CHAPTER - III

POWER AND
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Michel Foucault is best known for giving postmodernism a distinctive characteristic. He is also poststructuralist, and postmodernist. He gives importance to economy and other social institutions. To him social structure is micro-politics of power. This is his deviation from Karl Marx. Knowledge-power relationship is Foucault’s major contribution to postmodernism. Power and knowledge entail one another. Knowledge ceases to be liberation and becomes enslavement. Foucault examines the discourses of madness, clinic, sexuality and punishment from the perspective of power-knowledge relationship. The power is exercised through surveillance, monitoring and other forms of regulation of people’s lives. The history of all social institutions is the history of power relations. Power originates from knowledge. It is the knowledge-power relationship which controls and governs the society in the postmodern age. Like other poststructuralists, Foucault sees world as created by language, it is the poststructuralist perspective that helped Foucault to develop postmodernism. Foucault thinks that the meaning of language is conditioned by social structure, culture and discourses. As the meaning of words is related to other word and the whole language, a discourse is related to other discourses and likewise other texts.

The central theme of Foucault’s work is in the field of epistemology. He wanted to uncover knowledge and his search for knowledge led him to find out power. Ultimately, he connected power with truth. Before Foucault took up the search for truth, Nietzsche analyzed good and evil in his work, Genealogy of Morals. He argued that there were no essential, or original, definitions of truth. This argument
was further carried on by Foucault who interpreted that truth was tied to the operation of power and domination. Truth is, therefore, produced by power, and the consequences of the exercise of power are formulated as truth. Foucault observes that Power and knowledge directly involve one another. There is no power relation with correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not pre-suppose and constitute at the same time power relations.

Foucault establishes through his various case studies that power, knowledge and truth are interconnected. Power is differed throughout society. It is always in circulation. It is not localized here or there, never in anybody’s hands. It is also not appropriated as a product or piece of wealth and do not individuals flow between its threads. They are also in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising power.

Yet another important theme of Foucault’s work is his concept of discourse. Power, knowledge and truth are connected through discourses and texts. Discourse, in simple terms, means social institutions and disciplines. Crime is a discourse, so are corruption, leadership, village development, industrialization, capitalism and environment. According to Foucault, discourses are everywhere. They are the very stuff of society and mediate all aspects of life. For instance, in Indian society, family is a discourse. Before the coming of British or industrialization, Indian family was joint. Today, it is sub-divided and has become nuclear family. Public views have been changing towards family in India. Thus, discourse always keeps on changing. Discourse is not just an abstract public sphere of words and images. It exists in concrete social situations. It has very real effects. Foucault’s study of Madness and Civilization, discourse could be said that professional discourse in course of time employed scientific knowledge to make distinction between the sane and the insane, the normal and the abnormal. Discourse is characterized by tradition,
modernity and postmodernity. For example, it is the discourse, which distinguishes between legal and illegal killing; or between proper and improper sexual conduct. The discourses are always historical particulars, variable from culture to culture. These are always subject to change. The term episteme is the set of relations between discursive positivity, knowledge and science that archaeological analysis examines at the threshold of epistemologization. The episteme is not itself a form of knowledge. It has no general content in and of itself. It is not a world view or slice of history common to all branches of knowledge in a given period. The term refers only to a level of relations involving knowledge and science as they emerge within a discursive positivity. These relations are various and shifting, even for a single period. Historical a priori the positivity is that constitute discursive formations and relations form a historical priori. It is a level of historical language which other modes of analysis depend on but fail to address. Discourse functions at the level of things said. Thus, any analysis of the formal structure, hidden meaning, or psychological traces of discourse take the level of discourse itself for granted, as a kind of raw material that is difficult to recognize due to its operation at the level of existence itself. It is important to note that the historical a priori constituted by the positivity of discourse is not a priori in the usual sense of a formal philosophical principle. Instead, the historical a priori is simply a feature of the level of discourse as opposed to other levels of analysis; it does not remain stable as a single principle with a single content but rather shifts with the transformations of the positivities themselves.

Foucault’s aim in his studies was to work on the trinity of knowledge, power and truth. His methodology is apparent in two of his major works: The Archaeology of Knowledge and Genealogy of Power. Archaeology focuses on a given historical moment, while genealogy is
concerned with a historical process. More specifically, “genealogy offers us a procession perspective on the web of discourse, in contrast to an archaeological approach which provides us with a snapshot, a slice through the discursive nexus”. Actually, Foucault discoursed about knowledge in his archaeology but soon realized that his discussion was silent on the issue of power. He also could not establish link between knowledge and power. Therefore, the Genealogy of Power establishes relationship between knowledge and power.

Foucault’s major concern is knowledge, truth, and power. He contends that problem in the society becomes the construction of discourse. He presents the problem to see how men are governed by themselves and others and by the production of truth. Such society must be rejected as immutable truths with the idea of rationality as a natural human quality.

Michel Foucault was a French historian and philosopher, associated with the structuralist and post-structuralist movements. He has had strong influence not only in philosophy but also in a wide range of humanistic and social scientific disciplines. He became academically established during the 1960s, when he held a series of positions at French universities. From 1970s onwards, Foucault was very active politically. He was a founder of the Groupe d’information sur les prisons and often protested on behalf of homosexuals and other marginalized groups. He frequently lectured outside France, particularly in the United States, and in 1983 had agreed to teach annually at the University of California at Berkeley. An early victim of AIDS, Foucault died in Paris on June 25, 1984. In addition to works published during his lifetime, his lectures at the College de France, being published posthumously, contain important elucidations and extensions of his ideas.
His academic formation was in psychology and its history as much as in philosophy; his books were mostly histories of medical and social sciences; his passions were literary and political.

He entered the Ecole Normale Superiere (the standard launching pad for major French philosophers) in 1946, during the heyday of existential phenomenology. Merleau-Ponty, whose lectures he attended, and Heidegger were particularly important for him. Hegel and Marx were also major concerns, the first through the interpretation of his work offered by Jean Hyppolite and the latter through the structuralist reading of Louis Althusser both teachers who had a strong impact on Foucault at the Ecole Normale. It is, accordingly, not surprising that Foucault’s earliest works.

Although Jean-Paul Sartre, living and working outside the University system, had no personal influence on Foucault, the thought of him, as the French thinker preceding Foucault is always in the background. Like Sartre, Foucault began from inexorable hatred of bourgeois society and culture and with a spontaneous sympathy for groups at the margins of the bourgeoisie (artists, homosexuals, prisoners, etc.). They were also similar in their interests in literature and psychology, as well as philosophy, and both, after an early relative lack of political interest, became strong activists. But in the end, Foucault seemed to insist on defining himself in contradiction to Sartre. Philosophically, he rejected what he saw as Sartre's centralization of the subject. Personally and politically, he rejected Sartre's role as what Foucault called the “universal intellectual”, judging a society in terms of transcendent principles.

Three other factors were of much more positive significance for the young Foucault. First, there was the French tradition of history and philosophy of science, particularly as represented by Georges
Canguilhem, a powerful figure in the French University whose work in the history and philosophy of biology provided a model for much of what Foucault had later done in the history of the human sciences. Canguilhem sponsored Foucault’s doctoral thesis on the history of madness and, throughout Foucault’s career, remained one of his most important and effective supporters. Canguilhem’s approach to the history of science provided Foucault with a strong sense of the discontinuities in scientific history, along with a rationalist understanding of the historical role of concepts that made them independent of the phenomenologist’s transcendental consciousness. Foucault found this understanding reinforced in the structuralist linguistics and psychology developed, respectively, by Ferdinand de Saussure and Jacques. These anti-subjective standpoints provide the context for Foucault's marginalization of the subject in his “structuralist histories”, *The Birth of the Clinic and The Order of Things*.

Foucault was fascinated by French avant-garde literature, especially the writings of Georges Bataille and Maurice Blanchot, where he found the experimental concreteness of existential phenomenology without what he came to see as uncertain philosophical assumptions about subjectivity. This philosophical milieu provided materials for the critique of subjectivity and the corresponding “archaeological” and “genealogical” methods of writing history that inform Foucault's projects of historical critique, to which we now turn. Since its beginnings with Socrates, philosophy has typically involved the project of questioning the accepted knowledge of the day. Later, Locke, Hume, and especially, Kant developed a distinctively modern idea of philosophy as the critique of knowledge.

Kant’s great epistemological innovation was to maintain that the same critique that revealed the limits of our knowing powers could also
reveal necessary conditions for their exercise. There seemed just contingent features of human cognition turn out to be necessary truths. Foucault, however, suggests the need to reverse this Kantian move rather than asking what in the apparently contingent, is actually necessary. He suggests asking what in the apparently necessary, might be dependent. The focus of his questioning is the modern human sciences (biological, psychological, social). These purports to offer universal scientific truths about human nature that are, in fact, often mere expressions of ethical and political commitments of a particular society. Foucault's “critical philosophy” undermines such claims by exhibiting how they are just the outcome of contingent historical forces, and is not scientifically grounded truths. Michel Foucault’s major works consist of History of Madness and Civilization; The Order of Things; Archaeology of Knowledge; Discipline and Punish; History of Modern Sexuality.

Foucault's first major work, History of Madness and Civilization in the Classical Age (1961) originated in his academic study of psychology. It deals with a Parisian mental hospital, and his personal psychological problems. It was mainly written during his post-graduate through a succession of diplomatic/educational posts in Sweden, Germany, and Poland. As a study of the emergence of the modern concept of “mental illness” in Europe, History of Madness is formed from both Foucault's extensive archival work and his intense anger at what he saw as the moral hypocrisy of modern psychiatry. Standard histories saw the nineteenth-century medical treatment of madness as an enlightened liberation of the mad from the ignorance and brutality of preceding ages. But, according to Foucault, the new idea that the mad were merely sick (“mentally” ill) and in need of medical treatment was not at all a clear improvement on earlier conceptions (e.g., the Renaissance idea that the mad were in contact with the mysterious forces of cosmic tragedy or the 17th-18th-century view of
madness as a renouncing of reason). Moreover, he argued that the alleged scientific neutrality of modern medical treatments of insanity is in fact covers for controlling challenges to a conventional bourgeois morality. In short, Foucault argued that what was presented as an objective, incontrovertible scientific discovery (that madness is mental illness) was in fact the product of eminently questionable social and ethical commitments.

Foucault got his doctorate on *Madness and Civilization*. For Foucault madness is a discourse. All through the periods of history, people have developed a specific framework of thinking about the insane and the mad. For instance, during the renaissance period, madness and reason were not separated. There was a continuous dialogue between madness and reason. By the middle ages, the people, that is, the mad were locked up with those who suffered from leprosy. Leprosy is not only contagious but also disturbing to look at. They left them empty, but just for a while. In the 15th century, an idea cropped up, and became a central image in the popular imagination. People came to know anyhow that the madman may have dangerous insights. What Foucault in this work has tried to do is that it is the knowledge, which helps people to wield power.

His book *Madness and Civilization (1961)* is only a great synopsis of the original book in French, which are over 600 pages long. The idea of madness is completely separate from opposite to reason. Here, Foucault gives three portraits of mad persons: a man who has odd violent outbursts at one in particular and strikes at the air around him; another man who tells you that some secret agency has planted a radio receiver in his brain and is monitoring his thoughts and he believes it will soon take control of him and third, a man who sits perfectly still and does not move or speak, though you discourse that he is physically capable of doing so.
All these three examples of men make it clear that each one of them has a problem that may keep him from functioning well in our society. It is also obvious that they are all suffering from different versions of the same disease. In fact, all the three men require a similar approach for their cure.

Madness during renaissance period has no dialogue between sane and insane. Foucault’s objective is clear while studying madness. He is not interested in madness. He is trying to know about knowledge, especially knowledge about psychiatry. He is not doing a history or a history of ideas. He says that he has not tried to write the history of that language (psychiatry) but rather the archaeology that is silence.

Foucault begins his analysis of madness from the period of renaissance. During this period, madness and reason were not separated. Modernity brings forth madness within the confines of psychology and psychiatry. In 17th century, the mad and the criminals were locked up by the state police. The discourse about the mad was that they were a sub-category of the unemployed. Madness was shameful and must be hidden. In the 17th and 18th centuries, not only matter was falling down the madman, people wanted to fall the idea of madness as well. By the end of the 18th century, physical treatment alone would not cure madness. But this did not mark the beginning of psychological treatment. It became the expert knowledge that the body, soul and mind are so interrelated, like the trinity, that what affects one affects all.

Thus, initially, madness was considered as the breakdown of the unity of body and soul, the breakdown of the internal consistency of the symbol system.

The French Revolution brought out a shift in the discourse of madness. Foucault traced out the history of madness along with its discourse through centuries. The French Revolution proved to be a
turning point in the discourse of insanity. Mirabeau and the Marquis de Sade, the two French counts, were both in jail before the beginning of French Revolution. Sade who was said to be a “True Madman and truly immoral” was let out first from the jail, while Mirabeau, soon to be the hero of his country, continued to be kept in jail for no real reason. During French Revolution, there was attack on the Bastille jail by the public. Mirabeau led the people in their fight against the king.

The mad were taken out of prison and put in special hospitals. But, the hospitals were few and far between. So, the mad were sent to their home. But, they created trouble with home and, therefore, they were sent away to lonely places.

_Madness and Civilization_ is Foucault’s classical document. Foucault through this book of 600 pages established the discourse-the framework of people’s thinking about madness. The attitude towards madness has undergone changes through several centuries. During the period of renaissance, madness and reason were not separated. Then, there comes the period of Middle Ages when madmen were treated as animals. They were isolated from the society and put to prison. The French Revolution and the reform movement brought the mad in contact with the persons who were experts in medicine, psychology and psychiatry. Here Foucault was also influenced by the wave of positivism and influence of Freud that swept the whole of Europe. He was also influenced by Structuralism. Finding the process of truth Foucault studied the structure of language in his _Madness and Civilization._

The subject matter of _Madness and Civilization_ is the discourse constructed by the knowledgeable person/expert on the subject. Counter-knowledge can be constructed only by those who are equally experts or ‘higher’ experts. Foucault’s focus all through this work is to establish that those who have knowledge exercise power.
Foucault’s objective of *The Birth of the Clinic* was to find out the source of knowledge. Clinical observation helped the doctors to get knowledge about human body. George Ritzer’s (1997) comments on the ability to see and touch sick people was a crucial change in medicine and an important source of knowledge and ultimately power.

The focus was on the classification system and the class, genus or species of a given diseases. The examination of dead bodies in autopsies gives new sources of knowledge. Medicine was largely a classificatory science during the 18th century. There is a shift from classificatory medicines to clinical observation. From clinical observations came the examination of autopsies, that is, dead bodies. What was hidden from observation came out clear in the autopsy. Marie-Francois-Xavier Bichet spoke to his students in 1803: “For twenty years, from morning to night, you have taken notes at patients besides... and all is confusion for you in the systems, which, refusing to yield up meaning, offer you a succession of incoherent phenomena. Open a few corpses: you will dissipate at once the darkness that observation alone could not dissipate” (Foucault, Michel 1963,).

