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THE EMPTYING OF THE METANARRATIVE:
FOUCAULT'S ARCHAEOLOGY AND GENEALOGY IN THE STUDY OF NORMATIVITY

by

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Abstract

The twenty-first century is characterized by drastic changes in epistemology, as a result of academical shifts in important fields since the 60s. The decline of metanarratives – defined by Lyotard as grand-narratives about narratives (which, in turn, legitimate historically-situated events) – provided a fertile research ground for new methodological practices based on sharp critiques of Enlightenment rationality. One of the founding authors of the "postmodern condition" (as Lyotard labels it) is Michel Foucault. Foucault's archaeological and genealogical project regarding epistemology redefined our conceptual approach to knowledge and its legitimation, by situating both concepts in specific historical contexts, at specific historical times. Recurring themes in the Foucauldian project involve skepticism about objective truths, anti-historicism and subjectivity. In this dissertation, I seek to answer the question *"Why is Foucauldian methodology relevant in the (post-)modern world, especially in light of the decline of metanarratives?".* The main goal is to address the role of Foucault's works in the rethinking of historically given narratives and expose the contingency of practices embroiled in power-knowledge relations, while keeping in mind the dispersibility of the origins of those narratives. This is particularly relevant under the framework of an emptying of over-arching narratives about knowledge and the human condition, i.e., the Lyotardian metanarrative. Human societies are usually seen in a context of a larger narrative to which each of our lives in an element. The metanarrative serves as an umbrella for smaller narratives in which other epistemic and moral narratives find their place. There seems to be a clear intersection in Lyotard and Foucault's works: the former studies the conditions in which the metanarratives empty themselves, while the latter occupies himself with the archaeological/genealogical study of the narratives within the metanarratives that, in turn, occupy the vacuum left by the original metanarrative. There is, nonetheless, a distinction between both authors: while Lyotard sees this replacement as normative-laden, Foucault focuses on a strictly analytical view of discourse and practice.

Keywords: Deviance; Discipline; Metanarrative; Normativity; Power.

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1. Introduction

History, for Foucault, is based on practices. Practices, simply put, are what people live. They shape us, determining who we are, not by imposing a set of exogenous restrictions, but through historically given norms and guidelines, through which we think and act. They set the larger theme of "normality" and cannot be separated from what people often consider their larger historical context. Practices are created and reproduced through what Foucault calls "discipline", which is defined as a mechanism of power that regulates thought and behavior through subtle means. In other words, discipline involves a set of power relations which are oriented, but not necessarily imposed.

One of the most important aspects of the analysis of practices is their deep connection with the notion of "knowledge". Knowledge is situated in our practices. This brings two different implications. First, our knowledge changes as our practices change. We know differently at different periods of our history. This does not necessarily mean that there is no "true" knowledge; it only implies that, since we cannot separate ourselves from our practices, our knowledge is bound to our contingent practices. Secondly, what indeed happens in those practices affects our project of knowing. Our knowledge is inseparable from the norms, actions and expected behaviors of which these practices consist of. Simply put, if knowledge occurs within our contingent practices and power arises from those practices, then there must be a deep connection between knowledge and power.

Foucault's works can be boiled down to five distinct features. Firstly, the collective determination of who we are is complex, as there is not a single unitary theme that constitutes who we are at a given moment, but, instead, a complex network of themes that interact with each other. Bird-eye views are clearly rejected in favor of historically given practices. Foucault dismisses the use of *Weltgeschichte* (world history) to explain phenomena, arguing, instead, that every historical judgement is contingent to its social structures and no truly objective truth can be established. Secondly, the fact that these practices are historically given means they are, indeed, changeable. Although we did not control how we became who we are now and we are bound to our historical heritage, we do not have to remain who we are. History has different paths and branches; who we were did not necessarily had to led us to who we are now, nor to who we want to be. Thirdly, these practices shape not only the way we behave and act but also our knowledge about the world and about ourselves. This is intrinsically related with the notions of creative

power and power-knowledge advanced by Foucault. Fourthly, the determination of who we are is deeply historical, which makes us indissociable with our historical legacy and unable to simply choose who we are in a set epoch. Lastly, these features imply that the question of who each of us is, individually, is a collective matter: there is not an *"I"* in our history, but a *"We"*.

Foucault's archaeological phase lasted from 1961 to 1969. The goal of this phase was to describe discourses as practices specified in the element of an archive. In order to achieve this, it is necessary to uncover the archives which help create an understanding of a contingent practice in our past, i.e., archeology frames the consequent genealogy by historically reconstructing a contingent historical practice in a linear way. The archetype of this phase is *Madness and Civilization* (1961). In this work, there is a clear rejection of phenomenology; it shifts the ground from Foucault's earlier projects of unpacking and detailing an experience (which had not yet been fully clarified) to a historical investigation, in this case, of the different structures of the treatment of madness. What was aimed in this work was to study madness as the "Other" of Reason in three distinct eras: the Renaissance, the Classical Age and Modernity. *Madness and Civilization,* however, is not a book about madness; it is a book about Reason's monologue on madness.

The use of the term "genealogy" is usually distinguished from that of "archaeology," although genealogies are based on archaeologies. Foucault's works are no exception to this. In an archaeological view, there is, within a given archive, a stability of discursive rules that do not change until a historical break occurs. In a genealogical view, practices converge and diverge, but they do not do so under any larger over-arching themes, as these themes are fluid and historically situated. While archaeology works to understand how artifacts fit together in a historical moment, providing contextual and contingent meaning to them, genealogy works by figuring out what kind of people would fit into that set of artifacts, i.e., how these artifacts create norms and guidelines for our practices. Genealogy is, above all, non-linear and based on tracing back the origins of historically given practices. This phase lasted from 1969 to 1978 and its archetype is Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* (1974). As is characteristic of the genealogical phase, there is a significant change in what is being analyzed: contrary to the archaeological phase, where there was a larger interest on how discourses materialized in certain practices, what is now being addressed is how practices themselves are constituted and how they constitute our knowledge, focusing on the fact that the genealogies of practices

are many and varied. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault traces the genealogy of the disciplinary society (which Foucault argues is the basis of today's society) in four different instances: Torture, Punishment, Discipline and Prison.

Foucault's philosophical project converges on an in-depth archaeological and genealogical study of the disciplinary society. Different critics, ranging from Deleuze's "control societies" to Baudrillard's "hyperreality" directly engage with Foucault's views of who we were, are and will be. However, these alternative conceptual models also work within the postmodern framework, i.e., according to Lyotard in *The Postmodern Condition*, under a sharp transformation of the game rules for literature, art and, especially, science, which laid the foundation for a critical rethinking of Enlightenment rationality and on how economic and political power is maintained, by deconstructing the discourses that legitimate them.

Throughout this dissertation, I will seek to characterize the postmodern condition and, in particular, the Lyotardian perspective on what it means to be a part of the postmodern. I will also present how knowledge is constructed and legitimated by applying a Wittgensteinian (i.e., by means of an analogy to language games) approach to narrative-building, distinguishing between different types of legitimation criteria of knowledge. In order to understand how the postmodern condition affects our production of knowledge, I will revisit Foucault's earlier archaeological works and, especially, his genealogical project, providing insights as to why Foucaldian methodology can help us filter how historically contingent moments can create certain discourses instead of others, which, in turn, legitimate a larger narrative regarding what we consider to be true. To this end, I then focus on how norms are created and sustained through power relations, leading to a distinction between the normal and the abnormal, creating the need for normalization. Finally, I will present the relevance of a genealogical approach in the production of knowledge and how it can make clearer how, why and when do we consider something to be true, i.e., why do we choose to constitute ourselves in a specific way.

In order to understand how the Foucaldian project operates, we need to define and understand the framework in which it operates. It is under the definition of the concept of the postmodern that we shall begin this dissertation.

2. The Lyotardian “Postmodern”

2.1 The Modern and the Postmodern

Although the discussion of the “postmodern” is a recurrent theme in the Lyotardian project, it is on *The Postmodern Condition* where the clearest distinction between the modern and postmodern appears. Fredric Jameson (2019, p. vii), writing on the foreword of the English version of *The Postmodern Condition* suggests that:

> (…) postmodernism, as it is generally understood, involves a radical break, both with a dominant culture and aesthetic, and with a rather different moment of socioeconomic organization against which its structural novelties and innovations are measured: a new social and economic moment (or even system), which has variously been called media society, the "society of the spectacle" (Guy Debord), consumer society (or the "société de consommation"), the "bureaucratic society of controlled consumption" (Henri Lefebvre), or "postindustrial society" (Daniel Bell).

What is key to understand here is how the postmodern refers to an epoch/mindset of critical activity towards the modern, expressing itself in the form of a vanguardist *zeitgeist* in the fields of philosophy, science, politics and art. The aim of this “vanguard” is to uncover the limits and rules on which these areas operate and, consequently, create new works based on rules that were hitherto unidentified until the creation of that work. In other words, the postmodern stance must always attempt to produce that which cannot be produced and cannot be fully represented. To identify the “break” from where the postmodern sprouts, Lyotard defines the foundation of his project through his own definition of the modern:

> I will use the term modern to designate any science that legitimates itself with reference to a metadiscourse of this kind making an explicit appeal to some grand narrative, such as the dialectics of Spirit, the hermeneutics of meaning, the emancipation of the rational or working subject, or the creation of wealth. (Lyotard 2019, p.10)

The Postmodern Condition was Lyotard’s attempt to diagnose his own time, which was characterized by drastic changes on how knowledge was perceived and, more precisely, its legitimation, taking as a focal point the so-called “developed” world. It is Lyotard’s most extensive attempt at defining the postmodern using six major topics of discussion, which are summarized by Brügger (2001, pp.78-79) in his recollection of the

Lyotardian project. First, the main aim of Lyotard's study of the postmodern is to discuss " (…) *the condition of knowledge in the most highly developed societies.*" (Lyotard, 2019, p. xxiii). Second, the "postmodern" refers to the condition of knowledge today, especially taking into consideration the perspectives which stem from the philosophy of history, where the "modern" epoch is replaced by a "postmodern" epoch. Third, it is important to take notice that Lyotard uses the term "postmodern" as a point of departure and not as a fixed epoch with a beginning and a (possible) end. The aim here is to focus on the crisis of legitimation of the post-industrial world and, especially, the twilight of master-narratives. Four, the modern gives special emphasis to science, the pursuit of truth and to the different institutions that are able to control or influence social bonds, namely the ones which tend to focus on the concept of justice, as well as those which legitimate their activities (and revolving phenomena), in accordance with some grand narrative. These master-narratives are, according to Lyotard (2019, p. xxiii) "(…) *the dialectics of Spirit, the hermeneutics of meaning, the emancipation of the rational or working subject, or the creation of wealth"*. It was based on these narratives that both science and social bonds were legitimated in the modern epoch. Lyotard, however, argues that they have now become obsolete and untrustworthy, thus creating a new postmodern context which is mainly defied by this obsolete instance and by the emptying of the grand narratives of the modern epoch. Fifth, by "(…) *losing its functors, its great hero, its great dangers, its great voyages, its great goal"* (Lyotard, 2019, p. xxiv), the obsolete condition of the master-narrative becomes evident and leads to a fragmentation of an otherwise relatively clear institution, discourse or practice, into ones which are diffused and that "(…) *give rise to institutions in patches—local determinism".* The sixth and last discussion in *The Postmodern Condition* takes into consideration three plausible criteria for legitimation, which mainly appear in the realm of science*:* performativity, consensus and paralogy. We will analyze these criteria in detail later.

2.2 Language Problems and the Differend

The Lyotardian project examines the legitimating narratives for science and social bonds through the usage of language games, particularly Wittengstein's (later) works. Brügger (2001, p.79) argues, in his reading of Lyotard, " (…) *that language ought to be conceived as a series of different and incommensurable language games. The definition of the different language games is tied to the pragmatic situation in which a statement places the sender, referent, and addressee*.". The (post)modern world is usually

characterized by a plurality of discourses which frequently conflict with each other, as a direct consequence of what happens in language and speech, in a realm of interconnected speech-acts. According to Boeve (1998, p.300):

> Once a phrase has happened, numerous other phrases can be linked to it, according to the genre of discourse (what Wittgenstein called a language game, consisting of a strategy of linking phrases to pursue a certain goal) which regulates the linking. But although there are many phrase candidates, only one of them can actually realize the linking, and this according to the genre of discourse which finally overcomes the other genres. Other phrases, fitting within the strategies of linking in other genres of discourse, then remain unactualized.

Discourses function in a similar way to Wittgensteinian linguistics: one discourse can only function and be legitimized if a given set of rules and procedures acknowledges that discourse as valid. In Wittgenstein's (1986, p.48) words, *"A picture held us captive. And we could not get outside it, for it lay in our language and language seemed to repeat it to us inexorably."*. In the same way our language has different meaning and interpretations under different contexts, so do our practices and our knowledge of our practices. Language games function, to Lyotard, as an analogy towards what we affirm to be the postmodern condition; if language cannot be understand when used outside of its context (i.e., words have a different symbology when used in different circumstances), then practices are also only functional and legitimate when the rules that surround them are accepted and understood by the practitioners. Essentially, the postmodern condition does not address problems and phenomena in an empiric, quasi-positivist way, but addresses them by looking at how discourses (such as a specific use of language, for example) and (meta-)narratives impact our quest for knowledge and truth:

> These are, of course, not empirical problems; they are solved, rather, by looking into the workings of our language, and that in such a way as to make us recognize those workings: in despite of an urge to misunderstand them. The problems are solved, not by giving new information, but by arranging what we have always known. Philosophy is a battle against the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of language. (Wittgenstein 1953, p.47)

Plurality of discourses then, is not simply a stagnant phenomenon, but a deep and complex network of differences and otherness, which, inevitably, creates a lesser or higher stage for conflict between the agents of the plural space. From a macro perspective,

this conflict can be seen as a conflict between the different types of discourse present in a given society. This happens due to the fact that the linking of different phrases does not have a self-regulating mechanism. Plural discourses imply a different set of rules and strategies for the construction of the narrative, making those phrases always discourse-dependent. This means that, for each of the different discourses, there is a clear linking of phrases (which provide an evident explanation for decisions), precisely because they are feeding themselves the rules unto which their goals are most easily fulfilled.

