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GENEALOGY AS IMMANENT CRITICISM OF FORMS OF LIFE

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Dissertation presented as a requirement of completion
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Professor Advisor: Emil Albert Sobottka

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Abstract

The present study seeks to demonstrate that genealogy can be an instrument of immanent critique of forms of life and with that recast genealogy's place within critical theory. The catalyst for this proposal is Honneth's challenge of describing and justifying a standpoint from which society and its institutional practices can be meaningfully theoretically criticized. This study delves deeply into the concept of forms of life and its critiques, and proposes that a genealogical approach realizes the goals intended by Jaeggi's proposition in her book *Critique of Forms of Life*. Martin Saar's tridimensional description of Nietzsche's genealogy is the guide towards the realization of this genealogical project. Jaeggi has a theoretical proposition developed and genealogy can be an instrument that could bridge the gap between the theoretical possibility of the immanent criticism and a practice of social critique. The genealogical proposition provides a surplus in comparison with Jaeggi's position. Genealogy presents itself as an instrument of critique tailor made to the time that we live in.

Key words: genealogy, critical theory, forms of life

Resumo

O presente estudo busca demonstrar que a genealogia pode ser um instrumento de crítica imanente das formas de vida e com isso repensar o lugar da genealogia na teoria crítica. O ponto de partida para esta proposta é o desafio colocado por Honneth de descrever e justificar um ponto de vista a partir do qual a sociedade e suas práticas institucionais podem ser significativamente criticadas teoricamente. Este estudo mergulha profundamente na conceitualização das formas de vida e sua crítica para propor que uma abordagem genealógica realiza os objetivos pretendidos pela proposição de Jaeggi em seu livro *Crítica das formas de vida*. A descrição tridimensional de Martin Saar da genealogia de Nietzsche é o guia para a realização deste projeto genealógico. Jaeggi tem uma proposição teórica desenvolvida e a genealogia pode ser um instrumento que poderia preencher a lacuna entre a possibilidade teórica da crítica imanente e uma prática de crítica social. A proposição genealógica fornece um excedente em relação à posição de Jaeggi. A genealogia se apresenta como um instrumento de crítica feito sob medida para a época em que vivemos.

Palavras chave: genealogia, teoria crítica, formas de vida

INTRODUCTION	10
1. THE THEMATIZATION OF FORMS OF LIFE	20
1.1 Beyond justice and the good life	20
1.2 Conceptualization of forms of life	34
1.3 Thematize and criticize	58
2. GENEALOGY: AN EXPLANATORY FORM OF CRITICISM	67
2.1 Koopman's genealogy: The Kantian tradition and the Foucault x Habermas debate	67
2.2 Allen's genealogy as problematization: Adorno and Foucault.	76
2.3 Foucault's Critique: Power and Freedom	86
2.4 Genealogy as explanation	98
3. REFLEXIVENESS, RESONANCE AND EMANCIPATION	124
3.1 Acceleration and Resonance	124
3.2 The third dimension of genealogy and the task of the genealogist	135
CLOSING REMARKS	147
REFERENCES	156

INTRODUCTION

The venture proposed by Rahel Jaeggi in *Critique of Forms of Life* delves into the very core of the critical project and casts a wide gaze into the socio-ontology of the problems/contradictions posed by forms of life. This study will excavate the conceptualization of forms of life, as well as its accompanying critique, and propose that a genealogical approach realizes the goals intended by Jaeggi's proposition. The juxtaposition of theoretical positions demonstrates that the project of recasting the genealogical methodology is a promising one. This dissertation proposes a specific, mainly methodological, take on genealogy provided by marrying the immanent critique of forms of life posed by Jaeggi's Book with the comprehension of genealogy as tridimensional endeavor. The unorthodox path chosen at this time to bring genealogy to the forefront of critical theory starts with Honneth's latest attempt to integrate genealogy into the realm of critical theory. The decision to start with Honneth's proposal of integrating genealogy to his own critical scheme does not mean an endorsement of his proposal, but serves as an antagonistic figure that touches on a critical point in his essay — that is, why the theorist interested in genealogy, and genealogists at large, have strongly rooted preconceptions on the subject.

In his book "Pathologies of Reason" (2009), Honneth raises questions that still remain latent in the debate of contemporary critique; How to describe and justify a point of view which addresses a society and its institutional practices? Can society and its practices be theoretically criticized in significant ways? Are we stuck with the conclusion that only a contextually localized form of "weak" social criticism represents a legitimately political and philosophical study, while any "strong" form that transcends the context of social criticism necessarily brings the risk of paternalism or even despotism?

In Honneth's view, these questions pose a challenge for all those approaches that still appeal to the heritage of the Frankfurt School. Indeed, some contemporary authors often refer to the representatives of this tradition and their work as exemplary cases of a strong social criticism that no longer has a place in social theory. The worst part of this contemporary push to delegitimize the heritage of this tradition, according to Honneth, is the fact that *many of the central writings of this school create the impression that it so distanced itself from the institutional order of the given society that its criticism has lost all normative reference points and thus must fall under suspicion of being a totalizing ideology* (2009, p. 44).

With that in mind, Honneth (2009) ventures a new interpretation of a "strong" form of social criticism by defending the classical criticism of the Frankfurt School. He offers two basic

provisions; firstly, a committed reconstruction of the ideal form of this kind of criticism, to find whether the central idea behind the whole project can still be defended today; and secondly, deeply connected with the first, an emphasis that his defense should by no means be understood as a ratification of the material content of any specific social theory.

Honneth starts with a modification of Walzer's tripartite scheme of social criticism, which consists of the procedures of discovery, invention and interpretation. However, he distances himself from Walzer's procedure of discovery, which is intimately connected to a certain religious or metaphysical experience that supports the conditions for criticism. Honneth does not believe that such social criticism from such conditions is sufficiently relevant in philosophical terms.

The other procedures are reclassified in Honneth's scheme. The *invention*, which takes as its starting point a real or fictitious general affirmation for the production of normativity, becomes construction; whereas *interpretation*, a procedure in which Walzer himself identifies what was once called immanent criticism, becomes reconstruction. The fundamental difference between the two models is that the latter can only use as a legitimate source of criticism the principles and ideals that have already emerged in a given society.

Honneth states that differentiating between constructivism and reconstruction is not enough to exhaust the contemporary models of social criticism. In the following lines of his text he illustrates the point with a defense of the socially critical writings of Michel Foucault. At this moment, Honneth is already advocating for social criticism under a genealogical proviso. The author is emphatic in expressing Foucault's merits by showing how a normative ideal becomes social practice. He understands that the writings of the French author might offer a handle to grasping the normative failures of a particular society through time. However, the role of genealogy is restricted in Honneth's view: *genealogy is, in a sense, a parasitic critical procedure, since it presupposes a normative justification that it does not intend to give* (2009, p. 48). The author even mentions that genealogical research serves *as a detector of the social changes and their main ideals* (2009, p. 53). This critique is the fundamental problem that permeates even the most charitable reading of genealogy — genealogy does not give a normative justification, and therefore, it needs to be complemented or can be deemed parasitic.

Honneth's proposed scheme of critique stands first on a constructive justification, from a critical point of view, which provides a conception of rationality that establishes a systematic connection between social rationality and moral validity. It is then demonstrated, through the reconstruction, that this potential rationality determines social reality in the form of moral

ideals. Finally, these moral ideals must be seen under the genealogical condition in which their original meaning can become socially unrecognizable.

Could genealogy be used as a proviso as Honneth proposes? It seems unlikely. The idea that genealogy is somehow parasitic or cryptonormative has proven to be quite resistant for some time and it has influenced much of the academic production on genealogy, especially within the realm of critical theory. The resistance towards genealogy could be traced to the Habermasian interpretation of Foucault. Habermas did not mince words in his critique of what he chose to call Foucault's *theory of power*¹. The influence of his critique has been, and remains, profound, even though there are studies strenuously refuting his argument². His specific critique and preoccupations will be dealt with in the second chapter.

Honneth attempts to integrate genealogy within the project of critical theory, but clearly states that genealogy lacks normative justification and therefore is not primed without the previous steps (*construction* and *reconstruction*). This, in turn, becomes an impediment for a possible normative project entailing autonomy or emancipation.

That is the same problem that Allen wrestles with in *The Politics of Our Selves* (2008). The author in this case is an advocate of Foucault's critical potential and yet her position was, at the time, following the Butler, Benhabib and Fraser debate, integrating Habermasian concepts of autonomy and transformation and Foucault's insights of subjectivation and power relations. Allen herself admits that to do so it is necessary to contextualize Habermasian idealizations and recast some of the findings made by Foucault. Allen's choice was to supplant the normative expectation with Habermas' antagonizing views — an attempt that invited criticism by its own followers (see Koopman, 2013). Later, Allen, in *The End of Progress* (2016) further developed her proposition, combining Foucault and Adorno, and tried to place much of the normative heft onto Adorno. The author didn't totally flesh out her ideas regarding genealogy and primarily focused on the resolution of her forward-looking form of progress.

My work here is an attempt to invigorate genealogy, not by counting on external additives to supplement normative justification, but as an all-encompassing project, immanent in its criticism. Another quintessential difference between my tentative argument and Allen's projects, for example, is my lack of direct interest in the face value of Foucault's findings per

¹ See Habermas, J. (2007). *The philosophical discourse of modernity: Twelve lectures* (Reprinted; F. Lawrence, Trans.). Cambridge: Polity Press.

² See Oliveira, N. F. de (2012). *On the genealogy of modernity: Foucault's social philosophy*. Hauppauge, N.Y: Nova Science.

se. The idea of instrumentalizing his findings to enable a project within critical theory is certainly a valid quest; yet, it is not what this dissertation is searching for.

The direct connection with Foucault's work in this dissertation delves into the realm of his methodological definitions and choices of practices. Certainly his findings demonstrate the relevancy of his methodology, but also his findings by themselves don't seem relevant enough for this work. That's why the direct reappraisal of Foucault in this dissertation rests mostly on his conception of critique. The aim of this dissertation is to overcome reservations and construct an emancipatory critical scheme from the genealogical perspective. Not necessarily one particularly tied to any particular author's findings, but one that certainly owes itself to various Nietzschean and Foucaultian reflections on the subject of genealogy.

By the end of this dissertation it should be clear that despite the loaded theoretical heritage implied by the construction of said genealogical project, this project is fairly pragmatic. To begin to understand how this task will be fulfilled the analytical lens that will permeate this dissertation but must be introduced: namely, Martin Saar's tridimensional description of genealogy. It's important to emphasize the fact that Saar's influence on the genealogical project is limited and, yet, overarching. The systematic and analytical interpretation of Nietzsche's *On the Genealogy of Morals* is invaluable for extracting an analytical lens that decodes critical potential, and yet the use of said interpretation does not mean that an endorsement of Saar's entire theoretical project. It does not seek total refutation either. The project of genealogy presented in this dissertation intends to go beyond a reformulation of Nietzsche and Foucault — or perhaps, more accurately, attempts a lateral move away from this reformulation. Saar's contribution to this work will be essential in the search to demonstrate how genealogy can be rooted or related outside of its very own "tradition" so to speak.

Saar (2008) underlines the relevancy of genealogy as a new way of relating the historical and the philosophical. Genealogies can be thought of as "critical" stories and "effective stories", that is, stories that fundamentally change the conception of what people are. In other words, genealogy goes far beyond mere methodological historicism, as it employs a sophisticated philosophical apparatus that shapes and informs its narratives.

Genealogy, according to Saar, has a specific range of objects, a specific mode of explanation, and a specific textual form. By expanding on these three points Saar seeks to substantiate his claim that genealogies are stories with a philosophical difference. Through a systematic and methodological reading of Nietzsche's *On the Genealogy of Morals*, the author seeks to demonstrate three dimensions of genealogy (thematic, explanatory and stylistic) that illustrate its critical potential.

The first dimension is the thematic — the subject as an object. According to Saar, the genealogical history of Nietzsche's morality narrates the history of morality as a history of moral subject formation processes. It places a variety of moral practices, judgments and beliefs in their historical, social and cultural context and, therefore, destroys any illusion about the naturalness or unity of the moral world. At the same time, it pluralizes the moral subject by showing that in history a variety of conceptions of moral agencies and moral values were in competition and that the success of one form of morality meant the decline of another.

The genealogy of morality, according to Saar, surpasses the mere historicization of its object as it relates the historical processes with the effects they have on the construction and self-constitution of human actors. If morality is to be taken as a complex social institution that structures and shapes the subject and their practices, the attempt to contextualize and criticize it needs a kind of discourse that puts the history of morality up against its moral concepts, practices and institutions.

The second dimension, the explanatory, exposes the specific way of explaining genealogy. It is at this moment that power comes into the picture. Unlike other Nietzsche manuscripts, *On The Genealogy of Morals* is not permeated by many references to the term "power". However, Saar stresses that the basic methodological idea of the "will to power" as an explanatory concept that can decipher life, as such, is present throughout the text and guides the descriptions of life forms and cultural ideals.

Saar underscores that the spectre of power is found in the emergence and transformation of the senses given to life. In the succession of subjugation processes within the thing itself, more or less profound and interdependent, together with the resistance that each time encounters, the attempts of defense and reaction, and also the results of successful counter actions. According to Saar, Nietzsche offers a methodology of discontinuity, which prevents the genealogist from reducing the present phenomena to previous forms (to its origin or truer form), and vice versa. For the genealogist, the form and function of any social institution, value or practice becomes a legible sign of the processes of power (*Überwältigen*) that stabilize and sustain a system of institutions, values or practices.

Saar stresses the particularity by which a genealogy writes history. The methodology has its own primarily interpretative way of connecting historical events, and that is what embodies the third dimension of genealogy — the stylistic. Genealogy seeks to scandalize the objects of its own analysis and the strategy behind that artifice is twofold: firstly, in the degree of genealogical rhetoric and secondly, the manner in which the text addresses the readers.

According to Saar, genealogy offers hypothetical scenarios in which a specific emergency is narrated in relatively causal terms within a process related to power. Such scenarios are created through highly imaginative metaphors and illustrations, where Nietzsche's idiosyncratic artistic use of rhetoric emerges. This narrative strategy shows that the genealogist must give up on offering a strictly historical account and instead be prepared to offer theorizations in the form of fictional historical scenes. Nietzsche seeks to reveal the internal connections between morality and power through theoretical fictions or what could be called “*thought-images*”. Nietzsche alters the point of view of history and succeeds in making power relations visible and thinkable in areas that until then weren't expected.

Genealogy is also a style of writing that is conscious of the direct relationship it seeks with its audience. It's success ultimately depends on its audience. On a formal level, the genealogical text implies a specific audience to which it is addressed, it has *an* audience in mind that it aims to affect and transform. This is made clear from its performance and structure. Likewise, the audience has its own part in the success of a genealogical text — it must recognize itself in the narratives, even when they offer up a strange view of the world that does not correspond with what the audience has in mind prior to the reading. This experience produces an effect of discomfort, which is particular to the genealogical goal of illustrating how the subjects are always under influence of powers and forces hitherto invisible, that is, that the subjects are involved in a power relationship.

These three dimensions presented by Saar - thematic, explanatory and stylistic - illustrate some relevant points about the peculiarities of a genealogical study and its all-encompassing critical potential. Saar specifically distills in what ways genealogy can be of service to social criticism as a non-standard form, highly interpretative storytelling that connects historical events to the dynamics of individual and collective of competing forces. Saar manages to grasp in a systematic way some subtleties of this genealogical practice, especially regarding the stylistics of the text pedigree and its inseparable role.

Nevertheless, the question of normative challenges remains. How does one respond to the arguments brought up by Honneth? From Saar's systematic reading of Nietzsche's *On the Genealogy of Morals*, with its three previously delineated ‘dimensions’ of genealogy and their critical potential, one can definitely make out a kind of cartography of what may be called methodology within genealogy. However, to address Honneth's concern, the task is to provide an interpretation of genealogy as a fully developed immanent criticism.

This is the critical moment in which genealogy ventures “outside” of its own “tradition” and Rahel Jaeggi's book *Critique of Forms of Life* (2018) comes to the forefront.

Jaeggi's conceptualization of *forms of life* as a category of social formations and the instrument of its own critique plays a pivotal role in this work of genealogy. Without getting ahead of the arguments made further ahead, it is pertinent to show how Jaeggi has a particular view regarding how one should thematize forms of life. She proposes a unique understanding of the validity claims raised in and through forms of life and of the self-understanding at work in them. This different understanding of forms of life can be summarized in three affirmations: i) Forms of life are complex bundles (or ensembles) of social practices geared towards solving problems that are historically contextualized and normatively constituted; ii) The question of the rationality of the forms of life can be formulated from within a context-transcending perspective, namely, one about the rationality of the dynamics of development of the respective form of life; and iii) This perspective adopts as its criterion of success not substantive aspects of content, but rather formal criteria relating to the rationality and success of the process thus described as an ethical and social learning process³.

Alongside questions regarding the success of a form of life is also the question of failure. If, according to Jaeggi's proposal, the criteria for the success of a form of life refers to its claim to solve the problems posed with and through the respective forms of life, then forms of life, when they fail, succumb to a normative crisis specific to them.

Furthermore, still according to Jaeggi, it's fair to assume that if forms of life become criticizable based on norms that they themselves posit, and that are to a certain extent embedded in their constitutive practical performances, then this normative structure (or the normative social ontology of forms of life) suggests that such a critique will exhibit a specific mode. The mode of critique that Jaeggi is implying is the immanent critique; immanent is here understood in a *strong* sense referring to the crisis in which the forms of life have succumbed to failure by being unable to measure up to the problems that were posed. This type of critique by the author takes as its starting point the claims and conditions posited together with a form of life and then responds to the problems and crises that arise in this specific context. It derives from this procedure the transformative potential that goes beyond the practices in question and seeks their transformation.

Jaeggi affirms that immanent criticism is the only one which can solve the problem of establishing a critical standard. Immanent critique doesn't get caught up in a contextualist variant of criticism in which it becomes purely a matter of self-clarification within a framework that, in and of itself, cannot be placed in question. Or, in a criticism posed on external standards

³ See Chapter 10, The Dynamics of Learning Process.

that would not measure up to the task of criticizing forms of life as forms of life. Her position could be characterized as a contemporary reading of Hegel.

In a way, Honneth's dilemma on social critique does appear to be responded to. Jaeggi would respond that the dilemma can be resolved by a strong version of what is called, following on Hegel's work, "immanent criticism" because it transcends some of the customary dichotomies. It's neither "strong" nor "weak", and it is neither "internal" (and internal, at this point, should be understood in the sense of a strictly contextual position) nor "external". It assumes a certain historically and socially situated context and at the same time transcends it. The immanent criticism, on the one hand, generates its standard "out of the thing (criticized) itself", but, on the other hand — in contrast to particularistic forms of criticism that remains internal — it is strong enough to be able to criticize forms of life as forms of life; that is, it is also transformative.

So, at this point the question remains, What part does genealogy play? My contention is that genealogy enables the immanent criticism charted by Jaeggi's work and supplies the means for a practical execution of the goals set out by the immanent criticism of forms of life. This is not because Jaeggi's position is somehow ideal, however it still lacks a direct approach and practical manner to connect with the history of forms of life. This was exactly part of the challenge posed by Honneth and the reason why he bundled genealogy into his scheme of critique. Jaeggi has developed a theoretical proposition and genealogy, according to my thesis, can be a bridge over the gap existing between the theoretical possibility of an immanent criticism and a practice of social critique. I would go even further and say that not only the immanent criticism of forms of life realizes itself fully within genealogy but also that genealogy provides a surplus beyond Jaeggi's proposition and avoids some of the pitfalls within it. Genealogy presents an empirical process for and within the form of life and its own presentation transcends a dual form of critique. Genealogy presents itself as an instrument of critique tailor-made to our times.

The arguments so far have just allowed and enforced the main question: Can genealogy be considered an immanent criticism of forms of life? If so, is it worthy of the goal of emancipation? And what constitutes the surplus that puts genealogy ahead in present times?

To answer these questions and to demonstrate the contention arrived at earlier the first chapter of this dissertation will be dedicated to the concept and thematization of forms of life; forms of life as ensemble of practices and orientations, institutional manifestations and materializations demand a very specific approach considering the genealogical take. Also, according to Jaeggi, in terms of the opposition between the "good life" and "justice", to criticize

something as a form of life has a broader and context-transcending scope. Jaeggi highlights that what is at stake is neither what is the best way of acting within a given framework of purposes, in order to achieve purposes, nor how, within a given framework, the most appropriate realization of these orientations should be conceived. It is, in fact, a matter of thematizing such purposes themselves, and determining what shape the very goods cherished within a society and the associated practices should assume.

The thematization and conceptualization of forms of life has a fundamental place in Jaeggi's project of critique. Without the thematization of forms of life any process of critique would be superficial; without proper context surrounding practices and attitudes one cannot fully appreciate the functional and evaluative aspects within a form of life. Thematization and conceptualization of forms of life intuitively claim a genealogical appraisal. The thematic dimension of genealogy and the direct reappraisal of Foucault's own process (as *Aufklärung*) comes to play a very important part in the process ventured in this chapter.

The second chapter opens up the field in regards to genealogy within the realm of critical theory and some of the common misunderstandings on the matter. Koopman and Allen's propositions are analyzed and the Habermas versus Foucault debate is briefly mentioned. In the end, it is possible to infer that most of the misunderstandings regarding genealogy appear to be tied to an excessively Kantian reading of Foucault's work, which leads to placing the Foucaultian genealogy within the Hegelian tradition. This closes the loop from the direct connection with the thematization of forms of life through reconstruction of genealogy as akin to the task of the *Aufklärung* and it allows one to move forward towards a clear definition of the second dimension of genealogy as an immanent critique of forms of life. Jaeggi's reconstruction of immanent criticism via determinate negation and a performative-constructivist understanding of the procedure of historical realization and actualization of freedom argues for an approach to the power relations that somehow interfere with the instantiations of freedom. Genealogy as an explanatory dimension — reading history through “power” and its related forms — offers a better chance to demonstrate how our practices and institutions really are provisional and at times provide problematic instances of freedom: power and freedom do share an intricate relationship in the genealogical process.

The final chapter focuses on the path to emancipation, asking, Can genealogy be a conduit to such realization? Emancipation, according to Jaeggi, is the intrinsic measure of the rationality of forms of life and of their criticism. If emancipation can be inferred by the level of reflexiveness within a form of life, then, likewise, the challenges lie in the lack of reflexiveness

presented within any given form of life. Genealogy's third dimension holds a surplus in this area and could be a key feature towards the goal of reflexiveness.

Yet to appreciate the relevancy of this dimension one has to also be aware of Rosa's dual diagnostic of the "accelerating society" of late modernity; one in which social processes do seem to be closing in on a hyper-accelerated status quo accompanied by the characterization of the mode of relating to the world known as resonance. This provides a fertile ground to demonstrate how genealogy can act as a resonant instrument, inviting reflexive thought to denaturalize reified relations, with its own particular way of scandalizing the narrative and reaching and transforming its audience. Finally, the genealogist does not end in their published work and should have an impact that goes beyond academia, affecting the political arena, in the hope for the creation of a consciously critical attitude.

1. THE THEMATIZATION OF FORMS OF LIFE

1.1 Beyond justice and the good life

To understand why forms of life is the precise term that fits the scope of this study one has to look into the processes that birthed this concept and the theoretical space that it seeks to fill. Forms of life can be broadly categorized as an ensemble of practices and orientations, institutional manifestations and materializations related to the cultural and social reproductions of life. Its critique, therefore, focuses on the specific constitution of a form of life. Jaeggi (2018) states that to criticize something as a form of life is to ask whether a form of life as such is flourishing or has turned out well or is rational, and not only whether it reflects a just social order in the narrower sense. According to her, the distinction between the “good” and the “right” life is itself contested and its utility is a matter of dispute; the evaluation of forms of life rests on a broad and inclusive field of practical questions that cannot be subsumed under the narrower domain of questions of relevance regarding morality and justice.

To demonstrate the specificity of this type of criticism Jaeggi reflects upon a recurrent theme of her book, the marketization of life, or as she puts it, commodification as a form-of-life problem. Commodification as form of life raises questions on the one hand of (distributive) justice — marketized health care and so on disproportionately affecting the poorest — and on other hand of the *good life*; if marketization can be considered a success and how the understanding of certain goods as commodities and treating them as such has implications for ourselves and our social practices. This example shows that the problem concerns the very constitution of a form of life as marked by marketization, the goods themselves, and not only their distribution within certain limits or a defined order.

Jaeggi defends the position that forms of life should be addressed, debated and criticized *as* forms of life. What is at stake is not only the best way of acting within a given framework of purposes in order to achieve certain purposes or how, within a given framework of value orientations, the most appropriate realization of these orientations should be conceived. Rather, it is thematizing such purposes themselves, not only the distribution of goods or opportunities, but also of what shape the very goods and the associated practices should assume.

Jaeggi seeks to extricate herself from the limitations of a patently liberal or communitarian outlook on the matters of evaluating forms of life. According to her, what is thematized is not only the unjust effects of the marketization but also what it means to treat determined goods as commodities and not only the appropriate distribution of resources but

also the meaning thereof. Therefore the values of a specific form of life become the focus of contestation. However, this debate of values reveals just how far from self-evident the establishing of these values are and to what extent they are the result of sociohistorical constellations. Jaeggi's position is that only then, after this process, the internal constitution of forms of life can become the subject of discussion. The type of criticism espoused by the author, criticism of forms of life, is aimed at a different object in comparison with a theory of justice and, likewise, has its specific perspective.

The criticism of forms of life deals not only with our actions (what we *ought* to do) but also with frames of reference that inform *how* we act and guide ourselves. If, according to Jaeggi, we have different positions about whether "chastity", "honor", or "discipline" should have a place in our ethical vocabulary, then we have to look at the reference system of social practices and interpretations itself — the understandings of the world in which these concepts are important — to have an idea of what we find wrong or strange. Therefore, when forms of life are criticized as forms of life we have the catalyst for thematizing the meaning, constitution, and interpretation of concepts that are somehow involved in what we do and also what we ought to do. The debate here rests not only on practical evaluative questions – questions about the right action - but also on differences over the appropriateness of collective patterns of interpretation. Jaeggi states that framework conditions are not always readily available and that one does just haphazardly stumble upon them. That's why thematizing these framework conditions as such, and rendering them visible, is a large part of the endeavor in the formal criticism of forms of life.

Jaeggi demonstrates that it's possible to determine how productive such a disclosure of conditions and frameworks can be for social emancipation movements, such as the women's movement. Before one is able to criticize a form of life, one has to see that concepts such as chastity, honor, and discipline, with their respective associated practices and evaluations, are not spontaneous developments, but are a naturalized part of an established form of life. The thematization of forms of life already resembles a thematic dimension that seeks to destroy any illusion about the naturalness or unity of the moral world and is quite aware of the effects that the naturalization of practices have on the construction and self-constitution of human actors (Saar, 2008).

The precise scope of the thematization of forms of life can provide a broad spectrum of questions; questions that resist being pinned down by a simple vocabulary of "right or wrong" and "good and bad":

A form of life centered on television or shopping malls and may be bleak, civil marriage conventional, life in the provinces boring, an interest in esoterism regressive, townhouse windows decorated with porcelain cats tawdry, and the ideal of beauty pursued by means of cosmetic surgery sterile. (...) The vocabulary we use to qualify and criticize forms of life is composed of, in Bernard Williams's expression, "thick ethical concepts". Forms of life may succeed or fail, flourish or become impoverished; they may be sterile, lifeless, tawdry, bleak or regressive – or, conversely, they may be cool, original, enthralling, fascinating, or progressive (2018, p. 8).

Yet, this myriad of characterizations, according to Jaeggi, does not necessarily mean that the core evaluative criteria is soft or has limited validity claims. To spell it out systematically, the goal of conceptualization of the criticism of forms of life rests on an intermediate level between prohibition and individual whim: a level that seems to have been obscured by the dominant currents in political liberalism and Kantian moral philosophy. The goal of bringing light to these ethical questions is only possible, *due to the merely purported brightness of a light source that always illuminates the space of practical reasons from the vantage point of the primacy of the right over the good* (2018, p. 9).

This form of criticism that attempts to surpass the supremacy of the right over the good and seeks to be binding, may end up being interrogated for its paternalistic tendencies or even be accused of downright moral dictatorship. Is there a path to avoid that?

Jaeggi answers the question by setting the opposing argument, mentioning that a successful cohabitation within a multicultural society seems to depend on the recognition of difference and plurality which in turn would entail an attitude of self-restraint regarding one's own tradition and way of life. The process of individualization, pluralization, and reflexivity that have shaped the development of modernity — and championed autonomy, self-determination, and self-realization with their respective normative contents — seems to be attached to the notion that not only is a universally binding form of ethical life no longer possible, but that there is no viable standpoint from which forms of life can be justifiably criticized.

This seemingly inescapable predicament is one strong argument for ethical-epistemic abstinence; contemporary political philosophy has several currents that attempt to circumvent, contain or completely avoid the thematization of forms of life. Two of the most influential expressions of this position are selectively delineated by Jaeggi, and they are a) political liberalism with its pragmatic justification for the need of neutrality (represented mainly by Rawls) and b) the assertion that there is a categorical difference between morality and ethics

espoused most notably by Habermas. In broad Rawlsian⁴ terms, the liberal proposal demands that the key institutions of state must remain ethically neutral in order to be just in regard to the ineluctable diversity of ethical doctrines. The state should proceed without promoting conceptions of good life, and, therefore, hold a conception of justice that is based on this ideal of neutrality, retreating from evaluating the content of all conceptions of good. The political conception of justice as fairness mediates the openness towards varying conceptions of *the good* whose content would otherwise make them incompatible. This process allows that any individual member of any well-ordered society can pursue their individual plans, just as long as these plans do not conflict with very same principles that enable the society. The exclusion of the evaluation of the contents of life plans and ideas of the good would then enable the possibility of an "overlapping consensus".

Jaeggi stresses a few more points on the Rawlsian position; one that even Rawls won't deny, especially in his later work, namely the ethical basis of his "thin" core morality, which bears the imprint of values traced to liberal modern democratic societies. However, the underlying idea of an *unethical* version of liberalism still remains a validity claim that underlies the push for a comprehensive ethical neutralization offering a possible consensus. Secondly, Rawls' thesis of "reasonable disagreement" entails that two positions regarding the same ethical question may be equally rational and, nonetheless, lead to different results. In this scenario, even if we assume a willingness to reach an agreement, the existing differences cannot be overcome through rational clarification. According to Rawlsian political theory, a "method of avoidance" is recommended, which will comprise the bracketing of such differences and the containment of the disagreement on the basis of the underlying agreement on the political principles governing social life. Jaeggi states that even Rawls realizes that such a political conception, of retracing the disagreement back to the core principles, is philosophically flat; any deeper thematization would become entangled in the controversies of specific conceptions of the good and would lead to illegitimate responses, or as Rawls himself puts it:

To secure this agreement we try, so far as we can, to avoid disputed philosophical, as well as disputed moral and religious, questions. We do this not because these questions are unimportant or regarded with indifference, but because we think them too important and recognize that there is no way to resolve them politically. The only alternative to a principle of toleration is the autocratic use of state power. Thus, justice as fairness deliberately stays on the surface, philosophically speaking. Given the profound differences in belief and conceptions of the good at least since the Reformation, we must recognize that, just as on questions of religious and moral doctrine, public agreement on

⁴ See Rawls, J. (1985). Justice as Fairness: Political not Metaphysical. *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, 14(3), 223–251. JSTOR. Retrieved from JSTOR.

the basic questions of philosophy cannot be obtained without the state's infringement of basic liberties. Philosophy as the search for truth about an independent metaphysical and moral order cannot, I believe, provide a workable and shared basis for a political conception of justice in a democratic society (1985, p. 230).

The Habermasian position has a special thrust, according to Jaeggi (2018); it not only shares the diagnosis of pluralism and the insight on the conflict in modern societies regarding the right way to live, but assumes that a just social order should be neutral towards its members' conceptions of the good; it specifically rests on the categorical distinction between morality and ethics. In this position, morality concerns the norms of social life unconditionally and universally, and also the basic forms of respect that human beings owe each other following the Kantian morality tradition of respect and duties. Morally-based points of view are the yardstick against which every form of life would be measured and justified. Morality then is the locus of generalized interests and, in contrast, ethics would reserve itself to the particular, dealing with existential questions that affect our individual and collective identity⁵. This kind of subdivision of the space of practical reasons into a narrow meaning of morality, with its universal claim of moral reason, and the wider space of ethical questions has, according to Jaeggi, more than pragmatic significance in the context of Habermas's theory of modernity.

For Habermas (2001), under modern conditions philosophy has no jurisdiction over the multiplicity of individual life projects and collective forms of life, or, as to how one lives one's own life; this responsibility rests on the shoulders of socialized individuals themselves. This entails that only the procedure of rational will formation is capable of commanding universal assent among the myriad of life projects and collective forms of life.

The modern era does not allow general validity any longer for one of various rival traditions. Developing a uniform and substantive notion of the good life that aims to be binding becomes an impossibility or, at least, risks settling questions concerning the normative regulation of our everyday life by coercion, influence, or the power of the stronger interest. In Habermas' own words: *We can't expect to find a generally binding answer when we ask what is good for me or for us or for them; instead, we must ask what is equally good for all* (2001, p. 151).

⁵ As Habermas puts it: *The moral point of view from which we can judge practical questions impartially is indeed open to different interpretations. But because it is grounded in the communicative structure of rational discourse as such, we cannot simply dispose of it at will. It forces itself intuitively on anyone who is at all open to this reflective form of communicative action. With this fundamental assumption, discourse ethics situates itself squarely in the Kantian tradition yet without leaving itself vulnerable to the objections with which the abstract ethics of conviction has met from its inception. Admittedly, it adopts a narrowly circumscribed conception of morality that focuses on questions of justice* (2001, p. 151).

This differentiation, according to Jaeggi (2018), implies a sphere of reciprocal demands that claim validity independently of those affected. Habermas' position of ethical abstinence advocates that we, as philosophers, should abstain from the questions regarding a "good life" and concentrate on interventions in the domain of the core area of morality. Jaeggi notes, however, that regardless of his position of abstinence, as citizens we confront all variety of ethical conflicts, including the perennial conflict over the demarcation of what is morality in the sea of ethical principles. Apparently, the ethical abstinence of the modern Kantian position is the price to be paid for the project of moral universalism, even if the universalism proposed may not seek a claim of ultimate grounding.

Inevitably, this line of reasoning will land on questions of justice. Clearly, Habermas takes a strong position on justice very much aligned with a core morality claim. According to him, justice can be judged impartially only in light of valid norms, and to be considered valid, such norms must survive a universalization test that examines what is equally good for all: *Just as 'true' is a predicate for the validity of assertoric sentences, so is 'just' a predicate for the validity of the universal normative sentences that express general moral norms* (1996, p. 153).

For Habermas (1996), justice is not simply one value amongst others; it does not compete with other values in common matters of stating which goods specific persons or collectivities strive for or prefer under specific circumstances. In this scheme, justice poses as an absolute validity claim, much like moral precepts claim to be valid for each and every person. Other values, when given the perspective of an individual or group, can be ranked in a transitive order and, thus, carry a relative validity claim.

Jaeggi already sets up her critique of ethical abstinence when she states that Habermas is very aware of the consequences of his "well-founded abstinence" towards the ethical questions, including the scope of possibility on critique. She demonstrates that fact by bringing forth a Habermas quote in chapter 5 of *Truth and Justification* (2003):

We call the torture of human beings "cruel" not only here for us, but everywhere and for everyone. Yet we feel by no means justified to object against strange child-raising practices or marriage ceremonies, that is, against core components of the ethos of a foreign culture, as long as they do not contradict our moral standards. The latter are those central values that differ from other values in virtue of their universal claim to validity (2003, p. 228-229)

In spite of the previous quote, the argument for a separation of morality from ethics carries some semblance of nuance. Baynes in his book *Habermas* (2015) argued that Habermas' position on morality has changed at times and can be seen as dialectical or even Durkheimian in the sense that the fabric of social relations is, in itself, moral. According to Baynes, for

Habermas, morality is fundamentally *not about abstract moral principles or 'natural laws,' but about a class of social norms connected to the legitimacy of a social order and responsible for the integration of individuals as 'singular' or 'unique' into that social order* (2015, p. 100). Even after his later turn towards Kantian formalistic propositions, which can be overstated, according to Baynes, Habermas doesn't refute his earlier formulations on discourse morality: *it would indeed be quite troubling if later developments were to deprive discourse morality of 'almost everything that was interesting in the initial formulation* (2015, p. 103).

In the end, discourse morality on Habermasian terms conflicts with Jaeggi's proposal because it rests on a deontological moral theory; following Baynes, it assumes the priority of the right over the good and that basic moral principles must not presuppose a specific conception of the good; a different stance would oppose the liberal commitment to a plurality of conceptions of the good. Jaeggi seems to believe, and I tend to agree, that this commitment of abstinence towards a position on the good could lead to a de facto non-cognitivism regarding the ethical questions, which stands in contrast to the declared cognitivism facing moral questions; the debate on the matter is still wide open. The question that remains for Jaeggi is, Is the stance of ethical abstinence outlined above possibly unsatisfactory, yet unavoidable? Jaeggi (2018) does not believe so. The author is critical of the so-called "avoidance strategies" and by thematizing these positions seeks to reopen the "black box" of ethical questions.

According to Jaeggi (2018) most of the avoidance strategies are guided above all by two practical considerations: a) the idea that conflicts in modern, pluralistic societies can be resolved justly, or at least contained; and b) the anti-paternalistic idea that this strategy best corresponds to the idea of personal responsibility and autonomy of modern subjects. Jaeggi starting position is also twofold: on one level it is grounded in the factual inevitability of ethical decisions and predetermined character of ethical questions that lie within the neutrality of states, and, on the other, the conceptual concern with the ethical character of the morality-ethics distinction itself and its potential for conflicts.

The principle of abstinence and the idea of neutrality encounter a defining limit, following Jaeggi (2018), precisely because of the current situation facing modern societies. Just as the practical consideration of neutrality seems emblematic for modern societies, the opposite statement seems to be equally justifiable: that under conditions of modernity and fast paced scientific and technological advancements, civilization increasingly confronts subjects with problems that render the evaluation of forms of life a necessity. The approach chosen to understand how the evaluation of forms of life comes as a necessary part of the critical endeavor

of Jaeggi is a kind of dialectic of individualization straight from Hegel's *Elements of the philosophy of right*:

While, on the one hand, modernity enables individuals to become independent from collective and traditional bonds (which Hegel expresses as the "right of the subject's particularity to find satisfaction"⁶), on the other hand, individuals in modern civil society are becoming increasingly dependent on social exchange and interaction and hence are becoming increasingly interdependent (2018, p. 15).

Jaeggi's preliminary diagnosis of modernity, deeply connected with the Hegelian tradition, is much like Rosa's diagnosis of the social formation of modernity in a dialectic of mute and resonant relations. Modernity, according to Rosa (2019), has a high degree of openness through closure; the modern subject must be "closed" to his environment in order to develop his own voice and experience the segments of the world in which he is inserted. Moving as a distinctly "other", individuals reach their sensitivity to resonance (relatedness), through the tendency to close themselves off from what they find as a world. These complex relations in modern societies imply a dependence on regulation of matters of common concern; they rely on the regulation in these matters that, as Jaeggi implies, prove to be resistant to bracketing and containment on the basis of the governing political principles.

The debate over forms of life has to be called upon in situations where public decisions have a direct effect on private happiness. Jaeggi (2018) sees this realization on the state of affairs of modernity as a calling out for a critique of the forms of life that is not based on backward-looking or unrealizable desires for a new uniform binding form of ethical life, but rests on the recognition that ethically-connoted shared conditions of individual lives also exist beyond obvious examples and are not freely chosen. The relevance of this acknowledgment of a form of life as a permanent backdrop of one's life has a great impact on the decision-making process, especially in regard to the possibility of a political neutrality towards divergent forms of life.

