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The Vanishing Face of Man: Foucault on the End of Human Science

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## Abstract

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Contemporary French philosopher Michel Foucault examines the historical development of human understanding in his major theoretical work *The Order of Things*. He includes three epistemes in History: the age of similarities, the Classical Age, and the age of man. He employs an archaeological method to reveal the origin of man based on human science, which includes economics, biology, and language. He argues that man is only a recent creature after the 19<sup>th</sup> century and a product of historical arrangement. His understanding about man's existence and his non-subject centered view of History allow him to propose in the end of *The Order of Things* that man will vanish later in History.

This paper aims to propose that Foucault's hypothesis on the end of man is invalid. The first chapter of the paper will illustrate his development of History. The second chapter will examine how economics, biology, and language transform into human science in the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, the third chapter will challenge his view on the existence of man. It will prove that Foucault's positivist view limits his understanding of man, since he considers man's existence only as a modern scientific object. It will also reveal that man can also exist through his subjectivity; thus, the true moment of the rise of man should be in the creation of poetry because poetry is the most original expression of human subjectivity. In this sense, Foucault's archaeological method that is based on the idea of man being only a recent creature is mistaken, since he has already presupposed to objectify man.

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## Introduction

Michel Foucault is one of the most significant contemporary French philosophers. His works offer both discursive and non-discursive methods to examine History. For Foucault, History, different from historicity, is not a continuous whole that is based on chronological events.

Instead, History contains different paradigms and breaks. The creation and disappearance of each paradigm is a result of the arrangement of knowledge. However, the arrangement of knowledge does not arise out of human subjectivity or consciousness but is an autonomous transformation of History. Foucault's philosophy tends to provide a relativist view to prove that understanding is always moved by historical paradigms. The truth in one historical paradigm is doomed to lose its central status or even be overthrown by the latter paradigm. Thus, Foucault's philosophy and historical views are non-subject centered, challenging the traditional theories that emphasize the significance of transcendental consciousness and subjectivity, which originated from Descartes and Kant. It is this non-subject centered view that makes Foucault philosophy revolutionary and unique.

After finishing *Madness and Civilization* and *The Birth of the Clinic* that examine two particular fields of historical transformation, he starts to theoretically illustrate the transformation in *The Order to Things*. The object that this book examines is the development of human epistemic paradigms (episteme). This book tends to discover the possible foundations of human understanding and eventually to reveal the historical conditions that create the age of man. For Foucault, the age of man is based on modern empirical science that decomposes and analyzes human subjectivity. Thus, Foucault attempts to offer an archaeological approach to find what possibly makes man appear in History. Archaeology does not refer to a subject, but a method to



unfold the discursive practices that constitute bodies of knowledge.<sup>1</sup> The archaeological system does not examine an object through its static essence, but describes its origin and development. It provides a relative perspective view that human collective understanding is not how it manifests itself in one moment but it is experiencing a constant transformation in History.

Foucault's archaeology is indeed inspired by Nietzsche's genealogy that discovers that morality is relative and changed by power. It is noticeable that Foucault pays tributes to Nietzsche in many places in *The Order of Things*. He believes that Nietzsche's philosophy achieves an ultimate freedom. Nietzsche breaks free of the restriction of subjectivity and dialectic.<sup>2</sup> However, in this book, Foucault's archaeological approach is different from Nietzsche's genealogy in the sense that Foucault does not clarify that power is the reason of the episteme. Archaeology only describes the transformation without finding the cause. In his later work, *Discipline and Punish*, he eventually employs a genealogy that connects power and History together.

In Foucault's philosophy, since History is based on the rise and fall of each paradigm, Foucault proposes a hypothesis that the age of man may also disappear, "like a face drawn in sand at the edge of the sea."<sup>3</sup> In this sense, the age of man is only one temporary moment in History. It is not the center of the world before and will lose its central role again. Man has to embrace his finitude. According to Foucault, man may be replaced by the achievement of the absolute objectivity. For example, human subjectivity will be replaced by modern scientific research of biology that reduces consciousness into electrons and atomic energy. Language can be interpreted and created completely by mathematic algorithm. Foucault believes that human

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<sup>1</sup> Gutting, G. (1999). *Michel Foucault's Archaeology of Scientific Reason*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p7.

<sup>2</sup> Foucault, M. (1994). *The Order of Things*. New York: Vintage Books, p263.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 387.

science is composed of three aspects: biology, economics, and language. However, the unstable nature of human science will lead a future episteme to totalize human science through only one of the three aspects. Another danger that may cause man to vanish is that psychoanalysis and ethnology theories will replace man's consciousness by unconscious and social structure. Counter-human science can substitute human science. Man's autonomy will eventually be historicized.

Foucault wants to reveal that History and epistemes never need to follow consciousness. The development of knowledge and discourse (a way of constituting knowledge) is also independent from chronological time. It contains several breaks, transformations, and developments, which illustrate sudden suspension and change of human understanding. The progression of History does not involve human subjectivity. Signs, representations, conflicts in History can exist and run without appearing to consciousness but through their objective principles and norms. Human science can eventually manifest the human psyche, the social interactions, and the essence of myth without the awareness of individuals in the society.<sup>4</sup> In this sense, Foucault's philosophy seems to correspond with the post-existentialist trend that rejects consciousness in the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Hence, Foucault is often labeled as a "structuralist" or "post-structuralist" along with Claude Levi-Strauss, Ferdinand de Saussure, et al. It is undeniable that Foucault is tempted by many structuralist approaches. He is impressed by Levi-Strauss on primitive culture and Jacques Lacan on psychoanalysis. Also, he believes that his archaeology is a supplement of structuralism, "effecting in the history of thought the kind of decentering of the subject that structuralists had

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<sup>4</sup> Gutting, G. (1999). *Michel Foucault's Archaeology of Scientific Reason*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p212.

achieved in other domains.”<sup>5</sup> However, Foucault’s approach has fundamental differences with structuralists. For structuralists, human life must be constituted by constant structures and laws to interpret the phenomena and support their validity. However, in Foucault’s archeology, there is no existence of constant structures behind History or each episteme. Foucault’s philosophy is not about constant, but about change. *The Order of Things* reveals that each episteme has to experience its rise and fall in History instead of proving that History is structured by static paradigms. History will always move forward beyond the present understanding and structure rather than be defined by changeless principles. For Foucault, structuralism belongs to another episteme that challenges an anthropological misconception that man is infinite. It is one of the waves to replace the episteme of man but meanwhile it is doomed to be replaced by the future episteme. In this sense, structuralism is only a part of Foucault’s general view of History.

For Foucault, man’s existence can be only described as an object and proved by modern science. The reason man does not exist before the 19<sup>th</sup> century is that modern science does not focus on man in the previous epistemes. In the first episteme, man is only a locus of similarities and in the second episteme man only functions to connect different representations through natural science. Only after the 19<sup>th</sup> century, man’s subjectivity is clearly represented on the stage.

However, after carefully explaining Foucault’s belief in the development of three epistemes in the first chapter and the rise of man in the 19<sup>th</sup> century in the second chapter, this paper in the third chapter will challenge Foucault’s view on the existence of man. The paper will conclude that Foucault’s hypothesis that man may vanish is invalid. The reason is that Foucault’s understanding of man is mistaken and his archaeological method does not find the time of man’s true rise. This paper will propose that man’s existence can not only be considered as an object,

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 266.

but also can be proved through subjectivity. Nevertheless, rather than claim that History is based on human subjectivity, this paper proves that there must be historical periods without man's consciousness. However, the age of man must be first revealed through subjectivity by poetry.

In this sense, Foucault's archaeological method is indeed to examine the origin of man's objectification by modern science. He generalizes the objectified man to man's whole existence. Throughout the book, *The Order of Things*, he overlooks the significance of the rise of man through subjectivity whether that be poetic thinking during the Renaissance or rationality during the Enlightenment. He states, "renaissance 'humanism' and Classical 'rationalism' were indeed able to allot human beings a privileged position in the order of the world, but they were not able to conceive of man."<sup>6</sup> His reasoning is that only the modern episteme can provide a single domain of man and can "measure" man's finitude with modern scientific knowledge. Modern science can employ their own mathematic objectivity, providing a universal clarity of man's finitude, regardless of who is using it.

It is apparent that Foucault's scientific prejudice and his belief in man's finitude have presupposed his view on the existence of man. However, man should exist beyond being objectified. Goethe in his major work, *Faust*, illustrates the existence of man in the following excerpt:

Who divides up the dull monotonous drift  
 Into a living rhythm? Who can lift  
 Particulars things into a general sense  
 Of some great music's sacred congruence  
 When passion rage, who makes the tempest sing,

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<sup>6</sup> Foucault, M. (1994). *The Order of Things*. New York: Vintage Books, p318.

The sunset glow when solemn thought prevails?  
 Who scatters all the blossoms of the spring  
 On his beloved's path? Who makes a crown  
 Of mere green leaves the symbol of renown  
 For high distinction? What is this that fills  
 Olympus, joins the gods in unity –  
 The power of Man, revealed in Poetry! <sup>7</sup>

In the poem, Man does not appear as an object. Man does not create things in the poem (e.g. sunset, blossom, etc.) either. These things have already existed in nature having been created by God. However, it is in man's power to recognize different things, make and connect representations. Representations are not created through reason based on identities, differences, and rational analysis. Instead, they are the results of man's ability to poetize nature into his consciousness. Representations are not connected in a mechanic way by following mathematic principles. Rather, they are organically unified together by man's imagination. In this sense, poetry is not a mere imitation of nature, but it is the result of man's thinking. In order to claim Foucault's hypothesis on the disappearance of man is invalid, it is necessary not only to illustrate man's true existence but also to use archaeological method to trace back to the origin of the poetic man.

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<sup>7</sup> Goethe, J. and Luke, D. (2008). *Faust*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p8.

## Chapter I: Historical Development of Epistemes

Foucault focuses on the historical development of human understanding in *The Order of Things*. He believes that in every single given period in History, there exists a unique episteme, which is a totality of relations of knowledge in the society at a level of discursive regularities.<sup>8</sup> In other words, the knowledge to understand the world in a certain period forms and fits in a paradigm. Foucault includes three epistemes in the book: the pre-Classical period, the Classical Age, and Modernity. The time before the 17<sup>th</sup> century is considered an age in which understanding of the world is based on similarities. The beginning of the Classical Age breaks free this thinking paradigm and brings reason into the understanding of knowledge. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Modernity), the understanding starts focusing on the subjectivity of human beings instead of external objects as in the Classical Age; human science appears on the stage. The purpose of Foucault in this book is not only to describe the different ideas in the three epistemes, but also to discover on what basis the understanding is being changed, which is indeed to discover the historical a priori.

### The Age of Similarities

Until the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, resemblances construct the main role in human knowledge. It allows humans to explore the unknown by associating to the known. In this age, the essences of two things are related because their outside existences share something in common. Humans can only perceive physical aspects on the surface of an object. For example, a person can see his hand through the shape and lines without immediately understanding the essence of the hand. This superficial perception of the physical object will be expressed in the human mind as a “sign” to represent the whole thing. Similarities between things are developed

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<sup>8</sup> Dreyfus, H., Rabinow, P. and Foucault, M. (1982). *Michel Foucault*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, p18.

by connecting different signs together. Foucault categorizes four kinds of resemblances: *convenientia*, *aemulatio*, analogy, and sympathies. In *convenientia*, things are close to each other to be in juxtaposition. They are adjacent; they exist conveniently.<sup>9</sup> They are connected in space and the edge of one thing is not only the end but also a start of another thing. The connection in space for the mind in 16<sup>th</sup> century manifests that two things share a certain connection in essence. For example, an image of moss growing on the top of shells help humans to associate and understand them together. The image indicates these two are related in their nature. Foucault refers to this connection as a rope of *convenientia* in space, helping humans to understand by connecting what is known to what is unknown. “If we touch one extremity of the cord it will make tremble and move all.”<sup>10</sup>

The second kind of resemblance is *aemulatio*. It is an emulation that does not depend on the adjacency in space. In the second kind, two remote things can also be associated together without the limitation of space. Instead, emulation relates one thing to another by reflection just like a mirror. For example, a human face emulates the sky; two eyes emulate stars in the sky. Not only the outside appearances can pass this reflection, but the inner characteristics also inherit the resembling property. To illustrate, if human face resembles the sky, then human intelligence also resembles the intelligence of the sky, which is God’s wisdom. The sky can be considered a personification of the human inner spiritual world. Unlike *convenientia*, *aemulatio* “does not form a chain but a series of concentric circles reflecting and rivaling one another.”<sup>11</sup> In this sense, *convenientia* forms a bond between different things, but *aemulatio* builds a confrontation, where humans always shake and transform the appearance of the sky instead of continuing it.