However, plurality is the condition of discourse in the postmodern, where different discourses regulate the linking between phrases in some sort of self-fulfilling prophecy. This is a direct consequent of the untrustworthiness towards a meta-discourse which transcends the multitude of discourses that characterized language games in the modern era. The unquestionable rule for this linkage is no longer present; we now arrive at the postmodern condition of permanent conflict in the discourse, a situation which Lyotard names "differend". There is an important caveat to be made here, which is the distinction between a "litigation" and a "differend".:

> In the first genre of judgment, the 'judge' has a rule at his or her disposal to resolve a conflict; in the second, this rule is not available, but must still be sought for. Litigation is the case within a certain genre of discourse: according to its strategy the conflict becomes resolved. But the plurality of discourses, in absence of a meta-discourse, installs a general condition of 'differend': there is no rule available. To do justice, the 'judge' still has to seek it. (Boeve, 1998, p.301)

The Lyotardian postmodern is the awareness that each new phenomenon constitutes a different event, a dilemma to a new, undetermined, phrase. Nonetheless, "differends" are still solved as litigations, albeit not in conform with some grand-narrative, but with its own "*petit-narrative*" (little narrative). This creates a condition, for any given phenomena, where one *petit-narrative* overlapped a different *petit-narrative*. For Lyotard, the postmodern requires a critical rethinking of the linking strategies that exist in present-day discourse, especially considering those linkages which neglect the differend at the expense of simple litigations. Even if we can solve the linking of phrases, it is vital that there remains a permanent consciousness of the undecidability of what characterizes the postmodern epoch, as the different sources for legitimation create different rules in each discourse. The emptying of the power of over-arching narratives towards discourse helped uncover the incommensurability of language games. According

to Lyotard (2019, p.10), "(…) *to speak is to fight, in the sense of playing, and speech acts fall within the domain of a general agonistics."*. Agonistics in language wield a certain polytheism of values, that go beyond traditional solutions in language games, such as performativity and consensus. This is a clear opposition to the modern master narratives, which impose their own rules of discourse, excluding and/or subordinating all other discourses and narratives, providing a "one-size-fits-all" rule of thumb for litigations.

2.3 Legitimation criteria in the Postmodern

Up until the postmodern era, there were two fundamental models used to legitimate both science and social bonds: the speculative narrative and the emancipation narrative. For Brügger (2001, p.80), the speculative narrative argues that *"(...) scientific, social, and existential practice can be united.*", which implies that "(…) *the search for the true cause undertaken by science is unproblematically brought into line with the justified goals for which one aims in the social/political sphere."* In this type of narrative, the subject of knowledge is inherently a reflective subject, i.e., a speculative spirit which is incarnated by a system of rules, expectations and social bonds. The language for legitimation in this instance is philosophical, where knowledge for the sake of knowledge presents itself as the ultimate goal. This specific type of knowledge is seen as an accurate depiction of reality and, as such, provides the best mechanism to understand and act upon reality.

The emancipation narrative takes as its main premise the individuals' need for development and fulfilment. Under this logic, education and science have the role of being the main catalyst for human emancipation from whichever instance of oppression they find themselves in. As Brügger (2001, p.80) argues *"In contrast to what was true in the speculative narrative, there is a latent conflict between individual and state, the state always being, to a certain extent, an oppressor".* Under the narrative of emancipation, along with the need to legitimate denotative statements (which define what is, or not, a true statement), there is also a need to legitimate prescriptive utterances, since they fall under the definition of what is just or unjust. There is a clear separation between the legitimator of knowledge (usually a field of science or a figure of authority on knowledge), who aims to provide "true" information to the different discourses and to the distributors of knowledge (the social *corpus*), who act in accordance with what they deem "just", based on the knowledge acquired. In this type of grand-narrative, the subject of knowledge is a practical one – the social *corpus* – and legitimates knowledge through

political discourses, with the explicit aim of creating knowledge which is readily available to the (ideally) unrestricted subject.

The Lyotardian project rejects these two "master narratives", pointing to their untrustworthiness, inciting a clear "(…) *delegitimation that characterizes postindustrial society and postmodern culture."* (Brügger, 2001, p.80). Lyotard does not subscribe to any epochal explanation, rejecting "delegitimation" as a phenomenon which stems from the effects of the advance of technology in the mid-twentieth century or the drastic changes in the economic paradigm, in the form of a re-expansion of a Keynesian (liberal) capitalism. Instead, Lyotard claims both these narratives are problematic from the very start. The major issue with the speculative narrative is its principle of a unitary science from which all forms of knowledge develop and unto which all social structures should be subjected. This means that language games are uniform in its character and included (i.e., subordinated) to a metalanguage (the speculative spirit) which defines the rules and limits of those language games. The speculative narrative fails to address the heteromorphy of language games. On the other hand, the narrative of emancipation entails the following issue: the principle of autonomy suggests the idea that if we can provide a truthful description of reality, then we fulfill the *sine qua non* condition to legitimate a given demand about changing reality. Brügger (2001, p.81) argues that *"If distinct language games are translatable, one may unproblematically infer a prescriptive statement from a denotative one."* The emancipation narrative fails to respect the untranslatability of language games, which happen in different and contingent contexts.

Lyotard believes that the classical episteme, which hitherto has guided contemporary consciousness, channels practical and cognitive imagination in two different vectors. The first, one – performativity - conceives society as a functional whole. Benhabib (1984, p. 105) defines performativity as "(…) *the view that knowledge is power, that modern science is to be legitimated through the increase in technological capacity, efficiency, control, and output it enables"*. The aim of performativity is to minimize the intrinsic fragility of the legitimation of power. It does so by minimizing complexity and risk; in sum, performativity is a criterion which tries to reduce the unpredictability of legitimating narratives. Mastery over the legitimation criteria, in this case, performativity, is a position of control over the narrative, conferring power to its wielder:

> This is how legitimation by power takes shape. Power is not only good performativity, but also effective verification and good verdicts. It legitimates

> science and the law on the basis of their efficiency and legitimates this efficiency on the basis of science and law. It is self-legitimating, in the same way a system organized around performance maximization seems to be. (Lyotard 2019, p.47)

Knowledge is, indeed, a form of power (a notion Lyotard inherits from Foucault). Power generates access to more knowledge; thus, knowledge can be used as a tool for a self-perpetuating mechanism of legitimating a given narrative. Performativity channels power through an input/output analytical model, in which it presupposes the commensurability of the elements present in the model, with the end goal of increasing/perfecting "performance". To Brügger (2001, p.80), performativity answers the questions *"What can it be used for?", "Can it be sold?"* and *"Is it effective?"*. When litigations occur, this criterion solves them by choosing the linkage which provides the best "performance" within a given narrative.

The second criterion for legitimation is consensus. Consensus divides society in two; a splintered, bifurcated totality, which requires unification. Benhabib (1984, p. 105) sees this as a "critical" epistemic vision instead of a "functional" view of knowledge:

> Critical knowledge is in the service of the subject; its goal is not the legitimation of power but the enabling of empowerment. It seeks not to enhance the efficiency of the apparatus but to further the self-formation of humanity; not to reduce complexity but to create a world in which a reconciled humanity recognizes itself.

Consensus is best articulated by authors such as Habermas, who proposes the creation of a meta-discourse which is valid for all language games. This metalinguistic discourse aims at clarifying and reconciliating different discourses, thus occupying the vacuum left by the previous metanarratives. Lyotard, however, rejects this solution, as it is unable to provide a "true" concept of justice, since, at best, the outcomes of litigations solved by a consensus work in a "lowest common denominator" formula.

Lyotard endorses a third mechanism for the legitimation of knowledge – paralogy. Paralogy, in short, replaces the reliance on a preexisting metanarrative over an instance where the multiplication of possible language moves in each language game is preferred. This means that the postmodern becomes a condition where discourse practices are diverse, entailing a clear rejection of the metanarratives of the modern. In the postmodern world, politics and ethics are not analyzed as a form of scientific or technological

knowledge, but, instead, are evaluated through a contingent lens with a specific context of analysis. This way:

> Postmodern science - by concerning itself with such things as undecidables, the limits of precise control, conflicts characterized by incomplete information, "fracta", catastrophes, and pragmatic paradoxes - is theorizing its own evolution as discontinuous, catastrophic, non-rectifiable, and paradoxical. It is changing the meaning of the word "knowledge", while expressing how such a change can take place. It is producing not the known, but the unknown. And it suggests a model of legitimation that has nothing to do with maximized performance, but has as its basis difference understood as paralogy. (Lyotard 2019, p.60).

To Lyotard, the "*petit-narrative*" is always preferable to the "grand narrative", as the use of consensus as a legitimation criterion is not sufficient to legitimate knowledge. Consensus is a "*(...) horizon that is never reached*.", but *"(paralogy) is not without rules (there are classes of catastrophes), but it is always locally determined."* (Lyotard 2019, p.61). Paralogy is a model in which language games are not opposing each other and are, instead, "fighting" in order to reach an ever-widening agreement. The same language games are repurposed to provide and give rise to new ideas and new forms of knowledge. It is a constructive criterion, not a homogenizing one. Language games become unrestricted by an *a priori* metalanguage and are not evaluated in relation to a metanarrative, providing the freedom to a flourishment of discourses.

The central problem of consensus as a legitimation criterion is how well it can be extended to different areas of knowledge and how well can it be applied to different language games. For example, social bonds are intrinsically more complex than the production and dissemination of scientific knowledge. Social bonds are affected by networks of different phrases and overlaps of discourses. Lyotard (2019, p.65) summarizes this:

> There is no reason to think that it would be possible to determine metaprescriptives common to all of these language games or that a revisable consensus like the one in force at a given moment in the scientific community could embrace the totality of metaprescriptions regulating the totality of statements circulating in the social collectivity. As a matter of fact, the contemporary decline of narratives of legitimation - be they traditional or "modern" (the emancipation of humanity, the realization of the Idea) - is tied to the abandonment of this belief. It is its absence for which the ideology of the

"system," with its pretensions to totality, tries to compensate and which it expresses in the cynicism of its criterion of performance.

Thus, consensus should not be the preferred mechanism used to legitimate knowledge within the social *corpus*. To Brügger (2001, pp. 83-84), doing so would entail two different premises. First, everyone involved in the language games has to agree on universally valid rules, which can be applied in all language games, even though language games are usually diverse, heterogenous and rules are contingent. Second, all participants must agree that the goal is, in fact, consensus, which might not be the case, as some language games require convincing, manipulating or forcing others to accept a given outcome. Recognizing the invalidity of these assumptions, Lyotard focuses on paralogy as a problem-solving mechanism within language games and leaves consensus as a mere mid-step for discussion. Lyotard (2019, p.66) then concludes that:

> Consensus has become an outmoded and suspect value. But justice as a value is neither outmoded nor suspect. We must thus arrive at an idea and practice of justice that is not linked to that of consensus. A recognition of the heteromorphous nature of language games is a first step in that direction. This obviously implies a renunciation of terror, which assumes that they are isomorphic and tries to make them so. The second step is the principle that any consensus on the rules defining a game and the "moves" playable within it must be local, in other words, agreed on by its present players and subject to eventual cancellation. The orientation then favors a multiplicity of finite meta-arguments, by which I mean argumentation that concerns metaprescriptives and is limited in space and time.

The agonistics of language in the Lyotardian project stands in direct opposition to the totalizing approach of Habermas. Lyotard rejects the denotative function of language, turning to its performative functions. This means that knowledge becomes a discursive practice and not a *locus* of implicit (and *a priori*) language rules of differend-solving, which aim to guide every competent speaker of a language. By rejecting universal language rules, Lyotard is able to point out the narrative aspect of knowledge – the "know how". Benhabid, in a recollection of Lyotard's project, traces a clear dichotomy between Habermas' consensus-seeking universal language (aimed at achieving knowledge through consensus) and the localized contingencies of the Lyotardian project:

> For Habermas discursive knowledge is continuous with everyday communicative practices; already everyday communication functions as its own reflexive medium through acts of interrogation, disagreement, questioning, and puzzling. In

> discourses we do not enter a Platonic heaven of ideas, but we "bracket" certain constraints of space and time, suspend belief in the truth of propositions, in the rightness of norms, and the truthfulness of our partners, and examine everyday convictions in which we have lost belief. For Lyotard, by contrast, "discourse" and "narrative knowledge" are radically discontinuous. Narrative knowledge appears to be in need of no legitimation. Lyotard describes the pragmatics of narrative knowledge such that it *eo ipso* seems to preclude the kind of questioning, puzzling, and disagreement which everyday communicative practices in fact always already allow. (Benhabid, 1984, p.112)

It is discontinuity and fluidity, then, what characterizes the Lyotardian postmodern. Consensus, to Lyotard, is an imperfect mode to acquire knowledge, since consensus can only be obtained with the aim of achieving a given purpose or to execute a given task; it inherently entails objectives, motives and end-goals. Lyotard does not necessarily reject the different purposes of knowledge; instead, Lyotard seems to focus on the locality and contingency of the purposes of that knowledge. By rejecting universalism (and, by extension, universal "linking" rules in discourse), a new status of knowledge emerges. If knowledge is now contingent to local practices, to local discourses and to local rules, then knowledge is bound to be historically and/culturally situated. This is not the same as to say that knowledge which derives from a metanarrative is necessarily invalid. It only means that knowledge diverges as the rules which legitimate a certain type of knowledge as "true" knowledge diverge. Such is the case of narrative knowledge that, far from being presented as complementary to modern scientific knowledge (one which usually aims for consensus), is often described as *"(...) if it were "premodern" knowledge, a historically lost mode of though."* (Benhabid, 1984, p.118). For Lyotard, narrative knowledge is usually seen as an "Other" of "true" (scientific) knowledge – not a past, historical type of knowledge, but a different type of knowledge, subject to different legitimation criteria. Nonetheless, narrative knowledge still seems to be regarded as an inferior type of knowledge:

> The scientist questions the validity of narrative statements and concludes that they are never subject to argumentation or proof. He classifies them as belonging to a different mentality: savage, primitive, underdeveloped, backward, alienated, composed of opinions, customs, authority, prejudice, ignorance, ideology. Narratives are fables, myths, legends, fit only for women and children. At best, attempts are made to throw some rays of light into this obscurantism, to civilize, educate, develop. (Lyotard, 2019, p.27)

Narrative knowledge is seen as a self-sustaining, prereflexive whole. In Lyotard's (2019, p.27) words "*(...) narrative knowledge does not give priority to the question of its own legitimation and that it certifies itself in the pragmatics of its own transmission without having recourse to argumentation and proof.*" By lacking clear legitimation criteria, this type of knowledge operates in a framework where the focal point is not "*How truthful is this statement?*" but instead "*Does the way in which I transmit this knowledge suffices in order to perpetuate itself as valid knowledge?*". Narrative knowledge is operational, bound to contingencies and local practices. It does not need an over-arching narrative to legitimate itself; the very act of being used as a discursive practice is enough to be acknowledged as legitimate. However, this also means that narrative knowledge does not have a self-correcting mechanism able to assert what should be legitimate and what should not, leading to a mere replication of discursive practices. Therefore, narrative knowledge can *"(...) define what has the right to be said and done in the culture in question, and since they are themselves a part of that culture, they are legitimated by the simple fact that they do what they do.*" Lyotard's (2019, p.23). The only way to interrupt this cycle is by *stimuli* from exogenous sources.

