

CHAPTER ONE

GENEALOGICAL ENQUIRY AND METHODOLOGY

‘[O]nly that which has no history is definable.’ Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals* ¹

‘I n some remote corner of the universe, flickering in the light of the countless solar systems in which it had been poured, there was once a planet on which clever animals invented cognition. It was the most arrogant and most mendacious minute in the “history of the world”; but a minute was all it was. After nature had drawn just a few more breaths the planet froze and the clever animals had to die. Someone could invent a fable like this and yet they would still not have given a satisfactory illustration of just how pitiful, how insubstantial and transitory, how purposeless and arbitrary the human intellect looks within nature; there were eternities during which it did not exist; and when it had disappeared again, nothing will have happened. For this intellect has no further mission that might extend beyond the bounds of human life.’ So begins the essay, ‘On Truth and Lying in a Non-moral Sense’, an essay that was completed in 1873 but remained unpublished during Nietzsche’s lifetime, by the self-proclaimed, inveterate enemy of Christianity and Plato, the great revaluator of all values, the irascible proponent of the supremacy of the vital force of life over reactive reason and art over science, the divisive spectre that haunts modernism, existentialism, and poststructuralism.² A profound attack on the foundational premise of Western philosophy, on the idea of the transcendental nature of truth pre-existing subject positions, this essay draws attention to the protean and metaphorical nature of language used by the prisoners of subjectivity to fabricate and put forward concepts marked by dissimulation. The fable

Nietzsche begins with points to the evanescence and purposelessness of how ‘human intellect looks within nature’ (p. 874), an intellect that aspires to transcend the existence of human beings even though it has to remain bound to human life. The most general effect of what Nietzsche calls the ‘arrogant’ use of cognition is deception. To preserve the individual, because the weak do not have horns or fangs to aid their struggle for existence, the intellect’s greater strength is concealment by pretence, i.e., ‘dissimulation’. Dissimulation of intellect, or cognition, then, begins as an evolutionary tool for species preservation, but soon becomes ‘deception, flattery, lying and cheating, speaking behind the backs of others, keeping up appearances [...] wearing masks’ (p. 875). This dissimulation, according to Nietzsche, has cast a veil over our cognition, and we fail to perceive the world around us, dreaming false dreams every night. ‘Given this’, he asks, ‘where on earth can the drive to truth possibly have come from?’ (*ibid.*)

In the wake of dissimulation and the invention of language, the boundaries of ‘truth’ become fixed, as well as the contrast between truth and lying. Only with the invention of language, with arbitrary meanings attached to words, he says, such a thing is possible. Anticipating Ferdinand de Saussure, Nietzsche asks, ‘Is there a perfect match between things and their designations? Is language the full and adequate expression of all relations?’ (p. 876) If the masquerading intellect attempts to posit universal truths by creating concepts using the conventional rules of language, then what would be the ‘status of those conventions of language?’ (*ibid.*) There cannot be a ‘perfect match between things and their designations’, simply because language fails to represent the ‘full and adequate expression of all realities’ (*ibid.*) as it always works by metaphors. Linguistic tools can only point to the relational aspect of different objects and concepts, and to express these we only have the recourse to using bold metaphors. Stimulation of our senses produces image, and that necessitates the production of the first metaphor; the image is then translated into speech-sound which becomes the second

metaphor; and in each case ‘there is a complete leap from one sphere into the heart of another, new sphere’ (p. 877). There is an insurmountable barrier between entities and their designations: ‘We believe that when we speak of trees, colours, snow and flowers, we have knowledge of the things themselves, and yet we possess only metaphors of things which in no way correspond to the original entities’ (*ibid.*).

And yet each word immediately acts as a ‘concept’. And each concept materialises ‘by making equivalent that which is non-equivalent’ (*ibid.*). Nietzsche gives the example of a leaf: each leaf is different from the other, in shape, in colour, and in form, and therefore not equal to one another. Each of them is an arbitrarily designated form, a copy, a translation, a reinscription and reinterpretation of the primal concept of a leaf, so that in naming and enunciating the concept of the leaf, all differences and deviations are erased or masked to propound the concept of the leaf as transcendental reality. ‘Just as it is certain that no leaf is ever exactly the same as any other leaf, it is equally certain that the concept “leaf” is formed by dropping these individual differences *arbitrarily*, by forgetting those features which differentiate one thing from another, so that the concept then gives rise to the notion that something other than leaves exists in nature, something which would be “leaf”, a primal form, say, from which all leaves are woven, drawn, delineated, dyed, curled, painted — but by a clumsy pair of hands, so that no single example turned out to be a faithful, correct, and reliable copy of the primal form’ (*ibid.*, *emphasis added*). So is the word and the concept ‘honest’; each designation of it turns out to be merely tautological. Only through the consolidation and apparent ossification of the multifarious free-floating images that originally suspended in ‘a hot, liquid stream from the primal power of human imagination’, such a coagulation of *the* image is possible, where the process of such rigid stratification is entirely masked because ‘man forgets himself as a subject’ (p. 880).³ Privileging one concept over another, according to Nietzsche, is a meaningless proposition, since comparisons ‘would require them to be