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<sup>9</sup> Foucault, M. (1994). *The Order of Things*. New York: Vintage Books, p18.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, 19.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, 21.

The third one is analogy. It seems to function as a combination of *convenientia* and *aemulatio* because it involves both continuation and confrontation regardless of the space limitation. It can match one point to similar infinite points. For example, this resemblance can be found between lives and where lives inhabit. Individual life is considered a representation of where they live. The plant can be associated with an upright animal because the nutrition in both of them starts from the bottom to the top.<sup>12</sup> In analogy, the similarity in the whole world flows in every direction. Although everything can empirically resemble something else, everything will concentrate in one central point – man. The reason is because man is the most familiar object with which to associate. The phenomena in the world always end up being compared to different parts of man's body, as long as it shares very minimal similarities. In analogy, the resemblance between two things is more flexible than *convenientia* and *aemulatio*.

The last one is *sympathies*. It is a principle of mobility, stimulating the movement of the things in the world. It makes the most remote things in the world come closer. It attracts heavy objects to fall to the ground. It extends the root of a plant to the water. It turns the disk of sunflower to follow the direction of the sun.<sup>13</sup> Instead of being a physical force, *sympathies* is a personified term that associate things together based on their movements. The movements allow them to merge into a similar point or path. The opposite of sympathy is *antipathy*, which keeps things independent and segregated. *Antipathy* is based on hatred rather than attraction. Thus, the world is established upon the balance between sympathy and *antipathy*. Dry and hot fire is the *antipathy* of humid and cold water. They will compose and affect the world to reach a harmonic level, such as the perfect temperature and moisture of air and the earth.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, sympathy

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid, 21.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, 23

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 25.



and antipathy may not only parallel the other kinds of resemblances, but they are also the foundation of the whole system. It explains the previous three kinds. “All the adjacencies of convenience, all the echoes of emulation, all the linkages of analogy, are supported, maintained, and doubled by sympathy and antipathy.”<sup>15</sup> In this way, all the representations of things in the world are understood as a result of sympathy and antipathy.

Language is a significant factor that reflects the development of episteme. Foucault believes that at the beginning of time, the most original language given by God reflects signs in the most transparent way, in which things would not hide themselves from man’s perception. It is the holy language for all the humans to communicate with God until God punished men at Babel. Since then, languages became diverse as well as separated. The original transparency that resembled the signs was also destroyed. Foucault’s Judeo-Christian historical view also considers that Hebrew is the only language that still inherits the original resemblance; Hebrew words keep radical metaphors when humans first assign a name to an object. Radical metaphor means identifying an object based on superficial observations. “All other languages have lost these radical similitudes, which have been preserved in Hebrew only in order to show that it was once the common language of God, Adam, and animals of the newly created earth.”<sup>16</sup> The original nature of language that reflects signs and similarities has been increasingly fading away. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century’s episteme, language still plays a role depicting the similarities. However, language does not form a system that reflects and combines all of the signs, but it is fragmented and mysterious. This happens because things start to reveal and hide their essence in language. Language is not a unified whole but only touches here and there in the world of signs.<sup>17</sup> There

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 25.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, 36.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, 35.

does not exist a consistency for a language to unify all of the signs. Nevertheless, during this time period, language is not completely detached and independent from the world of signs, but it becomes interwoven with them. Furthermore, Foucault points out that language is developing toward a complete independence. In the 17<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup> century, language becomes an art of “making a sign” to represent things’ names. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, language finally achieves an autonomous existence.<sup>18</sup>

Besides religion, another reason that language becomes half detached from signs is the development of printing. The massive production of books created by printing allows language to be expressed in the form of text instead of voice. The Bible becomes accessible to everyone and the interpretation of the Bible based on the text has more authority than churches’ preaching. The writing language is always believed to have more certainty than talking language relying on personal memory. This fact leads to a phenomenon that interpretation books not only interpret the Bible, but also interpret books that interpret the Bible. “There is more work in interpreting interpretations than in interpreting things; and more books about books than on any other subject.”<sup>19</sup> Thus, language becomes a way to reflect language rather than mere signs. Foucault believes that in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, knowledge is about interpreting instead of seeing or illustrating. The interpreting essence of language allows language to develop upon itself and to “accumulate to infinity.”<sup>20</sup> The interpretation of the original source is destined to become a source for the future interpretation.

However, Foucault does not believe that the interpretations upon interpretations in the 16<sup>th</sup> century discuss any truth but only bring things into the system of similarities. The infinite

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid, 43.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, 40.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

interpretations always return back to the original written text, which is to know the similarities between signs. The interpretations only function to inherit the similarities without realizing the fallacy or rejecting them. “it (language) can express that discourse only by trying to approximate to it, by attempting to say things about it that are similar to it, thereby bringing into existence the infinity of adjacent and similar fidelities of interpretation.”<sup>21</sup> Just like the signs that resemble each other in this episteme, interpretations also resemble the previous text without really knowing themselves.

### The Classical Age

The problem of the resemblance episteme is also apparent. In this episteme, humans only observe the sensible side of a thing without discovering the true essence. The four types of similarities that connect signs are fragile. They lack certainty and accuracy to discover the world. The net of resemblance in one’s mind forms a microcosm that is detached from thinking of truth. The understanding of the world can vary from another’s mind, according to one’s respective experiences in the past and imagination of the future. The system does not possess a universal value to convince everyone to reach an absolute commonness. The reason is the things in the worlds are only examined as the shallowest surface without going in depth until one reaches the invariable essence.

According to Foucault, at the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the first discontinuity of episteme appears. He claims that, before the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the understanding of the world is always based on similarities to connect the signs with each other. However, in the 17<sup>th</sup> century reason starts to replace the similarities, and the continuous development of History was interrupted because things start to be understood in a new way. The episteme that connects things

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid, 41.

by similarity has already ceased. "Similarity is no longer the form of knowledge but rather the occasion of error."<sup>22</sup>Foucault believes that Descartes is an emblematic figure that offers a method to seek the invariable essence. For Descartes, the simplest thing, the most unshakeable ground is the cogito – "I think, therefore I am." If one is trying to argue against this foundation, he has already presupposed thinking and his essence. Thus, Descartes does break up the imaginative world based on resemblance and offers a Cartesian mathematic way to generalize out of the cogito. From the 17<sup>th</sup> century, a new episteme – the Classical Age – starts to enter in History. In this episteme, understanding excludes the uncertain, variable, and flexible similarities as the foundations to constitute understanding. Instead, knowledge has to be acquired by analyzed through identity, difference, measurement, and order,<sup>23</sup>

Notably, for Foucault, Descartes is not the only one that seeks this certainty, or the elite philosopher stays on top of the pyramid without keeping consistency with the whole society. Foucault's concern about episteme the totality of the knowledge, which is the knowledge that represents the mainstream understanding of the society, is the people's average everyday understanding. In this sense, Foucault believes that Descartes is not only an elite philosopher whose thinking is detached from the rest the society but is the epitome of the interconnectedness of the whole age. This is the reason why ancient Greek society with Plato and Aristotle, whose philosophies already state a complete system to rationally analyze the world, is not considered to enter a reasoning episteme. The understanding of the majority of ancient Greek people perhaps still stays in the similarities to relate one thing to another. Furthermore, Foucault, as a historical relativist, seems not to believe this episteme is led by one or two individuals' theories. Indeed, it is the transformation of History that causes the emergence of those crucial figures. Besides

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid, 51,

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, 52.

Descartes, other philosophers including Thomas Hobbs, George Berkeley, and David Hume also appear due to the rise of the Classical Age rather than their individual efforts that change the episteme.<sup>24</sup> The overwhelming History decides an individual's fate; one can only think within a certain historical background, on the basis of its historical a priori. This is because an individual does not have ability to change the whole History, but History has the overwhelming power to shape an individual thinking.

The rational transformation of knowledge first reflects on the understanding of signs. In the Classical Age, signs no longer constitute the world; they are no longer the ways for people to understand an object. Foucault is not stating that signs are erased from human understanding. They still exist in the nature, but in this new episteme, they cannot transform into knowledge before being completely known by analysis. Signs have to be rationalized. In this sense, the function of signs is no longer to approximate the world in arbitrary forms, but to unify human perceptions in an absolute public platform in order to unfold the secret of the world.<sup>25</sup> Consequently, things will acquire their own identities and characteristics as well as logically combine together. Before the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, signs in human understanding exist in primitive forms. "The artificial signs owed their power only to their fidelity to natural signs."<sup>26</sup> However, in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the relationship between the natural signs and artificial signs is reversed. Human analysis will select signs to form knowledge, transforming "imagination into voluntary memory, spontaneous attention into reflection, and instinct into rational knowledge."<sup>27</sup> The probable natural signs now must be compared with others and decomposed into the simplest elements to acquire certain artificial signs. All of the certain artificial signs not exist by

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid, 63.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, 61.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, 62.

themselves or combine arbitrarily but constitute a whole universal episteme that is analyzable and calculable. The rational signs have been detached from similarities, leading to the rise of rationalism in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

Furthermore, since signs in the 17<sup>th</sup> century have also been rationally analyzed and decomposed, signs no longer only signify part of an object but signify an object or a thought as a whole. Thus, signs in the Classical Age transform into representations. As Foucault states, “from the Classical Age, the sign is the representative of the representation in so far as it is representable.”<sup>28</sup> Compared to signs, representations represent both rational essence and appearance, whereas signs only signify appearance. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, a sign utilizes a particular part to signify the whole, but meanwhile a whole can exist only by being signified by the particular. In this sense, representation has already unified the dualism of a sign – what signifies and what is signified. “the signifying element and the signified element are linked only in so far as they are represented.”<sup>29</sup> The representation formed by rational analysis makes humans no longer partially perceive one side of the whole, since in this episteme humans will naturally think in terms of the logic essence of an object.

The Classical Age constructs a certain method to order the representations of every object in order to mirror the world. This order is absolute and universal. The “table” is a network that displays order reflecting the relations between different representations. On the table, the universal method of analysis can describe a clear picture of the true order of the world.<sup>30</sup> This method is based on logic; the table is the structure of the episteme in the Classical Age. Instead of similarities of signs in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the analysis of the world in the Classical Age becomes

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid, 65.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, 67.

<sup>30</sup> Dreyfus, H., Rabinow, P. and Foucault, M. (1982). *Michel Foucault*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, p19.

comparison and order of representations. The comparison process starts from comparing the same and difference between two representations and then decomposes them into their simplest elements, the very origins. “One considers the whole first and then divides it up into parts.”<sup>31</sup>

The comparison of two representations requires at least one invariable common element, so the two representations can be compared and reduced to the simpler level. For example, if one wants to compare the mass of two objects, he needs to control the volume so that these two are the same. Then he is able to conclude that the simplest element – density – is the scientific factor that influences mass. Once the simplest elements are guaranteed and isolated, it is certain to combine them with a mathematic order to form complexity. This logical method in the Classical Age has preceded human consciousness; rationality has become a natural habit for humans to think.

Notably, the method in the Classical Age is, in fact, different from Descartes' method. This method decomposes experiences by comparison, whereas Descartes radically eliminates all the experiences to avoid the uncertainty. It results that the simplest element, the most unshakeable ground in the Classical Age is the intuitive irreducible thing from which things only add up instead of Descartes' method. In this sense, Descartes' method may function at the sprout of the episteme to wake up the world from the resemblance slumber, but it actually does not play a role during the development of the Classical Age. The scientific method in the Classical Age does not totally reject the previous episteme based on resemblance, but instead inherits and sharpens it by starting from comparison. Foucault also observes Descartes' method and the Classical Age by claiming that “though Descartes rejects resemblance, he does so not by excluding the act of comparison from rational thought, nor even by seeking to limit it, but on the contrary by universalizing it and thereby giving it its purest form.”<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Foucault, M. (1994). *The Order of Things*. New York: Vintage Books, p53.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, 52.

