figure of the Same, yet possessing the Power, nevertheless, to burst open upon itself and become Other," or when he describes the end of the modern episteme as "the identity of the Return of the Same with the absolute dispersion of man" (OT: 49, 328, 329-30, 385).

This model can perhaps be most helpfully conceived in terms of the Same and the Other. The space of the Same is characterised by light. It is the space of discourse. The
elements that characterise the space of the Other are those that have been excluded by discourse. These are the figures of madness, sexuality, desire and death. In what Foucault calls the classical period (1650-1800), signs were constituted and referents identified in the world of the Same. But in the modern period, a new space or a new fold invented itself. That is, what Foucault called the “birth of literature”, a vertical space was established at the limit where light met darkness. This is the space of non-discursive literature opened by that limit with Kant’s aesthetic establishing the possibility and Sade the realisation. It is in this fold, that the Foucaultian theatre is situated. It is here where Mallarme, Nietzsche, Bataille and Blanchot wrote and where Foucault writes. It hardly attests to his modesty when he qualifies his entire corpus as “fiction”. The new language of this vertical space is able to offer a radical description of discourse and the same description of discourse and the Same. It can also speak about the Other (madness, sexuality etc.) in a qualitatively different way than that of which discourse is capable. From time to time figures from the Other are able to cross over into this fold and speak. The model is however more rigorously thematised in his essay on Blanchot and Bataille. We shall come to the presence of similar themes in Foucault’s History of Sexuality later on.

As we have seen in the third chapter, to read history with Foucault is to see it as a kind of Roussellian cartography: The ship of Fools stands for the free movement of the mad, the opening of the Paris Hospital General in 1656 for the confinement of unreason in a world structured by rationality, Velasquez’s
"Las meninas" figures. Reading Foucault's work with this perspective should not lead us to expect allusions to sexual identity everywhere. His analyses were never mere allegories: the pattern of sexual sameness and difference seemed a background figure in the carpet. It functions like the linguistic substrata of Roussel's tales enabling Foucault's thinking and imagination in ways that could never be predicted in advance. We know however that Foucault gave much significance to a whole series of figures as emblems for valid truths. The classical episteme and panopticon is a metaphor giving relief to relations of Power difficult to clarify without it. Echoes of Roussel can be seen in the theme Foucault made central to modern carceral society: visibility. Foucault writes:

Full lighting and the eye of a supervisor capture better than darkness, which ultimately protected, visibility is a trap (DP: 200).

Roussel too was pursued by the spectre of visibility. In a passage written while he was under the care of Pierre Janet which Foucault quoted in his book he declared:

Practicing forbidden acts in private rooms knowing that it is prohibited, risking punishment or at least the contempt of respectable people, that is perfection. But that nudity should be shown, and sexual pleasures can simply be seen at a public spectacle without risks of punishment, with the consent of parents, and while pretending to remain chaste and virtuous, that is unthinkable, inadmissible. Everything concerning love must remain forbidden and inaccessible (DL: 101).
Foucault's understanding of the trap constituted by visibility shares this argument. He writes:

The exile of the leper and the plague do not bring with them the same political dream. The first is that of a pure community, the second that of a disciplined society. Two ways of exercising power over men, of controlling their relations, of separating out their dangerous mixtures (DP: 198).

A prison like Bentham's put an end to the relations inmates had earlier constituted with each other. It was that of "a crowd, a compact mass, a locus of multiple exchanges, individualities merging together". With this change it prepared the state of "sequestered and observed solitude" suffered by all modern individuals. This subjectivation and objectivation in the disciplinary society is the theme of Discipline and Punish. Here the reformed penology of the later Enlightenment stands in much the same relationship to the order of brutal, capricious punishments it replaced. It resembles what the asylum of Pinel and Tuke did to their earlier regimes: Reasonable, humane treatment replaces the barbarities of previous systems but their result is to establish a new set of controls. It operates on "independent moral subjects from within". In the pre-classical phase, represented by medieval leper hospitals or later Jesuit colleges, groups were already divided from one another but without reference to the character of the individual. "The organisation of a serial space was one of the great technical mutations of elementary education," Foucault observes (DP: 147). In contrast, classical institutions set people into analytical
frames or ranks according to individual characteristics exercising a more subtle and effective discipline. Foucault writes:

They are different projects, then, but not in compatible ones. We see them coming slowly together and it is the peculiarity of the nineteenth century that it applied to the space of exclusions of which the leper was the symbolic inhabitant (beggars, vagabonds, madmen and the disorderly formed the real population) the technique of power proper to disciplinary partitioning (DP: 199).

The interchange of subjectivity and subjection already appears in classical institutions; but it is perfected in the panopticon, where the constant visibility of the prisoner is implied by the architecture itself, making the presence of a guardian unnecessary. Foucault writes:

He who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power, he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection (DP: 202-203).

The architectural model of such surveillance ensures a model of great institutional flexibility. It could be used as the design of a prison, a hospital, a factory or a school. The panopticon guarantees the constant visibility of the prisoner and the anonymous invisibility of his guard. Bentham's scheme gives us the ideal figure of a political technology which
individualises human beings in order to homogenise them. Difference can be reduced only by being first of all defined.

The mechanisms of power studied by Foucault produce the individuals they are designed to dominate. Because of this, they are essentially different from techniques of thought control. Foucault's interest centers not on the coercive techniques by which we can be brought around to embrace a certain body of beliefs. His interest is on the ways in which the thinking subject itself is created as the delimiting field of possibility for all thought. Critiques of power almost invariably define power as a repressive force. Foucault on the other hand insists on the non-representative nature of power. All relations of power constitute fields of knowledge. Because knowledge implies and even constitutes power relations, a study of the birth of prisons inevitably becomes a statement about the epistemological achievements of the same period. Penal law and the human sciences have a common matrix in a specifically modern mode of exercising power. This mode has given birth not only to the institution of the prison, but also to man himself as the object of a scientific discourse.

A certain myth about Man has been used to explain and to control the behaviour of the human subject. The question of the subject is however not exhausted by a critique of the complicity between the political exercise of power and the description of human nature proposed by the presumably disinterested "human sciences". What exactly is the place of the subject in the
networks of power, both as he is traversed by power strategies and as he himself exercises power?

For Foucault, the human subject is not a self-existing thing which has certain essence or nature. Rather, it is a historical product. It is the production of various social, political economic and cultural factors. It is a socially constituted historical product. According to Foucault, confession does much to define the human soul. Foucault points out that the confession comes from outside. It is a social institution. It is a form of social structuring and constituting the soul. The confession then is an example of how the soul is socially constituted. The Body also cannot be taken to be stable or a given. According to Barry Smart:

It is not a biological conception of the body which appears in Foucault's work but a historical conception of the body embedded within a political field, subject to power relations which restrain it, invest it, mark it, train it, torture it, force it to carry out tasks, to perform ceremonies, to emit signs. This Nietzschean conception of the body as inscribed by history and invested with relations of power and domination is the anti-thesis of conceptions in which the body is the alienated locus of an essential human potential.

