

MICHEL FOUCAULT AND 'THE ABNORMALS': A POSSIBLE GENEALOGY OF MONSTROSITY¹

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ABSTRACT. In his course, 'The Abnormals' (1974-1975) at the Collège de France, Foucault highlights that the figure of the Monster – alongside the figures of the individual to be corrected and the onanist subject – is fundamental in the constitution of the modern abnormal subject and, across broad phases of thought, an exceptional and transgressive element of natural, civil and divine laws. This research analyzes the genealogy of the figure of the monster in this course, and its effects and developments in the legal, biological, moral, and medical spheres, linked to its mutations in broad historical periods, producers of knowledge, with emphasis on the Middle Ages, Classicism, and Modernity. The monster is a figure external to prevailing thinking, an exception defying the normative aspects of each era and encompassing a spectrum of stigmatization and prejudices, producers of social exclusion, violence, and mortification uniquely produced at each historical moment, being a key element, among others, in the constitution of the contemporary medico-legal examination.

Keywords: Foucault; monster; abnormality.

MICHEL FOUCAULT E 'OS ANORMAIS': UMA GENEALOGIA DA MONSTRUOSIDADE

RESUMO. No curso, 'Os Anormais' (1974-1975) do Collège de France, Foucault destaca que a figura do Monstro – ao lado das figuras do indivíduo a ser corrigido e do sujeito onanista – é fundamental na constituição do sujeito anormal moderno e, diante de amplas fases do pensamento, elemento de exceção e transgressivo das leis naturais, civis e divinas. Esta pesquisa estuda a genealogia da figura do monstro nesse curso, e seus efeitos e desdobramentos nos âmbitos jurídicos, biológicos, morais e médicos, articulados às suas mutações em abrangentes períodos históricos, produtores do conhecimento, com destaque para a Idade Média, Classicismo e Modernidade. Verificou-se que o monstro é uma figura de exterioridade ao pensamento vigente, uma exceção desafiando os aspectos normativos de cada época e abrangendo um espectro de estigmatizações e de preconceitos, produtores de exclusão social, violência e mortificação singularmente produzidos a cada momento histórico, sendo elemento-chave, dentre outros, na constituição do exame médico-legal contemporâneo.

Palavras-chave: Foucault; monstro; anormalidade.

MICHEL FOUCAULT Y 'LOS ANORMALES': UNA GENEALOGÍA DE LA MONSTRUOSIDAD

RESUMEN. En el curso 'Los anormales' (1974-1975) en el Collège de France, Foucault destaca que la figura del Monstruo –junto con las figuras del individuo a corregir y del sujeto onanista– es fundamental en la constitución del mundo moderno. sujeto anormal y, en vista de amplias fases del

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pensamiento, un elemento excepcional y transgresor de las leyes naturales, civiles y divinas. Esta investigación estudia la genealogía de la figura del monstruo en este curso, y sus efectos y desarrollos en los ámbitos jurídico, biológico, moral y médico, vinculados a sus mutaciones en amplios períodos históricos, productores de conocimiento, con énfasis en: El Medio. Épocas, Clasicismo y Modernidad. Se encontró que el monstruo es una figura externa al pensamiento actual, una excepción que desafía los aspectos normativos de cada época y que abarca un espectro de estigmatización y prejuicios, productores de exclusión social, violencia y mortificación singularmente producidos en cada momento histórico, siendo elemento clave. , entre otros, en la constitución del examen médico legal contemporáneo.

Palabras clave: Foucault; monstruo; anormalidad.

Introduction

From January 8 to March 9, 1975, Foucault taught a course at the Collège de France titled 'The Abnormals', in which he presented the genealogy of the multifaceted family of the abnormals – under the figures of the monster, the undisciplined, and the onanist, which, in descriptive and reflective density, we will study the monstrous subject exclusively.

By outlining monstrosity in multiple subjectivities, Foucault reflects on how this subject/object relationship emerges through the rearrangement of various systems of knowledge related to broad historical periods: Antiquity (Roman law), the Middle Ages, Classicism, and Modernity.