However, in this episteme, man is not involved on the table; he is not one of the representations he is trying to compare and order. The role of man is to clarify the order of things, to give an artificial depiction of the order by using language. Man is not the creator but only the clarifier. He neither creates the world nor its representations. God is the creator and transcendental source of everything.<sup>33</sup> This is why Foucault believes that there are no significant theories in the Classical Age. The mission of man is only to clarify the order of the representations in the world; man cannot represent himself on the table. Man has to stand outside all the representations to organize them together. He may involve human presence on the table, but this presence is by no means his full representation. One cannot represent the representor. The reason that in the Classical Age there is no place for man is that man concentrated on discovering and clarifying the outside representations and order while ignoring the human subjectivity. The questions concerning human subjectivity are not necessities to start the table. The table can also run on without participation of human science. For example, the birth and success of physics and chemistry are not related to a science that analyzes scientists themselves. Similarly, Descartes' cogito only attains a trivial answer to achieve certainty and clarity<sup>34</sup>. The purpose of "I think" is to build the ground to ensure the outside sensual world is real, but it does not get into "I" or "think." The cogito touches the edge of human subjectivity, but it does not delve into the core by representing and objectifying it.

### The Age of Man

The Classical Age does not provide a specific and isolate domain for man. The order of human "being" is still absent in the Classical Age. Foucault radically states that man does not exist before the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. "He is a quite recent creature, which the demiurge

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<sup>33</sup> Dreyfus, H., Rabinow, P. and Foucault, M. (1982). *Michel Foucault*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, p20.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid*, 20.



of knowledge fabricated with its own hands less than two hundred years ago.”<sup>35</sup> Before this period, in the 17<sup>th</sup> and the 18<sup>th</sup> century, there was no observation of the human body, no analysis of sensation and passion, no empirical science, and even no philosophy.<sup>36</sup> The lack of man in the Classical Age eventually urges the emergence of man (human science) in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This opinion will seem controversial unless one knows that Foucault understands man in terms of human science, which include no more than three dimensions: biology, economics and philology. Human science is expressed as man that lives, speaks and produces.<sup>37</sup> In one dimension, humans have math and physical science to logically discover the human body and human behaviors. In the second dimension, humans have science to investigate relations between individuals and social structure. The third dimension, language, allows humans to express their thoughts in the symbolic world, to think about existence, and acquire beauty through literature and poetry. Human science lies in a “prism” composed by these three dimensions. Notably, human science exists in the volume of the prism instead of on each side or plane; each subject in itself does not compose human science as a whole. For example, the organism, bacteria, and virus in the human body, do not equate to human science. The generalization of each dimension is what Foucault describes as the danger of human science; the uncertain and unstable nature will easily be shifted toward “psychologism,” “sociologism,” or “anthropologism.”<sup>38</sup> Thus, the object of human science is human subjectivity as a whole.

However, man neither creates economic principles, anatomy of body, or language system, nor reveal them to be part of human knowledge. Instead, they exist before the man’s birth. These three dimensions certify and determinate human existence, objectifying man in the

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<sup>35</sup> Foucault, M. (1994). *The Order of Things*. New York: Vintage Books, p308.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 344.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 351.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 348.

19<sup>th</sup> century. Consequently, in Foucault's philosophy, man is finite; man will be doomed to disappear in History. "Man's finitude is heralded, - and imperiously so - in the positivity of knowledge."<sup>39</sup> Foucault acquires the analysis of finitude first from Kant. Kant argues that man as an object of the empirical scientific knowledge is created by the form of space and time as well as the framework of the categories, but these are also the conditions that restrict man. Language, economics, and biology do no more than empirically describe the domains of Kantian criterion.<sup>40</sup> Furthermore, Foucault is attempting to prove man's finitude by using modern man's empirical science to reconcile Kant's distinction between man as a transcendental and man as empirical. In Foucault's philosophy, transcendental becomes empirical. Thanks to the modern development of biology, the human transcendental ability to think can be decomposed into biological conditions of electrons and molecules. Also, knowledge can have historical conditions that have already determined the transcendental subject. Thus, the transcendental subject of Kant, transcendental ego of Husserl, or the cogito of Descartes have already lost the transcendental nature and purity when confronting modern empirical science. In this sense, man can be objectified as objects or history that he does not create. Each object in the world already has its own history before they together accumulate together to make man. "Man ... originates from what is essentially other than him."<sup>41</sup> The modern scientific man appears in the 19<sup>th</sup> century to form a new episteme, but will die later. Foucault does not propose a complete annihilation of man or humanism, but claims that man will no longer be the central concern or the locus of knowledge. The scientific methods in economics, biology, and language may replace man to start a new episteme, which today's society seems to submit.

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid, 313.

<sup>40</sup> Gutting, G. (1999). *Michel Foucault's Archaeology of Scientific Reason*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p200.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, 205.

In this sense, to investigate which period the episteme of human science was born is to certify the time of biology, economics, and philology. All of them coincidentally start developing in the 19<sup>th</sup> century due to the influence of rationalism and practical problems that natural science cannot solve. In this era, Jean-Baptiste Lamarck and Charles Darwin first established the subject biology by introducing evolution. Additionally, modern capitalism began rising to include every individual into a whole society by satisfying desire. Furthermore, philology is introduced into the golden age. However, in the Classical period, all knowledge is ordered to seek differences and trace mathematic principles behind those differences.<sup>42</sup> In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, knowledge starts presenting as different categories and subjects, becoming fragmented to seek man at an individual level. The similarities between epistemic structures of experience and human science are also noticeable. Foucault describes experience as a prism that is composed by truth, subjectivities, and knowledge, whereas human science consists of biology, economics, and language.<sup>43</sup> This experience should be contained in History as a whole of all accumulations of each historical episteme. The microcosm of human science resembles the macrocosm of experience. Biology is investigated through math and physical science that tell the truth. Human relations and desires are expressed in economics but they are also subjectivities that affect our moral choices. Finally, language is used for humans to explore the symbolic world that allows us to acquire knowledge. Consequently, the 19<sup>th</sup> century should not be understood as a special period that stands out apart from other periods, but an episteme that develops from History.

Another characteristic of the 19<sup>th</sup> century is the investigation of archeology. From Hegel to Nietzsche, the 19<sup>th</sup> century began to employ genealogical approaches to cognize an episteme.

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<sup>42</sup> Foucault, M. (1994). *The Order of Things*. New York: Vintage Books p346.

<sup>43</sup> Flynn, T. (1997). *Sartre, Foucault, and Historical Reason, Volume Two*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press p147.

Archeological analysis allows us to perceive an outline of the historical configuration that creates historical a priori – positivity. Positivity should be understood as empirical conditions to state this particular episteme. Through archeological investigation, we can acquire the limits of man's being in order to gain the relativity that humans cannot escape. Thus, human science can unveil the unconscious by consciousness, which, according to Foucault, is the most fundamental object.<sup>44</sup> The unconscious provides a thought that will be repeated again in History. The future resembles the past. Foucault's belief in human science has certain common ground with Carl Jung's psychoanalysis in terms of archetypes that are discovered as the origins of archeology to manifest the unconscious. Nevertheless, Foucault does not believe psychoanalysis is human science since man's being contains two aspects: he is the foundation of all positivity and the present. Psychoanalysis that reduces man to archetypes and the unconscious only concerns the historical priori without consideration of the present. For Foucault, the purpose of human science is to reveal the present, which is the interiority of human existence instead of the external historical a priori, even though the historical a priori can limit the boundary of this interiority.

Now Foucault's concern is how to reconcile the positivity and the present (the 19<sup>th</sup> century) with human science, which also means how should humans view the relation between History and human history. In this episteme knowledge has already been fragmented; the continuous development of History was shattered by human science: nature is no longer about the beginning of the world, but only about nature's history (evolution) and the interiority of nature; wealth is no longer about glorious events in History, but only concerns production's ways being changed and economics' history; language is no longer about its trace back to the divine and archaic origin, but about the grammar and pronunciation that can even transcend without

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<sup>44</sup> Foucault, M. (1994). *The Order of Things*. New York: Vintage Books, p372.

time. Human science divides the unity of History into three parts: biology, economics and language, which just run on each own history. Humans seem to experience a period named “dehistoricized.”<sup>45</sup> However, human history does not totally detach from History. The synchronicity shared between History and human history determines the fact that positivity has already been set up to condition human life, labor, and language. Instead of saying to end History, human science more likely stops pure reliance on chronology and the memory inside it, gaining certain autonomy out of passive relationship to History. Nevertheless, History constitutes an environment for human science<sup>46</sup>, which allows it to move within the boundary. Foucault opposes historicism that man’s being is totally limited by the historical positivity. On the contrary, analysis of man’s finitude allows us to study being in the environment of historical conditions. Human science is able to exist and enjoy relative freedom in the episteme that will disappear eventually.

Foucault in *The Order of Things* does not state the reason why the episteme shifts happen, what causes the birth of human science, or why the attention of the western world changes from study of the outside representations to the inside human subjectivity. Similarly, he does not explain why the episteme shifts from the system of similarities to the Classical Age, since there are civilizations in the world, which would stay in the resemblance without seeking the certainty. However, Foucault’s examination of archaeology to discursive and non-discursive practices in his later works such as *Discipline and Punish* may explain the internal cause of the episteme shift. Unlike many historians’ views that history dialectically moves, or is changed by world historical figures, Foucault believes that numerous unrelated small factors will eventually result in fundamental change. Some sudden random ideas or violence from scientists, politicians,

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 368

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 372

or even ordinary people may change the whole episteme. “The action of the micro-causes can eventually lead to fundamentally new sorts of discursive practices and to a corresponding revolution in the correlated discursive practices (a new episteme).<sup>47</sup> The accumulations of actions result in immense power to change the whole episteme. The minor procedures will gradually invade and alter the form of a major paradigm of a society.

In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault claims that the episteme of man is created due to the different methods of incarceration. The Change of the episteme is “because they (human science) have been conveyed by a specific and new modality of power: a certain policy of the body, a certain way of rendering the group of men docile and useful.”<sup>48</sup> Here Foucault believes that micro interpersonal power relations will be interwoven together and form an examination system in the society just like the most ideal prison described in the book, Mettray. In this examination society, the relation between teacher and student, doctor and patient, priests and follower, etc., will act like guard and prisoners. Since everyone lives in institutions, the numerous interpersonal powers will cause everyone to examine each other and most importantly to examine themselves as individuals. As Foucault’s inspiration, Giambattista Vico states, “the order of ideas must follow the order of institutions.”<sup>49</sup> In both Foucault and Vico’s philosophies, institution refers to social things. Foucault believes that the collective reliance in the community starts to collapse in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the individual man begins to appear. As Foucault states, “Discipline 'makes 'individuals; it is the specific technique of a power that regards individuals both as objects and as instruments of its exercise.”<sup>50</sup> Instead of an almighty power from the above, it is the

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<sup>47</sup> Gutting, G. (1999). *Michel Foucault's Archaeology of Scientific Reason*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p271.

<sup>48</sup> Foucault, M. and Sheridan, A. (1995). *Discipline and Punish*. New York: Vintage Books, p305.

<sup>49</sup> Bergin, T. (2015). *New Science of Giambattista Vico*. Cornell University Press, p78.

<sup>50</sup> Foucault, M. and Sheridan, A. (1995). *Discipline and Punish*. New York: Vintage Books, p170.

accumulation of numerous micro-interpersonal power that starts an examination system. The examination of self indeed produces a motivation to divert social attention from the outside to the inside and then to objectify man's subjectivity, thus transforming the Classical Age to age of man.

## Chapter II: Transformations into Human Science

Foucault believes that in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a new episteme was created. In this episteme, experiences transfer from objects to a new field – transcendental field of subjectivity: Life, Labor, and Language. These three fields are what Foucault named quasi-transcendentals: they no longer need to be understood in relations to something else, but become independent subjects and acquire certain transcendental value. That is to say, each subject can be analyzed by certain principles within it. For example, biology can be decomposed as activities of bacteria, Economics can be specified as mathematic formulas in terms of value, and Philology can be treated as rules of vowels and consonants. Thus, human subjectivity is transformed into three areas of objectivity to learn. On the contrary, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the analysis of each subject (representations) is in tabulated space to provide identity and differences between them. The representations are decomposed, analyzed, and recomposed into a duplication of representation. This analysis of representations composes a “table.” This table, according to Foucault, is a net of representations connected by categories, only presenting the visible surface of knowledge. The order the table generates is “only a superficial glitter above an abyss.”<sup>51</sup>

At the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the methods that exist in the Classical Age start to collapse and develop into new methods; they would vertically get into origin, causality, and History. This vertical discovery of the deeper truth behind representations may not be mathematical, induction, or deduction, but will show specifically in biology, economics, and language. This appearance in these academic fields is significant since it triggers a new paradigm of human epistemology. In this sense, the positivity of knowledge changes its form and nature. Positivity is an external outline based on experiences instead of reason to circumscribe the

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<sup>51</sup> Foucault, M. (1994). *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences, etc.* New York: Vintage Books, p251.



knowledge in this episteme. Nevertheless, positivity in Foucault's view is understood as an historical a priori, which provides historical conditions to certain epistemes. Positivity is different from reason in the sense that it is an historical empirical development instead of a set of transcendental formulas.