Foucault makes this clear when he writes, "The body is moulded by a great many distinct regimes; it is broken down by the rhythms of work, rest and holidays, it is poisoned by food or
values, through eating habits or moral laws; it constructs resistances" (LGP: 153).

The body is not a pristine thing that exists underneath the surface on which the social world inscribes its disciplines. Rather the body is socially constituted, it is defined historically as the result of societal training, shaping and manipulation.

In addition to the soul and the body providing unsatisfactory constants for an understanding of the human being, Foucault also points out how socially constructed understandings define the human being. This is also susceptible to shift. Foucault points out this in his book on Pierre Riviere. Here Foucault presents the battle over who Pierre Riviere was: was he criminal or insane? or normal, but perverted by an evil society, or satanic? In this book, Foucault provides documents showing the tyranny of discourses (medical, legal, psychological and criminological) which each try to categorise and define Pierre Riviere. In addition, Foucault presents the memoirs of Riviere himself. But while no single social discourse clearly defines Riviere, neither does the memoir itself provide the deciding factor. The memoir as well as other evidence must be put through the sieve of interpretive discourses. It alone cannot establish the nature of Riviere. But in showing this, Foucault also makes it clear that neither can the other medico-legal discourses. The battle goes back and forth. Indeed, Riviere's suicide denies each competing discourse, its final say on what he is. It shows
that even socially constructed understandings of the human being are unstable (IPR: 30 - 47).

In *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault explores the notion that sex is central to the human being, at the core of what we are. Sexuality, the discourse of sex is paramount. Sex itself is the product of sexuality. He writes:

So we must not refer a history of sexuality to the agency of sex; but rather show how sex is historically subordinate to sexuality. We must not place sex on the side of reality and sexuality on that of confused ideas and illusions. Sexuality is a very real historical formation, it is what gave rise to the notion of sex, as a speculative element necessary to its operation (HS: 187).

For Foucault, then sex is not the essence of human beings, it is a "dense transfer point for relations of power" (HS: 103). In short, it means that there is nothing at the core of human beings that could be called a nature or essence. Neither body, soul, nor social definition of sex is a stable substance. They are made, created, produced. They are social constructs. According to Foucault, power is not simply a force that emanates from one person or institution. Such conceptions of power are based on an understanding of sovereign power. This is where power is seen as flowing down from the Sovereign in the form of prohibitive law—a law that works to "incite, reinforce, control, monitor, epitomise and organise the forces under it" (HS: 136). Power in the contemporary world is agentless. It does not flow from one agent to another. The pattern is not linear. There is not a clear dominator and dominated. Power is simply the configuration of
vectors of force relations as they assume a pattern at different
and in different situations. According to Foucault:

> 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
organisation (HS: 93).

The result of this view of power is that in the asylum, state or
prison one does not see the source of power, nor even power's
final forms. Rather, what we see is the codification of force
relations at a given time. Moreover within these disciplinary
institutions power does not flow from psychiatrist to patient,
Sovereign to ruled or warden to prisoner. Rather, power
characterises the configuration of exertion, coercion and force
articulated by the interactive strategies of both sets of
subjects.

Approaching power in this way, we have to look at power not
in its macro-formations but in its micro-forms. He writes:

> But in thinking of the mechanisms of power, I am
thinking rather of its capillary forms of existence, the
point where power reaches into the very grain of
individuals, touches their bodies and inserts itself into
their actions and attitudes, their discourses, learning
processes and everyday lives (PK: 39).

Focusing on power at this level shows the complexity of its
machinations as well as its fluidity. It denies monolithic
reductionistic, linear conceptualisations. In most of his work,
Foucault focuses on the interplay between different discursive
formations. In doing so, Foucault simply sketches the contours
of force relations as they pattern themselves in this interplay. He does not talk about origins, end points or broad movements of power.

Foucault understands that power does not originate in one place and end in another because he notices that there will always be resistance to force relations. One example of this can be seen in the episode when society tries to control masturbation in children. Masturbation was understood as a sickness of the western world. As a result, "via the medium of families, though not at their initiative, a system of control of sexuality, an objectivisation of sexuality allied to corporeal persecution was established over the bodies of children" (PK: 56).

Resistance however formed against this. Instead of steering adults and children away from interests in the body and therewith dissuading them from masturbating almost the opposite took place. He writes:

But sexuality through thus becoming an object of analysis and concern, surveillance and control engendered at the same time an intensification of each individual's desire, for, in and over his body.... The revolt of the sexual body is the reverse effect of this encroachment (PK: 56-57).

Foucault cites another example of such resistances and reversals in Discipline and Punish when discussing public executions. Foucault points out how the spectacle of public executions served as a form of social control. It was a deterrent to people contemplating criminal acts. It demonstrated the awesome strength of the state. However, being able to witness executions
also allowed people to revolt against the state. It represented
a transfer point of power. It is a place where resistance could
manifest and fight back and reverse the direction of power. He
writes:

Now it was on this point that the people, drawn to the
spectacle intended to terrorise it, could express its
rejection of the punitive power and sometimes revolt.
Preventing an execution that was regarded as unjust,
snatching a condemned man from the hands of the executioner,
obtaining his pardon by force, possibly pursuing and
assaulting the executioners, in any case abusing the judges
and causing an uproar against the sentence - all this formed
part of the popular practices that invested, traversed and
often overturned the ritual of the public
execution (DP: 59-60).

A final example of such resistances and reverses can be seen in
the epitome of control as it was translated into architecture in
the panopticon. The point here is that, Foucault does not see
power as simple "thing" that originates in one area and affects
another. Rather, power is web-like, one cannot identify its
sources nor control its direction. There are resistances to power
that frustrate clear delineation of direction. When these are
considered in addition to the pervasiveness of power in general,
it is clear that Foucault has a unique conception of power that
is critical of traditional, monological, unidirectional
understandings of it.

According to Foucault, power is rather the multiplicity of
forms of force relations exercised within the fabric of society.
If we locate power in one spot and talk about it in strict economic terms it bleaches out the specificity and contextual characteristics of power. The pervasiveness of discursive formations explodes the core of the human being and results in a view that sees power as diffuse.