Thus, the figure of the monster is not monolithic, but susceptible to mutations during the phases of knowledge production in Western history. To guide readers through changes in knowledge during these historical phases, we present the work based on a temporal framework across distinct periods, up to the 19th century. This taxonomy has been accepted by researchers on the subject, including Elden (2001), Leite Junior (2012), Cabral (2020), and Couto and Gerbase (2021). According to Elden (2001), Foucault's study indicates that each historical period has a particular type of monster. The first type of monster was the bestial man in the Middle Ages (in relation to the Roman law of antiquity); the second type was Siamese twins in the Renaissance; the third type of monster was the hermaphrodite in the Classical Period. These figures will rearrange themselves based on the constitution of the monster of Modernity through scientific processes of pathologization and judicialization, at the interface between Law, Psychiatry, Psychology, and Biology.

In this way, readers — whether laypeople or experienced with Foucault's work — can identify phases to understand monstrosity in the course "The Abnormals" and its subjectifying effects on the history of Western man.

Human Monster - first reflections based on the articulation between roman law and the figure of the monster in the Middle Ages

Foucault believed it was important to understand the parameters and references that define a non-human condition, category, or status of monstrosity. In this sense, his genealogical research on the figure of the monster revealed that a juridical-biological dimension is a fundamental element of the soul that enables the embodiment of the human monster. The concept of the human monster does not stem from a positive and harmonious relationship with the law. Rather, it is the result of a double violation of the laws of society and nature, as Foucault clarifies below:

The first of these figures is what I will call the 'human monster'. The context of reference for the human monster is, of course, the law. The notion of a monster is essentially a legal notion – legal, of course, in the broad sense of the term, because what defines a monster is the fact that it constitutes, in its very existence and form, not only a violation of the laws of society, but a violation of the laws of nature. It is, in a double register, an infraction of the laws in its very existence. The field of appearance of the monster is, therefore, a domain that we can call 'legal-biological' (Foucault, 2001, pp. 69-70, author's emphasis).

The monster, as an existence in its relation to the norm, marks a place that situates it on the edge, in deviation, and outside the law simultaneously. The monster infringes on the norm and establishes itself as a natural form of counter-nature.

According to Foucault (2001, p. 70), the monster “[...] is the enlarged model, the form, developed by the very games of nature, of all possible small irregularities.” Its existence provokes reactions of violence, suppression, extermination, and medical care.

Foucault, through the genealogy of the figure of the monster, explores and highlights the power and knowledge relations throughout history, which allow us to reveal the properties necessary for the constitution of the notion of the abnormal man in the 18th century. Thus, the analysis of these properties reveals that the notion of abnormality in the 18th century was associated with and defined by the characteristics of the monster.

However, the understanding of the legal notion of the monster originates in Roman law. Roman law divided alterations in the body pattern into two categories: one characterized by deformity, illness, and defect; and the other characterized by monstrosity. This distinction was based on criteria that established these categories and attributed a legal notion to them, which also correlates with the medical and scientific knowledge of the time. Nevertheless, illness and monstrosity differ in their historical contexts, despite both disturbing the natural order of things. This is because the nature of these disturbances has distinct semantic and legal perspectives.

Illness affects the natural order by not conforming to nature; however, unlike monstrosity, illness finds predictability within the law. The monster, however, with its natural irregularity, questions the law.

In turn, transgression is a fundamental principle of the figure of the monster. The figure of the monster is typically associated with a deviation from or rupture of a law. Foucault (2001, p. 79) points out that “[...] transgression of natural limits, transgression of classifications, transgression of the framework, transgression of the law as a framework: this is what monstrosity is all about.”

During the Middle Ages and persisting into the 17th and 18th centuries, a prevalent aspect of thought held that a single legal infraction of natural law was insufficient to constitute monstrosity. This conception required the transgression of civil and canonical laws in addition to natural laws. According to Foucault:

For monstrosity to exist, this transgression of the natural limit, this transgression of the framework law, must refer to or question a suspension of civil, religious, or divine law. Monstrosity exists only where the disorder of natural law touches, shakes, or disturbs the law, whether civil, canonical, or religious (Foucault, 2001, p. 79).