As Jaeggi affirms, forms of life depend on public institutions and are politically instituted from the outset; therefore it does not matter if in a given society several competing forms of life exist alongside one another. Thus, regarding the arguments for an ethical abstinence (per Rawls), Jaeggi thinks the abstinence doctrine is an ideological self-misunderstanding of the liberal neutrality thesis and obscures the fact that the selection of possible evaluative decisions is always predetermined in certain respects by the institutional

⁶ See Hegel, G. W. F. (2011). *Elements of the philosophy of right* (15. print; H. B. Nisbet, Trans.). Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press. paragraph 124

framework of liberal societies. The naturalization of the market, for example, which is supposedly a neutral medium, has significant impact on the forms of life.

Jaeggi also dismisses the Habermasian view: the Habermas quote selected by Jaeggi demonstrates how the line between cruelty and the disconcerting character of different forms of life is not always clear:

Fifty years ago, corporal punishment of children was still regarded by many people (also within "our culture") not only as morally unobjectionable – indeed, even as morally required – but also as private matter. Today, most of us think that it is cruel and that we are justified in intervening. What counts as morally relevant cruelty is also interpreted very differently across different cultures. For instance, in Vietnam (to take a not especially martial example) it is considered cruel to let infants cry, whereas in Germany the thesis that screaming strengthens the lungs and character has proved to be remarkably resilient. So where does the domain of universally binding moral issues end and that of ineluctable (and in case of doubt even idiosyncratic) ethical value judgements begin? (JAEGGI, 2018, p. 17).

Who's to say what's moral? Even better, when and where? The scope of the domains identified as moral or ethical exhibit extreme historical and cultural variations. Yet again, the Habermasian discourse of morality (Baynes, 2015) does address the question of the confines of the light of morality and its own continuous process of transformation: But how much is up for debate? Jaeggi (2018) implies that the range of variation clearly suggests that the criteria for the distinction itself is a matter of established ethical life. The doctrine of abstinence corresponds to a specific ethos — the ethos of modernity — in which it is embedded. So, questions regarding the boundaries between morality and ethics become the signal features of every specific formation of this ethical life and, as Jaeggi underlines, in some respects a key point of differentiation between traditional and nontraditional forms of life. However, every demarcation of boundaries on values in any specific formation has ethical connotations; even if it's viewed from a universalistic perspective, this doesn't expurgate the fact that the ethos of modernity is controversial. The question is then, whether or not the ethos of modernity must be explicitly defended and how this defense can be formulated in a way other than as a defense of a particular form of life, rendering the universality argument moot.

The ethical or perfectionist liberalism espoused by Joseph Raz has an interesting take on these matters. Raz (1986) does not make any claim to neutrality and defends liberal values as genuinely ethical values. Nevertheless, his position doesn't stand without its caveats:

The value of personal autonomy is a fact of life. Since we live in a society whose social forms are to a considerable extent based on individual choice, and since our options are limited by what is available in our society, we can prosper in it only if we can be successfully autonomous. (...) The value of autonomy does not depend on choice, except to the very limited extent indicated. Throughout the preceding remarks I was assuming, of course, that

it is generally agreed that an autonomous life is not inherently and necessarily evil or worthless (RAZ, 1986, p. 394).

There are several points in Raz's interpretation of autonomy that beg consideration. Jaeggi (2018) puts her focus on the fact that Raz doesn't justify the specific content of the liberal ethos which, by her account, founded the facticity of the autonomous life in relation to the different forms of life. I would even go further to assert that assuming an autonomous life is not worthless is not the same as pairing the liberal ethos goals with maximum autonomous success. In the end, Raz's open defense of autonomy may prove to be less paternalistic than the claim of neutrality.

The thematization of forms of life, according to Jaeggi (2018), provides that the position of the critic is open to contradiction. It is a more egalitarian and symmetrical option compared to the several attempts to downplay the ethical character of one's own form of life to, in fact, shield it from challenges. The strategy of liberal abstinence, avoidance, containment or neutralization of conflicts appears now as an obfuscation of said conflicts, which produces new potential for practical conflicts. As to the enabling of self-determination by the neutrality thesis, Jaeggi has a strong argument for the thematization of forms of life:

Where forms of life cannot be thematized, they impose themselves without thematization. Ethical abstinence concerning forms of life leads to them being made invisible as forms of life (...) And that means in many respects that they are renaturalized into a power of fate (Jaeggi, 2018, p. 21).

The renaturalization effect undermines the project associated with liberal anti-paternalism in regards to how individuals can actually lead their lives. The strategy of neutral abstinence ends up obscuring the powers that determine people's lives, instead of enabling them to shape their own path. Between ethical abstinence and an illiberal moral dictatorship, Jaeggi strives to find a gray area that can provide perspective on this debate.

She seeks to elucidate the ethical domain and, in turn, calls for particularistic questions of comparison vis-à-vis questions of morality and justice. According to Jaeggi, questions about forms of life do not admit public philosophical justification in the same breath as those regarding what is moral or just, which already have their origin in a conceptually abridged description of the object. To clarify her stance, Jaeggi closely examines the model of ethical identity informing the debate around ethical abstinence/neutrality.

According to Jaeggi (2018), Rawls and Habermas have similar intuitions regarding the ethical question: both authors seem to agree that the intrinsic content of forms of life are closely bound up with questions of individual and collective identity (life histories). Particularistic in

nature, motivated by the historically contingent situations of each individual or collective. Therefore, they are ineluctable and meaningful, but not generalizable.

Rawls (1999) characterizes this picture of ethical differences as something called "total experience". This "total experience" carries an ethical distance that's overwhelming to any individual or collective identity. As Rawls puts it:

to some unknown extent, our total experience, our whole course of life up to now, shapes the way we assess evidence and weigh moral and political values, and our total experiences surely differ. Thus, in a modern society with its numerous offices and positions, its various divisions of labor, its many social groups and often their ethnic variety, the total experiences of citizens are disparate enough for their judgments to diverge, at least to some degree, on many if not most cases of any significant complexity. (1999, p.477)

Such considerations certainly could explain why ethical debates are fraught with difficulty. They don't explain, according to Jaeggi, why these total experiences and their corresponding formative biographical constellations should not be open to scrutiny in regards to their formation (emergence and sustainability) and results (consequences). The position of ineluctability of the ethical life impairs the possibility of answering these questions.

Habermas aligns himself with this position of the ineluctability of the ethical life despite his own comments on the characteristics of discourse ethics. He states that discourse ethics does not *exclude from the sphere of discursive problematization the questions of the good life accorded prominence by classical ethics, abandoning them to irrational emotional dispositions or decisions* (2001, p. 2). Nevertheless, Jaeggi (2018) argues that the ethical use of reason in Habermas — the ethical-existential process of clarification — is a purely internal clarification and a process of self-understanding, that does not allow context transcending criticism.

The argument is clear when Habermas stresses the differences between ethical-existential and moral-practical discourses:

In ethical-existential discourses, reason and the will condition one another reciprocally, though the latter remains embedded in the life-historical context thematized. Participants in processes of self-clarification cannot distance themselves from the life histories and forms of life in which they actually find themselves. Moral-practical discourses, by contrast, require a break with all of the unquestioned truths of an established, concrete ethical life, in addition to distancing oneself from the contexts of life with which one's identity is inextricably interwoven (2001, p. 12).

The position that ethical expressions cannot express rational terms without some critical deficit rests on the assumption of the naturalization of the values. Hilary Putnam (2002), in his critique of Habermas, stresses that all naturalistic accounts have in common the fact that they either deny that ethical sentences are expressions of judgment — of thoughts that can be

described as true and false without some particular expression of relativization (“in the relevant social world,” or “relative to the individual’s desires and attitudes,”) — or, if there is agreement of the rationality of ethical judgements, they tend to give an account of the purpose or content of such judgments in nonethical terms, such as evolutionary, utilitarian or contractarian. In the end, ethics is treated as something to be justified from the outside.

The constant referencing to the particularity of forms of life entails, according to Jaeggi (2018), an irrationalization of what can be extracted: the experiences, practices and discourses, in the ethical domain. Jaeggi stresses that the liberal discourse pushes for an essentialization and petrification of forms of life. The Habermasian emphasis on the fact that forms of life crystallize around particular identities and the liberal pluralistic celebration of ethical diversity culminates in a kind of zoological view of the ethical domain; it reacts and underlines the differences and the essence, rather than dealing with the hybrid and dynamic character of every form of life. Habermas’ position — necessarily coupling the ethical with existential — ends up positing that the success of forms of life is not available for context transcending criticism. The proposition that the substance of a way of life could never be justified under universalistic aspects promotes the retreat of reason from the lifeworld.

Jaeggi believes that the image of forms of life sketched by these theoretical positions is underdetermined at best. The conception of what forms of life are and the character of the validity claims implied by Rawls and Habermas, specifically, fail to measure up to the normative claims of those involved: regular people. From the perspective of social theory, this conception fails to realize what forms of life, structurally, do and what they do for the individuals concerned. As it appears *the philosophical justification of the possibility of criticism of forms of life is not (only) an ethical project but also a project in social philosophy and in social theory* (2018, p. 24).

What can be expected then from the proposal of criticism of forms of life, following Jaeggi's project?

a) Transformations versus Prohibitions: The argument that it is possible to criticize forms of life based on reasoning, does not necessarily mean that such criticism should lead directly to legal and political intervention in the shape of prohibitions and sanctions. The public thematization of forms of life must be separated from the question of political and legal sanctions to allow some latitude on the process and to avoid preemptively inviting authoritative interventions. This type of criticism calls for reflection and not imposition; it is less a matter of restriction than of transformation. Nevertheless, given that forms of life are imbued with political and legal frameworks, the public thematization of forms of life can and must at times

lead to political and legal alterations. In the end, the character of the measures will depend on the subject matter.

b) Philosophy versus Democracy: Why shouldn't democracy be in charge of the discussion over forms of life? What role can philosophy assume in the process? Should philosophy be the judge which provides binding and objectifiable standards for evaluating social relations and institutions? Philosophy as a judge invites the contention that prioritizes democracy over philosophy. According to this contention, philosophical analysis must not have a privileged position in settling conflicts of opinions. Jaeggi sees this opposition as misleading from the outset. *Philosophy, properly understood, is part of the democratic process, not its opponent* (2018, p. 26). If one considers the democratic process with a deliberative understanding, then philosophy has much to contribute; it does much more than clarifying and demonstrating arguments and counterarguments. If philosophy recovers its primary contribution which is the interpretation and analysis of a determined situation, it has much to contribute to democratic decision-making. As Jaeggi puts it, *one must first recognize and understand the regressive or alienated character of a form of life in order to be able to evaluate it, and this requires more than intuitions* (2018, p. 27). One must not forget that understanding what is problematic about a form of life requires philosophical concepts: the understanding and analysis that informs it can't be totally separated from one another, and this process is in itself already a normative matter. If this is a correct assumption, then philosophy intervenes in democratic debates not as a norm-setting authority but as an enabling resource for communication and evaluation. Therefore, philosophy should not replace democracy; philosophy is an integral part of the democratic debate without having the final say in the process.

c) Dynamic Conflicts: Jaeggi (2018) disassociates herself from what she calls political agonality, a concept which includes a mixture of deconstructivist, radical democratic, neo-Marxist, and hegemonic theoretical positions. Even though those positions, prominently known by the works of Chantal Mouffe and Ernesto Laclau, share with the critique of forms of life the rejection of the neutrality thesis, they follow, for the most part, Gramsci's theory of hegemony; they regard the irreducible conflict over the cultural prerogative of interpretation as being at the core of socialization. This line of reasoning, according to Jaeggi, entails that the struggle for social hegemony cannot be pacified or bracketed and also raises skepticism regarding the possibility of placing the conflict on an argumentative footing. This point highlights the distinguishing trait of both lines of criticism:

As I understand it, criticism is always simultaneously dissociative and associative, it forges a relationship – even if also a negative one – to what is criticized. But it is precisely this forging of a relationship and hence the attempt to generate a common basis mediated by justification, that the agonal theories suspect of "eliminating" the irreducibility of the conflict (2018, p. 28).

The position of agonal theorists consists in suspecting even a form of negative common basis for a justification in criticism between forms of life. This stance ends up impairing their aspirations towards a politicization of conflicts. Jaeggi states that the theory of agonality fails to understand the relational character of conflicts and misjudges their internal dynamics in the attempt to bracket the validity claims within.

The interesting part, Jaeggi stresses, is that the agonal theories and liberal stance both share a starting point related to the dynamics of forms of life; they perceive the forms of life as self-contained and ineluctable units locked into their collective identities and without recognition of the normative validity claims within. This is because — most specifically for agonistic positions — they reduce them to claims of power and domination (in the sense of subjugation). Another interesting point is that Terry Pinkard (2017) in his review of Jaeggi's book does imply that Jaeggi isn't that far from his own interpretation of the liberal position, which can be problematic considering Jaeggi's critical endeavor.

Jaeggi's position is that, if one seeks to properly criticize forms of life, one must arrive at a different understanding, contrary to both the agonistic and liberal positions, of the validity claims raised in and through forms of life and of the self-understanding within. This alternative understanding comes with a closer look on the practices and institutions that constitute the internal structure of forms of life. Jaeggi puts it bluntly in a brief summary of her project:

Reduced to a succinct formula, my proposed solution can be stated as follows: (1) forms of life are complex bundles (or ensembles) of social practices geared to solving problems that for their part are historically contextualized and normatively constituted. (2) The question of rationality of forms of life can then be formulated from a context transcending perspective as one about the rationality of the dynamics of development of the respective form of life. (3) Such a perspective adopts as its criterion of success [*gelingen*] not so much substantive aspects of content but rather formal criteria relating to the rationality and success of the process thus described as an ethical and social learning process (2018, p. 29).

The first statement will be dealt with in the next section of this chapter. The conceptualization of forms of life proposed by Jaeggi will be analyzed and juxtaposed with the historical thematization of genealogy before the end of this chapter. Finally, the second and third statements are closely connected and bring up the question of genealogy as a form of criticism and how the shifts of criteria proposed by Jaeggi can open the path for genealogy.

1.2 Conceptualization of forms of life

a) What is not a form of life?

Jaeggi (2018) traces the emergence of the term, forms of life, and seeks to clarify the term by demarcating it from related concepts and phenomena. The term became fashionable in the 1920s specifically in German intellectual history when Eduard Spranger's book *Lebensformen* distinguished several types of forms of life, including economic, aesthetic, theoretical and religious. In that instance, the concept is used to refer to ideal types of individuality corresponding to ways of relating to oneself and the world. The theoretical scope of formations referred to as forms of life may be varied, but the thematization of forms of life in everyday language reflects an interest in life-determining orientations and the informal ways of shaping one's life that, in turn, shape a society. The 1968 movement was once described by the author Peter Schneider⁷ as a struggle against tradition and in support of new forms of life. The matters of institutional changes in the political system blended with concerns about the political dimension of everyday life. Jaeggi states that, according to this perspective on the anti-authoritarian movement of the late 1960s, the real impact consisted in transforming everyday life, even if the transformations were relatively meager institutionally.

Rendered a bit more clearly, Jaeggi stresses that forms of life are a matter of the attitudes, practices and principles that govern them. One could say that forms of life are more variable than entrenched social formations. However, they designate stable and antecedent structures that constrain individual action. Forms of life, as Jaeggi seems to imply, has a particular perspective that thematizes something which “enables us to act,”: that is, something which shapes and limits our options for action in decisive ways.

Despite the overlaps between the concepts of form of life and that of conduct of life (*Lebensführung*) in the sense of orienting one's life systematically toward something, or under guidance of certain positive or negative principles⁸, both concepts have their particular space on the vernacular; conduct is more individual than collective. Meanwhile, for forms of life the character of socially shared practices is very important. One's conduct of life always has a predominantly active element, whereas forms of life have a passive, antecedent element. As Jaeggi puts it, *one is socialized into a form of life; it is to a certain extent there and already*

⁷ Peter Schneider was one of the leading intellectuals of the 1968 movement.

⁸ *We speak of the (admirable) conduct of life of a Mother Teresa or the (deplorable) conduct of life of an alcoholic* (Jaeggi, 2018, p 37)

prefigured as form prior to the individuals concerned, even if (...) one the preconditions of survival of forms of life is that they are actively appropriated (2018, p. 38). Leading (or conducting) one's life is something one necessarily does, while the context in which one lives and the basis for the actions is related to the specific form of life.

Habits of life (*Lebensgewohnheit*) also comes to mind when talking about forms of life; both concepts share connotations of regularity, stability and self-evidence. However, Jaeggi distinguishes between habits — which are associated with isolated practices — from forms of life which refer to clusters, or a coherent ensemble, of practices. Always sitting in the same chair is a perfect example of what could be considered a habit but not a form of life per se. Deviating from a particular personal habit could cause surprise to other individuals, but does not necessarily elicit any particular action towards me. Conforming or deviating from relevant collective practices invites positive or negative sanctions. Thus, forms of life, in contrast to habits of life, have an embedded normativity.

Ways of life (*Lebensweise*) also have, apparently, close connections with forms of life and both concepts are often used as synonyms. However, Jaeggi stresses that ways of life, much like habits of life, are less comprehensive than forms. A way of life refers specifically to one's repertoire of practices, and almost always new practices. One can say that one changes his way of life by waking up earlier every day, and yet cannot say that this gives birth to a new form of life; this would be a major exaggeration, according to Jaeggi.

Lifestyle (*Lebensstil*), is a concept that, following Jaeggi, has some resemblances with forms of life and yet does not quite achieve the same normative level. Lifestyles differ from forms of life in their transience and contingency, falling within the area of phenomena such as fashion and the fashionable. Even considering the particular sociological meaning of lifestyles, as general contexts of one's mode of behavior, interactions, opinions, stores of knowledge and evaluative attitudes, the differences between the concepts rise analytically. Describing the bourgeois nuclear family as a lifestyle does not seem to fit with the idea that: *to be a father is not a lifestyle, but it is to participate in a form of life* (2018, p. 39). To perform the roles that belong to the form of life of the family involves reciprocal normative expectations: expectations that can't be found within the lifestyle phenomena.

Jaeggi stresses that some other concepts aptly capture the phenomenon described as a form of life: custom (*Sitte*) and usage (*Brauch*), both of which lead to the concept of tradition. Customs are very close to forms of life in two particular fronts: organization and binding power.

This follows from Max Weber's⁹ definition of custom, as long standing practices that differ from conventions or laws. Yet, the normative trait of custom demands great attention; as Jaeggi puts it, '*custom* encompasses a variety of habits of life insofar as they are 'fitting' (p. 39). The relation of fit comes to mind when referring to some customary modes of conduct with the expression "how things are done".

One could say that Jaeggi has a normative-oriented interpretation of custom. However, custom (*Sitte*) comes with a particular caveat in Jaeggi's interpretation; the author underlines that the German *Sitte* carries a stronger normative connotation unlike the English term custom. Jaeggi's work seeks to draw a very close connection between forms of life and Hegel's notion of *Sittlichkeit* (ethical life).

Usage (*Brauch*) also captures a key element of the constitution of forms of life with its emphasis on ritual and the aspect of what is handed down. That is despite the fact that "usage" could refer to individual actions and appears quite narrow by comparison with the inclusive aspects of forms of life¹⁰.

As mentioned earlier, these concepts will lead to tradition: tradition encompasses customs and habits of life of a more or less institutionalized kind. The comparison between tradition and forms of life shows that the emphasis of tradition is more on origin, habit, the (pre)given, and history than on the case of forms of life, even considering the historical dimension. One could say that a tradition is, in fact, a long-standing form of life that derives its validity from this "time-honored" quality.

On one hand, the concept of institution has an interesting affinity with forms of life. Forms of life, much like institutions, are instances of social practices that have become habitual and normatively imbued. On the other hand, the concepts diverge in a very specific way. As Jaeggi makes evident, the difference can be seen in their respective conditions of emergence and criteria for belonging. One does not enter into a form of life — as one joins a union or gets married — by filling out an application form or saying the performative 'I do'. Institutions have their corresponding practices firmly established, whereas forms of life appear to be softer

⁹ As distinguished from both 'convention' and 'law,' 'custom' refers to rules devoid of any external sanction. The actor conforms with them of his own free will, whether his motivation lies in the fact that he merely fails to think about it, that it is more comfortable to conform, or whatever else the reason may be. For the same reasons he can consider it likely that other members of the group will adhere to a custom. Thus custom is not 'valid' in anything like the legal sense; conformity with it is not 'demanded' by anybody. Naturally, the transition from this to validly enforced convention and to law is gradual. Everywhere what has been traditionally handed down has been an important source of what has come to be enforced. Weber, *Economy and Society*. p. 29.

¹⁰ For a more comprehensive view on the usage one must seek the arguments on the concept of *chresis* made by Foucault on the Volume 2 of *The History of Sexuality*. Foucault's analysis of Ancient Greek sexual morality is centered on the concept of *chresis aphrodision*, or "the use of pleasures".

and more informal applied; unlike institutions, forms of life cannot be strictly codified or legally constituted.

Despite the specific differences between the concepts, forms of life represent the background condition of possibility for certain institutions. This becomes clear as one notes that an institution cannot be implemented from the “outside” of one’s form of life, without a single point of reference from within. Institutions can become constituent parts of a form of life and facilitate or stabilize its permanence; likewise, they can become outmoded and abandoned. Classical wedlock comes to mind as an example that fits both instances.

In the end, Jaeggi stresses that the matter between institutions and forms of life is certainly one that can be viewed under gradations. Especially, if one recognizes that some institutions don’t fit the established and regulated mold, while others are quite unregulated and could develop spontaneously. A form of life can be understood as an overarching moment (in time) of an ensemble of practices of different aggregate states, and within this moment, one of the aggregate states is the institution.

The relationship between the concepts of culture and forms of life can show striking overlaps if, as Jaeggi implies, culture is understood as a product of cultivation, of refined ways of dealing with inner and outer natures and the corresponding ways of organizing social relations. The concept of culture is in substance perhaps, if not, the closest and most important relative of the concept of a form of life. Nevertheless, she underlines that the reference to the concept of culture is not helpful because it is itself obscure and is in danger of becoming even more blurred.

The most interesting aspect of this approach towards culture and forms of life is differentiation; Jaeggi points out the conspicuous difference between the two concepts is very central to the study. If, on the one hand, the concept of culture tends to evoke the idea of a comprehensive, self-contained totality, suggesting a single, uniform culture of a society, it follows then that:

The concept of forms of life (...) is suited to dissolving this assumption of uniformity and to comprehending formations that cut across such classifications and are situated below the level of such large formations. Therefore, the concept of a form of life, insofar as (to borrow Wolfgang Iser’s words) “it passes through classical cultural boundaries”, is preferable as a de-essentialized and a de-substantialized alternative to the concept of culture, so that it can do justice to the hybrid character of the formation under discussion here (2018, p. 41).

The hybrid nature of forms of life appears to fit the singularities acknowledged elsewhere. Without getting too much ahead of ourselves it’s important to iterate that there are

hints between Foucault's process of critique (as *Aufklärung*) (1990) and thematization of forms of life which already seed the relationship between both processes; the singularities are the scope of criticism of the positivities (discourse, practice or formation of practices). Much like the singularities, forms of life appear to be neither an incarnation of an essence nor the individualization of a certain practice or formation. Also, the push for a transgression of classical boundaries in a de-essentialized manner, without settling for a simplistic or unifying answer, does sound remarkably similar to the process of evaluation detailed by Foucault¹¹. Yet, the demarcation of attributes and the particularities of recognizing a singularity is hazy in Foucault's presentation; very much in contrast to Jaeggi's process in which the core elements of the concept of forms of life are clearly spelled out. The idea here is not just to imply a simple relation between both processes; the intent is to demonstrate how both processes share a common heritage and, despite being very different processes at times, they also share the goal of a de-essentialized view of social practices.

For Jaeggi, the properties of her concept of forms of life inform which vernacular one should use to describe it. Four elements make up these properties: 1) Cluster of practices: one does not speak of forms of life in individualistic or isolated terms; they are clusters of practices that are interconnected and interrelated in one way or another; 2) Collective formations: "orders of human co-existence"; one does not have a form of life as an individual, but the concept rests on socially shared practices, even if one participates and relates to them as an individual; 3) Established formations with a habitual character: forms of life have a passive as well as an active element; people live in a form of life as in a structure that is pre-given, even if they simultaneously create it through their own practice; and finally 4) Expectation of cooperation: Not unlike the phenomena of custom and tradition, a certain normative pressure of expectation is associated with forms of life, at least from the internal perspective of its participants.

Jaeggi is keenly aware that these elements invite follow up questions as to the duration, depth and scope of forms of life. *How stable, significant, self-sufficient, and comprehensive must an ensemble of practices and beliefs be in order to qualify as a form of life?* (2018, p. 42). The question that the author poses herself is that, Even if the preliminary core properties of the concept suggest that a social formation can be described as a form of life if it is identifiable as a stable and self-sufficient entity in various respects and if it has a certain relevance for human

¹¹ Let us say roughly that, as opposed to a genesis that is oriented towards the unity of a difficult main cause, of a multiple offspring, it would be a genealogy there, that is, anything that tries to repay the conditions of appearance of a singularity from multiple elements where it appears not as the product but as the effect. (Foucault, 2005, p. 90).

life is shaped, how is one to demonstrate these intuitively plausible criteria? Jaeggi (2018) tries to illustrate how permanence, depth, and self-sufficiency of a social formation become criteria of whether it can be described as form of life:

a. The criterion of permanence or stability: a formation must exhibit certain stability in order to qualify as a form of life. Something that never changes does not constitute a form of life. Duration is a determining factor as to whether something is a form of life or a transient phenomenon. Yet, the question of how permanent such formations must be in order to qualify as a form of life remains.

b. The criterion of depth: depth commonly appears as a metaphor to describe a more profound meaning that it's ascribed on forms of life in comparison with more fleeting or superficial phenomena of individual and communal life. Should we speak of forms of life, therefore, only where certain central or important areas of social life are affected? Even if it seems to be obvious in some practices and areas of life, how does one distinguish those? Is a material distinction even desirable?

c. The criterion of scope and self-sufficiency: as mentioned before, one shouldn't speak of forms of life when it is a matter of isolated practices, but only when clusters of interconnected and interrelated practices are evident. However, the question on the required extension of an ensemble of practices and the necessary internal consistency claims associated with it to be counted as self-sufficient remains unanswered.

Jaeggi posits that if those answers seem unsatisfactory it may very well be because these are soft criteria. A quantitative affirmation or approximation on exactly to what degree forms of life are stable, self-sufficient or "deep" appears to be an impossibility. Jaeggi appears to have hit the elusive limits of forms of life. This is a delicate, though not uncommon, point: most of the concepts that will be referred to in this dissertation have an elusive quality. As said earlier, even if the author didn't spell it out in this exact manner, Foucault clearly deals with singularity as a very elusive matter; and Rosa deals with resonance with a particular elusiveness in the rendering of the specific phenomenological trait of his theory. These are questions that one can only grasp within the analyses of a determined form of life. A firm grasp on the stability of an instantiation of a concept can only be achieved with a direct analysis of said instantiation. This is part of the goal set by this dissertation, to demonstrate that a genealogical proposal of methodology can provide the tools missing for the realization of the social immanent critique posed by Jaeggi. Yet, this does not mean that her whole project of critique is without fault and this point will be clarified in the following chapters.

Nevertheless, Jaeggi goes on in her clarification of the concept in order to demonstrate the relevant criteria for a qualitative characterization of forms of life, and to do that the author draws a parallel with Georg Simmel's philosophy of fashion. The relevance of the social phenomenon of fashion for Jaeggi is that it brings together criteria that are, in key aspects, the opposite of what is important when it comes to the concept of a form of life.

Three attributes can be extrapolated from Simmel's analysis of fashion for the clarification by opposition proposed by Jaeggi: the dynamic of fashion is constitutively unstable, extraneous to reality (*sachfremd*) and non-generalizable.

Simmel analyses the value attached to the concept of fashion and identifies how fashion can exercise a powerful influence on our consciousness. To do that Simmel's lays out a few traits of the fleeting phenomena:

In the practice of life, anything else that is similarly new and suddenly disseminated in the same manner will not be characterized as fashion, if we believe in its continuance and its objective justification. If, on the other hand, we are convinced that the phenomenon will vanish just as rapidly as it came into existence, then we call it fashion. Hence, among the reasons why nowadays fashion exercises such a powerful influence on our consciousness there is also the fact that the major, permanent, unquestionable convictions are more and more losing their force. Consequently, the fleeting and fluctuating elements of life gain that much more free space (1997, p. 193)

Fashion has a particularly short lived shelf life which provides it with an interesting connection with time, the breaking with the past¹² and the increasing pace of social formations. Jaeggi (2018) emphasizes that fashion has a rapid disappearance rate and permanent interchangeability. This, in turn, leads to the understanding that if fashion is a phenomenon that is distinguished constitutively by constant change, then the dynamics of change of fashion seem to be singular. This dependence of the factor of change does not seem to be simply a matter of contingent need for variation; the systematic reason for it is that fashion aims simultaneously at conformity and differentiation.

Jaeggi continues by stating that fashion generates a pull toward conformity; the imperative of following appears to be instantaneous once something presents itself as fashion. Without this pressure towards conformity one cannot identify fashion: it only becomes fashion when others join in. At the same time, something immediately loses its fashionable character the moment it has achieved wide acceptance. This is what constitutes the paradox of fashion:

¹² *The break with the past which, for more than a century, civilized human kind has been labouring unceasingly to bring about, concentrates consciousness more and more upon the present. This accentuation of the present is evidently, at the same time, an emphasis upon change and to the extent to which a particular strata is the agent of this cultural tendency, so to that degree will it turn to fashion in all fields, and by no means merely with regard to clothing* (1997 p. 193).

the change in attitudes, practices or speech only counts as fashionable, as long as it can be regarded as a distinguishing feature.

According to Jaeggi, things change when considering forms of life. Again, a quantitative estimation of how long something must exist to be a form of life is extremely difficult and such an assessment could inadvertently draw hard lines on the concept. Yet:

There are nevertheless good reasons for the assertion that something which (like fashion) is constitutively unstable cannot be a form of life. Thus, even if in-line skaters or ravers as a group share a variety of practices and attitudes over and above the mere preference for a sport or a musical direction, and even if here very different aspects (clothing, music, lifestyle) may develop into a life-determining identity for the individual at least temporarily the result is at most what can be called a (perhaps subcultural) lifestyle, but not a form of life (2018, p. 44-45)

Lifestyles do share some of the dynamics attributed to fashion and cannot be merely transient, but in comparison with forms of life, they are dramatically different; unlike lifestyles, forms of life are geared to permanence. Thus, the unstable character of the dynamics of fashion is the first trait of the parallel by opposition provided by Jaeggi. The second feature of fashion that fit Jaeggi's parallel is the lack of purpose and conformity with reality.

Jaeggi brings the comparison with this specific trait of Simmel's analysis of fashion to convey a crucial aspect for the understanding of the criterion of depth: fashion is not purposeful and does not (necessarily¹³) conform to reality. According to this understanding of fashion, the phenomena seems to be conceived as purely a matter of distinction. In this case, the contents of fashion, not its effects, are not subject to requirements of fulfilling purposes in accordance with material standards of life.

Jaeggi stresses the parallel between the concepts by stating that fashionable clothing is not intrinsically better, more practical or even more beautiful than any other clothes. What is fashionable is indifferent to our needs, as fashion derives its meaning from a formal social effect of distinction. Fashion, then, has the qualitatively decisive feature of purposelessness. Once again, things are different with forms of life. Forms of life have a reference to reality and they react to real circumstances. Even though it can be more difficult to recognize their purpose (conformity with reality, problems and responses to them), when speaking of forms of life, we should be able to identify factual or substantive criteria of purposefulness arising from the inferential relations to other social facts.

¹³ Of course, it may occasionally adopt objectively justified elements but, as fashion, it is only effective when its independence from any other motivation (1997, p. 190)

The metaphor of depth within social formations becomes pertinent with the realization that some formations stand at a higher level while others are below. This entails that the difference between lifestyles and forms of life can also be perceived by the manner in which one criticizes a phenomena at a lower level. Whereas, it seems that we are inclined to switch to a higher level aspect to underline the critique (e.g. the spread of a certain single style sport as a symptom of social individualization processes). The manner to achieve a genuine criticism of forms of life appears to have this discrepancy in the levels of analyses; it begins at a higher level despite the fact that one may have to obtain access via contingent phenomena. This specific trait on the scope of criticism tracing the microsocial to the foreground of a higher level of critique is very reminiscent of the works of significant genealogists, such as Nietzsche and Foucault. This will not surprise anyone, but no genealogical proposition feigned to develop a sophisticated theoretical manner to describe its subject, and yet, a genealogical approach could be the key to execute the criticism implied by this discrepancy at the level of analysis insight.

The third feature of fashion that parallels forms of life is the nongeneralizability and avant-garde principle. Fashion demands one to be where the others are not yet. According to Jaeggi, it lives off the avant-garde, and is sustained by a permanent avant-garde that takes the lead of the "masses" and also hurries ahead once the latter have followed suit.

Jaeggi seeks to differentiate social formations that are analogous to fashion from forms of life; these formations, even though they do appear to have a distance from the mainstream, do not raise a normative claim, or at least not a strong one. Forms of life, even where their specific manifestation is tied to a particular place or history, have strong normative claims, claims of being appropriate, good or even better. Phenomena such as fashion and lifestyles tend to be parasitic on the mainstream: these formations of dissident life push to posit themselves as alternatives. The distance that separates the dissident life from the mainstream does not rest on the unattainability of an avant-garde. The movements of dissident life that present themselves as alternatives to the established forms of life compete directly with the status quo and thereby raise a normative claim, albeit one they cannot always live up to its own hype.

Jaeggi underlines that, at this point, considering the arguments made, it is possible to make sense of self-sufficiency as a criterion of forms of life. The author states that forms of life must have a self-sufficient character, and that the self-sufficiency of forms of life is tightly connected with the nature of the relationship to more comprehensive social norms; lifestyles can color almost all expressions of life, but lack the characteristic claim of forms of life to generalizability. Conversely, the restricted object domain does not limit something to count as a form of life, provided it raises a comprehensive validity claim.

Does the generalizability criterion fit with the claim that forms of life refer to real, substantive conditions, in the sense of being grounded in relevant subject matter?: Jaeggi responds in the affirmative. According to her understanding of forms of life there are some gray areas of the affirmation of generalizability specifically because forms of life correspond to grounded subject matter. Forms of life perform different functions and pursue different purposes; peasant-rural and urban forms of life, for example, each constitute a specific field of practices and attitudes. However, as Jaeggi stresses, in referring to forms of life a different kind of differentiation and nongeneralizability is involved from that of a “formal-social” one. It is a functional difference, which entails that different ensembles of practices can be grouped into divisions of labor around different areas of activity of social reproduction. In the end, the scope of a form of life is at once particular and general. It could very well concern one part of society and hardly affect everyone. Nonetheless the claim associated with these practices determines the realm of action of anyone that is placed in that same particular social position.

Jaeggi’s approach developed thus far has demonstrated the peculiar space occupied by the concept of forms of life. According to the author we can now start to better characterize the concept: i) Forms of life are nexuses of practices, orientations, and orders of social behavior; ii) Forms of life include attitudes and habitualized modes of conduct with a normative character concerning the collective conduct of life, although not strictly codified or institutionally binding; iii) The criteria of adaptation to reality, permanence, and self-sufficiency — criteria that shaped contours through the comparison with the social phenomenon of fashion — shows that forms of life do not concern just any arbitrary practices, but normatively imbued practices; they are part of the social-norm structure and of a normative social order with a claim to validity.

It appears that forms of life are individuated through the reality or matter they address or, as the suggested by Jaeggi, in terms of the problems they are supposed to solve. This understanding leads to another attempt of drawing a system of coordinates to demarcate this apparent confusing field of criteria. The first is the relationship of the whole and parts:

The nuclear family as form of life is part of the whole constituted by the comprehensive form of life of bourgeois society or modernity, which also includes other parts. But, terminologically speaking, there is nothing to be said against calling both – the more and the less comprehensive formation – a form of life (2018, p. 52).

In speaking of “modernity as a form of life” one should be aware that this expression is an attempt to provide an overall characterization of a nexus of more small-scale forms of life. Therefore, one can belong to several forms of life and, also, at the same time a group of people can live simultaneously in the same and in different forms of life. The second coordinate comes

from the differentiation between substantive and accidental features of a form of life. A feature of modern society is the separation between work and leisure time, so the specifics of any recreational activity constitute an accidental feature compared to the substantive state of affairs of one's form of life.

Lifestyles, then, can be characterized as accidental features of or even colorings that a form of life can assume. Yet, Jaeggi highlights that this does not mean that accidental features are somehow unimportant for a social diagnosis. As mentioned earlier, a criticism of forms of life begins with accidental features and proceeds to underlying problems. (e.g. bowling alone as a symptom of individualization on the advance). Still, there's some questions that remain: Is there some tell sign to recognize a new form of life? Or, how can one form of life replace another? Is there a change being undergone in the form of life itself or a substitution? Is the transition from bourgeois family to single-person households and patchwork families totally new or some shift in the form of life? Jaeggi states that it is difficult to state definitively whether the spread of single person households or patchwork families really point to a new form of life, or whether it is a shift in emphasis within the form of life of the bourgeois family.

The third coordinate points to the various factors that condition each other and interact, while also retaining distinctive identities relative to the whole. Interestingly, Jaeggi implies that Adorno's thematization of forms of life in *Minima Moralia* (2005) sheds light on the subject matter when demonstrating how fascist and, at times, capitalist logic permeates the forms of life into their capillaries without basing his diagnosis in a simply deterministic schema of base and superstructure. The singular example is the one from the small front lawn, the harbinger of fascist exclusion: *The caring hand that even now tends the little garden as if it had not long since become a 'lot', but fearfully wards off the unknown intruder, is already that which denies the political refugee asylum* (Adorno, 2005, p. 34). The complicated and yet simple relation between the bourgeois society and its rulers and the level of symbioses that an authoritative state imprints in the microsocial level of the family are relevant here because the family is not the direct product of bourgeois society, and yet is part of this society. The family coheres with bourgeois society and fulfills its function within it, even if it is not a direct causal product. Jaeggi encourages us to examine the overlaps and relations of influence, connections, associations, and relationships, although these must not be conceived as bottom up causal relationships. Again, a procedure involving the unfolding of a causal network that would not precisely obey the demand for a unitary, pyramid-based and necessary principle of causality is exactly the proposal of Foucault (1990) working through his own process by analyzing the *Aufklärung*. It is interesting to notice that Allen (2016) draws directly from Adorno and

Foucault to sketch her alternative conception of genealogical critique, seeking a substantial engagement with the challenge of postcolonialism.

The final coordinate set by Jaeggi is notably elusive and prepares for the establishing of more specific traits of forms of life. She states that the reflections offered so far enable us to recognize the genuine plurality of forms of life, however in order to be able to evaluate and criticize these forms, it's important to establish the kinds of differences involved in the alternatives under discussion. The author offers some elusive points to narrow down not only the difference between her concept and other all-encompassing conceptual constructs but also the relevancy of her particular concept; it would be interesting to see the concept matched with the genealogical process.

b) What is a form of life?

Andreas Niederberger and Tobias Wehrauch (2015) raise the issue that the concept of life form remains too vague. In spite of Jaeggi's push to include some kind of notion of social reality, it seems that Jaeggi did not go far enough. Niederberger and Wehrauch stressed the interrelation between attitudes and beliefs of participants, on the one hand, and actions and interactions in relevant contexts, on the other. This interrelation raises important questions: Are the attitudes and beliefs, which are constitutive for life forms, resilient, or the actions and interactions - or the interrelation itself? Niederberger and Wehrauch imply that it is not clear why and when they are resilient and why this resilience should be a factor for the possibilities of transforming, creating a new or even overcoming life forms. To address these and other questions over the consistency of the concept of forms of life it is necessary to delve into the simplest form within a form of life; a narrowing of the concept of forms of life, with its own interrelations between active and passive moments, will make an argument on the substantiality of a form of life possible. It begins with the question of Jaeggi's position on social practices.