Foucault finds traditional history problematic then because it bleaches out the specificity of events. It smooths rough edges and removes disruptions and discontinuities which characterise historical events. It injects an overall theme to history which the circumstantial aspect of events cannot support. He writes:

It seemed to me that, for the moment, the essential task was to free the history of thought from its subjection to transcendence... my aim was to analyse this history in the discontinuity that no teleology would reduce in advance; to map it in a dispersion that no pre-established horizon would embrace (AK: 203).

In place of a strict traditional historical approach Foucault suggests a genealogical one. Genealogy is a type of historical study which rejects inserting specific events into grand explanatory schemes. Instead it preserves the singularity of events. Hence in so doing it gives voice to the silenced conflicts and twists and turns of the past. In this way, genealogy robs traditional history of its use of supra-historical constants. In short, it tries to get rid of any transcendental reference. A significant result of genealogy is that in dismantling the large conceptual architecture of traditional
history, it denies legitimacy to historical subjects. Historical subjects cannot claim a sense of naturalness, rationality and ontological privilegedness. For example, the prison, asylum, school or state cannot claim to represent the natural consequence of things. Genealogy in this sense, dislodges any claim by a historical subject to a privileged existence. It does so by showing that subjects do not reflect forms infused to the nature of the universe. Genealogy exposes the accidental character of historical subjects. It points out that they owe their existence and character to the mere conjunction of historical accidents. In short, genealogy shows that historical subjects have no essence and they are socially constituted. Foucault uses a genealogical approach to exteriorise everything. Everything is a social construct. Foucault makes this clear in his Essay on “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History”:

If the genealogist refuses to extend his faith in metaphysics, if he listens to history, he finds that there is something altogether different behind things: not a timeless and essential secret, but the secret that they have no essence or that their essence was fabricated in a piecemeal fashion from alien forms (LCP: 142).

In Foucault's historical work he actually finds that the events he traces do not have smooth, continuous character. For example in Discipline and Punish, he finds that the history of imprisonment does not represent a logical series of events. When considering the legitimacy and acceptability of prison practices those practices must be considered on the same topical level as all other historical products. They represent the result of the
interplay between force relations which are not injected into the historical scene. Rather they are the ruses of human beings, nothing more, nothing less.

Now we have seen that genealogy is obviously critical of the dialectic. Genealogy rejects both the teleological element as well as its interiority. Foucault writes:

"History has no meaning, though this is not to say that it is absurd or incoherent. On the contrary, it is intelligible and should be susceptible to analysis down to the smallest detail - but this in accordance with the intelligibility of struggles, of strategies and tactics. Neither the dialectic as logic of contradictions nor semiotics as the structure of communication can account for the intrinsic intelligibility of conflicts. Dialectic is a way of evading the always open and hazardous reality of conflict by reducing it to a Hegelian skeleton (FR: 57).

In short, the above criticism consists of an attack on the three pillars on which Marx's grand theory rests. They are the human subject, power in society and a philosophy of History. We have seen above that Foucault problematises each of these. For Foucault, Marx's attempt to thread the whole system together with the concept of labour is undesirable. There is something wrong with the discovering a centre to anything. According to Foucault, there are no centers. This is the main thrust of his critique of Marx. It also represents his critique of grand theory. Grand theory tries to connect understandings of the human being, society and history. It cannot hold together because nothing
holds together. This character can be understood under the "rubric of decentering".

Decentering is the critique of the idea that any one element can be defined as essential, fundamental and determinate. It characterises the view that there are no referents in reality itself. In fact, there are no objects in the traditional sense of the term. Everything is exteriorised. Nothing is substantive. For Foucault, there are no orienting principles or points of identity around which one can develop orienting principles. He makes this clear to the degree that his investigations into psychiatry, medicine, criminology and sexuality do not focus on the nature of insanity, illness, the criminal, male or female. Rather his works are catalogues of the discursive formations which while refering to the same subject actually produce the object about which they speak. There are no objects for Foucault, only discursive formations producing "objects". For example, by the time Foucault wrote *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, he came to see mental illness not as a fundamental experience but as a constructed phenomenon. He writes:

It would certainly be a mistake to try to discover what could have been said of madness at a particular time by interrogating the being of madness itself, its secrete content, its silent, self-enclosed truth; mental illness was constituted by all that was said in all the statements that named it, divided it up, described it, explained it, traced its developments, indicated its various correlations, judged it and possibly gave it speech by articulating, in its name, discourses that were to be taken as its own.
Moreover, this group of statements is far from referring to a single object, formed once and for all, and to preserving it indefinitely as its horizon of unexhaustible ideality (AK: 22).

What Foucault says here goes for his work in general. Madness, criminality, illness and so forth are not things awaiting to be discovered by modern science. For Foucault the sciences produce their objects. Discussing Foucault's work on madness Alan Sheridan writes:

Madness did not wait, in immobile identity, for the advent of psychiatry to carry it from the darkness of superstition to the light of truth. The categories of modern psychiatry were not lying in a state of nature ready to be picked up by the perceptive observer: They were produced by that science in its very act of formation.

At another level, Foucault not only takes apart the objects or phenomena referred to but he showed that there is nothing there but discourse (the act of referring). He also explodes the elements of discourse themselves. The elements of discourse are the tools with which people talked about supposed objects. He unpacks the statement itself. He shows there is no cohesive core element to the statement that delineates it as a thing, a referent. He writes:

One should not be surprised, then if one has failed to find structural criteria of unity for the statement; this is because it is not in itself a unit, but a function that cuts across a domain of structures and possible unities and which reveals them with concrete contents, in time and place.
Thus, not only are referents disembodied but also the discourse which actually constitutes them. This exploding of phenomena or dispensing with the object is called decentering. It sees no unities and hence no central organising principle to phenomena.

Foucault's recognition of this assumption and his evaluation of its basic inadequacy for a study of power in modern society provide the characteristic traits of his political analysis. The foundation of contemporary politics is found in what he calls "bio-politics". His studies on the prison and sexuality treat two dimensions as crucial for the emergence of this bio-politics. Prison is concerned with the disciplining of the human body. Sexuality is addressing the health of the social body as a whole.

As a historical event, the birth of the prison is tied to several other processes taking place at the same time. While philosophers were discussing the state of nature, rights, social contract and a general will, the military was involved with the construction of a great military machine. It tried to elaborate techniques of discipline by which bodies could be trained to become docile instruments in its functioning. A new anatomy of the body and a new force of technology were being assembled. Discipline is the major means for the production of peace and order within a society. Discipline is a mechanism in which different powers are placed in relation to one another in order to produce a certain type of human conduct. A "cellular" power was required, one that would distribute the individual members of
groups into manipulable series. Individuals are to be located in specific spaces defined in terms of rankings and possible transitions from rank to rank (DP: 141-168). In short, "it dissociates power from the body" and establishes in the body a "link between an increased aptitude and an increased domination" (DP: 138).