Thus, the configuration of a monstrosity referred to a reciprocal and threefold transgressive qualification of natural, civil, and religious laws. In the next section, we will see this threefold transgression in the figure of the bestial monster.

The Mixture of Kingdoms of the Bestial Monster of the Middle Ages

The notion of abnormal in the period between the Middle Ages and the 18th century was closely related to the figure of the monster. Foucault’s genealogy of the monster revealed that historical criteria used to define monstrosity involved the concept of mixtures.

In the Middle Ages, the bestial monster was a product of the imagination, standing out in bestiaries and pagan folklore. These hybrid beings, such as mermaids, half woman and half fish, which, for Christian thought at the time, were considered a punishment for violating divine laws by committing the sin of fornication with beings of two different species—for example, a man with an animal or a woman with an animal.

The taxonomy of the monster in France, reconstructed by Foucault from his genealogical surveys, made possible a historical-conceptual mapping of the disposition and conception of this figure in different periods, up to the 19th century. Many researchers on the subject have accepted this taxonomy, including Elden (2001), Leite Junior (2012), Cabral (2020), and Couto and Gerbase (2021). According to Elden (2001), Foucault’s study suggests a taxonomy in which each age had a particular privileged form of monster. The first type was the bestial man in the Middle Ages; the second, the Siamese twins in the Renaissance; and the third, the hermaphrodite in the Classical Period.

Natural history clearly distinguishes between species, genera, and kingdoms. The first monster emerged by breaking these distinctions. In medieval thought, monsters were the result of mixing two kingdoms – animal and human – which defied natural and divine laws. The monster was the fruit of

fornication between parents of two distinct species, that is, a man with an animal or a woman with an animal, which transgressed human and divine law (Foucault, 2001).

In the universe of the Middle Ages, the production of thought and language referred to the games of similarity between the microcosm and the macrocosm. Through these similarities, the human microcosm – as a corporeal and psychic reality of its worldly presence – mirrored the cosmic, divine macrocosm. This constituted the worlds and kingdoms. The monstrous creature pointed to a process of expiation of sins and concupiscences materialized within the limits of the monstrous body.

This also has legal consequences since this figure escapes existing norms, triggering a rupture in social regulations. For example, there was a debate about whether to baptize individuals with human heads and animal bodies or animal heads and human bodies (Foucault, 2001). This challenged the pragmatic thinking of that period in the face of monstrous natural disorder.

The birth of children considered to be the result of bestiality raised a series of questions for the law. For example, in inheritance law, if a man died while his wife was pregnant and he had written a will naming his children as his primary heirs, but stating that if he had no children, his assets would go to his relatives.

Furthermore, the birth of a monster with two heads or two bodies raised the following question for canon law: Should the priest perform one or two baptisms? At the same time, civil law was questioned as to whether there was one or two children of the couple. In the case of Siamese twins, if one committed a crime and was sentenced to capital punishment, would executing the death sentence imply taking the life of the innocent twin? If the innocent twin was allowed to live, would the life of the criminal have to be spared?

Another example: Should a child born with dual sex be treated as a girl or a boy? Would they be allowed to marry, and whom? Could they hold ecclesiastical benefices or receive religious orders? These are some of the problems that monstrosity posed to the law (civil, criminal, canon) in the past, in addition to being a violation of nature.

Foucault used Francesco Emanuele Cangiamila's 1745 work, *Traité d'embryologie sacrée*, as a reference for these problems of legal teratology. For the first time, this treatise unites the previously separate natural-legal and biological-legal theories (Marchetti & Salomoni, 2001). The monster of the 18th century is the intersection of these two theories. The figure of the monster is marked by the union of nature and law.

References to monsters are very old in the context of natural law. The 18th-century monster will be reflected in the monstrosity of the 19th century. In his studies, Foucault (2001) found that certain figures of monsters were highlighted in each period of history.

In the Middle Ages, the bestial man – a mixture of two kingdoms, half human and half animal — was the privileged monster. Siamese twins, which we will discuss below, frequently appeared in general, medical, legal, and religious literature as a prevalent monstrosity during the Renaissance.