Foucault’s addition of one more dimension to clinical observation is examination of autopsy. Actually, dissecting corpses was not so new but deciding it as central was very different. Suddenly, the eye can see inside the body and all of diseases are visible to the gaze. This makes a change in our attitude towards death. The idea of death changes when the autopsy involves the dead body. Science begins to take account of the individual in *The Birth of the Clinic* Foucault takes a scientific attitude towards death and diseases. He believed that Death is not as much of the lack of life as the culmination of life. The nature of science deals with the general principles. It does not consider individual circumstances. Newton did not stop his thought at the particular apple that fell on his individual
head. He developed a principle that accounts for all apples, all objects, falling.

But, the general principle of science does not apply to human beings. For some reason, we are very idealistic about apples, but when human beings are concerned, we tend to care much about the actual individuals. It was during the 19th century that science began to take account of the individual. It was deviation from the general principles of science. It also became clear that many of the sciences began to focus on humans, namely, the human sciences: economics, anthropology, linguistics, psychology, and so on. Medical science is a hard science, but it also deals with human beings. Opening up the corpses, Foucault maintained, gave medicine the opportunity to subject all of the body to the scientific look.

Foucault established through his study of The Birth of the Clinic that knowledge can be derived from the gaze of the sick person and the examination of corpses. He added to it the role of science. Commenting on the contribution of his case study on the clinical, Ritzer (1997) writes: “In order to words, the ability to study the dead illuminated many things about health, disease and death. With the advent of the autopsy and the clinical gaze, death took centre stage. Death left its old tragic leaven and became the lyrical core of man: his invisible truth, his visible secret” (Ritzer, George 1997). Foucault's next essay, The Birth of the Clinic (1963) can similarly be read as a critique of modern clinical medicine. But the socio-ethical critique is muted presumably because there is a substantial core of objective truth in medicine and so less basis for critique. As a result The Birth of the Clinic is much closer to a standard history of science, in the tradition of Canguilhem's history of concepts.
Thus, Foucault tried to find out the origin of knowledge in *The Birth of the Clinic* and *Madness and Civilization*. The similar efforts are seen in his other works.

*The Order of Things* that made Foucault famous in many ways an odd interruption into the development of his thought. Its subtitle, “*An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*”, suggests an expansion of the earlier critical histories of psychiatry and clinical medicine into other modern disciplines such as economics, biology, and philology. And indeed there is an extensive account of the various “empirical disciplines” of the Renaissance and the Classical Age that precede these modern human sciences. But there is little or nothing of the implicit social critique found in the *History of Madness* or even *The Birth of the Clinic*. Instead, Foucault offers a global analysis of what knowledge meant and how this meaning changed in Western thought from the Renaissance to the present. At the heart of his account is the notion of representation. Here I focus on his treatment of representation in philosophical thought, where we find Foucault's most direct engagement with traditional philosophical questions.

Foucault argues that from Descartes to Kant representation was simply identified with thought: to think just was to employ ideas to represent the object of thought. But, he says, we need to be clear about what it meant for an idea to represent an object. This was not, first of all, any sort of relation of resemblance: there were no features (properties) of the idea that they constituted the representation of the object. By contrast, during the Renaissance, knowledge was understood as a matter of resemblance between signs.

Foucault maintains that the great “turn” in modern philosophy occurs when, with Kant it becomes possible to raise the question of whether ideas do in fact represent their objects and, if so, how they do so.
In other words, ideas are no longer taken as the unproblematic vehicles of knowledge; it is now possible to think that knowledge might be something other than representation. This did not mean that representation had nothing at all to do with knowledge. Perhaps some knowledge still essentially involved ideas representing objects. But, Foucault insists, the thought that was only now possible was that representation itself could have an origin in something else.

According to Foucault the thought led to some important and distinctively modern possibilities. The first was that developed by Kant himself, who thought that representations were themselves the product of the mind. Not, however, produced by the mind as a natural or historical reality, but as belonging to a special epistemic realm: transcendental subjectivity. Kant thus maintained the Classical insistence that knowledge cannot be understood as a physical or historical reality, but he located the grounds of knowledge in a field more fundamental than the ideas it subtended. Another and in some ways more typically modern view was that ideas were themselves historical realities. This could be most plausibly developed by making ideas essentially tied to language now regarded as the primary historicized vehicle of knowledge. But such an approach was not viable in its pure form, since to make knowledge entirely historical would deprive it of any normative character and so destroy its character as knowledge. In other words, even when modern thought makes knowledge essentially historical, it must retain some functional equivalent of Kant's transcendental realm to guarantee the normative validity of knowledge.

The Order of Things introduces the two central features of thought is the return of language and the birth of man. Foucault talks of a return of language: it now has an independent and essential role that it couldn't have as the mere instrument of Classical ideas. Language is related to
knowledge in various ways, and to each there corresponds a distinctive sort of “return”. So, for example, the history of natural language has introduced confusions and distortions that we can try to eliminate through techniques of formalization. On the other hand, this same history may have deposited fundamental truths in our languages that we can unearth only by the methods of hermeneutic interpretation. But there is yet another possibility: freed from its subordination to ideas, language can be treated as an autonomous reality, indeed as even more deeply autonomous than Renaissance language since there is no system of similarity binding it to the world. In contrast to the Renaissance, however, there is no divine word underlying and giving unique truth to the words of language. Literature is literally nothing but language or rather many languages, speaking for and of them.

Even more important than language is the figure of man. The most important point about man is that it is an epistemological concept. Foucault says that Man did not exist during the Classical Age. This is not because there was no idea of human beings as a species or of human nature as a psychological, moral, or political notion. Rather, “there was no epistemological consciousness of man as such” (Foucault, Michel 1966, 309). But even “epistemological” needs construal. There is no doubt that even in the Classical age human beings were conceived as the locus of knowledge. It is humans who possessed the ideas that represented the world. Man, on the other hand, is an epistemological notion in the Kantian sense of a transcendental subject that is also an empirical object. For the Classical age, men are the locus of representations but not, as for Kant, their source. There is, in Classical thought, no room for the modern notion of “constitution”.

Foucault illustrates his point through a striking discussion of Descartes' cogito, showing why it is an indubitable certitude within the
classical episteme, but not within the modern episteme. There are two ways of questioning the force of the cogito. One is to suggest that the subject (the thinking self, I) that Descartes concludes, exists is something more than an act of representing objects; so we can't go from representation to a thinker. But for the Classical Age this makes no sense, since thinking is representation. A second criticism would be that the self as represented may not be really real but merely the “product of” a mind that is real in a fuller sense. But this objection will receive more attention only if we can think of this more real mind as having the self as an object in some sense other than representing it. But, once again, this is precisely what cannot be thought in Classical terms.

Modern philosophy tries to resolve the problem of man by, in effect, reducing the transcendental to the empirical. For example, positivism attempts to explain knowledge in terms of natural science (physics, biology), while Marxism appeals to historical social sciences. Either approach simply ignores the terms of the problem: that man must be regarded as irreducibly both empirical and transcendental.

It might seem that Husserl’s phenomenology has carried out the Kantian project of synthesizing man as object and man as subject by radicalizing the Cartesian project; that is, by grounding our knowledge of empirical truths in the reality of the transcendental subject. The problem, however, is that the modern notion of man excludes Descartes’ idea of the cogito as a “sovereign transparency” of pure consciousness. Thought is no longer pure representation and therefore cannot be separated from an “unthought” Or, putting the point in the reverse way, if we use “I” to denote my reality simply as a conscious being, then I “am not” much of what I (as a self in the world) am. As a result, to the extent that Husserl has grounded everything in the transcendental subject, this is not the subject (cogito) of Descartes but the modern cogito, which includes the
(empirical) unthought that is part of man’s reality. Phenomenology, like all modern thought, must accept the unthought as the in eliminable “other” of man. Nor are the existential phenomenologists (Sartre and Merleau-Ponty) able to solve the problem. Unlike Husserl, they avoid positing a transcendental ego and instead focus on the concrete reality of man-in-the-world. But this, Foucault claims, is just a more subtle way of reducing the transcendental to the empirical.

Finally, some philosophers like Hegel and Marx in one way, Nietzsche and Heidegger in another have tried to resolve the problem of man's dual status by treating him as a historical reality. But this move encounters the difficulty that man has to be both a product of historical processes and the origin of history. If we treat man as a product, we find ourselves reducing his reality to something non-human. This is what Foucault calls the “retreat” from man's origin. But if we insist on a “return” to man as his proper origin, then we can no longer make sense of his place in the practical world. This paradox may make clear the endless modern obsession with origins, but there is never any way out of the contradiction between man as originator and man as originated. Nonetheless, Foucault thinks that the modern pursuit of the question of origins has provided us with a deeper sense of the ontological significance of time, particularly in the thought of Nietzsche and Heidegger, who reject Hegel's and Marx's view of the return to our origin as a redemptive fullness of being, and instead see it as a confrontation with the nothingness of our existence.

*The Archaeology of Knowledge (1969)*

The French edition of *The Archaeology of Knowledge* was published in 1969. It is on the methodology of social sciences. Technically, archaeology is the scientific study of material of artefacts and dwellings of past human life and activities. Foucault has defined
archaeology in a very limited way. In each period of civilization there are layers of discourse that is thinking about social institutions, issues and events. The discourse, the thinking, could exist for relatively periods, and change could happen quite suddenly.

Foucault gives to his method of the Archeology which seeks to describe discourses in the conditions of their emergence and transformation rather than in their deeper, hidden meaning, their propositional or logical content, or their expression of an individual or collective psychology. Archeological analysis studies discourse only at its level of positive existence, and never takes discourse to be a trace or record of something outside of itself. In his discussion of the archive, Foucault writes that the term 'archeology' marks the distance necessary for the historian to be able to describe the archive with any clarity. This distance is not just a methodological requirement, but a crucial and pervasive feature of the history that the archeological method tries to describe a history defined throughout by difference. Archeology has strong connotations of positivity. Foucault's method always describes only the positive, verifiably extant aspect of discourse, as one might describe a physical artifact or monument.

In *Archaeology of Knowledge* Foucault discusses the concept of discourse. In his view, “the great theme of the history of ideas is the genesis of idea, their continuity over time, as well as tantalizations such as the spirit of an age. He looks at the ideas of a period both in their continuity and discontinuity. He prefers detailed analyses of statements of ideas to global generalizations about totalities. He rejects totalizing of ideas quite like his later postmodernists.” In this context, Foucault articulates four principles that distinguish the archaeology of knowledge from the history of ideas.
Archaeology of Knowledge is not the history of ideas. It does not focus on thoughts, representations, images and themes. Foucault writes: “Archaeology is not an interpretative discipline; it does not seek another, better hidden discourse” (Foucault, Michel 1969) Archaeology defines discourses in their specificity. Foucault is not interested in the evolution of discourse. In other words, he does not analyze the linear and gradual slopes of a particular period of discourse. He focuses on how discourse of a particular period is different from discourse of another period in what thinking prevailed about madness or sexuality in renaissance and later periods of history.

Archaeology concentrates on the types of rules which control discourse. There are several discourses in a period. Foucault does not study all these. Nor he studies some dominant discourses. He is concerned only about the ‘types of rules’ which organize and control the discourse. Archaeology gives systematic description of the discourse-object. Foucault is not interested to give origin of clinic. Rather, he focuses on systematic description of clinic-layer after layer in different periods. He sees the history of ideas as involved in seeking to repress contradictions to show coherence in continuity in ideas. On the basis of such contradiction that discourses emerges. Without contradiction everything is impossible. Contradiction is ceaselessly reborn through discourse. Contradiction functions throughout discourse as a principle of its historicity.

He looks plural discourses at a time. The Archaeology of Knowledge is inherently inter-discursive. Thus, it looks like the ‘spirit’ of a science, but rather the tangle of contradictions and analogies that make up one discourse in contrast to others. Thus, the key ideas in Foucault’s The Archaeology of Knowledge is to find positive knowledge. Man was the primary object of knowledge, or in other words, all knowledge was
for the welfare of man. Foucault argues that in our history, knowledge became a tool to subordinate the individual that is, subject. Thus, subjectivities and knowledge are truly the major concerns of Foucault’s early works. He has confined to the description of knowledge and subject and not the power. From the idea of archaeology, he moved to ‘genealogy’ which he conceived as a series of infinitely proliferating branches.

Foucault’s *Discipline and Punish* is a book about the emergence of the prison system. According to him, the prison is an institution; the objective purpose is to produce criminality and recidivism. The system encompasses the movement that calls for reform of the prison as an integral and permanent part. Jeremy Bentham’s “panopticon,” a design for a prison, exercised an influence on nineteenth century strict architecture. Institutional architecture was more generally up to the level of city planning. The important general idea of the book is “discipline” in the strict sense, a specific historical form of power that was taken up by the state with professional soldiering in the 17th century, and spread widely across society, first via the panoptic prison, then via the division of labor in the factory and universal education. The purpose of discipline is to produce “docile bodies,” the individual movements of which can be controlled, and which in its turn involves the psychological monitoring and control of individual.

*The Will to Knowledge* is an extraordinarily influential work, perhaps Foucault’s most influential. The central thesis of the book is that, contrary to popular perceptions that we are sexually repressed, the entire notion of sexual repression is part and parcel of a general imperative for us to talk about sex like never before: the production of behavior is represented simply as the liberation of innate tendencies.
The problem, says Foucault, is that we have a negative conception of power, which leads us only to call power that prohibits, while the production of behaviour is not problematized at all. Foucault claims that all previous political theory has found itself stuck in a view of power propagated in connection to absolute monarchy, and that our political thought has not caught up with the French Revolution, hence there is a need “to cut off the head of the king” in political theory. Foucault’s point is that we imagine power as being a thing that can be possessed by individuals, as organized pyramidal, with one person at the apex, operating via negative sanctions. Foucault argues that power is in fact more amorphous and autonomous than this, and essentially relational. That is, power consists primarily not of something a person has, but rather is a matter of what people do, subsisting in our interactions with one another in the first instance. As such, power is completely ubiquitous to social networks. Moreover, people are as much products of power as they are wielders of it. Power thus has a relative autonomy regarding of people, just as they do apropos of it: power has its own strategic logics, emerging from the actions of people within a network of power relations. The carceral system and the device of sexuality are two prime examples of such strategies of power: they are not constructed deliberately by anyone or even by any class, but rather emerge out of themselves.

This leads Foucault to an analysis of the specific historical dynamics of power. He introduces the concept of “biopower,” which combines disciplinary power as discussed in *Discipline and Punish*, with a “biopolitics” that invests people’s lives at a biological level, “making” us live according to norms, in order to regulate humanity at the level of the population, while keeping in reserve the bloody sword of “thanatpolitics,” now exaggerated into an industrial warfare that kills millions. This specific historical thesis is dealt with in more detail in the article.
“Foucault and Feminism”, in the first section. Foucault’s concerns with sexuality, bodies, and norms form a potent mix that has, via the work of Judith Butler in particular, been one of the main influences on contemporary feminist thought, as well as influential in diverse areas of the humanities and social sciences.