By means of the "disciplines", Foucault carries the theme of anonymity and impersonality from the realm of discourse to the realm of power relations. Under the rubric of Discipline and Punish, Foucault presented a reformulation of a whole set of traditional renderings of modern European history, the advent of bourgeois liberalism, the ideologies of progress and individualism, the intensification of bureaucratisation, the rise of the professions are all included here. Each has its own relationship to the "disciplines". In Discipline and Punish, the disciplines refer in the first instance not to an elite cadre of expert practitioners but to the masses. But as Foucault develops his theme, its scope widens. Confinement and exclusion displayed its strength in a negative functioning. In contrast, the disciplinary power aspires to an exercise of coercion that is positive, continuous and subtle. Its goal is a system of surveillance which is automatic, generalised and spread through out the social body. It is a power that cannot be defined with any particular institution. It is the fabric of all of them. The operations of the powers and technology of a disciplinary society constitutes perhaps the most fundamental level from which the "man of modern humanism
was born" (DP: 141). It is not only the criminal who becomes an object to be known during the modern period but human reality itself, in the figure of man. He writes:

The carceral network constituted one of the armatures of this power-knowledge that has made the human sciences historically possible. Knowable man (soul, individuality, consciousness, conduct, whatever it is called) is the object-effect of this analytical investment, of this domination-observation (DP: 305).

At the heart of this disciplinary society is the norm:

We are in the society of the teacher-judge, the doctor-judge, the educator-judge, the social worker-judge, it is on them that the universal reign of the normative is based; and each individual wherever he may find himself subjects to it his body, his gestures, his behaviour, his aptitudes, his achievements (DP: 304).

Like the penal condition itself this power of normalisation is not exterior to us. It penetrates the depths of what we consider most internal and intimate: our sexuality. The notion of norm is rooted in the idea that there is a principle of correct functioning for a specific organism. In writing a history of sexuality, Foucault’s interest is not to account for different patterns of sexual conduct. His attempt is to probe the foundations that tie sexuality with its many accepted norms to knowledge and the power to normalize.
A paradoxical air accompanies the unfolding of Foucault's argument in the first volume of *The History of Sexuality*. Inverting psychoanalysis' realism of the sexual, Foucault's analysis compels the inversion of the hierarchy. A constant of Foucault's work is an investigation of the relations between Reason and Ethics. In pursuing the links between reason and ethics, Foucault traces an unbroken descent from a hegiographic framework via an explicit discourse on the philosophical foundations of freedom and truth in the eighteenth century. This is the theme of *The Birth of the Clinic*, in which the body forms the objective foundation of diagnostic judgements. This argument is further extended in *The Order of Things* where it is suggested that the mythological forms of finitude may receive a complementary "ethnographic" elucidation. In *The History of Sexuality*, the sexual becomes the end product of the convergence of the most explicit scientific codes of knowledge and of institutional "implantations" of abnormality. He writes:

Sexuality must not be thought of as a kind of natural given which power tried to hold in check or an obscure domain which knowledge tries gradually to uncover. It is the name that can be given to a historical construct: not a furtive reality that is difficult to grasp, but a great surface network in which the stimulation of bodies, the intensification of pleasures, the incitement to discourse, the formation of special knowledges, the strengthening of controls and resistances, are linked to one another, in
accordance with a few major strategies of knowledge and power (HS: 105-06).

But the sexual is not alone in being denied a fundamental ontological status. Foucault seems concerned in this work to trace its multiple genealogies. It is possible to say that his overall enterprise is concerned with the ways - "the modes of objectification" - in which human beings become subjects. A consideration of the relations between power and knowledge of course remains central to any account of such modes of objectification. But the significance of sexuality is that it increasingly comes to occupy the place of the problemisation of discourse for him. The question of the formation of the subject, of individualisation, was explicitly treated in Discipline and Punish. In The History of Sexuality, the question of subjection formulated as a question of the techniques of the self and the practices involved in it. He writes:

It is through sex - in fact, an imaginary point determined by the deployment of sexuality - that each individual has to pass in order to have access to his own intelligibility (seeing that it is both the hidden aspect and the generative principle of meaning), the whole of his body (since it is a real and threatened part of it, while symbolically constituting the whole), to his identity (since it joins the force of a drive to the singularity of a history) (HS: 155-56).

There is then a shift of emphasis from techniques imposed upon bodies by others to those which are self-imposed. The History of Sexuality has an obvious concern with the formation of an
objective science of the sexual, both medical and psychiatric. The novelty of Foucault's construction of the sexual is two-fold: (a) it construed sexual as a moral, practical object which involves the investigation of disciplines like monastic regimes and their technique of confession in its origins and development. (b) the constitutive role it played in the formation of the modern subject. These are the components which advanced his project beyond the conclusions of *Madness and Civilisation* and *The Birth of the Clinic*.

At the outset, Foucault replaces the traditional question "what is sexuality?" in its genesis, forms and development with the prior question, "is there sex?" Foucault takes these traditional questions as his starting points, proposing to provide an account of the various mechanisms which bring sex and sexuality into being. He is very careful to distinguish between sex and sexuality. According to him, it is not only the latter which is socially and historically constituted but "sex" is not to be taken as a natural given. This does not, however, mean that they have identical conditions of possibility. He calls it "the history of bodies". He writes:

I do not envisage a history of mentalities that would take account of bodies only through the manner in which they have been perceived and given meaning and value; but a history of bodies and the manner in which what is most material and most vital in them has invested (HS: 152).

It is in *Discipline and Punish* that Foucault offers an account of the way in which the body becomes invested by power relations so that it becomes simultaneously productive and subjected. More
significantly still, there emerges a new kind of knowledge about the body. He writes:

There may be a knowledge of the body that is not exactly the science of its functioning, and a mastery of its forces that is more than the ability to conquer them: this knowledge and this mastery constitute what might be called the political technology of the body (DP: 20).

The primary question posed by Foucault seems indifferent to the nature of sex, to its ultimate factual status. This is so because their priority is to examine the assumption of its ubiquity and to discern the extraneous relations which fabricate the conditions of its existence. Such relations form strategies with the objective of producing subjects who are in a fundamental relation to truth. Sexuality exists above all as an injunction to inquire. Always conducting the inquiry in the first person, the inquirer must ask, "what is the significance of sexuality for me and what am I as a result of it?" What the inquiry attempts to uncover is the truth of sex and consequently a knowledge of the individual. Foucault writes:

It is precisely this idea of sex in itself that we cannot accept without examination. Is sex really the anchorage point that supports the manifestations of sexuality, or is it rather a complex idea that was formed inside the deployment of sexuality (HS: 152).