Different types of knowledge appeal to different narratives (or, in some cases, to no narrative at all). This creates an instance where different aspects of knowledge might coexist at the same time. Narrative knowledge is utilized by Lyotard to show that this knowledge is not necessarily an "Other" of our (scientific-empiric) knowledge; it is also *our* knowledge. The way knowledge legitimates itself, as well as the different criteria for its legitimation, causes a permanent state of conflict, where knowledge becomes incommensurable and clashes with other knowledge's claims to validity. This stance is not necessarily anti-scientific; quite the opposite, it is actually a self-critique of science. The Lyotardian postmodern does not reject the knowledge that, for example, a physician acquires over the human body and illness. Instead, the postmodern alerts the physician that his or her knowledge is not absolute, but a contingent and condition-dependent type of knowledge, susceptible to be altered according to the advance of science and that it should be ever-adapting to current situations or practices. The physician does not know if a treatment is guaranteed to work on a certain patient, nor he or her can know for certain that a patient will react positively to a treatment. The postmodern stance is recognizing that the "best" knowledge is the one which best fulfills a specific legitimation criterion; this does not make that knowledge uncriticizable, uninvolving or subject to future change.

Lyotard approaches different types of knowledge as different occurrences working under specific condition. Although we might be tempted to assert the dissociable notion of knowledge(s), Lyotard claims that knowledge is a wide spectrum in which different discourses emerge, instead of separate blocks that create an “otherness”:

> It is therefore impossible to judge the existence or validity of narrative knowledge on the basis of scientific knowledge and vice versa: the relevant criteria are different. All we can do is gaze in wonderment at the diversity of discursive species, just as we do at the diversity of plant or animal species. (Lyotard, 2019, p.26)

To Lyotard, *“(...) language species, like living species, are interrelated, and their relations are far from harmonious.”* (Lyotard, 2019, p.27). The postmodern stance exposes the fact that knowledge is no longer mainly narrative, thus creating a sense of “loss of meaning”. If we arrive at an instance where it is not possible to indicate a line of transition between types of knowledge (and this seems the case), then no type of knowledge can claim universal validity. It can, however, claim contingent validity. There are no epistemic priorities in the postmodern since all types of knowledge fail to justify a certain prioritization towards other types. The postmodern, then, *“(...) is provided by the model of a discontinuous, fractured, and self-destabilizing epistemology, said to characterize modern mathematical and natural science.”* (Benhabid, 1984, p.120). Thus, we are able to conclude that what Lyotard proposes is not that knowledge is inherently meaningless, but that knowledge, is, in fact, everywhere and that validity depends on the set of criteria we utilize, in order to gather, interpret and disseminate knowledge.

2.4 Capitalism as the last modern metanarrative

The modern era saw capitalism as the pinnacle for a hegemonic master narrative. It presented itself as an emancipatory narrative and a renewed “face” of the previous narrative of emancipation. The proliferation of welfare and, more precisely, the welfare state, promised humanity a future where material need would no longer constrict the human desire for freedom. To Boeve (1998, p.304) the economic master narrative is a synonym of the accumulation of capital with the aim of gaining (dominating) time through money:

> The rules for linkage in the economic genre are clear (and show the domination of time through money): when phrase ‘x’ (addressor ‘a’ hands over referent ‘c’ to

addressee ‘b’), then phrase ‘y’ is presupposed (‘b’ gives referent ‘d’ to ‘a’). The linkage is thus not only expected, but even presupposed from the outset: that which is intended is exchange. Phrase ‘x’ makes of ‘b’ one who stands in debt to ‘a’; phrase ‘y’ cancels this debt. While the narrative attempts to acknowledge the event (the debt) and maintain it (reductively) by encapsulating it within the larger whole, phrase ‘y’ immediately attempts to erase, to undo, the event (causing debt) of phrase ‘x’ in the hegemonic discourse.

Capitalism provides an over-arching narrative through a systemic market situation of trade and exchange. Events do not “progress” anymore because these events (time) are calculated *a priori*, in an input-output framework which radically debilitates the potential for interruptive “now-moments”. There is no “next” phrase, no “other” linkage; the event is replaced by a coercive logic of exchange. To Boeve, the contemporary metanarrative of capitalism finds itself at the crossroad of four genres of discourse: an amalgamation of political, technological and scientific discourses that support a predominant economic discourse:

> The latter (economic discourse) is ruled by the finality or idea of profit (the accumulation of time); the political discourse strives for the common good; the discourse of science is guided by the idea of perfect knowledge; and the techn(olog)ical discourse attempts to reach the highest degree of performance and efficiency. In capitalism, all four of these are mutually related. (Boeve, 1998, pp. 304-305)

Contemporary mixed economies encompass a clear conjunction of economic and political spheres, with actors such as the State performing a vital role in the economic discourse (as a banker, a redistributor, an employer, a service provider, etc.) On the other hand, the scientific and technical spheres provide a situation where the nature of knowledge suffers changes; the technical discourse aims at providing the necessary proof to validate certain phrases, while the scientific discourse, usually in the form of research, supports the technical discourse by creating new ways to make it more “efficient”. These two discourses interplay with the economic and political discourses in areas to create an emancipation-by-efficiency narrative. Capitalism, then, aims to create a narrative focused on improvements to “efficiency”, either through improvements to the welfare state (a more efficient way of redistributing money) or improvements to the technical aspects of areas such as industry, housing, education, healthcare, etc.

Modern (neoliberal) capitalism failed to keep its promises, which led to a crisis in its own legitimacy. The welfare state failed to adequately redistribute welfare, as the ever-growing gap between the rich and the poor increases. The marginal improvements of the quality of life are confined to Western countries, who profit from the direct exploitation of the South, to whom the benefits of the capitalist metanarrative never fully reached. Global industrialization processes are leading to an unbearable situation of environmental crisis. Technical progress is not turning out to be a synonym of accessibility to that "progress". In the 1986 essay *Rules and Paradoxes,* Lyotard correctly identifies that *"(...) capitalism, the liberal or neo-liberal discourse, seems to me to have little credibility in the contemporary situation: that does not mean that capitalism is finished, quite the contrary. But it does mean that it no longer knows how to legitimate itself."* (Lyotard, 1986, p.210). As with any other metanarrative, capitalism has its own way of solving differends, with specific rules, operators, expected behaviors and institutions; otherwise, we would have anarchy. Yet, anarchy is precisely the postmodern condition. Capitalism is able to answer the question "*Why should we produce and exchange the way we do?",* by saying that "for-profit" production relations imply a clear boost to the emancipation of the human being, by raising the efficiency through which we can satisfy our material needs. However, capitalism fails to answer the question "*How should we produce and exchange?".* There is not a universal answer to how many work-hours a day of labor should have, how workers should participate in the capitalization stage of the production process or what guarantees should be entitled to the agents within production cycles. The different "*-isms*" of the last century provided different discourses to answer these questions. Different linkages were proposed, and all failed to provide a definitive answer, leading to an increasing deterioration of the grand narrative of the 20th century – capitalism –, which now seems to exist in a merely palliative state.

The twilight of the "*-isms*", some born autonomously, others born as reactions to a grand narrative, have shown us that totalizing answers are increasingly frowned upon. Capitalism, liberalism, communism or positivism are no longer a safe haven to guide progress, nor do they retain the authority which these (and other) ideologies had in the 19th and the 20th century. They are no longer capable of linking phrases beyond a local or regional level. Their crisis of legitimation turned totalizing and almost unquestionable grand narratives into small narratives, which even struggle to legitimate themselves at lower levels. It was *"Precisely their fall (that) has made manifest the radical plurality of*

our context, and inspired postmodern critical consciousness of the general condition of differend." (Boeve, 1998, p.304).

In the *Svelte Appendix,* Lyotard clarifies how capitalism became *"(...) one of the names of modernity goes by",* arguing that *"(...) capitalism was able to bring under its control the infinite desire to know which propels the sciences, and to submit its realization to capitalism's own criterion of technicity: the performativity rule that demands the endless optimization of the expense/return (input-output) relation."* (Lyotard, 1986, p.215). Capitalism, Lyotard argues, has transcended its economic, political and sociological form, becoming a "metaphysical" figure which aims to provide an underlying metanarrative to human actions. By providing a system of expectations and (potential) future prosperity, capitalism positions itself as an infinite and largely indetermined *locus,* where new rules are created as a means to legitimate its own failure, i.e., capitalism creates the necessary discourses in order to reinvent itself and prevent delegitimation:

> Capitalism, however, is a figure. (…) As a figure, its force derives from the idea of the infinite. That idea may present itself in people's experience as the desire for money, for power, for the new. And we may find that very ugly and disturbing. But these desires are the anthropological translation of something that ontologically is the instantiation of the infinite in the will. (Lyotard, 1986, p.216)

What solidifies capitalism as a metanarrative is its capacity to go beyond a mere material approach to emancipation. When Lyotard approaches capitalism, he does not mean the owners and managers of capital, nor the proletariat or the socioeconomic classes. Lyotard takes the transcendental approach, i.e., he analyses what precepts support the "rules" that provide the linkages within the differends of capitalist societies. Capitalism, in contrast with most other *"isms"*, can sustain itself because it goes beyond materialism (which is the basis of most orthodox Marxist analyses, for example): the road to emancipation is one of accumulation – of money, infrastructure, technical progress – in sum, the perfecting of efficiency, working under the rules of performativity.

Under the framework of (economic) hegemonic domination, Lyotard's critiques provide an alternative methodology for the deconstruction of the effects of master-narratives upon discourse, by supporting the postmodern stance. If the hegemony of "*the Spirit", "the rational or working subject"* and, later, "*the creation of wealth*" cannot boast any reasonable universal claim to legitimacy (since they are all but one of different

discourses available), the Lyotardian postmodern raises its counter-narrative critical stance as a guideline to analysis and decision-making. The goal here is to always be aware of the insidious dangers of domination. The economic master-narrative, for example, "(*...) not only regulates the linkages, it anticipates them and even offers the semblance of taking events seriously, while actually producing them."* (Boeve, 1998, p.308). Lyotard proposes a stance in which the thinker, the painter and the scientist embrace the heterogeneity characteristic of the (post)modern world, unmasking all false claims to universality. To "rewrite modernity" is not to simply investigate the past by analyzing the whole of modernity again and pass a new, contingent judgement. It also does not include the "correction" of the "mistakes" of modernity, for it is not the aim of the postmodern stance to "fulfill" the promises of the modern epoch. If that would be the case, then *"(...) the history of the fate of modernity would then be encapsulated once again within a hegemonic narrative, predictably at our own deception."* (Boeve, 1998, p.309). *"Rewriting"*, Boeve continues *"boils down to a remembering of what one actually should not/cannot forget because it never was/can be written down: an already shattered/shattering presence of which only the interruptive event can be remembered, which in itself can never be called to mind.".* This "rewriting" of modernity must be faced as an end in itself; an action without any decisive goal other than uncover the specificities of knowledge. Only the postmodern attitude towards knowledge presents the opportunity to view the past (and the present) not as it is represented, but on how it was presented. The aim is not to acquire knowledge about the past, but to uncover new ways in which knowledge presents itself.

3. The Archaeology of who we are

> I believe that one of the tasks, one of the meanings of human existence—the source of human freedom—is never to accept anything as definitive, untouchable, obvious, or immobile. No aspect of reality should be allowed to become a definitive and inhuman law for us. We have to rise up against all forms of power—but not just power in the narrow sense of the word, referring to the power of a government or of one social group over another: these are only a few particular instances of power. Power is anything that tends to render immobile and untouchable those things that are offered to us as real, as true, as good. (Foucault, 1980a, p.1)

The Foucauldian project centers itself around the contention that principles, concepts, categories, actions and institutions, which might appear as fundamental to making sense of our societies, are not immune to being called into question, to being scrutinized and deconstructed. The non-acceptance of these foundational blocks creates a realm of possibilities aimed at developing alternative modes of thought, as well as allowing a better understanding of how power and narratives work, especially taking into consideration how power affects the way certain principles and institutions are accepted in a given society. By not accepting what is presented to us as necessary, natural or, in other words, as *normal,* i.e., by tracing back the way in which a norm became a norm, we are able to create a critical space where true epistemic freedom can form. We will approach this question, in detail, later.

The over-arching theme of the Foucauldian project, even in its earlier stages, revolves around the question of who we are or, more precisely, of who we are *now*. Foucault approaches the modern human sciences (mainly social, biological and psychological ones) in order to ask what might be contingent in our quest for knowledge. Ever since the Enlightenment and, especially, since positivism became the go-to foundation for (scientific) knowledge, "science" became a synonym of uncovering some underlying universal truth, just waiting to be discovered. However, to Foucault, these so-called "universal truths" are always mainly expressions of some political, cultural, ethical or economic commitment of a scientist living in a specific time and place, according to contingent rules for the knowledge he or she acquires. It is the goal of critical philosophy to undermine universal claims of knowledge by identifying and proving that knowledge is acquired as a mere outcome of contingent historical forces and not as a scientific

uncovering of underlying truths. Foucault's major works present such a critique, usually aimed at the use of Reason throughout History.

3.1 The reconstruction of Madness

Foucault first major work (and the one which broke with earlier works, starting the archaeological phase of his project) was *Madness and Civilization* (1961). In this work, Foucault addresses the emergence of the modern concept of mental illness and how it changed throughout the centuries. Here, Foucault rejects phenomenology and shifts the focus from simply unpacking and analyzing a given experience (as he hitherto did) to a full-on historical investigation into the different structures revolving around the treatment of mental illnesses. By asking the question *"What are the ever-changing historical frameworks within a given phenomenon?"*, the investigation goes from what a certain individual feels or goes through to, instead, the historical conditions in which a given individual lives. If historical frameworks are ever-changing, then, in the study of madness, we cannot assume the concept of "madness" as an objective given. As Todd May (2006, p.26) in his rewriting of the Foucauldian project, exposes:

> It is not that there is this disease or this structure or this way of being called madness that has been experienced differently in different historical periods. Why should we assume that beneath the frameworks within which madness is treated, there is some constant that informs them all? This would assume too much. Alternatively, we need not assume the opposite, that there is nothing that any of these frameworks is looking at, that they are all preoccupied with an illusion. Rather, we should make no assumptions about the object of study and treatment called "madness". We should look at the historical frameworks for what they are, and, more important, for what they reveal to us about ourselves, rather than for what they may or may not reveal about the object of their investigation.