The Siamese Twin, Monsters of the Renaissance

The monstrosity of each era involved distinct aspects specific to the cultural, religious, social, and political context of the respective historical period. The 'Siamese' monsters were a Renaissance phenomenon that stood out, above all, in medico-legal literature from the late 16th to the early 17th century. These texts characterized Siamese monsters as individuals with one head and two bodies or two heads and one body. This monstrosity raises questions that highlight issues in the fields of medicine and religion.

In France, religious wars took place between 1562 and 1598: Catholics fought Calvinist Protestants (Huguenots). The war also involved a struggle for the throne of the Kingdom of France between the wealthy Catholic ducal House of Guise and the House of Condé, who were blood heirs to the throne and allies of the Calvinists.

Against this backdrop, a story from 16th-century France recounts the baptism of two Siamese twins – a rite of passage in the Catholic Church – to initiate their Christian life. However, during the ritual, the priest could only baptize one of the sisters because the other had died before receiving the sacrament. Foucault (2001, p. 83) writes, "Then, a huge discussion ensued, and the Catholic priest who had performed the baptism said: It's simple. If the other one died, it's because she would have been Protestant. We have the image of the kingdom of France, with half saved by baptism and half damned and lost." In this story, these Siamese twins reflect the kingdom of France, divided between Catholics and Protestants.

In a sense, the political-religious duality in France seems to resonate with the figure of Siamese twins. Next, the figure of the hermaphroditic monster and the issues arising from an ambiguous sexual identity are explored.

Hermaphrodite Monsters: their mutations during various historical periods in their respective systems of knowledge

Individuals with two true sexual organs are referred to as hermaphrodites, while those with a pseudo-second organ are referred to as pseudo-hermaphrodites. Currently, science refers to both as intersex. However, in the past, individuals with these physical characteristics were considered aberrations of nature and monsters that defied the natural order, the law, and the medicine of the time.

In general, people identified as hermaphrodites from the Middle Ages until the beginning of the 17th century were categorized as monsters. They were generally judged and punished for their condition, facing corporal punishment or the death penalty. A hermaphrodite monster was considered an individual who possessed both sexes. Hermaphrodites constituted the third privileged category of monsters in history. The figure of the hermaphrodite became the protagonist as a monster of the Classical Age.

Perhaps one of the last cases in which a hermaphrodite was executed for being a hermaphrodite occurred at the end of the 16th century, in 1599. This individual was named Antide Collas. Collas lived in Dole and was examined by doctors who concluded that he had two sexes, probably because he had relations with Satan. After being tortured, Collas confessed to transgressing divine laws by having sexual relations with Satan. For this reason, he was burned alive in Dole in 1599.

The 17th century introduced a change in the legal understanding of hermaphrodites compared to the previous century. A hermaphrodite could no longer be condemned simply for having this condition. The mere finding of an individual's hermaphroditism was no longer sufficient grounds for condemnation (Foucault, 2001).

This change was significant in preventing the simple identification of hermaphrodites from leading to their death. However, it did not improve the harsh lives of these individuals because they were forced by the authorities of the time to conform to a single sex due to their condition. Furthermore, there was no tolerance for various forms of affective-sexual relationships. The use of the assigned sex led to the condemnation of many hermaphrodites.

While the anatomical anomaly in hermaphrodites is no longer the main focus of medical discourse since it is now considered a minor irregularity of nature, the new discourse focuses on moral and behavioral deviations. This can be inferred from the following passage:

Now, these oddities, these bad conformations, these slips, these stammers of nature are perhaps the main or pretextual cause of certain criminal behaviors. In the case of Grandjean, they should lead to condemnation, says Champeaux, not because she is a hermaphrodite. Rather, it is simply the fact that she is a woman with perverse tastes and likes women. It is this monstrosity of behavior, not of nature, that should provoke condemnation (Foucault, 2001, p.91).

This outlines a new design of monstrosity, shifting it from the legal-natural dimension to the legal-moral dimension and highlighting the monstrosity of conduct. This aspect will appear later in the monsters of sexuality in the 18th century and criminal psychiatry in the 19th century.