Also, Foucault warns us that it is mistaken to simply consider that the change of an episteme is due to the discovery of previously unknown objects. The reason of the birth of a new episteme is also established upon the previous episteme. The 18<sup>th</sup> century's knowledge provides historical a priori for the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The latter does not deny the former, but these two are both parts of a historical development. Furthermore, Foucault warns it is mistaken to consider all the knowledge in biology, economics, and language, as he argues, "free themselves from their prehistories through a sort of auto-analysis achieved by reason itself."<sup>52</sup> He does not believe there is absolutely transcendental knowledge in these three fields, which is why he names them in 19<sup>th</sup> century quasi-transcendentals. That is to say, beside the knowledge itself, the method to study knowledge is based on an historical a priori.

The true way to understand this turning point between the episteme of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the episteme of the 19<sup>th</sup> century is "knowledge itself as an anterior and indivisible mode of being between the knowing subject and the object of knowledge."<sup>53</sup> It indicates the transition point that human subjectivity is turning toward objects. Knowledge of production replaces exchange in Labor, study of internal organic organ and structure is directing Life, and Language, laws of vowel gradation or consonant mutation replace discourse. This ideology guarantees a certain autonomy of the three fields, making them possess their own rules to be understood without strong connection of their previous history. Nevertheless, the knowledge is not gradually

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid, 252.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid, 252.

built up or established upon new methods. They are also not construed on human understanding due to the birth of a new episteme. The knowledge has already been there; they are things-in-themselves that maintain the unity across time, but they are understood by the human mind differently due to discovering unprecedented methods. Historical development of an episteme finally allows humans to unveil the deeper face of knowledge. “The constitution of these fundamental modes is doubtless buried deep down in the dense archeological layers.”<sup>54</sup> Foucault here seems to argue that the way for humans to understand principles behind certain representations are chronologically variable, which forms different epistemes. It shows Foucault’s Kantian belief that separates the thing-in-itself and consciousness: thing-in-itself (knowledge) can remain unchanged, but consciousness trying to understand thing-in-itself will change according to different historical epistemes. It proves Kant’s view on impossibility to grasp the thing-in-itself, the pure objectivity, because inter-subjectivity under different episteme will reach different conclusions to understand the same knowledge.

#### Transformation of Economic Theories

Foucault believes that at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, David Ricardo, a British economist, generates a work on economy that starts a new episteme in History. The difference between the 18<sup>th</sup> century’s economist Adam Smith and Ricardo is that for Smith, “labor is analyzable into days of subsistence, can be used as a unit common to all other merchandise; for Ricardo, the quantity of labor makes it possible to determine the value of a thing.”<sup>55</sup> In the Classical age, labor is considered as a unit on the table to exchange with other activities that shared similar representations and value is only a sign derived from labor without substantial function to determine trade in the market. For example, an arrow can be exchanged for a hammer

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid, 253.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, 254.

without involving money or price tags on them. However, in this new episteme, labor is production and value is product; quantity of labor (cost and time), instead of wage, determines its product's value. The activity of economics no longer needs to connect with other fields; it becomes a more singular and independent subject. When the products are exchanged in the market, this exchange is based on the value of the products as a representation. Theories of production serve a fundamental role in economics, since it precedes and determines the market trade. In short, economics in the 18<sup>th</sup> century is about exchange; economics in the 19<sup>th</sup> century is about production in terms of value.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the problem concerned and analyzed is reciprocal power relations on the surface of representation. "Production diminished when the instruments of representation diminished in relation to the things to be represented."<sup>56</sup> However, after Ricardo, labor has detached from representation; it depends on its own causality to organize the system of labor, the cost of production, number of workers, etc. Labor alone established its own system in economics instead of being related or exchanged with other representations. Economics thus acquired autonomy to become one subject. This transformation allows economics to involve man as its object to discover without the interference of other representations on the table, evoking the awakening of human science.

Another turning point in economics is scarcity. In the Classical age, scarcity appears because people represent things to themselves they do not yet own: for those who are hungry, wheat is scarce; for the rich, diamonds are scarce.<sup>57</sup> However, in Ricardo's theory, it has a fundamental insufficiency related with human increasing avarice. When the population increases and resources become more inaccessible to develop, the horror of death forces humans to work

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid, 255.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid, 256.

more intensely and renew their ways of labor. Principles in economics are designed and applied in production in order for humans not to die. Death defines human finitude. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, economics is no longer a subject that satisfies the need of human beings in a psychological representation, but refers to anthropology that deals with human natural finitude. The evolution of economics is not resource abundance but its decline due to human avarice. Ricardo analyzes the avarice in terms of production cost, which breaks the order of representation of the 18<sup>th</sup> century's episteme and starts the new episteme.

Specifically, this avarice reflects on the "rent of land." The quality of land is becoming increasingly infertile due to the development of the land, which results in labor becoming progressively harder. The growth of new crops requires more labor than before. The cost is higher than growing crops on the original fertile land. In order to avoid death, growing crops on the infertile land is indispensable and it determines the normal price of the crops. Thus, growing crops on the fertile land will increase the profits, which motivates the owners to rent their lands. An avarice is the result of the increasing profits. However, the fertile land will eventually transform into infertile land. The cost of labor will increase, which leads to the increase of workers' wages and the price of the land. As a result, the profits of the entrepreneurs will substantially decrease and eventually disappear. During the profit disappearance, the low profit will not provide new labor and population will stop to grow. Labor will no longer develop the new and more infertile land, which causes the rent of land will also cease to produce extra profit. On Foucault's reading of Ricardo, consequently, man will reach his finitude and History will subside to quietness<sup>58</sup>.

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid, 259.

Unlike the episteme in the Classical Age that perceives economy as a variable future, Ricardo's theory first defines History as a closed end. The scarcity Ricardo stresses makes History have "its progressive inertia, its petrification, and, ultimately, its stony immobility."<sup>59</sup> Foucault believes History only exists in man's finitude. Opposed to humanism that believes man is the center of the world and never ceases in History, Foucault states that this dangerous anthropological approach exaggerates man's finitude. It hopes to break free from the restriction of human finitude, but in the end, it has to stop when bumping into the boundary of spiritual mortality. History will eventually become stabilized or fixed, justifying the previous humanist misconception that growing tendency of human spirituality will continue endlessly. In economics, the stabilization of History embodies self-sufficiency. The avarice resulted from scarcity will be gradually cancelled. There will be no more profit from production: the price of a commodity is equal to its cost. In this sense, labor and population will reach a constant number. History shows man's finitude in its pure form: there will be no more efforts or chances for a man to change his future.<sup>60</sup> This pessimistic truth will manifest its absolute nakedness to a man, leading man to envision the impossibility of possibilities in the future.

Another significant economic theory is Marxism. Unlike Ricardo's pessimistic attitude toward humanity's future, Marxism is always considered revolutionary to challenge and alter History. Foucault believes in Marx's theories, labors produce more products than the wage they earn. The extra capital goes to employ more laborers. It increases the number of laborers and enterprises, requiring expansion of the market to sell the extra products. Meanwhile, the extra capital also encourages the employers to update the technology in order to improve the efficiency of production. The income will be higher than before, but the enterprise no longer needs as many

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid, 259.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid, 260.

laborers as before. The unemployment will increase. Different from Ricardo's theories, Marx divides the whole society into the bourgeois and the proletarians. The unemployed people will wind up being proletarians, whereas the rich will get richer through the accumulation of capital. The misery of the proletarians allows part of the society to awake and evoke the conscience of human nature, realizing the alienation and exploitation that constantly continue in capitalist world. Eventually, the divisiveness will cause a revolution that leads to a new society.

For Foucault, the revolutionary ideas by Marx cannot prevent the development of History to reach a point of stabilization. Although Marx provides remarkable understanding about nature of human beings and capitalist society, but it has no real power to alter it, because Marxism does not base itself upon or involve the episteme shift like Ricardo's theory that changes the Classical Age by considering labor as the foundation of modern economy. Foucault states that "At the deepest level of Western knowledge, Marxism introduced no real discontinuity... since it was this arrangement that was in fact making room for it."<sup>61</sup> Though it aims to overthrow the bourgeois economy in order to accelerate or reverse History, it indeed fits in the precision of History of the 19<sup>th</sup> century economic theories. The effort and dispute Marxism made is "no more than storms in a children's paddling pool."<sup>62</sup>

Foucault believes that the significance of the new episteme is that it connects History, anthropology, and the suspension of development together. Utopia is the result of the intersection of these three aspects. In the Classical Age, utopia is considered as the most ideal and harmonic form of society. On the table, utopia places everything in its appropriate place, with its proportion, adjacencies, identities, and differences. In this episteme, knowledge cannot be separated apart from its representation on the table. The perfect arrangement of the table equals

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid, 261

<sup>62</sup> Ibid, 262.

the highest achievement of knowledge. However, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the knowledge is no longer represented on the table. It gains its own development.<sup>63</sup> It consequentially causes the final stabilization of History. In this sense, utopia is the result of this immobilization, the necessary end of humanism. In utopia, time will continue to flow, but it is void and purposeless. Human spirituality will neither increase nor decrease since it has already overlapped with historicity, being the development of time in its purest form and without human involvement. The drama, oblivion, and alienation in the flow of development will reach to anthropological finitude.<sup>64</sup> Thus, time is finite. The finitude here is not about death of one individual life, but the absolute quietness of total human spirituality. Utopia in the Classical Age is the inception, but the end of History in this new episteme. It is the dusk, not the morning.

This pessimistic view of Utopia denies the fantasy of Marx's communism. Instead of saying Marx's approach to communism is a revolution or progress, it is indeed a regress to the Classical Age where Utopia is still the most ideal form. The later History in communist countries like the Soviet Union and China, where Marxism is put on a pedestal, also proves its regressive nature. The undeniable pursuit of communism and revolution encourages the evil and manipulative human nature, resulting in constant famines and brutal fighting for power. These societies always pretend to enter communism, but indeed retreat back to feudalism or even to a distorted chaos. This happens because revolution is the only value to be emphasized; all other virtues, moralities, and culture should be sacrificed and destroyed. Movement against the development of History – to blindly renew the form of society without renewing episteme – is doomed to fail.

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid

<sup>64</sup> Ibid, 263.

### Transformation of Biology Theories

The second aspect in human science is the transformation of understanding biology. In the Classical Age, objects in biology are understood as representations classified on the taxonomic table in terms of their identities and differences. Foucault believes that Georges Curvier breaks the mode of biology in the Classical Age. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the objects in biology are no longer subordinated in the taxonomic system, but enter into organic structures. The internal connections in structures are the foundations prior to categories.<sup>65</sup> Foucault illustrates this transformation in two ways.

The first way in which to understand this transformation is in terms of organs. In the Classical Age, organs are defined by both their function and structure. For example, a lung can be considered an organ due to its respiratory function and its shape, size, etc. However, Curvier does not believe both of them as being equal. For Curvier, function is prioritized over structure. “Organs must relate to the functions they perform.”<sup>66</sup> All the organs of living organisms are connected in such a way that prioritizes function. The organs in the body are no longer separated into different categories. They instead form an organic whole. Thus, different organs can co-exist if they perform the same function. For an animal, the structure of its teeth and digestive organs is in a way connected to the variation of its limbs that help grasp food. Organs are connected based on their functional necessity.

The structure of these organs is controlled by the function. Curvier proposes that the most fundamental functions are reproduction and circulation.<sup>67</sup> Reproduction creates a being of an organism and circulation defines the arrangement of organs. The representational table in the

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid, 263.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid, 264.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid, 266.



Classical Age that considers every organ as being independent and every function as being equal has been overthrown. Now, they exist in a hierarchy. The functions along the hierarchy unify animal species according to their central but implicit identities. The differences in structure are now the secondary and peripheral concerns.