To be able to analyze a phenomenon in its rawest form, Foucault opts to return to an initial, more focal point from where to start the analysis of the phenomenon, meaning *"We must try to return, in history, to that zero point in the course of madness at which madness is an undifferentiated experience, a not yet divided experience of division itself."* (Foucault, 2013, p.ix). In the Middle Ages, madness emerges in a specific historical context, as an experience that is quite distinct from Reason. Madness, at that time, did not have the character that we now ascribe to it, that of madness as the "Other" of Reason. At the end of the Middle Ages, the figure of the "mad" begins to become commonplace in

European societies, replacing the figure of the medieval leper: *"As leprosy vanished, in part because of segregation, a void was created and the moral values attached to the leper had to find another scapegoat. Mental illness and unreason attracted that stigma to themselves."* (Foucault, 2013, p.vi). The leper was once the target of rituals and practices of exclusion, leading a life far away from the city centers, confined to lazar houses, where they would be kept, as a way of protecting the rest of the population. Leprosy, being a slow-spreading, slow-acting disease, was usually delt with by a binary exclusion of the sick; a model based on repression and the exclusion of the Other. However, as leprosy dwindled, the same rituals and practices started to be applied to the "mad", whose number also included criminals and vagrants:

> Leprosy disappeared, the leper vanished, or almost, from memory; these structures remained. Often, in these same places, the formulas of exclusion would be repeated, strangely similar two or three centuries later. Poor vagabonds, criminals, and "deranged minds" would take the part played by the leper, and we shall see what salvation was expected from this exclusion, for them and for those who excluded them as well. With an altogether new meaning and in a very different culture, the forms would remain - essentially that major form of a rigorous division which is social exclusion but spiritual reintegration. (Foucault, 2013, p.7).

The aura of dread exhaled by the leper was now played by the mad. But why were the mad seen as a threat? In the late Medieval/Early Renaissance period, madness was usually associated with animality, darkness, obscurantism, and death. Madness was the indecipherable, the hidden, the unintelligible. May (2006, p.27) suggests, *"It (madness) is the underside of existence that can neither be escaped nor understood. (...) an object of both fascination and repulsion".* This dualism was represented by the figure of the Ship of Fools (a ship entrusted with the task of transporting the mad, with the aim of "curing" them at sea), a metaphorical figure whose historical existence is disputed, but that, nonetheless, encapsulates the relation between society and its madmen. On the one hand, the Ships of Fools are painted, discussed and written about; in sum, objects of fascination. On the other hand, they have a functional objective: they are to be removed from sight and expel "undesirables" from a particular place.

The Renaissance brought a resignification of what it means to be mad. Madness is no longer a symbol of darkness and death. A historical break occurs, as madness

becomes a more common-place phenomenon. No longer the *locus* of bestiality or disintegration, madness had become folly:

> Madness is here, at the heart of things and of men, an ironic sign that misplaces the guideposts between the real and the chimerical, barely retaining the memory of the great tragic threats - a life more disturbed than disturbing, an absurd agitation in society, the mobility of reason. (Foucault, 2013, p.37).

The first major historical break in the treatment of madness was precisely the passage from aversion, exclusion and undesirability to fascinating awkwardness, a peek into the limits of human reason. The mad was no longer a dangerous leper-like entity; he was now a curiosity and an object of study and fascination since the madmen was a representation of the mysterious forces of cosmic tragedy. Pity, not disgust, became the sentiment that ruled the relation between the mad and society.

In the seventeenth century, another historical break occurred. Foucault identifies the precise mark of this break as the 1656 decree that established the *Hôpital Général* in Paris. Along with it, several other confinement institutions were established (many of which were converted lazar houses). However the *Hôpital Général* had the uniqueness of " (…) *not (being) a medical establishment. It is rather a sort of semi-judicial structure, an administrative entity which, along with the already constituted powers, and outside of the courts, decides, judges, and executes."* (Foucault, 2013, p.47). Up to one percent of the population of Paris (about five thousand people) was incarcerated in this semi-judicial establishments, on the account of madness. But was really one percent of the population mad? The reality was that madness was now being interpreted on the account of its economic-moral implications, which gave rise to what was called the Great Confinement: "*Those who can work are morally worthy; those who cannot are to be excluded."* (May, 2006, p.30).

There seems to be a hint of historical continuity, with Foucault suggesting that there is an historical constant in the role of exclusion and seclusion, played by either the leper or the madmen, even taking into consideration the differences between the two instances of confinement. Although there exists, undeniably, a degree of similarities like overlapping exclusion sites and ritualization, the supposed "continuity" ends there. There are, however, several instances of an inclusion-exclusion dualism that can occur in a given socio-historical context which can reappear at different stages of history. This is not to suggest that history is, somehow, cyclical and bound to create the same phenomena over

and over, but, instead, that the historical contingencies are so diverse and atomized that, invariably, some will lead to similar outcomes. Foucault is merely following one of these paths, while simultaneously recognizing that there are other paths that create the same outcomes, in this case, that of the exclusion of a specific group of people.

Madness in the seventeenth century was viewed through the lens of one's capacity/willingness to work, to be productive and integrated in the economic aspects of society; *"(...) madness was perceived through a condemnation of idleness and in a social immanence guaranteed by the community of labor"* (Foucault, 2013, p.58). We now approach madness as unreason, as the person of reason is the one who is engaged with labor. One engages with labor and identifies himself or herself under the laboring community. This is not just a strictly economic matter; it's a deeply moral one. Confinement houses for the mad resorted to labor as a "cure" to madness but, as Foucault notes, the actual labor did not have any significant value. One works because that is the right thing to do in that epoch and not because one needs to contribute to a greater social labor. The ones who refuse to labor are deemed people of unreason and thus must submit themselves to correction through confinement, where they will be forced to engage in labor. The most interesting point in this depiction of madness, however, was the category in which it was placed: animalistic unreason. The mad became a serving display of what one should not be, a sort of centerpiece of undesirable unreason which must not be followed. The mad became a lesson to be learned on how far human beings can descend into a bestial, primitive state. To May (2006, p.31) this proves that "*If reason is distinct both from unreason and from animality, then the madman exhibits the link between the latter two clearly, and in doing so shows, by contrast, what it is to be fully human."*. It is here that the figure of the madman becomes an "Other" of reason that is now both feared and used as an antithesis to what a desirable, rational member of society should look like. No longer an object of fascination, nor just a person without reason, madness fell upon to anyone who displayed undesirable traits and attitudes; an inferior, primitive, and bestial human being:

> The animal in man no longer has any value as the sign of a Beyond; it has become his madness, without relation to anything but itself: his madness in the state of nature. The animality that rages in madness dispossesses man of what is specifically human in him; not in order to deliver him over to other powers, but simply to establish him at the zero degree of his own nature. For classicism,

> madness in its ultimate form is man - in immediate relation to his animality, without other reference, without any recourse. (Foucault, 2013, pp.73-74).

Madness in the classical period harbored a debauched freedom, a freedom which must be contained if we are able to live in a society. If one is to "cure" madness, then one must restrain the "free" person into submitting to the laws of reason; in this case, to the moral laws of labor. Madness was still far removed from being treated as a mental illness, nor was it subject to medical appreciation. Quite the opposite, it was "*Unchained animality (that) could be mastered only by discipline and brutalizing.*" (Foucault, 2013, p.75). Madness was considered a moral matter and should be treated as such. Treatments were not aimed at helping an underlying medical condition but to morally correct the uncanny nature of the madmen.

In the mid-eighteenth century, there starts to surge a more contemporary view of what it means to be mad. The previous notions of madness get deconstructed in favor of a clear distinction between what it means to be mad and a pauper, but only insofar as that poverty is a result of unforeseen and unhappy circumstances, but not indolence. The link between poverty and unreason is explained by Foucault in a causal way. As May (2006, pp.32-33) sums it:

> In the economic change from mercantilism to industrialism there arises a need for unskilled labor. Mercantilism relies on trade and small-scale production. Industrialism requires a large labor pool. Therefore, confining those who are able to perform unskilled labor in the name of unreason begins to run counter to the emerging economic imperatives.

Although madness is still somewhat tied with the absence of labor, labor is no longer tied to poverty, meaning that even well-off individuals can become the subject of madness. This new view of madness revolves around three major themes: excess wealth, religious fervor and reading/speculation, all of which preoccupations of the rich, who had the time to invest in such frivolities. If one is not laboring, then one can quickly become mad. This shift was accompanied by a gradual disinvestment in confinement; the mad should no longer be locked away but reintegrated as a productive members of society. With the appearance of industrial economies, the breakdown of the unity of unreason and, at least in France (but also around Europe), confinement lost its status as the go-to method of curing mental illness.

The final pre-modern stage of the treatment of madness was initiated by Tuke and Pinel at the end of the eighteenth century. Basing themselves on humanist ideals, they recognized the brutality and inefficiency of confinements and made crucial steps in presenting more humane methods of treating madness. Madhouses became asylums, real spaces of cure, losing its previous role as mere institutions of confinement. Tuke and Pinel tried to depart from what we now call a barbaric treatment of the mad. We must take into consideration, however, that, during the classical period, this supposed barbarity was not intended to be so. The confinement of the mad was not motivated by mere anger or unjustified fear, but by a major fault in the relation between reason and madness. To May (2006, p.34), *"Given the view of madness as a type of unreason rooted in a libertine animality, confinement makes a certain kind of sense."*. The point of history where Tuke and Pinel intervene is one in which barbarity was contingently justified for the greater good. Their intervention provided yet another historical break, launching the foundations of modern psychology and psychotherapy. But what can we learn from Foucaut's reconstruction of the history of madness? How do these historical breaks help us answering the question of who we are today?

3.2 Archaeological practices

The contributions of Foucault's archaeology allow us to reinterpret what it means to be mad today. The focal point of this chapter is not to analyze madness *per se*, but to understand how we can apply the same archaeological methodologies to other areas of our current knowledge. The brutality of the classical period towards the mad (or the deviant) was largely unrecognized at the time. Were people in the sixteenth and seventeenth century uncapable of recognizing a situation of brutality? Hardly. In fact, the use of brutal punishments for crimes, for example (a topic Foucault would address at a later stage of his career), was identified as a just consequence to anyone perturbing the legal norms revolving civil life. Punishment was handed out violently precisely because only visible brutality was deemed as a correction mechanism for criminals and deviants. With the correction of madness and the treatment of madmen, brutality was hidden under a mask, not operating to change one's behavior, but to contain one's inherent animality and unreason - characteristics that were, in themselves, deemed brutal and primitive by the rest of the population. Is it reasonable to assume that our historical heritage of the treatment of mental illness was completely eliminated thanks to apparent innovations in

the medical sciences and an apparent more humane conduct of the mentally ill? That would be a presumptuous assumption, at best, and a very dangerous one, at worst. We believe ourselves to products of the Enlightenment, morally and scientifically, and look back with distrust and arrogance to our past. But, if our predecessors were so categorically "wrong" by our current standards, how was their conduct justified in the first place? According to May (2006, p.34) *"Their (our predecessors) thought is not incoherent, and, given the framework that Foucault depicts, their theories about and actions towards what they take to be madness are neither arbitrary nor baseless."*. There is a distinct possibility that, since we, as a society, view history as progressive (or, at least, as progressing towards where we are now), we are somewhat blind to our current instances of barbarity towards the mad. Foucault addresses this in *Madness and Civilization* by analyzing the contributions of Tuke and Pinel. To Foucault, they did not liberate the mad from their chains; they simply changed the composition of those chains. Humanism did not bring a substantial change to what it meant to be mad; their exclusion would not be a physical one, but a moral one. Shame and guilt became the chains of isolation for the mentally ill:

> (…) (do) not address a word to this poor madman. This prohibition, which was rigorously observed, produced upon this self-intoxicated creature an effect much more perceptible than irons and the dungeon; he felt humiliated in an abandon and an isolation so new to him amid his freedom. Finally, after long hesitations, they saw him come of his own accord to join the society of the other patients; henceforth, he returned to more sensible and true ideas. (Pinel as cited by Foucault, 2013, p.260)

Physical bondage became mental bondage. This was the "liberation" that still plies its trade to this day, as the ritual of exclusion is still around mental hospitals, asylums and, overall, reclusion, not only for those deemed mentally ill, but also to deviants and undesirables that are confined to the carceral system. This new, more modern approach to madness does not heal the hiatus between those deemed mad and the sane: *"The science of mental disease, as it would develop in the asylum, would always be only of the order of observation and classification. It would not be a dialogue."* (Foucault, 2013, p.250). I am not suggesting that physical bondage is better than moral bondage; that discussion is beyond the point. The point to be made here is that, even though historical breaks occurred in the past, the situation we find ourselves in today is somewhat interconnected to that specific historical break. Several (and different) historical breaks could have occurred and probably would have led to a different telling of who we are today, but we can only

understand our current paradigm if we understand the contingencies of the historical paths from where our paradigm stems from.

We can extract three major takeaways from Foucault's work in *Madness and Civilization.* Firstly, it is a clear misconception to portrait a progress in the liberation of the mad. The change of physical to mental bindings did not remove the need to confine and exclude the mentally ill; it only masqueraded it to be acceptable and justifiable to a modern humanist society. Secondly, the abandonment of physical restraint failed to heal the hiatus between what we conceive as madness and what is conceived as reasonable. Modern psychiatry is "*(...) a monologue of reason about madness, (and) has been established only on the basis of such a silence."* (Foucault, 2013, pp.x-xi). Thirdly, the contingency of phenomena (and, especially, their legitimation) can only be understood if we abandon the view of history as progressive. History does not necessarily move from the primitive to the enlightened; assuming that would mean a failure to provide critical introspection of what we consider knowledge today. Instead, we must assume that history does not have a *telos,* nor structure, nor intrinsic continuity. Analyzing historically located breaks, and not pursuing grand narratives of progress and enlightenment, is what allow us to understand new perspectives and frameworks, which shape the way we acquire knowledge. This is precisely what Foucault himself presents as a methodological approach for his earlier works in *The Archaeology of Knowledge:*

> The positivities that I have tried to establish must not be understood as a set of determinations imposed from the outside on the thought of individuals, or inhabiting it from the inside, in advance as it were; they constitute rather the set of conditions in accordance with which a practice is exercised, in accordance with which that practice gives rise to partially or totally new statements, and in accordance with which it can be modified. (Foucault, 2002, p.230)

What Foucault suggests is that, in order to properly analyze the past and its relation to the phenomena of today, one has to approach history while resisting the urge to look for continuities or consistencies and that the idea of a historical structure of knowledge in a given practice, in a given place, at a given time, can be subjected to a significant degree of change by conscious efforts to alter those practices (like Tuke and Pinel did in the treatment of madness). At any specific historical frame, there are specific rules that regulate what can and what cannot be legitimately said or done about particular practices. These rules constitute the narrative around that practice. These rules are not set

in stone, nor are not subject to be altered. One can suggest different rules or different ways of doing something; however, the epistemic structure of that time usually delegitimizes the purported alternative. If something deemed unacceptable is said in a particular instance or that same suggestion/phrase is said by someone not recognized as a legitimate agent, then it will almost certainly not be recognized as a legitimate part of discourse. These rules are not identified as limitations by the ones engaging in a given practice. The most perverse characteristic of these rules, however, is the fact they set the boundaries and character on how debate and discussion about a given practice can happen, due to the fact that they are unconscious structures.

