

## Chapter 1 : Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy

*Michel Foucault () was a French historian and philosopher, associated with the structuralist and post-structuralist movements. He has had strong influence not only (or even primarily) in philosophy but also in a wide range of humanistic and social scientific disciplines.*

Select Secondary Sources 1. One rare, short, but not unimportant analysis occurs in *The Order of Things*. There, Foucault maintains that modern ethical thought attempts to derive moral obligations from human nature and yet modern thought also holds that human nature can never be, given the fact of human finitude, fully given to human knowledge. Consequently, modern thought is incapable of coherently formulating a set of moral obligations OT ; see also PPC This argument is, essentially, one piece of his larger attack on modern humanism and its conception of the human being as subject, a being that supplies for itself the foundations of knowledge, value, and freedom. *Discipline and Punish* and the first volume of *The History of Sexuality* further this line of criticism, insisting on the historical constitution of the subject by discursive practices and techniques of power see, for example, FL 67, PK , EW3 , DP It is surprising to many commentators, then, that by Foucault elaborated a framework for his work that grants self-constitution considerable importance. These focal points are studied along three axes: Foucault never did articulate a clear position on the conceptual fit between his critique of the modern subject and his account of ethics. Nevertheless, he does provide some clues as to the nature of his mature position. Late in his life he admits that his earlier work was too insistent on the formation of subjectivity by discursive practices and power-relations EW1 , Now, his focus is on the subject as both constituted and self-constituting, or the point at which discursive practices and power-relations dovetail with ethics. Of course, this does not decisively resolve the problem, but it does suggest a rereading of his earlier works more conducive to the notion of self-constitution. In fact, in later writings and interviews Foucault supports this interpretation when he explains that all the axes of analysis existed in a confused manner EW1 ; he even retrospectively interprets his work as fitting one or more of those axes EW1 By admitting that, first, all three axes of analysis existed in earlier works, and, second, that the goal of his work is to study the connection of knowledge and power with ethics, Foucault suggests that there is no ethical turn. However, it does appear to be the case that Foucault is suggesting that he is best read backwards rather than forwards. There, he designates ethics as one of the three primary areas of morality. In addition to ethics, morality consists of both a moral code and the concrete acts of moral agents. The latter refers to the actions of historically real persons insofar as those actions comply or fail to comply with, obey or resist, or respect or disrespect the values and rules prescribed to them by prescriptive agencies. In addition to a moral code and the real behaviors of individuals, Foucault claims that morality also consists of a third area, namely, ethics. He commonly and pithily defines it as a relation of the subject to itself, but a more technical definition of ethics is the conduct required of an individual so as to render its own actions consistent with a moral code and standards of moral approval. For Foucault, conduct is a category that is broader than moral agency and includes both non-moral actions and the exercising of non-agential capacities for example, attitudes, demeanor, and so forth. Ethical conduct, then, consists of the actions performed and capacities exercised intentionally by a subject for the purpose of engaging in morally approved conduct. Suppose, for example, that an individual adopts the prescription of sexual fidelity to her partner. In this case, ethics concerns not her morally satisfactory conduct that directly satisfies her duty of being faithful to her partner, but rather the conduct through which she enables or brings herself to behave in a way that is sexually faithful to her partner. Consistent with his distinction between moral conduct and ethical conduct, Foucault also distinguishes between moral obligations and ethical obligations. A moral obligation is an imperative of a moral code that either requires or forbids a specific kind of conduct, whereas an ethical obligation is a prescription for conduct that is a necessary condition for producing morally approved conduct. Foucault understands morally approved conduct to be a wide category, as it does not designate just those acts that comply with a moral code “ which is, he thinks, a manifestly modern conception of moral approval. In this regard, the moral valorization of conduct might be, as it was with the ancients, weighted toward the satisfaction of ethical obligations, or, as it

is in modernity, weighted toward the satisfaction of the moral obligations that comprise a moral code. These ethical obligations are, Foucault contends, deducible by analyzing the four primary themes of sexual austerity expressed throughout all of Western history: Although these themes are occasionally mentioned below, the focus of this section is on the four elements of ethical relations. In *The Use of Pleasure* Foucault maintains that the ethical substance of ancient Greek sexual ethics "an ethics that was exclusively for men of the right inherited social status" was the aphrodisia or the broad range of acts, gestures, and contacts associated with pleasures to promote the propagation of the species and considered the inferior pleasures given their commonality with all animals. The intensity of the aphrodisia induced the majority of men to behave immoderately with regard to it, and since the moral telos of ancient Greek ethics was a moderate state in which a man had succeeded in mastering his pleasures, the immoderate man was considered by ethicists to be shameful and dishonorable for allowing the inferior part of his soul to enslave his superior part. It was also considered shameful for a man to experiment or delight in pleasures derived from the passive and subordinate rather than active and dominant role in sexual relations, the latter assigned by nature to men and the former assigned to those incapable of mastering themselves of their own power, namely, women and children. By violating these limits out of a failure to master himself, the Greek man put himself in the position of compromising his health, household, social standing, and political ambitions. Foucault maintains in *The Care of the Self* that aphrodisia remains the ethical substance for Roman sexual ethics. But unlike the Greek ethicists before them, Roman ethicists conceived the aphrodisia as essentially and intrinsically dangerous rather than dangerous merely because of the fact that their intensity induces immoderate conduct. According to Foucault, Roman ethicists stipulated that although sexual acts are good by nature, since nature is perfect in its designs, those acts are nevertheless fraught with a dangerous and essential passivity that causes involuntary movements of the body and soul and expenditure of the life forces. Nature has, as it were, designed sex as good and beneficial but only on the condition that it conforms to its designs. Foucault therefore asserts that the perception of the dangerous physical and spiritual effects of unrestrained sexual activity led to a moral and medical discourse about sex different in kind than that of ancient Greek ethical discourse. It focused more on moderated use as a means of achieving physical and spiritual health rather than excellence.

**Mode of Subjection Deontology** The mode of subjection is the way in which the individual establishes its relation to the moral code, recognizes itself as bound to act according to it, and is entitled to view its acts as worthy of moral valorization. For example, consider the obligation to help someone in need. The use of pleasures refers to how a man managed or integrated pleasures into his life such that their use did not compromise but benefitted his health and social standing. Appropriate management submitted the use of pleasures to three strategies. The strategy of need demanded that desires for pleasures should arise from nature alone and be fulfilled neither extravagantly nor as a result of artifice. The strategy of status demanded that a man use his pleasures consistent with his inherited status, purposes, and responsibilities. But submitting oneself to this mode of subjection meant imposing ethical requirements on oneself that were not included in the moral code. In fact, submitting oneself to this rigorous sexual ethics was seen as a noble and fine choice precisely because it was not morally required. The mode of subjection for ancient Roman sexual ethics is also an aesthetics of existence, but Foucault is also clear that it is more austere than the Greek ethics that preceded it. What this means is that Roman ethical obligations became stricter despite a loose moral code regarding sex. The increased austerity of this ethics is due in part to the perception of an intrinsic passivity of sexual acts, and also because the means of responding to this passivity required greater attention to the rationality of nature which is not be understood according to the distinction between what is normal and abnormal. Roman ethicists conceived that the pleasures of sex were derived by involuntary and dangerous movements of the body and soul, and that seeking pleasure as the end of an act only furthered the possibility of corrupting both body and soul. Consequently, the criterion by which Roman ethicists evaluated sexual conduct was whether it was born of desire conformed to the wisdom of nature. These practices are not to be conflated with an asceticism that strives for the goal of freeing oneself from all desires for physical pleasures. To be sure, all ascetic practices are, Foucault thinks, organized around principles of self-restraint, self-discipline, and self-denial. Foucault maintains that the ethical work to be performed in ancient sexual ethics is that of self-mastery. For the ancient