In 1976, Foucault gave lectured on the genealogy of racism in ‘Society Must Be Defended’, which provides a useful companion to The Will to Knowledge, and contains perhaps the clearest exposition of Foucault’s thoughts on biopower. The publication of these lecture series, and, a fortiori, of the lecture series that were given in the eight years in between the publication of The Will to Knowledge and the posthumously publication of the next volumes of The History of Sexuality are transforming our picture of Foucault’s later thought.

Foucault’s Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison (1977) brings home the fact that the new forms of social control of punishment emerged from the coming of capitalist society. Foucault discusses knowledge-power relationship. In his History of Discipline and Punishment Foucault develops for the first time the idea of power/knowledge in a precise manner and he links this new form of supervisory social control to the emergence of capitalism.

Before 18th century, the criminals were treated with arbitrariness and brutality by the state authorities. By the middle of this century, Cesare Beccaria and other legal philosophers objected to such a kind of inhuman treatment. In 1791, the English philosopher Jeremy Bentham presented his idea of an inspection house. Bentham presented his creation as a universal model for all buildings involved in activities that required supervisions: hospitals, asylums, workhouses, schools, factories, etc. His model provided an answer to the question of how a few could watch the many and this surveillance could be made more effective, so that those
who were watched could always be observed and thus must live their lives knowing there was a risk that they could also be seen.

According to Foucault, imprisonment is more than a legal deprivation of freedom. It is not just a punishment, but a process of converting the imprisoned individuals. He writes: “Punishment is not primarily repayment for an incurred injury, but more a supervised penance emanating from the individuals, his biography, and casual connections derived there from. Thus, the execution of the sentence is separated from the offence against the law per se” (Foucault, Michel 1977).

There is an all-encompassing disciplinary power that permeates the entire social body. This power does not operate solely behind prison walls, but also on military bases, in the new factory buildings, in schoolrooms, and in hospitals. The new spatial creation is everywhere in which individuals are separated out of the collective and subjected to various disciplinary techniques. Typical of this disciplinary power is its hierarchical supervision, normalizing sanctions and integration of these into various examination processes.

In this book Foucault links knowledge with power. The emergence of penal system or imprisonment owes to the notion of controlling the people by wielding power. It is the wielding of power which brings about discipline in the society. The society thus becomes a disciplined society. Foucault further asserts that it is not always negative and it is not only destructive. It has also positive consequences. He says that discipline produces not only the criminal as a new type of person, but also the obedient soldier, the useful worker, and educated and trained child. Regardless of its institutional ties, the goal of this disciplinary technology is to mould docile bodies, competent individuals who can be used, changed, and developed.
In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault has introduced the theory of power in correlation with the archaeology of knowledge. Prison and punishment are the manifestations of knowledge and power. Completing certain key statements is a type of power, a modality for its exercise comprising a whole set of instruments, techniques, procedures, levels of application, targets; it is a ‘physics’ or an anatomy of power, a technology. Discipline means wielding power. Knowledge gives rise to technologies that exercise power. No knowledge, no technologies has the ability to implement discipline. The examination for example, of students in schools, of patients in hospitals is a method of control that combines hierarchical observation with normalizing judgment. It is a prime example of what Foucault calls power/knowledge, since it combines into a unified whole “the deployment of force and the establishment of truth” (Foucault, Michel 1976, 184). It both elicits the truth about those who undergo the examination (tells what they know or what is the state of their health) and controls their behaviour (by forcing them to study or directing them to a course of treatment).

Foucault views the relation of power and knowledge as far closer than in the familiar Baconian engineering model, for which “knowledge is power”, means that knowledge is an instrument of power, although the two exist quite independently. Foucault’s point is that the study of human beings, the goals of power and the goals of knowledge cannot be separated: in knowing we control and in controlling we know. The examination also situates individuals in a “field of documentation”. The results of examinations are recorded in documents that provide detailed information about the individuals examined and allow power systems to control those for example absentee records for schools, patients’ charts in hospitals. On the basis of these records, those in control can formulate categories, averages, and norms that are in turn a basis for knowledge.
The examination turns the individual into a “case” in both senses of the term: a scientific example and an object of care. Caring is always also an opportunity for control.

Foucault calls the inspection house as ‘Panopticon’. Panopticon is the basis of surveillance for a capitalist society. It helps a perfect implementation of power. It reduces the number of people needed to exercise power, while at the same time, it increases the number of people over whom power is exercised. Discipline or power is not always negative. It has positive impact on society. Foucault coins two terms for knowledge: *connaissance* refers to a specific corpus of knowledge or a discipline *savoir*, at least for Foucault, refers to a kind of knowledge that is underlying but explicit and describable. Foucault's method treats knowledge in the sense of *savoir*, as 'the conditions that are necessary in a particular period for this or that type of object to be given to connaissance as something that is known. In short, ‘knowledge’ as the major focus of Foucault’s method refers to the discursive conditions of possibility. Generally it is understand as objective or subjective knowledge. At one point in *Science and Knowledge*, Foucault describes the archeological method: Instead of exploring the consciousness/knowledge/science axis, archeology explores the discursive practice/knowledge/science axis.

Foucault indeed focuses on the concept of power. He remarked that he produced the analysis of power relations rather than the genealogies. Foucault began talking about power as soon as he began to do genealogy in *The Order of Discourse*. In *Discipline and Punish* he develops a notion of “power-knowledge”. It recombines the analysis of the epistemic with analysis of the political. Knowledge for Foucault is unfathomable apart from power, although Foucault continues to insist on the relative autonomy of discourse. Discourse introduces the concept of power-knowledge precisely as a replacement for the Marxist notion of ideology.
in which knowledge is seen as distorted by class power. For Foucault, there is no pure knowledge apart from power, but knowledge also has real and irreducible importance for power. Foucault sketches idea of power in *Discipline and Punish*. His conception of power is mainly explained in a work published the following year in 1976, the first volume of his *History of Sexuality*, with the title *The Will to Knowledge*. The later is a reference to Nietzsche’s *Will to Power* is titled basically *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*.

Foucault’s most interesting contributions was to challenge a particular notion of power, power-as-sovereignty, and to juxtapose against it a vision of surveillance and of discipline. At the heart of this project was a belief that both our analyses of the operation of political power and our strategies for its restraint or limitation were inaccurate and misguided. In a series of essays and books, Foucault argued that, rather than the public and formal triangle of sovereign, citizen and right, we should focus on a series of subtler, private, informal and material forms of coercion organised around the concepts of discipline and surveillance. The paradigm for the idea of surveillance was the Panopticon, Bentham's plan for a prison constructed in the shape of a wheel around the hub of an observing warden, who at any moment might have the prisoner under observation through a nineteenth century version of the closed circuit TV. Uncertain of when authority might, in fact, be watching, the prisoner would strive to conform his behaviour to its presumed desires; Bentham had struck upon a behavioralist equivalent of the superego, formed from uncertainty about when one was being observed by the powers that is the echo of contemporary laments about the privacy-free state is striking.

Foucault explicitly presents *The Order of Things* as an “archaeological” approach to the history of thought. In 1969 he published *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, a methodological treatise that clearly
formulates what he took to be the archaeological method. The premise of the archaeological method is that systems of thought and knowledge (episteme or discursive formations) are governed by rules, beyond those of grammar and logic. These operate under the consciousness of individual subjects and define a system of conceptual possibilities that determine the boundaries of thought in a given domain and period. So, for example, *History of Madness* should be maintained and be read as an intellectual excavation of the radically different discursive formations that governed talk and thought about madness from the 17\textsuperscript{th} through the 19\textsuperscript{th} centuries.

Archaeology was an essential method for Foucault because it supported a historiography that did not rest on the primacy of the consciousness of individual subjects; it allowed the historian of thought to operate at an unconscious level that displaced the primacy of the subject found in both phenomenology and in traditional historiography. However, archaeology's critical force was restricted to the comparison of the different discursive formations of different periods. Such comparisons could suggest the contingency of a given way of thinking. But mere archaeological analysis could say nothing about the causes of the transition from one way of thinking to another and so had to ignore perhaps the most forceful case for the contingency of entrenched contemporary positions. Genealogy, the new method first deployed in *Discipline and Punish*, was intended to remedy this deficiency.

Foucault intended the term “genealogy” to remind Nietzsche’s *Genealogy of Morals*, particularly with its suggestion of complex, mundane, dishonourable origins in no way part of any grand scheme of progressive history. The point of a genealogical analysis is to show that a given system of thought was the result of contingent turns of history, not the outcome of rationally inevitable trends. It uncovered in its essential
structures by archaeology, which therefore becomes part of Foucault’s historiography. Foucault and the critique of Modernity are not necessary to draw a line between our present discontinuities within the historical and transcendental tradition of the nineteenth century and a great effort to liberate them. The impression of fulfilment and of end, the muffled feeling that carries and animates our thought, and perhaps lulls it to sleep with the facility of its promises ... and makes us believe that something new is about to begin, something that we glimpse only as a thin line of light low on the horizon - that feeling and impression are perhaps not ill founded (Foucault, Michel 1973, 384).

Foucault’s critique of modernity and humanism, along with his declaration of the ‘death of man’ and development of new perspectives on society, knowledge, discourse, and power, has made him a major source of postmodern thought. Foucault draws on an anti-Enlightenment tradition that rejects the equation of reason, emancipation, and progress, arguing that an interface between modern forms of power and knowledge has served to create new forms of domination. In a series of historico-philosophical studies, he has attempted to develop and substantiate this theme from various perspectives: psychiatry, medicine, punishment and criminology, the emergence of the human sciences, the formation of various disciplinary apparatuses, and the constitution of the subject. Foucault’s project has been to write a ‘critique of our historical era’ (Foucault, Michel 1984, 42) which problematizes modern forms of knowledge, rationality, social institutions, and subjectivity that seems given and natural but in fact are contingent sociohistorical constructs of power and domination.

While Foucault has decisively influenced postmodern theory, he cannot be wholly assimilated to that rubric. He is a complex and eclectic thinker who draws from multiple sources and problematics while aligning
himself with no single one. If there are privileged figures in his work, they are critics of reason and Western thought such as Nietzsche and Bataille. Nietzsche provided Foucault, and nearly all French poststructuralists, with the impetus and ideas to transcend Hegelian and Marxist philosophies. In addition to initiating a postmetaphysical, posthumanist mode of thought, Nietzsche taught Foucault that one could write a ‘genealogical’ history of unconventional topics such as reason, madness, and the subject which located their emergence within sites of domination. Nietzsche demonstrated that the will to truth and knowledge is indissociable from the will to power, and Foucault developed these claims in his critique of liberal humanism, the human sciences, and in his later work on ethics. While Foucault never wrote aphoristically in the style of Nietzsche, he did accept Nietzsche’s claims that systematizing methods produce reductive social and historical analyses, and that knowledge is perspectival in nature, requiring multiple viewpoints to interpret a heterogeneous reality.

Foucault was also deeply influenced by Bataille’s assault on Enlightenment reason and the reality principle of Western culture. Bataille (1989) championed the realm of heterogeneity, the ecstatic and explosive forces of religious fervour, sexuality, and intoxicated experience that subvert and transgress the instrumental rationality and normalcy of bourgeois culture. Against the rationalist outlook of political economy and philosophy, Bataille sought a transcendence of utilitarian production and needs, while celebrating a ‘general economy’ of consumption, waste, and expenditure as liberatory. Bataille’s fervent attack on the sovereign philosophical subject and his embrace of transgressive experiences were influential for Foucault and other postmodern theorists. Throughout his writings, Foucault valorizes figures such as Artaud, and others for subverting the hegemony of modern reason.
and its norms and he frequently empathized with the mad, criminals, aesthetes, and marginalized types of all kinds.

Recognizing the problems with attaching labels to Foucault’s work, the present research examines the extent to which he develops certain postmodern positions. Foucault is not read as a postmodernist tout court, but rather as a theorist who combines premodern, modern, and postmodern perspectives (Foucault, Michel 1988, 33-4). Foucault is a profoundly different thinker whose thought is torn between oppositions such as totalizing/detotalizing impulses and tensions between discursive/extra-discursive theorization, macro/micro perspectives, and dialectic of domination/resistance. This critique is developed in the form of new historiographical approaches which he terms ‘archaeology’ and ‘genealogy’.

Postmodernism and the Critique of Modernity is the central issue of philosophy and critical thought since 18th century. It has always been, still is, and will, I hope, remain the question: “What is this Reason that we use? What are its historical effects? What are its limits, and what are its dangers (Foucault, Michel 1984, 249). My objective... has been to create a history of the different modes by which in our culture human beings are made subjects” (Foucault, Michel 1982, 208).

Foucault’s work provides an innovative and comprehensive critique of modernity. Whereas for many theorists modernity encompasses a large, undifferentiated historical epoch that dates from the Renaissance to the present moment, Foucault distinguishes between two post-Renaissance eras: the classical era (1660-1800) and the modern era (1800-1950) (Foucault, Michel 1989, 30). He sees the classical era as inaugurating a powerful mode of domination over human beings that culminates in the modern era. Foucault follows the Nietzschean position that dismisses the Enlightenment ideology of historical progress:
“Humanity does not gradually progress from combat to combat until it arrives at universal reciprocity, where the rule of law finally replaces warfare; humanity installs each of its violence’s in a system of rules and thus proceeds from domination to domination” (Foucault 1977, 151). Yet, ironically, Foucault believes that the modern era is a kind of progress - in the dissemination and refinement of techniques of domination. On this point, his initial position is similar to that of Adorno who spoke of the continuity of disaster ‘leading from the slingshot to the megaton bomb’ (Adorno 1973, 320), and quite unlike that of Marx, Weber, or Habermas who attempt to identify both the emancipatory and repressive aspects of modernity.

Like Horkheimer and Adorno Foucault believes that modern rationality is a coercive force, but whereas they focused on the colonization of nature, and the subsequent repression of social and psychic existence, Foucault concentrates on the domination of the individual through social institutions, discourses, and practices. Awakening in the classical world like a sleeping giant, reason finds chaos and disorder everywhere and embarks on a rational ordering of the social world. It attempts to classify and regulate all forms of experience through a systematic construction of knowledge and discourse, which Foucault understands as systems of language imbricated with social practice. He argues that various human experiences, such as madness or sexuality, become the objects of intense analysis and scrutiny. They are discursively (re)constituted within rationalist and scientific frames of reference, within the discourses of modern knowledge, and thereby made accessible for administration and control. Since the eighteenth century, there has been a discursive explosion whereby all human behaviour has come under the ‘imperialism’ of modern discourse and regimes of power/knowledge. The task of the Enlightenment, Foucault argues, was to multiply ‘reason’s
political power’ (Foucault, Michel 1988, 58) and disseminate it through the social field, eventually saturating the spaces of everyday life.

