

The Sexual Experience:
Michel Foucault and The History of Sexuality

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DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

This thesis offers a discussion of the central concepts informing Michel Foucault's *The History of Sexuality* project. Through his analysis, Foucault develops concepts in a bid to understand individual experiences of sexuality in different historical periods. His project investigates the repressive and productive effects of power in determining the sexual self. He argues that power and knowledge created new types of sexualities from the seventeen-century onward. In addition, he examines ethical problems associated with sex in classical Greece and early Christianity. Foucault claims that sexuality is a practice of self-formation and such that sexual freedom is experienced through the everyday care of the self. By developing his own style of historical investigation, Foucault argues there are different ways of thinking about history, which do not simply legitimate what is already known. This thesis seeks to demonstrate how Foucault's studies contribute to our historical and contemporary understanding of the experience of sexuality.

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INTRODUCTION

Michel Foucault and The History of Sexuality

Despite Michel Foucault's insistence that 'sex is boring' (1983, 229), his discussion on the topic is anything but. His analysis includes such topics as heterosexuality and homosexuality, procreation and perversion, sexual austerity and sexual abstinence, sadism, sodomism, necrophilism, adolescent masturbation, and an elephant thrown in for good measure. In addition, Foucault provides a tantalising account of early philosophers and Christians who assemble an entire repertoire for mastering or managing sex. For some, sex is just out right evil thus to manage it one should not engage in it at all. For others, sex is a procreative matter that should occur preferably at night and whilst sober as heaven forbid the child be born a drunk. Thus despite Foucault's opinion that sex is boring, this thesis demonstrates Foucault's concepts of sex and sexuality is anything but mundane. This thesis offers a discussion of the key concepts Foucault develops in order to understand the experience of sexuality in different historical periods. In effect, this thesis seeks to demonstrate how Foucault's studies on sexuality may contribute to our own understanding of sexuality throughout history.

Michel Foucault published his three-volume series entitled *The History of Sexuality* between 1976 and 1984 (1983, 229). The first volume is titled *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction* (1990) while the second volume is titled *The Use of Pleasure* (1985) with the final volume termed *The Care of the Self* (1986). Each text provides a critical analysis of sexuality in a

particular historical period, starting with modernity, then moving back to classical antiquity, and lastly dealing with the centuries in and around the early Christian period. In addition, each text presents 'ideas and arguments' which challenge conventional understandings of sex and sexuality (Smart 1995, 94). In regard to his project, Foucault sees his studies on sexuality as a 'philosophical exercise' in that the object was 'to learn to what extent the effort to think one's own history can free thought from what it silently thinks, and so enable it to think differently' (1985, 9).

In his first volume *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction* (1990), Foucault analyses the effects of power in determining the sexual self. He argues that since the seventeen-century, theoretical discussion favours the view of power as repressive and as a result, modern individuals have come to regard their sexuality as something which is repressed. Foucault refutes this hypothesis and claims that power created diverse sexualities such as the heterosexual, homosexual and hermaphrodite (1990, 43). In fact, he argues that the term 'sexuality' is a 'historical construct' that was invented through 'strategies of knowledge and power' (1990, 106). Foucault does not give priority to 'creative individual subjects' rather he is more interested in how power produces one's sexuality (McHoul and Grace 1998, 37).

In the second volume entitled *The Use of Pleasure* (1985), rather than elaborating on the relationship between power and sexuality in modernity, Foucault examines the 'ethical problems' associated with sex during classical antiquity (1985, 36). He argues that the early Greek and

Greco-Roman's devised a variety of techniques or 'practices of the self' to master their pleasures (1985, 13, 36). He suggests that there was an emphasis on moderation as opposed to immoderation, and self-restraint as opposed to self-indulgence in all matters concerning *aphrodisia* (pleasures). The purpose was to 'stylize' a sexual freedom which would enhance one's overall life (1985, 97). Through an analysis of the classical texts, Foucault examines the impact of ethics in determining the sexual self.

Foucault's final text entitled *The Care of the Self* (1986), analyses sexuality in the golden age of Rome and early Christianity in the first and second century A.D. Foucault argues that a new phenomenon developed in this era which stressed that individuals 'must take care of themselves' through a variety of internal and external practices (1986, 43). In addition, there was an increased emphasis on sexual austerity during this time thus altering the way in which individuals experienced their sexuality. He notes that these changes are reflected in three main areas: medicine, marriage, and erotic literature (1986, 9). According to Foucault, it was against this background in which an emphasis was placed on heterosexual relations as opposed to homosexual relations, as it was during a time in which civil law promoted marriage and procreation over sexual infidelity, and heterogeneous relations over that of the love of boys (Foucault 1986, 39, 40, 186).

Much of Foucault's work has been incorporated into post-structuralism, post-modernism, feminism and post-Marxism, thereby reaching readers in sociology, anthropology, English,

history and philosophy (Mills 2003, 1). However, it has been argued by a number of scholars (Bernauer and Mahon 1994; McHoul and Grace 1998; Cutting 1994; Mills 2003; Taylor 1984), that Foucault's overall work does not comprise of any theory as such therefore does not lend itself to easy or concise generalisations. For Clare O'Farrell, Foucault had the 'irritating ability to step into a new field and come up with ideas that forced specialists who had spent years in the area to significantly revise their approach' (2006, 3).

Due to the vast body of scholarly writing surrounding Foucault's work, this thesis will only include the academic literature that addresses his historical style of analysis and his concepts on sexuality. Each chapter will include various points of view from sociologist, historians, and philosophers who either support, criticise or explain more simply Foucault's various concepts and his historical methodology. As the purpose of this thesis is to provide an objective discussion on Foucault and his work, several footnotes demonstrate some of the contradictions that reside in Foucault's historical point of view. The additional footnotes simply demonstrate the vast scholarly opinions surrounding Foucault's *The History of Sexuality* project.

Foucault has been criticised by many scholars for his unconventional use of historical texts (J. Davidson 1998; A. I Davidson 1994; Cohen and Saller 1994; Dykes, 2002). In large, these criticisms are directed toward Foucault for failing to acknowledge his sources and for suppressing certain historical facts that would undoubtedly challenge his position or argument. James Davidson in particular, argues that Foucault regarded the ancient philosophical and

proscriptive texts as 'good representations of Greek concerns with sexuality' when in fact what the Greeks actually said about sex was not as concise and coherent as Foucault suggests (1998, xxiii). Yet other interpreting theorists like Thomas Flynn, argue that Foucault writes the history of 'problems' not 'periods' and is thus warranted in addressing only those events and practices which are relevant to the particular problem under analysis (1994, 42).

Furthermore, sociologists Kendall and Wickham argue that '[t]o use history in the Foucaultian manner is to use it to help us see that the present is just as strange as the past' such that 'history should not be used to make ourselves comfortable, but rather to disturb the taken-for-granted' (1999, 4). Thus we should not expect to find in any of Foucault's work a conventional or standard discussion concerning historical events. Rather as Donnelly puts forth, 'instead of treating the past as a prologue, as part of an easily comprehensible, continuous series of events unfolding into the present' Foucault 'tried to establish its radical otherness, its difference' (1986, 17). According to Foucauldian critic Fink-Eitel, a good starting point in discussing Foucault is to regard his work as a 'labyrinth in a temporal respect and subject to constant change' (1992, 3). Armed with this advice, this thesis will provide an account of the key concepts informing Foucault's *The History of Sexuality* project.

The Structure of the Thesis

Chapter One will discuss Foucault's concept of 'the repressive hypothesis' which he develops in the first volume of *The History of Sexuality* entitled *An Introduction* (1990). Foucault argues that the main theory shaping how we understand sexuality is 'the repressive hypothesis' (1990, 3, 10). This hypothesis sees the history of modern sexuality as one of repression. Foucault claims that this historical view sees sexual repression developing alongside the rise of economic capitalism in the seventeen-century. He argues that sexual repression is seen as developing in the form of a censorship which operates through 'prohibition, silence and nonexistence' (1990, 6).

In addition, this chapter will discuss Foucault's critique of the repressive hypothesis. He criticises this historical point of view on four accounts. He argues that it deliberately situates its historical context to coincide with the rise of capitalism. He claims that it draws on a 'discourse of oppression' to validate that sexual repression exists (1990, 7). He is further critical of individuals who argue that sexual repression exists. Foucault claims that these individuals are provided with 'speakers benefits' (1990, 6). Finally, Foucault criticises the repressive hypothesis for its representation of power as exclusively repressive and controlling. This chapter will illustrate Foucault's concepts and ideas surrounding sexual repression.

Chapter Two will discuss Foucault's concept of 'bio-power' which he develops in *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction* (1990). Foucault develops the concept of bio-power to refute the repressive hypothesis. He argues that the history of modern sexuality is not one of repression but one in which there was an increase in sexualities which was caused by a power that developed around the concept of the 'body' and 'population' (1990, 144).

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section entitled 'Bio-Power' will discuss Foucault's concept of power and its historical context. He argues that sovereign-power dominated pre-industrial society and bio-power is what caused the rise of capitalism (1990, 15, 140, 141). In addition, Foucault claims that bio-power operates in two ways: it is a disciplinary power that controls the human body and a regulatory power that controls the population.

The second section entitled 'Bio-Power and Sexuality' will provide a discussion on how Foucault sees power creating new types of sexualities. Through the 'sexualization' of children, the 'hysterization' of women and their bodies, the 'psychiatrization' of individuals considered perverse and the 'socialization' of the procreative couple, Foucault argues that new sexualities were developed (1990, 153-154). This chapter will illustrate how Foucault sees power determining the sexual self.

Chapter Three will provide a discussion on Foucault's second volume of *The History of Sexuality* entitled *The Use of Pleasure* (1985). In this text, Foucault argues that sex was problematic in classical antiquity. He claims that the early Greek and Greco-Roman's addressed these problems ethically through what he terms 'practices of the self' (1985, 13, 36).

This chapter has two sections. The first section titled 'Problematization' will address this very concept of Foucault's. He describes 'problematization' as a historical form of analysis which examines how individuals undertake the process of problem and solution-making ([1984] 1991, 384). In addition, he applies this type of study to analyse the way sex was problematic in both classical antiquity and early Christianity. He argues that both these historical periods had similar problems concerning sex however they differed in their way of addressing these problems.

The second section titled 'Moral Problematization' will proceed with a discussion on how Foucault perceives sex as a moral issue in classical antiquity. He argues that there were four problems surrounding sex during this period. The first problem concerned moderation and excess in acts of pleasures (*aphrodisia*). The second problem concerned the use of pleasures (*chresis*). The third problem concerned the attitude toward pleasures (*enkrateia*). The final problem concerned the manner in which one seeks their goal (*sophrosyne*) which was to master pleasures through establishing a moral conduct (*telos*). This chapter will discuss Foucault's analysis of ethics and its impact on how early Greek and Greco-Roman's experienced sexuality.

Chapter Four will focus on Foucault's remaining volume of *The History of Sexuality* entitled *The Care of the Self* (1986). Foucault argues that a new phenomenon developed in the first and second century in which individuals were encouraged to 'take care of oneself' (1986, 43). He claims that this process created a 'crisis of the subject' in which there were new difficulties for the individual in cultivating their sexual and ethical self (1986, 95). As a result there developed an increased concern for sexual austerity due to the changes taking place within medicine, marriage and erotics (Foucault 1986, 9).

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section will discuss Foucault's concept concerning 'the care of the self' (1986, 43). Foucault argues that the care of the self is a process that corresponds to medical thought in that it involves caring for the body. He suggests that it is also a practice that requires labour, self-knowledge and seeking a common goal. Foucault concludes that this culture of the self developed at the same time in which the state was promoting marriage and condemning adultery whilst under the leadership of Augustus (1986, 40).

The second section of this chapter entitled 'A Crisis for the Sexual Self' will discuss the ways in which Foucault sees a 'crisis of the subject' developing during this period' (1986, 95). He argues that there was an increased 'mistrust of pleasures' and thus individuals had to reinvent their sexual selves. He claims that these changes are reflected in three main areas: the body and medicine, the wife and household and lastly boys and erotic literature (1986, 39, 235). This final

chapter will discuss the way in which Foucault sees a culture of the self influencing the way the individual develops their sexuality.

CHAPTER ONE – Sexuality and Repression

This chapter is a discussion of Foucault's concept of 'the repressive hypothesis' which is introduced in the opening chapter of *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction* (1990). Foucault argues that the repressive hypothesis is the main theoretical framework shaping our understanding of modern sexuality. This hypothesis identifies that a sexual repression developed in seventeenth-century industrial society, and continued into the present (Foucault 1990, 3, 10). Foucault claims the notion of repression is 'firmly anchored' in our contemporary civilisation and 'weighs heavily on sex', thus he asks: 'Why do we say, with so much passion and so much resentment against our most recent past, against our present, and against ourselves, that we are repressed?' (1990, 8-9).