This is the sense in which sex is used in his work. It's biological denotation depends upon the prior concepts of "species survival", "gene pool" etc. which cannot be abstracted in the vain hope of establishing a "simple" biological datum. It
is important to note that Foucault is not including in his references to discourses on sexuality those sciences concerned with the physiology of reproduction. The two types of discourse have different rules of formation. He writes:

Causality in the subject, the unconscious of the subject, the truth of the subject in the other who knows, the knowledge he holds can unbeknown to him, all this found an opportunity to deploy itself in the discourse of sex (MS: 70).

This is presumably the reason why for Foucault, the histories of obligation and observance, the codes of the sexual and knowledge are intrinsically linked. The agent once governed by pleasure is transformed into a subject. A preoccupation with the truth of sexuality produces thought as the "vector-sum of bodily pleasures" of their subjective representation as wish, memory or desire. The relation constitutive of the subject of sexuality is thus an epistemic rather than a hedonist one. An examination of motivation, a discourse seeking to establish the true concept of the object desired is the means by which truth enters into the calculation of action. Thus the agent’s relation to action is the fragile and fallible link that the techniques of truth must safeguard. To know oneself is not a matter of simple introspection, observation or recollection. It is an intricate process involving in part the capacity to infer one’s most intimate desires from the observation of external relations between things said and done to one.

Sexuality as the foundation of conscience placing responsibility to oneself and to others side by side in a concern
for the true ramifications of one's conduct. It combines both traditional senses of the subject: "the condition of being dependent and controlled and a continuity of identity ensured through knowledge. The question is: what gives sexuality and its privileged relation to truth the power to constitute subjects?

According to Foucault, since the late eighteenth century, micro-mechanisms of power have played an increasingly significant role in the management of lives through informed operations on bodies:

In any case, the purpose of the present study is in fact to show how deployments of power are directly connected to the body - to bodies, functions, physiological processes, sensations and pleasures; far from the body having to be effaced, what is needed is to make it visible through an analysis in which the biological and the historical ... are bound together in an increasingly complex fashion in accordance with the development of the modern technologies of power that life as their objective (HD: 151-52).

The characteristic feature of such mechanisms of power is that they operate through a technology of normalisation. Their aim is a corrective one. For Foucault, modern power is almost synomymous with efficacy in penetrating and regulating life. The significance of sexuality in the context of modern power is that it is an irreducible common element between the diagnostic disciplines of the body and the political regulation of populations. The emergence of population as a biologically,
economically and politically intelligible entity only occurred in the eighteenth century because the well-being of the nation was perceived as depending on the sexual conduct of the population. Hence, it became the target of state intervention. For sexuality to be administered by a regime of expertise, it must engender minute surveillances, endless medical and psychological examinations, statistical calculations, projections, demographic adjustments and public health operations on a massive scale. Behind all these, the pretext is the liability of sex to its fallibility. Our primary relation and our access to sex is thus as an individual and populational responsibility. This is also exercised in an informed way. Sexuality makes us susceptible to a double normalisation. This discourse on sexuality which in its global face forms the mode in which a society renders itself politically intelligible as population (not people). He writes:

The conclusion would be that the political, ethical, social, philosophical problem of our days is not to try to liberate the individual from the state, but to liberate us both from the state and from the type of individualisation which is linked to the state. This is as Foucault's numerous cautions indicate easier said than done. At one level, forms of subjectivation seem to be inescapable. Another level, sexual politics seem to be dependent on epistemological and ontological considerations. The refusal of existing sexual norms is a refusal of the dominant mode's access to the truth about ourselves. Sex, he argues in *The History of Sexuality* has been construed as something repressed.
openly the status of transgressors. His own positive view of power would render the repressive hypothesis immediately suspect. He writes:

The will to knowledge has not come to a halt in the face of a taboo that must not be lifted, but has persisted in constituting—despite many mistakes, of course—a science of sexuality (HS: 12-13).

The lifting of taboos merely constitutes a further step in our epistemic experience of sexuality. Liberation obeys the imperative of the will to know. Against the program of liberation Foucault replies that:

The object, in short is to define the regime of power—knowledge-pleasure that sustains the discourse on human sexuality in our part of the world...what is at issue, briefly, is the overall discursive fact, the way in which sex is put into discourse (HS: 11).

Sexual discourse is not sustained by repression. Retracing the changes of pastoral power delineates the archaeology of the sexual far more accurately. This history of the regime of pastoral Power will indicate the site to refuse our responsibility toward the sexual. This is for Foucault a more productive form of resistance. Liberation and its theoretical doubles would not contest the type of individualisation which is linked to the state. "Only the problematical network of power-knowledge-pleasure can have a contesting function. It is important to note the terminology here. The composite power-knowledge-pleasure is a network because each of its elements is and irreducible. Power and knowledge reciprocally determine each
other. Both are necessary to generate sex or sexuality out of pleasure. The subject is constituted in essential reference not only to sex but also to a desire to know its truth. Modern power is not simply repressive but productive because it subjects bodies primarily in order to render them skilled. Its repressive aspect is obvious only when it instills in the very process of training a reluctance use the enhanced capacities to undesirable ends. It could not have the effects it does if it operated through cognition alone. This is why "ideology" as an explanation for the prevalence of widespread beliefs provides an entirely deficient account. Efficacious ideas only become so via practices implemented on bodies. Foucault's notion of pastoral power outlines this picture more rigorously. He writes:

It has been often said that Christianity brought into being a code of ethics fundamentally different from that of the ancient world... This form of power is salvation oriented (as opposed to political power). It is obblitative (as opposed to the principle of sovereignty); it is individualising (as opposed to legal power); it is coextensive and continuous with life; it is linked with a production of truth - the truth of the individual himself.

Confession is a prevalent means by which truth may be used to individuate and to normalise through speaking and hearing. In this new guise, pastoral power takes the form of continuous observation and coupling the observer and the observed to form "perpetual spirals of power and pleasure". Truthful confession of the nature of one's pleasure is the foundation of
individualisation by power. Confession is one of the main
techniques for establishing the individual's relation to truth.

Speaking of one's sexuality

Confession frees, but power reduces one to silence,
truth does not belong to the order of power, but shares an
original affinity with freedom: traditional themes in
philosophy, which has a political history of truth would
have to overturn by showing that truth is not by nature free
nor error servile - but that its production is thoroughly
imbued with relations of power (HS: 50).