The Criminal Monster, The Moral Monster, The Legal Monster, The Political Monster: transitions between Classicism and Modernity

Between the Classical Age and the beginning of the Modern Age, the figure of the monster was reinvented by the Enlightenment. Under the pretext of qualifying a criminal act, the Enlightenment qualified the delinquent subject through imputability, as we will present in this section. Until the mid-18th century, however, a criminal status of monstrosity still existed since the monster transgressed the entire system of natural or legal laws. In fact, "[...] criminality was, until the mid-18th century, a necessary exponent of monstrosity. Monstrosity, however, was not yet what it would become later: an eventual qualifier of criminality" (Foucault, 2001, p. 93).

With the effect of the displacement of the category of monster to the domain of criminality, the notion of monstrous criminality emerges. This displacement was only possible through the development of moral monstrosity, which we saw emerge with the hermaphrodite monster.

Between the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century, the figures of the criminal monster and the moral monster will emerge in distinct forms of discourse and practices. The moral monster will be a prominent figure in literature, particularly in Gothic novels, and will appear in the works of Sade (Foucault, 2001).

In the literary field, among the Gothic novels of the early 19th century, we find Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, in which the monster highlights its non-human condition by transgressing divine rules, through its existence, and natural rules, through its bestial appearance. These aspects, combined with bodily nonconformity and rejection, intensify the creature's identity conflict (Basso & Marques, 2018). Later, at the end of the 19th century, the figure of the human monster appears in Robert Louis Stevenson's novel *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. In this Gothic novel, Mr. Hyde's unreasonable behavior highlights his status as a moral monster (Drighetti, 2019).

In the political field, 18th-century France witnessed the decline of the Old Regime and the monarch's power, as well as the rise of the bourgeoisie. This process reached its peak with the beginning of the French Revolution in 1789. In the 18th century, from the Enlightenment ideas, a group of thinkers emerged as reformers, rebelling against torture methods characterized by excessive violence and ostentatious displays of the sovereign's power and the populace's vengeance.

These reformers suggested abolishing the outdated form of punishment and its excesses. Starting from the notion of a social contract, they understood that an individual's transgression of the law meant breaking this contract with society (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 2010). During this period, the old monarchical regimes were in crisis, and the bourgeoisie was rising to power. The bourgeoisie promoted the adoption of new regulatory principles of civil, political, and economic rights because they expected it would reduce the nobility's privileges and the king's power. Thus, this change, which organized society around the social contract, was fundamental to the decline of the sovereign's power and altered the punitive economy.

In this sense, a transgression of the law was no longer considered an attack on the sovereign's body, but rather a breach of the contract. Society would demand reparation through punishment. Since the whole society is involved in the criminal's act, this punishment should be more moderate. The target of punishment is the humanity of each individual in that society (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 2010).

Thus, in the new punitive economy, crime is not solely constituted as a violation of civil, natural, and religious laws. Rather, the criminal act represents an attack on the social body itself. In this context, a new punitive theory is formulated in which crime has its own nature. The criminal is a natural being classified, at the same level, as his nature.

This understanding, which stems from Roman law and is evident in Montesquieu, links the frequency of crimes to the disease of the social body (Foucault, 2001). This perspective reinforces the association of pathology with criminality.

Indeed, it did not take long for this association of pathology with criminality to lead to the perspective that the criminal is ill.

This aspect was observed at the end of the 18th century, during the French Revolution, when the new Penal Code was being discussed. For the drafters of the new legislation, crime was no longer considered a disease of society; rather, the criminal was considered ill (Foucault, 2001).

The figure of the monster did not escape the changes that society underwent in the 18th century. These changes were foreshadowed by the last monstrous figures of hermaphrodites, whose conduct was sanctioned from a moral perspective. Thus, the monster is referred to as part of the context of political and judicial powers. Consequently, its figure undergoes historically constitutive mutations at the end of the 18th century as the functions of the family and disciplinary techniques develop (Foucault, 2001).

It is in this context of practically simultaneous changes that the transformation of the figure of the legal-natural and legal-biological monster into the figure of the legal-moral monster occurs. This transformation into the moral monster was accompanied by a new economy of power to punish. This new profile of the moral monster began to take shape around 1760 as the understanding developed that criminals are those who break the social pact or contract. An individual who breaks the pact for self-interest abuses power and resembles a despot because of his arbitrary measures (Foucault, 2001).