During his archaeological phase, more specifically, in *The Order of Things*, Foucault (1993, pp.xi-xii) would famously categorize these structures " (…) as *a positive unconscious of knowledge: a level that eludes the consciousness of the scientist and yet is part of scientific discourse, instead of disputing its validity and seeking to diminish its scientific nature.".* These structures are not dictated by an outside force, nor imposed on the practice itself; they are a framework in which the participants of that practice recognize each other as participants with a given role (the patient and the psychiatrist, for example*),* that contribute to the practice in a particular form, from a particular placement. To Foucault (2002, pp.146-147), these structures form *" (...) the archive (which) defines a particular level: that of a practice that causes a multiplicity of statements to emerge as so many regular events, as so many things to be dealt with and manipulated."* meaning that the purpose of his archaeological work is *"(...) to describe discourses as practices specified in the element of the archive.".* Contrasting with more mainstream views of history as progressive and continuous, archaeological historization portraits history as a concept that always entails particular structures which carve out what can be legitimately said (i.e., taken as "knowledge"), as well as the legitimacy of the ones who produce knowledge. These structures are subject to change, but, when they do change, this does not necessarily happen because of improvements in knowledge or the efforts of individual agents (although they can, obviously, impact the way in which they change). How exactly these structures change is beyond the scope of this dissertation. What we must keep in mind is, precisely because knowledge is structured in a specific way at a specific time, then every time that there is a fundamental alteration in those structures, then, invariably, our knowledge also changes, constituting an historical break.

4. The Genealogy of who we are

What is genealogy? The most common use of the term is linked to its application in tracing family lineages. To trace one's familiar genealogy is to trace his or hers ancestors, to trace back kinship and family lines, to rediscover long-forgotten characters and link them to the present. Foucault's genealogical project builds on this principle. Just like family genealogies, his investigations aim at tracing how one became who one is today. There is no privileged starting point and the further one goes back in tracing one's history, the more disperse that history becomes. Authors such as Tamboukou (2013, p.2) provide a clear connection between the Foucaldian genealogy and the construction and maintenance of the narrative:

> Genealogy as a Nietzschean concept redeployed in Foucault's work is, put very simply, the art of archival research, the patience to work meticulously with grey dusty documents, looking for insignificant details, bringing into light unthought-of contours of various ways, discourses and practices that human beings have used to make sense of themselves and the world. Instead of setting itself the task of reaching the ultimate and hidden truth, genealogy offers archaeological journeys with no final destinations. Working in parallel with archaeology, it keeps uncovering layers of distortions/constructions and is directed to the future rather than to the past. (Tamboukou, 2013, p.2)

Even during his late archaeological phase, Foucault hinted at what his philosophical project would become. In the *Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault (2002, p.230) wrote that he aimed to show *"(...) how series of discourse are formed, through, in spite of, or with the aid of these systems of constraint: what were the specific norms for each, and what were their conditions of appearance, growth and variation*.". The genealogical shift in his works brought about four major characteristics. Firstly, Foucault aimed at tracing the evolution of practices and discourses. Secondly, the collective question of who we are cements itself even more as a collective matter, building on what was already a sub-intended perspective in his archaeological phase. Thirdly, the diverse and non-mutually exclusive character of practices becomes the focal point of his project. If we are involved in multiple practices, then no single practice can be a decisive answer to the question of who we are, as it is not conceivable that any given practice gains a degree of privilege towards other. Fourthly, and perhaps more importantly, genealogies are mainly concerned with the politics of truth. Alongside the practices themselves,

Foucault is also interested in the bond between the politics and epistemology of those practices.

To Foucault, genealogy has the aim of analyzing the "*(...) force relations in regard to particular institutions or practices.*" (May, 2006, p.64). These forces can be, in Nietzschean terms (an author who inspired Foucault), either active or reactive. Active forces can be either destructive or productive; however, even if they are destructive, it is only as a byproduct of their productivity. They seek to express themselves and be visible, to elaborate and create a given situation or practice. Reactive forces, on the other hand, do not seek to express themselves, but only to react to active ones. They repress and undermine the expressive nature of active forces. The question Foucault seeks to answer is how we can know, in a given practice or institution, what type of force is currently dominating? This is the role of genealogy.

Genealogy traces the history of a practice or institution precisely by asking what are the forces that have taken hold of it. History, for Foucault, is a struggle for dominance between active and reactive forces, of one discourse over the other. In order to do this, genealogy does not need to search for an origin of a given practice. Most of the times, this is an impossible task. Even if we were able to identify the spark that enabled a given practice or discourse, this would not give us any particularly privileged insight over how that practice or discourse works or on how they are legitimated and sustained. The reason for this is the rejection of essentialism in Foucault's works. In the analysis of a given practice or discourse, what is truly relevant for its understanding is not some supposed immanent features of practice or discourse, but its historical legacy. To understand them, one must trace the roles they played, their intersections, their contingent meaning and the consequences of their existence.

A key component of Foucault's genealogy is a more normative-laden analysis of history, albeit a subtle one. While in his archaeological writings one could hardly find more than a description of structures, norms and legitimating factors for a given practice, in genealogy we can easily find a more critical project, such as Foucault's analysis of the evolution of the penal system. It is not that the genealogical project is critical *per se,* but that it is framed in a critical methodology, distinguishing what should be tolerable in a given instance from what should not. The fact that the objects of his analysis are persons in positions of weakness (such as the mad, prisoners, outcasts and non-normative sexuality) proofs the underlaying existence of an emancipatory project which would characterize his works until his untimely death. Foucault identified a certain conformism

to what people were living, identifying them as victims "*(...) of historically grounded realities, such as the emergence of capitalism and the evolution of church doctrine.*" (May, 2006, p.65).

There it not a single story of who we are that Foucault wants to tell. The genealogy of who we are does not seek to cover the entirety of our historical legacy. In a distinct way from archaeology, genealogies tries to trace aspects of who we have become. In Foucault's (1980b, p.79) own words:

> Still I could claim that after all, these were only trails to be followed, it mattered little where they led; indeed it was important that they did not have a predetermined starting point and destination. They were merely lines laid down for you to pursue or to divert elsewhere for me to extend upon or redesign as the case might be. They are in the final analysis, just fragments and it is up to you or me to see what we can make of them.

If, indeed, our history is mainly a matter of unwrapping temporary unities from a plethora of different and complex origins, then genealogy seems to suggest that who we are is not a matter of any particular unity that made us who we are, but a variety of intersecting, overlapping and, sometimes, even conflicting unities of practices sustained by different discourses.

4.1 The reconstruction of the Penal system

Foucault's major genealogical work and, perhaps, his *magnum opus*, is *Discipline and Punish* (1974). We can find certain similarities between this work and his book on madness. On both, Foucault aims to create an inversion a received view. In the *History of Madness*, this inversion occurs during the analysis of Tuke and Pinel's work, who are widely conceived as the first liberators of the mad, unchaining them and releasing from their violent, physical constraints. To Foucault, however, what happened was precisely the opposite; a rechaining of the mad through moral bonds, which were even more effective at restricting the mentally ill than their physical counterparts. We should not, however, succumb to the temptation of concluding that Foucault argues that practices were "better" in earlier periods and just became more perverse over time. This is not what the Foucauldian project approaches, as this would be just another way of retelling the past through modern lens instead of understanding and reconstructing the past contingently. The inversion performed is not simply one that says something is better or worse than it

was. This is not to say that to not embrace a progressive view of history is to adopt a regressive one; the argument here is that progressive views of history are usually accompanied with a dangerous occultation of history. I do not seek to reverse the notion of historical project, but to show that this notion is much more complex than most authors seem to suggest.

The history of penal progress is one which starts with vengeance and ends with rehabilitation. In the early stages of punishment (Foucault focuses on the Late Middle Ages and Early Modern eras here), punishment takes the form of retribution. The offender (i.e., the criminal) is treated as someone beneath human concern, a pariah of society who rejects established norms. In order to repay his or her debt to society, the criminal must be subjected to whatever form of punishment that the social body deems appropriate. The usual forms of punishment included torture, public humiliation, and psychological abuse. The sole objective of these practices is to enact vengeance upon the deviant. Such is the case of an attempted regicide in the eighteenth century named Damiens, an example from which Foucault exemplifies what were the penal practices at the time, accounting the several instances of torture and lynching that Damiens was subjected to. This account is then followed by a prison schedule from the nineteenth century that offers a glimpse of the mundane, tedious and strict routine of a prisoner. The received view of history here is that the exercise of vengeance in the first case is barbaric, while the second case portraits at least an attempt at rehabilitation, showing an improvement in the penal system. But this is an over-simplified view of history, and one which Foucault aims to deconstruct.

Foucault does not take any major issues with the early part of the received historical view. The physical body was subjected to pain up until the reforms of the nineteenth century. In fact, torture occurs ate two different stages of the criminal procedure, the first one secretly and the second one openly public. Interrogation and confessions were crucial to the administration of justice. In order to obtain admissions of guilt, pain was inflicted of the suspect's body. During the administration of justice (usually following a forceful confession), pain and torture became a public affair:

> In France the procedure is called "*supplice*", which translates into English as torture. However, we should not think of "*supplice*" as a simple barbarity performed upon the body of the criminal. "*Supplice"* is not chaotic or arbitrary. It is a measured and calculated response to criminality, one that has three elements: the infliction of a measured amount of pain; the regulation of that pain; and the ritualistic character of the application of techniques producing pain. "*Supplice*" is

> a tightly choreographed public ritual of agony, and it finds its seat in the nature of criminality itself. (May, 2006, p.70)

What was the necessity of such a ritualization revolving around the criminal act? Criminality was (and still is) often seen as a major offence against the social body. If one commits a crime, then one does not respect the rules of society and must be purged or corrected. In earlier periods, the social body was represented by the monarch. The State and the monarch, especially during the Absolutist era, were often synonyms. If a criminal committed a crime, then he or she was committing a crime against the king, who had his authority questioned and legitimacy dented. The authority figure had to assert its power and correct the imbalance of power; if the criminal is not visibly punished for his or her offenses, then the authority figure might be perceived as vulnerable and powerless. The elaborate ritual of public torture maximizes pain and asserts the power and dominance of the authority figure in a way that is both believable and unrelenting, both to the offender and the rest of society. To Foucault (1994, p.47), "*The public execution is to be understood not only as a judicial, but also as a political ritual. It belongs, even in minor cases, to the ceremonies by which power is manifested.*". When the ritual is completed and power is reestablished, the people are, on the one hand, restored to the security that the figure of authority (i.e., the king) can offer them and, on the other hand, warned against committing another attack on the social body:

> (…) the public execution (was) more than an act of justice; it was a manifestation of force or rather, it was justice as the physical, material and awesome force of the sovereign deployed there. The ceremony of the public torture and execution displayed for all to see the power relation that gave his force to the law. (Foucault 1994, p.50)

The logic behind the apparatus of torture is straightforward: even if this violence is excruciating for the criminal, it has a purpose, as it is the mechanism through which the sovereign expresses himself (with an active force) and asserts its control over the populace, maintaining the *status quo.* The legitimizing factor of this *status quo* is mainly fear of reprisal and, as long as the power of the monarch remained unchallenged, then violent practices would continue. Nonetheless, precisely because it was a ritual, public punishment had its own set of rules, limits and ways of acting. Failing to control one's own power it to succumb to being dominated by that same power, showing fear and weakness by part of the monarch. Even in ultra-violent practices, power was not unlimited

nor was it enacted without consequence. The power of the monarch was frequently questioned, shaking the over-arching narrative of the king as an almost omnipotent figure. The social body (the people) would frequently empathize with the subject of torture of execution, often when the violence exercised seemed excessive, illegitimate or certain rules were not respected. This would be especially true if the crime commit was a crime against property, as a response to a condition of poverty by the criminal. The rest of society would frequently find reason in these desperate acts, as they would usually find themselves under a system with large economic disparities.

By this point, it was clear that violence was failing to legitimize itself as a form of conduct towards criminality. Not only reforms were starting to take place in order to appease the populace and create a narrative of legitimately wielded power, but also the core aspects of criminality were changing as well:

> In fact, the shift from a criminality of blood to a criminality of fraud forms part of a whole complex mechanism, embracing the development of production, the increase of wealth, a higher juridical and moral value placed on property relations, stricter methods of surveillance. a tighter partitioning of the population, more efficient techniques of locating and obtaining information: the shift in illegal practices is correlative with an extension and a refinement of punitive practices. (Foucault, 1994, p.77)

Up to the end of the nineteenth century, punishment, although gruesome and violent, was sporadic; the consequences of being caught committing a crime were dreadful. However, punishment for a crime was far from a common occurrence, as most crimes were never judged, nor the culprits found. When the institution of property rights became firmly established, there was an immediate need for a more universal, holistic form of punishment. If property had to be protected (and, with the rise of the bourgeoisie, property was accessible to a larger portion of the population), then protection from criminality must be a priority of the State. According to Foucault, it was mainly this shift that propelled the reformers to change the penal system:

> The true objective of the reform movement, even in its most general formulations, was not so much to establish a new right to punish based on more equitable principles, as to set up a new 'economy' of the power to punish, to assure its better distribution, so that it should be neither too concentrated at certain privileged points, nor too divided between opposing authorities; so that it should be distributed in homogeneous circuits capable of operating everywhere, in a continuous way, down to the finest grain of the social body.· The reform of

> criminal law must be read as a strategy for the real management of the power to punish, according to modalities that render it more regular, more effective, more constant and more detailed in its effects; in short, which increase its effects while diminishing its economic cost (that is to say, by dissociating it from the system of property, of buying and selling, of corruption in obtaining not only offices, but the decisions themselves) and its political cost (by dissociating it from the arbitrariness of monarchical power). The new juridical theory of penality corresponds in fact to a new 'political economy' of the power to punish. This explains why the 'reform' did not have a single origin. (Foucault, 1994, pp.80-81)

The reforms had to answer to two major questions: one, how can we construct a penal structure that will protect against all crimes against property; and two, how can this structure be always respected and be functional at all times? The reformers answered this by changing the discourse from vengeance to deterrence. In utilitarian terms, if the potential loss to be incurred outweighs the gain of practicing a crime (and if one feels like it will almost always lead to these losses actually occurring), then one is much less likely to commit that crime: *"To find the suitable punishment for a crime is to find the disadvantage whose idea is such that it robs forever the idea of a crime of any at traction."* (Foucault, 1994, p.104). The ritual of punishment becomes less public, centered around the deterrence of crime and not of the punishment of the body. As it is much more subtle and requires less spectacle, the punishment receives less outcry on part of the populace, improving public order.

