

# Engaging Foucault



*Volume 2*

edited by

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# *Engaging Foucault*

*Volume 2*

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Edition	Conferentia
Title	Engaging Foucault (Vol. 2)
Edited by	Marjan Ivković, Gazela Pudar Draško, Srđan Prodanović
Reviewers	Ana Birešev, Predrag Krstić
Publisher	Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory, Belgrade
ISBN	978-86-82417-88-0

This Volume contains a collection of papers presented at the *Engaging Foucault* International conference which was held in Belgrade 05-07 December. The organization of the conference was supported by Heinrich Boell Foundation and Fund for an Open Society.

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## Introduction

This volume comes as an published outcome of the *Engaging Foucault* international conference which was organized by the Group for Social Engagement Studies (Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory) in December 2014. The main aim of the conference was to open space for a general discussion of the actuality of Foucault's work. During the conference we had many opportunities to see just how much legacy of the French philosopher still remains rich and vibrant. But perhaps more importantly, the presentations that we heard – and now have an opportunity to read – also proved that contemporary interpretation of Foucault try to (re)emphasize practical applicability and political implications of his philosophical insights. These new tendencies in interpretation prove to be all the more important if we have in mind the conventional rendition of Foucauldian thought as being “nihilistic” and devoided of any social hope.

In that sense, the authors of this volume tried to offer many ways in which we could (re)think “Foucauldian engagement.” Following his somewhat overlooked cues, they tried to combine theory “that has political meaning, utility and effectiveness” with the “involvement with the struggles taking place with the area in question”.<sup>1</sup> Throughout the volume, in different connotations, we repeatedly hear the question of *what* we as theoreticians do, or should do. Do we play the role of prophetic intellectuals who think instead of others, prescribe objectives and means, and tell people what they should believe and ought to do? Or can we join in Foucault's dream of an intellectual “who incessantly displaces herself, doesn't know exactly where she is heading nor what she'll think tomorrow because she is too attentive to the present”?<sup>2</sup> This question is related to *how* we do things as well. Do we collaborate with practitioners, in order to modify the institutions and practices we theorize about, which also allows for the possibility of the thought itself being reshaped in this process?<sup>3</sup>

In other words, the contributions in this volume suggest that (Foucauldian) social engagement should be about production of communities, however transient and mobile they are, and not about the production of foes. If we follow Foucault this is imperative not because of inherent belief in the goodness of the world or human nature. “What is good is something that comes through innovation. The good does not exist, like that, in an a-temporal sky, with people who would be like the Astrologers of the Good, whose job is to determine what is the favorable nature of the stars. The good is defined by us, *it is practiced*, it is invented. *And this is a collective work.*”<sup>4</sup>

The opening chapter of the volume named *Technology of Self-Development* deals the theoretical problems regarding the reproduction of market-based neoliberal governmentality. In the first contribution, Nikolina Patalen tries to see how the concept of civil society – that partly emerged through problematization of government's scope – opened some un-

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1. Foucault, Questions on Geography, in *Power/Knowledge*, 64.

2. Foucault, Questions on Geography, in *Power/Knowledge*, 64.

3. What is called punishing, 384

4. In a sense I am a moralist, <http://www.critical-theory.com/read-me-foucault-interview-in-a-sense-i-am-a-moralist/>

expected ways of governing populations and individuals. She claims that the structure of relations in which civil society can legitimately be “managed” and governed by state and non-state authorities has also determined the way human rights, as legal entitlements of persons, have been formulated, interpreted and implemented today. Therefore, human rights, according to Patalen, rationalize the need for constant intervention by the state and other authorities in the civil society sphere. Moreover, the author also tries to show that when human rights are interpreted as techniques that people use to govern themselves within the given framework of liberal governmentality, we can as a consequence expect that the responsibility of the state and other authorities for securing these standards becomes dispersed and “shared” with the citizens who – by becoming knowledgeable of them – are conceived as responsible for the enactment and the protection of their human rights.

Karel Musilek in his paper also claims that modern Foucauldian analysis should pay more attention to technologies of the self and the role they play in contemporary rationalities of government. The author argues against taking the central epistemic figure of neoliberal economics – homo economicus – as the only model for production of subjectivity in contemporary societies. Musilek takes two lectures about professional self-development as an illustrative example and shows how this technology of the self – rather than simply reducing subject to a maximiser of economic value – captures certain ethical ethos and offers to the subject ethical guidelines for work on the self.

In their contribution, Dejan Matlak and Nina Racić analyze the development of techniques of the “self”, that is, “the art of existing” in which the main occupation is your own being. Their research is based primarily on narrative analysis of individuals attending fitness centers. They aim to demonstrate how discipline is also achieved outside of institutional bounds, by placing the “panopticon” – which intensifies the power one has over one “self” – in a “public area. Based on this investigation, Matlak and Racić propose a compound “self-discipline” in order to demonstrate the historical development which created a practice of “working with oneself”, that over time makes the individual feel like she or he is gaining a specific form of power.

The second chapter, called *(New) Variates of Governmentality*, tries to tackle the complex ways in which Foucault’s classic notions of governmentality could be used to shed light on contemporary everyday practices. To that end, authors focus their theoretical attention towards the concrete ways in which neoliberal state creates its citizens. In the first paper of this chapter Kritee Ahmed investigates the “fate” of public sector workers under neoliberalism. By investigating Toronto, Canada’s public transit organization, the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC), and the organization’s customer service ethos, her paper explores the unique power relationship between “customers” of the organization and TTC workers. The author observes that threat of the observing customer, seeking their own wellbeing through a desire for good service, aids in governing workers by encouraging them to act appropriately on their own. Here the constitution and governance of a vigilant customer comes through the monitoring of the worker. Using Foucauldian concepts, Ahmed explores TTC documents that discuss how the organization understands and makes known its workers and customers.

In his contribution, Antonis Galanopoulos is analyzing how austerity measures of “The Memorandum Era” in Greece are producing subjectivity of guilt. The author tries to notice that the implementation of the memorandum in Greece was associated with the call to make Greece a “normal country”. Therefore, according to Galanopoulos, transition to a normal country moves through the passage from desire of debt to biopolitical austerity. A transition that is mediated by a specific conceptualization of debt and the construction of the indebted man.

In the next paper, Utku Özmakas tried to apply Foucauldian notion of biopolitics to “Gezi revolt”. In this context, the author focuses on governmental techniques used over the population during the last 12 years by the Justice and Development Party (JDP) party.

Milad Dokhanchi is on the other hand interested in investigating how constitutive elements of governmentality (knowledge of population, surveillance, liberalism, technologies of power, homo-economicus subjectivity ect.) have only slightly changed with advent of new digitalized media. By comparing Gill Deleuze’s notion of “societies of control” with Foucault’s notion of “governmentality”, Dokhanchi criticizes Deleuze for failing to treat “societies of control” in genealogical fashion by positioning it in a linear account of history, and proposes “digitized governmentality” as an alternative concept for theorizing modalities of power in the new media age. However, this type of governmentality, according to Dokhanchi, is completely compatible with neoliberalism.

In the third contribution of this chapter, Marta Roriz, following Foucault, argues that the biopolitics of obesity cannot be dissociated from the framework of political rationality that helped to create its growing manifestations in individual bodies. She claims that the health of populations is dependent on the links between individuals and social processes like economic systems, political power and social ideology. According to Roriz, individualizing health responsibilities – a characteristic of the dominant health discourses and prevention initiatives – constitutes a disciplinary strategy where the public dimension of health is eclipsed.

In the last paper of this chapter William Valliere examines ways in which Foucauldian analysis could be applied to mid-level phenomena, such as governmental public policy. Valliere conducted a discursive analysis of the U.S. Food & Drug Administration’s ban on blood donations from men who have had sex with men that illustrated that the FDA blood ban on donations from MSM is an good example of “biopower”.

The third chapter, named *Queer, Feminism and Resistance*, investigates the possibility of (deeper) convergence between feminist/queer theory and Foucauldian notions of subjectivity. The authors in their contributions go beyond mere considerations of theoretical similarities and differences among mentioned theories and try to (re)radicalize Foucault’s understanding of power/knowledge relation through the perspective those actors who are construed as “irrational” and are therefore “powerless”. In the opening paper of this chapter, Iva Dimovska uses Foucauldian reformulation of power (and resistance) in order to explore the ways in which queer theorists (and activists) use the notion of resistance as a possibility for a subversive appropriation of the homophobic categories. To this end the



author uses Judith Butler's and Leo Bersani's view of the subversive as an inner characteristic of resistance within the power structures.

In the next contribution, Aravinda Kosaraju aims to understand the construction of children and their sexualities within contemporary discourses on child sexual exploitation, as well as the impact of those constructions on the prosecution of crimes involving sexual exploitation of children. The paper mainly focuses on the unique contribution of Foucault and feminist conceptions of power, knowledge and subjectivity to understanding child sexual exploitation.

Gašper Mlakar aims to find and rediscover new importance of Foucault's work by comparing his views on sexuality with Freudian psychanalyses. According to Mlakar, Freud developed a specific notion of femininity as *the dark continent* which could be read as a mystery and approached it through the concepts of ignorance and resistance. He claims that Foucault reveals "the mystery of sexuality" as historically produced. The author claims that within the function of the Christian "will to knowledge", it is the very scientific discourse on sexuality that produces sexuality as mysterious and enveloped with secrecy. The very notion of "mysterious sexuality" is consequently analysed as an effect of discursive practices, based on the necessity of confession, and subjected to the mechanisms of power.

In the next article Monika Rogowska-Stangret explains why Foucault's thought is especially susceptible to being engaged in different theoretical debates. The author gives eight reasons why Foucault's philosophy may be useful for feminist philosophy. In the paper, the author elaborates on the Foucauldian take on reason, subject, history, power, body, sex, sexuality, oppression, resistance, materiality and active discourse, demonstrating how elaboration on those ideas influenced feminist scholarship.

In the fourth chapter, *Spatial and Temporal aspects of Foucault's Taught* authors try to analyze the core notions of power, knowledge, biopolitics, discourse etc. in light of concreteness of time and (both material and virtual) space. In the opening paper of the chapter, Krešimir Petković explores the uncharted relationship between Chateaubriand and Foucault found in the field of political theology – with a specific focus on the theme of utopianism. The author observes that in Chateaubriand's works there is an abundance of utopian motifs, while on the other hand, Foucault's name is more easily paired with heterotopias. However, Petković claims Foucault's theorizing on the hermeneutics of subject also seems to open up space for envisaging private aesthetic utopias that gain political dimension in the analyses of the faculties such as parrhesia. The paper ends with an examination of Chateaubriand's and Foucault's strangely congenial depiction of the French Revolution, as well as the relationship of their utopian political theologies with violence and universality.

In the next contribution, Isidora Stanković aims to point out that Foucault's problematization of discourse as a possible methodology of the general theory of heritage, particularly in the realm of the inquiry of cultural memory. Thus, her intention is to indicate the relation between the process of patrimonialization and different discourses, as well as their

internal and external frameworks that are affecting the choice of different parts of the past (memories) that would be activated.

Rohan Ghatak analyzes the potential of virtual space in changing our understating identity. He claims that although network might be empirically constituted by and through developing technologies such as those on the Internet, its functionality might still rest upon structures of control and apparatuses of power that have historically governed thought, behavior and action. The active effect of these structures is the enforcement of a code of conduct, an ethics of existence, whose genealogy and implications, as detailed by Foucault, are perhaps crucial in the generation of a virtual historical apparatus of power.

In the final contribution of the chapter, Alexandre José de Abreu provides a comparison between José Pedro de Sant'Anna Gomes urban reform in the city of Campinas and Foucault's understanding of panopticon. According to de Abreu, this comparison provides additional insight into transition from disciplinary societies to a societies of control.

The authors of the last chapter, named *Art, Artist and Foucauldian Subject*, try to see to which extent is Foucault's taught applicable to both modern art theory and art critique. Therefore, the authors in their contributions tackle abstract terms such as the author and anonymity from Foucauldian perspective, but also apply key notions of the French philosopher to concrete works of contemporary art. In the first paper, Sanela Nikolić provides an interesting theoretical comparison between Foucault and Roland Barthes in regards to their conceptualization of the author. She maintains that for Barthes, the death of the author implies that the meaning of his or hers work is ultimately completed by the reader, while for Foucault the author category is a conceptual product conceived in a certain historic moment as a result of knowledge specific discursive practice. Nikolić tries to explain these differences through difference in methodological approaches of mentioned authors.

In the second contribution, Kristof Vanhoutte is also concerned with Foucault's deconstruction of the author. Vanhoutte investigation into the similarities and dissimilarities of various forms of masked anonymity aims to unveil, on the one hand, the paradoxical nature of Foucault's aspired anonymity and, on the other hand, its, almost necessary, autoreferentiality. He claims that while various protest movements mask themselves to unmask the 'others, the philosopher Michel Foucault masks himself, in a "de-spectacularized" society, with the mask of the author-function Michel Foucault.

In the next paper, Andrej Pezelj tries to show the pastoral origins of painting and contemporary art. In his analysis Pezelj follows the investigation of pastoral power and governmentality presented by Foucault in his *Security, territory, population*. The first part of the text attempts to show that discipline in art follows the main points of the transition from dispositives of discipline to dispositives of security. In the second part, a comparison of institutions like the *Académie royale de peinture et sculpture* and the *Hôpital Général* is used to analyze a possible conceptual framework for thinking about art in the context of the population as a consequence of pastoral power.

Mirjana Stošić's paper deals with figures of victim and victimizer in interrogation practices as shown in Beckett's enigmatic one act play *What Where*, rendered through Foucault's

power/discourse/knowledge relations and his conception of Western men becoming a “confessing animal”.

In the last contribution of this chapter, Nataša Milović, Olja Marković, Iskra Krstić analyze the movie *Clip* in order to contemplate on selected problems regarding socialization and education. Using Foucauldian analysis the authors aim to disentangle the micro-segments that sustain and give impetus to social apathy in modern Serbian society, and suggest the possible ways for reconceptualisation of the subject’s activity by revising the Foucauldian concept of subjectivity.

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## Technology of Self-Development

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## Contemporary Political Rationality and the Multiple Effects of Human Rights

### Introduction: What and who can be governed within the liberal political rationality?

At the end of the lecture entitled *The Birth of Biopolitics*, Michel Foucault describes changes that took place in the second half of the eighteenth century regarding the concept of “civil society” compared to what the term had designated and how it had been used previously (Foucault 2008). These changes in understanding and using the concept were both influenced by and had an impact on the interpretations of how one can govern and towards which aspects of “human life” governmental actions can be directed, since they took place in the broader context of questioning the limits and the scope of government in general. However, the issue of governmental action formulated in terms of scope – the area suitable for governmental interventions – was directly connected to the issue of the “nature” of the market and to the emergence of the market conceptualized as a special field led by its own principles. Since these principles were regarded as natural and spontaneous, the market was seen and approached as a space not suitable for governmental action. Moreover, governmental action directed to this special sphere was regarded as futile and, even more significantly, as detrimental to these natural processes, which were conceived as something that enables the market to function as it is supposed to function, in other words – to maximize itself. Principles regulating the market were deemed as something that cannot be known by any kind of political authority, and so governmental action was restrained from directly intervening into this sphere. This, of course, has led to the question of what the legitimate sphere of governmental interference is, since it is no longer aimed at preserving or expanding land and territory or enhancing sovereign power and the nation’s wealth. The question of the legitimacy of governmental action and intervention has become closely linked to the market – always seeing the market as a specific separate sphere not suitable for the involvement of the state and at the same time as a measure of the success of the government, or as Foucault puts it, as a sphere where the government finds its truth, and its internal limits (Foucault 2008). The scope of governmental action has thus been partially restrained, but was spread to other fields, in particular to the field conceptualized as the civil society. However, the civil society was not completely independent of the market or vice versa since the processes within the civil society were seen as substantial for the market and the proper functioning of the market mechanisms, and the individuals who inhabit this sphere were primarily thought of as in relation to the market<sup>1</sup>.

Also, this was a period when the purpose of the government began to change, and it was found in arranging things in a way that will enable spontaneous mechanisms to work and the mechanisms important for the market to function, to be preserved and fostered. In addition to that, the general principle of governing became the principle of frugal government, of not intervening too much, not governing too much. What Foucault calls liberalism is this new art of governing which is restricted by the market, self constrained by the principle of utility and dependent on one other aspect that Foucault identifies – maintaining an equilibrium between the states on international scale (Foucault 2008). A corollary of the liberal art of governing is the civil society, which should not be regarded as a natural sphere discovered at a certain point in time, nor as an ideological notion put forward by the state, but as a part of this new rationalization of governmental action and a political technology of the government. The interconnectedness between civil society and liberal governmentality, moreover the indispensable role it had in creating the contemporary political rationality is elaborated by Foucault in the following way:

“And I think that civil society – which is very quickly called society, and which at the end of the eighteenth century is called the nation – makes a self-limitation possible for governmental practice and an art of government, for reflection on this art of government and so for a governmental technology; it makes possible a self-limitation which infringes neither economic laws nor the principles of right, and which infringes neither the requirement of governmental generality nor the need for an omnipresence of government. An omnipresent government, a government which nothing escapes, a government which conforms to the rules of right, and a government which nevertheless respects the specificity of the economy, will be a government that manages civil society, the nation, society, the social.”

(Foucault 2008:296)

In short, with these changes in understanding what civil society is, how the market functions and who and what can be governed, a new governmental rationality and a new art of government started to emerge closely tied to the position that the market is outside of the scope of government, that civil society is within this scope and that it has to be governed and administrated so as to enable the “spontaneous” functioning of the market.

### **The subject of rights and economic subjects within the liberal political rationality**

Since operating on the level of civil society, governmental action, in the period that Foucault is referring to, logically became closely linked to the government of populations, of the inhabitants who at the same time were seen as a large entity and a totalizing entity, a large assemblage of human beings, precisely – a population – and as individual subjects who were regarded as both – subjects of rights and as economic subjects<sup>2</sup>. What charac-

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1. That individuals who are part of the civil society are first and foremost conceptualized in relation to the market means that individual actions are being interpreted with the help of principles that have so far been used only to describe functioning of the market, i.e. principles used to analyze market relations became principles for analyzing and interpreting human behavior and individual actions become interpreted as if individuals are calculating on costs and benefits when making their choices (Foucault 2008, Read 2009).

2. Homo juridicus and Homo oeconomicus (Foucault 2008).

terizes this interpretation is also that the subjects of rights and economic subjects cannot be governed in the same way since, unlike within the classic social contract metaphor that explains how subjects of rights are integrated into a political entity, economic subjects never can and never do relinquish some parts of their natural possession that leads their actions, since these are non-transferable and non-changeable. Namely, they never relinquish their interest. The figure of the economic subject also has to be viewed as correlative to this new art of government since his/her behavior is crucial for the market to function, and the government has to secure that it manifests itself freely. Respect for freedoms is one of the essential characteristics of this political rationality, where freedom is deemed a condition for these natural mechanisms to be put to work, secured by state authorities, and where neglect of freedom means bad governance. As Foucault puts it:

“[...] a condition of governing well is that freedom, or certain forms of freedom, are really respected. Failing to respect freedom is not only an abuse of rights with regard to the law, it is above all ignorance of how to govern properly. The integration of freedom, and the specific limits to this freedom within the field of governmental practice has now become an imperative.”

(Foucault 2004:451)

This insight into the connection between governing or administrating people's lives and at the same time respecting and securing freedom and rights is particularly important for interpreting human rights as the most prominent and most widespread political discourse that deals with freedom, justice and emancipation and analyzing the effects that its practical implementation has, beyond these commonly accepted desirable goals it promotes.

In the sections which follow I will explain how human rights are connected to the contemporary political rationality through the analysis of how they interrelate with the two most important concepts within the liberal political rationality – that of freedom and of that the market. Pointing to the similarities between the liberal political rationality and the human rights discourse in approaching and interpreting these concepts, I will argue that human rights can be interpreted as governmental technologies or as mechanisms that intervene in and modify civil society as well as individuals within the predetermined framework of the liberal governmentality.

### **Definition of the term “human rights” and its place in contemporary political rationality**

The term “human rights” can be defined in various formulations, from inalienable moral possessions of individuals or moral principles, safeguards of fundamental human capabilities, protectors from excessive power of the state, legal obligations to be respected or minimal standards to be achieved. In contrast to that, when using this term I am not trying to define what human rights are as if human rights existed separately from the theoretical space in which they are conceptualized or separate from the practices by which their realization is taking place – not as a concept or a practice that has a meaning in itself. When referring to this concept I am referring to all of the definitions and descriptions that are made and used by different authors and human rights scholars as well as national or international authorities who deal with human rights, and I am referring to the concept

treating it as a discourse and a practice. Human rights from my point of view represent a discourse which seeks to define standards on how states should govern their citizens when perceiving them as subjects with innate freedom and dignity, which expresses these standards or principles in legal terms or in policy terms and envisions their realization, prescribing ways in which they can be put to work. It is also a discourse that defines indirectly what it is to be a human being, defining what are the essential human needs and the capabilities that have to be satisfied or secured. It is, therefore, crucial in determining a whole set of practices that those who govern undertake towards the governed.

What is the place of freedom in this omnipresent and, as Jack Donnelly calls it, “hegemonic” discourse (Donnelly 2003), and which mechanisms typical for contemporary practices of implementing human rights function on the level of the population and of the individual, producing subjects that are governable, thus dissociating human rights radically from the emancipatory role that they promise to have?

The concept of human rights contains in it the idea that freedom is an inalienable possession of individuals<sup>3</sup>. However, a peculiar feature of this discourse and accompanying practice is that it does not seek to liberate subjects, meaning that it does not question neither the meaning of freedom or the conditions of freedom<sup>4</sup> nor the circumstances that lead to the need for the protection of individuals through something like “human rights”, but presupposes freedom as a given fact, suggesting only that the manifestation of some actions should not be restrained by political authorities.<sup>5</sup> The fact that human rights, as a liberating and emancipatory discourse, do not within themselves question what freedom is, shows that they are embedded in a wider political context, in a specific governmental rationality, which in fact they often try to distance themselves from, at least when human rights are conceptualized as not a exclusively western concept<sup>6</sup>. Not defining freedom beyond what is compatible with the liberal political rationality has repercussions on how human rights standards are implemented in practice and how they “enable” the exercise of freedom in practice. Since the meaning of freedom is in fact appropriated by the broader political rationality in which freedom is constantly produced because its existence is crucial for the functioning of the market, but produced in a managed way<sup>7</sup>, human rights cannot be interpreted as a substantially liberating and emancipatory concept, regardless of the emancipatory potential that they in some periods and in some situations did have<sup>8</sup>.

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3. „All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.” Article 1 of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UN, internet).

4. International documents that define human rights only enumerate freedoms which should be guaranteed, e.g. freedom of movement, freedom of thought, conscience and religion, freedom of opinion and expression etc... (UN, internet).

5. For example, when describing how Foucault depicted contemporary political rationality, Graham Burchell (Burchell 1991) argues that freedom within the liberal governmentality is conceived only in technical terms.

6. That rights and especially human rights as a concept stem from liberal political thought (Donnelly 2003, Howard and Donnelly 2007) is not what is elaborated herein more detail since this connection is taken as unquestionable and determined for their employment within the liberal governmentality.

7. [...] liberalism is not so much the imperative of freedom as the management and organization of the conditions in which one can be free [...] (Foucault 2004: 64),

8. The concept of the “rights of men and citizens” from the French revolution is an example of the challenging position that rights can have in relation to political authorities and in questioning the ways people are governed.



In addition to being a liberating discourse that does not define freedom, human rights also are a discourse that defines what human needs are, but does not deal with the sphere that affects them most directly – the market. In other words, the human rights discourse relates to the market in the same way as the broader political rationality does, leaving it aside as an autonomous sphere. Nor does it deal with the mechanisms of the market and how the interpretations of the meaning of the market and its functioning are at the same time interwoven with the possibility of the employment of human rights<sup>9</sup> and with what is considered to be a human right. It in itself is a mechanism that produces freedoms so as to enable the functioning of the market and governmental interventions in the lives of the individual citizens as well as governing populations.

### **Human rights in governing the civil society**

In human rights discourse there is a constant deliberation present related to their implementation. The level of compliance with human rights standards from the side of individual states is often being scrutinized and monitored by both international organizations and national non-governmental organizations. In other words, human rights are inseparably linked to the request for their implementation as well as to broadening the scope of rights<sup>10</sup>, being the sole mechanism in our society for “requesting” justice and organizing the relationship between the state authorities and the citizens. Since human rights are stated in a manner of principles or legal formulations, their implementation requires action plans, strategies, programs with concrete measures that have to be undertaken, and these actions have to be undertaken by the states and the governments who in numerous cases delegate them to various civil society organizations. These documents always rely on data on populations, and in some cases the collection of statistical data on a population is a prerequisite for drafting these sorts of documents. What follows from this is that on the level of the state and on the level of the population, human rights legitimize the division of the population into different groups through the concept of vulnerable or marginalized groups. Then, through instruments such as state policies, strategic plans and programs, they act upon and manage the circumstances which are parts of their “social reality”.

The reports on the state of human rights drafted by various international or national authorities also can be seen as instruments used to detect non-compliances and then to suggest the broadening of state intervention into the sphere of civil society. The effect of the requests or recommendations formulated for the states to redefine their “problematic” practices is the reaffirmation of the position of the state as the necessary framework for the life of humans. This leads to a possibility of reversing the classic question in human rights literature and to wonder – perhaps it is not the case that citizens need human rights to protect them from the excessive power and acts of violence of the state, but that states need human rights to acquire their legitimacy, both in terms of their existence and in legitimizing their governmental actions.

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9. Pointing to this aspect of course, belongs to Marxist criticism of rights.

10. Rights for specific groups, the so called fourth generation of human rights, etc...

Another characteristic of human rights is that they are presented as not yet attained and because of that always desired and requested, regarded as something that has yet to be achieved. This has the effect of reaffirming the position of the current human rights discourse as the only available means for achieving justice and the only available framework for defining what the relationship between the political authorities and the individuals and groups that they govern should be.

### Human rights as technologies of the self

Broadening the legitimate scope of governmental intervention in the way described above does not leave any room for any criticism of this governing of civil society through human rights without being regarded as holding an anti-human rights position. However, this perspective is necessary if human rights are and, for a certain period of time, still will be used as a tool to challenge political authorities and unacceptable ways of governing.

Also there is another aspect of employing human rights in contemporary political rationality that also should be taken into account to understand the effects that they can produce. This aspect is visible when human rights practices are looked at on the level of the individual. What characterizes the liberal governmentality is the compatibility between the broader framework of governing by state or non-state actors and self-government or, to put it differently, that liberal governmentality constructs subjects who are amenable to self-government (Read 2009). Namely, this kind of subjectivity is a prerequisite for the liberal art of governing in order to achieve maximum effects with minimal interventions, which means that various technologies of the self with which this is achieved are put to work within this governmentality. What are the technologies of the self as described by Foucault that can be used as a tool for explaining the effects of human rights practices on the individual level? Technologies of the self are:

“[...] techniques that permit individuals to effect, by their own means or with the help of other people, a certain number of operations on their own bodies and on their own souls, on their own thoughts, on their own conduct and this in a manner so as to transform themselves, modify themselves or to attain a certain state of perfection, of happiness, of purity, of supernatural power and so on and so on [...]”

(Foucault 1996, internet)

Few authors have already looked at the production of modern subjects within this framework (Burchell 1991, Read 2009, Sokhi-Bully 2013) in connection to freedom and rights. Here, I will briefly sketch a description by Bal Sokhi-Bully who has interpreted the practices undertaken by the Fundamental Rights Agency of the European Union (FRA) (Sokhi-Bully 2013) with regard to governing subjects through rights since her analysis is especially relevant for one other effect of human rights, which I want to present here.

Sokhi-Bully views the practices of the FRA as governmentality since they capacitate citizens to “govern themselves through rights” (Sokhi-Bully 2013:229). By making the individuals experts in their own rights through surveys or interviews that they can engage with, by making educational materials accessible on their web site and also by enabling the visitors of

the web site to get involved with the issues put forward by the FRA, the FRA promotes self-government. By accepting being placed in categories such as “vulnerable minority” or “victim” when interacting with the FRA, individuals are regulated and their experiences used to be made representative for the broader population. Insisting on the need to be informed and to have knowledge of one’s rights so that one can be protected, the FRA puts the responsibility for the realization of these rights on the individual. Additionally, individuals knowing their rights, as defined and constrained within the dominant human rights discourse, makes individuals better citizens of the European Union, which focuses on the protection of these exact rights. Human rights as technologies of the self help people to “fit better into society” (Sokhi-Bulley 2013:233) since knowing individual rights makes them acquainted with how the system works and what kind of protection they can expect from the political authorities. This aspect of human rights manifested through promotional campaigns<sup>11</sup>, educational programs and similar techniques places the responsibility for using these rights on individuals suggesting that through the established framework for human rights protection and with the established mechanisms they can resolve the problems they have, staying within the framework of the modern state and liberal governmentality<sup>12</sup>.

### **Conclusion: Human rights in contemporary political rationality?**

Seeing human rights not as opposed to but compatible with the contemporary political rationality and liberal governmentality or as a mechanism that constructs ways in which citizens can interact with the state and in which state and other authorities can approach the civil society is a useful perspective since it can explain consequences of human rights other than the ones they are, at least on the theoretical level, designed to have. Guaranteeing freedom of a certain kind and not being able to deal with the effects that current market relations have on the possibility to make use of the formally guaranteed rights or on the content of human rights in general, are features that point to the close interconnectedness of human rights and contemporary political rationality and also governmentality. In this paper I have explained two effects that the implementation of human rights conceived as a corollary of liberal governmentality have. Firstly, they indirectly give legitimacy to unconstrained governmental interventions from different localities in the civil society. Secondly, there is a rising responsibility of the citizen for his/her own human rights in order to be a citizen, who fits into the society that protects them. This perspective is useful for challenging the established practices of human rights when they curtail the possibilities of challenging unjust or excessive governing or governing that is harmful to people. Human rights as they are conceived and how they are implemented at the moment cannot substantially question the existing power relations since they are closely linked to the liberal governmentality. Making this connection visible opens up possibilities for critiquing them and refining them

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11. For example when marking the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights in 2008, the UN launched a promotional campaign titled KnowYourRights2008, (UN, internet)

<http://www.unric.org/en/unric-campaigns>

12. Making the individuals responsible for their human rights and displacing this responsibility from state authorities can also be viewed as a paradox if the enactment of human rights is seen as working through intensifying governmental actions in relation to the civil society. Namely, more and more governmental actions directed to the civil society paradoxically is accompanied with shared responsibility between the state authorities and individual citizens who are its parts.

to be a useful tool in questioning and in constructing relations between the state, the individual, the civil society and various authorities that try to govern these relations in contemporary societies.

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## **Nurturing the Worker's Self: The Ethic of Authenticity in The Discourse of Professional Self-Development**

### **Introduction**

The theme of interconnection between technologies of power and technologies of the self was a recurring topic of Foucault's work. Technologies of power are in Foucault's thought associated with processes of subjection - the ways in which subject is formed by imperatives of various forms of knowledge or by surveillance and training. On the other hand, technologies of the self are associated with processes of subjectification - the ways in which individuals relate to themselves in order to shape their selves according to a certain ethical ideal and a particular guidance for the proper way of living. These two levels are in Foucault's later thought seen as always interrelated and technologies of the self are understood to be associated with certain type of technologies of power (Foucault 2000:225). It is through concept of governmentality that Foucault sought to capture their interconnection and to reflect on how we are governed within particular rationalities of government defined broadly as a 'conduct of conduct'. Lemke argues that the concept of governmentality is useful, above all, precisely because it helps us to theorise the link between technologies of power and technologies of the self, or between "the constitution of the subject and the formation of the state" (Lemke 2001, 2002:50). Similarly, Allen (2011) argues persuasively that the combination of focus on these two dimensions - how the self is constituted by power-knowledge relations and the ways in which subject constitutes itself - is the crucial tenet of Foucault's critical project.

Foucault (2008) opened the study into the emergence and discursive roots of neo-liberal governmentality. This project was later developed by many followers (Barry, Osborne, and Rose 1996; Bröckling, Krasmann, and Lemke 2010; Dilts 2011; Gane 2012, 2014; Miller and Rose 2008; Read 2009; Rose 1999a, 1999b; Springer 2012) into a burgeoning inquiry that seeks to understand the neoliberal rationalities of government through exploration of what type of subjectivity is both presupposed and simultaneously produced through the reforms, programs and technologies of neo-liberal government. Neoliberal formula of government is based on the understanding that governments should above all create an arena in which citizens can freely develop their own strategies of well-being using their freedom, skills and determination in order to succeed. Government should limit itself to ensuring such conditions where these efforts can be played out without unnecessary constraints and outcome of these individual strategies can be maximised. Simultane-

ously, the individual 'active' citizens are portrayed as solely responsible for the outcomes of their life strategies (Lesenich 2010). The ideal subject presupposed by this formula of government takes the form of homo economicus - a rationally calculating entrepreneurial agent acting out of self-interest, seeking maximisation of its human capital thus maximising its economic gains. As Foucault puts it, homo economicus is "an entrepreneur, the entrepreneur of himself" (Foucault 2008:226).

However revealing this line of inquiry is, this article argues that the unequal attention has so far been paid to the two levels of investigation into the neo-liberal governmentality. Many accounts focus on the form the ideal subject of neo-liberalism takes in economic theories or general plans for government of particular institutional field. Their point of view is usually that of theoretical school or institution presupposing an ideal subject. As Binkley puts it, governmentality scholarship suffers from 'macro-level bias' (Binkley 2009, 2011). In other words, its attention often stays with the issue of what ideal subject is presupposed by these grand designs and the tools designed to form the subject into particular shape. What is lost within this perspective are the ways in which individuals are invited to think about themselves as a certain type of subject and perform a work on their selves in order to achieve a particular change in their lives. This article's goal is to contribute to our understanding of this problematic: discourses and practices offered to subjects to take up in their pursuits to change themselves and to become individuals of certain kind. It will inquire into a particular case of guidelines for living that are offered to subjects to help them in their striving to become successful and satisfied agents within the contemporary social conditions. In other words, the article will focus on a particular case of a *technology of the self* that is supposed to help agents to become successful and fulfilled productive subjects.

In what follows I will draw on two lectures concerned with a practice of professional self-development provided by two "experts of subjectivity" (Rose 1999a:24). Lectures were given to university students attending a conference concerned with successful career and professional life. The two lectures will be taken as an illustrative case of technology of the self, illuminating how individuals are invited to think about themselves and work on themselves in a particular manner. I will argue that the version of subjectivity entailed in the two lectures differs considerably from a pure picture of homo economicus as described in works concerned with neo-liberal governmentality. I will contend that rather than instructing the individual to become a pure rationally calculating maximisers of economic gain, the lectures identify within the subject an ethical substance - the authentic self - that is seen as an important value in one's life. In addition, I will argue that rather than portraying an individual as a self-enclosed unit rejecting any concerns with problems of collective life, the two lectures take the authentic self as a basis for a larger critique of power arrangements and tie the individual life to a larger vision of a proper society. Finally, using the two lectures as a backdrop to a discussion of the study of neo-liberal governmentality, I will argue for more careful and detailed exploration of how individual lives and subjectivities are incorporated into the schemes of neoliberal governmentality.

The discussion is divided into four parts. The first section develops a critical reading of studies of neoliberal governmentality and the position of homo economicus as a supposed model for technologies of the self used by individuals navigating the waters of neo-liberal society. The second section uses the empirical material to illustrate how discourse of pro-

professional self-development formulates ethical substance of “authentic self” which is used as a basis for a particular technology of the self grounded in introspection and dialogical exploration of one’s authentic personality. The third section explores implications this technology of the self has for thinking about collective social life. It shows how it is tied to a critique of normalising pressures and disciplinary institutions as well as to a positive vision of an ideal society. Finally the conclusion (the fourth section) ties empirical material back to discussion of subjectivity in neo-liberal governmentality.

### **Neoliberal governmentality and technologies of the self**

The link between the ways in which human beings are shaped into subjects of certain kind (technologies of power) and the ways in which human beings themselves work on their selves in order to become proper subjects according to various ethical doctrines (technologies of the self) is central to Foucault’s thought about rationalities of government (or governmentalities). In parts of his writing, Foucault refers to this link when he says: “This encounter between the technologies of the domination of others and those of the self I call ‘governmentality’ (Foucault 2000:225). Attention paid to this dual character of rule is what allows analytics of power to escape the narrow focus on domination. It helps us to capture the ways in which government is more than simple ordering of actions of the governed by force and restraint and leads us to look at the ways in which government functions as ordering of action of ‘free’ individuals. As Lemke argues, it is this notion of governmentality as interplay between domination and ordering of ‘autonomous’ actions of the governed that helps Foucault to transcend limiting dualisms of freedom and constraint or consensus and violence (Lemke 2002). Instead, it suggests “to analyse government as a continuum extending from political government through to forms of self-regulation” (Lemke 2002:59). In certain respect, we may say that Foucault’s later emphasis on the issues of governmentality and technologies of the self is a continuation of his intellectual struggle against understanding of power as a merely repressive force. This effort is by this move extended beyond exploration of how subject is constituted in situations of domination to consideration of how subjects relatively autonomously constitute themselves as agents through a use of various technologies of the self.

Importance of such perspective is perhaps made more urgent by the contemporary rationality of neo-liberal rule. Rose portrays at length how under neo-liberalism the societies are governed increasingly through techniques which seek to utilise ‘free’ conduct of individuals. Indeed, it is opening or enlargement of spaces of freedom (and simultaneous offering of instructions on a proper use of this freedom) that are the most distinct characteristic of contemporary government (Miller and Rose 2008:209–218; Rose 1999b). Similarly, Deleuze in his attempts to reformulate Foucault’s work on power for contemporary conditions emphasizes that power functions increasingly through utilizing individual’s own motivations and ambitions (Deleuze 1992, 1997; see also Gane 2012). Observation of these developments is perhaps captured the most succinctly by Burchell:

“Liberalism, particularly its modern versions, constructs a relationship between government and the governed that increasingly depends upon ways in which individuals are required to assume the status of being the subjects of their lives,



upon the ways in which they fashion themselves as certain kinds of subjects, upon the ways in which they practise their freedom”

(Burchell 1996:29–30).

We may say that neo-liberal government, by increasingly delegating responsibility for attaining various social goods from state to individuals simultaneously invites these individuals to utilise various doctrines and practices in order to become free, responsible and successful subjects navigating the changing waters of contemporary society. To help them achieve this goal plethora of advice is available from various sources (Rose 1999a:259–265). Technologies of the self are not only made possible, but are to a great extent necessitated in contemporary rationalities of government.

However, scholarship about neo-liberal governmentality to a large extent remains focused on the dimension of technologies of power rather than technologies of the self. The processes of subjectification and technologies of the self are not altogether ignored and as the brief review above shows, their importance is being recognised. Nonetheless, as Binkley (2009, 2011) argues, the studies of neoliberal governmentality still remain predominantly within perspective of Foucault’s genealogical study of technologies of power or processes of subjection. As he puts it, they focus predominantly on “the production of subjects but not the production of self-producing subjects” (Binkley 2009:65). While authors often acknowledge that doctrines of government of conduct rest on the presupposition of citizens as entrepreneurial, independent and to a large extent self-forming subjects, we hear surprisingly little about how precisely are subjects invited to undertake this self-forming work on their selves. Often, we do not see the “ethical work by which the rationalities of domination are extended into a program of self government itself” (Binkley 2009:65). In other words, the governmentality scheme then remains rather top-down and deterministic, not paying justice to Foucault’s conception of governmentality as a link between functioning of technologies of power and technologies of the self. Guidelines for practices of everyday life that subjects are invited to follow are then often overshadowed by greater logics of government (either of society as a whole, a particular institution or a field of expertise). What seems to be lost is precisely the link between “institutional rationalities and subjectivities of the individuals” (Binkley 2011:85). The question how precisely are the great visions of neo-liberal government connected to guidelines for living in contemporary society often remain under-explored in these accounts. In addition, Campbell (2010) makes a case that the term rationality of government is narrowed down to a rather limited understanding of what rationality means. Studies of governmentality, she argues, often contain implicit focus on cognitive and instrumental aspects of the way subjects relate to governmental technologies and practices, as well as to themselves. As her study in the field of criminal justice and apparatuses of security demonstrates, affects and emotions play an important role in acceptance of governmental rationalities and connected practices. As she argues, it is important to inquire into the ways in which rationalities of government “capture *hearts* as well as minds” (Campbell 2010:37 emphasis in the original).

This bias towards grand doctrines of government and general schools of (economic) thought can perhaps be best documented by a short exploration of a status given to the figure of homo economicus in a Foucault-inspired study of neo-liberal governmentality. Homo economicus, according to Foucault, represents the central point of reference of neo-liberal thought. It is a notion of an individual who rationally applies economic cost and

benefits analysis to decisions in all spheres of life. Government can count on such economically rational mode of behaviour and utilise it in its plans for government. Homo economicus is seen as not only reacting rationally to stimuli and constraints (Foucault 2008:269–270), but also as working on maximisation of its own productive potential - understood as human capital - and financial returns stemming from it (Foucault 2008:226–228). Homo economicus is thus recognised as an ideal and central model of subjectivity presupposed by neoliberal economic and governmental doctrines (Bröckling 2010; Dilts 2011; Foucault 2008; Read 2009). As Read argues (2009) homo economicus represents a conception of how human beings are in their reality - a conception of human nature. This conception of subject then translates, according to Read, into a particular ways of living (Read 2009). It is therefore of paramount importance (Lemke 2001, 2002; Read 2009) to explore the ways in which human beings are formed and form themselves into this kind neo-liberal self-entrepreneurial subjects.

However, what seems to be rather problematic is an ease with which passage is often made from homo economicus as a central discursive figure of neoliberal economic theory to homo economicus as a model for living followed by individuals themselves in their self-shaping efforts. This is intuitively understandable, as these levels are naturally difficult to distinguish in practice and the line drawn by Foucault between processes of subjection and processes of subjectification seems to be rather a heuristic device than a statement about two separate aspects of reality (see Harrer 2007). However, it seems that in certain respect these two levels are conceptually mixed together and the processes of subjection are taken to automatically translate into the practice of subjectification. In other words, it seems that writers often simply assume that the version of homo economicus underpinning neo-liberal economic and political theory translates unproblematically into active self-fashioning of subjects. For example, Hamann (2009) seems to take this approach in her article about relations of neoliberal governmentality to ethics in everyday experience. While she acknowledges that “economic man” is a subject that must be produced within relations of power and knowledge, she skips the ways of how such subjects are produced altogether. Moreover, even though she acknowledges that there are particular technologies of the self offered in a form of self-help books and other guides for self-management, she does not empirically engage with the material. Instead, she assumes that the form of homo economicus translates directly into every day experience of individuals. Two points are of particular importance here. Firstly, homo economicus as a living individual uses “rational choice and cost-benefit calculation *to the express exclusion* of all other values and interest” (Hamann 2009:38 emphasis in the original). It seems that this individual does not recognize any other values, norms or affects that would lie outside the very narrow space of economic value. Secondly, such individual is construed as a self-interested atom, who is unable to take into account considerations of its co-citizens and rejects an idea of government of the social. As Hamann puts it, “[n]eoliberal subjects are constituted as thoroughly responsible for themselves and themselves alone because they are subjectified as thoroughly autonomous and free” (2009:44). Individual living in neo-liberal times thus seems to be a subject who sacrifices all values to economic value and whose self-interest prevents him from thinking about collective concerns and well-being of the society as a whole.

From a perspective similar to that of Binkley (2009) I will argue that this perspective indeed suffers from a “macro-level bias”. Ideal subjectivity is taken from the discourse of

neo-liberal economics or from the proposals for governmental reforms and it is automatically assumed that this is a version of subjectivity offered to or even assumed by the (self)governed subjects. This perspective ignores the question of whether and how the figures taken from texts of experts of economics are translated into the particular guidelines for living - or technologies of the self - that are presented to subjects navigating everyday waters of life in contemporary societies. What is lost, among other aspects, is the ethical content of particular technologies of the self and their relation to a normative visions of ideal society. As a response to this perspective, I will argue that paying attention to actual technologies of the self offered to individuals can help us to see neo-liberalism from a different angle and to understand how its rationalities are actually translated into life and experience of individuals.

### **Professional self-development as a technology of the self**

Job Academy is a conference organised for students of Masaryk University by its Career Centre, which is a university body seeking to help students to find a job during their studies or after their graduation. The event organised in 2014 consisted of several plenary talks delivered to all the participants, as well as smaller workshops that were designed to offer guidance in particular aspects of their preparation for the competitive job market (such as self-presentation, CV writing, stylistic advice). The mission of Job Academy, according to the event's website, is to help students "to become creators of their own career path that will originate from their individuality, and which will not only provide for them economically, but will also be a source of fulfilment". The conference should not merely give advice on how to find a job, but should help students to develop a particular attitude and set of skills that will be necessary for their personal and professional success. The conference does not limit itself to informing students about particular realities of the job market, but rather seeks to help students to become subjects of a particular kind - to become creators of their careers. The goal is not simply to inform, but to help students to change themselves. Assisting with this were various experts, ranging from successful entrepreneurs and professionals (often Masaryk University alumni) to psychologists, fashion gurus, motivational speakers and personal coaches. Two speeches delivered by two personal coaches will be analysed here in a greater detail, as they offer particularly interesting insights into the technology of the self connected to the notion of professional self-development. Both speeches formulate certain form of ideal subjectivity in relation to working life and devise methods of self-development that will lead to growth of such subjectivity. This, according to the speakers, will lead to a development of a fulfilling work and life, maximisation of individual happiness as well as self-actualisation.

I will read the lectures as an example of a technology of the self. Foucault defines the technologies of the self as practices that: "permit individual to effect by their own means, or with the help of others, a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection or immortality" (Foucault 2000:225). While various technologies differ in several dimensions, two of them will be crucial for the analysis presented here. The first one is the dimension of "determination of ethical substance". It represents "the way in which the individual has to constitute this or that part of

himself as the prime material of his moral conduct” (Foucault 1990:26). Ethical substance functions as the basis around which the technology of the self is built and forms the prime material that is targeted through various techniques that subject applies to itself. The second one concerns “elaboration of ethical work that one performs on oneself” (Foucault 1990:27). Subject performs ethical work on itself in order to bring its conduct into compliance with a given ethical rule. Using analogy, we may say that ethical substance presents a certain material or target of ethical pursuits, while ethical work is a particular tool or method used to shape them.

The road to professional success and personal happiness as it is presented in the two lectures leads through laborious process. The labour starts with getting to know one's self properly or with mastering skill of looking at one's self from a particular perspective. The process starts with identification of who listeners truly are. Only through recognising characteristics of one's individuality and one's key talents can individual attain material prosperity, satisfaction with an engaging job and personal self-actualisation. Personal uniqueness is a value that must be respected and protected. So important found one of the speakers this message that he repeated it at the very end of the lecture, as if to remind listeners what really matters before they will disperse:

“I wish you that you would never forget - or that you will be constantly reminding yourself - that you are truly unique and that you won't allow anyone to tell you otherwise.”

(PM, 14:65).

Protecting and nurturing of one's authentic individuality is important goal in itself, as it allows the individual to lead an honest and fulfilled life. However, being true to one's true individuality is also a characteristic that is positively valued by others, as for example by selectors during a job interview. Two aspects - self-satisfaction and positive appraisal by others are seen as inherently connected:

“So the genuineness something by which you can get people on your side. But it's mainly quite good for you, because you won't have to worry about who you are; you are just as you are.”

(PM, 14:41)

The emphasis on the importance of authentic individuality for both success and happiness ties this instance of discourse of professional development to what Rose called “an ethic of authenticity” (Rose 1999a:267). This approach to ethic of the self is connected to developments within apparatus of psychiatry and psychology whereby therapies cease to be exclusive tools in the hands of experts and are promoted by experts who do not hold strictly scientific status (coaches, speakers, consultants, managers) as well as by mass media (Rose 1999a:261, 263–265). The ethic of authenticity substitutes external codes of moral judgement with principles that are supposedly internal. In other words, norms seen as external have to be resisted in order to make room for subjects' own judgement which compares the state of their being “with their inner truth” (Rose 1999a:267). In opposition to the authentic self-formation stands life in hypocrisy and self-denial. Authenticity then functions as a basis for production of one's subjectivity which is meaningful both to the individual herself and others. Rather than seeing it simply as a part of neo-lib-

eral subjectivity production machine urging individuals to become ruthless maximisers of economic value, Rose understands the ethic of authenticity as being part of larger “‘passional economy’ in which human beings are connected into flows of needs and desires, pleasures and anxieties” (Rose 1999a:271). However congruent this concern with authenticity is with the governmental rationalities dominant in the age of the supposed crisis of the welfare state (Rose 1999a:260), they contain irreducible ethical, affective and passional element.

It should not surprise us to find emphasis on authenticity and personal uniqueness in lectures about working life and professional self-development, as it fits rather well within larger contours of contemporary thought about work. Theorists of work have been for some time pointing out how the new ethics of work is tied to values of self-actualisation and genuineness. In chapters devoted to discourses of production and management, Rose (Miller and Rose 2008:173–178; Rose 1999a:103–119, 1999b:156–158) describes how emphasis on self-fulfilment through work became dominant within this line of thought since approximately 1980s. In a similar vein, Boltanski and Chiapello (2006, 2007) argue that the management discourse in France since 1990s incorporated aspects of the “spirit of 1968”, such as desire for autonomy and creativity. Reflecting on the issues of power and resistance in contemporary workplace Fleming and Spicer (2008:303) note that “[r]ather than exhort employees to subjectively conform to a unitary set of values ala the 1980s cultures of commitment, the latest wave of management gurus invites employees to simply be themselves...”. No matter how this use of ethics of authenticity might be seen as instrumental it undeniably formulates an ethical concern with subjectivity of the individual at work.

In the analysed speeches we can see how similar logic is used as a part of the technology of the self that the listeners are invited to apply to their lives. The authentic self plays the role of ethical substance in practice of professional self-development. It is the prime material that must be uncovered, delimited from other parts of one’s being and further developed through the use of appropriate techniques. It forms a basis of “*ethical work* that one performs on oneself” (Foucault 1990:27). And work it is, as to get to truly know one’s authentic self is not an easy task. The skill of relating to this inner authentic self must be practised, perhaps most effectively under the guidance of a personal coach or other self-development expert. Introspection, an honest and careful look at one’s own personality and one’s way of life, is an important aspect of steering the life onto the path to authenticity and fulfilment:

“It is good from time to time to conduct such a small self-reflection. So you can take a look into how you are really thinking about things, what you do, where you are going, who you meet. Why do you do that? Does it make any sense? What do you get from that? So, the self-reflection is important”.

(PM, 14:47)

The second speaker, the personal coach, describes coaching as a technique which is not based on providing any specific directive or a strict plan for life. Rather, coaching is described as a specific form of dialogue in which coach merely helps his conversation partner to discover what matters to her individually and what life perspective and necessary actions are meaningful from this perspective:

“Consultant comes saying ‘I have a solution, I have gone through this before and I can give you a solution’. Coach won’t give you any solution. Mentor is someone who is an expert in a particular field... mentor can help you build exactly those skills that you need in that field. Well, life does not work that way. When I give advice to someone, in 95% of the cases it is an absolute waste of time, because you cannot advise people. If coach gives you an advice, it is not a coach”.

(AV, 13:24).

In contrast to a therapist, a consultant or a mentor, coach is not supposed to provide his client with a strict directive or a list of steps that she needs to do in order to achieve a desired goal. The practice of coaching is rather based on coach’s ability to assist client through a guided dialogue to discover what goals are meaningful to her personally and ensure that expenditure of energy in real life pursuits is in alignment with goals that are essentially meaningful to the individual herself. Coaching is thus presented as a technique that positions an individual as an exclusive judge of his life.

Professional self-development, as a technology of the self presented in the two lectures, does make the practice of active introspection central to the work on the self. Recognition of one’s authentic self is not an easy task and its discovery requires not only certain practice and diligence, but also a particular knowledge of how the authentic self might be obscured. The authentic self as an ethical substance must be set apart from other traits of one’s personality, mainly from the sediments piled up on the character by the apparatuses of family, education and collective pressures in general. These sediments represent major obstacles to full realisation of one’s authenticity and maximal potential. One speaker labels these sediments as “self-limiting settings” and positions them as a central problem of self-development practice:

“I would like to remind you that what personal development is all about is the fact that everyone in this room, myself included, has certain self-limiting settings... a comfort zone, things that we have given up a long time ago, dreams that we have buried... But it does not have to be that way”.

(PM, 14:32).

The self-limiting settings that we carry with us present a major problem to authentic self-development. Firstly, they represent limits of possible understanding of oneself, one’s qualities and opportunities in both personal and professional life. Secondly, they impose harmful limits on possible behaviour. Authentic behaviour, self-actualisation and professional success stemming from it are restricted by self-limiting settings which impose standards of what action is suitable, acceptable and efficient. The central imperative of self-development as it is presented in both lectures is, through practice of focused introspection, to make these sediments known to the subject and thus to open to a conscious change.

The subject of personal development, as presented in the two lectures, surely resembles the figure of homo economicus. Most importantly, it too is an entrepreneur of the self, working on increasing its potential (human capital) which will lead not only to self-actualization but also to financial reward. However, it would be simplistic to say that personal development reduces life to minimization of income and views personality as a portfolio of

knowledge and skills that can be sold on the labour market. On the contrary, the professional self-development as a technology of the self formulates a certain ethical substance - the authentic self - within individual. Moreover, it formulates a particular practical approach to one's self that should allow this authentic self to fully develop. In sum, rather than reducing all values to economic value and the individual to its blind maximizer, it formulates an ethical ideal of existence and a corresponding practice of its realization. It is consideration of this technology of the self in greater detail that allows us to see the ethical dimension of incorporation of the subjective level into contemporary neo-liberal rationalities of government.

### **Against normalization, towards professional utopia**

In the previous section, I have shown how discourse of professional self-development identifies an ethical substance within the subject - the authentic self. Discovery of one's authentic self leads through practice of introspection that must uncover the authentic self from factors which are obscuring it. These obstacles to authentic personal development are seen as accumulated effects of influences from individual's environment - family, educational institutions and societal norms in general. 'Self-limiting settings', as they are called by one of the speakers, present an important point where concerns with one's individuality are connected to the critique of larger social arrangements.

We may say that a particular technology of the self in this way relates to the dimension of technologies of power. In other words, the way in which one should govern oneself is set as a basis for problematisation and critique of how one is governed by others. This issue is strongly present in Foucault's later works. As Karayakali argues, Foucault portrays technologies of the self as essentially transformative, as "they stem from a problematisation of the existing forms of power relations and subjectivity in a society" (Karakayali 2014:10). Technologies of the self invite subject not only to conform to certain ideals and practices, but also to question norms of behaviour and models of self-formation that are presented to it. As Karayakali puts it aptly:

"[A]t the heart of transformative practices is the idea of a self who confronts, at every moment, the question of whether it will continue acting in accordance with its past dispositions or whether it will attempt to transform itself and experiment with new modes of existence"

(Karakayali 2014:13).

In the technology of professional development, certain social sentiments as well as institutions concerned with education and upbringing are subject to critique. Both lectures analysed here formulate a critique of a social arrangements which are seen as hampering development of the authentic self. An individual must carefully examine the effects these outside pressures had on her personal development. In the following excerpt, the speaker mentions such detrimental effects stemming from expectations set up for the individual by her family:

“Your father told you that it is great to go to a college. Your mother told you that it would be good to do some sport. [...] Well, yes. But it must make sense to you. To you! So re-examine if you are not by chance going in a train full of things that you do not want to do, that are a nuisance to you.”

(PM, 14:45)

In a different excerpt, the same speaker broadens the scope of critique to encompass the educational institutions which are seen as hampering the authentic development by enforcing rules too strictly and by being based on essentially repressive model of education. The target of the critique is a disciplinary pedagogy which is seen as building a “mentality of inadequacy” in an individual:

“I see the entire system of elementary school, high school and university as being based on [the premise], often, that people want to catch you when you are not prepared and when you make a mistake. So you are writing an essay about courage and you are putting your heart into it in that sixth grade. And the teacher is standing there and she is waiting for you to screw up. [She is seeking] where you make a grammatical mistake, where you forget to put a comma.”

(PM, 14:4)

What has to be resisted are not only influences of institutions connected to disciplinary education or strict demands pressed by the family on an individual. In the thought of the speaker, the individual should be ideally shielded from any form of external judgement and his authentic creative steps, his feelings and opinions should be applauded. What is criticised is the development of individual in accordance with externally imposed norms in general. Imposition of external norms is seen as building a “mentality of inadequacy”. The individual should be critical of recommendations related to her educational and professional trajectory as well as norms of behaviour received from her social environment. Only such step is positive which is meaningful to individual herself and which is in harmony with her “authentic” self-understanding.

The lecture attacks as its normative opposition disciplinary form of power. Most importantly one of its “great instruments” (Foucault 1977:184) - normalisation - that Foucault so influentially documented in *Discipline and Punish*. Normalizing judgement, as Foucault observed, is based on suppression of non-observance, of “that which does not measure up to the rule, that departs from it” (Foucault 1977:178). Norms are not just created as prohibitions stemming from a normative codex. They are also based on assumption of comparability of individuals, of their results, of their performance and dynamics of their development. Through comparison between individuals, normalising judgement does not only confront an individual with a prototype of perfection but also with the group of his peers, or individuals at a similar stage of education and training. In this sense, normalisation renders “... differences useful by fitting the one to another” (Foucault 1977:184). In the discourse of professional development, as it is presented in the two lectures, such comparison is seen as detrimental to the growth of the authentic self. Comparison of the individual with external norms is understood as a source of the harmful “feeling of inadequacy” and other “self-limiting settings”. Such pressures must be resisted. Not only in present, but subject is also instructed to reflect on harmful effects they could have on his formation in the past.



Discourse of professional self-development thus combines the attack on the normalising power with a critique of disciplinary effects of institutions (school, family). In this sense, it connects the technology of the self which establishes as its ethical substance “authentic” individual with a critique of disciplinary technology of power as it developed during modernity and persisted into our present. The disciplinary form and normalisation as one of its most important aspects is seen as a thing of the past - not only harmful to the practice of authentic development, but also no longer functional in the present. The disciplined, normalised individual, even if she is more successful than most of her peers (e.g. being university-educated), does not have what the present employer or economic environment demands - creativity, energy and self-determination which are all seen as results of authentic self-development.

The second speaker uses similar logic of critique of a certain epoch, its sentiments and technologies utilised for formation of proper subjectivity. However, he ties this critique more to the thought about economic and social nature of contemporary society, and to formulation of a vision of ideal society of the future that is already manifested in our present. In the following excerpt, he describes individual pursuits in entrepreneurship or employment as a joyful and creative game that listeners are invited to play. This principle (life as a game) is contrasted with life of “serious” people, who were formed by an industrial era:

“Anything in life can be transformed into an interesting and entertaining game.... Some people do not see it that way, they are ‘serious’. Their thinking is based on the industrial era which lasted so long, when it was necessary for people to be the same as others, to find stable job, to get promoted, to save some money for a retirement and most importantly, to shut up and work hard. And this is what ‘serious’ life has to offer.”

(AV, 13:8)

Self development as a “game” which does not follow general normalising guidelines set by the industrial era fits better to the present, or perhaps more precisely to the near future:

“Nowadays, we see more start ups being established than anytime before in the history of humanity and more people than ever before are becoming entrepreneurs. Well, now it is a trend in the US, but I foresee it becoming reality in the Czech Republic too. So, the trend is that we will work independently and we will do what we enjoy to do, what fulfils us, what helps other people and we will be paid for doing this. But we won’t do that for money, we will do this because it will be meaningful. And the concept of the game plays a gigantic role in this.”

(AV, 13:10)

According to the speaker’s prognosis, the model based on pressures towards normality and conformity as well as general guidelines for success and material wellbeing will cease to be functional and will disappear together with the last remnants of the industrial age. The new era of knowledge economy will make space for subjects seeking success by quite a different means: through listening to their authentic self, recognising its special talents and fulfilling their individual visions. Rather than financial reward, they should seek meaning and fulfilment. Material prosperity will be a result of leading such life that is in accordance with self-actualisation, rather than from accommodating one’s subjectivity to general norms. Rather than following general guidelines for successful and prosperous

life, subjects shall be playing a personalised and challenging game in accordance with their unique potential and talents. Importantly, the level of concern with one's individuality is here tied to a larger socio-political narrative and reason of the government. Particular idea of ethical substance of individuals - the authentic self - is translated into a critique of contemporary modes of government and tied to a vision of ideal society of a near future.

## Conclusion

A reading of the discourse of professional self-development as technology of the self offers insights that could easily be lost in the more general accounts of workings of neo-liberal governmentality. Focus on the micro-level in which subjects are called upon as agents undertaking self-forming work allows us to see how subjects are actually addressed, what interpretation of their lives within the contemporary constellations of government of conduct are offered to them and how are the realities of contemporary society construed into an ethical problem for practice of everyday life. We can see how subjects are invited to become entrepreneurial agents seeking not only maximisation of profit and individual gain, but also searching for meaning and connection of their individual life with larger political and social narratives.

The version of subjectivity formulated within the two lectures on professional self-development shares some fundamental traits with the figure of homo economicus. The ideal subject of professional development too is a maximiser of its human capital or the entrepreneur of the self. It is asked to maximise its skills and to fully develop its individual capability understood as employability or prospects of future profits. Simultaneously, in many ways it should understand itself as an individual solely responsible for its success. However, the subject of this version of professional development is also much more than a pure reflection of homo economicus. It identifies as its ethical substance the authentic self which it seeks to uncover, protect and develop. Rather than leading subject to reject all values other than economic value, it is invited to seek authentic self-development and self-actualisation which will bring both happiness and material well-being. The concerns with authentic self-development also transcend the individual horizon. They are tied to a particular critique of technologies of domination (normalisation) and to a certain understanding of a social and economic change. More attention being paid to technologies of the self can also provide a space for reconsideration of social critique. Seeing from the perspective of the technologies of the self, we can see how contemporary governmentality incorporates values such as desire for self-actualisation and autonomy and makes them part of the government of everyday life.

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## **“Self-discipline” As a Path to Power**

### **Introduction**

Our primary purpose with this paper is to demonstrate a new phenomenon that we have noticed in our everyday lives. That is, we have noticed a significant occupation with “the gym” as a form of exercise, but this is also followed with an increasing interest in the ways in which the body is represented in everyday life. We noticed a discourse forming that was occupied with the beautification of the self, through exercise, discipline and dietary practices, and that these specific techniques offered our acquaintances a sort of “relief” and after a certain time they would start speaking of the way in which their lives were changed for the better.

First we noticed that there are similarities between “the gym”, and the space of the “panopticon”, and this was to lead our further research. The theory of Michael Foucault helped us understand how “the gym” reflects the changes that are occurring in our times, and the way the relations of “power” have changed, and in what way does this become noticeable in our daily lives.

This paper is based on five interviews that we made with daily users of different gyms in the city of Novi Sad, between the age of 19 and 27. The purpose of these interviews was to extract narratives that we will use for marking the concepts that are employed by the users, to explain their daily routines, and to give meaning to these practices. That is why this paper will convey the key concepts that helped us in understanding this phenomenon. After that we will demonstrate what practices are linked with “the gym”, and how they can be understood in relation to the “self”, and the “techniques” that are linked to it. We don't intend on giving conclusion in a strict sense, but rather to open questions that we wish to examine later in our research. Before we give an analysis, in this paper, of the material we acquired in the process of this research we will explain the method that we used for accumulating data for this paper. We do not perceive this paper as an outcome of “multidisciplinary” research, even though we are researchers from two different disciplines. Rather we see it as a multi perspective questioning of a phenomenon prompted by a method of analysis that has been employed in recent years by researchers across the social sciences.

## The body, Foucault, disciplining and the self

There is a significant shift in the study of “the body” in social sciences and humanities. Margaret Look points out, that at first “the body” was “naturalized”, or rather taken as a biological reality that needed no questioning. Then with the ‘70s anthropologist became “aware” of “the body” as a significant factor in the formation of our understanding of the world; it is now understood that “the body” is always perceived through culture, and not just as a universal mode of existing (Look 1993). There are different opinions concerning “the body” that have come to light, and it can be stated that they come to two significant positions: “*the body as ‘symbol’ and the body as ‘agent’.*” That is to say that “the body” has a significant symbolic power which allows us to understand it as a representation of a “social order” - as a field for seeing norms. And on the other hand it is seen as the basis of “the self that acts”, because it is able to transgress “the norms” by its ability to “act”. These different stands do not negate each other, but rather tell of the different ways the body is engaged in the world. “The body” can “represent” but it is also capable of being an “agent”/ “able to act” (Reischer and Koo 2004). One of the ways “the body” demonstrates its agency is through its “size”. Helen Gremillion demonstrates in her revive of recent studies concerning the cultural politics of body size, that there have been many approaches in analyzing corporeal ideals, and that most of the work demonstrates a tension, in anthropology, that is linked to the idea that a border exists between nature and culture. But this idea is shifting and is being questioned. (Gremillion 2005)

Before the body could be treated in this way by researchers, our society had to go through significant shifts in the ways it constitutes the relations of power. Foucault wrote of this process of change in *'Discipline and punish'*, where he identifies a process of “disciplining” that originates from the 17th century. His analysis gives a detailed picture of how these techniques were implemented in “the west”, primarily by means of formal state institutions, that helped in forming a society of subjects that sustain the relation of power by themselves. As he says: “*Discipline 'makes' individuals; it is the specific technique of power that regards individuals both as objects and as instruments of its exercise.*”(p.170). Apart from making individuals, it has “simple” instruments that make this way of practicing power sustain itself: hierarchical observation, normalizing judgment and the examination. The development of continuous supervision, the constituting of norms, and the making of the “case” is what ensures the grip of power over our lives. These are the mechanisms that turn us into subjects, constituting a “disciplinary society”. (Foucault 1995)

In order to demonstrate the new way in which power has changed Foucault employed a concept that was developed by Jeremy Bentham, applied in Victorian prisons. The “panopticon” is seen as a space in which the correction of individuals is done by constant observation. This observation is conceived in such a way that one always knows it is being looked at, but it never knows when this is precisely done, that is why it always has a need to correct itself. One’s idea is that this notion for application within the walls of institutions, has exceeded its institutional form, and became “an indefinitely generalizable mechanism” of powers existence (Goodlad 2003). Later Foucault made significant changes in the way he observed functioning of power. His interest shifted towards the process of “subjectification” which represent ways one constitutes itself, and recognize itself as a subject. These specific techniques he termed “the techniques of the self”. (Rail and Harvey 1995: 167)

While analyzing the care of the self through history, one is able to observe the transformation of the “technologies of the self” through different epochs. Let us take the Alchibian view into account. According to him, the care of the self is not connected with the care of the body. The main concern here should be the soul. Through acquiring knowledge of the soul, one acquires the basis for political activity. Comparing this understanding with the one linked to the modern era, we can conclude that in each of these epochs, there is a connection between political activity and the care of the self. Furthermore, in the Hellenistic and Imperial era, there is a withdrawal from political activities and its distinction from the care of the “self”. Also, at that same period there is a dilemma, which can be formulated as a question – Is the care of the self connected with understanding of the self? In the stoic tradition, a path to understanding of the self is made of remembrance of the rules, while in the Christian tradition the truth of the self is forced upon the penitent through symbolic and ritual separation.

The care of the body was gaining importance over time and the themes were not just sport, but it is also talked about health and sexuality. Greeks had a form of exercises called askesis which were a certain form of test for the possible realistic events in the future. There were two types of exercises – melete, which was practicing of thinking, and gymnasias, practicing of artificially induced realistic situation. Gymnasium includes different forms in other cultures. For example, in some of them there is sexual abstinence. In the stoic culture, it served as a test of individual's resourcefulness in the world. (Foucault 1988)

Another author helped us in understanding what happened in antiquity and how was it linked to the individual and to collective aspects of existence. Hanna Arendt in her study *The Human Condition* analyzes antiquity and the imperial period, but gives significance to a different aspect of existence - to political life. What she noticed is that after the move from city state to an imperial way of governing, the people (politically able men) felt like they had less or no political power which made them recede from the public sphere into an “occupation with one's self”. Her argument is that when the “intimate” represents itself as a field for political battles, the society is no longer constituted as a “plurality” but rather shows certain levels of individualization. This is one of the reasons why people, once faced with the fact that they lack true political potential, find a “resolution” in self occupation. This move from occupation with “the collective” to an occupation with the self is the main reason why “plurality” has lost its significance in our lives, and by putting it aside the potential to “be political” is taken away from “us/them”. (Arendt 1998) This may be one of the reasons which gave rise to proliferation to the “techniques of the self” in our own times.

Rail and Harvey wrote of the many ways that Foucault was greeted in sociology when sport is concerned. Many of his ideas are useful for analyzing the contemporary practices linked to sport especially because there is a similarity between the ways in which sports are practiced and played, and the practices that Foucault links to “the institutions of disciplining”. That is, many of the “techniques of disciplining” like the “formation of norms” and “hierarchical observation” are at play in these practices. While they are also “useful” in the process of “subjectification”, because they create environments in which individuals can recognize themselves as “subjects” (Rail and Harvey 1995).

Among the many sports that are analyzed, bodybuilding is directly linked to the practice of going to “the gym”, and it has been observed as a “professional sport”. Our intention is to draw attention to the “recreational” use of this space. But the extent and manner in which it is being “used” demonstrates that it is not merely a “recreational activity” but has significant differences that we wish to link to the “techniques of the self”, and demonstrate how those “techniques” make the individual perceive it is acquiring a certain amount of “power”.