Through a critique of the repressive hypothesis, Foucault argues that sexual repression is seen as developing through a process of censorship which operates via 'prohibition, silence, and nonexistence' (1990, 6). In addition, Foucault develops four criticisms toward the repressive hypothesis. First, he argues the repressive hypothesis situates its historical context to coincide with the rise of capitalism. Second, he claims it draws on a 'discourse of oppression' to validate that sexual repression exists (1990, 7). Third, he presents a critical argument that some individuals are motivated to talk of sexual repression because it provides them with what he terms 'speakers benefits' (1990, 6). Lastly, Foucault examines the repressive hypothesis and argues it portrays power as an exclusively repressive force. This chapter will introduce

Foucault's concept of the repressive hypothesis which he develops in his first volume on the history of sexuality, In addition, this chapter includes scholarly interpretations and criticisms toward Foucault's studies of modern sexuality and the repressive hypothesis.

The Repressive Hypothesis

In his opening chapter entitled 'We Other Victorians', Foucault argues that in the context of sexuality, the main historical theory informing us is the 'repressive hypothesis' (1990, 10). In Foucault's opinion, 'we supported a Victorian regime, and we continue to be dominated by it even today' (Foucault 1990, 3). This historical view 'holds that through European history we have moved from a period of relative openness about our bodies and speech to an ever-increasing repression and hypocrisy' (Dreyfus and Rabinow 1983, 128). Foucauldian scholars Dreyfus and Rabinow argue that Foucault's historical interpretation should be taken as an 'interpretive exaggeration' or as a way of revealing 'issues to be confronted' because the concept of the repressive hypothesis actually enabled Foucault to later develop his own counter-interpretation of the modern experience of sexuality (1983, 127-128)¹.

According to Foucault, the repressive hypothesis is situated in a particular historical context

¹ Dreyfus and Rabinow argue 'Foucault has clearly set up the repressive hypothesis as a deception to be revealed' thus 'his aim is to give a genealogy of how the repressive hypothesis came to be and what functions it has played in our society' (1983, 131).

which sees the early seventeenth-century as a period in which a degree of sexual autonomy still existed: 'It was a time of direct gestures, shameless discourse, and open transgressions... it was a period when bodies made a display of themselves' (Foucault 1990, 3). Thus a general freedom and tolerance still existed in the way individuals spoke about and experienced sexuality. For instance, the notion of privacy was generally not given consideration in the early seventeenth-century. Foucault argues: '[s]exual practices had little need for secrecy; words were said without undue reticence, and things were done without too much concealment' (1990, 85). However with the rise of capitalism, this era of sexual liberation ceased and 'twilight soon fell upon this bright day, followed by the monotonous nights of the Victorian bourgeois' (Foucault 1985, 3). In Foucault's perception, a new phenomenon occurred in which sexuality 'was carefully confined; it moved into the home' when the 'conjugal family took custody of it and absorbed it into the serious function of reproduction' (Foucault 1990, 3). Thus sexuality is thought to have become a procreative practice at best, occurring exclusively in the parents' bedroom.

Foucault states that the way sexual repression is perceived as occurring in the general social sphere is through a process of 'censorship' (1990, 6). He insists censorship during this time had nothing to do with 'penal law' rather it was exercised over individuals in an entirely different manner. Sheridan in his critique of Foucault's work, argues that this process took place in the form of a 'purification of the authorized vocabulary' in which '[a] new, stricter code governed what could be said, where, in what circumstances, and to whom' (2005, 168)². In addition,

² Alan Sheridan in his discussion on Foucault's work suggests Foucault's aim 'is not so much to disprove the repressive hypothesis' but instead to demonstrate that '[r]epression is rather one effect, among others, of a complex set of mechanisms concerned with the production of discourse, power, knowledge' (2005, 167-168).

Foucault identifies three ways in which censorship is seen as establishing a repression over individuals and their sexualities. These three forms of censorship are defined as prohibition, silence and non-existence (Foucault 1990, 6).

First, sexual repression developed through a form of 'prohibition'. According to Foucault, this occurred through a process of socially defining what was permissible sexual behaviour and similarly forbidden. Incidentally, the procreative couple set the standard and 'laid down the law' because their sexual activities had a 'utilitarian' purpose (Foucault 1990, 3). As a result, all other forms of sexual activity were deemed 'sterile' (Foucault 1990, 3, 34). Furthermore, those who engaged in alternate sexual activities were considered to display signs of 'abnormality' such as the village 'half-wit' who paid young girls for his sexual pleasures or the dirty Englishmen who recorded his sexual adventures anonymously in *My Secret Life* (Foucault 1990, 21, 32).

The second way sexual repression resulted was through a 'rule of silence' in that, '[o]n the subject of sex, silence became the rule' (Foucault 1990, 3). Because the procreative couple set the norm, they too, 'safeguarded the truth, and reserved the right to speak while retaining the principle of secrecy' (Foucault 1990, 3). Thus the speaking of sex itself was seen as an exclusive practice, in which only the legitimate couple could participate. According to Foucault, children were not permitted to discuss sex which is why 'one closed one's eyes and stopped one's ear's' whenever they came in contact with the contrary' (1990, 4). Furthermore, sexual connotations were to be absent from everyday speech. Foucault argues this represents that a 'general and studied silence was imposed' on the subject of sex (Foucault 1990, 4).

The final way sexual repression occurred was through a process of 'non-existence' (Foucault 1990, 6). Non-existence means the denial that alternate or other sexualities existed in Victorian society therefore sexualities deemed deviant or abnormal were endured only within 'brothels' and 'mental institutions' (Foucault 1990, 4). In citing Steven Marcus³, Foucault argues that the prostitute and client including the psychiatrist and his or her patient constituted those 'other Victorians', because they continued to enjoy a degree of sexual autonomy by creating a space in which to express their alternate sexualities (1990, 4). Foucault identifies prohibition, silence and non-existence as products of a censorship that was imposed on individuals and their sexualities in early Victorian society. He argues the repressive hypothesis perceives sexual repression developing through these three particular forms of censorship (1990, 6).

By identifying its particular elements, Foucault criticises the repressive hypothesis on four accounts. According to Dreyfus and Rabinow, where Foucault stood in relation to his critique is 'not explicitly clear', however they see Foucault as generally 'problematizing the way others have related the term' (1983, 132). Sheridan in his interpretation, claims Foucault 'is not saying that sex, far from being repressed in bourgeois society, has enjoyed unprecedented freedom' but rather his purpose was to situate the repressive hypothesis in a 'general economy of discourse on sex' (2005, 167). In other words, Foucault intended to demonstrate how the repressive hypothesis is a major theory defining our sexual experiences from the seventeen-century onward. The

³ Steven Marcus wrote *The Other Victorians: A Study of Sexuality and Pornography in Mid-Nineteenth Century England* ([1888] 1966). Marcus provides an alternate view of sexuality in the Victorian era by comparing the official Victorian views of sexuality alongside those expressed by 'The Other Victorians', which consist of the sexual subcultures during this period.

following will discuss the four criticisms Foucault identifies with the repressive hypothesis.

First, Foucault criticises the repressive hypothesis by situating its historical context alongside the rise of capitalism. He argues that '[b]y placing the advent of the age of repression in the seventeenth century, after hundreds of years of open spaces and free expression, one adjusts it to coincide with the development of capitalism' (Foucault 1990, 5). Foucault suggests that the repressive hypothesis first and foremost seeks to critique the capitalist movement, with the topic of sexuality remaining a secondary concern. In Dreyfus and Rabinow's interpretation: 'Sexuality is thus only an appendage to the real story of history – the rise of capitalism – since repression is the general form of domination under capitalism' (1983, 128).

In addition, Foucault states that by situating the age of repression with the rise of capitalism, the concept of sexual repression is an 'easy one to uphold' (1990, 5). For instance, 'if sex is so rigorously repressed, this is because it is incompatible with the general and intensive work imperative' (Foucault 1990, 6). Furthermore, '[a]t a time when labor capacity was being systematically exploited, how could this capacity be allowed to dissipate itself in pleasurable pursuits, except in those - reduced to a minimum - that enabled it to reproduce itself' (Foucault 1990, 6). Foucault rejects the idea that sex is repressed and that its singular purpose is to produce a workforce that fulfils the demands of the capitalist system. Mills in particular, argues Foucault was not trying to ignore the role of the economy in his analysis, but rather was suggesting that

'the ownership of property and the accumulation of capital' are not the most important elements in any analysis (2003, 4)⁴.

Foucault concedes that we have not 'liberated ourselves' from perceiving the history of modern sexuality as a 'chronicle of increasing repression' (1990, 5). He suggests Freud may have made some progress in minimising sexual repression. However, he quickly dismantles this idea by claiming Freud enhanced sexual repression through 'the normalizing functions of psychoanalysis' (Foucault 1990, 5). Marxist philosopher Balibar⁵ argues that Foucault was attempting to 'undermine' and 'criticise' certain problems that 'Freudo-Marxist' theorists have identified within our modern 'epoch' (1992, 40). For instance 'the reciprocal implication of sexual repression and the exploitation of the workforce in capitalist society' (Balibar 1992, 40). In Balibar's interpretation, Foucault was trying to 'reveal' how Marxism and psychoanalysis have over time evolved into the 'same field of theoretical knowledge' (1992, 41).

The second issue Foucault identifies with the repressive hypothesis is a 'discourse of sexual oppression' (1990, 7). Throughout much of his work, Foucault uses the term discourse which he

⁴ Mills argues Foucault was interested in a style of analysis which 'focuses on contingencies rather than simple relations of cause and effect' because in historical analysis 'we tend to try to attribute simple, clear causes' for various events or practices such as sexual repression (2003, 51). Mills further suggests Foucault interrogated such concepts like the economy and the self, as he saw these concepts as having their own history and motivation (2003, 4).

⁵ In Balibar's interpretation, 'the whole of Foucault's work can be seen in terms of a genuine struggle with Marx, and that this can be viewed as one of the driving forces in his productiveness' (1992, 39).

defines as 'reflexive categories, principles of classification, normative rules, institutionalized types' (2004 26). In their introduction to Foucault's philosophy, McHoul and Grace claim that Foucault thought of discourse in terms of 'bodies of knowledge' (1998, 26). Foucault argues that a discourse of oppression has two functions. One, it utilises a form of 'preaching' which encourages individuals to 'speak of sex in terms of repression' (Foucault 1990, 7). Two, a discourse of oppression causes sex to become a legitimate political issue. Foucault claims that a discourse of oppression encourages one to speak of sexual repression as it acts as form of preaching. The practice of preaching is 'familiar and important in the West', because it has long been a religious and cultural tradition (Foucault 1990, 7). According to Foucault, this exercise dates back to the theological practice of 'the sermon' and is also seen within the ancient prophetic texts (Foucault 1990, 8). It is a practice constituted upon a belief which sees liberation as a genuine possibility through ongoing resistance. According to Foucault:

What sustains our eagerness to speak of sex in terms of repression is doubtless this opportunity to speak out against the powers that be, to utter truths and promise bliss, to link together enlightenment, liberation, and manifold pleasures; to pronounce a discourse that combines the fervour of knowledge, the determination to change the laws, and the longing for the garden of earthly delights (1990, 7).

Foucault further notes that a discourse of oppression caused sex to become 'legitimately associated with the honor of a political cause' (1990, 6). This particular phenomenon according

to Foucault is caused through a series of assertions: 'the demand for sexual freedom, the knowledge to be gained from sex and the right to speak of sex' (Foucault 1990, 6). He argues that these three claims made it possible for the subject of sex to enter into the political sphere. This is because since the nineteenth-century, 'speaking openly and defiantly about sex is considered an inherently political act' according to Dreyfus and Rabinow (1983, 129).

Thirdly, Foucault is critical of individuals who support the repressive hypothesis through their historical work or tautology. He claims that these individuals are motivated by what he terms 'speakers benefit' (1990, 6). In other words, these individuals are impelled to preserve the idea that sexuality is repressed because in turn they are seen as 'defying established power' (Foucault 1990, 6). In Foucault's view, 'A person who holds forth in such language places himself to an extent outside of the reach of power' thus it is an attractive position to be in (1990, 6).

In addition, he argues that speaking about sexual repression is in itself an act of resistance and an 'appeal to the future' (Foucault 1990, 6). For example, the speaker alludes to a future in which sexual liberation will be a reality. Foucault claims that this phenomenon occurs within psychiatry because the psychiatrist is paid to not only listen, but to reinforce the idea ones sexuality can be liberated from repressive forces. Thus the speaker of sexual repression may also benefit in monetary ways. In Foucault's view, '[t]his discourse on modern sexual repression holds up well, owing no doubt to how easy it is to uphold' (1990, 5). According to philosopher Taylor, Foucault

is 'paradoxical' in his analysis because he appears to 'bring evils to light' however at the same time distances himself from the idea that overcoming 'these evils promotes a good' (1986, 69).

Lastly, Foucault finds fault with the repressive hypothesis for its representation of power as repressive. In her introductory guide to Foucault's concepts and ideas, Mills notes that Foucault 'is very critical of the notion that power is something which a group of people or an institution possess and that power is only concerned with oppressing and constraining' (2003, 33). Foucault claims that the repressive hypothesis, or the theory of sexual repression, has a 'juridico-discursive' perception of power (1990, 82). This means the idea of power is perceived only in relation to the law. Foucault states: 'it is a power whose model is essentially juridical, centred on nothing more than a statement of law and the operation of taboos' (1990, 85). In his critical analysis, Foucault argues a juridico-discursive view of power has five principle features:

First, the conception of power is always a '*negative*' one (Foucault 1990, 83). Power is understood as operating in a 'general form of limit or lack' by establishing continual boundaries on individuals (Foucault 1990, 83). According to Foucault, '[w]here sex and pleasure are concerned, power can "do" nothing but say no to them' (1990, 83). Power is seen as a constraint on sexuality which operates by 'suppressing desire, fostering false consciousness' and 'promoting ignorance' (Dreyfus and Rabinow 1983, 129). Couzens Hoy in his analysis of various power theories, suggests that Foucault is critical of explanations which see power as repressive because

they fail to justify the 'kinds of knowledge' that are developed and required in order to control and repress the human body (1986, 131)⁶.