This pairing of the despot and the wrongdoer introduces a paradox because, from a political point of view, they are distinct figures. The symmetry conferred on these two figures places different infractions on the same level. This argument seems to strip the king of his power, making him similar to a wrongdoer and enabling his assimilation into the new punitive economy. Notably, two years after these arguments, Louis XVI was deposed and executed in 1793.

From then on, the king was considered a despot by virtue of his existence alone and was already committing the ultimate crime of breaking the social pact by which society must maintain itself and exist. He is the perpetual wrongdoer, an individual without social ties. The despot possesses an essence that is contrary to nature. In exercising his despotic power, the king is a monster (Foucault, 2001).

In a certain way, the king embodies the fourth category of monster conceived in the Modern Age: the legal monster. In the genealogy of the legal monster, we will find, in its monstrous descendants, this connection with royalty, also associated with the figure of the moral monster, as the most sublimated and well-finished form of rupturing the social contract.

The Popular Monster and Sade's Monster: the literary figures of the Monster

During the revolutionary period, literature was a very fertile ground for the production of monsters. The conflict in revolutionary France was reflected in literary themes of the time. It was a clash of forces that spread throughout the literary sphere. As previously mentioned, these texts attacked figures of royalty. Conversely, during the same period, another type of counterrevolutionary and anti-Jacobin literature circulated, produced by monarchists, Catholics, and the English. In these works, Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette are portrayed in a way that contrasts with their depiction in revolutionary pamphlets. This literature features the popular monster, who breaks the social pact through revolt.

This popular monster is portrayed in literature influenced by the repercussions of the massacres of September 2nd to 7th, 1792, in Revolutionary France. Books like Barruel's *Histoire du clergé pendant la Révolution* highlight the violence of common people who, in this case, roast a countess and her daughters and demand that clergymen consume their bodies (Foucault, 2001).

In this counter-revolutionary literature, the popular monster represents the breaking of the social pact within French society by the less favored strata. In contrast, the sovereign breaks the pact starting from the most favored stratum.

The idea of anthropophagy was particularly highlighted in the literature of that time. Thus, during that period, the popular monster and Sade represent the revival of at least two ancient themes: anthropophagy and depravity. These themes form the basis of the monstrous composition. These themes rekindle the idea of bestial violence related to political organization.

During this period, the trial of Louis XVI and the September Massacres occurred. These events reflected the population's demand for justice that was more direct and fair than the institutional system. Around these figures, the law and the economy of power to punish were reorganized. Furthermore, these two monsters were important for the development of 18th-century horror literature (Foucault, 2001).

In this period, a great emphasis is placed on the horror genre in literature. Two extremes of social division appear in it: on one side, the nobility and the clergy; on the other, the man without possessions and the man of the forest. These two types of characters embody monsters. The noble characters are known for their abuse of power, while the poor characters are known for their vile actions. At that time, these novels could be interpreted as political.

The monstrous figures that populate these novels oscillate between two extremes. This double monstrosity is evident in novels such as *Château des Pyrénées*, by Ann Radcliffe (Foucault, 2001).

In the works of the Marquis de Sade, the two forms of monsters stand out especially in the novel *Juliette's Story*. In this work, there is a clear connection between the monstrosity of the powerful and the common man, the minister, and the rebel. One of the most striking characteristics of Sade's novels is certainly libertinism, which is always associated with the abuse of power. Furthermore, Sade's monsters stand out by nurturing a violent nature that surpasses others'.

Sade's monsters are typically individuals who use money or political power to go against nature. Self-destruction is a fundamental theme in Sade's novels. This self-destruction is a type of monstrosity without limits that occurs when a certain number of individuals with superpowers are present: the prince, the lord, the minister, and the rebel (Foucault, 2001).

In his analyses of the dispositions and configurations of power, Foucault seeks to highlight the emergence of these two monsters: the one from above and the one from below. As we have seen, the monster from below is the popular monster, and the monster from above is Sade's monster. Though these monsters manifest in distinct ways, they share common elements of internal connectivity. These elements are sexual and anthropophagic transgression, which allow us to establish monstrosity.