This specific form of attention to the condition of subjects
has by no means been historically superseded. The care of self
now embraces the diverse pursuits of health, well being and
security. The question which arises is how pastoral power
achieved its ubiquity in the light of its highly circumscribed
beginnings? This was achieved when the rituals of confession
were secularised and came to function in scientific terms. The
concern with Salvation was replaced by the goal of normality.
Sexuality is its paradigmatic object. Sexuality becomes the
foundation of the truth of all utterances in so far as their
object is the subject who utters them. Foucault states the way
in which this dissemination and generalisation of the sexual
should be studied:

We are dealing less with a discourse on sex than with a
multiplicity of discourses produced by a whole series of
mechanisms operating in different institutions..... Between the
objectification of sex in rational discourses and the movement by
which each individual was set to the task of recounting his own sex, there has occurred since the eighteenth century, a whole series of tensions, conflicts, efforts at adjustment and attempts at retranscription. So it is not simply in terms of a continual extension that we must speak of this discursive growth; it should be seen rather as a dispersion of centres from which discourses emanated, a diversification of their forms, and the complex deployment of the network connecting them. (HS: 33-4).

Sexuality in the first instance becomes the target of intervention that makes it possible to link these diverse centres strategically in an initiative. A sexual politics comes about in direct response to the need to unify the confessional relation of the individual to truth - a relationship which has been distributed. Sex as a ubiquitous way of problemising the conduct of both individuals and populations is significant in the light of strategical management of individuals and populations. The sexually problematic individual authorises medical intervention by which the truth of aberrant sexuality is diagnosed. In the psychoanalytic contract speaking of oneself becomes a privileged means of access to the truth of the sexual. The problematic population on the other hand permits the organisation of a unique exchange between the state and the individual. There is in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries an implanation of sexualities along the axis of power-knowledge-pleasure. Each provides a pretext for the intervention of power. The medical examination, a diagnostic and normative rationality is the place where these diverse evaluations of the sexual find their common ground. Once sodomy
was merely a category of forbidden acts, the homosexual is now a species. Foucault writes:

It was everywhere present in him: at the root of all his actions because it was their insidious and indefinitely active principle, written immodestly on his face and body because it was a secret that always gave itself away ... Homosexuality appeared as one of the forms of sexuality when it was transposed from the practice of Sodomy on to a kind of interior androgyny, a hermaphrodisim of the soul. The Sodomite had been a temporary aberration, the homosexual was now a species. (HS: 43).

Reality became replete with aberrant sexualities which when incorporated into individuals though psychiatric diagnosis served to differentiate them. It attempted to objectify their truth as individuals in the form of cases. "Sexuality" is the correlative of a discursive practice. Therefore, its apparently ontological features correspond to the functional requirements of a discourse. Modern society sets out to discover the truth of sex because it assumes that in doing so it will produce the truth of the individual as well.

As a consequence of Foucault's argument, truth and a medico-diagnostic examination must be systematically related to one another. Pleasure, subjectivity and individuality can therefore be analysed without being turned into substances. It should come as no surprise then that the avowed aim of Foucault's later works becomes the uses of truth and truth-telling. The shift responsible for this involved the replacement of the quest for self-mastery with that of the care for the self.
Foucault's last two volumes of the *History of Sexuality* have met with a very mixed critical reaction. Richard Wolin commented on this change thus:

Foucault conceives of the Greek "aesthetics of existence" as a positive model that we moderns would do well to re-activate in however modified a form. The emphasis on aesthetic and stylistic criteria as a basis for ethics is at the very least preferable to the various modern "techniques of self" which Foucault has mercilessly exposed in his earlier work on asylums, hospitals, prisons, etc. Hence Foucault rediscovers neoclassicism.  

The charge is representative. The common target of criticism has been Foucault's "aesthetics of existence" which has been taken as a sign of his allegiance to a Greek morality. It seems clear that Foucault did not wish his aesthetics of existence to be understood as an echo of that Greek morality which he found neither exemplary nor admirable. An "aesthetics of existence" is in contrast and resistance to a "Science of life". To speak of human existence as a work of art is to take it out of the domain of the scientifically knowable. It frees us from the obligation of deciphering ourselves as a system of timeless functions which are subjected to corresponding norms. As Foucault indicated earlier, such deciphering would be a psychological approach. He writes:

Nevertheless, we can say in a general way that psychology is fundamentally a study of man in terms of functions and norms (functions and norms which can, in a
secondary fashion. be interpreted on the basis of conflicts and significations, rules and systems (QT: 357-58).

But psychology itself emerges from biological science and the determination of human existence as an organism, as life. He writes:

The Faustain pact, whose temptation has been instilled in us by the deployment of sexuality, is now as follows: to exchange life in its entirety for sex itself, for the truth and the sovereignty of sex. Sex is worth dying for (HS: 156).

The binding of personal identity and organic life immerses that identity within the flow of blood. It is a sign of life but also an index of that life's fragility. Life bleeds and thus the confession of sexual identity avows not only life but its permanent war with death. Foucault's problemisation of the man of desire in his History of Sexuality may be viewed as an additional fragment in his examination of psychoanalysis. The hermeneutics of desire rests upon the triad of truth-sexuality-subjectivity. Behind his probing of that is the spectre of human existence which will continue to understand itself as a struggle of life versus death. Our souls have been fashioned as a mirror of that contemporary political landscape. In this we can see that massacres are vital and that political choice is governed by the sole opposition between survival or suicide. Discipline and Punish showed that philosophical thought must struggle with the power-knowledge relations that would transform the human soul and existence into a mechanism. In contrast Foucault's history of sexuality points to the ethical task of
detaching ourselves from those forces which would subordinate human existence to biological life. His subversion of this story was for the sake of making another ethos available, a "use of philosophy which may enable us to limit the areas of knowledge".

The practice of such limitation is the meaning of general ethic for thought which is the legacy of the Foucaultian project. His explicit turn to ethics at the end of his life was not, however, an abandonment of his political concerns. It is precisely because he recognised that our political culture of life versus death involved a particular mode of political relationship to the self. Hence the practice of ethics became central to his last works. It is as he said, "politics as an ethics" (FR: 375).

The battle between life and death that forms our actual political terrain also furnishes the map for our epistemological and imaginative landscapes. The replacement of a natural history by a science of biology pledged our lines to history and struggle. In place of the priority given by classical nature to the stable kingdom of discrete plants, knowledge and imagination are captured by the energy of animality. Life escaped the space of order and became "wild once more", dwelling on the frontiers of life and death. Life is surrounded by death on all sides: It is "from the depth of their lives that death overtakes living beings" (OT: 277-78). This fraternity with death reveals life as a murderous evolutionary force: "It kills because it lives".