Second, power is perceived as operating in the form of a 'rule' in that 'power acts by laying down the law' by defining what is legal as opposed to illegal (Foucault 1990, 83). Sex itself is placed in a binary system of 'licit and illicit, permitted and forbidden' (Foucault 1990, 83). For instance, in early Victorian society, illicit sexual acts included rape, incest, adultery, bestiality, sodomy and in some cases homosexuality (Foucault 1990, 38). However Foucault argues it was 'matrimonial relations' that were especially 'saturated with prescriptions', 'rules and recommendation' (1990, 37). For instance, the couple must have parental consent to marry, they must have conjugal sex on their wedding night, they must not 'seek strange pleasures' or commit infidelity and the marital couple must procreate (Foucault 1990, 38). Thus Foucault argues that this form of power 'resides in the function of legislator' by establishing what is legal and illegal in regards to sex and sexualities (1990, 83).

Third, power is understood as a form of 'prohibition' dictating what one should and should not do. Foucault sees this process occurring in the form of 'thou shalt not touch, thou shalt not consume, thou shalt not experience pleasure, thou shalt not show thyself... except in darkness

⁶ Couzens Hoy investigates power theories pertaining to Foucault, Steven Lukes and the Frankfurt School. He argues Foucault's view of power challenges Marx and neo-Marxian theories as they 'omit altogether an account of how it is possible for the human body even to be constructed as labour power' (1986, 130)

and secrecy' (1990, 84). Power is essentially seen as repressing sex 'through a taboo that plays on the alternative between two nonexistences' (Foucault 1990, 84). The first 'nonexistence' denies that other or alternate sexualities exist. The second non-existence prohibits those other sexualities from existing in the first place. According to Foucault, deviant sexualities that exist are subject to the penalty of being 'suppressed' or at best endured only within brothels and mental institutions (1990, 4, 84).

'Censorship' is the fourth feature Foucault identifies in a juridico-discursive perspective of power. As previously noted, Foucault sees censorship as taking three forms: 'affirming that such a thing is not permitted' (prohibition), 'preventing it from being said' (silence), and lastly 'denying that it exists' (nonexistence) (1990, 3-6, 84). Foucault notes that within this context, power 'only has the force of negative on its side' and is 'capable of only posting limits' on our freedom (1990, 85).

The fifth principle feature identified by Foucault is that power is seen as having an overall 'uniformity' (Foucault, 1990, 84). Power is seen as operating within all social institutions and impacting on all aspects of social life. Power over sex 'is exercised in the same way and at all levels' (Foucault 1990, 84). In Sheridan's interpretation, 'Foucault does not deny the fact of repression; what he rejects is a view of power as monolithic, centralized, and repressive' (2005, 168). Foucault perceives this particular form of power working in the following manner:

[I]t operates according to the simple and endlessly reproduced mechanisms of law, taboo, and censorship: from state to family, from prince to father, from the tribunal to the small change of everyday punishments, from the agencies of social domination to the structures that constitute the subject himself, one finds a general form of power (1990, 85).

Foucault argues that a 'juridico-discursive' view of power is the major one adopted in modern Western political thought (1990, 82-83). He claims that it dates back to the Middle Ages and later enabled the very development of Western monarchy systems. According to Foucault, the Western monarchies were 'constructed on systems of law, they expressed themselves through theories of law and they made their mechanisms of power work in the form of law' (1990, 87). In addition, he concludes that this perception of power remains 'under the spell of the king' and suggests we must 'conceive of sex without the law, and power without the king' (1990, 88, 91).

This chapter has introduced Foucault's concept of 'the repressive hypothesis' which he develops in *The History of Sexuality* (1990). It has been demonstrated that Foucault rejects the idea that sexual repression developed in the seventeenth-century and continued into the present. He claims that sexual repression is a phenomenon understood as occurring through a censorship which promotes 'prohibition, silence and nonexistence' in regards to other or alternate sexualities. He identifies four reasons why he refutes this historical theory. First, because it coincides sexual

repression with the rise of capitalism. Second, because it draws on a 'discourse of oppression' which uses the ancient practice of preaching to aid the belief of future sexual liberation. In addition, a discourse of oppression causes sex to become politicised. Foucault further criticises the individuals who claim that sexual repression is a reality in our society as he considers it an attractive opinion that provides the individual with diverse benefits. And lastly, Foucault refutes the repressive hypothesis by arguing it perceives power as an extension of law. For Foucault, this view of power is the underlying one informing Western political thought and furthermore the main one informing the idea a sexual repression developed in seventeenth-century industrial society.

CHAPTER TWO - Sexuality and Power

This chapter discusses Foucault's concept of 'bio-power' and its relationship to sexuality which is developed in *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction* (1990). Foucault formulates a theory of power to refute the repressive hypothesis, which claims that sexual repression has developed throughout the past three centuries (1990, 143). He concludes that the 'techniques of power' during these periods did not repress sex, rather power is what created new sexualities like heterosexuality and homosexuality (1990, 12). In addition, Foucault argues that the term 'sexuality' did not exist until the eighteenth-century, and that it was invented through 'strategies of knowledge' such as medicine and psychiatry, and 'systems of power' such as rules and constraints (1990, 105-106). He claims that 'sexuality' is 'the name that can be given to a historical construct' (1990, 105).

This chapter is divided into two sections: 'Bio-Power' and 'Bio-Power and Sexuality'. The first section will introduce Foucault's concept of power. He argues that bio-power developed in the seventeenth-century and created the rise of the capitalist economy. He claims that pre-industrial society was dominated by 'sovereign-power' (1990, 15). In addition, he argues that bio-power works in two ways: as a disciplinary power that dominates the human body and as a regulatory power which dominates the population (1990, 145). In Foucault's argument, power does not repress, rather it controls individuals and the social body in order to 'normalize society' (1990, 144).

The second section will discuss bio-power and sexuality. Foucault claims that bio-power constructed new sexualities through the following process: the 'sexualization of childhood' - the 'hysterization of women' - the 'psychiatrization of perversions' and - the 'socialization of procreative behaviour' (1990, 153-154). As a result, he argues that bio-power created new and diverse forms of sexuality such as the 'the hysterical woman, the masturbating child, the Malthusian couple, and the perverse adult' (1990, 105).

Bio-Power

In his chapter entitled '*Right of Death and Power over Life*' Foucault introduces his concept of 'bio-power' (1990, 143). Foucault argues that a process took place in the seventeenth-century in which the state developed an acute interest in the health and well-being of its citizens. Alongside this process, he claims that a new form of political power developed which was concerned with dominating the biological aspects of human life. Foucault terms this political power 'bio-power' and argues it 'brought life and its mechanisms into the realm of explicit calculation and made knowledge-power an agent of transformation of human life' (1990, 143). He concludes that the purpose of bio-power is not to repress life but 'to take charge of life' in order to normalize society (1990, 144). Philosopher Charles Taylor⁷, defines Foucault's analysis as an 'unmasking' in which

⁷ Charles Taylor sees confusion and contradictions in Foucault's concept of power, freedom and truth, which he discusses through an examination of *The History of Sexuality* and Foucault's prior text *Discipline and Punish* (1986). He concludes that Foucault wanted to 'discredit' the 'very idea of liberation from power' (1986, 92).

'[h]e lays bare a modern system of power which is both more all-penetrating and much more insidious than previous forms' (1986, 69).

Before the seventeenth-century, Foucault claims that the main form of power exercised over individuals and the social body was 'sovereign power' (1990, 135). At its most extreme form, sovereign power is 'the right to decide life and death' in which the sovereign leader or crowned head had the ultimate capacity to administer a death sentence or coerce his or her citizens into war (Foucault 1990, 135). Foucault asserts that sovereign power originated in early Roman society and was employed through the law of '*patria potestas*' (Foucault 1990, 135). This law enabled the father of a Roman family the right to 'dispose' of the life of child or slave, 'just as he had given life, so he could take it away' (Foucault 1990, 135). Early classical scholar William Smith⁸ however suggests that this law was only permissible on the condition the life or status of the father or master could be improved, and not made worse by such an act (Smith [1842] 874). By the late sixteenth-century, sovereign-power had decreased in severity, in which the right over life and death was employed only when the head of state was under attack by internal or external forces.

By the beginning of the seventeenth-century, Foucault claims that a rapid change occurred in the

⁸ In 1842, William Smith published his *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities* which is a 1,300 page compendium of information on the classical world. His text contains information on laws, architecture, the military, festivals, art including clothing and furniture see <http://www.ancientlibrary.com/smith-dgra/>

overall workings of power in which, 'the existence in question is no longer the juridical existence of the sovereignty; at stake is the biological existence of a population' (1990, 137). Power was no longer solely employed for the survival of the sovereign, rather it is employed for the survival of the entire social body (Foucault 1990, 142). Taylor argues Foucault's analogy develops around the ideas of 'power/domination' and 'disguise/illusion' (1986, 69). He claims that Foucault saw 'the old power' as providing individuals with a degree of invisibility as it relied on 'public space' and a 'public authority' in order to function. This 'new power' however scrutinised the lives of all individuals as it 'does away with the notion of public space; power no longer appears, it is hidden' and thus works in the form of a 'universal surveillance' (Taylor 1986, 74).

Foucault stresses that the purpose of this new power was not to repress but to 'ensure, sustain, and multiply life, to put this life in order' (1990, 138). This process of preserving and prolonging all human life had nothing to do with humanitarian sentiments, rather it developed in a particular historical moment when new economic developments were taking place, namely - the rise of industrial capitalism. Sociologist Barry Smart, argues that this 'pastoral' or 'caring' form of power is presented by Foucault as the defining aspects enabling 'the diffusion of capitalist economic relations throughout social life' (1995, 102). In other words, Foucault sees bio-power as the fundamental and necessary precursor of capitalism. Thus in Foucault's historical interpretation:

This bio-power was without question an indispensable element in the development of capitalism; the latter would not have been possible

without the controlled insertion of bodies into the machinery of production and the adjustment of the phenomena of population to economic processes (1990, 140-141).

Starting in the seventeenth-century, Foucault argues that bio-power developed in two distinct forms: disciplinary and regulatory (1990, 130). The first form of power was 'tied to the disciplines of the body' whilst the second form 'was applied to the regulation of populations' (Foucault, 1990, 145). Thus Foucault argues that a new phenomenon developed in which 'an explosion of numerous and diverse techniques for achieving the subjugation of bodies and the control of populations, marking the beginning of an era of "bio-power"' (1990, 149). The following will discuss how Foucault sees power operating over individuals and populations.

First, Foucault argues that power is a force that dominates in the form of an 'intensification of the body' (1990, 107). In the seventeenth-century, he claims power 'centred on the body as a machine' in that the body was seen as something which could be improved and utilised more effectively (Foucault 1990, 139). Foucauldian scholars Dreyfus and Rabinow suggest that human beings within this domain were considered a 'resource' however only insofar as they could 'contribute to the strength of the state' (1983, 13). Foucault argues that this power was concerned with dominating the following aspects of the human body: 'its disciplining, the optimization of its capabilities, the extortion of its forces, the parallel increase of its usefulness and its docility, its integration into systems of efficient and economic controls (1990, 139).

Foucault claims that the way the human body was dominated was through '*disciplines*' (1990, 139). Disciplines refer to the way in which the body is 'manipulated, shaped, trained' and in turn 'obeys, responds, becomes skillful, and increases its forces' (Foucault 1977, 139). In another text by Foucault, notably *Discipline and Punish* (1977), the soldier is used to illustrate this process. A variety of disciplinary measures are taken to ensure the soldier has proper stance, correct posture and appropriate gestures when in marching or using weaponry (1977, 135). Furthermore, Foucault suggests that disciplinary power is 'embodied' in other institutions' such as universities, secondary schools, and the workplace, including medical and administrative institutions. He argues that all these places represent a space in which the body is carefully manipulated and disciplined (Foucault 1990, 140-141).

Second, Foucault claims that power is a force which controls the 'species body' or 'population' (1990, 25). He argues that one of the major 'innovations in the eighteenth century was the 'emergence of population' (1990, 25). This particular process developed when: '[g]overnments perceived that they were not dealing simply with subjects, or even with a "people," but with "population," with its specific phenomena and its peculiar variables: birth and death rates, life expectancy, fertility, state of health, frequency of illnesses, patterns of diet and habitation (1990, 25).