Greeks, mastering oneself is an agonistic battle with oneself, where victory is achieved through careful use of the pleasures according to need, timeliness, and social status. Greek ethicists understood that this battle required regular training in addition to the knowledge of the things to which one ought to be attracted. The sort of training a man undertook was aimed at self-mastery through practices of self-denial and abstention, which taught him to satisfy natural needs at the right time consistent with his social status. The moral end of such practices was not to cultivate the attitude that abstention is a moral ideal, but rather to train him to become temperate and self-controlled. As such, successful self-mastery was exhibited by the man who did not suppress his desires, but authoritatively controlled them in a way that contributed to his excellence and the beauty of his life. Foucault suggests that this ideal is exemplified in the literature about the love of boys, which heroized the man who could express and maintain friendly love for a boy while at the same time restraining his co-present erotic love. Foucault is clear in *The Care of the Self* that the ethical work in ancient Roman ethics is also self-mastery, and that the ethicists reconceived the nature of this kind of ethical work. Instead of an agonistic relationship in which a man struggles to subdue and enslave his desires for pleasures rather than be subdued and enslaved by them through their proper use, the work of self-mastery for Roman ethics was forcing the desires for pleasures into proper alignment with the designs of nature. What becomes essential for this ethics is grasping that all pleasures that are not internal to oneself originate in desires that might not be capable of satisfaction, and whenever one chooses to engage such desires one subjects oneself to physical and spiritual risk. The intensification of the austerity of sexual ethics this change in self-mastery produced is emphasized in marital ethics. Their joint spiritual well-being was considered integral to the harmony of the human community. **Telos Teleology** The telos of an ethics is the ideal mode or state of being toward which one strives or aspires in their ethical work. The man who controlled his use of pleasures made himself personally prosperous – physically excellent and socially estimable – in the same way that a household or nation prospers as the result of the careful and skilled governance of a manager or ruler, and a man was not expected to be successful in managing his household or exercising political authority and influence without first achieving victory over his pleasures. The man who failed to master his pleasures and yet found himself in a position of authority over others was a candidate for tyranny, while the man who mastered his pleasures was considered the best candidate to govern. Roman ethicists conceived the activity of self-mastery as aiming at a conversion of the self to itself, which they conceived as freedom in fullest form. Through the ethical work of self-mastery an individual conformed their desires to the rationality of nature, which resulted in a detachment from anything not given by nature as an appropriate object of desire. Roman ethicists did not understand the telos of self-mastery as the authority over pleasures that manifested itself in their strategic use, but rather it manifested itself as a disinterestedness and detachment from the pleasures such that one finds a non-physical, spiritual pleasure in belonging to the true self nature intends. Nature does not recommend the mere pursuit of pleasures; it recommends the pursuit of pleasures insofar as those acts are consistent with other ends that it wants met. Foucault certainly claims in both those volumes that the care of self is foundational to ancient ethics UP 73, , ; CS , but curiously, and despite his titling of the third volume *The Care of the Self*, he does not provide significant discussion of the care of self in its generality. This history emphasizes the integral relation between the care of self and the concern for truth, notably on display in the practice of parrhesia frank-speech , as its central mode of expression. For the ancients, Foucault claims, the care of the self was the foundational principle of all moral rationality. Today, however, caring for oneself is without moral content. By explaining the ancient conception of the care of the self and its connection to the Delphic prescription to know oneself, famously observed by Socrates, Foucault wishes to diagnose the exclusion of the care of the self by modern thought and consider whether, given his diagnosis, the care of the self might remain viable in modern ethics. The exclusion of the care of the self is the result of a reconception of two ancient injunctions: These two injunctions were originally expressed by Socrates – the exemplar par excellence, Foucault thinks, of the person who cares for himself – with the care of the self serving as the justification for the prescription to know oneself. The prescription to know oneself was the means through which one cared for oneself, and Socrates cared for his own soul and the souls of others by using the practice of dialectic to force the examination of the truth of his own thought and conduct and that of his interlocutors. The salient point for

Foucault is that Socrates did not practice philosophy merely as a means of arriving at true propositions. Instead, his program was to use philosophy as a tool for examining and testing the consistency of the rational discourse he and his interlocutors employed to justify their lives and conduct. Foucault sees this as a philosophical activity that is fundamentally oriented to the care of the self, for truth is pursued in philosophy for its own good and the sake of ethical development. Foucault therefore distinguishes between philosophy simpliciter and philosophy as a spiritual activity. But philosophy as a spiritual activity “ or philosophy undertaken according to the injunction to care for oneself ” is philosophy conceived as ethical work that must be performed in order for an individual to gain access to the truth. This is not to say, of course, that philosophy as a spiritual activity does not seek to acquire knowledge of things as they are. Rather, it is to say that such knowledge requires right conduct in addition to the justification of a true belief. Now, knowing oneself becomes merely a necessary epistemic, and not moral, condition for gaining access to the truth. Consequently, attending to oneself becomes judging the truth of a proposition, and self-knowledge is not a directive for spiritual and ethical development. In modernity philosophy is, for the most part compare HS 28, where Foucault adds some qualification , not the activity of ethical transformation that aims at the existence transformed by truth. The modern shift in the construal of self-knowledge as self-evidence required changes in moral rationality. But this is predicated upon a fundamental misconception of the care of the self. The care of the self is the ethical transformation of the self in light of the truth, which is to say the transformation of the self into a truthful existence. Parrhesia Frank-Speech In the final two years of his life, Foucault began to focus his attention on a particular ancient practice of caring for the self, namely, parrhesia alternatively, parresia or frank-speech. Parrhesia is the courageous act of telling the truth without either embellishment or concealment for the purpose of criticizing oneself or another. Foucault stipulates that there are five features of the parrhesiastic act. First, the speaker must express his own opinion directly; that is, he must express his opinion without or by minimizing rhetorical flourish and make it plain that it is his opinion.

*The Philosophy of Foucault is an accessible and stimulating introduction that will be welcomed by students studying Foucault as part of politics, sociology, and history courses as well as within philosophy.*

See Article History Alternative Title: Education and career The son and grandson of a physician, Michel Foucault was born to a solidly bourgeois family. He resisted what he regarded as the provincialism of his upbringing and his native country, and his career was marked by frequent sojourns abroad. There he studied psychology and philosophy, embraced and then abandoned communism, and established a reputation as a sedulous, brilliant, and eccentric student. After graduating in 1960, Foucault began a career marked by constant movement, both professional and intellectual. Foucault defended his doctoral dissertation at the ENS in 1961. An abridged version was translated into English and published in 1965 as *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*. His other early monographs, written while he taught at the University of Clermont-Ferrand in France in 1966, had much the same fate. *The Order of Things* did not begin to attract wide notice as one of the most original and controversial thinkers of his day. He chose to watch his reputation grow from a distance at the University of Tunis in Tunisia in 1968 and was still in Tunis when student riots erupted in Paris in the spring of 1968. The appointment gave Foucault the opportunity to conduct intensive research. Between 1969 and 1975, Foucault wrote several works, including *Surveiller et punir: The Birth of the Prison*, a monograph on the emergence of the modern prison; three volumes of a history of Western sexuality; and numerous essays. Foucault continued to travel widely, and as his reputation grew he spent extended periods in Brazil, Japan, Italy, Canada, and the United States. He became particularly attached to Berkeley, California, and the San Francisco Bay area and was a visiting lecturer at the University of California at Berkeley for several years. Foucault died of a septicemia typical of AIDS in 1984, the fourth volume of his history of sexuality still incomplete. What is their essence? What is the essence of human history? Contrary to so many of his intellectual predecessors, Foucault sought not to answer these traditional and seemingly straightforward questions but to critically examine them and the responses they had inspired. He directed his most sustained skepticism toward those responses—among them, race, the unity of reason or the psyche, progress, and liberation—that had become commonplaces in Europe and the United States in the 19th century. He argued that such commonplaces informed both Hegelian phenomenology and Marxist materialism. He argued that they also informed the evolutionary biology, physical anthropology, clinical medicine, psychology, sociology, and criminology of the same period. Foucault found fault with them as well, but he decisively rejected the positivist tenet that the methods of the pure or natural sciences provided an exclusive standard for arriving at genuine or legitimate knowledge. His critique concentrated instead upon the fundamental point of reference that had grounded and guided inquiry in the human sciences: On one hand, man was an object, like any other object in the natural world, obedient to the indiscriminate dictates of physical laws. On the other hand, man was a subject, an agent uniquely capable of comprehending and altering his worldly condition in order to become more fully, more essentially, himself. Foucault reviewed the historical record for evidence that such a creature actually had ever existed, but to no avail. Looking for objects, he found only a plurality of subjects whose features varied dramatically with shifts of place and time. In *The Order of Things* and elsewhere, Foucault suggested that, to the contrary, a creature somehow fully determined and fully free was little short of a paradox, a contradiction in terms. Not only had it never existed in fact, it could not exist, even in principle. Foucault understood the very possibility of his own critique to be evidence that the concept of man was beginning to loosen its grip on Western thought. Yet a further puzzle remained: How could such an erroneous, such an impossible, figure have been so completely taken for granted for so long? The latter notion lent the technologies of modern policing their enduring rationale. Among contemporary instruments of discipline, the surveillance camera must be counted one of the most representative. Although this discipline operated on individuals, it was paired with a current of reformism that took not individuals but various human populations as its basic object. The prevailing sensibility of its greatest champions was markedly medical. They scrutinized everything from sexual behaviour to social organization