Foucault suggests that the new episteme changes the classification system, especially when he states that “the species can be classified only because they are alive and on the basis of what they conceal.”<sup>68</sup> In what is concealed there exists a homogenous common ground that unifies categories. Life no longer depends as heavily on the distinctions in structure, and it helps establish biology as the new subject that focuses on function. The consideration of function by Cuvier indeed detaches biology from History, interrupting the continuity of chronological sequence. Biology in the 19<sup>th</sup> century becomes a transcendental field reliant on its own functional laws.

The second way in which Foucault illustrates the transformation of biology in the 19<sup>th</sup> century is attributed to semantic anatomy. It allows biology to go beyond the superficial and to find the invisible nature, instead of only stopping on scanning the surface and trying to seek the differences. Because anatomy suggests a correlation between the outside and the inside of the body, an organ can now indicate the whole spectrum of the organism. A piece of bone can be used to acknowledge the animal. In the Classical Age, fossil evidence only tells the continuity of chronology. However, in the modern episteme, the fossil indicates the form and the interiority of the organism, “breaking the supposed continuity of time.”<sup>69</sup> Now, organisms can be analyzed in an independent dimension without attaching to a chronological sequence or even other fields.

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid, 268.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid, 270.

The new biology's dimension is anatomy's own continuity of function, which is the general spectrum of organisms as a whole.

Foucault suggests that the significant transformation from the Classical Age to the modern episteme in biology is that the modern episteme no longer considers differences as a primary concern to categorize organisms. In the Classical Age, difference is created and understood by the human mind to connect organisms together. Sensation of difference is processed at an unconscious and conscious level; it can occur even below the threshold of perception.<sup>70</sup> Taxonomy, which includes domain, kingdom, phylum, class, order, family, genus, and species, is divided according to how obvious the difference between two things are. However, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century from Cuvier, the extent of difference goes beyond species. It becomes so multiple that individuality of organism without category can be revealed. Biology becomes diverse and breaks free from the artificial control of taxonomy. Foucault states that the difference no longer functions as intervals to connect organisms. Instead, "it can integrate with itself and maintain itself in life; it makes interval deeper by making itself deeper, in order to define in isolation, the great type of compatibility."<sup>71</sup> In this sense, the organic biology of the 19<sup>th</sup> century is discontinuous because the individuality of organism denies the possibility of formulating a table that connects and represents organisms. It is the table in the Classical Age that denies individuality since it traces life back to a certain category. Since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, each being becomes alive and exists within its own independence.

The liveness of being defines an individual time and continuity that exists parallel to History's time. Even though it will become part of History, it does not continue from its historical a priori. In the individual time, biological being will evolve and degenerate in a similar

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid, 272.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

way that a flower experiences bud, blossom. and wither. Thus, there are flaws and edges that are usually not represented in the Classical Age, which only shows forms of things. The table only represents the material being, which includes extension, weight, and movement.<sup>72</sup> However, the individual continuity of the modern episteme separates the ontological being from its abstract and mechanical being, which are the same in the Classical understanding. Foucault believes that in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, life is the foundation of existence. It is the nucleus of being and non-being.<sup>73</sup> Being now must be unveiled as life, which is a constant movement to death. In this sense, life is doomed to be destroyed by violence, so being is indeed a will to survive. The human daily experience of survival is the primitive ontology. On the contrary, on the table, the Classical being will never fade away or decline because the table only provides an abstract as well as an eternal form of representation. It only flows within the general Historical time while ignoring its individual lively continuity.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, being as life involves mobility and uncertainty. The inside of life should no longer be understood as a mechanical combination of certain molecules or atoms. Similarly, the outside of life should no longer be mechanically expressed as an exchange or connection between things. Rather, the continuity of life creates a “continual circulation” from the outside to the inside and vice versa to maintain the balance of its organic structure as well as the outside environment it relies on. For example, the food from the outside enters the body. It transforms into calories and nutrition to satisfy the functions of life. Eventually, it becomes excrement that is recycled back into the environment. Biological beings are not static or unchanged like the universal being in the Classical Age. The historical a priori that considers life as a segregated representation, which isolates life from environment, has already been erased

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid, 273.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid, 278.

from the new episteme. The continuity of life has replaced chronological continuity; “history” of nature has replaced natural History.

#### Transformation of Language Theories

Language is the third aspect in human science that Foucault believes experiences the episteme shift. In the Classical Age, language is “the immediate and spontaneous unfolding of representations.”<sup>74</sup> Different signs in the world compose language; they are all represented on the table and grouped or differentiated according to their commonness. Language can be thought of as the ability of knowing, a medium to know other things or representations in the world. Language itself never appears on the table, since it only functions to order the table, to unfold representations without being a representation. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, “language began to fold in upon itself, to acquire its own particular density, to deploy a history, an objectivity, and laws of its own.”<sup>75</sup> In this sense, language is not only a medium to know knowledge, but also an object to be known. Language not only becomes the ability of knowing, but also the object to learn. Language in this new episteme is not to be learned in terms of its grammar and logic. Instead, it is a field to apply general understandings.

Foucault explains this language transformation in four perspectives. First, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the analysis of language changes to focus on the grammatical structure, isolating language.<sup>76</sup> Thus, language acquires its own autonomy, becoming an independent object. In the Classical Age, the definition of one individual language is still based on the surface’s representations: proportions of the vowels and consonants occupied in the word, the sequence of the words, the alphabets’ appearance, etc. From these differences in representations, one is able

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid, 295.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid, 296.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid, 295.

to claim which language is more logical, more mythical, more civilized, or more impolite. However, philologist Friedrich Schlegel discovers that the language is composed by words: nouns, verbs, adjectives, etc. They are connected and arranged not by representations but by deeper and implicit grammatical principles. It is indeed the grammatical principle that defines particularity and individuality of a language.

The second one is the internal variations of the sound of language. Language in the 19<sup>th</sup> century is first considered a totality of phonetic elements.<sup>77</sup> Grammar has a certain limitation: it is based on the change of writing alphabets rather than the sounds of syllables. It accumulates the writing to organize but at the same time ignores the sounds within a word. Thus, besides grammar, language should also exist in a way that has been divided into different sounds. The language possesses a charm of sounds, creating a musical nature of speaking. This beauty cannot be found in writing. The most obvious example is reading poetry. The melodies created by sound in the verses melt between lips and teeth but plunge into the heart. The beauty is mythical. It is a “pure poetic flash that disappears without trace, leaving nothing behind it but a vibration suspended in the air for one brief moment.”<sup>78</sup> The sounds separate a language from visual signs, promoting language to gain its spoken autonomy.

The third one is the new understanding of the root of the vocabulary. In the Classical Age, the roots are divided into two categories: they are organized either by the same alphabets or the similar meaning. Root is the beginning of the different variations to transform words into infinity. It provides an approximate boundary of words, whereas the radical clarifies the individuality of a specific word. The judgment of root requires the classical linguistic analysis to trace back to the starting “imaginary point,” where the representation in the world first produces

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid, 286.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

the sound.<sup>79</sup> Foucault believes this method of analysis is an infinite regress. Consequently, the root in the 18<sup>th</sup> century is always the origin, a concrete representation that is instantly perceived by human senses. The words are nouns, and then verbs are created to connect the nouns. However, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Franz Bopp starts focusing on verbs in terms of their radicals and their forms, e.g. verb conjugations according to tense and personal pronouns.<sup>80</sup> Bopp finds out verbs do not derive from nouns but have their own development based on the radicals. Therefore, the root of the verb designates not representations of things but action and wills. The language now is related to the subject – man. “It is the product of will and energy, rather than of the memory that duplicates representation.”<sup>81</sup> In this sense, language is no longer a tool to represent the representation, but has an expressive nature. It is no longer an imitation, but a transformative activity that allows man to speak his will. The distance between thinking and speaking has disappeared. This new way of analysis makes language internal. It becomes definite, separate from History. It can be detached from the infinite regress that the Classical Age uses to trace back to the origin. “Language is no longer linked to the knowing of things, but to man’s freedom.”<sup>82</sup>

The last one is the kinship between languages. In the Classical Age, the analysis to compare and connect two languages contains two directions: vertical continuity and horizontal continuity. For vertical continuity, two languages are traced back to the most original representations, which give languages their universal meaning. For horizontal continuity, there must exist an intermediate thing between two languages for human minds to produce a common image. These two directions both compare language indirectly and lead to an archeological

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid, 288.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid, 289.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid, 290.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid, 291.

conclusion of language comparison: first, they either have an ancestral language, which they are derived or developed from each other due to migration, trade, and invasion.<sup>83</sup> However, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Bopp's theories suggest a kinship between languages instead of derivation. Different languages exist in parallel ways without being considered for their genealogical sequence. The variations of roots of the words make it possible to compare languages directly. The grammatical comparison allows languages from two systems to be connected where words do not share the similar roots. Bopp's theories treat different languages with simultaneity, breaking them free from chronological sequence and representations. Consequently, one language will neither be considered more ancient than the other nor they both have an ancestral language. Instead, they will be treated as a relation of "fraternity."<sup>84</sup>

These four perspectives of language interrupt its archeological continuity in the historicity but start language's own history – the time of human science. Language now becomes a human object, acquiring transparency to study. However, language cannot be easily reduced to objects. Foucault suggests three compensations that hold back human attempts to completely transform language.

The first compensation is that language constantly reappears as a medium of knowledge. Man tries to associate language as object, but language is also knowing on the side of subject. That is to say, man is using subject to objectify, causing language to reduce itself. In order to solve this paradox, to reduce the reducer, two methods are employed: first is to purify language to pure science, getting rid of all the nonscientific or irregular factors in it. It makes language as the most realistic reflection of the world, "faithful portrait" of nature.<sup>85</sup> By this method, language

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid, 292.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid, 293.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid, 297.

will no longer be a way of ordering the representations on the table as in the Classical Age. Instead, it will be the table; it will be the representations. The representations here are not signs, but the mirror of knowledge. The second method is to use symbolic logic to universalize language. In this sense, language will be totally transformed into symbols and logic algebra. Foucault shows great optimism about this method by stating that “at the archeological level, the condition of possibility of a non-verbal logic and a historical grammar are the same. The ground of their positivity is identical.”<sup>86</sup> Consequently, the method to reduce the reducer is to logically unify language into pure algebra. It enables the object to detach from the subject. Language will not reappear in man’s knowing any longer after the process of mathematic transformation has finished. It can now run on its own.

The second compensation is the “interpretation” method against the logic formalization of language. History makes language an inherently human and unconscious thought. These hidden values behind language exist prior to man’s consciousness. Instead of claiming that man can rule language by formalizing it into logic, language has controlled man’s mind in its deep nature without man’s awareness. “Men believe that their speech is their servant and do not realize that they are submitting themselves to its demands.”<sup>87</sup> Thus, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, formalization is not only highly developed but Sigmund Freud’s psychoanalysis is tremendously valued as well to discover the unconscious and to interpret the unspoken faces of language. Different from formalization that focuses on the grammar or structure of sentence, interpretation concentrates on words that bestow another aspect to clarify language. The interpretation transforms the implicit and unconscious myth into explicit knowledge in human consciousness. For example, Foucault states all Nietzsche’s works are about interpretations of a few Greek

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.



words.<sup>88</sup> However, man may never reveal a complete interpretation of language because he has to employ language to interpret language. Human efforts are trapped in an infinite circle. One can never free oneself from the control of language. The interpretation method functions not to tell the meaning of discourse but only to manifest it in its most fundamental being, which is the most empirically accessible nature for all humans.

The third compensation is literature. Foucault states that literature is the contestation of philology.<sup>89</sup> It is separated from the logic expression of grammar, possessing a romantic power. However, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, literature is no longer a representational tool of the world in the Classical Age. Instead, it becomes an independent realm to manifest language and to confirm its existence. “There is nothing for it to do but to curve back in a perpetual return upon itself, as if its discourse could have no other continent than the expression of its own form.”<sup>90</sup> The words themselves are now talking. Thus, literature reaches to its purest and most brilliant being – the writing behavior. This writing behavior has neither purpose nor end; it is a simple wandering on paper, so History in literature achieves its ultimate quietness.