The practice of bodybuilding has been observed by some authors in recent years. David Brown tried to demonstrate that this practice is actually a “self-reflective body project” by using narratives from five bodybuilders that he interviewed over a period of a year, while they were going through the process of transformation. His main intention was to demonstrate what social mechanisms, are at play in the gym. For this he employed several concepts, from different authors. Among them are Turner and his theory of bodily order, Goffman's interactionism work on self and social identity, Foucault's notion of invested and 'docile' bodies, and Bourdieu's concept of habitus and physical capital accumulation. We can say that he concludes with an opinion that the practice of bodybuilding changes these people's perception of their self's, and in doing so changes them. Also he seems to be defending a stance that by doing “self-reflective body projects” these people become agents, rather than just subjects, or as he termed it using Sartreian notions: “...*the body takes a central role in not only the definition of self but also in achieving a meaningful existence in the sense of ‘exister’ as opposite to ‘viver’*” (Brown 1999: 88).

We take a somewhat different stand. While we accept that the gym is a significant part in the contemporary practices that are linked to “techniques of the self”, our intention is to demonstrate, with further research what mechanisms are at play in this “space”, our primary interest in this paper is to place the gym within a social context, and by doing so try to find out what makes this practice so appealing to people. That is, we want to know what makes people want to practice such an activity that demonstrates the “accumulation of power” in such a directed and internalized way? We don't presume on giving an answer at this moment in our research, but rather just wish to see the key concepts that define this activity and differentiate it from other forms of recreational activities, or sports.

### **Narrative analysis**

Narration or narratives can be seen as stories with temporal ordering of events; narrator's interpretation and linkage between the elements of the past, present and the future events of the stories that depend on cultural and social context in which they are told (Sandelowski 1991: 162). Narrative analysis is a descriptive and explanatory method that is mostly used in qualitative research. It is sometimes criticized because of its subjectivity, but on the other hand, analyzing narratives, which are universal mode of verbal expression, can give us information that cannot be reached by some other method (Smith 2000).

In this specific case, the purpose of narrative, which we got through semi-structured interviews, was to provide us with insight into experiences of the users of the gym and link their



ways of thinking with today’s form of “technologies of the self” and to reach deeper understanding of their everyday rituals.

According to Michael Agar, the heart of a narrative are time and cause. Narrative is a very rich concept because of many different ways the language can be used. There are post-structural arguments that the two previously mentioned elements are not necessary for a narrative to be formed. The analysis of the cause in the classical form of narrative consists of guessing why and how something happened, but without a clear sense of beginning or an end. Narrative analysis can be used as a link between story and experience, so the focus is on the discourse, more precisely, on the meaning of the story. (Agar 2005) In our analysis, we made the link between the meaning the narrators gave to their stories and our interpretation of them.

We cannot claim that this is a classic form on narrative analysis, because we also used elements of “content analysis” and gave some emphasis to the informational context of the narratives as well.

## **Analysis**

As a basis for this research, an ethnographic note was used. That was made thru a period of six months of weekly visits to two gyms in Subotica, and in Belgrade. The first thing that we did was to define the different aspects and practices that where noticed, and we thought would be significant for this inquiry. After this, we defined what became the focus of this research. Although there were many other possibilities, because at this moment we understand that “the gym” is a space that opens up a range of different ideas for further research work, we chose first of all to treat the question of “power”.

When the phenomenon of placing the “panopticon” in to the public area, specifically in to “the gym”, was noticed, and the particular behavioral patterns of individuals, which were linked to the mentioned space. Using the mentioned ethnographic note, we formulated a semi structured basis for interviews that would direct the interviewed individual to reveal the complexities of this practice. The aspects that interested us where: the description of the daily routine, dietary practices, supplement usage, the exercising, “the gym” as a socializing area, relations to health, bodily ideals and the tracking of individual progress.

Even though this is not a classical, narrative analysis, by definition, we named it that way in this case. The reason for that is the fact that the interviews were not conducted in a standard form, and because of the noticeable tendency in social sciences to use qualitative research methods. Since the terminology to describe these methods differ depending on the discipline that is “employing” it, for this paper we chose to use narrative analyses, in the sense of abstracting data from the interviews. The questions were assembled, mainly because we weren’t sure in which direction the interviews would take us and how would our research develop further. It is a narrative, because we did hear various life stories from the people we interviewed. We got descriptions about the lives they led before they started going to the gym and to which extent they are now dedicated to exercising and changing their everyday life habits. We would like to emphasize, before we go on to the

linking up of theory and practice, that we didn't have the conversations about "the gym" with the professional body builders. That is what makes it even more interesting, because we can see to which extent and how much time they devote to something that is supposed to be a "recreational" activity, and what is the perceived purpose of body building in ordinary people lives.

We can observe the gym as a gathering place of individuals who, besides the improvement of their physical health, have a series of other motives to visit that place, on average, four times a week. Now, we will move on to the display of things that make body building in the gym different from the other forms of "recreational" sports. In general, we highlighted some particulars which are actually the conclusion of analysis of all the interviews.

What we were able to observe is that, mostly because of the influence of the media, the emphasis is no longer on the "intellectual" work, but is now transferred to "physical work", or it's maybe better to say, working on one's body. Physical appearance is generally the initial motivation for one to start going to the gym. We will see that the motive changes over time. When we carefully listened to the users, we noticed that behind what seemed like a repetition of movements directed towards muscles, there are very complex "life philosophies", medicalized theories about the functioning of "the body", and other explanations for it. An average body builder knows when, why and how the specific movement is done and which muscle is supposed to be engaged in order to achieve modification of a certain part of the body. They are mainly very well informed and educated in the field of body building and they make an effort to apply their knowledge, because they consider that it is necessary for achievement of good results.

The next thing we will discuss is the question of achieving good results. Everyone thinks that without a diet and a strict schedule for exercising, there will be no good results. We can notice here that body building isn't just simple exercising in the gym. It is an individual activity, in addition to that, it consists of adjustment of series of other activities. The process of exercising itself is perceived by the users as a ritual which is present before, during and after the session in "the gym".

Why "the gym" isn't just a "recreational" activity? Of course, as we may first see, the gym in fact is a place where people go to "work" on their bodies. However, body building is not a sport which has defined goal or rules. There are many techniques and instructions, which are adjusted by the users according to their needs which were the original motive for starting that process. Exercising in the gym sometimes serves as an addition to some other sports, for achieving better results in them.

The matter in which discipline is reflected in the process of working on the self is the fact that the action itself isn't especially pleasant. The users sometimes for days or even weeks suffer from sore muscles, there is a possibility of an injury, in which case they continue fulfilling their rituals like someone is forcing them, even though no one explicitly told them that they are obliged to act that way. There are also times when they feel guilty if they miss one session. Further on, there is an issue of a diet, which can be very strict and it takes a lot of time for planning and preparation in advance. We can say that these people follow the "patterns" of "technologies of the self" that were represented through history. There is renunciation of certain desires, or a change in "life style", but there is also a whole selection of allowed supplements like protein, creatine or caffeine, all of which are

used in order to make progress in building muscles. For example, when they explain why they consume caffeine, they compare body building with studying for an exam, because as they claim, they need concentration. The same situation is when they break a record. They compare it with an excellent mark on the exam, which indicates how serious this activity is for them and that it is much more than just a recreational sport.

The key point is the motive that lies underneath of everything and that is actually the main initiator for going to the gym. That capital motive is gaining a certain amount of power. This is the place where we can find a link between the writings of Hannah Arendt, which was mentioned previously and the practices that were just described. We can see that these individuals are trying to get in possession of “power”, but the actions they take and the things they do to fulfill their wishes are “technologies of the self”, which are not directly connected with the collective, or at actual political activities that could influence a change in the functioning of power, and the way in which “plurality” is constituted. Users just tend to be “better” in any sense. Some of them exercise so they could become better looking than the others, or so they could reach the ideal image they have of themselves.

While David Brown tried to put out an argument that there is an actual accumulation of “power”, after a significant period, that is linked to the accumulation of muscles. And that the people he interviewed started getting some money after achieving results on body-building competitions. (Brown 1999: 87) It is hard for us to claim that this is a fact that is present in all users of “the gym”. First of all most of them are not there as “professional” athlete, and secondly it is more likely that the few ones that do “succeed” in getting actual material benefits from this practice, are the ones that constitute the top of the chain of “hierarchical observation”, and force the “recreational” users to “push themselves further” in order to be good as them.

What is interesting is the transformation of the initial motive “*to be good looking*”, with the other one “*to be strong*”, to be “stronger” than others. This occurs by comparing oneself to others and by observing other users at the gym, while being surrounded with mirrors. They watch each other and their own reflection in the mirror. Their movements are “controlled” by constant observation, just like in Bentham’s “panopticon”. We will quote one of the users - this is his answer on the question about comparison: “*Of course, you are literally at war. War with eyes.*” They force themselves because, as they say, they can’t let themselves to be weak and powerless. Quote: “*If I don’t go, someone else will, and he/she will be better than me. I mean, I go to the gym because of the sport, not for the looks. I mean I go for the looks too, a for many other reasons, for health.. But my priority is sport. To be better at sport.*”

Accordingly, the aim of body building is to be better than the others, but also, to break your own record in lifting weights. Quote: “*It is a strange thing, because your body feels good and that is something you can’t explain to the regular mortal on the street.*” It represents a form of power over oneself: “*The whole body starts listening to you.*” We don’t see body building just as a trivial muscle pumping anymore, but rather something that also effects building up a personality and to see why is it so, we will, for the conclusion give some of the interesting quotes. “*You feel better and fulfilled as a person if you do some things that are important to you. It is some sort of safety. It builds up a personality, or at least confidence.*” Or as one user noted: “*If you are doing good at the gym, you are doing good in life.*”

## Conclusion

Before concluding we will like to address the question of gender in the context of “the gym”. We did not mention this aspect earlier because it would require further inquiry that could not be achieved thru this paper, or rather it would be a different “story” all together. Our informants where all men, but in the process of making the ethnographic note we were in touch with some women that use “the gym”.

There are author that claim that this activity seems like a subversive one. Because women are transgressing the bounds of femininity by building muscles, but the muscle groups that they work on show that they are actually following the hetero normative “roles” that they should. Most of them “work” on their thighs, and abdomen , because it is not yet accepted that a woman is “beautiful” if she has a large chest and arms. (Mackeith 2006) On the other hand, there is a opinion that this is purely a “masculine” activity and that it is linked to the “hegemony of masculinity”. Even though it cannot be claimed that “the body-builder” is the ideal that every mail strives for, the obvious link is made between the ideals of “masculinity” and muscles. (Pringle 2005) There is certainly to an extent an ideal that is being followed, but the manner in which these people work on their bodies can also be identified with “classical feminine” traits in the sense of beatification, occupation with ones looks, and the “sexualization” of the body. So it is too early, for us, to claim that the ideals of “masculinity” present the primary source of motivation, and that this practice reproduces the hetero normative roles in society.

The term “self-discipline” is the starting point for our further research. What we have noticed is that power no longer functions just by making “subjects”, or that “the disciplinary society” is the basis for this particular way of power functioning. With the process of globalization, and before that with the social changes that accrued in the 20th century, power has found a way of “infiltrating” our desires, or it is better to say that power acts out of desire. There is no longer a need for strict institutional control, because the consumer society has ensured that we reproduce the relation of power by making us “need” to represent our self's, or to represent our “self”, by means of consumption, and disciplining that is done by “us” to “us” in order to satisfy the desire we have. “The gym” is the most obvious place for seeing these changes, we hope we have shown some part of this with this paper.

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(New) Variates of Governmentality

## Engaged Customers, Disciplined Public Workers and the Quest for Good Customer Service Under Neoliberalism

“We are putting the customer at the centre of everything we do and we will completely modernize the TTC [Toronto Transit Commission] over the next five years so that our performance and reputation is transformed”

(Byford 2012, internet).

Have you ever taken a picture, captioned it and posted it online for the world to see and comment? Such an action might be part of broader processes of government, a crucial concept that helps us understand the practices and techniques involved in trying to shape the conduct of individuals through social relations and the self (Gordon 1991, 2-3) in ways we might not imagine. By employing a sociological imagination to assess the act of picture taking, it becomes possible to see how, in particular contexts, such action can play into governing conduct. But how do such actions relate to Byford's (2012, internet) comments above? To explore this, I investigate the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC), Toronto, Canada's unionized public transit organization, the organization's ongoing movement towards “modernization” and good customer service and the concurrent unfolding of worker misconduct through visual evidence.

The work of Michel Foucault can help make sense of the relationship between observed worker behaviour (as reported), the actions of vigilant transit users and the way the TTC makes known workers and customers when thought of in relation to (neoliberal) governmentality. This paper will demonstrate how an organization makes known workers and customers, coupled with simple everyday acts of vigilant riders who desire good service on public transit, become part and parcel of the drive to govern and discipline public transit workers without the direct intervention of the state or the organization in governing. In the process of conducting surveillance on workers much akin to a form of ubiquitous panoptic power (Foucault 1995), customers engage in their own self-transformation becoming entrepreneurial in spirit, seeking their own wellbeing (Burchell 1996; Larner 1999). In effect, workers and customers are thus trained to become oriented as good neoliberal subjects – to become self-regulating, and self-managing, all the while acting appropriately within the context. Moreover, they help fuel a customer service ethic, while concurrently prescribing a need for it. Finally when thinking of the worker misconduct captured in relation to a customer service ethos, one might see their produced representation reproducing

a negative image of the transit system – as a transit system that supposedly has a staff not dedicated to the customer and this consequently can be seen to necessitate a need for “reinvention” and “modernization.” Thus, the representation of the worker and the knowledge produced of the worker come to play a crucial role in necessitating the need for good customer service.

Conceptual tools provided by Foucault and developed by Foucauldian scholars are employed to interrogate truths associated with the good (public) worker who must be disciplined, and the vigilant and very much engaged customer; both must be governed. To conduct this exploration, I first situate the TTC and public labour in context. Then, I develop the broader conceptual framework in order to look at a number of TTC documents and media reports. After discussing the findings, the paper moves on to engage in a discussion of possibilities to highlight strategies to reframe discourse that reengages the public in beginning to develop a new politics of truth (Foucault 1980).

## Situating the TTC

Broader funding problems have plagued the TTC. A Toronto Transit Commission (2003, internet) Ridership Growth Strategy report indicated that “[...] the past fifteen years has been one of dramatic reductions in government subsidies, resulting in fare increases that have been more than 50% above the rate of inflation, and system-wide reductions in the services provided” (2). The report also stated that “[t]ransit is a very utilitarian product, not a highly-prized consumer good, and it is in direct competition with the private automobile, which offers a high level of comfort and convenience compared to transit service” (Toronto Transit Commission 2003, internet: 2). Similarly:

“[...] underfunding and budget cuts have forced some transit agencies to hike fares, often at a pace that considerably exceeds inflation. Meanwhile jobs in large urban areas have been shifting to the suburbs where service is poor or non-existent. The result is a drop-off in riders who can choose to take their cars, while lower-income transit users—often recent immigrants and university students—are stuck carrying the load because they have no alternative.”

(Lorinc 2006: 244-5).

To further exacerbate this theme, fares in Toronto continue to be hiked most recently in 2015, increasing the cost of tokens, and passes, but allowing children under 12 to ride free (Mangione, internet) to pay for those free rides but also to make investments in and increase service (Shum and Armstrong, internet).

Considering service change and cost of transit as part of the broader political economy of public transit, Schabas (internet) notes “[...] that the TTC requires the smallest share of government subsidies to balance its books than any comparable transit agency less than a fifteen-hour flight from Pearson [Toronto’s international airport].” Moreover, “[...] to keep the system running, 67 cents [of every spent dollar] is made back almost entirely through fares” (Schabas, internet). Comparatively speaking, Schabas (internet) has further indicated that an average American transit organization “[...] makes only a third of the money



it needs to operate through fares [...].” Thus, the cost of transit use, one may infer, is disproportionately downloaded or devolved to users, instead of more thoroughly financed through public funds and subsidies.

Despite the question of the cost associated with transit travel, in 2003 it was noted that “[t]ransit fares, and price sensitivity, are rarely the primary reason why people do not choose transit services over other modes. For transit to compete effectively with the automobile, it must provide an acceptable level of convenience, comfort, speed, and reliability compared to the equivalent automobile trip” (Toronto Transit Commission 2003, internet: 5). Though, the TTC does acknowledge that some 15 to 20% of people taking the TTC “[...] do not have access to an automobile for their trip and are, therefore, highly dependent on the TTC for travel” (Toronto Transit Commission 2003, internet: 8). “Customer research” has also indicated the TTC that passengers, both current and potential, have a greater sensitivity to service quality and service changes rather than fares (Toronto Transit Commission 2003: 8). Crucially, the particular intensity of customer service discourse under the ongoing “modernization” project is guided by a desire to deliver good service to the organization’s customers (Byford 2012, internet; Byford n.d., internet). All of this comes to indicate not only why a customer service orientation might make sense, but also how these conditions put pressures on workers and customer expectations, especially as customer fares increase due to funding issues.

Alongside the “structural terms” under which the TTC operates, there has been an increasing emphasis on the importance of “customer service” as being central to the definition of the TTC (Byford 2012, internet; Byford n.d., internet). The paramountcy of the customer service discourse might be seen through the organization’s appointment of a chief customer service officer (CBC News, internet). This also aligns with broader discursive tones in federal public sector operation and as such the ongoing developments within the TTC must be situated within public sector work and its links to customer service discourse, couched within the idea of “reinvention.” For example, Osborne and Gaebler’s (1992) seminal text highlights the necessity of government service “reinvention,” to develop its own entrepreneurial spirit. They state that: “[t]he product was government of a distinct ethos: slow, inefficient, impersonal” (Osborne and Gaebler 1992: 14) and further that:

“[t]oday’s environment demands institutions that are extremely flexible and adaptable. It demands institutions that deliver high quality goods and services, squeezing out ever more bang out of every buck. It demands institutions that are responsive to their customers, offering choices of nonstandardized services; that lead by persuasion and incentives rather than commands; that give employees a sense of meaning and control, even ownership. It demands institutions that empower citizens rather than simply serving them.”

(Osborne and Gaebler 1992: 15, original emphasis).

Osborne and Gaebler (1992) discuss some commonalities of entrepreneurial organizations. Of the relevant ones, these include: “[...] empower[ing] citizens by pushing control out of the bureaucracy, into the community” (original emphasis), a focus on outcomes, and a redefining of an organization’s clients to customers (Osborne and Gaebler 1992: 19-20). These, as will be demonstrated, start to link up with notions of neoliberal governmentality, and develop particular truths about how organizations should operate. Nonetheless, one

can see how the discourse emerging from Osborne and Gaebler (1992) can be related to the Canadian federal public service.

Savoie (2005) identifies the strong role of the language of the customer alongside the New Public Management (NPM) movement in the Canadian federal public service. He describes NPM as being:

“[...] rooted in the public-choice literature, which argues that bureaucracies are inefficient at least in part because sponsors, and hence clients, have so little influence in shaping policy and programs or in deciding whether they should be continued or scrapped. A central feature of the movement is its strong emphasis on empowering “customers,” “consumers” and “clients.” Proponents believe that this will lead to a new public-service culture and break down the formal systems of control that lead civil servants to be overly cautious and to favour the status quo.”

(Savoie 2005: 52).

Moreover, Savoie (2005) identifies the historical development of NPM in the public service from the 1980s, mirroring some of the language of public service transformation in Osborne and Gaebler’s (1992) *Reinventing Government*. The federal public service has gone on to adopt aspects of NPM and in particular an importance has been placed on accountability and transparency of public services, particularly with the advent of information technologies that have helped facilitate greater scrutiny (Savoie 2005: 53).

Similarly, it has been noted that there has been a move towards a post-NPM, which has given birth to digital-era governance (Dunleavy et al. 2006). This, among other things, crucially denotes changes in information technology and information systems and their impacts in “[...] how public services are organized as business practices and delivered to citizens or customers” (Dunleavy et al. 2006: 468). Moreover, the internet and email have played an important role in transforming not only office practices, but also “[...] relations between government agencies and civil society” (Dunleavy et al. 2006: 478). Crucially, the public sector is called on to adopt private sector practices as they become norms as part of new organizational realities (Dunleavy et al. 2006: 479).

A constituent element of this digital-era governance is “radical disintermediation,” which permits various actors, including citizens, to directly connect with “state systems” through “Web-based processes” without needing to go through gatekeepers to access state services (Dunleavy et al. 2006: 486). Here, the success of disintermediation depends on “[...] citizens or customers chang[ing] their behaviors in line with facilitating shifts by government agencies and officials” (Dunleavy et al. 2006: 486-7). Importantly, both Dunleavy et al. (2006) and Savoie (2005) appear to discuss the increased role that “customers” are required to take on in public services, as well as the emergence of information technology to spur and cultivate such a responsabilization. In this sense, the organization of services and the way services and actors associated with said services make things known in particular ways and make certain types of action legitimate.

Importantly, the centrality of the customer or consumer and the embrace of customer sovereignty permit management to appear blameless in adhering to customer demands (Bolton and Houlihan 2005: 688). This point directs us to the managerial role that custom-

ers take on. Finally, as du Gay (1996) comments, both workers and customers (those outside an organization) take on customer orientations under a consumer culture (79-80). Thus, one might argue that the discourse of enterprise is much more socially all-encompassing and not limited to particular organizations, workers. This forces us to consider neoliberal governmentality, which might appear as a guiding rationality, to make sense of these ongoing changes and their impacts on subjects.

## Conceptual Framework

The shifts noted in public service operation and delivery direct us to explore the ways in which actors should conduct themselves in how freedom is deployed to govern conduct. This necessitates a reading of the concept of government (and its neoliberal variety) which, as has been mentioned, can be understood as exploring the techniques and processes involved in shaping the conduct of individuals through social relations and the self (Gordon 1991: 2-3).

Knowledge is crucial to understanding what unfolds in this contemporary Toronto public transit phenomena, particularly in how workers and customers are made known and conceived. After all, government requires particular representations and particular ways of knowing and in thus being made known enables certain ways to govern (Townley 1993: 520). In this sense, governing conduct is contingent on certain types of specialized knowledge (Townley 1993: 520). Thus, “[knowledge] delineates an analytical space and in constituting an area of knowledge, provides the basis for action and intervention—the operation of power,” thereby demonstrating how power/knowledge are “co-terminous” (Townley 1993: 521). Here, a customer service ethos can be understood as a power/knowledge construct, legitimating certain actions over others.

Neoliberal strategies and techniques have been identified with “advanced liberalism,” where old and new techniques of government are employed and knowledge is tied to its ability to calculate, monitor, evaluate and measure performance (Isin 1998: 173-4). Neoliberalism as a form of government, then, operates as a rationality, guiding conduct towards an “enterprise form,” though such techniques promoting enterprise are “[...] varied and uncertain [...]” (Burchell 1996: 28-9). Through these techniques people are “[...] encouraged to see themselves as individualized and active subjects responsible for improving their own well being [sic]” (Larner 1999: 13).

Moreover, there is a shift in authority and responsibility under neoliberalism (Isin 1998: 175). “Neoliberal technologies” shift responsibilities away from the state and emphasize consumer control; “[...] subjects become consumers who are invested in capacities for making choices and agents are no longer state officials exercising authority over them [subjects] but experts assisting subjects in making these choices” (Isin 1998: 176). In this sense, individuals are constituted as “responsible for their own condition” (Isin 1998: 175). While the essential orienting features of neoliberalism have been identified here, the micromechanics of power – the techniques and procedures that maintain a system of order and how they are taken up by actors (Foucault 2003: 32) – need to be established, when considering who governs whom (cf. Dean 2010: 38).

Firstly, there is discipline (Foucault 1995). As Sara Mills (2003) puts it:

“Discipline consists of a concern with control which is internalised by each individual: it consists of a concern with time-keeping, self-control over one’s posture and bodily functions, concentration, sublimation of immediate desires and emotions – all of these elements are the effects of disciplinary pressure and at the same time they are all actions which produce the individual as subjected to a set of procedures which come from outside of themselves but whose aim is disciplining the self by the self.

(Mills 2003: 43)

An aspect of disciplinary power is the normalizing judgement, which should be noted alongside the idea of normalization:

“In a sense, the power of normalization imposes homogeneity; but it individualizes by making it possible to measure gaps, to determine levels, to fix specialities and to render the differences useful by fitting them one to another. It is easy to understand how the power of the norm functions within a system of formal equality, since within a homogeneity that is the rule, the norm introduces, as a useful imperative and as a result of measurement, all the shading of individual differences.”

(Foucault 1995: 184)

Normalization can be combined with observation to form “the examination,” which Foucault (1995) describes as a form of normalizing gaze that permits classification, visibility and judgement on individuals (184). Moreover, as Foucault (1995) notes: “In discipline, it is the subjects who have to be seen. Their visibility assures the hold of the power that is exercised over them. It is the fact of being constantly seen, of being able always to be seen, that maintains the disciplined individual in his subjection” (Foucault 1995: 187).

In order to classify and to judge, one is held to a standard, and that standard can be conceptualized in terms of norms. Rose and Valverde (1990) have identified that “[a] norm [...] appears – or claims – to emerge out of the very nature of that which is governed. Its normativity is predicated upon and justified by its normality: the normal child, the normal family, normal conduct, normal business practice” (544). These norms, then, act as standards through which to judge individuals, to see how they have deviated from the norm. This necessarily assumes that certain forms of truths enable the formation of that which is seen as being normal.

In this sense, “[t]ruth’ is to be understood as a system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation, distribution, circulation and operation of statements” (Foucault 1980: 133). Traversing information systems, “[...] [truth] is produced and transmitted under the control, dominant if not exclusive, of a few great political and economic apparatuses (university, army, writing, media); lastly, it is the issue of a whole political debate and social confrontation (‘ideological’ struggles)” (Foucault 1980: 131-2). This indicates the processes involved in producing knowledge and truth which come to be recognized as being true. One may also see how certain events or stories come to be connected with other narratives to be made part of a broader narrative, thus fashioning or refashioning truth. Truth claims, then, in what we come to understand to be true, help guide how one acts by estab-

lishing norms which are reproduced in various ways and engage in regulating actors whether it is done closely or at a distance. These norms then may help facilitate action, highlighting to what degree one deviates from the norm, suggesting that a transformation or change is required to bring that individual into line with said norm. The effect is a disciplining of the subject into shape, to govern their conduct.

### **Knowing Workers, Knowing Customers and the Quest**

In this section I look to a number of TTC reports, documents and media reports to explore how the TTC discursively makes known workers and customers and to investigate how conduct can and might be shaped. This also reveals the legitimated types of actions through such knowledge. However, it is not within the scope of this paper to provide an exhaustive reading of texts, documents and reports. Thus, my intent here is to elevate the discourse that makes workers, customers and the organization known in certain ways.

Here, I begin with the Toronto Transit Commission's (2003, internet) Ridership Growth Strategy report, which discusses, to some degree, the importance of the customer for service quality and this is developed while acknowledging the poor state of funding and subsidies associated with the transit service. The use of the language of the customer in the Ridership Growth Strategy report suggests attempts to foster quality service from staff:

“The desire to continually improve the quality and friendliness of the service which the TTC delivers must continue to be engendered in all employees – management, staff, and union. The Awards of Excellence program, which recognises employees who have provided truly excellent service according to customer commendations, is a key tool in this drive. Also critical is the TTC's ongoing program of employee training and development. These and other initiatives to inculcate an unwavering commitment to satisfying customers must be supported, strengthened, and accelerated.”

(Toronto Transit Commission 2003, internet: 12)

This passage sheds light on techniques that aim to shape workers toward a particular type of subject position in relation to customers. These techniques suggest that not only are educational programs necessary to “inculcate” workers with particular values, but also that the process to shape workers requires the constitution of a customer that provides feedback on service. In this sense, the report implicitly acknowledges that the development of a certain type of worker requires and necessitates the participation of a certain type of public individual – a responsabilized customer, who acts like a manager and is willing to provide critical feedback about workers that adhere to (customer) service excellence. This ties back to ideas about the responsible neoliberal subject (Isin 1998: 175; Larner 1999: 13).

Interestingly, the pursuit of customer service excellence can be seen through customer service training for “Bus Operators,” which, as a recertification program, was to be increased from two to three days (Toronto Transit Commission 2009, internet: 13). Moreover, the same document also states that:

“Recognizing that front-line employees often have excellent knowledge of customers’ preferences and in-field operating challenges, a formalized consultation process is being established which will ensure ongoing communications between operating divisions and other departments. The process will focus on improving customer service by identifying warranted refinements to service levels, operations, supervision, and other aspects of service delivery.”

(Toronto Transit Commission 2009, internet: 14).

By highlighting the importance of the customer, it helps to shape not only transit priorities, but how bus operators should act in relation to that customer. Crucially, the quotation above also indicates that in the attempt to shape the worker and the conditions of work, there is a need for a customer to provide feedback, but that feedback can be mediated through the worker. In this sense, there appears to be a mutually constitutive relationship – the formation of the worker depends on a satisfaction-seeking customer. However, to know the customer, one must know the worker because the worker knows what the customer wants. In this sense, techniques to encourage the dissemination of knowledge from workers about customers are to be derived through a responsible worker-subject. The worker must be willing and able to share the knowledge for the benefit of the organization and they must absorb information from their interaction with the customer.

A desire to develop a particular organizational customer service ethic, perhaps, was best exemplified through the creation of the Customer Service Advisory Panel (CSAP). The produced report indicated that, surprisingly, TTC operators were expected by customers to service a significant range of demands from being a “tour guide” and “custodian” to driving the vehicle they are on well and safely (O’Brien et al. internet: 2-3). This highlights how customers view workers and it is, after all, these views which the organization actively solicits to regulate and govern the conduct of workers. For there to be such high customer expectations, then, suggests the immense pressure faced by workers. The report, in this sense, recognizes the TTC’s structural and funding challenges (O’Brien et al., internet: 11), but it nonetheless highlights means to improve the customer service philosophy of the TTC and how it can be made effective, at least in part, through working on the worker (O’Brien et al., internet: 34). In the section “TTC Employees,” ways to redefine what workers do, and how they are trained in relation to a customer service orientation is discussed. Here, it is recommended that the customer service training program which employees take should be put under review (O’Brien et al., internet, p. 34). Additionally, it is recommended that:

“All training should be created to help employees address and avoid actions that cause complaints to be received by the TTC. As well, training should help them understand what types of actions they can take to excel in the eyes of the public. Ongoing review of customer service complaints will help in the identification of training needs that relate directly to feedback the public provides to the TTC. By focusing on elements that the public has identified as important, the TTC can improve to better meet customers’ expectations.”

(O’Brien et al., internet: 34-5).

Thus, there is a belief the organization should take an active role to subject employees to training since part of the problem that ails the TTC image is worker intransigence. These refer to disciplinary techniques (Foucault 1995), which individualize the problem of poor

service – that workers are the problem and need to “fixed” and made responsible to manage situations. This also suggests that customers then, are more than simply people who are seen to purchase a good – they, in fact, play a critical role in observing and managing TTC employees.

A customer, then, is seen to actively participate in and with the TTC (cf. Dunleavy et al. 2006; Savoie 2005) and guide the very ethos of the organization, as well as the conduct of workers. Thus, the very act of providing feedback, is a means to govern the conduct of the customer, and in the process, they may be seen to become part of the process to manage workers. This demonstrates the production of knowledge in order to calculate and manage subjects, and measure performance, in this case, of workers (Isin 1998: 173-4). The document also seems to indicate a continued reliance on customer feedback and transparency in communication between the service and the broader public. If implementing these, they will be useful measuring tools to judge how the conduct of workers must be (Foucault 1995: 184) in order to please the customer, the information for which is ultimately derived from customer feedback.

In addition to the comments made by Byford (2012, internet) at the outset of this paper, in the TTC’s 2013 to 2017 Corporate Plan “Foreword from the Chief Executive Officer”, it is stated: “We have reorganized the company to put the customer at the centre of everything we do and to create centres of excellence for back- and front-of-house activity. And we have taken steps to make our organization and our actions more transparent and accountable to customers and taxpayers” (Byford, n.d., internet). It is further stated that further that “[a] huge amount remains to be done, however, if we are to change the culture of the TTC and create a modernized, fit-for-purpose transit system capable of meeting the ever-increasing demands placed upon it by an ever-growing population” (Byford, n.d., internet). In this way, it becomes clear that the customer is the centre of activity for the TTC, and the organization must function and make itself known in relation to it.

Altogether, these passages elevate three crucial points. Firstly, they highlight the centrality of the customer in tailoring programs and guiding worker conduct. Secondly, they indicate workers need to be trained in line with customer preferences, and thirdly, that there is a critical link between the constitution of the worker, which is tied to the customer, and simultaneously that the constitution of the customer, which rests on the constitution of the worker is made possible by providing feedback (and thereby producing knowledge), including complaints.

This forces us to think about knowledge and how both workers and customers are made known in order to become governable in particular ways (Townley 1993: 520). Guided towards these subject positions, these identities aid in attempts to govern individuals – worker and customer – under neoliberalism. Crucially, ideas about customer feedback and knowledge produced by customers, position them as unpaid managers of the organization. In a sense, the discourse makes customers knowable as erudite managers. Here, techniques of discipline, operating through customers, encourage workers towards being a good responsible, active neoliberal subject. Similarly customers are seen to be and understood as active and responsible agents who are interested in seeking their own wellbeing (Larner 1999: 13).

That there is a discursive constitution of subjects does not by itself demonstrate its materialization. As such, the discussion here shifts to a few examples of customer actions to illustrate its reality. Take for instance the very tragic case of George Robitaille, a (now deceased) Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) worker, who was photographed by a transit user sleeping at a ticket booth at McCowan Rapid Transit Station. As noted in the *Toronto Star*, a Toronto daily newspaper, the image was captioned with the following words: “Yup, love how my TTC dollars R being spent ...” the image went viral once tweeted spawning media reports and parody photoshopped images (Aulakh, internet). This thereby highlighted worker misconduct visually, creating a public reference point and also brought to the fore what should be considered acceptable worker conduct, the opposite of the seemingly inactive public worker. In one article discussing Robitaille’s apology for the incident, one Toronto city councillor was quoted stating: “we cannot have unions thinking their jobs are safe” and further that: “It’s important for us to revisit services to the city” (Robertson, internet). In another article, “[Robitaille] is now a symbol of a public transit system that, both figuratively and literally, appears to be asleep at the switch during a time of fare hikes and service disruptions” (Menon, internet). In yet another article, Peat (2010a, internet) provides a pseudo-timeline in highlighting issues that arose in making the TTC customer service a front page news item. The piece begins by discussing Robitaille’s infamous photo, but then ends on a note highlighting a salary disclosure list indicating the increasing number of TTC employees earning \$100,000 (Canadian dollars) or more. Crucially, together, this one case indicates how a simple act of a vigilant customer seeking good service, created a public reference point indicating “problems” with the work, lack of work ethic, and privilege of said type of work. As a result, such narratives and stories, link this negative representation of the worker to its opposite to what constitutes the good worker and a good work ethic, while simultaneously critiquing the unionized worker for its relative privilege and high pay. Such critiques, as Fowler (2011) indicates are already present in state discourses regarding unionized work while public unions are critiqued for being “[...] a drain on the tax base” (81).

The above, however, is not the only example of images of workers being posted online, generating stories, media reports and narratives for the world to see. The *Toronto Sun* (internet), a Toronto tabloid, even published an online top 10 list of TTC worker foibles captured visually. In one sense, this hints at a perpetually problematic transit operator. In another case, a Toronto streetcar operator was photographed six times for stopping in the middle of the route to take money out of an automated banking machine (Peat 2010b, internet). These pictures were subsequently uploaded to the photographer’s Facebook account with the following words, “The TTC is a joke.” (Peat 2010, internet). This captured image reveals to the reader that the worker is abusing their position and making a mockery of the user, especially when considered in light of the quality of service.

There are other recorded and documented cases of TTC worker foibles that have also been uploaded online and have been picked up by the media. In one notable example, a tram operator was videoed applying cosmetics while driving (Davidson, internet). When considered altogether, these stories, among many others, do not paint a pretty picture of public transport workers in Toronto, but create the sense that misconduct is rampant, especially when considered alongside how workers and customers are made known. The photographers, in these examples, reflect a type of subject constituted under neoliberalism, and produce knowledge from monitoring and measuring performance (Isin 1998: 174) – the



performance of workers. They also require the vigilant customer to conduct surveillance, for without them, workers cannot be publically disciplined, nor can they internalize a need to engage in self-discipline and behave well with the customer in mind. Importantly though, in a 2011 article in the *Toronto Star*, a TTC spokesperson had asked passengers not to take photographic evidence, but rather to report the bus number and route and date and time of the incident (Dempsey and Rush, internet). In this sense, the requirement to produce information was not in question, but rather the mode in which this knowledge was produced was questioned.

Becoming stories, and within the context of a focus on customer service, suggests a necessity to monitor workers. Despite the TTC request to not take photographic evidence, the same article notes that a passenger who took video evidence of a worker texting while driving a bus “[...] worried that without it there wouldn’t be enough to go on to punish drivers responsible ‘endangering the safety of the public’” (Dempsey and Rush, internet). Despite this, the same passenger remarked that if “[...] so many people [are] taking videos and pictures of their drivers texting, there’s a huge problem” (Dempsey and Rush, internet). Workers need to be disciplined. They need to be monitored. Customers need to be satisfied as they quest for their own wellbeing. Based on the examples provided, such instances, at least in part, can be seen to reproduce a negative image of the transit system as one that has a privileged public sector unionized workforce and supposedly does not have a staff dedicated to the customer. This consequently can be seen to necessitate a need for a quest for good customer service. Customer feedback can produce and sustain knowledge that upholds a truth associated with a problematic workforce that needs discipline. Such forms of surveillance and the subsequent media reports that emerge help make visible public reference points, produce knowledge of workers through the actions of engaged customers, enabling and reproducing truths associated with the good worker and good customer service by marking examples of the bad. However, needed in such acts are enterprising subjects that are interested in their own wellbeing (Larner 1999: 13) and good service.

## Final Discussion

The analysis has above has demonstrated the effects of the reinvention (cf. Osborne and Gaebler 1992) or modernization of the TTC (Byford 2012, internet; Byford n.d., internet). The centrality of the customer in the broader public service discourse (Osborne and Gaebler 1992; Savoie 2005), and the subject positions cultivated are tied to the various knowledges that are deployed and employed. Good work, and good work ethic norms emerge through organizational logics and discourse, acts taken by vigilant customers questing for good service, or are elaborated through information systems. Some elaborations of norms emerge through visual evidence, while others visualize types of the good, the normal, and the right. Yet, the customer identities emerge through acts of providing feedback, in producing knowledge, and in disciplining workers. In the context of the TTC, it is important to note that workers and customers have two different purposes, but each of these revolves around their relationship to the TTC and with each other under neoliberalism and the customer service ethic.

Importantly, there is something else operating through such acts, and the threat of such acts – the omnipresence of the customer questing for good service and self-satisfaction, operating under the ever watchful gaze of panoptic power (Foucault 1995), workers may never truly know who watches them, to what end, and what knowledge is produced from such surveillance. Yet the very threat of being watched serves as a disciplinary technique – behave and work properly, otherwise one might get reported. One might even end up in the news! Consequently, there is always an attempt to shape workers through technologies of the self and technologies of power (Foucault 1988) in the form of discipline, guiding workers and customers towards reshaping themselves, governing their own conduct through their relations with each other. This harkens back to a discussion on neoliberalism raised by Foucault (2008). He notes that the entrepreneurial homo oeconomicus is “[...] an entrepreneur of himself [sic]”, and is one who consumer for their own satisfaction (Foucault 2008: 226). Moreover, he states, “[...] we should think of consumption as an enterprise activity by which the individual, precisely on the basis of the capital he [sic] has at his disposal, will produce something that will be his [sic] [own] satisfaction” (Foucault 2008: 226).

In another vein, the paper demonstrates that the utility of governmentality studies in helping to explore and diagnose a contemporary social phenomenon. It further directs us to reflect upon the simple acts social actors take part in, which at first glance may be driven by a noble intention, but may in fact link up with truths, norms and discourses which might be employed to govern others through neoliberal strategies, guiding social actors to become ever more satisfied and responsible subjects. It also demonstrates how knowledge operates coercively. Thus the paper provides an opportunity to think about varied means through which workers as well as individuals more broadly through their bodies are encouraged through and are caught up in particular practices, to be shaped into the right type of person required for economic production (Foucault 1995: 25-6).

On a separate note, while passengers of the TTC might be frustrated by the lack of timeliness, quality of service, and cost of public transit, this paper necessitates a meditation on this very focus on quality of service, and why there might be such a lack of focus on actually building service infrastructure and in making transit more affordable through lower fares. The paper, then, forces a question: where is the focus on gaining more sustainable funding for a better, affordable public service? What questions are not being asked?

The paper also directs one to how neoliberal governance can be seen and must be seen beyond the state. Social actors actively take part in governing themselves and others. As a result, people can encourage others to exercise their freedom to responsibly and autonomously make decisions that will “[...] maximise the quality of their lives” (Rose and Miller 2010: 298). This is a “regulated freedom” (Rose and Miller 2010: 272). Thus, as noted in the paper, where the customer acts to pursue their own wellbeing, so too must the worker. However, the worker must learn to choose, to freely and autonomously make the right decisions in the work place and must be trained through disciplinary practices in the surveillance of their work. However, in choosing, one must choose to act and work, in the right way. In this manner, one may be governed and employed together in particular ways beyond the simple use and operation of public transit system in Toronto.

## Conclusions and Possibilities

I want to end this paper on a positive note. It seems that in providing a topological exploration of how TTC organizational logic makes known workers and customers, as well as the simple acts of concerned everyday passengers or customers, who search for good service provides a rather pessimistic tone in exploring the phenomenon. It suggests that neoliberal rationality operates to shape us towards a market orientation, and as a result, one is merely doomed to become homo oeconomicus, becoming nothing more than enterprising subjects seeking self-satisfaction. It further implies that all will be determined through neoliberal rationality, yielded through particular logics, techniques and practices. Yet, Michel Foucault certainly provides us with tools to recognize that perhaps there is more than pessimism – that there might be something different, something hopeful.

After all, a particular discourse contains within it the seeds of resistance (Foucault 1990: 100-3) and this, I argue, provides us with an entrée into exploring the possibility of a new rearticulated public engagement and a new politics of truth (Foucault 1980). In that sense, we can look to the discourse of the customer and customer service to see how it can provide us with an opportunity to explore examples of resistance. I provide a number of examples below that can give us a sense of this resistance and how it may manifest itself, and how we may, also take part in it too. I should note, that these are not the sole examples to explore, but due to the scope of this paper, I leave it to the few mentioned below.

Firstly, in my own experience, I have seen a transit operator stop the bus to announce to passengers that they were running ahead of schedule. Consequently, they asked passengers if we were okay with them running out to grab a coffee. In what seemed to be a group of understanding passengers (as one appeared to object from where I was sitting), the operator rushed out to grab a coffee, but only after asking our permission. In this sense, the operator understood the importance of the customer, and by operating through that discourse, was seemingly able to find a different way to operate within it.

In another instance, we might think of the monitoring conducted by customers as a possible site of resistance too. It should be noted that the customer service centre of the TTC has doubled its hours and takes complaints seven days a week, and the organization even tracks feedback on Twitter (Doolittle, internet). After all, TTC CEO Andy Byford “[...] wants to hear from riders, so he can fix their problems” (Doolittle, internet). Importantly, we might also see a case where riders highlight positives regarding transit as well, not limiting their monitoring to ways that engage in social control. After all, while complaints were on the rise, so too were compliments (Doolittle, internet).

There may also be efforts to resist via attempts to reframe knowledge. This might be seen through a TTC maintenance workers’ union ad campaign called “Protecting What Matters,” where one might observe an attempt to reframe discourse surrounding these transit workers (Kalinowski, internet). In this manner, this may help to reframe, or at least reposition what it means to be a good public servant by indicating new truths and knowledge about the type of work being done, permitting workers to voice their own understanding of what they do, and the type of work they do especially when their reputations are damaged. Hypothetically speaking, a similar campaign for frontline workers that interact with the public, on

a day to day basis, could also be a way for these workers to help reframe knowledge about themselves and engage in resistance in relation to customer service.

The lesson to be learned here is not that it is impossible to avoid neoliberalism, or rather that neoliberalism's power is such that even simple acts, and ways of knowing become means to shape subjectivity towards this market utopic end. Rather, while subjects are directed in particular ways through everyday acts and ways of knowing, there is always political space through which actors can find ways to disrupt, unsettle and contest those techniques and rationalities. They may not in themselves articulate a new politics of truth, as they may not necessarily indicate the “[...] the detaching of the power of truth from the forms of hegemony, social, economic and cultural, within which it operates” (Foucault 1980: 133), but they certainly provide the grounds to rethink the operation of truth, creating an entrée into thinking about ways to detach truth from hegemony and a discourse that centres the market and the customer. Regardless, the examples noted above provide ways to think of work and public service as a way to reengage the public. In this manner, as noted above, workers and customers can find ways to become anew while remaining kin to a rationality that aims to reinvent. Finally, it must be noted that while such a rationality aims to reinvent organizational discourse and operation, it is far from certain that such a logic will undoubtedly destroy the very foundations and necessity of public service. After all, in keeping with the spirit of Stuart Hall (1997) and his work on representation, there can be no correct possibility or answer to constituting a new politics of truth, as “[...] there can be no absolute guarantees” (276). In a similar vein, the operation of a customer service discourse may seek to reinvent, but it may not succeed in creating the utopic relations so desired from it.

In this sense, there is possibility. We may be individuals riding transit together, and we may be individuals operating public transit vehicles and servicing the public. Indeed, we are part of a collective, capitalistic social order, which operates to individualize us. This paper starts to suggest that perhaps we can transgress this legitimated neoliberal rationality, to realize that a worker and customer relationship is not adversarial – that the problem is not with one another and what one does or does not do, but rather a social order operating under a rationality that serves to keep us from realizing our dependence on and need for each other. After all, what a public service is public by mere fact that it is work that serves and engages with the public. Perhaps what is needed most is a realization and activation of such an ethical imperative.

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## For a “normal country”: Debt, Biopolitics, Austerity in the Era of Memorandum in Greece

The title of my paper is: *For a “normal country”: Debt, Biopolitics, Austerity in the Era of Memorandum in Greece*. I would like to point out from the beginning that although this paper is not exclusively Foucauldian it draws however its basic ideas from the famous “Foucault's toolbox” and combines them with the contributions of other theoreticians.

Firstly, I will describe briefly the social, political and theoretical framework with which my paper is related. Greece from April 2010 until today is under the memorandum status and the constant supervision of the so-called troika, the International Monetary Fund, the European Union and the European Central Bank. The announcement for the appeal on the support mechanism was made on the 23rd of April 2010 and the implementation of the program started on May the 3rd. The financial data that made the country appeal to the memorandum were the deficit that for 2009 had risen eventually<sup>1</sup> to 15.4% of GDP and the total debt that had reached the 126,8% of GDP. (Smith, internet)

Four years of cruel austerity and severe recession have passed. The Gross domestic product (GDP) of the country declined cumulatively between 2010 and 2014 by 25% (Eurostat, internet). The crisis in Greece or even better the strategy for dealing with it has not left anything unaffected. Salaries, pensions, allowances, public goods, health, employment in the public and private sector, all received blows. Unemployment has reached 25,8% for the general population and 50,6% for the young people under 25 years old, the highest rates of unemployment in Europe (Makris, internet). The financial information concerning 2012<sup>2</sup>3, as announced by Eurostat, are the following: deficit at 12,7% of GDP and debt at 175,1% of GDP (To Vima, Internet). We clearly see that despite all the austerity measures and the sacrifices by the Greek people, the debt increases. The very program of economic measures chosen in order to reduce the debt, after three years of implementation increases the debt to unprecedented levels.

This economic program due to its hardness and the impact and the extent of the areas that affected, has marked the period from 2010 onwards to a degree that we refer to this

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1. It is worth mentioning that the fiscal data for 2009 were finalized after continuous revisions and were officially announced in November 2010. Before the elections, which took place on October 4, 2010, the previous government assured that the deficit would be between 6-8%.

2. These are the latest fiscal data concerning the Greek economy. The data for the year 2014 are not yet announced.



period as the memorandum era in Greece. Such periods of major economic and political ventures that aim at changing the structures of a society and a country are always linked to a specific narrative that to a great extent legitimize them. So during the Metapolitefsi (the political change-over at the post Junta period) we encounter in Greece the discourses of “Change”, “Modernization”, the “Powerful Greece” of the Olympic Games and others.

As the meaning of the memorandum and phrases that are connected to it, such as fiscal or structural adjustment, have acquired an extremely negative connotation in Greece, in recent years those in power searched for a reference that can have positive connotations, conceptualizations. I will thus support that the implementation of the memorandum program is pivotally connected with the call to make Greece “a normal country”, “a normal state.”

All the governments that came into power during those years were supporting that those measures were taken so that the country manage to avoid bankruptcy, to save Greece. And they are also telling us that this is the only right road. There is no alternative. But actually this is an extreme neoliberal restructuring that leads to the redistribution of wealth upwards. It is indicative that 10% of wealthy Greeks in 2014 possessed 56% of the country's wealth, increasing by 8% their share over the last seven years. (Credit Suisse, internet)

Neoliberalism is the political discourse that seeks the subjection of everything at the shaping from the capitalist economy. Michel Foucault dealt with neoliberalism in his lectures at the College of France in 1978-1979, under the title “The birth of biopolitics.” In this book, Foucault analyzed neoliberalism as an economic and political rationality and the market as a place of truth. All dimensions of human life must be subject to the truth of the market.

The system of discourse and power that is the articulation of neoliberalism and capitalism is closer to what Foucault calls “biopolitics”. Neoliberalism and capitalism constitute the field of the productive investment to bodies and subjectivities, in the scale of the individual and the population, aiming at increasing the exercise of power over life up to the deepest aspects of everyday life. (Doxiadis, 2012: 55, 56)

In the present paper I will rely on Foucault's idea concerning the connection between neoliberalism and biopolitics in order to interpret the situation in Greece. The biopolitical dimension of the memorandum era in Greece has started emerging lately drawing the attention of political theorists and analysts. Indicatively Alexandros Kioupkiolis in one of his articles he characterized the memorandum era as “a regime of post-political biopower”. He also adds that “the violent oligarchic regime change which has been initiated with the first “bailout” package in 2010 marks an authoritarian turn which might augur similar trends in other western liberal democracies” (Kioupkiolis, 2014: 144).

What in my opinion is necessary is a deeper study towards the direction of the highlighting of the biopolitical dimension and its connection with the normative dimension, through the effort of the normalization of the social body. I believe that the effort of normalization and biopolitical compliance is structured in two levels, at the level of discourse and the level of the measures taken by the government. We will initially see the discursive level.

## Nom normality and crisis

It is a widespread idea that the current crisis is not only economic but also moral or cultural. This was closely associated in Greece with a criticism on the way of life of the Greek people before the crisis. This criticism was detected both within the country and also abroad with highly derogatory and mocking articles<sup>3</sup> of the international press on the lazy and corrupt Greeks.

According to Costas Douzinas, Greece is presented as a backward country, stuck to the past, with a hypertrophic and inefficient public sector and a population without healthy motives and legitimate aspirations. Therefore the goal is to destroy the old regime and bring the Greeks to the modern world (Douzinas, 2011: 65). This reference reminds us also the concept of cultural dualism<sup>4</sup> that was previously introduced by Nikiforos Diamantouros supporting that in Greece there is a battle between two cultures. The culture of modernization and the culture of the underdog with the second one being outdated, anachronistic, populist and dominating for so many years in the country that has to be beaten. Although this pattern was firstly introduced in the distant 1993's its proponent recently reaffirmed its usefulness and validity within the context of the current crisis<sup>5</sup>. Behind this concept underlines an idea of a natural state, a natural development of things even for the States.

The debt crisis is an opportunity to put in place a normative discourse and a biopolitical power through the austerity measures that aim at changing the way of life of the citizens. From the desire of debt we pass on to the biopolitical austerity. The concept "desire of debt" that I borrow from Costas Douzinas, describes the pre-crisis dominant discourse inviting people to consume, urging them to borrow without fear in order to consume. With the crisis this discourse is transformed and we pass to a discourse of guilt and punishment condensed in the phrase "The Greeks have sinned and must be punished". Here is where the concept of debt as "what is economically owed" meets the concept of debt as "what is morally appropriate" (Douzinas, 2011: 40). The Greek debt has become the eminent evidence of the Greek particularity, the prime symptom of the Greek disease. So the indebtedness is being used as the basis of a diffuse incrimination, aiming at the broader legalization of the inflicted policy. According to Yannis Stavrakakis, we encounter a process of creating and sustaining shame and guilt and thus legitimating punishment in the form of radical impoverishment, sky-rocketing unemployment and so on. Debt emerges as the nodal point of all the aforementioned practices of discipline, punishment and blame (Stavrakakis, 2013: 36 and Stavrakakis, 2014: 315).

Within the country we can identify two key phrases on the idea of abnormality that led us to the crisis. According to the first "we lived above our means and now we have to pay the bill" and according to the second "Even if the public debt disappears, we will not solve our problem if we do not change behaviors and attitudes". Both of these phrases already conceal

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3. Let us not forget that the international press was referring to the countries that had financial problems as PIGS (Portugal, Ireland, Greece, Spain)

4. See Nikiforos Diamantouros, *Politics and Culture in Greece, 1974-1991: An Interpretation*, in Richard Clogg, ed., *Greece 1981-1989. The Populist Decade*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993, pp. 1-25

5. See Nikiforos Diamantouros, 2013, *Postscript: Cultural Dualism Revisited*, in A Triantafyllidou, R. Gropas and H. Kouki, eds., *The Greek Crisis and European Modernity*, London: Palgrave - Macmillan, 2013, pp. 208 - 232

within them the idea that the exit from the crisis is not only an economic issue but requires changes in the lifestyles of the citizens. We can also locate the same reasoning at the governmental discourse<sup>6</sup>. For example, the parliamentary spokesman of PASOK (the social democratic party that participates in the Greek coalition government) has stated that “If something has brought us to the crisis is our deviation from normality.” (Koukoulopoulos, internet)

They indicate as causes of the crisis the lifestyle of the people, their excessive demands etc. And this has to change. The current measures do not only aim at the fiscal consolidation, but also at the change of the lifestyle, in producing a new subjectivity, a normal citizen who will obey the rules. The Greek citizens were abnormal because of their huge indebtedness. The abnormal country and its abnormal citizens must now become normal.

### **Normal country, normal state, normal citizens.**

In this context normality is being chosen as the nodal point of the governmental discourse, which is an indication of a strategic choice of normalization of the social body. We will attempt now to demonstrate how this happened using the methodological tools of the Essex School of Discourse Analysis.

The first coherent appearance of the idea of “normal country” is located on a questionnaire sent by PASOK to its members in view of its forthcoming ninth conference. “The central aim of our conference is to create a party that can guarantee the transformation of Greece into a normal country” was mentioned in the announcement of the party. To the question “Who should be addressed to and who does PASOK express” a possible option was the answer “All those people who believe in the need for Greece to become a normal state”. To the question “What strategy, concerning the country, should PASOK consider fundamental” there was as an option the answer “The need for Greece to become a normal state, a normal economy, a normal society”. (Kathimerini, internet)

Since then the idea of a normal country evolved into a central message in the discourse of the Greek government. More specifically I can say that this expression was detected in PASOK's website in 50 different cases during 2014.

The emergence of the phrase 'normal country' into the main idea, narration or hegemonic discourse if you will, is also indirectly indicated by the very president of PASOK and Deputy Prime Minister in a speech in April 2014 where he says: “The country's new brand is a Greece that surpasses the crisis, is a Greece coming back to normality, is a Greece that once again becomes self reliant within the EU, the Euro zone and the international markets” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs a, internet).

Normality is used in the discourse of the two governing parties (New Democracy and PASOK) as empty signifier (according to the definition of Laclau and Mouffe), it means a lot of things and nothing specific. Normality may be identified with a European normality,

6. This paper was written and presented before the January elections that led to the government of SYRIZA. Therefore as government is meant the previous government which consisted of New Democracy and PASOK.

which means the participation of Greece to the EU as an equal member. Normality may equal to the exit to the markets in search of loans or may be manifested through the assumption of the EU Presidency from the country. It may also be connected to the completion of the four year term of the government and the avoidance of early elections.

It is worth seeing in detail some indicative examples. The Deputy Prime Minister stated about the country's exit to the markets "Greece is returning. Is returning to the markets, to the positive growth rates, to normality" and in another speech "The return to the markets symbolizes the gradual return to normality" (Megatv, internet) while the Prime Minister had earlier stated that "In 2014 Greece will return to the markets, will start becoming a normal country, like the others" (Primeminister.gov, internet)

Moreover, the parliamentary spokesman of PASOK has stated "So if the desired thing, as we believe, is the search of a European-let's say- normality-because Greece is not a normal country- we should face with honesty some things.(...) This is the way to become step by step a normal country". (Koukouloupoulos, internet)

In addition, "We must become a normal country and have elections every four years as the Constitution specifies" stated the Prime Minister Antonis Samaras in a meeting with members of his party.

Finally, "The return to normality has already begun, the transition to the next day has to become with safety" (Tvxs, internet) and "We are negotiating closely with our lenders the next day after the end of the programme, a prudent exit to normality" (The Toc, internet) stated the Prime Minister Antonis Samaras in Brussels shortly after the end of the summit of the states of the Eurozone in October 2014.

Because a lot of times we meet the phrase "return to normality" something that may give the impression that the speaker means that the country was normal in the past and that what is not normal is the condition of the memorandum the Deputy Prime Minister makes a very useful statement regarding the working hypothesis in which my paper is based on. Speaking at the Conference of the Greek Union of Entrepreneurs in October he stressed that "the return to normality is not a return to the past, but a return to the future. Because it means a lot" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs b, internet).

When sometimes the speakers attempted to describe in more detail what this normality means, it revealed even indirectly the link of normality with an overall neoliberal restructuring of the State. In December 2013 the Deputy Prime Minister once more stated "The first condition is to have a normal state, a state whose administration is friendly towards investments and is associated with a society friendly to investments. (...) A state that can provide legal certainty and mainly a secure, stable and simple tax regime" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs c, internet).

The fact that normality is never adequately defined in the discourse of the government is due to the fact that the normativity of power does not refer to the description and identification of a normality but in its production through the productive power of rules, as Foucault has shown, inspired by the work of Canguilhem.

What is really interesting on the reasoning that I have developed since the introduction of the presentation is the connection of the transition to normality with the austerity measures taken by the Government. A connection that I don't have to try to uncover as it is stated by the government itself.

For example, the Minister of Labor has stated: “The Prime Minister Antonis Samaras, kept the country on its feet, and at the same time proceeded with a number of critical structural reforms across the entire range of economic, social and political life gradually transforming Greece into a normal European country” (Naxosnow, internet) while the Minister of Development stated that “Thanks to the sacrifices of the Greeks and the efforts of the government, the country becomes a normal country” (Alphatv, internet). The Prime Minister himself used often the argument that he received Greece to the brink and turned it into a normal country which is one step before the exit from the crisis.

The idea of normality and a normal country was diffused at the political scene and became a controversial matter as far as its symbolisms are concerned. We will however leave it slowly behind us in order to move now in the austerity measures where the normative and biopolitical dimension intersect.

### **Normalization through biopolitical austerity measures**

The measures taken by the Greek government in the last four years were considered that “will restore Greece to normality”. Despite their hardness, which has become a matter of debate internationally, the measures are exonerated somehow by government officials just because they are the means to achieve the so much desired normality. In a last example the Deputy Prime Minister has stated during a press conference that “(...)you said that all this has caused much trouble, great sacrifices, despair in many Greeks, businesses closed, businesses suffered a shock. Unemployment was increased to brutal levels and income was decreased. But the country is always a normal, European country that has a context into which it is moving and it is a European context politically, socially and economically stable” (Evenizelos, internet).

From the beginning of this paper I have described the austerity measures as biopolitical measures. If this was considered an exaggeration it is worth looking only at some of their consequences in the lives of Greek citizens.

The percentage of Greece's population at risk of poverty in 2013 reached 35,7%, with a 7.6% increase to 35.7% from 28.1% in 2008. In absolute figures, nearly 3.9 million Greeks (almost one out of three) were classified as at risk of poverty (Skordas, internet). Moreover, three in every five Greeks, or some 6.3 million people, were living in poverty or under the threat of poverty in 2013 due to material deprivation and unemployment, a report by Parliament's State Budget Office. Greece ranks top among the 28 European Union countries in terms of poverty risk and also has the highest poverty share in the population (23.1 percent). (Ekathimerini, internet). Child poverty, according to Unicef, reached 40.5% in 2012, an increase of 17.5% since 2008 (Unicef, internet). As most survey data stop in 2013 (or some of them even in 2012) we can assume that the current poverty lev-

els are significantly higher. Greece turned, in terms of the average family income, at least fourteen years behind, with wages constantly being reduced in the last four years from quarter to quarter. As Unicef again reported: "In Greece in 2012 median household incomes for families with children sank to 1998 levels – the equivalent of a loss of 14 years of income progress" (Unicef, internet). Another shocking point concerns the ability of citizens to access the health system. In September 2013, the president of the National Organization for Healthcare Provision, Dimitris Kontos, announced that around 3,1 million people had lost their insurance capability (Jacobsen, internet). The organization "Doctors Without Borders" reported also a significant increase in the number of Greek citizens lacking state health insurance, rising to 28% of the country's population at the end of 2013 (Anampa, internet).

If, according to Michel Foucault, biopower is the exercise of power that focuses on the management and direction of behavior through the control of life and extends from the depths of consciousness to the bodies of the population, then this is exactly what happens in Greece with the implementation of the memorandum programs. The concept of internal devaluation, that is the doctrine behind the measures proposed by the creditors of Greece, concerns the reduction in the living standards of the whole population, the violent change of the lifestyle. The health, the nutrition, the education, the habits and the lifestyle of citizens all accept violent downward pressure. The people, the entire population become expendable. As Athena Athanasiou argues "the crisis is organically linked to the governance of life and its limits" (Athanasiou, 2012: 27).

The consequences of these policies remind us the "right to let someone die" that Foucault elaborated in his book "Society must be defended". Foucault talked about "the emergence of a power that I would call the power of regularization, and it, in contrast, consists in making live and letting die" (Foucault, 2003:247). Continuing, Foucault claimed that "if the power of normalization wished to exercise the old sovereign right to kill, it must become racist". Maybe, during our times, this claim must be revised or the term "racism" must be extended in order to include more phenomena than those that Foucault had in mind when he was writing the book. But putting aside the notion of racism, the concept of power that lets someone die is absolutely relevant to the memorandum policies imposed in Greece. As Foucault himself clarified

"When I say 'killing', I obviously do not mean simply murder as such, but also every form of indirect murder: the fact of exposing someone to death, increasing the risk of death for some people, or, quite simply, political death, expulsion, rejection, and so on."

(Foucault, 2003:256)

As we have indicated above, almost one out of three Greeks is exposed in increased risk of death due to the austerity measures imposed by the Greek governments under the memorandum regime and the supervision of the European Union, the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Except of these indirect forms, a hot debated and very sensible issue is the increase in suicides in Greece as result of the memorandum. This is a really controversial issue for the Greek society. According to a very recent study, the mean suicide rate overall rose by 35% between 2010 and 2012, from 3.37 to 4.56/100.000 population (Rachiotis et al., internet)

Costas Douzinas in his book “Resistance and philosophy during the crisis” also highlighted the biopolitical dimension of the measures implemented in Greece, saying that: “The measures of the memorandum impose strict discipline of the behavior and extensive control over all aspects of life. They intensify in an unprecedented degree the way of exercising power that is called biopower and is accomplished through the strategies of biopolitics. The aim of these measures is to shape the body, the movements and the behaviors of people and make them economically productive and socially obedient”. (Douzinas, 2011: 71)

These measures are however a result, a medium. For this reason we have to go back to the cause. We must study the debt and the relation between debt and biopolitics.

### Debt and biopolitics

The Greek citizen is a great incarnation of what Maurizio Lazzarato described as the indebted man. In his excellent work entitled “The making of indebted man” -which is inspired by Foucault, but goes beyond him- he puts the debt at the center of modern capitalism. He considers that the construction of the debts and the establishment of the power relationship between the creditor and the debtor is the strategic core of the neoliberal policies. (Lazzarato, 2014: 50)

The debt acts as production and governance mechanism of collective and individual subjectivities. (Lazzarato, 2014: 54) This creates, through the connection of debt and guilt, the indebted man or the homo debtor. Through the public debt the entire population is converted into an indebted man.

As Balibar wrote in a paper last year, the fact that people are tied by a *succession of debts* which they have to “repay” throughout their life, creates new modalities of domination, subjection and subjectivation. The subject’s obligation to repay becomes the primary mechanism of dependency. (Balibar, 2013).

People at the economies of debt are free to the extent that they adopt the lifestyle that is compatible with the repayment of the debt. The debtor is not only required to repay in money but in behaviors, attitudes and lifestyles. He should adopt the lifestyle defined as normal by the lenders that possess the power. The power of the creditor on the debtor is very similar to the definition of power in Foucault as an action on an action. (Lazzarato, 2014: 55, 56) The measures dictated by the creditors and the government to the Greek citizens aim at shaping the potential range of their action, patronizing people and their behaviors in order to convert them into obedient subjects and control their responses. The debt directly references at a life discipline, a life style that implies a “care of the self” as Foucault would say. (Lazzarato, 2014: 126)

The debt is also a insurance technique of governance that aims at reducing the uncertainty of the behavior of the governed in the future. And this does not only apply to the current population but to future generations as well, as children not yet born owe tens of thousands of Euros each.

## Conclusions

To sum up, what I tried to highlight is the normative and biopolitical dimension of the strategy that is followed in order to deal the Greek crisis, that starts from the issue of the debt and the construction of the subjectivity of the indebted man who assumes the responsibility and the guilt for his situation, passes through the biopolitical austerity measures that cause direct changes to the way of life of the citizens and ends up to the achievement of the normality that the Greek government envision.

On the basis of this strategy there is the idea that because Greece owes, the Greeks should destroy the old and adopt radically new social, cultural and moral values, a new way of life, in order to serve the debt (Douzinas, 2011: 40)

The economies of debt needs biopolitics. Lazzarato showed us that the austerity, the sacrifices of the citizens and the construction of the subjectivity of the debtor is not a transient phenomenon from which we will escape and return to normality according to the Greek rulers, but actually they are power techniques.

The economy of debt fully realizes the way of governance analyzed by Foucault. Under the light of new theoretical insights, we can say that it passes through the control of the social body, the control of the population, who earlier has transformed into an indebted man. In this way the resistance is reduced, and the indebted man is persuaded to proceed to the process of "care of the self" because he has internalized the responsibility, the guilt resulting from the debt. The austerity policies implemented in Greece and the countries of southern Europe are sample of the biopolitics of modern capitalism.

If as Deleuze said "*A man is no longer a man confined, but a man in debt*" what we need to do, under the current conditions of the globalized power of debt, is to *break the shackles of debt, get away from the morality of debt and resist to the callings of normality*. This task is extremely difficult because as we have shown the debt is a power mechanism with profound moral bases, so the battle against it is not just an economic issue. Balibar described with precision this difficulty. *Debating the possibilities and modalities of resistance to debt, he claimed in his paper "Politics of the debt" that while the decisive question is whether a collective resistance is possible, it is also a difficult question because the burden of debts which have been accepted produces negative individualities (Balibar, 2013)*. To take collective action against debt, we must first overcome the obstacle of the morality inherent in debt, the guilt we have internalized, the subjectivity that we have constructed<sup>7</sup>. This is an absolutely necessary and essentially emancipatory process.

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7. While talking about morality, guilt and subjectivity, we do not talk about an internal, personal, introspective process. We can say that subjectivity is product of trans-individual processes. The individual and the collective, the social are inseparable, constantly intertwined.



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## A Foucauldian Approach To “Gezi Revolt”

### Introduction

Michel Foucault wrote “Revolts belong to history” (Foucault 2000: 449) in his article entitled “Useless to Revolt?” In this presentation, I will try to explain the last major revolt that marked Turkey’s recent history “Gezi Revolt”, and the processes that made Turkish people to rise in revolt by making use of Foucault’s arguments. In order to do that, firstly I will discuss how Recep Tayyip Erdoğan<sup>1</sup>, the prime minister of JDP (Justice and Development Party) government has been ruling Turkey for the last twelve years and the how government has been materialized with his personality, how JDP has been using biopolitical techniques in two examples. Finally, by presenting a short historical framework of Gezi Revolt, I will mention, in Foucault’s words, a person “prefers the risk of death to the certainty of having to obey” (Foucault 2000: 449).

### Before Gezi Revolt

JDP, which came to power in 2002, was primarily grounded on two discourses: First one was “economic stability” in order to eliminate the effects of 2001 economic crisis in Turkey; and the second one was “human rights” in order to join the European Union. Additionally, JDP’s founders who come from a conservative and anti-secular background, especially Erdoğan, have taken immediate actions to remove military tutelage. However, from 2010 onwards, “economic stability” discourse kept its place on the agenda, but “human rights” discourse lost power to a great extent. As deterioration was observed in areas of press and freedom of speech, an anti-secular mode took over the field of education. That is because, Erdoğan, had a rising tendency to talk with Islamic references from 2010 onwards.

In order to point out JDP’s discourse before Gezi Revolt clearly, I will take two examples in two different levels. First one is the promotion of “giving birth to three children” on population level; the second one is the “smoking ban” discourse on personal level. By these exam-

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1. Later, Erdoğan was elected as President and he passed on his Prime minister office to former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ahmet Davutoğlu.

ples, I will try to show how JDP government tries to shape public and citizens through the power of the state.