measured by the criterion of the *correct perception*, i.e., by a *non-existent* criterion [...] [which] is something contradictory and impossible' (*ibid.*). Undermining the idea of words consolidating into suspect concepts, Nietzsche now asks, 'What, then, is truth?', and his answer is that it is a 'mobile army of metaphors, metonymies, anthropomorphisms, in short, a sum of human relations which have been subjected to poetic and rhetorical intensification, translation, and decoration, and which, after they have been in use for a long time, strike a people as firmly established, canonical and binding' (p. 878). Nietzsche follows this up by problematising the constructions of laws, privileges, borders, classifications — 'the great edifice[s] of concepts' — to say that we still do not know where the drive for truth comes from: we only have 'the obligation to lie in accordance with firmly established convention, to lie *in masse* and in a style that is binding for all' (*ibid.*).

This is the mode of enquiry initiated by Nietzsche — the *genealogical* enquiry — that focuses on the invasion of the outer world into our perception and our desperate need to name the sensations that stimulate us, thereby forging concepts that appear as transcendental, bereft of human subjects, masking their own constructions as concepts. A genealogical enquiry points to the unbridgeable chasm between metaphors and concepts, the inevitability of the fabrication of concepts that appear as transcendental, metaphysical truths, and unearths the historical conditions of their contingent productions, and also questions how and by whom the concepts are deployed in specific historical periods, in specific contexts, to achieve specific set of results. From a genealogical perspective, these preternatural concepts are discrete weapons in the eternal conflict between hegemonic powers that regulate the flow of forces and power to dominate each other, to determine the supremacy of one force over another. Perhaps it is easy to see, from the vantage point of one's own time, why this essay was not published during Nietzsche's life. If the publication of his first book, *The Birth of Tragedy*, befuddled his colleagues for its subject matter and for the curious lack of footnotes, then the explosive subject

matter of this essay, however short it appears to be, would have shocked them into sheer disbelief.⁴ It is also easy to see the inevitability of the theoretical appropriation of Nietzsche by the French poststructuralists through the latter half of the twentieth century, especially in the works of Michel Foucault, where, Ernst Behler notes, ‘Foucault’s entire text can be seen as reenacting of Nietzsche in our time, an actualisation of Nietzsche toward the end of the twentieth century.’⁵

According to Behler, Nietzsche has not proliferated signifiers, but changed or pointed towards the ambivalence of the relationship between signifiers and signifieds, and ‘ordered them in more complicated ways, placing mirrors among them, and thereby gave them new dimensions’ (*ibid.*). Interpretation, in this sense, becomes a limitless, inexhaustible project, as Foucault indicates in ‘Nietzsche, Freud, Marx’ that with these three master sceptics and their ‘hermeneutics of suspicion’,⁶ ‘interpretation has at last become an infinite task’.⁷ Foucault cites *On the Genealogy of Morals* and its discussion on the etymology and ambiguity of words like ‘good’, ‘bad’, ‘evil’, words that, according to Nietzsche, are nothing but imposition of interpretations.⁸ As Foucault says in that particular essay, ‘[p]erhaps this primacy of interpretation over the sign is the decisive feature of modern hermeneutics’ (p. 274).

Interpretation of Nietzsche in French poststructuralism centred on three basic themes, as noted by Alan D Schrift: ‘the hermeneutics of suspicion, the reflection upon the nature of language, and the critique of metaphysical humanism’.⁹ Foucault conceives the change in the strategy of interpretation in the three thinkers as a ‘profound change in the nature of the sign and the way signs in general are interpreted [...] [where] the representative function of the sign gives way to a view of the sign as already a part of the activity of interpretation [...] [and] signs are no longer viewed as the reservoir of some deep, hidden meaning; rather they are surface phenomena which confront interpretation with an infinite task’ (*ibid.*). Moving away from the structuralist tendency to use binary relationships to mark the rigid correlation of the

components of signs, Foucault locates a new hermeneutic strategy that is beyond the predominance of the sign as a monolithic relation of signifiers and signifieds, and welcomes the hermeneutic approach where the sign is regarded as always already interpreted, and always in the process of further interpretation.