These three compensations may be the resistances of language transformation in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but Foucault considers them as ways to tell the future of language and human science – a complete objectification of man. Foucault believes that before the 19<sup>th</sup> century, man uses taxonomy to organize representations by forming a table without involving himself as part of the representations. Ricardo, Curvier, and Bopp’s theories in economy, biology, and language transform the episteme to focus on human per se, liberating man from ordering outside things and realizing his own nature. Man first comes to the stage as an object to be understood. The way

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid, 300.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

of this liberation is scientific and transcendental. The original impulse of human science is to involve man and to use objectification for man to acquire subjectivity – freedom. However, the scientific methods according to the three compensations irresistibly rationalize as well as stabilize the human nature: Bertrand Russell’s logical assimilation of language deprives the musical beauty of sound and mobile nature of language. Freud’s psychoanalysis decomposes every word into unconscious personal history, so words no longer come from freedom and creation. Finally, literature no longer has any art value or meaning but only exists for the sake of existence. After introducing human subjectivity to History, human science erases it. It no longer has any associations with humans and becomes a purely scientific and technological force, ripping off the last reserved land of human autonomy. Everything that comes from outside time and space (from “nowhere”) becomes explainable, without surprise. Economics, biology, and language in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which originally detached themselves from History, now start to also detach from their object – man.

### Chapter III: Foucault's Misconception of Man

The historical development of the episteme in the first chapter and the analysis of the age of man have revealed Foucault's belief that man is by no means the center of the world before the 19<sup>th</sup> century; the rise of man may be eventually replaced by a new episteme. Even though Foucault indicates in the previous chapters the end of man in *the Order of Things* for several times, the first time that he explicitly proposes this idea is in the fifth section, *Psychoanalysis and Ethnology*, of the last chapter (*the Human Sciences*). The last chapter is indeed the place that summarizes the concepts of the previous chapters, culminating into a philosophical manifesto that tells the fate of man. He concludes the end of man by referring to Nietzsche's death of God. "It is not so much the absence or the death of God that is affirmed as the end of man."<sup>91</sup> Foucault believes man has posited his language, existence, and thinking in God. The death of God leads to the death of man, who is God's murderer. It is time for man to embrace his finitude and a new God will appear in History. Different from humanistic belief in the 20<sup>th</sup> century such as Jean Paul Sartre who claims that whether God exists or not makes no difference to man and man can be only saved by himself,<sup>92</sup> Foucault suggests that man has already been connected with God; God's death will cause the end of man. This belief not only manifests Foucault's Christian beliefs, but also shows his historical relativism. Unlike existential humanists, Foucault does not believe an individual has the power to change History. The death of God indicates the end of a historical era and an individual must accept the demise of this era. Man cannot save himself, but rather locate himself in the right position of History in order to re-determine a new episteme.

The reason for the end of modern episteme is related to language. Language is always a major concern in the episteme shifts from the similarities to the Classical Age to the rise of man.

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<sup>91</sup> Foucault, M. (2006). *The Order of Things*. New York: Vintage Books, p,385.

<sup>92</sup> Sartre, J. and Mairet, P. (1970). *Existentialism and Humanism*. London: Methuen, p56.

In modern episteme, which is the age of man, language is fragmented in different fields such as biology, economics, and literature. Man exists only when language situates within representations. “Man composed his own figure in the interstices of that fragmented language.”<sup>93</sup> Meanwhile language also has a tendency to return back to the Same by achieving objectivity. A new episteme will not put man as a central role, but instead language will replace man to unify knowledge as a whole. Individual man or particular man will perish in the new episteme again just like he does not exist in the Classical Age.

In the final conclusion of the book, Foucault further affirms this opinion by claiming that man is not the oldest being in human understanding but a relatively new invention. The knowledge in the Classical Age based on identities and differences gives the historical a priori that allows man to possibly appear. Thus, man is only a product of History instead of an awakening of human consciousness from the slumber of darkness. As Foucault claims, “And that appearance was not the liberation of an old anxiety...it was the effect of a change in the fundamental arrangements of knowledge.”<sup>94</sup> The episteme of man is only one moment in the historical wave, and “If those arrangements were to disappear as they appear ... one can certainly wager that man would be erased, like a face drawn in sand at the edge of the sea.”<sup>95</sup> Foucault is very careful to end the book. Instead of stating a decisive and certain prediction, he proposes a possible philosophical hypothesis: if the previous episteme shifts can apply to the modern episteme, then it is very possible for man to vanish. It is apparent that this hypothesis is based on induction rather than logical deduction. The previous analysis of the whole book only offers possible causes that man may lose his central position in human understanding. Thus, this

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<sup>93</sup> Foucault, M. (2006). *The Order of Things*. New York: Vintage Books, p386.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid, 387.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

hypothesis is irrational. If one accepts Foucault's theories, the approach to test whether this hypothesis is true or not can only be experimental. The test requires to use contemporary reality to examine the historical inquiry. However, before putting this hypothesis into contemporary reality, it is necessary to unfold the limitations of his philosophy in order to determine the precondition and validity of the hypothesis.

Foucault offers a non-subject centered approach to examine History. Human reality in the *Order of Things* is structured and relative beyond the control of subjectivity.<sup>96</sup> As he states, "the more History attempts to transcend its own rootedness in historicity ... the more it bears the marks of its historical birth ... the more it accepts its relativity ... the more it tends to the slenderness of the narrative."<sup>97</sup> However, now the question is what is Foucault's role in History? What is his own position in multiple episteme shifts? Is he able to escape historical relativity to tell the transcendental truth? Apparently, one can observe that his philosophy has been deeply affected by the philosophical stream and social power of his time. Even though Foucault does offer a unique analysis that is not based on man, his philosophy is limited by postmodern episteme and more importantly limited by his positivist's view to look at man as an empirical and scientific object. Once Foucault's position and limitations in History are clarified, it is possible to dispute his theories, to examine the time of the rise of man, and to offer an alternative conclusion to whether man will vanish or not.

Foucault proposes that the third episteme, age of human science, starts to appear in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The term "science" should not be understood generally as knowledge or the essence of a thing. "Science" here is not a metaphysical term as in German philosophical tradition

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<sup>96</sup> Gutting, G. (1999). *Michel Foucault's Archaeology of Scientific Reason*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p279.

<sup>97</sup> Foucault, M. (2006). *The Order of Things*. New York: Vintage Books, p371.

(*Wissenschaft*). Instead, “science” only has a positive meaning; it refers to a modern scientific method to empirically examine objects, which is the reason that Foucault refers an historical a priori to positivity. Foucault as a positivist is explicit in his writing. He suggests to only restrict thinking in experience and rejects the existence of any transcendental grounding, only dealing with Kant’s “phenomenal world.”<sup>98</sup> He expects to use positivity, which is a description of relation of historical exteriority to replace transcendental truth. Also, in *the Archaeology of Knowledge*, when he explains why he uses the word “positivity,” he states that “If... one is a positivist, then I am quite happy to be one.”<sup>99</sup> It is Foucault’s positivist view that makes him interpret man in a modern scientific method and decompose man into three particular empirical fields – biology, economics, and language. Thus, Foucault’s analysis of man has excluded the possibility of being metaphysical and subjective, since modern science can only study man as a substantial sensible object. In positivism e.g. Auguste Comte, positive principles and behaviors replace metaphysics. Relative knowledge from different scientific subjects such as chemistry, physics, biology, and sociology replaces the absolute truth. For Foucault, the reason that human science becomes possible in the 19<sup>th</sup> century is that during this time the scientific research orientation first starts to study man’s subjectivity by an objective method, which is exactly what positivism offers.

Thus, Foucault’s human science or the age of man is by no means humanistic. For example, Sartre believes that existential humanism is “this relation of transcendence as constitutive of man with subjectivity.”<sup>100</sup> Humanism believes man is the only universe of the

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<sup>98</sup> Gutting, G. (1999). *Michel Foucault's Archaeology of Scientific Reason*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p185.

<sup>99</sup> Foucault, M. (2010). *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*. New York: Vintage Books, p125.

<sup>100</sup> Sartre, J. and Maitret, P. (1970). *Existentialism and Humanism*. London: Methuen, p55.

world and legislator of himself. In this sense, humanism teachings do not require one to scientifically and empirically objectify human subjectivity as Foucault's human science. In humanism tradition, the embodiment of man can be romantic, poetical, and mystical. Furthermore, in *the Order of Things*, Foucault never describes the birth of man as a revival of humanism or refers the modern episteme to humanism. On the contrary, he states that establishing man in the modern episteme matters little whether or not it is entitled in the form of humanism, which is "a duty to assume responsibility for the fate of the West."<sup>101</sup> Regardless if Foucault's understanding of humanism is the same as Sartre's, Foucault's modern episteme is not humanistic but scientific, objective, and clarified. The birth of man is indeed the birth of scientific methods to study man as an object, which inevitably leads to the end of man because science will start to detach from man's subjectivity and build upon itself to form theoretical science or technology. In this sense, the reason that Foucault is anti-humanist is not that he argues humanism will rise in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and fall, but he believes that humanism itself is a fake concept since it does not involve modern scientific objectivity.

#### Objection to Positivist Man

Consequently, the weakness of Foucault's philosophy is the concept that man cannot reach beyond positivist range. Man cannot break free of the restriction of being empirical, scientific, and objectified. To reject Foucault's positivist man requires to examine whether man can exist not as an object. Heidegger offers a possible answer by claiming that "ek-sistence (existence) can be said only of the essence of man, that is, only of the human way 'to be'"<sup>102</sup> Thus, to understand what is man is to know man's existence. For Heidegger, human thinking of

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<sup>101</sup>Foucault, M. (2006). *The Order of Things*. New York: Vintage Books, p327.

<sup>102</sup> Heidegger, M. (1976). *Basic Writings from Being and Time [1927] to the Task of Thinking [1964]*. New York: Harper & Row, p204.

his existence is not merely to explain his history or activities. Instead, man's existence occurs "essentially in such a way that he is the 'there', that is, the lighting of Being."<sup>103</sup> In this sense, Foucault's archaeological investigation that reveals the historical exteriority (positivity) and his analysis that interiority (human science) that is divided into three aspects fail to provide a full spectrum of human existence. His interpretation of man only satisfies a logical correctness based on language without realizing language cannot tell the Being of man. After all, language is designed for humans to be communicable. It has inner logic to explain an idea. Thus, language is an instrument to serve a common accessibility of understanding for everyone in the same society. To describe or define what is man in language inevitably limits Being, since language has to set a definite category of what is correct and what is incorrect. In this sense, language always conceals part of Being when trying to reveal Being. As Heidegger claims, "Language is the lighting-concealing advent of Being itself."<sup>104</sup> Language inevitably projects Being as an object by involving the cause and effect within the sentences, which is what Foucault attempts to state in his philosophy. However, Being is more than what language mechanically reveals. It requires an absolute knowing of subjectivity to discover Truth as a whole.

Consequently, man's existence and subjectivity cannot be objectified in language.

Foucault believes that in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the rapid development of biology is able to decode this subjectivity with transcendental objectivity (stated in the Chapter II). However, Heidegger does not believe that physiology or biology can reveal Being by stating, "the fact that physiology and physiological chemistry can scientifically investigate man as an organism is no proof that in this 'organic' thing, that is, in the body scientifically explained, the essence of man consists."<sup>105</sup> In

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid, 205.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid, 206

<sup>105</sup> Ibid, 205.



Heidegger's view, the micro-analysis of the human body does not contain the human essence. The analytical method that decomposes physical man into unbreakable parts can only prove that certain parts are clarified, but meanwhile it conceals the true existence of man as an organic whole. Furthermore, the atomic energy, neurons, and molecules by no means can manifest man's thinking. Thus, biology disguises Being as a scientific observation, driving man further and further away from thinking of the true existence of man.

If Being or human existence cannot be objectified in modern scientific method or language, then how may one understand this subjectivity? According to Heidegger, Being exists in a mysterious way, since it can never be rationally interpreted. Therefore, one cannot know it in an ontic way, but instead "feel" it at an ontological level by living according to his true existence. In his essay, *the Question Concerning Technology*, in order to keep the mystery of Being, he proposes to poetically dwell. He believes that, "the poetical brings the true into the splendor of what Plato in the Phaedrus calls to ekphanestaton, that which shines forth most purely."<sup>106</sup> The true Being of man now becomes the highest beauty, which is not only knowledge but also an ultimate poetical way of life (Da-sein). Additionally, Zen Buddhism also offers a similar method that is often associated with Heidegger's Da-sein. In Zen Buddhism, the only goal is to achieve Satori, which means a sudden enlightenment to grasp the true essence of self. Thus, Satori is not intellectual, but experiential. Study Zen does not require any books and doctrines, but instead asks disciples to think beyond the limitation of logic. Language only serves to provoke a student's ability to achieve Satori. The master will never tell a student what is Satori. Satori allows one to have an illuminating insight to see the very nature and acquire the ultimate peace as well as happiness, allowing one to absorb all the outside objects into the inmost

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<sup>106</sup> Ibid, 316.

self.<sup>107</sup> In this sense, Satori can lead one to naturally enter poetical world. Heidegger's philosophy of Being and Zen's Satori both prove that man's existence is not only an object but also can be achieved through subjectivity.