Let's give our first example on the level of the "population": In 2010, Erdoğan, addressed to women and wanted them to give birth to "three children" at the wedding of one of the minister's daughter. But later, this "three children" motto evolved into "at least three children" politics. How this motto turned into politics gives us an important hint. In one of his speeches Erdoğan, referring to a study carried by Hacettepe University Population Research Institute, stressed that "three children" is important for the continuity of the state, keeping in mind that European Union member countries have a very high average of age and the youth population is decreasing in Turkey lately. Then, by moving a step further from this point, he mentioned "external forces" who do not want to make Turkey's population younger. Meanwhile, "three children" motto was attempted to be made an official state policy and even a law has been enforced for economical support for those who have three children.

Analyzing this situation by Foucault's terms, the scene is quite clear: For Foucault, "The population is a fundamental element, that is to say one that conditions all the others" (Foucault 2009: 97). In this sense, population is a term, only whose increase is acceptable and its decrease will cause *raison d'état* to put red alert. Population, which is the most fundamental factor in determining continuity of the state is important because of several reasons. Foucault points out the most common and important of them as such:

"[Finally], the population is a fundamental component of the state's power because it ensures competition within the possible workforce within the state, which of course ensures low wages. Low wages mean low prices of products and the possibility of export, and hence a new guarantee, a new source of the state's strength"

(Foucault 2009: 97).

Accordingly, one of the most fundamental bases of JDP's "economic stability" discourse is the effort in population growth. That is why as a "a new guarantee", "at least three children" discourse is important. Erdoğan's population control effort is a clear example of what Foucault called "regulatory controls" (Foucault 1978: 139).

Let's come to the second example: During JDP era, many public service announcements (psa) concerning many subjects such as smoking addiction, desire to be a European Union member country, obesity and bio-trafficking were transmitted to capillary vessels of the public through mass media. Prime Minister worked as a dauntless guardian of these "norms" produced by public service announcements. Erdoğan, who defends smoking ban, supported public service announcements on this subject as follows:

"It is our primary objective to protect people who does not smoke, but are exposed to harmful effects of smoking. (...) During my visits in Anatolia, as Prime Minister Erdogan, I take the packs of cigarettes from people's hands. I ask them 'Do you love me?'; 'Very much' answers the citizen. Then I tell them 'to make me believe that you love me, hand the pack in.' I want them to promise me that they'll quit smoking. If the citizen answers "hopefully", then I say "do more than hoping".

Then the citizen answers 'Okey my Prime Minister, I quit smoking'. Finally, I take the pack and write his name on it. I have a lot of packs of cigarettes at home"

(Erdoğan, internet).

This conduct of Erdoğan, reminds the "*medical police*" (Foucault 2009: 87) notion that Foucault uses in his book *Security, Territory, Population*. Anti-smoking discourse, which was tried to be legitimized first by discourses, and then by public service announcements, has been legalized after a while. Firstly, smoking indoors was banned. Then, by imposing high taxes on tobacco and alcohol products; their sale after 10 p.m. has been prohibited.

Erdoğan's stance concerning "the people who do not smoke, but are exposed to harmful effects of smoking", regards smoking as a continuous treat to public by disregarding its being a personal decision. Nevertheless, smoking has not been banned completely; however, its harms were tried to be reduced. In this context, Erdoğan's words and actions concerning non-smoking, is a kind of "norming" process in Foucault's words. According to the philosopher,

"Disciplinary normalization consists first of all in positing a model, an optimal model that is constructed in terms of a certain result, and the operation of disciplinary normalization consists in trying to get people, movements, and actions to conform to this model, the normal being precisely that which can conform to this norm, and the abnormal that which is incapable of conforming to the norm"

(Foucault 2009: 85).

The policy realized by norms is not only aiming the citizen as a person. According to Thomas Lemke, "What is at stake is no longer the juridical existence of a sovereign but rather the biological survival of a population" (Lemke 2011: 39).

According to Foucault, "Biopolitics deals with the population, with the population as a political problem, as a problem that is at once scientific and political, as a biological problem and as power's problem. And I think that biopolitics emerges at this time" (Foucault 2003: 245). In this context, the population itself becomes an object of the government. But, there is nothing outside of liberalism. At that point, one should keep in mind Foucault's warning: "Only when we know what this governmental regime called liberalism was, will we be able to grasp what biopolitics is" (Foucault 2008: 22). However, before reaching to that point, let us have a brief look at the history of Gezi Revolt.

### **A Short History of Gezi Revolt**

On May 27, 2013, one of the most central areas of Istanbul which is assigned only to public use, was occupied by heavy vehicles that were brought by the government in order to build military barracks and a mall in the middle of Taksim Gezi Park. That process started, despite 6th Administrative Court and 2nd Protection of Cultural and Natural Heritage Board's opposed decisions. Before the vehicles started to remove the trees in the park, People's Democratic Party Istanbul MP Sırrı Süreyya Önder and the members of "Taksim

Solidarity Platform” tried to prevent them. After this incident, the revolt organized rapidly on social media such as twitter and facebook etc. which led to the occupation of Taksim Gezi park by thousands of people. Within no time, usually opposing groups and people in Turkey such as Leftists, Kemalists, Nationalists and Kurds, came together regardless of their political positions.

Several organizations and independent people mentioned above tried to organize an alternative life style in Gezi Park. Along with police’s gas bombs, water cannons and plastic bullet attacks, Erdoğan, all the JDP MP’s without exceptions, heavily attacked rioters through media and social media. Prime Minister Erdogan insulted rioters as “çapulcu”, “rodent”, “drunkards”. In this context, one of the most interesting reflections of this process in micro scale was the adopting of the word “Çapulcu” by rioters. The word used as an insult was turned into a verb and began to be used as "chapulling". Even it entered *Wikipedia* as an entry. In return, the rioters setting up barricades, tried to invade streets, central areas against police and draw graffities like never before. One of the aspects that made Gezi Revolt unique was that there was formed a “riot language” that has been never seen before. This language was mostly using an ironic slogan or image.

As there has been more than a year of this incident, when we look at the scene, we should first point out these: In the riots starting from İstanbul and expanded to all over Turkey, Mehmet Ayvalıtaş, Abdullah Cömert, Ethem Sarısülük (killed by a policeman named Ahmet Şahbaz by a plastic bullet hit his head. Şahbaz’s trial is still in progress), Ali İsmail Korkmaz (lynched by a group containing policemen), Ahmet Atakan, Berkin Elvan (when he was out to buy bread, a gas cannon hit his head and go into coma, died at the age of 15), Burak Can Karamanoğlu, Mehmet İstif, Elif Çermik and police commissioner Mustafa Sarı and policemen Ahmet Küçüktağ died. Additionally, during riots tens of people lost their eyes shot by gas bombs or had severe disorders. But, it is impossible to know the exact number of the people who did not go to the hospitals in order to avoid getting arrested and the number of people who received treatment in infirmaries set up in several locations; however, according to statement by Commerce of Turkish Doctors, during the events, 7.478 people got injured because of pressurized water, short-range pepper gas cannon shoots and plastic bullets. I shall specify as an additional note: The doctors who treated rioters in these alternative infirmaries were later faced investigation by Ministry of Health because of “treatment in inappropriate conditions”. According to Agenda Children Association’s report, involving dates between 28 May-25 June 2013, more than 294 children were arrested (Agenda Children Association, internet). For the first time in the history of Turkish Republic, a recreation area “closed and opened” under the supervision of the police and order of governorship for “security” reasons.

As a result, Turkish people who have been greatly assimilated since 12 September 1980 coup d’etat, “largest riot of last thirty years” is spontaneously organized. There is no need to stress “spontaneously” very much. Foucault says that in reference to Bacon: “Sedition should not be seen as extraordinary so much as an entirely normal, natural phenomenon, immanent as it were to the life of the *res publica*, of the republic” (Foucault 2009: 348-9). In this context, there are two reasons of sedition: Material and occasional. Material conditions of sedition are poverty and discontent. On the other hand, “as for (occasional) causes, these are like burning elements falling front the combustible material” (Foucault 2009: 350). Foucault adds this: “That is to say, there are occasional causes of sedition when pre-

viously separated and indifferent elements are brought to a level of conscious discontent, when the same type of discontent is produced in different people, which, as a result, leads them to unite despite the divergence of their interests” (Foucault 2009: 351).

The Gezi Revolt process can be understood exactly with these terms. The material reasons which created by JDP for a while, met with occasional reasons; and thus different people which come from different political backgrounds were disturbed by the same things. Material reasons are nothing more than prevalent neo-liberal politics. At this point, I would like to remind that we cannot understand biopolitics without liberalism. On the one hand, JDP makes public service announcements on issues such as bio-trafficking, on the other hand they try to build hydroelectric power plants that destroy nature. In short, for JDP, “nature” is important as long as it can be converted to “natural resources”. Just a short time ago, we saw that more than six thousands olive trees were removed to build thermic power plant inspite of there is juridicial order against it. Now, Gezi Revolt occurred as a result of combining material conditions such as poverty, unemployment, narrowing of public sphere and occasional reasons like cutting down the trees at Taksim Gezi Park in order to make a mall.

I do not want to finish my article without mentioning a serious notion strikes attention in Gezi Revolt: Despite government’s pressure and humiliation at the people’s “to prefer the risk of death to the certainty of having to obey” (Foucault 2000: 449) is an issue that must be examined. In spite of all the disappointments of the history, rebellious people risk their own life but as Foucault points out, we need to speak of what is “universal”; not to talk in the language of the “natural rights”. Right here we can make a Jacques Ranci reian intervention. We can say that, what Ranci re says for “democratic process” is “rebellious people’s duty to “bring the universal into the play in a polemical form” (Ranci re 2009: 62). The “universal” put forward during a revolt is meaningful as long as it is a polemic against the government. So, the “universal” put forward during the revolt to oppose the narrowing of the public sphere in a practical way, on the other hand, it should not claim a philosophical superiority over particular or the minority and should “ceaselessly displace the limits of the public and the private, of the political and the social” (Ranci re 2009: 62).

Now we can turn back to Foucault’s statement that we mentioned at the beginning: If the revolts “belongs to history”, then whose property is history? Of course, as Foucault taught us, it belongs to those people government labels as “mad”, “guilty”, “rodent” and “ ap-ulcu”...

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## Digitized Governmentality: Is Foucault Relevant for Understanding New Media Culture?

Jean Baudrillard, a Foucault contemporary, wrote an article in 1978 and called it *Oublier Foucault*. For him, Foucault's time was long *de passe*. Thus for Baudrillard, even the thought of Foucault's relevance for understanding today's social formation is problematic—perhaps even horrifying, particularly if Foucault's relevance is with regards to new media—a subject that Foucault never spoke, nor wrote about.

But, being a long time friend and colleague of Foucault, Gill Deleuze would take a slightly different stance, although in a similar direction, from that of Baudrillard. Deleuze would simply respond to the above question: “No.” In his short and famous essay, *Postscript on Societies of Control*, Deleuze implicitly calls Foucault's model of disciplinary society inadequate for understating the new social formation, which, due to “technological evolution” (Deleuze 6), can be best characterized as “Societies of Control” (2). He invokes Foucault's disciplinary society but contends that as this society once replaced societies of sovereignties, a new society has now replaced the disciplinary society. He writes: “a disciplinary society was what we already no longer were, what we had ceased to be” (2). In *Societies of Control*, according to Deleuze, modulatory forms of power replace discipline, corporations replace factories as an analogical model of society, and individuals are turned to “dividuals.” He refers to computers as “machines of third type” (6) that replaced simple machines of society of sovereignties and the energy machines of societies of discipline. Computers make possible the tracking of each person's position and hence they effect “a universalized modulation” (7). Through samples and data, and “passwords,” new societies achieve control through “access” and are able to design in advance “dividuals” and way they move between “orbits and continuous networks” (6). Deleuze uses the analogy of “mole” versus “serpent” to compare disciplinary societies and Societies of Control and explicitly claims that “we have passed from one animal to the other” (5). He argues for end of “spaces of enclosures” (7) and insists that “we are the beginning of something” (7) new.

One may wonder why Foucault should even be relevant, or to put it more explicitly: why should the above question be there in the first place? Perhaps what makes Foucault relevant for understanding new media cultures, is his long dedicated study of “power” and its mode of operation in modern society. Further, Foucault's concept of “governmentality” long influenced the way cultural theorists attempted to understand “culture.” Foucauldian Cultural Studies tends to see culture as a space for “transactional realities” (Foucault 2008: 297) of power, thus defining culture as a realm, or a space, hugely interlocked with

power. In this approach, culture becomes another realm for biopolitical interventions and culture becomes a constitutive force in the make-up of power.

Deleuze's assertion regarding the end of Foucault's model in understanding new media cultures problematizes the very tenets of Foucauldian Cultural Studies because it implies the need for a new kind of theorization for the term "culture" that does not fail to take into account the impact of new media in the way culture is formed. Foucauldian Cultural Studies is interested in the co-constitutive relations between power and culture (Bennet 1998), yet there is little in their account that addresses the rise of new media and its impact on culture that is examined.

Deleuze's accounts invite theorists to think of culture in terms of "Societies of Control" as opposed to Foucault's account, wherein there is no acknowledgment of the mode of operation of power in the world of new media. As necessary as the emergence of this model may sound, this paper argues for how insufficient and problematic Deleuze's Societies of Control are in studying the analytics of power in the new media age. Further, this paper maintains that Foucault's model of studying power still holds water— even in understanding new media's impact on society. This paper shall first problematize Deleuze's account of Societies of Control as an adequate analytic in studying power and then will demonstrate the way Foucault's concept of governmentality can still be relevant in exploring modes of operation of power in the electronic age. Lastly, attention will be paid to exploring the implication of a new concept, which will be referred to as "digitized governmentality" in understanding new media cultures.

### Why not Deleuze?

There was a close interaction between Foucault and Deleuze both personally and intellectually. Foucault wrote an endorsing introduction for Deleuze's first series of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, and Deleuze wrote an entire book called *Foucault* after Foucault's death, in which he critically admired Foucault's works. However, despite Deleuze's appreciation of Foucault's works, Deleuze failed to have regard for one of Foucault's famous methodological approaches when conceptualizing Societies of Control, namely, Foucault's concept of genealogy.

Foucault derives his notion of genealogy from Friedrich Nietzsche's, *The Genealogy of Morals*. In his essay, *Nietzsche, Genealogy, History*, Foucault adopts Nietzsche's genealogy and contrasts it with "traditional history." Rather than seeking to describe the history of concepts "in terms of linear development" (Foucault 1977b: 76), thereby "reducing its entire history and genesis to an exclusive concern for utility" (76), Foucault argues that each concept has a genealogy which allows one to "record the singularity of events outside of any monstrous finality" (76). Genealogy rejects searching for origins and it avoids viewing social formations in a linear fashion. In a genealogical approach, historical formations evolve not smoothly and continuously. Instead, they come into being discontinuously in a way that one historical formation appropriates, and abruptly reconfigures older ones, for the make-up of the new.

Despite Deleuze's use of genealogy in his study of the genealogy of desire in *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze fails to regard genealogy in the way he perceives societies of control. Deleuze sees societies of control as the ones "replacing" disciplinary societies and with this account fails to recognize the way societies of control have appropriated elements of previous "societies." Deleuze speaks of societies of control as if they have emerged as a rupture or a "beginning," and thus he follows a "linear" and "traditional" model of history. He constantly references Foucault's account of societies of sovereignties and discipline while Foucault was very careful not to speak of these analytics of government as one replacing another. Instead, Foucault was interested in modes of migration and juxtaposition of these systems. Foucault clearly rejected the "replacement" model in his College de France lectures: "so we should not see things as the replacement of society of sovereignty by a society of discipline, and then a society of discipline by a society, say, of government. In fact we have a triangle" (Foucault 2007:107). Deleuze fails to follow Foucault when theorizing societies of control, and because he only wrote four pages on the topic, he left many puzzled as to what he exactly meant by the concept. There is nowhere else, neither in his previous writings, nor in his close work with Felix Guattari, that Deleuze provided a framework for studying societies of control. Thus, Deleuze left little room for one to fully and appropriately contextualize societies of control in a broader field of his works. Although many theorists such as Hart and Negri picked up the concept and developed it in their own terms, it is absolutely unclear whether these modes of theorization do in fact follow what Deleuze intended with the concept.

Besides conciseness, Deleuze's account appears problematic on another front, which is his misinterpretation of Foucault's conception of power. The Foucault that Deleuze has in mind in *Postscript on Societies of Control* is the Foucault of *Discipline and Punish* while Foucault's conception of power underwent a shift from *Discipline and Punish* to *History of Sexuality* and the shift became even more intensified in his lectures in College de France between 1978-81. Foucault changed his attention from technologies of domination enforced through "spaces of enclosures" to technologies of the self throughout these years. Towards the end of his career, Foucault had passed from modalities of discipline and domination to a rather fresh concept he called *governmentality*. Foucault had become interested in the way technologies of the self and technologies of domination came together to form the concept of government.

In his *Postscript on Societies of Control*, Deleuze demonstrates absolute unawareness of the later Foucault, and reduces Foucault's conception of power to disciplinary society. Thus, Deleuze does not only fail to treat societies of control genealogically, and, as a corollary, fail to place societies of control as a part of a history of evolution of the exercise of power in modern society; he also sees societies of control as an end to societies of discipline, while for Foucault, societies of discipline never ended – they merely transformed themselves to modalities of government.

With this characterization, Deleuze's account of societies of control proves unable to explain the way the rise of new media transforms and shapes technologies of power. Societies of control, as an analytical model, cannot explain the very dynamic of power on the basis of which new technologies find their place, rise, and transform societies. In short, Deleuze's *Societies of Control* provides a very useful description of the way new media have transformed power, but it is utterly unable to provide clues as to how and exactly

through which modalities this transformation takes place. Had Deleuze been aware of the later Foucault, perhaps his mode of theorization of Societies of Control would have been different and he would have addressed the new dynamics of power that Foucault spoke of in the later part of his career.

What is, however, common about the two theorists is that they both see a transformation in modalities of power from disciplinary modality to something rather different. Foucault called the later transformation *governmentality* and Deleuze called it *Societies of Control*. The fact that the two concepts were developed as an evolution from societies of discipline invites for an inquiry into similarities of the two modalities. As this paper shall argue, Societies of Control shares many (if not all) characteristics of governmentality that meets new media. The moment liberal governmentality becomes engulfed with new technology, its modalities procure a kind of society that Deleuze describes. Thus, Societies of Control is an intensified form of governmentality enforced in the electronic age, which can be referred to as “digitized governmentality.” In order to better describe “digitized governmentality,” I shall provide different characteristics of governmentality in the way Foucault describes the term and I will show how each aspect of governmentality have only been intensified, but not radically changed, with the rise of new media. But before doing that, let's draw our attention, however brief, to Foucault's relation with technology. Foucault never explicitly wrote on technology like Horkheimer and Adorno, but his modes of analysis hints at his trajectory of the concept of technology. Foucault's relation with technology will simplify and justify some of the claims made in this paper.

## Foucault and Technology

Although Foucault was not a philosopher of technology, he made frequent use of the term “technology” and related terminologies in his discussion of power. “Technologies of the self,” “Technologies of the government,” “system,” “schema,” “procedure,” “structure,” “technique,” “complex grid,” “ritualized forms,” “forms deployed,” “strata of practices,” “system of books,” and “prodigious machinery,” are all Foucauldian terms that are reminiscent of Foucault's technical understanding of power (Gerrie 4). Foucault was critical of juridical understandings of power in which power was envisioned to be in the hands of a group, elite or a class. Instead, he believed in a complex pervasive web of power/knowledge which all makes use of a series of techniques, apparatuses, and institutions to ensure the effective operation of power. For Foucault, power relies on a series of “relays” to make its operation possible, and some of these relays are “materialized in machines, architecture, or other devices, ...[and] standardized forms of behavior that do not so much coerce and suppress the individuals as guide them toward more productive use of their bodies” (Feenberg 71). Thus, for Foucault, anything from machines to institutions that make possible the operation of power is a *relay* or a form of technology. He saw, for instance, discipline as a form of technology. He wrote: “Discipline may be identified neither with an institution nor with an apparatus; it is a type of power, a modality for its exercise, comprising a whole set of instruments, techniques, procedures, levels of application, targets; it is a 'physics' or 'anatomy' of power, a technology” (Foucault 1995: 32). With this broad notion of technology as devices of operation of power, what Foucault shows, as Jim Gerrie does, is in line with the thinking of essentialist philosophers of technology such as

McLuhan and Ellul who rejected the notion of technology as culturally neutral. Foucault of course never spoke of new media, but the connection he made between power and technology provides a framework to understand new media in relation to power and hence culture.

## Governmentality

Foucault coined the term 'governmentality' in his fourth lecture in College De France in 1977. He never clearly defined the concept. Rather, he defined it in different ways, which makes offering one definition of governmentality rather difficult. However, if there is one term that captures the overall concept that Foucault had in mind, it was what Foucault called "conduct of conduct." Governmentality marks a shift in the way Foucault envisioned power from a model of domination and control in *Discipline and Punish* to pervasive arts and techniques where the conduct of conduct becomes possible through technologies of governance. The beginning of this shift in Foucault's thoughts, however, goes back to *History of Sexuality* where Foucault maintained his critical stance towards juridical theories of power and slowly turned his attention to micro-physics of power that called for "analyses that understood power as multiple, rational, heterogeneous and pervasive." "It was in *History of Sexuality* that he began to see power as something that is "everywhere, not because it embraces everything, because it comes from everywhere...power is not an institution and not a structure... it's the same that one attributes to complex strategical situation in a particular society" (Foucault 1980: 93). By the time Foucault spoke of governmentality, he had dropped his "analysis of power relations in the metaphorical field of battle, war and struggle" (Walters 15) that he had employed in *Discipline and Punish* and became inclined towards a more pervasive notion of power. The reason was perhaps because "the models and metaphors of war allowed insufficient analytical space for the presence of subjects who possess a certain degree of freedom, for the zone of the ethical within subjects work on their selves"(15). Thus, in governmentality, one is looking at a major transition that Foucault underwent in his analysis of power, which apparently Deleuze was totally unaware of. Instead of attempting to define governmentality, this paper dissects its different characteristics and explores whether the rise of new media has radically altered or has slightly transformed operation of governmentality.

## Networks of Power

The first notion that marks the transition in Foucault's conception of power from *Discipline and Punish* to governmentally was his recognition of power as something ubiquitous and pervasive operating in multiple fields. Foucault critiqued the dominant political theories that revolved around the idea of power as a monolithic, repressive entity exercised from the top by a particular individual, class or a system. Instead, he saw power as something dispersed across complicated and heterogeneous social networks. Foucault held that "power is employed and exercised through a net-like organization. And not only do individuals circulate between its threads; they are always in the position of simultaneously under-

going and exercising this power“(Foucault 1980: 98). With this network-vision of power, Foucault arrived at his theme of governmentality and explained how different technologies of power, from which many operate outside state apparatuses, participate in the game of “conduct of conduct.” In his book, *The Rise of the Network Society*, Manuel Castells explored the way digital information and communication technologies have turned society into series of networks. In Castells’ words “...the definition, if you wish, in concrete terms of a network society is a society where the key social structures and activities are organized around electronically processed information networks“(Castells 2008). With a similar approach, he explored the impact of the rise of new technologies on states and called the transformation a “network state.” Martin Hand has summarized Castells’ account in the following terms:

[According to Castells,] where the older communication networks of the nation-state system were vertical, hierarchical and one-directional, the digital information industries made possible by the Net promised horizontal and inter-actional patterns of circulation and flow. Where the traditional state shaped its satellite regions through controlling the taxation from the center and dominating the peripheries through bureaucratic apparatus, the digitally democratized state will be multi-centered, networked and decentralized in form...In short, the Internet allows central government to institutionalized process of decentralized and disperse governance, while retaining a nation state level formation

(Hand 2008: 24).

For Castells, the rise of new media has aggregated the pervasiveness of the nature of power by distributing it in a series of networks and individuals, which all of them in Foucauldian terms are “always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power.” Deleuze calls this subjectivity that emerges out of this dynamic “the man of control” who is “adulatory, in orbit, in a continuous network. Everywhere surfing has already replaced the older sports.” The individuals that move between Foucault’s networked natures of power in Castells “information age” is the Deleuzian “man of control.” When Castells and others wrote on network society, for many, their mode of theorization was reminiscent of a discovery of a new social formation distributed in networks, while long before Castells, Foucault had uncovered the network nature of power in modernity. Castells’ contribution can be seen as mere commentary on the way Foucault’s networks of power underwent a shift with the rise of new media.

## Disciplinary Mechanism

In *History of Sexuality*, Foucault identified the rise of a certain kind of power that brought life and management to the population at the center of political strategies in the western world. “Biopower” is what he called this new mode of exercise of power, which was concurrent with “explosion of numbers and diverse techniques in achieving the subjugation of bodies and the control of the populations” (Foucault 1980:140). Foucault identified two poles for the operation of biopower. The first was the disciplining of bodies and the second was the regulation of the population (139). In his lecture series later published under the title *The Birth of Biopolitics*, he developed the concept of biopower. This time he called it

bio-politics and offered a more comprehensive account as to how different arts and techniques of government come together and make possible “governmentalization of the state” (Foucault 2007:107). Through the concept of biopolitics, Foucault was able to move away from his earlier sole focus on discipline, and instead see “economic freedom, liberalism and disciplinary techniques...[as systems ] completely bound up with each other”(Foucault 2008:67). So for Foucault, disciplinary mechanisms never ended, but their mode of operation became even more pervasive and they became an integral part of the liberal art of government. One of the famous disciplinary mechanisms that Foucault invoked was Jeremy Bentham’s panoptic watchtower that made possible a visible but unverifiable presence of power. Through panoptic devices, the subject “must be sure that he must never know whether he is being looked at any moment; but be sure that he may always be so...the Panopticon is a machine for disassociating the seeing/being dyad: in the peripheral ring, one is totally seen, without ever seeing; in the central tower, one sees everything without ever being seen” (Foucault 1977:180). Deleuze believed that these mechanisms of discipline that Foucault described are specific to spaces of enclosures, while for others such as Robins and Webster, the rise of new technology has not only put an end to panoptic modalities, but their measures have also been intensified and expanded to a larger social field:

“We believe that Foucault is right in seeing Bentham’s Panopticon as a significant event in the history of the human mind. We want to suggest that the new communication and information technologies—particularly in the form of an integrated electronic grid – permit a massive extension and transformation of that same (relative, technological) mobilization to which Bentham's Panoptic principle aspired. What these technologies support, in fact, is the same dissemination of power and control, but freed from the architectural constraints of Bentham's stone and brick prototype. On the basis of the ‘information revolution,’ not just the prison or factory, but the social totality, comes to function as the hierarchical and disciplinary Panoptic machine”.

(Robins and Webster 1988: 7)

In *Cybernetic Capitalism*, Robin and Webster expand their notion of the panoptic society by commenting on the way the electronic panopticon enables gathering the knowledge of the population. This new mode of the panopticon makes possible constant “documentation of activities” and as a result, “the observed and scrutinized individual, subjected to continues registration, becomes the object of knowledge” (Foucault 1977: 180). For Robin and Western, new media has intensified the connection between knowledge and power that for Foucault, was an essential technique in the project of governmentality.

## Power and Knowledge

In the tenth lecture in his lecture series entitled *Security, Territory, Population*, Foucault asserted the following to make the connection between power and knowledge:

“At the start of the seventeenth century I think we see the appearance of a completely different description of the knowledge required by someone who gov-



erns...That is to say, the sovereign's necessary knowledge will be a knowledge of things rather than knowledge of the law, and this knowledge of the things that compromise the very reality of the state is precisely at the time was called: 'statistics'."

(Foucault 2007:274).

According to Foucault, starting in the seventeenth century, power's interest in "knowledge of the population" emerged as one of the essential components of biopolitical interventions. Management of the population as the second pole of biopolitics only became possible with the rise of "local centers of power-knowledge" (Foucault 1977:99). Through knowledge of the population gathered by statistics, power could introduce new "rules of games" and engage in an effective economic management of the population. Power in this context uses knowledge and knowledge constitutes power and through this "reciprocal" relation, power ceases to be repressive, exclusionary and censoring, and instead operates in a productive manner. That is why power is constantly after taking charge of "the individual and knowledge that may be gained of him," (Foucault 1977:194) and it's through this knowledge that power's field and mode of intervention is defined.

Many theorists have commented on the way the rise of new media have facilitated gathering knowledge of the population, individual modes of being, behavior, and conduct in the social field. Robin and Webster provide the example of cable television networks that "continuously monitor consumer preferences for programming material, along with details of any financial or communicative transactions" (Robins and Webster 1988: 9). They show how digital technologies keep track of "information on the activities, transactions, needs, and desires of individuals or social groups" (Robins and Webster 1988: 9). Chun provides the example of Twitter, whereby "using Twitter and other U.S. softwares,... makes it much easier for the U.S government to track one's actions through back doors." (Chun 2001: 89) Oscar Gandy has referred to this process as "panoptic sort" where power "considers all information about individual status and behavior to be potentially useful in the production of intelligence about a person's economic value (Gandy 1993: 67). And Mark Poster has gone one step further, calling this information gathering procedure using new media: "superpanopticonism." Through superpanopticonism...

"the unwanted surveillance of personal choice becomes a discursive reality through the willing participation of the surveilled individual. In this instance the play of power and discourse is uniquely configured. The one being surveilled provides the information necessary for surveillance. No carefully designed edifice is needed, no science such as criminology is employed, and no complex administrative apparatus is invoked. In the superpanopticonism, surveillance is assured when the act of the individual is communicated by telephone line to the computerized database...a gigantic and sleek operation is effected whose political force of surveillance is occluded in the willing participation of the victim."

(Poster 1996: 94)

Poster stresses that Foucault's disciplinary mode of power is not in demise and power is still in the business of organizing and producing subjects through the knowledge dissected in databases created by digital technologies.

## Technologies of Power.

If, for Foucault, disciplinary devices are all forms of technology with the objective of producing proper “subjects,” for Chun, “computer programs” are in charge of producing users/subjects. Chun compares operating systems and softwares to Zizek’s notion of ideology. She argues that both are less concerned about one’s belief, and instead, they define and shape one’s action. She also invokes Brenda Laurel’s analogy of programmers as law-givers in modern societies in her classic, *Computer as Theater*. Programmer is a playwright and the user in “not simply the audience, but also the actors...Thus, the designer must not simply create good characters that do they what they intend, but also create inartistic constraints so that users can become good characters too and follow the designers” (Chun 2001: 64) If for Foucault, schools, hospitals and prisons were “relays” of power, for Chun, interfaces, virtual spaces and softwares through their “invisible laws” ensure that they have “disciplined us” and have “created certain expectations of cause and effect” (Chun 2001: 92). She draws on different examples of new media projects and concludes her discussion with the view of softwares and of interactive real-time interfaces as machines that have:

“a desire to control, [and ] to ‘govern’ based on a promise of transparent technologically medicated contact... It is a vision of permanence and flexibility: the files are permanently stored and the user’s information tracked. Through this, this spectral interface has come to stand in for the machine itself, erasing the medium as it proliferates its specters, making our machines transparent producers of unreal visions.”

(Chun 2001: 115)

Softwares act as new “relays” and they make possible “the conduct of conduct” through programming. Thus, softwares and their “programmability” (Manovich) are technologies in Foucauldian sense employed by states and forces of the market to fulfill the project of governmentality.

## The Rise of the Market

Much of what Foucault discusses in relation to governmentality is in the context of the liberal art of government. For Foucault, liberalism is not an ideology, nor an economic doctrine. Rather, liberalism is a critique of sovereign power and a practical rejection of “too much governance”. In *The Birth of Biopolitics*, Foucault traces the genealogy of the rise of neo-liberalism in the debates among Ordo-liberalism in Germany in 1940 where they critiqued the state credibility in overseeing the affairs of the market. Ordo-liberals held:

“Our question should not be: Given a relatively free market economy, how should the state limit it so as to minimize its harmful effects? We should reason completely different and say...free market [should be the] organizing and regulating principle of the state, from the start of its existence up to the last form of its inter-

ventions. In other words: a state under the supervision of the market rather than a market supervised by the state.”

(Foucault 2008:116).

Foucault then shows how this logic triumphs in American neoliberalism and market interventions that take hold of all affairs of society, social policies, as well as the state's conduct. Although at the time when Foucault provided his account, neo-liberalism in its contemporary mode was not in existence, he seemed to have an excellent grasp of the way the logic of markets and corporations override state control.

Much of what later on emerged as either a celebratory or a critical account of globalization marked the weakening of the nation-state borders and the rise of global markets due to the expansion of new technologies and the Internet. While some early theorists in early 1990s saw the Internet as one of main causes of globalization, hypermobility, and dematerialization, most of these accounts ignore the fact that “much of what happens in electronic space is deeply inflected by the cultures, the material practices, and the imaginaries that take place outside electronic space” (Sassen 344). In another words, the Internet did not invent globalization. Rather, the rise of markets and the weakening of states had already been at work. Digital culture, then, simply built “upon current sociopolitical, cultural and economic trends towards commodification and privatization” (Hand 39). For Foucault the rise of market control and the decline of nation-state control was part of the complex array of different arts of government in (neo) liberal version of governmentality. Thus, Deleuze's insistence upon the notion of the “corporation” as an analogical model of society had already been referenced by Foucault in his discussion of Ordo-liberals and their insistence upon the “neoliberal art of government” as a means of “normalizing and disciplining society on the basis of the market value and form” (Foucault 2008:147). Digital technology, the Internet, and passwords simply sat on these arts of governments, slightly changed their nature, and transformed them in new directions, but they did not invent them.

## Homo Economicus

For Deleuze, one of the characteristics of societies of control is the rise of a post-modern subjectivity, which, unlike the individual of discipline, is controlled, designed and modulated in advance. He calls this new subject the “dividual.” William Bogard describes Deleuze's notion of dividuals in following terms:

“[Dividuals] are not self-controlled but ‘controlled in advance,’ through simulation and modeling... Dividuals are database constructions, derived from rich, highly textured information on ranges of individuals...They are abstract digital profiling, and they are the profiled digital targets of advertising... opinion polls”

(Bogard 2009: 37).

According to Deleuze, power no longer invents its energy in disciplining individuals in spaces of enclosures. Rather, it uses meta-databases and mechanisms of modulations to govern individuals in advance. In his lecture series on governmentality, Foucault also

became interested in technologies of the self and commented on the way neoliberal subjectivity plays hand in hand with technologies of domination to make possible the project of governance. Foucault once again invoked a term from classical liberalism: homo-economicus (capital man) and described how this subjectivity has undergone a shift in post-modern neoliberalism. For Foucault, neoliberal *Homo economicus* is a free and autonomous "atom" of self-interest who is fully responsible for navigating the social realm using rational choice and cost-benefit calculations. This subjectivity Foucault stresses is

the person who accepts reality or who responds systematically to modifications in the variables of the environment, appears as someone manageable, someone who responds systematically to systematic modifications artificially introduced into the environment. Homo economicus is someone who is eminently governable

(Bogard 2009: 270).

Foucault's description of homo-economicus in the neoliberal context resonates well with Deleuze's concept of the dividual, except that Foucault's homo-economicus is traceable in history of liberal thoughts, whereas Deleuze's dividual remains vague and utterly incapable in providing a framework for locating its genealogical emergence. Though Foucault's concept does not encompass new media, Deleuze's dividual seems to equate with a kind of homo-economicus who meets new media. Turning individuals to dividuals can only be possible if they have taken up the attributes of the homo-economicus subjectivity. It is the "eminent governability" and readiness to respond "systematically to systematic modifications artificially introduced into the environment" of homo-economicus that makes him/her ready to turn into a dividual upon being placed in digital networks. Unlike the dividual, Foucault's homo-economicus is not a passive agent constructed by computerized metadata. According to Foucault, one participates in the game of neoliberal governance for as much he/she takes up the attributes of the homo-economicus. This subjectivity is "an entrepreneur, an entrepreneur of himself" and through self-management, both the realms of production and consumption facilitate the project of governance. When placed in the online world, homo-economicus becomes involved in post-modern capitalist "prosumption" (Nathan and George), by producing and consuming content on MySpace, Facebook, YouTube, Wikipedia and so on. In this context, homo-economicus participates in the game of "flattening culture," and hence furthers the pervasiveness of power. It is the digital homo-economicus that moves between "orbits and continuous networks" and makes possible the "conduct of conduct" through self-management, self-production and self-consumption.

Foucault's homo-economicus is a result of a circular operation of power in digital neoliberalism. Power constructs homo-economicus (Deleuze's dividual) and this homo-economicus actively participates with a degree of agency in the game of power. Thus, Foucault's account of post-modern subjectivity is much more nuanced than Deleuze's concept of the "dividual." Of course, Foucault's account of homo-economicus did not address new media discourse. However, his account provides a much richer framework for studying the connection between power and subjectivity in digital neoliberalism as opposed to Deleuze's rather vague and less commented upon concept of the dividual. Digital homo-economicus is the dividual that Deleuze has in mind, yet unlike Deleuze's conception of dividual as mere construction of meta-data, digital homo-economicus participates in the game of power. In another words, the digital homo-economicus acts as the appropriate subject of neoliberal governmentality.

## Concluding Remarks: Digitized Governmentality

For Deleuze, technology, or a machine, is an expression of a given social form, and it's neither its cause nor its effect. Following Deleuze here, it can be said that new media is an expression of neoliberal governmentality. The neoliberal condition that Foucault describes had prepared the necessary assemblage for the rise of new media and vice versa. Though Deleuze's notion of Societies of Control provides a useful description of the operation of power in the electronic age, it fails to provide theorists with a genealogical framework of its origins. Deleuze's linear understanding of history in his conception of Societies of Control proves very problematic as it does not allow one to explore how new media transformed the existing modalities of the operation of power. Deleuze's analogy of going from one animal to another also fails to account for the change that Foucault made in his conception of power. In contrast to Deleuze's read of his colleague, Foucault changed his attention from modalities of discipline to modalities of governmentality. In the governmentality approach, power is dispersed within a series of networks, and mechanisms of discipline are at work to ensure that gathering the knowledge of the population, different technologies, and relays of power, are employed to ensure demands of the market and homo-economicus appears as the appropriate subject of power. The rise of new media does not radically alter the operation of power in the governmentality approach – it only intensifies it. Thus, unlike Deleuze's approach, one can say the rise of new media did not bring about the “beginning” of a new social formation. New media was simply installed in different techniques and arts of government in neoliberalism and facilitated the project of the “conduct of conduct.” It is in this context that one can speak of governmentality that has become digitized, or *digitized governmentality*, instead of Societies of Control. *Digitized governmentality* shares the characteristics of Societies of Control that Deleuze attempted to describe, yet it addresses the flaw inherent in Deleuze's conception of the term. *Digitized governmentality* provides a framework for theorists to trace the genealogy of the operation of power in the digital age. Further, *digitized governmentality* helps to maintain the fundamentals of Foucauldian Cultural Studies, yet it invites theorists to bring in new media in their analysis of power and consequently, culture. In this context, the study of culture becomes a close scrutiny of modalities of power enforced through new media and digital technologies, and it is in this context that, as Manovich has suggested, we should move from media studies to “software studies.” *Digitized governmentality* invite theorists to explore the way the rise of software has altered the operation of governmentality in its diverse fields while allowing them to rely on tremendous accounts and critiques of Foucault's notion of governmentality.

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## A Foucauldian Gaze at Obesity: The intricacies of Governing and Bodies

### Obesity: A state of the art

According to medical experts, overweight and obesity turned into a global imminence and a growing concern to public health. Particularly, the United States, but also Europe and the rest of the world recognized a measurable dramatic increase of overweight people in their populations, who at present would be diagnosed with “obesity.” As a consequence, obesity is currently being held as a priority in the latest health programs and the reduction of its determinant factors have been identified as a priority by the EU, WHO and other health organisations at national contexts. Portugal has one of the highest rates of obesity in Europe, where portuguese population studies show obese and overweight percentages of population to be 31,6% in children (Padez et al. 2004); 22,6% in adolescents (Sardinha et al. 2011) and 53,6% of adults (Carmo et al. 2008).

Constituted as a medical category recently – declared in 1997 a disease by WHO - obesity was medicalised within metabolic diseases. The basis for this medicalization was the observation of the epidemiological relation between excess body weight and disease risk as other secondary damages - type II diabetes, cardiovascular disease, hypertension, hormonal dysfunctions, cancer, fatty liver, joint damages and spinal disorders. Furthermore significant health expenses ought to arise to national health systems. It was in 1997 that a WHO committee of experts detected and warned about a global “Obesity Epidemic”, declaring it a disease of epidemic proportions. In Portugal, the Health Directorate officially recognized it as a nosological entity by 2004, and since then, in agreement with WHO and other important health organizations, been defining surgical treatments as the best options to treat severe obesity individually. Connected with the ICD-10 diagnosis “obesity due to excess calories”, the WHO - who defines guidelines on practices - defines the Body-Mass-Index (BMI) as an indicator for overweight and obesity. The BMI-supported differentiation of overweight of the WHO is mostly accepted. However, as a problem-solving method it is critically discussed especially under discourse analytical aspects by medical anthropologists.

Tina Moffat (2010), in an article, exposes the implications of the uses of the epidemic metaphor for obesity, as well as the response to this phenomenon either by critical scholars as well as by medical researchers. She shows how the problem of obesity, with particular attention to childhood obesity, has been framed in extremes. On the one hand, it has been framed by many social scientists as a socially constructed phenomenon, and, on the other



hand, framed as medical crisis with contours of an “epidemic” by medical researchers. However, in between the two poles, this is a social problem with real consequences for real people. She shows how it becomes clear that framing the phenomenon as an epidemic is not useful, and how critical scholars must begin a dialogue with biomedical professionals, since there appears to be little communication between these groups.

Although obesity has been scrutinized intensely by physicians, it was in the last two or three decades that the condition came to be viewed as a medical condition in need of attention at a global scale. Before being recognized as a medical condition, obesity began to be constructed as a harmful condition, followed by the public and official recognition of the “epidemic” (Moffat 2010). The “epidemic” started to be recognized by NGO’s, such as the International Association for the Study of Obesity (IASO) that in 1995 created the International Obesity Task Force (IOTF). Two years later obesity was declared a disease. In 2002 these two organizations merged, and were rebranded in 2014 as World Obesity (2015). These organizations have been working with WHO in order to inform the world about the urgency of the problem and to persuade governments to action. In 2000 with support of WHO published a report entitled “Obesity: Preventing and Managing a Global Epidemic” (WHO, 2000). By this time, if obesity has been considered by some as culture bound disease of the so called northern countries, by this time it became to be perceived as a global issue: “Globesity” has it was dubbed. Health organizations around the world followed, and by recognizing the legitimacy of the issue, funding for obesity research increased considerably (Moffat 2010).

### **Reframing and Resocializing Obesity**

By tradition the objective of epidemiology and public health is to control diseases, but as several authors affirm there are problems concerning the dominant epidemiological paradigm and its growing tendency to individualize health responsibilities (Galea and Putnam 2007; Rose 2001). This is due to a process of biomedicalization of epidemiology and public health; the molecularization and geneticization of these disciplines, as it has been argued. The problem of biomedicalization on these disciplines whose traditions were more broad, is the fact that biomedicine tends to isolate and study diseases as entities distinct from their social contexts, transforming social problems in individual problems subjected to medical control (Clark et al. 2003; Rose 2007). This leads, in many cases as in the case of obesity, to explanations that come to figure as reductionist for such complex problems.

Regarding obesity, public health campaigns, health information as well as the National Health programs normally engage in discourses that encourage individuals to make responsible decisions in relation to food and physical activity; but population interventions, by focusing on these two individual and behavioral dimensions, exclude wider causes - namely those who are beyond individuals and reside in the social structure. These reductionist explanations have been permeating prevention initiatives, of which one example is the concept of energy balance (the relation of energy intake vs. energy expenditure). Many studies in population health show that to simply demonstrate the associations between excess body weight and risk of disease, such as cardiovascular diseases for example, is not sufficient for population to change their habits. And this is particularly real when there

are constraints to healthy choices, as it seems to be the case for those on lower socioeconomic status or with low health literacy.

Inputs from Critical Studies and Medical Anthropology can help reframe health problems and intervention initiatives, beyond the scope of individualizing responsibilities and the model of individualistic health interventions. The health of populations depends, as many scholars argue, on the links between individuals and social processes like economic systems, political power and social ideologies. Their biology and their sociohistorical context, their environment. This environment, in this modern, globalized age is fuelled processed food. Only a few decades ago, food production, food preparation and consumption were local affairs, ecologically embedded. If on the one hand with economic globalization, a so called “nutrition-transition” became possible, on the other hand, the strong concentration in the food processing sector was also responsible for the epidemic spread of obesity. Right now we can see an explosive spread of the billion dollar "slimming industry" products and diets while industrial processed food simultaneously is available on a global level.

In a way, obesity can be seen as an environmental disease: a disease caused by an environment saturated by process food and publicity. A notion like structural violence (Farmer 2004) comes to mind when we think about what entails to live in such a toxic environment, where for a great part of the population, choices are limited and the purchase of high-density, low-nutrient food becomes cheaper than buying healthy food.

Obesity impacts constitutes an intersection of political economy with bio and eco-social causation that requires more multidisciplinary research. It becomes important to acknowledge the fact that behind direct experience of individuals, there are social political and economic forces that are shaping disease risk. This has not only ethical considerations but shows the importance of social history and political processes namely forms of production and regulation of the complex contemporary food chains. Nutrition habits, as the main cause of obesity, are a structural issue influenced by problems derived from social inequalities and not merely a biological process that mobilises metabolic knowledge. The association of obesity to disease risk became a key element of public health discourses on individual responsibility for their own health, implying that we must discipline our bodies to be thin. But is necessary to examine the limits of this responsibility once a *persecutory health* (Castiel and Dardet 2007) is taking place. Accordingly with WHO ‘health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity’<sup>1</sup>. Therefore, it’s necessary to broaden health policy towards a *politics of life* distinct from the one associated to biomedicine and to recognise causal relationships between exposures to modern products and diseases. We are talking about manufactured risks that need ways of looking distinct from the epistemology of medicine. Exposition to processed food products that became cheaper than healthier food - namely due to policies that promoted years of public investment in food industry and certain agricultural technologies – have great impact in lower income populations. Today, well financed lobbies – such as food industry – have enormous control on the public policy agenda, leaving a small space for the inputs of this type of anthropological research (Singer 2012). It is through col-

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1. Preamble to the Constitution of the World Health Organization as adopted by the International Health Conference, New York, 19-22 June, 1946; signed on 22 July 1946 by the representatives of 61 States (Official Records of the World Health Organization, no. 2, p. 100) and entered into force on 7 April 1948. This definition was not amended since 1948.

laborations with different knowledges, that the development of more healthy policies may take place.

Foucault's body of work as well as the work of other scholars of governmentality become a rich repertoire to work with, because it makes possible to bring obesity into the light of its historic and politico-economic understandings. Following Foucault, the biopolitics of obesity cannot be dissociated from the framework of political rationality that helped to create its growing manifestations in individual bodies, even if these results - the growing numbers of obesity rates - comes to configure a set of unintended consequence of other social actions (Merton 1936) - like the policies and global trade agreements that permitted the liberalization of food industry and food consumption.

Looking at the governmentality aspects of obesity one may ask how did knowledge, practices, and technologies of power were here at play? What laws, policy and institutions created the structures that promoted obesity? How has the social world been defining this biological theater at play? And how does this shape of the social world been defining who is at risk of being ill? These are some research questions that come to mind when one engages with Foucault's work as it follows in the next section.

### **Governmentality: The emergence of population as ultimate end of government**

Foucault's work on governmentality and the subject of modern government is best articulated in the series of lectures given at the Collège de France in 1978 and 1979. In the lecture entitled "Governmentality" (Foucault 2001), Foucault undertakes a genealogical analysis of the art of government, locating its emergence in the sixteenth-century Europe, when certain questions regarding government exploded with particular force. These questions – which had to do with who can govern, how best to govern, how to be governed, and how to govern oneself and others - arose largely on account of two major social developments and at the crossroads of these two processes: the double movement of state centralization on the one hand, and of dispersion and religious dissidence on the other. In this double movement, the state centralization implied the breakdown of feudal institutions, which led to the formation of the modern state; the other movement was the Reformation and Counter-Reformation, which resulted in the spread of religious dissidence: "There is a double movement, then, of state centralization, on the one hand, and of dispersion and religious dissidence, on the other. It is at the intersection of these two tendencies that the problem comes to pose itself with this peculiar intensity, of how to be ruled, how strictly, by whom, to what end, by what methods, and so on" (2001: 202).

The raising of these questions concerning the art of governing signals, according to Foucault, a major shift in thinking about political rule. Through an analysis of Machiavelli's *The Prince*, Foucault traces its relationship with all transformations of the government of the state until the end of eighteenth century, elaborating the shift from a sovereign notion of power to that of an art of government. In sovereignty political rule, the object was to preserve the principality, its territory and by consequence to subject its inhabitants to the law. Its end was self-preservation through the force of law. The idea of the art of government stands in sharp contrast to this sovereign notion of power articulated in *The Prince*. The

crucial difference is that whereas sovereignty is exercised over a territory and, consequently, over the subjects who dwell in it, government is effected on a complex made up of men and their relation to things. As Foucault puts it:

“What government has to do with is not territory but, rather, a sort of complex composed of men and things. The things, in this sense, with which government is to be concerned are in fact men, but men in their relations, their links, their imbrications with those things that are wealth, resources, means of subsistence, the territory with its specific qualities, climate, irrigation, fertility, and so on; men in their relation to those other things that are customs, habits, ways of acting and thinking, and so on; and finally men in their relation to those still other things that might be accidents and misfortunes such as famine, epidemics, death, and so on.” (2001: 208–209).

Following Foucault, for government, the issue of territory is only a secondary matter. What is important is this complex of men and things; constituting this complex the target of government, of arranging things in order to produce an end appropriate to, and convenient for, each of the things governed. To govern then means to govern things. Government gains a finality of its own that can be distinguished from sovereignty. Entailed in this disposal of things is a multiplicity of specific goals: “For instance, government will have to ensure that the greatest possible quantity of wealth is produced, that the people are provided with sufficient means of subsistence, that the population is enabled to multiply, and so on” (2001: 211). To *dispose things* means to administer men and things in a efficient way, to properly manage wealth and resources, modes of living and habitation, and all those eventualities like accidents, epidemics, death, and so on. It is a question of not imposing law on men (like in sovereignty) but of disposing things as tactics. According to Foucault (2001), to arrange things in a certain way, through a number of means, can lead to determined ends to be achieved.

This is an important turning point here: “whereas the end of sovereignty is internal to itself and possesses its own intrinsic instruments in the shape of its laws, the finality of government resides in the things it manages and in the pursuit of the perfection and intensification of the processes it directs; and the instruments of government, instead of being laws now come to be a range of multiform tactics.” (Foucault 2001: 211)

As Inda (2005) in its introduction of *Anthropology of Modernity: Foucault, Governmentality and Life Politics*, a interesting handbook for scholars of governamntality, summarizes, this thinking regarding the art of government, was not to remain a purely theoretical exercise. From the sixteenth century on, it became linked directly to the formation of the territorial, administrative state and the growth of governmental apparatuses. At first, the practice of the art of government was concerned with introducing economy into political practice. As Foucault (2001) explains, the idea of “economic government” became tautological, given that the art of government is the art of exercising power in the form of the economy. The word economy in this process acquired its modern meaning. It becomes apparent that the very essence of government – the art of exercising power in the form of economy – is to have it as its main objective. So since the 18<sup>th</sup> century the word economy comes to designate a level of reality, a field of intervention through a series of complex processes that are fundamental to our history.

However, with the expansion of capitalism and the demographic growth of the eighteenth century, the practice of the art of government experienced a recentering: the theme of the family was supplanted with that of the population. Foucault (2001) elaborates on how a number of processes at this time played a part on the emergence of population as the ultimate end of government; how the demographic expansion led to the increase of abundance of money and expansion of agricultural production, and so on, and, at the same time, the development of a science of government helped to recenter the notion of economy onto this different plane of reality, outside the sphere of family and into the perspective of population.

Through the development of statistical forms of representation, population was identified as a specific objectivity, as an entity that had “its own regularities, its own rate of deaths and diseases, its cycles of scarcity, and so on; statistics shows also that the domain of population involves a range of intrinsic, aggregate effects, phenomena that are irreducible to those of the family such as epidemics, endemic levels of mortality, ascending spirals of labor and wealth; finally, it shows that, through its shifts, customs, activities and so on, population has specific economic effects. Statistics by making possible to quantify these phenomena of population also shows that this specificity is irreducible to the dimension of the family” (2001:216). So family disappears as a model of government. The consequence of such representations was to establish population as a higher-order assemblage of which the family formed only one component. The practice of the art of government grew to be above all concerned with populations, having as primary end the management of such assemblages in ways that augmented their prosperity, longevity, safety, productivity, and so forth:

“In contrast to sovereignty, government has as its purpose not the act of government itself, but the welfare of the population, the improvement of its condition, the increase of its wealth, longevity, health, and so on; and the means the government uses to attain these ends are themselves all, in some sense, immanent to the population; it is the population itself on which government will act either directly, through large-scale campaigns, or indirectly, through techniques that will make possible, without the full awareness of the people, the stimulation of birth rates, the directing of the flow of population into certain regions or activities, and so on.” (Foucault 2001: 216–217)

Gordon (2001) suggests that Foucault's Governmentality's lesson in the Lectures at College de France was in part an immediate response to a contemporary political fact, namely the ascendancy in western Europe of governments with the discourse and doctrine of economic neoliberalism. A number of events at the time such as the oil price shocks and other crisis of governmentality, the rises of disobedience and protests led governments to portray a kind of pedagogical ascendancy and a claim to lead, confronting citizens with the realities and disciplines of the market (Gordon 2001). In these lectures Foucault shifts the focus of his work from specialized practices and knowledges of the individual to an entire population, addressing the question of government itself as a practice, or a succession of practices, animated, justified and enabled by a specific rationality, leading him to be attentive to liberalism and neoliberalism. In *The birth of Biopolitics* (Foucault 1998; 2008) Liberalism enters the picture. For Foucault, biopolitics meant “the endeavor, begun in the eighteenth century, to rationalize the problems presented to governmental practice by the phenomena characteristic of a group of living human beings constituted as a population:

health, sanitation birthrate, longevity, race..." (1998: 73). He was aware of the place these problems occupied as well as the political and economic issues they constitute up to the present day. These problems, in his view could not be dissociated from the framework of political rationality of liberalism, and it was in connection with liberalism that they began to have the look of a challenge (Foucault 1998: 73). Foucault analyzes liberalism not as theory or an ideology, but, rather "as a practice, which is to say, as a way of doing things oriented toward objectives and regulating itself by means of a sustained reflection...as a principle and method of rationalizing the exercise of government, a rationalization that obeys – and this is its specificity – the internal rule of maximum economy" (1998: 74).

### **Power / Knowledge and Governmentality: an Analytics of Modernity**

An important addition Foucault makes, as the care and growth of population becomes a fundamental concern of government, is the novel technology of power that meanwhile takes hold. Foucault names this technology biopower: "what brought life and its mechanisms into the realm of explicit calculations and made knowledge-power an agent of transformation of human life" (Foucault 1980: 143). Meaning that when it comes to governing, it is the vital processes of human existence that are important. For Foucault this new technology of power assumes two forms. One is biopolitics and the other is what he calls an anatomo-politics of the human body. Biopolitics, is concerned with population at "the level of its aggregate effects" (2001: 219). The anatomo-politics of the human body is seen as discipline, meaning that "implies the management of population in its depths and its details" (2001: 219).

Biopower targets population through the individual bodies: "the body imbued with the mechanics of life and serving as the basis of the biological processes: propagation, births and mortality, the level of health, life expectancy and longevity, with all the conditions that can cause these to vary" (1980: 139). The objective is to optimize the life of the population, and through discipline to target individual bodies that compose this population in order to administer them, to govern them. So, it is also through the logics of biopower, that Foucault provides an understanding of the modern political power.

Another important aspect of Foucault's work when we consider the question of power is the matter of knowledge. As Gordon (2001) states in his introduction to the third volume of Foucault's *Essential Works: Power*, Foucault was interested in the possibility of gaining new and more effective political ways of seeing, and these new ways concerned exactly the relations of power and knowledge and their respective relation to the subject.

In *Discipline and Punishment*, *History of Sexuality*, *Madness and Civilization* and *The Birth of the Clinic* his intent was to show closely the emergence of some types of knowledge - such as the human sciences, psychology, sociology, psychiatry, criminology and some aspects of medicine - was enmeshed in the problems and practices of power, the social government and management of individuals (Gordon 2001). He set out to show how in recent western history the knowable individual has been the individual caught in relations of power, as the creature who has to be trained, corrected, supervised, controlled. Foucault was interested in the role of knowledges as useful and necessary to the exercise of power

because they were practically serviceable and less importantly if they were true or false; the link of knowledge to power was precisely the role of knowledge as valued and effective due to its instrumental efficacy (Gordon 2001). The central idea here is that the rational exercise of power tends to make the fullest use of knowledges capable of the maximum instrumental efficacy for government.

As population becomes the ultimate end of government, government has the purpose of its welfare and the improvement of its condition, its wealth, health, longevity and so on. It is the population itself, according to Foucault (2001), on which government will act either directly through large-scale campaigns or indirectly through techniques that will make possible without the full awareness of people to direct population into certain regions and activities.

He conceives the population as the subject of needs, of aspirations but also as the object in the hands of the government aware of what it wants, but ignorant of what is being done to it. So interest comes to play an important role: "Interest as the consciousness of each individual who makes up the population, and interest considered as the interest of population regardless of what the particular interests and aspirations may be of individuals who compose it: this is the new target and the fundamental instrument of the government of population. This is the birth of a new art, or at any rate of a range of absolutely new tactics and techniques." (Foucault 2001: 217).

So the notion of government can be understood in the broad sense of techniques and procedures for directing human behaviour. For Foucault, government then means the conduct of conducts, but this definition is not simple as it seems. To sum up, as Rose suggests governmentality analysis a special stratum of discourses and practices of knowledge and power (1999:19). It is a matter that involves the question of knowledge, the emergence of specific regimes of truth, exploring how the various modalities of speaking the truth are formed, and persons speaking the authorized truth are designated and the areas in which statements, discourses and practices rooted in truth are generated. The area that is thus opened through the analytics of governmentality is that part of the 'history of the present' created by the invention, contestation and operationalization of various rational programmes and techniques that try to conduct behaviours so that specific results can be obtained (Rose 1999: 20). Or as the authors gathered in *Anthropologies of Modernity* (Inda 2005b) suggest, Foucault's governmentality provides an analytical framework for modern objects, an analytical framework of modernity and its concrete manifestations. In the introduction of this book, Inda (2005a) notes on how for Foucault the notion of government does not entail merely the activities of the state and its institutions, but more broadly it involves a multitude of heterogeneous entities that influence or guide the conduct of human beings through acting on their hopes, circumstances or their environment.

Indeed for Foucault government takes place both outside and inside state contexts, and governmentality draws attention to all those strategies, tactics and authorities that seek to discipline conduct. Scholars of governmentality have been precisely concerned with those practices that have as target population be it health, wealth, security and so on.

Inda (2005a) identifies three analytical themes in governmentality that are useful for those of us who study governmentality manifestations, these assemblages of authorities, knowledges and techniques: the reasons of government, the techniques of government

and the subjects of government. For the case of obesity, introduced in the first part of this article, these three analytical themes form a good starting point if one is interested to map the phenomenon of obesity as a modern object of study, a manifestation of modernity. But this is valuable not just for the case of obesity but as for many other health and disease conditions, specially environmental ones, among many other possibilities beyond health.

The first analytical theme of the governmentality literature that Inda (2005a) suggests involves the political reasons or rationalities of government. These may be conceptualized as intellectual machineries that render reality thinkable in such a manner as to make it calculable and governable, pointing to the forms of political reasoning ensconced in governmental discourse, the language and vocabulary of political rule, the constitution of manageable fields and objects, and the variable forms of truth, knowledge and expertise that authorize governmental practice (Inda 2005). Here, for the case of obesity, discourses and practices of health organizations and health officials come to configure an object of inquiry. Through a set of possible methodologies of discourse research - be it for example critical discourse analysis (Wodak and Meyer 2009) or foucauldian discourse analysis as it is also referred, are just one among other possibilities. The intention for this analytical theme is as Inda (2005a) suggests is to guide and explore how certain events, processes or phenomena become formulated as problems; where these problems are given form and what authorities are accountable for vocalizing them. In sum, it consists in attending to its problematizations, the ways intellectuals, policy analysts, doctors and other governmental authorities conceptualize their objects as problems.

The second analytical theme proposed by Inda (2005a) regards the technics or technologies of government; the domain of practical mechanisms, devices, calculations, procedures, apparatuses and documents "through which authorities of various sorts have sought to shape, normalize and instrumentalize the conduct, thought, decisions and aspirations of others in order to achieve the objectives they consider desirable" (Miller and Rose 1990 in Inda 2005a:9). The technical means that help to direct the actions of individuals and populations are very important. They are what makes the object visible, and can be all the mundane tools such as methods of examination, tables and graphs, therapeutics, standardized procedures, etc. Without them, the government of conduct cannot take place. Here, for the case of obesity one thinks immediately in the interventions of health campaigns, health promotion and health education; or the devices like the scale and calculations like BMI that permit to classify individuals as obese, morbidly obese or overweight and all the possible prescribed medical treatments that can range from diet and physical exercise to bariatric surgery in order to tame the body to its *normal* state. Here another concern of the technological domain is through a focus on the programmatic character of government. The programmatic may be taken to be that: realm of designs put forward by philosophers, political economists, physiocrats and philanthropists, government reports, committees of inquiry, White Papers, proposals and counterproposals by organizations of business, labor, finance, charities and professionals, that seek to configure specific locales and relations in ways thought desirable. (Rose and Miller 1992 in Inda 2005a: 10). Government is programmatic in the sense that it assumes that the real can be programmed in order to make it amenable to diagnosis, reform, and improvement: "This programmatic character manifests itself most directly in specific programs of government - that is, in practical schemes for reforming reality. Governmentality scholars tend to train a good deal of attention on these programs of government. They focus on how such governmental



schemes conceptualize, manage, and endeavor to resolve particular problems in light of specific goals." (Inda 2005a:10). Here one thinks in health policy. For example, in Portugal obesity is one of the health political priorities and the Health Ministry and Health Directorate have been particularly attentive of this health problem initiating a series of initiatives such as the foundation of the platform Health Directorate's Plataforma Against Obesity and the National Program For The Promotion of Healthy Eating.

The third analytical theme of the governmentality literature suggested by Inda involves the subjects of government – that is, the diverse types of selves, persons, actors, agents, or identities that arise from and inform governmental activity (2005a: 10). Here, the researcher may find useful to ask what forms of person, self and identity are presupposed by different practices of government and what sorts of transformation do these practices seek? (Dean 1999 in Inda 2005a: 10). To focus on the subjects of government is thus to direct attention to how governmental practices and programs seek to cultivate particular types of individual and collective identity as well as forms of agency and subjectivity (Inda 2005a: 10). It is to emphasize how government is intimately involved in making modern subjects, and for the case of obesity this can involve research with people who are subjected to obesity interventions, like patients followed in the health system. But this can go beyond patients to include those people who are agents in the making of these interventions, here maybe it would be interesting to include not only patients but also workers of the national system such as doctors of different specialties dealing with obesity in hospital settings, nurses, as well as other experts and stakeholders from the policy worlds to the more public sphere of civil society – policy makers, public health professionals, lobbyists, food industry representatives, health journalists, etc. As Inda states “the importance of such subject-making is that through it – that is, through attaching individuals to particular identities, through getting them to experience themselves as specific kinds of beings with certain kinds of capacities and qualities – government is able to mold human conduct in such a way as to bring about individual and collective wellbeing” (2005a: 10). At last, while in some part governmental practices may seek to create particular kind of subjects, individuals can negotiate the process by which they are subjected, so it becomes important to look at how particular agents negotiate these forms of collective and individual identity, and how they embrace, adapt or refuse them (Inda 2005a: 11). For this an ethnography or a multi-sited ethnography (Marcus, 1995) might be a possible method to comprise such possible dynamics as well as to document the microphysics of power at play. As Gordon (2001) refers Foucault sets a new standard for an important area of historical inquiry; for his work on the theme of governmental rationalities becomes a way of drawing together the levels of micro and macro analysis of power together with the durable impact of liberalism and neoliberalism. And that, I would say, is what has to be traced for the case of obesity if one wants to map it as research itinerary.

### **Concluding Remarks**

This paper sought to focus on Foucault’s body of work specially his work on governmentality, as well as from others scholars in order to highlight the need of bringing obesity into the light of its historic and politico-economic understandings. This theoretical framing constitutes a very instrumental one when it comes to resocializing a health and disease phenom-

enon such as obesity in a time where the more reductionist descriptions of obesity are available. Combining anthropology, philosophy, sociology, history, political economy and other resocializing disciplines with the fields of epidemiology, biology and medicine allows to build a more comprehensive framework for the complexity of the case. Medical anthropologists can contribute to the case by widening the scope of its social and macrosocial dimensions. Having a multidisciplinary approach on health problems permits us to go from the large-scale to the local and from the social to the molecular. Through methods like multi-sited ethnography, informed by social theory and governmentality literature, the potential to enable a research itinerary that can link micro processes of obesity to its wider context, its macro-narrative or political economy comes to form. If on the one hand medicalisation processes permit to acknowledge a particular health problem, on the other hand, biomedicalisation entails to absorb wider causes like the social and macro-social determinants as well as behaviours, under the jurisdiction of biomedical treatment, mystifying and depoliticising social origins of disease (Singer 2004). It is disciplines like medical anthropology, among other social and human sciences that can contribute to put back the social and the political in the map.

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R. William Valliere

## The Biopolitics of Blood Donation

The thought of Michel Foucault has been used to examine both the macro- and the micro-political—both massive, historical, society-wide discourses and the tiny affairs of day-to-day life. Yet strangely left out of the account have been mid-level phenomena, such as public policies. Here I do not mean the functioning of states or markets in a general sense, but rather the critical examination of specific projects. Is this appropriate? Does Foucault have anything to teach us about public policy? And can we move toward a middle analysis, a meso-politics?

The 1980s were a dangerous time. Sexual minorities, especially men, were in a precarious position. HIV/AIDS ravaged whole communities, and yet it was some time before a virus was even identified as the cause of AIDS. Confusion and speculation were as prevalent as the virus. The medical profession, and the government, were apathetic. Queer people realized that only agitation would rouse the scientific and political arenas. If not rouse, then shame. Silence was death.

It was only the deaths of heterosexual people that truly alarmed. Suddenly, straight men and women began contracting HIV from blood donations, from their hemophilia medication, and, dare we acknowledge, from sex and drug use. This could not stand; it was a tragedy. Something had to be done.

And it was. In order to secure the blood supply, a ban was placed on the blood of any men who had had sex with other men. At the time, the blood of gay men was seen as directly tied to HIV and AIDS. In fact, AIDS and homosexuality itself were thought to be directly linked. Gay blood was bad blood.

Three decades have passed. Today, the human immunodeficiency virus is well understood. Those in and out of the medical profession understand that HIV transmission has absolutely nothing to do with sexual orientation. It is transmitted primarily via unsafe sex, intravenous drug use, from mother to child during childbirth, and blood-to-blood contact. HIV does not discriminate.

The debasement of the blood of queers in the name of safety, part of what might be called “security theater” (Magnet 2011: 155) is still official government policy, and it has been for over 30 years. According to the Food and Drug Administration website, “Men who have had sex with men, at any time since 1977... are currently deferred as blood donors” (United

States Food & Drug Administration 2013). The FDA is shameless in its efforts to ensure that it is not seen as homophobic; many justifications are given for the ban, and the agency assures us that, not only does the ban have nothing to do with discrimination based on sexual orientation, other countries follow similar procedures as well. And yet, as is so often the case, after a careful examination of the facts, each reason cited in defense of the policy falls flat.

The blood ban is charged, politically and sexually, and thus, given the themes of Michel Foucault's work, is an excellent opportunity to examine whether his thought can be used in the analysis of public policy. Turning our attention to the ban, we see that, indeed, Foucault has much to offer. While traditional analyses of the ban focus on its internal logic—whether it is logical, or ethical, or even legal—a Foucauldian frame would have us step back from the discussion and consider how the blood ban *functions*. Using Foucault's discussion on sexuality, and his concepts of biopower and governmentality, we see that the FDA blood ban on donations from men who have sex with men—or MSM—is productive. The ban and its discourses are an extension of power relations over entire populations, such that life, death, and specific subpopulations—in this case, MSM themselves—become phenomena to be studied, and ultimately managed. It is to this Foucauldian analysis that we now turn.

Food and Drug Administration's blood ban is caught up in something far larger than itself. It is part of the creation, deployment, and management of human sexuality that has been unfolding since the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Foucault, concerned with the way objectification turns human beings into subjects, identified three such forms of objectification: sciences (encompassing social sciences as well as the “harder” ones); “dividing practices” that split people into groups like “the sane” or “the mad”; and sexuality. We can see clearly that the blood ban involves all of these. It relies heavily on science to point out the risks in the blood of MSM; it divides blood (and people) into “safe” and “dangerous”; and it is concerned, more than perhaps anything else, with a person's relation to himself as a subject of sexuality (Foucault 2003: 126). In this way, it births a subject—the MSM.

Sexuality though is unlike the sciences or dividing practices in that it is also concerned with one's relationship to oneself. It is thus subjectification as well as objectification—it is a way not only of speaking about a general truth, but a personal one. Foucault believed that sexuality was the correlation between three elements: a domain of knowledge (“with its own concepts, theories, diverse disciplines”), a type of normativity (“which differentiate[s] the permissible from the forbidden...what is decent from what is not”), and a mode of relation to the self (which enables a person “to recognize himself as a sexual subject amid others”) (Foucault 2003: 58-59). All three elements of sexuality are present in the blood ban.