for relative pathology or health. A thinker more inclined to strict materialism might have added that in both discipline and biopolitics the human sciences served an ideological function, cloaking the apparatuses of arbitrary domination with the sober aura of objectivity. Foucault, however, opposed the materialist tendency to construe science—even the most dubious science—as the simple handmaiden of power. He opposed any identification of knowledge—even the most mistaken knowledge—with power. His understanding of subjectivation, however, changed significantly over the course of two decades, as did the methods he applied to its analysis. Intent on devising a properly specific history of subjects, he initially pressed the analogy between the corpus of statements about subjects produced and presumed true at any given historical moment and the artifacts of some archaeological site or complex. He was able to reveal the inherently local qualities of past conceptions of being human and able further to reveal the frequent abruptness of their coming into being and passing away. Among other things, its consideration of both power and power-knowledge was at best partial, if not oblique. With genealogy, Foucault set out to unearth the artificiality of the dividing line between the putatively illegitimate and its putatively normal and natural opposite. He expanded the scope and lessened the bite of genealogy. In later work, a concern with ethics led Foucault to study how people care for one another in social relations such as friendship. It led him finally to an elegant meditation, unpublished at his death, on the conduct of modern philosophy, the title of which is that decidedly open-ended question to which Immanuel Kant and Moses Mendelssohn had been asked to respond some years before: He rejected both Hegelianism and Marxism but took both quite seriously. It also offered him the prototypes for both archaeology and genealogy. In the work of the French philosopher Gilles Deleuze he discerned elements of a general epistemology of problem formation. His conversations with the American scholars Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow stimulated his turn toward ethics and the genealogy of problematization. Special mention must finally be made of his teacher and mentor, Georges Canguilhem. In Canguilhem, a historian of the life sciences, Foucault found an intellectual example independent of the phenomenological and materialist camps that dominated French universities after World War II, a sponsor for his dissertation, and a supporter of his larger investigative project. Owing less to Nietzsche than to Canguilhem, Foucault came to regard human life as an often discontinuous, often disruptive and clumsy, and sometimes despotic quest to come to terms with an ever-recalcitrant environment. A history of systems of human thought would thus have to be a persistently local history. It would have to recognize that all ideas are normative, no matter what their content. It could be a history of truth, but it also would have to be a long—and in its own way tragic—history of error. They have not, however, prevented him from inspiring increasingly important alternatives to established practices of cultural and intellectual history. His critique of the human sciences provoked much soul-searching within anthropology and its allied fields, even as it helped a new generation of scholars to embark upon a cross-cultural dialogue on the themes and variations of domination and subjectivation. The terms discourse, genealogy, and power-knowledge have become deeply entrenched in the lexicon of virtually all contemporary social and cultural research. Foucault has attracted several biographers, some of whom have been happy to flout his opposition to the practice of seeking the key to an oeuvre in the psychology or personality of its author. He regularly made the issues that most troubled him personally—emotional suffering, exclusion, sexuality—the topics of his research. His critiques were often both theoretical and practical; he did not merely write about prisons, for example, but also organized protests against them. In , while in Spain to protest the impending executions of two members of ETA, the Basque separatist movement, by the government of Francisco Franco, Foucault confronted police officers who had come to seize the protest leaflets he had prepared. He also publicly attacked Jean-Paul Sartre at a time when Sartre was still the demigod of Parisian intellectuals. He was something of a dandy, preferring to shave his head and dress in black and white. He declared that he had experimented with drugs. Foucault was skeptical of conventional wisdom and conventional moralism—but not without exception. He was an ironist—but not without restraint. He could be subversive and could admire subversion—but he was not a revolutionary. But whether the situation at hand was common or simply his own, he sought in all his endeavours to remove himself to a vista distant enough that the question might at least be intelligently posed.

*The book is an introduction to Foucault's historical and philosophical writings. The position May takes regarding what Foucault is: philosopher, historian, post-modernist, etc. is not an issue, and in a book like this it is not significant.*

In this article I want to examine the latter, especially in relation to scientific knowledge. As a structuralist, Foucault believes the key to understanding the status of scientific knowledge is to understand the conceptual structures that lie at its foundations. Conceptual structures give rise to and organize fields of knowledge by establishing what categories of things there are, how they exist, and the ways in which we know and speak about them. Foucault calls the conceptual structures that come to organize a field of knowledge discourses, so there are biological discourses, or chemical, or anthropological discourses, and so on. Importantly, Foucault argues that a scientific discourse is not the simple product of an objective study of phenomena, as scientific realists such as most scientists like to believe, but is rather the product of systems of power relations struggling to create fields of knowledge within a society. Unfortunately, what he says about the possibility of objective scientific knowledge is not always clear. Is truth always relative to discourse? Is there really no possibility of getting at objective truth if the phenomena we study and the procedures for knowing them are historical products of power? This problem is the elephant always in the room with Foucault, going wherever he goes, from one work to the next. I want to argue here that Foucault is not and cannot be an absolute relativist about knowledge. Rather, he is a relativist only toward scientific theorization and our knowledge generated from that. To show this we must understand both his theory of power and its relation to scientific knowledge, as well as some basic aspects of the nature of scientific theorizing and scientific concepts generally. Karl Marx, for instance, had a theory of how power influences our beliefs in terms of his understanding of ideology. This theory describes the relation between power and knowledge as sometimes being an illegitimate external force imposing false beliefs on a society. In such a case, objective science is possible, we just have to free ourselves from this illegitimate authority and let nature speak for itself. The price for not believing Lysenkoism could be death, as with Vavilov in The Soviet Institute of Genetics used its power to conceal the truth about genetic inheritance by literally determining what counted as scientific knowledge. This is ideology at work on knowledge through brute force. Knowledge being ideologically influenced in this way relies on a specific understanding of power. Foucault traces this understanding of power back to the twelfth century resurrection of Roman law in Europe. On this view, the supreme example of power is the sovereignty of the king and his right to rule "to impose his will on others. Compare this with the political theories of Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau. When power transgresses this social contract, it is oppressive or forced upon us, and is illegitimate. This is how ideology works for Marx in terms of knowledge too" it is an oppressive putting upon or covering up of our scientific knowledge by an illegitimate authority. But he finds this conception unable to adequately describe power and its effects. In modern societies, power does not seek a right to rule, but operates through struggle and negotiation. Power works at every level of society, from large-scale political phenomena such as the establishment of a Constitution, down to individual interpersonal exchanges, such as between a parent and child or a doctor and patient. Power is an expression of the will to dominate, and domination comes through controlling even options or choices. Thus you control a theatre of war by establishing boundaries and avenues of advance and retreat for your enemy; you define and direct all possible decisions and actions for the opposing force, and then let them make their choices. He argues that power plays a major role in science by creating discourses. Recall that a discourse is a set of concepts related in specific ways to other concepts. A discourse establishes categories of objects, their mode of existence, and the methods for investigating and judging assertions about them "that is, for judging what constitutes knowledge and truth about them. Yet unlike with ideology for Marx, a discourse is not something covering over truth, because science is not a simple process of uncovering nature. Rather, a discourse structures science from the inside. Certainly, scientific knowledge is a product of scientists in the lab or field themselves, not state propagandists; yet scientific knowledge is still directly organized by the discourse of the society at the time, and this discourse is produced as an effect of power. If you accept the juridical conception