To Jaeggi (2018):

- a) Single actions are rarely called practices. Rather, practices typically involve a sequence of several actions, of verbal or nonverbal utterances and gestures (e.g. queuing up and paying at the supermarket).
- b) Not everything one does, and not everything several people do, is a social practice. A practice has to be something that is repeatedly and habitually reinforced: at the point that they

are at least in part based on implicit knowledge and practical know-how, which are not consciously accessible to the individuals involved in all respects.

c) Practices are socially constructed, but that doesn't necessarily mean performing with others. Practices are social in the fundamental sense that what is performed can be understood only in context of socially shaped meanings and within socially constituted institutions (in a broad sense) (e.g. making a bank transfer – socially constituted entities such as money, banks, loans are required).

d) Practices are rule-governed. Practices always involve a division of the possibilities of action into what is and is not appropriate to do. Someone who jumps the queue in the supermarket failed to understand or violated what that queue meant. This type of action shows an internal mistake to the practice, a failure to comply with a given practice, or a violation of the norm that constitutes the practice itself. Central to understanding the character of practices is that they involve such internal criteria, which are different from the criteria by which we externally judge a practice as wrong. For example, jumping the queue to pay refers to the internal norms and talking loudly on cell phone and leaving the cashier without saying goodbye or thank you can refer to external norms depending on how one understands the practice of shopping.

e) Practices have an enabling character. Jaeggi's draws attention to what she called the "stage-setting character" of practices in a way whose impact and interpretative power cannot be overestimated. The author builds on the understanding of Rawls that in a text published in 1955¹⁴ underlined this character of practices. Certain things are possible only against the background of established (social) practices. One can throw balls into a net hanging from a circular frame even without the practice of playing basketball. But only if basketball and its constitutive rules exist is there such a thing as scoring a 3-point field goal.

f) Practices, as Jaeggi's understands them, posit and have purposes and, among other things, are determined by these purposes. The fact that practices are constituted, structured, and individuated by purposes does not mean that any action, or a whole sequence of actions, may not also be associated with different purposes. Practices can be overdetermined. A single conversation in the grocery store can achieve more than one purpose, perhaps purchasing a product or flirting with a sales clerk, for example. Also, to assert that practices have purposes

¹⁴ In the case of actions specified by practices it is logically impossible to perform them outside the stage-setting provided by those practices, for unless there is the practice, and unless the requisite properties are fulfilled, whatever one does, whatever movements one makes, will fail to count as a form of action which the practice specifies. See Rawls (2001, p. 25)

and that they are structured internally by those purposes is not to posit that they must be based on intentions that are fully known. Purposes are not always formulated; they can be implicit and remain latent. Some purposes take shape only gradually in the course of performing an action. Other purposes exceed the subjective intentions of the actors or are even implemented behind their backs.

g) Social practices have an active-passive character. The overall context of a practice refers to something that characteristically is not associated with intentions that must be newly formed in every case and hence is not associated with purposes that must be constantly revised. Practices transcend the subject-object relation. Practices arise as it were through subjects and yet exist prior to them and their intentions; they cannot be reduced to the intentions of the subjects concerned. When engaged in a practice we are participating in something that already exists while at the same time creating it through our actions.

Following Jaeggi's reasoning, (social) practices are habitual, rule-governed, socially significant complexes of interlinked actions that have an enabling character and through which purposes are pursued. However, one aspect in particular looms in the background of Jaeggi's stance on social practices: the context of corresponding practices and objects that goes beyond them. *The practice of shopping (...) is possible only in market societies, standing in line at the checkout is possible only where money and cash registers exist, and making money transfers requires banks* (2018, p. 61).

The point is that individual social practices have preconditions that reside in other practices and offer connections to other practices. This entails that practices, in fact, are interwoven with a whole variety of other practices and attitudes from which they first derive their specific function and meaning. These interrelations and contexts, according to Jaeggi, can be called forms of life. Jaeggi seems to imply a systematic response, in a Hegelian¹⁵ sense, to the question of the specific character of forms of life. She posits that forms of life constitute a certain segment of the field of possible practices but are also the organizing principle of this field insofar as forms of life do not merely represent a loose assemblage of disjointed practices. At this point, the author utilizes the ideas of Charles Taylor in support of her statement that

¹⁵ Yet, Jaeggi also seems to keep aiming for a closer relation to a Hegelian tradition, as systematic answers come to appear relevant. A systematic justification could be defined in terms of three fundamental and interrelated principles “— (1) immanent development, (2) necessary entailment, and (3) retrogressive grounding—and one fundamental precondition—the justification of the systematic standpoint itself. Let us consider each of these elements in turn. The cornerstone of the systematic form of justification is its commitment to presuppositionlessness. (...) this means that systematic justification cannot pre-suppose its object, its content, nor can it presuppose its method, its form.” (Thompson, 2019, p. 39)

practices are inextricably interwoven with attitudes and orientations, insofar as they are always interpreted and not “raw” practices. Taylor underscores his commitment to the understanding of the human as self-interpreting animal¹⁶.

We not only engage in practices, but simultaneously understand them as something. This means that the individuals concerned not only do something, but also understand this doing as something and invest it with meaning. As Jaeggi emphasizes, in certain respects the attitudes of the actors endow practices with unity (of action – meaning/purpose); nevertheless, the attitudes, values and purposes are not conceivable apart from the context in which they are put into practice. This in turn entails that the attitudes toward and interpretations of practices exist in tandem with practices and lend them their particular character. Without exchange relationships, for example, the expectation of fairness in exchanges would not exist or, without social contact, courtesy would be an impossibility.

Yet, adopting the expression “practices and orientations”, to refer to the associated orientations, attitudes, and beliefs, in describing forms of life seems redundant and rather unnecessary since, according to Jaeggi, forms of life are always a nexus founded on interpretation. To share a form of life means not only engaging together in practices but also sharing interpretations and, above all, the schemata of interpretation for such practices. Jaeggi, who seemed to need some distance from the concept of culture before, now brings Alasdair MacIntyre’s notes on his approach to culture. To be fair, Jaeggi keeps her conceptual distance from culture, defining forms of life as a less comprehensive and unified scheme, in order to avoid generalizations; she also understands the concept of culture is in substance perhaps, if not, the closest and most important relative of the concept of a form of life.

MacIntyre ask us to consider what it is to share a culture:

It is to share schemata which are at one and the same time constitutive of and normative for intelligible action by myself and are also means for my interpretations of the actions of others. My ability to understand what you are doing and my ability to act intelligibly (both to myself and to others) are one and the same ability. (2006, p.4)

As we can see, the schemata of interpretation enables us to understand the particular practices. This particular trait of the concept of culture in MacIntyre’s theory is especially relevant for the conceptualization of forms of life. Jaeggi (2018) underlines that the practices specify – in a prescriptive, normative sense – how these actions should be performed and which

¹⁶ “For in many cases we can only give their proper significance to the subject’s articulations by means of ‘idiographic’ studies, which can explore the particular terms of an individual’s self-interpretations.” (Taylor, 1985, p. 43) See also Taylor (1985) *Self-interpreting animals*, p. 45-76.

practices belong here so as to allow the actions to fulfill their meanings. The observation of one's practice, therefore, is not independent: the entire assessment and evaluation of the situation with which I am faced will be dependent on all the schemata and background thus posited. (e.g. schemata of interpretation enables me to understand that a child hiding behind a tree is playing hide and seek).

The collection of practices that come together to constitute the form of life are in part interrelated and intermeshed in practical-functional ways; some have a quite tangible sense of an interdependent functional nexus, such as agricultural practices being prerequisite to urban consumption, while others, like playing with children as an indispensable part of the form of life of parenthood, lack this sense. One can assert this indispensable character on a particular conception of childhood perhaps as a precondition to a successful life of and with children.

Practices, according to Jaeggi, bring both the interpretation of practices as something (descriptive) and the functional assignment of practices as being good for something (evaluative) in correlation with each other. This is because practices are more than raw facts and are directed to ends within an interpretive framework connected with other ends which combine to constitute a form of life.

Jaeggi strives to clarify what she calls a practical-hermeneutical circle that follows a highly interpretive take of practices. As she puts it, practices that feature in the nexus of or constitute a form of life are interpreted in the light of an anticipatory reference to the (imagined) whole of a form of life. Conversely, the form of life is constituted and progressively concretized by the interrelated practices in question. The individual practices are geared to the nexus and derive meaning from it; nevertheless, it is the practices themselves that constitute the nexus.

This is a virtuous rather than vicious cycle according to Jaeggi and one must think of the process as one in which parts are reciprocally enriched, differentiated, and determined by the whole — and the whole in turn by the parts. Yet the author explicitly emphasizes that this process in question is an open one in which the “whole”, referring to that in which we interpret the individual practices, is not known from the outset. Rather, it is first constituted in the interplay with the changing elements and, in the process, continually reconfigured and transformed.

The nexus mentioned, therefore, is not something that only externally organizes the practices it collects; the schemata of interpretation will not be found in some place beyond the practices. Nexus and schemata orient the practices and their semantic content and hence are to a certain extent embedded in them. If we understand forms of life as interpretative and functional nexuses, therefore, for every practice situated in such a nexus it must be possible to

reconstruct a coherent understanding in the context of the further practices with which it is interrelated.

At this point, the characterization of the concept of forms of life begins to anticipate the critique of said forms of life. Jaeggi underscores that to enter into a dispute about what exactly constitutes or should constitute a form of life means to argue about which practices and attitudes together constitute a certain form of life and how they should be understood in this nexus. People have strong intuitions about what does and does not fit within a certain ensemble of practices understood as a form of life:

A family father who kept detailed accounts of all expenses associated with the upkeep of his children and presented his offspring with a bill, inclusive of (compound) interest, on reaching adulthood would not only be considered callous (based on traditional family values); the associated practices also seem incongruous in view of the form of life of the classical bourgeois family (2018, p. 68)

Cashing in on parental care constitutes a practice that does not belong to this specific formation and interpretation of "family" that stands against the backdrop of the modern ideal of familial relationships based on intimacy and authenticity. As Jaeggi stresses, the reciprocal intimate connectedness that informs the form of life of the family contradicts the objectified model of a capitalist service provider; the relations of fit can be understood in a number of ways. It can be argued that the practices described do not cohere with other practices involved in the corresponding situations. Presenting one's children with a bill for "parenting" does not seem to cohere with the emotional ties that a father expects from his children even if they do not go beyond authority and obedience. A certain practice could seem incongruous within the interpretive framework defined by the context of a form of life. The same example applies: cashing in on parenting doesn't seem to cohere with the customary, and culturally operative, interpretations of relationship between parents and children. Jaeggi stresses that these are cases in which the practices in question do not fit together and are not a good fit insofar as they cannot be placed in coherence with the practices that belong to a form of life and the interpretive framework that constitutes the latter. As Jaeggi puts it:

Then expressions like "That's no longer a family" and "that's no longer a city" suggests that, just as in the case of individual practices, also with forms of life (as nexuses of practices), there are internal conditions of success or fulfillment – conditions against which, conversely, a form of life can also infringe or which it can realize only in a deficient way. (2018, p. 69)

This is a very interesting point that opens up a few lines of inquiry. Notice that, first, the author already implies the inner aspects for a critique of forms of life. The idea of what

“fits” brings up the question about what we think things should be and what they are. The normative expectations and the interpretive schemata available in the form of life allows for, at this point very intuitively, criticism and evaluation of a practice. By seeking to define its own subject matter (forms of life) the author already finds the inner aspects that broadly allow the act of criticizing it.

Without getting ahead of ourselves it’s possible to briefly comment on the second point that emerges from the quote above. Right at the end of the paragraph Jaeggi drops a hint on the greater subject of her critique: practices can be evaluated by the normative expectation and the interpretive schemata, but also the form of life itself can be evaluated by the norms and interpretations that it itself posits. This evaluation could very well indicate that the form of life cannot live up to its own interpretive scheme and normative expectations. This point goes to the core of Jaeggi’s critique and, again, allows a fertile connection with the instrument of genealogy. These initial connections will feature in the next segment.

Jaeggi moves on to another way of conceiving the appropriateness of certain practices in the nexus of a form of life that also uses the concept of “fit”, but rests on a teleological interpretation:

If many practices first derive their meaning and their conditions of possibility from being embedded in a further nexus of practices and interpretations – hence, if the good and the purpose that a practices is supposed to realize cannot be realized in it alone - then forms of life turn out to be structured ensembles in which complex goods or purposes are pursued. Identifying something as particular form of life means, accordingly, identifying nexuses of practices and attitudes as a nexus that is good for something (2018, p. 70)

Nevertheless, these nexuses do not unfold in complete harmony; Jaeggi points out that within such a nexus there are practices that will serve to realize the purposes it posits, practices that actually run counter to these purposes, and also practices that don’t interfere and don’t push forward in this regard. The individual elements of shape and character of a nexus of practices can only fulfill together what is required by the form of life as form of life. This seems to be a clear evocation, in a less metaphysical vernacular, of the totality formed by abstract right and morality as the necessary fulfillment of the ethical life (*Sittlichkeit*).

If goods and purposes shared this intricate relation within the nexus of practices that, in the end, fulfill a form of life as a form of life, then the argument becomes twofold, as Jaeggi implies: it’s possible to say that certain practices do not fit or are inappropriate, but also (positively) that certain practices must be components of the nexus of a form of life if it is not to remain deficient.

At this point Jaeggi understands that it's possible to offer a more detailed or even more systematic account of the substantive or factual adequacy discussed during the parallel by opposition with phenomena of fashion. In regard to certain practices fitting or their appropriateness, what is in fact at stake is a culturally and historically saturated understanding of what constitutes a particular form of life anchored in a complex of practices and their interpretations (familial relationships in the example of billing a child for caring). Jaeggi had mentioned that grasping the depth of a nexus of practices is particularly daunting and it becomes quite tricky:

It is difficult to distinguish between “fitting together,” “fitting the interpretive framework,” and “fitting the matter” precisely because the matter with which certain practices fit (or do not fit) is not only seldom a raw fact and is normally a state of affairs sustained by practices and interpretations that cohere with each other (2018, p. 78).

This statement leads to two possible paths: one of which is the main focus of the rest of her work and the other, more remote, but necessary. The first path is the realization that if practices belonging to the nexus of a form of life represent the moments required to facilitate the functioning of a particular practical nexus, then conversely, this functioning is not something objective (meaning substantial or straight factual); our understanding of this functional interlocking already depends on attributions of meaning and interpretations of the practices in question. The author leans heavily on the functioning part of the nexus of practices and this will be a big part of the conceptualization of means for critique.

The second is that only in limited cases is the adaptation to reality independent of interpretations and, in this sense, objective and given with the matter. The criteria of appropriateness for such interpretations will rest on what can be called initial conditions. Forms of life take shape around these initial conditions. They are, as Jaeggi puts it *in part natural, such as the biological condition of helplessness of newborn human beings or certain geographical and climatic conditions, and in part (and mostly) self-created, such as the initial conditions urban form of life, even that one, however, are based in turn on natural initial conditions* (2018, p. 72).

At this point the proper aspects of forms of life were laid down to a certain degree, and this allowed a few assertions on the character of the phenomena. The connections within a form of life are varied: sometimes stronger or weaker. Some clusters of practices stand in closer functional interconnection within an overarching context of a form of life, while others may not. Sometimes they fit together snugly, while others can easily be perceived independent of each other. Forms of life are variable and the dynamic of change involves shifts in weight with

regards to some practices and the emergence of new constellations: *...the family does not disintegrate if it no longer eats its evening meal together. Similarly, the center of gravity of this form of life shifts with the move away from the provider marriage without as a result calling the family as an emotional center and locus of mutual care into question.* (2018, p. 73).

The conclusion, then, is that forms of life as nexuses of practices are particularly held together and individuated as interpreted functional interconnections against the background of substantive or factual conditions. This period already defines the concept in its functional-descriptive particularity and offers an intuitive and apprehensible depth in parallel with other social formations.

Another specificity is how these nexus of practices should be understood: Jaeggi is quite clear to underscore that the nexus should be seen in a moderately holistic sense. This entails constitutive significance for the practices in the sense that the interconnectedness found within it's not something external, but its defining internal character. Yet the nexus remains an open context of meaning constituted by the very same practices. This seems to tread on the Hegelian tradition that Jaeggi seeks to actualize and to support and substantiate a second assertion defended by the author: that forms of life, as a second nature, are at once given and made. So, addressing the first part of the questions posed initially by Niederberger and Weihrauch, it seems that the resilience of the form of life is focused on the interrelation, on the nexus, and on the schemata of interpretation that informs and enables a social practice.

When human beings do share a form of life, a certain scope for shaping, justifying, and deciding is always involved. This latitude is the precondition of the activity of criticism with regard to forms of life. Something that cannot be other than it is does not entail criticism; in these cases criticism would be absurd. The second nature character of forms of life breaks through the aspects of freedom and malleability with a pre-reflexive aspect, an antecedence and ineluctability. Forms of life in this sense are always already there, creating and shaping the space of possibility of our actions.; yet even the customary, fixed, and antecedent aspects that forms of life "give" to us obviously can be traced back to human activity.

Forms of life are, in some respects, sedimented human activity. This point leads to one singular aspect that certainly acknowledges an alignment with the argument raised in this dissertation. The materiality and the institutionalization as characters of forms of life (material manifestations and embodiments of attitudes and practices) undoubtedly implies a specific mode of critique. As Jaeggi even states: *It is not for nothing that one can infer from artifacts left behind by a past social formation to the character of the life lived during that epoch* (2018, p. 74).

In underscoring the interpenetration of the material and immaterial dimensions of forms of life the author gives another telling example of the strong grasp needed to criticize a form of life: *if city planning and architecture are expressions of form of life, then conversely the resulting shape assumed by the city dictates – at least in part – how to live in the city* (2018, p. 75). This interpenetration of material and immaterial dimensions shows that practices do appear in current-like, fluid shapes, but also become firmly established, outliving our actions and our existence.

Jaeggi states that the same also holds for institutions and the institutionalized parts of forms of life; despite the difference in their fixed aggregate states, both typically outlive the living practices they comprehend. To the institutionalized parts of the forms of life this particular character demonstrates a certain inertia of the practical nexus of forms of life. The very point of scope and the example chosen of the city already compels us to mention the fact that Foucault specifically wrangled with these questions¹⁷. However, the parallel with institutions is even more of a reminder of the French author's work; the challenge to delve within established social practices in order to demonstrate what constitute parts of a form of life (to use Jaeggi's vernacular) and therefore imbued with a certain level of inertia seems to be perennial in his work.

Another assertion on forms of life intricately connected with the previous is the notion that forms of life rest to a considerable extent on habits and practical routines. Habits are not always available and cannot always be shaped; one does not form new intentions every time within habitual processes. Falling in a habitual process could be characterized as bypassing the reflection that could provide ground for new actions and decisions.

The attitudes and attributions connected with the habitual processes sometimes never find their way into the reflexive foreground at all impeding, therefore, changes in the corresponding practical dispositions. Jaeggi underlines that this unavailability could be further explained by the concepts of "tacit" or implicit knowledge and of practical know-how in regard to the existence of forms of life:

(...) we operate primarily practically in forms of life and are acquainted with the constituting norms through practical activation. We have only implicit knowledge of them insofar as mastering and activating the practice in question involves such knowledge. However, this knowledge does not have to be

¹⁷ See the class of January 1st of 1978, specifically the general features of security apparatuses (1): the spaces of security. The example of the town. Three examples of planning urban space in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: (a) Alexandre Le Maître's *La Métropolitée* (1682); (b) Richelieu; (c) Nantes. in Foucault, M. (2007). *Security, territory, population: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977-78*. Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave Macmillan : République Française.

updated in each case and does not have to be – consciously – available in every respect (2018, p. 76)

This entails that the knowledge available of our form of life is at times limited and yet we do know our way around while in it. The author does state that Bourdieu has a very close understanding of this same aspect when his talking about the habitus, in which the internalization of the objective living conditions gives this practical sense that guides us through the world¹⁸. Jaeggi uses the act of driving and its associated experience to illustrate the relevant aspects in which knowledge can imply genuinely practical abilities:

We have good reasons for saying that, even after passing the driving test, someone still has to acquire driving experience in order to be really able to drive. Firstly, this does not mean that the individual concerned has to learn the rules of driving even better than when she took the driving test. On the contrary, to a certain extent she has to forget the rules. She has to internalize and develop a feel for what she has learned (...) so that it becomes a routine, quasi-automatic sequence of actions that she does not have to reflect on it over and over again. This knowledge is implicit when, assuming sufficient experience, one does not always have to have the rules one has learned consciously available and at some point one is no longer able to access them either. Secondly, there may also be aspects of being able to drive that one has not forgotten or has not let fade into the background but whose rules one has never known. (...) Just as some people apply grammatical rules without being able to explain them, one can perform aspects of driving without having learned a corresponding rule – even though these rules can in principle be explicated. From these aspects of driving must be distinguished, thirdly, those which are so closely bound with the experience that corresponding (formalized) rules cannot even be found or the rules would be far too complex to be illuminating or communicable at the practical level. (...) In such cases, practical skills cannot be fully expressed as theoretical knowledge: “we can know more than we can tell”. Then practical learning of competences can no longer be conceived as the implementation of what was previously grasped cognitively; knowing and doing cannot be separated in two distinct steps

The example remains illuminating despite the subject matter being essentially elusive. If this realization on implicit knowledge is correct, then it's possible to find it in three moments: following on those elaborated in the example: a) When we have forgotten its explicit version of the rules in routines; b) In situations where we cannot verbalize what we know (the rules are applied and yet we do not know them explicitly); c) When it's a matter of practical knowledge

¹⁸ “The conditionings associated with a particular class of conditions of existence produce habitus, systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them.” “The habitus - embodied history, internalized as a second nature and so forgotten as history - is the active presence of the whole past of which it is the product. As such, it is what gives practices their relative autonomy with respect to external determinations of the immediate present.” Bourdieu, P. (2008). *The logic of practice* (Reprinted). Stanford, California: Stanford Univ. Press. p. 53-56

based on experience (either too complex or not possible to formalize), and acquired and exercised only through practical implementation. Jaeggi agrees with this realization and implies that this kind of knowledge is not a secondary phenomenon but rather allows systematic inferences about relationships we have within the world as well as the intricacies between knowledge and practice. The tandem of implicit knowledge and know-how associated with the mode of implementation of practices provides additional arguments for explaining the moments of unavailability that constitute this kind of inertia within the practical network of forms of life.

At this juncture, the question that comes to mind is the following: If forms of life operate in a certain habitual mode, with certain implicit knowledge not always readily available, how should one proceed to change this horizon? As Jaeggi puts it, *what one does not know explicitly one cannot change so easily (...) and for what is self-evident¹⁹ one does not need any reasons; hence, countervailing reasons cannot carry any weight here* (2018, p.78). Now it's possible to understand why resilience matters for the possibilities of transformation of the interrelations, as posited by Niederberger and Weihrauch. Jaeggi underscores the idea that the critical approach to forms of life should be disruptive in the sense that reveals the contingency of such interrelation. Apparently this is, or could be, the first step towards change. The idea of a disruptive mode of critique is very rich and Jaeggi does not provide a charter on how one should implement or could promote it.

Jaeggi perceives disruptions as occasions for explication at two levels: individually and collectively. But what does that mean? She pushes the fact that though knowledge can be implicit it does not necessarily mean it cannot be made explicit. The process of rendering explicit what is implicit and of thematizing practical performances can be quite commonplace. As individuals, actions that we routinely perform involuntarily, and whose internal rules we know implicitly, are regularly made explicit when a disruption occurs that interrupts or problematizes the course of those actions. Once a disruptive event occurs, the course of action becomes “conspicuous”²⁰, and the implicit and practical knowledge has to appear, either for reactivation or reformulation. When a process doesn't function as it is supposed to, knowledge must be remobilized; sequences of actions must be made explicit, re-evaluated and readjusted, if necessary. This disruptive process not occurs at the level of technical-instrumental processes, but also in everyday interpersonal relations:

¹⁹ (...) *Self-evidence (in wittgensteinian sense), in a mode of implicit self-evidence in which we cannot – and do not have to – constantly keep in mind all of these rules for dealing with things* (2018, p. 78).

²⁰ In Heideggerian sense: *the ‘the tool becomes conspicuous’ because it is not ‘ready to hand’ in the usual way (for example, because it is broken)* (2018, p. 79).

If the person I want to shake hands with withdraws her hand in gesture of irritation or annoyance, then I am forced to recognize that I may be in a country in which greeting with a handshake is uncommon and will make corresponding adjustment to bridge the situation by switching to a different greeting ritual. (2018, p. 79-80)

As mentioned earlier “the disruption” as an occasion for explication rests not only in individual, but also collective, practices. Forms of life (as interpreted nexuses of practices that usually recede into the background and whose precise shape the participants are rarely fully aware of) are also prey to disruptions that could raise them to the threshold of attention. This happens when the imprint of certain forms of life becomes apparent and confronts differently shaped forms of life: *think of the greeting rituals alluded to above or dating practices or of the confrontation with the urban public space when one finds oneself for the first time in an American suburb or in a provincial town in western Germany* (2018, p. 80).

What the author is trying to show is that facing the otherness of a whole form of life can be disconcerting; when this otherness is compared against our own habits and what we take for granted, the contrast in itself, provides the moment of disruption. It is in these moments of reflection, on the contexts of practices that we have brought forth as a form of life, that we become aware of them as such and as a context. A form of life then becomes “conspicuous”, and the nexus of a form of life is actualized in the form of the articulation or rearticulation of self-understanding of something as a form of life. These manifestations of one’s own form of life as a form of life, according to Jaeggi, do acquire some level of urgency when they face unexpected conditions. In these instances, it either has to demarcate itself or ends up drawn into a conflict. In other words, to realize that one’s form of life is a form of life, among others, attached to a certain context of practices and attitudes, does not come without consequences which at times can be conflictual in nature. Jaeggi stresses that modern forms of life at their zenith, which were also times of conflict, found themselves in a state of reflected and programmatic demarcation from non-modern forms of life.

It is now clear that if forms of life become explicit as forms of life, under conditions of conflict and contrast, the ground of self-evidence becomes unstable. The nexus of forms of life, the background generally beyond thematization and in cases of disruption most of the times, presents itself as a context of practice: it does so in explicit and understandable ways, which, in the end, can be shaped and negotiated.

As Jaeggi puts it:

(...) precisely such cases demonstrate that implicit knowledge is also a form of knowledge, that implicit reasons are also reasons, and that the mode of

implicit communication and implicit “cultural agreement” (...) have become ingrained through repeated performance, and thus were produced and must sometimes be reestablished through further performance (2018, p. 81).

It is an important recognition that the motif of disruption is not an exception, nor confined to dramatic crisis situations; large or small-scale disruptions are by no means infrequent occurrences. The disruptions and adjustments are a constitutive moment of the process of establishing and maintaining forms of life.

As we have seen so far, social actors are always both recipients and producers in talks regarding forms of life. In the process of adopting a form of life (conceived as an active process) that same form of life is recreated. They are always shaping and being transformed within the process of appropriation. As Jaeggi underscores, forms of life are created by our actions and, as something we create, become background conditions to our actions, and where forms of life have a component of inertia, of unavailability and givenness, it is simply because practice has become fixed within them.

These elements, generally unavailable, must also be continuously reactualized if they are to become the living nexus of a form of life. This can occur when forms of life are exposed to the process of examination and transformation that the author chooses to call “criticism”. Jaeggi demonstrates clearly that the thematization of forms of life plays a fundamental role in her project of critique. Moreover, the author demonstrates that without the thematization of forms of life any process of critique would be superficial; without a proper context on the practices and attitudes one cannot fully appreciate the functional and evaluative aspects within a form of life.

One final consideration is the institutability of forms of life, or the idea that forms of life are created and recreated by our actions. It is only natural to consider the question of how a form of life emerges. Jaeggi maintains that this process rests not only on elements of planned positing, but also alongside elements of unregulated development. This does entail that one cannot program a whole form of life and expect to reap rewards and not every program can develop into a form of life; there are forms of resistance that elude instituting. There are many examples in Brazil's history of this kind of failure, one of the latest being the Constitution of 1988. This all brings us to the realization that establishing or changing a form of life calls for a relationship of fit to previously established sources of practical authority.

1.3 Thematize and criticize

Niederberger and Weihrauch's argument about forms of life being at times too vague does seem convincing; the examples give color to the argument posed and yet seem to fall short at times. In the argument for disruption as occasions for explications, the affirmation that disruptions can be quite commonplace doesn't comport with the ambition of a project of social critique. It could, however, be the door for charting disruptive form of critique. This leads to the realization that forms of life, as a concept, need an appropriate mode of connection to the empirical, if the final aim is to shape a form of social critique. In the following paragraphs it will be made clear that the process of thematizing forms of life could provide a connection to a particular understanding of genealogy. The implication is that both share a theoretical heritage and a common goal. The second chapter will deal with the aspects of this shared theoretical heritage and here the focus is on the final goal: to de-essentialize and de-naturalize social practices. Also it will become clear that the attempt to define the concept of forms of life not only contains, at least in preliminary form, the elements of its own critique, with its own particularities, but that it can be perceived of as aligned with the goals of the specific form of genealogy defended in this dissertation. All this, in turn, could be viewed as an indictment of Jaeggi's approach of failing to perceive the clear methodological path for guiding the application of said critique of forms of life; one that not only fits the minutiae of the proposed concept but also enables and potentially supersedes the expected effects to enact change in social life.

It's important to underline that this particular form of genealogy is set up by Saar's systematic reading of Nietzsche's *On the Genealogy of Morals* and Foucault's own reflections on genealogy and *Aufklärung*; both of these approaches push to settle elusive points of the methodology in question. Genealogy and its potential to explicate and to criticize, paired with the intricacies of the normative justification, and the ideas of regress and progress drawn out by Jaeggi, will be the main theme of the next chapter. The point of bringing genealogy to the foreground is to show how the thematization of forms of life seems to fit within the intricate process of genealogy. Saar's analyses of genealogy's critical potential in three dimensions (thematic, explanatory and stylistic) illuminate the process within the genealogical endeavor, as we've mentioned earlier. However the dimension that's more relevant to the topic at hand is thematic; the semantics already hint at the correlation.

In his reading of *On the Genealogy of Morals*, Saar (2008) argues that Nietzsche's exposition and description of the conditions and circumstances of emergence of moral practices is centered around the subject and the self. The genealogical history of Nietzsche's morality narrates the history of morality as a history of moral subject formation processes. The

genealogical endeavor places a variety of moral practices, judgments and beliefs in their historical, social and cultural context and, therefore, destroys any illusion about the naturalness or unity of the moral world. Also, it pluralizes the moral subject by demonstrating that in history a variety of conceptions of moral agencies and moral values have always been competing, and that the success of one form of moral meant the decline of another.

According to Saar, the genealogy of morality surpasses the mere historicization of its object as it relates to historical processes, as well as the effects they have on the construction and self-constitution of human actors. If morality is to be taken as a complex social institution that structures and shapes the subject and his practices, the attempt to contextualize and criticize it needs a kind of discourse that puts the history of morality up and against its moral concepts, practices and institutions, thereby thematizing itself. It becomes, then, more than a history of moral behavior and explores more deeply the individualizing and subjectifying effects of different systems of morality. Looking back at the arguments posed by Jaeggi during her argument against the ethical abstinence, at the beginning of this chapter, it's possible to notice in the effort to avoid the narrower domain of questions of relevance regarding morality and justice, the author knocks on the very same door, or at least in the same neighborhood, of genealogy's thematic dimension.

The examples and demonstrations utilized to elaborate her proposal make the argument clear; Jaeggi invites us to reflect upon a recurrent theme of her book: the marketization of life, or as she puts it, commodification as a form-of-life problem. The author accentuates the point that criticism of forms of life deals not only with our actions — what we ought to do — but also with the frames of reference that inform how we act and guide our behavior. Yet this framework of conditions is not always fully available. That's why thematizing these framework conditions as such, and rendering them visible, is a large part of the endeavor in the criticism of forms of life. In the effort to thematize and contextualize with the aim of rendering visible the (moral) values that inform practices and attitudes, the project of Jaeggi does not fall very far from the ambitions of the genealogist.

Jaeggi's example of the women's movement already leads to the conclusion that the thematization of a form of life leads to the reassessment of the historic meanings of certain concepts. She underscores that before one is able to criticize a form of life, one has to see that concepts such as chastity, honor, and discipline, with their associated practices and evaluations, are not spontaneous developments but are, in fact, naturalized: a part of an already established form of life.

As previously mentioned, the thematization of forms of life already resembles the thematic dimension of genealogy that seeks to destroy any illusion about the naturalness or unity of the moral world; it is aware of the effects that the historical naturalization of practices have on the construction and self-constitution of human beings (Saar, 2008). Thematization, taking a form of life as a form of life²¹, translates to the genealogical as the reassessment of a different kind of history: one that demands means that are very distant from a traditional investigation of historically legitimate knowledge modes. As Saar elsewhere affirms, it is a form of writing history, but a quite specific writing of the history of certain objects. This historiography accounts for ‘our’ history, i.e. the processes of constitution and construction of present morality, mentality, or ‘soul’ in all its discontinuities, functional transformations, and contingencies.

This is reminiscent of Foucault’s (1990) own well known reflections on the concept of *Aufklärung*. Looking into arguments posed in his lecture it is clear that he sees himself as following, in his own way, the tradition of the *Aufklärung*. For Foucault, to make *Aufklärung* a central issue is to undertake the project critically. Engaging in a critical enterprise means seeking certain historical-philosophical practice, which departs from both the philosophy of history and history of philosophy: a genealogy. However, to this specific question, what appears to be most relevant is a rare occasion in which Foucault chooses to elaborate on his process (the *Aufklärung*, the critical) with a certain level of conceptualization.

Foucault mentions an eventualization process which entails:

sets of elements where you can demarcate, in a first approach, so empirical and provisional, the connections between coercion mechanisms and knowledge. Different coercion mechanisms, perhaps as well as legislative sets, regiments, material devices, phenomena of authority, etc.; knowledge content that equally in their diversity and heterogeneity and will be of the power effects of which they carry while valid as part of a knowledge system (1990, p. 48)

In summary, this search for connections can be demarcated between coercive mechanisms and knowledge elements. These connections (i) enable an element to acquire effects of power, whether it be to validate or falsify this certain element within a specific system, and; (ii) also, the coercive characterizations in the process of acquiring rational forms and justifications. This process goes through the cycle of positivity, which ranges from the fact of

²¹ Jaeggi acknowledges in conceptualization of forms of life the relevance of the historic context “forms of life are complex bundles (or ensembles) of social practices geared to solving problems that for their part are historically contextualized and normatively constituted” (Jaeggi, 2018, p. 29)

acceptance to the acceptability system, from the perspective of the knowledge-power game and discards *a priori* explanations.

It should be noted that the use of knowledge and power in Foucault's text has a specific characteristic of not sticking to one particular sense; knowledge refers to all procedures and all knowledge effects that are acceptable in a given time and in a defined domain, and power covers a whole series of particular, definable and definite mechanisms which seem likely to induce behaviors and discourse.

The critical intent supported in this process is not seeking to describe what knowledge or power is, how one would repress the other, or how the other would abuse the first; it is only in the description of the imbrication and in the context of the nexus knowledge-power, that one can understand what constitutes acceptability of a positivity in a given system. Therefore, the relevant issues will revolve around redeeming the conditions of acceptability and the rupture lines that mark the emergence of a positivity in a given system.

This pursuit of a critical endeavor has a particular relationship with causal evaluation, which also shares a connection with categories brought up only briefly by Jaeggi. Foucault states that this procedure involves the unfolding of a causal network that would not precisely obey the demand for a unitary, pyramidalizing and necessary principle of causality:

It is a matter of establishing a network to cope with this singularity as an effect: hence the need for multiplicity of relationships, of the differentiation between different types of relationship, the differentiation between different ways of needing threads, deciphering interactions and circular actions and taking into account the intersection of heterogeneous processes. (...) Let us say roughly that, as opposed to a genesis that is oriented towards the unity of a difficult main cause, of a multiple offspring, it would be a genealogy there, that is, anything that tries to repay the conditions of appearance of a singularity from multiple elements where it appears not as the product but as the effect. (1990, p. 51).

Looking closer at the author's choice of words it's possible to notice that the effect plays a great part in the explanation of how this singularity appears as effect; in reverse engineering the process one has to pay attention on the effects in order to work backwards to the singularity in question; hence the need for analyses of multiple and different processes and relationships available. This intuitively connects to the functional side of forms of life, at least in the sense that one can perceive functioning, both good and bad, as an effect on practices and attitudes of a form of life. Foucault can't escape the elusiveness and haziness of the concept of singularities. He underscores that the singularities are the scope of criticism of the positivities. These singularities are neither an incarnation of an essence nor the individualization of a species. Some of the themes worked on by the author are cited in the lecture as examples of

singularity: madness in western civilization, sexuality and the moral-legal system of our punishments.

It's interesting to notice that Jaeggi's effort to separate her concept of forms of life from the often related concept of culture actually provides a better account of the singularities. Jaeggi asserts that the concept of culture often evokes the idea of a comprehensive, self-contained totality, thereby suggesting a single, uniform culture of a society. On the other hand, however, she states:

The concept of forms of life (...) is suited to dissolving this assumption of uniformity and to comprehending formations that cut across such classifications and are situated below the level of such large formations. Therefore, the concept of a form of life, insofar as (to borrow Wolfgang Iser's words) "it passes through classical cultural boundaries", is preferable as a de-essentialized and a de-substantialized alternative to the concept of culture, so that it can do justice to the hybrid character of the formation under discussion here (2018, p. 41).

As already mentioned earlier, the hybrid character of forms of life appears to comport very well with the singularities; much like the singularities, forms of life appear to be neither an incarnation of an essence nor the individualization of certain practice or formation. Also, the push for a transgression of classical boundaries in a de-essentialized manner without settling for a simple or unifying answer, sounds remarkably similar to the process of evaluation detailed by Foucault. The examples brought by Jaeggi illustrate this elusive and yet perceivable relation between forms of life and practices, attitudes, subjects and subjectification.

The complicated and yet simple relation between bourgeois society and its rulers, and the level of symbiosis that an authoritative state imprints in the microsocial level, at the family are both relevant here because the family is not the direct product of bourgeois society, and yet, is part of this society. The family coheres with bourgeois society and fulfills functions within it, even if it is not a direct causal product. Jaeggi invites us to examine the overlaps and relations of influence, connections, associations, and relationships, although these must not be conceived as bottom-up causal relationships. What the author is claiming for her proposal is a procedure involving the unfolding of a causal network that would not precisely obey the demand for a unitary, pyramidalizing and necessary principle of causality; this is exactly the proposal of Foucault (1990) working through his own process by analyzing the *Aufklärung*.

Other critical theorists offer a different outlook on the subject. Allen (2016), for example, as mentioned earlier, draws on precisely Adorno and Foucault to sketch her alternative conception of genealogical critique (Allen's proposal will be dealt with in the next chapter) Yet

its Jaeggi's concepts that inadvertently have elective affinities, one might say, with the genealogical endeavor.

Jaeggi's position on the process of evaluation of a form of life clearly states that the form of life itself can be evaluated by the norms and interpretations that it posits itself. This evaluation could very well state that the form of life cannot live up to its own interpretive scheme and normative expectations. This was also mentioned before; the conclusion of the impossibility of one's form of life to realize its own goals goes to the core of Jaeggi's critique and, again, allows a fertile connection with the genealogical instrument. The promise of a moral life, of humanitarian punishments, of sexual freedom seem to be prone to fail from within. Genealogy's thematic purpose is to render visible the contradictions and irrationalities of a modern society. To do that one must gather from the *namely, gray, in other words, what has been documented, what can be established as the truth, what really took place* (2009, p. 12).

Forms of life as sedimented human activity provide material manifestations and embodiments of attitudes and practices — as characters of forms of life without a doubt implies a specific mode of critique. This point leads, as posed earlier, to another singular aspect that certainly acknowledges an alignment with the argument raised in this dissertation. Jaeggi even states: *It is not for nothing that one can infer from artifacts left behind by a past social formation to the character of the life lived during that epoch* (2018, p. 74).