To the reformers, there was a single, unitary answer to the problems of modern criminality: imprisonment, in the form of the carceral system. There is a degree of continuity between earlier and later forms of punishment: they are both dealing with criminality and both use techniques upon the body. But the similarities end there. While physical punishment of the body was seen as retaliation, the later punishments over the body were conceived as disciplinary control over the body. According to May (2006, p.73):

> Discipline, as Foucault uses the term, is more specific than simply the control of the behavior of others. It may be defined as the project for the body's optimization, for turning the body into a well-regulated machine by means of breaking down its movements into their smallest elements and then building them back into a maximally efficient whole. This project does not simply concern individuals, however. It also concerns their relations. Discipline must ensure that space is properly partitioned so that individuals can relate to one another in maximally efficient ways. It must ensure the proper time coordination among activities as

well as within them. It is a process that is applied both to bodies and to the interaction between them.

In order to be able to discipline individuals, one needs to find a controllable, encased environment in which movements and actions are tightly controlled by the disciplinary body. This environment would take the form of the prison. For Foucault, the necessity of disciplinary institutions is fundamental for the maintenance of coercive structures. As he explains, "(…) *discipline 'makes' individuals; it is the specific technique of a power that regards individuals both as objects and as instruments of its exercise"* (Foucault, 1994, p.170). Discipline aggregates a series of techniques by which the body and the mind can be controlled. It works by rearranging the individual's actions, beliefs and place in society, using subliminal coercion. This is achieved by devices such as timetables, confinement to specific places and adherence to certain rules, establishing an authoritative and disciplinary power, which "(…) *is exercised through its invisibility; at the same time it imposes on those whom it subjects a principle of compulsory visibility."* (Foucault, 1994, p.187). Through discipline, individuals are shaped out of a mass. This disciplinary power usually operates under three main elements: hierarchical observation, examination and normalization of judgment.

Hierarchical observation entails a relation between the observers and the observed. The observer monitors the observed from a vantage point so that the observer can see but cannot be seen, and the observed knows he or she is being seen but does not see the observer. This relation can be demonstrated, for example, in the dynamic between the mentally ill and the psychiatrist or the prisoner and the prison guard. The point of this dynamic is to allow the observer to see what the observed is doing, not doing and how well or poorly they are (not) doing it. As for the observed, since they are under constant supervision (or at least they think they are), they will always act in a way that acknowledges the constant surveillance, limiting the probability of deviance from established norms, in an effort to normalize judgment. We will return to the role of the norm and the need of normalization latter.

The second element of discipline is examination. The sole goal of examination is to reinforce the feedback loop of discipline. Examination depends on the existence of a norm (a desired standard), to which we are being compared and should strive for. It provides the necessary information that allows a given observer to identify the degree to which efficiency (i.e., how well the observed follow rules and norms) has been

internalized, how much it became a part of them and how can practices be corrected to fully fulfill their designed objective.

Foucault utilized the analogy of the Jeremy Bentham's "Panopticon" prison as a synopsis of the elements of power. Bentham's "Panopticon" consists of a prison with a watch tower at its center, combined with a round system of separated cells circling the tower. The cells are built so that prisoners cannot communicate with one another and they never know when they are being watched. This system, for Bentham, allowed the functioning of a highly efficient prison, in which only one guard could supervise many prisoners. In fact, the same effect is possible even without guards since the prisoners act on their own as if they are being constantly watched. Constant observation acts as a control mechanism; a consciousness of constant surveillance is then internalized by the prisoners. Essentially, the prisoners guard themselves, without the need of any active surveillance, acting as though they are, in fact, being watched.

Our modern society still works on a similar model. For example, when someone parks his or her car in a zone where payment is mandatory, he or she usually goes to the parking meter and pay for the parking. This is done almost naturally and intuitively, even though nobody is forcing him or her to do so, and, realistically, the chances of getting fined are somewhat slim. This action is still done anyway, out of an internalized fear of being punished. A normalization of sorts, stemming from the threat of discipline, is bound to happen under a society based on these principles. As Foucault (1994, p.187) explains *"(...) in this space of domination, disciplinary power manifests its potency, essentially by arranging objects".* Suitable behavior is achieved not through total surveillance, but by panoptic discipline and by inducing the population to conform to norms by the internalization of this set of rules. Structures, maintained through disciplinary power, become an unconscious prison for the mind.

To Foucault, "panopticism" is the condition of our society, perpetuated and legitimized by disciplinary practices in factories, schools, prisons, and other institutions. These practices create a very strong incentive for conformation, thus maintaining and legitimating the structures that create the norms to follow in the first place, out of an internalized fear of negative reprisals. Most modern institutions behave this way. When a child first enters primary school, a strict code of conduct is established: there are schedules to follow, mandatory attendance and normative types of behavior to replicate. All these aspects are carefully supervised and examined by the "local authority" – that is, the teacher - who qualifies students on how well they adhere to established norms, as well

as having the authority to punish deviants. This type of power relation carries on during the education of the child and goes on into adulthood. In any type of job, there are sets of procedures, norms and deontological codes that must be followed. Compliers are rewarded and promoted; deviants are warned, shunned upon and even fired. Through hierarchical observation and repeated examination, we create instruments for the application of power. Using these processes and instruments, followed by their methodological application to human sciences, institutions and discourses, the notion of "norm" is constructed and inserted into society, remaining largely unquestioned by the agent. But what, exactly, constitutes a norm? How does the notion of normalization permeate society and create the standards to which we are attached?

4.2 Norms and Normalization

The concept of the norm, as well as subsequent concepts such as normality, abnormality and normalization, are recurrent themes of the Foucauldian project. But what is a norm? To Kelly (2019, p.2), the Foucauldian project conceives "(…) *the norm as a model of perfection that operates as a guide to action in any particular sphere of human activity, and normalization correlatively as the movement by which people are brought under these norms."*.

The emergence of normalization constitutes an historical break in the punishment of criminality. Earlier forms of punishment functioned "*(...) by bringing into play the binary opposition of the permitted and the forbidden; not by homogenizing, but by operating the division, acquired once and for all, of condemnation."* (Foucault, 1994, p.183). The comparison with the norm is not the point of earlier punishments; the duality is only between permitted and forbidden. One who conducts a forbidden action is hardly punished. One who conducts a permitted action is not subject to any particular control whatsoever.

Control is exercised through normalization, which requires norms to be apprehended. But what constitutes a normalizing norm? To Taylor (2009, p. 47):

> A norm is normalizing if, as noted above, it links the increase of capacities and expansion of possibilities to an increase in an expansion of the proliferation of power within society. Simply put, normalizing norms encourage subjects to become highly efficient at performing a narrowly defined range of practices.

Perhaps one of the most prominent examples of a normalizing norm is that of the gender, which divides society in two major groups (men and women), each with predetermined behaviors/conducts and that the constituents of both groups are encouraged to follow and repeat *ad aeternum (*at school, in the family, at the workplace, …). This repeating of behaviors, made possible by a more or less strict set of rules one should follow in one's daily life, becomes a part of who we are to a point at which they are not perceived as an exogenous set of norms pushed down on the subject through disciplinary means, but simply as an acceptance of what is to be normal and, therefore, becomes almost immune to any sort of critical analysis. The fundamental issue with normalizing norms is precisely the fact that they constitute a severe obstacle to critical analysis; not only that, but they also impede the necessary framework for a specific debate to exist in the first place. Even if, through a complex deconstruction of what is to be normal, we find ourselves able to, for example, reject gender binarism (or even gender itself), the whole framework of the discussion is still usually maintained, at best, if one should accept the "abnormal" as part of a new, wider range of what it means to be "normal". Even if we can penetrate established norms, the notion of "normal" itself still places discourses, such as women and men having fundamental, essential differences between them, as part of a given established truth. The widening of the "normal" only contributes to the simplification of the discussions regarding practices or discourses, because it maintains the focus of the debate on why something or someone should be deemed as respectable of the norms, at a given time, at a given place, limiting the emancipation potential of critical analysis:

> To the extent that normalizing norms maintain or strengthen the link between increased capacities and expanded possibilities and increased power and inhibit or even prevent the cultivation and exercise of practices which elucidate and loosen this link, these norms are counter to freedom. Taylor (2009, p. 47)

The existence of the norm, however, does not necessarily mean that there is a strict binarism between normal and abnormal. The argument is more nuanced: since all individuals always deviate, even to a small degree, from the norm, nothing is classified as perfectly normal. Even if we use a precise quantitative norm, for example, the assumption that the human body should have a temperature of 37ºC, this norm is hardly met by anyone. Normality is accepted as a range, not as a positive condition. As Kelly suggests (2019, p. 18) *"(...) the norm primarily functions to label things as abnormal*

rather than to assure any kind of positive accordance with it.". Although discipline aims at bringing something or someone into the fold of the "normal", that is not its main function: the real goal of normalization is that, since nothing and nobody is completely normal, then everything and everyone can be punished and normalized. The theme of normalization becomes a pretext for correction and for the use of power over individuals.

This is the reason why normalization through discipline is a focal point of the Foucauldian project. If society is in thrall to normalization, then we must uncover how and why this normalizing occurs. This is not to say that every type of normalization is necessarily negative; it is to say that every normalization must be recognized so we can understand its impact, be it negative or positive, in a society. Foucault (1994. p.184) suggests that *"The power of the norm appears throughout the disciplines.".* They appear through discipline because, to Foucault, sovereign power was no longer able to control people. With the rise of modernity, power, in order to maintain its efficacy, had to be subjected to change. Societies were more complex, the agents who exercised power were many and the Enlightenment brought with it a more critical stance towards those who wielded power. Power became omnipresent, but unseen; constricting, but also subtle. Foucault's earlier works on madness follow this evolution of power: along with the rise of normalization, psychology and psychiatry rose to a state where they were both a science of the normal and, more importantly, a mechanism through which the abnormal could turn into the normal. The treatment of the mentally ill, in a similar way to the treatment of criminality, aims at normalizing and correcting behaviors. One is to conform to predetermined norms (which may vary at different times and places) if one is to be considered normal.

In Foucault's genealogies, the norm is tied to the power of discipline. Discipline targets bodies with the aim of controlling them into being productive, efficient and, above all, complacent towards the wielders of power. In the 1975 lecture *Abnormal*, Foucault defines the norm *"(...) as an element on the basis of which a certain exercise of power is founded and legitimized",* while also highlighting that it *"(...) brings with it a principle of both qualification and correction. The norm's function is not to exclude and reject. Rather, it is always linked to a positive technique of intervention and transformation, to a sort of normative project.* (Foucault, 2004, p.50). Norms are prescriptive, setting the standard for what is normal, with the guidance of discipline. This way, subjects under a disciplinary society both constitute themselves and are constituted by certain techniques of power that support the norm, forcing them into the optimum standard.

4.3 Power and Norms

Norms, in order to sustain themselves, need to be applied through a legitimate mechanism for the usage of power. If we are to understand how power influences the process of normalization, then we need to ask two major questions: what is power and how does it operate? The Foucaldian project rejects the usage of a definitive theory of power. Instead, the main aim is to provide a description of how power operates in particular historical contingencies. Nonetheless, Foucault uses a somewhat loose definition of the term throughout his project. In a later stage of his career, in *The Subject and Power*, Foucault (1982, p.789) provides a retroactively appliable definition of power:

> In effect, what defines a relationship of power is that it is a mode of action which does not act directly and immediately on others. Instead, it acts upon their actions: an action upon an action, on existing actions or on those which may arise in the present or the future.

Power is not a synonym of violence, however. In the case of violence, one's body is forced to do a certain action, without the possibility of resisting. In the case of power, one is influenced into doing a certain action. Power works not just by restraining, but by inducing something to happen. This way, "*Power is exercised only over free subjects, and only insofar as they are free." (*Foucault 1982, p.790). Power operates by defining and constructing paths that should be travelled by the subject in an effort to normalize him or her. Power does not coerce the subject; it influences the subject to choose one path instead of the other.

The definition of power that Foucault provides is linked with the analysis of contingent history of a genealogical project. If power operates through influence rather than by force, then this influence can be limited, altered or even rejected. The more we can negate the usage of power, the weaker the influence exercised. Even if we admit that normalization occurs deeply in our practices and that normalization plays a key role in answering the question of who we are, this only happens because influence is being exerted through power and replicated at the level of our practices.

Foucault argues that knowledge and power are intrinsically connected to each other. The concept of power-knowledge refuses the idea that one can separate the way we identified something as true/legitimate from the relations of power in which we are involved. To Foucault (1994, p.27), there is no pure, neutral knowledge:

> Perhaps, too, we should abandon a whole tradition that allows us to imagine that knowledge can exist only where the power relations are suspended and that knowledge can develop only outside its injunctions, its demands and its interests. Perhaps we should abandon the belief that power makes mad and that, by the same token) the renunciation of power is one of the conditions of knowledge. We should admit rather that power produces knowledge (and not simply by encouraging it because it serves power or by applying where it is useful); that power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations.

We should not assume, however, that knowledge is reducible to power relations or that knowledge simply functions as a synonym for power. Foucault's approach to knowledge is one that identifies that power shapes that knowledge, forming an integral part of what we deem as truthful. The penal approach to criminality, for example, not only provides a disciplinary status for the correction of deviancy through power, but also constitutes what it means to be a criminal; it does not simply act upon us but creates who we are and how we should act. Power is not merely a repressive or negative force; it can also create. Therefore, knowledge is not something that is out there to be discovered, but something that is created through forces exogenous to that "discovery":

> These 'power-knowledge relations' are to be analyzed, therefore, not on the basis of a subject of knowledge who is or is not free in relation to the power system, but, on the contrary, the subject who knows, the objects to be known and the modalities of knowledge must be regarded as so many effects of these fundamental implications of power-knowledge and their historical transformations. (Foucault, 1994, pp.27-28)

Foucault would complement the idea of disciplinary power targeting individual bodies (with the knowledge acquired through power-knowledge relations) with his concept of "biopower". Simply put, "*(...) biopower proliferates through the actions of the State in such a way as to regulate populations at the biological level in the name of promoting the health and protecting the life of society as a whole."* Taylor (2009, p. 50). This regulation and protection work together with the individual disciplining of the individual body. The intersection of biopower and disciplinary power creates the norm, that both founds and legitimates the exercise of power, allowing for a smooth system of normative control.