Foucault, therefore, adopts a stance of hostile opposition to modernity and this is one of the most salient postmodern features of his work. Postmodern theory in general rejects the modern equation of reason and freedom and attempts to problematize modern forms of rationality as reductive and oppressive. In his genealogical works of the 1970s, Foucault stigmatizes modern rationality, institutions, and forms of subjectivity as sources or constructs of domination. Where modern theories tend to see knowledge and truth to be neutral, objective, universal, or vehicles of progress and emancipation, Foucault analyzes them as integral components of power and domination. Postmodern theory rejects unifying or totalizing modes of theory as rationalist myths of the Enlightenment that are reductionist and obscure the differential and plural nature of the social field, while politically entailing the suppression of plurality, diversity, and individuality in favour of conformity and homogeneity.

In direct opposition to modern views, postmodernists valorize incommensurability, difference, and fragmentation as the antidotes to repressive modern modes of theory and rationality. For example, Foucault valorizes ‘the amazing efficacy of discontinuous, particular and local criticism’ as compared to the ‘inhibiting effect of global, totalitarian theories’ at both the theoretical and political level. While he acknowledges that global theories such as marxism and psychoanalysis have provided ‘useful tools for local research’ (Foucault, Michel 1980, 81), he believes they are reductionist and coercive in their practical implications and need to be superseded by a plurality of forms of knowledge and microanalyses. Consequently, Foucault attempts to detotalize history and society as unified wholes governed by a centre,
essence, or telos, and to decentre the subject as a constituted rather than a constituting consciousness. He analyses history as a non-evolutionary, fragmented field of disconnected knowledges, while presenting society as a dispersed regularity of unevenly developing levels of discourses, and the modern subject as a humanist fiction integral to the operations of a carceral society that everywhere disciplines and trains its subjects for labour and conformity.

Perhaps the fundamental guiding motivation of Foucault’s work is to ‘respect ... differences’ (Foucault, Michel 1973, xii). This imperative informs his historical approach, perspectives on society, and political positions and takes numerous forms: a historical methodology which attempts to grasp the specificity and discontinuity of discourses, a rethinking of power as diffused throughout multiple social sites, a redefinition of the ‘general intellectual’ as a ‘specific intellectual’, and a critique of global and totalizing modes of thought. Foucault analyzes modernity from various perspectives on modern discourses and institutions. On Nietzsche’s understanding, perspectivism denies the existence of facts, and insists there are only interpretations of the world. Since the world has no single meaning, but rather countless meanings, a perspectivist seeks multiple interpretations of phenomena and insists there is ‘no limit to the ways in which the world can be interpreted’ (Nietzsche, 1967, 326). Nietzsche’s reflections on the origins of values, for instance, proceeded from psychological, physiological, historical, philosophical, and linguistic grounds. For Nietzsche, the more perspectives one can gain on the world or any of its phenomena, the richer and deeper will be one’s interpretations and knowledge (Nietzsche, 1969 46)

Following Nietzsche, Foucault rejects the philosophical pretension to grasp systematically all of reality within one philosophical system or
from one central vantage point. Foucault believes that ‘Discourse ... is so complex a reality that we not only can, but should, approach it at different levels with different methods’ (Foucault, Michel 1973, xiv). Hence, no single theory or method of interpretation by itself can grasp the plurality of discourses, institutions, and modes of power that constitute modern society. Accordingly, while Foucault is strongly influenced by theoretical positions such as structuralism or marxism, he rejects any single analytic framework and analyzes modernity from the perspectives of psychiatry, medicine, criminology and sexuality, all of which overlap in complex ways and provide different optics on modern society and the constitution of the modern subject.

In his initial books, Foucault characterizes his position as archaeology of knowledge. He employs the term archaeology to differentiate his historical approach, first, from hermeneutics, which seeks a deep truth underlying discourse or an elucidation of subjective meaning schemes. The surface-depth and causal models utilized by modern theory are overturned in favour of a postmodern description of discontinuous surfaces of discourse unconnected by causal linkages. The ‘hermeneutics of suspicion’ itself becomes suspect. Archaeology is also distinguished from ‘the confused, under-structured, and ill-structured domain of the history of ideas’ (Foucault, Michel 1975, 195). Foucault rejects this idealist and humanist mode of writing which traces a continuous evolution of thought in terms of tradition or the conscious productions of subjects.

Against this approach, archaeology attempts to identify the conditions of possibility of knowledge, the determining rules of formation of discursive rationality that operate beneath the level of intention or thematic content. ‘It is these rules of formation, which were never formulated in their own right, but are to be found only in widely differing
theories, concepts, and objects of study, that I have tried to reveal, by isolating, as their specific locus, a level that I have called ... archaeological’ (Foucault, Michel 1973, xi). Unlike structuralism, to which his early analyses bear some resemblances (Dreyfus and Rabinow 1983), these rules are not universal and immutable in character, or grounded in the structure of the mind, but are historically changing and specific to given discursive domains. Such rules constitute the ‘historical a priori’ of all knowledge, perception, and truth. They are ‘the fundamental codes of a culture’ which construct the ‘episteme’, or configuration of knowledge, that determines the empirical orders and social practices of a particular historical era.

In *Madness and Civilization* (1973) Foucault attempts to write the ‘archaeology of that silence’ whereby madness is historically constituted as the other of reason. He returns to the discontinuity marked by the great confinement of 1656 where modern reason breaks off communication with the mad and attempts to ‘guard against the subterranean danger of unreason’ (Foucault, Michel 1973, 84) through discourses of exclusion and institutions of confinement. Classical and modern discourses construct oppositions between sane and insane, normal and abnormal that work to enforce norms of reason and truth.

Foucault’s *Discipline and Punish* published in 1975, is a genealogical study of the development of the gentler modern way of imprisoning criminals rather than torturing or killing them. While recognizing the element of genuinely enlightened reform, Foucault particularly emphasizes how such reform also becomes a vehicle of more effective control to punish less may be to punish better. He further argues that the new mode of punishment becomes the model for control of an entire society, with factories, hospitals, and schools modelled on the modern prison. We should not, however, think that the deployment of this
model was due to the explicit decisions of some central controlling agency. In typically genealogical fashion, Foucault's analysis shows how techniques and institutions, developed for different and often quite innocuous purposes, converged to create the modern system of disciplinary power.

At the core of Foucault’s picture of modern “disciplinary” society are three primary techniques of control: hierarchical observation, normalizing judgment, and the examination. To a great extent, control over people (power) can be achieved merely by observing them. So, for example, the tiered rows of seats in a stadium not only make it easy for spectators to see but also for guards or security cameras to scan the audience. A perfect system of observation would allow one guard to see everything in Jeremy Bentham’s Panopticon. But since this is not usually possible, there is a need for relays of observers, hierarchically ordered, through whom observed data passes from lower to higher levels.

A distinctive feature of modern power (disciplinary control) is its concern with what people have not done with, that is, a person's failure to reach required standards. This concern illustrates the primary function of modern disciplinary systems: to correct deviant behaviour. The goal is not revenge but reform, where, of course, reform means coming to live by society's standards or norms. Discipline through imposing precise norms is quite different from the older system of judicial punishment, which merely judges each action as allowed by the law or not allowed by the law and does not say that those judged are “normal” or “abnormal”. This idea of normalization is pervasive in our society: for example national standards for educational programs, for medical practice, for industrial processes and products.

The examination of students in schools, of patients in hospitals is a method of control that combines hierarchical observation with
normalizing judgment. It is a prime example of what Foucault calls power/knowledge, since it combines into a unified whole “the deployment of force and the establishment of truth” (Foucault, Michel 1975, 184). It both elicits the truth about those who undergo the examination (tells what they know or what is the state of their health) and controls their behaviour.

On Foucault’s account, the relation of power and knowledge is far closer than in the familiar Baconian engineering model, for which “knowledge is power” means that knowledge is an instrument of power, although the two exist quite independently. Foucault’s point is rather that, at least for the study of human beings, the goals of power and the goals of knowledge cannot be separated: in knowing we control and in controlling we know.

The examination also situates individuals in a “field of documentation”. The results of examinations are recorded in documents that provide detailed information about the individuals examined and allow power systems to control them (e.g., absentee records for schools, patients’ charts in hospitals). On the basis of these records, those in control can formulate categories, averages, and norms that are in turn a basis for knowledge. The examination turns the individual into a “case” in both senses of the term: a scientific example and an object of care. Caring is always also an opportunity for control.

For Foucault Bentham's Panopticon is an ideal architectural model of modern disciplinary power. It is a design for a prison, built so that each inmate is separated from and invisible to all the others and each inmate is always visible to a monitor situated in a central tower. Monitors will not in fact always see each inmate; the point is that they could at any time. Since inmates never know whether they are being observed, they must act as if they are always objects of observation. As a result, control is
achieved more by the internal monitoring of those controlled than by heavy physical constraints.

The principle of the Panopticon can be applied not only to prisons but to any system of disciplinary power. And, in fact, although Bentham himself was never able to build it, its principle has come to pervade every aspect of modern society. It is the instrument through which modern discipline has replaced pre-modern sovereignty (kings, judges) as the fundamental power relation.

In his next book, *The Birth of the Clinic* (1975, orig. 1963), subtitled *An Archaeology of Medical Perception*, Foucault analyzes the shift from a premodern speculatively-based medicine to a modern empirically-based medicine rooted in the rationality of the scientific gaze. Rejecting a history based on the ‘consciousness of clinicians’, he pursues a structural study of discourse that seeks to determine ‘the conditions of possibility of medical experience in modern times’ (Foucault, Michel 1975, xix) and the historical conditions whereby a scientific discourse of the individual can first emerge.

Foucault’s *The Order of Things* (1966) in French was published in 1966. Its translation in English appeared in 1970. The French edition was sold like a hot cake. This made Foucault famous in France. Foucault enjoyed his status as a celebrity. He suspected that everyone who bought the books really read and understood it. *The Order of Things* is a very difficult book, hardly to understand anything. It examines three major areas of human sciences: linguistics, biology, and economics.

Foucault finds out the structure of knowledge of a time and its way of establishing order in this book. But he starts long before the existence of human sciences, and examines the development of the fields known in the 17th and 18th centuries as general grammar, natural history, and analysis of wealth. Fredrich Nietzsche argues that God is dead. In other
words, Nietzsche had signed the death of God; Foucault now predicated the death of man. He said that man was an invention, and that he might die.

In *The Order of Things* Foucault argues that before the 18th century man did not exist. Admittedly, he existed before this period, but he was never a centre of the universe. Men were subordinated by God. God was necessarily more central, and was the source of all knowledge. Human knowledge was limited, God’s was infinite. In the 18th and 19th centuries, God lost his place as the firm centre of all, who made all knowledge possible. Man was left with only himself at the centre, as the source of knowledge, and thus turned to intense examination of the source of knowledge. The man, therefore, was invented in the 18th century when human sciences sprang up to study man both as an object and subject.

*The Order of Things* begins with the points of some Argentine writer Jorge Louis Borges who claimed that animals are divided into: belonging to the emperor, embalmed, tame, suckling pigs, sirens, stray dogs, included in the present classification, frenzied, innumerable, dawn with a very fine camel hair brush, having just broken the water jug, a long way off look like flies. It is a ridiculous way of making categorization. It abuses all our sense of order, indeed of the order of things. What Foucault wants to demonstrate is that before 18th century the thinking of man was quite limited. It was only with the emergence of human sciences that the real man came out. It has been Foucault’s attempt in this book to establish the order of things in knowledge perspective.

In *The Order of Things* Foucault has studied three human sciences: linguistic, biology, and economics. In linguistics, he analyses the general grammar of languages. He examines Saussure and argues that the meaning of signified rests at the judgment of the individual. Words do not have anything to do with the objects which they signify. It is the language
which gives meaning. In the natural history, Foucault discusses the biology of body and finally his analysis of economics focuses on wealth.

As far as linguistics in *The Order of Things* is concerned, Foucault tried to understand social structure in historical perspective. It is because of his focus on history that he is also labelled as a historian. His aim in the book has been to analyze the structure of knowledge and its importance in establishing order. By referring to the points of Chinese encyclopaedia of the categories of animals he only wanted to demonstrate that before 17th century people had no knowledge to put the things in proper order. Categories make sense only when they are properly placed in an appropriate order. And, the categorization of animals in a book of the status of encyclopaedia was highly non-sensual. He analyzed the status of knowledge in the social structural point of view. Foucault was both a historian and a structuralist.

Foucault’s approach to biology in *The Order of Things* focuses immensely on the human science of biology. First, he rejects biology in preference of natural history. Second, he says that the body does not obey the laws of physiology. It cannot escape the influence of history. Biology, therefore, needs to be studied within the perspectives of discourse and natural history. He argues that body is moulded by a great distinct rule, it is poisoned by food or values, through eating habits or moral laws, and it constructs resistances.

Foucault develops the importance of technical knowledge. Today, we have enough specialized or technical knowledge. In fact, the definition of knowledge changes with time. There is difference between the field, namely, natural history and the field named biology. As a matter of fact the technical specialists always work together to establish their field and dominant ideas. These technical fields have had ever-increasing
power over people, and these discourses have profoundly shaped the structure of our society.

Foucault gives evidences from his study of madness. Madness in his terminology is a discourse. The experts, that is psychiatrists, psychologists and social workers explained madness in terms of specialized knowledge and thus the discourse about madness underwent a revolutionary change. It means that change in the discourse can change the whole social structure.

The idea of Discourse is central to all his thought as the study dealt with the concept of discourse in *Order of Things* also. It is a framework of thinking of a people about a problem. Foucault’s central theme in all his discussions is the discourse. In its broadest sense discourse means anything written or said or communicated using signs. Usually it is explained by a ‘regulated order of talk’. It includes the concept of chains of statements, institutionalized practices, and the historically. Discourse is the object of Foucault's history. It is extremely wide-ranging and variable, tending to cross over almost every traditional historical unity; but it does so only because it has a very specific level of existence that has never before been analyzed in and of itself. This level is defined in a way similar to that of the statement and that of the enunciatively function, as an aspect of language that captures its emergence and transformation in the active world. The analysis of discourse rigorously ignores any fundamental dependence on anything outside of discourse itself; discourse is never taken as a record of historical events, an articulation of meaningful content, or the expression of an individual or collective psychology. Instead, it is analyzed strictly at the level of ‘things said,’ the level at which statements have their ‘conditions of possibility’ and their conditions of relation to one another. Thus, discourse is not just a set of articulated propositions, nor is it the trace of an otherwise hidden
psychology, spirit, or encompassing historical idea; it is the set of
relations within which all of these other factors gain their sense.

Language is a sign. Foucault uses it as a tool in his discourse. In
his book *The Order of Things*, he argues that in course of history there is
a constant change in the discourse. Nietzsche rejected the notions of
rational man and absolute truth. Foucault argued that history’s search for
origins in great moral truths are entirely misguided.