In addition, the way in which the population was controlled was through what Foucault terms '*regulatory controls*' (1990, 139). This refers to the process in which the state collected statistical

data on all biological matters concerning the social body, including all possible variables. In due process, regulatory controls were put in place. For instance, surveillance systems were installed to monitor populations, and medical examinations became a standard norm. Furthermore Foucault argues that there was 'extremely meticulous orderings of space' (Foucault 1990, 145). Garland in his text *Punishment and Modern Society* (1991)⁹, suggests this latter form of regulatory control was most clearly depicted for Foucault in Jeremy Bentham's architectural design of the 'Panopticon' prison (1991, 146). Bentham's prison was designed with a central inspection tower, so inmates at all times were to be visually seen by their guards. This continual visibility was supposedly designed to increase vulnerability which 'induces self-control' on 'behalf of inmates' (Garland 1991, 146). For Foucault, this represented the 'perfection of power' as the inmates are 'caught up in a power relation in which they are the bearers' (1977, 201).

Foucault claims that these two distinct forms of power (disciplinary and regulatory) remained separate until the nineteenth-century in which they combined to form a 'bio-power' which is recognisable within our own contemporary period (1990, 144-145)¹⁰. In addition, he claims that sex is what united these two forms of power in the nineteenth-century because 'sex was a means of access to the life of the body and the life of the species. It was employed as a standard for the disciplines and as a basis for regulation' (1990, 14). He concludes that power does not repress,

⁹ According to Garland, Foucault also saw this regulatory process as a form of 'normalization' because this method of surveillance was concerned with correction not punishment, thus incidents of non-conformity were dealt with by sanctions that involved 'exercises and training' designed to 'bring conduct into line' and induce self-control (1991, 145).

¹⁰ Taylor (1986, 74) including Dreyfus and Rabinow (1983, 134), similarly agree that this type of power is characteristic of our contemporary society in that a variety of surveillance systems are set up in order to monitor and record a variety of human enterprises.

rather it controls individuals and the social body in order to 'normalize society' (1990, 144).

Bio-Power and Sexuality

Foucault argues that bio-power did not repress sexuality, rather it created a 'proliferation of sexualities' from the nineteenth-century onward (1990, 48)¹¹. He claims that the way in which power constructed new sexualities was through the medical, political and administrative community who at the time were preoccupied with the sex of children, women and men (1990, 103). As such, these institutions defined what was normal as opposed to abnormal in regards to sexual behaviour (Foucault 1990, 144). Thus Foucault argues that the increase of sexualities was invented through both 'systems of power' and 'strategies of knowledge' (1990, 105-106). Dreyfus and Rabinow describe this as a process in which 'knowledge and power combined in a specific mechanism constructed around sexuality' (1983, 171).

In addition, Foucault claims that in order for bio-power to 'take charge of life', sex had to be 'managed, inserted into systems of utility, regulated for the greater good' and 'made to function according to an optimum' (1990, 24, 143). Thus sex itself became the source in which power could control both the individual and the population simultaneously. Foucault argues that because sex had to function to an optimum, 'four great lines of attack' were made on individuals

¹¹ Foucauldian scholar Barry Smart suggests, Foucault's idea of power needs to be 'conceptualized not in terms of repression and law but in terms of positive and productive social technologies, associated tactics, and strategies' (1991, 203).

and their bodies (1990, 146). Furthermore, each line of attack was constructed by both disciplinary and regulatory power. Foucault describes these attacks as developing through the 'sexualization of childhood', the 'hysterization of women', the 'psychiatrization of perversions' and lastly the 'socialization of procreative behaviour' (1990, 153-154).

The first line of attack was on children and their bodies. According to Foucault, in the eighteenth-century, a great deal of discussion developed around the topic of children and their sexuality. Children 'posed physical and moral' including 'individual and collective dangers' across the entire social spectrum (Foucault 1990, 104). Such threatening adolescents included 'children wise beyond their years, precocious little girls' and 'ambiguous schoolboys' and Foucault claims that a great campaign developed in order to end this 'epidemic menace' (1990, 40, 104).

Foucault argues that this campaign developed new 'strategies' to deal with children and their sexualities (Foucault 1990, 105). One strategy included new architectural developments designed to segregate the two sexes. For instance, education institutions were constructed to include boys and girls dormitories and restrooms. Another strategy included forcing children to speak about sex. Those involved in this process included parents, teachers, doctors, administrators and psychologists. Foucault argues that the whole purpose of this ordeal was in order to develop a 'science' on children's sexuality (1990, 104). He terms this science a '*pedagogization of children's sex*' in which the sex of children is a source of both medical and political interest (1990, 104).

The second line of attack was on women and their bodies. Foucault claims that this offence on women's bodies occurred in three ways. First, the female body was studied and 'analysed' by the medical community as it was considered the key source that ensured the survival of the population and the 'safeguarding of society' (Foucault 1990, 104, 147). Second, the female body was 'qualified' as biologically responsible for the health and well-being of children (Foucault 1990, 104). Foucault claims that this responsibility for mothers lasted 'throughout the entire period of their child's education' (1990, 104). Third, the female body was 'disqualified' by the medical community when it posed a threat to the survival of the human species (Foucault 1990, 104). Foucault claims that there was a variety of pathologies associated exclusively with women. He defines this process as the '*hysterization of women's bodies*' and argues that the 'nervous woman constituted the most visible form of this hysterization' (1990, 104). Thus some women were seen as compromising the survival of the social species. Foucault concedes that the body of woman was 'thoroughly saturated with sexuality' because it went through a threefold process in which it was 'analysed', 'qualified' and 'disqualified' (1990, 104).

The third line of attack was on couples and their fertility. According to Foucault, a number of measures were taken by the medical community to ensure couples were fertile, as they were responsible for maintaining the survival of the population (1990, 104). Dreyfus and Rabinow argue that this process demonstrates how the 'conjugal couple' were given both 'medical and social responsibilities' (1983, 172). Foucault claims that a number of theories developed concerning the matter of birth-control.

First, a theory of 'degenerescence' developed which concerned the biological processes of life such as genetics. This theory concerned what type of off-spring one would produce according to hereditary factors. Foucault argues that these doctors supposedly treated homosexuality as a perversion which was brought on by the illnesses afflicting ones ancestors (1990, 118). Second, a 'eugenics movement' developed in which early eugenicists such as Sade were concerned with 'perfecting the species' by studying and analysing blood (1990, 148). Foucault claims that the study of blood was an aristocratic movement which eventually led to a 'eugenic ordering of society' in which individuals across the entire world were categorised into races. Foucault terms this overall process as the '*socialization of procreative behaviour*' in which an attack was made upon the procreative couple (1990, 104). And the final line of attack was on individuals and their sexuality and occurred in the form of an 'incorporation of perversions' (1990, 42). Foucault defines this process as the 'setting apart the "unnatural" as a specific dimension' in the field of sexuality (1990, 39). The way this occurred was by defining sexual behaviour as either normal as opposed to abnormal thus, '[a]ll behaviour could now be classified along a scale of normalization and pathologization' (Dreyfus and Rabinow 1983, 173). Foucault argues this process is most clearly depicted in texts written by nineteenth-century doctors and psychiatrists who developed an entire new system for classifying sexual behaviour. For instance 'there was Krafft-Ebing's zoophiles and zooerasts, Rohleder's auto-monosexualists; and later, mixoscopophiles, gynecomasts, presbyophiles, sexoesthetic inverts and dyspareunist women' (Foucault 1990, 43). Foucault argues 'the growth of perversions is not a moralizing theme' rather he sees it as 'the real product of the encroachment of a type of power on bodies and their pleasures' (1990, 48).

In summarising, Foucault sees four major attacks occurring on the individual body during the nineteenth-century, notably an attack on 'the hysterical woman, the masturbating child, the Malthusian couple, and the perverse adult' (1990, 105). In Mill's opinion, rather than 'closing down' certain types of sexualities, Foucault saw the 'repressive discourses' during the time as actually creating apparently 'perverse forms of sexuality' (2003, 85). Foucault claims that this process represents how the sex of children, men and women was a 'preoccupation' for medical, political and administrative staff from the nineteenth-century onward (1990, 103). He argues that the result of this process creating a defining of the normal as opposed to abnormal in the matter of individual sexuality and concludes that a 'normalizing society is the historical outcome of a technology of power centred on life' (Foucault 1990, 144).

In conclusion, in *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*, Foucault developed his studies around refuting the idea that sexuality has been repressed from the seventeenth-century onward. Instead he argues that the modern period is 'the age of multiplication: a dispersion of sexualities' and a 'strengthening of their disparate forms' (1990, 37). In Foucault's opinion, the term 'sexuality' did not exist until the nineteenth-century and the reason it does is due to 'fields of knowledge' dealing with sex and 'systems of power' which constrain sex. In Foucault's opinion, these processes enabled the 'very production of sexuality' and the term 'sexuality' 'is thus 'the name that can be given to a historical construct' (1990, 105).

This chapter has introduced Foucault's concept of 'bio-power' which he develops in the first volume entitled *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction* (1990). It has been shown that Foucault sees bio-power developing in the seventeenth-century which in effect caused the rise of economic capitalism. Before this period, he claims sovereign-power was the main form of power exercised over state citizens. Furthermore this chapter has included a discussion on how Foucault sees bio-power operating in two ways: via a disciplinary power concerned with controlling the human body, and a regulatory power concerned with controlling the population. And lastly, this chapter has demonstrated how Foucault sees an increase of sexualities developing in the nineteenth-century through four lines of attacks on individuals and their sexuality: The first and second attack was on children and women's sexuality. The third attack was on the procreative couple and the last attack was made on those that were considered perverted. In conclusion, Foucault argues the term sexuality is a nineteenth-century invention which was developed through a definitional process, in which the normal and pathological was clearly defined. His overall argument is sexual repression did not develop in the seventeenth-century, rather there was an increase of diverse forms of sexualities. Thus he perceives modernity as a period which created and constructed new and diverse forms of sexuality such as 'the hysterical woman, the masturbating child, the Malthusian couple, and the perverse adult' (1990, 105).

CHAPTER THREE – *Issues with Sex*

This chapter explores Foucault's concept of 'problematization' which he develops in his second volume of *The History of Sexuality* entitled *The Use of Pleasure* (1985). Foucault argues sex was an 'ethical problem' in Greek and Greco-Roman society during fourth century B.C (1985, 36). He claims that this phenomenon is portrayed within various ancient texts which discuss a variety of issues relating to human sexuality. Foucault argues that this demonstrates a 'problematization of sexuality' during classical antiquity (1985, 13, 36). In addition, he suggests the way of dealing with these problems was ethical and occurred through a form of 'moral reflection' which he terms 'practices of the self' (1985, 11-13, 92). Through a critique of the ancient texts, Foucault concludes that the purpose of practices of the self was to 'stylize' a sexual freedom which would ultimately result in one's life becoming an oeuvre (1985, 13, 97). This practice of 'self-formation' according to Bernauer and Mahon can be essentially understood as 'the way we fashion our freedom' (1994, 143).

This chapter is divided into two sections entitled 'Problematization' and 'Moral Problematization of Pleasures'. The first section will discuss the concept of problematization which Foucault identifies as a historical form of analysis which examines the process of both problem and solution-making ([1984] 1991, 388). Following this will be a discussion on how Foucault sees sex as problematic in both classical antiquity and early Christianity. Foucault claims that in each era there were similar problems surrounding the practice of sex, notably a concern around the

following themes: fear, conduct, image and abstinence.

The second section of this chapter will discuss what Foucault terms a 'moral problematization of pleasure' in classical antiquity. Foucault claims that there are four themes within the classical texts that demonstrate sex was a moral and 'ethical problem during this period' (1985, 36). First, the theme of *aphrodisia* which means sexual pleasures. Second the theme of *chresis*, which refers to the use of sexual pleasures. Third, the theme of *enkrateia*, which is the attitude one adopts toward pleasures. The last theme Foucault identifies is *sophrosyne*, which is the goal one seeks to obtain in their use of pleasures through *telos* which is the process one undergoes in order to establish a moral conduct.

Problematization

In an interview with Rabinow and conducted shortly before his death, Foucault characterised his current work as 'problematization' ([1984] 1991, 384). This term refers to an analysis of 'what has made possible the transformation of the difficulties and obstacles of a practice into a general problem for which one proposes diverse practical solutions' (Foucault [1984] 1991, 389). This is a form of analysis concerned with how problem and solution-making is conducted by the individual. In addition, Foucault further claims that problematization is a practice in which the individual steps back from their everyday life in order to analyse their actions as an 'object of

thought'. The purpose of this process is to question the 'meaning', 'condition' and 'goal' underlying particular 'objects of thought' which in turn influences one's actions (Foucault [1984] 1991, 388). This process of problematization, according to Flynn¹² is simply a 'charting the experience in question' (1994, 38).

Foucault argues that in order to commence his studies on sexuality in early antiquity 'it was necessary to locate the areas of experience and the forms in which sexual behaviour is problematized, becoming an object of moral concern' (1985, 23-24). In other words, Foucault's analysis attempts to isolate the ways in which sex is problematic in history and to determine the kind of practices of the self that developed in response to these problems. Bernauer and Mahon suggest Foucault was investigating a 'historical ontology of ourselves' and the manner in which we 'fashioned ourselves as ethical subjects' (1994, 148). Foucault situates his historical analysis by arguing that the problems with sex in early antiquity were similar with those in early Christianity. He identifies four key similarities between each historical period in which sex was problematic. These problems are defined as: fear, conduct, image and abstinence.