Biopower constitutes the population as the object of power, aiming at enhancing its functioning. According to Kelly (2019, p.16) "(…) *the power of rulers was essentially negative, deductive, and deadly, keeping people in line through the constant threat and intermittent use of violence. Now, by contrast, agencies actively intervene to constitute people as docile subjects by caring for them rather than simply threatening them."*. Biopower, however, depends on discipline, i.e., the control of individual bodies, to be actuated, creating an intersection between the two concepts. To Foucault (2003, pp. 252-253*) "The element that circulates between the two is the norm. The norm is something that can be applied to both a body one wishes to discipline and a population one wishes to regularize."* Biopower, then, allows for the control of large swathes of the population, using disciplinary practices over each of the individuals to be controlled, with the use of standards (norms) that are supposed to be actualized by the usage of disciplinary power and biopower.

Within a disciplinary society, norms are established, for example, by a factory manager who determines what workers should produce and at what time they should produce it. The workers' body is trained so that it achieves maximum efficiency (i.e., doing the maximum production at the fastest speed possible), performing desirable actions that facilitate achieving a given objective. The use of biopower intersects with discipline, for example, as economists ascertain a certain level of unemployment that is "necessary" or "natural" for a given economy to grow. These are, usually, uncritically accepted by the population.

The second question regarding Foucault's usage of power is how power operates. We can identify five major characteristics of power, which are clearly present in Foucault's later works, especially on the first volume of his work on sexuality: one, that power is not a possession; two, power is not exogenous to other relations; three, power works from a bottom-up mechanic; four, power relation are non-subjective and intentional; and lastly, power is always somewhat resisted. We will analyze each of these five tenets.

The traditional view of power sees it as a possession to be held, one in which the entity that holds that power (usually the State) seeks to understand and regulate power. Power can, nonetheless, belong to nobody and operate independently. One can be constraint without anyone holding power. The relation of a psychiatrist over a patient, for example, is not one that rests on power, but a simple expression of practical and discursive regularities. However, these same practices and regularities help constitute the subject (in

this case, the mad) into what they will become. These interventions upon the subject create the identity of who they are and it is on the basis of that identity that the subject is normalized: *"Normalization is not something they impose, but instead something in which they participate."* (May, 2006, p.83). The relation between the subject and the normalizing entity can be a relation that is, in itself, one of discipline and not an exogenous imposition.

Knowledge is not exterior to power. Power is intertwined with practices in complex ways. To recognize that power has a role in the dissemination of practices is to recognize that, by understanding how power operates within these practices, we lay the foundations for a study of how power arises within these practices and how it expands. This is a methodology that contrasts sharply with simple generalizations about everything being a simple matter of power and its exertion.

Power, in a Foucaldian sense, it not the expression of an over-arching theme, a consequence of economic realities or a possession of the State. Power lies in everything and expresses itself constantly in our daily lives. Power exists in the practices themselves, being it how a teacher educates a student or on how a journalist deontological code functions. We should always remind ourselves that, despite everything having some degree of power in it, not everything is power. That is Foucault's contribution: to try and distinguish how and where power is a relevant factor in our daily lives.

When we say that power is non-subjective and intentional, we are not referring to a final objective of power which guides its usage. Foucault (1978, p.93) suggests that *"(...) there is no power that is exercised without a series of aims and objectives. But this does not mean that it results from the choice or decision of an individual subject;"* Power relations do not seek to achieve anything themselves; nevertheless, they are oriented towards certain directions, which lead to some practices being preferred over others. Disciplinary power, for example, requires a set of power relations which are oriented. A plethora of different practices come together to induce individuals into a ritual of normalization, while also creating their identity in relation to norms. This orientation is not necessarily the goal of anything in particular; it is only the product of the intersection of the plethora of practices that characterize an historical moment which, in turn, lead to somewhat predictable consequences. It is the role of genealogy to approach these intersections, identify them and deconstruct their consequences. This is what Foucault claims is "intentional" in power relations.

Finally, we arrive at the idea that "*Where there is power, there is resistance*." (Foucault, 1978, p.93). We must resist the temptation to assert that power requires an opposition to be enforced. That would be violence, not power-as-influence. Instead, we should interpret this tenet as an assertion that where there exist power relations, there also exist individuals (or groups of individuals) which seem to resist it. Power, although it does not imply resistance, it is usually met with some form of resistance. Throughout the Foucaldian project, we can identify, especially in *Discipline and Punish*, that the various power relations have been met with resistance, both by the subjects of punishment and the reformers of the carceral system, even if they didn't exactly knew what they were resisting.

These five tenets, combined, support the thesis that power does not merely repress, suppress and oppress; it can also (and often does) create. Without anyone controlling it, without a master, power seems to exist and replicate itself in our practices, shaping both our behavior and our knowledge, creating historical situations where knowledge is deemed legitimate and behavior acceptable by the created norms. Even if we often are not fully aware of their existence, we participate in this relation, creating and being created by that force. We most likely become what those forces orient us to be and we legitimate that particular identity towards others, creating the criteria for what is normal. Power is a part of who we are; it creates who we are now. It is the project of genealogy to tell us how we came to be.

4.4 Power and Normalization

Power, independently of its form, sediments itself through the uncritical acceptance of norms. That is why, for Foucault, we must be ever-vigilant of how norms are formed and why do we accept them. Taylor (2007, p.53), writing on the role of the norm in the Foucaldian project, suggests that *"Normalizing norms are those which facilitate such sedimentation by linking the increase of capacities and expansion of possibilities to an intensification of existing power relations"* Sedimentation occurs when conceptions and understandings become naturalized in society. Taking into consideration the example above, worker productivity, unemployment and poverty are naturalized elements of the economic landscape. It is not that people do not think critically about these types of phenomena; most people do not even give them any thought at all. Even if we have some degree of discussion about the economic landscape, these naturalized

elements are assumed during the discussion. To Taylor (2007, p.53) *"Such naturalization effectively promotes acceptance and conformity with prevailing norms on both an individual and societal level."* Not only this naturalization allows for the distinction between the normal and the abnormal, but, most importantly, it also legitimates intervention upon non-conformants, bringing them into the fold of the desirable standard, while also eliminating potential threats by resisting individuals. There is an inherent danger for conceptualizing politics and ethics assuming the necessity of some normative foundations. The inability to imagine what politics and ethics are outside of a given framework, combined with the inability to even identify that there is a framework for our process of acquiring knowledge, creates an instance where our critical reflections about the world become limited by the prevailing modes of thought and what is already considered legitimate knowledge. The power to enforce normality, then, becomes a necessary "commodity" for stability. To Foucault, power exists everywhere and comes from everywhere; it is a key concept because it acts as a type of relation between individuals, as well as formulating a complex form of strategy, with the ability to, almost secretly, shape one's behavior. Structures and institutions are properly maintained if there is an effective and knowledgeable use of power.

From a Foucaldian point of view, refusing to uncritically accept the "normal" is a necessary foundation for a critical analysis of phenomena. The concept of the "norm" and the "normal" can be oppressive in the sense that, while they increase one's capacities (according to a predetermined norm), this increment happens at the expense of other modes of acting and thinking. Limitation of possibilities curtails the potential flow of productive power and restraints one's position regarding existing power relations:

> Insofar as Foucault sees freedom being characterized not by an escape from power but rather by the ability to negotiate power relations in ways that increase capacities and possible modes of thought and existence. For him such curtailment has the potential to lead to states of domination in which all aspects of persons' lives are dictated to them. (Taylor 2007, p.57)

If we accept predetermined norms, then, by extension, we have to accept that there are certain questions we do not need to ask, certain ways of thinking which are not valid and some forms of critical analysis which is not allowed. The Foucaldian approach is one that rejects certainty and totality; if we desire otherwise, it is because modern modes of though, in their quest for control and domination, have silently been directing us towards

them. Both what we believe to be true and why do we believe something to be true must be scrutinized. Foucault's approach to normalization points the norm as an integral part of relations of power. This does not mean that the function of the norm is necessarily tainted; it does mean, however, that all norms have the potential to be normalizing and, because of that, we must be ever vigilant of every norm. All norms enmesh us in relations of power; nonetheless, some norms can mitigate power and promote freedom while other promote control and restrict us. It is precisely this quest for freedom and the dissolution of forceful, illegitimate norms, that motivates Foucault:

> (…) this critique (of uncritically accepted truths) will be genealogical in the sense that it will not deduce from the form of what we are what it is impossible for us to do and to know; but it will separate out, from the contingency that has made us what we are, the possibility of no longer being, doing, or thinking what we are, do, or think. It is not seeking to make possible a metaphysics that has finally become a science; it is seeking to give new impetus, as far and wide as possible, to the undefined work of freedom. (Foucault, 1984a, p.46)

In *Discipline and Punish*, we can observe that the role of the norm plays an essential part in Foucault's genealogies. Earlier and later forms of punishment aimed at disciplining the body; however, there is a fundamental difference introduced with the dissemination of carceral systems: penality is no longer a project of just punishment, but mainly, one of deterrence. It became a project of normalization, one which experts usually call "rehabilitation". In the place of vengeance and torture we find care and discipline. The project of punishment no longer aims at extracting a compensation for an injury against the social *corpus*. The role of the body, more than the project itself, has also changed. It no longer is a site of pain, where punishment is exercised; it is now a site of normalization and correction. The prison, however, failed to become the site of discipline in which discipline can actually take hold; recidivism is high, prisoners often do not apprehend the norms which are instilled upon them and psychological therapy (i.e., normalization) has had few successes in its efforts, If the carceral project is a failure, then why do we still insist so much on it? Foucault does not deny the failure of the carceral system. But that is not the object of his genealogy. What Foucault aims to understand is the insistence upon this project, even after it became a recognized failure. If prisons continue to be so popular today, it must be because they serve additional purposes than just their designated function. May identifies two other functions of the prison, the first one, regarding the prisoners themselves:

> Regarding prisoners, the prison becomes part of an entire system where certain criminals who cannot be rehabilitated can at least be monitored. Prisons, parole officers, police, informants: all these become relays in a larger system of surveillance where criminality can be overseen, at times even utilized, when it cannot be eliminated. The dream of the early prison reformers, or later of the practitioners of discipline, is indeed a dream. There will always be criminality, particularly in societies where goods are as unevenly distributed as they are in Western societies. Therefore, where one can impose discipline successfully, one does. Where one cannot, one uses the same resources to construct a system of surveillance that can at least monitor what it cannot change. (May, 2007, p78)

If prisons are unable to provide a disciplinary rehabilitation of the criminal (i.e., of the non-conformant), it can, at least, be able to isolate him or her from the rest of society. Disciplinary power is used here with the main purpose of containing and not normalizing. Although one is ideally expected to be reintroduced to society, the simple fact that we can curtail "abnormal" individuals from tainting it is enough of a justification for the insistence on the prison project.

The effects of the carceral system on the rest of society are far more interesting. They go beyond the prisons themselves, but to what Foucault call the "carceral archipelago", composed by social workers, doctors, judges, teachers and others. The analysis of the carceral archipelago serves as a step-stone to understand how disciplinary society works. Foucault isolates six major effects of the carceral society. First, it blurs the line between what is legal and what is illegal, which allows for permanent disciplinary intervention upon individuals. Second, it can use its own deviants to monitor other deviants. Third, it naturalizes punishment, especially taking into consideration the non-violent nature of punishment. Fourth, it changes the permitted/not permitted dualism into a legal framework that transcends dualism. Fifth, it maximizes the proliferation of procedures of normalization throughout society. Finally, it reinforces the importance of the prison (or of the school, the factory, etc.) as a definitive site of disciplinary intervention. The disciplinary archipelago then, with the prison at its center, sustains disciplinary society, even when it fails to rehabilitate deviants. As Foucault (1994, p.304) decisively concludes:

> The judges of normality are present everywhere. We are in the society of the teacher-judge, the doctor-judge, the educator-judge, the social worker-judge; it is on them that the universal reign of the normative is based; and each individual,

wherever he may find himself, subjects to it his body, his gestures, his behavior, his aptitudes, his achievements. The carceral network, in its compact or disseminated forms, with its systems of insertion, distribution, surveillance, observation, has been the greatest support, in modern society, of the normalizing power.

5. Genealogy today

Genealogical methodology demands that we struggle against our own mode of reasoning. In a genealogical framework, the researcher must become skeptical about what he or she apprehends of the narratives investigated. Genealogy approaches the theme of the (meta-)narrative by *"(...) stripping away as it were the veils that cover narrative practices…"* (Tamboukou, 2013, p.3), in an effort to understand how these narratives may have been the product of discursive construction of a given historical contingency and how they should be questioned.

The most important component of the genealogical approach is the fact that what we consider to be true cannot be removed from the framework and procedures that led to the production of knowledge. Precisely because the genealogical approach is concerned on how procedures, practices and institutions affect the way in which we construct and legitimate knowledge, it gives it the main task of trying to separate which part of our knowledge is constituted by what is already normal, legitimate and accepted as knowledge. It makes the production of knowledge a less circular affair: one should not produce knowledge because it fits a predetermined framework for what knowledge should look like but, instead, one should understand why knowledge that is produced in a certain way can participate in discourses about a practice. This way, "A *genealogical analysis of narratives will thus pose the question of which kinds of practices, linked to which kinds of external conditions determine the discursive production of narratives under investigation.* (Tamboukou, 2013, p.4). If power intervenes in each practice and legitimates a discourse, then there is an inherent tendency to follow that trend, as specific narratives emerge as dominant, while other are marginalized. Genealogy uncovers the marginalized narratives and brings them to the center of discussion. To reject the metanarrative is to understand how the alienated "petit-narratives" also produce us and tell us who we are. We must, however, always apply a methodological approach that looks at power as not merely a repressive force – one that blocks marginalized knowledge -, but as a force that reconfigures "truth" in certain ways.

Foucault's genealogical project is an ontology of the present. By questioning what we deem self-evident and self-explanatory in the present, we can detach ourselves from our contingent truths and seek new ways of creating and promoting knowledge. To write the history of the present, one has to detach himself of the ways knowledge was constructed in the past; "(...) *it is necessary to distance ourselves from this present of ours,*

objectify ourselves and pose practical questions about life. (Tamboukou, 2013, p.9). This way, we can scrutinize (meta-)narratives and excavate the eventual distortions and constructed regimes of truth which accompany them. The specific focus on the narrative and its deconstruction promotes an underlying logic of thinking about knowledge not in general terms and holistic views, but rather in a way that promotes the role of singular ideas, complex themes and complications of an historically given moment.