### True Time of the Rise of Man

In order to determine whether man will vanish or not, it is necessary to examine when the age of man was born in History, which is what Foucault's archaeological method offers. Now, since man can exist through his subjectivity instead of as a scientific object, the true time of the rise of man should be redefined. Foucault believes that man does not exist before the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This is because in the episteme of similarities or the Classical Age, man's function is only to connect different signs or representations without representing himself. In this sense, man as an object cannot be considered in these two epistemes. Foucault believes that finding signs is an arbitrary action which is superficial and unworthy to be valued. On the contrary, finding representations is a primary and universal rationality that does not involve significant subjectivity. Human capacity of "connection" is based on either similarities or the identities and differences in a mechanic and systematic way. Consequently, Foucault lacks subject as the center of his philosophy. Foucault's positivist view to objectify man convinces him that "finding" and "connecting" cannot manifest man in History. However, man's existence, as stated above, can only "be" rather than "be said." Thus, to trace the time of man's existence is to trace man's performance that expresses his subjectivity, namely, to trace "finding" and "connecting."

Although "finding" and "connecting" do exist in Foucault's episteme of similarities, they are by no means superficial thinking that only exist in human primitive understanding. Instead, together they form metaphors which are the presuppositions of rational analysis and cannot be

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<sup>107</sup> Suzuki, D. and Jung, C. (2007). *An Introduction to Zen Buddhism*. NY, Grove/Atlantic, Inc, p47.

totally replaced by reason. As Ernesto Grassi claims, “it presupposes a “vision” of something hitherto concealed; it ‘shows’ to the reader or to the spectator a common quality which is not rationally deducible.”<sup>108</sup> Indeed, metaphor forms the most fundamental structure of human understanding. Metaphor gives a name to sensory phenomena or abstract concept and the names will then be associated in a metaphorical way with meanings of other beings. In this sense, metaphor gives man the first insight to provide “topics” and rational deduction can only build upon “topics.”<sup>109</sup> The continuous discovery or application of new scientific method constantly require employing new “topics,” which is induction. Otherwise, logical deduction will only enter into a dead end; multiple premises will be reduced to one conclusion or mathematic formulas. Searching new “topics” requires human imagination to find similarities between different phenomena. There are no logical necessities between each “topic” to build induction. This is first suggested by David Hume as known as problem of induction: “there can be no demonstrative arguments to prove, that those instance, of which we have had no experience, resemble those, of which we have had experience.”<sup>110</sup> Thus, scientific discovery still needs to return back to metaphors and similarities. In this sense, metaphors not only start rationality, but also regularly intersects rationality. Consequently, if man, as Grassi believes, can manifest himself only through metaphor, man’s existence through subjectivity is not interrupted from the Classical Age to the modern episteme, even though the human scientific subjectivity is not as strong, vivid, and flexible as the poetical subjectivity. Natural science and human science do not have the pure transcendental objectivity that can be completely separated from man’s subjectivity. Foucault definitely realizes the nature of similarities, but what he overlooks is the interconnection between

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<sup>108</sup> Grassi, E. (2001). *Rhetoric as Philosophy*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press. P33.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid, 41.

<sup>110</sup> Hume, D. and Norton, D. (2007). *A Treatise of Human Nature*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, p62.

similarities and rationality. He ignores that human understanding has already pre-reflectively marked man's existence in science.

Apparently, the rise of man starts in the episteme of similarities. However, this episteme includes from the origin of human all the way to the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Now, it is necessary to examine more precisely when the metaphor was established in History. Since "topics" precede rationality, the subject that only contains metaphors must be created by man before philosophy or science. This subject must be poetry because poetical thinking only requires an ingenious impetus without judging what is right or wrong. The poetical thinking is about the individual or the particular, which provide the most original premises. The original premises cannot be introduced by rationality, since the universal cannot describe the particular.<sup>111</sup> Reversely, the particulars can be reduced and generalized to the universal rationality. The only source to create poetry is an ingenuity from the human subjectivity without additional help of other fields. This is the reason that in every civilization in the world, the creation of poetry always precedes philosophy.

However, the creation of poetry should not be considered a mere imitation. A poet does not only copy phenomena that have already existed in the nature, but instead uses human imagination to establish metaphors and gives ingenious meanings to things. In this sense, not all imaginations come from memory or even the unconscious, but they are surprises from "nowhere." Poetical thinking absolutely reveals Being. The moment of ingenuity can be understood as Satori. To determine the true moment of the rise of man in the West is to determine the time of the creation of poetry instead of philosophy. Consequently, even though Giovanni Pico della Mirandola wrote the *Oration on the Dignity of Man* that explicitly manifests

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<sup>111</sup> Grassi, E. (2001). *Rhetoric as Philosophy*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, p44.

man's existence by claiming that man is "a rank to be envied not only by brutes but even by the stars and by mind beyond this world,"<sup>112</sup> His time should not be considered the first moment of the true rise of man in the West. Man's existence through subjectivity must be implicitly created in poetry before philosophy.

Although philosophy cannot tell the exact time, it can prove the existence of man and indicate that man exists prior to it. The first moment of the creation of philosophy is in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE. The philosophers include Thales, Pythagoras, et al., so the first moment of man must precede this time. It is apparent that Greek philosophy continues to Roman empire e.g. Cicero, but there is a suspension of philosophy between Roman empire and Pico. This suspension time is the Early Middle Ages (from the 6<sup>th</sup> to the 10<sup>th</sup> century). During this period, the dominating social control from the church or the government largely restricts the objects for humans to think. This restriction deprives human freedom to express the absolute subjectivity. The social control culminates into the Early Middle Ages, which other historical time cannot compare. It never exists before and generally decreases after the Early Middle Ages. Foucault is right that the social power will cause the shifts of episteme. The episteme of man does not exist during the Early Middle Ages. Consequently, there should be two times of the rise of man in History (before and after the Early Middle Ages), which are indeed two significant times of poetry.

In this sense, Giambattista Vico's philosophy on division of gentile society is true. The development of gentile History contains course and recourse. Each course contains three successive ages – the age of Gods, the age of heroes, and the age of men. The recourse is the

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<sup>112</sup> Cassirer, E., Kristeller, P. and Randall, J. (1948). *The Renaissance Philosophy of Man*. Edited by E. Cassirer, Paul Oskar Kristeller, John Herman Randall, in collaboration with Hans Nachod [and others], etc. [Translated extracts from Petrarch, Valla and others. With introductions and notes.]. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, p223.

recurrence of the previous course, following the same ages and order.<sup>113</sup> The rise of the recourse emerges from previous barbarism in the age of man. Religion will reappear to domesticate men, which is what happens in the Early Middle Ages. Vico believes that the poets were the first people in the gentile nations and poets exist before historians, thus man's first history must be poetical.<sup>114</sup> Since the poets were born from the evolution of Gods and heroes, the first poets should record the events of heroes. A hero can be considered a mixture of God and man like Achilles in Homer's *Iliad*.

#### The First Time of the Rise of Man

In this sense, the first "poet" in the West must be Homer, who writes about the stories of Gods and heroes. The first true time of the rise of man is in Homer's poetry. Notably, Homer, according to Vico, is not an individual, but a representation of collective wisdom of the people during that time. Thus, Homer is not one outstanding figure that is separated from the Greek society, but a start of the holistic episteme of man. As Vico suggests, Although in Homer's poetry, the metaphors and rhetoric are splendid, his language is vulgar; many comparisons are taken from the wild and savage. For example, the Greek heroes - Agamemnon and Achilles – call each other dogs.<sup>115</sup> The purpose of his poetry is to teach or pleasure the vulgar people in the ancient society. The vulgar language is designed for the audiences to understand more easily and intimately. Vico believes that in each historical age, there also exists a respective language system. In the age of Gods, language is divine. The sacred language is used to serve religion and it is designed to be strictly revered rather than for humans to communicate. It comes directly from the mental imagination. In the age of heroes, the symbolic language is used to reduce the

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<sup>113</sup> Bergin, T. (2015). *New Science of Giambattista Vico*. Cornell University Press, pxxiv.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid, 311.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid, 393.

imagination into different heroes. Thus, the mind is able to abstract different representations in order to form categories. In the age of man, vulgar language is invented to make speech. Simplified language replaces the imaginative heroic representations. Vico's famous example is that "the blood boils in my heart" from the age of heroes is replaced by "I am angry" in the age of man.<sup>116</sup> Thus, Homer's poetry reflects the language in the age of man. Perhaps the stories in *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are also not created by Homer himself. Instead, Homer is the human locus to collect stories that truly happened in the age of God, but had been distorted in the age of heroes. As Vico examines that Homer never saw Egypt, but he recorded many stories in Egypt and other foreign lands such as Phoenicia and Asia. Thus, it must be the Phoenicians that told the stories to Greeks, since commerce only existed between Greece and Phoenicia.<sup>117</sup> Furthermore, Homer is not a philosopher because his poetry does not contain moral judgements that tell the truth. Under his description, Achilles does not have a patriotic heart and responsibility to his nation. He would rather see the extermination of the whole Greek people than fight for his people only because Agamemnon wants to take away his trophy, a woman named Brises. The only reason he eventually participates in the war is for revenge against Hector, who kills his friend. Also, Homer's descriptions do not meet the legal standards. "his heroes contract marriages with foreigners, and bastard succeed to kingdom."<sup>118</sup> Vico concludes three types of laws. In the age of God, law is divine and given by God. In the age of heroes, laws are controlled by religion. They are forceful since they are decided and executed by fierce and brutal heroes who use their power to judge. In the age of man, laws are developed from human reason and nature, which are kind and moderate. Thus, Homer's poetry can only exist in a human liberal society where the strict

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<sup>116</sup> Ibid, 341.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid, 308.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

laws from the age of heroes have already become humane. The first true moment of the rise of man is in Homer's time. Foucault's positivist view makes him believe that before the end of 16<sup>th</sup> century there is only one episteme. However, Homer's time has already brought the episteme to the last stage of the first course – the age of man.

### The Second Time of the Rise of Man

After the suspension of man during the Early Middle Ages, the second rise of man starts to emerge in History. Another prominent poet that has human freedom and reason appears on the stage. He is able to break free of the fierce restriction of heroic laws. Thus, this poet is Dante Alighieri. Vico describes Dante as “in the returned barbarism of Italy, at the end of which came Dante, the Tuscan Homer.”<sup>119</sup> Clearly, Vico believes that Dante is the figure that appears in the end of the age of heroes in the recourse of History and he is the start of a new age of man. Unfortunately, Vico does not further illustrate this point like he does for Homer. A possible method to examine why Dante is the start of a new age is through his thinking on language. The revolutionary work, *The Divine Comedy*, was written in his vernacular, Tuscan Italian. This work helps to establish this dialect to be the standard language in Italy and starts to replace Latin. Dante believes that there are two types of languages. The first is Latin. It is an unchanging language that is artificially designed for all people from different nations. It has a universal value because it is based on grammatical rules that construct itself in a purely rational way.<sup>120</sup> Latin gives people from different nations an ability to communicate with each other and to communicate with the aristocracy. It also provides an access to the ancient works in Latin. However, the danger of Latin causes a man to lose his ingenuity, which is his instinctive ability to create metaphors and poetize phenomena. The reason is that Latin, the universal rational

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<sup>119</sup> Ibid, 303.