The blood ban *is* sexuality—understood as something much more than simple sexual desire. Rather, sexuality is really everything that is said, produced, published, thought, or spoken about as part of a prolonged process to make a part of ourselves speak the “truth” of ourselves. Sexuality is more than merely an orientation. Sexuality constructs the subject—it does this by revealing both a general and an individual truth, an objective and a subjective fact.

Central to the understanding of the ban's power to objectify is an understanding of two related terms in the Foucault canon: "governmentality," and "biopower."

The first of these, governmentality, refers to the "general field of endeavors by authorities to conduct the conduct of their human charges toward certain ends," and the growth of "the apparatuses of the state, the development of the disciplines of administration and the civil service, and the rise of professionals" (Rabinow & Rose 2003: x). Governmentality is like power: it is not uniformly negative, nor solely a practice of the state. Foucault intended the term to cover "the whole range of practices that constitute, define, organize, and instrumentalize the strategies that individuals in their freedom can use in dealing with each other" (Foucault 2003: 41).

"Biopower" refers to those parts of governmentality oriented toward the "management of the phenomena that characterize groups of living human beings," that is, things like their "race, fertility, gender, constitution," and the ways that these characteristics can be "shaped, managed, and selected in order to achieve political objectives" (Foucault 2003: 41). Biopower is a "distinct regime of power," superseding the sovereign power of earlier eras. In the rationality of what can be called bio-politics, "the new object is life and its regulation, to be achieved through the continuous regulation of its mechanisms" (Foucault 2003: xxix).

But biopower is concerned with more than the administration of life: as Judith Butler points out, death, too, must be managed: who shall be made to die, or, "let go"? Moreover, biopower is concerned not merely with individuals, but entire masses of humanity as well—entire populations.

The blood ban, then, is simply an aspect of the technology of sexuality, which is itself a structure of biopower, which is itself a technique of governmentality. The blood ban is another tool in the architecture of population—the management of life and death.

This is nothing revelatory. That is the point of public policy—especially of public health policy. But what is novel is the way the blood ban creates a new creature: the "man who has sex with men." As it does this, it must manage him. As Butler notes, "regulation is always generative, producing the object it claims merely to discover or to find in the social field in which it operates" (Butler 1996: 64). The ban must speak of the MSM, to the MSM. It must produce the truth about him. It must separate and study.

The term, "man who has sex with men" seems benign; it appears to be an attempt to avoid giving anyone an identity (gay, bisexual) he does not want. Yet it is an identity. Men who have sex with men are grouped together by virtue of their sexual activities and given an identity that merely pretends to be something else. Says Foucault: "Power is tolerable only on condition that it mask a substantial part of itself. Its success is proportional to its ability to hide its own mechanisms" (Foucault 1990: 86).

Now, we can speak about the MSM. We know how he behaves, what his interests are. Where he socializes, what he does. His activities are "consubstantial with him, less as a habitual sin than as a singular nature" (Foucault 1990: 86). This is how we can know his blood is so toxic. Or rather, not "we," but experts. For another fascinating development is

the qualification of certain speakers over others. It is for doctors to speak. It is for the sick, or those deemed sick, to listen.

The blood ban helps to objectify a new sexual type. But what about subjectification? In what way is this new group of people encouraged to see itself?

The key to any successful subjectification is confession. Confession is a way of producing truth; the crucible for this truth is the soul of the subject. Since its inception in religious practice, confession has been preoccupied with sex. This did not change when confession found its way to the sciences and, in truth, every area of life.

“The confession has spread its effects far and wide. It plays a part in justice, medicine, education, family relationships, and love relations, in the most ordinary affairs of everyday life, and in the most solemn rites; one confesses one’s crimes, one’s sins, one’s thoughts and desires, one’s illnesses and troubles; one goes about telling, with the greatest precision, whatever is most difficult to tell.”

(Foucault 1990: 59).

Confession is essentially a power relationship, for in every confession there is the presence, tangible or not, of an observer.

But how is confession related to the blood ban? During the blood donation process, potential donors are given a “Health History Form,” a sheet on which they are asked numerous questions about their bodies and lives. If donors believe, after reading and answering the questions on the sheet, that they are unsuitable, they are encouraged to “self-defer”—that is, to willingly forgo the procedure. MSM are presented an image of themselves, encouraged to see themselves as outside, other. In fact, they are encouraged to play a role in the creation of themselves as dangerous Other. The Health History Form, and the process of self-deferral, is thus an example of subjectification through confession. Foucault, in *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1*, gives an overview of how sexual confession entered the realm of science. Sexual confession was constituted in scientific terms through five processes: “a clinical codification of the inducement to speak,” “the postulate of a general and diffuse causality,” “the principle of a latency intrinsic to sexuality,” “the method of interpretation” and “the medicalization of the effects of confession” (Foucault 1990: 65-67).

Each of these methods is present in the FDA’s blood ban. The “clinical codification of the inducement to speak” is the Health History Form itself. The form combines “confession with examination, the personal with the deployment of a set of decipherable signs and symptoms” (Foucault 1990: 65-67).

The “postulate of a general and diffuse causality” is present in the ban’s explicit assumption that anal sex is the cause of HIV; that two male bodies colliding is the breeding ground for the virus. After all, sex has “an inexhaustible and polymorphous causal power,” and even “the most discrete event in one’s sexual behavior...[is] capable of entailing the most varied consequences throughout one’s life” (Foucault 1990: 65-67).

The “principle of a latency intrinsic to sexuality,” can be observed in the ban’s assumption of how little men who have sex with men really know about what is festering inside their bodies as a result of their predilections. This principle is concerned not with what the MSM

is hiding, but with what remains *hidden from him*—hence the endless rolling out of the statistics that illustrate how many infected MSM are unaware of their true HIV status.

The “method of interpretation” has already been touched upon: only certain persons are qualified to speak with authority about MSM. We need scientists to tell us which blood is life-giving and which is deadly. What the MSM thinks, feels, or experiences, is inconsequential.

Finally, the “medicalization of the effects of confession” is to be found, again, in the Health History Form. MSM are reminded that their answers to the questions on this form are for the health of not only the recipients of their blood, but for their health as well (Foucault 1990: 65-67).

Surely, we can fight this confessional tendency? What about the MSM who lie, and donate blood anyway? It is tempting to see this as a victory. But suppose, Foucault asks us, the obligation to conceal our sexuality is just another aspect of the duty to admit to it? (Foucault 1990: 61). After all, the MSM who lie on the Health History Form must still confess to themselves. Does that not stick in the mind? Does this confession have no effect?

Confession is held to really change people, and, perhaps because this belief is ubiquitous, it becomes true. Foucault writes that the confession is held to be “a ritual in which the expression alone, independently of its external consequences, produces intrinsic modification in the person who articulates it: it exonerates, redeems, and purifies him; it unburdens him of his wrongs, liberates him, and promises him salvation” (Foucault 1990: 62).

But if a man has been told his whole life not to lie and then does, to the government no less, what “modifications” in him then? We might stress that confession is a false prophet, but what of those who do not think so? What about the possible guilt—either to the government, which they are taught to obey, or (if they identify as gay and accept an essentialist self-concept), to who they “really are,” deep down inside?

The blood ban creates a group of people; produces knowledge about them; separates them from the rest of the population; and qualifies some people to speak the truth about whether they are healthy or not, normal or not. The FDA blood ban reveals a general truth: that MSM are dangerous. Yet it also reveals an individual truth to the MSM: “I am dangerous. I am other. What I do is sick, wrong, different. What I do can kill people.” By both objectifying and subjectifying, the ban accomplishes its productivity.

The stakes seem rather higher than whether a person can simply give blood or not. And at stake is not whether MSM blood is really dangerous or not, but how that truth is produced, by whom, for whom, and, lastly, who gets to use that truth.

And it is Foucault, and his thought, that encourages us to see it this way. I have tried to show, in just one instance, that Foucault’s thought, indeed, can be quite useful in conceptualizing the utility and effects of public policies more broadly. The analysis of public policy, long the domain of disciplines like political science, has abandoned the humanities for the social sciences, whose regimes of truth, strict and rigorous, are seen as a more useful method of investigation for the activities of states. I hold that belief to be misguided, and I



should like to encourage future projects that make use of Foucauldian concepts to turn a critical eye toward public policies.

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## Queer and Feminism as Forms of Resistance

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## Engaging Queer Foucault: The Power Of Resistance As A Subversive Appropriation

### Introduction: Foucault and Feminism

The creative influence that Foucault's oeuvre has had on the development on many different feminist and queer theories and subfields of study is undeniable. But at the same time, the sometimes ambivalent tendencies which seem to characterize his entire life work, starting from *Madness and Civilization* to the last volumes of *History of Sexuality* and are present in his most famous conceptions on power, sexuality, identity, the formation of the subject, have proven difficult, or even problematic for feminist theory, and its child – queer theory, as Lynne Huffer nicely names it (Huffer 2010: 23).

Tamsin Spargo in his book *Foucault and Queer Theory* lucidly summarizes: "Foucault can be seen as a catalyst, as a point of departure, an example and antecedent but also as a continuing irritant, a bit of grit that is still provoking the production of new ideas" (Spargo 1999: 10). The production of Foucauldian-inspired ideas took various dimensions: many well established authors have heavily relied on his works, while others equally influential in their fields have argued that the dispersion of his influence has done more harm than good.

Edward Said, for example, claims that Foucault offers a "profoundly pessimistic view" and "a singular lack of interest in the force of resistance" informed by his conception of the "undifferentiated power" (Said In ed. Couzens Hoy 1996: 150-1). In a similar manner Selya Benhabib argues that Foucault's conception of the self is strongly based upon the passiveness of the Other, and yet again falls into the trap of dialectic binarism (Benhabib 1986: 54).

Lois McNay, on the other hand, disagrees with Benhabib by considering that Foucault's development of the "ethics of the self" in the second and third volume of *History of Sexuality* are a valuable asset for feminist thinkers, she believes that his "theories" are mostly "flawed" in two main ways: being asexual/desexual, i.e. not interested in pursuing the theories of the feminine, nor in the "exploring of the intersection of sexuality with an understanding of the self" and mostly ambivalent, since they don't seem to offer a stronger foregrounding of normative guidelines that would posit his ethics of the self as a possible cornerstone for his politics of resistance (McNay 1992: 8 and 193, respectively).

McNay's remarks are helpful because they pin down the challenges feminist scholars have experienced while engaging with Foucauldian ideas and contextualize the love-hate relationship with his work in a larger framework: one that courses around the (im)possibility of translating the radical deconstructivist tendencies, especially present in the wish for the ultimate destabilization of the self into a sphere of feminist politics. Although a direction that could help clear some of the difficulties surrounding the encounter between feminist/queer studies and Foucault's work, McNay's thoughts on the matter could possibly simplify the issue of the uneasy and sometimes problematic reception of his work in these related areas to a more general question that is concerned with the possibility of establishing productive links between post-structuralist (or in McNay's view, postmodernist) thought and feminist theory and activism.

The poststructuralist rethinking of the traditional modes of thought, particularly when applied to the creation of the unified, rational, and self-sufficient subject has been adopted by many scholars working in different areas of social and critical thought, including feminist scholars with whom poststructuralism seems to share more than enough interrelated interest. But, as Nancy Fraser puts it, the poststructuralist 'relativist' logics has often been considered by feminist as a "retreat from politics" and such as seen as incompatible with the feminist struggle for equality (Fraser 1989: 116).

However, while McNay, Fraser, Benhabib and many other feminist theorists have been reluctant to indulge in feminist projects that would take into consideration the poststructuralist legacy and appropriate it for their own goals, queer theoreticians such as Butler and Bersani have not been constrained by the risks that those stances might bring. Quite the contrary, critically engaging with Foucault's poststructuralist ideas, Butler and Bersani have grounded their projects on his legacy and by doing that, have shown the limitations as well as the possibilities it offers.

Butler and Bersani have intentionally and explicitly based their own arguments about the construction of the "homosexual subject" on some of the most important Foucauldian arguments concerning the formation of the subject in the complex webs of power and resistance (what Foucault names as the constant processes of "*assujettissement*"). *Both have implicitly proven that not only Foucault was very much interested in the processes emerging and developing at the intersection between subjectivity and sexuality, but that his "theories" can still provide some provocative and productive clues leading to never-ending, always perpetuating new approaches, for feminism, as well as for queer theory.*

As McNay puts it, feminists have often drawn on Foucault's theories, mostly centering on the works from his middle years, notably the first volume of *History of Sexuality* where he presents his theory on power and discusses its relations to the construction of the sexual body (McNay 1992: 3). In my analysis I investigate the ways in which some of queer theory's foundational texts have also drawn on the Foucauldian notions of power, sexuality and the body, positing them in the center of its emergence as a field of study and at the same time critically reexamining its limitations. In such a manner, instead of blindly applying Foucault's claims, queer theoreticians such as Butler and Bersani have formulated their basic principles from his ideas, showing how far and how wide they can draw on his thought and develop it throughout many projects.

Before directly engaging with Butler's and Bersani's work, I will map out the most important Foucauldian concepts that have paved the ways for their interpretations.

### **Beyond the juridico-discursive model of power**

Foucault's work cannot be fully understood without having in mind his attempt to formulate a new conception of power. By negating the juridico-discursive model which equates power with interdiction and prohibition, thus rendering its effect to mere repression, Foucault introduces a theory devoted to the more reproductive aspects of power. Instead of representing power through the terms of law, punishment and discipline, he writes about power as an omnipresent field of complex and strategic force relations that function through multiplicity of institutions, apparatus and discourses by re-inscribing themselves on the individual and the socio-cultural body. As such, power is not essentially repressive, but always generative. Its self-reproductive mechanisms form networks of knowledge that necessarily produce positive, strategic and tactical forms of discourses, controls, interventions and pleasures.

Within such a conception power is always present in time and space challenging the structure of the binary opposites of the inside/outside, center/margin. Power does not emerge from one central source (which was constantly perceived as the law of the state apparatus or the justice of the juridical monarchy within the disciplinary model) but consists of chains and systems of connections. This concept of power has a great influence in defining resistance as well. In the omnipresent realm of power, resistance is always itself integrated within: resistance in all its multiplicity only exists at the interconnection of power relations. At the same time, power relations come to being depending of the plurality of the sites of resistance. There is no resistance outside the sphere of power, but power cannot exist without the fluid and mobile points of resistance. In this way, power is an omnipresent existence that constantly generates its own mechanisms of resistance.

Analyzing (the history of "Western") sexuality in terms of the affirmative notions of power relations and resistances, Foucault talks about sexuality not as an instrumental device intended to control and limit sex, but as part of the knowledge production networks that conceive the idea of sex as the ultimate site of all pleasures invested in and formed through the positive economies of body control. He does not talk about the repression of sex through the state law mechanisms, but of the discursive formulation of sexuality as a positive product formed through the merging of power and desire. Sex and sexuality become the sites within which the self comes into existence in its own realm of subjectivity and the greater sphere of the social, and at the same time, they are the places that lead to the dissolution of the self and/through the other. As Foucault says, the network of power "acts as the formative matrix of sexuality (...) within which we seem at once to recognize and lose ourselves" (Gordon 1980: 186).

In the next part of this essay, this "recognizing" and "losing" of the self through sexuality within the sphere of power and resistance will be addressed through Judith Butler's examination of the creation of the notions of hetero/homosexuality as the binary opposites orig-

inal/copy, as well as in Leo Bersani's analysis on the de/construction of the "proud subjectivity" through the violent sexual act (Bersani 1987: 222).

### The false authenticity of the copy/original

Butler's conceptions of the subversive *reconstructions* of identities (as the term *reconstruction* indicates) are entirely dependent of the "oppressive" normative and consolidating identities which they seek to re-inverse, reinterpret, reread. In the next couple of pages I emphasize the significance that Foucault's work, especially his writing on the processes of the construction of the subject amidst the complex network of power-resistance relationships has had on Butler's rethinking of the binaries "heterosexual" and "homosexual".

According to many of his feminist and queer critiques, it seems that Butler's work continues where Foucault's stopped. Analyzing the formation of the subject and its never complete stabilization in the Subject, she focuses on the gendered and the sexed aspects the subject assumes as her/his identity/identities in the endless process of becoming.

As Catherine Mills points out, Butler is often described as a neo-Foucauldian thinker, but "interestingly enough, critics of her work frequently refer to the Foucauldian basis of her writing as if it is here—in this theoretical similarity—that one finds the origin not only of the problems with her work, but even more generally of poststructuralist feminism." (Mills 2003: 253). This certainly relates to McNay's comments on the role Foucauldian thought assumes in feminist studies, reflecting the broader issue on the possibly dangerous intersections between feminist theories and poststructuralist philosophy.

Relying on Foucault's productive conception of power, Butler describes the processes of subjectivation not as an inherently prohibitive, but focuses on the formation of the subject as determined by both violently restrictive and prolific forces. However, while Foucault does not engage in a description of the individual constitution of the subject, Butler offers an in-depth psychoanalytic inquiry concerning the process of subjectivation. "Conjoining Foucault's recognition of the founding role of power with a psychoanalytic approach to the subject [...] Butler argues that the term "subjection" signifies both the process of becoming a subject and of becoming subordinated to power, says Mills (Mills 2003: 259). Thus, appropriating the Foucauldian vocabulary and methods, most clearly expressed in his conceptualizations of the power-resistance dynamic, Butler offers a psychoanalytic reading of the formation of the homosexual as a subject. Applying Foucault's apparatus while engaging in a psychoanalytical interpretation of the formation of the homosexual as a subject, Butler both follows his lead and surpasses the boundaries of his work, managing to broaden its scope and potentials.

Thus, Butler's "critical genealogy of gender ontologies" whose development posited her as one of the founders of queer theory par excellence, is highly embedded in a Foucauldian frame of thought and based on his oeuvre while at the same time expanding its significance and developing the scope of his thinking into new areas (Butler 1990). Paradoxically enough, the psychology that Foucault so rigorously critiqued throughout his works comes to life in Butler's works, while her "theories", amongst many others, contribute to the birth

of queer theory on the thresholds (at times, “uneasy ones”, as Salih points out) of feminist, Foucauldian, post-structuralist and psychoanalytic thinking (Butler and Salih 2004: 8).

Analyzing the never-ending processes of subjectivation which trace the emergence of the gendered and sexed subject and the possibilities of subverting and resisting the existing power structures, Butler’s work can be situated within the specific Foucauldian legacy which emphasizes the generative and productive processes of power as a way of constant struggle and attempt of re-interrogating and reinventing the subject. Butler’s work tackles directly the ambivalent and contradictory processes of subjectivation, which signifies both the subject’s submission to the power dynamics and its formation as a resistant subject under it. “This paradox is found in the very words we must use to talk of subject-formation”, explains Noela Davis. “The term ‘subjectivation’ (or *assujettissement*) - the process of becoming a subject”, as she emphasizes - has a double meaning” (Davis 2012: 883). On different occasions, Butler herself addressed the contradictory nature of the subjectivation process: “assujettissement means both subjection (in the sense of subordination) and becoming a subject [...] If the word subjection (*assujettissement*) has two meanings, to subordinate someone to power and to become a subject, it presupposes the subject in its first meaning, and induces the subject in its second. Is there a contradiction here, or is it a paradox—a constitutive paradox?” (Butler 2002, 16–17; see also Butler 1997b, 83). As it will be seen from her destabilization of the binary opposites carried through the existing tensions between the processes of subject formation, Butler clearly channelizes the power of this paradox and transforms it into a constructive force.

Starting from her earliest works, such as *Subjects of Desire* (1987), Butler has engaged with the question of the formation of the subject and the ongoing process of subjectivation, which in her first book is presented through her interest in the Hegelian formulation of the subject as developed throughout his *Phenomenology of Spirit* and its later reception by French philosophers in the 1930s and 1940s. Butler argues for a reading of the Hegelian subject that insist on the mutual interrelatedness of the self and the other. The self and the other are mutually authoring, they are not just internally related to each other, but they are each other and through their mutual recognition they bring each other into being (Butler 1987, 50-1). As such, Butler concludes, the Hegelian subject is a subject-in-process.

Although Butler’s reading of the Foucauldian dialectics might seem crude and harsh at first sight, it seems to me that it nicely captures all the contradictory and even paradoxical tendencies that have been coloring the approaches towards Foucault’s oeuvre in feminism and later on, in queer theory discussed above, and have not escaped the works of Butler herself, one of the most prominent carriers of his legacy in these fields of study.

But it seems that Butler’s work while primarily analyzing the discursive construction of gender identity by using the Foucauldian apparatus offers a productive way of addressing the “major differences” (which I suggest can be classified as a result of a false dichotomy) between the ruptures that characterize feminist thought, on the one hand and postmodern and poststructuralist thinking, on the other. Inspired by the Hegelian notion of the “subject-in-process” developed in great detail in *Subjects of Desire*, in *Gender Trouble* Butler dwells into a Foucauldian appropriation of Freud’s theories of ego-formation in developing her argument on the interrelatedness and intertwinement of hetero and homosexuality.

In her analysis of the relations between the heterosexual identity as the “original” and the homosexual as the “copy”, Butler proposes the acceptance and subversive reversion of these negative homophobic constructions which try to dismiss homosexuality by claiming it is just a bad copy that tries to imitate the original – heterosexuality. In this sense, homosexuality is always determined as “secondary” or “derivative” copy of the original which is equated with the heterosexual. But, as Butler claims, in its wish to confirm itself as the ultimate and only real form of existence, the “original” will always depend on its secondary derivations. That is, the meaning of the original can only situate itself as long as it has the copy through which it establishes its “real” and “unique” self. Following this argument, the copy becomes the prerequisite for the original, the thing that determines the position of the original in its imagined essence. This leads to Butler’s conclusion that the heterosexual conceived as the original cannot exist without the homosexual as the copy. In this way, the copy (homosexuality) takes on the role of the first (i.e. of the original), while the original (heterosexuality) is transformed into the derivative, secondary product and thus becomes the copy.

However, this kind of a reverse appropriation of the notion of heterosexuality doesn’t tend to fix and mark its position as the copy: by doing that, it would eventually fall into the same trap of reiterating the framework of binary opposites. Instead, it functions as an attempt for destabilization of the very notion of the heterosexual priority. It does so by emphasizing the never-ending, always-existent, impossible-to-fulfill imitation of the heterosexuality itself, which acts according to the need to reaffirm itself as the original and thus perpetually proves its inescapable dependence on the copy. As such, heterosexuality always fails and yet never stops trying to reach and become one with what Butler calls “its own naturalized idealization” through repeated acts of imitation (Butler and Salih 2004: 129). The striving of the heterosexuality to constantly prove its prior position and establish itself as the original that most clearly reveals its nature as constructed through acts of repetitive imitation. Ironically, the repetitive failure in the goal of achieving the status of the original affirms its position as the “copy” (i.e. the non-original). This opens the possibility for homosexual identity to assume the claim of priority and to position itself as the “original”, which necessarily depicts not only the constructed heterosexual existence as an effect that comes into being as the result of the repetition of its own “naturalized idealizations”, but the socially constructed positions of the “original” and the “copy”.

In Butler’s work, like in Foucault’s conceptions where resistance is always dependent on and happens within the omnipresent realm of power relations, the source for subversive appropriation and reinvention of the category of homosexuality is to be found in the sphere of the heterosexual existence. The repetitive and imitative attempts of heterosexuality to position itself as the prior original by negating the existence of the homosexuality is what creates the source of resistance for homosexuality.

### **The self-destructive power of the violent self**

“Foucault has been an immensely important influence”, claims Bersani in an interview conducted by Tim Dean, still remaining skeptical about the “absurd and reductive mis-readings” that the first volume of the *History of Sexuality* has induced, amongst which



those who claim that “the homosexual” didn’t exist before the middle of the nineteenth century (Dean 1997: 12). Foucault himself who was deeply interested in rethinking the interconnections between the social construction (homo)sexuality and power relations would have never agreed with this interpretation of his work.

Following Foucault, identity for Bersani is “an operation of power, a disciplinary project that is a tool at the service of identification and containment” (Bersani 1995: 3). However, instead of using identity as a device for tracing the historization of the homosexual, Bersani examines its tenability as a resource for opposing the essentialization as well as the deletion of homosexuality. It can be said that in much of his works Bersani is rather interested in the failure of identity as a notion that is characteristically related to homosexuals and its appropriation for formulating a different kind of identity politics. The failure of identity is appropriated as a tool not for rejecting the notion of identity, but for developing a new conception through which Bersani posits “homo-ness as an anti-identitarian identity” (Bersani 1995: 101). In the rest of this section, I explore Bersani’s desire to rethink the processes of subject formation and starting from there, to introduce a new and according, to him, more productive way of doing politics based on identitarian stances in his most influential essay “Is the Rectum a Grave?”. In doing this, I focus on examining the ways in which Bersani heavily relies on Foucauldian theories on power and sexuality while developing “homo-ness” as a new model for reconfiguring both human subjectivity and relationality.

In a similar way to Butler’s thinking, Bersani advocates the acceptance of the homophobic representation of homosexuality based on the anxiety that homosexuals are willingly killing their inner self and ceaselessly abolishing their subjectivity. Like Foucault, Bersani also views sex and thus sexuality as always embedded in the realm of social and subjective power relations and talks about their role in forming and abolishing the subjective self. Bersani, as well as Butler, in many of his works, uses psychoanalysis as a starting point in his thinking of the formation of the subject. “Psychoanalysis in Bersani’s view”, as Lerner argues in his essay on Morning and Subjectivity in several of Bersani’s works, “provides the language and conceptual framework to describe how and why subjects go about appropriating and annihilating objects” (Lerner 2007: 41). But, psychoanalysis according to Bersani has been misdirected, because its main contribution, the discovery of the unconscious, has not been adequately exploited as a means of reconceptualizing subjects in solidarity, rather than antagonism, with objects (Bersani 2006: 161–64). In his work, *The Culture of Redemption* (1990), says Lerner, Bersani “has pursued investigating the ways in which [...] psychoanalytic theorists present our relations with others through a narrative of appropriation and annihilation, of subjects obliterating objects by adopting techniques of projection, introjection, and identification. On the one hand, he has continued to view psychoanalysis as complicitous with the ways in which subjects appropriate and eradicate objects (Lerner 2007: 42). On the other hand, Bersani has looked to psychoanalysis as “evidence of the human subject’s aptitude [...] for modes of subjecthood in excess of or to the side of the psychic particularities that constitute individualizing subjectivities” (Bersani, 2006: 161). It is exactly this interest in psychoanalysis as the mode through which subjects constitute their own selves by annihilating the Others which leads to Bersani claiming, “unprecedented self-possession” which characterizes his analysis of the deconstruction of the “proud subjectivity” through the appropriation and usage of the

violent sex act in his seminal essay “Is the Rectum a Grave?” and that enables the drawing of the parallel between his own work and Butler’s.

In the last part of this essay I trace the ways in which Bersani, engaging in a Foucauldian reading of the psychoanalytical subjectivation processes, similar to Butler, proposes a revised conception of the self that is not caught up in antagonistic binaries, but exemplifies the falseness of the dichotomies that lead its creation as the Subject. Kaja Sliverman points out that the kind of conception of the self that Bersani develops, “privileges the moment of undoing, and see it as something which must either be endlessly repeated, or prolonged to infinity [...] while its failure is always there, part of the dissolution or “shattering” of the self, which finally never disappears” (Dean 1997: 4).

Here, as in Butler’s writings on the negative interdependence of the original and the copy, the self constitutes itself only through its connection and negation of the other. The self can only be established as a coherent, stable and persistent self through the abolishment of the other’s existence. The self only comes to its own existence through a violent act of establishing its boundaries, i.e. through the violent expulsion of the other.

According to Bersani, sexuality as defined in Foucault’s terms, is the site where the social and subjective collide and functions through the expression of the self’s inherent violent striving for power. Sex is always a violent act and penetration is necessarily an act of power: the penetrator uses sex in establishing his proud self, while in the same time the penetrated loses its power and its own self. “To be penetrated is to abdicate power” (Bersani 1987, 212). Further, Bersani claims that the “masochistic self-shattering was constitutive of our identity as sexual beings, that it is present, always, not primarily in our orgasms but rather in the terrifying but also exhilarating instability of human subjectivity” (Dean 1997: 6). Thus, the masochistic self-shattering that initiates the sexual awakening of the subject is an essential phase of his/her constitution. Bersani is primarily interested in the productivity that persists in the annihilation of the self as one of the crucial strategies for its own reinvention. In his work, the obliteration of the self does not only bring forth the immeasurable pleasure of giving up the boundaries of the ego, but at the same time offers new opportunities for “rediscovering the self outside the self” (Dean 1997: 6).

By “imbu[ing] anal sex with this subversive potential” Bersani “turns against the current trend among some queer theorists to ‘de-sex’ homosexuality as a means of obtaining gay acceptability” (Garlinger 1999: 62). The violent shattering of the self is thus a profoundly sexual one. In Bersani’s work, anal penetration is not merely a metaphor for abdicating power; it is the acceptance and the celebration of the violent act that kills the egotistic self, liberating it from its boundaries. In such a way, the homosexual anal penetration is posited as the new means of violent self-annihilation and therefore, self-transformation. A lot of parallels can be drawn between the radical ambiguity of his conception and Foucault’s study of power relations. As Garlinger points out, “the tensions in Bersani’s text between visibility and surveillance, same-sex relations and antisociality, coherent subjectivity and self-shattering jouissance, sameness and difference” are the foundations of his project (Garlinger 1999: 70). Foucault’s own oeuvre is similarly developed at the intersection of the tensions between the generative power strategies and repressive control mechanisms. Their works seem to indicate that while destabilizing the binaries and unsettling the preconceived conceptions, the appropriation of seemingly unproductive concepts and

entities and the subsequent ambiguous tensions they inflict, are among the most productive means of subversion.

More importantly, for Bersani, as well as for Butler, the homosexual becomes the figure through which he rethinks the notions of selfhood and subjectivity that dominate contemporary society. Instead of focusing on the historical construction of homosexuality, he is more interested in the homosexual as a category of “potential radicality”, a model for developing a different kind of subjectivity (Dean 1997: 12). The “self-shattering is intrinsic to the homo-ness in homosexuality,” then “homo-ness is an anti-identitarian identity” (Bersani 1995: 101). This self-shattering quality of the subject, according to Bersani, is most eminently emphasized in the homosexual subject and, as such, is the basis for the establishment of this ambiguous “anti-identitarian identity” that disrupts the violent self, transforming this violent rupture into a source for a new kind of subject. “The homosexual might be crucial for constituting a relationality not based on identity”, says Bersani in the interview (Dean 1997: 13).

Bersani provides a “complex queer rhetoric [that] embraces contradictions”, writes Savoy, adding that his “argumentative trajectories frequently—if not habitually—culminate in spectacular paradoxes that at once consolidate his deconstructive practice and demonstrate courageously the limits of that practice” (Savoy 2011: 243). Savoy’s descriptions on Bersani’s ambivalent writing style can be easily applied to themes he is interested in: the productive, yet violent destructiveness of the self-shattering subject that leads to its reinvention. In this manner, by being relentlessly critical towards the notion of coherent subjectivity, Bersani undoubtedly follows Foucault’s leads in his examinations of the processes of subjectivization in a culture of both productive and prohibitive regulation and control. On the other hand, by distancing himself from Foucault’s identitarian politics as implied in his project devoted on tracing the historization of the homosexual as a species, he surpasses Foucault. Instead, he argues that “the attempted stabilizing of identity is inherently a disciplinary project [because] the project of elaborating an intentionally oppositional gay identity by its very coherence, only repeats the restrictive and immobilizing analyses it set out to resist” (Bersani 1995: 3).

Bersani does not try to deny the violence embedded in the notion of the self, nor does he attempt to redeem the violent structure of the sexual act itself. Indeed, he instead calls for its celebration. He acknowledges its violent existence and starting from there, he transforms them by re-inverting their constitutive violence into a subversive site of resistance. While accepting the notion that violence is the ground that establishes the subject, he accentuates the power of the violent sex act for annihilating this already existent violent self. Violence forms the self, but at the same, when appearing in the form of the inherently violent sex act, is able to kill the violence in the self. Operating with the terms used within the homophobic accounts, Bersani discusses the homosexual sex as an act of violence, but one that should be hallowed and even rejoiced as the site of a constant representation of the becoming and destruction of the violent self. Using the homophobic notions and terminology, he subverts their meanings, which enables him to speak about subjectivity, sexuality and power in a different way that emphasizes their positive potentials.

## Conclusion: Butler's and Bersani's Queer Foucault

Both Butler and Bersani base their queer projects on Foucauldian grounds. Complementing Foucault's fundamental project, as it was developed in the first volume of *History of Sexuality*, with psychoanalysis, they both engage with the homosexual as the failed subject that is usually perceived as the "copy" or the inherently violent. As Bersani says, this "fallibility" of the homosexual subject is "the strength, not the weakness, of homosexuality, for a nihilistic civilization has been built on the foundation of a (factitious) inviolable subject" (Dean 1997: 14). Widening the scope of his approach, they are no longer interested only in the historicization of homosexuality as a phenomenon, but in the radical potential that the figure of the homosexual has for rethinking the notions of subjectivity. Thus, the failed homosexual self which is not present in Foucault's own writings, is now appropriated by queer theory and used as the basic premise in the search for a new model of subjectivity and sociability.

So, instead of talking about "a lack of rounded theory of subjectivity" in Foucault's work, it is more productive to think about the ways in which the Foucauldian notions on subjectivity as developed throughout his theories were reexamined and productively reappropriated by thinkers such as Butler and Bersani. Although Foucault does not provide a psychoanalytical account on the formation on the subject, it would be simply too reductive to argue that he only develops a limited model of the individual and active subject. His nuanced and complex examinations of the ways in which power constructs the sexual subject indicate the opposite. Those are the same grounds upon which Butler and Bersani develop their projects, mapping the formation processes of the queer sexual self.

Foucault's theoretical premises negate the traditional juridico-discursive model of power and replace it with a more complex network of relations where power and resistance merge and exit in inter-dependant relations. This conception of power calls into question the stable and fixed existence of the binary opposites of inside/outside, center/margin by subverting their fixed positions. In the Foucauldian framework resistance is understood as an always present characteristic of the power structures that subverts and redefines their positions. Butler and Bersani use this notion of resistance which in their texts becomes a possibility through the subversive appropriation of the homophobic categories.

Following Foucault's lead, Butler and Bersani both engage in destabilizing the binary positions, successfully proving that one "elementary lesson of both deconstruction and queer theory is that the 'inside' of any position will inescapably be haunted by its constitutive 'outside' (Savoy 2011: 244). Attempting to reexamine the fixed polarities between the homosexual and the heterosexual as the ones established between the "original" and the "copy" or the "violent self" and the "loving self", Butler and Bersani engage in a Foucauldian reading of the binaries. Therefore, the political and intellectual stances that are well reflected in their personal poetics are deeply embedded in the Foucauldian ambiguity, the same one that comes to being in his conceptualization of power as both prohibitive and productive at the same instance. Thus, Butler and Bersani's Foucauldian-inspired study of the self-shattering creation of the homosexual subject can be read as part of the paradoxical foundation of what Savoy names "the coherent incoherency of queer theory" (Savoy 2011: 247).

The acceptance of the subject's own subordination as a necessary stage for its formation and analyzing it as not inherently a prohibitive act, but a productive opportunity is the Foucauldian basis upon which both Butler and Bersani examine the constitution of the homosexual as the "copy" and the "violent self". Utilizing the Foucauldian reexamination of the prohibitive power dimensions and their reconceptualization, Butler and Bersani reverse the negative ways that have determined the depiction of the homosexual as the self-shattering entity. In their works, as well as in Foucault's, the necessary submission to power is not seen as inherently unproductive, but is rather appropriated and transformed into a site of new subject formation. The violent self-shattering of the subject is not seen as something that transforms her/him into a "copy", but is the primary condition for establishing a new self, one that will not be equated to the one-dimensional categories of either the "original" or the "copy", the "productive" or the "destructive". Butler and Bersani draw upon Foucault's examinations on the nature of power to base their own theories on the *assujettissement* of the homosexual subject. By doing that, they read Foucault's thought on subjectivation through psychoanalytical lenses, adding a new perspective on his works. In essence these scholars are "queering" them.

While Butler points out the homophobic absurdity of the notions of the original and the copy through an analysis of the construction of the heterosexual and homosexual identities, Bersani accepts and uses the multiple aspects of violence in forming and abolishing subjectivity in order to destabilize the same homophobic representations. Starting out from the same Foucauldian theoretical grounds, they both use the notion of the subversive as the inner characteristic of resistance within the power structures in order to destabilize the stable and fixed entities formed by the same structures. By doing so they re-invent the ground on which these stable entities stand on and use them in a way that celebrates their perhaps sometimes hidden theoretical and political potentials. In the works of these two scholars, Foucault's ideas have proven to be not only compatible with feminist theories, but also significantly productive when it comes to delineating the directions and goals of a contemporary field of study such as queer theory.

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## **Foucauldian Feminist Approach to Interrogating Child Sexual Exploitation and the Challenges to Engaging Sexually Exploited Children in Research – A Probe**

### **Setting the context**

Are feminism(s) and Foucauldian theory two swords that will not fit in one scabbard? Or, could we say that a mutual engagement of these two distinct approaches evolve into a renewed framework, a “double edged” (Deveaux 1996) sword, for researchers and activists alike. This question has been considered by many feminist scholars such as Hekman, Hartsock, Butler, Bell, Cooper and more recently Marshall, Taylor, Allen, McNay and McWhorter to name a few. Foucault’s work raised questions about the viability of feminist politics, through deconstructing the stable subject and through challenging the feminist project of liberation (Hekman 1996). Foucault’s critique of the truth-knowledge regime also posed a challenge to feminist modes of constructing knowledge. Have feminists arrived at an impasse then? Or as Fraser (1996) argues feminist appropriation of Foucault offers transformative potential? Or as Lloyd (1996) argues Foucault’s theorising calls for a re-configuration of contemporary feminist politics? This paper will explore the (im)possibility<sup>1</sup> of a Foucauldian feminist approach as a framework to interrogate the exploitation of children for sexual purposes. To this end, the first section will examine literature identifying specific sites of contradiction and convergence between the feminist and Foucauldian approaches and explore their suitability as a framework for researching child sexual exploitation in England and Wales. In section two, it will examine the challenges to engaging children subjected to sexual exploitation in research and the impact of those challenges to a truly Foucauldian feminist approach. It will particularly argue that ‘privacy’, ‘confidentiality’ and ‘autonomy’ are liberal constructs acting as impediments to children engaging in the construction of knowledge about their sexual experiences. Before we begin let us briefly outline how child sexual exploitation is understood in the context of this paper.

### **What is Child Sexual Exploitation?**

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1. This notion of ‘possibility’ and ‘impossibility’ is inspired by the work of Bell V (1993) *Interrogating incest: Feminism, Foucault, and the Law*.

Described popularly as the process of involving children in sexual activity through coercion, deceit and control, the conceptual terrain of ‘child sexual exploitation’ remains contested, both within and across disciplines. There is no agreement on how child sexual exploitation ought to be or ought not to be defined. Contestation centres on ambiguity around the age of children, the nature of behaviour that can be construed as sexual or exploitative, and more predominantly on the notion of the agency of the child. This paper starts from the premise that sexual activity with vulnerable persons (including children) is predicated on power imbalance and produces contexts and consequences that undermine the ‘possibility of freedom’. This thesis uses the widely cited description of child sexual exploitation (CSE) in the UK developed by the National Working Group (NWG) for tackling child sexual exploitation<sup>2</sup>.

“Sexual exploitation of children and young people under 18 involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people (or a third person or persons) receive ‘something’ (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of them performing, and/or another or others performing on them, sexual activities. Child sexual exploitation can occur through the use of technology without the child’s immediate recognition; for example being persuaded to post sexual images on the internet/mobile phones without immediate payment or gain. In all cases, those exploiting the child/young person have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources. Violence, coercion and intimidation are common, involvement in exploitative relationships being characterised in the main by the child or young person’s limited availability of choice resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability”

(DCSF 2009: 9).

Examining this contested terrain is a challenging task. The following section will appraise the usefulness of Foucauldian feminism as a framework of analysis for exploring the construction of children’s sexuality and their subjectivity in contemporary discourses on child sexual exploitation and to further investigate the conditions of possibility that specific constructions of children’s sexuality offer for the prosecution of these crimes.

### **A Foucauldian feminist approach to interrogate child sexual exploitation**

In examining the possibility of a Foucauldian feminist approach to interrogate child sexual exploitation, we will first grapple with the contradiction in feminist theorising of a “knowing subject” and the alleged non-existence of a subject in Foucault’s theorisation. Did Foucault deconstruct the subject as claimed in the feminist critique of his work? Did he deny the existence of a subject in toto? We will delve a bit on this much discussed, yet important question and consider some feminist critiques of Foucauldian theory. Much of feminist critique of Foucault in the 1990s has come to constitute a view that Foucault, in suggesting

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2. The National Working Group (NWG) network is a charitable organisation formed as a UK network of over 2500 practitioners working on the issue of child sexual exploitation and trafficking. For more information see <http://www.nwgnetwork.org/>



that subjects are discursively constructed had altogether negated the subject, thus leading to the disappearance of agency as well as the scope for 'transformation of relations of domination'(Marshall 2006), which has been the aim of feminist politics. These critiques cannot be taken lightly. The question that these critiques bring to the surface is: what losing the human subject and accepting a discursive subject, may mean for researching child sexual exploitation and more broadly for questions of choice and responsibility of those who perpetuate sexual violence? It is hoped that the Foucauldian notion of 'freedom as practice' elaborated in this section will alleviate some of these concerns. This paper argues, siding with Sawicki and others such as Lloyd and Allen that Foucault rejects the modern humanistic universal subject and offers a new line of thinking for alternative ways of configuring subjectivity (Allen 2008; Sawicki 1996; Lloyd 1996; Taylor 2013). It further clarifies that Foucault did not completely negate the subject, which is evident from his later works such as *The Subject and Power* and *The Ethics of the Concern of the Self as a Practice of Freedom* (Sawicki 1996, Amigot and Pujal 2009, McWhorter 2013).

Foucault presents that subjects are products of power; discursively constructed; and historically produced (Fraser 1996; Haber 1996; Bell 1993; Ramazanoglu 1993). Foucault writes in *The Subject and Power*: "(P)ower applies itself to immediate everyday life which categorises the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him which he must recognise and others have to recognise in him. It is a form of power which makes individuals subjects" (Foucault 1983: 212). One prominent critique of Foucauldian notion of subjectivity comes from Hartsock (1996) writing in Marxist Feminist tradition who contends that Foucault's negation of a stable subject and his failure to offer alternatives to an autonomous subject makes his theory problematic for feminist analysis and politics. She notes that feminists should treat Foucault's theory as one of many situated knowledges and focus their energies on developing epistemologies of 'marked subjectivities' i.e. knowledge that grow out of experiences of domination. In a somewhat different perspective, Sawicki (1996) notes, even though Foucault's subjects are subjugated, he claims that power and resistance are simultaneous processes.

In *The Subject and Power*, Foucault wrote: "Power is exercised only over free subjects. And only so far as they are free. Freedom does not disappear wherever power is exercised. The relationship between power and freedom's refusal to submit therefore cannot be separated. At the heart of the power is the possibility for recalcitrance" (Foucault 1983: 221). This possibility for recalcitrance that Foucault alludes to is integral to power, localised and dispersed in multiple sites. Building on Foucault's view of 'freedom' as a 'practice', I would view resistance too, as a freedom to practice freedom, freedom to disobey, freedom to enact or locate oneself differently, which can help us to understand the subject as a possibility (to use Schmid's notion of 'self as a possibility' quoted in Lloyd 1996: 247). This notion of subject is relational and is neither universal, nor stable. Taylor (2013) refers to this practice as an exercise of rejecting who we are and exercising our critical, creative and disobedient capacities. This practice of freedom, writes Taylor, "is characteristically disobedient and counter to normalization: it stands in a critical relationship to prevailing norms and values, on the one hand, and cultivates alternative modes of thinking and acting, and hence of relating to ourselves and the world, on the other" (Taylor 2013:93). What does this notion of 'subject in the making' or the 'self as a possibility' mean to feminist politics generally and particularly for understanding subjectivities of children? Allen, Lloyd and Butler avow that Foucault's later work on ethics, challenges and pushes feminists to reconfig-

ure their politics and the relationship between the feminist subject and feminist politics (Lloyd 1996; Butler 1996; Allen 2008), a discussion we will return to later. This notion of subjectivity as a critical capacity to engage in non-normalising forms of self constitution pushes the researcher to ask, what if any, of the possibility for children to exercise their critical capacity to challenge normalising constructs in child sexual exploitation discourses.

Let us now turn our discussion to the notion of power, another area of contest and convergence in Foucault's and feminist theorising. Foucault's emphasis on the need to examine the nature of power is vital to any work that is political in nature, feminist or otherwise. Child sexual exploitation is broadly understood as being predicated on 'power imbalance' between children and those who exploit them (DCSF 2009). This thesis aims to explore the relations of power that continue to operate and shape children's subjectivities as they embark on a journey through the criminal justice system. Haber notes that one of the key contributions of Foucault to feminist analysis is that of a "framework for understanding the body as a site of political struggle" (1996: 138). Both feminism and Foucault, contends Sawicki, have been successful in highlighting the operation of power outside the realms of politics and the state (Sawicki 1996). Reflecting on the nature of power as repressive, developed by Marcuse, Foucault notes that power, rather than being repressive and so negative, is positive producing effects at the level of desire and also at the level of knowledge (Foucault 1980: 55-62). Foucault reiterates the omnipresence of power, in *The History of Sexuality Volume 1*, "not because it has the privilege of consolidating everything under its invincible unity, but because it is produced from one moment to the next, at every point, or rather in every relation from one point to another. Power is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere" (Foucault 1978: 93). Hartsock finds Foucault's analysis of power as lacking as far as it rejects subjectivity/agency, negates the possibility of feminist knowledge and fails to account for systemic injustices suffered by women (Sawicki 1996; Deveaux 1996).

Also in critically examining the appropriateness of Foucault's conception of power for feminist analyses, Deveaux reviews three genres of feminist Foucauldian literature to examine and argues that feminist analyses based on conceptions of 'docile bodies' and 'biopower' present female subjectivity with totalising affects and de-emphasises the capacity of the female subject to resist modern regulatory practices (Deveaux 1996). She critiques Foucault's agonistic model of power cautions us against "simplistic, dualistic accounts of power". However, it fails to account for women's specific experiences of power and to offer a "sustainable notion of agency" (Deveaux 1996: 222). She further argues that Foucault's framework is inappropriate for describing cooperative efforts aimed at political transformation, personal empowerment and consciousness-raising. The following paragraphs will review Deveaux's critique of Foucault's notion of power from a close reading of *The Subject and Power* and argue that in fact Foucault's notion of agency coupled with his analytics of power allows us to have a sustainable, if not a stable agency.

In *The Subject and Power*, Foucault makes a very interesting comment. He writes that between a relationship of power and a strategy of struggle there is a reciprocal appeal, a perpetual linking and a perpetual reversal. The way we decipher, make them intelligible may be different depending upon the points (either from the relations of power or from the strategies of struggle) from where we engage in that decipherment. Whatever position we may take we have to use both frames (power and resistance) of the historical fabric. In fact

it is precisely the disparities between the two readings which make visible those fundamental phenomena of 'domination' which are present in a large number of human societies (Foucault 1983). Foucault asks us to begin our investigation at the point of resistances: resistances that are local, close to personal experiences; resistances that challenge those practices that individualise us; and resistances against the mystification of us, our experience and our knowledge (Foucault 1983). Foucault's explication of self-formation and self-knowledge parallels with an understanding of the ethics of feminism at the grassroots, which further corresponds, with ideas of 'situated knowledges' (Hartsock 1996), 'politics of location' (Hooks as quoted in Deveaux 1996: 233).

Another aspect of feminist critique of Foucault's theory of power is that Foucault created a false dichotomy between relations of power and domination/violence (Allen 1996; Deveaux 1996). A dichotomous understanding of domination and power disengages with many forms of violence that feminism understands to constitute the situation of women. Feminists are right in seeking to engage with power in all its forms, levels and spheres. However, the contention that Foucault created such a false dichotomy needs to be contested. Foucault categorically states that relations of power, relations of communication and relations of domination are separate; but that they overlap, mutually support each other and use each other as a means to an end. These three dimensions interact differently in different situations, creating a space or a milieu of 'capacity-communication-power' (Foucault 1983). Munroe (2003) too challenges the cogency of an argument that Foucault denied the existence of relations of domination. In a more recent examination of Foucault's notion of 'freedom as practice', McWhorter (2013) examines practices of freedom in post-liberal feminism and argues that the Foucault's account of oppression maps on to account of feminists such as Marilyn Frye, Alison Young who note oppression as immobilising and often resulting from systemic networks of forces. McWhorter argues for a change in feminist rhetoric from oppression to 'regimes of governmentality' as a possible way forward in a neo-liberal climate where systemic causation is denied, resistances are either quenched or co-opted. McWhorter contends that without losing our faith in the need to address women's oppression, the trick is to style 'feminism as an ethical movement that cultivates and embodies transformative practices of freedom' and not as 'resistance to oppression' (McWhorter 2013).

Foucault's elaboration of the nature of power as 'relations of power', 'relations of communication' and 'relations of dominance' as separate and yet connected dimensions and how they create conditions for the milieu of 'capacity-communication-power' is a useful framework in the context of child sexual exploitation. In talking about power and in distinguishing relations of power from relations of communication, Foucault writes: "the production and circulation of meanings can have as their objective or as their consequence certain results in the realm of power" (Foucault 1983: 217). Children's experiences and their stories relayed through different apparatuses (be it legal, socio-scientific, psych-physic) can have diverse effects in the realms of power, and children can be inscribed both as subjects and as objects of analysis in the production of knowledge and scientific discourse on child sexual exploitation.

Foucault notes that power is neither a 'function of consent' 'not a renunciation of freedom'. This notion is central to understanding the value of Foucault's notion of power to feminist analysis. To illustrate it further, let us turn to the example of child sexual exploitation. When

crimes of child sexual exploitation are adjudicated, the question of child's consent and agency is often contested: Did she say 'yes' to sexual activity? Why did she not disclose about the abuse? Why did she continue to be subjected to sexual exploitation? If the child knows that, she can say 'no' to a sexual act, or that she can seek help, but has not done so; it does not mean that she has exercised a choice or that she has power or that she has consented. As Foucault says, power exists only when it is put to action. "What defines a relationship of power is that it is a mode of action which does not act directly and immediately on others. Instead it acts upon their actions: an action upon action, on existing actions, or on those which might arise in future". In a relationship where grooming, fear, vulnerability and control subject the child to her exploitation, she may seemingly have power, but not able to act upon the actions of her exploiters. On the contrary, it is her assailant, who exercises power: in the act of grooming and the subsequent involvement of the child in sexual activity, the perpetrator actively acts upon the actions of the child. When we ask this child to take responsibility, we fail to recognise that though she may possess power, but her critical capacity to disobey her assailant may be undermined where relationships of domination, power and communication intertwine in the process of exploitation. So how might a Foucauldian Feminist analysis assist in bringing these nuances to the fore?

Adopting a feminist approach to analysis will first engage in constituting the child, in the moment of that specific sexual act, either as a 'passive agent', or as an agent whose choices and freedoms are constrained by their social, political, economic vulnerabilities and subsequently engage in analysis that reconstitute her as active agent i.e. in the moment of her ability to complain and recover from her experience. This process of self-renunciation and self-reassertion as a characteristic of modern Western Subjectivity is problematized by Taylor (2013). For one, such a construction posits children as passive and subordinate and feeds the myth of an abstract exploited child. Such abstractions will be reproduced in contexts of a network of power, discourse and knowledge production. In contrast, a Foucauldian approach will enable an analysis of the operation of power, helps us to reinstate the 'subject of a possibility', and saves feminist analysis from constructing passive subjects/subjectivities. Foucauldian framework prevents the researcher from constructing feminist experiences and knowledges as universal and immutable.

Returning to the question of whether appropriating Foucault's theoretical concepts will necessitate Feminism to reconfigure its politics and its tactical deployments? I would answer in the affirmative. I would also argue that such an appropriation will particularly demand that we re-evaluate the way we engage in the construction of feminist knowledges as Marle rightly emphasises (Marle 2012). Foucauldian conception of knowledge-truth-power matrix poses specific challenges to feminist theorising and its modalities of knowledge construction. As Hartsock (1996) notes, it negates the possibility of feminist knowledge. Phelan too notes the critiques of Taylor and Habermas that 'truth as only an effect of the rules of discourse' has problematic consequences. They contend that it a proposition that is impossible to integrate into analytical logic (Phelan, 1990). However, Foucauldian theory offers a map to identify vulnerable spaces, sites to deploy our critique and warns us about the normalising effects that certain forms of those knowledges may have.

Finally, I would argue that the concept of power relations is deployed in feminist analysis as a theory and empowerment as a strategy. Foucault instead applies analytics of power as a strategy to peel off different layers of subjugation and subordination of one in modern lib-

eral democracies. As Sawicki rightly points out Foucault does not offer a “*theory of power, but a critico-historical ethical practice ... for thinking and being otherwise*” (Sawicki 2013). Appropriating Foucault would enable feminism to deploy analytics of power relations as a strategy, transforming Feminism into a strategy or space for ‘practicing freedom’ making it double edged.

### **Confidentiality in qualitative research as a technology of power**

In this section, using Foucauldian theoretical concepts, I will briefly examine the notion of ‘confidentiality’ as both a technology of power and a technology of resistance. Etymologically, the term ‘confidentiality’ comes from Latin ‘cum’ (with) and ‘fides’ (fidelity), implying that ‘confidentiality’ means ‘with fidelity’, a relationship based on trust and fidelity (Ajayi 2003). In practical terms, as noted by Yu, confidentiality can be understood as the process of delinking participant’s real identity from its representation in a research report with the aim of preserving participant anonymity (Yu 2008). It is perceived as an instrument that enhances personal autonomy and control over personal and private lives or information. In an examination of the convention of confidentiality in qualitative research Baez notes that its justifications emerge from liberal values of privacy, autonomy, agency and utility. It is framed as concerning actions and choices, rights and freedoms (Baez 2002). Without eliding the distinction between privacy, confidentiality and agency, this paper treats these concepts as interfacing in a matrix that we could call the matrices of privacy, and produces certain contexts and possibilities. The purpose here is not to pass a moral judgement as to whether confidentiality is good or bad, but to thoroughly problematize the notion and identify its multiple deployments, workings and affects. Using the Foucauldian feminist approach we will ask, in this section, what can workings of the notion of confidentiality tell us about the power and its links to scientific methods, legality and the truth claims of knowledge about child sexual exploitation?

Yu (2008) notes that the convention of confidentiality often gets deployed uncritically in research practice. Baez too argues that for research to be transformative (which certainly is a feminist objective), researchers must critically examine the given nature of confidentiality in qualitative research, not to reject it completely as a principle in research ethics, but to examine what the notion actually permits or forecloses at every stage of the research process (Baez 2002). Baez further notes that the convention of confidentiality influences actions of both the researcher and the researched thwarting transformative potential of research.

Confidentiality as a convention or concept is deployed at many sites in the context of child sexual exploitation: when children disclose abuse to professionals with responsibility for safeguarding such as teachers, police officers, social care workers, youth workers or health care practitioners; when they attempt to access services such as health care, law enforcement or social care; when their narratives are considered as evidence in criminal justice proceedings; when their experiences are reported in the media; or when they are called upon to participate in research. Two of these specific sites are crucial to examining the role of children in the construction of knowledge about them, their sexuality and their abuse: one, the confidential records of agencies or professionals; and two, children’s

engagement in research. I would like to focus on these two sites to examine the possibility for children to be included or occluded from the production of knowledge that concerns them.

The convention of confidentiality acts as an impediment in engaging children in the research and subsequently from the process of engaging in a re-description of their experiences. There are many caveats that operate when we propose to engage children in qualitative research and the foremost being consent, capacity, sensitivity, risk of harm and risk of being identified. Confidentiality acts as a justificatory principle for gate keeping and thus, as noted by Baez, forecloses the possibility of children's engagement in the construction of knowledge. Contemporary discourses (with very few exceptions) on child sexual exploitation in the UK are built upon representations of children as objects and not as critical agents who can defy stereotypical identities and constructions and can engage in the production of knowledge about the crime of child sexual exploitation and its victims/survivors. The very title of a recent report by the Office of the Children's Commissioner in England and Wales "If only someone had listened" indicates the importance and urgency to critically examine practices that forget and disengage the child (OCC 2013).

Let us now turn to the other site of production of knowledge about child sexual exploitation i.e. confidential records of disclosure held by professionals. Children often disclose information about sexual activities to a trusted adult and disclosure becomes a means to an end, be it an empathetic ear, cry for protection, need to access a specific service or simply their attempt to seek an explanation of their experiences. They often expect the trusted adult to keep the information confidential, despite having signed a consent form and being told about the limits of confidentiality. It is possible that confidential records may only reveal partial information about the experiences of children or it may represent them in certain a way and construct a specific identity. Children's engagement in discursive practices about themselves varies on a continuum from a complete lack of participation to a proactive engagement (Warrington 2013). Children's experiences are subjected to professional judgements, processed through apparatuses of expert knowledge and scientific method without much scope for children to alter the course of the production of their identities and knowledge about those categories. The following statements drawn from the Office of the Children's Commissioner's (for England and Wales) inquiry into child sexual exploitation in gangs and groups published in 2013:

*" They talked about me like I wasn't even there. They were very harsh "*  
(OCC 2013: 22).

*" They acted like they knew everything about me, but they don't know me "*

(OCC 2013: 66)

These words of young people are a testimony to the disenchantment and disengagement that children and young people experience. Children's critical engagement, a process where children have the opportunity, freedom as well as the enablement to challenge stereotypes and misrepresentations, is vital to ensure their specific, local experiences pose challenges to dominant and exclusionary constructions of children and their sexualities. The convention of confidentiality can be deployed as a technology of power often constituted as a justificatory practice for protecting safety and agency can deny them the critical engagement and disallow them to question and resist the "disciplinary and discursive sub-

jectification...from the margins of power” (Butler, 1997a, 1997b as quoted in Baez 2002: 50). A lack of the space, opportunity and facilitation of children’s involvement in the production of knowledge would be counterproductive to feminist ethics. However, a Foucauldian approach and methods indicates a way forward, though limited in scope, by allowing the researcher to undertake a genealogical analysis of discursive practices and by examining how child sexual exploitation and its victimisation is problematized in those discursive practices. Such an approach enables us to posit confidentiality as a technology of resistance for children and young people in these contexts. In general, the Foucauldian option for those who struggle against their subjection is to use the capacities and resources available to them in their particular subject position (Simons 1996). The following statement of a child is drawn from another piece of research engaging children:

“I hadn’t talked about what was happening to me before that because I didn’t want people to think I was bad or stupid. It felt safer writing things down, knowing that no-one would change my words’ “

(Jago et al 2011: 72).

The child’s response noted above may to be a very small act of subversion. But it does challenge many assumptions, practices and effects of power that intertwine to discursively produce children and their subjectivities.

To conclude, the paper briefly reviewed feminist critiques of Foucault identifying the convergences and contestation between the two approaches. It asserted that Foucault did not deny the subject altogether, but deconstructed the humanist transcendental autonomous subject. It further elicited that Foucauldian theorisation of power and resistance as inter-related offers feminist analysis the possibility for subjects in the making. It has reiterated that appropriating Foucauldian concepts and tools of analyses would enable feminist analysis to deploy analytics of power relations as a strategy, transforming Feminism into a strategy or space for ‘practicing freedom’ making it double edged. In critically examining the concept of confidentiality in researching child sexual exploitation this paper established that confidentiality as tool should be deployed cautiously and in a manner that promotes the critical engagement of children in the production of knowledge about themselves and the crimes that affect their lives. The uniqueness of a Foucauldian feminist framework, thus, to interrogating child sexual exploitation is in its position, its analytical tools, its creative and critical becoming underpinned by humility and courage.

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## From Mysterious Sexuality to Femininity: Freud and Foucault

In this paper, an attempt to engage the theory and open the space for actuality of Foucault's work through Foucauldian optic of sexuality will be made by parallel reading of Foucault and Freud on the terrain of sexuality and femininity.

In *The History of Sexuality* Foucault writes about the so called *age of repression*: the period of oppression, suppression, exclusion and prohibition of discourse on sex. During this period, which began in 17<sup>th</sup> century and culminated in the time of Victorian bourgeoisie, referencing this so called *age of repression*, a hypothesis had emerged, stating that sex had been continuously repressed and needed to be liberated. We need to speak about sex in order to oppose and speak out against the powers that be. This hypothesis, this notion of repressed sex is precisely what Foucault calls into question. Foucault situates the series of historical analyses and poses the question, not "*Why are we repressed*", but rather, "*Why do we say, with so much passion and so much resentment against our most recent past, against our present, and against ourselves, that we are repressed?*" (Foucault 2010:14). What are the reasons, therefore, and what is the effect of this notion of repressed sex? Ultimately, this question becomes the question of critique: is there really a historical rupture between the age of repression and the critical analysis of repression? Is the critical discourse that addresses the repression not in fact part of the same historical network? Is the critical discourse not part of the same power mechanism?

The objective, in short, is to define the regime of *power-knowledge-pleasure*, and to bring out the 'will to knowledge' that serves as its instrument. This particular 'will to knowledge' in question is related to Christian pastoral – practices of confession and repentance. And through the years this 'will to knowledge' has persisted in constituting a *science of sexuality*. At the same time, sexuality is also a terrain central to Freudian psychoanalysis. This opens a possibility of parallel reading of Foucault and Freud and creates a space, in which the Freudian problem of female sexuality can be developed further.

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In his essay on the *Question of Lay Analysis* Freud tackles the problem of difference between the sexual life of a boy and a girl. "*We know less about the sexual life of little girls,*"

says Freud, “*But we need not feel ashamed of this distinction; after all, the sexual life of adult women is a ‘dark continent’ for psychology*” (Freud 1926e:239). Woman is a *dark continent* for psychology, Freud continues, and we need not feel ashamed because of that! Psychoanalysis does not align itself with answers but with an effort to define and articulate the fundamental question. The problem Freud opens with the formula of the ‘dark continent’ is precisely that kind of question, psychoanalytic question *par excellence*: the question of female sexuality. For Freud, woman is a central figure of psychoanalysis and a focal philosophical problem. Even though he dedicates a substantial part of his life to the question of female sexuality, he never directly asks the question of femininity; Freud ultimately fails to find the *via Regia* to the heart of femininity, as he did researching the dreams and unconscious.

Regardless, Freud offers three distinct answers to the problem of femininity: neurosis, masculinity complex and maternity. But the question persists; for Freud, the question of femininity is a mystery, a riddle (*Rätsel*) that forms the very heart of the ‘dark continent’. A Lecture from 1933 titled *Femininity* is where Freud directly addresses the problem of femininity as a riddle: “*Throughout history, people have knocked their heads against the riddle of the nature of femininity [...]. Nor will you have escaped worrying over this problem those of you who are men; to those of you are women this will not apply you are your selves the problem*” (Freud 1933a[1932]:139-140). For philosophy, the concept of mystery or enigma is a problematic one. Firstly, because it is not yet a concept, and secondly, because it refers to a multitude of Freudian concepts. However, the epistemological reading of Freud shows that there is a difference between the mysterious hypnosis, dreams or unconscious on one side, and the mysterious femininity on the other. The mysteries, referring to hypnosis, dreams and unconscious, are proven by Freud to be so called ‘temporary riddles’, conditional to some other knowledge or findings that Freud tries to call attention to in his essays.

In the case of dreams, Freud refers to the ‘mysteriousness’ as a kind of ignorance related to the lack of knowledge about the unconscious. When one successfully perceives the dream as the wish fulfilment and connects it to the mental processes in awakened states, one can see the mystery disintegrate (*Ich sehe das Rätsel zerfallen*). Similarly, but with a different solution, the mystery of hypnosis is clarified by addressing the hypothesis of the primal horde (Freud 1921c). The so called ‘riddles’ pertaining to dreams, hypnosis and even unconscious are, in the end, regarded by Freud as what we may call ‘*epistemological riddles*’. They are perceived as riddles up until the explanation for certain mechanisms is found.

However, when it comes to women, there is a difference. The riddle seems to somehow persist or, as Shoshana Felman points out, woman seems to resist the explanation (Felman 1993:91). What is it that is enigmatic when it comes to women? In his essay *Fragments of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria* Freud tackles the phenomenon of transference and ties the female sexuality with the ‘unknown quantity’, described as ‘*das X*’ (Freud 1905e[1901]:106). In the essay *Delusion and Dream in Jensen's Gradiva* Freud writes about the ‘enigmatic female colleague’ who replaced the older man in Gradiva’s dreams (Freud 1907a[1906]). In this case the mystery or – the riddle, to be more exact – is not epistemological. Freud never questions the factors that constitute this female colleague as enigmatic, neither does he contribute the mysteriousness to the mechanisms of substitu-

tion in dreams; the enigmatic is simply ‘added’ to the lady in the dreams and regarded as a given. To the same effect, in his essay on *Leonardo da Vinci*, Freud goes on how Leonardo was perceived by his contemporaries not only as a genius, but also as an enigmatic or mysterious person. He proceeds to explain: It wasn’t his ‘sidedness of his capacities and knowledge’ that made him enigmatic to the contemporaries – it was his posture, his appearance, his looks, his taste. He was tall and symmetrically built, charming and of unusual physical strength, he admired beauty and wore beautiful garments, his house was filled with beautiful paintings and was spotlessly clean. Finally, Freud clarifies: Leonardo seemed enigmatic precisely because there was something feminine to him (Freud 1910c). That, what is enigmatic, is the *femininity in itself*.

The enigmatic, when referring to women, is somehow taken for granted or, at best, lacks explanation. Woman is not mysterious or enigmatic for some specific and defined reason but precisely *because* she is a woman. It seems as though for Freud the problem of femininity is an epistemological riddle that somehow tilts itself towards the ontological enigma for which there could be no proper answer. In his lecture on *Femininity* Freud reminds the reader that the nature of femininity is the riddle of such proportions that people have ‘knocked their heads’ against it throughout the whole history. Freud ultimately tries to solve the riddle of femininity by transposing it into the problem of castration and bisexuality. When we follow the ‘solution’ of castration which associates woman with death, there are aspects of the problem that remain epistemologically unexplained. And when we try to elucidate the problem with the concept of bisexuality, we are confronted with what Freud calls the ‘bedrock’ or the ‘living rock of castration’ in *Analysis Terminable and Interminable* (Freud 1937c). Closing words of his lecture on femininity read:

*“A man of about thirty strikes us as a youthful, somewhat unformed individual, whom we expect to make powerful use of the possibilities for development opened up to him by analysis. A woman of the same age, however, often frightens us by her psychological rigidity and unchangeability. Her libido has taken up final positions and seems incapable of exchanging them for others”*

(Freud 1933a[1932]:154).

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This seems to be the Freudian end-point of the problem of femininity. How can we then develop the problem further? How can we demystify the enigma and take the problem beyond the question of the riddle? This is where the project of parallel reading of Foucault and Freud proves fruitful – so let us return to Foucault. Inspired by Nietzsche, Foucault in his study of the history of sexuality employs the genealogical method to analyse the will. While his archaeology, his archaeological method employed in *History of Madness* and *The Order of Things* revolves around thorough observations, segregations and delimitations in opposition to the search for continuity, his genealogy can be viewed as a sort of an ‘upgrade’ which also takes into account the problem of the will.

*“Genealogy is grey, meticulous, and patiently documentary,”* Foucault writes in his essay *Nietzsche, Genealogy, History* (Foucault 2008:87). Genealogy requires

patience, a vast amount of source material and a great attention to details. To record the singularity of events one must be able to discern where and when the occurrences took over different roles, changed directions and even disappeared from the scene or remained unrealised. But most importantly, archaeology and genealogy both reject the search for ‘that which was already there’ – the search for ‘eternal and primordial truths’, the ‘exact essences of things’ and their ‘original identities’. They both reject the search for harmony or equilibrium in history, derived from the existence of immobile forms that precede the external world. Genealogy opposes itself precisely to the search for these kinds of origins and the ‘grand reconstruction’ of the history of thought. Instead, genealogy examines the numberless and relative beginnings, the details, discontinuities and moments of transformation (Foucault 1989:45–46). By including the problem of the will genealogy endeavours to show how knowledge acts as a form of power inside a very specific will.

In his essay on *Nietzsche, Genealogy and History* Foucault, following Nietzsche’s thought, places the concept of origin (*Ursprung*) in opposition to concept of descent (*Herkunft*) and emergence (*Entstehung*). While the search for origins is not the object of genealogy, the search for descent and emergence is a preferred way of historical analysis of this epistemological method. Investigating descent means investigating provenance and belonging, resulting in fragmentation of ‘grand idealistic reconstructions’ and pointing out the heterogeneity in history. To elucidate further: if the search for origins is on the side of identities, eternal idea(l)s and linearity within history, then the search for descent is, quite the contrary, on the side of pluralities, bodies and heterogeneity, rooted in coincidences. By following and analysing the descent genealogy studies the multitude of beginnings and the traits through which and thanks to which they were formed:

*“Genealogy does not resemble the evolution of a species and does not map the destiny of a people. On the contrary, to follow the complex course of descent is to maintain passing events in their proper dispersion; it is to identify the accidents, the minute deviations – or conversely, the complete reversals – the errors, the false appraisals, and the faulty calculations that gave birth to those things that continue to exist and have value for us”*

(Foucault 2008:92)

Emergence, Foucault continues, designates the moment of arising (Foucault 2008:94). Where the analysis of origins would find the ‘originals’, forming an uninterrupted continuity, emergence differentiates the multiple purposes and contents of the concept. *“The eye was not always intended for contemplation,”* Foucault explains: *“initially [it] responded to the requirements of hunting and warfare”* (Foucault 2008:94). The purpose and the content are not given but *produced* through a particular stage of forces, establishing various systems of domination and subjection.