The Foucaldian approach to genealogy starts with the construction of *dispositif,* defined as *"(...) a grid of intelligibility wherein power relations, knowledges, discourses and practices cross each other and make connections.* (Tamboukou, 2013, p.9). A *dispositif* is a network of relations that are established between more or less heterogenous practices, discursive and non-discursive elements, *"(...) the said as well as the unsaid (...) "* including *" (...) discourses, institutions, architectural arrangements, regulations, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophic propositions, morality, philanthropy, etc."* (Foucault, 1980c, p.194). Taking into consideration that *dispositifs* are heterogenous and disperse, genealogical methodology allows the researcher to draw an immense variety of information, data and approaches in the construction of knowledge. After the construction of the *dispositif*, the genealogist should put together all the different parcels which are relevant to his or her research, while also identifying what narratives might be tainting what is considered legitimate knowledge in a certain field of study. One should always question how knowledge was constructed up to that point before contributing to a field of study. The genealogical approach to knowledge should always interrogate what is the "truth", while being especially mindful of the relation between knowledge and the historically situated legitimation criteria for knowledge. If there are narrative practices that constitute individuals, then it is up to genealogy to uncover and understand them, tracing the history of how we came to be. It acts as a map to understand how different stories connect with each other, how discourses and practices shape those stories and how the subject constitutes himself through those stories.

In analyzing (meta-)narratives, the genealogist approaches carefully any minor textual details, examples and elements that constitute the picture of a phenomenon. He or she identifies, compares and juxtaposes discourses and traces their replication, appearances and disappearances. While working with narratives, the genealogist must discern variations and weave a nexus of power relations, as well as the influence of social, cultural, economic and historical conditions which affect that nexus. The aim here is to

understand where these connections intersect and why they intersect each other. To Tamboukou (2013, p.11):

> Being sensitive to the uniqueness of the self, the genealogist is very much interested in wider biographical elements of the subjects whose narratives are under scrutiny. These biographical details however are read in a way that deconstructs their coherence and reveals contradictions, gaps and broken narrative lines, fragmented and incomplete sketches of the self.

By doing this, we are able to approach narratives by stressing their historically situated limits, as well as the particularities within which given narrative is produced. The focus is on the unsaid, the unspoken, the forgotten. The skeptical attitude of the genealogist does not mean that he or she opposes what is considered to be "true" at a given historical time; on the contrary, the genealogist seeks to understand why the different narratives, discourses and practices did not arise or were substituted. If we are now what we are, then we need to understand why we are not something else entirely. This way, we can trace the transformations of old narratives into new narratives and perceive how they came to be, by uncovering the layers of elements which constitute a phenomenon and create a certain type of subject of knowledge.

To understand who we are, we must adopt a stance that rejects the premise that truth is out-there, waiting to be discovered according to an objective reality. Truth is usually bound to principles and procedures. Truth, in a Foucaldian perspective, revolves around a game of truth (i.e., a combination of discourses which compete for supremacy) instead of an obligation of truth (i.e., that truth can be objectively pursued). The obligation to truth leads to a state where what is deemed true is left unquestioned by those who aspire to produce knowledge.

Conclusion

At the beginning of this dissertation, I set out to answer the question of why we should revisit Foucault's philosophical/historical project. In short, the answer to this question is linked to a second, more complex question: *Who are we today?* Before we ask this, however, we must ask ourselves who we are not. The postmodern condition brought with it a dissociation with the present, a self-conscious scientific, artistic and discursive anti-narrative that has two major characteristics. First, the postmodern refers to a crisis of legitimation of the major grand-narrratives of legitimation in the modern era and the appearance of other legitimation criteria that filled the vacuum (such as performativity, consensus and paralogy). Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, the postmodern is a condition where critical discourse can flourish, since the framework under which we have been producing knowledge and guiding our activities is crumbling and can no longer sustain itself.

The Lyotardian postmodern portraits a world filled with differends, not because it endogenously became more self-aware or its participants started creating more discourses themselves, but because the framework for discourses and narratives became uncapable of creating the rules and limits for the creation of self-legitimating discourse. The postmodern world grants us the freedom to ask questions, but not the answers to them or, more importantly, it does not give us the rules and criteria from which to assert that a given answer is the correct one. But why do we need to answer definitively to any question? In reality, we do not. Under the postmodern, one does not achieve an answer; one finds out what are not the answers, while ever perfecting the *dispositif* that can tell us who we are, by travelling the different paths that could have also made us we are, but did not.

This is precisely what Foucault seeks to address. *Madness and Civilization* is an archaeological discussion of who we are. It focuses on the use of Reason as a constitutive aspect of ourselves. By using a monologue of reason to describe the Other, we establish and maintain an image of the Other which tells us who we are by telling who we are not – it demonstrates what lies outside of us, a characterization of who we ought not to be. Foucault's work suggests that Reason is not a timeless, constant, immutable human tool. Far removed from being the center of who we are, the use of reason is an historically contingent project, taking different forms at different times. During the classical period, reason was usually intertwined with morality, which also was, in itself, connected to

labor. Reason is indissociable with several elements that, despite the efforts of separating between them, are still a part of what it means to be a person of reason: history, practices and our view of the Other. Foucault's earlier works already suggest that reason is not ethereal and timeless, but temporal and related to our current situation. To Foucault (1980b, p.131):

> Truth is a thing of this world: it 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 types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true.

What we learn from Foucault's archaeology does not concern those who have been subjects of reason (i.e., the mad); the use of reason concerns especially those who operate with it. *Madness and Civilization* is not an archaeology of madness and the mad; it is an archeology on how we used reason to identify ourselves over time. It presents a discussion of who we have been and who we have become, from the perspective of a monologue of the use of reason addressed at those who both understand that monologue and, particularly, to those who can recognize themselves as agents of the game of reason and truth.

When we lean towards Foucault's genealogies, however, we start to understand why rediscovering our past plays a huge part of what we are today. *Discipline and Punish* retells a story of how our penal regimes became more "civilized". Rehabilitation replaced torture and public punishment as the answer to crime. Rather than simply punishing deviants, we now seek to change them, normalize them. Crime morphed from being an act requiring violence to be avenged to a behavior to be corrected. Once the criminal comes under the surveillance of the carceral system, he or she is to be worked upon, promoting a new way of viewing and interacting with the world:

> Whether by instilling proper work habits, or offering insight into the causes of the aberrant behavior, or breaking individuals down bootcamp style and rebuilding them, or reinforcing good habits while seeking to extinguish bad ones, or by some combination of these, criminals are not simply to be harmed. They are to be improved. (May, 2006, p.69)

This way, we were told a story of how the treatment of criminal became more humane. It is no longer a ritual of abuse and violence; it is just a policy of normalization. The criminal is no longer outside of human concern, to be abandoned and subject to barbaric violence; it is now someone who was, is and (hopefully) will continue to be a member of society. However, this is but one of the ways we can tell the history of the penal system. Foucault tells another story: one in which the contingencies that justified barbaric violence might still be present today, not in a physical manner, but in a mental one, where physical bonds morphed into mental bonds. And in this new history we have a concept of power that does not only repress (as most theories of power seem to suggest), but a concept of power that can create and constitute. If individuals are able to either be normalized or even normalize themselves in exercises of self-censure, then it must be because power usually comes from below rather than from above, i.e., that power comes more from our practices than from some oppressive agent such as the State. Power operates by creating objects more than by repressing them. With an ever-growing decentralized exercise of power (especially considering a world full of failing metanarratives), the withering of all-powerful actors such as the monarch or the State, and the surge of new local, regional and transnational actors, one must be, more than ever, conscient of how power operates and, especially, how it can constitute reality.

Discipline and Punish brought with it several major contributions. It questions our progressive view of history without necessarily adopting a regressive one. It places knowledge in the realm of politics. It questions whether some aspects of ourselves truly are immutable. If there are aspects of our history that are immutable and subject to specific condition at specifics times and places, then we cannot qualify history as being regressive or progressive. In Foucault's archaeologies, there is, within a specific archive, a stability of discursive rules and practices that remain up until a historical break. In his genealogies, however, these same practices do not necessarily converge and diverge in accordance with a larger (meta-)narrative. In genealogy, the elements which constitute us are fluid, dispersed and historically contingent. When the question of who we are arises, we are not asking after a hidden nature that lies deep within us or that has made us who we are today. We are also not asking after a specific *telos* that orients us towards it. The question is not what we have been revealed to be. The question of who we are is the question of how came to be. History has multiple strands and one of those strands led us to be who we are today, at this particular moment. But is our current history at a condition where multiple crossroads, paths and discourses converge and diverge? To answer this,

we must look deeply into ourselves, to our truths and to our practices. Authors such as Foucault do not answer this question but give us the tools to do so. We must ask ourselves where we have been and if we may or may not have travelled a different path that made us different from the people that Foucault writes in his reconstruction of the mad or the prison.

Some authors will argue that we have gone past Foucault, past the need for genealogical methodology and the role of power in constructing who we are. Gilles Deleuze, a colleague of Foucault, argues that, in contrast with disciplinary societies maintained by power relations, we now live in what he calls "control societies":

> We're moving toward control societies that no longer operate by confining people but through continuous control and instant communication… New kinds of punishment, education, health care are being stealthily introduced. Open hospitals and teams providing home health care have been around for some time. One can envisage education becoming less and less a closed site differentiated from the workspace as another closed site, but both disappearing and giving way to frightful continual training, to continual monitoring of workers, schoolkids or bureaucrat-students. (Deleuze, 1995, pp. 174-175)

To Deleuze, we are no longer confined to specific places where people are monitored, disciplined and normalized. Instead, we now have open networks of communication that do not create us by subliminal methods of normalization at specific sites (school, military, workplace, among others), but by a digital web that is woven throughout all spheres of society, where people are also woven into it.

But have we really moved away from Foucault's "carceral archipelago"? We undoubtedly rely a lot less on confinement and, instead, operate on a more decentralized network of communication and monitorization. However, the project of normalization went nowhere, as we are merely observing a shift in the operation of intervention and discipline from closed sites (prisons, schools, …) to more open ones (the Internet, for example). And what about normalization in psychology? Does it no longer assess the distinction between the normal and the abnormal because normalization no longer constitutes us or because the *locus* of this assessment shifted from the therapist to the markets, as our role in society also shifted from producers of goods to consumer of goods? These are the types of questions which Foucauldian methodology seeks to answer.

Jean Baudrillard, another contemporary of Foucault, also offered a different (if somewhat related) proposal to the question of who we are. Baudrillard rejects the view

that we are products of intersecting practices, each of them with the power of creating a different version of who we are. Baudrillard is especially critical of the notion that power produces us; this view is, for him, anachronic:

> When one talks so much about power, it's because it can no longer be found anywhere. The same goes for God: the stage in which he was everywhere came just before the one in which he was dead. Even the death of God no doubt came before the stage in which he was everywhere. The same goes for power, and if one speaks about it so much and so well, that's because it is deceased, a ghost, a puppet. (Baudrillard, 2007, p. 64)

The model of power, discipline and production is, for Baudrillard, an industrial one, unfit for the post-industrial society we now inhabit. If we are to be able to understand our present, then we must understand our virtual realities, the immaterial (digital) world that seems to have replaced the material world as our reality. Television, cinema and the Internet produce us and create a fabric of the world based on fiction. The history of who we are becomes lost to a present that merely pretends to present reality. This is the world of hyper-reality, where reality is produced by *"(...) the generation by models of a real without origin or reality."* (Baudrillard, 1994, p.3). In other words, a place like, for example, Disneyland only exists to give us the impression that the world outside its walls is what we can call reality.

There is a third set of authors, more disperse in their analysis, who argue that we have entered in a globalized world. Instant communication changed both the economic structure and the relation of individuals with those structures and between each other. We are not characterized by the fact that we are producers of goods; we are, in fact, consumers of them. We are no longer dependent of companies that, in return for our labor, promise us a steady career; we are now mere pawns of a larger game regarding the movements of capital, which can lead to rapid benefits and even faster harms. We are also no longer just citizens of a nation-state in which companies operate as subservient to the State; we are now drifting, as the concept of nation-state becomes ever dwindling and unable to legitimate itself.

All these three accounts seek to answer the question of who we are today and all three have something in common. They are based in technological advances of the past few decades. They see our recent history as a breakaway from a recent past. They ascribe the logic of power to digital culture and transnational capitalism. All these authors look

at the 1970s and the 1980s as if they happened an eternity ago and evaluate Foucault's works on madness, prisons and sexuality as a relic of a past that preceded our present.

These accounts have something much more important in common, however, something that render them as both pre and post-Foucauldian. They are accounts that seek to understand our present from a bird-eye view, looking down on it with an aura of disdain and superiority. Independently of answering who we are by appealing to digital networks, agents of hyper-reality or by subjectifying ourselves to global capitalism, we are still accounted as one, unitary thing - a story do be holistically told. This is precisely the view of history we ought to reject. In his explanation of the relevance of Foucault today, May (2005, p.8) tells us that:

> At times, of course, Foucault is read as reducing everything: to sexuality, to the carceral society, to Reason. However, he is badly read this way. To approach our present as though it were reducible to a unitary explanation is to approach it sloppily, without concern for detail, without responsiveness to the practices and the archives among which we live. Never again will a single story be told as though it were the only one. Those who hold to each of these stories (…) have not yet reached Foucault, much less gone beyond him.

Answering who we are today is far from a trivial matter. And this is what Foucault reminds us to do. We are unable to tell who we are by trying to find a *telos* where there is none, metanarratives that try to answer that which cannot be answered or continuity in the chaotic paths of history. The genealogist must do the spade work of unfolding history as we have received it. In other words, to ask the relevance of the Foucaldian project today one must be more Foucaldian. One should revisit Foucault not to discover whether the penal regime of torture and rehabilitation ever overlapped each other, but to remind us of the contingencies of that history that might still be present in our history – we revisit Foucault to remind us of our own contingency.

The problem of distancing ourselves from our past is still one that haunts the production of the knowledge about ourselves and our surroundings. We still treat our world as if it did not have a past that lead us to where we are today. It would be, of course, naïve to deny that technology can reinforce this problem. Television, movies and social media often create a "now-moment" that alienates the historical legacy of our pass. Nonetheless, it is precisely this tendency what makes Foucault's works and methodology so relevant today. If we face the present by assuming there are no moments other than the ones we are living in, at the expense of recognizing how we arrived at where we are now,

then it might not be because certain historical contingencies are now irrelevant, but because those same historical contingencies led us to where we are now. If these elements are, in fact, contingencies, then we can understand the path which led us here and understand what paths are open to us in the future. The problem with looking to the past without looking at what specific branches of history brought us to who we are today is that it creates a notion of change as something inaccessible. It is not that authors such as Deleuze or Baudrillard are fatalists. In fact, Deleuze (1992, p.4) tells us *"There is no need to fear or hope, but only to look for new weapons."*. Baudrillard, on the other hand, evokes an undefined strategy of silence and seduction. Nonetheless, these strategies remain as generalized as their analysis of the world. Contrary to Foucault, they do not aim at creating a framework for resistance and freedom offered by a more understandable approach to the present. Foucauldian methodology, however, tells us not to look down, but to look around.

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