<sup>120</sup> Grassi, E. (2001). *Rhetoric as Philosophy*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, p77.



language, does not deal with the particulars, which are the sources of poetical thinking. If one attempts to use the universal language to grasp the poetical beauty in the garden, the result is “the scent is everywhere but is seen nowhere.”<sup>121</sup> Thus, Dante values the significance of the original language. “The divine manifests itself in this original tension.”<sup>122</sup> Since the original language possess an authenticity for a man through the particulars, it has an illuminating nature to enlighten him to see the higher truth and beauty. For Dante, the universal language has already been defined, restricting man’s creativity to start a radical metaphor to name things. Man using the universal language acts similar to stonerollers that mechanically repeat their work every day when building the tower of Babel. They can never be the master to command and design the project. However, the disintegration of language gives man a freedom to be his own master. Man starts to use a changing language derived from the changing situations in his life. Thus, man can use a language through the whole development of his life. Man shall never be annoyed by an invariable dead language, in which the ancients alienates man from his mind. Instead, the original language will be born directly from man’s passion. Finding the Muse of a poetry will no longer be an exhausting job to do. Instead, the Muse will find the man himself and poetry will naturally flow out of his heart. Consequently, the true man as an individual comes to the stage in History. “Humanization begins with the revolt against the originally existing order which thereby is lost and then built up anew in a different way. Here is the origin of human historicity.”<sup>123</sup> This movement is similar to Homer’s poetry, in which the vulgar language is employed. It is the vulgar language that can elegantly and absolutely express man’s true existence. In this sense, Foucault’s belief that individual man does not exist before the 19<sup>th</sup> century is wrong. The

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<sup>121</sup> Ibid, 79.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid, 76.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid, 77.

fragmentation of language first allows a man to manifest his originality. Language as an object is collective since it is shared by a group of people to communicate. However, language can trigger the inter-subjectivity of men. In this sense, man's subjectivity through language is both collective and individualistic.

### Foucault's Incautious Method on Examining Episteme

Both Foucault and Vico propose the time of the rise of man. However, compared to Vico's method, Foucault's method that measures whether the West transforms into a new episteme is incautious. In order to examine the human episteme, one must examine through a method that can reveal the epistemology of the whole society or at least the majority of the people. Foucault examines the transformation from the Classical Age to the Age of man by using theories of Ricardo, Cuvier, and Bopp to illustrate it (Chapter II). However, it is apparent that there is always an epistemic separation or distinction between theorists and the common people in society. Although Foucault selects theorists based on a positivist understanding, which makes the separation less significant than metaphysical theories, there still exists delay or even contradictions between the development of theories and the development of the society. Furthermore, the theorists that Foucault select also have differences with their contemporaries and the differences sometimes can be fundamental. Foucault does not answer why the theories he selects are not the exceptions in the 19<sup>th</sup> century or whether the separation between the society and the theorists exists. As a historical relativist, he may answer it by saying that History makes man instead of vice versa; the theories are the products of the historical change related to social power. However, his historical relativist belief is only based on the romantic observation of History instead of substantial reasons. After all, it is observable that exceptions do exist. For example, History seems to follow Darwin's evolution instead of Cuvier's anti-evolution theories.

Contradicting Foucault's belief, history in the age of man cannot be detached from the previous History. Not only does it not achieve the quasi-transcendental, but also reinforces the connection to the historicity of evolution. Also, it is observable for one, who has presupposed an existentialist view of History, that the significant people or events do change the development of History or episteme. This view cannot be refuted by the historical relativist.

However, Vico's method intelligently avoids the endless argument whether History makes man or vice versa. Vico proposes that the time of Homer and Dante are the start of the age of man without claiming the absolute cause and effect between History and man. Instead of being logical and scientific, Vico's poetical and humanistic nature makes History and man exist as metaphorical synchronicities. Vico's methods about the age of man are through jurisprudence and philology instead of avant-garde theorists, who may think beyond the whole social episteme. First, for Vico, jurisprudence does not refer to legal rules that reflect social controls to forbid certain actions. Instead, it is a collective civil wisdom in one age. For example, the Law of the Twelve Tables is an important monument for Vico to determine in which age the natural law exists.<sup>124</sup> There are three kinds of jurisprudence. In the age of Gods, the jurisprudence is divine theology to understand the religion and the divine Gods. It is designed to interpret the mind of Gods. The heroic jurisprudence is designed to strictly provide formulas that prove that the clients satisfy standards in a social institution. The human jurisprudence pursues not merely the facts but also the principles behind the facts. The human legal wisdom can justify the rigid rules.<sup>125</sup> Compared to theories that Foucault uses, the illustration of one age (episteme) through jurisprudence largely eliminates the separation between the intellectuals and the common people. This is because everyone in the society has to act according to the law and thus everyone

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<sup>124</sup> Bergin, T. (2015). *New Science of Giambattista Vico*. Cornell University Press, p335.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid, 343.

possesses the epistemic form of the jurisprudence. Second, for Vico, philosophy examines philology, which is not a study to discover the variation of words or phonetic pronunciations but “the doctrine of all the institutions that depend on the human choice; for example, all histories of the language, customs, and deeds of people in war and peace.”<sup>126</sup> Vico’s philological methods include three principles – the religious practice, marriage, and burial – because only these three customs exist in every nation whether it is barbarous or civilized. They can reveal the collective human understanding: the religious practice manifests the local people’s understanding of the divine, marriage shows their passion for life, and the burial tells their belief in the immortality of the soul. Consequently, similar to law, the philological examination reveals the totality of human epistemology, determining in which age the civil people exist.

If man can also exist through his subjectivity instead of being only objectified by Foucault’s incautious methods (modern science) and if the true archaeological time of the rise of man is the time of poetical discoveries instead of in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it is reasonable to argue that Foucault’s hypothesis that man may vanish in History is invalid.

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<sup>126</sup> Ibid, 6.

## Conclusion

Although the last chapter of this paper challenges Foucault's archaeological method on man's existence in *The Order of Things*, it is still valuable to study his works. His historical view based on the transformation of epistemes provides a new vision to examine man's past. Also, his philosophy that decenters subjectivity leads to the birth of contemporary theories, allowing readers to criticize traditional views based on subjectivity. Foucault's historical critique in a certain sense, although negative, helps the readers understand the significance of man's subjectivity and humanism better. Foucault's belief in man's finitude makes the readers cherish human existence and miracle. This is exemplified by his belief that the critical ontology of ourselves must be considered not only as theories or knowledge, but also be conceived as a philosophical life in which "the critique of what we are is at one and the same time the historical analysis of the limits imposed on us and an experiment with the possibility of going beyond them."<sup>127</sup>

Foucault's philosophical orientation experiences also transform s throughout his life time. His later works have obvious inconsistent values with *The Order of Things*. Foucault defends this in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* by saying his philosophical writing journey is like venturing in a labyrinth. "Do not ask who I am and do not ask me to remain the same: leave it to our bureaucrats and our police to see that papers are in order."<sup>128</sup> In the final years of his life, his philosophy is no longer dedicated to criticizing humanism as he does in *The Order of Things*. Instead, he revalues the significance of subjectivity by examining ancient Greek society in his works such as *The Care of Self* and *The Courage of Truth*. In this sense, man's existence is not

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<sup>127</sup> Foucault, M. and Rabinow, P. (1997). *Ethics*. New York: New Press, p319.

<sup>128</sup> Foucault, M. (2010). *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*. New York: Vintage Books, p17.

only a product of historical arrangement, but also a free being that can liberate him from the social power and episteme.

Perhaps it is also appropriate to consider Foucault's and Vico's views of History as supplements to each other. On the one hand, *The Order of Things*, as the last the chapter proves, does ignore the significance of subjectivity in human existence during the Renaissance and ancient Greek era. On the other hand, because Vico is from the 17<sup>th</sup> century, he cannot foresee the radical changes caused by science in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Thus, it may be reasonable to incorporate Foucault's historical view into Vico's recourse. The three epistemes become subdivisions within Vico's second age of man; the three object-orientated ages divide the general age of man based on subjectivity. If Foucault's belief in the end of man came under the presupposition of Vico's second age of man, then the hypothesis would be that the object of human subjective understanding will no longer be man. This new hypothesis will be valid. Nevertheless, this does not claim that man will totally vanish, but only man as the main focus of human understanding will be replaced.

One cannot deny that human society today has already entered into an age oriented by science and technology. The progress of modern technology and science becomes the mainstream in the news as well as in daily conversations. The work of the humanities has lost its central status. Even the Italian humanist Ernesto Grassi has to admit that "philosophy hardly appears still to play a role, and rhetorical speech is recognized only outside the framework of scientific discourse as the superficial art of persuasion."<sup>129</sup> In this sense, Foucault is right that the episteme will return back to the Same, since technological and scientific thinking is based on universal mathematic principles.

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<sup>129</sup> Grassi, E. (2001). *Rhetoric as Philosophy*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, p68.

However, in order to achieve the true existence of man, one must be able to see the danger of science and technology, while prudently enjoying the efficiency they bring to human life. Foucault's opinion on the Enlightenment may apply to his opinion of today, since both the Classical Age and today are based on the Same. Foucault believes that the Enlightenment constantly "blackmails" people to either accept it and remain within the rationalist traditions or criticizes it and try to escape from rationality.<sup>130</sup> For Foucault, the universal rationality compels people to submit to the public use of reason, which supersedes the individual freedom. The universal reason is the best guarantee of obedience by prescribing individuals to conform to its principles. Individuals believe that they act according to the truth, but in the end, they have lost their freedom of genuine conscience. On the contrary, if one does not follow the universal rationality, he will be considered insane and be abandoned by the society. Similar to the Classical Age, today's science and technology also use their universal truth and efficiency to seduce people to follow them. They create a tremendous social pressure for the individuals to submit by saying "obey, and you will be able to reason as much as you like."<sup>131</sup> If one blindly follows science and technology today, his life will be dominated and alienated by them, thus losing his vivid freedom as a man. On the contrary, if one does not follow them, he will be easily marginalized by the society, since everyone else has already established a social network based on science and technology. Foucault considers this "blackmail" a danger that restricts man's vision to see beyond it.

Foucault's solution to this dialectical predicament is through constant criticism. The criticism to challenge today's orientation needs to understand what are the universal and

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<sup>130</sup> Foucault, M. and Rabinow, P. (1997). *Ethics*. New York: New Press, p313.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid*, 306.

obligatory principles as well as where the exceptions and contingency exist.<sup>132</sup> Foucault attempts to use particular situations to criticize and transform the universal principles. The approach of criticism is first to use an archaeological method to investigate which contingent knowledge in History make up the present age. Then humans need to separate their present existence from these contingencies and thus experientially enter into a new age. Foucault attempts to liberate man from the dangers of the present episteme. As he states, “my point is not that everything is bad, but everything is dangerous.”<sup>133</sup> In order to achieve beyond the present existence, one needs to realize the danger of knowledge in History; one needs to experience and liberate himself from constant struggles of the archaeological discovery.

Unlike Foucault, Vico sees the problem of science and technology from a different perspective. Contemporary technology is based on mathematic algebra. Vico believes that immersing in algebra for too long “obscures their (youth) imagination, enfeebles their memory, renders their perception, sluggish, and slackens their understanding.”<sup>134</sup> Since algebra is only about the abstractions of phenomena, it does not contain images and stories behind each number or letter. Staying in science and technology for too long will cause one to lose the ability to collect memories and create imaginations. He can only do computing and deductive logic under the framework provided by the universal principles, losing the ability to tell the particulars and imaginatively connect the particulars to form poetry. He will be rationally mad in the sense that the original passion and humanistic stories will be detached from his present existence. Consequently, Vico’s solution to deal with the age of science and technology is to teach the youth humanities, language, inventions, and prudence. The youth will acquire topical minds with

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<sup>132</sup> Ibid, 315.

<sup>133</sup> Gutting, G. (1999). *Michel Foucault's Archaeology of Scientific Reason*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p288.

<sup>134</sup> Vico, G. (1995). *The Autobiography of Giambattista Vico*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, p124.



sufficient rationality of man's original subjectivity instead of critical minds that only analyze what has already been collected. As Vico states, "that is why topical minds are richer and less true, while critical minds are truer but drier."<sup>135</sup>

In the age of science and technology, human subjectivity may not completely disappear since science and technology still require inductions and creations during their processes and productions. However, the majority of the people will only follow or analyze the existent order of the universal rationality. This rationality does not allow logical contradictions, which entangles individuals in constant battles of conflict. It universalizes and standardizes the cultural and individual differences, leading one to believe the existence of the superiority based on number greatness (e.g. wealth, efficiency). Consequently, the current dominating scientific and technological understanding hampers individuals to experience the ultimate freedom beyond the contradictions, namely, to grasp the absolute. Humans today should feel fortunate that man's face has not completely vanished. Maybe one can only leave the question whether or not the mathematic objectivity can completely detach from human subjectivity to the scientists or engineers to answer.

I hope that my humble effort in this paper can restore some confidence in man's dignity, even though I am deeply aware that my effort is no more than a grain of sand in the historical waves.

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<sup>135</sup> Grassi, E. (2001). *Rhetoric as Philosophy*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, p45.

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