In *The Order of Things* (1973b; orig. 1966), subtitled *An
Archaeology of the Human Science*, Foucault describes the emergence of
the human sciences. He gives his most detailed analysis of the underlying
rules, assumptions and ordering procedures of the Renaissance, classical,
and modern eras, focusing on the shifts in the sciences of life, labour, and
language. In this analysis, Foucault uncovers the birth of ‘man’ as a
discursive construct. ‘Man’, the object of philosophy as the human
sciences (psychology, sociology and literature), emerges when the
classical field of representation dissolves and the human being for the
first time becomes not only an aloof representing subject, but also the
object of modern scientific investigation, a finite and historically
determined being to be studied in its living, labouring, and speaking
capacities.

Embedded in a new field of temporality and finitude, the status of
the subject as master of knowledge becomes threatened, but its
sovereignty is maintained in its reconstitution in transcendental form.
Foucault describes how modern philosophy constructs ‘Man’- both object
and subject of knowledge - within a series of unstable ‘doublets’: the
cogito/unthought doublet whereby Man is determined by external forces
yet aware of this determination and able to free himself from it; the
retreat-and-return-of-the-origin doublet whereby history precedes Man
but he is the phenomenological source from which history unfolds; and
the transcendental/empirical doublet whereby Man both constitutes and is constituted by the external world, finding secure foundations for knowledge through *a priori* categories in Kant or through procedures of ‘reduction’ which allow consciousness to purify itself from the empirical world in Husserl. In each of these doublets, humanist thought attempts to recuperate the primacy and autonomy of the thinking subject and to master all that is other to it.

Foucault’s initial critique of the human sciences is that like philosophy, they are premised on an impossible attempt to reconcile irreconcilable poles of thought and posit a constituting subject. It is only in his genealogical works, as we shall see, that this critique assumes its full importance as Foucault becomes clear on the political implications of humanism as the epistemological basis of a disciplinary society. Having analyzed the birth of ‘man’, *The Order of Things* concludes by anticipating the ‘death of man’ as an epistemological subject in the emerging posthumanist, postmodern epistemic space where the subject is once and for all dethroned and interpreted as an effect of language, desire, and the unconscious. This development begins in the twentieth century with the appearance of the ‘counter-sciences’ (psychoanalysis, linguistics, and ethnology), and archaeology itself clearly belongs to this space.

Finally, in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972; orig. 1971), Foucault pursues a metatheoretical reflection on his project and methodology in order to clarify his ideas and criticize some of his past mistakes. Drawing from the work of French historians of science, Bachelard and Canguilhem, Foucault self-consciously announces that ‘a new form of history is trying to develop its own theory’ (Foucault, Michel 1972, 5). From within this new conceptual space the modern themes of continuity, teleology, genesis, totality, and subject are no longer self-evident and are reconstructed or abandoned.
Unlike in modern historiography, discontinuity is no longer seen as disfigurement on the historical narrative and stigmatized in principle. Rather, Foucault adopts discontinuity as a positive working concept. He contrasts his postmodern concept of a general history to the modern concept of a total history that he attributes to figures such as Hegel and Marx. Foucault summarizes the difference in this way: ‘A total description draws all phenomena around a single centre - a principle, a meaning, a spirit, a world-view, an overall shape; a general history, on the contrary, would deploy the space of dispersion’ (Ibid. 10). The types of totality that Foucault rejects include massive vertical totalities such as history, civilization, and epoch; horizontal totalities such as society or period; and anthropological or humanist conceptions of a centred subject.

For Foucault, evolutionary history such as written by Hegel or Marx attains its narrative totalizations in an illegitimate way, through the construction of abstractions that obscure more than they reveal. Beneath these abstractions are complex interrelations, a shifting plurality of decentred, individualized series of discourses, unable to be reduced to a single law, model, unity, or vertical arrangement. His goal is to break up the vast unities ‘and then see whether they can be legitimately reaffirmed; or whether other groupings should be made’ (Ibid. 26). The potential result of such detotalizing moves is that ‘an entire field is set free’ - the field of discursive formations, complex systems of dispersions. Hence, as a postmodern historiography, archaeology ‘does not have a unifying but a diversifying effect’ (Ibid. 160), allowing the historian to discover the multiplicity of discourses in a field of knowledge.

Foucault’s archaeological approach can be distinguished from theorists such as Baudrillard, Lyotard or Derrida in two significant ways. First, Foucault does not dissolve all forms of structure, coherence, and intelligibility into an endless flux of signification. Having cleared the
ground, he attempts to grasp what forms of regularities, relations, continuities, and totalities really do exist. The task of archaeology is not just ‘to attain a plurality of histories juxtaposed and independent of one another’, but also ‘to determine what form of relation may be legitimately described between ... different series [of things]’ (Ibid. 10).

Second, unlike Baudrillard’s apocalyptic trumpeting of postmodernity as a complete break with industrial modernity, political economy, and referential reason, Foucault employs a cautious and qualified use of the discourse of discontinuity. While he appropriates this discourse to attack the traditional interpretation of history as the steady accumulation of knowledge or the gradual progress of truth or reason, and to show that sudden and abrupt changes occur in configurations of knowledge, he rejects the interpretation of his work as simply a ‘philosophy of discontinuity’ (Foucault, Michel 1988, 99-100). Instead, he claims that he sometimes exaggerated the degree of historical breaks ‘for pedagogical purposes’, that is, to counter the hegemony of the traditional theories of historical progress and continuity (Foucault, Michel 1980, 111-12).

For Foucault, discontinuity refers to the fact that in a transition from one historical era to another ‘things are no longer perceived, described, expressed, characterized, classified, and known in the same way’ (Foucault, Michel 1973, 217). In the shift from the Renaissance to the classical episteme, for example, ‘thought ceases to move in the element of resemblance. Similitude is no longer the form of knowledge but the occasion of error (Foucault, Michel 1973, 51) which is derided as the poetic fantasy of an age before Reason. But there is no rupture or break so radical as to spring forth ex nihilo and negate everything that has preceded it. Rupture is possible ‘only on the basis of rules that are already in operation’ (Foucault, Michel 1972, 17). Foucault argues that rupture
means not some absolute change, but a ‘redistribution of the [prior] episteme’ (Foucault, Michel 1973, 345), a reconfiguration of its elements, where, although there are new rules of a discursive formation redefining the boundaries and nature of knowledge and truth, there are significant continuities as well.

Hence, Foucault employs dialectic of continuity and discontinuity; historical breaks always include some ‘overlapping, interaction, and echoes’ (Foucault, Michel 1980, 149) between the old and the new. In The Order of Things (Foucault, Michel 1973, 361), for example, he emphasizes the continuities between the modern and the emerging postmodern episteme, such as the continued importance of the problematic of representation in the space of the counter-sciences. Similarly, in his works on sexuality, he describes continuity between medieval Christianity and modernity in terms of the constitution of the individual whose deep truth is its sexuality. Also in his later work, he seeks to identify ‘that thread that may connect us with the Enlightenment’ (Foucault, Michel 1984, 42), a still existing historico-critical outlook.

The Archaeology of Knowledge was the last work Foucault explicitly identified as archaeology and it marks the end of his focus on the unconscious rules of discourse and the historical shifts within each discursive field. This perspective has led theorists such as Habermas (Foucault, Michel 1987, 268) and Grumley (Foucault, Michel 1989, 192) to wrongly argue that Foucault’s archaeologies grant ‘total autonomy’ to discourse over social institutions and practices. This critique of the early Foucault as idealist is contradicted most obviously, by the focus on institutional supports of discourse in Madness and Civilization, but one also finds a concern with policing, surveillance, and disciplinary apparatuses already in The Birth of the Clinic, and an emphasis on the
‘materiality’ of discourse in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (Foucault, Michel 1989, 18-19).

Nevertheless, there is no doubt that Foucault’s archaeologies privileged analysis of theory and knowledge over practices and institutions. While Foucault’s limited focus had a legitimate philosophical justification, recasting traditional views of history and seeking an imminent clarification of the intelligibility of discourse in terms of linguistic rules unperceived by human actors, a more adequate analysis would ultimately have to focus more directly on practices and institutions to situate discourse within its full social and political context. Working through the influence of Nietzsche, this became Foucault’s project and marks his turn to genealogy and an explicit concern with power relations and effects.

In 1970 Foucault began to make the transition from archaeology to genealogy and thereby to a more adequate theorization of material institutions and forms of power. In his essay, *The Discourse of Language*, he speaks of employing a new genealogical analysis of ‘the effective formation of discourse, whether within the limits of control, or outside them’ (Foucault, Michel 1972, 233). In a summary of a course he gave in the College de France (1970-71), he stated that his earlier archaeological studies should now be conducted ‘in relation to the will to knowledge’ (Foucault, Michel 1977, 201) and the power effects this creates. In his 1971 essay *Nietzsche, Genealogy, and History*, he analyzes the central Nietzschean themes that will inform his new historical method, which appears in mature form in his next major book, *Discipline and Punish* (1979; orig. 1975). While genealogy signals a new shift in focus, it is not a break in his work, but rather a widening of the scope of analysis. Like archaeology, Foucault characterizes genealogy as a new mode of historical writing, calling the genealogist ‘the new historian’ (Ibid. 160).
Both methodologies attempt to re-examine the social field from a micrological standpoint that enables one to identify discursive discontinuity and dispersion instead of continuity and identity, and to grasp historical events in their real complexity. Both methodologies, therefore, attempt to undo great chains of historical continuity and their teleological destinations and to historicize what is thought to be immutable. Foucault seeks to destroy historical identities by pluralizing the field of discourse, to purge historical writing of humanist assumptions by decenring the subject, and to critically analyze modern reason through a history of the human sciences.

In the transition to his genealogical stage, however, Foucault places more emphasis on the material conditions of discourse, which he defines in terms of ‘institutions, political events, economic practices and processes’ (Foucault, Michel 1972, 49), and on analyzing the relations between discursive and non-discursive domains. Consequently, he thematizes the operations of power, particularly as they target the body to produce knowledge and subjectivity. This transition is not then a break between the idealist archaeological Foucault and the materialist genealogical Foucault, but rather marks a more adequate thematization of social practices and power relations that were implicit in his work all along.

Archaeology and genealogy now combine in the form of theory/practice where theory is immediately practical in character. As Foucault states, “‘archaeology’ would be the appropriate methodology of the analysis of local discursivities, and ‘genealogy’ would be the tactics whereby on the basis of the descriptions of these local discursivities, the subjected knowledges which were thus released would be brought into play’ (Foucault, Michel 1980, 85). Where archaeology attempted to show that the subject is a fictitious construct, genealogy seeks to foreground the
material context of subject construction, to draw out the political consequences of ‘subjectification’, and to help form resistances to subjectifying practices. Where archaeology criticized the human sciences as being grounded in humanist assumptions, genealogy links these theories to the operations of power and tries to put historical knowledge to work in local struggles. And where archaeology theorized the birth of the human sciences in the context of the modern episteme and the figure ‘Man’, genealogy highlights the power and effects relations they produced.

In Discipline and Punish, Foucault describes the historical formation of the soul, body, and subject within various disciplinary matrices of power that operate in institutions such as prisons, schools, hospitals, and workshops. Disciplinary techniques include timetables for constant imposition and regulation of activity, surveillance measures to monitor performance, examinations such as written reports and files to reward conformity and penalize resistance, and ‘normalizing judgement’ to impose and enforce moral values such as the work ethic. The lives of the student, soldier and prisoner are equally regulated and monitored. The individual is interpreted not only as a discursive construct, but as an effect of political technologies through which its very identity, desires, body, and ‘soul’ are shaped and constituted. ‘Discipline “makes” individuals; it is the specific technique of a power that regards individuals both as objects and as instruments of its exercise’ (Foucault, Michel 1979, 170). The ultimate goal and effect of discipline is ‘normalization’, the elimination of all social and psychological irregularities and the production of useful and docile subjects through a refashioning of minds and bodies.

Similarly, in The History of Sexuality (1980b; orig. 1976) Foucault attempts to write the history of the ‘polymorphous techniques of power’
that since the end of the sixteenth century has rigorously inscribed the body within discourses of sexuality governed by a scientific will to knowledge. Power operates not through repression of sex, but through the discursive production of sexuality and subjects who have a ‘sexual nature’. ‘The deployment of sexuality has its reason for being ... in proliferating, innovating, annexing, creating, and penetrating bodies in an increasingly detailed way, and in controlling populations in an increasingly comprehensive way’ (Foucault, Michel 1980, 107). The production of the sexual body allows it to be inscribed within a network of normalizing powers where a whole regime of knowledge-pleasure is defined and controlled.

In order to theorize the birth of modern disciplinary and normalizing practices, genealogy politicizes all facets of culture and everyday life. Following Nietzsche’s genealogies of morality, asceticism, justice, and punishment, Foucault tries to write the histories of unknown, forgotten, excluded, and marginal discourses. He sees the discourses of madness, medicine, punishment and sexuality to have independent histories and institutional bases, irreducible to macrophenomena such as the modern state and economy. He calls for ‘an insurrection of subjugated knowledges (Ibid. 81), of those ‘disqualified’ discourses that positivistic science and marxism delegitimate because they are deemed marginal and/or non-formalizable, against ‘the tyranny of globalizing discourses’ (Ibid. 83). Genealogies are therefore ‘anti-sciences’, not because they seek to ‘vindicate a lyrical right to ignorance or non-knowledge’ and attack the concepts and methods of science for each rather because they contest ‘the [coercive] effects of the centralizing powers which are linked to the institution and functioning of an organized scientific discourse’ (Ibid. 84).
Foucault’s idea of Power/Knowledge/Subjectivity had to “wait until the nineteenth century before we began to understand the nature of exploitation, and to this day, we have yet to fully comprehend the nature of power” (Foucault, Michel 1977, 213). Foucault attempts to rethink the nature of modern power in a non-totalizing, non-representational, and anti-humanist scheme in beginning of the early 1970s. He rejects all modern theories that see power to be attached in macrostructures or ruling classes and to be repressive in nature. He develops new post-modern perspectives that interpret power as dispersed, indeterminate, heteromorphous, subjectless and productive, constituting individuals’ bodies and identities. He claims that the two dominant models for theorizing modern power, the juridical and economist models are flawed by outmoded and erroneous assumptions. The economic model, as espoused by Marxists, is rejected as a reductionistic subordination of power to class domination and economic imperatives. The juridical model, his primary target, analyzes power in terms of law, legal and moral right, and political sovereignty. While the bourgeois revolution decapitated the king in the socio-political realm, Foucault argues that many concepts and assumptions of the sovereign-juridical model continue to inform modern thought.

Foucault marks a rupture in history that inaugurates a radically different mode of power than theorized on the juridical model, a power that is productive, not repressive, in nature, one which is ‘bent on generating forces, making them grow, and ordering them, rather than one dedicated to impeding them, making them submit, or destroying them’ (Foucault, Michel 1980, 136). As evident from the dramatic historical shifts Foucault outlines in Discipline and Punish, from the gruesome torture of Damiens to the moral reform of prisoners, schoolchildren, and others, this power operates not through physical force or representation
by law, but through the hegemony of norms, political technologies, and
the shaping of the body and soul.