of power, you might understand our scientific knowledge of sexuality as a gradual uncovering of a suppressed aspect of reality. You might say, social taboos and laws have distorted and repressed our knowledge of sexuality, leaving marginalized sexualities obscure, hidden; but once we free ourselves from these taboos and laws these coverings, we can disclose the objective truth about sexuality. The scientific concept simply did not exist. Moreover, the mechanisms of power at that time produced and employed this discourse on sexuality not for the sake of knowledge but in order to extend control over individuals. And they did this by creating knowledge: One might think that even if knowledge about something for instance, human sexuality must come from a discourse created by juridical-sovereign systems of power, there would still be objective facts about it that science could objectively investigate. Nineteenth century bourgeois society might have produced a certain discourse on the body, still influencing what we think today, but we would be able to eventually throw off that discourse and get at the truth. But Foucault argues that power constitutes knowledge from the inside. Rather, everything we say about ourselves as individuals, and so what we are as human beings, is always a product of some system of power, and it is a matter of continually struggling against these systems of power to create new discourses. The truth about human sexuality or any other complex concept involving a discourse can never be simply a listing of direct impressions; that would be incoherent and boring. Instead, how we understand human sexuality comes from the integration of these impressions in a certain systematic way defined by a discourse. This is a basic aspect of scientific theorizing. To better understand the role of power in scientific knowledge we need to understand scientific theorizing and the nature of a scientific concept.

Observation Is Not Science Direct observation gives us very little besides immediate sense impressions. Of course, these are the meat of empirical science. But the essence of scientific theorizing involves understanding and prediction or manipulation. Merely describing experience cannot give us either of those things. What parts of experience we investigate in a certain science, like physics or chemistry, what we count as the phenomena to be studied, their boundaries, essential properties, modes of existence, and so on, are determined by ideas outside of experience. There are the notions of relevance that the scientist accepts at the time and manifests in their work by the creation and use of specific scientific concepts. Lee, Take the example of defining a species. But what even is a species? Rather, it is a theoretical concept created by scientists as a way to systematically integrate and explain diverse experiences. Is it the particular shape of the leaves or stem of the plant, the historical lore on the plant, or is it the ability for two members of that group to produce fertile offspring? Linnaeus defined species reproductively. Or we may ask, what does a botanist study? What parts of experience are relevant to botanical phenomena? What changed between the botanical studies of pre-eighteenth century, the eighteenth century, and today? We start off with an unorganized mess of sense impressions, testimony from others, and edicts from authorities, such as religious texts. Only by superimposing a structure on these diverse experiences can we judge that both experience A and experience B but not experience C are of the same individual object, for example, a birch tree. The experiences themselves are simply organisations of geometrically related points of colour, taste, sound, etc. The fact that this observed object is identical to or similar enough to that one is not something we get from observation itself. A suitable resemblance between two or more observations is instead constituted by the discourse used, which tells us what is relevant, and so what the object is and how we test our judgments about it. These features of the world or individuals are created by the ways in which we theoretically systematize and organize experience. Take another example from the natural sciences: Eighteenth century scientists disagreed on what they considered to be electrical phenomena. Attraction and friction but not repulsion; attraction and repulsion? Electrical conduction but not attraction or repulsion? There had for a long time been recorded examples of the effects of electricity on magnetized metals such as lodestones, but the idea that these phenomena were part of the same force had to be brought in by a new way of systematizing experience. So it is the very essence of science to go beyond experience. And if experience itself does not tell us how to organize experience, what does? Can There Be Truth? The fact that scientific theorizing and scientific concepts go beyond observable experience sits at the very heart of science. So we can now see how we necessarily need something organizing our research. For scientific realists, this something is axiomatic or intuitive theoretical virtues or principles. Therefore, for Foucault, scientific knowledge, grounded in theoretical systematization, is necessarily relative to power. I will

close by asking three questions. Foucault cannot be a relativist when it comes to the truth or falsehood of these sort of statements. Can reality not still have natural connections and boundaries? To say that scientists rely on discourses set up by power to systematize experience and create science does not mean that reality itself is constituted by power, just that science is. The argument does not go far enough to be relativist in this regard. There may still be objective categories in nature, even if we cannot try and understand them besides through the effects of power. Instead the essence of science is theoretical systematization. Systematization produces both understanding and prediction and hence the ability to manipulate by trying to get closer to the actual patterns or laws in nature, independent of how our human cognition happens to be constituted. Or to put this conversely, are there truths which no discourse can coherently deny? Do discourses operate within certain immutable logical boundaries; provided by, for instance, the Law of Contradiction and similar logical laws? Foucault is, however, to some extent a relativist in respect to scientific theories and the knowledge we get from them. He was trained at the University of Chicago and the University of Kansas, and focuses on issues in epistemology, logic, and the sciences; or, intellect and imagination.

**Chapter 4 : Michel Foucault and Power**

*Paul-Michel Foucault* (/ f uː• ɛ• k oʊ• /; 15 October - 25 June ), generally known as *Michel Foucault* (French: [miˈɛfˈɛl fuko]), was a French philosopher, historian of ideas, social theorist, and literary critic.

A Genealogy of Modernity Published: August 02, Joseph J. A Genealogy of Modernity, Continuum, , pp. So doing, he allows formal problems such as materiality, medium, lighting, color, depth, perspective, similitude, abstraction, and the place of the viewer to interface with familiar Foucauldian concepts such as archeological description, genealogical rupture, the event, ethical parrhesia, and the shifting relation between subjectivity and truth. At the same time, the Foucauldian philosophical apparatus Tanke brings to bear on aesthetic criticism reshapes our understanding of art history. Reframing genealogy as a "visual practice" 6 that articulates a "dissociating view" 7 , Tanke thus rewrites both the story of Foucault and the story of modern art. Throughout the book, Tanke develops the Foucauldian claim that, beginning with Manet in the mid-nineteenth century, art establishes a break with quattrocento painting by moving away from a representational aesthetic. To be sure, to say that modern art is post-representational is hardly a new insight. Indeed, the bulk of 20th-century writing on art, from R. Such a reading, however, would miss the uniquely archeological frame Tanke brings to his analysis. Let me focus on two conceptual problems that emerge there. First, what is the historico-philosophical relation between resemblance and representation? Second, what is the relation between art and knowledge, especially in the post-representational age? On the first point: Briefly, if the Renaissance ordering of knowledge as hidden resemblances gives way to a Classical system of representation based on the taxonomic ordering of visible signs, resemblance persists beyond the Renaissance episteme in the work of poets and artists. Tanke writes, following Foucault: Given the importance of the resemblance theme in the 20th-century artists under review in the book, it is worth pausing over this Foucauldian point and raising some questions for Tanke about the disruptive force of the art he describes. Is the untimeliness of poets and painters a transhistorical characteristic of artistic practice generally or a feature particular to the Renaissance and Classical orders? More pointedly, if resemblance persists beyond the Renaissance through the work of visual artists, does this incommensurability between artistic practice as resemblance and the order of knowledge as representation carry through into the modern age? Indeed, Tanke makes this persistence of resemblance explicit: How, exactly, does the Renaissance haunting of resemblance occur in the modern age? More problematically, what is the relation between this persistence of resemblance and the break with quattrocento painting, ushered in by Manet Chapter Two , that marks the advent of non-representational modernity? Is pre-representational Renaissance resemblance of the same order as modern post-representation? This brings me to the second guiding conceptual question about the relation between art and knowledge in the age of post-representation. Like the poets and painters mentioned earlier, Las Meninas is "untimely" 16 , belonging simultaneously to all three epistemes in The Order of Things. Created in the heart of the 17th century, it simultaneously reflects a premodern experience of resemblance, a Classical order of representation, and a post-representational age of man. In Las Meninas, the viewer "transforms into a doublet" If, as we have seen with "the untimely ones," art-as-resemblance and knowledge-as-representation are incommensurable in the Classical age, here, at the threshold of modernity, art and knowledge seem to converge as post-representation. Tanke makes this point explicit: Painting, starting with Manet, ceases to concern itself with its traditional representational task, instead undertaking the interrogation of its own finitude in much the same way as the sciences of man This difference between the Classical divergence and modern convergence of art and knowledge is crucial for at least two reasons. Tanke simultaneously argues for the persistence of the Renaissance as resemblance and a break with it as quattrocento painting in modern art. How is this so? To be sure, Foucault is a thinker of paradox, and it is entirely possible that these contradictory assertions might be explained within a paradigm that embraces paradox. But such an acknowledgement does not explain the conceptual problems generated by that conflation. Lacking any such explanation by Tanke or even an acknowledgement that the resemblance-representation contradiction exists , one is left wondering what to make of it. Second, the divergence versus convergence of art and knowledge raises important philosophical