The chosen examples by Jaeggi are very telling of the grasp needed to criticize a form of life; in the process to underline the interpenetration of the material and immaterial dimensions of forms of life the author gives an example of: *if city planning and architecture are expressions of form of life, then conversely the resulting shape assumed by the city dictates – at least in part – how to live in the city* (2018, p. 75). The very selection the city as an example compels us to mention that Foucault specifically worked with these questions in his lectures at the Collège de France: *Security, Territory, Population*²². This example chosen by Jaeggi serves the purpose of demonstrating this interpenetration of material and immaterial dimensions within practices, which appear in current, fluid shapes, but also become firmly established and outlive our actions and existence.

This leads to the institutions and the institutionalized parts of forms of life; despite the difference in their fixed aggregate states, both typically outlive the everyday practices they

²² See the class of January 1st of 1978, specifically the general features of security apparatuses (1): the spaces of security. The example of the town. Three examples of planning urban space in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: (a) Alexandre Le Maître's La Métropolitée (1682); (b) Richelieu; (c) Nantes. in Foucault, M. (2007). *Security, territory, population: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977-78*. Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave Macmillan : République Française.

comprehend. To the institutionalized parts of the forms of life this particular character shows a certain inertia in regards to the practical nexus of forms of life. The parallel alongside institutions is one further reminder of the French author's work — the challenge to delve within established social practices in order to demonstrate the parts of the form of life (using Jaeggi's vernacular). The position that these parts are imbued with a certain level of inertia, but not immutable, seems to be perennial in his work. Nevertheless, another connection that fits the conceptualization and development of a form of life is the one between the nexus of forms of life and the nexus of knowledge-power. The nexus of the form of life should be seen, according to Jaeggi, in a moderately holistic sense. This entails that it is constitutively significant for the practices, in two senses: the interconnectedness found within it is not something external, but its defining internal character, and secondly, that the nexus remains an open context of meaning constituted by the very same practices.

As mentioned earlier, all this seems to explicitly be based on the Hegelian tradition supporting the idea of forms of life as a second nature, at once given and made. Yet this also supports a link with the knowledge-power nexus; one has only to look into the process which goes through the cycle of positivity, ranging from the fact of acceptance to the acceptability system, utilizing the knowledge-power game, and discarding a fundamental *a priori*. It seems that the knowledge-power game mentioned reflects the interconnected, internal character between knowledge (and know-how) and practice (power relations enacted). This becomes even clearer when Jaeggi delves into the topics of habitual processes and tacit knowledge. She indicates that the tandem of implicit knowledge and know-how associated with the mode of implementation of practices provides additional arguments for explaining the moments of unavailability that constitute this kind of inertia within the practical network of forms of life. The process laid down by Foucault sought to demonstrate exactly when and where knowledge becomes irreflexive. Jaeggi's conceptualization and detailed description of forms of life illuminates intricate relations in the knowledge power nexus, as well as the unavailability and elusiveness of some moments. To be clear, this explicitly emphasizes the relations and threads one can find running through both authors. This is not a marriage of visions that comes easily - one must look very closely into the definitions of critique posed by Foucault to posit something as such. Nevertheless, both authors would agree that the key to shedding light on these moments of irreflexiveness is to thematize — to process through a cycle of positivity — these forms of life: the process of rendering explicit what is implicit and of thematizing practical performances, which can be commonplace. Jaeggi underlines the commonalities of this process, on an individual level, by using the example of the foreigner who catches himself trying to shake

hands with a native of a culture that doesn't share the same custom. This example illustrates that facing the otherness of a whole form of life can be disconcerting and when this otherness is put up against our own habits or what we take for granted, that contrast in itself, provides the moment of disruption. It is in these moments of reflection on the contexts of practices that we have brought forth as a form of life, that we become aware of them as such. Asked about what would give credibility to his studies Foucault had a few things to say and one of them was this:

If I had wanted, for example, to do the history of psychiatric institutions in Europe between the seventeenth and eighteenth century, obviously I wouldn't have written a book like *Madness and Civilization*. But my problem is not to satisfy the professional historians; my problem is to construct myself, and to invite others to share an experience of our modernity in such a way that we might come out of it transformed. Which means that at the end of a book we would establish new relationships with the subject at issue. (Foucault, 2000, p. 242)

Notice that Foucault sees himself bringing forth the backdrop of modernity to the foreground in order to provide an experience that could be transformative of the way we see the established irreflexive reality. Nothing that has been mentioned falls outside of the purview of thematizing forms of life and Jaeggi (2018) seems to agree. When Jaeggi mentions these generally unavailable elements, she posits that they have to be continuously reactualized if they are to become the living nexus of a form of life; they can only be reactualized when exposed to the process of examination and transformation that the author chooses to call "criticism"; to thematize, to render explicit, to expose and to transform have fundamental places in her project of critique. Jaeggi states that without the thematization of forms of life any process of critique would be superficial; without a proper context on the practices and attitudes one cannot fully appreciate the functional and evaluative aspects within a form of life. In the end and in spite of many differences of style and approach to the subject both Jaeggi and Foucault share the same goal and some key aspects in their development of the object of critique. Moreover, a genealogical approach can provide a methodological charter to social critique — one that can be both polemical and disruptive. Jaeggi's process intuitively (perhaps to a fault) claims a genealogical approach, such as the one proposed here; the question that remains unclear is that of why it doesn't appear anywhere in her work. In the following chapter, a few of the (mis)understandings surrounding genealogy will be dealt with upfront and, subsequently, it will be possible to proceed with the pairing of genealogy with the critique of forms of life.

2. GENEALOGY: AN EXPLANATORY FORM OF CRITICISM

2.1 Koopman's genealogy: The Kantian tradition and the Foucault x Habermas debate

In the previous chapter a direct connection of the conceptualization of forms of life with a particular stance on genealogy was undertaken. This section will broaden the scope with regards to genealogy and critical theory and address some of the (mis)understandings on the matter. Colin Koopman's book *Genealogy as Critique* (2013) raises a few considerations that could help us navigate some of the questions posed about genealogy. Koopman's book tries to set out what genealogy does and makes clear that the dealings of genealogy involve depth problems — those lodged deep inside all of us — as the historical conditions of possibility of our present ways of doing, being, and thinking. Nevertheless, these problems can be found right at the surface, insofar as they condition us in our present actions and thoughts. Koopman sets himself on a mission to explicate genealogical methodology as it figures in, mainly, the works of Foucault. His proposition (following and extending the work of Foucault) is that genealogy at its best involves a practice of critique in the form of the historical problematization of the present. His particular take has a few issues in need of pointing out, yet his contribution to recast the debate around genealogy is worth mentioning at the onset. The motivations for his study share a similarity with this dissertation:

A motivating thought for this project is that a careful exploration of what genealogy involves can function to sponsor more effective uses of genealogical methodology when future philosopher - historians undertake critical inquiries in the shadows and under the guidance of existing genealogical critiques (2013, p. 5)

This sums up the meaning one wishes to bestow on his or her work; the idea that this work on the subject of genealogy would one day enable some form of continuation and/or critique, especially around critical theory, is the *raison d'être* of this project. Koopman also perceived that debate on genealogy became somewhat of a trend in academic circles and chose to share his thoughts regarding the trend. Koopman sees that there is not much care given to the nomenclature of genealogy these days and, as he puts it, *It sometimes seems as if anyone who does history and is not themselves a historian is eager to describe their work as a 'genealogy'* (2013, p. 5). This realization impels Koopman to make a few distinctions that of great value to this dissertation, and also allow a questioning of Koopman's proposal itself. The first distinction posed by the author concerns critical methods and critical concepts: Koopman (2013) states that

his commitment to genealogy is primarily as a methodological toolkit. The distinction in question enables us to realize that genealogy as a method is not so much about discipline or biopolitics (in Foucault's case) as it is about a philosophic-historical inquiry into the conditions that make problems such as modern sexuality and modern punishment possible.

This realization is very apropos of the problem of taking the critical concepts found within genealogy at face value — as something given without its proper thematization. The push towards “finding” genealogical concepts (especially in Foucault's case) has become a trend in academic circles. Koopman (2013) maintains that much of the work today calling itself genealogical is, in fact, deploying methodological procedures better described as “biopower-hunting”. This kind of work seems to ferret out nefarious hidden workings of biopower (or disciplinary power) in some determined context where its appearance seemed unexpected. Brazil has its own niche of academic biopower-hunters and it seems to be a growing field. Methodologically, the biopower hunt itself is not so different from what Koopman calls old-fashioned ideological unmasking.

Koopman (2013) defends the position that the strengths of Foucault's concepts of discipline, biopower, self-care and others, depend in large part on his methodological approach. Detaching and applying those concepts, regardless of the methodological questions from which they were brought up, affects their potential critical grip. Nonetheless, Koopman stresses that this doesn't mean one cannot redeploy a genealogical method into problematic aspects of our contemporary condition and find that discipline or biopower exerts its pressure in these contexts too. This, however, is a question to be answered through genealogical inquiry rather than decided in advance as a conceptual matter. The conceptual findings of the genealogical inquiry are purposefully attractive and could lead to an acritical appropriation which is itself problematic. The attractiveness of the genealogical inquiry will be dealt with later, for now let's simply posit that it's an integral part of methodology.

Koopman perceives that the American academic reception of Foucault is itself divided in two camps, with the majority of readings (pro and con) amongst philosophers an effect of reading him as a “traditional” theoretical author, rather than “undertaking inquiry”. Only the minority of philosophers (namely, philosophers of science using his work on knowledge formation, political philosophers using his work on power, and moral philosophers using his work on ancient ethics) and social scientists (most notably amongst small circles of anthropologists, sociologists, and historians) acknowledge that Foucault does not so much provide a warrant for certain theoretical positions, as he provides equipment for certain practices of critical inquiry.

An additional distinction made by the author revolves around the place of Foucault's work between some of the post-structuralist authors. Koopman contests the placement of Foucault, as he views Foucault alongside with other twentieth century philosophers who have sought to transform Kant's critical project, or, as Koopman puts it, *Foucault was not unlike Dewey or Habermas when he took up genealogy as a tool* (2013, p. 11).

These are valuable distinctions that not only provide an insight within the spectrum of academic studies on Foucault, but also on genealogy. Nevertheless, the full argument of the genealogy proposed by Koopman doesn't offer many more alignments with this dissertation, but can be of service to illustrate the paradigm shift proposed here. There's at least two crucial points that lead through Koopman's proposition that don't fit with the genealogy envisioned as the immanent criticism of forms of life. The first one is the division of genealogy as problematizing (Foucault's version), vindicatory (genealogy of Bernard Williams) and the subversive (genealogy of Friedrich Nietzsche).

The view of placing Bernard Williams' inquiry as something akin to an affirmation of values lost, much like Rosa (2012) did in his division of genealogy as black and white, seems understandable. The white genealogy, which Rosa identifies on Charles Taylor's work, seeks to historically reconstruct the value scales and guiding concepts that are constitutive by and for us — taking our conceptions of what really matters and, subsequently, rescuing them and putting them in position against an inadequate and insufficient social practice. It does not seem far-fetched to say that Williams and Taylor share this character of internal critique in their studies. According to Rosa (2012), with this type of white or vindicatory genealogy it is possible to show how modern society is undermining and losing its own moral foundations and aspirations; it creates crises of legitimacy — in the form of alienation of huge proportions — and yet still eludes this type of critique of the historical questionability and internal power relations within those aspirations. This brings us to a different vein of genealogy where lies one of the points of disagreement with Koopman: he understands that there is a division between what he chooses to call subversive and problematizing genealogy.

The core difference between these modes of critique is that, while the subversive version (Nietzsche) casts judgments on certain concepts (truthfulness and morality), the problematizing one doesn't. Koopman (2013) goes on to say that where Foucault departs from Nietzsche and Williams is in their ambition to use genealogy to obtain normative results. Koopman points out that Nietzsche and Williams diverge from Foucaultian genealogy in the very same way insofar as they both deploy genealogical histories to generate normative justifications. The author implies that Foucault deployed his genealogy in order to simply

clarify and intensify problematizations. If the reader perceives a kind of neutrality behind this problematized version of genealogy it is because there is a clear defense of neutrality in the genealogy defended by Koopman. The author implies it is a mistake to suggest that genealogies cannot be put forward under a critical modality which aims to be neither for nor against. Koopman tries to elucidate his thoughts on the matter:

This is exactly the critical modality achieved in Foucault's practice of genealogy as problematization. Granted that no philosopher can be neutral about everything, there is still room for the philosopher to aim to remain neutral about some things. The mode of neutrality is the mode of doubt, indeterminacy, and vagueness. It is in this sense that genealogical problematization is neutral—it leaves us in doubt, with questions, and unprepared to pronounce a verdict (2013, p. 60).

There's a few things that need to be said about this supposed neutrality of Foucault's work. It seems that Koopman conflates the stylistics of Foucault's writing (often vague or indeterminate) with his well-known personal position of not trying to be the alter-ego of politicians²³ and perceives his critique as somewhat neutral. That's a conclusion that is, historically, very common and perhaps the first indicative of why Koopman's final proposition is a bit hesitant. Acknowledging Foucault's academic trajectory, as an author that refused to bend his will and his work to the Marxist/communist political agenda in France in his time²⁴, it's fair to say that the refusal to position his direct normative or political expectations on his work, perhaps made Foucault just as much subversive as Nietzsche once was. Yet there is more to say about the normative point put forth by Koopman. His take of a neutral criticism or merely problematizing seems naïve in its assumption that Foucault himself didn't have any normative

²³ *I will reply that, for reasons essentially having to do with my political preference in the broad sense of the term, I have absolutely no desire to play the role of a prescriber of solutions. I think that the role of the intellectual today is not to ordain, to recommend solutions, to prophesy, because in that function he can only contribute to the functioning of a particular power situation that, in my opinion, must be criticized. I understand why the political parties prefer to have relations with intellectuals who offer solutions. In this way, they can establish relations between partners; the intellectual offers a proposal, the party criticizes it, or formulates another one. I reject the intellectual's functioning as the political party's alter ego, double, and alibi.* (Foucault 2000 p. 287-288).

²⁴ The contentious relation that Foucault had with French Communist Party (PCF) and some of the Marxist political push of his time does color his personal approach to the academic and political relations *The problems I raise are just as general as those habitually raised by political parties or the great theoretical institutions that define the major problems of society. For example, the Communist or Socialist Parties have never put on their working agenda the analysis of the power of reason over unreason. Perhaps that is not their job. But if it isn't their problem, theirs is not necessarily mine either (...)* *When, together with others, I tried in a practical way, working alongside people coming out of prison, with prison staff and prisoners' families, to pose the problem of prison in France, do you know how the PCF reacted? One of its local dailies, in the Paris suburbs, wondered why we, the people doing this work, hadn't yet been put in prison, and what our links with the police might be, seeing that the latter allowed us to do it. That's why I ask how I can be criticized for not posing general problems, never taking a position concerning the great questions raised by the political parties* (2000, p. 286-. 287).

expectations or justifications in mind. In an interview Foucault was once pressed on the subject of his work lacking a palpable political agenda, and his answer was that:

The problems I try to pose—those tangled things that crime, madness, and sex are, and that concern everyday life—cannot easily be resolved. Years, decades, of work and political imagination will be necessary, work at the grass roots, with the people directly affected, restoring their right to speak. Only then will we succeed, perhaps, in changing a situation that, with the terms in which it is currently laid out, only leads to impasses and blockages. I take care not to dictate how things should be. I try instead to pose problems, to make them active, to display them in such a complexity that they can silence the prophets and lawgivers, all those who speak for others or to others. In this way, it will be possible for the complexity of the problem to appear in its connection with people's lives; and, consequently, through concrete questions, difficult cases, movements of rebellion, reflections, and testimonies, the legitimacy of a common creative action can also appear. It's a matter of working through things little by little, of introducing modifications that are able if not to find solutions, at least to change the given terms of the problem (2000, p. 288)

This paragraph is very telling of his type of critique and certainly this quote will return to settle some of the details of the proposition posed in this dissertation. For the time being, this quote serves to illustrate that Foucault is very much aware of the normative expectations that his work seeks to enable. To enable and not enact is a quintessential difference that cannot be avoided. Foucault's work doesn't aim for a specific project that one can simply enact at a certain point and it is one of the reasons he works using the genealogical approach. Genealogy as a means to explicate problems and to make them visible to the people so they will be able to perceive how these problems are related to their own everyday lives, which, in the end, provides the very means to introduce change by and for people themselves. There is no neutrality argument here.

Perhaps that is why Rosa's definition of Black genealogy is centered on a Nietzschean/Foucauldian position. Rosa seems to be aware of the "goal oriented" stance of the Black genealogy when underlining the fact that, through historical deconstructions, someone can understand that conceptions of values and constitutive norms of self-understanding are historically contingent. This, in turn, implies a loss of their normalizing and legitimizing force; their transgression becomes possible; alternatives become conceivable.

This argument of neutrality for Foucault's genealogy is apparently aligned with the old indictment of cryptonormativism. To be clear, this is not simply a blunt "out of nowhere" statement, but has everything to do with the second point of departure between Koopman's genealogy and genealogy as immanent criticism of forms of life. As mentioned earlier, Koopman has a strong argument as to why one needs to avoid framing a Foucault vs. Habermas

debate. He cleverly deduces that it risks adjusting both contributions to a lowest common denominator, or could even end up reducing critical theory to genealogical terms in the process of contextualizing the strong universalistic claims of Habermas. All the same, his project fails to perform against his own argument: the genealogy that Koopman tries to set up, at first, pushes to bypass the Habermasian influence on the methodological scheme and, in the end, admittedly seeks to reconcile Habermasian critical theory with Foucaultian genealogy. This is a decision that is, in itself, problematic for a number of reasons.

Firstly, his project of genealogy is heavily influenced by the Kantian tradition, but doesn't rely strongly on the Kantian influence on Foucault's work. He sees Foucault's work as a continuation of Kant's and ties his approach to this connection; Koopman does not realize how shortsighted his recuperation of the *Aufklärung* really is. Foucault is, at least subtly, criticizing Kant. There will be more to say on this point later.

Koopman's approach to genealogy claims to seek the connections between what he chose to call *Foucault's Kantian project of problematization on the one hand and the Kantian projects of reconstruction featured in the work of pragmatism and critical theory on the other* (2013, p. 217). So, what Koopman proposes is close to what Honneth also proposed regarding genealogy. Honneth sees genealogy as a parasitic critical procedure, based on his conclusion that it's lacking a normative justification that it presupposes. Honneth combines genealogy with construction and reconstruction to build a critical apparatus. Both authors perceive a fundamental absence in their understandings of genealogy: a normative absence. And yet, Honneth's project may very well be a more productive one because it doesn't depend so much on the Kantian tradition. Koopman's project, in this sense, rewinds the debate around the deficits of genealogy instead of pushing it forward by inadvertently reigniting the discussion on normative critique;

A second point is that Koopman's philosophical position colors the entry point of his project within critical theory. As he said himself, he's looking to connect Foucault's Kantian project with Kantian projects of reconstruction featured in the work of pragmatism and critical theory. This all means that, according to Koopman, only Kantian "friendly" approaches would enable his project; a proposal this dissertation most emphatically disagrees with.

As I've said earlier, Koopman walks back on his refusal of Habermasian influences. It's important to notice that, at first, this refusal is posed by him as a differential; he criticizes Amy Allen for trying to integrate Foucault and Habermas and, in the end, he tries to do the same. But not quite the same, to be exact: Allen's take is a comprehensive goal oriented proposal, while Koopman's methodological procedure is too timid and plays into Habermas's

normative criticism of genealogy. Koopman seeks to show that his Foucaultian proposal has merits by measuring against Benhabib's two dimensional form of critical theory²⁵. One thing that's ironic about the choice to measure his methodology against Benhabib's dual critical theory is that once Koopman sets himself to be in an advanced position (or a more methodological approach) in comparison to Amy Allen's, one would think he ought to avoid one of the more drastic critics of Foucault's genealogy in the theoretical debate that set up *The Politics of Ourselves* (2008).

Benhabib's approach is heavily influenced by Habermas; one cannot deny that you could draw a straight line between both authors and their respective positions²⁶. Therefore, it won't be a surprise that Koopman's methodological position inevitably fails to measure up against the highly normative idealist take of the anticipatory-utopian dimension of Benhabib's critical theory. It's likely that Koopman had this plan all along which suggests that the diagnosis-explanatory proposed by Benhabib can be supplied by his genealogical problematization, while the need for utopian-anticipation can be filled in by some pragmatic critical theoretic reconstruction. Actually, not some version of pragmatic critical theoretic reconstruction, but a very specific one — Habermas's version. In a combination that Koopman himself recognizes that hadn't show much promise, and yet his proposition seeks another reconciliation between Foucault and Habermas:

(...) my approach to reconciling Habermasian critical theory with Foucaultian genealogy involves preserving distinctive elements from each theoretical apparatus that the other theoretical apparatus does not feature. We preserve from Habermas, or at least from a certain pragmatized version of critical theory, a role that is not well played by genealogy as Foucault practiced it. And we preserve from Foucault a critical element not clearly featured in pragmatism and critical theory. (2013, p. 220)

²⁵ I shall refer to these two dimensions of critical theory (...) the "explanatory-diagnostic" and "anticipatory-utopian" moments of critique. The explanatory- diagnostic function of critical theory corresponds to the epistemic viewpoint of the observer, of the third (even if not exclusively). Here the social system is viewed as having internal contradictions, limitations, and crises. The anticipatory-utopian dimension of critique addresses the lived needs and experiences of social agents in order to interpret them and render them meaningful in light of a future normative ideal. Without an explanatory dimension, critical theory dissolves into mere normative philosophy; if it excludes the dimension of anticipatory-utopian critique, however, it cannot be distinguished from other mainstream social theories that attempt to gain value-free knowledge of the social world. Benhabib, S. (1986). Critique, norm, and utopia: A study of the foundations of critical theory. New York: Columbia University Press. p. 142.

²⁶ "In this respect, it is one of the great merits of Habermas's critical social theory to have restored that moment of genuine collaboration between philosophy and the social sciences, and to have developed an empirically fruitful explanatory-diagnostic theory of late-capitalist societies." Benhabib, S. (1986). Critique, norm, and utopia: A study of the foundations of critical theory. New York: Columbia University Press. p. 227

Koopman's proposition at the beginning looked very promising indeed, being very self-aware of the pitfalls that genealogy can lead to (biopower hunting) and conscious that a combination of Habermas's critical theory and Foucaultian genealogy is probably doomed to fail. And yet, the latter repeats itself in his work with a less comprehensive and methodological overtone. The question that begs to be answered is, Why do philosophers and social theorists keep coming back to this approach of Habermas and Foucault? There are so many aspects that have influenced the recurrence of this debate for at least thirty years, and yet amidst several arguments that have been (and still are) made about this debate at least two seem strikingly relevant to this work: the position of Baynes in *Habermas* (2015) and Allen's position in *The Politics of Ourselves* (2008). Both authors succeed in their articulation of crucial disparities between their subjects. Allen's position on the subject will be treated first because it illustrates the thought process presented in Koopman's genealogy and sets up the subsequent proposal of genealogy by Allen herself in *The End of Progress* (2016). Baynes' position does develop quite so fluidly and will be presented in the treatment of Foucault's understanding of power and freedom. Nevertheless, *The Politics of Ourselves* (2008) is certainly a step forward regarding the minutiae of both approaches as it boldly attempts to settle the differences between them with a comprehensive approach. Before a brief look into why this text elucidates some crucial points, we must emphasize that the proposition of this dissertation does not reside in some continuation, combination or reformulation of the Foucault versus Habermas debate.

My interest in Foucault is limited to his appraisal and understanding of his own practice of genealogy and not what can be extrapolated from his conclusion; It should be noted that it's quite possible to gather the traces and hints of the methodology without being necessarily attached to his particular findings. That's a quintessential difference between my tentative argument and Amy Allen's project in *The Politics of Ourselves* (2008). I'm not directly interested in the face value of Foucault's conclusions per se, nor his possible or probable theoretical applications. Allen seeks to instrumentalize his findings to enable a project within a contextualized version of Habermasian critical theory — a valid quest, yet not the subject of this dissertation. In her process of analyzing the contributions of both authors she ventures into some questions that can be very helpful to understand not only the normative standstill between the authors, but also the complex connection between Foucault and Kant. In fact, both subjects have some interplay.

At the core of this debate rests a dispute over interpretations on the Kantian Enlightenment. Habermas accuses Foucault of having contradictory readings of Kant — one that negates his critical legacy (*The Order of Things*) and another that seeks to recuperate and

revitalize the Enlightenment (*What is Enlightenment?*). This in turn leads to a deep-seated contradiction in his own theoretical thought. Allen's position is that Foucault doesn't offer contradictory readings of Kant, but it is a misunderstanding of Foucault's early work (specifically *The Order of Things*) as a straightforward rejection or abstract negation of Kant's Enlightenment project. Allen posits that the whole "death of man" argument is best understood as a critique of critique — an interrogation of the possibility of the transcendental subject. Allen's point is that Habermas misunderstands the early work of Foucault and misjudges the relation with Kant as a fundamental contradiction in Foucault's own thought. Instead, Allen argues precisely the opposite:

Foucault's relationship to Kant suggests a way of viewing Foucault's work as a continuous whole. One might even suggest that Foucault spent his entire career reworking Kant's famous four questions, historicizing and contextualizing them as he went. "What can I know?" becomes, in Foucault's archaeologies, "how have discursive structures positioned me as a speaking and knowing subject?" "What ought I do?" becomes, in Foucault's genealogies, "how have norms functioned insidiously to position me as a normalized, disciplined individual?" "What may I hope?" becomes, in his late work, "how can I attempt to turn myself into an ethical subject and my life into a work of art via practices and techniques of the self?" And, as with Kant, it is the fourth and final question—"what is man?" which we might recast in Foucaultian terms as "what has human subjectivity been and what might it become?"—that sums up the first three and provides the guiding thread that runs throughout Foucault's work as a whole (2008, p. 40)

It's not a surprise that Koopman considers himself following in the footsteps of Allen, even while criticizing her. Allen sees the Kantian parallel as a kind of bridge that could connect Foucault and Habermas, because she sees both authors as wrestling with the Kantian legacy; both are, according to her, engaged in a radicalization from within the Kantian critical project.

Allen's endeavor is to show that Foucault's historicizing and contextualizing of Kant's transcendental subject is worthy of a combination with a contextualized version of Habermas's ambitions. The author realizes that Habermas's attempt to formulate a universal pragmatics which rationally reconstructs the counterfactual idealizations that all competent speakers must presuppose when they engage in discourse (the ideal speech situation); this points towards the fact that his willingness to contextualize and historicize the Kantian subject only goes so far. Allen seizes the opportunity and attempts to mesh both contributions which is, as I've mentioned earlier, a valid effort, yet somehow incomplete or misplaced. Koopman (2013) himself states that Allen's proposal risks adjusting both contributions to a "lowest" common

denominator, or “reducing” critical theory to genealogical terms, thus creating a toned-down version of critical theory.

Why exactly does Koopman take this position? Why does he see genealogy in such minute terms?: An excessively Kantian reading of genealogy would be my guess. This cannot be sustained, in this case, without an excessively Kantian reading of Foucault. The perception of a straight line connecting both authors — one as transcendental and the other contextualized and historicized — is a bit simplistic. Genealogy as merely a vessel for the “destranscendentalized subject” would certainly imply a lack of normative grounding which could apparently be supplanted in the eyes of some. These interpretations play into the Habermasian (misplaced) critique — not only in the comprehension of genealogy and of Foucault’s work in general, but also in settling to reclaim some form of the very source of said critique. In an effort to look at this subject from a different perspective, the subsequent task is to look beyond the direct connection between Foucault and Kant in order to offer a more complex take on the impact that Foucault’s influences have had on his methodology and, subsequently, to demonstrate how genealogy could be understood from the perspective of the immanent critique of forms of life.

2.2 Allen’s genealogy as problematization: Adorno and Foucault.

Foucault saw himself as part of the enlightenment tradition and that means more than just being a Kantian. Habermas (1986) mentions his surprise when Foucault in his lecture on the question of the enlightenment adds himself to the tradition that goes back to Hegel, Nietzsche and Max Weber, and all the way up to Horkheimer and Adorno. Habermas could not see how Foucault maintained this kind of split personality: *How can Foucault’s self-understanding as a thinker in the tradition of the enlightenment be compatible with his unmistakable criticism of this very form of knowledge of modernity?* (1986, p. 106). How can Foucault claim and deconstruct modernity all at once? Habermas sees, as mentioned earlier, a deep-seated contradiction²⁷ in Foucault’s thinking, to which Allen’s (2008) answer regarding Habermas misunderstanding of Foucault’s is fair but incomplete. Foucault’s approach goes well beyond the interrogation of the possibility of the transcendental subject.

²⁷ Up to now, Foucault traced this will-to-knowledge in modern power-formations. only to denounce it. Now, however, he presents it in a completely different light, as the critical impulse worthy of preservation and in need of renewal. This connects his own thinking to the beginnings of modernity. 1986, p. 107

There is a more comprehensive and complex understanding of this relation between Kant and Foucault which undoubtedly passes through Hegel. In recent years, Allen's position on Foucault's work has substantially improved; in *The End of Progress* (2016) Allen pairs Adorno and Foucault to demonstrate how closely they are aligned theoretically and methodologically. The author puts forth a strong proposition which has been vastly underrated, as she considers Foucault part of the enlightenment tradition and perceives a normative commitment to freedom in his work. One of the reasons that could explain why said proposition did not have a noticeable impact is that the proposition itself doesn't have much room to grow — it remains in the background of the forward-looking conception of progress. Nevertheless, her argument will be a substantial contribution to the understanding of Foucaultian genealogy as immanent critique within critical theory.

Allen's main focus resides on mobilizing Adorno's and Foucault's insights to construct an alternative to the Hegelian and Kantian accounts of the relationship between normativity and history. She also tries to suggest how this alternative can be used in the project of decolonizing critical theory, which, in her mind, is stuck in its attempt to ground normativity in either a deflationary, pragmatic, and contingent (yet still Hegelian) account of historical progress or a neo-Kantian conception of practical reason. In this process, Allen perceives that Adorno and Foucault, both being skeptics on the ideal of historical progress, share some similarities in their approaches. Both authors agree that traditional conceptions of historical progress presuppose a supra-historical, atemporal point of view which is, in the end, a metaphysical construction. In this sense Allen underscores that both Foucault and Adorno could be understood as attempting to break out of a certain interpretation of Hegelian philosophy of history and its closely related conception of dialectics. Nevertheless, Foucault and Adorno remained firm adepts to the basically Hegelian idea that philosophy, understood as a project of critique, is: a) historically situated and b) a critical reflection on our historical present that makes use of conceptual tools which are themselves the products of history. Allen perceives both thinkers attempting to work through the possibilities of a thoroughly historicized understanding of critical philosophy, abandoning the recourse to the notion of the Absolute — an effort to think through and beyond Hegel.

To give an appropriate account of Allen's recent position on genealogy it's necessary to highlight her process and goals going in. Her process, as mentioned, compares the similarities between Adorno and Foucault in order to show the closeness between both of their philosophical positions and processes. Her goal is broad: to decolonize critical theory by showing that the skepticism on the idea of progress held by both authors is not an abstract

negation, but could lead to more productive, diverse, and open questions about the subject; at the same time, their optimistic perspective regarding progress ends up, inadvertently or not, reproducing an Eurocentric stance.

Allen concludes that Adorno's negativistic framed, forward-looking conception of progress does not rest on an abstract negation of reason, even when considering reason's entanglement with domination, but rather on a reflexive realization. Allen reiterates Adorno's belief that progress as a moral-political imperative can only be achieved through a rational reflection on reason's own limits and blind spots. Regarding Foucault, Allen sees his work, specifically in the *History of Madness*, as an attempt to de-dialectize Hegel. Allen perceives the attempt to historicize Hegel's philosophy of history and offering a genealogy of the Hegelian notion of History, as even more important than Foucault's refusal to assume that history should be understood under the idea of progress towards some end point.

Allen also understands that Foucault's historic/philosophical approach attempts to move beyond dialectical History and romanticism by respectively refusing the suprahistorical point of view and nostalgia for the past. She realizes that the critique of reason elaborated in the *History of Madness* doesn't reject reason or demand an embrace of either madness or unreason as the true space of freedom. Rather, Allen concludes that Foucault implicitly relies on the conception of critique where reason is understood as ambivalently entangled with power relations and where freedom consists in opening up a space between ourselves and our historical *a priori*. This conception is one that could be considered characteristic of Foucault's later work. Allen is on point with her remark that Foucault uses the figure of unreason to open up the space between us and our historical *a priori* to reveal not only its contingency, but also the structures (social, institutional and ideological) out of which our contingent present is constructed.

At this point, Allen ventures an alternative approach to history and its relationship to normativity, tying together the common threads she found in the discussion of Adorno and Foucault. As she points out, Allen's proposal is more of a sketch and yet holds for her the key to a fuller realization of the normative inheritance of modernity. Genealogy as problematization appears for the author as a result of this sketch, so we will explore it more deeply.

The first topic raised by Allen is the relationship between reason and power. Allen's point here is one that she holds for a long time: the impurity of reason. Adorno and Foucault are critical of the idea of history as the progressive realization of reason, but neither endorses a totalizing critique or an abstract negation of enlightenment rationality. This brings two questions to mind: Where should reason be placed? and How can one meaningfully criticize it? Allen sustains that reason is entangled with power and one cannot avoid that fact by trying to

identify a use or select a stratum of reason that “apparently” is not thus entangled. Allen underlines that both authors do not support a denial of reason and that for Adorno the task of philosophy as a rational enterprise is an attempt to transcend itself — transcending the concept by way of the concept, particularly. For Foucault, the process is similar according to Allen (2016); the task of critical thought is to reflect on its own activity and its entanglements with dangerous relations of power. If the task of critical thought is to reflect on its own rational activity, where does that lead? Where does the notion of transcendence lead? Allen attempts to answer this question in the subsequent topic, utopia and utopianism.

At this moment, Allen tries to offer a sense of direction regarding the critical thought process he has laid out. The author has a very interesting take on the relationship both authors have with the utopian ideal, and yet it is her reading of Foucault on this topic that stands out most. Allen understands that this subject is sensitive for Adorno and Foucault and underlines that in spite of Adorno being less hostile to the idea of Utopia, both authors are careful to offer only negativistic accounts of utopia or the good life. On the one hand, with Adorno it does seem to be easier to tease out the utopian influence and Allen states that for him it’s impossible to glimpse the right life within the wrong one; his own utopian ideal (connected to a notion of reconciliation) cannot be defended as a positive concept. The glimpse of utopia, for Adorno, can only manifest itself indirectly and in anticipation through the illumination of modern art. On the other hand, a utopian case within Foucault’s work it’s more difficult to sustain, a utopic position would mean a step outside of power relations which, for him, is an impossibility.

Nevertheless, Allen makes a case that both authors offer similar takes on the matter; they both eschew utopian speculations about the content of “the good life” because they are acutely aware of how any vision of the good life is impaired within a society structured by relations of domination. Allen also understands that there is a sense in which Adorno and Foucault could be considered more radically utopian than even Habermas. That’s because, according to Allen, both authors cling to the possibility of radical social change and look ahead towards an open-ended future; they allow for a possibility of radical transformation of our existing normative ideals, with such transformation not necessarily falling into regressive practices. In regards to Foucault, Allen sustains this radically “utopian” position with his particular look into the historical *a priori*:

The early work of Foucault in particular is filled with thought experiments that pose this possibility: someday we might look back on our present preoccupation with mental illness and wonder what all the fuss was about, and from that point of view our current historical *a priori* may well seem benighted. Although we can’t imagine what it would be like to inhabit that future point of view, there is a critical value for Foucault in being open to this

possibility and to the idea that the creatures who inhabit that point of view will inhabit a different historical a priori and hence a different moral universe (2016, p. 188).

This leads to the third topic on Allen's project of critique: The Historicization of History. It's important to make clear that in the process of reviewing the authors' use of the utopian in their works, Allen seems to read power relations in a very specific way: she focuses on how problematic these relations can become and how they express domination. This could lead to a one-sided stance on power that Allen is very likely opposed to. As mentioned earlier, discussions on power relations will figure largely in the subsequent text.

Allen presses the point of historicization; Adorno and Foucault understood their own critical, historico-philosophical projects as historically situated and both worked to apply the insights of a historically situated conception of rationality to the historico-philosophical enterprise itself. Basically, Allen points to similarities between Foucault's stance on historical contingencies and Adorno's charge against an "ahistorical concept of history". In both cases, Allen concludes that historicization is the thread connecting Adorno and Foucault to Hegel and also the gulf that separates them.

Yet, this historicization does not end on itself. As Allen points out in the fourth part of her own sketch of critique, the historicization of History is bound up with its problematization. It is at this point that Allen mentions genealogy plainly in her book. Let's look at what kind of genealogy resides in Allen's proposition. The first indications of a characterization can be found already in the transition from historicization. Allen indicates that historicization bound with problematization means two things: *first, revealing the historical contingency of our own historically situated point of view; second, showing how that point of view has been contingently made up and as such is bound up with particular relations of power.* (2016, p. 190). So, to effectively face the task of problematizing our historically situated point of view, Allen's proposition is a distinctive kind of genealogical method which, incidentally, follows from Koopman's position. Allen uses the three different modes of genealogical inquiry laid out by Koopman: genealogy as subversive, vindicatory and problematizing; and yet, her spin on problematization attempts to sidestep the neutrality argument.

For Allen genealogy as problematization combines both subversive and vindicatory features insofar as it aims to reveal at once the dangers and the promise contained in the contingent history it traces, but its aim is neither simply subversive nor vindicatory. Allen struggles to sustain this argument from the perspective of Foucault's work. Allen even searches for sentences where Foucault himself calls his form of critique problematization. Besides that,

to justify the vindicatory features of the genealogy as problematization, Allen uses a two-pronged approach: The first is to, again, directly quote Foucault's statement that his critique does not mean everything is bad. Allen seems very much aware of the fact that this doesn't say much when she highlights that although the aim of Foucault's genealogies is not to vindicate our practices or forms of rationality, an important and underappreciated vindicatory element to his genealogical method is present. Which leads us into the most substantive part of the defense of a vindicatory feature in Foucault's genealogy.

Allen argues that in *What is Enlightenment?* Foucault places his own critical method within the philosophical ethos of the normative inheritance of the enlightenment, and yet that doesn't necessarily demand fidelity to its doctrinal elements, but rather to its critical attitude. His work would be part of an inheritance that involves reaffirming the legacy of the enlightenment in and through its radical transformation²⁸. Allen states that in spite of Adorno never having used the term genealogy or problematization the outlines of such an approach are evident in his work. Also, Allen emphasizes that Adorno's philosophy aims to chart the historical emergence of the ideals of enlightenment. Which is consistent with a mixture of domination and promise, an unity of discontinuity and continuity, that particularly fits her method of problematizing genealogy.

It's interesting to notice that Allen claims, along with her own alterations, the concepts of the dual step genealogy of problematization of Koopman. Koopman's genealogy was tailor-made to measure up against Benhabib's dual-dimensioned standard for critical social theory and failed on the anticipatory-utopian part. It is not clear if Allen's genealogy also tries to fit within this same standard, which would be a bit incongruous considering that Benhabib dismisses much of the critical potential of Adorno's project²⁹; her views on Foucault are very well documented by Allen herself (see Allen, 2008). Allen insists on the utopian and vindicatory vision of Foucault and the explanatory merits of Adorno's critique, but whether or not it satisfies

²⁸ I do not pretend to be summarizing in these few lines either the complex historical event that was the Enlightenment, at the end of the eighteenth century, or the attitude of modernity in the various guises it may have taken on during the last two centuries. I have been seeking, on the one hand, to emphasize the extent to which a type of philosophical interrogation—one that simultaneously problematizes man's relation to the present, man's historical mode of being, and the constitution of the self as an autonomous subject - is rooted in the Enlightenment. On the other hand, I have been seeking to stress that the thread which may connect us with the Enlightenment is not faithfulness to doctrinal elements but, rather, the permanent reactivation of an attitude—that is, of a philosophical ethos that could be described as a permanent critique of our historical era. (1997 p. 312)

²⁹ After the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, the critical theory of the Frankfurt School lost its explanatory-diagnostic dimension. It could no longer analyze the contradictions of the period. (...) With its explanatory-diagnostic dimension blocked off, critical theory continued as anticipatory-utopian critique alone. Since the ideal of Utopian reason in the name of which Adorno and Horkheimer spoke could not be anchored in the present, or mediated with it, however, their critical theory became an increasingly aporetic project. (1986, p. 227)

(or even attempts to satisfy) Benhabib's standard remains unanswered. In the end, Allen's stance tries to sustain itself; the final two topics before her attempt to explain the benefits of the problematization method in the decolonization of progress are promising.