Reinterpreting Nietzsche in *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, Gilles Deleuze points out the difference between the Hegelian idea of synthesis and the Nietzschean emphasis on multiplicity and diversity, where he views the oeuvre of Nietzsche as a response to the famed Hegelian dialectic: 'To the famous positivity of the negative Nietzsche opposes his own discovery: the negativity of the positive'.¹⁰ Shrift notes: 'Thus, whereas in the Hegelian dialectic of master and slave, the reactive negation of the other has as its consequence the affirmation of self, Nietzsche reverses this situation: the master's active self-affirmation is accompanied by and results in a negation of the slave's reactive force. By tracing the interplay of affirmation and negation in Nietzsche's typology of active (artistic, noble, legislative) and reactive (*ressentiment*, bad conscience, ascetic ideal) force, Deleuze concludes that the *Übermensch*, Nietzsche's metaphor for the affirmation of multiplicity and difference as such, is offered in response to the conception of human being as a synthesised unity provided by the Hegelian dialectic' (p. 330).¹¹ Shrift further notes: 'Foucault engaged in a highly sophisticated analysis of power which, following Nietzsche's example, focused not on the subjects of power but on power *relations*, the relations of force that operate within social practices and social systems. And within this analysis, will and desire play an integral role in directing the relations of power. Where Nietzsche saw a continuum of will to power, Foucault saw power relations operating along a continuum of repression and production; and where Nietzsche sought to incite a becoming-stronger of will to power to rival the progressive becoming-weaker he associated with modernity, Foucault sought to draw attention to the becoming-productive of power that accompanies the increasingly repressive power of the pastoral' (p. 340).

One should turn to ‘Nietzsche, Freud, Marx’ for more detail to grasp Foucault’s appropriation of Nietzsche in order to appreciate the genealogical mode of enquiry to the extent of the multiplying and liberating possibilities of interpretation. Originally appeared in *Cahiers de Royaumont* (Vol. 4: *Nietzsche*, Paris: Minuit, 1967, pp. 185-200), this essay is conceived from a round table discussion from the July 1964 Royaumont colloquium where Foucault suggests a theme of the technique of interpretation in the thoughts of Nietzsche, Marx, and Freud. He begins by pointing out the suspect nature of language itself, as the manifest meaning of language essentially conceals, protects, and limits the ‘stronger’ and ‘underlying’ meanings. Also, language generally exceeds its purely verbal connotations as ‘there are indeed other things in the world which speak and which are not language’ (p. 270). Although Foucault enlists among these nonlinguistic verbosity an idiosyncratic mixture of natural sounds, ‘the rustling of trees’, the rumble of the ocean, ‘animals, faces, masks, crossed swords’ (*ibid.*), we might also include, more prosaically, general physical gestures and cultural practices among them as types of language that are not limited by a restrictive grammatical connotation, and therefore exceed its articulable possibilities. ‘[T]here is language that articulates itself in a manner that is not verbal’ (*ibid.*). These suspicions regarding language that appeared with the Greeks, Foucault says, have become more apparent since the nineteenth century, and the need to articulate the ‘mute gestures’, ‘illnesses’, to excavate their meaning that eventually connives in the formation and production of discourses, has also become essential. He takes the sixteenth century as a remote reference point, and says that the basis of interpretation during that period was based on resemblance, and that ‘formed the basis of two perfectly distinct types of knowledge: *cognitio*, which was the transition, in some lateral fashion, from one resemblance to another; and *divinatio*, which was knowledge in depth, going from a superficial resemblance to a deeper resemblance’ (p. 271). In the nineteenth century, though, the works of Marx, Freud, and Nietzsche ‘have put us back into the presence of a new possibility of interpretation; they

have founded once again the possibility of a hermeneutic' (pp. 271-272). What texts like the first volume of *Capital*, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, and *The Interpretation of Dreams* do, according to Foucault, they cast a sharp focus on the subjectivity of the interpreters, as the interpreters have begun to interpret themselves through the hermeneutic techniques they deploy. 'With these techniques of interpretation [...] we must interrogate those interpreters who were Freud, Nietzsche, and Marx, so that we are perpetually sent back in a perpetual play of mirrors' (p. 272). He proposes that these thinkers, instead of multiplying signs and generating meanings where none existed, have essentially 'changed the nature of the sign and modified the fashion in which the sign can in general be interpreted', along with a modification of 'the space of distribution in which signs can be signs' (*ibid.*). With these thinkers, the interpretive space has become differentiated in contrast to the earlier ages where a more homogeneous distribution of space is found, and the dimension of 'depth' has become singularly important in the mode of genealogical enquiry. The notion of depth here does not signify interiority, though; Foucault points out that for Nietzsche depth suggests an exteriority that masks the ideality of truth as 'the pure and interior search for truth' (p. 273). When one interprets, going deep down, to excavate the lower depths, one restores the form of exteriority 'that was covered up and buried'; the interpretive task becomes a project that sheds light on the disturbing and discordant protrusions of elevations from the lower depths as they become more and more visible, and the depth is restored 'as an absolutely superficial secret' with the discovery that 'depth was only a game and a surface fold' (*ibid.*). With this new dimension of interpretation in extended spatiality, therefore, the world around us becomes deeper in exteriority.