Even in antiquity, some biographers associated the notion of monstrosity with Caligula, citing sexual transgression as an example. The Roman emperor was accused of incest for allegedly having sexual relations with his sister (Cavicchioli, 2020).

In this context, the figure of the King of France was associated with incestuous monstrosity or a sexual transgression. Rebellious people were attributed the condition of monstrosity and associated with cannibalism, or anthropophagy.

Later, in the 19th century, these two figures helped compose the background of the modern monstrous subject, which was constructed in the context of the pathologization of monsters through the interrelation of law and medicine. From then on, it was emphasized that a crime had to fulfill, at a minimum, two transgressive conditions to be classified as monstrous: the food ban and the sexual ban. The conjunction of these two elements was crucial in problematizing the abnormal individual and characterizing the monstrosity of the great cases of forensic medicine that inaugurated modern psychiatry in the 19th century.

The following section will discuss sexual depravity and anthropophagy, two elements that have already been highlighted as relevant elements in the constitution of the monstrous subject.

The Sexual Monster and the Anthropophagic Monster: modern reinventions of monstrosities

Between the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century, a type of sexual monstrosity was revealed at the heart of the family institution: the masturbating or onanistic child. This behavior was considered deviant and the source of all bodily illnesses. An anti-masturbation crusade arose at this time because childhood masturbation was considered a deviation and an etiological source of multiple illnesses, as seen in the medical pedagogy of that period. The deleterious and degenerative effects of childhood onanism were emphasized as being capable of causing any type of disease, including behavioral monstrosities (Foucault, 2001).

The sexual monster appears not only in transgressing the incest taboo, as previously mentioned, but also in relation to transgressing the prohibition of masturbation. However, the figure of sexual monstrosity joins the anthropophagic figure in problematizing discussions about crime in 19th-century forensic medicine. Among the great criminals of the 19th century, we will find the figures of the sexual transgressor and the anthropophagist. Nevertheless, psychological reports even in the 21st century still classify sexual monsters as pedophiles or sexual abusers (Oliveira & Russo, 2017).

The first monster of modern psychiatry was the case of Sélestat's wife in 1817, who killed and cannibalized her daughter. A few years later, there was the case of Léger, who sexually abused, killed, and ate parts of a girl's body. In 1825, the soldier Bertrand violated the corpses of women, disemboweled them, and hung their entrails on tombs (Foucault, 2001).

Therefore, in these cases, clear elements of anthropophagy stand out in the case of Sélestat, a mixture of anthropophagy and sexual transgression in Léger, and sexual transgression (necrophilia) in the case of the soldier Bertrand. During that period, there were famous serial criminals, such as the Frenchman Joseph Vacher, the German Peter Kürten, and the Englishman Jack the Ripper. These figures are, in a sense, the basis of discussions in academic disciplines such as anthropology, particularly regarding incest and anthropophagy.

Medical experts of the time primarily performed medico-legal examinations to assess monstrous criminals and respond to judicial requests. Contemporary examinations with dual medical and legal qualifications have replaced the demarcation and reciprocal exclusion of medical and legal discourse, organizing it as perversity through expert reports. These examinations reveal pathological criminality, to which society responds with two homogeneous poles: one expiatory and the other therapeutic (Foucault, 2001). This highlights the close relationship between law and medicine.

Final considerations

The notion of the monster – along with other figures such as the onanist and the individual in need of correction helped define the concept of abnormality in the 19th century. This theme of the monster was a particular concern for the legal field in the 18th century. From the 19th century onward, however, it became a problem for psychiatry, constituting the fertile ground for the development of criminal psychiatry. Foucault's studies suggest that these three cases mark the beginning of criminal psychiatry as a scientific discipline and the end of historically privileged monsters.

By the end of the 19th century, the monster had become vulgarized or banalized because, through psychiatric examination, a trace of monstrosity was ultimately found in every crime. The notion of abnormality at the end of the 19th century — and in some cases, the 20th century — is marked by these pseudoscientific assumptions.

Within this context, a protoscience emerges, not yet grounded in the clear, objective principles of the monster figure, but rather reconfigured by the new knowledge of modernity, including neuropathology, psychoanalysis, and psychotechniques. These factors contributed to the transformation of the monster into the abnormal individual.