But this morbid law of life is also ours. But only a "politics of ourselves" will libeate us from a soul and a self-relation that have been created and defined by very specific historical forces of knowledge, power and subjectivation. This
Foucaultian politics of ourselves is a resistance to a form of power. He writes:

The main objective of these struggles is to attack not so much, such or such an institution of power, or group, or elite, or class, but rather a technique, a form of power. This form of power applies itself to immediate everyday life which categorises the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him which he must recognise and which others have to recognise in him. It is a form of power which makes individuals subjects.

The suicidal life of Herculine Barbin is a witness to the force of such power-knowledge-subjectivity relations. As a result of such relations, present political struggles must "revolve around the question: who are we? They are a refusal of these abstractions, of economic and ideological state violence which ignore who we are individually and also a refusal of a scientific or administrative inquisition which determines who one is". If one side of this resistance is to "refuse what we are", the other side is to invent, and not discover who we are by promoting "new forms of subjectivity".

Freud became the principal concern lurking in Foucault's problematisation. It is because Freud's delineation of the soul as eros and thanatos reenacts the special relationship that sexuality is the index of one's true self. Foucault's journey to this anti-Freudian politics of the self followed a very circuitous route. For Foucault, Oedipus' search for truth can be linked to the work of psycho-analysis. The story possesses
perennial appeal because we recognise ourselves in Oedipus. As Freud points out:

"His destiny moves us – because the oracle laid the same curse upon us before our birth as upon him." \(^p\)

Perhaps the myth attracted Foucault because it portrays so well the major domains of his own work: (a) an analysis of the knowledges through which we are constructed as knowable and from which we derive the paths for fleeing self-ignorance, (b) an examination of the power relations generated with those knowledges and of the systems of dependence to which we become subject in seeking our truth, and (c) a study of how subjectivity became intimately associated with both truth and sexuality. All of these encounters estrange us from Freud's story of the soul and thus from the destiny of our Politics.

In the following section I would like to touch briefly on each of these moments of estrangement. While Freud admitted that psychoanalysis had its origin on medical soil, he had hoped that it could be transplanted. Foucault's *The Birth of the Clinic* indicated that modern readings of the individual are tied to a medical perception. This work argued that clinical medicine was the first science of the individual. Integral to this science was the role of death as constitutive of one's individuality and unique intelligibility. This status was the precondition for the extraordinary importance given by historians to pathological anatomy in the development of a science of medicine. Death and disease broke from metaphysical understandings and became essential elements in the identity of the person. The idea of a
disease attacking life and destroying it replaced by the conception that death is embodied in the living bodies of individuals. It is not because diseases attack him that man dies. It is because he will die that he is susceptible to disease. But death is the essential truth of human life and any inquiry into the meaning of individual life is guaranteed to meet that medical perception which holds up to man the "face of his finitude". It also promises to exercise it through certain techniques. (FG: 153, 198). The medical component is clear in questions of sexuality. According to Foucault, all knowledge of the "modern finite bound-to-death self" is oriented to aim at a truth which aspires to function as cure. This would account why Freud, who could demystify so many of the asylum's major structures (its constant silence, observation, condemnation) could not eliminate the place which the doctor occupied. The structures were concentrated on this place. It is the very knowledge of our finite, individual selves that invites a medical paradigm. This indicates another fact in our culture that of the significance of Freud and medical thought. The controversies which centered around the relationship between medicine and psychoanalysis are native and permanent to Freudian thought to the extent of its modernity. Foucault's The Order of Things extended the analysis by indicating the foundations for the specific character of the unconscious which is at the core of psycho-analytic knowledge. Psycho-analysis occupies a central position in modern thought because it explores an opaqueness generated by modern knowledge's dispersion of man within processes of life, labour and language. All of these possess
histories alien to and independent of man. The themes of Death, Desire and Law in which one's psychoanalytic search for intelligibility takes place are born together with and remain dependent upon modern knowledge's drawing of man. In exploring these psycho-analytic themes, western culture is brought back to the foundations for its anthropological knowledge.

The central role which sexuality plays in the psychoanalytic image of the person is the next major element which indicates Freudian thought's coherence with the modern period's threefold sexual production: They are (a) the creation of sexuality as a reality especially the sexualisation of children's experience, (b) the constitution of a "scientia sexualis" based on global study of the population and analytic study of the individual, and (c) the privileging of sexuality as the access to the truth of human identity. The "cultural vigour" of psychoanalysis is at the "junction of these two ideas - that we must not deceive ourselves concerning our sex, and that our sex harbours what is most true in ourselves" (HR: xi). Despite its greater subtlety, psychoanalysis operates within the modern regime of sexuality and even intensifies it. It gives support to the conception of sex as a stubborn drive, constantly at war with repressive powers. Psychoanalysis, therefore observes the positive function of Power as productive of what we take the sexual realm and its themses to be. For Foucault, psychoanalysis unifies the system of the family with the modern sphere of sexuality by placing the incest desire at the centre of the individuals sexual life. Freud cooperates in constituting the family as a privileged target for political governace. The "germ of all the misfortunes of sex" is
transformed into that. Finally, psycho-analysis provides one of the most striking examples in the modern transformation of Christainity's pastoral power. It has taken over the techniques of confessional practice. By doing so it places the individual under the obligation to manifest truth to another in a situation of dependence and through the action of speech. It is invested with a special virtue of verification (HS: 103-114). The Kinship of subjectivity - truth - sexuality is the lynchpin of Freudian thought. The capacity of sexual desires and deeds to become the most revealing signs of our truest, deepest selves is dependent upon a long historical formation.

I shall not repeat here Foucault’s tracing of either plato’s initial interrogation of the "man of desire" in The Use of Pleasure or the emergence of the Roman culture of the self in his The Care of the Self. The platonic desire to know oneself, united with the practices of such groups as the Epicureans and stoics established a governace of the self. Foucault regarded this as a sort of “permanent political relationship between self and self "or a " Politics of themselves”. This ancient concern with the self was a prelude to the development of a Christian hermeneutics of the self which reflected novel forms of Power, knowledge and relation to the self. The exercise of Christian pastoral power focused especially on sexuality was a sign of man’s fallen state. The obedience to pastoral authority which overcame that state involved a search for truth. It entails not just the general truths of faith but the specific truths of each person’s soul. The excavation of personal truth gave birth to a technology for self - discovery. The endless task of self -
recruiting is accompanied by regular confessions to another. The verbalisation of thoughts is another level of sorting out the good thoughts from those which seek to hide from the light of public expression. The principal product of this technology was a unique form of subjectivity. One is related to oneself as an obscure text demanding permanent interpretation. The soul is a house of truth and true discourses are able to be articulated concerning it.