As mentioned earlier, in addition to this new spatiality for interpreting the signs, Foucault suggests the theme of the inexhaustibility of the interpretive possibilities: 'interpretation has at last become an infinite task' (p. 274). 'Beginning in the nineteenth century', Foucault says,

‘signs are linked together in an inexhaustible network, itself also infinite, not because they are based on a resemblance without borders but because there is irreducible gaping and openness’ (*ibid.*). The further one engages in the hermeneutic project in this way, ‘the closer one comes at the same time to an absolutely dangerous region where interpretation will not only find its point of return but where it will disappear as interpretation, perhaps involving the disappearance of the interpreter himself’ (*ibid.*). If interpretation is inexhaustible in the sense that it is always ongoing, a process in motion, *ad infinitum*, if it can never be a complete closure, like a circle without an origin or an end, then ‘there is nothing absolutely primary to interpret, for after all everything is already interpretation, each sign is in itself not the thing that offers itself to interpretation but an interpretation of other signs’ (p. 275). Also, according to Foucault, interpretation is not an imperturbable act of clarifying things which lie passively open to the act of interpretation, but rather it is an act of violence: ‘it can only seize, and violently, an already-present interpretation, which it must overthrow, upset, shatter with the blows of a hammer’ (*ibid.*). He refers to Nietzsche’s use of the etymological roots of the Greek words *agathos* (good, well-born, gentle, brave) and *esthlos* (good, brave) in Section 5 of the *First Essay of On the Genealogy of Morals*, and generalises the Nietzschean idea that ‘words have always been invented by the ruling class; they do not denote a signified, they impose an interpretation’ (p. 276).¹² A corollary to this Nietzschean idea will have to be the Foucauldian project that directs its focus to ‘the great tissue of violent interpretations beneath everything that speaks’ (*ibid.*) to dismantle the signs, to ‘overturn’ them, precisely because the signs ‘prescribe to us the interpretation of their interpretation’ (*ibid.*). This presupposition of interpretation before the sign, ‘the idea that interpretation precedes the sign’ (p. 277), is the reason why ‘the interpreter, for Nietzsche, is the “authentic one” [...] the “true one” ’ (p. 276), and that it also implies that the sign is ‘not a simple and benevolent being [...] on the contrary, beginning with the nineteenth century, beginning with Freud, Marx, and Nietzsche [...] the

sign becomes malevolent' (p. 277). This malevolence stems from the fact that 'there is in the sign an ambiguous and somewhat suspicious form of ill will and "malice" ' (*ibid.*), and 'that the sign is already an interpretation that does not appear as such' (*ibid.*). In other words, signs are dangerous to the extent that they are 'interpretations that try to justify themselves, and not the reverse' (*ibid.*).

In another essay, 'Nietzsche, Genealogy, History', which deals with the notion of depth in Nietzsche and his critique of 'origin' in much more detail, Foucault points out that the quest of the genealogist is to track the transformations of language and words that undergo changes through time to record the particularity of 'events outside any monotonous finality', and to account for the confusing palimpsest of scratches and traces of those transformations, seeking them 'in the most unpromising places', places without history, in 'sentiments, love, conscience, instincts' (p. 369).¹³ A genealogical enquiry is also a study about a recurrence of events, not about the 'origin' of events, not in order to find the evolutionary change in the linearity of historical events, but to seek the common strain in different manifestations of the recurrent event which is at work even when it is unavailable, 'the moment when [it] remained unrealised' (*ibid.*). Conducting a genealogical analysis, then, is like taking stock of an 'unstable assemblage of faults, fissures, and heterogeneous layers that threaten the fragile inheritor from within or from underneath' (p. 374). This mode of enquiry is intricately linked with a critique of 'origin'. In *On the Genealogy of Morals* Nietzsche uses many words, *Ursprung*, *Herkunft*, *Entstehung*, all literally meaning 'origin', but Foucault differentiates between a stressed and an unstressed use of the word *Ursprung*. Where do we find the 'origin' of morality? 'In detestable narrow-minded conclusions. *Pudenda Origo* [shameful origin].'¹⁴ The pursuit of origin is an attempt to grasp the hidden essence of things, to seize their pristine core unsullied by time and history. It is an endeavour, Foucault says, to 'capture the exact essence of things, their purest possibilities, and their carefully protected identities; because this search assumes the existence

of immobile forms that precede the external world of accident and succession' (p. 371). Nietzsche has already pointed out in 'On Truth and Lying in a Non-moral Sense' that this search for the pursuit of essence is essentially absurd, for all concepts are metaphors, and therefore their meanings are to be sought only in their relationships to one another. For the genealogist, then, the origin is 'fabricated in a piecemeal fashion from alien forms', and it resides in the location of 'inevitable loss, the point where the truth of things is knotted to a truthful discourse, the site of a fleeting articulation that discourse has obscured and finally lost' (p. 372).