In the genealogy of monster categories, from the first bestial creatures to political monsters, we perceive a type of transgression against the law, an infraction of natural, civil, and religious laws, which was an exception within the realm of criminality. Until the 18th century, monstrous figures could represent a specific type of criminal who did not belong to the common category of wrongdoers. In the 19th century, however, an inversion occurs; this monstrosity was generalized.

In a way, the figure of the monster has always challenged the systems of knowledge in the fields of legal and natural sciences. In the 19th century, the problem of the monster questioned legal and medical institutions. The power and knowledge relations that arose from discussions about anomalies were fertile ground for the development of psychiatry, which classified monstrosity as crime.

Within this scope, in order to establish a classification of monstrosity, certain procedures were developed within the medical and psychological sciences – more precisely, in criminal psychiatry and criminal psychology – to address the demands of the Judiciary regarding the anomaly of the criminal individual in the 19th century.

The great monsters of psychiatry were fragmented and pulverized amidst various irregularities, deviations in conduct, behavior, and anomalies of daily life. This fragmentation was agglutinated into mosaics constituted from new theories of subjectivation. Thus, we can say that the production of the abnormal subject is the result of the conjunction of knowledge and power in modernity.

The historical genealogy of the monster figure is a fundamental element in understanding the mosaic of anomalies in the 19th century. This genealogy plays an essential role in understanding the transformation from monster to abnormal individual as a figure of modernity.

On the other hand, it does not seem that Foucault intended to generalize, absolutely, the figures and, above all, the taxonomy of the monster. Foucault generally expected that his work could have a different use by other researchers. Therefore, he was not concerned with constructing a closed theory that explained everything.

For instance, when analyzing the political monster, Foucault begins with the context of the French Revolution. Clearly, Foucault recognized the particularity of the events and conditions of revolutionary France, as events such as the executions of King Louis XVI and Queen Marie Antoinette were specific to that context and distinct from other European countries during the same historical period. However, the researcher was interested in the elements embodied by those royal figures, the sovereigns of France, and their representation as political monsters. The information gathered about that period is significant for understanding the impact of the monster figure and its development in the notion of the abnormal.

The investigation of this theme concludes that, while Sharpe's (2009) criticisms do not dismiss all elements of Foucault's (2001) taxonomy of monsters, which are largely circumstantial to the context of French history, the conclusions drawn from it cannot be generalized to understand monsters in other historical and cultural contexts. Nevertheless, some elements of monstrous figures emerge in contemporary authors' studies in contexts distinct from France. Among these, we can highlight Ganji (2019)

in his studies, especially those on the Islamic State, which use the concept of the biopolitical monster to analyze its form of organization and political autonomy.

Brazilian researchers also stand out for their direct or indirect addressing of the issue of monstrosity. Among them, Bertin (2016) employs the concept of the moral monster when analyzing this modern figure in the works of authors such as Machado de Assis, Rubem Fonseca, and Lourenço Mutarelli. Leite Junior (2012), who focuses on gender issues in his study of monsters, reveals how this figure impacts people by evoking fear, contempt, and violent reactions. These feelings contribute to Manichean interpretations of subjects who embody this monstrous representation in a prejudiced and stigmatizing way. Merhy (2012) uses the zombie monster category to analyze the stigmatization of drug users as abnormal individuals. Petuco (2012) investigated how the media portrays crack users and revealed the aspects that associate the image of the user with monstrous figures. These figures are commonly associated with zombies and the undead and resonate in the social imagination, leading to their perception as dangerous non-human beings.

Given this portrayal of monsters mentioned so far, it becomes clear how Foucault's thought allows for new configurations of reading reality, which present an instrumental potential for understanding the practical-discursive constructions of monster figures in the Brazilian context, taking into account their social, political, and historical singularities.

Therefore, it is important to emphasize that the crystallized image of a monstrous figure is not the most important aspect of this Foucauldian taxonomy. Rather, what is at stake is the diagramming of power and knowledge relations around the monster, with its functional dispositions and constitutional properties. This allows us to better understand the normalization process of the modern subject in its incessant struggles, transformations, and resistances.

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