First, a general '*fear*' of the sexual act itself existed in both societies. In the Christian tradition, individuals connected 'pleasure to the realm of the devil' thus a genuine fear circulated around its

¹² Thomas Flynn in mapping Foucault's historical methods, suggests problematization enabled Foucault to write the history of a 'problem' rather than of a 'period' which freed him of the 'obligation to exhaustive research of historical sources' (1994, 42).

practice (Foucault 1985, 16). Whereas in classical antiquity, early Greeks like Soranus believed sexual pleasure was more detrimental to health than 'virginity and plain abstinence' (Foucault 1985, 16). Thus individuals in Greek society were generally fearful of the illnesses they believed the 'illicit use of sex' would bring about (Foucault 1985, 16). Such illicit practices included excess sexual activity and onanism (masturbation).

Second, the idea of '*conduct*' constituted a concern in both historical periods. For instance, early Christians were encouraged to exercise 'virtue' and 'good morals' in their sexual conduct (Foucault 1985, 17). This notion of conduct was supposedly handed down from the Greeks who emphasised the notion of 'inner strength' and 'self-mastery' over sexual desires (Foucault 1985, 17). Early Greeks like Saint Francis of Sales urged his disciples to exercise sexual virtue and fidelity in the same manner in which the elephant does. For example, the elephant has good sexual virtue by mating only every three years with the same partner and also practises good hygiene by bathing straight after sexual intercourse. Foucault claims that each era was concerned with an 'ideal of conduct' in matters of sexual practice (1985, 17).

Third, the idea of '*image*' was a genuine problem surrounding sex in both the early Greek and later Christian epoch. Foucault argues that this is most readily understood as a fear of stigmatisation or stereotyping in which a 'natural stigma' is attached to certain visual sexual representations such as homosexuals who dress and act like women (1985, 19-21). He claims that this particular sexual image was a source of negative judgement by others in both historical

periods and suggest that a stigma is still attached to this sexual imagery in contemporary Western society. Foucault argues that an overall anxiety and fear of certain sexual images has troubled individuals not only in classical antiquity and Christianity but throughout all historical periods (Foucault 1985, 19-20).

Lastly, the notion of sexual '*abstinence*' in which the individual renounces sexual activity, is a 'familiar figure in Christianity' and 'equally known in pagan antiquity' (Foucault 1985, 20). Foucault notes that sexual abstinence in Christianity was exercised for religious purposes in which virginity was seen as an practice which would 'give access to a spiritual experience of truth and love that sexual activity excludes' (Foucault 1985, 20). The practice of sexual renunciation in classical antiquity however was popular amongst athletes who were committed to exercising 'self-restraint' over sexual cravings (Foucault 1985, 20). Others who engaged in sexual abstinence during this time were motivated by the idea it would lead them to a higher source of truth or knowledge.

Thus Foucault conceives sex as being problematic in both Greco-Roman and Christian societies in which fear, image, conduct and abstinence were the primary concerns informing how one experienced sexuality. He warns however, '[i]t would be a mistake to infer that the sexual morality of Christianity and that of paganism form a continuity' (1985, 20-21). In that it would be an error to see a similar motivation informing how individuals experienced sexuality in both historical periods.

Foucault argues that the early Christians experienced sexuality through 'codes of behaviours' in which sexual austerity was 'imposed' on all individuals in the same manner by the rules and values developed by the Church (1985, 21). Arnold Davidson¹³, who discusses Foucault's historical methods of analysis, suggests that Foucault understood this to be a 'moral code' which consists of 'the rules that determine which actions are forbidden, permitted, or required' (1994, 228). Foucault claims that '[t]he Church and the pastoral ministry stressed the principles of a morality whose precepts were compulsory and whose scope was universal' (Foucault 1985, 21).

The Greeks and Greco-Romans however, experienced sexuality through 'forms of subjectivity' in which the rules and values during the time were 'proposed' and 'transmitted in a diffuse manner' (Foucault 1985, 25, 29). With regards to sexual austerity, individuals were encouraged to develop 'self-reflection', 'self-knowledge' and self-examination' as there was no overall institution or system determining how one should behave and act in their sexual activities (Foucault 1985, 29). Cohen, in his studies of classical antiquity, suggests there did in fact exist a legal governance informing how one should behave. He sees this represented in the law of *hubris* which forbade a variety of 'sexual misconducts' including 'rape', 'sexual aggression' and 'violations of sexual honour' (Cohen, 1991, 172-173)¹⁴.

¹³ Arnold Davidson argues Foucault's examination of ancient sexuality is first and foremost a study of ethics. He is critical of scholars who attack Foucault for his use and interpretation of the ancient texts because he visualises Foucault's ethics as a way to 'write history' (1994, 116)

¹⁴ Cohen in his article entitled *Sexuality, Violence, and the Law of Hubris* suggests a more thorough account of the 'social context and moral psychology of the ideology, social practices, and legal prosecutions involving *hubris* would make a fundamental contribution to our understanding of Athenian society' (1991, 171)

In summarising, Foucault argues that there were similarities and differences in the way in which early Greeks and later Christian's problematized sex. However, he asserts the major difference between these two epochs is that within classical antiquity 'the demands for sexual austerity were not organized into a unified, coherent, authoritarian moral system that was imposed on everyone in the same manner; they were more in the nature of a supplement' (1985, 21). Regarding this analogy, Arnold Davidson suggests Foucault ultimate aim was to elaborate a theory of ethics 'as a framework for interpreting these Greek and Roman problematizations of sex' (1994, 117-118).

The Moral Problematization of Pleasures

In the chapter entitled '*The Moral Problematization of Pleasures*' Foucault argues that the 'manner' in which early Greek and Athenians enjoyed pleasure 'was considered by them to be an ethical problem' (1985, 36). He claims that in classical ethics, an emphasis 'is placed on the relationship with the self that enabled a person to keep from getting carried away by the appetites and pleasures, to maintain a mastery and superiority over them' (1985, 31). Arnold Davidson claims 'Foucault took ethics to be one part of the study of morals' and thus his concept of ethics means the 'study of the self's relation to itself' (1994, 228). Notably, Foucault warns readers that ethics in classical antiquity was a 'male ethics' which was 'made by men for men' (1985, 47). Thus he argues that a male ethics was developed to counteract the various problems associated with sex during classical antiquity¹⁵.

¹⁵ In her critical guide to Foucault's work, Sarah Mills argues that Foucault is a 'very androcentric, or male-orientated thinker' as his analysis of classical ethics is essentially a 'male-orientated ethics' that excludes women (2003, 7)

Foucault argues that there were four ways in which sex was problematic during this period. First, there were concerns regarding sexual pleasure (*aphrodisia*). Second, there were issues concerning how one should perform acts of pleasure (*chresis*). Third, there were problems regarding the attitude one should adopt in dealing with pleasure (*enkrateia*). And finally, Foucault argues there existed a concern regarding *sophrosyne*, which is the goal one seeks to obtain in their use of pleasures through the process of *telos* which is what one does in establishing a moral conduct. The following discussion will demonstrate how Foucault sees sex as problematic in classical antiquity.

Foucault argues that the term *aphrodisia* in classical antiquity means the 'acts, gestures, and contacts that produce a certain form of pleasure' (1985, 40). He notes there is a difficulty in defining this term outside of sexual pleasures, as there is no long list describing what constitutes acts of *aphrodisia*. He includes food and wine to the list of Greek and Roman pleasures because they are discussed in the ancient texts, thus he argues there were problems concerning their use. Similarly, James Davidson¹⁶ in his study on the 'consuming passions' in antiquity argues that sex, food and drinking were three ways in which individuals derived a 'bodily gratification' (1998, xvi). In addition, Foucault claims that *aphrodisia* was a 'domain of moral concern' during classical antiquity, due to two specific issues surrounding its practice (1985, 37).

¹⁶ James Davidson argues Foucault was informed by a 'Platonic mirage' or false impression of antiquity via his examination of comic fragments, vase paintings and Attic oratory (1998, xxiii). Thus he argues the ambivalence regarding the topic of women has frustrated some scholars into utilising a 'two-type model' which defines women as 'wives and the Rest' (1998, 74).

First, there was a problem regarding the 'number and frequency of acts' of *aphrodisia* or how often one should engage in acts of pleasure (Foucault 1985, 45). Foucault argues that this represents a 'quantitative' concern regarding pleasure which is based on an axis of 'moderation or excess' (1985, 44). The notion of moderation and excess is represented by the distinction Plato made in the first book of *Laws*, between self-restraint and self-indulgence. Plato regarded lust as an act of excess, in which the individual is driven into a state of distraction for the majority of his life. According to Foucault, Plato thought of lust as a 'sickness of the body' or a 'disorder' because it could only result in producing systems of excess pleasure or excess pain (1985, 45). Cohen in his historical analysis of classical antiquity argues it was not the concept of moderation and excess that informed how individuals behaved, rather there existed a 'politics of reputation' based on the idea of honour and shame (1991, 200-201). Thus Cohen's work signifies individuals were also concerned with what sort of sexual activities were honourable or shameful¹⁷.

The second problem Foucault identifies is a concern regarding the actual performance of *aphrodisia*, particularly with sexual acts between couples. He argues that a 'role of polarity' existed, in which there was a clear distinction regarding 'the one who performs the activity and the one on whom the activity is performed' (1985, 46-47). This distinction was based on an axis of 'passive' and 'active' roles, in which women, boys and slaves constituted the latter according to Foucault (1990, 47). In his historical interpretation, James Davidson, argues Foucault is

¹⁷ David Cohen in *Law, Sexuality and Society*, describes his studies as 'an exercise in historical legal sociology' in which his texts examines why Athenian law 'marked certain forms of sexual and religious behaviour as deviant' (1991, 5). Cohen's work demonstrates there were laws during classical antiquity that proscribed certain types of behaviour, thus challenging Foucault central hypothesis that no overall authoritarian system existed within this historical period.

presenting Greek sexual relations as a 'zero-sum game' in which the 'active' or 'masculine' partner seeks to dominate the 'passive' or 'subordinate' partner (Davidson, 1998 169-179). Davidson suggests this representation of Athenian society is misleading, thus should not be read as factual.

In his overall interpretation, Foucault argues that it was not so much the acts of *aphrodisia* which constituted a moral concern, rather it was the way in which they were practised. In Plato's writing, *aphrodisia* was classified as a natural and necessary act and according to Foucault, 'was radically different from the experiences of the flesh that would develop later' (1985, 48). In classical antiquity however, Foucault argues that *aphrodisia* was problematized because of the notion of excess and moderation, and passive and active roles within its use. Thus the acts themselves are not problematic, rather it was the manner in which they were practised that concerned Greek individuals in their sexual experiences.

Foucault argues that the second way sex was problematic during this period is reflected in the notion of *chresis*. He claims this term means 'the way in which the individual establishes his relation to the rule and recognizes himself as obliged to put it into practice' (1985, 27). This process can be understood as 'the way in which the individual establishes his or her relation to moral obligations and rules' (Davidson 1994, 118). Foucault claims that a degree of 'prudence', 'reflection', and 'calculation' was involved in this practice during classical antiquity, as it was not simply a matter of complying to what was permitted or forbidden (1985, 54). The early Athenians may well have respected the overall laws and cultural customs of their time, however

because they lacked an actual code of behaviour their moral rules were far more ambiguous (Foucault 1985, 54). Through an interpretation of texts by Xenophon, Socrates, Aristotle and Demosthenes, Foucault argues that there was three 'strategies' or principles individuals developed during classical antiquity for dealing with acts of pleasure: need, timeliness and status (1985, 54).

Foucault suggests that the lesson of Socrates as put forth by Xenophon, stressed a concern for limiting oneself in the practice of *aphrodisia* 'unless the need were pressing' (1985, 55). The objective was not to reduce acts of pleasure from ones life, but rather to 'maintain' them through a '*strategy of need*' (1985, 54-56). This principle of need 'made possible an equilibrium in the dynamics of pleasure and desire' (Foucault 1985, 56). It was seen as an act of moderating oneself in acts of pleasure, of not indulging beyond what was deemed necessary or natural. Furthermore this strategy of need also encompassed the problem of immoderation, which does not mean sexually-deprived but refers to 'seeking sensual pleasures in the gratification of unnatural desires' (1985, 57). This is a process in which an individual uses another in order to seek or gratify their own unnatural or depraved desires. This particular scenario was deemed immoral or shameful as it encompassed a selfishness on behalf of the individual, as it did not constitute as a general and natural need worthy of satisfying.

The second strategy in the Athenian use of pleasure is '*timeliness*' (Foucault 1985, 57). Foucault argues that the act of prudence and calculation in Athenian morality is largely depicted in this

principle of timeliness. According to Foucault, Plato in his text *Laws*, emphasised a concern for engaging in acts of pleasure 'at the right time and in the right amount' (1985, 57). He considers that this notion of 'the right time' demonstrates a concern for timeliness in Athenian practices of pleasures. For instance, it was considered the right time for females to procreate once they reached the age of twenty-one. Furthermore sexual intercourse was seen as more favourable and productive if it occurred at night. This principle of timeliness was concerned with determining the 'opportune time' in which to engage in acts of pleasure (Foucault 1985, 57).