Along with Nietzsche, Foucault's strong claim is that 'a genealogy of value, morality, asceticism, and knowledge will never confuse itself with a quest for their 'origins' [...] on the contrary it will cultivate the details and accidents that accompany every beginning' (p. 373). It is an excavation of depths, allowing the contingent, discordant elements to flee from the shackles of metaphysical truths. More importantly, the genealogist 'must be able to diagnose the illnesses of the body, the conditions of weakness and strength, its breakdowns and resistances, to be in a position to judge philosophical discourse' (*ibid.*). Genealogy does not, according to this prescriptive mode of analysis, reach back in time to argue for a restoration of forged continuity; its task is to show that the past continues to reshape the present by imposing the already determined solidity of forms on all its manifestations. It does not correspond to the linear progression of the maturity of a species, but it recognises the vicissitudes of its emergence and the variety of its accidental growth, and thus it 'does not map the destiny of a people' (p. 374). What genealogy does try to do though is to 'identify the accidents, the minute deviations — or conversely, the complete reversals — the errors, the false appraisals, and the faulty calculations that gave birth to those things which continue to exist and have value for us; it is to discover that truth or being lies not at the root of what we know and what we are but the exteriority of accidents' (*ibid.*). Continuing with the trope of the genealogical enquiry

fastening itself onto the body, Foucault seizes on Nietzsche's use of the word, *Herkunft*, to say that this 'descent' — not in the meaning of 'going down', but 'descending from', suggesting affiliation to a race, clan, family — is also affiliated to the body, and it is a dangerous legacy as well as an unstable assemblage. Following *The Gay Science*, Sections 348-349, Foucault says that this descent 'attaches itself to the body [...] inscribes itself to the nervous system, in temperament, in the digestive apparatus; it appears in faulty respiration, in improper diets, in the debilitated and prostrate bodies of those whose ancestors committed errors' (p. 375).¹⁵ The forefathers, the ancestors, the 'accursed progenitors', as proclaimed by Hamm in *Endgame*,¹⁶ postulate eternal truths, confuses causes with effects, and, as a result of these 'inaccuracies' and faulty diagnostics, 'the bodies of their children will suffer' (*ibid.*).

One of the tasks of genealogy is to 'expose a body totally imprinted by history and the process of history's destruction of the body' (p. 376). Foucault also maintains that interpretation is produced from the 'violent or surreptitious appropriation of a system of rules'; and since the system of rules does not have any essential meaning on its own, the appropriation or imposition of these rules to create meaning by interested parties would suggest that 'the development of humanity is a series of interpretation' (p. 378). And the task of genealogy is to 'record its history' (*ibid.*). To reiterate again, one of the aims of a genealogical enquiry, as Foucault conceives it, is to show the body's inevitable inscription by history, to show that a body is entirely imprinted by the contingent historical conditions, as well as its eventual destruction by the forces of history, because the body bears the markings of descent (*Herkunft*), and as the site of descent, the inscriptions of the events are traced on the body. 'The body', he goes on to say, 'and everything that touches it: diet, climate soil — is the domain of the *Herkunft* [...] it manifests the stigmata of past experience and also gives rise to desires, failings, and errors [...] [which] may join in a body where they achieve a sudden expression, but just as

often, their encounter is an engagement in which they efface each other, and pursue their insurmountable conflict' (p. 375).

Just as genealogical enquiry should avoid searching for an origin or descent in an uninterrupted continuity, it should also be wary of 'emergence' (*Entstehung*) as a finality in itself. What appears as a final term is in effect a contemporary episode in a chain of events, something what Foucault calls 'a series of subjugations', and it is the responsibility of genealogy to acknowledge these various systems of subjections and subjectifications without aiming for a fabrication of meaning, and to describe 'the hazardous play of dominations' (p. 376). Emergence is an event where the different forces come into play, and the analysis of this emergence must describe the interactions of these various forces, the mode of their perpetual confrontations with each other, and their cycle of development, advancement, and degeneration. Foucault denies emergence its subjectivity: there is no human subject responsible for this emergence. 'As descent qualifies the strength or weakness of an instinct and its inscription on a body, emergence designates a place of confrontation, but not as a closed field offering the spectacle of a struggle among equals. Rather, as Nietzsche demonstrated in his analysis of good and evil, it is a 'non-place', a pure distance, which indicates that the adversaries do not belong to a common space. Consequently, no one is responsible for an emergence, no one can glory in it, since it always occurs in the interstices' (p. 377). In this Nietzsche-designated 'non-place' only one drama ever takes place: 'the endlessly repeated play of domination' (*ibid.*). The study of history in the traditional sense depends on a finality of eternal, transcendental truth and asserts to 'base its judgment on an apocalyptic objectivity' (p. 379). On the other hand, a genealogical enquiry 'is capable of liberating divergence and marginal elements' by refusing the certainties of the absolutes. While elaborating on the difference between what Nietzsche designated as *wirkliche Historie* (*actual, real history, literally*) in *The Gay Science*, No. 7¹⁷ and also in Section 7 of his 'Preface' to the *On the*