In *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault terms this new mode of
dpower ‘bio-power’. Its first modality, as we have already discussed, is a
disciplinary power that involves ‘an *anatomo-politics of the human body*’
(Ibid.139). Most generally, Foucault defines disciplines as ‘techniques for
assuring the ordering of human multiplicities’ (Foucault, Michel 1979,
218). Initially developed in monasteries and in late-seventeenth-century
plague towns that required methods of spatial separation and population
surveillance, disciplinary techniques soon extended throughout society,
thereby forming a gigantic ‘carceral archipelago’.

The second modality of bio-power, emerging subsequent to
disciplinary power, focuses on the ‘species body’, the social population in
general. ‘Governments perceived that they were not dealing simply with
subjects, or even with a “people”, but with a “population”, with its
specific phenomena and its peculiar variables: birth and death rates, life
expectancy, fertility, state of health, frequency of illnesses, patterns of
diet and habitation’ (Foucault, Michel 1980, 25). The ensuing supervision
of the population represents ‘the entry of life into history’, into a densely
constituted field of knowledge, power, and techniques. Hence, in the
eighteenth century, sexuality became an object of discursive
administration and regulation. The ‘deployment of sexuality’ produced
perversions and sexual categorizations of various sorts in accordance with
normalizing strategies of power.

Against modern theories that see knowledge as neutral and
objective (positivism) or emancipatory (Marxism), Foucault emphasizes
that knowledge is indissociable from regimes of power. His concept of
‘power/knowledge’ is symptomatic of the postmodern suspicion of reason
and the emancipatory schemes advanced in its name. The circular
relationship between power and knowledge is established in Foucault’s genealogical critiques of the human sciences. Having emerged within the context of relations of power, through practices and technologies of exclusion, confinement, surveillance, and objectification, disciplines such as psychiatry, sociology, and criminology in turn contributed to the development, refinement, and proliferation of new techniques of power. Institutions such as the asylum, hospital, or prison functioned as laboratories for observation of individuals, experimentation with correctional techniques, and acquisition of knowledge for social control.

The modern individual became both an object and subject of knowledge, not ‘repressed’, but positively shaped and formed within the matrices of scientifc-disciplinary mechanisms’, a oral/legal/ psychological/ medical/sexual being ‘carefully fabricated ... according to a whole technique of force and odies’ (Foucaul, Michel 1979, 217). As Foucault understands it, the term ‘subject’ has a double meaning: one is both ‘subject to someone else by control and dependence, and tied to their own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge’ (Foucault, Michel 1982, 212). Hence, as Dews (1987) has noted, Foucault rejects the Enlightenment model which links consciousness, self-reflection, and freedom, and instead follows Nietzsche’s claim in The Genealogy of Morals that self-knowledge, particularly in the form of moral consciousness, is a strategy and effect of power whereby one internalizes social control.

Against modern theories that posit a pregiven unified subject or an unchanging human essence that precedes all social operations, Foucault calls for the destruction of the subject and sees this as a key political tactic. ‘One has to dispense with the constituent subject, and to get rid of the subject itself, that’s to say, to arrive at an analysis which can account for the constitution of the subject within a historical framework’
The notion of a constituent subject is a humanist mystification that occludes a critical examination of the various institutional sites where subjects are produced within power relations. Taking his cue from Nietzsche, Foucault’s task is to awaken thought from its humanist slumbers and to destroy ‘all concrete forms of the anthropological prejudice’, a task which would allow us ‘to renew contact ... with the project of a general critique of reason’ (Foucault, Michel 1973, 342). To accomplish this, the subject must be ‘stripped of its creative role and analyzed as a complex and variable function of discourse’ (Foucault, Michel 1977, 138). Hence, Foucault rejects the active subject and welcomes the emerging postmodern era as a positive event where the denuding of agency occurs and new forms of thought can emerge (Foucault, Michel 1973, 386).

Foucault’s account of power emphasizes the highly differentiated nature of modern society and the ‘heteromorphous’ power mechanisms that operate independent of conscious subjects. This postmodern theory attempts to grasp the plural nature of modernity itself, which Foucault believes modern social theory such as Marxism has failed to adequately understand. Modernity is characterized by the fact that ‘never have there existed more centres of power more circular contacts and linkages ... more sites where the intensity of pleasures and the persistency of power catch hold, only to spread elsewhere’ (Foucault, Michel 1980, 49). Hence, Foucault defines power as ‘a multiple and mobile field of force relations where far-reaching, but never completely stable effects of domination are produced’ (Foucault, Michel 1980, 102). Modern power is a ‘relational’ power that is ‘exercised from innumerable points,’ is highly indeterminate in character, and is never something ‘acquired, seized, or shared’. There is no source or centre of power to neither contest, nor are
there any subjects holding it; power is a purely structural activity for which subjects are anonymous conduits or by-products.

In opposition to modern totalizing analyses, Foucault undertakes a pluralized analysis of power and rationality as they are inscribed in various discourses and institutional sites. Demarcating his approach from the Frankfurt School and other modern approaches, Foucault rejects a generalized description of ‘rationalization’. Instead, he analyzes it as a process which occurs ‘in several fields, each grounded in a fundamental experience: madness, illness, death, crime, sexuality, etc.’ (Foucault, Michel 1988, 59). Consequently, Foucault conducts an ‘ascending’ rather than ‘descending’ analysis which sees power as circulating throughout a decentred field of institutional networks and is only subsequently taken up by larger structures such as class or the state. These macroforces ‘are only the terminal forms power takes’ (Foucault, Michel 1980, 92). Moreover, this explains why Foucault calls his approach an ‘analytics’, rather than a ‘theory’ of power. The latter term implies a systematic, unitary viewpoint which he seeks to destroy in favour of a plural, fragmentary, differentiated, indeterminant, and historically and spatially specific mode of analysis.

Therefore distinction between a theory of postmodern power and a postmodern analytics of modern power needed while there are salient postmodern aspects to his analysis of power, whereby he dissolves power into a plurality of micro forces as in Lyotard’s word that “postmodern era is the era of micropolitics” (Lyotard Jean-Francois 1984). Foucault never theorizes those technologies and strategies that some theorists identify as constituting a postmodern power. For theorists such as Baudrillard a postmodern power involves electronic media and information technologies and semiotic systems that undermine the distinction between reality and unreality to proliferate an abstract environment of images and
manipulated signifiers. It is peculiar that he says nothing about these new forms of power which have emerged in 20th century as powerful social and cultural forces, and which are only partially illuminated by the model of a disciplinary bio-power in that they involve the circulation of information and abstract sign systems.

On Foucault’s scheme, therefore, there have been no significant developments in the mechanisms of operations and power since the nineteenth century. Theorists such as Baudrillard sharply challenge by positing the existence of a new postmodern society and a ‘disembodied’ semiotic power. Foucault does not identify a postmodern form of power. He does anticipate a new postmodern episteme and historical era, describing his strong impression that ‘something new is about to begin, something that we glimpse only as a thin line of light low on the horizon’ (Foucault, Michel 1973, 384). But this era is not specified beyond its conception as a posthumanist era and is therefore not explored more broadly in terms of new social, economic, technological, or cultural processes. Indeed, the move of Foucault’s later thought was to shift from an analysis of modernity toward an analysis of premodernity in order to further develop his genealogy of the modern subject.

Moreover, in later essays such as What is Enlightenment? (Foucault, Michel 1984, 32-50) we find that far from positing a radical rupture in history, he draws key continuities between our current era and the Enlightenment. In doing this, he modifies his earlier critique of rationality in important ways which force rethinking of charges that he is an unrepentent irrationalist or aestheticist. While still critical of Enlightenment reason, Foucault attempts to positively appropriate key aspects of the Enlightenment heritage its acute historical sense of the present, its emphasis on rational autonomy over conformity and dogma, and its critical outlook. He now sees the uncritical acceptance of modern
rationality and its complete rejection as equally hazardous: ‘if it is extremely dangerous to say that Reason is the enemy that should be eliminated, it is just as dangerous to say that any critical questioning risks sending us into irrationality’ (Ibid. 249). This qualification rescues Foucault from the aporia of repudiating reason from a rational standpoint. Critical thought must constantly live within a field of tension; its function is to accept and theorize ‘this sort of revolving door of rationality that refers us to its necessity, to its indispensability, and at the same time to its intrinsic dangers’ (Ibid. 249).

Hence, Foucault modified his attitude toward the Enlightenment, modernity, and rationality. While his early critiques of modernity are sharply negative, in his later work he sometimes adopts a more positive attitude, seeing a critical impulse in the modern will-to-knowledge which should be preserved. This leads him, to qualify his position that subjectivity is nothing but a construct of domination. Such changes are symptomatic of a shift in French thought away from earlier denunciations of reason and subjectivity: “Free political action from all unitary and totalizing paranoia, Develop action, thought, and desires by proliferation, juxtaposition, and disjunction, and not by subdivision and pyramidal hierarchization” (Foucault, Michel 1983 xiii). Maybe the target nowadays is not to discover what we are, but to refuse what we are (Foucault, Michel 1982, 216).

Power is diffused throughout the social field, constituting individual subjectivities and their knowledge’s and pleasures, colonizing the body itself, utilizing its forces while inducing obedience and conformity. Since the seventeenth century, individuals have been caught within a complex grid of disciplinary, normalizing, panoptic powers that survey, judge, measure, and correct their every move. There are no ‘spaces of primal liberty’ in society; power is everywhere. The fact is that
every human relation has to some degree a power relation. We move in a world of perpetual strategic relations’ (Foucault, Michel 1988, 168). Despite this intense vision of oppression, it is a mistake to see Foucault as a fatalist with respect to social and political change for his work can be read in another way. Indeed, Foucault’s own interventions into political struggles and debates would make little sense if he felt that the deadlock of power was unbreakable. One might even speak of Foucault’s optimism that issue from his belief in the contingency and vulnerability of power: ‘There’s an optimism that consists in saying that things couldn’t be better. My optimism would consist rather in saying that so many things can be changed, fragile as they are, bound up more with circumstances than necessities, more arbitrary than self-evident, more a matter of complex, but temporary, historical circumstances than with inevitable anthropological constraints’ (Ibid. 156). Ultimately, this attitude proceeds on the belief that ‘Knowledge can transform us’ (Ibid. 4), hence the importance of archaeology and genealogy as historical methods that expose the beginnings and development of current subjectifying discourses and practices.

Misinterpretations of Foucault turn on a conflation between power as omnipresent and as omnipotent. While power is everywhere, it is indissociable from contestation and struggle: ‘I am just saying: as soon as there is a power relation, there is a possibility of resistance. We can never be ensnared by power: we can always modify its grip in determinate conditions and according to a precise strategy’ (Foucault, Michel 1988, 123). The common argument that Foucault presents subjects as helpless and passive victims of power fails to observe his emphasis on the contingency and vulnerability of power and the places in his work where he describes actual resistances to it. In *Discipline and Punish*, for example, he briefly discusses ‘popular illegalities’ and strategies of
indiscipline to counter the mechanisms of discipline and normalization (Foucault, Michel 1979, 273). Similarly, in *The History of Sexuality*, he argues that while the discourses of ‘perversity’ multiplied the mechanisms of social control, they also produced a reverse discourse where homosexuals appropriated them in order to demand their legitimacy as a group (Foucault, Michel 1980, 101).

The marxist binary model of class struggle between antagonistic classes, Foucault calls for a plurality of autonomous struggles waged throughout the micro-levels of society, in the prisons, asylums, hospitals, and schools. For a modern concept of macro-politics where clashing forces struggle for control over a centralized source of power rooted in the economy and state, Foucault substitutes a postmodern concept of micro-politics where numerous local groups contest diffuse and decentred forms of power spreading throughout society.

The ‘general intellectual’ who ‘represents’ all oppressed groups is demoted to the ‘specific intellectual’ who assumes a modest advisory role within a particular group and form of struggle. Foucault rejects nearly the entire vocabulary of classical marxism. The concepts of liberation or emancipation, for example, imply for Foucault an inherent human essence waiting to be freed from the shackles of a repressive power. The notion of ideology, moreover, assumes the possibility of a true consciousness and a form of truth constituted outside the field of power, as well as a power based on mental representations rather than physical discipline. Finally, Foucault finds the very idea of revolution to be erroneous insofar as it entails a large-scale social transformation radiating from a central point (the state or mode of production), rather than a detotalized proliferation of local struggles against a relational power that no one owns. There are no wars, no revolts, or no revolutions instead there are plurality of opposition. Everyone is special on their place.
If Foucault is right that modern power is irreducibly plural, that it proliferates and thrives at the local and capillary levels of society, and is only subsequently taken up by larger institutional structures, then it follows that a change only in the form of the state, mode of production, or class composition of society fails to address autonomous trajectories of power. Thus, the key assumption behind the micrological strategies of thinkers like Foucault, Deleuze and Guattari, and Lyotard, is that since power is decentred and plural, so in turn must be forms of political struggle. A Foucauldian postmodern politics, therefore, attempts to break with unifying and totalizing strategies, to cultivate multiple forms of resistance, to destroy the prisons of received identities and discourses of exclusion, and to encourage the proliferation of differences of all kinds.

The political task of genealogy is to recover the autonomous discourses, knowledges, and voices suppressed through totalizing narratives. The subjugated voices of history speak to hidden forms of domination; to admit their speech is necessarily to revise one’s conception of what and where power is. As Marx attempted to break the spell of commodity fetishism in capitalist society, or as the surrealist and Russian formalists practised ‘defamiliarization’ techniques to shatter the grip of ordinary sensibility, so genealogy problematizes the present as eternal and self-evident, exposing the operations of power and domination working behind neutral or beneficent facades. In Foucault’s words: ‘It seems to me that the real political task in a society such as ours is to criticize the working of institutions which appear to be both neutral and independent; to criticize them in such a manner that the political violence which has always exercized itself obscurely through them will be unmasked, so that one can fight them’ (Foucault, Michel 1974, 171).

Genealogies attempt to demonstrate how objectifying forms of reason (and their regimes of truth and knowledge) have been made, as
historically contingent rather than eternally necessary forces. Consequently, ‘they can be unmade, as long as we know how it was they were made’ (Foucault, Michel 1988, 37). Foucault’s genealogy of sexuality was written with such purposes in mind. He attempted to problematize contemporary notions of sexual liberation by demonstrating that the concepts of sexual nature or sexuality originated in early Christian culture and in modernity became articulated with disciplinary and therapeutic techniques that work to imprison individuals in normalizing discourses and identities.