The last strategy was in order to address any issues which could compromise ones '*status*' in early antiquity (Foucault 1987, 59). Foucault claims that 'standards of sexual morality were always tailored to one's way of life' in which individuals like Epicrates and Hiero were advised to uphold 'rigorous standards of sexual conduct' as they were important figures of Athenian society (Foucault 1985, 60). Thus depending on one's social standing, the incorrect use of pleasures could damage one's reputation therefore for some early Greeks and Roman's, 'the art of making pleasure also had to be adapted to suit the user and his personal status' (Foucault 1985, 59). The idea of need, timeliness and status reflects the way 'one had to take different factors into account' in their sexual practices (Foucault 1985, 54). Because there was no universal system like the Church or State dictating rules and values, Foucault argues that the way of dealing with problems associated with sex was through these three strategies of *chresis*.

The third way Foucault perceives sex as problematic during this period is reflected in the notion of *enkrateia* which he describes as the 'ethical work' one performs in order to 'transform oneself into the ethical subject of one's behaviour' (1985, 27). This means the 'self-forming activity or ethical work that one performs on oneself (Davidson 1994, 114). Thus *enkrateia* can be understood as the ethical work carried out by individual in putting their sexuality into practice. Foucault argues that ethical work (in the case of sexual austerity) can include an all-out 'renunciation of pleasures' or a 'relentless combat' for self-control over the self and desires (1990, 27) It is this latter form of ethical work that Foucault sees as predominately exercised in early antiquity. Moreover, he identifies five ways in which Greek and Greco-Roman's carried out their ethical work.

First, Foucault suggests a struggle was involved for early Athenians in their ethical work. According to Foucault, this signified that 'one could behave ethically only by adopting a combative attitude toward pleasures' (1985, 66). In other words, that in order to exercise sexual moderation as opposed to excess, and self-restraint as opposed to self-indulgence, and accord to the principles of need, timeliness and status, one must be in a constant state of battle to control their sexual desires.

Second, Foucault claims that this battle must be fought within the self. He sees this battle as an 'agnostic relationship with oneself' in which the body and soul are in conflict (1985, 67). This phenomenon is depicted in Plato's *Republic*. Plato distinguishes the soul into two parts, a

stronger/weaker and a better/worse part and suggests one generally opts to obtain the former type of soul. Thus Foucault argues that the primary goal in this battle with the self or the soul is to acquire victory of 'oneself over oneself' (1985, 69).

Third, Foucault notes that 'the intensity of desire and pleasures did not disappear' but if one could 'master' the first two components of ethical work, that is, master a combative attitude and master inner conflict, then one could speak of 'victory' over oneself (1985, 6). Many Greek figures like Plato, Xenophon, Diogenes, Antiphon and Aristotle defined sexual moderation in terms like ruling desires, or governing pleasures. Obtaining power over these sensations thus represents the 'setting up of a solid and stable state of rule of the self over the self' (Foucault 1985, 69).

The fourth way Foucault argues that the ancient Greeks conducted their ethical work was by ruling oneself in the same manner of ruling one's wife, one's estate and one's servants (1985, 71). Foucault draws on Xenophon's work who describes the disorganised soul as corresponding to a disorganised household. This metaphor suggests 'a man would be moderate only insofar as he was able to rule his desires as if they were his servants' (Foucault 1985, 70-71). Thus in order to rule one's pleasures, one must be able to rule other aspects of one's life such as the family, household and business.

And lastly, Foucault claims that self-mastery in itself required ongoing training and exercise. In classical antiquity, the Greek athlete served as an important reminder to exercise both body and mind in order to 'reduce every pleasure to nothing more than the elementary satisfaction of needs' (1985, 73). This two-fold training of both body and mind implied that a 'victory over self' could be achieved and thus produce a happy and balanced life (Foucault 1985, 73). Foucault notes that in order to master one's pleasures, one must first rule the body and mind through ongoing training.

The final way in which Foucault sees sex as problematic in classical antiquity is reflected through what he terms *telos* which refers to the process one undergoes in order to establish a 'moral conduct' (Foucault 1985, 28). Foucault defines this as a process in which 'the individual delimits that part of himself that will form the object of his moral practice' (1985, 28). Arnold Davidson suggests that the term can be understood as the overall 'goal' one seeks in behaving ethically (1998, 228). It is an ongoing process in which the individual is committed to a certain way of being. In Foucault's opinion, the ultimate goal pursued by the early Greek and Greco-Roman's was to reach a state of *sophrosyne*, which is the complete 'self-mastery' and 'self-restraint' over one's pleasures and desires (1985, 78). However, in order to reach this state, the individual must undergo the process of *telos* in order to obtain the ultimate goal which is *sophrosyne*. The idea of *sophrosyne* is linked to two ideas: freedom and truth.

According to Foucault, the idea of freedom was linked to *sophrosyne*, as it signified one was not a slave to one's pleasures and desires. The greatest danger for the individual was to become 'bondage' to pleasures, therefore '[t]o be free in relation to pleasures was to be free of their authority' (Foucault 1985, 79). For some individuals this state could be reached through fidelity in one's marriage or through complete sexual renunciation. In addition, Foucault argues that the idea of truth was linked to *sophrosyne*. He suggests that these two ideas were joined by a 'reason' or *logos* which is 'constitutive of the moderate subject' (1985, 89). McHoul and Grace in their critique of Foucault's ethics, suggest that by 'developing ones capacity for self-control, one simultaneously develops the capacity for reason', thus 'to rein in one's desires is to bring them under control of this form of reason' (1998, 105). It is this form of reasoning or truth that Foucault argues is essential for the individual in order to establish a moderate self and 'a life of moderation' (1985, 89).

In Foucault's overall interpretation of the ancient texts, he argues that the 'demands of sexual austerity' during classical antiquity 'were not organized into a unified, coherent, authoritarian moral system that was imposed on everyone in the same manner' (1985, 210). Instead he notes that the rules and values associated with sexuality were 'proposed' through 'different styles of moderation or strictness' (1985, 21). Because there were no overall universal principles proscribed through institutions like the Church or State, Foucault argues sexual activity was 'constituted, recognized, and organized as a moral issue' (1985, 250).

In concluding, Foucault develops his studies on sexuality in classical antiquity by perceiving the practice of *aphrodisia* in classical antiquity as 'problematized' by philosophers and doctors in classical Greek culture of the fourth century B.C. He argues that the emphasis in these ancient texts was 'to remain free from interior bondage to the passions, to achieve a mode of being that could be defined by the full enjoyment of oneself, or the perfect supremacy of oneself over oneself' (Foucault 1985, 31).

This chapter has introduced Foucault's concept of 'problematization' which he develops in his second volume of *The History of Sexuality*. It has been demonstrated that Foucault refers to 'problematization' as a historical method of analysing the process of problem and solution-making and is the term he assigns to the way in which the early Greek and Greco-Roman's understood and practised their sexuality. In addition, this chapter has illustrated how Foucault sees sex as problematic in both classical antiquity and early Christianity through a general fear of sex, and through a concern surrounding conduct, image and sexual abstinence. Furthermore, this discussion has addressed the various ways Foucault sees a 'moral problematization of pleasure' developing in classical antiquity. For Foucault there were four problems associated with sex during classical antiquity. The first problem concerned moderation and excess in acts of *aphrodisia*. The second problem was with the notion of *chresis* which emphasised need, timeliness and status in one's sexual activities. The third problem was reflected in the idea of *enkrateia* which encouraged the individual to develop a combative attitude toward acts of pleasure. The final problem concerned the manner in which one seeks the goal of self-mastery,

freedom and truth or *sophrosyne* which firstly required the individual to establish a moral self through a process of *telos*.

CHAPTER FOUR – Sex and the Self

This remaining chapter discusses Foucault's concepts surrounding sex and the self which he develops in his final volume of *The History of Sexuality* entitled *The Care of the Self* (1986). Foucault argues that a new phenomenon developed in the first and second century A.D which he defines as 'the cultivation of the self' (1986, 43). The principle feature of this concept is the idea that 'one must take care of oneself' through a variety of external and internal practices (1986, 43). In order to do so, the individual must conform to a certain way of living or 'art of living' by developing oneself into an 'ethical subject' (Foucault 1986, 67). In addition, Foucault argues that this culture of the self caused a 'crisis of the subject' in which the individual was confronted with new difficulties in forming their sexual and ethical self (1986, 95). As a result, there was an increased 'mistrust of pleasures' which was reflected in three main fields during the time: medicine, marriage and erotic literature (Foucault 1986, 9).

The first section of this chapter entitled 'The Care of the Self' will discuss how Foucault conceives of a culture of the self developing in the early Christian period. He argues that this phenomenon originated in early classical antiquity but had adapted over time. In addition, he claims that the care of the self is an ethical practice which closely corresponds to medical thought as it includes caring for the body. He further argues that to care for the self is a practice that requires work, self-knowledge, and a common goal.

The second section of the chapter entitled 'A Crisis of the Sexual Self' will illustrate the ways in which Foucault sees a 'crisis of the subject' developing during this historical period (1986, 95). First he claims that a pathology of sex developed in medicine which resulted in a strict regimen of sexual activities due to the fear of the health problems associated with its practice. Second, there was a stronger emphasis on marriage, and the role of the wife. Foucault argues that there was an enhanced condemnation toward adultery and sex outside of marriage. Third, because of the importance associated with marriage, Foucault concedes that there was a heightened disinterest toward the love of boys (1986, 189). Foucault argues that the changing attitudes toward boys and love created a new erotics which emphasised heterogeneous love over that of boys and men (1986, 228).

The Care of the Self

Foucault argues that in the first and second century A.D, a new phenomenon developed which he terms 'the cultivation of the self' (1986, 43). He stresses the underlying principle of this phenomenon is the idea 'that says one must take care of themselves' by 'testing oneself, examining oneself, monitoring oneself in a series of clearly defined exercises' (1986, 43, 68). Stated in an interview with Fornet-Betancourt, Becker and Gomez-Muller, Foucault claims that the care of the self is an ethical practice in which 'individual liberty' and 'civic liberty' are combined to produce a certain way of living or 'art of living' ([1984] 1994, 4; Foucault 1986, 45).

The goal of caring for the self is to acquire what is commonly known as 'the good life' (Wolfgang Detel 2005, 93-94). In his analysis of Foucault's third volume, Wolfgang Detel¹⁸ argues that the care of the self is an 'ancient dietetics' in which the primary aim was not to prolong life, but rather optimise 'the quality of life' which means to maximise 'pleasurable health within natural bounds' (2005, 9). Foucault argues that the care of the self originated in classical antiquity, however he asserts that overtime 'the relationship with the self' had 'intensified' (1986, 45). Foucault identifies five elements that created the phenomenon that one must care of the self.

First, the idea of caring for the self is found in a variety of first and second century philosophical texts. In reference to authors such as Zeno, Musonius, Seneca, Marcus Aurelius, Epictetus and Plutarch, Foucault argues the caring for oneself is depicted within these texts as a practice of 'taking care of the soul' in which 'man must attend to himself' (1986, 46-47). Such examples include Epicureans ideas stating that 'the principle of philosophy should be considered as a permanent exercise of the care of oneself' as well as Apuleius's emphasis on 'cultivating the soul' (Foucault 1986, 46). Foucault stresses that the care of the self is considered a permanent and life-long practice and suitable to all individuals of all ages by quoting Epicurus who states, 'It is never too early or too late to care for the well-being of the soul' (1986, 48).

Second, to care for the self requires work or 'labor' in which a 'whole set of occupations' are

¹⁸ Wolfgang Detel argues that the purpose of Foucault's discussion on ancient dietetics is primarily to demonstrate how his 'ethics programme worked' (2005, 94).

employed by the individual in order to become an ethical person (1986, 50). Foucault sees this process occurring in a variety of way. For instance, setting aside time in order to contemplate or reflect on ones life, or memorising 'useful principles' in inspirational texts, or to 'interrupt one's ordinary activities and go into retreat' (Foucault 1986, 50). Additionally, this practice also involves strengthening one's relationship with family and friends. Because the care of the self also requires caring for others, McHoul and Grace argue 'it is much more social art than the ascetics of Plato and Xenophon' in classical antiquity (1998, 106)¹⁹.

Third, the care of the self is in 'close correlation with medical thought and practice' (1986, 54). In other words, the care of the self corresponds to the notion of caring for the body. For Foucault '[a] whole series of medical metaphors is regularly employed to designate the operations necessary for the care of the soul' (1986, 55). For example, Epicurus treated his philosophical school as a 'dispensary of the soul' in which students were considered 'patients' with varying degrees of ailments requiring treatment. For Foucault, this process of treating the mind like a sick body is necessary 'because diseases of the soul – unlike those of the body – do not announce themselves' and as a result 'can go undetected for a long time' (1986, 58).

The individual also requires 'self-knowledge' in order to take care of the self (Foucault 1986, 58).