The fifth part of Allen's approach to problematization frames a very interesting question of how we can comprehend that our historical *a priori* is a particular system of thought — a historically situated point of view entangled within power relations. Allen understands that Adorno and Foucault provide the tools for what she calls critical distance (or *philosophizing with a hammer*); this is necessary to apprehend the particularity of our historical *a priori*, by making use of a figure that cannot be reconciled into the dialectical unfolding of History. Allen perceives both authors as pushing against a recuperation into the dialectic, trying to reveal the fragmentary nature of the Hegelian Historical modernity. Adorno used the nonidentical and Foucault unreason, respectively, as this figure against the unifying logic of modernity:

For both Adorno and Foucault, tracing the figure of the nonidentical or of unreason through the fragmentary, non-systematic, and experimental work of critical thought—or through the anticipatory illumination cast by works of art—serves to reveal the fragmentary, fragile, and internally fractured nature of our present historical situation (2016, p. 194).

Before concluding this topic, Allen touches briefly on a very sensitive point — one of great importance to this dissertation — that could have been exploited more fully. In arguing about what it means to be “free” from the historical backdrop of possibility of thought set for us to use in our historical *a priori*, Allen engages with the argument of Martin Saar with regarding the aim of genealogy as a form of critique:

“telling the subject the story of the powers working on him, telling it the story of its own becoming.” Saar argues that this distinctive goal accounts for the hyperbolic and exaggerated nature of genealogical texts; although his focus here is on Nietzsche and Foucault, he also includes *Dialectic of Enlightenment* in this genre. Only stories told through exaggeration and hyperbole, Saar argues, “release the explosive power contained in the revelation of processes of power and forceful construction. In this sense, genealogies are textual shocks and momentous negative world disclosures.” While the shape and contours of some prior historical epoch can be uncovered through gentle digging, in order to see one's own historical *a priori* as historical, one must philosophize with a hammer, as Foucault, following Nietzsche, put it. (2016, p. 194).

Perhaps Allen fails to realize how integral this stylistic argument is to the process of enabling one to see one's own historical *a priori* as historical: How much of the weight of the hammer resides on this brief reminder of the explosiveness needed in a genealogical text? As

mentioned earlier, Saar's stylistic dimension of genealogy is integral to the project of genealogy as immanent criticism and demands proper treatment.

The last part of Allen's sketch of genealogy as a problematization is perhaps the most important: Problematization and the normative inheritance of modernity. Allen's main argument here is that the choice for problematization should not be understood as a rejection of the normative inheritance of modernity, but rather as a fuller realization of its core value: freedom. Regarding Adorno, Allen's argument is that his account of second nature illustrates the connection between his philosophy of history and the possibility of freedom. Revealing the contingency of this second nature is a crucial task for Adorno's critical theory because, argues Allen, the unmasking of the congealed history intends to break history's illusory and ideological spell; considering that Adorno perceives freedom³⁰, at least in its positive sense, in an intricate relation with the possibility of breaking or escaping the spell, this process of demonstrating the contingent, and therefore changeable, traits of history is vital to Adorno. Allen understands that *breaking or escaping the spell, freeing thought up from what it silently thinks in order to enable it to think differently—these are both ways of realizing freedom* (2016, p. 196).

In Allen's view, Adorno's process is very akin to Foucault's characterization of genealogy as an attempt to seek the singularity of events we tend to feel are without history. Allen underlines summarizing lines from *What is Enlightenment*³¹ (1997) that genealogy as a process of critique should be understood as an historical investigation into the events that contributed in some way to the constitution of the self and the recognition of self as a subject. The goal of this critical inquiry is to give new impetus to the undefined work of freedom.

³⁰ If you agree with at least some of what I have told you about history as natural history, about history as spell, and if you are prepared to take seriously what I have also said about resistance, then this does provide a pointer to what might be meant by freedom. For if you agree with me on that point, then freedom is nothing but the quintessence of resistance to the spell that I have been trying to explain to you. I hope to be able to promise you that once I have worked my way into the dialectics of the intelligible character, and thus into the dialectics of free will, I shall return to the assertion that the positive meaning of freedom lies in the potential, in the possibility, of breaking the spell or escaping from it. (2001 p. 174)

³¹ Here's the full quote: ...that criticism is no longer going to be practiced in the search for formal structures with universal value but, rather, as a historical investigation into the events that have led us to constitute ourselves and to recognize ourselves as subjects of what we are doing, thinking, saying. In that sense, this criticism is not transcendental, and its goal is not that of making a metaphysics possible: it is genealogical in its design and archaeological in its method. Archaeological-and not transcendental-in the sense that it will not seek to identify the universal structures of all knowledge [connaissance] or of all possible moral action, but will seek to treat the instances of discourse that articulate what we think, say, and do as so many historical events. And this critique will be genealogical in the sense that it will not deduce from the form of what we are what it is impossible for us to do and to know; but it will separate out, from the contingency that has made us what we are, the possibility of no longer being, doing, or thinking what we are, do, or think. It is not seeking to make possible a metaphysics that has finally become a science; it is seeking to give new impetus, as far and wide as possible, to the undefined work of freedom (1997, p. 315, 316).

Allen, with this proposition, seems to have reached the inflection point for her approach on problematization; she establishes her argument and boldly goes on to, perhaps, imbue her own vision of forward looking progress with some heft:

So for both Adorno and Foucault, the problematization of our own point of view has a normative point. It aims at a fuller realization of a central normative ideal of the Enlightenment: freedom. But Adorno's work goes further than this, and in this sense goes beyond Foucault, by also suggesting that the problematization of our own point of view not only enhances our freedom in relation to second nature or to our historical a priori; it also is required if we are to do justice to the Other. (2016, p. 196)

From this point forward, Allen strives to substantiate the inclusion of the terms justice to the Other into the “undefined work of freedom” — it seems that Adorno does most of the heavy lifting here. To uphold the ideal of “justice to the Other”, Allen relies on the final lecture of *Problems of Moral Philosophy* (2000) which puts her approach and normative commitment proposed in a tough spot. Allen's (2016) argument begins by highlighting Adorno's position on the goal of moral philosophy; the author stresses the point that the most one can say about the good life is that it would consist in resistance to the forms of bad life. Not much else could be envisaged than a negative prescription of guidance.

Allen also states that one of Adorno's contentions is that even though one must resist the abstract rigorism of Kantian morality, it does not mean an abandonment of the notions of conscience and responsibility — without these the idea of the good life would not be possible. Adorno writes that *we find ourselves really and truly in a contradictory situation. We need to hold fast to moral norms, to self-criticism, to the question of right and wrong, and at the same time to a sense of the fallibility of the authority that has the confidence to undertake such self-criticism* (2000, p. 169). Allen follows up on that point by stressing how Adorno perceives this contradictory predicament and, specifically, the moral content implied in his statement. Allen (2016) emphasizes that Adorno believes that self-reflection today has become the true heir of moral categories and also that by reflecting our own limitations it's possible to learn to do justice to those who are different from us. That is why modesty, for Adorno, is the only possible item in a hypothetical list of cardinal virtues — in the end, we must have a conscience, but not necessarily insist on our own.

Allen then assimilates the virtue argument:

The best way of achieving the stance of modesty is through a critical, genealogical problematization that combines both vindicatory and subversive, or progressive and regressive, strands, but whose aim is neither simply vindication nor subversion. By allowing us to reflexively critique the social institutions and practices, the patterns of cultural meaning and subject

formation, and the normative commitments that have made us who we are, problematizing critique opens up a space of critical distance on those institutions, practices, and so forth, thereby freeing us up in relation to them, and thus also in relation to ourselves. (2016, p. 197).

It's interesting to perceive how the modest stance has become a goal to achieve through the genealogical problematization of Allen: Am I not already modest if I seek a critical problematization of social space that surrounds me? Is this modest stance assumed by the very same process that Allen is trying to justify? Allen's understanding of Adorno's modest stance is not only epistemic (regarding the fallibility of the subject), but also morally required *if we are to do justice to those who are different from ourselves* (2016, p. 198). In the end, Allen ties the normative trait of her method of problematization to the epistemic and moral requirements of the modest stance:

In other words, and here is a different way of construing the normative point of the method of problematization, such problematization is motivated not merely by epistemic concerns about our inescapable fallibility given our inability to have access to a God's-eye point of view, but also by our commitment to equal respect for the Other, that is, to justice (2016, p. 198).

As mentioned before, Allen's understanding of Adorno really creates a compelling argument for a forward-looking, morally-charged process of genealogy as problematization. The modest stance becomes the center as a moral requirement, an assumption and a goal of the process of critique; the apparent normative heft of freedom implied earlier in the text takes a backseat. The justice to the Other moral imperative invites criticism for being, at least apparently, an excessively Kantian reading of Adorno. The moral requirement understanding of Adorno's modesty could be charged of actually not being modest at all, and of containing *exactly the same positing of self, the same self-assertion as positivity, which really just camouflages the principle of self-preservation, while simultaneously pretending to be the moral* (2000, p. 170).³²

³² Here's the full quote by Adorno in *Problems of Moral Philosophy*: *For example, if you find yourself on a committee – just assume you belong on a committee, and nowadays all of you will be a member of some committee or other, that is the name of the game – and hear someone saying 'My conscience forbids me to do this or that', you should make up your minds to treat such a person with the greatest possible distrust. Above all, when we ourselves feel tempted to say that we 'are making our stand and can do no other', we too deserve to be distrusted in precisely the same way, because this gesture contains exactly the same positing of self, the same self-assertion as positivity, which really just camouflages the principle of self-preservation, while simultaneously pretending to be the moral with which – as I hope I have demonstrated in the course of my critical analysis – it also coincides* (2000, p. 170).

Allen's proposal of genealogy as problematization progresses in comparison to Koopman's version. Nevertheless, it seems to move intentionally to fit Allen's version of forward-looking progress and even to satisfy Benhabib's dual model of critical theory. Allen imprints a strong emancipatory-utopian trait onto Adorno's text, specifically on the seventeenth lecture of *Problems of Moral Philosophy*. The Foucaultian part of her process stands by itself with insight relating to freedom and normativity — it remains profoundly untapped and not quite developed in her text. The next goal of this dissertation is to show a specific understanding of Foucault and his work, and maybe thread together some of the issues left untapped by Allen's genealogy as problematization.

2.3 Foucault's Critique: Power and Freedom

In the last segment, it was stated that there is a more comprehensive and complex understanding of the relation between Kant and Foucault — one that undoubtedly passes through Hegel. Allen's take on Foucault's work as de-dialectized Hegel is certainly a step forward; yet in spite of engaging with the aforementioned realization, it doesn't fully take advantage of what this actually means. Allen's approach gets caught up with the possibility of a forward-looking progress which, as mentioned earlier, relies heavily on a particular reading of Adorno that could be viewed as moralistic, in some respects, if not Neo-Kantian. The result is that the progress regarding Foucault ends up taking a backseat to the goal of setting up a forward-looking conception of progress — one that could lead to the main goal of the book: the decolonization of critical theory. Therefore, the arguments posited in Allen's Foucaultian section, in some shape or form, fall in line with her ultimate argument, or, at the very least, they have to be understood under certain theoretical grounds in order to remain relevant to her argument. I have problems with both options.

To de-dialectize Hegel just to return to Kant seem illogical to me. The thought that Foucault's process, as posed by Allen, would need to limit its impact or be supplemented theoretically in order to be useful doesn't gel. Allen's forward-looking complementation is very much in-line with Koopman's conclusion; only Koopman did not quite determine what would be the specific complementation. It's possible the concept of problematization requires something more, such as being paired with Benhabib's dual dimensioned form of critique. In spite of their differences in characterizing Foucault's process, one argues a neutrality of genealogy (Koopman) and the other defends the idea that genealogy must be both subversive

and affirmative to be problematizing (Allen); both end up reaching for something afar while taking their positions regarding the critique process. The goal is to avoid that act of “reaching out” and seeking outwardly, not for some sense of true understanding or dogmatic fidelity, but because the process itself allows it. The potency of process, in my view, does rest in its own movement. To accomplish this, it is important to offer some initial insight to the aforementioned complex relation between Kant and Hegel in Foucault.

2.3.1 Foucault’s *dispositif* and systematicity

Looking closely at Foucault’s approach it is possible to perceive a Hegelian eye towards the Kantian tradition, meaning that his understanding and critique of Kant is colored by Hegel’s influence — directly or indirectly³³. This will be clear subsequently. There’s at least two critical revelatory moments of Foucault’s Hegelian lens in his studies which by no means refutes or diminishes his well-known disagreements with a more traditional stance on Hegel.

The first is the use of the word *dispositif*, or “apparatus” in English. Giorgio Agamben in *What is an apparatus* (2009) proposed a genealogy of the term which Foucault uses quite often (especially from the mid 1970s onwards) when he began to concern himself with what he calls “governmentality” or the “government of men”. Even though Foucault never offers a complete definition, Agamben posits that he comes very close to doing so in a 1977 interview³⁴:

What I'm trying to single out with this term is, first and foremost, a thoroughly heterogeneous set consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral, and philanthropic propositions—in short, the said as much as the unsaid. Such are the elements of the apparatus. The apparatus itself is the network that can be established between these elements (...) by the term “apparatus” I mean a kind of a formation, so to speak, that at a given historical moment has as its major function the response to an urgency. The apparatus therefore has a dominant strategic function (...) I said that the nature of an apparatus is essentially strategic, which means that we are speaking about a certain manipulation of relations of forces, of a rational and concrete intervention in the relations of forces, either so as to develop them in a particular direction, or to block them, to stabilize them, and to utilize them. The apparatus is thus always inscribed into a play of power, but it is also always linked to certain limits of knowledge that arise from it and, to an equal degree, condition it. The apparatus is precisely this: a set of strategies of the

³³ Foucault himself acknowledges his training and the prevailing influence of Hegel: *Nietzsche, Blanchot, and Bataille were the authors who enabled me to free myself from the dominant influences in my university training in the early fifties—Hegel and phenomenology. Doing philosophy in those days, and today as well in fact, mainly amounted to doing the history of philosophy—and the history of philosophy delimited, on the one hand, by Hegel's theory of systems and, on the other, by the philosophy of the subject, went on in the form of phenomenology and existentialism. Essentially, it was Hegel who was the prevailing influence* (2001, p. 246).

³⁴ Foucault, M. (1980). *Power/knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings, 1972-1977*

relations of forces supporting, and supported by, certain types of knowledge (Foucault, 1980, p. 194-196)

Agamben summarizes three points made by Foucault in his interview that characterizes the “apparatus”: Firstly, defining it as heterogeneous set that includes virtually anything linguistic and non-linguistic: discourses, institutions, buildings, laws, philosophical propositions, and so on. The network that is established between these elements, in the end, is the “apparatus”. Secondly, the apparatus has a concrete strategic function which is located within a power relation. And finally, the “apparatus” presents itself at the intersection of power relations and relations of knowledge. By tracing the origin of the term, Agamben realizes that, at the end of the 1960s, around the time that Foucault was writing *The Archeology of Knowledge*, he uses the term *positivité* or “positivity” to define the object of his research (without offering a clear cut definition); at this point he does yet use the term "apparatus": "positivity" is an etymological neighbor of *dispositif*. Agamben states that he wrestles with the question around the choice of positivity and its apparent undisclosed origin.

Revisiting a book by Jean Hyppolite entitled *Introduction à la philosophie de l'histoire de Hegel*, Agamben found his answer. Jean Hyppolite was a huge influence on Foucault’s academic career: *You probably know about the strong link that ties Foucault to Hyppolite, a person whom he referred to at times as ‘my master’* (2009 p. 4). Hyppolite was Foucault’s teacher in two critical periods of his academic career: *first during the khâgne in the Lycee Henri-IV [the preparatory course for the Ecole normale superieure] and then in the Ecole normale* (2009 p. 4). Agamben focuses on the third part of Hyppolite's book: *Reason and History: The Ideas of Positivity and Destiny*. In this section, Hyppolite analyzes two works from Hegel's years in Bern and Frankfurt (1795-96): *The Spirit of Christianity and Its Destiny* and *The Positivity of the Christian Religion*.

Agamben emphasizes that Hyppolite works with “destiny” and “positivity” — two key concepts in Hegel's thought. It seems that Hyppolite finds the term "positivity" in Hegel set in opposition between “natural religion” and “positive religion”. On the one hand, natural religion is concerned with matters of the immediate and general relation of human reason with the divine, but positive or historical religion also comprehends the beliefs, rules, and rites that in a certain society and at a certain historical moment are externally imposed on individuals: *A positive religion, 'Hegel writes in a passage cited by Hyppolite,' implies feelings that are more or less impressed through constraint on souls; these are actions that are the effect of command and the result of obedience and are accomplished without direct interest* (2009, p. 4-5).

According to Agamben, Hyppolite shows in his interpretation that the opposition between nature and positivity corresponds to the dialectics of freedom and obligation, as well as of reason and history:

Hyppolite writes: We see here the knot of questions implicit in the concept of positivity, as well as Hegel's successive attempts to bring together dialectically-a dialectics that is not yet conscious of itself-pure reason (theoretical and above all practical) and positivity, that is, the historical element. In a certain sense, Hegel considers positivity as an obstacle to the freedom of man, and as such it is condemned. To investigate (the positive elements of a religion, and we might add, of a social state, means to discover in them that which is imposed through a constraint on man, that which obfuscates the purity of reason. But, in another sense - and this is the aspect that ends up having the upper hand in the course of Hegel's development - positivity must be reconciled with reason, which then loses its abstract character and adapts to the concrete richness of life. We see then why the concept of positivity is at the center of Hegelian perspectives (2009, p. 5).

Agamben makes an important point: if, according to Hyppolite, “positivity” is the term that the young Hegel gives to the historical element — loaded with rules, rites, and institutions — then Foucault, by using the term, takes a decisive stance with respect to his own problem of the relation between individuals as living beings and the historical element. Agamben plays up the idea that in a Foucaultian sense the historical element means the set of institutions, processes of subjectification and rules in which power relations become concrete. One thing that Agamben preemptively dismisses is that *Foucault's ultimate aim is not, then, as in Hegel, the reconciliation of the two elements; it is not even to emphasize their conflict* (2009, p. 6). Agamben doesn't imply some version of the neutrality or problematization argument: *For Foucault, what is at stake is rather the investigation of concrete modes in which the positivities (or the apparatuses) act within the relations, mechanisms, and "plays" of power* (2009, p. 6). All this seems a bit too descriptive and dissonant with regard to the point being made here.

Agamben dismisses the reconciliation argument, apparently, for the wrong reasons. Likely, even the young Hegel didn't have a fully-formed approach to the goal of reconciliation or a clear idea of how systematic his proposal would one day become. The reconciliation of reason with history, freedom and power is clearly tied with the systematicity thesis proposed later in Hegel's life. This leads to the second point of contact between Hegel and Foucault: the intricate relation between power and freedom. To understand how this aspect of Foucault's work shares insights with Hegel, it's important to comprehend the sense of systematicity of Hegel's normativity gauge.

Kevin Thompson's *Hegel's Theory of Normativity* (2019) does a very good job of demonstrating the potency of the system posed by Hegel. Going even further, in this book,

Thompson demonstrates that Hegel's work in the *Elements of the Philosophy of Right* seeks to elucidate the central problem of representational forms of knowledge (Rationalism and Empiricism, more specifically). Hegel claims that they presuppose both their object and their methodology by attempting to justify the authoritativeness of right with a systematic type of argumentation, not beholden to representation, but abjured from all presuppositions.

Nevertheless, even Thompson realizes that the critical power of Hegel's systematic proposition has to be attached with extra-systematic aspects (representational). Sticking with the systematic and procedural argument for now, Thompson argues that Hegel's crucial thesis is that the justification of the concept of right consists in it being shown to be the immanent and necessary ground of the more basic, and thus less determinate, concept of freedom. According to Thompson, the entire normative character of the argument of the Philosophy of Right hinges on this idea. Right, would be, according to this position, the condition of the possibility of freedom:

The nerve of Hegel's systematic justification of the concept of right is that it is the result of the immanent and necessary unfolding of the essential determinations of freedom and thus is its ground. As such, right is not only essential to being free, but it has binding authority over all forms of free acting (...). Systematic justification (...) is able to show that right is not only one of the essential determinations discovered in the unfolding of freedom, it is the concrete existence, the necessary embodiment, through which human striving is able to be genuinely free. But if being free is made possible by right itself, then this concept and its further, more concrete, determinations possess legitimate binding authority with respect to free actions and forms of life because they have proved to be the retrogressive ground of freedom itself. The normativity that is right thus flows from its being what ultimately constitutes freedom itself, or what we shall call, following Hegel, the objectivity of freedom: "the system of right is the realm of actualized freedom" (GPR §4). (2019, p. 36).

There's much to say about the idea of retrogressive grounding. For example, the manner in which the intricate connections between right and freedom are posed by the systematic position of Hegel, or how normativity can be explored by the premise that right is an expression of freedom actualized. Of course, in Hegel's case the retrogressive grounding falls back into a dense metaphysical set interrelations into the Science of Logic³⁵. One can glean some sense of the retrogressive grounding proposal in Foucault's relation between freedom and power. When dealing with the subject of power, Foucault generally seeks to demonstrate how

³⁵ Hegel's central claim in the *Science of Logic*, and in the core of his system as a whole, is thus that the actualized movement of self-differentiation, the idea, is the absolute ground and truth of being, the foundation of all objects and relations. The immanent development of being thus necessarily entails the idea as its retrogressive ground (2019, p. 31).

power relations don't necessarily imply bad relations. This is an idea that sometimes gets overlooked considering that he dedicated most of his life addressing the history of problematic power relations. In the text *The Subject and Power* (2000), Foucault deals with exercise of power by underlining this exact point:

The exercise of power can produce as much acceptance as may be wished for: it can pile up the dead and shelter itself behind whatever threats it can imagine. In itself, the exercise of power is not a violence that sometimes hides, or an implicitly renewed consent. It operates on the field of possibilities in which behavior of active subjects is able to inscribe itself. It is a set of actions on possible actions; it incites, it induces, it seduces, it makes easier or more difficult; it releases or contrives, makes more probable or less; in the extreme, it constrains or forbids absolutely, but it is always a way of acting upon one or more acting subjects by virtue of their acting or being capable of action. A set of actions upon other actions (2000, p. 341).

For Foucault, the exercise of power should be considered a question of government — not a particular confrontation between opponents or their mutual engagement. Government is meant here in the broadest sense of the word, not referring to political structures or management of state. It is actually closer to the meaning it had in the sixteenth century: how the conduct of individuals or of groups might be directed; *the government of children, of souls, of communities, of families, of the sick* (2000, p. 341). To govern, in this sense, means more than political or economic subjection, but is to structure the possible field of action of others. Foucault points out that if one considers government as the exercise of power as a mode of action upon the actions of others (in the broad sense of the word), one must include the element of freedom. This element that, at times, apparently eluded the author seems to have had an intricate part in his process. Foucault understands that:

Power is exercised only over free subjects, and only insofar as they are “free.” By this we mean individual or collective subjects who are faced with a field of possibilities in which several kinds of conduct, several ways of reacting and modes of behavior are available. Where the determining factors are exhaustive, there is no relationship of power: slavery is not a power relationship when a man is in chains, only when he has some possible mobility, even a chance of escape (2000, p. 342).

This suggests that power and freedom are not only mutually exclusive, but an interplay between them that carries more than it initially appears:

In this game, freedom may well appear as the condition for the exercise of power (at the same time its precondition, since freedom must exist for power to be exerted, and also its permanent support, since without the possibility of recalcitrance power would be equivalent to a physical determination) (2000, p. 342).

The interlocking, systematic and retrogressive manner of describing the relationship of power and freedom is reminiscent of Hegel's position of freedom and right; both authors undeniably share more than what is commonly expected. Now let's rethread the Habermasian question on Foucault's position in this subject. Baynes (2015) is well aware of Foucault's remarks on power and freedom and challenges the possibility of the statement, as Allen puts it, that *autonomy is ... necessarily linked to power relations* (2008, p. 67). Baynes states:

If the claim is that with reference to any individual life—or relatedly in reference to any claim to knowledge—power relations are at work, it seems important to ask whether these are objectionable or unobjectionable exercises of power or, if both, how any distinction between the two forms is to be made. The claim that “autonomy is necessarily linked to power relations” would be relatively uncontroversial if (1) we are making an empirical claim about a specific case or individual life-history or (2) if the type of power involved is itself unobjectionable (if the claim is, for example, that “individualization requires socialization”). Neither of these are claims that Habermas would deny. But, if the point is that, as a conceptual or normative matter, we cannot conceive of freedom (or autonomy) without it being necessarily linked to objectionable power relations it becomes more difficult to assess (2015, p. 202)

Baynes is particularly interested in some way to distinguish between objectionable and unobjectionable power relations; he underscores the position that Habermas's charge concerning Foucault's “cryptonormativism” was not originally meant to defend an ultimate grounding at securing human freedom. It was, nevertheless, a demonstration of the necessity for a clear cut or even relatively clear indication as to how the distinction between unobjectionable and objectionable forms of power might be drawn; Foucault's analysis of power does not seem to be able to do that. Foucault's analysis of power doesn't aim to do that. The question is that, for Foucault, there's no way to anticipate a distinction of what forms of power are objectionable and unobjectionable prior to the experience of a critique, and a genealogical critique at that. Furthermore there's no form of power unobjectionable. Within these terms, objectionable and unobjectionable characteristics are always present in any form of power. The degree of presentation in the social practice of such characteristics is the proper question to ask. When the objectionable traits of an instance of freedom, a form of life, rises to a problematic level (hindering experiences) then it demands criticism. That does not amount to a totalizing critique of reason.

Habermas' chosen process of critique rests in pointing out the idealizing suppositions contained in our more mundane social practices. That's a valid route — a Kantian route. If we agree that Foucault's diverse theoretical heritage allows a rendezvous with Hegelian thinking,

as proposed here, then it would be no surprise that his process of critique would venture on his own historical immanent criticism — a criticism that includes a heavy dose of Nietzsche. In the end, Foucault's perspective provides a very intricate methodological scheme (with diverse influences) that does not focus on the success, or on the unobjectionable and tends to realize that we are far from being through with the problems of power and freedom and perhaps we will never be.

Nevertheless, even if one disagrees that Foucault's position on power and freedom owes much to Hegel's influence, it's clear that both positions are relevant to the matter at hand. Foucault's idea of exercise of power takes on a particular sense of determination in Hegel's vernacular. It is clearly less determinate than the right (*Recht*) and does share the same retrogressive grounding: But does it share the weight of normativity? In Hegel the normativity of the right (*Recht*) flows from it being what ultimately constitutes freedom itself. Would it be possible to argue the same about power as it relates to freedom?: The answer is yes. Power carries a normative ground while holding a more or less determinate and concentrated position. The fact is that the difference of perspectives of both authors, Hegel and Foucault, usually prevents the drawing of these types of parallels. Hegel sees the right (*Recht*) as a case of success in the history of actualizations of freedom, while Foucault contrapuntally looks at instances of power to demonstrate how they are failing to fulfill an expression of freedom. This certainly colors the way that Foucault proceeds in his analyses, being not very worried with the legitimacy of its normative grounds, but extremely engaged with problems that relations of power bring about. And yet Foucault does not lose sight of the possibility of change:

What would be proper to a relationship of power, then, is that it be a mode of action on actions. That is, power relations are rooted deep in the social nexus, not a supplementary structure over and above "society" whose radical effacement one could perhaps dream of. To live in society is, in any event, to live in such a way that some can act on the actions of others. A society without power relations can only be an abstraction. Which, be it said in passing, makes all the more politically necessary the analysis of power relations in a given society, their historical formation, the source of their strength or fragility, the conditions that are necessary to transform some or to abolish others. (2000, p. 343)

Foucault considers power relations to be deeply rooted in the social nexus — so much so that he claims society does not exist outside of power relations. This understanding is quite nearly an invitation to the analysis of power relations in a given society to transform or abolish those problematic power relations. Foucault perceives the relationship between power and

freedom not as an antagonism and more like an "agonism", which for him is not an inescapable gridlock paralyzing both sides but, in fact, a permanent provocation and an increasingly political task. How can we assess the conditions that are necessary to transform or abolish some power relations? How should we look at their historical formation to evaluate the source of their strength or fragility? These questions bring us right back to the critical process of genealogy. Foucault has a particular view of genealogy and traces his own process to the tradition of enlightenment, as mentioned before. Perhaps now with more perspective on some key aspects of his own work that are connected, inspired or at least reminiscent of Hegel, it is possible to have a more comprehensive outlook of Foucault's relation with Kant.

2.3.2 Foucault and *Aufklärung*

The most often used text to show how Foucault was influenced by Kant is *What is Enlightenment?* (1997) or *Qu'est-ce que les Lumières?* (1984). This text certainly has an important place on the characterization of his perception and his place as a philosopher, and yet I choose to work here with the seminal lecture called *Qu'est-ce que la critique? Critique et Aufklärung* (1990), which is very apropos of the thematization in question. In this lecture, Foucault offers a very rare look into his own process and characterizes his outlook on both Kant and on the enlightenment. The lecture begins with a historical take contextualizing the construction of the Kantian answer on what is enlightenment. The author tries to demonstrate one way to find the possible origins of the critical attitude and finds the path running through the upward governance of Western societies in the 15th and 16th centuries with the expansion of the rule of life. This is the origin of the broad sense of governing mentioned earlier in the analyses of power relations. According to Foucault (1990), since before the Protestant Reform, there was an expansion of the art of governing men, understood in two senses:

"Displacement initially in relation to its religious nucleus, say, if you will, laicization, expansion in civil society, this theme of the art of governing men and the methods to do so. And then, secondly, multiplication of this art of governing in various domains: how to govern children, how to govern the poor and beggars, how to govern a family, a house, how to governing the army, how to govern the different groups, cities, states, how to govern their own bodies, how to rule your own spirit." (1990. p. 37)

Foucault saw the question of "How to govern?" as fundamental to explaining the displacement of laicization and the expansion of the art of governance in the 15th and 16th centuries. That said, Foucault (1990) is keenly aware that the opposite question, "How not to

be governed?", cannot be dissociated from this process of governmentalization. To be clear, this doesn't mean a dichotomy.

However, the process of governmentalization incites the questions of how and why we are governed in one way and not another. Foucault (1990) underscores that alongside the arts of governing, there was something that was born in Europe at that time. Something that worked in return of the arts governing, or more as partner and opponent, and, at the same time, as a way to distrust them, to refuse them, to limit them, to find them a fair measure, to transform them. He's underscoring the emergence of a general cultural form, at once moral and political attitude, simply called the art of not being governed or even the art of not being governed in that way and at that price.

Notice that here it is possible we're still talking about the interplay between power and freedom. Governing and questioning the same government could be characterized as concrete expressions of power and freedom, respectively. No wonder Foucault underlines the complexity of the relation between governing and the attitude of contesting such government as oddly complementary.

It is this general moral and political attitude that the author recognizes as a first definition of criticism. Three historical anchor points are raised by the author (1990) to better explain the origin of this definition of criticism: a) An unwillingness to be governed which ascends in the midst of religious thoughts that question ecclesiastical teaching. It means a return to the scripture, about what was authentic, what was actually written in the scripture, and how to gain direct access to the truth; b) The questioning and/or rejection of the laws because they are unfair and/or illegitimate in essence. The critical attitude at this point stands before the sovereign and obedience that he (or she) demands, and, from this point of view, seeks to oppose universal and imprescriptible rights, to which every government, whatever it may be. In short, according to Foucault (1990), there is the problem of natural law. Natural law assumes, from the 16th century onwards, a critical function that it seems to be ever present — that is to question the limits to the right to govern. The critical attitude here becomes essentially legal; and c) Not to accept as truth what an authority says to be true or, at least not simply accept it because the authority says it's true unless that you consider for yourself good reasons to accept.

These historical anchors point towards a definition of criticism that demonstrates a sense of movement in the governmentalization process and the criticism represents the means of unwillingness, or means of displacement in the political game of truth. Within the great process of governmentalization of society, as described by Foucault, emerges this attitude questioning the reality posed: *if governmentalization is in fact this movement by which the*

subject gives himself the right to question the truth, now, criticism will be the art of voluntary reflected indocility (1990, p. 39).

That is how Foucault understands, as he puts it, “one possible origin” for the critical attitude and he can’t help but find some parallels with Kant's propositions in *Was ist Aufklärung?*. *Aufklärung*, in Kantian terms, could be expressed as a desire not to be governed which resonates with Foucault’s understanding of critique. According to Foucault, Kant’s three stages of nonage to define the *Aufklärung* offer close proximity with his reconstruction of historical anchor points of governmentality. On the first point, Kant presents the state of self-imposed nonage. The second is in the definition of nonage as a certain humanity's inability to use its own understanding without direction from another. Finally, we find the correlation between the authority employed in maintenance of this nonage and the lack of courage and/or deficiency of decision of that submitted to this state³⁶. The stages of permanence in the state of nonage are related to and involve religion, law and knowledge; the exodus of the state of nonage and the aim for Kant is *Aufklärung*.

So Foucault succeeds in the reconstruction and localizes historically what Kant described as *Aufklärung* in his attempt to describe the critical attitude. That being said, one could ask what criticism means in Kantian terms? *I would say that in relation to Aufklärung, criticism will be, in Kant's eyes, what it will tell the know: do you know how far you can know? Reason as much as you want, but you know how far you can reason without danger?* (Foucault, 1990 p. 41). In other words, criticism in Kantian terms will be delegated to the reflective examination of our reason and its limits. This is far from being the same as an invitation to challenge the *status quo* that the *Aufklärung* seems to imply (1990). And yet Foucault is keenly aware of the argument that the same courage to know of the *Aufklärung* is present in Kant's critique dealing with the distance which knowledge can take you; autonomy in Kant is far from being strict obedience. Nevertheless, Foucault is adamant on the undeniability that Kant fixed his project of criticism as a prolegomenon for the *Aufklärung*.

Foucault underscores that a Kantian influence could have ambiguous tones considering that the impact of the Kantian legacy among criticism and the *Aufklärung* is very uneven. Historically, it was the assimilation of criticism — in the sense of exploring the limits of knowledge — that prevailed in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in three particular strokes:

³⁶ *And therefore, this definition of Aufklärung is not simply going to be a kind of definition. historical and speculative; there will be in this definition of Aufklärung something that reveals a little ridiculous, no doubt, to call it preaching, but it is in any case a call to courage that he throws in this description of Aufklärung. It should not be forgotten that this was a newspaper article* (1990, p. 40).

a positivist science, the development of a state or a state system and, in the seam of this scientific positivism, a state science or a statism.

What Foucault is trying to show is that the preponderance of one half of the Kantian experiment in the detriment of another; if we can characterize it this way, it implies a distancing from the interrogation processes from which the relation between *Aufklärung* and criticism originate. Foucault's goal is to bring the *Aufklärung* to the forefront. He acknowledges that he is not alone in remarking that problems posed by the *Aufklärung* remain relevant in one way or another in all of the distrust of positivism, objectivism and rationalization supported by the Hegelian left and the Frankfurt School³⁷. That's why the Kantian influence on Foucault's process has to be contextualized and is not surprising, considering that Foucault sees himself as young Hegelian.

To make *Aufklärung* a central issue — which makes us (genealogists) fraternal in relation to the Frankfurt School — underlines Foucault, is, in the end, to be critical. For Foucault, engaging in a critical enterprise means seeking a certain historical-philosophical practice, which departs from both the philosophy of history and history of philosophy. The process that represents this particular critical practice is genealogy.

In the first chapter, it was demonstrated how the analysis of the *Aufklärung* embodies the Foucaultian genealogical process but also that it comports with the thematization of Forms of life - the process of rendering explicit what is implicit and of thematizing practical performances. It is no longer a surprise that both Jaeggi's Critique of forms of life and Foucault's genealogical project share the goal of providing an experience that could be transformative of the way we see the established irreflexive reality. It's possible now to perceive that both authors do share Hegelian influences and desire to go beyond Hegel's work. Obviously, we can't surmise either of their meanings by only one author's influence considering their rich philosophical background, but the common threads demonstrated so far warrant a more profound look at the hypothesis raised in this dissertation. After closing the loop from the direct connection with the thematization of forms of life through the reconstruction of genealogy, as akin to the task of the *Aufklärung*, it will be possible to move towards a clear definition of the second dimension of genealogy as an immanent critique of forms of life which, at some point, will inevitably rethread crucial aspects of the arguments laid out so far.

³⁷ In any case, from the Hegelian left to the Frankfurt School, there was a whole critique of positivism, objectivism, rationalization, technè and technicization, a whole critique of the relations between the fundamental project of science and technique, which aims to bring up the links between a naive presumption of science, on the one hand, and the forms of domination inherent in the form of contemporary society, on the other. (1990. 42-43).

2.4 Genealogy as explanation

The set-up for understanding of genealogy as a tridimensional endeavor, as mentioned before, resides in Saar's reading of *On the Genealogy of Morals*. Saar (2008) has a very particular defense of genealogy; he understands that it goes far beyond mere methodological historicism, as it employs a sophisticated philosophical apparatus that shapes and informs its narratives. Genealogy, according to him, has a specific range of objects, a specific mode of explanation, and a specific textual form; these characteristics inform the three dimensions. The first dimension we have analyzed, thematic dimension, puts the subject as an object, and fits the insight of thematizing itself. Genealogy proposes more than a history of moral behavior by exploring more deeply the individualizing and subjectifying effects of different systems of morality. The goal of contextualizing to render visible the (moral) values that inform practices and attitudes, as mentioned before, posed by Jaeggi's project, does not fall very far from the ambitions of the genealogist. The thematization of forms of life already resembles the thematic dimension of genealogy by sharing the same sentiment that any naturalness or unity of the moral world is an illusion and the awareness of the historic naturalization of practices have on the construction and self-constitution of human beings. Therefore, the first dimension fits particularly well with Jaeggi's conceptualization and thematization of forms of life and leads us into the second dimension: the explanatory dimension of genealogy. By first describing this dimension, we can see what can be gathered beyond the disparities with Jaeggi's process.

Saar underlines that Nietzsche's genealogy relies on the idea of "will to power" — an explanatory concept that can help to decipher "life". The "will to power" is a particularly theoretical mode of explication, or explanatory mechanism deployed to reveal non-standard readings of the past. Saar reminds us that there only a few direct mentions of this concept in *On The Genealogy of Morals* (2009) and yet one must not forget that for Nietzsche *all expressions of 'life', all human conduct is to be seen in the broader context of the struggles of life-forms for survival and self-preservation, enhancement and growth in – sometimes violent – relation to other forms of life that might enhance or diminish the first ones* (2008, p. 303).

The pivotal reference to power as an explanatory concept in the *Genealogy of Morals* appears in a methodological reflection on how to construe the history of punishment as a social practice, and yet, as Saar distinctively underscores, Nietzsche makes clear that this is of central relevance to his version of the writing of history in general. The proposition is *that what causes a particular thing to arise and the final utility of that thing, its actual use and arrangement in*

a system of purposes, are separate toto coelo [by all the heavens, i.e., absolutely] from each other (2009, p. 59).