questions. Has art in modernity become timely? Clearly not, since Tanke repeatedly characterizes modern art as a rupturing force in the present. But how is this so if the epistemic and aesthetic orders so clearly converge in post-representation? If, as Tanke asserts early in the book, Foucault "understood art as an anticultural force" 4 , how are we to conceptualize the temporality of that force? Let me offer two examples to illustrate the stakes of this second question. But what are we to make of the genealogical rupture this implies? But if that is the case, how are we then to understand the subsequent ruptures and transgressive practices Tanke details over the course of the 20th century? Another example illustrates this point, in this case as an anti-psychological artistic practice at odds with a psychological ordering of knowledge. How can we explain these anti-psychological, transgressive moves in the face of the post-representation convergence thesis that would imply an art-knowledge parallel in the psychologization of the modern subject? To be fair, Foucault himself is unclear about these matters, both in *The Order of Things* and in his subsequent writings about art. For example, if Foucault is explicit in *The Order of Things* about the "strangeness" OT 50 of artistic similitude in the Classical order of knowledge, he does not explain what happens to art in its relation to knowledge in the age of man. Shapiro began to address some of these issues in his chapters on Foucault and postmodern similitude. Tanke might well respond to both my questions about what is at stake in the modernity of art by repeating what he asserts in the book: More importantly, if what looks like an epoch is actually an ethos, one still needs to account for historical singularity: As Foucault puts it in *The Archeology of Knowledge* , the archeological question remains: For Tanke, there is ethical value in the release of image-events he finds in the modern works under investigation. Tanke does not explicitly say what he means by ethics, but drawing on the claims just enumerated -- art as rupture, release, liberation, or reversal -- we can piece together what we might call an anti-normative ethics of freedom in the practices of the artistic subject. Tanke repeatedly describes this freedom as a force unearthed in history: Forces, strategies, paths, the elementary: To quote the title of a Michals photograph, when it comes to Foucault and aesthetics, "things are queer. Notes [1] Gary Shapiro, *Archeologies of Vision: Foucault and Nietzsche on Seeing and Saying* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, Vintage, , p. Sheridan Smith New York: Pantheon, , p. Gallimard, , p. *Subjectivity and Truth*, ed. Paul Rabinow New York: New Press, , p.

Chapter 5 : Philosophy of history - Wikipedia

*Michel Foucault's archaeology of scientific reason. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, The definitive volume on Foucault's archaeological period, and on Foucault and the philosophy of science.*

Paul Foucault, but his mother insisted on the addition of "Michel"; referred to as "Paul" at school, he expressed a preference for "Michel" throughout his life. He then undertook his first four years of secondary education at the same establishment, excelling in French, Greek, Latin and history but doing poorly at arithmetic and mathematics. Lonely, he described his years there as an "ordeal", but he excelled academically, particularly in philosophy, history and literature. Here he studied under the philosopher Jean Hyppolite, an existentialist and expert on the work of 19th-century German philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. Hyppolite had devoted himself to uniting existentialist theories with the dialectical theories of Hegel and Karl Marx. Of the hundred students entering the ENS, Foucault was ranked fourth based on his entry results, and encountered the highly competitive nature of the institution. His fellow students noted his love of violence and the macabre; he decorated his bedroom with images of torture and war drawn during the Napoleonic Wars by Spanish artist Francisco Goya, and on one occasion chased a classmate with a dagger. Obsessed with the idea of self-mutilation and suicide, Foucault attempted the latter several times in ensuing years, praising suicide in later writings. Foucault did so in, but never became particularly active in its activities, and never adopted an orthodox Marxist viewpoint, refuting core Marxist tenets such as class struggle. Over the following few years, Foucault embarked on a variety of research and teaching jobs. Together, they tried to produce their greatest work, heavily used recreational drugs and engaged in sado-masochistic sexual activity. In Uppsala, he became known for his heavy alcohol consumption and reckless driving in his new Jaguar car. In part because of this rejection, Foucault left Sweden. Wracked in diplomatic scandal, he was ordered to leave Poland for a new destination. *History of Madness in the Classical Age*, a philosophical work based upon his studies into the history of medicine. The book discussed how West European society had dealt with madness, arguing that it was a social construct distinct from mental illness. Foucault traces the evolution of the concept of madness through three phases: The first step was to obtain a rapporteur, or "sponsor" for the work: Foucault chose Georges Canguilhem. The two remained bitter rivals until reconciling in Roger Garaudy, a senior figure in the Communist Party. Foucault made life at the university difficult for Garaudy, leading the latter to transfer to Poitiers. It would be published in English in *Death and the Labyrinth: The World of Raymond Roussel*. *An Archaeology of Medical Perception*. Shorter than its predecessor, it focused on the changes that the medical establishment underwent in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Implemented in, they brought staff strikes and student protests. *An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*. Although initially accepting this description, Foucault soon vehemently rejected it. It made a real impression. I was present for large, violent student riots that preceded by several weeks what happened in May in France. This was March The unrest lasted a whole year: And in March, a general strike by the students. The police came into the university, beat up the students, wounded several of them seriously, and started making arrests I have to say that I was tremendously impressed by those young men and women who took terrible risks by writing or distributing tracts or calling for strikes, the ones who really risked losing their freedom! It was a political experience for me. His decision to do so was largely because his lover, Defert, had been posted to the country as part of his national service. Soon after his arrival, Foucault announced that Tunisia was "blessed by history", a nation which "deserves to live forever because it was where Hannibal and St. Although many young students were enthusiastic about his teaching, they were critical of what they believed to be his right-wing political views, viewing him as a "representative of Gaullist technocracy", even though he considered himself a leftist. Although highly critical of the violent, ultra-nationalistic and anti-semitic nature of many protesters, he used his status to try to prevent some of his militant leftist students from being arrested and tortured for their role in the agitation. He hid their printing press in his garden, and tried to testify on their behalf at their trials, but was prevented when the trials became closed-door events. He enjoyed this teamwork and collective research, and together they would publish a number of short books. The GIP aimed to investigate and expose poor conditions in prisons and give prisoners

and ex-prisoners a voice in French society. It was highly critical of the penal system, believing that it converted petty criminals into hardened delinquents. *Naissance de la prison Discipline and Punish* in , offering a history of the system in western Europe. In it, Foucault examines the penal evolution away from corporal and capital punishment to the penitentiary system that began in Europe and the United States around the end of the 18th century. This campaign was formalised as the Committee for the Defence of the Rights of Immigrants, but there was tension at their meetings as Foucault opposed the anti-Israeli sentiment of many Arab workers and Maoist activists. *The Will to Knowledge* , a short book exploring what Foucault called the "repressive hypothesis". It revolved largely around the concept of power, rejecting both Marxist and Freudian theory. Foucault intended it as the first in a seven-volume exploration of the subject. After all, we are all ruled, and as such, we are in solidarity.