Foucault claims that this is a process in which individuals test and examine themselves so as to

¹⁹ McHoul and Grace in their guide on Foucault's overall work, argue his final volume on sexuality was still an 'ethical enquiry' on the 'internal relationship of the self to the self' however they argue his analysis was primarily 'an investigation of forms of *controls*' that determine the sexual self (1998, 92)

develop a self-awareness. For instance, individuals like Epicurus experimented with forms of deprivation in order to gauge his level of tolerance, discomfort and so forth. Epicurus would practice fasting in order 'to see how much his pleasure diminished' (Foucault 1986, 59). For the Stoics, 'it was a matter of preparing oneself for possible privations' that may occur in the future (Foucault 1986, 59). Thus by depriving the body of various substances or activities, the individual would develop a self-awareness and knowledge which would aid in caring for the self.

And lastly, the care of the self involves seeking a 'common goal' which is the 'conversion to self' according to Foucault (1986, 64). He describes this as a two-fold process in that once the individual has succeeded in mastering all their 'dependences and enslavements', they are enabled to 'delight in oneself' (1986, 65)²⁰. Foucault claims that '[t]he individual who has finally succeeded in gaining access to himself is, for himself, an object of pleasure' (1986, 66). McHoul and Grace argue that the goal to dominate the self had not changed much since classical antiquity, however these later philosophers added the new aspect of 'enjoyment' to their goal (1998, 106). Thus once the individual has mastered their desires, the practice of caring for the self becomes a pleasurable experience. Foucault claims the care of the self was a phenomenon that developed at the same time that civil law (under the jurisdiction of Augustus) was promoting marriage, protecting the family and condemning adultery (1986, 40). However, the restructuring of political policies and legislation during this era was designed primarily to increase the responsibilities of each individual citizen thus creating a society in which 'one must take care of

²⁰ Clare O'Farrel in her interpretation of this historical period suggests that this 'culture' intended to 'help individuals free themselves from enslaving desires, to allow them to become masters of themselves and to lead a beautiful life which would be an example to others' (2006, 48).

oneself' (Foucault 1986, 43). In his critique of Foucault's three volumes on sexuality, Barry Smart claims that Foucault was attempting to 'represent a different form of moral problematization' than in classical antiquity (1991, 210). Smart argues that Foucault's final volume is 'not an accentuation of taboos' rather it is an analysis of how individuals developed 'a style of conduct that revolves around the question of the self' (1991, 210).

A Crisis of the Sexual Self

Foucault argues that the consequence of this particular phenomenon caused a 'crisis of the subject' in which the individual was confronted with an entirely new set of difficulties to take into account in forming the self into an 'ethical subject' (1986, 67). Foucault claims that this crisis of the self is reflected in the way one sought 'self-mastery' over the self, over the household and over others (Foucault 1986, 95). In addition, he suggests that '[i]t was against the background of this cultivation of the self' in which 'a more intense problematization of the *aphrodisia*' developed (1986, 39, 67).

Arnold Davidson argues that this increased emphasis on sexual austerity should not be interpreted as the beginning of proscriptive rules and regulations determining the individual's sexuality. Rather, it is an ethical process that requires the individual to continually adapt their attitude and actions in order to 'constantly take care of oneself' (1994, 120). Foucault claims that

this increased anxiety concerning the sexual self is depicted in the text of Soranus, Rufus, Mosonius and Seneca (1986, 39). Barry Smart further emphasises that these texts 'do not take the form of plans for a general legislation or restraint of sexual behaviour but the encouragement of even more austerity on the part of the individuals' (1995, 115).

Foucault argues that the consequence of this increased concern for sexual austerity changed the way in which individuals experienced their sexuality. He claims that there was a 'mistrust of the pleasure, an emphasis on their abuse for the body and soul, a valorization of marriage and marital obligations' and 'a disaffection regard to spiritual meaning imputed to the love of boys' (1986, 9). As such, he claims that this mistrust of the pleasures had a unique effect in three main areas: the body and medicine, the wife and the household, and lastly boys and erotic literature. The following will illustrate how Foucault perceives these three developments taking place.

Foucault notes that the first area in which changes developed in the first and second century was in the field of medicine. There was a more 'tighter structuring of life', and more vigilant attention directed toward the body by doctors like Galen, Marcus Aurelius and Rufus (Foucault 1986, 103). McHoul and Grace, claim that ancient medicine was very different from what we now know, as there was 'little emphasis on correction and cure' rather the point was to integrate medicine into the 'management of health and the life of the body' (1998, 107). In addition, Foucault suggests that there developed an increased fear concerning sex because of its 'many connections with disease and with evil' (1986, 237). He identifies four specific developments that

took place in the field of medicine: pathology, complex pathology, sexual therapeutics and the positive effects of sexual abstention. All of these developments had an effect on the individual in constituting their sexual self.

The first development to take place was a 'pathology of sexual activity'. According to Foucault, early physicians like Artaeus including Galen looked upon sex as a practice which could cause 'disease' (1986, 113-114). In addition, a pathology of sexual activity could take two forms. First, there is the disease that is 'marked by a constant excitation' in which sexual release is never complete (Foucault 1986, 113). Such a disease included satyriasis or priapism in which there is an excess, or often uncontrollable sexual desire by a man which at times can be painful. Foucault claims that 'the patient is in a state of constant convulsion, traversed by extreme attacks, which closely resemble epilepsy' (1986, 113). A further disease within this category includes hysteria which is understood as a complaint chiefly concerning women. The second pathology of sexual activity included what Foucault describes as 'unlimited expenditure' or 'a continuous discharge of semen without erection of the penis' (1986, 115). Foucault argues that the Greeks called this gonorrhoea and considered it a 'shameful disease' because it leads to loss of strength, premature ageing and led 'inevitably to death' (Foucault 1986, 115-116).

The second development to take place was a 'complex pathology' of sexual acts (Foucault, 1986, 116). According to Foucault the sexual act itself became associated with 'an abundance of diverse factors' in which one should consider the time, the climate, bodily temperature, and

quality and content of food one has digested before engaging in sexual acts (1986, 116). Foucault argues that this represents the sexual act as 'fragile in which 'the least deviation, the least malaise, risks perturbing them' (1986, 116). Thus a variety of possible illnesses could occur by deviating from the medical norm. In citing Greco-Roman physician Rufus, Foucault lists such possible ailments as: 'digestive disorder, a weakening of sight and hearing, a general weakness of the sense organs, and memory loss, convulsive trembling, pains of the joint, a stabbing pain in the side...' and so forth (1986, 117). Foucault notes that all this complication with sexual activities signified that sexual acts 'must therefore be placed under an extremely careful regimen' (1996, 124).

The third development to take place was that sexuality became a 'source of therapeutic effects' (Foucault 1986, 118). Thus the sexual act not only produces illness but is thought to have healing properties as well. For instance, sex was seen as therapeutic for certain illnesses like 'diseases due to phlegm' or that sex can cure respiratory illnesses, it can increase the appetite, and appease aggressive behaviour (Foucault 1986, 118). According to Foucault, the central debate during that time concerned the health effects of sexual activity and children. Some doctors, like Rufus believed epilepsy and headaches would cease once a child had his his or first sexual experience whereas Aretaeus objected to this theory believing it 'violates the designs of Nature' and 'because it produces or prolongs the disease it aims to cure' (Foucault 1986, 120).

The final development Foucault sees taking place regarding sexuality was the 'positive effects of sexual abstention' (1986, 129). For Foucault, doctors like Artaeus stressed the importance of sexual abstinence for men because a high value was placed on sperm (spermatic humor). Artaeus argued sexual renunciation developed men into 'courageous' beings who became 'bold, daring, and strong as wild beasts' (Foucault 1986, 121). He applied this particular practice to athletes and animals, and argued those men or beasts who 'keep their sperm' become 'superior in strength'. Galen however saw dangers for men who suddenly practice abstinence after years of engaging in sexual activity. According to Foucault, Galen believed men became 'dull and inactive' and obtained a 'sad and hopeless expression of their faces' which he associated with melancholy (1986, 120-121). In addition, the positive effects of sexual abstinence was not applied to women, as it was seen as their destiny to marry and procreate. Foucault argues that sex was not seen as 'evil' nor was sexual abstinence a 'duty', rather there was an increased concern regarding the health effects of sexual activities on the body (1986, 122).

As a result of these four developments, Foucault claims that sex was 'placed under an extremely careful regimen' (1986, 124). This regime is not prescriptive as there was no actual defining of what was permissible or prohibited sexual acts. According to Foucault, 'four variables' are discussed by the early doctors: 'the auspicious occasion for procreation, the age of the subject, the time frame (the season or hour of the day), and the individual temperament' (1986, 125). The following discussion will highlight these variables which Foucault argues constitutes a regimen of sexual acts.

First, Foucault argues that a '*regimen of the aphrodisia and procreation*' developed in which special attention was placed on the how the couple should prepare for sexual reproduction. Foucault stresses that there involved 'a general conditioning of the body and soul' because any possible 'disorders of conception' would be reflected in one's offspring (1986, 125). For example, Athenaeus emphasised that before copulation took place, the body must be free of illness and fatigue and the soul must be 'tranquil' and free of worries (Foucault 1986, 125). Furthermore, there was an emphasis on sexual abstinence before copulation as this allowed the male's sperm to develop strength and potency. For women it was favourable to wait until just after menstruation finished. Foucault notes that there was a further concern regarding ones diet prior to procreating. For instance, women were encouraged not to drink alcohol because the child would come to resemble her state of mind during the act. In addition, both man and woman should purify their bodies and only eat small amounts of food so as not to develop indigestion before the sexual act commenced. McHoul and Grace argue that '[t]hese prohibitions are familiar enough today' however the similarity ends when it comes to advising 'against sex during menstruation' (1998, 109-110).

Second, Foucault claims that there was a concern regarding the '*age of the subject*' in which sexual activity 'must neither be continued too long nor begun too early' (1986, 128). For example, sexual intercourse was seen as detrimental to one's health if it occurred too early or too late in one's life. Athenaeus stressed that boys under the age of fourteen have not yet reached puberty therefore their bodies are not equipped to deal with sexual intercourse as they will tire easily and 'repress their desires from the beginning' (Foucault 1986, 129). Adolescent females were advised

by doctors like Soranus that sex and child-bearing 'could occur as soon as menstruation was regularly established' (1986, 129).

Foucault argues that the early doctors saw winter and spring as the appropriate season in which to procreate thus a regimen was developed around the notion of a '*favourable time*' (1986, 130). He notes that there were many discussions concerning what time of the year and what time of the day couples should copulate. For instance, Plutarch recommended to couples to not have sexual intercourse in the middle of the night nor in the morning because 'there still may be food ill-digested in the stomach' (Foucault 1986, 131). Doctors like Galen and Rufus suggested nature reflected the appropriate time in which to engage in sexual activities. They saw night-time as the appropriate and natural time in which to copulate because the 'women retains sperm better while sleeping' (Foucault 1986, 131).

And lastly Foucault argues that a regimen developed during the fourth century regarding '*individual temperaments*' in relation to sexuality activities (1986, 132). He notes that Rufus emphasised that the body should be at a certain temperature during sexual intercourse. For instance, the body should be 'more or less hot and moist' and not 'cold and dry' and individuals should engage in exercise and good eating to ensure their bodies are in an optimum state (Foucault 1986, 132). Furthermore, Foucault argues that there was an overall emphasis on 'balance' in which individuals should exercise 'neither too fast nor too slow' in which positive activities included walking and horse-riding but not javelin throwing and hot baths because the

body would heat up and cool down too quickly (1986, 132).

Foucault concludes that these regimen were concerned entirely with the body with an emphasis on its 'condition', 'its balances' and 'its ailments' (1986, 133). He sees this as a process in which one must take all necessary precautions in order to 'determine the conditions that least affect the whole combinations of balances' (1986, 125). Foucault claims that all these particulars concerning sex, health, and the body may give the impression that the 'sexual ethics' of the Christian period, including our contemporary science on sex developed from this early field of medicine. However he argues that the 'fundamental differences' was the ways in which individuals integrated these 'precepts' into their everyday life. McHoul and Grace argue that 'Foucault's lesson is clear: don't make history out of easy similarities; make it out of difficult differences' (1998, 111)²¹.

Foucault argues that the second area in which changes developed in the first and second century was with marriage, the household and the role of the wife. He claims that in the texts of classical antiquity, the topic of marriage was secondary to larger social issues like the household and the laws and customs of the city (1985, 147). However in the texts of the first and second century, the topic of marriage 'became a more insistent and more often debated question than in the past'

²¹ McHoul and Grace argue that Foucault does not provide a 'definitive theory on anything' because his investigations are 'conceptual' rather than theoretical. They further claim that Foucault does philosophy as an 'interrogative practice rather than as a search for essentials' (1998, vii-viii)

(Foucault 1986, 14). There was 'an attempt to define a mode of coexistence between husband and wife' which caused an 'ethics of strict marriage' to develop (Foucault 1986, 150,166). Historical scholars Cohen and Saller argue that Foucault saw this process as the beginning of 'the universalization of marriage' in which marriage became a social norm (1994, 44)²². Foucault argues that this phenomenon developed in three ways: marriage became a 'dual relation' a 'universal relation' and lastly a 'singular relation' (1986, 150-160).

