

Michel Foucault, (1926-1984) a brief historical sketch:

1. Born in Poitiers.
2. Educated at the Ecole Normale Superieure in Paris. Like Sartre, *the cream of the crop*.
3. Taught in Germany, Sweden and Algiers and held chairs at Clermont-Ferrand and Vincennes
4. before being appointed professor of the history of systems of thought at the College of France.
5. His studies on sexuality, madness, and incarceration were very widely read.
6. Died of AIDS in Paris in 1984.
7. Like the other three, he was an atheist.
8. His writing is dense. Like the other three, we will only look at a couple of his ideas.
9. *He sort of sums up the three figures we have already looked at.*
10. *He is not well known but is the most influential for what is happening today.*

Michel Foucault thoughts on the archaeology of knowledge as a process for digging deeper:

1. How his process works: you begin on the surface and dig down in the same location and come to an earlier version of that place your digging at.
2. You keep digging down, going through various layers in the same spot, in the same area and you will begin to discover different incarnations of that same place.
3. *This is a master metaphor for how he sees how things work and what he does.*

Michel Foucault view of sexuality using the archaeology of knowledge:

1. What does our society typically say about sexuality: what behavior is acceptable and what behavior is not?
2. The digging down, like an archaeologist, allows you to find earlier expressions of what you once thought was acceptable and/or unacceptable, what was right and what was wrong.
3. You keep digging down deeper until you reach the ancient times and what you'll find that there is an extraordinary variety.
4. Example would be the social/sexual mores of ancient Rome are different than ours are today.
5. Thus, what we say now that is ordinary and acceptable wasn't true back in ancient times where sexuality was different than ours is today.
6. *The same is done with incarceration: why do we punish certain people for certain crimes; why capital punishment for some things and not others One needs to keep digging in the same place to discover different findings.*

Michel Foucault on Nietzsche and power:

1. Foucault says that there are no clear objective state of affairs.
2. Example: there is no single right way to think about sexuality (*or incarceration*). Why?
 - a. Because throughout history these have been practiced differently.
 - b. *Foucault picks up Nietzsche's relativism and therefore his perspective-ism.*
3. Foucault asks a second question: how do you account for these differences in sexuality?
 - a. The answer: it is a function of power.
 - b. *This is similar to both Marx and Nietzsche.*
 - c. *Is there any outright rejection of Christianity here?*
4. Those who are in power arrange things and organize language with specific modes of discourse in order to keep themselves in power.
 - a. In other words, there is a specific way of talking about things.
 - b. Language is a prime weapon that is to be used to manipulate and intimidate.
5. A particular class of people who are in power will manipulate circumstances through the policing and protocols of language to keep themselves in power.
6. Examples:
 - a. Heterosexuals will demonize homosexuals. Why? To maintain power.
 - b. Males will characterize females as misbegotten incomplete versions of themselves in order to maintain power.
 - c. One race will demonize another race as socially inferior to maintain power.

Michel Foucault on Nietzsche and Marx on the oppressor and oppressed:

1. Foucault then develops the interplay between oppressor and oppressed.
 - a. *This is Marx.*
2. He wants to unmask the oppressor by seeing how language contributes to it.
 - a. *This is Marx.*
3. This will cause a clashing of the wills.
 - a. *This is Nietzsche.*
4. Foucault has an intense preoccupation with policing language.
 - a. He talks about micro aggressions and triggers, sexism, racism, homophobia, transphobia that is carried on by language to control others or keep them at a distance.
5. *He combines the antagonistic social theory of Marx with Nietzsche's great stress on power.*
6. Like the other three, Foucault is an atheist:
 - a. If God exists there is an objective ground for truth and value for examining such issues as sexuality, incarceration and madness.
 - b. But, Foucault states God does not exist.
 - c. Therefore those in power decide these issues through language in order to keep themselves in power.
 - d. *Does this sound like a syllogism that is similar to Sartre's.*