This Christian regime of pastoral power and self-discovery was not left behind by the modern age. Indeed, the sixteenth century opened a period which is characterised by the beginning of a Christianisation in depth. Freud's interpretation of Oedipus witnesses to that transformed spiritual struggle in Christian practice. It is indeed transformed.

Modern technologies of the self promoted the emergence of a positive self. For Foucault, this is an event of supreme political importance. Because the positive modern subject is fashioned in isolation from ethical and aesthetic concerns. A critical distance from the modern power-knowledge-subjectivity formation is the pre-condition for a new politics of ourselves. In the current epoch, that will especially entail new relationships of ourselves to modern knowledges.

Foucault's proposed philosophical ethos, his aesthetics of existence is his form of resistance. As Foucault's final course in the Greek virtue of truth-telling (Parresia) suggested, the beauty of this existence is to be located in a personal harmony of word and deed. It is the creation of an "other life" which is
worthy of remembrance because it shapes a presence from a
multiplicity of truths personally confronted. The center of this
philosophical ethos is the practice of an ethical interrogation
and self-formation that generates a host of new options for moral
and political choice. Foucault had earlier undermined the simple
alternatives of Reason versus Madness and liberation over against
repression. Now he undercuts the reduction of experience to a
struggle between life and death.

Although it was only in his last writings that Foucault
dealt at length with ethics, the ethical interest was throughout
his work. As he pointed out in The Order of Things, modern
thought has never been able to propose a morality (OT: 327-28).
It is precisely this ethical perspective that enables Foucault to
"resituate the production of truth " at the heart of historical
analysis and political critique. His ethical interrogation is a
mode of self-formation.

The scheme for ethical interrogation had a long period and
represents Foucault's fashioning of his aesthetics of existence.
Thomas Flynn writes:

Far from the random grossness, the Cynics' practices
challenged philosophers to live radically different lives
from those conforming to the revered wisdom of their
contemporaries. For the Socratic other world they
substituted an other life, the truly philosophical life, the
true life. Specifically, the cynics inversion of the true
life entailed: (1) absence of dissemblance to the point of
dramatisation, their notorious naturalism; (2) lack of
admixture of virtue and vice as exemplified in their poverty (an inversion of stoic indifference), which led paradoxically to dependency, mendicancy and dishonour. (3) rectitude understood as life, according to the natural demands of animality, including the rejection of social conventions and taboos, and (4) self-possession and sovereignty pushed to the extreme of claiming a militant kingship which fights against customs, institutions, personal passions and views to restore us to our natural state.***

Foucault's distinct experiments with thought were not random experiments. The elements of his ethical schema mirror the four arts of interrogation that he practised through his writings. : (1) what was it necessary to think today in contrast to the traditional domain of thought worthy? (2) What should be the substance for thought?, (3) Inexamining this domain, what sort of understanding should be sought? What mode of subjection should the thinker take up? (4) How should the search for such understanding find its methodological way? (5) What goal is pursued through the definition of substance, mode of subjection and practice of asceticism?

Foucault's exploration of these questions throughout his works succeeded in creating a broad ethical inquiry on the activity of thought itself. Foucault's practice of his ethic marks paths for a collaborative assumption of new responsibilities. The domain of Foucault's ethic is made up of the practices that gave rise to those issues that entail the exercise of moral-political discernment and decision. Rejecting moral experience as a matter of either response to religious
revelation or commitment to an aesthetic task, the modern period articulated moral conduct in the context of true knowledges. Foucault problemises this modern statement by examining such crucial knowledges for moral reflection as biology, psychology and medicine. At the source of his delimitation of a substance to be ethically interrogated is the realisation that the formation of a domain in terms of true and false values is dangerous. They are no less dangerous than was appearance of discourses that defined the holy and the profane and the good and the wicked.

The ethical substance of his treatise creates a field for analysis that overcomes the theory-practice dualism. It is composed not of institutions, theories or ideologies, but of practices, the discursive and extra discursive relations that are operative in a culture's program for the conduct of intellectual pursuit, practical action and self constitution. Foucault's ethical perspective was signalled in his concern with the action of the axes: what knowledge does and not reads, how Power constructs and not represents, how a relationship to the self is invented and not discovered. Philosophical inquiry becomes substantially ethical for Foucaultian the sense that when it is concerned with the problemisations that pose themselves to a culture as a result of the interplay of its practices, its types of knowledge, its political strategies and its style of personal life. The focus for an analysis of the ethical subseance is the thought responds to these problemisations. Foucault writes:

It is a question of movement of critical analysis in which one tries to see how the different solutions to a
problem have been constructed; but also how these different solutions result from a specific form of problemisation.... The work of philosophical and historical reflection is put back into the field of the work of thought only on condition that one clearly grasps problemisation not as an arrangement of representations but as a work of thought. (FR 389-90).

The second element in Foucault's ethical interrogation is the type of enlightenment pursued by this interrogation. Foucault's debate with Kant was central here. His work denatures Kant's great questions on knowledge, obligation and hope. The Kantian questions are (1) What can I know? (2) What do I ought to do? (3) What may I hope for? These questions assume a very different significance for Foucault: (1) How have my questions been produced? (2) How have I been situated to experience the real? How have exclusions operated in delineating the realm of obligation for me? (3) What are the struggles in which I am engaged? The point of such shifts is to free thought from the formal structures and place it in an historical field where it must confront the singular, contingent and arbitrary that operate in what is put forward as universal, necessary and obligatory. Foucault writes:

The point, in brief, is to transform the critique conducted in the form of necessary limitation into a practical critique that takes the form of a possible transgression. This entails an obvious consequence: that criticism is no longer going to be practiced in the search for formal structures with universal value, but rather as a
historical investigation into the vents that have led us to constitute ourselves and to recognise ourselves as subjects of what we are doing, thinking, saying.... It is genealogical in its design and archaeological in its method.

(FR: 45-6).

Foucault's methods stress of our responsibility for the support we lend to the dominance of specific discourses. He redefines the field of critique. From an arena that is already enunciated in terms of identifiable repressions and specific programs of liberation to an ever changing historical space in which Power is capable of colonising the most noble knowledges and projects. Foucault's ethic is permanent critique in the interest of an endless practice of freedom. This freedom is the goal of his ethic. There won't be any definitive escape from configurations of knowledge-power-self relations. At the same time no specific configuration was necessary and unchangeable. His earlier declaration of the death of man was complemented with a new style of relating to our modern knowledges.

Notes
2. How I Wrote Certain of My Books is Raymond Roussel's book. Foucault writes: "How I Wrote Certain of My Books is, after all, one of his books. Doesn't this text of the unveiled secret also hold its own secret, exposed and masked at the same time by the light it sheds on the other works?" (DL:6).