Genealogy of Morals ¹⁸ (Foucault calls it ‘effective’ history) and traditional history, Foucault says that while traditional history dissolves a singular event into a continuity, effective history brings out that event’s ‘most accurate manifestations’: ‘An event [...] is not a decision, a treaty, a reign, or a battle, but the *reversal* of a relationship of forces, the usurpation of power, the appropriation of a vocabulary turned against those who had once used it, a domination that grows feeble, poisons itself, grows slack, the entry of a masked “other” ’ (p. 380-81, *emphasis added*).

Foucault’s intense textual analysis and eventual appropriation of Nietzsche in ‘Nietzsche, Genealogy, History’ is representative of his own view of genealogical enquiry as a particular type of historical methodology, a method that he termed as ‘effective history’, or ‘history of the present’, mirroring Nietzsche’s notion of ‘*wirkliche Historie*’. Even though the genealogical mode of analysis is sometimes taken to be a distinct second phase of Foucault’s theoretical output, because there are certain expansions of the archaeological analysis offered in his earlier works like *The Archaeology of Knowledge* and *The Order of Things* which will be explored in detail in Chapter Two, to an important extent the methodology remains fairly consistent in his later works on prison and incarceration and sexuality. The supplementation comes in the particular emphasis on the concept of power. In Foucault’s work on incarceration, for example, the prisoners constitute a new set of *objects*, marked by *concepts* about the felonious characteristics, while it delineates different *modes of authority*, and permitted to initiate *lines of strategic action*.¹⁹ These four key archaeological categories ²⁰ are not limited to just verbal language here, however, as they are now applied to concrete, actual practices that go beyond linguistic expressions to effect distinct physical changes in their objects, and thus genealogical enquiry, supplemented by the modes of discursive formations, is expressly concerned with the power relations that influence these changes. In other words, genealogy provides ‘an adequate method of causal explanation to complement archaeology’.²¹ The first

emphasis of this mode of analysis falls on the notion that changes in thought are the outcome of *not* the specific emergence of an incandescent, transcendental idea, but the accidental outcome of a multitude of little causes that inadvertently shapes a new system. Secondly, the object of these disparate, little causes, the diverse accidental forces that shape history, is the body. These interplay of forces that shape history through chance, forces that have their significance only in their adjacent relationships to each other, do not merely affect human consciousness, they also alter human bodies. As Gutting notes, a genealogical enquiry unearths ‘causal explanations that is material, multiple, and corporeal’ (p. 47). In his early works on madness and the establishment of the clinic, Foucault describes distinct historical conditions and relations between forms of knowledge and power that leave their imprint on the body without formally articulating the power-knowledge nexus, and without explicitly isolating the body as the site where the operations of power and knowledge leave their marks. Beginning with *Discipline and Punish*, though, deploying the methodology of genealogical enquiry, Foucault begins to address how the power-knowledge relationship and the technologies of power shape the primary object of its imprint, the body, by subjugating it and transforming it into an object of knowledge.

If, then, one attempts to summarise the distinctive features of a genealogical mode of enquiry as opposed to a traditional historical analysis, one should note that its aim is to celebrate the discreteness of events, to highlight the singularity of events along with the contingent nature of their outbreak, and to deny their necessary conditions for grand teleological ends. Each event is admitted into the enquiry to show that underneath the great construction of the unity of things there is no pure origin but only strata of distributions, discrepancies, and differentiations, and the perpetual cycle of dominations, the endless play of dominations without any human subject responsible for it. As Barry Smart puts it, ‘[g]enealogical analysis is thus synonymous with the endless task of interpretation for there is no hidden meaning or foundation beneath things,

merely more layers of interpretations which through accretion have achieved the form of truth, self-evidence, and necessity and which, in turn, it is the task of genealogy to breach.’²² As the body is entirely imprinted by history, this mode of enquiry focuses primarily on the body itself, how the body is inscribed into submission and conceived as a subject, ‘broken-down by the rhythms of work, rest and holidays [...] poisoned by food or values, through eating habits or moral laws’, and, also, how the body resists the efforts of subjectifications to make it docile and subservient.²³ So, genealogical enquiry’s focus on events and bodies is based on their specific attributes and manifestations shorn of ideality and destiny, on the regulatory mechanism at work underneath the construction of the ideality of the event and the docility of the body, and on the contextualisation of knowledge that produces the conceptions of abstract ideas and purest individualities, to show that such construction masks and effaces the effects of arbitrary confrontations and configurations, contingency and error, the uneven relations of powers and their unpremeditated consequences. And that marks a return, once again, to Nietzsche’s observation that one should always be circumspect about the fabrication of the ‘pure reason’, ‘knowledge in itself’, and a ‘pure, will-less, painless, timeless knowing subject’, and that there is ‘*only* a perspective seeing, *only* a perspective “knowing”’; and the *more* affects we allow to speak about one thing, the *more* eyes, different eyes, we can use to observe one thing, the more complete will our “concept” of this thing, our “objectivity” be.’²⁴