Foucauldian micropolitics include two key components: a discourse politics and a bio-politics. In discourse politics, marginal groups attempt to contest the hegemonic discourses that position individuals within the straitjacket of normal identities to liberate the free play of differences. In any society, discourse is power because the rules determining discourse enforce norms of what is rational, sane, or true, and to speak from outside these rules is to risk marginalization and exclusion. All discourses are produced by power, but they are not wholly subservient to it and can be used as ‘a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy’ (Foucault, Michel 1980, 101). Counter-discourses provide a lever of political resistance by encapsulating a popular memory of previous forms of oppression and struggle and a means of articulating needs and demands. In bio-struggle, by contrast, individuals attempt to break from the grip of disciplinary powers and to reinvent the body by creating new modes of desire and pleasure. Foucault believes that the development of new bodies and pleasures have the potential to subvert the construction of normalized subject identities and forms of consciousness. The political deployment of the body, however, could not take the form of ‘liberation of sexuality’, as Reich or Marcuse call for, since sexuality is a normalizing construct of modernity. Hence,
for Foucault, ‘the rallying point for the counterattack against the deployment of sexuality ought not to be sex-desire, but bodies and pleasures’ (Ibid. 157).

There is some tension between these two strategies since discourse politics promotes a critical reflexivity and a popular counter-memory and bio-politics explores the trangressive potential of the body. The first perspective emphasizes the historical constitution of everything human and the second sometimes verges toward a naive naturalism. Ultimately, this reflects the tension that runs throughout Foucault’s work between discursive and extra-discursive emphases. There is also tension between the emphases on the ubiquity of domination and the possibility of resistance insofar as the balance of description is tipped toward the side of a domination that shapes every aspect of mental and physical existence, while very few specifics about resistance are given and the efficacy of human agency, at least theoretically, is denied. Moreover, as Fraser notes it is not clear how the ‘bodies and pleasures’ Foucault valorizes are not, like ‘sexuality’, (Fraser 1989, 60) also power effects or implicated in normalizing strategies. Foucault contradicts himself in claiming that everything is historically constituted within power relations and then privileging some realm of the body as a transcendental source of transgression. He thereby seems to reproduce the kind of essentialist anthropology for which he attacks humanism.

Nevertheless, discourse and bio-struggle are intended to facilitate the development of new forms of subjectivity and values (Foucault, Michel 1982, 216). The precondition for the development of new subjectivities is the dissolution of the old ones, a move first anticipated in *The Order of Things*. While Foucault has never provided any conception of human agency, he does, unlike Althusser and other structuralist or poststructuralist thinkers, gesture towards a positive reconstruction of
subjectivity in a posthumanist problematic. This move occurs in his later works - the second and third volumes of his *History of Sexuality* and various essays and interviews from the 1980s - and it moves into the forefront of Foucault’s thought a concern with ethics and technologies of the self. We have to create ourselves as a work of art (Ibid. 237). [Genealogy] is seeking to give new impetus, as far and wide as possible, to the undefined work of freedom (Foucault, Michel 1984, 46).

The archaeological focus is on systems of knowledge in the 1960s, to the genealogical focus on modalities of power in the 1970s, to the focus on technologies of the self, ethics, and freedom in the 1980s. There are both continuities and dramatic discontinuities if we compare the early and middle with the later Foucault. The continuities concern the extension of his archaeological and genealogical investigations to a new field of study that seeks the beginnings of the modern hermeneutic of desire - the search for the deep truth of one’s being in one’s ‘sexuality’ in Greek, Roman, and Christian culture; the discontinuities arise in regard to his new focus on a self-constituting subject and his reconsideration of rationality and autonomy.

Foucault has been concerned with the problematization of fundamental domains of experience in Western culture such as madness, illness, deviance, and sexuality. He has shown how subjectivity is constituted in a wide range of discourses and practices, within a field of power, knowledge, and truth. His project is to develop a multi-perspectival critique of modernity and its institutions, discourses, practices, and forms of subjectivity. In his books, essays, and interviews from the 1980s, however, Foucault leaves the familiar terrain of modernity to study premodern Greek, Roman, and Christian cultures.

The attempt to theorize how and when individuals first seek the truth of their being as subjects of desire through a hermeneutics of the
self, led Foucault to analyze the beginnings of this process in early
Christian cultures and the continuities and discontinuities between
Christian and modern morality. In trying to locate the beginnings of the
constitution of the self as a subject of desire, he traced the matrices of
Christian morality to Greek and Roman culture. In the second and third
volumes of his project, *The Use of Pleasure* (1986; orig. 1984) and *The
Care of the Self* (1988a; orig. 1984), he analyzed the similarities and
differences between Greek and Roman morality, and the continuities and
discontinuities between Greco-Roman morality and Christian and modern
morality. For Foucault, there are continuities throughout Western culture
in terms of a problematization of desire as a powerful force that needs to
be morally regulated; the discontinuities arise, in terms of the different
modes of regulation.

Foucault wrote *The History of Sexuality* (1976-1984) in three
volumes. The major concern of Foucault in these volumes is to analyze
the power-knowledge pleasure relationship. His main objective is to
define the regime of power-knowledge-pleasure that sustains the
discourse on human sexuality in our part of the world. An oppressive
silence is around sex. The first volume of *The History Sexuality* talks
mostly about the last two centuries; volumes II and III are quite
unexpectedly about Greece and Rome.

Foucault has expressed very strange ideas about sex in these three
volumes. For instance, he says that prostitution is potentially a rebellion
against women’s economic, social and sexual roles. As it mostly works
out, however, prostitution is a system run very strictly by men for men.
Female prostitutions are subject to brutal male dominance at every turn.
Foucault claims that the whole business of prostitution is a direct profit to
the state.
Foucault has traced the history of sexuality through different periods of history. At the beginning of the 17th century, sex was largely out in the open. The conventional law is that Victorianism closed off sex and confined it to the home, the conjugal family and ultimately to silence. Foucault argues that during Victorian age, there was repression of reality. By the end of the 18th century, a new technology of sex had emerged. Sex became a state concern. Foucault expressed his disagreement that the modern industrial societies exercised repression on sex. There was, in fact, an increase in specific pleasures and multiplication of disparate sexualities during this period.

Foucault argues that the public discourse on sexuality has constantly undergone exchange. In the renaissance, sodomy was a category of forbidden acts. And, then, in 19th century, homosexual became a personage, a post, a case history, and a childhood, in addition to being a type of life, a life form, and morphology, with an indiscreet anatomy and possibly a mysterious physiology. The sodomite had been a temporary aberration; the homosexual was now a species. During the 19th century homosexual and homosexuality were invented.

Following Freud, Foucault established that sex is the truth of life. It did not appear before the beginning of the 19th century. There was, more or less, a control on sexuality. Foucault’s discourses and technologies of sex involved four strategies of knowledge and power. He believed that hysterization of women’s bodies were statured with sexuality. It is because of this that they get hysteria. Such women were labelled as nervous women. To control hysteria, they had to be married for giving an outlet to their saturated sex.

Foucault suggested that children should be educated about sex. They should be told that masturbation of any kind is an activity ‘contra to
nature’. Pedagogization of sex would enable society to control the urge for sex.

By the end of the 19th century it was realized that control on population could only be exercised by controlling procreation. State and medical experts encouraged the limitation of family size. The needs of population size are determined politically. Pervasive sexual pleasure needs to be addressed to psychiatry. Sexuality is a separate biological and psychological instinct. This needs to be tackled by psychiatry. The four strategies given by Foucault produced four objects of knowledge for social control: the hysterical woman, the masturbating child, the Malthusian couple and the pervasive adult. These four types of control, that is, wielding of power exercised on biological behaviour. Explaining the importance of bio-power in the sexual behaviour, Foucault writes that by the exercise of bio-power, life and its mechanisms were brought into the reel of explicit calculations, and this knowledge-power conjunction produced an ability to transform human life. The internalization of sexual norms and practices controlled individuals from the inside.

Foucault's final engagement with traditional philosophy arises from the rather surprising turn toward the ancient world of the last few years of his life. *The History of Sexuality* had been planned as a multi-volume work on various themes in a study of modern sexuality. The first volume discussed above was a general introduction. Foucault wrote, but never published a second volume (The Confessions of the Flesh). It dealt with the origins of the modern notion of the subject in the practices of Christian confession. His concern was that a proper understanding of the Christian development required a comparison with ancient conceptions of the ethical self. He undertook something in his last two books (1984) on Greek and Roman sexuality: *The Use of Pleasure* and *The Care of the Self*.
These treatments of ancient sexuality moved Foucault into ethical issues. These moral issues had been understood but seldom explicitly subjected in his earlier writings. His specific goal was to compare ancient pagan and Christian ethics through the test-case of sexuality and to trace the development of Christian ideas about sex from the very different ideas of the ancients. The Greek viewed it as they were goods, natural and necessary though it’s a subject to abuse. As a result, instead of the Christian moral code forbidding most forms of sexual activity the ancient Greeks emphasized the proper use of pleasures, where this involved engaging in the full range of sexual activities (heterosexual, homosexual, in marriage, out of marriage), but with proper moderation.

History of Modern Sexuality explored in Michel Foucault’s *History of Sexuality*. The History of Sexuality was originally planned as a fairly straightforward extension of the genealogical approach of *Discipline and Punish* to the topic of sexuality. Foucault's idea is that the various modern bodies of knowledge about sexuality including psychoanalysis have an intimate association with the power structures of modern society and so are prime candidates for genealogical analysis. The first volume of the study published in 1976. It was intended as the introduction to a series of studies on particular aspects of modern sexuality of children, women, deprave population, etc. It outlined the development of the overall history, explaining the basic viewpoint and the methods to be used.

Thus, all of Foucault’s works described above revolve around the trinity of knowledge, truth and power. He has tried to establish the fact that all these aspects of life are related to one another. Some of his key generalizations are given: Knowledge is power. It enables man to invent or identify some techniques through which human behaviour can be controlled. It rests with the individual and not the state. Each historical age is characterized by particular forms of knowledge. Foucault called
these particular knowledge forms an ‘episteme’. It means sets of presuppositions that organize what counts as knowledge, truth and reality, and indicate how these matters can be discussed. Truth is produced by power. It is an interpretation tied to the operation of power and domination.

Power is exercised rather than possessed. It is not essentially repressive or coercive but it can be productive. Power does not flow from a centralized source but also flows from the bottom up, that is, from the multitude of interactions at the micro-level of society. Foucault calls it ‘micro-politics’. Power is scattered throughout society. It circulates. It has a ‘capillary form existence’. It reaches into the grain of individual, touches their bodies and inserts itself into their actions and attitudes, their discourses, learning processes and everyday lives. Power produces things, it induces pleasure, and forms are a productive product’s discourse. Thus, for Foucault, power is a productive network, which runs through the whole social body. And, then, to be sure, power is not social classes, the state, and other institutional sites of power that are the prime movers in social change.

Finally, it can be said in a broader way that Foucault has written the present history of human society. In this society, truth is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it induces regular effects of power. Each society has its regime of truth, its general politics of truth, that is, the type of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true.

The most dramatic transformations in the later Foucault, however, concern not the temporal changes in the fields of study, or the new expository writing style, but the focus of the new project and the revaluation of previous positions. As we have already seen, one important shift in Foucault’s later work involves a revaluation of the Enlightenment
in terms of its positive contributions to a critique of the present era and his identification of his own work with a trajectory of critical theory running from Kant to Nietzsche to the Frankfurt School. The second major difference involves a qualified turn to a problematic of the creative subject, which was previously rejected as a humanist fiction, along with the use of the vocabulary of freedom, liberty, and autonomy, previously eschewed by the theorist of the death of man. Foucault’s concern is still a history of the organization of knowledge and subjectivity, but now the emphasis is on the knowledge relation, a self has with itself.

These changes occur as Foucault shifts the focus from technologies of domination, where subjects are dominated and objectified by others through discourses and practices, to technologies of the self, where individuals create their own identities through ethics and forms of self-constitution. Explaining his motivations in an ‘auto-critique’, Foucault says: ‘If one wants to analyze the genealogy of the subject in Western civilization, one has to take into account not only techniques of domination, but also techniques of the self. One has to show the interaction between these two types of self. When I was studying asylums, prison, and so on, I perhaps insisted too much on techniques of domination ... I would like, in the years to come, to study power relations starting from techniques of the self (Foucault and Sennet 1982, 10).

Foucault defines technologies of the self as practices ‘which permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality’ (Foucault, Michel 1988, 18). Given this new emphasis, subjectivity is no longer characterized only as a reified construct of power; the deterministic view of the subject is rejected; impersonal,
functionalist explanations give way to a study of how individuals can transform their own subjectivities through techniques of the self. Discipline, in the form of these techniques, is no longer viewed solely as an instrument of domination. Furthermore, issues concerning the freedom and autonomy of individuals emerge as central concerns.

These changes in Foucault's work were influenced by his study of Greek and Roman cultures where techniques of the self, as practiced by free males (slaves and women were excluded from the ethical field) provided models of the practice of freedom. In *The Use of Pleasure* and *The Care of the Self*, Foucault analyzes how Greek and Roman citizens problematized desire as an area of intense moral concern and defined key domains of experience (diet, family relations, and sexuality) as areas requiring moderation and self-control. For the Greeks, especially, ethics was immediately bound up with 'aesthetics of existence' where it was admirable to turn one's life into a work of art through self-mastery and ethical stylization.

In *The Use of Pleasure*, Foucault debunks the common interpretation of Greek culture as wholly libertarian in its attitudes toward desire to show that the Greeks saw desire as a powerful and potentially destructive force in need of moderation and regulation. The practice of austerity and self-formation through knowledge, therefore, begins not with the Christians, but in antiquity itself. In *The Care of the Self*, Foucault describes how the problematization of pleasure in Roman society takes basically the same form as in Greek society, with the difference that there is less emphasis on aesthetics of existence, a greater emphasis on marriage and heterosexuality, an increase in austerity in the form of a 'care of the self', and a greater tendency to situate ethics and self-knowledge within the discourse of truth. Thus, although Roman morality is more continuous with Greek morality than with Christianity,
Christian culture constitutes a genuine rupture within Western societies and is far more continuous with modern culture than with Greco-Roman culture.

Unlike Christian morality, Greek and Roman morality aimed not at abstinence *per se*, but at moderation and self-control; it was not a question of banishing or stigmatizing desire and pleasure, but of their proper use. Where Romans saw desire as potentially evil in its effects, Christians saw it as evil by its very nature. In Christian culture, caring for the self took the form of renunciation and debasement of the self. Moreover, where in Greek and Roman culture moral problematizations were ultimately the responsibility of each individual who wished to give style, beauty, and grace to his existence, Christian culture employed universal ethical interdictions and rigid moral codification. Beginning in Christian cultures, the care for the self shifts from aesthetic or ethical grounds towards a hermeneutics of desire where individuals seek the deep truth of their being in their ‘sexuality’, a move that opens the way to modernity and its normalizing institutions. Thus, despite the fact that in secularized modern cultures science replaces religion as the locus of knowledge and value, there are fundamental continuities in terms of the hermeneutical search for the deep truth of the self and an essentialist view of the self.

Foucault seems to suggest that Greek and Roman cultures offer contemporary individuals elements of a model for overcoming modern forms of subjectivity and creating new forms of life that break with coercive normalizing institutions of modernity. Foucault seems to be embracing the reinvention of the self as an autonomous and self-governing being who enjoys new forms of experience, pleasure, and desire in stylized forms. In a rare moment of normative declaration, he proclaims that ‘We have to promote new forms of subjectivity through
the refusal of this kind of [normalized] individuality which has been imposed on us for centuries’ (Foucault, Michel 1982, 216).