*“Emergence is thus the entry of forces; it is their eruption, the leap from the wings to centre stage, each in its youthful strength. [...] As descent qualifies the strength or weakness of an instinct and its inscription on a body, emergence designates a place of confrontation, but not as a closed field offering the spectacle of a struggle among equals. Rather, as Nietzsche demonstrates in his analysis of good and evil, it is a ‘non-place,’ a pure distance, which indicates that the adver-*

*saries do not belong to a common space. Consequently, no one is responsible for an emergence; no one can glory in it, since it always occurs in the interstice”*

(Foucault 2008:96).

Genealogy can be viewed as an analysis of descent and emergence – its mission is to expose bodies, imprinted by history, and to analyse emergences as the ‘moments of arising’ that break continuity. Following this task, genealogy tries to make all the discontinuities that cross us visible. It tries to put forth the apparent insignificant or particular events that indicate through their inner transformations the mechanisms of power, which are active but disperse and invisible. By including the *problem of the will* the true genealogical question reads: “*What kind of ‘will to knowledge’ is responsible for the introduction of the repressive hypothesis?*” It is true, Foucault states, that the Victorian era has put a censorship on the discourse on sex, but those limitations more or less concern only the vocabulary. On the other hand, the forms of discourse have multiplied; the discourse on sex has spread and entered different areas of life. It has entered the political, medical, educational and judicial sphere – it was taken in by psychiatry, curriculums and courts of law. The discourse on sex needed to be imprinted into the wide range of mechanisms of power. The sex was something that needed to be managed.

Foucault frames the problem of repressive hypothesis by pointing out the mechanisms of control and limitation concerning the discourse on sex. In *The Order of Discourse*, an inaugural lecture at the Collège de France, Foucault describes external and internal mechanisms which limit, restrict, exclude, arrange, dilute and control the flow of the discourse (Foucault 2008:9-23). Especially relevant for us is the ‘opposition between true and false’ as one of the systems of exclusion:

*“Certainly, as a proposition, the division between true and false is neither arbitrary, nor modifiable, nor institutional, nor violent. Putting the question in different terms, however – asking what has been, what still is throughout our discourse, this will to truth which has survived throughout so many centuries of our history; or if we ask what is, in its very general form, the kind of division governing our will to knowledge – then we may well discern something like a system of exclusion (historical, modifiable, institutionally constraining) in the process of development”*

(Foucault 2008:11)

What Foucault tries to grasp here is the series of rules that divide the discourse on true and false. These rules, however, are constantly shifting throughout the history: “*In the 19<sup>th</sup> century there was undoubtedly a will to truth having nothing to do, in terms of the forms examined, of the fields to which it addressed itself, nor the techniques upon which it was based, with the will to knowledge which characterised classical culture”* (Foucault 2008:11-12). This series of rules that divide true from false is crucial in the formation of discourse. The rules determine a certain *will to truth*, *will to knowledge* by attributing a specific position, viewpoint and function to the individual – and those attributes define the limits of one’s judgment and discourse formation.

By following Foucault’s thought one can notice that the concept of knowledge used here is not compatible with that of the classical metaphysics. Knowledge is not something an intel-

lect ‘naturally strives for’, but ultimately a product, a creation, produced from the interplay of the forces, disguised as instincts, wishes and fears. Knowledge is an instrument of a specific interest, which is an interest for domination (Foucault 1997). Furthermore, knowledge is not something universal and unchangeable. Knowledge is rather a fragile creation, built on a temporary compromise inside the battlefield of forces. To become the *knowledge of truth*, the will to knowledge has to *produce the truth as something true*. For this creation of the knowledge of truth a certain system is needed as its prerequisite: a binary system of truth and error, which is, by itself, a product of the said will to knowledge. Therefore we must understand the will to knowledge as a *differential element of the forces*, as an ‘entity’ defining the boundaries of discourse by producing the parameters of that which is true and of that which is false.

\* \* \*

Let us now focus on the problem of the repressive hypothesis and the discourse on sex. “*Surely no other type of society has ever accumulated – and in such a relatively short span of time – a similar quantity of discourses concerned with sex. It may well be that we talk about sex more than anything else,*” writes Foucault in the first volume of *The History of Sexuality* (Foucault 2010:35). How must this contrast of the censorship and limitations regarding the discourse on sex and, on the other hand, the vast multiplication of this very discourse, be understood? Foucault points out that the discourse on sex has, from Victorian era onwards, spread and entered many different areas of life, from psychiatry and medicine to curriculums and courts of law. “*What is peculiar to modern societies, in fact, is not that they consigned sex to a shadow existence, but that they dedicated themselves to speaking of it ad infinitum, while exploiting it as the secret*” (Foucault 2010:37). The discourse has therefore become more frequent, if less rich. But to truly understand this shift, the beginnings of the discourse on sex must be sought in seemingly unrelated history of Christian pastoral and confession.

In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, at the very beginning of the so called ‘age of repression’, a specific form of Christian pastoral has emerged and was characterised with a double movement: on the one hand this was a movement of limitation and exclusion of discourse on sex, but on the other hand, the movement encouraged the multiplication and fusion of this same discourse. Confessions were more plain and ascetic in vocabulary, but they were more frequent and, most importantly, they included a whole new terrain of discussion: sinful *thoughts and wishes*. It was as if the discourse on sex had fused the body and spirit and thus extended its discursive space:

*“The Christian pastoral prescribed as a fundamental duty the task of passing everything having to do with sex through the endless mill of speech. The forbidding of certain words, the decency of expressions, all the censorings of vocabulary, might well have been only secondary devices compared to that great subjugation: ways of rendering it morally acceptable and technically useful”*

(Foucault 2010:24).

In this historical process there is a tendency to tear out the sex from the limited terrain of morality, to subject it to 'the eye of reason' and inscribe it into various mechanisms of power. Hypothesis of repression is correct when arguing that sex has been subjected to a certain censorship, but it would be false to claim that sex is something what has been disappearing from the discourse and needs to be liberated. The area of jurisdiction that has a say in this modified discourse on sex has been vastly extended, a series of new doors have been opened. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century talking about sex was encouraged from the political, economic and technical sphere. The discourse was consequently subjected to inventory, analysis and research, slowly but persistently becoming the object of *reason*, not only morality. It seems as if there was a kind of necessity to approach the topic of sex with the tools of science and reason, or as Foucault puts it: "*one had to speak of it as of a thing to be not simply condemned or tolerated but managed, inserted into systems of utility, regulated for the greater good of all, made to function according to an optimum*" (Foucault 2010: 28).

But has, as a result of this tendency, the discourse on sex become clearer, more transparent and illuminated by the 'light of reason'? Quite the contrary, fusing with the tradition of Christian pastoral, sex has been displaced on the side of confession, becoming a topic of excitement and *mystery*.

*"We must not forget that by making sex into that which, above all else, had to be confessed, the Christian pastoral always presented it as the disquieting enigma,"* Foucault writes, and continues: "*not a thing which stubbornly shows itself, but one which always hides, the insidious presence that speaks in a voice so muted and often disguised that one risks remaining deaf to it*"

(Foucault, 2010: 37)

The sex itself is not something hidden and enigmatic, but the mechanisms and procedures shape the discourse as enigmatic and mysterious. Fusing the Christian pastoral and scientific approach, discourse on sex has become an integral piece of the problem of truth. In fact, discourse on sex has been, more than any other discourse of 19<sup>th</sup> century, characterised with both, the will to knowledge and will to ignorance – two sides of the same will to truth. How can it be, that so much discourse has been produced on both sides and with so little interaction? As pointed out by Foucault this kind of disparity would indicate that the aim of a discourse "*was not to state the truth but to prevent its very emergence*" (Foucault 2010:55). It seems as though a vast apparatus for the production of truth was built around sex and the ignorance or mystery was – or should we say *is* – a crucial part of it. This procedure of truth production, specific for the 'western' Judeo-Christian civilisation, is called *scientia sexualis*.

*Scientia sexualis* is grounded in the institution of confession, while its production inscribes itself in the field of *power-knowledge* (Foucault 2010:57). Its purpose is to tell the truth about sex, but its procedures are the ones of Christian pastoral. Confession is not something specific to the discourse on sex, Foucault says. Confession was placed in the very centre of the 'western' mechanisms of truth production. It is present in criminal law, interrogation, examination; it has become one of the most valued techniques of truth production. In fact, confession has been inscribed so deep in the fields of medicine, law, pedagogy, familial and other relations that we do not regard it as a mechanism of power but, on the contrary, we perceive confession as a *method of liberation*. Power limits, but



confession liberates. This perception, however, lacks to grasp the full spectrum of power mechanisms, specifically its power of production.

Foucault warns that techniques of power are manifold. The ‘age of repression’ was not characterised only by repression on the side of vocabulary, but predominantly by the mechanisms of encouragement and multiplication. We mustn’t be lured by the instances of prohibition, exclusion, censure and negation – techniques of power include the instances of production of discourse and production of truth. And confession, rooted in Christian pastoral, is precisely this type of a technique. The purpose of confession as a technique is to establish the individuals as subjects. The process in question has two goals: to designate the *individuation* of the individual and to denote the individual as *subjected*. In telling about ourselves, our deeds and our secrets we subject ourselves to power mechanisms by producing ourselves as subjects. The seat of power, the agency of domination “*does not reside in the one who speaks [...], but in the one who listens and says nothing; not in the one who knows and answers, but in the one who questions and is not supposed to know*” (Foucault 2010:62).

What remains to be answered is how the discourse on sex has been able to penetrate the boundaries of ecclesiastical ceremonies and Christian pastoral and to enter the field of scientific knowledge. One of the crucial procedures was to render the ways of sex obscure and elusive by nature. The discourse on sex involved “*something that tried to stay hidden*” (Foucault 2010:65), making it an alluring target for scientific enquiry. Human sexuality is characterised by obscurity, mystery and dimness. With those characteristics it becomes an integral part of power mechanisms, because mystery is not an obstacle but rather a catalyst for the operation of said power mechanisms. It seems as though the discourse on sex needed to be made obscure to enable power mechanisms to occupy it – and this mysteriousness finally provided sufficient reasons to the scientific discourse to interrogate and examine everything related to sex. *Scientia sexualis* managed to adjust the old confession method with the rules of scientific discourse, producing what we now call *sexuality*.

*Scientia sexualis*, the ‘western’ procedure of truth production, was formed in 19<sup>th</sup> century by merging with the scientific discourse to establish sexuality as a mechanism of ‘truth about sex and its pleasures’. Thus, sexuality is a function of a discourse on truth; a function of a specific will to knowledge. This will to knowledge has fastened the discourse on sex to an ordered and inventoried truth about sex and imprinted it with a dark mystery. Little by little, sexuality was becoming an object of increasingly greater suspicion, excitement, curiosity and threat: “*the fragment of darkness that we each carry within us*” (Foucault 2010:68).

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By reading Nietzsche, Foucault is able to apply the genealogical analysis to trace the ‘will to knowledge’, tied to the ancient form of preaching and confession. By analysing the merge of the confession techniques with the scientific discourse in function of the Christian will to knowledge, relevant information regarding the reading of Freud can be extracted. We showed how the Christian will to knowledge found a way to survive, entering the centuries of scientific revelations. It has assisted in the invention of the ‘repressive hypotheses’ in an

attempt to exercise power through the confession about sex. Let us elucidate how this new information is relevant to our reading of Freud on the topic of *female sexuality*.

The task of Foucauldian genealogy is to demonstrate how knowledge joins up with power and forms something called *knowledge-power*. Namely, genealogy displays how knowledge acts as a form of power mechanism within a specific will. Foucauldian historical analysis reveals sexuality as something constituted within this specific will. Since the Middle Ages, 'western' societies have been establishing the confession as one of the main mechanisms for the production of truth, says Foucault. And these mechanisms are the beginnings, the ground, on which, with the help of modern scientific discourse, sexuality is constituted as production of true discourse on sex.

In combination with techniques of confession and scientific discursivity sexuality was constituted precisely as a field of concealed meanings and secrets, which need to be deciphered. According to Foucault it was constituted as a 'disquieting enigma', as something that is always hidden. Constituted as such, sexuality had to be liberated and exposed through the endless confession and interrogation – one of those methods being psychoanalysis itself. For Freud, the material on femininity is "*for some incomprehensible reason [...] far more obscure and full of gaps*" (Freud 1924d:9). The same goes for the sexual development of girls in comparison with boys. Following this idea, we read in the *Question of Lay Analysis* that female sexuality is the 'dark continent' for psychology. We have already pointed out how Freud, with a limited success, tries to tackle this enigma (*Rätsel*) of femininity and female sexuality. Even though there are many topics in psychoanalysis that are mysterious in one way or another, Freud proposes an explanation to each of them. But the question of female sexuality, the Freudian 'dark continent' is not only a mystery but also a true enigma so far as Freud does not find the satisfactory answer to it. One could argue that for Freud female sexuality transcends the epistemological enigma and becomes a kind of an ontological enigma that needs to be demystified. There is not *something enigmatic* in the enigma of female sexuality, but, as he points out in the case of Leonardo da Vinci, the enigmatic is the fact of femininity itself.

It appears as though the enigma or the riddle of femininity condenses in the terrain denoted by Freud as 'female sexuality'. Why *denoted*? It is, at the very least, curious how Freud regards 'female sexuality' as a derivative form of what one may call 'universal sexuality' or simply sexuality. There are questions and problems in psychoanalysis that concern the sexuality 'as such' and there are others that concern the 'female sexuality'. Freud never talks about 'male sexuality' or 'masculine sexuality' *per-se*. It seems as though the 'female sexuality' as a derivative of sexuality 'as such' owes its mysterious character and its 'darkness' of the 'dark continent' to the enigma of woman. But, as Foucault points out, the enigmatic and mysterious is an integral piece of sexuality as something historically produced. Darkness of the 'dark continent' is not a liability for the power mechanisms but indispensable to its workings: if power mechanisms together with their techniques of inquiry, examination and interrogation were to gain jurisdiction over the terrain of sexuality, they had to 'darken' it, produced it 'as enigmatic'.

Mystery is subjected to power mechanisms, but, as Foucault says, "[w]here there is power, there is resistance" (Foucault 2010:92). Shoshana Felman comes to a similar conclusion reading Freud's questions of femininity; she points to a specific resistance, concerning the problem of ignorance and mystery when it comes to male appropriation of femininity (Fel-

man 1993:41). Can this resistance be a sign that we are treading on a particularly condensed area of power relations?

If darkness and mystery of sexuality should be perceived as socially and historically constituted, the analogy with the 'female sexuality' could be drawn. It seems as though 'female sexuality' is thought as enigmatic precisely because woman is an object of power mechanisms *par excellence*. If the 'female sexuality' is conceived as a 'dark continent', there are legitimate, scientific reasons to apply a multitude of techniques to the topic of not only 'female sexuality' but also women by extension. We have already shown that the agency of domination doesn't reside in the one who speaks but in the one who examines, inquires and interrogates in silence. There is an undeniable silence when it comes to 'male sexuality' and by placing male and female sexualities side by side one can observe the *power play* in action.

To conclude; because the woman, supposed to be an unsolvable enigma, forms the integral part of the very darkness or mystery of 'female sexuality', it seems to be epistemologically grounded to question what Freud denominates as more puzzling, more mysterious and more peculiar type of sexuality. In the light of sexuality, constituted as 'disquieting enigma', and true discourse on sex one needs to question the very need for the hypothesis of 'female sexuality' for psychoanalysis. Do we really need the concept of 'female sexuality' or is it more of an impediment; paraphrasing Gaston Bachelard – an epistemological obstacle in our epistemological reading of Freud? Should the research on this matter continue, we propose to shift the inquiry from the question of the mystery of 'female sexuality' to the search for reasons why the femininity is regarded as mysterious and why the hypothesis of 'female sexuality' was necessary. This question addresses the problem of the will at its very core and is, inevitably and ultimately, a question of the will to knowledge that requires a further investigation of Foucault and Nietzsche on the matters of sexuality and femininity.

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## Michel Foucault and The Futurity of Feminist Philosophy

### 1. Introduction

I cannot get over Michel Foucault and the more feminist texts I am reading, the more I see that it is the case of many feminist philosophers. That is to say that feminist philosophy constantly engages Foucault in its scholarship by criticizing his thought, taking inspiration from it or simply by working on it. I believe that this ceaseless engagement in his work stems from the very nature of it. Foucault's work invites thinkers to get involved in it. It is in itself open to be reworked, de(re)construct, to be a partner in a discussion. It is often the case that feminist theorists do not interpret Foucault's philosophy as a systematic whole, they rather critically use some notions, adapt crucial ideas for their own purposes, incorporate certain lines of argument into feminist scholarship and modify it.

On the one hand that is exactly Foucault's own attitude to his masters, as he states on Friedrich Nietzsche: "For myself, I prefer to utilize the writers I like. The only valid tribute to thought such as Nietzsche's is precisely to use it, to deform it, to make it groan and protest. And if commentators then say that I am being faithful or unfaithful to Nietzsche, that is of absolutely no interest" (Foucault 1980: 53, 54).

On the other hand, Foucault also encourages others to utilize his own work rather than comment on it. Jana Sawicki in her book *Disciplining Foucault: Feminism, Power and the Body* gives a description of her meeting with the French philosopher: "I told him that I had just finished writing a dissertation on his critique of humanism. Not surprisingly, he responded with some embarrassment and much seriousness. He suggested that I not spend energy talking about him and, instead, do what he was doing, namely, write genealogies" (Sawicki 1991:15). Not all the feminist authors mentioned in this articles write genealogies, but all of them make use of Foucault's notions and they do so with their own theoretical objectives in mind.

This usage-oriented approach to Foucault's philosophy is justified not only by his own practice of paying tribute to philosophers by utilizing their work or by his advice on how to engage with his concepts, but it also is embedded in his broader attitude towards theory. As Gilles Deleuze explicitly states in his talk with Foucault on their attitude to theory: "A theory is exactly like a box of tools" (Deleuze, Foucault 2006, internet). Thus theory may be used just like tools are, to dismantle, to build, to preserve.

In this article I would like to consider how feminist philosophy was and still is engaging Foucault and I would like to make my own usage of his thought as well.

I see at least eight reasons why feminist philosophy might find Foucault's theory useful.

## 2. Reason and its others

First of all, Foucault is engaged in a critical elaboration on Reason and Enlightenment, seeing in both not only development possibilities but also an inhibiting power and constraints. His critical take on the reason supports the effort of feminist thinkers to criticize the notion of universality of reason, pointing to its sites and mechanisms of exclusion. In his *Madness and Civilization* Foucault states that madness is both excluded and objectified, that it lacks its proper language and that it is not contradictory in itself but it is qualified as contradictory (Foucault 1988 [1961]). Madness as reason's other occupies similar position in a society to a woman – frequently presented as the other (there are of course other figures of the other in European culture such as animal, nature, homosexual etc.). Woman as reason's other is often presented as insane, mad, and hysterical. Foucault intended to write a volume of *The History of Sexuality* entitled *La femme, la mere et l'hysterique* (A Woman, a Mother, and a Hysteric) but never did. We may only assume that it could shed new light on a woman's situation in a world of reason.

We may however juxtapose his project of tracing reason's others with Luce Irigaray's thoughts on femininity. Belgian philosopher states: "Not knowing what she [woman – MRS] wants, ready for anything, even asking for more, so long as he will 'take' her as his 'object' when he seeks his own pleasure. Thus she will not say what she herself wants; moreover, she does not know, or no longer knows, what she wants" (Irigaray 1993 [1977]: 25). According to Irigaray woman is objectified and excluded to the point where she cannot speak for herself and – what is more – she has no "proper" name. In a way Foucault and Irigaray engage in a kind of common critique of "the economy of the Same" tracing the sites of exclusion that has no name of its own.

## 3. Subject in question

Secondly, Foucault may be inspiring as a thinker who dwells on the concepts of subjectivity and individuation, especially in the light of the crises of the subject in poststructuralist theory.

On the one hand, it was a common objection to Foucault's theory that he dismantles the agency of the subject. From this perspective it would be difficult to defend emancipatory politics or politics of identity that influenced feminist political struggles. This attitude raises a lot of questions such as: is a subject active or is it just an effect of power relations? How is it possible for the subject to influence his or her social environment, to act on it, to change and transform power structures, to emancipate, to fulfill one's aims, to be

recognized? Do theories that challenge the subject's agency pose a threat to feminism as a theory and political struggle? Those questions raised so many doubts on the possible future of the alliance between Foucault and feminism, that some feminist theorist such as Louise McNay for instance looked forward to a subject-oriented shift in French philosopher's work. McNay appreciated that Foucault in his last years undertook the question of the subject as a principal site of his theoretical examination. She claimed, as some other authors did, that in his last work, Foucault "returns to the subject". This "return to the subject" from McNay's perspective makes it possible for feminism to be still engaged in Foucault's work. It gave an inspiration for feminism which found it challenging to negotiate between the vanishing subject and the urge to speak from the position of feminist subject, who initiates social transformations and is capable of political agency (McNay 1992: 192).

On the other hand, however, Foucault may be also perceived as a thinker who in fact did not return to the subject, but he was involved in issues such as subjectification or individuation as power effects from the very beginning of his philosophical career. Moreover, we may state that by dismantling the autonomous subject, he enables other conceptualizations of subjectivity that are not based on substance, essence or identity. It also provides means to conceptualize subjectivity outside the concept of "Universal Woman" that raises plenty of – mostly – ethical doubts. We may trace this line of inspiration in the work of Judith Butler (performative subject), Teresa de Laurentis (eccentric subject), Rosi Braidotti (nomadic subject) and many, many others. It may not be always clear that there is a direct inspiration by Foucault's work, but it is evident that his work forced philosophers to rethink the very concept of subject, subjectivity and his or her agency.

#### 4. History – Herstory

Thirdly, Foucault is particularly interested in speaking out the history of excluded others and being attentive to the fact that history may vary depending on one's position (Foucault 2003 [1997]). It is precisely what feminist historians are trying to elaborate when talking about so called "*herstory*", thus a story that was obliterated, forgotten, invisible. On the other hand an importance of one's position is underlined by Foucault in his famous talk with Deleuze. They both stressed that it would be highly improper to speak on behalf of others (Deleuze, Foucault 2006, internet), that it is important to speak for oneself in all circumstances to avoid colonizing others or dominating them by imposing one's ideas, notions, attitudes, behaviors, aims on them. This general trend may be traced in various feminist stances. Just to exemplify this let us mention the concept of "politics of location" by Adrienne Rich (Rich 1986), "situated knowledges" coined by Donna Haraway (Haraway 1988) or the situating political practices introduced by Rosi Braidotti in her development of the idea of nomadism (Braidotti 1994). Those various theoretical position cull inspiration or starting point from the Foucauldian idea that to use one's own voice and speak out from one's perspective is crucial in politics. What is more, being aware of power relations that run through us is one of the main tasks of us today, as philosopher states: „(...) problem of our days is not to try to liberate the individual from the state, and from the state's institutions, but to liberate us both from the state and from the type of individualization which is linked to the state. We have to promote new forms of subjectivity through the refusal of this kind of individuality which has been imposed on us for several centuries" (Foucault 1983:

216). Thus searching for power relations that form us and run through us, the importance of which in feminist theory was expressed by different practice of situating or locating oneself, is a way to search for new forms of subjectivity. This last motive was broadly developed by feminist philosophers that, as mentioned above, engaged themselves in a quest for new, feminist subject conceptualizations.

## 5. Power revisited

Fourthly, by establishing the notion of power-knowledge and the idea of power that stems from the bottom up, Foucault is confirming the fact that power structures and power relations penetrate all the aspects of our lives, they form bodies, subjects and individuals. Foucault puts it straightforwardly: "A society without power relations can only be an abstraction" (Foucault 1983: 222-223). This theoretical approach was reused by feminist philosophers to address the special situation of disciplining and forming women's bodies. Just to exemplify this standpoint I could mention the work of Sandra Lee Bartky in her article *Foucault, Femininity, and the Modernization of Patriarchal Power* or Susan Bordo in her book *Unbearable Weight. Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body*. Foucault's historical analyses of power relations made it also possible to face challenges brought about by biopolitics/ biopower which also influenced the way female bodies are perceived, used, and treated, especially in terms of reproduction.

## 6. Body under construction

Fifthly, the subject and the body are both according to Foucault the effects of power relations. This standpoint allows to seriously threaten the idea that there is a natural order of things or biological basis that influence the way social roles are distributed. The body in Foucault is not natural, not given, it is socially constructed (McNay 1992:17). This powerful statement received a strong feminist response. It allowed questioning *status quo* that established relations between sexes as influenced by the laws of nature. It opened up the possibility of investigating into the very ways we see something as natural, which in this case meant something unchangeable, pre-given, unquestionable. Whereas, according to feminist thinkers, the way we value femininity and masculinity reflects power structures and is the effect of them. This kind of inquiries were present in feminist scholarship from Simone de Beauvoir, when she famously stated: "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman" to Judith Butler and her take on gender-sex opposition.

## 7. Sex(uality)

Sixthly, not only subjectivity and body are constructed, but also sexuality and sex (Foucault 1983: 210) are the effects of power structures. Louis McNay claims that this belief



unlocked the possibility to reflect on the limited accounts of female sexuality provided by the patriarchal culture and to investigate into the ways the culture controls and determines it (McNay 1992: 3). It also helped to rethink the ostensibly “natural” institution of heterosexuality and fuelled critical notions of it like “compulsory heterosexuality” (Adrienne Rich) or the “heterosexual matrix” (Judith Butler). The critical take on sex and sexuality shed new light on the possibility to analyze notions in question from the historical perspective. It was reflected on by Thomas Laqueur in his book *Making Sex. Body and Gender From the Greeks to Freud*, where the author not only underlines the historicity of sex and sexuality, but also stresses the fact that what might be perceived as “normal” (“natural” or “given”) model of sex and gender is in fact rooted in the specific, historical, social context that enables certain views on sex while not admitting others. According to Foucault the fact that the society tends to seek truth in sex reveals the fact that sex is constructed by power relations. When the French philosopher reflects on Herculine Barbin and asks: “Do we *trully* need a *true* sex?” (Foucault 1980 [1978]: vii), he wants to inquiry about the ways to oppose the modes of individualization or subjugation put into action in the concept of truthful sex.

## 8. Oppression-resistance entanglement

Seventhly, Foucault is very explicit about the fact that power is not only about oppression, but also about the resistance. To search for the modes of resistance is the core of his analysis of power and, as Jana Sawicki, the author of the book *Disciplining Foucault: Feminism, Power, and the Body*, underlines, Foucault thus provides feminist philosophers not only with the recognition of appropriate methodology to dwell on theory and society, but also with the idea of resistance: “I’m not positing a substance of power. I’m simply saying: as soon as there’s a relation of power there’s a possibility of resistance. We’re never trapped by power: it’s always possible to modify its hold, in determined conditions and following a precise strategy” (Sawicki 1991: 24-25). Sawicki denies the fact that woman may be seen only as a passive victim of certain power relations with no possibility to act. As Foucault aptly puts it: “At the very heart of the power relationship, and constantly provoking it, are the recalcitrance of the will and the intransigence of freedom” (Foucault 1983: 222). By this Foucault allows in-depth understanding of power, which is inhibiting and stimulating, negative and affirmative, restricting and creative.

## 9. Material bits and pieces

Eighthly, and very recently Foucault is used by so called new materialist feminist scholars to rethink the problem of how matter comes to matter. Although we may claim that his elaboration on matter is insufficient, he mentions from time to time “bodies and pleasures” or the most material and vital elements (Foucault 1980 [1976]) that may be perceived as an ontological stance in a very initial phase. But more importantly, his concept of discourse as an active, creative agent (enriched by the notion of performativity by Butler) is used by Karen Barad to push to the extreme the way matter comes to matter and the way the material and linguistic are intertwined (Barad 2003: 808-811, 819-824). The diffractive reading

of Foucault performed by Barad attests to the fact that he can be seen, used, and developed outside poststructuralism which is often perceived as his theoretical background. It also affirms the fact that Foucault is still engaged in very different scholarships and his concepts remain vital and worth re-using, de(re)constructing in different contexts.

## 10. Futurity of thought

Yet I am strongly convinced that this popularity of the French writer among feminist researchers is also caused by a dimension of futurity that his work embraces and engages with. As I believe it is in the certain openness towards the future, which enlivens Foucault for feminist thinkers and which proves to be interesting for him in feminism also.

Partly it is due to the fact mentioned earlier that he treats his theory as a box of tools, which also means that it is important to use it in the future. In fact Foucault invites us to do so, to work with his concepts to accomplish liberation from the given ways of being individualized, being subjugated to the institutions of the state and the state itself. And this openness towards the future (undefined and imprecise as it is a matter of experimentation with for example new forms of subjectivity) introduces a time aspect into Foucault's stance. It may resonate with what Elizabeth Grosz articulated: "(...) to the extent that all radical politics is implicitly directed towards bringing into existence a future somehow dislocated from the present, our very object and milieu is time" (Grosz 2010: 51).

Let me remind you of an interesting quotation from the interview with Foucault entitled *The Confessions of the Flesh*:

„Well, regarding everything that is currently being said about the liberation of sexuality, what I want to make apparent is precisely that the object 'sexuality' is in reality an instrument formed a long while ago, and one which has constituted a centuries-long apparatus of subjection. The real strength of the women's liberation movements is not that of having laid claim to the specificity of their sexuality and the rights pertaining to it, but that they have actually departed from the discourse conducted within the apparatuses of sexuality. These movements do indeed emerge in the nineteenth century as demands for sexual specificity. What has their outcome been? Ultimately, a veritable movement of de-sexualisation, a displacement effected in relation to the sexual centering of the problem, formulating the demand for forms of culture, discourse, language, and so on, which are no longer part of that rigid assignation and pinning-down to their sex which they had initially in some sense been politically obliged to accept in order to make themselves heard. The creative and interesting element in the women's movements is precisely that”

(Foucault 1980: 219)

In the quotation above Foucault seems to claim that women's liberation movement (here I treat it as a synonym for feminism) is a movement that needed to establish a feminine subject for political reasons, but is now capable of abandoning the concept of sexuality or sex as, indeed, formed by power relations. Feminist theory is thus capable of recognizing power

structures in the very notion of sex and thus may be understood as a theory aimed at reflecting on power, opposing it, and refusing to be subjected to it, and not at supporting and maintaining ideas that promise freedom but turn out to be subjugating. From my perspective feminism, according to Foucault, is seen as a heart of engaged philosophy, which simultaneously recognizes power structures and seeks for new ways to oppose it, to counter it, and to disagree with it.

I suggest to understand this “movement of de-sexualisation” as Foucault names it, as a movement that recognizes dualist oppositions (such as woman-man, nature-culture, body-mind etc.) as not only oppositions, but also hierarchies, that comprehend the mechanisms, which have led to establishing them and see the urge to overcome, but not obliterate them. In that Foucault sees in feminist theory the possibility to overcome paradoxes that for some like Joan Wallach Scott are embedded in feminist logic: “Feminism was a protest against women’s political exclusion; its goal was to eliminate “sexual difference” in politics, but it had to make its claim on behalf of “women” (who were discursively produced through “sexual difference”). To the extent that it acted for “women,” feminism produced the “sexual difference” it sought to eliminate. This paradox—the need both to accept and to refuse “sexual difference”—was the constitutive condition of feminism as a political movement throughout its long history” (Scott 1996: 3-4).

The mentioned paradox although may be indeed recognized in feminist theory struggles, is not determining feminism by no means. It may be overcome and in this movement outside the, so to speak, apparently unavoidable contradiction, Foucault finds what is the most interesting thread in feminist theory.

It is worth mentioning that this movement that results in “a displacement effected in relation to the sexual centering of the problem” and in “the demand for forms of culture, discourse, language, and so on” may be recognized in the so called “new materialist” trend in feminist theory.

We may trace down the kind of “movement of de-sexualization” in the works of contemporary feminist new materialist scholars such as Rosi Braidotti, Elizabeth Grosz or Myra J. Hird. That does not mean that the notion of sexuality is erased from the feminist scholarship. On the contrary, it is reinvented, rethought, de(re)constructed, renewed in such a way that it is closer to Foucauldian “ontology of bodies and pleasures” or “the most material and vital elements”. Feminist thinkers experiment with the notion of sexuality endeavoring to reformulate the concept in question in new unexpected frames so that it would help us rethink the imposed forms of individuation. Braidotti in *The Posthuman* suggests that we should rethink sexuality without sex, discover the complexity of sexuality as a power (id est force) capable of deterritorialization of our identity (Braidotti 2013: 99). Grosz sees in “sexual difference” reformulated along the lines of sexual selection the evolutionary mechanism responsible for what is new, surprising, unthought-of (Grosz 2004). Hird experiments with transsexuality in nonhuman and finds traces of queer in animals and bacteria (Hird 2008 [2006]). There is thus a strong tendency that directs feminist theory towards the future, which is accompanied by the quest for a new world, space, time, culture, language, relationships, imaginary, subjectivity, desire, bodies, pleasures, sexuality etc.

Feminism is constantly engaging Foucault and that is for two reasons as I tried to argue in this paper.

Firstly, there are plenty of threads in Foucault's writings that happen to be useful for feminist theory. To be mentioned, reworked, and challenged in the work by so many different thinkers like Sandra Lee Bartky, Jana Sawicki, Judith Butler, Rosi Braidotti or Karen Barad proves the potential of Foucault's work and its being up-to-date.

Secondly, Foucault noticed in feminist theory something more than a standpoint that would stick to the notion of sex and sexuality or a political stance that has very specific aims to be achieved. I would say that he saw in feminism the will to de(re)construct power relations and as a consequence sexuality and sex relations themselves in search for a future that is opening to the unknown, unthought-of, unconceptualized. As I believe Foucault and feminist theory may be linked through their willingness and eagerness to be engaged in and by the world, their openness to experiment with the new and their alertness not to surrender to an illusion of the world without power relations.

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## Spatial and Temporal Aspects of Foucault's Taught

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## Chateaubriand and Foucault: A Strange Encounter in Political Theology

### Introduction

The strange encounter starts with two prosaic disclaimers. They may not be strange but they seem to be necessary. The first one concerns the concept of political theology. It is not used as a precise reference to Carl Schmitt who, following his conservative teacher Donoso Cortés, notably claimed that all concepts of political theory are secularized theological concepts (Schmitt 1985: 36).<sup>1</sup> By political theology I do not mean that state is a secular God which would hardly fit any analytical framework informed by Foucault. The concept is not used as a reference to Ernst Kantorowicz either. It is not an homage to his study in medieval political theology, dealing with the King's two bodies (Kantorowicz 1957). Although that book and its argument tend to be important for Foucault, especially in his *Discipline and Punish* where it is explicitly mentioned in the context of writing of a genealogy of the body of the condemned, it is not of importance for this comparison. The term is instead used in a vague sense of political spirituality. Political theology, proposed by an author, refers to some kind of utopian vision, explicitly stated or implied, usually energetic and emotional, that has political connotations or relevance. By political theology within this text I shall mean such projections by the two compared authors: their normative visions, eschatologies if they offer any, hopes and plans, associated with the non-places to be achieved or that are unachievable; a displacement of such motives to unexpected by-places, and the affirmation or the critique of practices that try to achieve utopian projections.

Second disclaimer is a necessary exercise in *ad hominem* modesty. One cannot be too small in the shadows of the vast and ever expanding Foucault industry, but reading, writing and teaching about his work for some years now, makes me more or less interpretively confident in dealing with Foucault. It is not so with Chateaubriand: this is my first paper dealing with him beyond disparate peripheral remarks. I have got to know him recently, mostly through reading of his longish memoirs—a traditionally unreliable genre of literature—which are in this particular case written by a “romantic” character who had a decent reputation of being unreliable himself. Although I feel I have mastered the basics, or at

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1. More specifically, Schmitt wrote about the concepts “of the modern theory of the state”. Cortés opens his *Essays on Catholicism, Liberalism and Socialism* with contempt for Proudhon's bewilderment expressed in *Les confessions d'un révolutionnaire*: unlike for Proudhon, it is perfectly natural for Cortés that we should stumble on theology in all our political questions.

least the things necessary for the here proposed argument, Chateaubriand's life and work are for me still largely an uncharted territory which, I hope, I will have time to read and explore in the future. Thus, if there are serious strains, faults or omissions in the interpretation offered, they are more probably to be expected on the older historical pole of this encounter. The argument will anyway speak for itself. I believe I have not overseen something crucially important but that is anyway on readers to judge.

To compare Chateaubriand and Foucault – the theme of this essay – is something that to my knowledge has not been done by myriad of followers and critics of Foucault. The first point of this comparison is as general as it can be, which suggests it is simple and useful. If analogies and metaphors are not only stylistic ornaments but creative ways of thinking, the unusual comparisons have a good chance to shed new light on the old worlds, and even create new worlds. War is a continuation of politics in Clausewitz, while in Foucault's thinking from the 1970s, exemplified in his debate with Chomsky, *To Discipline and Punish* and *The Society Should Be Defended* course at the Collège de France, politics becomes a continuation of war, creating an interesting conceptual frame to explore society. Similarly, a valuable perceptive prominence is gained when one author is viewed through the lenses of another, and vice-versa. It is even more so in the elusive terrain of utopianism which offers at the same time similar and radically different visions, which are best ascertained by comparison to their peers. By the means of comparison we tend to see things more clearly. In this specific case, the idea of comparison is to sharpen the picture of utopianism in Foucault which calls for a more systematic investigation. Secondly, this brings up a specific argument that will emerge out of comparison: in spite of his declared "hyperactive pessimism," scepticism, and frequent warnings to be careful and avoid dangers, Foucault was in fact a passionate utopian thinker, focused on the body as a vessel of utopianism and risk-taking as its mode; envisioning worldly political utopias of open games of aestheticization of the self, in an uneasy political liaison with liberalism in the fundamental sense of liberties of speech, movement, conduct and human endeavour.

The essay is structured as follows. It first explains the reasons for this strange encounter. By listing and elaborating the differences and similarities between Foucault and Chateaubriand, it provides the answer to the question: Why at all this comparison makes sense unlike, let's say, a comparison between (utopian thinking of) Karl Marx and Lady Gaga? Notwithstanding all the differences of lives, deeds, texts and styles, parallel and promising motifs will emerge justifying comparison. The second part briefly lays down a conceptual framework for the comparison, given the expected question: what are we comparing exactly? The answer draws on the typological distinction between utopias and heterotopias. The third section provides an overview of Chateaubriand's utopianism, while the fourth does the same for Foucault, elaborating on his ideas on the utopian body, the controversial Iranian episode and his turn toward liberal utopianism paired with the hermeneutics of the self. The final section develops the theme of the two revolutions in which two authors took part each in their own way, as actors and spectators. After diagnosing that the utopianism in both authors is of the colour grey, that is, a combination of utopian and heterotopian motifs, the essay thus ends up by tackling the themes of violence and universality, important for any political theologies of utopian thinking. The specific event used to provide a modest sketch of these problems is The French Revolution.



## Chateaubriand and Foucault: a not so strange encounter?

To start with the obvious: the trivia associated with the social and metaphysical categories such as class, space and time that tend to erect an insurmountable distance between people. François-René de Chateaubriand (1768-1848) was an aristocrat, a self-described *gentilhomme*, in times when aristocracy was in a historical decline. He was a man of words, but foremost a man of action: a diplomat, politician, and even a soldier, wounded in battle. He was a proto-romantic. Awaiting death in his seventies, he writes his memoirs that became a classical piece of the world's literary heritage. Melancholy soaks the pages from the beginning, as the ocean bathes the coast of Brittany where he was born, in the port city of Saint-Malo, spending his later childhood days in the secluded chateau de Combourg (1,1,3).<sup>2</sup> Michel Foucault (1926-1984), on the other hand, was a professor and a global academic star from the 20<sup>th</sup> century, an influential public intellectual but foremost a man of words, “an author,” no matter how he eschewed that position in his prefaces and theoretical elaborations. He was born into a provincial bourgeois family of good standing, as a son of a reputable surgeon—in central France, far away from the sea. On the surface, he seemed cynical in the sense of not expressing his emotions or beliefs directly on the pages of his works. In Charles Taylor's words, if he made us believe anything, it is the fact that everything is a “sham” and there is no firm historical or metaphysical ground to stand on (Taylor 1984). Chateaubriand mostly writes as a devout believer, a catholic firmly placed within Christian paradigm and its apologetics. And Foucault? Even if his interest in the practices of the self in early Christianity and in the role of confession in forming Western subjectivity; his monkish practices of work in a Dominican library, and his early years attendance of a Jesuit college, make him very close to Christianity, he can at best be described similarly to Joyce: as a “corrupted” Jesuit pupil, agnostic and secular when it comes to dogmas and institutional religion. Perhaps this is best summed up in a sentence that was used at the very end of his 1969 *The Archaeology of Knowledge*: “it is quite possible that you have killed God under the weight of all that you have said; but do not think that you will make, from all that you are saying, a man who will live longer than he” (Foucault 1991: 72).<sup>3</sup>

Finding similarities between the two seems a desperate task. Even their counter-enlightenment seems to be different. Indeed, there are many various counter-enlightenments. The one of Chateaubriand belongs to is an early conservative enmity to secular reason and belief in human progress. Ironically, it is exactly Voltaire's off-shot derisive remark about the Encyclopaedia, the secular bible of the Enlightenment, as a “Babel of the sciences and reason” (Garrard 2006: 73), that sums it up. The Enlightenment is an intolerable godlessness destined to fail as the tower of Babel from the Book of Genesis. Foucault, on the other hand, did not run away from *Aufklärung*, but took it as an invitation for the critical ontology of ourselves. Of course, Foucault's archaeologies chart histories of exclusion, and he finds

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2. The melancholic motifs include his lonely sitting on the seashore in Brittany (1,1,4), his observing of the moon over the sea (1,1,6), and the special place of autumn among the seasons, whose scenes of fading and dying nature are secretly tied to our destinies (1,3,12). The voluminous memoirs (Chateaubriand 2000a) are divided in three parts, each subdivided in books and chapters to which the three numbers in the brackets refer in succession (in this last instance: part 1, book 3, chapter 12). I shall cite from the memoirs in this way throughout the text.

3. Cf. *Il se peut bien que vous ayez tué Dieu sous le poids de tout ce que vous avez dit ; mais ne pensez pas que vous ferez, de tout ce que vous dites, un homme qui vivra plus longue que lui.* (Foucault 1969: 275).

parallels between his thinking and the one of the Frankfurt School, but ultimately since there might be no God, we might critically reflect on our practices as Kant has suggested.

Finally, if their personal positions, styles and beliefs seem to be disparate, the epistemic status of their Chateaubriand's and Foucault's discourses is different (the authors are working in different epistemes, Foucault might say). As Brian Leiter, an expert for Nietzsche, among other things, claimed: maybe Foucault is a Nietzschean, but he is a theorist that sits in the second row, not in the sense that he is a petty derivate or an unoriginal thinker, but in a sense that he is a radical nominalist (Leiter 2004). Nietzsche may substitute truth with power, and concept of language as the mirror of reality with an effective simile of a mobile army of metaphors and metonymies but he speaks of how things are. He offers his truth on man, power and the death of God. He is a naturalist and a psychologist. The same can be said for Chateaubriand, who wrote when the world was much younger and one could write naively about things as they seemingly are. We might very tentatively call him a realist in this epistemological sense. But not Foucault: he speaks of contingent historical discourses and different constellations of power, words and things: his nominalism is quite radical.

However, a parallel story might be told, one that substitutes irreconcilable differences with curious similarities of person, sensibility and style, as well as of the themes and motifs in their works. Stories of Foucault's younger years, including self inflicted harm and turbulences of his heterodox sexuality are well known and covered in his biographies, Eribon's, Macey's and Miller's, and I will not recount them here. Likewise, Chateaubriand himself wrote vividly about the two years of violent passions that haunted him, about his solitude and meagre sleep. Unlike Foucault's morbid posters from the ENS, Chateaubriand, still a boy, imagined an ideal woman composed of the women he saw, the portraits of ladies, classical beauties from Greek mythology, and even virgins from the churches (1, 3, 10-11). And to add yet another similarity, Chateaubriand also wrote about his failed suicide attempt to be done by a hunting rifle he stuck into his mouth (1, 3, 14), and generally described himself in early days as "a pilot without experience on the sea of tempestuous passions," which is a description probably fitting the young Foucault.<sup>4</sup>

These comparable strong passions come out of ordinary and might be formative for the delicate characters of the authors, their later preoccupations and various layers of their work. There is one more interesting parallel in this vein, perhaps no more than a banal speculative psychologization<sup>5</sup>, that nevertheless deserves several sentences. Chateaubriand devotes considerable space in the memoirs to Lucile, fourth of his sisters who was two year older than him (1,1,3). I was surprised to find out that this relationship figures prominently in the cultural history of incest (cf. Shell 1988: 208, cf. notes 55 and 60). His sexual fantasies are indeed built around a women that is *à la fois vierge et amante*, a virgin and a lover at the same time (1,3,13), but this image probably owns its existence to the eponymous story of René, a short romantic novella that fuelled the fads of the early romanticism, that

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4. The metaphor is worth quoting in length: *Ces passions dont mon âme était surmenée, ces passions vagues encore, ressemblaient aux tempêtes de mer qui affluent de tous les points de l'horizon : pilote sans expérience, je ne savais de quel côté présenter la voile à des vents indécis* (1, 3, 15).

5. It is what Foucault would, in constant search for distinction (in Bourdieu's sense), perhaps call a "Freudianism of a very low quality" (*un freudisme d'assez basse qualité*) (Foucault, 2001b: 1686).

can be read as a sublimation of incestuous desire, with stark parallels to Chateaubriand's life as depicted in his memoirs.

The plot is simple and suggestive: young hero is strangely dissatisfied with the whole world, melancholic and "full of passions", has an intensive emotional relationship with his sister Amélie; "timid and stifled before his father," he finds consolation in her, remembering their sweet childhood as the most beautiful experience of his life (Chateaubriand 2000b: 6, 8). As an archetypal romantic hero, he is persecuted by *ennui* and somewhat suicidal, unable to resolve his psychological troubles constructively. His sister Amélie ultimately leaves for the convent to become a nun. Understandably, René is desperate. She, who saw his first feelings, reminds him it is easy to die, but that he has to live, to find a beautiful woman, an embodiment of pure love and innocence completely dedicated to him, who will substitute her.<sup>6</sup> Amélie, once again understandably, loses conscience during the ritual of ordination and is overtaken by hard fever. She rocked him in his cradle, often they "slept together," but now she is to spend her life in the cold sanctuary; ultimately "the religion triumphs" (Chateaubriand 2000b: 14, 16). The sister in the end dies in the convent, a place where she attempted to overcome her "criminal passion" (*criminelle passion*) more or less constructively, in christianly love and prayers, taking care of the sick nuns. René can only exclaim in resignation how joys of religion are grand and terrible at the same time.<sup>7</sup> He leaves for the new world where he is killed, however appearing as a peripheral character in the story of Atala to be recounted in the section about Chateaubriand's utopianism.

According to biographies and to biographic fiction, Foucault also had a strict father with whom he did not fare well; whose name he has dropped, becoming only Michel instead of Paul-Michel but, unlike Chateaubriand and his characters, he had "no religion to triumph". Besides, he had a slightly older sister, Francine, born in 1925. Unable to separate from her, he stubbornly followed her to school, where place was found for him to sit in the back of the class, a motif that gained prominence in the psychoanalytical readings of his life as a case, fuelled by Hervé Guibert's terrible dioramas. In Miller's words: "Foucault was struck by something apparently sexual, about his relationship to his sister: both Bersani and Defert have also told me that a personal revelation about his relation with his sister was crucial for Foucault" (Miller 2000: 438).<sup>8</sup> I do not wish to develop this motif any further, nor speculate about the exact nature of the possibly incestuous relations and psychoanalytical family puzzles split by a more than a century and a half, but I feel that it should have been mentioned at least as an interesting coincidence and a pretext to recount a story about René which involves both a heterotopia of a convent, and the bitterness of other world utopias in perspective of unrealized and probably unrealizable worldly passions. The concepts of utopia and heterotopia will be further explained in the next section.

Wherever it might come from, both Chateaubriand and Foucault were extremely prolific writers and accomplished stylists. Chateaubriand's on-and-off relationship with Napoleon who admired his *The Genius of Christianity* and found it politically useful involved the following praise by the "world spirit on horseback": "Chateaubriand has by nature received

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6. The finale has a delicate phrasing of René literally believing he found a sister again: *Elle serait tout amour, tout innocence devant toi : tu croirais retrouver une soeur* (Chateaubriand 2000b: 13).

7. *O joies de la religion, que vous êtes grandes, mais que vous êtes terribles !* (Chateaubriand 2000b: 16)

8. Daniel Defert is Foucault's lifelong partner while Leo Bersani is James Miller's friend, literary theorist, professor of French, and the author of the collection of essays *Is Rectum a Grave?*

the sacred fire: his works witness to that. His style is not that of Racine, but of a prophet.”<sup>9</sup> This fire so impressed Charles White, Chateaubriand’s American translator, who in 1856 described his style as a “combination of impressive eloquence, descriptive power, and pathetic sentiment,” further quoting an eulogy concerning Chateaubriand’s style from J. L. Balmes’ *Protestantism and Catholicity Compared*: “in surpassing language he points out to astonished men the mysterious golden chain that connects the heavens and the earth” (White 1976: 8, 10).

Although some of the more conservative critics were irritated by his uncertain neologisms (cf. Sournia 1977), if anything was widely admitted to Foucault, from his contested dissertation on madness to the last of his works, is that he wrote nicely; he had *le talent d’un poète*, in a lucky phrase employed in the title of one of the chapters in Eribon’s biography. And the style is the man himself, as Comte de Buffon stated. The style also suggests a certain sensibility, perhaps shared by both authors, described by the following account. Antun Gustav Matoš, Croatian *belle époque* choleric novelist, recounts on how he had received a book from Édouard Champion—the memoirs of certain Julien, who was Chateaubriand’s *valet de chambre*. These counter-memoirs juxtaposed to Chateaubriand’s have a similar function and effect as would the Sancho Pansa’s memoirs to the perspective of Don Quixote, memorably lost in a renaissance epistémé in the pages of Foucault’s *Les mots et les choses*. It is, in other words, a bashing of a romantic from the point of view of a realist, that returns him down to earth. In his *Literary Remarks* from 1908, Matoš puts it like this: judging on the basis of the account by Julien, it seems that Chateaubriand “makes things up—to put it shortly—lies,” and that he is “as all big romantics, a grand phraser, who cares more for the effect than for the truth” (Ujević 1955: 64).<sup>10</sup>

Furthermore, Foucault and Chateaubriand changed their positions, political, authorial and aesthetic in a pattern that is not dissimilar. They were both arguably brilliant and unreliable, and manifested a combination of scepticism and utopianism. Foucault: from the Communist Party membership and Stalin as a theoretical reference to not only descriptive lectures on neoliberalism; from *Mental Illness and Personality* to *The Care of the Self*. Chateaubriand: from royalism, via Napoleon, against Napoleon (compared to Nero), back to royalism, to constitutionalism, freedom of expression, and the criticism of the July Monarchy; from *The Essay on Revolutions* to *The Memoirs Beyond the Grave*. Scepticism, rightly diagnosed by Veyne as one of Foucault’s defining traits, can perhaps find a religious parallel in Chateaubriand’s “Jobian despair” (Pesce 2014: 124). In a comparable shibboleth of political events, that worked as trial of their characters and induced the change in their positions—a theme I unfortunately don’t have space to develop here—several motives and themes emerge that are promising for comparison. Both Chateaubriand and Foucault, separated by distance of position, space and time, in different time and in different roles were witnesses of revolutions and wrote on them, on the events of *par excellence* utopian energy or at least utopian proclamation: the French (Bourgeois) Revolution and the Iranian Islamic Revolution, to which we will return in the last sections. They shared a set of scholarly interests and competences. Chateaubriand was extremely versed in Classical Antiq-

9. According to emperor’s memoirs rendered by, among others, his general comte de Montholon, who accompanied him to exile on Saint Helena: *Châteaubriant a reçu de la nature le feu sacré: ses ouvrages l’attestent. Son style n’est pas celui de Racine, c’est celui du Prophète* (Montholon 1824: 248).

10. Another interesting coincidence in this context is that Chateaubriand’s 1811 *Itinéraire de Paris à Jérusalem* is scrutinized by the same Sournia who was highly critical of Foucault (cf. Sournia 1968).

uity, Foucault's preoccupation from his last "phase". "His knowledge of history and classical literature is equalled only by his intimate acquaintance with the early annals of the church, and the fathers of the Catholic faith," writes Sir Archibald Alison, a conservative historian in an essay on Chateaubriand, lauding his writing skills (Alison 1850: 40). "[T]he most perfect living master of their [French, KP] language," even if he is "a bigoted Catholic" (Alison 1850: 4, 16). If the second part cannot apply to Foucault in any of the possible worlds, the first part, at least as an utter overstatement, hints to a right direction.

Beyond that, I shall stress two more things. Both authors were travellers, globetrotters one might say, certainly not Kantian sedentary spirits with the problem of ascending heartbeat when chariot exits the tranquil Prussian borough. Ships and the sea were their common theme that exemplifies this. *J'ai traverse plusieurs fois les mers*, writes Chateaubriand about his maritime travels in the general preface of his works from 1826 (1858: 1). And in Foucault, it is a partly allegorical ship of fools that evokes tragic allure of Bosch's pictures, floating on the abyss of madness, on beautiful and elusive water from Tarkovsky's *Nostalghia*. It is also *morceau flottant d'espace*, a floating piece of space with which Foucault ends his text on heterotopias, a place of dreams: *Le navire, c'est l'hétérotopie par excellence. Dans les civilisations sans bateaux les rêves se tarissent, l'espionnage y remplace l'aventure, et la police, les corsaires* (Foucault 2001a: 1581). And both authors were fascinated by death. "When the mysteries of life are at an end, those of death commence," concluded Chateaubriand his memoirs. Death—roaming on Foucault's pages from the opening of *The Birth of the Clinic* and the ending of *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, through omnipresent de Sade, Pierre Rivière and the torture of Damiens from *To Discipline and Punish*, to the *melete thanatou* of Stoics dealing with care of the self—is a recurrent theme, explored in detail in Miller's controversial biography, not only a tendentious reading of an American sensationalist biographer, as some understandably insisted, but probably a single most important motive in an "examined life". This is at least a promising start, but a conceptual clarification is needed, before the exploration of utopias offered in their works.

### Typologizing utopia: non-places and other places compared

What are we searching for exactly? The concept of utopia varies. It can imply a political messianism or a religious prophecy, or be secular in the sense of a rational plan. Concrete versions may emphasize alternative time in a fantastic narrative (*u-cronias*), or exactly the place (*u-topias*), but often utopias will involve both. While in this area, of "utopology" and "heterotopology," an exact science involving measurement on the trail of Lord Kelvin would not have much sense, a brief conceptual elaboration and a taxonomic exercise is in order, to achieve minimal clarity of thinking and comparison.<sup>11</sup>

I rely here on Johnson's summary distinction of differences between utopia and heterotopia, building on Ruth Levitas (Johnson 2012: 17). It is a simple operation of sketching ideal types consisting from five opposed characteristics that serve to see both utopias and het-

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11. I shall do it without any ambition to enter into the philosophy of utopia, a developed field on its own where Foucault is dismissed (Stillman 2001: 23-24) as the one who "looks at the placid surface" (which could well be description of his method as he himself saw it in the late 1960s).

erotopias more distinctly. Its purpose is to highlight the extreme points on the continuum of dimensions for comparison and open space for their possible combinations, rather than to entrench opposing camps in an exclusive binary schema. First, utopias are holistic, they offer the whole picture, and intend for the complete change of a system. Heterotopias are fragmentary, they refer to parts or appear in parts of something; they are fragments, fortunately described as “utopian debris” (Johnson 2012: 17). Second, utopias are imaginary, other places, fantastic and by definition opposed to reality, while heterotopias are concrete, considerably pedestrian other places, more strange and simple displacements than grandiose other worlds. Third, utopias are highly normative, presupposing goals and ideals to be achieved while heterotopias are more value-free, outlandish places than desirable shambalas. Thus, fourth, utopias are prescribed, by grammar or the desirability of their content, while heterotopias can be described more neutrally. Fifth, both utopias and heterotopias can be anchored in the present, but according to Johnson, utopias are in this ideal distinction to be thought as future oriented while heterotopias might be placed in the past, although, pace history, both Platonic philosophy and speculations on primitive communism might suggest otherwise.

These five provisory distinctions are a good preparation for a definition. To quote Levitas, who reminds of “Thomas More’s original pun – eutopos/outopos combined as utopia, hence the good place which is no place”: “Utopias, then, are blue-prints of the good (or even perfect) society, imagined elsewhere and intended as prescriptions for the near future. They are intrinsically linked to the concerns and assumptions of modernity” (Levitas 2003: 3). On the other hand, heterotopias are, in Foucault’s words, not opposite totalizing schemes, but real other places within society that, paradoxically, contradict it: *des lieux réels, des lieux effectifs, des lieux qui ont dessinés dans l’institution même de la société, et qui sont des sortes de contre-emplacements, sortes d’utopies effectivement réalisées dans lesquelles les emplacements réels, tous les autres emplacements réels que l’on peut trouver à l’intérieur de la culture sont à la fois représentés, contestés et inversés, des sortes de lieux qui sont hors de tous les lieux, bien que pourtant ils soient effectivement localizable* (Foucault 2001a: 1574-1575).

Very generally, this framework serves a simple function within this paper. I will not be too explicit with it, for example by fitting the narrative from the next two sections into procrustean tables, but having these distinctions in mind, a reader will probably find more sense in what I am writing. Principally, it will help to show that neither Foucault’s, nor Chateaubriand’s ideas fit clearly into the extreme boxes of ideal utopias and heterotopias. However, the surprise comes from different directions since the stereotypes about two authors might be different. While at least some would expect Foucault to fall neatly into a heterotopian square, it will be shown that he is much more of an utopian thinker. Conversely, Chateaubriand is not only an author of otherworldly projections of heaven to soothe the earthly despair but a creator of heterotopias, mostly associated with the new world of tribes and colonies to which he travelled, still a part of this one (since this earth is, in general, more or less opposed to heavens). A strange encounter between a devout Christian and a cynic, who coldly portrayed heterotopias, which could in, David Harvey’s words, be either banal or dangerous, piling together frivolous Disneyland and deadly concentration camps?

Instead of silent ships passing each other in the fog, we will have a much more cordial encounter finding a common ground—a not so strange encounter between a romantic sug-

gesting concrete utopias in the present instead of holistic imaginations of heavenly bliss, and a more of a Cynic than a cynic, if we follow a language game offered by Sloterdijk; an utopian spirit imagining a labile picture of aesthetic projects of the bodies at risk within liberal framework, instead of cold archaeologist that digs up fragments of the times lost.

### Chateaubriand's utopianism: A Christian transcendence?

At first, it seems that Chateaubriand's utopianism, that can be constructed on the basis of his memoirs, stories, and Christian apologetics—vitriolic pamphlets of the day can perhaps be put aside in this exercise—is one of simple Catholicism. It is the political theology that aims for the other worlds, waits for the Judgment day, and leaves worldly things to the emperors, states (and the Pope). More careful reading, however, will show elements of heterotopianism, as well as understanding of Christianity as a transformative force on this world.

Due to its possibly personal layer of meaning, the plot of René has already been presented in the context of psychological speculations preparing the comparison. Forbidden love and death of the protagonists perhaps suggest specific enjoyment of intensive emotions, but sorrow and spleen make turn it into a melodramatic version of Ecclesiastes. Everything falls apart, and, since nothing is stable in this world, salvation is to be sought elsewhere. René's romantic destiny is just a poignant illustration of the general logic on which he ruminates while he roams. World is a "tempestuous ocean" marked by "force of nature and weakness of man": "a leaf of grass often pierces the toughest marble of this tombs, which all those dead, however powerful, will never lift" (Chateaubriand 2000b: 7). Convent as a refuge is a thin descriptive heterotopias. It involves faith and utopian energies, managing of space, time and prayers, but it is not very promising either as a vehicle to firmly ground the interpretation of Chateaubriand's worldly utopianism.

Much more is offered in *The Genius of Christianity* and *Atala*. *The Genius*, a monumental work, is it to be left aside here because one cannot do justice to it in a small heterotopian space of a short essay. However, suffice it to say that it is book with heterotopian elements in the sense of the above distinction for the simple reason: its whole structure and content, four parts divided each into six books, defend Christianity as a changing force in this world. As for Mario Vargas Llosa's Don Rigoberto, according to whose peculiar understanding Catholicism has positive externalities in the sphere of sexuality, offering special pleasures as—to think with Foucault against Foucault—a productive force<sup>12</sup>, Catholic faith professed by Chateaubriand, and Christianity more generally, are for him a real world utopia. Not only its doctrine, dogmas, sacraments and variety of miracles and institutes, be it virginity or

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12. As in Chateaubriand's account, Don Rigoberto's Catholicism goes with "beautiful cathedrals, rituals, liturgies, ceremonies, representations, iconographies, music", but also with "inquisitor's flames and pincers," which are strangely productive, according to practical insights of this secluded mild pervert: "(...) without (...) prohibitions, sins, and moral fulminations, desires—especially sexual desire—would not have achieved the refinement they have reached at certain times. Consequently (...) I affirm that people make love much better in religious countries than in secular ones (better in Ireland than in England, in Poland than in Denmark), better in Catholic countries than in Protestant ones (better in Spain and Italy than in Germany or Sweden), and that women who have been educated in nuns' academies are a thousand times more imaginative, bold and delicate than those who have been have studies in secular schools (...)" (Vargas Llosa 1999: 115-116).

marriage, but its poetic force and influence on arts is defended. Moreover, Christianity is the force that transmuted morals. In Foucault's perspective, occidental subjectivity was formed by confession. Similarly, in Chateaubriand's opinion Christianity changed the world in a profound way, changing the very "bases of morals": *Chez les anciens, par exemple, l'humilité passait pour bassesse, et l'orgueil pour grandeur : chez les chrétiens, au contraire, l'orgueil est le premier de vices, et l'humilité une des premières vertus. Cette seule transmutation de principes montre la nature sous un jour nouveau, et nous devons découvrir dans les passions des rapports que les anciens n'y voyaient pas* (Chateaubriand 2014: 235). Christianity has changed aesthetics, moral and even human nature where it operated (a theme that received a specific twist in Nietzsche). The title of the last chapter of the last book of the last part of *The Genius* announces a counterfactual conditional: "What would be the state of society today, if Christianity had not appeared on this earth?" For Chateaubriand the answer is to be found along the lines of a catastrophic dystopia of barbarity. Christianity for him worked as a real world utopia, with concrete and positive influence on the history of the Western civilization. He is categorical in his opinion that *le christianisme a sauvé la société d'une destruction totale* (Chateaubriand 2014: 634).

Atala, Chateaubriand's preparation for *The Genius of Christianity*, a romantic novella that works on amplifying love and emotions by obstructing their realization and happy ending, similarly to Cameron's *Titanic*, is worth a closer look because it embodies Chateaubriand's paradoxical position of an utopian heterotopianism and heterotopian utopianism. It displays Christianity as a transformative force, especially on other places (colonies) where it constructs yet other places (Kingdoms of Christ). In the following few passages I will recount its plot and interpret it, thus concluding this section.

Chactas, is an old Indian who accepted Christianity. He recounts his story to René, our tragic character from the eponymous novella. Chactas fell in love with Atala who also fell in love with him, but, unfortunately, she has given a vow of chastity to her mother, making their love more intense, beautiful and tragic. They ran together from their brutal pursuers—Atala's father Simagan who sentenced Chactas to burn on a stick. They are saved by providence working through Father Aubry, probably a Jesuit missionary. Aubry's hands are mutilated, he was tortured but he hates no one. He loves others and the world even more, preparing for death and praising God in his hermitage. Christ died for all, *pour le Juif et le gentil*, he explains, and his blood pays for the sins of all humankind (Chateaubriand 2000c: 29). A Christian should replicate his example humbly with small deeds. Father Aubry, "saint hermit," went further and managed to create a Christian heterotopia by successfully preaching to the Indians who accepted Christianity. Chactas was curious *comment il gouvernait ses enfants*, and he responded:

*Je ne leur ai donné aucune loi ; je leur ai seulement enseigné à s'aimer, à prier Dieu et à espérer une meilleure vie : toutes les lois du monde sont là-dedans. Vous voyez au milieu du village une cabane plus grande que les autres : elle sert de chapelle dans la saison des pluies. On s'y assemble soir et matin pour louer le Seigneur, et quand je suis absent, c'est un vieillard qui fait la prière, car la vieille est, comme la maternité, une espèce de sacerdoce. Ensuite on va travailler dans les champs, et si les propriétés sont divisées, afin que chacun puisse apprendre l'économie sociale, les moissons sont déposées dans des greniers communs, pour maintenir la charité fraternelle. Quatre vieillards distribuent avec égalité le produit du labour. Ajoutez à cela des cérémonies religieuses, beaucoup*



*de cantiques ; la croix où j'ai célébré les mystères, l'ormeau sous lequel je prêche dans les bons jours, nos tombeaux tout près de nos champs de blé, nos fleuves, où je plonge les petits enfants et les saints Jean de cette nouvelle Béthanie, vous aurez une idée, complète de ce royaume de Jésus-Christ*

(Chateaubriand 2000c: 34).

It is a community with no repressive laws: only love and prayers, a hut as a church, a new Bethany, a small kingdom of Christ. It is also a heterotopia similar to Foucault's evocation of *Jésuits du Paraguay* from the essay on heterotopias, that is easily associated with *The Mission*, a 1986 Roland Joffé film with Jeremy Irons as Father Gabriel, who preaches to Guarani Indians, successfully establishing a Jesuit mission above the waterfall, playing his oboe. But Christianity is also intimately engaged with death as it is shown in the same film where violent Mendoza (played by de Niro), who found his redemption, is killed by military force, as well as Father Gabriel, carrying a monstrance in a procession with his peaceful converted Guarani. This is a world of pain and decay. Everyone is suffering, in hut and in palace: queens cry as the simple women (Chateaubriand 2000c: 38). Adam and Eve were perfect and did not last, reminds Aubry: a marriage of those in love often brings poverty and contempt. He preaches that nothing is lost in this world, which is full of pain, social evils and suffering. The fact of death is inexorable and the grave is final destiny in this valley of sorrow. For a moment we can imagine Chateaubriand's remnants buried back on the Grand Bé near Saint-Malo, in a tomb looking at the sea and surrounded by tide, while the resigned lamentation from Ecclesiastes is evoked by Aubry (*ô vanité des vanités*): the truth of earthly love lies with the maggots of the coffin (Chateaubriand, 2000c: 39).

No wonder that Atala takes poison and dies in chastity. She asks Chactas if he will accept Christian faith and he promises Atala that he will. She dies and a mystical moment ensues.<sup>13</sup> In an epilogue, the narrator, "voyager to the countries far away" (Chateaubriand 2000c: 45), sees an Indian mother mourning for her dead child. According to the Indian custom, she leaves the body to dry on the branches of trees—a maple with red flowers, serving as a natural perfumed mausoleum for the body. It turns out that she is the daughter of René, European whom Chactas adopted. She recounts how father Aubry was killed by Cherokees, praying for his torturers, so that "some of them, impressed by such a death, have become Christians". Near the very end, Chactas laments in an ontological key, essentializing pain as the defining moment of human existence: *Ainsi passe sur la terre tout ce qui fut bon, vertueux, sensible ! Homme, tu n'es qu'un songe rapide, un rêve douloureux ; tu n'existes que par le malheur ; tu n'es quelque chose que par la tristesse de ton âme et l'éternelle mélancolie de ta pensée !* (Chateaubriand 2000c: 47).

To sum up this section: in Chateaubriand, worldly utopias, utopias with heterotopian elements, are present, and Christianity is an educating utopian force. However, its ultimate truth within this world, a vanity fair from the Ecclesiastes, is death. Is Foucault's utopianism that different?

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13. Chactas recounts nothing less than a grandiose theophany in the presence of Father Aubry and Atala's corpse: *une force surnaturelle me contraint de tomber à genoux et m'incline la tête au pied du lit d'Atala. (...) La grotte parut soudain illuminée ; on entendit dans les airs les paroles des anges et les frémissements des harpes célestes, et, lorsque le solitaire tira le vase sacré de son tabernacle, je crus voir Dieu lui-même sortir du flanc de la montagne* (Chateaubriand 2000c: 41).

## Foucault's utopianism: the spiritual liberal bodies, taking risk, free-speaking and f...

As almost everything is contested, including the declarations and professions of faith made by author's themselves. So is perhaps the fact that Foucault owes much to Nietzsche, and at least something to Heidegger. Especially to Nietzsche. Can a Nietzschean be a utopian thinker, if he is not interested in utopias associated with the releasing of the will to power against the slave morality of the meek? There is one aspect of Nietzsche's philosophy that is especially important here and serves Foucault to develop his own utopian thinking. It is the focus on the body, the Nietzschean *Leib* and its historical taming. It is not only important for Foucauldian genealogies of the Western soul, linked to the exclusion of madness, birth of the human sciences, the carceral system and *scientia sexualis*, where body is historically disciplined, produced into a specific subject, and its dispositions changed by historical layers of discourse. The body is also a utopian vessel. Remarks from Eribon's biography and Veyne's memories of Foucault show a man who, although an intellectual, at the most basic level linked courage to the body, to physical braveness, and who did not subscribe to the stereotype of body versus soul, a ghost in the machine of Cartesianism, or a ghost in the shell of Japanese mangas.

That is the starting point of this section. It will build on a bit more obscure Foucault's text on the utopian body and an interview on de Sade and cinematography in which Foucault seeks to go beyond Sade as a "sergeant of sex". Text on heterotopias is another expected morsel, already built into this mosaic. I will test it as a tentative bridge from body to the social element of Foucault's utopianism: Foucault's reflections on collective action and liberalism, and his ideas on hermeneutics, aesthetics and politics of the self, built on the basis of exegesis and commentary of the texts from the Classical antiquity.