NOTES

1. Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, in *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, ed. and trans. Walter Kaufman (New York: Modern Library Edition, 2000), p. 516
2. Friedrich Nietzsche, 'On Truth and Lying in a Non-moral Sense', in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed. Vincent B Leitch, trans. Ronald Speirs (New York: W W Norton and Company, 2001), pp. 874-884
3. In Section 13 of *The First Essay* of *On the Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche points out the fundamental misconception of assuming a subject behind all effects. 'A quantum of force is equivalent to a quantum of drive', he writes, and because of the instability of language and 'of the fundamental errors of reason that are petrified in it', effects are conceived as 'somethings that causes effects, by a "subject" '. But Nietzsche claims that 'there is no "being" behind doing, effecting, becoming; the "doer" is merely a fiction added to the deed — the deed is everything'. This profound insight is appropriated into the theoretical concept of gender performativity, as will be seen in Chapter Three of this text, where Judith Butler claims that there is no subject behind the acts of *doing* gender. See *On the Genealogy of Morals*, in *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, p. 481.
4. Berndt Magnus and Kathleen M Higgins, 'Nietzsche's Works and Their Themes', in *The Cambridge Companion to Nietzsche*, eds. Berndt Magnus and Kathleen M Higgins (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 22
5. Ernst Behler, 'Nietzsche in the Twentieth Century', in *The Cambridge Companion to Nietzsche*, p. 317
6. Paul Ricoeur, *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation*, trans. Denis Savage (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970, 2008), p. 32
7. Michel Foucault, 'Nietzsche, Freud, Marx' in *Aesthetics: Essential Works of Foucault 1954 – 1984, Volume 2*, ed. James D Faubion (London: Penguin, 2000), p. 269

8. Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, in *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, see, especially, *The First Essay*, ‘Good and Evil, ‘Good and Bad’, pp. 460-492
9. Alan D Schrift, ‘Nietzsche’s French Legacy’, in *The Cambridge Companion to Nietzsche*, p. 326
10. Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), p. 180, quoted in Alan D Schrift, ‘Nietzsche’s French Legacy’, in *The Cambridge Companion to Nietzsche*, p. 331
11. See Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, in *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, pp. 437-599. The genealogy for a value system that seeks to do away with the mask that hides its constructedness cannot be exempt from deploying the same value-enforcing methodology and binary construction; and this is not a methodological fault, since it merely points out the reinterpetive possibilities of any interpretation. Nietzsche says, ‘While the noble man lives in trust and openness with himself [...] the man of *ressentiment* is neither upright nor naive nor honest and straightforward with himself’ (Sec. 10, p. 474). The plebeian *ressentiment* ‘loves hiding places, secret paths and backdoors, everything covert entices him as *his* world, *his* security, *his* refreshment; he understands how to keep silent, how not to forget, how to wait, how to be provisionally self-deprecating and humble’ (*ibid.*). Thus, ‘[a] race of such men of *ressentiment* is bound to become eventually *cleverer* than any noble race; it will also honour cleverness to a far greater degree: namely as a condition of existence of the first importance’ (Sec. 10, pp. 474-475). This evil *ressentiment* is ‘the original thing, the beginning, the distinctive *deed* in the conception of a slave morality’ (Sec. 11, p. 476). But who is the evil one in the valuation from the mentality of a slave morality? It is ‘*precisely* the good man of the other morality, precisely the noble, powerful man, the ruler, but dyed in another colour, interpreted in another fashion, seen in another way by the venomous eye of *ressentiment*’ (*ibid.*). But when placed side by side, when the nobility faced the exteriority of their familiar sphere, ‘where the strange, the *stranger* is found, they are not much better than uncaged beasts of prey’ (*ibid.*). Even though Nietzsche reiterates the ‘positive’ life-affirming force of the nobility of enforcing

the valuation of good, 'interpretation' works in both ways. And, under what juridical capability one should reinterpret it? 'One cannot fail to see at the bottom of all these noble races the beast of prey, the splendid blond beast prowling about avidly in search of spoil and victory' (*ibid.*). The competing hegemonic forces are perhaps equivalent in their exploitative mode of flourishing, even though Nietzsche belabours the positive aspect of goodness of the nobility against the *ressentiment* of the plebeian classes. Faced with the antagonistic *ressentiment*-driven lowly classes, the latent, animalistic and bestly core of the so-called nobility 'needs to erupt from time to time, the animal has to get out again and go back to the wilderness' (Sec. 11, pp. 476-477).