Hence, the genealogical importance of Foucault’s historical inquiries into ethics would seem to involve the valorization of a form of ethical practice that is non-universalizing and non-normalizing, attentive to individual differences, while emphasizing individual liberty and the larger social context of the freedom of the self. As Foucault says, ‘What was missing in classical antiquity was the problematization of the constitution of the self as a subject … Because of this, certain questions pose themselves to us in the same terms as they were posed in antiquity. The search for styles as different from each other as possible seems to me to be one of the points on which particular groups in the past may have inaugurated searches we are engaged in today’ (Foucault, Michel 1985, 12). Ethics here depends not so much on moral norms as free choice and aesthetic criteria and avoids subjectivizing the individual into a normalized, universal ethical subject. The task is not to ‘discover’ oneself, one’s secret inner being, but rather to continually produce one. A goal of genealogy here, like before, is to help delegitimize the present through a recuperation of a radically different past. Yet where earlier Foucault sought a vindication of marginalized and excluded groups, here he is analyzing the moral codes of ruling classes, finding among the privileged elite of antiquity a way of life and form of ethics radically different from what one finds in the modern world, and which presents a useful critical perspective on modernity. For Foucault now defines the task of genealogy as an attempt to create a space for freedom where there can be a ‘constitution of ourselves as autonomous subjects’ (Foucault, Michel 1984, 43).

Foucault still rejects essentialist liberation models that assume the self is an inner essence waiting to be liberated from its repression or
alienation. He contrasts liberation with liberty, and defines the later as an ongoing ethical practice of self-mastery and care of the self. He sees liberty as ‘the ontological condition of ethics’ and ethics as ‘the deliberate form assumed by liberty’ (Foucault, Michel 1988, 4). Similarly, the return of the ‘subject’ in Foucault is not a return to a pre-archaeological that is humanist or phenomenological - concept of the subject endowed with an inner essence or originary will that precedes and stands apart from the social. The subject is still discursively and socially conditioned for Foucault, and still theorized as situated within power relations; the difference is that he now sees that individuals also have the power to define their own identity, to master their body and desires, and to forge a practice of freedom through techniques of the self. What Foucault now suggests, therefore, is dialectic between an active and creative agent and a constraining social field where freedom is achieved to the extent that one can overcome socially imposed limitations and attain self-mastery and a stylized existence. As Foucault says: ‘if now I am interested ... in the way in which the subject constitutes himself in an active fashion, by the practices of the self, these practices are nevertheless not something that the individual invents by himself. They are patterns that he finds in his culture and which are proposed, suggested, and imposed on him by his culture, his society and his social group’ (Foucault, Michel 1988, 11).

Where earlier it could be said that Foucault privileged political issues relating to the theme of power, in his later work he states that ‘what interests me is much more morals than politics or, in any case, politics as an ethics’ (Foucault, Michel 1984, 375). This is not to say that Foucault abandons his past concepts and methods, for all three ‘axes’ of his studies overlap in his later works on techniques of self: the archaeology of problematizations intersects with a genealogy of the ethical practices of the self. Nor is it to say that the turn to analysis of
techniques of the self represents a rejection of his earlier political positions, since ethics for Foucault suggests the struggle of individuals against the forces that dominate, subjugate, and subjectify them. But the analysis of power undergoes an interesting mutation in this stage of Foucault’s work. He emphasises that all social relations are characterized by power and resistance (Foucault, Michel 1988, 11-12), but he distinguishes power from domination, seeing domination as the solidification of power relations such that they become relatively fixed in asymmetrical forms and the spaces of liberty and resistance thus become limited (Foucault, Michel 1988, 12).

In the later Foucault, emphasis on technologies of the self decentres the prior emphasis on power and domination. Yet, it would be a mistake to think that domination disappears altogether in this stage of his work. First, one finds an emphasis on gaining power and domination over oneself, of subduing and mastering one’s desires and body in a self-relation of ‘domination-submission’ and ‘command-obedience’ (Foucault, Michel 1986, 70). Here the conflict between power and the autonomy of the self is overcome as freedom is defined as mastery of and power over oneself. Second, in his history of ethics, Foucault foregrounds the domination of men over women. He constantly stresses that the Greek-Roman project of self-mastery is a strictly male concern from which women are excluded, or, if they are included at all, it is only in order to be a better servant for the man (Ibid. 22-3, 47, 83-4, 154-6), although in Roman culture women gained a greater degree of equality with the increased importance of the marriage institution (Foucault, Michel 1988, 75-80). Thus, while feminist critiques of Foucault rightly point out that his early and middle works fail to confront power in the form of male domination, his later works on ethics discuss to some extent gender differences and male domination.
The Nietzschean aestheticism in Foucault’s work, since the concepts of aesthetics of existence and care of the self imply some form of reflexive practice, acquired habits, and cognitive capacities. As Foucault emphasizes in his later works, the aesthetic stylization and practice of freedom these technologies of the self may involve are impossible without self-knowledge and rational self-control. While Foucault sometimes may have privileged the aesthetic over the cognitive component of the constitution of the self, we find a shift in the later works of Foucault away from an emphasis on creating one’s life as a work of art toward a care of the self where he moves ever closer to some of the Enlightenment positions he earlier described under the sign of social coercion. Indeed, the later Foucault sometimes sounds almost Kantian in his later embrace of the Enlightenment ‘historico-critical attitude’ and its discourse of autonomy, in his concern for the question ‘What are we today?’, in his emphasis on the formation of oneself as a thinker and moral agent, and in his conception of philosophy as a project of critique (Foucault, Michel 1984 42).

In general, while Foucault has developed an interesting new perspective that overcomes some of the problems of his genealogical stage, such as speaking of political resistance on one hand and rejecting the category of the subject on the other, he creates for himself a whole new set of problems. In particular, he does not adequately mediate the shift from technologies of domination to technologies of the self and fails to clarify the connections between ethics, aesthetics, and politics. He did not, therefore, accomplish his task ‘to show the interaction between these two types of self (Foucault, Michel 1982, 10), between the constituted and constituting self.

Thus, he leaves untheorized the problem of how technologies of the self can flourish in our present era which, as he claims, is saturated
with power relations. His attempts to situate discursive shifts within a social and historical setting remain vague and problematic (Foucault, Michel 1988, 71-95).

Foucault stresses that mastery of the self is essential for mastery of others, but nowhere discusses the constitution of the self through democratic social practices. This omission points to a typical ignoring of democracy, a word he rarely employs, which points to his decentring of politics and his individualistic tendencies, since democracy is a socially constituted project. And Foucault downplays the importance of the demise of the city state in the transition from Greece to Rome, as if the disappearance of democracy was not a key factor in the ‘withdrawal into the self’ in Rome which Foucault himself presents as a key feature of the era.

Foucault’s work has had a profound impact on virtually all fields in the humanities and social sciences. Undoubtedly, one of the most valuable aspects of his work is to sensitize theorists to the pervasive operations of power and to highlight the problematic or suspicious aspects of rationality, knowledge, subjectivity, and the production of social norms. In richly detailed analyses, he demonstrates how power is woven into all aspects of social and personal life, pervading the schools, hospitals, prisons, and social sciences. Following Nietzsche, Foucault questions seemingly beneficent forms of thought and value and forces us to rethink them anew. Whereas Nietzsche showed how the highest values have the lowliest ‘origins’, for example, how morality is rooted in immorality and resentment, and how all values and knowledge are manifestations of the will to power, Foucault exposes the links between power, truth, and knowledge, and describes how liberal-humanist values are intertwined with and supports of technologies of domination. Foucault’s work is a powerful critique both of macrotheorists who see
power only in terms of class or the state, and microtheorists who analyze institutions and face-to-face interaction while ignoring power altogether.

For all its virtues, however, Foucault’s work also suffers from a number of limitations. While Foucault came to acknowledge some positive aspects of Enlightenment reason, he failed to follow suit for the institutions and technologies of modernity. His critique of modernity is one-sided in its focus on repressive forms of rationalization and fails to delineate any progressive aspects of modernity. On Foucault’s scheme, modernity brings no advances in medicine, democracy, or literacy, but only in the efficacy of domination. He has correctly observed that Foucault describes all aspects of modernity as disciplinary and ignores the progressive aspects of modern social and political forms in terms of advances in liberty, law, and equality.

In general, Foucault's writings tend to be one-sided. His archaeological works privilege discourse over institutions and practices, his genealogical works emphasize domination over resistance and self-formation, and his later works analyze the constitution of the self apart from detailed considerations of social power and domination. The shift from technologies of domination to technologies of the self is abrupt and unmediated, and Foucault never adequately theorizes both sides of the structure/agency problem. He leaves behind his earlier political positions for a ‘politics as ethics’ and shifts the focus from analysis of social institutions to analysis of medical and philosophical texts of antiquity, never returning to analysis of the present era and its urgent political issues.

Moreover, while Foucault has argued that power breeds resistance and has on occasion pointed to tactics of resistance, there is no adequate description of resistance, the scope, detail, and rigour which approaches the analysis of technologies of domination. To put it another way, a
genealogy of resistance remains to be written as a full-scale study and historical perspective in its own right. Interestingly, in his later essay *The Subject and Power* (Foucault, Michel 1982, 210-11), Foucault proposes an alternative method of studying power relations: from the perspective of resistance to power rather than the exercise of power. In his later work he might have theorized political resistance as a form of technologies of the self, as a creative response to coercive practices, but, as we have been arguing, Foucault’s later work lacks substantive political dimensions.

For Foucault’s power is mostly treated as an impersonal and anonymous force which is exercised apart from the actions and intentions of human subjects. Foucault methodologically brackets the question of who controls and uses power. Whatever new light this perspective sheds in its emphasis that power operates in a diffuse force-field of relations of subjugation and struggle, it concludes the extent to which power is still controlled and administered by specific and identifiable agents in positions of economic and political power, such as members of corporate executive boards, bankers, the mass media, political lobbyists, land developers, or zealous outlaws in the Pentagon and White House.

While Foucault opens up a space for rethinking power and political strategies, he provides very little positive content with which to fill it and has no means whatsoever for a normative grounding of the critique of domination. Since his emphasis is on the microlevel of resistance, Foucault does not adequately address the problem of how to achieve alliances within local struggles or how an oppositional political movement might be developed. If indeed it is important to multiply and autonomize forms of resistance to counter the numerous tentacles of power, it is equally important to link these various struggles to avoid fragmentation. The question becomes: how can we create, in Gramsci’s terms, a ‘counter-hegemonic bloc’? This is a question which concerns
Guattari, Laclau and Mouffe, some feminists, and Jameson, but to which Foucault has no response. At times, he seems to recognize the problem, as when he speaks of the ‘danger of remaining at the level of conjunctural struggles’ and ‘the risk of being unable to develop these struggles for lack of a global [!] strategy or outside support’ (Foucault, Michel 1980, 130). But he then moves the problem, retreats to an insistence of the efficacy of ‘specific struggles’, and speaks as though larger macrostruggles would somehow take shape on their own accord apart from the strategies and intentions of human subjects.

Moreover, Foucault rarely analyzes the important role of macro-powers such as the state or capital. While in *Madness and Civilization* and *Discipline and Punish* he occasionally points to the determining power of capitalism, and in *The History of Sexuality* he sees the state as an important component of ‘bio-power’, macrological forces are seriously undertheorized in his work. In Foucault’s defence, it could be argued that his intention is to offer novel perspectives on power as a diffuse, disciplinary force, but his microperspectives nevertheless need to be more adequately conjoined with macroperspectives that are necessary to illuminate a wide range of contemporary issues and problems such as state power and the persistence of class domination and the hegemony of capital.

In order to more satisfactorily analyze the totalizing operations of macropowers, Foucault would have to modify his ‘theory-as-tool-kit’ approach and adopt a more systemic mode of analysis. In fact, there are numerous places in his texts where he lapses into totalizing claims and positions and tries to theorize certain types of unities or systems. One often finds highly general statements about power and domination that apply to all societies: ‘in any society, there are manifold relations of power’ whose existence depends on the production and circulation of ‘a
certain economy of discourses and truth’ (Foucault, Michel 1980, 93). Similarly, he has spoken about relations of power whose ‘interconnections delineate general conditions of domination’ where ‘domination is organised into a more-or-less coherent and unitary strategic form’ (Ibid. 142). He has even referred to ‘the global functioning of a society of normalisation’ (Ibid. 107).

Thus, Foucault utilizes global and totalizing concepts as he simultaneously prohibits them, resulting in a performative contradiction (Habermas). Our quarrel with Foucault is not that such generalized statements or analyses are fallacious or misconceived, for we shall argue in favour of forms of systemic theory, but rather that they are inconsistent with his strident attacks on ‘the tyranny of globalising discourses’. To the extent that disciplinary powers assume a ‘global functioning’, their analysis will require a form of global or systemic analysis. Like other poststructuralists and postmodernists, Foucault fails to distinguish between legitimate and illegitimate kinds of totalities and macrotheories, for example between open and heterogeneous modes of analysis that situate seemingly discrete particulars within a common context of determination, and homogeneous modes which obliterate differences among diverse phenomena. Foucault, in fact, employs both kinds of analysis, while polemicizing against totalizing thought tout court. If his analysis of regularity in dispersion in The Archaeology of Knowledge is an example of a complex and open system, his all-out attack on modernity, rationality, and knowledge that is centre to postmodernism is an example of a closed and reductive approach. In many ways, Foucault violates his own methodological imperative to ‘respect differences’.

He is a conflicted thinker, whose work oscillates between totalizing and detotalizing impulses, discursive and bio-politics, destroying the subject and resurrecting it, assailing forms of domination but eschewing
normative language and metadiscourse. He sometimes attacks the Enlightenment and modern theory while at other times aligning himself with their progressive heritage. His later positions seek a cultivation of the subject in an individualistic mode that stands in tension with emphasis on political struggle by oppressed groups.

Throughout his works Foucault employed a rhetoric of the postmodern, referring to new forms of knowledge and the dawn of a new era in *The Order of Things*, to a new form of postdisciplinary and posthumanist rights in *Power/Knowledge* (Ibid. 108), to new bodies and pleasures in *The History of Sexuality*, and to ‘new forms of subjectivity’ in a later essay (Foucault, Michel 1982, 216). Moreover, in his later work he embraces philosophy as a project of critical reflection on the contemporary era, on ‘this precise moment in which we are living’ (Ibid. 216). Yet, Foucault ultimately abandoned the pathos of the postmodern to descend into the dusty archives of antiquity. He thereby not only retreated from ‘an enigmatic and troubling “postmodernity”’ (Foucault, Michel 1984, 39), he became something of a classicist and modernist with Kantian elements, while continuing the postmodern project of rejecting universal standpoints in order to embrace difference and heterogeneity. Thus, we find a complex, eclectic mixture of premodern, modern, and postmodern elements in Foucault, with the postmodern elements receding ever further into the background of his work.