Saar (2008) understands that the dissociation of past and present meanings, purposes and usages introduces a methodology of discontinuity, which should inform the genealogist that reducing present phenomena to their preceding forms fails to comport with this particular enterprise. To account for the changes in meaning, purpose and function of Nietzsche's proposal, Saar selects a particular quote which elaborates on his perspectivist epistemology and conception of power:

(...) all purposes, all uses, are only signs that a will to power has become master over something with less power and has stamped on it its own meaning of some function, and the entire history of a "thing," an organ, a practice can by this process be seen as a continuing chain of signs of constantly new interpretations and adjustments, whose causes do not even need to be connected to each other—in some circumstances they rather follow and take over from each other by chance. Consequently, the "development" of a thing, a practice, or an organ has nothing to do with its progressus [progress] towards a single goal, even less is it the logical and shortest progressus reached with the least expenditure of power and resources—but rather the sequence of more or less profound, more or less mutually independent processes of overpowering which take place on that thing, together with the resistance which arises against that overpowering each time, the changes of form which have been attempted for the purpose of defense and reaction, as well as the results of successful countermeasures. (2009, p. 60)

Nietzsche's manner of communicating his vision might be considered convoluted at times, but what is clear is that (according to Saar) the function, meaning and purpose of historical objects can change over time (the essential discontinuity); one should account for the fact of such changes in terms of power and "overpowering" (*Überwältigen*) and this implies struggles of competing forms of life. Saar's discussion of Nietzsche's thinking on the historicity of meaning and methodology seems to provide grounds for the argument that *the 'will to power' plays the role of an explanatory mechanism that makes historical events and changes 'readable'* (2008, p. 306). Saar concludes that the genealogist reads history through "power" and its related terms: over-powering, violence, coercion, subjection, exploitation, strategy, and interest. These terms are used to transform the apparent peaceful realm of historical facts into a dynamic field of social processes. But how does one link history as a narrative of power with the critique of forms of life?

2.4.1 Solving the problems in forms of life

The first chapter of this dissertation revolved around the notion that forms of life are complex bundles of social practices geared to solving problems that, for their part, are historically contextualized and normatively constituted. Thoroughly considering the conceptualization of forms of life in order to retrieve the constitution and “functioning” of a form of life was particularly illuminating, especially when paired with the genealogical process. Now it will be necessary to look even further into the dynamic process of a form of life, but beforehand, let us elaborate a few points that will serve as a preamble to the following analysis.

How exactly are forms of life geared to solve problems? It’s possible that this point was briefly intuited earlier but further explanation seems necessary. Jaeggi’s (2018) proposes that the norms in forms of life are functional and ethical, and that those functional and ethical dimensions are constitutively interrelated. The argument is that in the domain of human activities, there is no such thing as functioning per se, but always more or less good functioning. These norms of ethical life, therefore, are conceived of as ethical-functional norms that operate as conditions of fulfillment of nexuses of practices in forms of life, defining the forms of life and making them what they are. And yet they are not some kind “value heaven” above social practice. In fact, according to Jaeggi, they constitute conditions of the normatively predefined success of a practice and, therefore, are embedded in the practices that constitute the forms of life.

To avoid the internal critique argument towards the proposition, Jaeggi defends the idea that these norms of ethical life are in a certain sense both internal and external. To do so the author reexamines the specific character of the normativity of forms of life aimed at in her process. Jaeggi claims a reconstruction of the Hegelian “concept” to deal with the specific normativity of forms of life. A brief illustration of that idea could surmise that the concept is a matter of comprehending. It comprehends, which means that it understands, subsumes, describes, and determines something as something. In comprehending, it takes account of what is and at same time specifies how it should be. Jaeggi utilizes the formula of the concept to demonstrate how forms of life are normatively charged, both internally and externally at the same time. So the concept of a social formation is determined by the fact that it reflects a certain manifestation of social practices as they developed historically; it is not something that has been merely normatively posited (not even collectively). However this same manifestation is not merely a historical-empirical reality; what is reflected in its concept is something that can claim to be rational against a certain historical background.

Jaeggi implies that the concept, as a result of responses to problems, captures a historically-achieved definition of a problem at a historically-achieved level of aspiration — it

is both an anticipation and the result of a social learning process. So, if a social formation does not correspond to its concept this would mean that it has fallen below the level of the problem that itself described. In the end, Jaeggi iterates that a form of life that does not correspond to its concept does not fulfill its ethically constituted function as this process evolves against the background of a specific problem solving history. All this means that this very same form of life is then shown to be deficient by the crisis-proneness of the practices it implies.

And that is how forms of life are geared to solve problems: they already have all the descriptive-evaluative instruments to respond to a problem that is posed by themselves. If a form of life does not function, it is possible to trace the source of dysfunctionality to its normative assignments. Therefore, it is not simply a matter of failing to satisfy an externally posited normative claim; it is a normative failure, a failure within a formation constituted by normative claims. With her particular interpretation of the Hegelian concept Jaeggi hopes to have settled a criteria at once immanent and transcendent, context-dependent and context transcending.

It's important to realize that the author expects us to understand that the normativity of the concept should not be conceived in a static or traditional manner, but instead in dynamic terms. Jaeggi understands that the normativity (of the concept) rests on the triangular relationship formed by is (current empirical state), ought (normative claim) and the changing objective conditions. Jaeggi chooses the example of the family to illustrate this interplay. "Family" is not what it once was — the concept has changed and its practices have become detached in part from the traditional institutions and practices. The shift in the semantic content of concept pushed by social development and political intervention does not interfere with its normative guiding function. So the concept changes while still claiming normative power? Yes. The change, according to Jaeggi, stems from the dysfunctionality of the traditional understanding of the concept. It's clear that the normative schemata proposed by Jaeggi relies on an interplay with the dysfunctions presented in and for a form of life. This leads to a second point in need of prior clarification: What are these problems that forms of life face as problem-solving processes?

Jaeggi perceives forms of life not as merely a means for realizing a certain purpose, but by the very characteristics mentioned above (descriptive and evaluative) the solution to problems manifests itself in them. Forms of life claim (implicitly or explicitly) to be the appropriate solution to the problem that they confront or that is posited to them. Jaeggi is aware that her position on problems can raise a few misunderstandings: namely, the question around the intentionality of problem solving. To avoid a cognitivist and intentionalistic

misunderstanding, Jaeggi conceives the problem-solving character of forms of life differently; she understands that problems invariably arise in-and-out of a practice in which formulations of problems and purposes only gradually assume concrete form; therefore sometimes is only apparent from "outside" that certain practices are in effect solutions to problems. This means that if forms of life solve a problem, this process is not necessarily transparent at every moment and is not always directly intended.

Another misunderstanding revolves around the idea of forms of life as a mere instrument to solve problems. As mentioned earlier, that idea doesn't conform with Jaeggi's proposition. To Jaeggi, forms of life are not the means to the end of solving problems. In fact, forms of life embody the solutions to problems — they are paradigmatic cases of problem solving. Given this structure, problems always have to be made into problems. Jaeggi understands that they must be comprehended and interpreted as problems, and the mode of interpretation (built in the form of life) shapes the possible solutions. Jaeggi then proposes and answers the question in everyone's mind: *But then the question 'are problems subjective, something constructed by us or only made through our interpretation or are they objective and hence independent of our interpretations?' must be answered as follows: they are both – at once given and made* (2018, p. 140).

To understand the statement that problems are at once given and made one must comprehend that identifying the problem is a constructive process. This means in a certain sense that the identification "makes" the problem, insofar as very different shapes could be extracted from the initially indeterminate situation. According to Jaeggi, these situations (that could be eventually considered a problem), arise as practical, crisis-prone distortions, consistent with an interruption of the performance of a certain action or the collapse of an interpretation, without already assuming the specific shape of a problem. As one would expect considering the structure of forms of life, the interpretive tools through which we make something into a problem are socially predetermined possibilities. These in turn can change when confronted with novel situations and subsequently novel problems. In the end, whether the problem description (the interpretation of the problem) fits the situation or crisis that triggered the process of inquiry, must be shown by the results obtained with the solution strategy implied by the problem description. Whether a solution offers relief to the situation (problem), or not, should be the guide here. Jaeggi advocates for the position that the description and solution of a problem are interwoven in the form of a learning/experiential process.

Jaeggi's stance towards the constitution of said problems posed in and with forms of life (as always interpreted problems) entails that problems always arise at a specific cultural

and historical level. This could be an indictment to the relevancy of these studies or towards the degree of transcendency or universality needed to build a strong social critique. To escape such indictments Jaeggi proposes an intermediate position between anthropological universalism and constructivist culturalism: *Just as it is implausible (but also unnecessary) to deny certain universal constants of the conditio humana, it is equally absurd to assume that all of us always confront the same problems – as if the problems actually arise in the same way irrespective of any historical-cultural constellation* (2018, p. 144-145). According to her proposal, the universality of problems can be asserted, at best, as a reverse inference from the persistence and regularity of certain problematic situations. Jaeggi explains her position by underscoring that even if it seems obvious that there must be basic problems common to all human beings, it would not be possible to compile a complete list; these universal problems exhibit historically and continually renewed, specific instantiations. Problems have (solution) histories.

Beyond the characterization of the problems (and their solution histories) the goal of bringing these questions to the foreground is to explain the possibility of forms of life when they fail to solve the problems they confront. There are two characterizations of failure for a form of life and yet both demonstrate a normative deficiency:

On the one hand, individual instantiations of a form of life can fail because they fail to actualize the claims raised with them: a given family may fail to actualize the level of aspiration posited by the modern model of the family. On the other hand, a form of life itself can also fail because the normative-practical structure that it describes turns out to be uninhabitable. (2018, p. 154).

Both types of failure are situated as normative failures, as mentioned before, and they also constitute a failure to satisfy self-imposed requirements. The first case denotes a failure to satisfy claims raised by the form of life that the individual shares. The second case demonstrates a form of life failing to satisfy the implications of the conditions of its own fulfillment.

Jaeggi illustrates the second case with Hegel's paradigmatic example of bourgeois civil society. Bourgeois civil society as a comprehensive economic and social context deprives individuals of their livelihoods and has become individuals' "new family" in a factual and functional sense. This is the source of the normative claim on bourgeois civil society that it should ensure the subsistence of the individual; it has replaced the family, which no longer holds the economic center. This normative claim is not an external claim made on bourgeois civil society, but follows from what bourgeois civil society is according to its historically evolved mode of functioning — its concept. Yet, direct help for the poor or political intervention in the market contradicts the core principles of bourgeois civil society. That is a

problem that threatens to divide a context of ethical life, because it would mean the disintegration of society and the division of the ethical into its extremes. Therefore, the problem of poverty for bourgeois civil society is a normative and functional problem — a problem that should not exist according to its self-understanding and, yet, the solutions available block the proper functioning of society. The characterization of the problem leads to the conclusion that a society marked by disintegration is in danger of falling apart.

Jaeggi is particularly interested in this type of problem, but does not want to render the individual kind irrelevant. As I've mentioned earlier, the individual problem within a form of life could be a first helpful means used to trace an overarching inherent problem of the form of life itself. So, Jaeggi focuses on how forms of life fail when they can't measure up to a certain level of aspiration that they have established for themselves and makes them what they are: immanent problems.

2.4.2 Immanent criticism and genealogy

According to Jaeggi (2018), the criteria for the success of a form of life refers to the claim to solve the problems posed with and through the respective form of life. Therefore, when forms of life fail to solve problems, they succumb to normative crises specific to them. Which means that, as Jaeggi puts it, *“there are not only self-defined standards for criticizing forms of life, but there is also a reason for criticizing them”* (2018, p. 173). Jaeggi explains that criticism can be perceived as the subjective side of problematic situations. If problems not only exist objectively, but are produced by subjects, criticism is then a component which constitutes the dynamics of forms of life. Considering that the basis for criticizing forms of life is the norms that they themselves posit (and are embedded in their constitutive practical performances), the normative social ontology of forms of life suggests a critique that fits well with this process. Jaeggi (2018) states that the critique in question is immanent criticism and she begins by using broad strokes to demonstrate how immanent criticism responds to the particularities of forms of life. For Jaeggi, immanence has a strong sense by referring to the crisis to which the forms of life succumbed by their failure in the attempt to measure up to the problems posed to them. According to Jaeggi, the task of immanent criticism starts with the claims and conditions posited together with a form of life. Then *it responds to the problems and crisis that arise in this context, and it derives from this in particular the transformative potential that goes beyond the practices in question and seeks to transform them* (2018, p. 174).

Jaeggi firmly believes that the approach of immanent criticism is the only approach that can solve the problem of establishing a critical standard that does not fall back on either a merely contextualist variant of criticism, or on external standards. In a way the author tries to answer the question posed by Honneth on the future of critical theory and its methodological challenges. The immanent criticism proposed by Jaeggi walks a tightrope to maintain its analysis without a meta-language game — without a neutral “Archimedean point” removed from all particular forms of life — while not remaining purely internal.

Jaeggi found in the Hegelian tradition of immanent criticism the possibility of transcending the customary dichotomies:

It's neither “strong” nor “weak”, and it is neither internal nor external. It assumes a certain (historically and socially situated) context and at the same time transcends it. (...) [Immanent criticism] on the one hand, generates its standard “out of the thing (criticized) itself”, but on the other hand, in contrast to particularism and relativism of a form of criticism that remains internal, it is nevertheless strong enough to be able to criticize forms of life as forms of life; that is, it is also transformative. (2018, p. 174).

It's interesting to note how particularly relevant the transformative nature of immanent criticism is, and yet, it's not clear how the dynamics of the process work. What is apparent is that genealogy and immanent criticism share a considerable amount of methodological traits. Robert Guay posits an interesting stance on how closely akin the two are in his article *Genealogy as Immanent Critique: Working from the Inside* published on *The Edinburgh Critical History of Nineteenth-Century Philosophy* (Stone, 2011). Not only does Guay put genealogy alongside immanent critique, but he contends that Nietzschean genealogy doesn't color outside the lines regarding the tradition of immanent critique; genealogy's own appeal resides in Nietzsche offering the account that most neatly represents the critical, historical, consciousness of the nineteenth century. To demonstrate his argument, Guay begins by characterizing genealogy and its pairing with immanent critique. Very much aligned with the previously mentioned characterizations of genealogy as problematization (by both Koopman and Allen), Guay defines the core features of genealogy in the following way:

I contend, four features that both distinguish genealogy as such and establish its common ground with other prominent accounts. First, genealogy involves what I call historical agency. The events narrated in a genealogy are considered as, if only in an inchoate or unconscious way, actions. Genealogy thus explains human events by appeal to terms familiar from the domain of human agency: purposes, reasons and above all freedom. Second, genealogy involves a form of cosmopolitanism. There are many forms of cosmopolitanism and that of genealogy is not a typical one, such as one in which ethnic or national differences are ethically insignificant. The cosmopolitanism of genealogy, rather, is that human identity is collective and

in particular historical: being oneself involves relations to a broader community. Indeed, genealogy typically characterizes identity, in its increasingly particularized form in the modern world, as coordinate with membership in increasingly broad groups, such that some identities are only possible as the legacy of enormous historical projects. Third, genealogy is typically critical. Genealogy, that is, takes normative (or, for that matter, social) authority to be problematic and responds to this by showing that certain claims to authority are in some way defective. As Nietzsche characterized it, genealogy is a ‘no-saying’ enterprise, whose purpose is to exhibit the failure of ideals [Nietzsche 1967–77: 6: 350]. Fourth, genealogy is historical-hermeneutic. Genealogy does not merely provide accounts of a sequence of events or of the changing circumstances of stable entities. Genealogy provides accounts of things that are themselves historical: because they are so fluid or indefinable, they can only be accounted for within the temporal scope of the narrative. (2011, p. 168-169)

These features, according to Guay, transform genealogy into immanent critique. By immanent critique Guay is referring to a critique that doesn’t adopt a privileged position with respect to the object of critique. In fact, in such critique a privileged standpoint is inaccessible, either because there are reasons to doubt any claim of privilege or because the legitimacy of one’s standpoint is itself the addressed goal of the critique. Guay perceives that the genealogical process has immanent critical features and he identifies the common threads in the development of an analysis. Guay sees the procedure of immanent critique as a three-pronged approach that matches the genealogical process: a) taking up the very standpoint to be criticized and identifying ‘internal’ flaws; b) keenly aware that particular claims are inseparable from the more general commitments that shape an outlook of the “object” criticized; and c) advancement in the process turns out to be self-undermining in a way that produces a transformative result. The critical conclusion of Guay’s immanent critique is that *the transformation is explicable as an immanent failure of the old position. (...) thus always at least potentially vindicating: the result is a claim of relative superiority, if only that almost anything would be better than the old position* (2011, p. 169). It’s clear that Guay and Jaeggi share a similar outlook of immanent critique (accounting for the process and the transformative aim) and yet, genealogy doesn’t appear to be a viable stance for Jaeggi.

To understand where the authors diverge in the matter one needs only to look at how Guay fails to account for Adorno’s formulation of immanent critique and Foucault’s practice of genealogy without suggesting how these approaches are in essence following Hegel. This should come as no surprise considering the reconstructive path previously taken within Foucault’s influences and conceptualizations. Guay perceives the influence of Hegel in the same vein as the one being offered in this dissertation.

According to Guay's understanding, Adorno and Foucault can be seen as taking up versions of Hegel's called 'absolute mediation', or mediation by conceptual activity. The idea is that our experience of the world is mediated by the conceptual repertoire that we have available, that we employ, and that structures our experience. Guay indicates that absolute mediation implies no element that escapes the human production of determinations, and this means that there is no moment outside of our social or cultural conditions within the entire human world. Nevertheless, that which does the mediating changes over the history of philosophy (from Marx to Nietzsche and beyond), and yet the basic premise endures. Guay's argument is that if it's assumed from a perspective of immanence it does not matter how one characterizes mediation; mediation is the key to understanding social phenomena and must itself be illuminated. It must be clear by now how Foucault's conception of there being nothing outside of power — power produces, constitutes or conditions everything that can be understood within the branches of a Nietzschean and Hegelian tree.

Guay does a very good job in inserting genealogy into the tradition of immanent critique going back to Hegel, and yet his conclusions do not bode well for this particular project. His first conclusion rethreads the misunderstanding of relations of power as inherently bad and makes the case that one of the consequences of absolute mediation in Foucault and Adorno suggests that there is no possibility of human self-liberation. This argument was already somewhat debunked when it was demonstrated that the realization of power and freedom is retrogressively grounded (at least in Foucault). One could make the same argument for Adorno given that he has even closer ties with the Hegelian tradition. Another conclusion implied by Guay comes from the second consequence of absolute mediation: according to Guay, the self, social institutions, and desires (including all the constituting activities) shape what we are and therefore every element of the human world becomes a subject for genealogy. In the end, genealogy does not stand as a distinctively philosophical enterprise, because it looks everywhere critically and interprets everything.

Guay's second conclusion falls back on his first: missing the target on what is the purpose to demonstrate how power relations determine our social spectrum. His position is not one to simply dismiss, as pointed out earlier in the Koopman section, but the number of studies that call themselves genealogical and don't come to grips on how and what it means to engage genealogically, grows by the minute. Guay's stance also calls upon us to illuminate the process of immanent criticism (How does the self-undermining position jump to a transformative? How do we evaluate that?) with the expectation that we will acknowledge genealogy's place, along with its distinctiveness and relevancy renewed. To do so, let us return to Jaeggi's proposition

on immanent criticism and try to settle a few points regarding genealogy as immanent criticism of forms of life.

Jaeggi offers great detail on the process of immanent criticism to perceive how and where it must be improved. According to Jaeggi (2018), in this form of criticism, a given object is not measured against an unchanging yardstick; rather, the yardstick of criticism itself has its own dynamic — it transforms itself in the exercise of criticism and must justify itself in the process of criticism. This means that it is not possible to construct a standard of criticism prior to the exercise nor outside the process of criticism either. Therefore, criticism of this form is a self-grounding process; Jaeggi's particular characterization speaks to the transformative character of immanent criticism. Immanent criticism does not aim to restore an existing order or reinstate valid norms and ideals — it seeks to transform them. The exercise of immanent criticism leads towards the transformation of both the object (reality) and its yardstick (concept).

How should this transformative process be understood? Jaeggi perceives that immanent criticism should be understood as an experiential and learning process. The process of immanent criticism is dynamic, not conservative. It's a catalyst of experiential processes that become richer and more differentiated as a result of criticism. Let's have a more descriptive look on this dynamic:

Firstly, the reality criticized is compelled by the experiences of failure or a deficiency to embark on this process of change. In this regard, secondly, the process of failing and overcoming failure takes the form of a movement of differentiating enrichment and progress – hence, of a learning process. (2018, p. 204)

Jaeggi insists that the development leading from a deficient practice to a new one, implies also a new self-understanding. Therefore, the development becomes a richer and more differentiated experiential process because it achieves a new position through the experience of failure of the old one. This dynamic of a problem-solving process whose validity of the new stance resides in the fact that it contains within itself the processed inadequacy of a previous one embodies what Hegel calls 'determinate negation'. It's possible to understand how the process can be, in a sense, self-undermining and transformative in Guay's terminology. Yet one can't help but notice that a couple of heavy concepts were thrown into the mix to explain the dynamic of criticism: the determinate negation implied (unsurprisingly), and the idea that progress can be problematic. But there is something more, something active, which does not count as a fully developed concept, but merits attention: the "compelled by the experiences of failure" — a concept that begs questions regarding when or how reality is compelled to act.

The characterization of immanent criticism — as a process of producing connections — speaks to this active side of the process and does not come without its own passive moment. Jaeggi understands that immanent criticism should be seen as *starting from necessary (systematic) contradictions, immanent criticism is the ferment of a transformation process that overcomes the deficiencies of the situation marked by these contradictions* (2018, p. 208). This stylish description illustrates the interdependence of analysis and criticism, which has been indicated since the thematization of forms of life. This also means that in the process connections become visible and, together with the perception of reality, transform any possible reactions. As Jaeggi puts it: *immanent criticism also involves a moment of disclosure that renders aspects of this reality visible in new ways* (2018, p. 208). Jaeggi seems to imply that immanent criticism makes reality intelligible, with its own disclosure of what is actually in front of our eyes, much like an explanatory dimension of a genealogical process. In any case, it seems clear that, for Jaeggi, being critical involves this passive-active approach, passive in terms of how much is dependent on the crisis-prone (contradiction, second order problems) state of what is criticized, and active in the sense of rendering and disclosing previously unavailable connections — i.e., being the “ferment of transformation”.

Jaeggi’s characterization of immanent criticism answers a few questions while inviting even more. It is clear that Jaeggi reclaims her own version of Hegel’s immanent criticism but exactly how do she propose to settle questions about the normative challenges of an immanent criticism, evaluation of progress and regress, or about necessary aspects of the contradictions? Jaeggi has a four-point reconstruction of immanent criticism and it seems a fair starting point to answer these key questions.

The first involves the question of what constitutes “functioning” and a “problem” which points to the ambiguity of the “inherent norms” of forms of life. As mentioned earlier, these norms are at once functional and ethical. A problem or practical contradiction is distinguished by the fact that crises arise in a social process in a peculiar interweaving of ethical and functional perspectives — if something does not function well, then how it functions is not good. There is no such thing as functioning independent of good functioning in the social realm, and there are no crises that do not have both objective and subjective sides. For Jaeggi, problems are always also normative problems, and normative problems, conversely, are always problems of dysfunctionality, so the characterization of the criteria must start from both sides simultaneously.

The second regards the consideration of immanent criticism as a procedure of producing connections, to that effect Jaeggi understands that, in light of her view, the practice

of establishing connections takes a constructivist-performative turn. So, accordingly, the connections and contradictions that constitute the principle of movement of the criticism are simultaneously given and made. Immanent-critical analysis, therefore, neither simply discovers nor freely conceives the contradictory connections of social reality. This means that it cannot base its analysis and evaluation on ultimate reasons nor on an interpretation of social reality that is definitive and independent of the actors.

The third consideration deals with the inevitable realization that immanent criticism must anticipate the multiplication of contradictions. Jaeggi is keenly aware that a current proposal of criticism can no longer be a matter of exposing one of the central contradictions, but of exposing diverse, multiplying, and partially conflicting contradictions. It's clear that the concept of forms of life is ample enough to embrace several inquiries and it is not tied to a central perspective. While Jaeggi's immanent criticism aims not towards a romantic-harmonistic ideal of consistency, it remains in stark contrast to positions that perceive contradictoriness as inescapable. Jaeggi's position regards problems and contradictoriness as mobile elements demanding to be even provisionally solved.

The fourth and last part of Jaeggi's reconstruction of immanent criticism deals with a crucial aspect going forward — the possibility of establishing critical standards for evaluating forms of life. Jaeggi sees that this possibility depends on being able to describe a rational learning process within the critique itself. In other words, *the validity claim of immanent criticism resides in the rational character of the transformation process that it makes use of* (2018, p. 213). Jaeggi underlines that the validity claim is founded on the notion that the results of immanent criticism represent the correct solution to a problem or a crisis to which a particular situation has succumbed. So norms and practices either fail or are transformed — in both cases they raise validity claims. Jaeggi stance is that the ground of validity of immanent criticism is marked by a “historical index”, by which the author means when considering forms of life as a problem-solving competences, it follows that the rationality of an experiential or learning process can be understood as the history of solutions to problems. In the end, validation is encountered in the historical and social constellations, normative rightness is the result of engagement in the process of criticism, and the viability of immanent criticism depends on the demonstration that such a process is rational.

The reconstruction of immanent criticism has demonstrated the inner workings of the critical process in its intricate relation with the concept of forms of life; Yet there are a few points that seem elusive: How does one perceive or extract the patterns and the norms out of the form of life itself? In what way can this process be transformative within and for a form of

life? Thus far it doesn't seem that Jaeggi has the *modus operandi* to divulge these normative claims from within the forms of life without using some sort of anthropology or philosophy of history (even in a weaker sense). From the start, to thematize and criticize was the aim of Jaeggi; her critical proposal already shows it can fit within the thematic dimension of the genealogical process and it sets itself apart by the direct empirical approach to history and its social practices. This is an instance where the project of genealogy proposed as an immanent critique of forms of life can avoid resorting to arguments of anthropology or philosophy of history. Nevertheless, Jaeggi proposes deeper questions within the mode of critique towards the rationality argument, the evaluation of progress and the normative challenges. The next task will be pinpointing the arguments that hold together the immanent criticism of forms of life as a viable mode of critique.

2.4.3 Determinate negation, progress and freedom

To understand Jaeggi's proposal one has to be aware that if forms of life are a result of the process of social transformation whose rationality can be understood and judged as a history of problem-solving only against the backdrop of the history of this process, then it is not any particular solution that can be appropriate or inappropriate, rational or irrational, good or bad. The judgement of viability of a solution is attached to the historical dynamic of the transformation process that it sets in motion. As noted earlier, the rationality of the sequence of solutions to problems (which can be described as an experiential or learning process) becomes the measure of success of forms of life.

Jaeggi is clear that this process can be deemed as rational, according to the argument of the ground of validity of immanent criticism, because and insofar as it describes an intelligible experiential or learning process that can be understood as a history of superseding deficiencies or crises. It's important to notice how Jaeggi stresses the learning process isn't necessary, which already speaks towards her idea of history and progress. The author highlights that not every dynamic is productive, not every way of processing an experience can be deemed satisfactory or adequate, and quelling a crisis is not necessarily the same thing as resolving it. This means that there are "regressive reaction formations" and problematic ways of shutting one's eyes to the reality of conflicts.

How do we differentiate between success or failure in this process? Jaeggi's first response relies heavily on the negative part of the answer:

A successful form of life is something that can be understood as the result of a successful dynamic of transformation. Conversely, forms of life are bad, irrational, or inappropriate insofar as they are marked by systemic blockages or disruptions with regard to the perception and solution of problems and correspondingly are the result of failed or deficient transformation process. (2018, p. 216)

This is not unexpected as Jaeggi's reappropriation of determinate negation was already expected considering the process of evaluation of a form of life. Nevertheless, Jaeggi proposes a very specific turn that is particularly relevant to this dissertation and aligned with the grounding of criticism; she defends that the substantive question about the content of successful forms of life should be replaced by the more formal question concerning how forms of life unfold and the dynamics of their development:

We must examine the character of the process that led to a particular solution. Thus, the question "how can good forms of life be distinguished from bad, irrational, or inappropriate ones?" becomes the metaquestion: "how can successful social transformation process be distinguished from unsuccessful (or irrational) ones?" (2018, p. 216).

Jaeggi sees herself following the proposal of Ernst Tugendhat to reinterpret the question of the good life in such a way that the content of what is ethically required for a good life no longer matters, but instead the measure of a good life resides in how this life is lived. This distinction means that the question for evaluating forms of life would no longer be what must be realized in them, *instead, we must examine how these practices arose, how they are established and maintained, and whether the solutions to problems that they embody can be regarded as more appropriate reactions to the problems in question* (2018, p. 217).

I would be remissive if I didn't mention that this "formal" turn away from content-related affirmations of the good life constitutes the very same process which is present in the genealogical endeavor to account for the shifts and changes in meaning, purpose and function of historical objects; the difference is the perspective. Jaeggi is looking from the perspective of possible learning processes, a continuity that demarcates rational traits. Nietzsche, for example, claims for discontinuity and how power plays a role as an explanatory mechanism of historical events. This difference of perspective will be even more relevant in the following lines.

For Jaeggi, the question is how to thread the needle between progress and a successful learning process. Jaeggi understands that learning processes are triggered by experiences of the failure and the inadequacy of a form of life as measured by the requirements imposed on it or posed within it; the possibility to learn something arises only when this situation (problem) can be mastered reflexively at a certain normative level in the mode of a process of enrichment and

differentiation. In the end, a crucial factor for the success of a form of life is whether there is a space for reflection.

She is very much aware that in trading the requirements to provide substantive answers to ethical questions for a formal or dynamic manner of constitution of critique certainly invites questions regarding the concept of progress, as inspired by the philosophy of history. Progress, for Jaeggi, does not take its bearings from an externally posited or predetermined goal, and does not guide itself towards a “truth of history”. Instead, progress is judged in terms of criteria that are inherently directed towards the process of transformation itself. If these transformation processes can be interpreted as learning processes, it doesn’t mean an automatic and compelling developmental process. Jaeggi’s position is that *the motif of learning process in relation to forms of life does not assume that mankind as whole is progressing* (2018, p. 218-219). Again, this accords precisely with the genealogical aversion to teleological history and yet, the perspective remains the opposite.

Jaeggi clarifies that the conception of the learning process is a normative one. This means the idea that history does or does not actually assume, or will eventually assume, a form of learning process is not on table. Yet, the consideration of the normative character of the conception entails an external normative criteria. Jaeggi perceives that the normative developmental logic is implicit in the way problems unfold within a form of life.

One has to delve into the Jaeggi’s reappraisal of Hegel to understand how this particular process of normative dynamic assignments and the idea of progress relate to one another. It is in the reconstruction of the determinate negation that Jaeggi consolidates her proposal of critique and lays down the three stages of the process:

(1) Negation is determinate because in the process of negation thus conceived “this nothingness is specifically the nothingness of that from which it results.” A process marked by determinate negation is, according to Walter Jaeschke, one “in which the result of the contradiction is not merely nothing, but constitutes a new object”. Describing a *continuity in discontinuity*. (2) However, this new object is not completely new. When Hegel says that “in every case the result of an untrue mode of knowledge must not be allowed to run away into an empty nothing, but must necessarily be grasped as the nothing of that from which it results – a result which contains what was true in the preceding knowledge” then the object resulting from a (determinately) negated state contains elements of the old – albeit in a transformed guise. Describing a process of enrichment and differentiation (3) If one can now say of this that it is not contingent, then it does not follow an externally mapped out course but can be explained in terms of immanent developmental logic of the stages described. (2018, p. 291-292)

These stages of determinate negation follow an inner necessity, but not because they are driven by some internal engine. The inner necessity plays a part only insofar as the new is always obtained as the result of the process of negation. The process implies that the crisis of the old already contains the potential for its productive supersession and not only that the trigger of the crisis gives rise to the means for resolving it; the crisis is triggered at a moment when these resources are already available. So one can notice an interplay on the objective and subjective, or, active and passive moments.

Jaeggi perceives that such a dialectical process of development and experience does not merely consist in superseding a false position, but in fact functions in the transformation of such a position in a way that preserves it — it contains the old, superseded “in itself”. In other words, considering the constitution of forms of life as problem solving processes, the determinate negation involves a qualitatively exacting process of enrichment and differentiation: *problems are not simply worked away or dissolved but become more complex together with their solutions* (2018, p. 293).

Still, the question about the standards of rightness of an achieved solution, and its supposed place in the rationality of the process itself, remains. Jaeggi responds by underscoring that determinate negation is both a mode of development and a mode of justification or, more precisely, it is a mode of justification as a mode of development. What this actually means is that a development (transformation) is justified because and insofar as the path it takes can be rationally comprehended. The rational comprehension of the development does work only insofar as problem and solution are intertwined and refer to each other in accordance with the process of determinate negation. In the end, the dialectical presentation of the development and its dialectical justification (or, conversely, critique) coincide. The movement of enrichment and differentiation demonstrates that the rationality or legitimacy of a historical process prevails.

At this point, Jaeggi brings Terry Pinkard’s interpretation of the dialectical history as a self-founding process, which eventually becomes the path for Jaeggi’s proposal:

A dialectical history tells a different story from that of the history of historians in that it does not concern itself primarily with how things came about - what social forces were at work, what contingencies were brought into play - but with showing how succeeding "social spaces" contained resources within themselves that were able to explain and justify themselves over and against earlier alternative accounts and to demonstrate and affirm for themselves that their own accounts of themselves were satisfactory. (1994, p. 11-12)

This seems like an affirmative route for a critique of a form of life and a demonstration of progress and validation of the subsequent forms of life. However I think the path that

illuminates how and why things aren't necessarily working shares some inheritance from Hegel; it has a self-founding and normative implicit form, and much like dialectical history, needs a presupposed or known goal. They differ in the perspective of analysis between success and failure; dialectical history does need a criteria of meaningfulness of the succeeding social formations. Genealogy's criteria of success of social formations is implied by the concept of analysis used to show how social formations are failing. Nevertheless, whether implied or upfront, it does seem like the same criteria — that criteria is freedom.

Jaeggi claims that the Hegelian conception of history as progress in the consciousness of freedom does not refer to freedom as a predetermined goal, but instead to the insight which is mediated by crisis experiences — conditions of the performance of our practice. According to Jaeggi's interpretation:

Human forms of life, ethical life, as moments of objective spirit, are instantiations of freedom because they are always instances of something that human beings could do in one way but also in a different way – manifestations of human practice that are bound up with certain room for reflection and shaping. (2018, p. 296)

According to Jaeggi, freedom is the pattern of movement of human history and its content; it can be seen as increasingly realized and recognized as such over the course of this history. In the end, if the realization of the consciousness of freedom can be interpreted as a process through which something objective comes to the awareness, or as making something implicit explicit, then what is involved is a procedure of practical self-knowledge.

Nevertheless, Jaeggi is very much aware that dealing with a Hegelian proposal invites the criticism that such a process can become incapable of integrating new or conflicting experiences, or taking into account the unforeseeable course taken by some transformation processes. That is why she proposes a performative-constructivist understanding of the procedure of the historical realization and actualization of freedom, in which the unfolding of the consciousness of freedom presents itself as a productive process.

Through her interpretation of the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, Jaeggi elaborates on the assertions that people can be free without knowing it and that some people are free but do not exist as free. The author states that the knowledge of freedom changes the circumstances of our lives by changing our self-understanding and our opinions concerning the world in which we live. Reflection on the fact of freedom makes the difference between being free in itself and being free in and for itself in Hegelian terms. Acquiring this knowledge entails a transformation of our entire relationship to ourselves in our practical relations to the world. In the rational process demonstrated by Jaeggi, the knowledge or reflective moment achieved

in the course of the crisis-driven history of transformation indicates a productive sign. This reflective moment constitutes a form of knowledge in virtue of which our practices are not only understood differently but are also changed.

Jaeggi understands that the knowledge of the fact that we, human beings, make our own history (even if under circumstances not chosen by ourselves and even if we do not seize the power to shape), changes us and our historical form of life. Jaeggi is even more clear when she emphasizes that *it is only through our knowledge of our power to shape reality that our practices and institutions become what they really are, namely, instances of forms of freedom* (2018, p. 304).

Looking back to the proposed parallel made so far one cannot help but point out that when considering the “knowledge of our power”, genealogy should not be dismissed. So far, the proposal of genealogy of this dissertation and immanent critique of forms of life design by Jaeggi demonstrated common traits that certainly allowed for this connection. It is obvious that Jaeggi’s critique is more conceptually detailed and even by common inheritance (Hegelian and critical) answers some of the theoretical blank spaces of a methodological approach — one more experienced than theorized. However, at this point, genealogy seems to pose a better chance of demonstrating the knowledge of our power. An affirmation process would be lost in the narratives of power and in the process of rendering visible the impediments for a reflexive moment in a social formation. Genealogy is an explanatory dimension; reading history through “power” and its related forms gives a better chance to demonstrate how our practices and institutions really are provisional and at times problematic instances of freedom. Yes, as posited before, power and freedom share an intricate relation in the genealogical process — one of retrogressive grounding. As Jaeggi underlined, there is no final solution for all forms of life, so every instantiation of freedom is poised to be flawed in some shape or form. So, an approach to the social formations through history as power relations does not seem unreasonable and it is best suited to fulfill Jaeggi’s wish of understanding the power to shape conditions of life.

2.4.4 From the critique of forms of life to genealogy

To follow through towards the completion of the genealogical proposal of this dissertation it will first be necessary to present the final construct of Jaeggi’s project, and subsequently demonstrate how the genealogy proposed here places itself in the debate. Jaeggi introduces the dialectic as retrospective teleology and yet this proposal does not fully encompass the potential of its own problems. Well, it might not fully comprehend but illustrates

the intricacies of the criticism aimed at by Jaeggi. She underscores that the key point of Terry Pinkard's dialectical process is the judgement about whether a position reached is appropriate or can only be made retrospectively; this means that the acknowledgement that a social formation is better than an old one is not something that can be anticipated — it emerges only in retrospect. This also means that recognizing a failed or inadequate existing practice and the search for a new one involves a particular type of problem-solving process, one that anticipates a successful practice whose conclusiveness and legitimacy must then be redeemed retrospectively. Dialectical problem-solving then takes the form of a hermeneutic anticipation of an assumed solution (of a desirable goal) and the cogency of such anticipation, of course, can only be demonstrated retrospectively in interaction with the results of the correspondingly changed practice.

For Jaeggi, this process demonstrates how a problem-solving process must be open to correction, and responsive to sources of resistance and repercussions of the solution employed, all on a trial and error basis. This opening of the dialectical process implies a rational necessity, rather than a strong causal historical necessity. The rational necessity is compelling merely in the manner of a consistent argument which, in the end, means that in each case a different continuation from the one suggested by determinate negation becomes possible. Jaeggi stresses this point (one intuited long before) by demonstrating how her vision does not convey a causal force that could prevent the historical events and their actors from adopting a different direction of transformation, nor a necessity that would allow just one dialectical retelling of this history. Jaeggi's suggested process entails the possibility of integrating new and resistant phenomena into a dialectical process and relies on a connection between the *pragmatist and dialectical solution dynamics, between the description of the problem-solving process and of learning as an active-passive process and the dialectical unfolding of contradictions* (2018, p. 308).

This integration of perspectives means, that for Jaeggi, historical processes are at once contingent and noncontingent; the tension between active and passive moments, between freedom and determination, can be resolved by the interpretation of the course of history as a matter of realizing possibilities residing in a situation that are not always realized. So even if one acts on the said situation, the corresponding action may have unexpected consequences or encounter unanticipated obstacles. The new, and that which offers resistance, may have a place in a transformation process, provided that the advance into the unknown (the provisional solution) constitutes at least part of a learning process conceived as differentiating enrichment through experience. In this process, a solution to a problem is neither directly continuous nor

discontinuous with the previous situation — the solution merges with the problem and the potentials implicit in it.