The first relevant series of Foucault's utopian thoughts date to the second half of the sixties defined by his beautiful and strongly contested masterpiece *Les mots et les choses*. Like Borges stories on the Library and the Lottery of Babel, it helps us think about the other places. It tantalizes us with unfamiliar categorizations and the uncertain promises of other worlds. Not surprisingly, it begins with a bizarre categorization offered by a certain Celestial Encyclopaedia of animals, rendered within Borges' story on the analytical language of John Wilkins that coins words phonetically as a system of codes for the hierarchy of (ultimately: arbitrary and baroque) set of categories to make sense of the world.

This phase offers two texts, on heterotopias (*Les Hétérotopies*) and on the utopian body (*Le corps utopique*), that were not authorized by Foucault for publishing in written form.<sup>14</sup> They were published only after his death, but both were made public since they were broadcasted as a radio lectures on 7<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> December 1966, while the much better known text on heterotopias was developed into a lecture *On other spaces (Des espaces autres)* held on March 14<sup>th</sup> 1967 (cf. Foucault 2009).

The text on the utopian body is crucial, not because it is so revealing in the sense of peculiar infantile fantasies (the author is prince charming and "all the pretty boys may turn nasty and hairy as bears"), but as revealing his early focus on the Nietzschean theme explored in *Discipline and Punish*, of the body imprisoned by disciplined soul, the body as a theoretical

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14. This is doubly ironic. To remind us on Foucault's frequent chant: Does it matter who speaks?

nexus for his utopian projections. The text begins as a simple reverie. The author is not bound by an ugly body in which he wakes up every day and in which he will rot like in a coffin, but instead has a body without body, a body that travels at the speed of light, a body of superhero which does not grow old and in which all wounds are miraculously healed. It is a land of fairy tales, sexual of course, of visibility at will: “Utopia is a place outside of all places, but it is a place where I will have a body without body, a body that will be beautiful, limpid, transparent, luminous, speedy, colossal in its power, infinite in its duration. Untethered, invisible, protected—always transfigured. It may very well be that the first utopia, the one most deeply rooted in the hearts of men, is precisely the utopia of an incorporeal body” (Foucault 2006: 229).

But then the story changes. It is turned upside down by the introduction of the mummies and Mycenaean golden masks, statues and the cities of the dead, culminating with “the most obstinate, the most powerful of those utopias with which we erase the sad topology of the body” – “the great myth of the soul” (Foucault 2006: 230). Foucault concludes that it was wrong to chart utopias without the body. Lines in the genre of the phenomenology of bodily experience ensue, the body that is visible and captured but also a vessel of pleasure: it is felt under fingers, it is necessary for making love, an experience that is only possible with the body. The reality of body here and now seems to erase even Foucault’s ostensible obsession with death: “There’s no need for a soul, nor a death, for me to be both transparent and opaque, visible and invisible, life and thing. For me to be a utopia, it is enough that I be a body”; body does not oppose itself to utopia, on the contrary, in Foucault’s opinion: “the human body is the principal actor in all utopias” (Foucault 2006: 231).

The bodily experiments as a utopian practice are intimately connected with its enjoyment. There is a sexual element to it, not necessarily in a narrow “genital-oriented” sense (Plant 2007: 535), and the whole citadel of private utopias can be built around it. Miller’s interpretation of the life of Foucault as the last philosopher after Nietzsche and the literature on Foucault and sadomasochism are an important reference here that I won’t develop due to the shortage of space and the fact they are reasonably well known, as well as the ethical controversies surrounding Foucault’s comments on sadomasochism. One revealing vignette will suffice. There is a telling phrase from an interview with Foucault about the difficulties of transferring de Sade to the cinematic format. According to the phase (“disciplinary power”) in which Foucault was then immersed, disciplinary interpretation of Sade as a figure that develops eroticism proper to the disciplinary society, while just a while ago his novels signalled, or at least served as a handy symbol of the epistemological shattering of the Classical age. There Foucault signals how, in his opinion, we should transcend Sade, and in that sense he wants to develop *un érotisme non disciplinaire: celui du corps à l’état volatil et diffus, avec ses rencontres de hasard et ses plaisirs sans calcul* (Foucault 2001b: 1690). The focus is again on the body, a volatile and diffuse body, taking risk in chance encounters and enjoying pleasures without calculation.

How to make peace between these loosely sexualized bodily visions and a collective utopianism? Can we imagine or point our finger to other place organized to fit this loose picture of utopian bodies? The text on heterotopias offers tentative principles for a heterotopology. This means it provides a taxonomic sketch of typical characteristics of places that are not like utopias, i.e. are not *fondamentalement essentiellement irréels*, and correspond to the above listed characteristics summarized by Johnson. Those who offer some utopian ele-

ments—beyond mirror, which is the combination of utopia (“I am not there”) and heterotopia (“it is there”)—bring Foucault closer to Chateaubriand’s Christian communities of converted Indians, but also sound a bit disciplinary, like de Sade Foucault would like to transcend: although Foucault in the 1960s seems bewildered by these historical *colonies merveilleuses* which offer an example of *des autres lieux absolument parfaits*, life in them is meticulously regulated, organized by ringing bells and taking place in the settlement following the geography of the cross (Foucault 2001a: 1580). People wake up, work, eat, and go to sleep in the same time, which sounds like a prison, and not like a successful experimental orgy, Sadean or other. To develop a less idiosyncratic utopianism we might, for starters, go to Foucault of the late 1970s and early 1980s.

Namely, it seems obvious that Foucault’s Nietzschean search into the historicity of the subject has a utopian motivation. In the last years of his work, he turned back to the subject, but did not abandon the body. It was a conceptual discovery of the techniques of the self, along with disciplinary techniques he discussed earlier, that sometimes define heterotopias such as asylums, prisons, and missionary colonies. Foucault explains his turn with the following words:

“I became more and more aware that there is in all societies, I think, in all societies whatever they are, another type of techniques: techniques which permit individuals to effect, by their own means, a certain number of operations on their own bodies, on their own souls, on their own thoughts, on their own conduct, and this in a manner so as to transform themselves, modify themselves, and to attain a certain state of perfection, of happiness, of purity, of supernatural power, and so on. Let’s call this kind of techniques a techniques or technology of the self”.

(Foucault 1993: 203)

The utopian politics by Foucault is to be sought in the development and socialization of this moment, which is necessarily posited as a culture, even if we speak about the askesis of a hermit facing the tradition and discourses of his peers. From the late 1970s until his death, this motif paradoxically becomes more collective and individual at the same time. Concerning Foucault’s Iranian episode and his early treatment of neoliberalism, before it became a general anathema of the Left, I rely here on an excellent study by Beaulieu who claims that “[t]he search for a ‘liberal Utopia’ was one of the later Foucault’s preoccupations” (Beaulieu 2010: 811).<sup>15</sup> Iran is important because Foucault, as on the spot journalist reporting and reflecting on the events, was impressed by revolutionary movement as a moment of political spirituality. It was his audacious attempt to understand others, “even at the risk of misunderstanding” (McCall 2013: 50). “Horror” of the repression that ensued by the “bloody government of an integrist clergy”, as he wrote for *Le Monde* in May 1979, did not in his eyes delegitimize the promising “intoxication” of the revolutionary moment as such, and its rediscovery of the spiritual knowledge forgotten in the West on which Foucault insisted in his last Collège de France lectures.

Even if it is for more than few reasons too much to suggest that Khomeini was in any way to Foucault what Hitler was to Heidegger (cf. Beaulieu 2010: 805), Beaulieu’s reading of Foucault’s lectures on liberal governmentality as an attempt of “Khomeinization of the

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15. This turn to liberalism paired with the hermeneutics of the self, however, does not mean Foucault abandons collective political action (McCall 2013: 31-32).

Shah,” that ensued as a sobering up after Iran, is accurate: “By introducing a spiritual dimension into liberalism, the later Foucault’s ethics combine the best of the two worlds he saw in action during the Iranian uprising” (Beaulieu 2010: 811). A precise timetable in Beaulieu’s article shows how moments of the Iranian episode intertwine with Foucault’s thoughts on enlightenment, his essay on Kant and his Collège de France lectures after the 1977 sabbatical (Beaulieu 2010: 802). Beaulieu’s argument is that Foucault was impressed by political spirituality in Iran and disappointed with its outcome. He thus combined the idea of a spiritual revolution with Kantian motifs and liberalism:

“What followed in his work must be considered a long explanation of the meaning of a spiritual revolution. In that sense, his later ethics, which put the Greco-Roman and medieval spiritual exercises at the fore, are a way of overcoming the romantic perspective he had adopted earlier: there is no radical Other who will save us, but we can find resources for a change within the western tradition. This is the first major self-critique that Foucault made of his interpretation of the Iranian uprising. The second deals with his negative assessment of liberal tradition. Foucault realized quickly that the liberal environment is perhaps not so bad after all”

(Beaulieu 2010: 806)

Spirituality as something that is lost—as exemplified by one of his interpretations of *Faust* as a mourning for the lost spiritual knowledge—is certainly something that preoccupied Foucault in his last phase, dealing with the Stoics and the Cynics whose search for truth was opposed to the platonic figures, in a sense that a *bios kunikos* as manifestation of truth is not a *bios theoretikos* of a mathematician or a scientist. It is, in fact, an old motive present in Foucault at least from his first, unabashedly Nietzschean, Collège de France course on *The Will to Know*: it is derived from the understanding of truth as a trial of the subject (*l'épreuve*) opposed to the understanding of truth as research of the facts (*l'enquête*). A battle in the present, instead of a sterile investigation in the past, was at the same time an understanding of truth and a juridical form that is today mostly an anachronism, or present as the battle of champions in the bestsellers of the fantasy genre such as *The Game of Thrones*. This understanding of truth as a test forms the basis of Foucault’s utopian ethics.

Even if that motif is much older than one might infer from reading Beaulieu, we may agree with his account as a more or less fair logical synthesis of politics and ethics in the later Foucault. Foucault’s utopianism of, as we have seen, the body that takes risks, makes love, and employs techniques of the self, was integrated into a liberal framework which allows subjects to, perhaps collectively, search for the forgotten knowledge, for the lost secular spirituality in the sense of the care of the self.

It may be a distasteful reflection when made with normative overtones, at least from certain class positions far from insecurity and precarious work, but liberalism seriously taken is government of risk. Historically, in Foucault’s account, frameworks of biopolitics and governmentality suggest a *riskophobia* of calculation, which is, however, combined with *riskophilia* on the level of the self (Beaulieu 2010: 809). Liberalism, not in the narrowly economical sense of free enterprise and its ideology, thus seems congruent with Foucault’s courage of truth, authentic free speech of a parrhesiast. “In the midst of his 14 March 1979 lecture (BB), Foucault made a unique, surprising and also very significant statement about Utopia: ‘(...)Liberalism also needs a Utopia. It is our task to create liberal

Utopias.’ [AB’s translation]” (Beaulieu 2010: 812) Maybe this should not be taken too far, since it comes amidst of lecturing on Hayek, and Foucault’s Collège de France courses belong to the genre of historical hermeneutics, not being normative in an overt way. Furthermore, perhaps there is an interesting paradox in the connection of parrhesia with some kind of oppression or domination (there should be a king in order for someone to exclaim that he is naked), but for the purposes of this essay, we may envisage some kind of open game of collective *enkrateia*, rule over the self, and liberal government of others paired with risk, “a conduct of conduct” as an approximation of Foucault’s secular utopia on this earth.

We could sum up this section as follows. Transformation of the self and the others starting from the body as the vessel of utopianism, is a theme that defined Foucault’s work and lectures, be it understanding of sexual ethics of Classical Antiquity or the relation of philosophy and politics in Plato: it is both utopian and heterotopian, it belongs to the future and the past, it is imaginative and fragmentary. It works on this earth as does Chateaubriand’s Christianity, but with the shadow of death transfigured to the enticing shadow of risk. Maybe it was useless to revolt from the point of history, but not from the utopian perspective of testing and building of the self and the others. For Foucault it was the risk worth taking.

### In the way of conclusion: utopias and revolutions

As far as one can speak of Foucault’s affirmation of liberalism, it can perhaps be linked to Chateaubriand’s adherence to constitutional liberalism during the Bourbon Restoration, in one more parallel between the two volatile spirits. However, a more promising starting point in this last section, after we have glimpsed at the “Foucault and the Iranian Revolution” episode, is to check how does Chateaubriand see the revolution that has turned his life upside down? He certainly does not take it with a Žižekian enthusiasm.<sup>16</sup> He takes it with utmost loathing. The parading with heads on the sticks was for our *gentilhomme* a disgusting brutality. The French Revolution quickly (d)evolved from cruel outburst of violence into a petty satisfaction of interests, a corrupt race for pensions for the real and phony revolutionaries, while the moment itself was a plebeian orgy, following a hazardous event of *quelques invalides et un timide gouverneur* who forgot to lock the door of the gaol:

*Au milieu de ces meurtres on se livrait à des orgies, comme dans les troubles de Rome, sous Othon et Vitellius. On promenait dans des fiacres les Vainqueurs de la Bastille, ivrognes heureux déclarés conquérants au cabaret ; des prostituées et des sans-culottes commençaient à régner, et leur faisaient escorte. Les passants se découvraient, avec le respect de la peur, devant ces héros, dont quelques-uns moururent de fatigue au milieu de leur triomphe. Les clefs de la Bastille se multiplièrent. (1,5,8)*

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16. “I think the French Revolution, this violent explosion of egalitarian terror, is crucial. Before, terror simply meant the ‘mob’ erupting in violence, but they don’t take over—they simply kill. I am speaking of the Jacobin Terror. This is the key event. You either buy it or you don’t” (Žižek 2007).

There was nothing radically new in the event: Jacobins were, for Chateaubriand, simple plagiarists (1,9,4). The complete veracity of the following recounted moment is less relevant than its function as a display of loathing: as we can today see lynching mobs in India that use mobile technologies to record beaten bodies of the rapists, the mob seen by Chateaubriand parades the streets with heads of Foulon and Berthier on pikes, exiting through open mouth while the teeth of the dead are clenching the iron. He shouts from his balcony: "Is that your understanding of liberty?"<sup>17</sup> Chateaubriand is abhorred by the cannibalistic feast. The mob did not destroy the gate and kill him. *Encore à la mer* (1,5,15): he sets on sea again, on a piece of heterotopia, where Byron, one of the obsessions of his memoirs, is his habitual reference.<sup>18</sup>

Chateaubriand sees the events in that way because they lack spirituality from his point of view. He is a Christian and his spirituality is religious. Violent revolution is in his eyes an antiutopia, a temporary orgy of fallen men. This is his sincere sentiment, or at least one expressed in the memoirs, in contrast to an attempt of a classicist explanation from the earlier essay dealing with the same phenomenon.<sup>19</sup> An impressive excerpt from the *Genius* conveys the gist of Chateaubriand's feelings on the matter:

Long shall we remember the days when men of blood pretended to erect altars to the *Vir-  
tues*, on the ruins of Christianity [*the charming comment in the here quoted American edi-  
tion: 'The author alludes to the disastrous tyranny exercised by Robespierre over the  
deluded French people.'*, KP]. With one hand they reared scaffolds; with the other, on the  
fronts of our temples they inscribed *Eternity* to God and *Death* to man; and those temples,  
where once was found that God who is acknowledged by the whole universe, and where  
devotion to Mary consoled so many afflicted hearts,—those temples were dedicated to  
*Truth*, which no man knows, and to *Reason*, which never dried a tear. (Chateaubriand  
1976: 52)

This lack of spirituality, the heartless values of truth and reason, makes revolutionary vio-  
lence senseless for Chateaubriand. On the other hand, French Revolution has a strange  
status in Foucault's studies: it figures more prominently in *The Birth of the Clinic*, it is pres-  
ent but ultimately not so relevant in *To Discipline and Punish*; it is a defining epochal event  
both in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, and in the mentioned self-apologetic piece *Is it Use-  
less to Revolt?* But in the eyes of early 1970's Foucault who discusses politics of the day  
with Maoists and with Chomsky, the event looks strangely similar to the one depicted by  
Chateaubriand, with the sole distinction that Foucault's portrayal of events is cynical in  
tone. Head on the stick, for Foucault, is an old Germanic custom, a form of people's justice.  
The clashes with the police should be framed in terms of war, because the people's court  
would, following bourgeois form, reproduce a bourgeois justice. There is no spirituality in  
French revolution, only power. Proletariat wages war to claim power, not because it is just,  
Foucault exclaimed to Chomsky (who, of course, did not agree). Neither truth, nor reason,

17. *L'oeil d'une de ces têtes, sorti de son orbite, descendait sur le visage obscur du mort ; la pique traversait la bouche ouverte dont les dents mordaient le fer: " Brigands ! " m'écriai-je, plein d'une indignation que je ne pus contenir, " Est-ce comme cela que vous entendez la liberté? (1,5,9)*

18. Chateaubriand seemed frustrated with the lack of Byron's recognition, portraying him as a son who, in terms of art and spiritual heritage, did not acknowledge his father (1,12,4). Cf. also Clubbe (2013).

19. Although he is an *acteur*, & *acteur souffrant*, Chateaubriand claims that his blood has calmed before he set out to write, building disinterestedly from the principles: *Je causerai toujours simplement avec vous.* (Chateaubriand, 1797: 5-6).

was present. Unlike in his picture of Iran of the late 1970s, spirituality was absent. Thus there was no place for utopia of political spirituality. This is of course not a claim in any sense about the facts and feelings in French Revolution as such, or any other revolution whatsoever, which might be more or less spiritual; this is only a claim that Foucault discovered spirituality later, and that his perspective, judged by his discourse, became less cynical.

Is revolution a utopia, then, depends on the point of view of the observer and actor. Utopia can serve to legitimize violence. Where one sees a righteous caliphate, others will see bloodthirsty cutthroats of Daesh. Utopia is sometimes devised in the shadow of power and violence to abolish both. Christianity is potentially universal but adherence to it was often achieved as a *compelle intrare* operation, by force more than by a missionary zeal. It is not so in Chateaubriand. His heterotopias are utopistically accepted by hearts of their dwellers. Foucault's utopias are ultimately private: their universality is at best the one of liberalism, devoid of metaphysics, "a liberalism with a sceptical face" (cf. Kurelić 2002), as the least bad political vehicle accommodated to accept differences. Western universality, as he claimed, was achieved by exclusion of the mad and the marginal. *Mais quoi? ce sont des fous*, exclaimed Descartes. Now, we have free speech and strategic games, perhaps more of a heterotopia than a utopia, since strategic games, if taken seriously, by definition go with the risk of domination (cf. Plant 2007).

To conclude: a strange encounter ends up in partial convergence, a strange congeniality of two spirits in different roles, times and epochs. They both start from death. Chateaubriand's childhood friend Gesril, undisciplined to the core and the master of audacious tests of courage, as a grown up swims back to his ship to be hanged by the English since he gave his word (1,1,5). Foucault ends up with techniques of spirituality of the utopian bodies, substituting or, more accurately, euphemizing death with risk. A strange encounter in political theology is the one of the quest for spirituality in two remarkable lives. Do they end up the same, with failure and death? Perhaps. But we may end more cheerfully—with life, putting aside the scholastic question whether it is utopian or heterotopian. Then, instead of a tranquil heaven of eternal life in one case, in the other we may see a never-ending earthly orgy. Is it consensual and how long it is going to last? I should leave that question for another occasion.

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## Presence of the Past and its Frameworks

*“S’il est vrai que la raison d’être fondamentale d’un lieu de mémoire est d’arrêter le temps, de bloquer le travail de l’oubli, de fixer un état des choses, d’immortaliser la mort, de matérialiser l’immatériel pour (...) enfermer le maximum de sens dans le minimum de signes, il est clair, et c’est ce qui les rend passionnants, que les lieux de mémoire ne vivent que de leur aptitude à la métamorphose, dans l’incessant rebondissement de leurs significations et le buissonnement imprévisible de leurs ramifications. » (Nora 1997: 38)*

Pierre Nora

Marie-Claire Lavabre, French scholar engaged in the study of memorial phenomena, political use of the past, as well as the approaches related to the social sciences that treat memory, defines memory as the “presence of the past”. (Lavabre, internet) This definition seemed appropriate as well in the realm of heritage studies, particularly in relation to the *general theory of heritage* (or *heritology*). In the mentioned theoretical context heritage is defined as the past that is activated, used in a present. Furthermore, heritage objects are explained as the material and immaterial carriers of mnemonical contents (Bulatović 2015: 18-22), and the process of patrimonialization (*patrimonialisation* in French), through which the parts of the past are recognized as heritage, as the maintaining the memorization of the past. (Bulatović 2014) Therefore, we could see how the idea of heritage is intertwined with the memory.

On the other hand, Maurice Halbwachs, French sociologist who had an enormous influence on the memory studies, analyzed the external (social) frameworks that are affecting the memorizing process. (Halbwachs 1994) Carrying forward his ideas of the social frameworks, on the one hand, but Foucault’s definition of the *discourse* and internal and external rules (frameworks) through which the discourse is formed (Foucault 1971: 10-47), the objective of this paper could be revealed. The hypothesis is that in relation to the discourse and the rules bonded to it, only particular parts of the past are activated, only particular memories, as well. Thus, only specific heritage objects (carriers of memories) are perceived as important. We could say as well that the frameworks will influence the definition, preservation and transference of the meanings of heritage.

In order to explain the general context of this paper, the first part of it will be dedicated to definition of heritage studies, as the basis for the interpretation of the theories of *collective* and *cultural memory* and *discourse*, as well. Furthermore, the similarities will be pointed

out between the *general theory of heritage*, on the one hand, and the *cultural* and *collective memory*, as well as *les lieux de mémoire*, on the other. The resemblance could be perceived in relation to the problems of interpretation and use of the past, but also in the context of discursivity of testimonies of the past. Thus, the next part of the paper will be dedicated to the relation between the theories of *discourse*, *cultural memory* and *general theory of heritage*. The final part will provide a sketch of the possibility to use the aforementioned theories for interpretation of cultural heritage of the Marais district in Paris.

## General theory of heritage

According to the theoretical position regarding heritage, which I will use throughout this paper, the characteristic of each heritage object is that it has a plurality of significations. Furthermore, hypothesis that will be developed emphasize that a signification is created within a particular discourse which is activating the past. Consequently, only certain parts of the past are perceived as important within the particular discourse and should, therefore, be preserved for the future. Nevertheless, before this discursive interpretation of the heritage is developed, it is important to refer firstly to the basis of the theoretical approach related to heritage that will be used.

There are various definitions of the term “heritage” (*patrimoine* in French), as well as numerous disciplines that are researching this problem. According to French scholars, the definition of the “heritage” today encompasses nearly “all the goods, all the treasures of the past”. (Babelon, Chastel 1994: 11)

Carrying forward the ideas and theories of museologists Wojciech Gluzinski, Zbynek Stránský and Ivo Maroević, as well as the tradition of hermeneutics, on the one hand, and communication theory on the other, Croatian museologist, Tomislav Šola, as well as Serbian museologist Dragan Bulatović, established the foundations of the *general theory of heritage (or heritology)*. The aim of the endeavor was to establish a discipline that will gather different treatments of the heritage problem, alongside with the aim to define its theory, philosophy and methodology. (Bulatović 2014; Šola 2003: 305-306; 311-314) As Tomislav Šola points out, what is bounding the disciplines that are focusing on the problem of heritage is the study of the information about the passed human experience, its identification/recollection, analysis, care and transference. (Šola 2003: 307)

As the main objective of this discipline the problematization of man’s relation towards the testimonies of the past, the material and immaterial carriers of mnemonic contents, is emphasized. Through identification of those carriers, their interpretation, preservation and transmission of some of their significations, the practice of the maintaining the process of memorizing the past is revealed as the vehicle. (Bulatović 2015: 18-22)

In that theoretical context, the heritage is defined as a result of the process of patrimonialization. During that process, the parts of the past that have a characteristic to be testimonies are identified, as well as “defined” as heritage. (Fiori 2012: 297) The main characteristic of those objects is that they are separated from their original context and have a possibility to testify about it in the realm of another context. (Maroević 1993: 120)

But, how? Someone has to recognize their content, interpret it, and be willing to transfer the information that these objects possess and the messages created in the process of interpretation. Therefore, we could say that the end (or the new beginning) of the patrimonialization process is when someone else decides to accept the message of the objects and to transmit it to others. (Булатовић 2005: 17-18)

Thus, the process of patrimonialization enables endurance of different parts of the past (of their content as well). On the other hand, it enables their continuous reinterpretation, as well as its preservation and transmission. Furthermore, we could say as well that heritage, developed through the process of patrimonialization, is consisted of the objects of the past whose various characteristics, content, is “activated” – used in the present and preserved for the future.

However, patrimonialization could not be fulfilled without memorizing as a process. Just to point out, the memorization is here interpreted as the accumulation of information and remembrance as their extraction. (Бедли 2004: 3-9) In the context of the patrimonialization, memorization and remembrance have two functions. The first in the identification of the testimonial character of the objects of the past – through relating them to the certain corpus of knowledge. Thus, we are identifying what are the memories, the content, that these objects store. Furthermore, through the influence of the knowledge as well as of the memories that are being recognized, we are creating some of the possible interpretations of the mentioned objects. We are memorizing that these objects are testimonies of the past, alongside with their created interpretation, someone else incorporates this information in the corpus of its own knowledge and transmits it afterwards. Therefore, through the patrimonialization we are sustaining the memorization process, as well as different memories. (Булатовић 2005: 17-18)

### **Collective and cultural memory**

Another field of inquiry important for the *general theory of heritage* is, therefore, the research of the human memory. There is a difference between the disciplines that examine the cognitive, biological and neural basis of the human memory, and those that are concerned with the sociocultural aspects that have the influence on it. The notion “cultural memory” is used as an “umbrella term” for the treatment of the memory related to mentioned sociocultural aspects, even though there are differences in these approaches as well. (Erl, Nünning 2008: 3-4)

As it was already mentioned, French scholar Maurice Halbwachs had a significant influence on the inquiry of the human memory related to external (social) frameworks. The focal point of his research was the role of the memory in the process of social integration, therefore in the construction of the social group, as well as in the identification of a person as a member of a group. He pointed out that there are as many collective memories as there are groups, that different memories are intertwining with each other and are changed due to the modification of circumstances. (Lavabre 2000: 54)

Halbwachs's works "The social frameworks of memory" published in 1925 and "The collective memory", published in 1950 after his death, had a major influence on the theories of collective memory developed from the end of the 1980s and beginning of the 1990s.

On the one hand, Halbwachs ideas were problematized throughout the concept of *les lieux de mémoire* of French historian, Pierre Nora, and numerous researchers that took part in the three volume book "Les lieux de mémoire". This notion was introduced in the processes of the interpretation of the past in order to fill in the gaps that existed in the historiographical research, and its focal point was (the historiographical research) of the process of active use of the past by different groups and crystallization of the contents of the past in different places. (Nora 1997: 15-43) The novelty of this methodological approach was, among other things, "to make the present speak, not as the inheritor of the past, but as its user (...)". (Poulot 2001: 202)

On the other hand, German scholars Jan and Aleida Assmann introduced the terms *cultural memory* and the *culture of memory*. According to them, the *cultural memory* is defined as the transference of the general knowledge from one generation to another in a distinctive, interactive realm of a society, including the means of transmission, defined as the *culture of memory*. (Kuljić 2006: 111) They also carried forward the idea of German art historian Aby Warburg, about the "objectivation of the culture" that they are defining as the "figures of memory" – the carriers of the mnemonic contents (texts, rituals, monuments, etc.). (Assmann, Czaplicka 1995: 129)

What is important to emphasize is the fact that through the research of Nora and other collaborators of "Les lieux de mémoire" and Jan and Aleida Assmann, on the other hand, the sociological inquiry, and the research of the use and importance of memory in the social group's constitution, was transformed in favor of the carriers of mnemonic contents, the content itself and the study of transmission of the memory through them.

### **Discursivity of memories and heritage**

Various scholars accentuate the role that Foucault and his ideas had on the historiographical research. Particularly through the emphasis that there are numerous interpretations of the past, as opposed to one universal, linearly perceived history. (Goldstein 1994) We could notice this idea of the plurality of interpretations of the past, their variability and the use of different parts of the past, according to the needs of the group that is interpreting the past related to Nora's concept of *lieu de mémoire* and to *culture of memory* and *cultural memory* of Assmanns as well. Even before these scholars, Halbwachs theoreticized about similar ideas.

In the context of the general theory of heritage these ideas will lead to a possibility of pluralism of information about the past, originating from the same objects of heritage. However, we have to bear in mind the discourse that is activating the past and that is maintaining the memories.

In relation to discourse, further points should be considered as well. When perceiving a practice or a discourse, as Foucault emphasized, it is important to have in mind the outset of internal or external rules (frameworks) that are governing a discourse or a practice itself. (Foucault 1971: 10-47) According to those frameworks we could perceive, think or talk about the heritage or about the past in general (therefore, about the memories as well). Thus, it will be important to problematize a set of questions related to a discourse – what are the possibilities of enunciation, which utterances constitute the discourse itself, which do not and why. (Фыко 1998: 123-127; 137-143) Furthermore, in the mentioned context, the relation between different discourses is important, as well as the transformations in particular discourse. (Foucault 1969).

Let us return to process of patrimonialization. As a presumption, we have an object from the past, separated from its original context, but having a possibility to testify about the mentioned context. In order to understand it, we have to decode it, by interpreting its various characteristics, or the memories deposited in it. Different discourses, according to the set of external and internal rules that are governing them, perceive only particular characteristics, particular memories as relevant, therefore, particular parts of the past as well.

Furthermore, by maintaining only the particular memories, identification of the object from the past whose content will be activated is influenced, as well as the interpretation of mentioned content. Carrying on this idea, we could say that particular discourse and discursive practice influence the memorization process, the memories maintained within those discourses, as well as the interpretation, preservation of heritage, and transference of its content.

### **The discursivity of the heritage of the Marais district in Paris**

In relation to the inquiry of the cultural heritage of the Marais district in Paris some of the aforementioned theoretical assumptions could be perceived. There are various discourses in which different parts of the past of this particular district are “activated”, used, and some of them will be mentioned.

Furthermore, only particular memories could be perceived as relevant and maintained, which is affecting the interpretation of the objects of the past as heritage, and the mere definition of heritage. Therefore, it is interesting to examine what are the memories that are being recognized as relevant, for what reason, and how does it affect the interpretation and transmission of heritage objects.

The discourse related to the history of heritage problematizes, on the one hand, different public and institutional initiatives for the protection of this district’s heritage. The aforementioned initiatives emerged due to the fear that different parts of this district’s heritage could disappear during the work on the modernization of Paris from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Therefore, numerous groups for the preservation of the “old Paris” were created. Through their publications and actions they influenced the definition of the heritage and the widening of the term by perceiving as heritage other artistic forms and periods than before. Furthermore, the mentioned groups were important as well for raising awareness of the public about the heritage of this district, as well as for the importance of its preservation. (Fiori



2012: 13-14; 123-125) Through these examples, we could see the development of the interpretation of heritage from the historical studies and historical information provided by that interpretation to the increasing role of the personal memories for the perception of heritage. (La Cité, Bulletin de la Société historique et archéologique du I<sup>er</sup> arrondissement de Paris: 1901-1907; “Le Pletzl », Bulletin de l’association des amis du 4<sup>e</sup> arrondissement: 1988-2000)

On the other hand, the same discourse of the history of heritage treats one of the consequences of these initiatives, namely, the declaration of this district as “protected area” according to the *Malraux law*. Based on this law, it became legally possible to protect not only the single historical monuments or the facades of the buildings and monuments, but their surroundings as well, in order to preserve the “traditional atmosphere of the district”. (Sauvgarde des quartiers anciens, Ministeres des affaires culturelles et de l’équipement, Ville de Paris III IV Arr. 1966: 24) However, different scholars are arguing the success of this law when it comes to the Marais. In her thesis “The Rosiers Street, urban space and Jewish identity”, defended in 1986, Jeanne Brody emphasized that even though the Malraux law has been adopted in 1962, it was still only the monuments that have been preserved, and not the community nor the community life in the Marais. (Brody 1986: 26) Therefore, her thesis treats the perseverance of the district of the Rosiers Street<sup>1</sup> as the symbol of the Jewish identity, on the one hand, and how does the urban space affects the Jewish identity and vice-versa, on the other. (Brody 1986: 70-73)

Furthermore, there are discourses of various ethnic and religious groups within which the preservation of the past is problematized. From the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and during the 20<sup>th</sup> century the district is settled by the Jewish immigrants, firstly from Eastern Europe, afterwards from the South Africa. However, even before the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century French Ashkenazi Jews lived in this district, beside several pogroms, during the centuries. (Brody 1986: 34-36) It is interesting that within the “Jewish discourse” of the preservation of this district’s heritage, different “memory groups”, societies or institutions are active. Therefore, it is really difficult to perceive separately various discourses, because of their mutual influences.

Furthermore, there are discourses of various societies for the protection of Marais’s heritage that are active in the present, discourses of various heritage institutions (archives, museums, libraries) that are creating different exhibitions and programs, thus affecting the maintenance of the memories. Firstly, those were the exhibitions about the architectural or artistic characteristics of the buildings preserved in the Marais (Le Marais. Age d’or et Renouveau 1963), but later on, other parts of the Marais’ past started to be involved in the exhibitions, such as Jewish heritage, for example (Azéma 2005, 31-57; 305-321).

## Conclusion

During the conference “Une autre histoire : Jacques le Goff”, that took place at the French National Library, in January 2015, Pierre Nora mentioned that the idea to write a book “La nouvelle histoire”, that summed up the various aspects of the change that happened in

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1. A part of the Marais, seen as the heart of the Jewish district.

the historiographical paradigm, came from Michel Foucault. Several years earlier, in 2008, during Nora's interview on *France Culture* in the program "Les Nouveaux Chemins de la connaissance", he stated that the 1980s represented the change towards the past, and the way we perceive it. Furthermore, he added that "Les lieux de mémoire" were part of that new perception of the past. Nora pointed out during the same interview as well that important intellectual differences existed between him and Foucault, and that he does not perceive himself as a Foucauldian. (Nora 14 March 2008) However, when he talked about the main idea of "Les lieux de mémoire", he indicated that he wanted to "defamiliarize our symbols, mythology and representations, that the time and the people fabricated". Hence, he continued, in order to use the Foucauldian term, his work consisted of "the archeology of mentioned symbols". (Nora 13 March 2008)

On the other hand, the birth of the modern perception of the heritage was also related to the French intellectual context. As French art historian Dominique Poulot sums up in his article "The Birth of Heritage : 'le moment Guizot'", the main ideas concerning democratization, nationalization and preservation of the monuments of the past were shaped throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but later on as well. (Poulot 1988: 50-52) Afterwards, the notion of the heritage, as well as different theories of it continued to be developed. However, its main characteristic remained – heritage represents the part of the past, according to the definition of *les lieux de mémoire*, we could add memories as well, deposited in material or immaterial carriers. The mentioned parts are activated, used in the present and preserved for the future. Since the memories are always activated in the realm of a discourse (or in a practice), it seems important to problematize the relation between the frameworks of a discourse and the interpretation of heritage.

Therefore, today's definition of heritage or, more generally, of *lieux de mémoire* should be perceived regarding the broader context of influences that existed between the ideas of historians, sociologists, philosophers and art historians, that were being formed during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and in that context, Michel Foucault has the prominent role as well.

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## This Body, This Paper, This Web

### Introduction: Power, Knowledge and Behavior

Power is not a thing but a relationship between two individuals, and a relationship that allows one individual to either determine or actually conduct the conduct of another. An examination of power, moreover, reveals it to be the essence of government or governmentality. (Foucault 2014:240) “Power is essentially relations...what brings individuals, human beings, into relation with one another, not only in the form of communication of meaning, not only in the form of desire, but also in a specific form that allows them to act on one another...to ‘govern’ each other.” (Foucault 2014:251) A fundamental feature of power relations would be what Foucault terms as a *dispositif* or an apparatus. The different elements of a heterogeneous existence constitute the necessary ontological (and historical) basis against which an apparatus (a *dispositif*) comes into being: an apparatus (or a *dispositif*) does not exist singly but as a system of relations that might be established between these elements. It is not defined by any single function but instead maintains a fluid functionality, possessing the dominant strategic function of responding to a necessary and urgent need. The apparatus is “always inscribed in a play of power, but it is also always linked to certain coordinates of knowledge which issue from it but, to an equal degree, condition it. This is what the apparatus consists in: strategies of relations of forces supporting, and supported by, types of knowledge.” (Foucault 1980:196) The function, as the most elementary unit of the apparatus, is the discursive, practical or applied means toward the production of some intended consequence. (Brenner 1994:680) The functional imperative never causes its own fulfillment on account of being embedded and constituted through those same historically specific social processes whose rationale and logic they describe, and in the context of power, possesses both an ordering effect (in ensuring that the elements of discourse obey a particular set of rules or codes) as well as one of control or discipline, through which power is inscribed onto the existence of the subject. (Brenner 1994:691) These “types of knowledge” are perhaps important for a subsequent consideration of the transformation of knowledge into data.

In Foucault’s work, knowledge as signified by the word “*connaissance*” refers to the relation of the subject to the object and the formal rules that govern it. This signification is sustained by “*savoir*”, the knowledge consisting of the conditions that are necessary in a particular period for this or that type of object to be given to *connaissance* and for this or that enunciation to be formulated. (Foucault 1972:15) Power and knowledge form an

interlocked, recursive and doubling mechanism propagated through the constant modification and formation of the identity of the subject contextualized in relation to the different constitutive elements of the ontological apparatus. An implication of the propagation of power through the constant use of knowledge of subjects would perhaps be the constitution of identity through a continuously modified set of relations. The relations and apparatuses of power are marked by flux, but the subject possesses a particular knowledge of themselves - a "truth" of themselves - that is taken to be the basis of their existence - historical, social, political and otherwise.

The genealogy of this truth is of considerable importance in the development of an ethical response to structures of power in Foucault's work. Upon the assumption of being a physico-historical connection in a field of power/knowledge, the relationship of the subject to itself is fundamentally altered. "Power relations are both intentional and non-subjective. If in fact they are intelligible, this is not because they are the effect of another instance that "explains" them, but rather because they are imbued, through and through, with calculation: there is no power that is exercised without a series of aims and objectives... the logic is perfectly clear, the aims decipherable, and yet it is often the case that no one is there to have invented them, and few who can be said to have formulated them: an implicit characteristic of the great anonymous" (Foucault 1978:94-95). The action of knowledge through and upon the subject possesses a few significant characteristics: the teleological direction of power can be determined only upon the basis of an external objectivity that does not imbue the subject themselves with any individual or subjective locus of power. Moreover, such an objectivity is dependent upon a mass homogenization of the subject at large: the affect of power might be to create a hierarchy of discourse, of checks and balances that ensures its own propagation and perpetuation, but every individual, significantly, must be treated as an equal and non-differentiable part of the "great anonymous":

"The positions of the subject are also defined by the situation that it is possible for him to occupy in relation to the various domains or groups of objects: according to a certain grid of explicit or implicit interrogations, he is the questioning subject and, according to a certain programme of information, he is the listening subject; according to a table of characteristic features, he is the seeing subject, and, according to a descriptive type, the observing subject; he is situated at an optimal perceptual distance whose boundaries delimit the wheat of relevant information; he uses instrumental intermediaries that modify the scale of the information, shift the subject in relation to the average or immediate perceptual level, ensure his movement from a superficial to a deep level, make him circulate in the interior space of the body."

(Foucault 1972:52)

## The Subject and Avowal

Doubling is an essential characteristic of the function and identity of a subject, and in the aforementioned context of anonymity, perhaps serves to determine some key characteris-

tics of the consequent transformation of the subject. These characteristics, Foucault argues, are set into linguistic and verbal motion by the process of avowal: which, in its basic form, consists of a verbal action on the part of the subject through which they are able to affirm themselves, bind themselves to the truth (of the self that has just been affirmed), place themselves in a dependent relationship of power with respect to another, and consequently and subsequently modifies their intra- and internal relations to one another. This archetypal mode of avowal evolves, however, into a method aimed toward a discovery of the truth manifested by the subject, and their position thereof. (Foucault 2014:17) The subject has been given the explicit of identity of being insane.

The recognition of this identity is of paramount importance for the transformation of consequence at hand: the identity of being 'insane' (or a 'criminal' or a 'hysteric') is one whose political and governmental existence is always transient. Self-knowledge on the part of the subject is directly constituted and modified by, and in turn modifies, the knowledge of the subject itself available in a hierarchy of power. After the enunciation of this truth, the concerned juridico-political authority can claim to have explicit and clear knowledge of the subject, who has now been assimilated, known and homogenized.

In its penal form, the technologies of avowal are triply bifurcated while remaining united and entwined in their aims. These divisions are directed toward the production of objects (the subject and the object of truth in this case), communication (which Foucault defines as the means through which individuals communicate between themselves) and government (mutual subjective action to ensure the propagation of power). There are no sure techniques of communication. This is a point of considerable importance, and one which will be discussed subsequently in this paper. Avowal also functions recursively within the context of a temporal discourse: it reminds the subject of their relationship to themselves as well as to a larger social contract. This relation, in its consequences for discipline, enforces the necessity of the action at hand to be performed upon the political, historical, social and physical body of the subject. These techniques of avowal serve to create a temporal ontology of the subject, whose transformation is defined with respect to the actual actions they have committed as well as those which they might still commit, depending on their character and behavior. (Foucault 2014:208-209)

The active components of existence, thus, are defined within the context of constant shifts in the modality of power relations, all the while possessing meaning only on account of an ontological metaphorization of action and behavior. "Power/knowledge is that which links discourse to the non-discursive, that creates the connections which make it possible to speak about some aspect of the world in a particular regime of truth. That which is non-discursive plays no part in such regimes, and whether or not it becomes discursive cannot be determined from essential features of the event itself." (Fox 1998:418) The emergence of the subject of knowledge is accompanied by a shift in subjectivization and individuation, with individual historiographies transformed into "descending" phenomena whose directionality and effect are ever-increasingly streamlined. There is a constant purpose that is served, however: the "bringing of everyday life into discourse, the insertion of a kind of administrative grid [through which grows] a political awareness of the utility of small things for controlling people, and from this process emerged a whole set of techniques, a corpus of methods and knowledge, programs, plans and data." (Smart 1982:130)

## Communication, Information and the Body

Arguably the most visible effect of discourse, however, is the historical and physical transformation of the subject - the body - which, for Foucault, is perhaps ambiguous and marked by characteristics of docility, order and the exercise of disciplinary motives and might be tangibly defined as a physical body, a natural body, a body-in-itself or the socially constructed body. (Fox 1998:426-427) A 'mode' of investment of power into the body is necessary in order for the adequate functionality of a society.(Foucault 1980:59) Power produces knowledge - it is on the basis of power over the body that a physiological and organic knowledge of it becomes possible. In the case of the internet, the physicality of being is replaced by an immediacy of existence: information, which exists to communicate, is in a constant dichotomy with data, which is the stream of facts - in numbers or in strings of words - that seeks to create a background and space for the utilization and creation of information.

The break between data and information occurs in within an epistemological framework: data provides the epistemological groundwork for the creation and propagation of meaning (or information) itself. Data is the means of communication without which communication cannot occur. It has no temporal value and is a consummate tool of rationality. Perhaps the most crucial difference between data and information is the self-aware sentience of the latter. Information, whether or not transmitted through social systems, is aware of itself - either because of its user or because of a mass awareness on a virtual scale. This awareness allows for it to transcend its technological and ontological limitations and instead allow it to assume the forms of both the medium and the message. Data assumes an aspect of truth which the subject must acquire, accept and be transformed by (*connaissance*) with this transformation and corresponding self-knowledge on the part of the subject being the information (*savoir*) that marks the subject.

For Foucault, communication is arguably fundamentally a directed and directive action meant to serve some expansive means. Within contemporary means of virtual existence, however, not only do products such as televisions, computers and social networks take over the role of the confessional, the acts of viewing and participation are themselves transformed. The freedom from an anonymous "shadowy" interlocutor, in power relations, leads to an entry into silence, the latter being arguably constructed in this context as and through the complete immersion of the self into the structure of power the subject exists in. (Foucault 1978:60,155) As Mark Poster writes, "In the act of viewing, television 'discourses' are presented which operate to 'constitute the self' of the viewer...in the case of computer mail and teleconferencing, temporal and spatial distance structures the subject continuously to constitute [themselves] in the discourse. Electronic mediation heightens the artificiality of communication, extending to the ultimate degree the *différance* of writing. Self-constitution is built into the structure of the communication. With the mode of information...the subject becomes a multiplicity of self-constitutions." (Poster 1987:115-116)



## The Subject and Communication

Communication, thus, forms the basis for a shift in an analytic of the subject from a macrocosmic perspective to one of physico-virtual attenuation, as occurs on the Internet. Virtual communication occurs as a constant flow of information, and this flow possesses a doubling characteristic of its own: the transmission of information on the internet could not possibly occur without the participating individual (the user of a social network, for example) being a unit of information themselves. Rasch defines communication thus:

“Social systems exist and reproduce themselves by virtue of communication, [which] is defined not as the transfer of information from active producer to passive receiver, but as the production of information through choice on the part of the recipient. Communication could be said to be the result of continuously constructing the distinction between information and noise. Communication offers itself then as connectivity (*Anschlußfähigkeit*), as the opportunity to continue or discontinue communication. Freedom arises in systems as the ability to affirm or reject communication.”

(Rasch 1995:216)

These systems possess a distinguishing characteristic, termed, by Mautarena and Varela, autopoiesis:

“An autopoietic system is organized (defined as unity) as a network of processes of production (synthesis and destruction) of components such that these components:

- (i) continuously regenerate and realize the network that produces them, and
- (ii) constitute the system as a distinguishable unity in the domain in which they exist.

Thus, autopoiesis attempts to capture the mechanism or process that generates the identity of the living, dividing the living from non-living.”

(Varela 1992:5)

Autopoiesis is concerned with the mechanism or the process that generates the identity of “living” (“a self-produced coherence”). There is an element of doubling within autopoiesis as well: “The living system must distinguish itself from its environment while at the same time maintaining its coupling...the autopoietic unity creates a perspective from which the exterior is one, which cannot be confused with the physical surroundings.” (Varela 1992:7) Varela defines environment as “the environment of the living system as it appears to an observer and without reference to the autonomous unity” and the world as “the environment for the system which is defined in the same movement that gave rise to its identity and that only exists in that mutual definition.” Luhmann opines that “all communication depends on the cooperation of conscious systems...[and as communication] it must take on a form, either acoustically or optically, in the media of possible perception, [transforming] the indeterminable complexity of these media into determinate complexity; that is, it must transform infinite informational loads into finite ones.” (Luhmann and Behnke 1994:29)

The change in the parametric of information is perhaps suggestive of an analytic of information-power: just as power modifies the relationship of the subject to themselves constantly, so too is the relationship of the information to itself modified according to the communicative necessity at hand. In the latter process, thus, not only is the constitution of the subject changed as in the former, but, significantly, the context for that constitution itself is constantly altered. The content and value of information - unlike the content of the parrhesic statement or the statement of avowal - fluctuates constantly. This fluctuation determines not only the identity of the subject but in the context of the subject as an environmental component of the system also determines a mode of behavior for the system in general.

Twitter, a microblogging social media network, evidences Luhmann's statement. The prevalence of hashtags (phrases preceded by a # sign) occurs in two simultaneous but separate processes. Hashtags, meant to evidence a certain ethos or emotion, initially serve an expository purpose for the phrase at hand - thus, a preliminary tweet with the hashtag "#blacklivesmatter" serves to ground this politico-virtual statement within a virtual discourse of blackness or racism, with a particular individual expressing outrage or despair. In time, however, the meaning of the hashtag is modified through the generation of tweets embodying lived, bodily and historical experience: in the case of this particular hashtag, for instance, it quickly assumed a form through which an absent, black body simultaneously became an easily-identified and yet-still-anonymous object of virtual discourse while at the same time altering the bodily and virtual value of the users who had made that phrase such a success. If the true force of social media lies in the fact that "today's media are able to access—and routinely operate by accessing—dimensions of our experience, of our open and ongoing individuation, that lie beneath the personal or individual level. This fact is absolutely crucial for appreciating the specificity of twenty-first-century media. Rather than furnishing a recorded surrogate for that experience, as nineteenth- and twentieth-century recording media certainly did, twenty- first century media exercises its force by influencing *how experience occurs*. Rather than intervening at the level of memory itself, twenty-first century media impacts the distinct and quasi-autonomous microagencies that underlie memory's integrated function, as well as other environmental dimensions that bear on that function." (Hansen 2012:56)

The internet obeys the fundamental principles of autopoiesis: its discrete unity is composed primarily on the basis of a generated intentionality on the part of its participants - every user agrees to a code of conduct. Without any particular mode of veridiction openly suggested, the different modalities of anonymity which the user might take on - there being no restriction to the different levels of apparent self-identification on the part of the subject - create a political landscape that exists simultaneously virtually and physically, as well as actually and potentially. By agreeing to join a particular network, the subject enters a particular modality for the analytic of power. The behavior and action of the subject is modulated by a concurrent net behavioral activity on the part of the system as a whole: to like or not to like a particular statement, thus, as in the case of Facebook, is at once to express an apparently personal belief while constantly modifying the meaning and value of that statement. The different contributing components to social media, thus, proceed autopoietically: at all instances, a unity of function is maintained (the activity of the user, the virtual presence, actual or otherwise, of the subject) which serves to define the coded rules in the system meant to establish function, order and purpose.

Autopoiesis in social media proceeds through the dual processes of popular, non-virtual culture seeping into and influenced by the subcultures on the Internet. Structures of power that internalize subjects' bodies and identities must dissipate and diffuse within strictly grounded technological codes in order to be recreated in different fashions and infiltrate the identities present within anonymity. The internet constantly reinvents and modifies the space for assumption of a virtual identity. There is no single user to be traced for the creation or generation of a particular phrase or meme: a single GIF is a result of far more than a few minutes spent on Photoshop - it represents a cross-section of the fault lines that are drawn at the coalescing of popular physical culture and virtual anonymity. The spectacle of the private confessional, in this case, is replaced by a multiplicity of both sinner and for-giver: the audience that listens to the confession and creation of a new visual text is the same audience that seeks to be heard. Identity, diffused through different networks of propagative virtual discourses, becomes fluid and undermined ontologically. Subsequently, the nearest and most stable mode of identification is thus with a non-human one. Animals are very reliably just objects and entities without any hope of interpersonal linguistic communication, and the transference of feelings is perhaps at once a response to and an admission of biopolitical power and thus, "forms such as language offer an evolutionary advantage, forms that can also serve as media and that can, on the basis of their considerable discipline (specification of sounds that can be expressed as words, grammatical rules, etc.) de-link themselves and can be freed from an immense variation of possible links so that other forms (*prágmata*, complexes of ideas, theories, etc) can impress themselves." (Luhmann and Rasch 2002:177)

### Confessionality and the Internet

The specter of the confessional that marked the rise in biopolitics in the nineteenth and early twentieth century has transcended the very act of confessing itself, and has instead become the medium as well as the message for the choice of being part of a social network. Regarding the development of sexuality, Foucault writes, "The primary concern was not repression of the sex of the classes to be exploited, but rather the body, vigor, longevity, progeniture, and descent of the classes that 'ruled.' This was the purpose for which the deployment of sexuality was first established, as a new distribution of pleasures, discourses, truths, and powers; it has to be seen as the self-affirmation of one class rather than the enslavement of another: a defense, a protection, a strengthening, and an exaltation that were eventually extended to others at the cost of different transformations - as a means of social control and political subjugation." (Foucault 1978:123). The traditional model for the confessional - a closed room and the anonymity of the sinner - has been replaced by a nearly-agoraphobic, endless, digitalized space, and it is within the confines of this space that identity is dissociated, regenerated and finally, proliferated. Individual identity does not have to remain constant within the boundaries of the Internet: there is a complete freedom of anonymity wherein an individual can choose to multiply their identity endless on the same website or different websites and assume different personas on each one. Such anonymity is only a process in itself and is not present in a teleology of social media. On Facebook, where different pages that might be created or different accounts that might be set up by the same person all serve the ostensible purpose of communica-

tion. Anonymity is a crucial part of such an ontology: the fractured, dissipated identities which the Internet creates must seek to recognize themselves as being fractured identities in enough of themselves.

A single set of numbers, letters, characters or some permutation defines the subject. Varela's dialectic of identity might be hierarchized, but in the case of social media, the hierarchy is dissipated to form an equipotential ontology. Every single voice on the internet can speak and generate whatever opinions or conclusions it wants, but it is perhaps incorrect to claim this as an example of equality. The space that the internet created for itself is waiting to be filled up by individual presences, which are then overtaken by the idempotent possibilities of virtual space to assume identities of their own. Thus, an ontology which was already created is recreated endlessly.

The confession is a ritual of discourse in which the speaking subject is also the subject of the statement; it is also a ritual that unfolds within a power relationship, for one does not confess without "the presence (or virtual presence) of a partner who is not simply the interlocutor but the authority who requires the confession, prescribes and appreciates it, and intervenes in order to judge, punish, forgive, console, and reconcile; a ritual in which the truth is corroborated by the obstacles and resistances it has had to surmount in order to be formulated; and finally, a ritual in which the expression alone, independently of its external consequences, produces intrinsic modifications in the person who articulates it: it exonerates, redeems, and purifies him; it unburdens him of his wrongs, liberates him, and promises him salvation." (Foucault 1978:61-62). Conducted within the realm of anonymous power, it forces the subject to avow some particular action or aspect of their political or internal being, with the object of this avowal being the renunciation of that fundamental attribute and characteristic of the subject expressed and brought forth through parrhesia. In "The Political Technology of Individuals," Foucault writes:

"The population and environment are in a perpetual living interrelation, and the state has to manage those living interrelations between those two types of living beings. We can say now that the true object [of power] becomes, at the end of the eighteenth century, the population; or, in other words, the state has essentially to take care of men as a population. It wields its power over living beings as living beings, and its politics, therefore, has to be a biopolitics...the main characteristic of our political rationality is the fact that this integration of the individuals in a community or in a totality results from a constant correlation between an increasing individualization and the reinforcement of this totality."

(Foucault 1997:415, 417)

The totality of this reinforcement creates the enclosing system defining the subject - and in the context of autopoietic virtual networks, there is a subsequent proliferation of identities meant to serve the purpose of a data-oriented and data-based form of knowledge. The site of operation of these structures, in turn, points toward the position and location of the subject within virtual space, while signally defining what that term means in the first place. Luhmann pointedly avoids giving a complete definition of space, writing that "space is constituted...by the assumption that two things cannot occupy the same place at the same time. Social systems always encounter the real aversion of other systems in the spatial autopoiesis of their life [and on the other] they conceive of space as the avoidance of contradictions organized as spatial positions." (Luhmann 1995:54, 385) These contradictions,

which emerge within the system, or within the relation between the environment and its world, are perhaps equivalent to the different modalities of knowledge for Foucault. The disciplinary spaces he subjects to spatial analysis are fundamentally defined by their content - in this case the body of the subject.

Bodies assume a particular location in space, and in his discussion of panopticism, Foucault observes that the enclosed and segmented space of a prison, scrutinized at every point, “in which the individuals are inserted in a fixed place, in which the slightest movements are supervised, in which all events are recorded, in which an uninterrupted work of writing links the centre and periphery, in which power is exercised without division, according to a continuous hierarchical figure, in which each individual is constantly located, examined and distributed among the living beings, the sick and the dead - all this constitutes a compact model of the disciplinary mechanism.” (Foucault 1977:197) Space acts as an ontological “skin” of sorts for the historico-political body, and in connexion with the deployment of sexuality, it forms the context against which the generation of an identity or agency (in this case sexuality) takes place. The space in which bio-power functions is fundamentally constituted and defined through the body of the population. About sex, Foucault states: “It fitted in both categories at once, giving rise to infinitesimal surveillances, permanent controls, extremely meticulous orderings of space, indeterminate medical or psychological examinations, to an entire micro-power concerned with the body.” (Foucault 1978:145) Regarded purely as a generative (and generated) entity, the ontological space of power/knowledge for Foucault is transformed into the general system for Luhmann, the latter marked through complexity, differentiation and perpetuation. (Luhmann 1995:7) The assumption of identity in this case has been already seen to be enforced through a process of avowal. Concurrent with avowal exists parrhesia, loosely translatable as “fearless speech”. If the purpose of truth telling is to ensure a system of identification and discipline and the establishment of boundaries and consequence, then parrhesia is:

“a way of telling the truth” - one that lays the subject open to a risk by the very fact that one tells the truth, of opening up this risk linked to truth-telling by, as it were, constituting oneself as the partner of oneself when one speaks, by binding oneself to the statement of the truth and to the act of stating the truth, and finally, of binding oneself to oneself in the statement of the truth, of freely binding oneself to oneself, and in the form of a courageous act. Parrhesia is the free courage by which one binds oneself in the act of telling the truth...the ethics of truth-telling as an action which is risky and free. The parrhesiast, the person who uses parrhesia, is the truthful man ... the person who has the courage to risk telling the truth, and who risks this truth-telling in a pact with himself, inasmuch as he is, precisely, the enunciator of the truth.”

(Foucault 2010:82)

Later on, he says, “It is not just a question of the game of truth or of the game of the right to speak in democracy, but of the game of the right to speak and of the game of truth in any, even an autocratic form of government.” (Foucault 2011:82)

## Parrhesiastic autopoiesis

Parrhesia involves a revelation of the truth of the subject - the self of the subject- instead of the emergence of an attribute or historico-legal characteristic. A parrhesic genealogy would thus have as its basis and aim the truth of the self: the self of the subject. In Varela, on the other hand, distinguishes between a virtual self and a selfless self, paralleled by biological and digital functionality. The virtual self is populated as a coherent global pattern that emerges through simple local components, appearing to have a central location where none is to be found and yet essential as a level of interaction for the behavior of the whole unity. The selfless self is constituted by the fact that although a system can possess separate local components of which there is no center or localized self, the whole behaves as a unit and for the observer, it is as if there was a coordinating agent virtually at the center. Digital functionality possesses a default casual mode of input-processing-output directionality in which information is processed at every stage. The internal constitution ("network and parallel architecture") of the former correspond to a relaxation time of back-and-forth signals that ends when every element has settled into a coherent activity. (Varela 1992:10-11) An epistemological significance to the dialectic of identity is constituted by a concurrent dialectic of knowledge. The former establishes an autonomous agent, a for-itself, and is constituted fundamentally by a dynamical term and a global term, referring to an assembly of individual components in relation to one another possessing reactionary and emergent properties (thereby establishing a horizontal connection). The latter refers to the properties themselves, thereby downwardly conditioning its internal components. A dialectic of knowledge, in such a method, arises from the perspective established through identity - equivalent to a coded surplus of significance to the internally constituted environment. In such a dialectic, signification is followed by coupling: the former refers to the necessary-emergence of a surplus meaning proper to the perspective of the constituted self while the latter refers to the necessary and permanent embeddedness and dependence of the self upon the environment. A functional method for constitution and continued existence of the self in bio-logic (biologically and virtually) is generated. Instead of a modal view of truth as an exclusionary procedure which enters discourse from the outside, a systems-theoretic understanding of truth would be that anonymous and unidentifiable principle of constraint that allows for the linkage of statements. Every scientific communication corresponds and correlates to the self-evolution of the system and therewith the medium within which its communications assume their form. (Wellbery 2009:992) The relationship between truth and power for Foucault, focuses from and upon

"The parrhesiastic standpoint, which tries precisely, stubbornly, and always starting over again, to bring the question of truth back to the question of its political conditions and the ethical differentiation which gives access to it; which constantly and always brings the question of power back to the question of its relation to truth and knowledge on the one hand, and to ethical differentiation on the other; the standpoint, finally, which constantly brings the question of the moral subject back to the question of the true discourse in which this moral subject constitutes itself and to the question of the relations of power in which this subject is formed. This is the parrhesiastic discourse and standpoint in philosophy: it is the discourse of the irreducibility of truth, power, and ethos, and at the same time the discourse of their necessary relationship, of the impossibility of thinking truth (*ale-*

*theia*), power (*politeia*), and *ethos* without their essential, fundamental relationship to each other.”

(Foucault 2011:68)

The means and methods of communication on the internet itself are worthy of a closer look. For Niklas Luhmann, communication is possible only through a synthesis of three different selections, none of which are self-contained or self-complete and each of which is epistemologically plausible only because of the presence of the others. “Like life and consciousness”, Luhmann writes, “communication is also an emergent reality, a self-generated state of affairs. It comes about through a synthesis of three different selections, namely the selection of information, the selection of the utterance [*die Mitteilung*] of this information, and selective understanding or misunderstanding of this utterance and its information.”(Luhmann and Rasch 2002:157) There is always a selection to be made, and this selection, within its boundaries of self-reflective and self-reflexive thought, is not a unique property of the individual, but, instead, is a necessary and essential quality of the systems that make up the internet itself. In considering emergent forms of electronic media, Luhmann writes, “One can begin communication with the help of these media - and postpone its completion in understanding. Such a postponement changes the form created by a difference, together with the non-form of the invisibility of what is uninvolved. In a strange way, the relationship to history thereby becomes selective, and any effort to reactualizes the past increases this selectivity.” (Luhmann and Behnke 1994:32)

## Communication and Identities

If all systems of communication are completely closed, then the apparent paradox of the internet as a closed system as well as the most open agency imaginable must be resolved. The internet is indeed completely closed in the sense that it is ontologically complete: it anticipates the different potential identities assumable by its users within itself, as in the case of a medium of communication such as Facebook. An inherent advantage that the internet (or cyberspace) possesses over physicality is that of “pattern over presence. As long as the pattern endures, one has attained a kind of immortality. Such views are authorized by cultural conditions that make physicality seem a better state to be from than to inhabit.” (Hayles 1993:81) The user, entering the internet from and on the basis of a physical, historical and materially tangible form, at once becomes part of the generation of a virtual reality that takes its constituency to be the physical and historical world. Upon entry, the physical (and arguably tangibly material) existence of the user is continually codified and made complex by any number or series of decisions that allow the user to participate in some activity. The multiplicity of identities available to a user determines the subsequent physico-political action on their part. The ethos that #blacklivesmatter initially came into being in response to is constantly transformed into a space within which the assumption of individual and political identity through that hashtag is constituted by and in turn constitutes the definition of lives that matter in the first place. Lives have mattered but only in a sense of data that has always been present but never been interpreted or considered, and the subsequent transformation would appear to place the fraught existence of blackness within a space delineated by the continual manifestation of power. The presence of physi-

cal identity is thus replaced by a pattern of actions, behavior, statements and actions - all of which contribute to a composite surface virtual consciousness. This consciousness is frequently one of enforced action, as in the case of social networks, wherein a user is expected to be *active* (ie, participate) above all.

For Luhmann, the attainable is the mesh of events and historicity in which all of life remains enmeshed, the formal inorganic in its consideration of historico-spatiality and the latter, wholly organic. The reinforcement of a dichotomy is especially important in the case of the internet, where the organic and the inorganic coincide to create its own mechanism, instead of a mere system, one which discards all divisions to construct its own self-sufficient temporal ontology. In Twitter, for example, the 140 character limit for every tweet allows for a compactness to its own ontological completeness: every character and every word hints at what else it can say, and different internet abbreviations and slang only serve to signify alternate processes and “realities”, so to speak, which dictate the historical and political immediacy of that which is finally expressed on screen. There is nothing beyond communication on the Internet, because in the trend of virtual communication, consciousness is transferred electronically and virtually to be present for fracturing, dissipation and diffusion. Luhmann’s statement that “Communication has no goal: It happens, or not, and that is all that one can say on that point...goal-oriented episodes can be formed inside of systems of communication, to the degree that autopoiesis functions, just as consciousness, too, can posit episodic goals for itself, without this positing of a goal being the goal of the system” (Luhmann and Rasch 2002:161) indicates the absence of any epistemological boundary whatsoever when considering the nature of virtual discourse.

An individual must necessarily possess certain abilities or characteristics which render them capable of performing that action: a person needs to be twenty-one years old to purchase alcohol and must have a government-verified pictorial ID in order to be granted permission to board a flight. In either case, the temporal or political characteristics of the individual are what allow their proof of identification to be as important or definitive as it is: the picture ID in question attains its temporal and consumerist value only on account of the dual characteristic of the individual in question. Nonetheless, the individual cannot perform an action without this proof of their identity, this proof that they have modified and in a very real sense, created. This proof allows them to become a complete figure able to lawfully carry out certain actions. The autopoietic mechanism is as follows: the ID itself serves to verify the individual’s ability to consume and create, but also stamps the individual with the authority of ability, these abilities being of different types and classes such as function and nationality among others. There is no isolated moment any longer for becoming a single individual, but instead, that moment becomes a geographic and physical entity in itself: a marker present in the former of some form of plastic or paper, defining the individual even as it is defined by that same person. This process of definition stops only at the point of complete inclusion of the subject into the mechanisms of virtual governmental relations: agencies such as PayPal, which break down the materialism represented by physical identity to create a corporeal simulacrum: transactions and purchases are made online, often anonymously, and the process of such transactions depend upon the choice of the virtual subject to abandon their actual beings and instead multiply their abilities to consume and produce. Space itself is multiplied, and the products are products of dissolution.



## The Action of Virtual Being

Katherine Hayles' experiments regarding the generation and behavior of "virtual creatures" - three dimensional computer simulations - at the turn of the last millennium led her to remark that a perception and observation of those simulated creatures were constituted by the same processes through which the subject (and the self) is brought into existence. Within a shift from analog to digital subjectivity, "the more profound change is from form to process, from preexisting bodies to embodied materialities linked to one another by complex combinations of processes based both in analogue resemblances and coding relationships." (Hayles 1999:24) In a social network, the behavior of the subject - the user - possesses what might conceivably be termed an ethopoietic function: the transformation of the truth into ethos. This ethos is perhaps representative of the general function of the system, and as such decides the historico-temporal structure of the latter. In the case of something as apparently basic as making a new blog post or posting a new tweet, for example, the action of the user defines the operation and propagation of what might conceivably be called 'virtual time', which, instead of being a purely temporal phenomenon, is the basis for any action on the part of the user: thus, the decision to post something always occurs within a frame of reference (and consciousness on the part of the self) whose meaning, scope and organization are continually modified by the actions on the part of each individual user. For #blacklivesmatter, that particular discourse was modified to create a linguistic entry-system of identity that initially began with the zero-sum equivalence of black life and uselessness or unimportance, but which was transformed in meaning and effect - owing to the simultaneous participation of the Twitterverse as well as the change in the politico-historical meaning of the phrase (and ethos thereof) itself - into a declaration of life by someone who was black and alive. Such a transformation might broadly be said to be affected either through the keeping of public documents (*hupomnemata*) or through correspondence. The former function to consecrate a code of public conduct, and Foucault writes that "the idea is not to constitute, in the notes that one takes and in the way one restores what one has read through writing, a series of 'portraits,' recognizable but "lifeless" ... It is one's own soul that must be constituted in what one writes; but, just as a man bears his natural resemblance to his ancestors on his face, so it is good that one can perceive the filiation of thoughts that are engraved in his soul. Through the interplay of selected readings and assimilative writing, one should be able to form an identity through which a whole spiritual genealogy can be read." (Foucault 1997:213)

Foucault's analysis ("Self Writing") is principally focused upon the "arts of oneself" of antiquity, but the historical manifestations of *hupomnemata* and correspondence are both clear. The latter, historically, was "something more than a training of oneself by means of writing, through the advice and opinions one gives to the other... it also constituted a certain way of manifesting oneself to oneself and to others. The letter makes the writer 'present' to the one to whom he addresses it. And present not simply through the information he gives concerning his life, his activities, his successes and failures, his good luck or misfortunes; rather, present with a kind of immediate, almost physical presence." (Foucault 1997:216) The site of Foucault's ethical project, thus, is the site of cultural invention, and his ethical genealogy deals with the processes and methods through which the self of the subject - as enunciated, expressed, understood and accepted in parrhesia - is bound within an analytic of power. Foucault's ethics "require a double coming to terms: with the self and

with its natural and cultural environment, but also with the relation between the two. “Knowing oneself” is impossible without reference to an environment—as the systems theorists would also avow. Yet such knowledge must thus be potentially vulnerable to any alteration, either in the self, or in its environment, or in both at once. Such alterations of course include those wrought by the self itself (on itself, on its environment, or on both). [The ethical self is thus] at risk; and its pedagogies, as apparatuses for the production and reproduction of the self, must serve not—*per impossibile*— to negate but rather to control, to manage, to cope with the self in its ‘riskiness.’” (Faubion 2001:100) The riskiness of any encounter on the internet is perhaps the freedom of identity therewith involved: all at once, a user of some network on the Internet is able to assume any number of arbitrary identities. The modality of these identities in turn informs the mutual relationship between users and simultaneously affects the functional imperative of the larger structure of the system at large. Knowledge, thus, is produced through and by arbitrary individual activity in a virtual system, but this form of knowledge transforms the political identity and agency of individuals into a realm of hypothetical and de-ontologized possibility. The user can be anyone they want, but in the process of choosing who they wish to be, that choice perhaps determines the nature of the environment - the world, in this case - in which the subject exists.