**Chapter 6 : Michel Foucault > By Individual Philosopher > Philosophy**

*Michel Foucault: Ethics. The French philosopher and historian Michel Foucault () does not understand ethics as moral philosophy, the metaphysical and epistemological investigation of ethical concepts (metaethics) and the investigation of the criteria for evaluating actions (normative ethics), as Anglo-American philosophers do.*

Foucault was schooled in Poitiers during the years of German occupation. Foucault excelled at philosophy and, having from a young age declared his intention to pursue an academic career, persisted in defying his father, who wanted the young Paul-Michel to follow his forebears into the medical profession. Foucault primarily studied philosophy, but also obtained qualifications in psychology. Foucault also began to work as a laboratory researcher in psychology. He would continue to work in psychology in various capacities until , when he took up a position as a director of the Maison de France at the University of Uppsala in Sweden. During these overseas postings, he wrote his first major work and primary doctoral thesis, a history of madness, which was later published in . In , Foucault returned to France to teach psychology in the philosophy department of the University of Clermont-Ferrand. He remained in that post until , during which he lived in Paris and commuted to teach. From , Defert was posted to Tunisia for 18 months of compulsory military service, during which time Foucault visited him more than once. This led to Foucault in taking up a chair of philosophy at the University of Tunis, where he was to remain until , missing the events of May in Paris for the most part. It became a bestseller despite its length and the obscurity of its argumentation, and cemented Foucault as a major figure in the French intellectual firmament. Returning to France in , Foucault presided over the creation and then running of the philosophy department at the new experimental university at Vincennes in Paris. The new university was created as an answer to the student uprising of , and inherited its ferment. Foucault assembled a department composed mostly of militant Marxists, including some who have gone on to be among the most prominent French philosophers of their generation: After scandals related to this militancy, the department was briefly stripped of its official accreditation. The early s were a politically tumultuous period in Paris, where Foucault was again living. He covered the Iranian Revolution first-hand in newspaper dispatches as the events unfolded in and . He began to spend more and more time teaching in the United States, where he had lately found an enthusiastic audience. He developed AIDS in and his health quickly declined. He finished editing two volumes on ancient sexuality which were published that year from his sick-bed, before dying on the 26th June, leaving the editing of a fourth and final volume uncompleted. He bequeathed his estate to Defert, with the proviso that there were to be no posthumous publications, a testament which has been subject to ever more elastic interpretation since. A note on dates: In these works, Foucault displays influences typical of young French academics of the time: This slim volume, commissioned for a series intended for students, begins with an historical survey of the types of explanation put forward in psychology, before producing a synthesis of perspectives from evolutionary psychology, psychoanalysis, phenomenology and Marxism. From these perspectives, mental illness can ultimately be understood as an adaptive, defensive response by an organism to conditions of alienation, which an individual experiences under capitalism. Foucault first modified the book in in a new edition, entitled *Mental Illness and Psychology*. This resulted in the change of the later parts – the most Marxist material and the conclusion – to bring them into line with the theoretical perspective that he had by then expounded in his later *The History of Madness*. According to this view, madness is something natural, and alienation is responsible not so much for creating mental illness as such, but for making madness into mental illness. This was a perspective with which Foucault in turn later grew unhappy, and he had the book go out of print for a time in France. Since imagination is necessary to grasp reality, dreaming is also essential to existence itself. It is best known in the English-speaking world by an abridged version, *Madness and Civilization*, since for decades the latter was the only version available in English. *History of Madness* is a work of some originality, showing several influences, but not slavishly following any convention. The link is stronger even than the title indicates: It has wider philosophical import than that, however, with Foucault ultimately finding that madness is negatively constitutive of Enlightenment reason via its exclusion. The exclusion of unreason itself, concomitant with the

physical exclusion of the mad, is effectively the dark side of the valorization of reason in modernity. For this reason, the original main title of the work was *Madness and Unreason*. Foucault argues in effect for the recuperation of madness, via a valorization of philosophers and artists deemed mad, such as Nietzsche, a recuperation which Foucault thinks the works of such men already portend. Still, Foucault wrote several short treatments on artists, including Manet and Magritte, and more substantially on literature. Still, the figure of Roussel offers something of a bridge from *The History of Madness* and the work that Foucault will now go on to do, not least because Roussel is a writer who could be categorized as rehabilitating madness in the literary sphere. Roussel was a madman "eccentrically suicidal" whose work consisted in playing games with language according to arbitrary rules, but with the utmost dedication and seriousness, the purpose of which was to investigate language itself, and its relation to extra-linguistic things. This latter theme is precisely that which comes to preoccupy Foucault in the s, and in the form too of uncovering the rules of the production of discourse. Despite that the Roussel book was the only one Foucault wrote on literature, he wrote literary essays throughout the s. All of these works contribute to a general engagement by Foucault with the theme of language and its relation to its exterior, a theme which is explored at greater length in his contemporaneous monographs. *An Archaeology of Medical Perception. The Birth of the Clinic* examines the emergence of modern medicine. It follows on from the *History of Madness* logically enough: However, this new study is a considerably more modest work than the other, due largely to a significant methodological tightening. The preface to *The Birth of the Clinic* proposes to look at discourses on their own terms as they historically occur, without the hermeneutics that attempts to interpret them in their relation to fundamental reality and historical context. That is, as Foucault puts it, to treat signifiers without reference to the signified, to look at the evolution of medical language without passing judgment on the things it supposedly referred to, namely disease. The main body of the work is an historical study of the emergence of clinical medicine around the time of the French revolution, at which time the transformation of social institutions and political imperatives combined to produce modern institutional medicine for the first time. There is some significant tension between the methodology and the rest of the book, however, with much of what is talked about in the book clearly not being signifiers themselves. The mainstay of the book is not concerned with this narrow area, however, but its pre-history, in the sense of the academic discourses which preceded its very existence. Foucault does not concern himself here with why these shifts happen, only with what has happened. Only with *The Order of Things* is archaeology formulated as a methodology. In *The Order of Things*, Foucault is concerned only to analyze the transformations in discourse as such, with no consideration of the concrete institutional context. The consideration of that context is now put aside until the s. He shows that in each of the disciplines he looks at, the precursors of the contemporary discipline of biology, economics, and linguistics, the same general transformations occur at roughly the same time, encompassing myriad changes at a local level that might not seem connected to one another. Before the Classical age, Foucault argues, Western knowledge was a rather disorganized mass of different kinds of knowledge superstitious, religious, philosophical, with the work of science being to note all kinds of resemblances between things. With the advent of the Classical Age, clear distinctions between academic disciplines emerge, part of a general enthusiasm for categorizing information. The aim at this stage is for a total, definitive cataloguing and categorization of what can be observed. Science is concerned with superficial visibles, not looking for anything deeper. Language is understood as simply transparently representing things, such that the only concern with language is work of clarification. For the first time, however, there is an appreciation of the reflexive role of subjects in the enquiry they are conducting "the scientist is himself an object for enquiry, an individual conceived simultaneously as both subject and object. Then, from the beginning of the nineteenth century, a new attention to language emerges, and the search begins for precisely what is hidden from our view, hidden logics behind what we can see. To this tendency belong theories as diverse as the dialectical view of history, psychoanalysis, and Darwinian evolution. In this work, Foucault tries to consolidate the method of archaeology: Archaeology, Foucault now declares, means approaching language in a way that does not refer to a subject who transcends it" though he acknowledges he has not been rigorous enough in this respect in the past. That is not to say that Foucault is making a strong metaphysical claim about subjectivity,

but rather only that he is proposing a mode of analysis that subordinates the role of the subject. Foucault in fact proposes to suspend acceptance not only of the notion of a subject who produces discourse but of all generally accepted discursive unities, such as the book. Instead, he wants to look only at the surface level of what is said, rather than to try to interpret language in terms of what stands behind it, be that hidden meaning, structures, or subjects. The specificity of a statement is rather determined both by such intrinsic properties and by its extrinsic relations, by context as well as content. Foucault asserts the autonomy of discourse, that language has a power that cannot be reduced to other things, either to the will of a speaking subject, or to economic and social forces, for example. It is rather the opposite. Both these things in effect need to be factored into analyses of statements – the identity of the statement is conditioned both by its relation to other statements, to discourse as such, and to reality, as well as by its intrinsic form. This of course retroactively includes much of what Foucault has been doing all along. This work represents an extension in literary theory of the impulse behind the Archaeology, with Foucault systematically criticizing the notion of an author, and suggesting that we can move beyond ascribing transcendent sovereignty to the subject in our understanding of discourse, understanding the subject rather as a function of discourse.