The characterization of the approach leads to an evaluative moment of the process. Jaeggi understands that historical social transformations can be understood as a learning process with reference to which one's position is better or worse than that the position overcomes; this represents progress or regression. Yet, the author is very candid in her reflection, mentioning that even though her approach claims to identify a progressive movement and define criteria for determining what constitutes such a progressive movement, this by itself means that history is constantly progressing and it does not exhibit setbacks. Jaeggi is clear that setbacks are more likely than progressive moments throughout history, but feels strongly that the reflections on the rationality of social transformation processes contribute to identifying the setbacks of history and allows us to derive conceptual possibilities.

Revisiting the argument of the rationality of social processes, Jaeggi realizes that there is a kind of meta-criterion implied in the criticism of forms of life — one that refers to the level of insight into the possibilities and abilities that do shape our condition of life. Emancipation is the meta-criterion. Jaeggi perceives that emancipation *becomes the intrinsic measure of the rationality of forms of life and of criticism of them, even if this measure takes its orientation from the occurrence of historical transformation processes* (2018, p. 312).

Jaeggi stresses that the conception of emancipation is reminiscent of Hegel's consciousness of freedom and stands in the tradition of early critical theory. Therefore, it does not deviate far from the goal of the author. Jaeggi even reassesses the evaluative guide for forms of life following this insight: *a form of life can be regarded as successful and flourishing when it is the result of procedures of collective self-determination* (2018, p. 312).

Nevertheless, Jaeggi is aware that self-determination can be an elusive measure; after all, forms of life have complex formations of more or less accessible practices and more or less fixed moments whose modes of transformation exhibit a complex pattern for shaping forms of life. Yes, subjects do make their own history, but they cannot choose from which circumstances they act on the very same history. That is why Jaeggi ends her chapter with an invitation:

If we want to explore the preconditions of emancipation and collective self-determination, therefore, we must understand the complicated relationship between the power to shape conditions of life, the lack of transparency, and the often intractable complexity of interlinked practices and attitudes. (2018, p. 313).

Again, if the preconditions of emancipation claim for a deep understanding of the power relations that shape our conditions of life, wouldn't an approach that prioritizes the

perspective of (problematic) power relations within this open dialectics make sense? The process described by Jaeggi that converges into a dialectic as retrospective teleology does not fall far from a genealogy that shares the inheritance of the enlightenment and the Hegelian conceptual influences. Before we can determine how the genealogical scheme proposed here determines its own third dimension of critique, let's bring to the forefront some of the criticism that Jaeggi's view has raised.

Andreas Niederberger and Tobias Weihrauch (2015) raise the issue that the concept of life form remains too vague, a concern already addressed in the first section. In their view, a notion of social reality seems lacking in the end. The authors stress an interrelation between attitudes and beliefs of participants, on the one hand, and actions and interactions in relevant contexts, on the other. The interrelation raises important questions: Are the attitudes and beliefs, which are constitutive for life forms, resilient or the actions and interactions - or the interrelation itself? This question was addressed earlier and yet the argument of resilience and its own relevancy seems interesting to revisit.

Another issue raised is the one over the proposed learning process. Niederberger and Weihrauch raise questions about the rationality discovered in this process: Is it realistic to expect emancipation from this rationality? Considering that there's no other criteria for the acceptability or unacceptability of a form of life, should we accept an oppressive form of life, if it meets certain criteria of self-reflexivity and solves crises in an adequate way? This line of questioning is akin to Terry Pinkard's (2017) comment on how formalistic Jaeggi's process presents itself.

Niederberger and Weihrauch (2015) proceed by arguing that even if the reference to rationality (internal and as a learning process) posed by Jaeggi were sufficiently convincing, another criticism would arise. If the rationality of life forms depends on their own way of dealing with problems, it is important to know who articulates the problems: Who learns from their solutions? And in what ways? For the authors, it's not clear in Jaeggi's work how one should differentiate collective and individual learning.

Terry Pinkard (2017) offers a broad and challenging take on Jaeggi's text that puts a question mark on the whole endeavor. Pinkard goes to the core of Jaeggi's critique of "modern liberalism". Jaeggi sees this "modern liberalism" as caught in a learning blockade and yet Pinkard questions if Jaeggi isn't herself posing another version of liberalism. Pinkard underlines that it is not quite clear what Jaeggi means in her critique by liberalism: Is it simply identified with the position of ethical neutrality? Or something more resembling "radical individualism"? In spite of a liberalism-convoluted history, Pinkard characterizes it in four fundamental

commitments loosely held together by various thinkers: (1) a deep suspicion of power (both governmental and these days also corporate), (2) a belief in the possibility of progress, (3) a loose commitment to equal respect among citizens, and (4) the belief in the ineradicability of social conflict and the necessity to deal with it in terms of progress and respect (2017, p. 546).

In this sense, Jaeggi's overall outlook seems to be, for Pinkard, a liberal position closely aligned with these four axes. Of course, the implications of Jaeggi's critique being somewhat liberal can be considered problematic simply because her text stands on the strenuous denial of the viability of liberal positions to resolve the problems of forms of life. These are valid points taken towards the project posed by Jaeggi. At this juncture, it seems fair to resolve the question of how the project of genealogy as immanent criticism of forms of life benefits from Jaeggi's work and addresses the arguments posed against the critique of forms of life.

a) To the question of how vague the concept of forms of life can be, it seems that genealogy has been successful in exposing societal failures and has had its own impact on the social and philosophical space without such a concept. That doesn't mean, however, that genealogy can't benefit from this conceptualization. Looking back at Foucault's brief illustration of positivities and singularities, one can surmise that a more sophisticated and theoretically sound concept could be the key to a more palpable result. In this point, the concept of forms of life contributes to genealogy — the concept can make genealogy a more approachable option of critique. It illustrates how a problem within a form of life can become a hindrance towards the experiences of freedom which is invaluable to the thematic search for a prospect of critique. The question about the place of resilience in the form of life can be addressed by genealogical analysis. Genealogy's treatment of history (documented history specifically) can be a cipher of how the nexus knowledge/action becomes resilient. Foucault himself worked with the term *knowledge/power* that intuited much of the relationship between background conditions and social practice as exposed in the conceptualization of forms of life. In this sense, the concept of forms of life harmonizes with the genealogical aim to de-essentialize and de-naturalize and illustrates theoretically what once was only intuited.

b) Regarding the question over the learning process, the project of genealogy as an immanent criticism of forms of life holds said process as a viable category or conceptualization. The conceptualization of a learning process implies a forward-looking view of progress that, even if mitigated, could turn out to be a normative issue. The determination of success should not have precedence in the critical scheme. The genealogical project here benefits itself from the mode of development, justification, and determinate negation, and yet deals with the spectrum of an experiential process. In this proposal the question would revolve around the

experiences of freedom damaged by the process of relations of power. From the negation of said process the transformation is seeded, where the crisis of the old already contains the potential for its productive supersession. This, to be fair, is not far from Jaeggi's proposal. In the conclusion of her book the argument is clear that there is no positive answer to the question of what makes a good or adequate form of life, but only a negative, indirect answer: failing forms of life suffer from a collective practical reflexive deficit. So a genealogical project of critique should rest on the continuous analyses of such deficits and not focus on the confirmation of the successes of history. Nevertheless, that doesn't mean that they do not exist.

Let's now ask the same question already posed to Jaeggi's project: Is it realistic to expect emancipation from this rationality? So far we have only two dimensions of the project of genealogy. The third dimension of genealogy is tightly connected with the aspirations of change and emancipation, but, for the time being, we can say that the narrative of power of genealogy, decoding and underlining the discontinuities of historical social formations could be an improvement in comparison to a retrospective confirmative reading of successes of history. The formal rationality here is of an experiential process that failed or it is failing. A genealogical approach would even be a more informative tool compared to the experiential pluralism proposed by Jaeggi. Should we accept an oppressive life form if they meet certain criteria of self-reflexivity and solve crises in adequate ways? That is the whole point of the realization that there is no form of life that is completely successful or representing a perfect instantiation of freedom. We should not accept such life forms. The critique is permanent and its focus rests on the problematic (negating or closing experiences) aspects that such an oppressive configuration of forms of life carries. The immanent critique in this sense works until the failures of the form of life are perceived, so that new solutions can be "fermented".

This is not so far from the broad conceptualization of the *Aufklärung* offered by Foucault. The question of "How not to be governed?" cannot be dissociated from this process of governmentalization. This by itself doesn't necessarily present a dichotomy. One possible interpretation is that it does not matter how we are governed, the process of governmentalization incites questions of how and why we are governed in one way and not another. Foucault saw these intricate processes as deeply connected; the arts of governing share a retrogressive grounding with the political attitude of distrustfulness — to refuse them, to limit them, to find them a fair measure and to transform them. He, of course, was speaking of concrete expressions of power and freedom, both systematically connected. So again, no (more or less) oppressive form of life should be accepted — the process of critique presented here does not accord with that possibility.

c) If it is important to know who articulates the problems, it should be the task of the critic to search for the “genesis” of its problematic nature — the discourse that informed, the practice that initiated, the subjects that were enacted and so on. This is another way that genealogy can enable the immanent criticism of forms of life. As mentioned before, genealogy has a specific means to treat its problems; utilizing historical documental analyses it is possible to delve into the (unknown) figures that influenced a practice or a discourse. Here it becomes palpable how genealogy offers a direct approach to the empirical.

d) Pinkard’s challenge of a liberal position that criticizes liberalism itself does not quite suit the genealogical proposal. Genealogy does not necessarily deal with social conflict in terms of progress and respect. Genealogy’s perspective is not one to focus on the confirmation of progress or the prescription of respect — genealogy is likely to deal with regressive expressions and sources of disrespect. The question raised by Pinkard is more clearly stated thus: What is the difference between the proposal of genealogy posited in this work and Jaeggi’s critique of forms of life? What are the advantages of genealogy over Jaeggi’s critique? Is a genealogy as immanent criticism of forms of life an ambitious enough project?

So far much of the work of this dissertation rested on the idea that genealogy is not only an unorthodox form of immanent criticism, but also that it could fit the ambitions of Jaeggi’s critique of forms of life. Now the difference between both approaches is significant — the critique of forms of life is conceptual and theoretically developed and genealogy (in broad terms) it is at times vague, but has a practical approach. The idea of this dissertation is to show that the affinities (in conceptual heritage) of both approaches could provide an insight towards the project of a tridimensional genealogy; this much is clear. Now that the third dimension of genealogy is ahead of us and doesn’t match directly with Jaeggi’s proposition, it seems reasonable to give a sense of what this proposal of genealogy might be.

The project of genealogy posed here proposes the instrumentalization of Jaeggi’s critique of forms of life towards the concretization of its own set goals. This genealogical proposal is set on the understanding that it can realize the goals of critiquing the power relations that shape our conditions of life in order to enable the preconditions of emancipation. This proposal would give up on the stance that affirms a set of learning processes and on the retrospective confirmation of progress. The experiential character and the retrospective analyses of failed instances in the expressions of freedom would be in the forefront. The advantage of genealogy is that it has a fairly successful practice of social critique that could be enhanced conceptually and theoretically (without mentioning the third dimension of genealogy that sets the project apart on a different level). One could say that so far, this project is not

ambitious enough or that it is not quite as ambitious as Jaeggi's project, which tries to give a new sense of progress in modernity. This raises several questions and probably will continue to raise more for a time. The ambition here is to demonstrate how genealogy can be an instrument for critique of the failures of forms of life. This can be considered a modest, but still quite relevant, ambition.

The problem of raising ambitions to this level is that so far we still have a dual form of criticism, pretty much aligned to Benhabib's dual model of critique. The third dimension of this genealogical process surpasses that model and perhaps reassesses the ambitions of this project. The question of how to change people's minds deserves more than ad-hoc appropriations of social psychology; it deserves a social diagnostic and a commitment of the critic to its practice.

3. REFLEXIVENESS, RESONANCE AND EMANCIPATION

This realization brings to the forefront the relevancy of a third dimension of genealogy. So far, the critique of forms of life was paired with two dimensions of genealogy: thematic and explanatory. This leaves us with a two-dimensional critique that invites the question: How can we move people towards acting on the conclusions of such a critique? If immanent critique is the fermentation of transformation, who's doing the baking? Shouldn't everybody be involved in the process? Does the truth (the realization, the rendering of what was once in the background) really set you free? I believe that genealogy's third dimension holds a surplus in this area — one that could be a key feature towards the goals of reflexiveness. However, prior to the proper characterization of said dimension, it is paramount to understand the context and social diagnosis that accompanies the realization of how relevant the third dimension of genealogy becomes.

3.1 Acceleration and Resonance

The idea of a critique with potential to inspire change has to be accompanied by a purposeful look into sociality. The conceptualization of forms of life achieves a great deal by analytically demonstrating the constitution of a form of life, but still does not provide a broad social diagnosis. It relies on a classic characterization of social problems as contradiction and yet still focuses more on the analytical part than the social argument. The understanding of how and why people live in some way or another, — especially in the age of post/late modernity — seems to need a comprehensive social diagnosis proposal that could encompass and reinvigorate the argument for a diagnosis of modernity, without necessarily antagonizing the history of social theory. That's exactly what Hartmut Rosa's work in his book *Social Acceleration: a new theory of modernity* (2013) intends to achieve.

3.1.1 Acceleration and modernization

Rosa (2013) seeks to give a new spin on the discourse of modernity — the author's proposal involves introducing an alternative perspective on the process of modernity: a temporal one. Rosa notices that in recent years there is an evident increase in the discourse about acceleration and shortage of time, but the idea and the feeling that history, culture, society

or even time itself, in a strange way, are accelerating is not a new one. Rosa's new and encompassing perspective of the history of modernity implies that it should be characterized by an acceleration of great reach and repercussion in all types of technological, economic, social and cultural processes, and the overall rhythm of life. Rosa is very much aware that within the systematic theories of modernity or modernization, acceleration is practically absent, except by the dromological approach to the history of Paul Virilio which is not a fully developed theory. The history of sociology shows that modernization was analyzed mainly from four different perspectives, referring to culture, social structure, personality types and relationship with nature. Weber, Durkheim, Simmel and Marx all stand out with their own perspective on the modernization process, identified as a process of instrumental rationalization, differentiation, individualization and domestication, respectively.

Rosa's understanding is that one cannot perceive the nature and character of modernity and the logic of its structural and cultural development, unless the temporal perspective is added to the analysis. So, what Rosa is trying to say, is that the temporal dimension is intertwined with the four "material" dimensions of society and cannot be clearly separated from them in phenomenological terms. This means that there is no social time independent of social structure, culture, etc. According to his view the prominent changes in the processes of individualization, differentiation, rationalization and domestication are, in fact, related to a cardinal transformation in temporal patterns (acceleration), which appear at the same time as cause and effect.

But what does Rosa specifically mean by acceleration? The author is aware that there is no single standard of universal acceleration that accelerates everything. In some cases many things slow down (ex: traffic in a traffic jam), while others resist any attempt to make them go faster (ex: the common cold). Nevertheless, Rosa believes that there are certainly a large number of social phenomena to which the concept of acceleration can be applied correctly.

According to Rosa, there are three categories in the spectrum of phenomena, each being analytically and empirically distinct: i) Technological acceleration: best represented by the advances in communication, transport and data processing. The space practically seems to "contract" and loses its importance for orientation in the late-modern world. The technical processes and developments are no longer localized and places become non-places, without history, identity or relationship. ii) Acceleration of social changes: attitudes and values such as fashion and lifestyle, relationships and social obligations, as well as groups, classes, social languages, practices and habits change at an ever increasing rate. In the end, the increasing rate of social practices and habits represent a contraction of the present. iii) Acceleration of the pace

of life: found in the subjective trait that people consider always to be short on time, feeling rushed and under pressure; and objectively, when people are expected to do more things in less time. It's also in the compression of actions and experiences, with fewer intervals and more simultaneities.

Rosa's position is that the driving force behind the spheres of social acceleration can be characterized as a feedback loop; technological acceleration (steam engine, railroad, automobile, telegraph, computer, internet) almost inevitably causes a whole series of changes in practices, and affects corresponding social and communication structures and ways of life. The acceleration of social change, therefore, supposes a contraction of the present — in a society with accelerated rates of social change in all spheres of life, individuals always feel that they are on a 'slippery slope'. This leads to an acceleration of the 'pace of life'; people feel pressured to keep up with the speed of change they experience in their social and technological world to avoid losing potentially valuable options and connections. Finally, new forms of technological acceleration will be required to accelerate the processes of productive and daily life.

Rosa points out that the acceleration cycle alone is not sufficient to explain the dynamics inherent in Western societies, or to understand their origins and the specific ways in which the logic and dynamics of speed and growth are interconnected. Going beyond the feedback loop itself, Rosa stresses that there are three primary factors (only analytically independent) that can be identified as 'key accelerators', working behind the three spheres of social acceleration. Firstly, the economic engine of the functioning of the capitalist system rests on the accelerated circulation of goods and capital in a growth-oriented society. The logic of capitalism connects growth with acceleration in the need to increase production, as well as productivity (which can be defined in terms of time as production per unit of time). Second is the cultural engine: the idea of a full life no longer corresponds with a life waiting for us after death, but consists of making the greatest possible number of options among the immense possibilities that the world offers. Savoring life in all its ups and downs and in all its complexity becomes a central aspiration of the modern person. So, the rule then is if we continue to increase the speed of life, over time we can live a multiplicity of lives in a single lifetime; acceleration serves as a strategy to erase the difference between the time of the world and the time of our life. Thirdly the structural engine signifies that social change is sped up due to the basic structural principle of modern society of functional differentiation. In a society that is not primarily segregated into class hierarchies, but structured along lines of functional 'systems'

(politics, science, art, economics, law, etc.), complexity increases. The contingency rises and society experiences time in the form of perpetual change and acceleration.

Even though it seems conclusive that acceleration is prevailing, considering the spheres and the engines described before, Rosa stresses that one should not assume that every process or social phenomenon is seen as determined by the dynamics of acceleration. As mentioned before, there's no single standard of universal acceleration that accelerates everything at every time. Yet there's only one form of deceleration that doesn't fit an anthropological or natural limit (e.g. a cold and a secluded island) or that it is not a byproduct or residual of acceleration itself (e.g. traffic jam, yoga classes, and anti-modern social movements) — the realization that real change is no longer possible. Despite ample acceleration and flexibility, and the appearance of total contingency, hyper-optionality and unlimited openness, in late-modern society the realization is that the modern system is closing and history is coming to an end in a 'hyper accelerated status quo'.

He underscores that this realization seems to be not only an inherent and complementary characteristic of modern acceleration itself, but constitutes the paradox characteristic of the opposite side of all the distinctive forces of modernity (individualization, differentiation, rationalization, domestication and acceleration). This insight is critical if one seeks to have a firm grasp on what can be troubling about forms of life in late modernity — the realization that despite the hyper-optionality and unlimited openness of late modern societies, subjects seem to have the unshakeable feeling that no real change is possible. This speaks directly to a collective deficit of reflexiveness; one that if tackled could be the key to action and transformation. His diagnosis is that late modernity is nothing more than accelerated (and out of sync) modern society beyond the point of possible reintegration.

Let's now highlight two fundamental interrelated transformations that substantiate Rosa's claim and that also illustrate the deficits of reflexiveness in two tiers: the transition in personal identities and the decline of politics in late modernity. Rosa underscores that, on a personal and individual level, in late modernity neither work nor family life can be predicted or planned for a lifetime. People start to develop a new perspective that has been strangely called "time temporalization": time intervals and the sequence and duration of activities or appointments are no longer planned in advance, but they are allowed to take their own course. This 'temporalization of time', however, is equivalent to the timelessness of life: life is no longer planned along a line that extends from the past to the future, but decisions are made from time to time, based on situational and contextual needs and wants. For Rosa, this seems to be a kind of 'new situationism' that somehow resembles pre-modern forms of existence in which people

had to face unpredictable contingencies day after day without being able to plan for the future. These situational identities are evidently incompatible with the modern ideal of individual ethical autonomy. It is because the ideal of leading an autonomous and reflective life requires the acceptance of long-term commitments that give a sense of direction, priority and a “narrable” life. The inability to develop a structure of priorities and long-term goals leads to a paradoxical counter-reaction, in which the experience of a 'temporalized time' and frantic changes open the way for the perception of a “frozen time” without past and future — a depressing inertia.

In the end, Rosa's sense of the individual's reaction to social acceleration in late modernity seems to result in a new form of situational identity in which the dynamism of "classical" modernity, marked by a strong sense of direction (perceived as progress), is replaced by a sense of frantic and aimless movement that compounds to a form of inertia. So far, it seems that the insights on the effects of social acceleration on an individual level shed light on some of the problems posed in and through forms of life and even on the ability to perceive these problems as part of a dynamic rational narrative.

In the collective or political sphere, Rosa perceives that acceleration forces are targeting the same agents and institutions that launched them: the bureaucracy, the nation-state, the factory, democratic policies, and stable personal identities. These institutions have played a historically central role in the development of social acceleration by providing stable initial conditions, and yet now they are in danger of being eroded by the same accelerating forces they have triggered. The author (2013) underlines that in late modernity these institutions became an obstacle to future acceleration. Politics has also become situationist: it only reacts to pressure, rather than developing its informed own views. Individually and politically, the sense of a directed movement in history has given way to a sense of frantic, aimless change.

The structural problem at the heart of the political system is the fundamental inability to accelerate. The time required for democratic political decision-making is not only very difficult to accelerate — the processes of deliberation and aggregation in a democratic and pluralist society inevitably take time — but its time demands are increasing: a) The less consensus there is within a society, the less conventionalized the legitimizing principles of that society will be and the more it will cost to reach consensus. With societies becoming more pluralistic and less conventionalized, it makes it more difficult to know in advance which associations or social groups will be relevant to the negotiations; b) The less certainty there is about future conditions, the more it will cost to plan for the future and make decisions. With the acceleration of social change and the contraction of the present, the social background

conditions become increasingly contingent and instead of providing criteria for decision making, they become potential problematic factors.

Rosa also reminds us that the acceleration of other systems — especially economic circulation and technological and scientific innovation — reduces the time given to politics to decide on an issue. Considering all these factors, it stands to reason that late modern politics has turned to increasingly temporary solutions, ensuring that issues continue to reappear on the agenda. Politics, then, becomes "situationist" and loses its sense of direction; in some cases it tends to pass on the decision-making process by delegating decisions to other areas, such as the legal system (juridification) or economic and individual responsibility (privatization and deregulation).

In this “accelerating society” of late modernity the deliberative and democratic political configuration that constitutes the political project and the promise of enlightened modernity therefore seems to become obsolete. Rosa’s insight on how deeply the political problems run illustrates the difficulties at enacting change and transformation within a form of life in an accelerating society. But how does this insight contribute to the critique of forms of life? How does the realization of the paradox of the acceleration factors in the third dimension of genealogy? These questions will be answered once the next key piece of Rosa’s diagnosis of modernity is considered.

3.1.2 Resonance and the critique of modernity

In his latest book, *Resonance: a sociology of our relationship to the world* (2019), Rosa follows up on his diagnosis of an accelerating society by introducing a concept that offers an interesting perspective on our social relationship with people and things. Rosa’s (2019) diagnosis of a dominant institutional mode of dynamic stabilization — one that requires incessant growth, acceleration, and innovation in order to reproduce the social structure and the institutional status quo — inevitably forces subjects into a mode of dispositional alienation. So what is exactly alienation for Hartmut Rosa? Much like Jaeggi’s push to recover the relevancy of alienation for social critique³⁸, Rosa intends to reclaim the value of alienation but his approach does seem to move a bit forward in comparison with Jaeggi's account.

Rosa’s claim is that alienation is a particular mode of relating to the world of things, to people, and to one’s self in which there is no responsiveness; it is a relationship without

³⁸ Jaeggi, R. (2014). *Alienation*. New York: Columbia University Press.

genuine relation. Causal and instrumental connections and interactions are possible, but the world cannot be appropriated by the subject — it cannot be made to “speak,”. Alienation is, therefore, a relationship without a vibrant exchange or connection. One feels like a subject with no real confronting a silent and grey world “out there”, and both appear to be either “frozen” or genuinely chaotic and mutually aversive. So what is the option for social relationships? And what is the other of alienation?

His proposal to the other of alienation is resonance: a mode of relating to the world in which the subject feels touched, moved, or addressed by the people, places and objects. It is the capacity to feel affected by something, and in turn to develop intrinsic interest in the part of the world which affects us. It is a core element of any positive way of relating to the world. Resonance, according to Rosa, has a dual movement of af<-fection (something touches us from the outside) and e->motion (we answer by giving a response and thus by establishing a connection). Rosa’s is keenly aware that this response has a psychological, social, and cognitive side, which is based on the experience that we can reach out and establish a connection through our own inner or outer reaction. This reaction (towards something that affects us) starts the process of appropriation of the world around us. Rosa underlines that we experience resonance in relationships of love or friendship, in a genuine dialogue, playing a musical instrument, in sports and at times at the workplace. A resonant relation brings about a receptive as well as active connection which sparks a process of progressive self- and world transformation. It’s fascinating how purposefully broad and, yet, very specific the concept of resonance laid out by Rosa is; it seems to already foreshadow its own potential for a critique of forms of life.

One point that is critical for Rosa is that resonance is not just built on the experience of being touched or affected, but also on self-efficacy. In the social dimension, self-efficacy is experienced when we realize that we are capable of actually reaching out to and affecting others, and that they truly listen and connect to us and answer in turn. Yet, self-efficacy, according to the author, can be experienced when we encounter the things of the world and the encounter transforms both sides: the subject and the world experienced. Rosa is aware that this claim can be controversial and that provokes the objection that while the subject might very well be transformed by the interaction, the world around us hardly changes. Nevertheless, Rosa underlines that one thing beyond dispute is that the experienced world is affected by such encounters and that resonances of this sort are vital elements of identity formation. This can be perceived by claims such as “after reading a book”, “visiting that place”, “hearing that song” or “climbing that mountain” people often say “I became a different person”. The key aspect to

be attentive to is that resonances are beyond the control of the subject — one cannot foresee the results when something really touches us.

In the end, Rosa's conceptualization of resonance can be defined by four elements: i) affection as in the sense of the experience of being truly touched or moved; ii) emotion as the experience of responsive self-efficacy; iii) its transformative quality; and iv) the intrinsic moment of unpredictability. Establishing resonance is not something that one can bring about at will — it always has an elusive character that rests beyond our control. Rosa explains that this is due to the realization that resonance is not an echo, nor an amplification or reassurance of one's own stance. Resonance involves a real "other" that remains beyond our will, that speaks in its own voice, and remains "alien" to us. That's why resonance is not consonance or harmony. Resonance requires difference and sometimes opposition and contradiction in order to enable real encounter.

Resonance is a fascinating concept that ties the aspirations of a good life and the reflexivity needed to change one's life. However, there are at least two broad questions towards the concept and its realization that seem relevant: What is the nature of the relationship between alienated and resonant relations? How can we change an accelerating society with an institutional dominant mode requiring incessant growth and, therefore, increasing alienation?

These are loaded questions of course, and the latter seems to permeate the contemporaneous social critique in one shape or another. To address this first question one cannot help but look at how Rosa traces the manner in which modernity has had a particular impact on social relations. Rosa points out that a body can only become a resonant body if its pores are tightly closed and have only certain specific preformed openings. Musical instruments with strings like violin or guitar are a fine example of this statement. Although, if these instruments were made of porous material, they could hardly be played and they would not carry their unique sound quality. Moving beyond the field of acoustics to the arena of subjective relations with the world, Rosa's metaphor implies that the modern subject must be somewhat "closed" to his environment in order to develop his own voice and experience the segments of the world in which he is inserted — moving as a distinctly "other". The development of specifically modern sensibilities to resonance (e.g. the experience of nature and art as resonance spheres, the discovery of the psyche) is closely related to cultural changes.

Inspired by Taylor's conception of a "porous" self, Rosa agrees with the understanding that the shape of the "self" changed during the process of cultural and structural modernization from a "porous" to a "buffered" self, and that the relationship between subject and world as a whole was also transformed in that same period. A "porous" self speaks towards the boundaries

between the self and the world that were permeable in both directions (in the material and immaterial dimensions), so that internal, almost magical correspondences could generate all kinds of mutual interactions (e.g. evil thoughts can precipitate storms; evil spirits could take possession of someone's body). Therefore, the fact that precisely this is no longer the case - that the political order, nature and life itself can be conceived and lived without the idea of a Creator God -, represents a total difference in the relationship of human beings with the world.

Rosa knows this characterization can be indicted as Eurocentric in nature, and even mentions that different cultures in different periods must have different constitutions and characterizations of resonance. Nevertheless, one thing that apparently rises above this disclaimer is the relationship between resonant and muted (alienated) relations — one does not seem to totally prevent the other. The rise in muted relationships in some areas (religiosity) provides a new voice and a new space for resonance in other areas (art and politics). Both types of relations appear to be necessary for one to live a functional life. One cannot expect to be resonant all the time, and the same could be said about a muted (or alienated) life. What seems specific to the social formation of modernity is a high degree of openness through closure. This means that individuals reach their sensitivity to resonance, tending to close themselves off from what they find as a world. However, under late modern conditions this opening (for relations of resonance) proves to be highly precarious and is constantly being threatened with a predominance of mute relationships with the world.

This conclusion leads to a second point posed: Rosa is aware that whether human beings live their lives predominantly in resonance or in muted (alienated) relations with the world depends not so much on the cultural, situational and contextual variables that concern them as individuals, but, to a large extent and in a much greater degree, on institutional contexts. Institutions determine the possible forms and intensities of the relationships that we can develop with regard to our cognitive capacities; they can generate or obstruct both potential resonance sensitivities and specific reification practices. To address such institutional developments, particularly in the course of modernization, Rosa uses the analyses of two authors (especially relying on one) to corroborate his thesis:

Norbert Elias and especially Michel Foucault have both offered brilliant, detailed analyses of how subjects relationships to the self and the world were institutionally transformed in the course of modernization, and both make it unmistakably clear that the ability to suppress resonance and thus to develop mute relationships to the world were critically important to this process. For Elias, the capacity to manage affect and strategically plan action is an essential component of the "civilizing process," while Foucault makes clear the extent to which this process was the result of the formation of relationships to the self and the world in "disciplinary institutions. (2019, p. 398)

Following Foucault particularly, Rosa characterizes the dissemination of disciplinary regimes from military barracks, prisons and factories to almost all institutional contexts as having a huge impact on the nature of relationships possible. He emphasizes that in educational institutions children learn early on how to immunize themselves against resonant impulses and to systematically develop their reification capacities, laboratories represent institutional contexts in which resonances are classified as dysfunctional, and hospitals are places where human proximity is necessary and practiced and yet meaningless. There are also cases when human proximity is strictly forbidden, because it's considered biased as an exclusion criterion in bureaucratic or legal situations. The stock market and financial markets in general represent a paradigmatic example of an institutional context in which resonances of all kinds have immediately dysfunctional effects, where any form of interest in something other than numerical values represents a risk of financial failure. Rosa underscores that stock exchanges and financial markets are *good examples of a change in the institutional logic of late modernity that was analyzed particularly in studies inspired by Foucault and Deleuze guided by theories of governmentality* (2019 p. 400).

Reflecting on this change, Rosa realizes that in today's world disciplinary and immediately reifying institutions have lost much of their importance in many contexts. It is tough to find a school, company (established or startups), hospital or nursing home that does not promise sensitivity and/or attention to the life of those directly or indirectly affected by the mission of the institution. This institutional awareness combines with an institutional resonance reification strategy. In late modernity, silent ways of relating to the self and the world have become so internalized and generalized that they are the standard way of being in the world; this realization provides the opportunity for institutions to increase the achievement of reification through the exploitation of resonance resources. This means that resonances have a particular role in the institutional modes of operation of late modern societies. They now seek creativity and motivational energies which always require at least one residual element of resonant relationships, even if often precisely going against institutional final logic.

Rosa calls attention to the criteria for progress and success in the creative, socio-therapeutic and educational professions which all require some capacity and sensitivity to resonance. This leads to tensions and contradictions in two aspects: i) experiences of resonance always contain an "excessive" element that cannot be confined or made accessible and eludes the reifying logic of escalation; ii) The contexts for which the development of resonances is essential and functional are under almost constant pressure of reification. As Rosa puts it:

The bureaucratic compulsion to produce documents (and financial records) accounting for every action and step, to measure and quantify every accomplishment and even idea, makes life hell for workers in nearly every profession and division in which the quality of one's work depends on the quality of one's resonant relationships. Doctors and teachers, scholars and journalists, caretakers and child care workers, artists and politicians, even bakers and cleaners, steelworkers and cooks, all complain in unison that compulsions to escalate, time pressures, normative guidelines, and documentation requirements prevent them from doing their work properly and well (2019, p. 401)

The picture drawn by Rosa of the real crisis in the world of late modern works resembles the diagnostic of Wendy Brown in her work *Undoing the demos* (2015), in which she describes how the constant spreading of compulsions to escalate and demands of documentation requirements, in the end, block the potential of creative production. For Rosa (2019) this push towards calculable and documented metrics of success constitutes the attempt to make resonance accessible (and exploitable) and leads directly to alienation. Rosa understands that the fundamental contradiction of the institutional order of late modernity is the discrepancy between reifying escalatory logic, on the one hand, and the desire for resonant relationships that it generates, on the other. In the end, Rosa acknowledges that any contemporary criticism of resonance relations must be considered as an urgent call to understand how the imperatives of the reifying escalatory logic are institutionally anchored and naturalized, and to identify possible ways to overcome them.

Therefore, much like Jaeggi's efforts toward the critique of the impediment of reflexiveness in a form of life, Rosa invites us to criticize the institutionally anchored imperatives of escalation and reification. However, Rosa's take moves ahead without necessarily clashing with a critique of forms of life. It introduces a broad, elusive and yet easily apprehensible concept of successful and functional relations and poses another true contradiction between alienated and resonant relations. It can be acknowledged as a true contradiction because the elements within it present a degree of necessity — a rational necessity even — in the way that it seems possible to retrospectively trace a rational path between alienated (muted) relations and resonant ones. Considering that, as Jaeggi underscored, the critique of forms of life has to be open to the myriad of contingent contradictions and not necessarily tied to one that closes the spectrum of critique, there's no reason to avoid this resonant and alienated contradiction. Both analyses posit a similar end goal: a more resonant society that would be a more reflexive one and a better instantiation of freedom.

Even in full agreement with the sentiment, the question remains: Where do we go from here? The introduction of resonance plays a part in the relevancy of the third dimension of

genealogy and my contention is that the third dimension of genealogy, the one that renders the style of a genealogy, could be a conduit for a moment of reflection. It can connect and affect people, enabling at least the opportunity of resonant relations. In the next segment, the task will be the detailing of the potentials of the third dimension of genealogy and also to speak of the genealogist and of what can be expected from this figure.

3.2 The third dimension of genealogy and the task of the genealogist

Rosa's diagnostic of the "accelerating society" of late modernity in which social processes — despite ample acceleration and flexibility, and the appearance of total contingency, hyper-optionality and unlimited openness — seem to be closing in on a hyper accelerated status quo. Where the deliberative and democratic political configuration that constitutes the political project seems to be obsolete. Alongside we can find the characterization of resonance as a mode of relating to the world in which the subject feels touched, moved, or addressed by the people, places and objects. With this scenario the diagnosis taps into the contradiction of the institutional order of late modernity located in the discrepancy between reifying escalatory logic, on the one hand, and the desire for resonant relationships that it generates, on the other. This vision of social relations and institutional demands provides fertile ground for genealogy's third dimension.

3.2.1 Genealogy's stylistics and extra-systematic form of reasoning

Regarding the third dimension of genealogy, it's important to bear in mind that genealogy differs from the traditional writing of history. According to Saar (2008), this is due to its primarily interpretative way of connecting historical events. While the first two dimensions previously exposed could be, in one or another way, integrated into more traditional historiographic projects, it is in this third aspect (in terms of style and form), where genealogy reaches the limits of discourse. As mentioned earlier, Saar's study proposes a methodological reading of Nietzsche's *On the Genealogy of Morals* that traces three dimensions (analytically separated) of the genealogical endeavor: thematic, explanatory and stylistic. In order to apprehend the complexity of the genealogical discursive dimension, two approaches can be illustrative: the first involving the degree of genealogical rhetoric and the other referring to the manner in which the text addresses the readers.

Considering the first approach, Saar understands that the genealogical thesis about history and its movements of values, institutions and practices are experimental by nature. It offers hypothetical scenarios in which a specific emergency is narrated in relatively causal terms within a process related to power. Such scenarios are created through highly imaginative metaphors and illustrations in which Nietzsche's artistic use of rhetoric emerges. There is clearly a conscious and strategic effort to simplify and allegorize. This narrative strategy shows that the author gives up on offering a strictly historical account and instead offers theorizations in the form of fictional historical scenes. Nietzsche seeks to reveal the internal connections between morality and power through theoretical fictions or what could be called "thought-images". Nietzsche alters the point of view of history and rethinks his hypotheses from this other point of view; he succeeds in making power relations visible and thinkable in areas that until then weren't expected. Oddly, genealogy's trait of scandalizing objects with historical scenes, metaphors and its interpretive way of writing can be traced back to Hegel.

Kevin Thompson's (2019) reconstruction of Hegel's normativity lands in a particularly close spot to the genealogical writing style when dealing with the extra-systematic form of Hegel's reasoning. Thompson characterizes the extra-systematic form of reason as the particular tool that draws the readers out of the mundane by appealing to the concrete possibilities presented by the historical epoch in which it is written. Thompson notices that Hegel's prefaces have a representational (extra-systematic) character that escapes the inherent systemic nature of his work. The author realizes that reconciling both aspects of Hegel's work could be the key towards the reactualization of Hegel's theory³⁹. Thompson notes that:

In the prefaces to the *Phenomenology*, the *Science of Logic*, and the first edition of the *Encyclopedia*, this is marked by Hegel's repeated references to the "new era," the "time of birth," the dawning of a "new world," and the attainment of a "higher standpoint." On the one hand, these references to the

³⁹ Thompson's remarks on the reconciliation of systematic and extra-systematic (representational) reasoning on Hegel: *'Yet, does not the investigation that we have undertaken in this study teach us that, if the systematic is, in this way, irretrievably entangled with the representational, then it would thereby be exposed to all the threats of the Agrippan trilemma: arbitrary grounding, infinite regress, and vicious circularity? Which is to say, would not the extra-systematic form of reasoning condemn the systematic philosophy that it introduces to being nothing more than emotivism, historicism, in a word, sheer dogmatism? (...) The answer, though it remains largely implicit in Hegel's remarks, is nonetheless exceedingly clear. The distinction between systematicity and representation does not collapse. Rather, the criterion for the extra-systematic function of reason is necessarily the same as that for its systematic employment: truth conceived as the movement of the concept, and in terms of right or normativity, as we have shown, is nothing other than the objectivity of freedom. That the present age bears within it concrete possibilities of thinking and acting upon this principle is what enables these conditions, as opposed to others, to be singled out as the signs of the dawning of a new world. In this way, the system itself establishes the standard that defines the extra-systematic employment of reason, its public usage, and the principle by which it operates. The preparatory representationalist pathway into the system is thus governed by the very concept of truth and right that is established by that system.* (2019 p. 90)

present as a time of ripening clearly indicate the historical preconditions of systematic philosophy: that the construction of a genuine science of reason came to be possible only in the wake of the intellectual and political upheavals that transformed European society in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. But, on the other hand, they also serve as the motivational wellspring upon which reason draws to make the case for the standpoint of systematic philosophical reflection itself. (2019, p. 89)

This form of reasoning implies that what the social and political events that define the new era have made possible is both a blessing and a burden that must now be taken up and worked through in thought itself. According to Thompson, Hegel's position is that the onus to make good on this actual possibility in this "new era" ripe for change is what should compel the readers of these texts into engagement with the philosophical enterprise and into concrete social and political action. This is precisely how the representational (extra-systematic) form of reasoning in Hegel proves to be vital; by appealing to the present as an age of possibility it communicates through publicly recognized symbols and images that set a narrative. The hyperbole of Hegel's prefaces with its particular choice of words to characterize the moment in time appears to share the same goal as the stylistics of genealogy, by building an enticing and intelligible narrative of a reality that's full of possibilities.