Foucault closes his lectures at Louvain with an account of a penal sentencing involving an individual convicted for the kidnapping and subsequent assassination of a child. The counsel for the defense states that even though the accused acknowledged his crime and gave up the necessary pertinent information, the jury knows nothing about him. (Foucault 2014:229) An individual on the Internet is simultaneously in the grasp of a virtual analytic of governmental power while remaining anonymous: the decisions effected through targeted keystrokes on a computer resolve themselves into a new locus of identity. Prior linguistic and extra-linguistic forms of the maintenance of identity depended upon the fixed assumption of some political, historical or social attribute. The removal of this dependency is perhaps equivalent to the generation of an antithesis of fixed historic-political being. The user, as part of the structure of the system, inevitably responds to the emergent needs of the system and its environment. As a consequence, virtual history and therefore, virtual identity, take place in an ontology of the virtual body, defined by multiplicity and a plethora of choice but constantly defining the identity of the user in terms of the physical body which is the site of physical, historical and systemic power.

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## José Pedro de Sant'Anna Gomes, Between the Territory and the Visible

### The discipline of docile ears

The latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was a time of great social and political unrest in Brazil. The end of slavery and the formation of a republican government were epochal changes, which took place alongside European immigration, the beginnings of industrialization, the development of coffee culture, and the adoption of a cultural and strategic cosmopolitanism

The two major dilemmas facing the nation were its status as the only monarchy in South America, and the dependence of its economy on slave labor. Seeking to emulate the modernity of the capitalist nations during the so-called belle époque, Emperor Dom Pedro II (1825 - 1891) encouraged cosmopolitanism through patronage of arts and literature, which only served to expose the contradictions of the regime.

In music, imperial patronage supported the international career of the most notable Brazilian opera composer, Antônio Carlos Gomes (1836-1896), who received a Royal scholarship to study in Milan. His successful staging of *Il Guarany* at the Teatro alla Scala in 1870 launched a great career in music.

Throughout his Italian career, Carlos Gomes counted on the valuable support of his older brother, José Pedro de Sant'Anna Gomes (1834-1908), who not only raised funds to stage the opera,<sup>1</sup> but also publicized his brother's work in Brazil.

Sant'Anna Gomes was one of the main figures in the cultural milieu of the city of Campinas. In line with the period's expectations for his profession,<sup>2</sup> he was a violinist, conductor, composer, and copyist, as well as the owner of a musical instrument shop (Arpeolina Musical). And, as a public figure, he held key positions such as alderman, justice of the peace, military battalion secretary (*Gazeta de Campinas Editorial*, 1872:1) chairman of the mili-

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1. The *Correio Paulistano* of August 27, 1868 highlights the details of funding the opera, mentioning the "necessity of the amount of four *contos de reis* to properly mount the indispensable scenic apparatus necessary for the effect of the presentation". It details that Sant'Anna Gomes sought the "support of 20 farmers from Campinas, paying two thousand *reis* each, to complete the amount and make known to the world the opera *Il Guarany*" (*Correio Paulistano Editorial* 1868: 1).

2. A common practice among most musicians.

tary junta (1881), merchant, and businessman, which suggest his stature and importance in the city.



Figure 1: Sant'Anna Gomes (Carlos Gomes Museum).

The city of Campinas was enjoying a period of intense musical and cultural activity. Holding a top position in coffee production, the city attracted farm owners and the agrarian elite of the period, all of whom were eager to see their city grow along the lines of the civility and modernity of major European centers. Reading soireés were performed, and stores such as *Au Monde Elegant* and the *Casa do Livro Azul* sold imported books and goods to meet the tastes of a new social class, all within an openly agrarian and slave society. The emulation of life in the great capitalist industrial cities guaranteed its access to modernity, despite the odd contradiction raised.

As for music, the fact that Campinas was the birthplace of Carlos Gomes drove a movement of great prominence, even competing with what was happening in Rio de Janeiro, the capital at the time. The city enjoyed the constant activity of a symphony orchestra, dozens of bands, and presentations by international opera companies. It refurbished important spaces such as the São Carlos theater (1846), and new spaces such as the *Rink Campineiro* (1878) a house specializing in skating shows and also having a hall for performances, dances, conferences and movies; the Weekly Artistic Culture Club [*Clube Semanal de Cultura Artística*](1857), and the Public Park [*Passeio Público*] (1879) all hosted regular concerts and soireés, besides the music made in schools and salons (Nogueira, 2001). The consumption of music and culture was an important index for the affirmation of the Campinas elite, which though unable to suppress its economic, agrarian, and slave bases, reformulated its consumption patterns.

The refurbishments and opening of cultural centers was part of a larger redevelopment plan for the city, which was modeled after the Paris of Haussmann<sup>3</sup> Among its main features were the rationalization of spaces, the need for health reform, prevention of epidemics, the beauty of its architecture, the appreciation of the central district (creating the concept of periphery), the redesign of streets and avenues, and the construction of new

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3. Baron Georges-Eugène Haussmann's renovation of Paris, between 1853 and 1869, would make its urban space a reference to major cities around the world.

recreational areas, such as squares and boulevards. All these initiatives were aligned with the ideology of the time: domination of nature by man through science, the emblem of the *belle époque* synthesized in the organization of the modern city.

The reformulation and re-urbanization of capital cities, as well as the growing number of collective institutions in the period, parallels the movement described by Michel Foucault (1926-1984) for the establishment of a disciplinary society. Under the model offered by the Panopticon of Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832), Foucault showed us the importance of collective disciplinary institutions to organize modern society, and their role in the construction of what he called *docile bodies*: in other words, bodies that were subject to the exercise of the discipline.

Key to the construction of these *docile bodies*, the panopticon was a central inspection tower, surrounded by a ring of small cells, allowing the watchman full control of the people observed. This control scheme, used especially in prisons, was adopted by Foucault to form the image of control and organization that constitutes the *disciplinary society*.

“It is a type of location of bodies in space, of distribution of individuals in relation to one another, of hierarchical organization, of disposition of centres and channels of power, of definition of the instruments and modes of intervention of power, which can be implemented in hospitals, workshops, schools, prisons. Whenever one is dealing with a multiplicity of individuals on whom a task particular form of behaviour must be imposed the panoptic schema may be used.”

(Foucault, 1975:205).

Disciplinary institutions mirror the operational logic offered by Bentham's panopticon, their architecture being its reflection. These spaces must allow the physical incarceration of disciplinable bodies, permitting the free flow of *discipline* and at the same time restricting the bodies. They establish such a functional linearity between different institutions that the similarities in their architecture can be viewed with suspicion. Under a *foucauldian* perspective, the architecture of collective institutions such as barns, industrial sheds, school gymnasiums, and army barracks show similarities scarcely hidden by their specific roles in society. To the keen observer they seem to leave a strange sense of familiarity.

This familiarity can also be transported to the musical environment of the period, since the concept of the panopticon was reflected in the structure of theaters and music halls. Built in the image of Italian stages, these spaces show a type of inverted panopticon, ensuring the visibility to many of a central focus, all united under the unique dilemma of visibility.



Figure 2: *Panoptic audience* public under discipline, Cine Rink Campinas, 1920 (Junior, 1970:252).

In Campinas, the same disciplinary movement was observed; the period of the urban reshaping of the city saw the creation of large schools (*Progresso, Culto à Ciência*), the first factories, hospitals (*Circolo Italiani Uniti*), the literary salons and cultural centers (CCLA), and other civic institutions. The rationalization and prioritization of social spaces had an impact on society, ranking and organizing the social body of the city in the manner suggested by Foucault.

Within this context, we highlight the performance of Sant'Anna Gomes from two possible perspectives: that of the repeated distribution of a specific repertoire in his role as a musician, and in the direct reformulation of the city's physical space in his role as a politician: the discipline of the ear and body. However, it is worth mentioning the role of spaces, observing that under a *foucauldian* view environments such as the audience of the theater hall, party rooms, and public promenades do not represent a mere spatial index, but active agents for the exercise of discipline.

The main feature of the discipline of *docile ears* was the reiteration of a specific taste in a given environment, noting the importance Foucault ascribes to architecture. For him, architecture is an integral part of the discipline, insofar as it sets a specific territory for its exercise and the disposition of its agents. Just like the guard and the prisoner have fixed positions in the panoptic structure, audience and musicians have fixed arrangements in the structure of theaters, halls and the public park, governed by the type of discipline exercised in each environment.

Although varied, the repertoire performed in these places always fell under the umbrella of European music: Zarzuelas, musical theater, operettas, operas, chamber and orchestral music, and dance music all composed the programs presented, always to the exclusion of popular works. Music and practices of popular origin were avoided, or even persecuted in the case of drumming and dance of African origin. The newspaper *Gazeta de Campinas* illustrates the hostility that was directed at these meetings of slaves, in a passage where the reader tells us that:

“The fountain next to the city's market sees every day around itself an agglomeration of slaves and people of negligible morals making a racket, and often serious dissension, to the prejudice of all and especially those of good morals. It would be appropriate to put there a guard responsible for patrolling that theater of vagrancy; or, at least, a patrol that, from time to time, could visit "those places.”

(Gazeta de Campinas Editorial, 1870:2).

Cultural choices were crystal clear, and the reader's claim was titled as a “fair demand” against the “theater of vagrancy”, and was endorsed by the newspaper which added that: “we fully agree with this excellent reminder from our reader”.

Sant'Anna Gomes was a committed abolitionist, attended abolitionist soirees,<sup>4</sup> and composed a piece clearly critical to the system (*O filho da Lavandeira*), but his position posed problems compared to a more openly declared opposition. As a composer, Sant'Anna Gomes confirmed the choice of European influences, as shown below in his production with its special emphasis on dance and chamber music:

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4. Benefit concerts whose proceeds went to purchase the freedom of one of the musicians.

**Table 1:**

Works of Sant'Anna Gomes	
<p><b>Piano works</b> 1886. <i>A Primavera</i> (polka)</p>	<p><b>Chamber music with strings</b> 1907 <i>Surdina</i> (flute sextet with strings)</p>
<p><b>Chamber music with piano</b> 1900. Piston solo in A 1894. <i>Duetto</i> (two violins and piano) 1896. Quarteto em Mi bemol (flute, violin, cello and piano)</p> <p><b>Voice and piano</b> n.d. Cantiga Húngara (tenor and piano) 1883. <i>Sonho</i> (Romance, voice and piano) 1907 <i>Suspiros</i></p> <p><b>String quartets</b> 1905. Canon Scherzo 1885. Quarteto in A mino</p> <p><b>String quintets</b> 1894. <i>Amaninha</i> (Waltz) n.d. Berceuse . 1882. Canon 1892. <i>Dudu Gallop</i> 1883 <i>Elisa!</i> n.d. <i>Frederiquinho</i> (waltz) n.d. <i>Il lamento degli orfanelli</i> 1901. Tempo de minueto 1894. <i>Nene</i> (Abanera) n.d. <i>O filho da Lavadeira</i> (e fl.). n.d. <i>Pic-nic</i> (waltz) . 1882. <i>Saudade!</i></p>	<p><b>Choir and religius music</b> n.d. Antífona 1883. <i>Ave Maris Stella</i> (orq. e mz) 1900. <i>Crux Ave Spes Unica</i> (sopr. bar. org.) 1883. <i>Te Deum</i> (improvisado) n.d. <i>Tristis est anima mea</i> n.d. Canto da Verônica (voice solo)</p> <p><b>Orchestral music</b> n.d. HinodaLojaMaçônicaIndependência n.d. Hino <i>Veni Creator</i> n.d. <i>Pastoral</i> (prelúdio) 1886. <i>Tico-tico</i> (polka para orq.) 1859. Valsa alemã</p> <p><b>Band f music</b> n.d. Polka Filuta cóp. 1899. Polka Sem Fim 1862. Quadrilha Club Semanal Valsa Club Campineiro</p> <p><b>Didact pieces</b> 1907. Canon</p> <p><b>Operas</b> 1904Alda n.d. (1889 )Semira</p>

Besides his work as a musician and conductor, Sant'Anna Gomes was also political in the city of Campinas. On May 5, 1872 the *Gazeta de Campinas* reported the investiture of Sant'Anna Gomes as a councilor in a session dated April 15 (*Gazeta de Campinas* Editorial, 1872:1). As a politician, he made a remarkable contribution to the city's urban reform, as seen from the table below showing some of the issues discussed at sessions of the chamber attended by Sant'Anna Gomes, for a period extending from April 15, 1872 to October 6 of the same year:



Topics addressed during Sant'Anna Gomes' political career
<p>Redevelopment and improvements</p> <p>Repair of city streets (Rosario Street and surroundings), paving stones for streets and gutters, survey works on repair of road to Limeira, exchange of private and public land for road widening, opening of bids to purchase gas lighting, inspection and regulation of streets, payment of accounts on construction, deadline for building walls, granting of land, appointment of the commission for the forest of Largo da Cruz.</p>
<p>Sanitation</p> <p>Cleaning costs for the city, arrangements for the collection of trash in streets, cleaning service instruction in the city and jail of São Paulo.</p>
<p>Others</p> <p>Rights to water from common streams and possession of animals, noble commission for receipt of Their Royal Highnesses D. Pedro II and Empress Leopoldina (newly returned from Europe).</p>

This Table shows that the urban layout of the city was not an exclusive concern of Sant'Anna Gomes. It is clear that most of the decisions pertain to sanitation, redevelopment, and improvement works. The amelioration of urban space to meet existing models was seen at the time as an inescapable necessity, to which the majority of society attended.

But the main initiative of Sant'Anna Gomes was the installation of street lighting. While this was by no means his only notable achievement for the urban space of the city,<sup>5</sup> it took on special significance. The maestro assisted in the installation of kerosene light poles in his home and in the streets leading to the city's theater, the São Carlos. In his notes, chronicler José de Castro Mendes recounts the importance of that initiative:<sup>6</sup>

How to understand that one of the most opulent cities of the province today has no illumination and can thus ranked along with the most insignificant village? Individuals begin to take steps while the chamber postpones a solution to the

5. A collection from the Court of Campinas (Unicamp Memory Center) shows an appointment given to Sant'Anna Gomes in 1866 for the supervision of the reform of the old city cemetery, where, according to the document, "the remains of many of the leading families" were interred.

6. Note dated 30/07/1871 (Unicamp Memory Center).

problem. A long time ago they installed two street lanterns in Campinas Velhas street, paid for by Vigário Souza e Oliveira and Mr. J. P. Sant'Anna Gomes. The street below then planted some poles, (the last one) being in front of Dr. Curvilhon's home; another appeared in front of the residence of Mr. Zimbres, another on Direita street, and now the Matriz Velha area will be lit exclusively by kerosene, all through the initiative of private funding by citizens

(CMU).

The lighting of the city was widely celebrated, and is somehow associated with the end of the colonial lifestyle, replaced by *belle époque* modernity. For a city like Campinas at that time, structurally grounded in agriculture and slave labor, street lighting was an important step in the direction forged by the great European capitals, and served to paper over the dilemmas inherent in the monarchical regime.

Widely anticipated, the illumination of the city served as an overall index of the physical changes occurring in the city. The plan of civilization and rationalization of public spaces was symbolically embraced by lighting the city, and the example reported by Foucault about urbanization in Europe in an earlier period bore an uncanny resemblance to what happened in Campinas. Foucault told us that:

A fear haunted the second half of the eighteenth century: the fear of darkened spaces, of the pall of gloom which prevents the full visibility of things, men, and truths. It sought to break up the patches of darkness that blocked the light, demolish the unlit chambers where arbitrary political acts, monarchical caprice, religious superstitions, tyrannical and priestly plots, epidemics, and the illusions of ignorance were fomented

(Foucault, 2008:119).

Sant'Anna Gomes' initiative to light the streets around the theater did not appear as just another trace of urbanization, but as a symbol of what was happening in the whole city. As the chronicler said, it was necessary to pull the city out of darkness, accomplished not only through urbanization, but through the moralizing practices and customs that would be established, the theater being only one of the possible paths.

In parallel to the redevelopment, another initiative involved health concerns, public safety, and the free movement of people, reflected in the press which often covered this wider project of visibility. As human safety and urban sanitation intersected, what emerged was a sanitization of people. City lighting, now an allegory for Campinas's urbanization, would result in the removal of unwanted social groups and their practices, as clearly happened in the public park (Páteo, 1997).<sup>7</sup>

The public park was typically the space for the performance of dozens of musical ensembles organized by various social segments in the city. Traders, immigrants (Italian, Portuguese, German), workers, school students, and even slaves took part, which showed the strength of this phenomenon to bring society together, although not equally. The physical space of the public park itself was significant: totally surrounded by railings, it clearly conveyed the stratified nature of access that characterized the location.

Sant'Anna Gomes spent his life forming musical ensembles: he started in his father's band, along with his brother Carlos, and took over direction upon his father's death (1868). His presence on the public park conducting the *Filorphênica* band was constant, participating in musical and dance soireés for hours on end. The public park was the place of choice for the performance of the bands, and their structure has implications as to the disciplinary profile of their practices. An ideological synthesis for the period, the space emerged for a constructed and disciplined nature, which certainly had implications for the rest of society.



Figure 3: Filorphênica band, conducted by Sant'Anna Gomes (seated third from left). (JUNIOR, 1970:42).

However, these spaces were built by and for the elite of society, and access to these spaces was restricted. The gated universe of musical societies, private clubs, and soirees was simply transferred to these new “open” spaces, for although these venues were new, the traditions and participants were the same. As a result, to begin with much of what occurred on the public park was not so different from what happened at private soirees and in theaters: polka dances, private meetings, and concerts—all the activities of the society of the period, circular, and thereby closed.

Páteo stated that the space was maintained by a committee of “distinguished citizens”, who furnished the area with iron benches, plants, and more, and that a fee was charged at the entrance of the Garden to pay for improvements. To add to the exclusivity, seats and

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7. Páteo relates two claims on this subject. The chronicler first speaks about the need to expel the unwanted people, including vagrants and prostitutes, as follows: "What is practiced at this square is unworthy (...) Degenerate women and individuals of bad character prefer the most nauseating obscurities. We have also seen (and often) supposed maintainers of order among the vagabonds and associating with the 'Dirty Camellias' who gather there to outrage public morality "(Diário de Campinas cited by Páteo, 1997, p.54).

The chronicler also speaks about the sale of slaves at the square in front of the main church: "Not a pretty view. Some people who come to this city to conduct transactions for the servile element have adopted the system of taking their wares to the main church door and covering the square following Mass, in order to attract attention. We find it an unedifying spectacle to be seen so soon after having contemplated Jesus Christ. However the law has just forbidden their auctions to avoid these scenes "(Gazeta de Campinas cited by Páteo, 1997, p.56). In both claims we notice how the reorganization of the spaces involved, the expulsion of people and their practices equally.

even covered boxes could be rented by spectators for concerts, and the square is fenced off, further reinforcing the restrictive nature of the space (Páteo,1997:65).

Though the space was “available” to the general populace on ordinary days, a notice at the entrance warned that “On entering and leaving the public park, close the gates with the iron catch to prevent the entry of animals that spoil the plants,” and “on days of special activities, especially on Sundays, doormen were hired (...) who were placed at the four entrance gates, in order to receive the fees or spontaneous contributions” (Páteo, 1997:65).

Thus, we can see that spaces like the theater or even the public square were active triggers, disseminating specific likes and practices and at the same time selecting a specific portion of society to celebrate them. Under a *foucauldian* perspective we can say that these devices played an important role in the division and organization of Campinas society in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, contributing to set fixed positions through the discipline of its participants.

While Foucault tells us the importance of discipline on docile bodies, we can reflect on the role of discipline in building *docile ears*. In other words, how a certain musical setting, a certain repertoire, and a specific group of characters gradually built the model for an official musical consumption, excluding others when necessary.

Figures like Sant'Anna Gomes, at the intersection of his performance as musician and public figure, were responsible for the exercise of this discipline through listening in its multiple meanings. Whether diffusing a specific repertoire, participating in civic celebrations, establishing his brother's canon, or promoting the redevelopment of the city, the actions of Sant'Anna Gomes directly affected the social reorganization of the city and the allocation of clear territories for repeated application of disciplines.

## Conclusion

The cultural and social environment of Campinas during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was marked by significant change. However, the crisis of slave labor seemed to exemplify the dilemmas this created. The Campinas elite lived in a rapidly modernizing society which was nevertheless economically inseparable from slavery. On a cultural level, they sought elements to distinguish their society from colonial patterns, seen as backward, and to relate it with the prevailing standards in the great modern cities.

The establishment of Carlos Gomes as the face of Brazilian music set his brother, Sant'Anna Gomes, as the face of Campinas in terms of local visibility. His activities exceeded the exercise of his *métier* and reached broader levels in the city's administration. To use Foucault's terms, he not only created a specific visibility through his performance as a musician, but also established territories for the reiteration of the discipline related to this visibility.

The ongoing establishment of disciplinary institutions (schools, hospitals, and so on) had a counterpart in the cultural environment, namely the creation and redesign of the characteristic spaces of the period. The public square, the skating rink, the São Carlos Theater, for example, may have had a disciplinary function in the manner of Foucault's panopticon, establishing hierarchies and control through the repeated distribution of a single repertoire celebrated by a specific segment of the city.

The musical institutions of the period took the form of a mirrored panopticon, where many bodies subject to discipline watch the drama unfolding at a single point. The model of the Italian stage appeared as disciplinarian and now placed the subjects under discipline as observers, a possible variant of the panopticon updated through visibility.

Understanding the activities of Sant'Anna Gomes under the increasing pressure of these disciplinary spaces is important for understanding a possible discipline of *docile ears*, exercised through the possibility of constant observation. It allows us to observe the impasse of a modernity inspired by the *belle époque* confronting the backwardness of the regime, and its resolution through the constant and reiterated exercise of tastes and practices. The social division that was being lost with the fall of the regime was recovered, at least in part, by establishing an elite of taste.

The activities of Sant'Anna Gomes, in his roles as a musician and politician, contributed to the social reorganization in a subtle manner, bringing together different social segments under the same taste. A good example of this is that the musical performances attracted slaves, Italian and Portuguese immigrants, workers from the newly-opened factories, students, merchants, and others, all welcome to the discipline of tastes that was developing.

The exercise of discipline helped to diagram society, establish specific territories for specific practices, and above all to control its characters. Unwanted practices were prohibited, or if that was not possible marginalized, thereby transferring to music and culture that which the opposition between center and periphery had already expressed for the urbanization of the *belle époque*.

Sant'Anna Gomes being the eldest brother of the most famous opera composer of the Americas was emblematic. The central genre of the old regime now had a representative in the new world, and all libertarian expectations should be negotiated considering the contradictions inherent in the case.

Sant'Anna may have articulated possible resistances in some areas, such as in his commitment to the abolitionism, but the repetition of a specific taste was not even questioned; his relationship with opera, and more specifically with dance and chamber music, profoundly marked his performance and the society in which he lived.

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## Art, Artist and Foucauldian Subjectivity

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## The Concept of the Author: Michel Foucault vs. Roland Barthes

In their texts on the concept of the author, Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault represented the theory that the author is not the “source” of the work, nor the one determining its meaning, but a notion founded in discourse, born in a certain social and historic context. While Barthes pronounced the author's death in his text *The Death of the Author* (1968) pointing out that the meaning of the work is limited by the personality of the author whereas the meaning of the text is completed by the reader in a plurivalent network of intertextuality, Michel Foucault in his text *What is an Author?* (1969) presented his standing that the author category is a conceptual creation born in a certain historic moment as a result of a discursive practice of the knowledge production. These two interpretations appear as such due to particular methodological bases and fields of interest present in the Barthes', i.e. Foucault's work. The notions author, subject, work, text and discourse appear in their texts as semiotically different, i.e. as conditioned in meaning by the specific problematic and methodological fields in which Barthes and Foucault developed their concepts of the author. Nevertheless, the texts *The Death of the Author* and *What is an Author?*, seen as reflections of wider methodological platforms of the Barthes' and Foucault's work, made a significant contribution in the de/stabilization of the structuralist, i.e. post-structuralist ways of interpreting the world and the art.

Barthes' text *The Death of the Author* was written as a discourse in the literary semiotics field. This theorist shaped his discourse as a theoretical elaboration of the notion and concept of the death of the author, work and text, in the moment when, according to his belief, the author's death theory in the literary field had already taken place. Barthes built his discourse about the author's death based on considerations of a specific artistic practice, developed in two directions: as criticism of terms and concepts of literature, of the author and the literary criticism the way those were defined by the modern age, and as an explication of the literary practices of the modernism for which the forming of the author's death concept represented an inevitable theoretical consequence.

By using the term author with a capital 'A', Barthes actually indicates the personality and biographical aspects of the author's life as crucial factors that influenced the interpretation of the meaning of a literary work in the modernistic era. However, claiming that today the writing space is a space in which disappear both the subject's and the identity of the writing itself, Barthes deduces several turns: instead of the Author's, he introduces the concept writing, and later the one of reading and of the reader, while instead of the term 'work' he introduces the term 'text' and 'performativity'. In that way, Barthes made a theoretical



change of terms and concepts used from the Age of Enlightenment, throughout the entire modern age, to interpret the meaning of a literary work. The procedure was carried out in the following manner. Taking as model samples the works of the contemporary literature, Barthes first explained how the 'writing' was born to take the place of the Author. Beside the work of Valéry (Paul Valéry), Proust (Marcel Proust) and the surrealist current, Barthes pointed out Mallarmé (Stephan Mallarmé) as the first writer whose poetics was fully focused on abolishing the author for the purpose of writing, focused on the "necessity to substitute language itself for the person who until then had been supposed to be its owner." (Barthes 1986: 143) Similarly to Mallarmé, Valéry indicated the verbal, no subjective, author-characteristic conditioning of the literature as art while the entire Proust's work, according to Barthes, showed an inclination toward the "inexorably blurring (...) the relation between the writer and his characters" (Barthes 1986: 143) and the surrealism contributed to the degradation of the author's reputation by destroying the expected meaning. Barthes actually indicated the new content forms in a series of literary artworks that are impossible to interpret using the traditional author concept. The term *work* was no longer adequate to determine a product that 'relinquishes' the authority of the author's aura in the meaning discovery, using the new procedures and relations to reach it, therefore Barthes introduced a new term, the *text*. Since the new procedures of reaching a meaning in an artistic product are achieved through the relation between the text and the reader, Barthes *relocated* the focus from the author as the 'source' of the meaning in an artwork to the text and the reader who, interacting with the text, reaches and completes its meaning.

"Thus is revealed the total existence of writing: a text is made of multiple writings, drawn from many cultures and entering into mutual relations of dialogue, parody, contestation, but there is one place where this multiplicity is focused and that place is a reader, not, as was hitherto said, the author. (...) it is necessary to overthrow the myth: the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author."

(Barthes 1986: 148)

The social and historic context to which both Barthes and Foucault link the concept of the author is the modern age during which, while separating the intellectual, artistic and productive work, the concept of the author appeared necessary to form a field of knowledge about the intellectual and artistic work. The concept of the author is, according to Barthes, simply a construct, a product of the modern society used by the individual in the British Empiricism and French Rationalism to prove and build a particular position of a human being, i.e. of the subject. (Barthes 1986: 142) Similarly, Foucault also claims that the author is not a specific phenomenon or an existential object imminent to the work. On the contrary, the author is external to the work, a conceptual product of the discursive practices where the discursive practice includes a way to establish a certain knowledge and to articulate it in a certain society through various institutions. (Foucault 1998: 217–219) As a matter of fact, both Barthes' and Foucault's concept of the author can be seen as part of a general tendency to contemplate the status of the subject in the late modernism and as part of the discourse regarding the death of the subject or regarding the hypothetical subject. In other words, discourses of both authors appear as a symptom of the late modernist criticism of the humanistic concept claiming that the statement is always a result of the thought of a certain individual identity – the subject, i.e. in this case, the author.

According to this, Barthes pointed out: “a text is not a line of words releasing a single ‘teleological’ meaning (the ‘message’ of the Author-God) but a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, bland and clash. The text is a tissue quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture.” (Barthes 1986: 146) Denying the logocentrism, Barthes insisted on the ‘autonomous’ notion of the work that is no longer thought of as a logocentric creation of that one God-author. “In precisely this way literature (it would be better from now on to say *writing*), by refusing to assign a ‘secret’, an ultimate meaning, to the text (and to the world as text), liberates what may be called an anti-theological activity an activity that is truly revolutionary since to refuse to fix meaning is, in the end, to reuse God and his hypostases – reason, science, law.” (Barthes 1986: 147) Barthes actually achieved the logocentric criticism as well in the field of literary theory, considering that he held the literary criticism, especially the positivist current, responsible for determining the logocentric concepts of the work. The culmination of the discourse presenting the author as the source of the work, as Barthes believed, was reached in the capitalism when the Positivism paid greatest attention to the author’s ‘personality’, while the meaning of a literary work was identified with the ‘meaning’ of its author. “Classic criticism has never paid any attention to the reader; for it, the writer is the only person in literature.” (Barthes 1986: 148) Such criticism focused on the work and achieved its task by ‘inventing’ the author, therefore Barthes formulated a new methodological standing of the contemporary literary criticism or theory, one focused on the text. Such theory was not to analyze the meaning, since it was located in the field of performativity, it could only follow the structure, but could not determine the final meanings.

Founding the structuralist approach in the literary theory, Barthes strived to cut the dominance chain of the existentialist interpretations of the literary works and of the belief that a work is an authentic reflection of the author’s existence. The positivist criticism’s discourse claiming that the author is ‘written in’ the work on different levels was put in doubt by Barthes stating that the Author, i.e. the subject, represents a fiction we use to prevent ‘thriving’ of the meaning in a certain discourse. The knowledge about a subject limits us in building the meaning of a text in a certain direction and brings us to exclude other directions. Foucault shared this opinion. “The author is not an indefinite source of significations that fill a work; the author does not precede the works; he is a certain functional principle by which, in our culture, one limits, excludes, and chooses; in short, by which one impedes the free circulation, the free manipulation, the free composition, decomposition, and recomposition of fiction.” (Foucault 1998: 221) Unlike Barthes, Foucault, however, did not wonder how the literary discourse achieved its meaning. He was not interested in the questions posed by Barthes – what is the work like today and how it achieves its meaning? On the contrary, Foucault wondered about what kind of concept the society offered at his time instead of the concept of the author and pointed out that the empty claim regarding the author’s disappearance should not be repeated, but that it should be explored what happens in the space revealed by that disappearance. The object of Foucault’s interest was not the world of art, but the discourse production space where the discourse was the way to establish and articulate knowledge in the society through various institutions. In other words, if Barthes believed that the status of the literary work had changed at the time, and that for such a “new” product it was necessary to deduce new terms and concepts as a vocabulary used to talk about it, Foucault considered the ways of arranging the discursive production of knowledge about the work and the author in the social and historic moment in which the death of the author was pronounced. In his text *The Death of the Author*, Bar-

thes came from the position of a contemporary literature theorist interested in the very status of the literature as art and in the question what happened to the literature in the period when the concept of the author was abolished, how could such a product be explained, named and conceptualized. On the other hand, the Foucault's text *What is an Author?* appeared as a reconstruction of the way in which the knowledge about the author was established in a certain social and historic context. Foucault underlined as a problem the question how the discursive practice of producing the concept of the author articulated in relation with the work and with the outer world. Therefore, we notice that the consideration of the concept of the author in the text *What is an Author?* emerges as part of the Foucault's basic philosophical concern – analysis of the system of thought and how the society constituted itself in certain social and historic moments. The discursive analysis as “a vast field of discussion of the expression techniques, interpretation, representation and demonstration of the social and historic forms of establishing the knowledge identity in the Western culture“ (Šuvaković, 2005: 146) appears as the outcome of the entire Foucault's work. We could mark his entire career as a philosopher as “deducing the history of different ways to identify a human *being* as a subject in culture.“ (Šuvaković, 2005: 146) The very titles of the Foucault's works indicate that he distinguished several ‘spheres’ and ways of determining a human being as a subject in culture.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, the text *What is an Author?* can be interpreted as an example of a discursive analysis of a way in which the subject is identified in the literary, scientific and theoretic discourses. In fact, Foucault pointed out that the author discourse in the literary field was built differently from the author discourse in the scientific, i.e. theoretic field. This difference appears as a variable related to the scope, use and purpose of the discursive practice through which a knowledge about the author was built.

“Perhaps it is time to study discourses not only in terms of their expressive value or formal transformations but according to their mode of existence. The modes of circulation, valorization, attribution, and appropriation of discourses vary with each culture and are modified within each. The manner in which they are articulated according to social relationships can be more readily understood, I believe, in the activity of the author function an in its modification than in the themes or concepts that discourses set in motion.”

(Foucault 1998: 220)

The name of the author has the function of the person who sorts the discourses, therefore Foucault did not use the term ‘author’, but the term ‘author function’. The author's name is actually used to mark the existence of a certain type of discourse. Discourse of a certain author is not simply a discourse, but a discourse that must be used in a certain way in a certain culture and receive a certain status in that culture. In other words, the appearance of the author's name “manifests the appearance of a certain discursive within a society and a culture” (Foucault 1998: 221), therefore the concept of the author function appears as a

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1. *Madness and civilization: a history of insanity in the age of reason* (1961), *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (1966), *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1975), *The History of Sexuality I* (1976) etc. We quote the 'typology' of the Foucault's analysis of the human being's way to identify itself as a subject in a culture as deduced by Miško Šuvaković: a) subject's identification in the science discourses (in the linguistics, economy, history, biology, medicin), b) subject's identification through the practice of division within the very subject (insane-noramal, healthy-ill), c) description and interpretation of the human being's transformation into a subject (for example, recognition of the human being as a sexual subject). Šuvaković, 2005: 146.

symbol of the way to exist, to move and function for certain discourses within the society. Foucault gives the characteristics of 'any' author function as a construct of a certain historic moment: „(1) the author function is linked to the juridical and institutional system that encompasses, determines, and articulates the universe of discourses; (2) it does not affect all discourses in the same way at all times and in all types of civilization; (3) it is not defined by the spontaneous attribution of a discourse to its producer but, rather, by a series of specific and complex operations; (4) it does not refer purely and simply to a real individual, since it can give rise simultaneously to several selves, to several subjects - positions that can be occupied by different classes of individuals.” (Foucault 1998: 216) Based on these four characteristics, Foucault then deduces the particularities of the author function discourse in the fields of literature, theory and science. Foucault indicated the following four modalities based on which the modern age literary criticism drags the author function into the play: „(i) if among several books attributed to an author one is inferior to the others, it must be withdrawn from the list of the author's works (the author is therefore defined as a constant level of value); (2) the same should be done if certain texts contradict the doctrine expounded in the author's other works (the author is thus defined as a field of conceptual or theoretical coherence); (3) one must also exclude works that are written in a different style, containing words and expressions not ordinarily found in the writer's production (the author is here conceived as a stylistic unity); (4) finally, passages quoting statements made or mentioning events that occurred after the author's death must be regarded as interpolated texts (the author is here seen as a historical figure at the crossroads of a certain number of events).” (Foucault 1998: 214) In the literary field, however, the “author function is not a pure and simple reconstruction made secondhand from a text given as inert material. The text always contains a certain number of signs referring to the author. These signs, well known to grammarians, are persona pronouns, adverbs of time and place, and verb conjugation.” (Foucault 1998: 215) Foucault also distinguished a special field of authors who appeared during the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Europe that are not to be identified neither with great literary authors, nor with the authors of religious texts, nor with science founders. He called them the “discursivity founders” and defined their standing as “transdiscursive” since they formed the conditions and rules for creation of other texts, for something different from their own discourse, but still belonging to what they had founded. “Freud is not just the author of *The Interpretation of Dreams or Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious*; Marx is not just the author of the *Communist Manifesto* or *Das Kapital*: they both have established an endless possibility of discourse. (...) In the future development of a science, the founding act may appear as little more than a particular instance of a more general phenomenon that unveils itself in the process. (...) when I speak of Marx or Freud as founders of discursivity, I mean that they made possible not only a certain number of analogies but also (and equally important) a certain number of differences.” (Foucault 1998: 217–218).

In the process used by Foucault to deduce the analysis of the author discourse, i.e. the discussion about the techniques of expression, interpretation, demonstration and representation of the author function in a particular social and historic moment, we recognize a specific methodological concept that he explained in his book carrying the same title in 1969 naming it the *Archeology of knowledge*. Foucault's theory exposed in his text *What is an Author?* – that a scientific text or a literary work of art is not a trace of the subject expressing it by writing himself and his essence in it, but a result of the discourse organization and the system order in which the text is written – is analog to the idea of 'archives'.

The world is no longer understood as a world of imminent objects, nature or phenomena, but as an effect of the relations between the discourses and their expressions within the system, i.e. archives, which is, nevertheless, an unnatural, outside world to the subject. Foucault underlined that we now think about the discourse as determined by the author function, whereas some other, future period will work based on a different system. That system may no longer be the author, but something else that will have to be determined or, perhaps, lived, and that system will be completely legitimate just as any other since it is not expressed as universal and undoubted. Foucault, therefore, did not negate the possibility of application and existence of another type of knowledge – Barthes' concept of the author's death – as an equally possible basis for a discursive knowledge production about the work and the author. He, however, criticized Barthes' deduction of the author's death in relation with the neutralization of author's personal markings, confirming that the death of the author shall come, but from the culture, not from the text itself. Hence, we can point out once again that Barthes developed the concept of the author from the text theory, while Foucault considered the field of authorship yet another construct of the socially institutionalized practices.

In this regard, the relation between the different social and historic discourses of the author and the reason for their changes were not the questions Foucault aspired to deal with applying the archeology of knowledge method. Reason for this is the peculiarity of the archeology of knowledge as a method. This method refers to the philosophic and theoretic structuring of knowledge, but in particularly located and limited historic periods, which made the turn away from the general homogenizing history of ideas into the history of discontinued, layered structuring of thought and cognition. Therefore, in his text *What is an Author?* Foucault was aware of the changes in the knowledge production practice about the author and he acknowledged the 'happening' of the new concept of the death of the author, but he did not point out the social and historic cause of the changes reflected in the two different formulations of the knowledge about the author.

A separate question regarding the Barthes' and Foucault's discourse about the author is locating their texts in the movement of the structuralist theoretic current towards post-structuralism which took place exactly in the period when the texts *The Death of the Author* and *What is an Author?* were written. The status of the subject, as well as the question of the authorship in relation with the work of art, the relationship between the author, work of art and the recipient in the knowledge production are the key problematic fields of the structuralist and post-structuralist theories.

In his text *The Death of the Author*, Barthes indicated the cultural context as an important link in the text meaning production chain where the main role is given to the reader who, interacting with the text and layers of other texts within himself, completes the meaning of the work. The meaning of the text is not, as in the structuralism, determined by the relations of the inner relationships between the text structure factors, but the text gains its meaning in the intertextuality net. Each deduction of the meaning in a text conceived in such manner represents a new, unrepeatable, performative act. Such product no longer has a 'complete' meaning, fixed by the hand of the author, but the work becomes a text that is performed again and again, 'here and now'. In his text *The Death of the Author*, Barthes actually hinted his theory about the modern art that he elaborated two years later in the text *From work to text* (1971) in form of an explicit substitution of the work concept

with the text concept. In this regard, whichever the medium, any form of production, exchange and consumption of meaning can be called text. The next step in the relation between the text, the author and the reader Barthes made elaborating the concept of *enjoying the text* which took place as a passage from the structuralist, aesthetic text that speaks about a sensory experience, to the aesthetic, post-structuralist text that drags both the reader and the writer physically into itself, facing it with the work of a desire produced into text and with enjoying the text.

The terms that Barthes criticized and, at the same time, offered as the new terminology of the literary theory, i.e. of the theory of text – subject, author, identity, writing, work, text, performativity, reading, reader – represent the key terms of theoretic explanations of the 20<sup>th</sup> century's art, therefore the importance of this text is special in terms of contribution not only to the theory of the contemporary literature, but also to the theory of contemporary art in general. The science of signs, to whose analytical potential first indicated Saussure, Barthes developed as a methodological tool that he applied to different discourses in culture. After starting from an exclusively linguistic meaning system, Barthes used the semiology as a translinguistic level of interpretation for different meaning systems, in form of the text theory. The text *The Death of the Author* is, therefore, crucial in forming the conceptual vocabulary used by the contemporary theories of art. It is possible to consider in which ways the terms introduced by Barthes in the field of literary practice were later used on other artistic disciplines, both in the Barthes' theoretical discourse and in the discourses of other theorists in post-structuralism.

The assumption that the subject is not something that precedes the speech, letter, text or work of art, but, on the contrary, something that is born out of relations between different texts as a possible apparent identity, is characteristic for the discourses of both authors. Based on this assumption, both Barthes' and Foucault's thinking can be said to belong in the field of post-structuralism. However, the relationship toward the subject is rather particular for the theoretical work of both authors.

Namely, while Barthes used the term Author with a capital 'A' thus indicating the past 'existence' of the subject and his identity as a crucial influence on the work's meaning generation, and therefore used the terms subject and author as synonyms, Foucault used the term author function. Nevertheless, Foucault emphasized that this term never included a print of subject's personality and his identity in his concept, but that the author function is exclusively a discursive practice, a concept created by the society to mark the ways of existence, movement and functioning of certain discourses within the society. Therefore, the assumption of the text based on which he who writes it vanishes inside it, as Foucault believed, was nothing new. For, the oversight of the structuralist readings of the text, in which the work became the text for the first time, lies in the fact that the author is not something that 'vanished' from the text with time through neutralization of individual markings of the one who wrote it, but something that has never been imminent to the text, something attributed 'externally', in form of various discursive practices of the knowledge about the author. Subject is not the founder of the discourse, the culture is. "How, under what conditions, and in what forms can something like a subject appear in the order of discourse? What place can it occupy in each type of discourse, what functions can it assume, and by obeying what rules? In short, it is a matter of depriving the subject (or its substitute) of its role as originator, and of analyzing the subject as a variable and complex function of

discourse.” (Foucault 1998: 220) The Foucault’s subject appears as an extratextual, historic being that establishes its identities and power through discursive practices. We can, therefore, talk about Foucault’s methodology as of the post-structuralist historicism, directed toward considering the forming of the subject’s identity in various historic moments through discursive practices of the knowledge production whose goal is limiting, defining and locating the subject’s history. As opposed to this, with his text *The Death of the Author*, Barthes ‘cancelled’ the possibility of the subject’s history, of constitution of his identities, knowledge and power, by seeing the subject as a fictitious inner textual creation, as an additional, metalinguistic post-product derived from the text content. In other words, while the Foucault’s subject exists as an independent entity that uses the field of textual production to construct, constitute and derive its identities, the Barthes’ text appears as a hegemonic notion ‘above’ the subject, able to achieve the death of the author, i.e. of the subject through its imminent power of structural production of self- and inter- meaning. It is exactly from these two distinguishing settings of the hierarchical relation between the notions of the subject and the text in the antecedence of the meaning production that the Barthes’ text *From work to text* got its name (Text). On the other hand, instead of the term ‘text’, Foucault used the notion of ‘discourse’ the content formulation of which is directly used by the subject in form of the meaning field through which his identities are defined within various practices of knowledge and power production. We can, therefore, claim that in relation to these two texts appear, on one hand, in Barthes’ case, a textual subject that ceases to exist by establishing the meaning power of the historic, the structuralist text field, i.e. in Foucault’s case, an extratextual subject with discursively formed identity whose history is determined and located in the post-structuralist manner in various discursive practices of the knowledge and power production. In this regard, Foucault interpreted the author function only as another possibility to constitute the subject’s identity in a certain social and historic moment.

Therefore, the Barthes’ theoretic thought in the text *The Death of the Author* can be clearly positioned in the field of the post-structuralist theoretical current, while the Foucault’s theoretical position should be considered in relation to the reshaping and movement of the methodologies and concepts of his entire work, in regard to locating the discourse of *What is an Author?* in the field of the archeology of knowledge as a method for studying the system of thought. While Barthes’ text represents a key turning point toward the field of post-structuralist considerations of the work of art, the Foucault’s discourse works as yet another discussion about establishing the subject’s identity in the modern society, since Foucault ends his text wondering where the subject is now, when he can no longer be established through the space of the discursive practice of the knowledge production about the author.

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## Difficult Anonymity: The Masked Foucault<sup>1</sup>

On the 6<sup>th</sup> of April 1980 an interview appeared in the pages of *Le Monde* with a French intellectual. The name of the intellectual was not mentioned. One just knew he was a philosopher (the piece was entitled: *Le philosophe masqué*). The reason the intellectual had chosen anonymity was not related to any sort of accusation or desire to cause mischief. There was, in fact, no opposer to torpedo. As the masked philosopher stated : “[S]i j’ai choisi l’anonymat, ce n’est donc pas pour critiquer tel ou tel, ce que je ne fais jamais”. (Foucault 2001: 925 / 1997: 323)<sup>2</sup> Although not related to a critique on the personal level, the point the anonymous author wanted to make did regard critique. As the same unknown philosopher would state in a different interview of some years later: “[...] apart from a few great authors, this knowledge [of who the author is], in the case of most of the others, serves absolutely no purpose”. In this majority of cases, he continues, “it would be better if [...] books were read for themselves, with whatever faults and qualities they may have”. (Foucault 1990: 52-53) As we now know, the masked philosopher was Michel Foucault and he had explicitly insisted on anonymity. (Cf. Foucault 2001: 923 / 1997: 321) Strange as this now sounds, his wish has been granted. It was only after Foucault’s passing that it was revealed that the anonymous philosopher had been him, Michel Foucault. And, although, Foucault’s anonymity seems to find its locus solely in ‘authorship’, as we will attempt to render evident, Foucault’s re-dimensioning of authorship is more complicated than it might appear at first sight. In an almost paradoxical twist, Foucault’s desire for anonymity actually reintroduces biography into the question of authorship. These are the questions that will occupy us for the majority of this text.

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1. T This text is the further elaboration of my conference presentation held on December 7, 2014 at the Institute of Philosophy and Social Theory of the University of Belgrade in Serbia. I want to express my gratitude to the organizers for the invitation. I also need to thank Lance Kirby who has been of help, as he has been on many previous occasions, by proofreading this text. I also need to express my gratitude to Gazela Pudar Draško who asked me a very pertinent question after my presentation. This question, that regarded the sheer continuous possibility of anonymity in writing, has made me re-think some of the claims of my conference presentation. My emphasis on the paradoxical nature of Foucault’s aspiration of anonymity is largely due to this question.

2. As ‘Le philosophe masqué’ is at the source of this text, we have opted for double references, where the first year and page number refers to the French edition of the text and the second year and page number to the English translation. Only on rare occasions, when translation issues will be at the center of the discussion, will the two texts be separately referred to.

That Foucault's choice of anonymity is an act of protest is already evident from the two short passages we just mentioned. It is, however, not just an act of protest with regard of the nature or the figure of the author. It also has implications for the public role of the philosopher – his function as intellectual. It is, in fact, not a surprise that, although Foucault desired to remain anonymous, he was nevertheless named as a philosopher (albeit a masked one).<sup>3</sup> Considering the peculiar nature of Foucault's search and aspiration for anonymity, the second aspect of this paper will consist in a confrontation between Foucault's anonymity and some of the, by now many, contemporary anonymous protest-movements.<sup>4</sup> An attempt will be made to unveil the similarities and the differences between Foucault's anonymity and these forms of anonymous expression of (political) dissent. We will attempt to discover the point of rupture between the foucaultian practice of anonymity and that of the protesters of today. The question of their practicability will be considered as the horizon of our reasoning.

In what follows I will thus start with a comment on the 'act' of being masked in the wider context of anonymity as such. In this first section we will shortly treat the nature of carnival and the ancient concept of the *persona* (be it the theatrical mask or the legal personality – the meaning of the *persona* will also prove its importance in the final sections of this text). Secondly, I will turn to Foucault's understanding of anonymity. Some necessary but minor comments will also be made on his text *What is an Author?* and the therein present critique's on Barthes and Derrida in this section. What will follow is a short resume of some of the more contemporary anonymous protest-movements and their relationship to anonymity. The text will conclude with a confrontation between the nature of anonymity aspired by Foucault and by the anonymous protestors. These considerations will, finally, allow us to have a better understanding of some of the aspects of the '(power-)nature' of the anonymous 'practice' aimed at by the philosopher Foucault.

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The title of the interview in which the French philosopher Michel Foucault remained anonymous was *Le philosophe masqué*.<sup>5</sup> This title is not without importance and interest on its own. In fact, it makes an immediate connection between anonymity and a mask, or masks.<sup>6</sup> It seems thus very appropriate to begin with this mask, with being masked, or, even better and more joyfully, let me start with a whole masquerade, that is carnival after which we will quickly return to the non-carnavalesque mask.

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3. Foucault's relationship with his functions as philosopher, 'public intellectual', and militant – it is not surprising that a whole chapter of David Macey's *The Lives of Michel Foucault* is dedicated precisely to this particular combination of philosophy professor and 'political' militant (cf. Macey 1993: 290-322) – is very complex and the limits of this text do not allow me explore this topic too deeply. That his being a militant also implied a certain amount of anonymity can be discerned from the opening sentences of Blanchot's *Michel Foucault tel que je l'imagine*. In this text of mourning, Blanchot described the beauty of his (non-)encounter with Foucault during the protests of May '68: "quoi que disent les détracteurs de Mai, ce fut un beau moment, lorsque chacun pouvait parler à l'autre, *anonyme*, impersonnel, homme parmi les hommes, [...]". (Blanchot 1986: 9 – emphasis added)

4. Although aware of most of the smaller movements of dissent, we will principally focus on Anonymous, the Black Bloc 'movement', and Occupy.

That I start with carnival is, however, not just related to the reason just mentioned (the title of the interview in *Le Monde*). That carnival is to be shortly considered regards the fact that Foucault himself did not disdain any reference to carnival and even described genealogy as a “history in the form of a concerted carnival”. (Foucault 1977a: 161) Furthermore, did William E. Connolly not shrewdly, even foxily – as it was just written in a footnote –, claim that it was Foucault’s favorite role to play the “modern fool”. (Connolly 1987: 95) Although these reasons could already be considered as sufficient to start by focusing on carnival, I start with carnival for another reason still. A reason, furthermore, that is mentioned by Foucault himself. In fact, in *Discipline and Punish* Foucault poignantly describes the chain-gangs, those chains of prisoners that marched to and from prison that could still be seen at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. And, as Foucault interestingly remarks, this “festival of the departing convicts” has, in fact, something of “the festival of fools, in which the reversal of roles is practiced, [...]”. (Foucault 1995: 259) Our quest to understand Foucault’s claim to anonymity starts with the mask and carnival because of this reversal of roles.

Carnival is, in fact, not only the perfect occasion to wear a mask, but it is, more importantly, the perfect moment to behave differently. As the Russian scholar Michael Bakhtin, who so cleverly theorized medieval carnival and folk culture, emphasized, carnival is all about opposition to the established order. Carnival, probably from its very origin is an undermining of the reigning order. As Bakhtin explains by contrasting carnival with official national feasts: the official feast(s) “sanction the existing pattern of things and reinforce it”. They do this by looking back “at the past to consecrate the present” and, as such, what the official feasts want to demonstrate is that “all [is] stable, unchanging, perennial: the existing hierarchy, the existing religious, political, and moral values, norms and prohibitions”. Carnival, and the carnivalesque feasts, on the contrary, temporarily liberate society from “the prevailing truth and the established order; [...]”. Carnival, in fact, marks “the suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms, and prohibitions”. “Carnival”, as Bakhtin concludes, “was the true feast of time, the feast of becoming, change, and renewal. It was hostile to all that was immortalized and completed”. (Bakhtin 1984: 9-10)

Although of great importance, the suspension of all rank and the reversal of ranked roles, as we will demonstrate in the next section, does not exhaust Foucault’s resorting to the mask or anonymity. In order to fully grasp Foucault’s usage of the concept of anonymity – which will be, as the following sections will evince, somewhat of a paradox – a

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5. There is a peculiar coincidence between Foucault, Deleuze, and Nietzsche that needs to be clarified before we can continue. As we are dealing here with a pure coincidence, the main text is not the best place to discuss – a footnote will have to suffice. In a chapter of the third ‘essay’ in *On the genealogy of morality*, Friedrich Nietzsche argues that philosophers have, historically, been obliged to hide behind the mask of the already established contemplative/religious man and the ascetic ideal (of the contemplative/religious man) has often been necessary as the precondition for philosophy’s mere possibility, its simple existence. (Nietzsche 1997: III, 10) Gilles Deleuze, in his less famous book on Nietzsche, entitled simply *Nietzsche – less famous*, but for that reason not less important or significant, than his other work on Nietzsche: *Nietzsche and philosophy* –, has given this section of his work the already encountered title: *Le philosophe masqué* (Deleuze 1965: 53) – also in *Nietzsche and philosophy* Deleuze treats this section of Nietzsche’s genealogy but without giving it the same title (Deleuze 2002: 3-6). Turning to Foucault; although we have just connected genealogy with carnival and with a masked philosopher, the masking that is the scope of Foucault is of a completely different nature than the one described by Nietzsche and commented on by Deleuze under the title of the masked philosopher.

closer look at the ‘*persona*-mask’ of ancient Rome is also of importance. For us to capture the full meaning of the *persona* we turn to a section of a text by Marcel Mauss<sup>7</sup> *Une catégorie de l’esprit humain: la notion de personne celle de “moi”* del 1938. (Cf. Mauss 1938: 18-23) As the title of Mauss already renders evident, at the centre of this text is the notion of the ‘person’.<sup>8</sup> As our task does not consist in deciding on the most original meaning of the *persona* (the theatrical mask or the legal personality), it suffices to indicate the similarities between both understandings. If the *persona* is from Latin derivation and means mask originating in *per/sonare*, that is, the mask through which the voice of the actor is reinforced, or whether the concept has Etruscan origins and refers to the ancestors’ masks which gave the members of that family a surname (*cognomen*), a sort of affiliation solely applicable to free people (who ‘own’ their own body) of a certain institutional rank. Whatever the true origin of the concept – if there is supposed to be a sole and unique source of this or whatever concept –, what is of interest is that both share the fact that the *persona* is not the natural or private *homo*, but respectively the actor or the legal personality. And it is also in this way that the *persona* gained its legal status. As the Roman jurists said: before the law there exist only *personae*, *res*, and actions. The *persona*, to put it in a phrase that will show its importance in what follows, is a social construction that does not completely coincide with the natural (owned) body behind the *persona*.

It is within this context of reversal of roles and of the theatrical/ancestral/legal *persona*-mask that we will be able to discover the full meaning of Foucault’s understanding and aspiration for anonymity and its difference with the various contemporary anonymous movements – who, by the way, ever more frequently turn to the masking of themselves –. But let us first return to Foucault’s understanding of anonymity.

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The first words spoken by Foucault in ‘The Masked Philosopher’ retell a little anecdote of some psychologists that went to Africa with a short film they showed to some villagers. After having shown the movie they asked the villagers to tell the story in their own words. The short film had three characters but the villagers only made mention of the

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6. The footnote that introduces the English translation of this interview offers an intriguing example of this connection between anonymity and the mask. Also the transcription of the interview in the French edition of his collection of essays, the *Dits et Écrits*, has a short introduction. It describes, just like the English footnote, the context of the interview – published in the Sunday supplement of *Le Monde*, etc.. What is of interest is that Foucault’s choice of anonymity is rendered as follows in French: “M. Foucault [...] posa une condition de principe: cet entretien devrait rester anonyme” (Foucault 2001: 923). The English footnote, however, describes Foucault’s choice of anonymity in the following words: “an interview between C. Delacampagne and M. Foucault was published in which the latter opted for *the mask* of anonymity [...]”. (Foucault 1997: 321 – emphasis added) The choice of anonymity is here immediately seen as the choice for a mask: the mask of anonymity. Unwillingly this ‘unconscious’ addition is very telling.

7. Foucault never actually mentioned Mauss but considering the importance and influence the work of Mauss had on Georges Bataille (cf. Kendall 2007: 38), and considering Bataille’s importance for Foucault, it would be rather extraordinary if Foucault was not aware of Mauss’s work.

8. Also Hannah Arendt treats the nature of the *persona* in her *On Revolution*. (Cf. Arendt 1990: 106-107) As Mauss’s text is more exhaustive we have opted to solely consider his article at this moment. Arendt’s treatment of this topic will result of great help and importance in the second to last section.

movement of the light and the shadow through the trees. (Cf. Foucault 2001: 923 / 1997: 321) Contrary to the African society that is depicted in this anecdote, for Foucault our society focuses almost exclusively on the characters, the ‘personnages’, of the movie. And “our attention tends to be arrested by the activities of faces that come and go, emerge and disappear”. (Foucault 2001: 923 / 1997: 321) By opting for anonymity Foucault attempts to reverse this trend that has also reached authorship.<sup>9</sup> Foucault questions, by his choice of not wanting to be named, not only authorship, and the function of the critic, but also the economic rationality of certain publishing techniques – as he states (and this is something that is more wanting with every day that passes), a book is not worse because the author was seen on tv, but neither can it be considered better.<sup>10</sup> (Cf. Foucault 2001: 925 / 1997: 323)

Although the broader critique of the ‘spectacularization’ of the writers/publication scene should not be excluded, the fundamental scope of Foucault’s choice of anonymity remains connected to the critique on the centrality of the author. This thematic was not new to Foucault. Already in February of 1969 he delivered a lecture with the telling title ‘What is an Author?’ before the *Société française de Philosophie* at the Collège de France. Although Foucault’s text is written only shortly after Barthes’ *The Death of the Author* (Barthes 1977: 142-148) and Derrida’s *De la grammatologie* – texts that will shortly be confronted by Foucault in this lecture – Foucault’s text originates from some critiques made to his *Les mots et les choses* that had been published in 1966. Without wanting to go the extreme lengths of Barthes and Derrida and declaring the death of the author<sup>11</sup>, Foucault investigates the space, the position, occupied by the author (disappeared or not). What is at stake in this space relates, according to Foucault, to the name (of the author). However, investigating the problems related to the name of the author (Foucault 1977b: 121-124), Foucault comes to the conclusion that “[T]he author’s name is not a function of a man’s civil status”. It, in fact, is not a proper name, but, as he continues, “nor is it fictional” (the ‘author’, whatever that may turn out to become, is not dead). (Foucault 1977b: 123) Or as he would say in the anonymous interview: “[L]e nom est une facilité”.<sup>12</sup> (Foucault 2001: 923 / 1997: 321) In fact, as his reasoning continues in “What is an Author?”, the ‘author’ is a function of discourse. (Cf. Foucault 1977b: 124) the ‘author’ is simply the ‘author-function’, that is a social,

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9. Although probably displeasing for Foucault, there is a clear echo of some of the first theses of Guy Debord’s *The Society of Spectacle* (cf. Debord 1995: §4; §6) in the way that Foucault described the state of affairs of authorship and publication in this interview – did Foucault not write in *Discipline and Punish* Foucault that “our society is not one of spectacle, but of surveillance; [...]” (Foucault 1995: 217) and should this not be considered for what it was, namely a direct attack at the earlier published work of Debord –.

10. This idea is repeated by Foucault in one of his last interviews, to which we already referred briefly, entitled ‘Une esthétique de l’existence’ (An Aesthetics of Existence) where he says that “[...]: the only law on the press, the only law on books, that I would like to see brought in, would be a prohibition to use an author’s name twice, together with a right to anonymity and to pseudonyms so that each book might be read for itself. There are books for which a knowledge of the author is a key to its intelligibility. But apart from a few great authors, this knowledge, in the case of most of the others, serves absolutely no purpose. [...] For someone like me – I am not a great author, but only someone who writes books – it would be better if my books were read for themselves, with whatever faults and qualities they may have.” (Foucault 1990: 52-53)

11. Regarding Foucault’s confrontation of Barthes and Derrida; Foucault, in ‘What is an Author?’, basically counters the claim made directly by Barthes and indirectly by Derrida of the death of the author. It doesn’t suffice to repeat empty slogans of the disappearance of the author while allowing him to creep back in through the back door. (Cf. Foucault 1977b: 118-120)

cultural, and historical construction that, not necessarily, crosses the natural person, the already mentioned naked *homo*, behind the ‘author-function’.

But how should anonymity be understood in this context of the ‘author-function’? John Mullan’s beautiful book on anonymity in English literature is of particular interest in this context. As Mullan has convincingly argued, most authors who have aimed at anonymity have only rarely aimed at final concealment. (Cf. Mullan 2007: 20) Anonymity in writing has been used as a form of protection against legal or criminal accusations, as a means of simply getting into print (women for example), or as a means to accuse, mock or cause mischief, or as Mary Anne Evans, Mary Ann Cross, or as we know her better, George Eliot, correctly remarked “to an author not already famous, anonymity is the highest prestige”. (Mullan 2007: 103) Not being named is the best strategy for the unknown. Strange as this may sound, only rarely is anonymity chosen as a means to actually be and remain anonymous. Anonymity, and even when chosen for its own sake, is hardly ever something desired in the long run. In the end, it generally turns out to have been a way to attract attention. We, however, know that for Foucault attracting attention was exactly what he was trying to avoid. Foucault’s anonymity is, as he makes explicit in the *Le Monde* interview, a desire for a time when he was unknown (*inconnu*) and what he said still had a chance to be heard. (Cf. Foucault 2001: 923 / 1997: 321) Famous as he had become, after the publication of *Les mots et les choses*, he desired for the time when the unknown-ness of his name would have left him unknown, even anonymous (and we know that at least on one occasion, this interview, he actually made this happen).

The clarification of the timeframe of Foucault’s aspired and desired anonymity is fundamental to understand the near-paradoxical nature of Foucault’s aspiration of anonymity. In fact, what is at stake for Foucault in his quest for anonymity is not not being named but the unknown-ness of his author-name. He, in fact, aspires to a time when reading a book by Michel Foucault-author would be the same as reading a book by an anonymous author. Translated in the language of his lecture ‘What is an author?’, Foucault aspires to a time when a book by ‘Michel Foucault’ and a book by an anonymous author were identical, had the same ‘author-function’. Foucault’s aspiration for anonymity is thus similar and dissimilar to the authors studied by Mullan. The similarity regards the lack of desire to remain anonymous (the near-paradox being that being ‘without a name’ is not what is at stake in anonymity – as its etymological meaning is supposed to mean), and the fundamental rupture is obviously related to the absolute refusal of the name/fame game or any return of the author-subject through the backdoor opened by Barthes and Derrida. Only in this near-paradoxical situation will the dichotomy between being an unnamed author and an unknown author be eradicated and will the author *de facto* disappear in favor of the ‘author-function’.

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12. The English translation of this sentence reads: “A name makes reading too easy”. (Foucault 1997: 321) Although not wrong at its outset (something ‘facile’ is something ‘easy’), this translation does not take into account Foucault’s insistence on the ‘author-function’ theorized first more than a decade before this interview. The translation should have been much more ‘literal’, and should have read that the name (not ‘a’ name) is a facility (a facility being something that yes renders easy something else, but exactly because it ‘facilitates’, because of its function-ality).

Only this operation will allow Foucault to completely overturn Nietzsche's judgment that, in the first person, claimed "I have gradually come to realize what every great philosophy so far has been: a confession of faith on the part of its author, and a type of involuntary and unself-conscious memoir; [...]". (Nietzsche 2002: I §6) Foucault, considering the eradication of the dichotomy unnamed/unknown, can now re-claim the/his name back to the work and state that "[E]ach of my works is a part of my own biography". (Foucault 1988: 11) Where Nietzsche claims that confessions of faith and types of involuntary and unself-conscious memoir, that is one's biography, turn into works of philosophy, for Foucault the works of philosophy becomes part of one's biography. To translate this in the language we used in the previous section, the 'author-function' Michel Foucault has become the *persona* of the books he has chosen to write down in words.

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Anonymity, masks, reversal of the established order, all these aspects probably sound somewhat familiar to all of us and also have very visual images imprinted in our minds: mass protesting and the mask-face of Guy Fawkes – the personification of Anonymous.<sup>13</sup> What strikes and probably could also come as a surprise, a rather large amount of what we have said up until now about Foucault's understanding of anonymity seems to hold also for the wider phenomenon of the forms of contemporary protest. True, when mentioning the Black Bloc 'movement' we refer to violence (and the same holds obviously for Anonymous, as violence is not only synonymous with physical aggression – the violence of the Black Bloc is, as they would more than probably argue, reactionary, and is a response to the structural violence that is characteristic for the neoliberal [democratic?] bureaucracies), and violence is not included nor even considered by Foucault's anonymity or mask wearing.<sup>14</sup> But violence (of whatever kind) will not be the main stumbling-block, the biggest and most fundamental difference, between Foucault's understanding and usage of anonymity and that of the protestors.

But before discussing the similarities and differences between Foucault's attempt at anonymousness and these contemporary forms of protest, let us highlight some elementary traits of these movements.

First of all, the Occupy movement (which originated roughly in 2011 and can already be considered as deceased – it had in Occupy Wall Street its most famous branch) claims to find its roots in the 1999 Seattle anti-globalization protest that later spread throughout the world demonstrating during all sorts of worldwide political summits. (Cf. Klein

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13. As mentioned before, I will refer only to Occupy, Black Bloc and Anonymous in this second part. Just for information's sake, the past months has seen a protest movement becoming more 'mainstream' that goes under the name of *Blockupy* – <https://blockupy.org/>.

14. As American anthropologist and activist David Graeber – who is generally considered as one of the founding fathers of the Occupy movement – correctly underlines: the American variant of Black Bloc tends to be less violent, but they too use far more direct "confrontational tactics than other activists". (Graeber 2009: 407) It has to be added (without intending this to be anything more than a mere observation), however, that, as Graeber claims, destruction and violence "is not their main purpose" (Graeber 2009: 408), the latest Black Bloc 'interventions' – at least on the European continent – have been unable to hold by their 'purpose' and have continuously ended in violence and destruction.

2012: 44) Also the Black Bloc ‘movement’ claims to originate in the protests of ‘99.<sup>15</sup> (Cf. Thompson 2010: vii, 2, 12-13) Although both Occupy and the Black Bloc claim to originate in the 1999 Seattle protests, only the Black Bloc saw the light of day, in their contemporary meaning, in those last days of the past millennium. They, however, already existed, albeit in a less violent way, before this date – the ‘80s had seen the *Schwarzer Block* in Germany<sup>16</sup> and in other countries they existed under the name of ‘autonomous’ [the *Autonomi* in Italy, for example]. Although the anti-globalization protests that showed their existence massively in 1999 did water down a great deal (especially after 9-11) they have come recently back to the surface.

Anonymous unites a largely unorganized (in its common understanding) collective of *hacktivists* (the hackers-activists with a social cause), on the other hand, is somewhat more difficult to track down and establish in its origins. It seems to have originated in a rather spontaneous way in the early years of this century. Anonymous postings on certain particular web-channels and web-communities seems to have functioned as its unstoppable fuse. Anonymous developed some form of real world cohesion for the first time in 2008. More precisely in its fight against Scientology. The leaders of this ‘church’ had attempted to obscure certain pieces of film that could have embarrassed them (an interview with American actor and member of Scientology Tom Cruise). It was also on this occasion that the mask of Guy Fawkes made its first appearance on streets.<sup>17</sup> Although Anonymous ‘returned’ to mainly internet activism, with the uprising of Occupy, the various Arab Springs, and the ‘Indignados’ protests, they became more politically involved. They prefer, at least they say so, the less violent way of protesting of the Occupiers, but as they are not ‘organized’ in a strict sense there has also been occasional support for the more violent actions of the Black Bloc’s.

To summarize their similarities with reference to what we have stated up until now, all three of these ‘movements’ (even if they can not actually be called or defined by this concept), being basically protest-movements, have as their basic goal the liberation of society from the established order. All three want to overthrow consolidated hierarchical rank, privileges, norms, and prohibitions. And they want to achieve this through a particular usage of anonymity, mostly in a direct but sometimes also in an indirect way. That Anonymous and the Black Bloc ‘movement’ do, needs no further mentioning (both groups hide behind masks, almost universally now behind the mask of Fawkes). That Occupy can also be considered as using anonymity seems, at first sight, somewhat less

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15. We have persistently called the Black Bloc a ‘movement’ – with movement always in between brackets – . That we have done so is related to the fact that it is essentially not a movement according to what one commonly would call movement. The already mentioned American anthropologist and activist David Graeber interestingly explains: “A Black Bloc is a tactic. It is not, as many seem to think, a group or organization. [...] It was [is] essentially a way of creating *anonymity*: [...]”. (Graeber 2009: 406 – emphasis added) Of equal interest regarding the Black Bloc is that it seems to use a set of tactics particularly appreciated by youngsters originating from the white middle class, as another theorist of the Black Bloc characterized these activists. (Cf. Thompson 2010: 9)

16. It even seems that the name Black Bloc was invented in Germany – by the media or, as others claim, by police. (Cf. Graeber 2009: 406)

17. The presence of these masks is related to its featuring in the 2006 movie *V for Vendetta*, directed by James McTeigue, where an anarchist fighter called V who is masked like Fawkes, takes on the fight with a fascist government. It has to be said that it is quite surprising that this Catholic who attempted to overthrow the Anglican King James I to put a new Catholic King on the throne is used as the image of this new type of activism.



evident. However, that it does relates to its hiding behind the number.<sup>18</sup> As Naomi Klein interestingly argued in her talk (or should one say conversation) during Occupy Wall Street, they were the 99%. (Klein 2012: 43) Another activist, John Wellington Ennis even claims that the slogan “WE ARE THE 99%’ became the rallying cry of a generation”.<sup>19</sup> (Wellington Ennis 2014) So no individualization was supposed to be possible and it certainly was not desired.<sup>20</sup>

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As we have been able to see unfold before our eyes, Foucault’s desired anonymity (that regards not only authorship as we have unveiled) and a series of recent protest-movements all share some fundamental aspects with each other. We have also discovered that they have some similarities with late-medieval carnival and share in carnival’s delectation for the mask. However, for as much as these similarities are of fundamental importance<sup>21</sup>, a complete understanding of the nature of the anonymity aspired to by Foucault and the protesting-dissenters is impossible without considering the various differences.