12. See Notes 2 and 5 in Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, in *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, pp. 465-466. In the *First Essay* of the text, 'Good and Evil', 'Good and Bad', Nietzsche points out that the concept of good action 'did *not* originate with those to whom "goodness" was shown' (p. 461); rather, the concept was created and established by the nobility, in the stratagem of the upper echelons, to dominate the 'low-minded, common and plebeian' (*ibid.*). '[T]hey first seized the right to create values and to coin names for values' (*ibid.*). Nietzsche further claims that as the concept of good and bad originated with the ruling class, one could also 'conceive of the origin of the language itself as an expression of power on the part of the rulers' (*ibid.*). He traces the etymological root of the word 'good' and finds it conflated with the aristocratic class and nobility. Good is the province of the dominating class, the prosperous with 'privileged soul', whereas the plebeian is associated with bad; and, with regard to a 'moral genealogy', Nietzsche calls this 'a fundamental insight' (Sec. 5, p. 464). Also, through the words that designate good, the powerful felt themselves holding power over the plebeians. The powerful class called themselves 'the truthful': 'The root of the word coined for this, *esthlos* [Greek for 'good', the opposite being *kakoi*, 'bad'], signifies one who *is*, who possesses reality, who is actual, who is true; then with a subjective turn, the true as the faithful: in this phase of the conceptual transformation it becomes a slogan and catchword of nobility and passes over entirely into the sense of the 'noble', as distinct from the *lying* common man' (p. 465). The hegemonic

class created and reinterpreted reality that causally demarcated their domination with their linguistic mastery and coinage of moral goodness against the subjugated people, and the ‘truth’ of the moral goodness masks the sinister construction that obfuscates its interpretation, evolution, and growth. But this valuation of morality, Nietzsche notes, saw a reversal in history, and this reversal comes with the priestly class, the torchbearers of the ascetic ideals. The powerful aristocratic value judgment came out of ‘a powerful physicality, a flourishing, abundant, even overflowing health, together with that which serves to preserve it: war, adventure, hunting, dancing, war games, and in general all that involves vigorous, free, joyful activity’ (Sec. 7, p. 469). The opposite of this is the priestly mode of valuation, that grew out of ingenious deep-rooted hatred — ‘the most spiritual and poisonous kind of hatred’ (*ibid.*). This, Nietzsche says, is the emergence of ‘slave morality’, as the masters, the aristocratic nobility, have been done away with, a hegemony replaced by another more powerful, a force subjugated by another more powerfully dominating one, where the ‘common man has won’ (Sec. 9, p. 472). And what is the defining mode of characteristic of this newer configuration of power? ‘While every noble morality develops from a triumphant affirmation of itself, slave morality from the outset says No to what is ‘outside’, what is different, what is ‘not itself’, and *this* No is its creative deed.’ (Sec. 10, p. 472) This new configuration of the dominating power structure defines itself with respect to what it is not, i.e., it entirely affirms its own existence based on the ‘other’, an ‘other’ that is decidedly not what it *is*, in existence, and shuns out any exteriority whatsoever.

13. Michel Foucault, ‘Nietzsche, Genealogy, History’, in *Aesthetics: Essential Works of Foucault 1954 – 1984, Volume 2*, p. 369
14. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Dawn of Day*, No. 102, 1881, quoted in Michel Foucault, ‘Nietzsche, Genealogy, History’, in *Aesthetics: Essential Works of Foucault 1954 – 1984, Volume 2*, p. 370
15. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, trans. Walter Kaufman (New York: Random House, 1974). See Note 23 in Michel Foucault, ‘Nietzsche, Genealogy, History’, in *Aesthetics: Essential Works of Foucault 1954 – 1984, Volume 2*, p. 390

16. Samuel Beckett, *Endgame* (London: Faber and Faber, 1958), p. 15
17. See Note 35 in Michel Foucault, 'Nietzsche, Genealogy, History', in *Aesthetics: Essential Works of Foucault 1954 – 1984, Volume 2*, p. 390
18. Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, in *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, p. 456
19. See Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of Prison* (London: Penguin, 1997, 1991)
20. See Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (New York: Pantheon, 1972)
21. Garry Gutting, *Foucault* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 46
22. Barry Smart, *Michel Foucault* (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 59
23. Michel Foucault, 'Nietzsche, Genealogy, History', in *Aesthetics: Essential Works of Foucault 1954 – 1984, Volume 2*, p. 380
24. Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, in *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, p. 555