Foucault notes that in the first and second century, the Stoics adopted the ancient Greek and Greco-Roman notion in which marriage is seen as natural 'by virtue of its two-fold contribution to procreation and community life' (Foucault 1986, 151) However he argues that the Stoics modified this by placing a stronger emphasis on the 'communal' aspect of marriage. Rufus for instance, stressed that marriage was not entirely a procreative affair and this particular perception could not justify why one would get married. For Rufus, the importance of marriage was the 'companionship' it provided between husband and wife in whom they could develop care, kindness and attentiveness toward one another (Foucault 1986, 151). Foucault argues that this particular perception caused marriage to become a 'dual relation' in which an emphasis is placed not so much on the procreative importance of marriage but rather on the communal benefits marriage provides.

²² Cohen and Saller argue that Foucault's representation of marriage in classical antiquity is 'misleading in important respects' because he fails to acknowledge that marriage was not always an 'affectionless bond formed only by those with status and property at stake' (1994, 46)

Furthermore Foucault claims that the Stoics placed a greater emphasis on the importance of getting married by perceiving it as a 'duty' (1986, 155). He notes that the notion of duty was developed in two ways. First, the Stoics believed marriage was essentially 'natural and rational' and should not 'be evaded by any human being who acknowledges himself to be a member of a community and a part of the human race' (Foucault 1986, 155). Second, marriage was seen as a 'universal occupation' in which even philosophers of the time should commit to. According to Foucault, the rationale underlying this perception was that philosophers should set themselves as an example to others, because if they avoided marriage they would be perceived as not 'obeying reason' and 'following' what nature had intended (1986, 157). Foucault argues that this demonstrates that marriage became a 'universal relation' as well (1986, 154).

Lastly, Foucault argues that the philosophers of the first and second century saw marriage as a 'singular relation' which combined two people to form a single entity (1986, 159). This particular perception developed from an 'adjustment of specific roles' in which the husband was expected to do tasks the wife couldn't do and the wife was expected to do tasks the husband could not do (Foucault 1986, 160). The husband and wife were perceived as developing an equilibrium or balance by having 'the same goal' which was the 'prosperity of the household' (Foucault 1986, 160). In addition, Foucault claims that marriage was seen as the most important relation that could develop between two people, such that it was greater in strength than other relations such as those of brothers, friends and parents to their children (Foucault 1986, 159).

Foucault argues that these particular perceptions of marriage 'granted both sexes, if not identical aptitudes, an equal capability of virtue' (1986, 161). Thus the role of the wife was significantly more important than what it was in classical antiquity. McHoul and Grace claim that, '[a] man's wife ceased to be simply one of the "objects" of his control and became, instead, what we might now call a "significant other"' (1998, 112). In addition, Foucault claims that the changes occurring within marriage caused a stronger emphasis on 'heterogeneous relationships' rather than blood relationships or friendships (1986, 163). He argues that the strengthening of the marital unit developed in two ways: through a condemnation of sex outside of marriage and a condemnation of adultery.

According to Foucault, the principle which condemns sex outside of marriage was depicted in the philosophical writings of Marcus Aurelius, who stressed that sexual intercourse must be restricted to marriage²³. This principle was based on the idea that 'all sexual relations are culpable if they did not take place in the relationships of marriage that makes them legitimate' (Foucault 1986, 167). This idea originated in classical antiquity in which to practice sexual fidelity was to master oneself and one's desire. However, these later philosophers were becoming increasingly strict by criticising all sexual activities that occurred outside of marriage. Foucault argues that it was not the sexual act itself that was offensive rather it was the 'debauchery' it inflicted on the institution of marriage (1986, 170).

²³ Cohen and Saller note that Foucault fails to acknowledge that Marcus Aurelius took a concubine following the death of his wife (1994, 46)

In addition, Foucault argues that a 'problematization' of adultery developed during the first and second century A.D (1986, 171). In classical antiquity, adultery was understood as 'extramarital sexual relations' in which the married man engaged in sexual relations with a married women, and the shame or 'injustice' was seen as occurring to the wife's husband (1987, 171). However, by the first and second century, the shame of adultery was positioned upon the husband who committed adultery and was further dispersed upon his wife. McHoul and Grace claim that marriage was seen as the 'natural home of sex', and that extramarital sex might harm the husband because if found out, it would threaten the civic status of his wife (1998, 113). In contrast, Foucault argues that sexual fidelity was 'defined less by a law than by a style of relation to the wife, by a way of being and of behaving with respect to her' (1986, 173).

On the topic of marriage, Foucault concludes that the first and second century texts define a 'certain model of relationships between spouses' but not in any institutional or legal form (1986, 150). A 'conjugalization of sexual relations' developed in which an emphasis was placed on not seeking pleasure outside of marriage (Foucault 1986, 166). This is because marriage itself was a 'bond formed between two spouses' and as such, it ruled out finding pleasure elsewhere (Foucault 1986, 166). Foucault stresses that in the early Christian period, 'marriage constitutes for human beings the only legitimate context for sexual union and the experience of *aphrodisia*' (1986, 170). Due to this particular phenomenon, Foucault argues that the privilege once granted to the love of boys was diminished because of the emphasis placed on the importance of marriage and sexual fidelity.

The final area that Foucault sees changes developing in the first and second century is in regards to love and boys (1986, 192). The love of boys had been an important topic in early philosophical discussions, however it ceased to be of much interest to the later philosophers. The practice of pederasty never ceased but what changed was the manner in which 'one questioned oneself about it' (Foucault 1986, 189). In effect, Foucault argues that the love of boys became associated with the love of women. He isolates two early texts to emphasise how the love of boys had lost its 'intensity' thus creating a 'deproblematization' of boys as objects of pleasure (1986, 189).

The first text by Plutarch entitled *Dialogue on Love* is about a man called Bacchon who is being pursued by both a man and a woman. Bacchon turns to his elders for advice and what follows is a dialogue between Proteogenes and Pusias 'who advocate the love of boys' and Anthemion and Daphnaeus who favours the love of women (Foucault 1986, 194). Plutarch attempts to create a 'unitary erotics' based on the relationship between man and woman which 'ultimately excludes the love of boys, for it lacks *charis*' or grace, and the debate between each man ultimately favours the love of women over boys (Foucault 1986, 210).

The second text entitled *Affairs of the Heart* by Lucian, focuses on Theomnestus, who loves both men and women equally but cannot decide which of the two deserve his attention more. Theomnestus asks Lycinus who has a text which consists of two orators discussing the matter. Lycinus decides in favour of the orator who praises the love of boys because it is 'practised by

philosophers... and it pledges itself to the ties of friendship that are just and undefiled' (Foucault 1986, 226). Foucault argues that the resolution (which favours heterosexual relations) in the text is 'a syncretic conclusion' which favours marriage, and that the love of boys is reserved only to philosophers (1986, 226). He claims that acts of pederasty are presented as a practice exclusive to philosophers thus it gives everyone else 'not only the right but duty to marry' (Foucault 1986, 226).

Foucault argues that these two texts demonstrate a 'new erotics' developing in the early Christian period in which 'the relationship between man and woman found its expression in romances' (1986, 228). He notes that the themes within these romances become the central characteristics of the erotic or romances that followed in which an emphasis is placed upon 'the existence of a "heterosexual" relation marked by a male-female polarity' (1986, 228). 'The love of a boy is never the principle objective of the narrative' rather the 'whole focus of attention is centred on the relationship of the boy and the girl' (Foucault 1986, 229). In addition, he argues that these texts emphasise the importance of virginity, not as a social expectation, but rather a choice or 'style of life' (1986, 230). Foucault concludes that these texts are organised around the 'reciprocal relationship of a man and a woman... the high values attributed to virginity, and around the complete union in which it finds perfection' (1986, 232).

The central argument Foucault develops in *The Care of the Self* is that a 'whole corpus of moral reflection on sexual activity and its pleasures seems to mark, the first centuries of our era, a

certain strengthening of austerity themes' (1986, 235). He argues that this phenomenon is evident by the way doctors worried about the health effects sexual activities had on the body, on how philosophers condemned extramarital relations preferring strict sexual fidelity between husband and wife, and by the overall disinterest concerning the love of boys in philosophical discussion (1986, 235).

This chapter has introduced Foucault's concept of 'the care of the self' which he sees as a phenomenon developing in the first two centuries following the death of Christ. For Foucault, the central principle underlying this concept is individuals must take care of themselves through both physically and spiritually training, and to develop a self-awareness and self-knowledge which will produce a goal in which to seek. Furthermore, this chapter has demonstrated how Foucault believes a 'crisis of the subject' developed alongside the many changes taking place during the time. The individual had to develop a new ethical and sexual self in order to process the changes occurring within medicine, marriage and erotics. And lastly, this chapter has demonstrated Foucault's central thesis, in that doctors and philosophers during this period were urging individuals to practice self-cultivation and exercise austerity in all matters pertaining to one's sexual activities.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has offered a discussion on the central concepts that Michel Foucault develops in his *The History of Sexuality* project. It has been demonstrated that Foucault devises a number of approaches toward understanding the experience of sexuality throughout various historical periods. His work is comprised of examining sexuality in classical antiquity, early Christianity and in the later half of the twentieth-century. In addition, his work explores the effects that power and ethics have in determining the sexual self. This thesis has also included a number of scholarly citations that were aimed to enhance the readers understanding of the debates surrounding Foucault's work.

Chapter One included a discussion of Foucault's concept of the 'repressive hypothesis' which he develops in the first volume of his project (1990, 10). It has been demonstrated that Foucault believes that the history of modern sexuality is understood to be one of repression. He develops a critique of this perception of sexual repression and argues that pre-industrial society was considered an era in which sexual liberty existed. In addition, this chapter has demonstrated the four faults that Foucault finds with this historical narrative. He criticises the repressive hypothesis for situating the beginning of sexual repression with the rise of economic capitalism in the seventeen-century. In addition, he argues that the repressive hypothesis utilises a 'discourse of oppression' to substantiate that sexual repression is a reality in the modern world (1990, 7). He further finds fault with individuals who support the repressive hypothesis by arguing they are

provided with 'speaker's benefits' (1990, 6). And lastly, this chapter has illustrated how Foucault finds fault with the idea that power is an exclusively repressive force that ultimately represses sexualities. Chapter One has demonstrated that Foucault sees the idea of sexual repression as influencing the modern individual in their understanding of sexuality

Chapter two has offered a discussion on Foucault's concept of 'bio-power' and its impact on sexuality which he develops in his first volume (1990, 143). It has been demonstrated that Foucault sees a new power developing in the seventeen-century which he terms 'bio-power' (1990, 143). It has been shown that Foucault sees bio-power as creating the industrial revolution in the seventeen-century. He claims that without a power controlling individuals and the population, the capitalist economy would never have developed. In addition it has been illustrated that Foucault rejects the idea that a sexual repression developed from the seventeen-century onward. Rather he sees new types of sexualities developing when the medical and political community defined what was normal as opposed to abnormal regarding sex and sexualities. In addition, chapter two has demonstrated that Foucault sees this increase of sexualities as developing through an attack on 'the masturbating child, the hysterical women, the Malthusian couple, and the perverse adult' (1990, 105). Chapter Two has demonstrated that Foucault perceives that the effects of power can influence the way in which the individual experiences their sexuality.

In Chapter Three, it has been shown that Foucault sees sex as problematic in ancient antiquity and early Christianity. He articulates this perception in his second volume on the history of sexuality. Foucault sees a fear surrounding sex in both historical periods which he argues represents a 'problematization' of sexuality ([1984] 1991, 384). Problematization is the term Foucault devises in order to describe the way in which individuals create problems and devise solutions. In addition, this chapter has demonstrated that Foucault argues that the problems with sex differ between these two historical periods. He claims that the early Christians were informed by the rules and regulations of the Church, thus the way they experienced sexuality was influenced by the teachings of Christ. The early Greeks however had no authoritarian system in place thus they were informed by the ethical teachings of the period. Foucault argues that because of this lack of standardised rules, individuals during classical antiquity experienced sexuality through 'practices of the self' which emphasised moderation, self-restraint and self-mastery over all matters pertaining to sexual activities. Chapter Three has illustrated the way in which Foucault sees ethics as influencing how individuals experienced their sexuality in classical Greek and Rome.

Chapter Four has discussed Foucault's concepts surrounding the self and sex in the first and second century A.D. In Foucault's final volume, he perceives a new phenomenon developing during this time which stressed that 'one must take care of oneself' through various practices (1986, 43, 68). It has been demonstrated that Foucault perceives this phenomenon emerging in a time when the state was emphasising the importance of marriage. Foucault argues that because of a culture that stressed one must care for the self, there developed a 'crisis' for the individual in

regards to how to behave ethically and sexually (1986, 95). He claims that this crisis is depicted in the changes that developed in three main areas, notably medicine, marriage and erotics. He concludes that there was an increased emphasis on sexual austerity because of the illnesses associated with sex and that there was a further emphasis on marriage as opposed to adultery. Lastly Foucault claims that there was an importance assigned to heterosexual relations over relations such as the love for boys. He claims that this was represented in the ancient erotics of the time. Chapter Four has demonstrated the impact that medicine, marriage and erotics play in how early Christian and Roman's experienced their sexuality.

In concluding, this thesis has provided a discussion on the various concepts Michel Foucault develops in his *The History of Sexuality* project. This thesis has intended to demonstrate that his various concepts concerning sex and sexuality are a unique and useful source that may contribute to those who wish to study this field. Through his own style of historical analysis, Foucault provides a compelling and often challenging way in which the contemporary individual can approach the study of sexuality.

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