**Genealogy** The period after May saw considerable social upheaval in France, particularly in the universities, where the revolt of that month had begun. Foucault, returning to this atmosphere from a Tunis that was also in political ferment, was politicized. His work quickly reflected his new engagement the Archaeology was completed early in , though published the next year. Of course, one may argue that all history has these features, but with genealogy this is intended rather than a matter of unavoidable bias.

**The Birth of the Prison. Discipline and Punish** is a book about the emergence of the prison system. The conclusion of the book in relation to this subject matter is that the prison is an institution, the objective purpose of which is to produce criminality and recidivism. The system encompasses the movement that calls for reform of the prisons as an integral and permanent part.

**The Will to Knowledge** Foucault indeed focused on the concept of power so much that he remarked that he produced the analysis of power relations rather than the genealogies he had intended. Foucault began talking about power as soon as he began to do genealogy, in *The Order of Discourse*. Knowledge now for Foucault is incomprehensible apart from power, although Foucault continues to insist on the relative autonomy of discourse, introducing the notion 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 a notion of power in *Discipline and Punish*, but his conception of power is primarily expounded only in a work published the following year in , the first volume of his *History of Sexuality*, with the title *The Will to Knowledge*. 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 problem, says Foucault, is that we have a negative conception of power, which leads us only to call power that which prohibits, while the production of behavior is not problematized at all. 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. People, one may say crudely, moreover, are as much products of power as they are wielders of it. Power thus has a relative autonomy apropos of people, just as they do apropos of it: The carceral system and the device of sexuality are two prime examples of such strategies of power: This leads Foucault to an analysis of the specific historical dynamics of power. This specific historical thesis is dealt with in more detail in the article *Foucault and Feminism* , in the first section. **Lecture Series** After his lectures on prisons, Foucault for two years returned to the old theme of institutional psychiatry in work that effectively provides a bridge between the theme and theory of the genealogy of prisons, and that of sexuality.

**Chapter 7 : The Philosophy of Foucault by Todd May**

*The Philosophy of Foucault is an accessible and stimulating introduction to one of the most popular and influential thinkers of recent years and will be welcomed by students studying Foucault as part of politics, sociology, history and philosophy courses.*

Having said this, I will state my main reservation about the book before saying a little about each of the chapters. My chief concern is that the book misses its audience. It is clearly intended as an introduction to Foucault, from its title to the back-cover description, and in keeping with an introductory-level work, treatment of other figures such as Descartes, Nietzsche, Freud, and Marx is elementary. Unfortunately, this is only an appearance; to benefit from what May says about Foucault, and to balance his take on various points, one already has to know Foucault quite well and it will be those who know Foucault well who will most like the book and profit from it. This ennobling is not a new mistake, and May is not the only one guilty of making it. Richard Rorty put the basic problem succinctly in his *Essays on Heidegger and Others*: There is little trace of the Foucault who desperately sought novelty of thought in the darkest and most forbidden corners of human activity, of the Foucault whose turn, from his bleak portrayal of power-relations in his genealogical works to his self-creation-enabling ethics, was perhaps a failure of nerve or at best fear that his genealogical works and account of power would be dismissed as a deterministic dead-end. The reason the noble image May presents does not do Foucault justice is that it effectively assimilates Foucault to an intellectual tradition he seems to have disdained and often disparaged. It makes Foucault seem an admirable philosopher like Spinoza or Kant. May then refines the question as "Who are we now? On the other hand, the treatment of *The History of Madness* is disproportionately long and less satisfactory. Again, though, the chapter reads well enough if you know Foucault, but one wonders what those new to his work will make of it. Chapter Three, "Genealogical histories of who we are," initially won me over in that contrary to, e. However, a third of the way through I began to feel that the presentation of genealogy, initially in terms of discussion of *Discipline and Punish*, is too historical, involves largely extraneous comparisons with *The History of Madness*, and is somehow too muted. It is as if May is trying not to put anyone off Foucault -- "Americanizing" him. The treatment of Foucauldian power is also muted and seems much less central than it ought to be. The point here is basically the one I make above: Chapter Four is titled "Who we are and who we might be" and contains what I think best in the book. Pages and present an inspired overview of what Foucault was up to that alone makes the book worth acquiring. May seems to read the last two books, especially *The Care of the Self*, as the culmination of a philosophical progression that for all its unevenness was a progression nonetheless. The fifth chapter, "Coda: The final chapter, "Are we still who Foucault says we are? Chapter Six raised anew my reservation about the book and its intended audience.

**Chapter 8 : Foucault, Michel | Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy**

*Michel Foucault ( - ) was a French philosopher, historian, critic and sociologist, often associated with the 20th Century Structuralism, Post-Structuralism and Post-Modernism movements (although he himself always rejected such labels).*

First, Foucault examines power in terms of minor processes that identify and invest the body. Four investment by the power of the body are described in *Discipline and Punish*: Against all odds, it is no longer, as one would a little too hastily, to study the question of power in terms of big questions about the genesis of the state or the rights of nature. A reading of Foucault, one realizes that all the work of the power to discipline its subjects takes place around a very thin body of political technique: Foucault and the discipline Foucault also noted an effort by the power to patrol the body and spread them in space. This is to avoid what it costs the least disorder in society. So everyone should be in place according to their rank, function, strengths, etc.. Whether in the factory, schools, barracks, power must control the activity, reaching the interior of the same behavior, playing at the act in its materiality most intimate and must also combine bodies in order to extract maximum utility. This is what we may call the combination of forces. This leads Foucault to study the techniques very meticulous teaching initiated by the government, and its rules very meticulous training of individuals in different strata of society. Punish the rebellious body, the unruly body. Besides a great power, there are ubiquitous in our society a lot of micro-powers, which allows Foucault to distinguish and to oppose the law and the norm. The law is what applies to individuals from outside, mainly in connection with an offense, the standard is what applies to individuals within, as it is for her to reach their interiority same conduct by imposing a fixed curve. Micro-power If these micro-powers, which aims to standardize the behavior, are numerous because they are at different levels: When, for example, political power is repressive, micro-power them, are productive. When political power sought to silence reserving the right to speak, to keep in ignorance, to suppress the pleasures and desires, and carries the threat of death, the micro-powers, however, produce speech and encourage a confession: The standard does not attempt to enter the individual acts in connection with accurate and timely, it wants to invest its entire existence. While the law in its application while surrounded by a theatrical ritual, the standard is more diffuse, more subtle, more indirect: She eventually win the corner of a thousand petty reprimands. We meet all eventually took his trap. And micro-powers to be just as binding even more than political power. They are, in any case, more subtle and precise, less visible than political power. But we are so far unable to combat it, give it up? Must be regarded as inevitable that the company can not be anything but a community of men led and supervised? Is it not always possible, however, to think our liberation from the bondage of the various strata of power and its micro-powers? The care of the self Foucault, despite his untimely death, will not leave these questions unanswered. No history of sexual behavior and practices, or history of representations of sex by people, this history is to aim to provide a research ethics, focusing on the solution of Greek moral problems posed by sexuality. It shows that, because only free men can dominate others, they must first master themselves. This requires a diet of the pleasures of food first, then sex. But they also need, in the words of Socrates, awareness of self-concern. But what is the care of the self? But not in a purely narcissistic. Foucault, unlike modern times, does not commit us to turn our gaze to our ego, to give us a review of our painful imperfections. It refers to the care of the self, in the ancient sense of the term, which is both an attitude combining the philosophical mode, but also on how a social practice. The care of the self will stick to the art of living, to correct the individual and not just to train. That will be for Foucault to govern ourselves, and even to build his life as a work of art. This means simply that in the type of analysis I try to offer you for a while, you see:

**Chapter 9 : Michel Foucault (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy)**

*"Michel Foucault () was a French 20th-century philosopher and historian who spent his career forensically critiquing the power of the modern bourgeois capitalist state, including its.*

As a student he was brilliant but psychologically tormented. From the s on, Foucault was very active politically. He frequently lectured outside France, particularly in the United States, and in had agreed to teach annually at the University of California at Berkeley. One might question whether Foucault is in fact a philosopher. His academic formation was in psychology and its history as well as in philosophy, his books were mostly histories of medical and social sciences, his passions were literary and political. This article will present him as a philosopher in these two dimensions. Intellectual Background We begin, however, with a sketch of the philosophical environment in which Foucault was educated. Merleau-Ponty, whose lectures he attended, and Heidegger were particularly important. But he soon turned away from both. Jean-Paul Sartre, working outside the University system, had no personal influence on Foucault. But, as the French master-thinker of the previous generation, he is always in the background. Like Sartre, Foucault began from a relentless hatred of bourgeois society and culture and with a spontaneous sympathy for marginal groups such as the mad, homosexuals, and prisoners. They both also had strong interests in literature and psychology as well as philosophy, and both, after an early relative lack of political interest, became committed activists. But in the end, Foucault seemed to insist on defining himself in contradiction to Sartre. Three other factors were of much more positive significance for the young Foucault. In a quite different vein, Foucault was enthralled by French avant-garde literature, especially the writings of Georges Bataille and Maurice Blanchot, where he found the experiential concreteness of existential phenomenology without what he came to see as dubious philosophical assumptions about subjectivity. Major Works 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. What might have seemed just contingent features of human cognition for example, the spatial and temporal character of its perceptual objects turn out to be necessary truths. Foucault, however, suggests the need to invert this Kantian move. Rather than asking what, in the apparently contingent, is actually necessary, he suggests asking what, in the apparently necessary, might be contingent. The focus of his questioning is the modern human sciences biological, psychological, social. These purport to offer universal scientific truths about human nature that are, in fact, often mere expressions of ethical and political commitments of a particular society. Each of his major books is a critique of historical reason. Standard histories saw the nineteenth-century medical treatment of madness developed from the reforms of Pinel in France and the Tuke brothers in England as an enlightened liberation of the mad from the ignorance and brutality of preceding ages. Moreover, he argued that the alleged scientific neutrality of modern medical treatments of insanity are in fact covers for controlling challenges to 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. But the socio-ethical critique is muted except for a few vehement passages , presumably because there is a substantial core of objective truth in medicine as opposed to psychiatry and so less basis for criticism. 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 an analysis of what knowledge meantâ€”and how this meaning changedâ€”in Western thought from the Renaissance to the present. At the heart of his account is the notion of representation. 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: By contrast, during the Renaissance, knowledge was understood as a matter of resemblance between things. The map is a useful model of Classical representation. It consists, for example, of a set of lines of varying widths, lengths, and colors, and thereby represents the roads in and around a city. This is not because the roads have the properties of the map the widths, lengths, and colors of the lines but because the abstract structure given in the map the relations among the lines duplicates the abstract structure of the roads.

At the heart of Classical thought is the principle that we know in virtue of having ideas that, in this sense, represent what we know. Of course, in contrast to the map, we do not need to know what the actual features of our ideas are in virtue of which they are able to represent. We do, however, have direct introspective access to the abstract structures of our ideas: How, on the Classical view, do we know that an idea is a representation of an object—and an adequate representation? Not, Foucault argues, by comparing the idea with the object as it is apart from its representation. This is impossible, since it would require knowing the object without a representation when, for Classical thought, to know is to represent. The only possibility is that the idea itself must make it apparent that it is a representation. The idea represents the very fact that it is a representation. As far as the early modern view is concerned, there may be no such objects; or, if there are, this needs to be established by some other means. We see, then, that for Foucault the key to Classical knowing is the idea, that is, mental representation. Language could be nothing more than a higher-order instrument of thought: Kant raises the question of whether ideas do in fact represent their objects and, if so, how in virtue of what 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 or have roots in something other than representation. This did not mean that representation had nothing at all to do with knowledge. But, Foucault insists, the thought that was only now with Kant possible was that representation itself and the ideas that represented could have an origin in something other than representation. This thought, according to Foucault, led to some important and distinctively modern possibilities. Not, however, produced by the mind as a natural or historical reality, but as belonging to a special epistemic realm: Kant thus maintained the Classical view that knowledge cannot be understood as a physical or historical reality, but he located the grounds of knowledge in a domain the transcendent more fundamental than the ideas it subtended. We must add, of course, that Kant also did not think of this domain as possessing a reality beyond the historical and the physical; it was not metaphysical. But this metaphysical alternative was explored by the idealistic metaphysics that followed Kant. Another—and in some ways more typically modern—view was that ideas were themselves historical realities. This could be most plausibly developed, as Herder did, by tying ideas essentially to language, now regarded as the primary and 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. Our discussion above readily explains why Foucault talks of a return of language: But the return is not a monolithic phenomenon. So, for example, the history of natural languages 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. So these two apparently opposed approaches—underlying the division of analytic and continental philosophy—are in fact, according to Foucault, complementary projects of modern thought. But there is yet another possibility: Even more, Foucault suggests, language is a truth unto itself, speaking nothing other than its own meaning. 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 themselves. Even more important than language is the figure of man. Man, Foucault says, did not exist during the Classical age or before. This is not because there was no idea of human beings as a species or of human nature as a psychological, moral, or political reality. There is no doubt that even in the Classical age human beings were conceived as the locus of knowledge since humans possess the ideas that represent the world. The notion of man, on the other hand, is epistemological in the Kantian sense of a transcendental subject that is also an empirical object. For the Classical age, human beings are the locus of representations but not, as for Kant, their source. There are two ways of questioning the force of the cogito. But for the Classical Age this makes no sense, since thinking is representation. But, once again, this is precisely what cannot be thought in Classical terms. This finitude is a philosophical problem because man as a historically limited empirical being must somehow also be the source of the representations whereby we know the empirical world, including ourselves as empirical beings. I my consciousness must, as Kant put it, be both an empirical object of representation and the transcendental source of representations. How is this possible? The question—and the basic strategy for answering it—go back, of

course, to Kant, who put forward the following crucial idea: Our finitude is, therefore, simultaneously founded and founding positive and fundamental, as Foucault puts it. The project of modern Kantian and post-Kantian philosophy—the analytic of finitude—is to show how this is possible. Some modern philosophy tries to resolve the problem of man by, in effect, reducing the transcendental to the empirical. For example, naturalism attempts to explain knowledge in terms of natural science physics, biology, while Marxism appeals to historical social sciences. The difference is that the first grounds knowledge in the past—the. Either approach simply ignores the terms of the problem: 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. 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. But this move encounters the difficulty that man has to be both a product of historical processes and the origin of history. This paradox may explain the endless modern obsession with origins, but there is never any way out of the contradiction between man as originator and man as originated. Three years later, in , he published *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, a methodological treatise that explicitly formulates what he took to be the archaeological method that he used not only in *The Order of Things* but also at least implicitly in *History of Madness* and *The Birth of the Clinic*. So, for example, *History of Madness* should, Foucault maintained, be read as an intellectual excavation of the radically different discursive formations that governed talk and thought about madness from the seventeenth through the nineteenth 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. Such comparisons could suggest the contingency of a given way of thinking by showing that the people living in previous ages had thought very differently and, apparently, just as effectively. 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.