Thompson underscores that the extra-systematic form of reasoning has a direct connection with its audience; it enables certain elements of the life-world to be seen as significant as they are drawn to compel readers to emerge from the mundane immediacy of this world. The extra-systematic employment of reason (found in the prefaces, introductions, and occasional essays of Hegel's published writings), traffics in the domain of representation, with its hyperboles and metaphors, in order to lead its audience towards social, cultural, and political change. This leads us to the second approach the genealogy's third dimension,

Saar (2008) emphasizes that genealogy is a style of writing that is conscious of the direct relationship it seeks with its audience; genealogical writing ultimately depends on its audience. On a formal level, the genealogical text implies a specific audience to which it is addressed — this is clear from its performance and structure. The audience of a genealogical text must recognize itself in these narratives, even if these narratives demonstrate a strange view compared to their previously held one. This strangeness effect is the result of the genealogical scope of illustrating how the subjects are always under influence of powers and forces hitherto invisible, that is, that the subjects are involved in a power relationship. The idea that a particular text measures its own success by how much it affects its own readers sounds interesting. Looking at the similarity between the extra-systematic form of reasoning and stylistic

dimension of genealogy is uncanny — both approaches utilize a certain type of language to impact and move readers towards the realization that their own freedom is at stake.

Thompson's best example of the extra-systematic usage of reason in Hegel's work is his "Preface" to *Elements of the Philosophy of Right* (1991). In this selected piece the author draws attention to a passage where Hegel chooses to use the figure of the *rose in the cross of the present*⁴⁰:

The key to this crucial passage lies, obviously, in its stunning and intentionally ambiguous imagery, that is, precisely in its representationalist appeal. The rose in the cross of the present is a metaphor that alludes, at once, to the symbolism of the seventeenth century secret religious society, the Rosicrucians, who used a St. Andrew's cross and four roses as its emblem, and to Luther's coat of arms, which had a black cross in the midst of a heart surrounded by white roses. It clearly articulates Hegel's core claim that to comprehend the actuality of right conceptually is to recognize that underlying the contingencies of the present—which are sometimes horrific in their extremes (the painful cross of the present)—is a substantiality that is rational in itself (the rose of reason) and the task of philosophical science is, by laying out the systematic unfolding of right, to reconcile the rationality of the thinking subject with this rationality of the actual. (2019, p. 92)

Thompson underlines that, as significant as this thesis is — reconciling the demand of free thought of the subject with this rationality of the actual — what is more significant is the fact that its means of conveyance is not through systematic proof, but through representation. The figure selected by Hegel fits the thought-image concept; as a theoretical fiction (or insight) it plays its own part in the Hegelian narrative which sought to provide a connection for its audience of Germanic Europeans — an effort to raise themselves to the matter at hand (the concept of right and its determinations). It does so by appealing to their Protestant background through symbolic figures and metaphors.

In the end, the Hegelian example conforms to both of the characteristics of genealogy's third dimension: it narrates with a specific style, using metaphors, symbolic figures, and etc., to affect its audience and transform their perspective regarding the subject at hand. Now it's clear how the diagnostic of an accelerated late modernity and its own deficit of resonant relations plays a strong part in the relevancy of this third dimension of genealogy.

The audience of a genealogy is invited through a journey of its own past, and through this journey the past is rendered readable by relations of power that impact the audience of the

⁴⁰ Here's the full quote selected by Thompson: *To recognize reason as the rose in the cross of the present and thereby to delight in the present - this rational insight is the reconciliation with actuality which philosophy grants to those who have received the inner call to comprehend, to preserve their subjective freedom in the realm of the substantial, and at the same time to stand with their subjective freedom not in a particular and contingent situation, but in what has being in and for itself* (1991, p. 22).

present. If a genealogy is successful it offers us time, it transforms our relationship with our own accelerated lives, and it moves us towards actions to change the apparent anti-climactic future of the society of acceleration plagued by the escalation of reified relations.

Even if these narratives demonstrate a strange or uncomfortable view from what they think their past once was, the audience of a genealogy recognizes itself in these narratives. Genealogy is not necessarily agreeing or negating your point of view regarding the history of your present, but gives a voice to this history of discontinuity in continuity — an outside voice that can often be unsettling. This strangeness effect is caused by the realization that we are not in this predicament by accident; choices were made, practices emerged and institutions were built, and all of this could have been different.

It is no coincidence that Rosa (2012) himself worked briefly with genealogy and took the position that there were two relevant types of genealogy related to his social critique. Charles Taylor's "white genealogy" (affirmative) is described as the instrument to prove, in detail, to what extent and at what points the restrictions of acceleration of late modernity are incompatible with the moral map of modernity. It defines what forms of alienation, needs, and social pathologies emerge, but also what possible corrections exist. The other was based on Michel Foucault's "black genealogy" (negative) that shows there are no such things as innocent ideals that now become "victims" of modernization; they are the same instruments of power imposing a certain problematic relationship on us and they have allowed the power of the modern state to become individualistic and even totalitarian.

For Rosa it stands to reason that social criticism must necessarily take both forms of genealogy seriously and combine them. This entails a critical theory of the present that must examine, not only what demands arise from our fundamental interpretations and the interpretations of the world, what contradictions are created in them and what deviations can be identified between the institutional reality and the moral map, but also what restrictions, power effects, normalization, exclusion and subjugation practices are associated with the same map.

Yet Rosa is aware that this combination cannot consist of a mutual relativization of the two stories; it must be a new story that can "sublate" (in the Hegelian sense) both black and white genealogy, taking their respective radical points seriously and recognizing their legitimacy. This new story would be understood as a "gray" genealogy whose operative mode would be formulated as:

Tell me the story of the genesis of my self-understanding as a series of effects of power, on the one hand, and as a result of the search for the good, on the

other hand, in such a way that, while listening, I recognize which moments of me seem to be worth preserving and what possibilities of overcoming or transgressing arise for me in relation to other moments. (2012, p. 33)

The fact that Rosa himself sees the potential of genealogy following his own social critique substantiates our proposition. However, Rosa's position on genealogy seems to fall in the trap of the positive critique and to redeem what is worthy of our values as a central aspect of genealogy. As we've seen during the characterization of the critique of forms of life, in actuality one cannot be preemptive of what works or doesn't; Jaeggi's understanding is that progress can only be apprehended retrospectively. And that's not even beyond criticism, there are still questions to be answered regarding the affirmation of progress even in Jaeggi's terms. Furthermore, a genealogy whose focus resides on the problematic relations of power is not denying the realization of progress — it is in fact underlining the interplay of instantiations of freedom and the pathologies of power relations. The stance of this project of genealogy is that its own negativistic perspective does not mitigate or underestimate the possibility of progress. The realization that there is not, and will not exist, a social formation (or form of life) that represents an ideal actualization of freedom, or a completely healthy resonance-alienation relation, helps us understand that an apparently solely negative analysis is the way to go to provide perspective and to impact the lives of those lost in hyper-accelerated *status quo*.

This leads to the common thread through this entire dissertation: Michel Foucault has been the perennial source of characterizations of what it means to be critical and to what is genealogy. Albeit, situated in between the influence of Nietzsche (Saar systematic lens) and of Hegel (Jaeggi's critique). Foucault was mentioned several times either directly or indirectly (via Allen, Koopman and Rosa) and the reason is very simple: no other author that identifies himself as a genealogist has had the same academic impact or been asked about his process as much as Foucault.

The insights on his work enable a bridge between a contemporaneous attempt of Hegelian critical theory and a Nietzschean proposal of genealogy. A Foucaultian genealogy is the closest in effect to the proposal of the tridimensional genealogy of this dissertation. Although in some aspects they are quite different: the proposal of a tridimensional genealogy gains in analytical and theoretical heft with the introduction of conceptualizations of forms of life, deficit of reflexiveness and resonant relations and it self-aware of its own expected impact on the social formations. I am positive that Foucault would not consider any of those a positive, but one can also highlight the similarities of these processes. Regarding the third dimension of genealogy for example, Foucault (2001) has acknowledged that his books are experiences, in a

sense that it is something that one comes out of transformed. The function of the experience is to wrench the subject from itself, of seeing to it that the subject is no longer itself. In this sense, his work is part of a project of desubjectivation and the author is keenly aware that wrenching the subject from itself requires a certain type of writing — a fictionalized and scandalized version of history⁴¹.

For Foucault, in the end, an experience is always a fiction because it's something that one fabricates oneself, that doesn't exist before and will exist afterward. Much like Rosa, Foucault perceives that an experience (being touched and affected), is a completely private experience but can only be fully appreciated to the extent that it escapes pure subjectivity and that others can at least encounter it in the world. Now it's possible to revisit a quote selected earlier to underline the thematization of forms of life and to read it with new eyes, considering the style of genealogy that engages with its audience in a transformative manner:

If I had wanted, for example, to do the history of psychiatric institutions in Europe between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, obviously I wouldn't have written a book like *Madness and Civilization*. But my problem is not to satisfy professional historians; my problem is to construct myself, and to invite others to share an experience of what we are, not only our past but also our present, an experience of our modernity in such a way that we might come out of it transformed. Which means that at the end of a book we would establish new relationships with the subject at issue. (2001, p. 242)

The idea of establishing new relationships now lends itself perfectly to the point in question. It is interesting how this selected quote can close a loop in the characterization of Foucault's genealogy with the proposal of a tridimensional genealogy. It marks and reports back to the first points made for a connection of genealogy and critique of forms of life and seals the argument for a third aspect of a genealogy that propels its audience towards the creation and transformation of relationships. The next segment will continue the exploration into Michel Foucault's understanding of a practice of genealogy based on Nietzsche's thought and it will attempt to define the task of the genealogist. The French author comes so close to the goal of this dissertation and offers vast experience in executing a genealogical study, so this seems a logical step.

3.2.2 Genealogy and the genealogist

⁴¹ *In spite of that, the people who read me—particularly those who value what I do—often tell me with a laugh, 'You know very well that what you say is really just fiction'. I always reply, 'Of course, there's no question of it being anything else but fiction' (2001, p. 242).*

One thing that Rosa forgot when he was crafting his argument for a “gray” genealogy, based on assigned chromatic tones to positive or negative approaches of genealogy, is that genealogy is and will remain gray and independent of his own tentative argument. The gray aspect of genealogy speaks towards the operative manner in which it realizes itself. Foucault in his essay *Nietzsche, Genealogy and History*⁴² (1977) gives a sense on how genealogy works and unsurprisingly points out that the approach is nothing less than meticulous and patiently documentary: *It operates on a field of entangled and confused parchments, on documents that have been scratched over and recopied many times* (1977, p. 139).

According to Foucault, genealogy seeks the record of events outside of a particular finality, and at times it turns to the most unpromising places — places that tend to feel without history. Consequently, it requires patience, attention to detail and generally depends on a vast accumulation of source material. The arguments of a genealogy are built through the collection of pieces of history, or, as Foucault puts it, *its 'cyclopean monuments' are constructed from 'discreet and apparently insignificant truths and according to a rigorous method'; they cannot be the product of 'large and well-meaning errors'* (1977, p. 140).

This means that the conclusions of a genealogy cannot be sustained by ideal constructions; they must be the result of a particular “ rigorous method”. To enlighten us on method Foucault subsequently mentions that genealogy does not necessarily oppose itself to history. It rejects, in fact, the meta-historical deployment of ideal significations, indefinite teleologies, and the search for "origins". With this realization, Foucault tries to narrow down the sense in which Nietzsche used the term *Ursprung* (*origin*) and leads us into the profound methodological aspects of genealogy. The pursuit of origin that escapes Nietzsche’s goals with genealogy is the attempt to capture the essence of things and their identities, because it assumes the existence of immobile forms that precede the external world of accident and succession. This search for the image of a primordial truth fits with the genealogical approach. The genealogist must not indulge this search, and if he succeeds in this refusal he should be ready to listen to history and possibly discover that there’s either no essence or if there is one, it was once fabricated:

Examining the history of reason, he learns that it was born in an altogether "reasonable" fashion - from chance, devotion to truth and the precision of scientific methods arose from the passion of scholars, their reciprocal hatred,

⁴² This essay first appeared in *Hommage à Jean Hyppolite* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1971), pp. 145-72.

their fanatical and unending discussions, and their spirit of competition - the personal conflicts that slowly forged the weapons of reason (1977, p. 142).

Foucault underscores that the genealogist and history must have a close relationship. Recognizing its jolts, surprises, unsteady victories and unpalatable defeats, the genealogist needs history to dispel any ideas of a true origin. Yet the question remains, In what intended sense did Nietzsche use the term *Ursprung* (*origin*)? According to Foucault, there are two meanings attached to the idea of origin that record the true objective of genealogy: *Entstehung* and *Herkunft* are both more exact than *Ursprung*, yet ordinarily translated as simply “origin”.

Foucault articulates this etymological description of the terms and sets the eyes of the genealogist towards his part in the process. The first is *Herkunft*, which he explains is the equivalent of stock or descent, the ancient affiliation to a group, sustained by the bonds of blood, tradition, or social class. In the descent, the genealogist must study the numberless beginnings whose faint traces should be readily seen by a historical lens. The analysis of descent permits the dissociation of the self, its recognition and displacement and the discovery (under the aspect of a trait or a concept), of the myriad events through which they were formed. And yet the genealogist must be aware that the task is not simply going back in time to restore an unbroken continuity beyond dispersion, nor geared to demonstrate that the past has imposed a predetermined present. The task is to identify the accidents, the deviations, the complete reversals, and the errors that gave birth to those things that continue to exist and have value for us.

It is interesting to notice how Foucault frames the process of descent, the possibility of a conceptual form and its own goal of refuting an unbroken continuous reality. Such a process matches the thematization of social formations as a dissociating process that questions our entrenched background conditions by introducing the conceptualization of forms of life. It is a concept suited to dissolving this assumption of uniformity, that passes through classical cultural boundaries — a de-essentialized and a de-substantialized alternative to the concept of culture. Jaeggi’s work with the thematization of forms of life fits the bill of a genealogical process from every angle and provides theoretical heft and a concept that transcends particular analysis.

The second meaning attached to the idea of origin is *Entstehung*, which designates emergence as the moment of arising. Foucault insists that the analysis of the emergence must delineate this interaction, the struggle of forces against each other or adverse circumstances. The core idea behind the emergence in the genealogical process is that: *humanity does not gradually progress from combat to combat until it arrives at universal reciprocity, where the*

rule of law finally replaces warfare; humanity installs each of its violences in a system of rules and thus proceeds from domination to domination (1977 p. 151).

Not only is there no final destination or a necessary progressive path for any social formation, but each of the instantiations is imperfect. The relationships of domination (power relations) are very clear for Foucault in the sense that they are commonplace, and can be found throughout history, in rituals or even in meticulous procedures that impose rights and obligations.

In the end, every new interpretation (as well as violent or surreptitious appropriation) of a system of rules that imposes a redefinition of the terms of the power relations means that the development of humanity becomes a series of interpretations and the role of genealogy is to record its history: *the history of morals, ideals and metaphysical concepts, the history of the concept of liberty or of the ascetic life; as they stand for the emergence of different interpretations, they must be made to appear as events on stage of historical process* (1977, p. 152).

It is no news that genealogy implies a narrative of power; it seeks to decode and underline the discontinuities of historical social formations and it is now clear how valuable this process is. What is interesting is that the process thus characterized seems to imply a social development that is rationally comprehensible within the historical process.

However, there's a third aspect that is underscored by Foucault that still demands attention and it rests in the relationship between genealogy (seen as the examination of descent and emergence) and history. Foucault makes the case that Nietzsche conceives genealogy as *wirkliche Historie* (effective history). But what does this conceptualization entail? Within genealogy historical meaning becomes a dimension of effective history to the extent it places everything considered immutable by man within a process of development. It provides a dissociating view that is capable of decomposing itself and shattering the unity of man's being: *History becomes 'effective' to the degree that it introduces discontinuity into our very being—as it divides our emotions, dramatizes our instincts, multiplies our body and sets it against itself* (1977, p. 154). The effective history is, in the end, affirmation of knowledge as perspective, as a voice that it's never neutral towards the reality that surrounds us.

The effective history impact speaks to the scandalizing narrative of a genealogy, but also towards the connection that inspires to have with its audience. Foucault's description of an effective history demonstrates how effectiveness depends on the connection that seeks to provide. One could say that an effective history is a resonant instrument. It provides the experience of being touched or affected, and self-efficacy. The subject comes out transformed

by the interaction with an effective history and the experienced world is affected; it is never the same and, as mentioned earlier, one cannot foresee the results when something truly touches us. A true resonant relation involves an “other” that speaks in its own voice; effective history can be the voice that grabs our attention and transforms us and the world around us.

This brief interlude with Foucault’s insight on Nietzsche’s genealogy illuminates the path for the genealogist and its practice. It also does not refute, but rather underlines, the connections made so far. It may not lead to a direct connection of Foucault and Hegel, and yet refutes neither, particularly in the terms posited in this dissertation. However, one remote connection is that the essay *Nietzsche, Genealogy and History* first appeared in a collection of essays *Hommage à Jean Hyppolite* in 1971. It seems to be an homage to the Hegelian master with next steps in the project of critique.

Beyond direct contact with the materials and the aspirations of a genealogical project there’s one additional reason to resort to Foucault’s experience. So far it was mentioned that critique is the ferment of transformation and the question was posed whether the truth sets you free; the characterization of genealogy’s third dimension aligned with the diagnostic of a resonant-depleted society presents a likely path for a project of critique, but shouldn’t one be doing something more? Shouldn’t all of us be more engaged in social movements and direct political action? Even you reading this dissertation, couldn’t you be doing more? This is the reason that Foucault’s experience is relevant to the genealogist or to the critic in general. Late in life, when giving an interview about his experience in Tunisia, Foucault revealed how his practice ends beyond the writing word. Foucault lived in Tunisia for two and a half years and was there during most of 1968.

For him, the political experience that stands out as the most significant in his life was not May of 68’ in France but March of 68’ in Tunisia. In this period, the author witnessed some very intense student revolts, suspensions of courses, arrests, and a general student strike:

The police came into the university, clubbed many students, seriously injured several of them, and threw them into prison. Some were sentenced to eight, ten, even fourteen years behind bars—some are still in prison. (...) I was deeply impressed by those young women and men who exposed themselves to fearful risks by drafting a leaflet, distributing it, or calling for a strike. It was a real political experience for me” (2001, p. 279).

The direct political experience was overwhelming and the political skepticism that the author already had after his brief association with the PCF (French Communist Party) was somewhat dissipated. The experience was *sui generis*, unlike the experience during the Algerian War where Foucault did not participate directly. This time in Tunisia the author was able to

directly support the students and to make contact with something different. Foucault was impressed by how the Tunisians students used Marxism with a radical vehemence and enthusiasm: *for those young people, Marxism didn't just represent a better way of analyzing reality: at the same time, it was a kind of moral energy, a kind of existential act that was quite remarkable* (2001, p. 280). The energy of the Tunisians students compelled the author to join the political debate.

When Foucault returned to France he couldn't help but notice how the treatment of Marxist theories was different: *People in France spoke of hyper-Marxism, of a proliferation of theories, of a splintering into small groups. It was exactly the opposite, the reverse, the contrary of what had intrigued me in Tunisia* (2001, p. 281). The use of theory not as a motivational instrument for political action but merely for academic dissent. This realization, as Foucault puts it, may have impacted his outlook going forward:

That may explain the way in which I tried to approach things from that time onward, away from those endless discussions, that hyper-Marxization, that irrepressible discursivity which characterized university life, and, in particular, Vincennes in 1969. I tried to do things that required a personal, physical, and real involvement, things that would address problems in concrete, precise, and definite terms in a given situation. It was only from that moment that necessary analyses could be proposed. Working with the GIP on the problem of the prisoners, I attempted to initiate and carry through an experience (2001, p. 281).

The path of an academic and political career marked by an experience that changed his life. An academic career that rises in the hopes of providing an experience that could change more lives. That is one of the tasks of a genealogist that can be extracted from the trajectory of Foucault. The genealogist's work is not only in the gray, but also outside of that — working with people, addressing concrete problems and supporting political action. Both parts are critical. In recent years, we've seen that progressive measures can be easily rolled back by political actors and that policy has become reactive or even inactive at times. Direct political action is the measure that attends to the most urgent problems in our life and yet we won't be able to prevent the recurrence of those problems if we don't properly narrate to those that will come after us.

An effective history — a genealogy as immanent criticism of forms of life — must have its place to rationally comprehend the historical process in an impactful way that affects us and moves us towards new political action. The hope is that the result of such a process is the creation of a consciously critical attitude, as Horkheimer once expected; not only as part of the development of societies, but also as an expression of self-determination.

CLOSING REMARKS

This dissertation began with Honneth's arguments dealing with the central problem of describing and justifying a standpoint from which society and its institutional practices can be meaningfully theoretically criticized. Honneth's main concern is the place of today's critique between a contextually localized form of "weak" social criticism and a "strong" form that transcends the context of social criticism with its own risk of paternalism or even despotism. Honneth's (2009) proposal to settle this conundrum is a scheme of critique that is constructive, reconstructive and genealogical, in that order. It stands first on a constructive justification from a critical point of view which provides a conception of rationality that establishes a systematic connection between social rationality and moral validity. It is then reconstructively demonstrated that this potential rationality determines social reality in the form of moral ideals. In the end, these same moral ideals must be seen under the genealogical condition so their original meaning can become socially unrecognizable.

Honneth proposes such a scheme under the misapprehension that genealogy is a parasitic critical procedure because it presupposes a normative justification and fails to provide one. In order to surpass Honneth's reservations towards the genealogical approach, not uncommon in academic circles, and to demonstrate how the practice of genealogy is worthy of the critical theory tradition and its aspirations, this dissertation sets out on an unusual path. It utilized Saar's tridimensional analyses of Nietzsche's genealogy as a guide through a fully theorized proposal of immanent critique, Jaeggi's critique of forms of life, and the diagnostic of late modernity's structural development drive and failings in human relationships, as well as Rosa's acceleration and resonance.

The first section began with a determination of the precise scope of the thematization of Jaeggi's forms of life and provided a broad spectrum of questions that do not strictly fit a communitarian or liberal argument. Jaeggi's theoretical proposition seeks to bring a reactualization of Hegel's immanent critique. She disavows her proposition from liberal abstinence towards ethical questions (Rawls and Habermas) and yet does not capitulate to agonal theories (Mouffe and Laclau). Jaeggi (2018) perceives the agonal position as a struggle for social hegemony that cannot be pacified or bracketed. According to her, the agonal position also raises a fundamental skepticism about the possibility of placing the conflict on an argumentative footing.

For Jaeggi *criticism is always simultaneously dissociative and associative, it forges a relationship – even if also a negative one – to what is criticized* (2018, p. 28). Agonal theories are suspicious of the forging of relationships and attempts of a common basis mediated by justification, because it may eliminate the irreducibility of the conflict. In the end, agonal theories share with the liberal stance the perception of forms of life as self-contained and ineluctable units locked into their collective identities; it doesn't recognize the normative validity claims within them. The liberal stance strives for a moral universality that transcends the internal claims and the agonal theories reduce them into power/domination (subjugation) claims.

Jaeggi's position is that one must arrive at a different understanding, contrary to both the agonistic and liberal positions, and the first step is the conceptualization of forms of life. The etymological, descriptive and evaluative analysis of the concept of forms of life fits with the particularities of a genealogical endeavor. No genealogical proposition has developed a sophisticated theoretical manner to describe its subject and yet, a genealogical approach can be the key to execute the criticism implied by Jaeggi's conceptualization. The realization that forms of life, as a concept, needs an appropriate mode of connection to the empirical is paramount, if the aim of its conceptualization is to shape a form of social critique. The process of thematizing forms of life could provide a connection to a particular understanding of genealogy. The implication is that both share theoretical heritage and a common goal. The thematization of forms of life and the Saar's thematic dimension of genealogy resemble each other in the common goal to destroy any illusion about the naturalness or unity of the moral world and in the awareness of the historic naturalization of practices have on the construction and self-constitution of human beings. Thematization (taking a form of life as a form of life), is translated in the genealogical as the reassessment of history — a different kind of history that demands means very distant from the traditional investigation of the historically legitimate knowledge modes. It is a history that is already, at this point, reminiscent of Foucault's descriptive analysis of the *Aufklärung*. The process of genealogy appears intuitively in Jaeggi's endeavor to seek a thematization of forms of life, a proper context on the practices and attitudes to appreciate the functional, and evaluative aspects within a form of life.

The second section's task was to recast the place of genealogy as a form of criticism that, in this particular case, could be intuitively claimed and yet somehow ignored. This is linked to some famous preconceptions of genealogy and why the chapter starts by tackling different understandings of genealogy and its own limitations. Koopman (2013) and Allen (2008, 2016) build their projects of genealogy mainly on Foucault's work, which is no surprise at all; the

French author has a myriad of interviews and essays illustrating and commenting on his practice. Koopman's proposition of genealogy as problematization is keenly aware of the pitfalls that genealogy can lead to (biopower hunting) and conscious that a combination of Habermas's critical theory and Foucaultian genealogy is probably doomed to fail. And yet, Koopman pairs the same combination with a less comprehensive and methodological overtone. He posits a genealogy as a problematization that not only misplaces Foucault's political preferences of writing style with the normative potency of his work, but also advocates for an excessively Kantian reading of Foucault. A position that attempts to move forward from Allen's (2008) combination of Foucault's historicizing and contextualizing Kant's transcendental subject with a contextualized version of Habermas's. And yet, ends up failing to measure up to the task. It fails because it draws a direct connection between Habermas and Foucault, and because it literally measures itself up to Habermasian standards using Benhabib's dual form of critical theory, which is heavily influenced by Habermas. Koopman's proposition raises the "Foucault versus Habermas" debate and Allen's position on said debate is central towards the understanding of her own project of critique, while Baynes's position is relevant for the characterization of Foucault's power x freedom relationship, which is also indispensable to this work.

Allen's (2016) proposal of genealogy characterized as problematization progresses in comparison with Koopman's version. Allen mobilizes Adorno's and Foucault's insights to construct an alternative to the Hegelian and Kantian accounts of the relationship between normativity and history and suggests how this alternative can be used in the project of decolonizing critical theory. This is a huge step forward that puts genealogy on display for critical theorists. Allen also underlines the Hegelian influence in both Adorno and Foucault, stressing that they remained firmly adept to the basically Hegelian thought that philosophy (understood as a project of critique), substantiates the most underappreciated insight posited by the author. Her project of genealogy as problematization is not a rejection of the normative inheritance of modernity but rather represents a fuller realization of its core value: freedom.

The insight is certainly rich and yet it is the basis for disappointment. Allen is working with her previous idea of impurity of reason, where reason is understood as ambivalently entangled with power relations and consists in opening up a space between ourselves and our historical a priori. So, it is a reframed version of de-transcendentalized subject argument which is not inherently wrong, but incomplete, working off the Kantian side of Foucault's genealogy. Perhaps because of this, by the end of her argument Allen moves away from Foucault and from genealogy itself and offers a strong emancipatory-utopian characterization of Adorno's text.

She moves intentionally to match Allen's version of forward-looking progress and maybe even to satisfy Benhabib's dual model of critical theory. This leaves us with the predicament that even the most Hegelian interpretation of genealogy cannot provide its own normative justification. To settle this matter the choice was made was to go deeper into the Foucaultian understanding of its own genealogy to tease out his Hegelian roots. Two key moments demonstrate the depth of the Hegelian influence in the Foucaultian genealogy, starting with the origin of the term *dispositif*.

Agamben traces the term back to a Hyppolite text about Hegel. Positivity is the term that the young Hegel gives to the historical element — loaded with rules, rites, and institutions. The idea is that Foucault, by using this term, (which was later to become "apparatus" or *dispositif*), takes a decisive stance with respect to his own problem: the relation between individuals as living beings and the historical element. The other moment regards the retrogressive grounding in Thompson's work regarding normativity in Hegel. Thompson elucidates how intricate the connections between right and freedom are posed by the systematic position of Hegel and how normativity can be explored by the premise that right to some extent is an expression of freedom — freedom actualized. To that effect, Foucault himself suggests not only that power and freedom are not mutually exclusive, but also that an interplay exists between them. He sees freedom as a condition and precondition for the exercise of power in a systematic and retrogressive manner. Rethreading the Foucault versus Habermas debate, Baynes (2015) is particularly interested in distinguishing between objectionable and unobjectionable power relations. Baynes underscores that Habermas's charge concerning Foucault's "cryptonormativism" was not originally meant to defend an ultimate grounding to secure human freedom. It was, nevertheless, to demonstrate the necessity of a clear cut or relatively clear indication as to how the distinction between unobjectionable and objectionable forms of power might be drawn; Foucault's analysis of power does not seem to be able or intended to do that. There's no way to anticipate a distinction of what forms of power are objectionable and unobjectionable prior to experience of a critique and there's no form of unobjectionable power; objectionable and unobjectionable characteristics are always present in any form of power. The proper question is the degree of presentation in the social practice of such characteristics. When the objectionable traits of an instance of freedom — a form of life — rises to a problematic level (hindering experiences) then it demands criticism. That does not amount to a totalizing critique of reason.

This conclusion impacts the exercise of power and normative expectation in Foucaultian genealogy. In the end, the stark difference between a Hegel's approach and

Foucault's lies in the perspective. Hegel sees the right (*Recht*) as a case of success in the history of actualizations of freedom, while Foucault takes an opposite position, looking at instances of power to demonstrate how they are failing to fulfill an expression of freedom. And yet there's a common theoretical grounding appraised from both sides of the spectrum. This explains how one can intuitively claim a certain genealogical approach and yet ignore it, because of a sedimented understanding that genealogy goes as far as Kant. It is not a surprise that both Jaeggi's critique of forms of life and Foucault's genealogical project share the very same goal of providing a transformational experience regarding the way we see the established irreflexive reality. It's possible to perceive that both authors share Hegelian influences and a desire to go beyond Hegel's work.

Jaeggi (2018) sets up her reconstruction of immanent criticism with a few touchstones: the inherent norms of a form of a life are at once functional and ethical; immanent-critical analysis, neither simply discovers nor freely conceives the contradictory connections of social reality and it cannot base its analysis and evaluation on ultimate reasons nor on an interpretation of social reality that is definitive and independent of the actors; and validation is encountered in the historical and social constellations; normative rightness is the result of engagement in the process of criticism and the viability of the immanent criticism depends on the demonstration that such process is rational. These by themselves merit more questions into the inner workings of the process: How does one perceive or extract the patterns, the norms, out of the form of life itself? In what way can this process be transformative within and for a form of life?

At this point it doesn't appear that Jaeggi has the *modus operandi* to divulge these normative claims from within the forms of life without using some sort of anthropology or philosophy of history (even in a weaker sense). To thematize and criticize from the start was already the aim of Jaeggi and her critical proposal already shows that it can fit within the thematic dimension of the genealogical process that sets itself apart by the direct empirical approach to history and its social practices. This is an instance where the project of genealogy proposed as an immanent critique of forms of life can avoid resorting to arguments of anthropology or philosophy of history. Jaeggi offers details on her process, beginning with the statement that history does not entail a necessary learning process, not every way of processing an experience can be deemed satisfactory or adequate, and quelling a crisis is not necessarily the same thing as resolving it. This speaks to her reappropriation of Hegel's determinate negation and her formal perspective of success. Regarding the latter, Jaeggi, inspired by Tugendhat's, turns away from substantive questions of what must be realized in a form of life to be good or successful and *instead, we must examine how these practices arose, how they are*

established and maintained, and whether the solutions to problems that they embody can be regarded as more appropriate reactions to the problems in question (2018, p. 217). Inspired by Tugendhat and yet very genealogical, except for the perspective.

Which leads into the dynamics between the process of determinate negation and the idea of progress and success; Jaeggi understands that learning processes are triggered by experiences of the failure and the inadequacy of a form of life as measured by the requirements imposed on it or posed within it. So the possibility to learn something arises only when this problem can be mastered reflexively at a certain normative level in the mode of a process of enrichment and differentiation. This process implies that the crisis of the old already contains the potential for its productive supersession, and not only that the trigger of the crisis gives rise to the means for resolving it, but also is then triggered at a moment when these resources are already available. The measure of rightness and its rational character rests in the process itself.

Determinate negation is both a mode of development and a mode of justification or, more precisely, a mode of justification as a mode of development. A social transformation is justified because and insofar as the path it takes can be rationally comprehended. The rational comprehension of the development works only insofar as problem and solution are intertwined and refer to each other in accordance with the process of determinate negation.

In the end, the movement of enrichment and differentiation determines if the rationality or legitimacy of a historical process prevails. Jaeggi's immanent criticism comprehends a development of critique and justification that coincide and a crucial factor for the appraisal of success in a form of life is whether there is space for reflection. The latter conclusion sets up Jaeggi's appropriation of the Hegelian conception of history as progress in the consciousness of freedom. Jaeggi understands that it refers to freedom as a predetermined goal, and rather than an insight mediated by crisis experiences, into conditions of the performance of our practices. The reflection on the fact of freedom is what makes the difference between being free in itself and being free in and for itself in Hegelian terms. Acquiring this knowledge entails a transformation of our entire relationship to ourselves in our practical relations to the world. In the process demonstrated by Jaeggi, the knowledge or reflective moment achieved in the course of the crisis-driven history of transformation is a productive sign.

The form of immanent criticism proposed by Jaeggi is based on Terry Pinkard's description of a dialectical history (1994), a history whose main concern is to show how succeeding "social spaces" contain resources within themselves that are able to explain and justify themselves over and against earlier alternative accounts, and demonstrate and affirm for

themselves that their own accounts of themselves were satisfactory. Jaeggi's project of problem-solving takes, then, the form of a hermeneutic anticipation of an assumed solution and a desirable goal. The cogency of such anticipation, of course, can only be demonstrated retrospectively in interaction with the results of the correspondingly changed practice. Basically it is a trial and error format — an open dialectic.

In this process, a historical social transformation can then be understood as a learning process with reference to which one position is deemed better or worse than the position overcome, and as representing progress or regression. And yet Jaeggi is very candid in her reflection when mentioning that even though her approach posits that it can identify a progressive movement, and define criteria for what constitutes such a progressive movement, that by itself does not mean history is constantly progressing and does not exhibit setbacks. Jaeggi is positive that in history setbacks are more likely than progress, and considering her proposition of critique and justification, one can only really be aware of what is going wrong. For that reason it is no surprise that the author proposes that the key to explore the preconditions of emancipation and collective self-determination is in the understanding *the complicated relationship between the power to shape conditions of life, the lack of transparency, and the often intractable complexity of interlinked practices and attitudes* (2018, p. 313).

It stands to reason that Jaeggi is not reverting her argument towards some variety of hegemonic or agonal theory mentioned earlier, so the implications of relations of power must be outside of that. Again, the author is intuitively supporting the second dimension of genealogy. Genealogy's explanatory dimension — reading history through “power” and its related forms — gives a better chance of demonstrating how our practices and institutions really are provisional and at times problematic instances of freedom. If the preconditions of emancipation claim for a deep understanding of the power relations that shape our conditions of life, an approach that prioritizes the perspective of (problematic) power relations within this open dialectics makes great sense. Jaeggi is trying to make a point in the conclusion of her book that is quite clear: there is no positive answer to the question of what makes a form of life good or an adequate form of life. All that exists is a negative, indirect answer: failing forms of life suffer from a collective practical reflexive deficit. So shouldn't the approach towards a critique be a narrative of the power relations that build or enable a deficit of reflexiveness?

Genealogy's narrative of power, decoding and underlining the discontinuities of historical social formations could be an improvement compared to a retrospective confirmative reading of successes of history. A genealogical approach would be a more informative tool for the experiential pluralism proposed by Jaeggi. Her process has been fairly criticized and in

order to deal with this criticism and settle what has been only intuited so far, this dissertation sets a few markers on how this genealogical proposal sets itself apart of the critique of forms of life and also how the critique of forms of life can be used to enhance the genealogical project. The conceptualization of forms of life can make genealogy a more approachable option of critique. It illustrates how a problem within a form of life can become a hindrance towards the experiences of freedom which is invaluable to the thematic search of a prospect of critique. Genealogy's treatment of history (documented history specifically), can be a cipher to how the nexus knowledge/action becomes resilient or, in other words, how some practices don't change. The genealogical project does not hold the determination of success of history in the forefront of its critical scheme. The genealogical project here benefits itself from the mode of development and justification, determinate negation, and yet deals with the spectrum of an experiential process. In this proposal the question would revolve around the experiences of freedom damaged by the process of relations of power. From the negation of said process the transformation is seeded, where the crisis of the old already contains the potential for its productive supersession. . The genealogical project of critique rests on the continuous analyses of the deficits of forms of life and doesn't focus on the confirmation of the successes of history. If we can only know for certain the unsatisfactory, the deficit and the failing, then the building blocks for the future would benefit from the explanatory dimension of a genealogy.

So far we are still within a two dimensional form of critique, based on awareness of one's freedom to act. Is that enough? Does the truth really set you free? The third dimension of this genealogical process comes to surpass the dual model of critique and to reassess the ambitions of reflexiveness and emancipation of this critique. This leads us to the final section that starts with the grounding for the presentation of genealogy's third dimension. The relevancy of genealogy's third dimension is tied to a particular dual diagnosis of late modernity. Rosa's diagnostic of: a) the "accelerating society" of late modernity in which social processes, despite ample acceleration and flexibility, and the appearance of total contingency, hyper-optionality and unlimited openness, seems to be closing in a hyper- accelerated status quo and the deliberative and democratic political configuration that constitutes the political project seem to be obsolete, and; b) the characterization of resonance as a mode of relating to the world in which the subject feels touched, moved, or addressed by the people, places and objects, and the contradiction of the institutional order of late modernity in the discrepancy between reifying escalatory logic, on the one hand, and the desire for resonant relationships that it generates.

The stylistic dimension of genealogy is characterized by two approaches. Firstly, the degree of genealogical rhetoric and secondly, the manner in which the text addresses the

readers. The interesting part is that both of them can be traced back to Hegel and his extra-systematic use of reason described by Thompson. Genealogy's third dimension implies a narrative with a specific style, using metaphors, symbolic figures, and etc., to affect its audience and transform their perspective on the subject at hand. The audience of a genealogy is invited through a journey of its own past. Through this journey the past is rendered readable by relations of power that impact the audience's present. If a genealogy is successful it gives us time, transforms our relationship towards our own accelerated lives and compels us to action.

The goal is that the stylistic form of its narrative enables an audience to recognize itself in these narratives, even if these narratives demonstrate a strange view compared to what they think their past once was — not necessarily agreeing or negating your point of view regarding the history of your present. Genealogy speaks and gives voice to this history of discontinuous continuity, so we can realize that we are not in this predicament by accident — choices were made, practices emerged and institutions were built. All of this could be different.

So how can we make a difference? The third dimension of genealogy provides the impact to transform the subject, but it doesn't seem quite enough. The question leads us to the task of a genealogist, who can no longer be locked in the walls of academia, but must also be outside of, working with people, addressing concrete problems and supporting political action; both parts are critical. The trajectory of Foucault in both areas can provide a guide to all of us. Direct political action is necessary and doesn't fully prevent the recurrence of regressive problems if we don't properly narrate to those that will come after us. That is why a genealogy — a critique of forms of life — must rationally comprehend the historical process in an impactful manner that affects us and moves us towards new political action.

The idea behind this dissertation was to provide a viable genealogical approach within critical theory that could settle the questions regarding normative viability of such critique. — the characterization of the critique of forms of life gave the theoretical heft that an unorthodox methodology like genealogy needed, given that both share in some form the inheritance of the enlightenment tradition and the Hegelian influence. It was clearly posited how this project enables the goals of a critique of forms of life and yet holds advantage over it when considering the empirical connection, the perspective of analysis and the stylistics. The realization that there is not, and will not be, a form of life that represents an ideal actualization of freedom or a completely healthy resonance-alienation relation, make us understand, I hope, that the apparent negativistic analysis of genealogy provides the best chance to impact the lives of those lost in hyper-accelerated *status quo*.

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