Starting with the reversal of the order so typical of carnival, we can begin by saying that the reversal of the consolidated order aspired to by Foucault and the protest-movements has a different time-relation than carnival’s. In fact, the difference between Foucault’s anonymous philosopher or the protestors and carnival’s fools is that carnival is strictly limited in time (it is limited to that day, or at maximum to those days dedicated to the celebration of carnival) whereas Foucault’s and the protesters’ attempted reversal is not.<sup>22</sup> Foucault’s anonymity is, as he makes explicit in the interview, a desire for a time when he was unknown (*inconnu*) and what he said still had a chance to be heard. True, he goes on to propose a game: the year without name (*l’année sans nom*)<sup>23</sup>, and a year is obviously a strictly limited time; but the time-experience that conditions Fou-

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18. That I say they are ‘hiding’ behind the number should not be considered a negative comment or detrimental to their cause – this is simply what happens in a pure form of democracy, as Claude Lefort already theorized, and a pure form of democracy is exactly what they claim to strive for.

19. The slogan ‘we are the 99%’, although often attributed to David Graeber, was, as Graeber himself explained in *The Democracy Project: A History, a Crisis, a Movement*, a “collective creation. I threw in the 99 percent part”, Graeber wrote, “Begonia and Luis added the ‘we’, and the verb was ultimately added by Chris of Food Not Bombs, [...]”. (Graeber 2013: 41)

20. Quite intriguingly Graeber, who, as we already stated, can be considered as one of the ‘founding fathers’ of the Occupy movement, defines mass (protest) actions as ‘festivals of resistance’ and even ‘carnivals against capitalism’. As his reasoning continues, the “originators always explicitly contrast them [these mass protest actions] with the old, tedious style favored by liberals and socialists, which simply involve marching along with signs”. (Graeber 2009: 381) It is thus somewhat surprising to discover that he does not appear to consider Bakhtin’s description of carnival as the temporary attempt to reverse the consolidated power as correct. (Cf. Graeber 2009: 503)

21. That the similarities between Foucault’s and the protesters masked anonymity and carnival regard the fundamentals is because without a comprehension of the similarities the full weight of the differences can not be understood.

22. It has to be said that Foucault’s description of a carnival is ‘flawed’ because of this time-relation. As Andrew R. Russ correctly notes, by describing genealogy as a ‘concerted carnival’, Foucault is eradicating some basic aspects of the structure of carnival, namely it being limited in time and space. (Cf. Russ 2013: 250)

cault's understanding of anonymity is basically the fact that it is without end. (Cf. Foucault 2001: 923 / 1997: 321-322) To say it somewhat paradoxically: where time for carnival is an existential part of its particular nature – carnival, for it to be properly (allowed to) be carnival, is strictly limited in time and can only happen when limited in time – Foucault's anonymity, can only have a meaning when it is not related to time – that is, when it is timeless. Exactly the same can be said about the protester's relation to time.

The mask and its capacity to render anonymous is the next topic. We have already seen how Foucault's choice of anonymity brought along the question of the mask. Christian Delacampagne, the interviewer for the *Le Monde* article, more than probably chose as title of this interview 'the masked philosopher' because of Foucault's choice of anonymity. And, as we already indicated previously, the English translator of the interview wrote as clarification that Foucault had chosen the 'mask of anonymity', as if anonymity – the being without a name – is identical to being masked. It is, however, precisely here, with the 'mask of anonymity' that we will be able to draw the line that separates Foucault's quest for anonymity in a fundamental way from the various protest-movements we have mentioned.<sup>24</sup> To put this difference in a very simple, but not simplistic, way, almost as a mere *boutade*: the fundamental difference between Foucault and the protesters (all 3 groups) is that Foucault simply wants to mask (himself – considered first and foremost in the singular) while the protesters want to unmask (the others – plural). As Foucault clearly states in the interview, his choice of anonymity has nothing to do with criticizing somebody "Si j'ai choisi l'anonymat, ce n'est donc pas pour critiquer tel ou tel, ce que je ne fais jamais". (Foucault 2001: 925 / 1997: 323) The contemporary protesters, however, these dissenters, mask themselves to attempt to show that the ones they are protesting against are the real ones that are masked. What separates Foucault and the protest-movements on a double level is that, firstly, Foucault choose anonymity to insist upon the profoundly masking nature of the name of the author (which is generally dismissed but on which Foucault insists time and again) – this is a profound reference to the 'self' –. And although there is a somewhat hidden ironical reference to the 'others' (the other authors who will have very little to say and publish in the imagined game of the 'year without name'), the 'others' are not the basic goal of his masking anonymity. The masked anonymity of the protesters revert this situation completely. Their masks are an attempt to make them truly anonymous as what is at stake in their protest is not themselves but the others, the 1% are truly masked and need to be unmasked.

To allow us to fully understand the rupture that exists between these two forms of masking anonymity, a short return to the concept of the *persona* is essential. As Hannah Arendt, who treated the concept of the *persona*-mask in the context of the French revolution, has intriguingly argued; when the revolutionaries "proceeded to tear of the mask of its own children, it aimed, of course, at the mask of hypocrisy". (Arendt 1990: 107) However, the mask of hypocrisy, as Arendt explains, is a different type of mask as the *persona*. In fact, as Arendt continues, linguistically speaking the Greek ὑποκριτής is

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23. This 'game' consists of the challenge to publish all books during a year without the author's name. But, as Foucault, ironically remarks: "all the authors would wait until the following year before publishing their books ...". (Foucault 2001: 923 / 1997: 321-322)

24. We are inclined to think that this difference is not only with these particular protest-movements but with the whole contemporary culture of dissent and dissidence.

not even a mask but is the actor himself and not the mask he wore. (Cf. Arendt 1990: 107) While “the unmasking of the ‘person’, the deprivation of legal personality, would leave behind the ‘natural’ human being, [...] the unmasking of the hypocrite would leave nothing behind the mask, [...]”. (Arendt 1990: 107) This is also the reason why, according to Arendt, the hypocrite is so dangerous. Although he is masked in a certain way, it is a masking of the nothing that is behind the mask. All there is with the hypocrite is faked sincerity. It is a taking ontological possession of whatever he pretends to be (whatever *persona*). The problem with this witch-hunt of hypocrites, as Arendt concludes her reasoning on these theatrical figures that are present in the enactors of the French revolution, is that the heinousness of hypocrisy makes for it that those who are in the quest to unmask it are generally prepared to do this at whatever cost. And it is exactly here, as Arendt convincingly claims, that time and again violence is born. (Cf. Arendt 1969: 66) As such the “Reign of Terror eventually spelled the exact opposite of true liberation and true equality; it [only] equalized because it left all inhabitants equally without the protecting mask of a legal personality”.<sup>25</sup> (Arendt 1990: 108)

That this comparison can be made regarding contemporary politics, is quite telling of how contemporary politics is being depicted by these protesting movements. That these protest-movements have gained, on certain occasions, a vast chain of support is even more telling on the state of contemporary politics. However, following this line of thinking any further would take us far beyond the scope of this text. The double difference of usage and scope of anonymity is what differentiates Foucault’s aspiration of anonymity from the protestors’ usage of anonymity.

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In April of the year 1980, an interview appeared in *Le Monde* with an anonymous intellectual. The intellectual, Michel Foucault, as we know by now, had chosen to wear the mask of anonymity. This choice, was intended as a form of protest against the ‘spectacularization’ of authorship which failed to acknowledge the true nature of authorship, it being an author-function. The full range of what could be considered, at first sight, as a relatively tiny act of protest evinces itself, however, only once the basic concepts have been understood and placed in their larger context. In order to enable this we have confronted various themes, such as carnival, the persona-mask, and, especially, some recent protest-movements that, in a direct or indirect way, also bank on masked anonymity. What becomes evident as such is that the aspiration of anonymity by Foucault is a far more complicated and demanding than what it seems to be – and not having one’s name mentioned is not even at the core of this act. Rendering the full

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25. Although the Terror to which Arendt refers is the historical one that characterized the French revolution, it should and can be taken out of its historical context and refer to any sort of hypocrites witch-hunt. The violent protest-tactics of the Black Bloc can easily be considered as spreading a similar ‘Terror’. They, however, are probably less ‘children of the revolution’ but adepts of the theoreticians of violence, Fanon and Sorel. In fact, as Fanon interestingly argued (especially in our context of masks and carnival), “without this struggle, without this practice [of violence] there is nothing but a *carnival parade* and a lot of hot air”. (Fanon 2004: 96 – emphasis added) It would be very interesting to be able to investigate how far Occupy’s non-violence is related to its precocious disappearance.

scale of this act of wearing the ‘mask of anonymity’ is what we have attempted to do in this text.

What remains is to find some sort of conclusion. Firstly, considering Foucault’s aspiration for anonymity, one is confronted with the difficulty of fully attaining the almost paradoxical nature of that to which he aspires. How can anonymity be reached where one could still be named? Secondly, when masking oneself in protest, one’s intention is not without importance. Is the scope to mask oneself or is it ‘just’ to unmask the others? When opting for the second, one should not forget the almost necessary presence of violence. Lastly, for the ‘intellectual’, in the case he truly wants to make some kind of difference (political or not) the option of masking to unmask is more than probably not the road to follow.<sup>26</sup> The only option is to mask himself. If he really succeeded, he could even do it under the same author-function of his own proper name. Our ‘spectacular’ society will, however, not permit this. For now he will thus have to remain anonymous. Leaving it to us to discover, after he will have passed away, that it had been ‘him’ or ‘her’.

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26. It is with some sadness that it seems necessary to attest to the growing divide between protesting in theory and in reality. Maybe Domenico Losurdo is even correct when he claims that we are dealing no longer with a mere divide but with a “ruinous divorce” between theory and practice. (Losurdo 2014: 271)

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## Painting according to Foucault, in spite of Foucault: The pastoral origins of contemporary art

### Introduction

We could perhaps say that when Foucault analysed painting, he often fell into a trap he systematically tried to avoid in his other research – psychological analysis of the author's inner feelings and objectives. The first chapter of *Les mots et les choses*, for example, abounds with expressions that analyse, through iconography, the painter's behaviour and thinking: The painter “*jette un coup d'oeil*”, he takes “*un peu de distance*”; the painter “*regarde*” and “*contemple*” (Foucault 1966: 19-20). At the outset, an overview of the precautions that Foucault himself insisted on is in order. Firstly, power should not be analysed in relation to its forms as considered at their centre, but in regional and capillary segments; secondly, power should not be analysed from the perspective of the subject's intention and decisions, or according to what the subjects that “have power” have in mind, but with regard to how things happen in the moment of subjection (*assujettissement*); thirdly, power should not be analysed as a global phenomenon that reflects the domination of one group over another, or as something that can be possessed, but as something that circulates between different subjects or groups; fourthly, power should not be analysed as something that starts from some central power and spreads to lower instances, but in the direction of its growth, that is, from the lowest position towards the central power; fifthly, power should not be analysed in relation to the mass ideologies that follow it, but in relation to less pompous procedures of the accumulation of knowledge, that is, through various procedures for registration, through the process of verification and investigation (Foucault 1997: 25-30). Foucault's description of Velasquez' famous painting somehow does not heed these “precautions”; when Foucault speaks of relations of power in art, his concern is mostly with the iconographical aspect of these relations. But can an analysis that minds these precautions be made solely through iconography?

There are probably different reasons behind Foucault's “negligence” – if it is in fact negligence. The most important one was probably indirectly given by Foucault himself. In an interview from 1975, Foucault said that he did not have any tactical or strategic relation to painting (Foucault 2001: 1574). The date of the interview is important, because it is from roughly the same time as “*If faut défendre la société*”, a series of lectures where Foucault outlined the precautions listed above. This lack of a “tactical relation” to painting was perhaps the reason why Foucault focused on the iconographical aspect of painting and did not

take into account the possibility that transformations of disciplinary dispositives also influenced the artist. The artist did in fact undergo a process of transformation through disciplinary dispositives, just like any other subject in the modern state: the prisoner, the pupil at the Jesuit College or the manufactory worker. Educational processes in art can therefore be examined using Foucault's theoretical concepts of governmentality.

### From discipline to security in art practice

One of Foucault's definitions of governmentality states that it is a process or the result of a process that made possible the transformation from a State of Law (*Etat de justice*) to a State of Government (*Etat de gouvernement*) by way of a State of Administration (*Etat administratif*) (Foucault 2004: 112-113). Generally speaking, the type of artist inherent to each of these political forms of power is easy to identify. The artisanal type of artist is characteristic of the feudal type of State; he is bound to the prince(s) or to the corporation by various legal contracts. The existence of this type of artist is related to some type of feudal domination and is dependent on some kind of territoriality. An example of this relation would be a permission to wear and use a weapon which Henry IV granted to the painter Marin Le Bourgeois:

“Aujoud’huy quatriesme jour du mois de may mil six cents cinq, le roy estant à Fontainebleau, ayant commandé au sr *Le Bourgeois*, l’un de ses peintres et Vallets de Chambre, de luy faire pour son plaisir et recreation ung tableau au naturel de toutes sortes d’oyseaux, Sa Majesté a pour cest effect permis et permet audit sieur *Le Bourgeois* de tirer avec l’harquebuze et arbaleste à toutes espèces d’oyseaux, tant sur le bord de la mer que autres lieux...”.

(Jouin 1876: 144).

Subjugated to king's need and pleasure, the artist's mission is also strictly delimited by territory, by the types of weapons that can be used and by the types of animals that are to be represented. A similar observation could be made for the “corporation type” of artist, whose monopoly is strictly delimited by territory and the technical aspect of painting.

The position of the academic type of artist is completely different. His work also relates to the king's interests, but a considerable change has occurred in the relation of power. When the artist is accepted as an academician, he has to take an oath and answer the following question in the affirmative:

”Ne prometé vous pas de servir fidèlement le Roy dans le callité que vous embrasse, de maintenir et avancer, autant qu’il vous sera possible, l’honneur de l’Académie, de garder et observer religieusement ces Status et Règlement et de vous assujeter à tous ces ordres?”

(de Montaignon 1875: 11).

The artist has to respect – *religieusement* – a register of rules. Who produces these *Statuss* and *Règlements*? It is no longer the king, but the academicians themselves. They are of course accountable to the king, and their mission is certainly to forge the king's image, but



they are not subjugated to the king in the feudal sense. They have a certain autonomy in making the rules and statutes.

This academic discipline which is to be followed religiously by academicians is the same type of discipline that is observed and respected in the cases of scarcity Foucault analysed in *Security, territory population* (Foucault 2004: 31-89). Here power deals with the potential crisis by doing everything necessary to avoid it, by literally making it such that it cannot appear; the crisis is dealt with even before it happens (Foucault 2004: 33). In the case of scarcity, discipline includes measures for the relative immobilisation of producers and sellers of wheat and the segmentation of the territory. The two main philosophical and moral frameworks for thinking about the problem of scarcity being the bad fortune of the state or society and man's bad nature (Foucault 2004: 33), power tries to operate in the sense of preventing the potential harmful effects of bad fortune and human nature. Foucault stressed that this discipline is centripetal; it operates by limiting space (Foucault 2004: 46); it immobilises and concentrates subjects in order to shield them from some kind of external menace. It tries to negate the impact of bad human nature. In the context of food shortages, this applies firstly to the bad nature of producers and sellers, who are understood *a priori* as a threat to society due to their monopolistic tendencies and the increase in prices these tendencies bring about.

In my research, I noted that discipline operates in a similar way with regard to practices in art. But first it is necessary to specify what constitutes an "external menace" in the context of painting. If scarcity is understood as a global phenomenon that appears as a curse (*fléau*), that is, as a kind of retribution for a discipline that was not adhered to, the opposite is true of painting. The objective of discipline in art is not to prevent a crisis, but to prevent the disappearance of painting. Under the *Ancien Régime*, language was considered a cohesive element of society (Merlin 1994: 374). Since painting was viewed as speechless poetry, the same could be said of painting: the disappearance of painting is a crisis because it implies the degradation of society.

How then does discipline operate in the practice of painting? The best strategy for answering this question is to analyse a discourse that deals with education in painting. Generally speaking, the aim of discipline is to prevent a young painter from negative influences. Such discipline operates in what Foucault termed a *complementary to reality*, that is, as a register of "positive" rules that determine the narrow field of what is permitted (Foucault 2004: 48-49). Even a quick look at Charles-Alphonse du Fresnoy's (1611-1668) text reveals that it is filled with such positive rules (du Fresnoy: 1767). This discipline for the most part does not operate in the process of the realisation of painting, but rather seeks to limit or block off the painter in the period that precedes realisation. The painter has to organise the totality of painting before he even touches the canvas. André Félibien says, for example, that the painter "*doit avoir disposé tout son ouvrage dans son esprit, & le posséder parfaitement avant que d'en venir à l'exécution*" (Félibien, 1660 : 3). Later, in the process of painting, he has to adhere strictly to the prescribed steps of painting: "*Ne donnez jamais aucun coup de Pinceau, qu'auparavant vous n'ayez bien examiné votre dessein, arrêté vous Contours, & que vous n'ayez present dans votre Esprit l'effet da votre Ouvrage*" (du Fresnoy 1767: 71). The young artist has to respect the regime of steps in painting; he has to adopt, for example, geometry and perspective before he can begin copying Ancient art.

Why all these precautions? Because discipline is trying to shield the painter from the vices he will inevitably encounter in the process of painting. Discipline is in the first place suspicious of young painters, for whom du Fresnoy has the following advice: “...pendant que vous vous efforcez d’éviter un vice, prenez garde de ne point tomber dans un autre” (du Fresnoy 1767: 67). Discipline also casts an untrusting glance at the young painter’s teacher. Analysing a child’s inclination to paint, Antoine Leblond de la Tour says that it is commonly “suffocated by the fathers” (Leblond 1669: 16). Du Fresnoy has a similar observation: “...il n’y a rien de plus pernicieux à un Enfant qui est dans les Elements de la Peinture, que d’entrer sous la Discipline d’un Maître ignorant, qui lui déprave le Goût par une infinité d’erreurs, dont ses Ouvrages sont remplis, & qui lui fasse boire le venin qui l’infecte pour le reste de ses jours.” (du Fresnoy 1767: 68). The teacher’s mistake is a critical one that is thought to deprive the young painter irremediably. It follows that artistic talent is something extremely precarious and delicate: Leblond de la Tour says that because of the negative influence of a bad teacher, a child’s inclination to paint withers as a flower in the frost (Leblond 1669: 16).

It therefore becomes clear that in painting, discipline operates in the same way as in the case of scarcity or contagion: it tries to prevent the impact of bad human nature on values that are given by birth. Artistic talent or *génie* is not understood as something that can operate and develop autonomously in the process of creation, but as an inborn ability or inclination to follow rules. Discipline aims to block the artist’s free creativity; it seeks to squelch unpredictable itineraries of passion. Letting the artist’s passion run freely would be tantamount to letting grain sellers sell or stock grain as they please.

In the first third of the eighteenth century, a certain change can be noted in artistic discourse. This change can be probably explained by the formation of dispositives of security. Foucault noted that dispositives of security do not treat a phenomenon such as scarcity or contagion as an external menace that is to be avoided, but as a phenomenon with its own natural existence. Dispositives of security will take up these crises in their effective reality; they will work within this reality, through a series of analyses, and will try to play the elements of reality off against one another (Foucault 2004: 48-49). A disease is no longer understood as something foreign and invasive, as a *maladie régnante*, but as something distributed within society along the lines of some natural matrix that, as such, does not attack all groups of people equally, as something to be analysed in accordance with the physical state of each group, etc. (Foucault 2004: 61-62). Diseases and food shortages thus practically become natural or constitutive elements of the population.

A similar change can be traced in the discourse of art. As noted above, in the seventeenth century, artistic talent was understood universally – one obtained it at birth or he did not. Talent was a package of values that had to be preserved through discipline. In the eighteenth century, this notion of artistic talent changes considerably. In the discourse of Jean-Baptiste Dubos, for example, talent is analysed in its “effective reality”. There is of course an inequality in the distribution of talent within society, but from a general perspective, talent is distributed so that almost everybody can fill some space of activity: “La nature a fait un partage inégal de ses biens entre ses enfants, mais elle n’a voulu desheriter personne, & l’homme entierement dépourvû de tout espece de talent est aussi rare qu’un genie universel.” (Dubos 1719: 9). What we would call the “liberal type of artist” does not operate in the same register of disciplinary precautions as the disciplined artist of the seventeenth

century. His activity, and especially his talent and creativity, are understood within the “reality” of the population. The multitude of artistic activities is organised into the different types of inclinations. As Coppel says:

”L’un n’est sensible qu’à la couleur, & n’est que peu flatté de l’élégance du dessein ; l’autre au contraire prétend que sans le grand gout, la délicatesse & la pureté du dessein, la Peinture n’est qu’une affaire de mécanique. L’homme d’esprit & de sentiment ne s’attachera qu’à l’expressions des têtes & à l’ordonnance. L’homme d’érudition sera satisfait si le costume est scrupuleusement observe dans un tableau: ainsi des autres.”

(Coppel 1732: 2-3).

How does this transform the notion of talent? It reverses it completely, and this transformation can even be interpreted as the birth pangs of the contemporary artist. Talent is no longer something precarious and delicate that has to be preserved by strict discipline and religious observation of certain precautions; it has become a sort of natural force that is completely autonomous. Its autonomy stems from the fact that it forms a part of the diversity of the population. It has ceased to be a “flower that withers away in the frost” and is now a force capable of overcoming every obstacle. In his *Réflexions critiques sur la poésie et sur la peinture*, Jean-Baptiste Dubos says, for example, that the painter’s *génie* “*prêsse, il pousse, il aiguillone, & il sçait se faire jour à travers l’inaapplication & la dissipation de la jeunesse*” (Dubos 1719: 22-23). Not only does bad behaviour in one’s youth no longer threaten the artistic *génie*; the teacher’s bad influence has also ceased to be a danger to the painter’s development. Speaking about teachers of painting, Dubos says “*...que ces Maîtres soient de grands hommes ou des ouvriers mediocres, il n’importe, l’Eleve, qui aura du genie profitera toûjours de leurs enseignement.*” (Dubos 1719: 19-20). The pupil with a *génie* learns how to do it right, even when he watches his master doing it wrong: “*Un Eleve qui a du genie apprend à bien faire en voyant son Maître faire mal.*” (Dubos 1719: 20). Talent now being understood as something that is distributed within the nation or society, discipline attempts to operate on or influence the distribution of talents within society to satisfy the progress of the State. The proliferation of drawing schools in the middle of the eighteenth century should probably be associated with these changes. Drawing is no longer considered an elitist practice for the “chosen”, but can now enhance the abilities of every worker. In his *Projet pour l’établissement d’Ecoles gratuites de Dessein*, Ferrand de Monthelon says that by learning to draw, even a common soldier can go beyond himself and become useful to the state : “*le simple Soldat qui aura été élevé dans les principes de Dessein, & dans les quelques préceptes de Géométrie, peut s’élevant au dessus de son état, devenir un sujet utile...*” (Ferrand de Monthelon 1746: 69-70). It is quite obvious that by this stage, art can be analysed in the context of the biopolitical technology of power, and that the artist has become what Foucault termed a “differential element in the progress of the State” (Foucault 2004: 330). The considerable development of the police in the eighteenth century, which had as its objective the improvement of conditions in the State through competition among states, is a well known phenomenon. Foucault described the domain of the police as proceeding from a condition of merely living to a condition that is more than just living: “*...du vivre au plus que vivre*” (Foucault STP: 333). Captured in this framework, artistic talent can now refer to the category of the population. Such talent is constitutive element of population and it is purely biopolitical element. A statement from Jean-Baptiste Dubos confirms this idea perfectly:

La Providence a donc voulu que les Nations fussent obligées de faire les unes avec les autres, un échange de talens & d'industrie, comme elles font échange des fruits differens de leurs pays, afin qu'elles se recherchassent reciproquement, par le même motif qui fait que les particuliers se joignent ensemble pour composer un même people: le desir d'être bien ou l'envie d'être mieux."

(Dubos 1719: 10).

Of what is this "providence" a consequence? According to Foucault, the Christian pastoral type of power forms the background of the process of governmentality (Foucault 2004: 169). As this type of power becomes the general form of power through the formation of the modern state in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, it is precisely to the academic type of artist that the analysis must turn in order to gain an understanding of the pastoral origins of modern art.

### The constitution of the pastoral herds

Foucault stated that the state is an incident (*péripétie*) of governmentality (Foucault 2004: 253). But he also noted that pastoral power precedes governmentality in two ways. Firstly, pastoral power constitutes a specific trinity of salvation, law and truth, wherein salvation refers to the sublime economy of merit and demerit present between shepherd and the herd, law becomes constant and pure obedience and truth is something that has to be extracted from every member of the herd through the process of subjection (Foucault 2004: 171-186). Pastoral power precedes governmentality by excluding all other possible trinities of salvation, law and truth (Foucault 2004: 187). Secondly, pastoral power forms a prelude to governmentality in the "specific constitution of a subject whose merits are identified in an analytic manner, who is subjected to a network of continuous obedience, and who is subjugated by the extraction of the truth that is imposed upon him" (Foucault 2004: 188).

If pastoral power forms a prelude to governmentality, it is also true, as Bruno Karsenti remarked, that liberalism is an incidence of the Christian religion as a political religion (Karsenti 2005: 45). The "providence" forcing states to compete against one another to attain better standards of living is thus a product of the historical process that made possible the dominance of pastoral power to the exclusion of other types of power. The important thing is that, as Foucault stressed, the process by which the Christian pastoral form of power became general and universal cannot be described through some kind of transfer of Catholic pastoral power to the secular political field (Foucault 2004: 235). It actually involved the intensification of pastoral power, which came about through the multitude of conflicts between different forms of power which Foucault referred to as *contre-conduite* (Foucault 2004: 199-219). Foucault's historical research does not focus on the causality of historical phenomena, but on an analysis of the different conflicts through which pastoral power intensified and became the predominant and universal form of power.

An important aspect of this intensification of pastoral power was realised precisely through the transformation of educational practices. But how does this concern art? It concerns art in the sense that the formation of the *Académie royale de peinture et sculpture*, as a place

where the artist began to take shape in relation to the objectives of the State, is to be understood as a result and a generator of this intensification. The painter is no longer trained in the framework of the master-apprentice relationship, but through a process of group drawing with a model. The group of painters that chooses to convene every day to teach young painters the art is certainly a consequence of historical processes that began in the middle of the sixteenth century, the elaboration of which surpasses the scope of this short essay<sup>1</sup>. Here it is important to note that this “innocent” gathering of artists constitutes and consequently intensifies pastoral relations of power. It is no longer a question of the transfer of knowledge that takes place, say, in a craftsman’s workshop, but of a disciplinary dispositive that will provide for the movement of a “herd” of artists in the direction of some kind of artistic “salvation” which is to be realised through the painter’s participation in the progress of the State. As Foucault said, pastoral power is power exerted on the multiplicity and power that guides towards some goal and serves as an intermediary (Foucault 2004: 133). The space of learning at the Academy, the hall with the model, becomes a disciplinary dispositive which leads precisely in the direction of salvation.

At the Academy, every segment of learning is organised through an economy of rewards and punishment. “Good” students have the privilege of entering the drawing hall first and choosing the place from which they will draw. At the same time, various competitions for medals are organised to create an environment of constant competition (Brugerolles 2009: 21). Defending the practices of the Academy at the end of the eighteenth century, Antoine Renou accurately described how this power works: “*Les Elèves dans nos Ecoles, les Maîtres dans L’Académie, doivent sans cesse aspirer à monter, les uns en obtenant des prix, les autres des grades; si l’on s’écarte de ce principe essentiel d’émulation, notre Corps tombera dans l’inertie & le sommeil.*” (Renou 1790: 10). Learning to draw becomes a never-ending process, because its goal is to push the artistic herd in the direction of salvation. Accordingly, nearly every theoretician of painting in this period insists that the painter is working for posterity. For example, du Fresnoy recommends that painters pay little heed to riches and try to apply themselves in such a way that their glory will fade only through the centuries: “*Que le trop grand soin de devenir riche ne vous fasse pas négliger votre réputation: mais vous contentant plutôt d’une fortune médiocre, ne songez qu’à vous acquérir pour toute récompense de vos beaux, Ouvrages, un renom glorieux, qui ne périra qu’avec les Siecles.*” (du Fresnoy 1767: 79).

Every segment of this new disciplinary dispositive functions as an indicator of artistic truth: the professor can use a student’s position in the hall to analyse his “quality” and progress, drawings are constantly hung on the wall to be examined, the student is called on to explain his drawing techniques, etc. “Artistic” truth becomes what Foucault, in the context of pastoral power, would have described as a form of hidden truth that has to be extracted from every member of the herd through relations of constant obedience and an economy of merit and demerit (Foucault 2004: 186). The novelty of this disciplinary dispositive – at least in theory – lies in the way that merits are given to the students in accordance with

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1. This is not a reference to the art academies that appear in Italy as early as the sixteenth century and the possible influence of these institutions on art in France, but to two global phenomena; firstly, the conflicts between the Protestant and Catholic religions and the influence these conflicts had on educational practices, for example the invention and proliferation of catechisms (D’Hotel 1967: 22-116); secondly, the proliferation of education associated with charity, which profoundly changed pedagogical strategies and objectives.

their “success” in the drawing process, their obedience and the truth they are capable of receiving and sharing, and not as a result of their social status. Yet obedience and truth are not general categories; they are individualised. One significant example will suffice to explain how this hidden truth, extracted from the young artist, refers to pure obedience and salvation. In 1662 a group of students tried to set off on their own and organise a new “academy” in response to deteriorating pedagogical conditions at the Academy. The students were expelled from the Academy, but were soon received back and obliged to sign a letter condemning their actions. It is interesting to note that two of these “rebellious” students were soon rewarded prizes for drawing. One of them, Pierre Monier, would go on to have a significant career at the Academy, and would even become a professor. In the process of admission to the Academy, he was even allowed to choose a subject to paint. Monier chose a theme associated with Hercules, a hero who serves a symbol of the battle against the barbarians, but who also killed his music teacher in his youth (de Montaignon 1875: 197-204, 221-222; de Montaignon 1878: 34). To paraphrase Foucault, under pastoral power the truth is not some unidimensional truth that has to be distributed equally to everyone, but rather a kind of interior truth that is extracted through constant and never-ending techniques of analysis and investigation and through examinations conducted by the subjects themselves (Foucault 2004: 183-188). These analyses and investigations are sanctioned or rewarded by a shepherd through an economy of merit and demerit. This purely pastoral economy is not a one-way distribution of punishments and rewards from the shepherd to the herd, but accommodates a range of inversions (Foucault 2004: 174-176, 186). Keeping in mind Foucault’s notion of *correspondance alternée*, being a good shepherd in the pastoral sense does not only mean that the herd is well; a good shepherd is he who is able to transform a bad herd into a good one; by the same token, the salvation of the herd is somehow more likely if the shepherd is not some unattainable ideal, but a person who shows his weak points (Foucault 2004: 175-176). A consequence of this inversion is that the subject who is rewarded is not the subject who is purely and abstractly good, or, speaking in terms of painting, the subject who produces a good painting, or even the best painting; the rewarded subject is the subject who makes the most progress. And what progress could be greater and more important than the transition from being a disobedient subject to being an exemplary one? In this way, truth in pastoral power is more a tool of pure obedience than some kind of general and abstract knowledge. In this context, Monier’s choice of subject should be understood as a segment of a never-ending process of confession and reconciliation with pure obedience. From the perspective of pastoral power, this event is only an upgraded version of Monier’s signing of the letter condemning his actions.

One specific feature of the institution of the Academy is perhaps that it was so saturated with rewards that the lack thereof operated as a sort of punishment. Nevertheless, the general economy of rewards and punishment at the Academy points to similarities with economies that developed elsewhere, for example at the *Hôpital Général*, an institution where the poor were forced to learn catechisms and the alphabet in order to become decent Catholics. As Jacques Depauw showed, the *Hôpital Général* was a type of institution where mostly poor children and youth were incarcerated (Depauw 1999: 244-248). This institution’s first and foremost function was instructive – to mould decent Catholics and work-loving youth. Before the *Hôpital Général*, the *pauvres honteux*, that is, the poor who were forced to beg despite their social status, had better access to organised social help. The institutionalisation of social help commenced in the first place to help the *pauvres honteux*,

whose poorness was relative in the sense that a poor person is primarily he who cannot keep up with his rank (Roche 1987: 835). With the *Hôpital Général*, a new way of distributing social care emerges. The distribution of food, clothes and blankets at the *Hôpital Général* is realised on a basis of equality and by taking into account the physical and health conditions, sex and age of the poor. Exceptions to this equal distribution were made to punish the disobedience or reward the progress of a poor person at the *Hôpital* :

“Les lits & couvertures, nourritures & habits, ne seront point donnés par faveur & recommandation, ni ôtés par aversion ni haine; mais seront distribués à tous les pauvres également, à proportion de leur âge, emploi, sexe, besoin ou infirmités; si ce n'est par ordre des directeurs, pour motifs de recompense ou de correction, selon leur prudence.”

(*Code de l'hôpital-général de Paris 1786: 275*).

This means that a considerable shift has occurred in the director's knowledge about the poor. Not only does he now have to investigate their general condition; he also has to survey them constantly in order to evaluate and appraise their progress. His power is pastoral in the sense that it is analytical and it individualises (Foucault 2004: 132,187).

This type of power analyses and individualises the poor population or a group of artists in relation to their general conditions or their achievements in the instruction process. From the perspective of the disciplinary dispositive, a poor person's access to a portion of beef is analogous to the medals awarded at the Academy. In both cases, the prize is not a reward given to a subject who has mastered some universal type of truth, but a consequence of a truth that happens through processes of subjection.

In the context of pastoral power and governmentality, these institutions can be defined as pastoral herds. Considered as such, it becomes clear why Foucault suddenly shifted his research from an analysis of discipline and security dispositives to an analysis of pastoral power. As Foucault said, prior to the appearance of dispositives of security, discipline operated in two general modes. On the one hand, a register of negative laws operating in the imaginary imagines and forbids everything that can go wrong before a crisis occurs – everything that remains is permitted. On the other hand, discipline forms a complement to reality by prescribing a register of positive rules that has to be respected – what is not prescribed is forbidden (Foucault 2004: 47-49).

Would it not be possible to say that a primary function of these two modes of discipline is to form and maintain the herd? The first mode, the negative imaginary of the law, separates society into the different fields of discipline, i.e. Academy, the *Général Hôpital*, and also Jesuit College. For example, the register of police rules in the context of the Jesuit Colleges contains prohibitions pertaining to cabaret owners and women in their dealings with the pupils and to the pupils themselves (curfews, etc.) (for examples of these rules, see Rochemonteix 1889: 91:94). The other mode, the register of prescriptions which forms a complementary to reality, takes hold of the pupils when they are at the College, forcing them to adopt an almost monastic lifestyle. In the context of the Jesuit College, this mode operates through instruction and virtual isolation and the use of the Latin language and through a filtered history of Ancient heroes (Snyders 1965: 67-83).

The State can thus be conceived as a kind of incident that develops on the surface of these institutionalisations. Would it not be possible to conceive the Academy, the Jesuit College and especially the *Hôpital Général* as preludes to the notion of population? They are preludes in the sense that pastoral power first divides society into groups and then tends to these “herds” by analysing them and individualising each member, with the aim of guiding them towards some “better” future. These institutions are in a way already populations on a micro scale. Could the population-as-object then be defined as something that appears at the moment knowledge about the multitude of these “herds”, which was provided, generalised and pedantically classified by the police and statistic analyses, becomes effective enough to construct a global and universal herd? The transition from dispositives of discipline to dispositives of security is in this sense also a question of scale and intensiveness. Through the formation of population-as-object as a global and universal herd and the disappearance of external threats, the “salvation” of the herd can become a purely biopolitical problem, that is, a problem of better living standards. In this sense, population-as-object can be conceived or analysed as an incident of pastoral power. Contemporary art would consequently be nothing but a small part of this incident. At the same time, this primal pastoral division of artists and the poor into herds could perhaps provide a convenient critical position for the analysis of the “boom” in contemporary artists’ concern for discriminated parts of society.

We may conclude, in a provisional and somewhat provocative way, that our contemporary understanding of art is deeply rooted in discipline and can be traced to the processes that made pastoral power universal and global. In the interview mentioned above, Foucault also said that what he likes about painting is that we are really forced to observe (Foucault 2001: 1574). This statement may come as a surprise to even a superficial reader of Foucault’s work. However, it perhaps confirms Foucault’s thesis that we have yet to be emancipated from a pastoral type of power (Foucault 2004: 152-153). We are not “forced” to observe paintings because of the supernatural values captured in them by some universal genius, but because we have learned forced observation through the complex history of a pastoral power which has never ceased being the promise of our own salvation.

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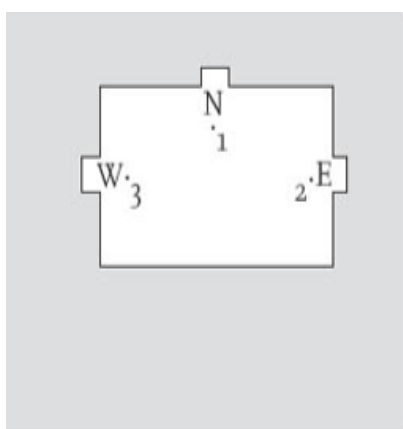


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## “You’ll be given the works until you confess” – Foucault and the Discourse of Confession



“This enclosed, segmented space, observed at every point, in which the individuals are inserted in a fixed place, in which the slightest movements are supervised, in which all events are recorded, in which an uninterrupted work of writing links the centre and periphery, in which power is exercised without division, according to a continuous hierarchical figure, in which each individual is constantly located, examined and distributed among the living beings, the sick and the dead - all this constitutes a compact model of the disciplinary mechanism.”

(Foucault 1995: 197)

“Beckett nicely formulates the theme with which I would like to begin: "What does it matter who is speaking;' someone said; 'what does it matter who is speaking.'" In this indifference appears one of the fundamental ethical principles of contemporary writing [écriture].”

(Foucault 1979: 141)

When dealing with the discourse of confession and the politics of Voice, we are confronted with various approaches, and they are different in methodology, different in style, and different in the outcomes. Beckett’s and Foucault’s work, first in the field of literary theory, the second in political philosophy, are somewhat eccentric and after all two of the most crucial and most alerting today. The focal point of this paper is the claim that “The tyranny is always citatological”. This claim belongs to Radomir Konstantinović, and is written in his book *Beckett: a friend* (2000). Konstantinovic has considered Beckett’s works *Texts for Nothing*, *Endgame*, *Waiting for Godot*, and other, as an anti-language, anti-system and anti-speech endeavor.

The claim that tyranny is always citatological, and that the system is making “every being, every subject, every letter only a manifestation of the system itself, its ‘statement’, its ‘cita-

tion” (Konstantinović 2000: 84), draws on the notion of one's indebtedness to the system. To cite is not only to repeat the claim, to legitimate that claim, but also, as etymology has shown – to cite means to set in movement. It includes institutional practices of summoning, urging, calling forward, rousing and exciting. The becoming of a subject through gaining and occupying discourse positions, is producing “alibi-references” (in Bourdieu's words), which guarantee subject's indebtedness to the system.

### “Incitement to speak” and the political body-kinetics

Dramatic figures of victim and victimizer in interrogation practices in Beckett's enigmatic one act play *What Where* (1983/1984) can be rendered through Foucault's power/discourse/knowledge relations, „incitement to speak“ notion and the conception of Western men becoming a „confessing animal“. Beside the discourse of confession, elaborated at length in Foucault's *oeuvre*, we would be using Foucault's notion of the Voice, and focusing on several aspects where the confessional discourse and the politics of voice, or to be more precise, of confessional voice, meet and pave the way for the concept of the subject of perception – the auditory subject, as opposed, or in line with, the ocular subject of disciplinary society.

Beckett's last one act play, *What Where* represents the confessing group of five last men – Bam, Bem, Bim, Bom, and the Voice of Bam – making „a shimmering mirage“, as Foucault would say, a truth „in between the words“, never told, never revealed. The regimes of truth lie in technologies of questioning, interrogating – and this „truth game“ can be interpreted through the Foucault's genealogy of confession. These characters represent a Beckettian reduction of the human figure, with the questionable corporeality, as a repetition with minor differences, obviously phonetic differences. They are „as alike as possible“, they have the same long grey hairs, they wear the same long grey gowns, but the Voice of Bam is represented „in the shape of a small megaphone in head level“. Bem, Bim, Bom, and Bam are called to confess that during the offstage interrogation, “he”, someone, never to appear on stage, has said “it”, said “where” and “what”. The reader never gets the answers to the questions: what “it” is, who “he” is, and “where” and “what” remain in semantic uncertainty. None of the characters confess, and every character is both the interrogator and the interrogated one. The Voice of Bam, isolated, on the stage, but outside of scene of interrogation (or recursively represented by the character Bam, also subjugated to the sovereign Voice, to the language system and farcically grotesque structure of confession), is conducting the play, switching on and switching off the lights as he pleases, and always, torturously, starting again. So, nothing is confessed in this play, there is no “production of truth“, but only a „continuous incitement to discourse“.

Beckett later suggested that the Voice of Bam should be perceived as a voice “beyond the grave”. Many interpretations of this play have approached this “beyond the grave” of the bodiless Voice as a site of memory, and this stage and time reduction itself as a chronotope of narrative first person mnemonics. But suppose that Beckett is giving voice to the ghost, to a tormenting voice, beyond death, a phantom, mediating (in two forms – without words and with words) and directing the play, not (only) out of memory, but representing the everyday power relations and its dynamics. If interrogation/confession and torture are

means to an end, to gaining knowledge on what “it” is (the main question in Beckett’s play) then, in Hannah Arendt’s words, this relation between means and end is disguised as “a paradox”, “the category of means and ends no longer work”, and “terror is apparently without an end” (cited in Villa 1999: 19).

Before we get to the examination (hastily taken to be the core of Beckett’s play), let’s focus on these practices of producing the disciplined bodies and their techniques, because the timespace tables, movements without words and choreography of repetition and coercion are, we can state, the tactile texture of the play, and the following repetition of movements, now with the chilling words, are a supplement, a “reappearance”, a trace of the inquisition practices.

Having in mind the bodily, spatial and temporal distribution (two rectangles in which characters are placed, or called to enter/exit), we can draw from Foucault’s notion of “composition of forces” in *Discipline and Punish*. Namely, “in order to obtain an efficient machine”:

1. The body is to be distributed in **space**, “placed, moved, articulated on others”, as a part “of multisegmentary machine” (bodies are ordered to enter, to confess, and to exit, only to reappear conducting almost the same movements);

2. **Time** is to be composed out of various chronological series, in order to legitimate the final composition of body-time (seasons are changing, the Beckettian dramatic “change” at its best);

3. System of **demand**, the signalization, is to “place the bodies in a little world of signals to each of which is attached a single, obligatory response; it is a technique of training, a *dressage*” (bodies with minor phonetic differences are only the obligatory responses to the signals: to interrogate or to be interrogated) (Foucault 1995: 164-166)

Four types of individuality created by the docile bodies are cellular, organic, genetic and combinatory. And four techniques, corresponding to these individualities, are: drawing up tables, prescribing movements, imposing exercises, and arranging tactics.

Consider the first scene and the introduction to the “silent” choreography of movements, “first without words”. No lights, the stage is in darkness. The only light is directed upon V, the megaphone in head level. The Voice speaks:

We are the last five.

It is spring.

Time passes.

First without words.

I switch on. (Beckett 1984: 313)

These lines, which V is repeating after every character is called to enter and exit the stage, can be taken as a suspension of the play, a necessary pause, directing the choreography of

torturous movements and interrogations of characters within the smaller stage-rectangle. Then the Voice starts again, and the ordering of bodies on the stage is explicit, one character following the other, a kind of docility of political body-kinetics within the strict structure of the *mise-en-scène*. Body-kinetics is obedient but the confession is suffering from characters not speaking the “required” truth. The truth is not spoken, or the only spoken truth is that there is truly nothing to say. Nothing required, at least.

After the “silent” choreography, the play “starts again”, “now with words”, in repetitive inscenations of coercion to confession, with interruptions by V:

**Bam**

Well?

**Bom** [Head bowed throughout.]

Nothing.

**Bam**

He didn't say anything?

**Bom**

No.

**Bam**

You gave him the works?

**Bom**

Yes.

**Bam**

And he didn't say anything.

**Bom**

No.

**Bam**

He wept?

**Bom**

Yes.

**Bam**

Screamed?

**Bom**

Yes.

**Bam**

Begged for mercy?

**Bom**

Yes.

**Bam**

But didn't say anything?

**Bom**

No.

**V**

Not good.

I start again.

**Bam**

Well?

**Bom**

Nothing.

**Bam**

He didn't say it?

**V**

Good.

**Bom**

No.

**Bam**

You gaye him the works?

**Bom**

Yes.

**Bam**

And he didn't say anything.

**Bom**

No.

**Bam**

He wept?

**Bom**

Yes.

**Bam**

Screamed?

**Bom**

Yes.

**Bam**

Begged for mercy?

**Bom**

Yes.

**Bam**

But didn't say anything?

**Bom**

No.

**Bam**

Then why stop?

**Bom**

He passed out.

**Bam**

And you didn't revive him?

**Bom**

I tried.

**Bam**

Well?

**Bom**

I couldn't. [Pause.]

**Bam**

It's a lie. [Pause.] He said it  
to you. [Pause.] Confess he said it to  
you. [Pause.] You'll be given the works  
until you confess.

(Beckett 1984: 316-318)

Given that this scene is repeating with other characters, we can assume that the play is not a representation of a certain interrogative scene, at least not completely, but that the crucial dramatic codes are in editing, in cutting and arranging the interrogation towards the specific objects of questioning: “it”, “what” and “where”.



As if Beckett is answering to Foucault's figure of the "centered", invisible and controlling gaze, and the divinity of sovereign-voice. And, as if Beckett is introducing, in literature, as Foucault in political philosophy, the double sensorium of disciplinary mechanisms – the Voice and the Gaze. Voice of Bam, conducting the play, and the gaze of the captivated audience, witnessing the confessional failure, are sharing the same space – the space of ordering confinement and, at the same time, being confined in circular disciplinary ordering of time.

With this in mind, Beckett's play introduces a complex web of intermingled speaking subjects and subjects of the statement. We are never to be introduced to the center of confession speech, only its aftermaths, only its not saying, its screaming, begging for mercy and fainting, and only from a secondary source, by the voice of its interrogator. What we are to „know“ are the questions, the What and the Where, and the deixis of confessional context is disseminated in question marks. The center is always outside, eccentric and, in line with Judith Butler's insights on politics of language, every speech is „ex-citable“. So, why is the question „Who is speaking/confessing“ never revealed? Why is there no confession, only repetitions of coercions and questioning and repetitive inquisitions? Why are all the characters at the same time the confessant and the confessor, and failed ones? There is no prevention, prohibition, only compulsion to speak of „it“, „what“ and „where“. Or, as Barthes put it: „But language – the performance of a language system – is neither reactionary nor progressive; it is quite simply fascist; for fascism does not prevent speech, it compels speech.“ (Barthes 1982: 461) What is "it"? Where is "it"? Seems like this coercive questions are the core of thinking itself. And "it", "what" and "where" is always out of reach, never to be said, never to be read – only missaid.

### Missaid and misread – ill said and ill seen

On the margins of artistic practices, bodily excesses and deficits are introducing the figure of a „cut“ as transformations of space, as sites flaunting, „faisaient la roue“, in transgression, unlawful trespassing, in passing briefly but endlessly to all fields, genres, indeterminate and threatening. Bodies in Beckett's works are monstrous, speechless, or speaking only to be exposed, like dismembered bodies, or bodies remainders – body becoming bodies or bodyless. These are the disciplined bodies, always already reduced to docile body, governed by interrogation practices. In the first volume of his book *History of Sexuality*, Foucault defines the ritualistic mode of confession:

“The confession is a ritual of discourse in which the speaking subject is also the subject of the statement; it is also a ritual that unfolds within a power relationship, for one does not confess without the presence (or virtual presence) of a partner who is not simply the interlocutor but the authority who requires the confession, prescribes and appreciates it, and intervenes in order to judge, punish, forgive, console, and reconcile; a ritual in which the truth is corroborated by the obstacles and resistances it has had to surmount in order to be formulated; and finally, a ritual in which the expression alone, independently of its external consequences, produces intrinsic modifications in the person who articulates it: it

exonerates, redeems, and purifies him; it unburdens him of his wrongs, liberates him, and promises him salvation.”

(Foucault 1990: 61–62)

Beckettian world - the world of the „human“ marked only by speech, *parole*, while the human individual itself is deprived of language, *langue* – is the space inhabited by „bodies without organs“, uncannily facing the apocalypse, of language, thought, body itself. Facing the apocalypse of the image of the body – of the other. „This imaginary body can be seen as a discomforting compilation of „ready-made“ images, of symbols, metaphors and representations.“(Frichot 2013)

An interrogative-dramatic discourse in Beckett’s play is the point of no return, and every character is at once the victim and the victimizer, being-tormented and torture-giving. Foucault finds a metamorphosis in literature, a historical overturn, where

“...we have passed from a pleasure to be recounted and heard, centering on the heroic or marvelous narration of “trials” of bravery or sainthood, to a literature ordered according to the infinite task of extracting from the depths of oneself, in between the words, a truth which the very form of the confession holds out like a shimmering mirage.”

(Foucault 1990: 59).

The Voice of Bam, the off-stage voice calling into presence the last five, is a Voice–narrator. Failure of the narration of this narrative „switching on/off“ („We are the last five“) is preceded by the act without words, only exits and outs, walkings through, a prestaged play without dialogue. Than the Voice „starts again“ and again and again, and we can presume – this never ends. The beginning, always starting again, is from the darkness, from certain traumatic erasure. This traumatic inscenation (repetitive and tormenting) is a site of „knitting“ together, suturing the text without confession saturated with confessional discourse. But, we can say that the suturing is of the reader. „What“ and „Where“ are the gaps, the cuts, that the reader’s desire for totality and truth-telling tries to close, to stitch, to sew together what and where it is split open, exposed and cut through. To knitt together that which is unsuturable, and thus the place of openness, even if sutured. Or, in Foucault’s terms, „tightly knit is the network of necessities that [...] links together all the elements of knowledge” (Foucault 1994: 172). The place of the suture is the dynamics of the reading, absent one imagining the almost absent one, the reader imagining the interrogated who never appears on the stage, who never speaks but is always mediated through the same-deferred recounts of interrogations, through the other’s coerced recits.

The interrogated subject is mobile, inflicted and infectious; every character, present and almost absent, is interrogated (we can assume) and tortured (we know). We can see, it is required to confess the words, not deeds, thoughts or desires – and to confess “in between words”. In Bam’s “Confess he said *it* to you” (emphasis mine), we are dealing with the verbal event, with the confession of “saying” not “doing”.

### “None looks within himself where none can be”

Beckett has tried to discover the body as a shadow game, as a crumpled melange of bones and gazes. In his dramatic works, the author forms a body as a certain force of limitation, as a movement towards non-movement, stillness, and we are witnessing the body rising to its fall – heads peeping from the barrels; buried bodies with heads dug up, speaking endlessly; wary, expectant bodies under the tired, stunted tree; crippled, disabled bodies; blind bodies; bodies reduced to vocal catachresis of mouths, tongue and teeth. Beckettian bodily-remainder is a body disfigured by speech, by speech-compulsion, by having „to speak“ to nothing and nobody. The body is „of all so far missaid the worse missaid“ (Beckett 1989: 121). It is missaid: the missaid flesh, bone, body, place, country, the other. Missaying body is saying oneself a body, as Beckett states in *Textes pour rien*: “Je me dirai un corps, un corps qui bouge, en avant, en arrière” [“I’ll say I’m a body, stirring back and forth, up and down, as required”] (Beckett 1958: 130). So, a body is being spoken, and appropriated to the subject of voice – the voice that states that one can never be completely and properly voiced, spoken.

Aphasia (the loss of speech) or the „missaid“ are the limits of language. Being the site of construction of the other, language has always already missaid the other. To speak in the name of the other is to missay the other. „For Beckett, the problem lies in speaking about something when there is nothing, or there is nothing to be said about *it*. [...] The ancient notion of the sacred link between logics and ontology is shattered, and the words no longer lean to the real, but are separated from the real, so that aphasia can be placed in the rubble of language.“ (Bozan 1985: 168) We can conclude, driven by Foucault’s dissembling of „order of things“, that aphasia is inevitably overlapped with atopia, and that we are faced with the dramatic atopia and aphasia. What we are dealing with is „the profound distress of those whose language has been destroyed: loss of what is ‘common’ to place and name” (Foucault 1994: 18-19). In Beckett’s play we have a sonorous system of the dictatorial Voice and spectral system of self-pleasuring Gaze. Confession is missaid, ruptured by iterability of the confessional script, ruptured by the absence of the confessant (absent or invisible silent “center” in/outside the “visible” stage), ruptured in the presence of the manifold confessors. Thus, a non-locus of subjectivation is revealed by being hidden, a spectral possibility of the non-sayable, the unspeakable and the unvoiced.

The directing Voice, setting the stage, is the sole figure of theatricality of power. Beckett has frequently represented the voice as technologically mediated. The megaphone is the only visibility of the Voice of Bam, placed in prosthesis of body-voice, directing the play and ordering bodies, time, and space, exits and entrances. So, it is a ritual, an aesthetics of making and multiplying the confessional animal.

Foucault, “the thinker of the voice, the sound, of audition and listening”, of parresia, as Lauri Siisiainen states in *Foucault’s Voices: Toward the Political Genealogy of Auditory-Sonorous* (2010: 4), differentiates three types of voice, or truth-telling in his lectures *The Government of Self and Others (1982-1983)* (2010): political voice, divine voice and confessional voice, or “oracle, confession (*l’aveu*), and political discourse” (Foucault 2010: 75). The “politicization of our ears” is twofold: the voice can be the site of power, but it can also represent the events and practices of resistance.

The stage is divided in physical, imaginary and discursive planes of interrogation. Physically, the characters appear and reappear, imaginary – the characters are subjugated to being the instruments of interrogation and its objects, and finally, discursively – the characters are not confessing. If we know, from Foucault's recount that parrhesia is truth-telling, a "free-spokenness", Beckett's stage is confinement, a prison like space where we encounter megaphone-voice-sovereign who produces forced-spokenness.

Double stage of interrogation is a panoptic and a panacoustic, panauditory drama, the setting of ontological and epistemic dualities of visibility and invisibility, of the voice and the unvoiced. When we are dealing with theatricality, the gaze of the spectator is crucial, and unbearable at the same time. The political effects of theatricality, inside the metaphorical walls of this dramatic prison, are reflected upon the audience. And the audience is requiring the unexposed, darkened, 4<sup>th</sup> wall of the double stage, thus accepting/declining the space ordering, and gazing upon the torturous play from the position of "perpetual spirals of power and pleasure" (Foucault 1990: 45), or producing the resistances. The place of the spectator/reader is the place of the surveillance, and becomes the part of the dominating vision of the Voice.

The spectator/reader is occupying the site "where none can be", as the observer in Beckett's story *The Lost Ones*, states: "none looks within himself where none can be" (Beckett 1972: 30). The "perpetual spirals of power and pleasure" are the grounding practices of governmentality, but, as well, the site of multiplying the instances and levels of vocality, of confession, and of interrogation. There is not one interrogator. Interrogation is conducted in the name of system, order, and every interrogator is always interpellated by some kind of sovereign-voice. Foucault finds that the practice of interrogation makes the political dramatics of truth-telling (*dire-vrai*).

The political dramatics of truth-telling, panoptic and panauditory, is set in repetitions. These repetitions take place in at least two forms, Foucault states at length: repetition in ascetic discourse and repetitions of the subject's positions in discourse. The first repetition, re-pronunciation, re-writing, is concerned with the care of the self, with the development of the internal voice (not characterized by vocality), and based in exercises, endurance and in becoming a (moral) subject. It gives vocality to bare voice, to a cry, or to the unvoiced noise. This subject is, we can say, polemological – subject's voice is the site of struggle and resistance. The second repetition form is citatological, it is the repetition of discourse marks, of discourse codes. Subject's voice is the site of "power of citation equal to the power of the system" (Konstantinović 2000: 84). The subject of tyranny is always already a citatological subject – set in motion or suspended (in the Foucauldian sense, subject is subjected to ontological suspension) in-between the system-claims. "The requirement for confession is the requirement for permanent transparency". (Dimitrov 2014: 27) The subject is claimed by the system, and claimed by subject's auditory and ocular mirroring of the discourse of confession.

Confessional discourse in Beckett's play combines both forms of repetitive vocality, of citatological and of polemological repetition – the first in coercive repetitive interrogations, and the second in perhaps "disclosing the truth about" confession, about "it", "what" and "where" – in the choreography of disobedience, of de-subjugation of the subject as such. In interrogative-dramatic discourse in Beckett's play the interrogation is coercive, and the confession always „missaid“: you can never quite confess, the total confession is the

dream of disciplinary strategies and the nightmare of human becoming a subject of confession: „the truth does not seem to lie *in* words but rather in *between* the words” (Fraden 2003: 13), as Rena Fraden states, in truth playing, in gaming. Beckett is writing all his texts as “texts for nothing”, and the only truth in speech, in language is in being missaid. “It is ‘noting’ that speaks solely as misspokeness. Hence, we are not to find any Beckett’s ‘expresion’, his ‘statement’ or ‘response’, his ‘citation’” (Konstantinović 2000: 83-84). „In-between-wordness“ of truth is the closest distance, one that cannot be appropriated, authorized and signed.

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## The movie “Clip”: resentment narratives and their overcoming

### Introduction

In this paper we analysed the movie “Clip”<sup>1</sup> in order to examine the function of socialization in the *dispositif* of education. We wish to re-examine the ways in which the function of socialization in the *dispositif* of education becomes depoliticised. We will try to show that illusory models of emancipation, which do not encourage participation in the social and political sphere and do not offer space for resistance that could be turned into political acting, are offered to the young people because of the depoliticisation of the socialization function of the education.

Using the example of contemporary Serbian context we will focus on the rethinking of the function of socialization within high school education. For that purpose we will analyze the movie “Clip”, by Maja Miloš, as a cultural artefact that depicts the reproduction of social apathy in a radicalized manner.

This way we radicalise the state of an indifferent system that has ways of reproducing itself on different society levels. We do so in order to observe its negative consequences, when pushed to their final limits, and pose the following question: are there any models of productively overcoming such situations of limitedness? We would like to identify the potentially crucial milestones, which reveal to us some general points about the state of the society, beyond the boundaries of movie critique, and examine them. From there on we will try to rethink and perceive the potential solutions to the existential crisis.

### Theoretical elaboration

It is possible to identify the symptoms of depoliticisation, which we have named „points of immobility” or “points of support”, using the movie “Clip” as an example. In Foucauldian

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1. Clip, movie, directed by Maja Miloš : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OcXwcoRvj3s>

terms, these points would be the result of the enactment of the disciplinary power that shapes the social and the individual body, as well as an individual's reality, and *essentialises* such positions in the individual's self-understanding.

The individual body is, in such a case, treated not as a whole, but regarded in its particular parts, as information, and an *object* of discipline.

As we observe in Foucault's work, the disciplinary authority is organized as multiple, automatic and anonymous authority. The surveillance rests on the individuals and functions as a top-bottom net of relations, but at the same time it is also directed upwards and to the side. By analysing the protagonist we will explain why we consider that some of her actions and expressions give us a chance to interpret the crucial moments upon which we could contemplate anew the position of the subject within the frame of social life, as subjected to the disciplinary regime.

We will try to make an argument that the potential for rethinking of the active subjectivity is articulated more effectively when the analysis of the subject's existentiality is taken as a point of departure, instead of regarding the subject-position as simply one of the functional points in a disciplinary regime, in a Foucauldian manner.

We will show how the regime of everyday practices disciplines the subjects, by analysing the movie based on the Foucault's concept of the disciplinary practice.

This regime of everyday practices, which is otherwise taken for granted, actually contains: the way in which classes are organized in time and space, the dress codes, the rules that coordinate engaging and presence of the pupils and teaching staff, the distribution of cultural capital among social actors involved, the ways in which studying is organized in the everyday lives of the pupils, the interconnectedness between members of the same generation, which blooms under elevated pressure on the part of the educational system, the normalized assumptions for forming intragenerational connections and, plainly said, making friends, within the given system.

All of the above mentioned practices of organizing everyday life work as a capillary network constitutive for the vitality and transformation of the *disciplinary regime* that takes part in the process of social actor's socialization through education.

We focus on the above defined "points of immobility" in order to deconstruct the discursive background of those points. Considering the fact that this immobility is taken as a given, an analysis bound to any particular discourse would not offer the way to overcome the social apathy. This motivated us to take into consideration multiple entangled discourses that are involved in the depoliticisation and that contribute to the process of passivizing social actors in the context of contemporary Serbia.

We recognize the symptoms of *depoliticisation*, important for this research, in the following phenomena, which are present in the movie:

1. The phenomenon of uninterestedness. The encapsulated personal communication between the young



2.The illusion of the forbidden and emancipatory character of turbo-folk represented through new media discipline which characters impose on their bodies. In other words, the *interiorization* of the disciplinary visual forming of the body under the gaze of the other

3.The lyrics and the ethos of turbo-folk songs

The listed phenomena are mutually inductive, and could hardly be disentangled. The educational institutions, in a narrow sense, exist in parallel with the new media and turbo-folk. They form capillary network of power, which is not only repressive, but it may also have a productive potential for socialization.

The movie "Clip"- applying the theoretical frame to the contours of the movie

The socialization of the main character in the movie, called Jasna, takes place within the discourses of family, school, and media: in a **family** burdened with lack of finances and father's malignant disease; in a **school** that fails to motivate its pupils to adopt the proposed norms of behaviour and intellectual content; through **media**, whose space is largely "owned" by turbo-folk. The lack of perspective, motivation and authority marks all three of the mentioned spheres of a society that produces apathy. Taking adolescents into account, we primarily focus on the category of age that intersects with class and gender.

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We chose this particular movie, because it metaphorically depicts the relationship between pupils and parents, family and school; more specifically, the lack of communication between them, which is marked by shallow, formal relations, insignificant at their core. The communication among social actors (agents) is limited to short phrases: "studying", "I'll go study", "Have you studied yet?", etc. This so frequently spoken word interrupts every meaningful dialogue. It closes the door- both literary and metaphorically- between separated life spheres of school, family, fun (that young experience in the virtual sphere). The cinematic means used to present this are: doors slamming, main character leaving the common space and secluding herself in her room, characters dropping one conversation and moving swiftly to an unrelated theme, cutting the scene and moving to a totally different one, and so on.

The word "studying" carries a meaning so faded that hardly anyone seems to remember it. It appears to be as depleted as the very function of schooling and the whole educational system itself. This is shown as being self-evident. There seems to be no space left for any kind of critique or constructive approach. The school as a motive is brought down to these short dialogues about studying. It is represented as a hollow shell whose formal elements (school hours, school building) are used only for orientation in time and space, in other words, as a structure which only wedges into the time and space organization of a pupils everyday life.

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The title of the movie underlines the wish to record every possible event using new media technology. New media function as a decentralized version of the Panopticum. The central surveillance is displaced from its central position, but it is not absent- it is omnipresent. Not only is it true that whoever is subjected to full visibility takes the clamps of power and spontaneously subjects himself to their grip (which is the imperative of subordination and the *interiorization* of discipline), but the full visibility becomes a conscious imperative. This presence, in fact, legitimizes the existence of every phenomenon in such reality- in order to be detected as existent things must appear before new media. The young find the new media appealing because they give them a broad frame for self-defining. It is simple on one side, but at the same time transparent and vital.

The alienation that the pupils feel in every separate sphere of their lives, the disconnection between school, family, and the social context that surrounds them, actually pushes the young closer together. It motivates them to try to reconnect the said spheres, and at first it seems that the new technology provides them with the means to do that, by allowing them to have a continuous experience of the virtual sphere, in which different *lines* of identification and fulfilment of the need to belong are found through an alternative cultural content.

The system of education and the alternative cultural content are initially perceived as opposites by the young people. Adolescents see the alternative content as emancipating, as something that can inform them about the real world.

This is, in our view, important, because turbo-folk music is perceived as an obscure cultural phenomenon with degrading potential within the system of education. With that in mind, we might add that this is exactly one of the reasons why the young find turbo-folk so appealing, and why they add a notion of sub cultural to it- although it is, in reality, only a part of the mainstream culture (imposed on them from the “above”).

Turbo-folk shapes the reality of the young people in the movie. We must mention that the term “turbo-folk” is used here to mark an “evolved” type of the musical genre in question and the culture that surrounds it. It emerged as a hybrid form, as already mentioned by numerous theoreticians in this region.

Turbo-folk music has frequently been associated with the rise of nationalism in Serbia during the nineties (Višnjić 2009: 46) In a globalized, interconnected world, in touch with the MTV culture and pop-phenomena, adolescent listeners of turbo-folk music feel their identity to be even cosmopolitan!

Turbo-folk presents them with the instruments for psychological displacement from their own troubled environment, thus creating a feeling of being a part of the global youth. What especially supports this thesis is the fact that they base their self-image on appearances, namely, the quasi-free choice of the way in which they represent themselves in visual terms. Today’s turbo-folk speaks the language of contemporary eclectics that is based on the practice of image consuming, the so-called *spectacularization*. The illusion of universality of the visual discourse in question is in fact heavily regulated within the system that consumes bodies as images, typical for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The disciplinary practice applied to the body using visual coding has been (from the eighties onward) interpreted as a *technique of power* that shapes the normative social roles (Bordo 1989). The social shaping of the body is expressed through the process of learning social roles and practicing the techniques of masculinity and femininity. Through the techniques of masculinity and femininity, which are learned by prestigious imitation (Mauss 1993: 69), the body is constructed according to the criteria of beauty, gender, etc. These techniques employ gender as a social strategy, which is, among other things, characterized by the media projection of the body. Prestigious imitation is a way for constructing a socially acceptable body. An acceptable body is shaped by certain knowledge and skills (gesticulation, clothing, taking care for the body), which are culturally specific. We can recognize such shaping in the movie in the part in which Jasna shaves and prepares for the photoshoot. In that situation she prepares her body to become an object of view. In a different scene the photo of her body is used by her boyfriend as an enticement for masturbation, while Jasna's real body is rejected and suspended by him, although she is physically present in the same space. In this scene Jasna's body becomes detached from her. She becomes a passive moving image serving the function of satisfying men's views, that can be turned on, turned off, played in slow motion or accelerated, but never able to speak for itself or confirm its own presence.

The real body is no longer understood as the object of enjoyment, but instead it is thrown away; simultaneously, it maybe slips from view because it is considered irrelevant, or it is being rejected because of its potential of becoming dangerous.

Turbo-folk is reproduced by the official and alternative media, both readily available to the young people. Wedging its way into the *dispositif* of education, it presents an illusion of emancipation that goes hand in hand with depoliticisation.

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We assume that the curiosity felt by the young people, their wish to find out the "real" reality, turns towards the street on a subconscious level. They turn to turbo folk culture as a source of truth: they watch dramatizations of the lives of TV celebrities in which relationships are analyzed in great detail. Journalists supposedly thoroughly "explore" who cheated on who, who is dating whom, who is wearing what etc. In this way new media *confessions* are created, which influence the self-understanding of individuality. Adolescents learn to follow the media-produced models of behaviour and representation.

The protagonists act as if they believe that the educational system is hypocritical, that it has no connection to real life, because knowledge is being less and less contextualized and it has less and less justification as existentially important. A notion is created that the systems of school and family are hypocritical because they supposedly try to mask the pupils' reality.

The adolescents' passion for knowledge has transformed into a passion for „truth" that can be found in the realm of visual culture and its instant answers. In this way the media dra-

matization of the folk stage gets absorbed into the *dispositif* of education, extending it simultaneously.

Bearing in mind that Foucault developed his genealogic approach inspired by Nietzsche's "Genealogy of morality", what we consider to be crucial in the *ethos* of turbo-folk lyrics is the observation that it is deeply rooted in *ressentiment*,<sup>2</sup> which only further amplifies the wish for revenge and the pleasures that derive from it.

This model of thinking actually prevents a person from understanding its own situation, and leaves no space for reflection on it. It is bound to the level of pure reaction, which attracts the focal points from the same source and remains within the simple relation of action-reaction. Lyrics express an ever present notion of a given situation being a dead/end/street, a no/go situation that is embellished to appear glamorous.

The lyrics of turbo-folk songs tend to carry an allusion to a secret truth that only waits to be unveiled. The mystification encourages a desire to discover that supposedly hidden wisdom, which in the end always seems to be knowledge about someone's own weaknesses. The "thirst for knowledge" that would, perhaps, lead the actors towards academic achievement, is under present circumstances redirected to exploring intrigues. This exploration holds a *ressentiment*-like ethos. In the final sequence of the movie there is a folk song by Mina Kostić<sup>3</sup> that says: "Only you, and nobody else, hold the key to my weaknesses". These lyrics serve as a musical background for a male-female sado-masochistic relationship that culminates in a scene of violence aimed towards the female character. The female character is encouraged by the turbo-folk culture to embrace and reinforce her own "weaknesses" as an ultimate "truth". Also, she is encouraged to find psychological fulfilment in a relationship in which male character takes advantage of those physical and emotional weaknesses. The social positions of young protagonists are presented as lacking perspective, characterized by scarcity of financial means, lack of role models and motivation for change and self-improvement, which seems to be pointless and even impossible under the given circumstances. This is what makes pupils acceptable to the pathos of turbo-folk.

The author of the movie Maja Miloš, is taking a critical stand towards what she depicts as a radicalized model of learning gender roles in contemporary Serbian society. The radicalized representation of dehumanizing patriarchy in the scenes of sex and violence becomes milder in later scenes, in which some warmth and closeness are introduced. Jasna's acting within a certain social frame is shown as being autonomous, but still slipping to a subordinate position towards the end of the movie. The relationship between Jasna and the boy she likes is being transformed during the movie. Jasna's role changes only after she becomes formally introduced to the boy, after a series of scenes of them spending time together, hanging out and having sex. The protagonists experience the spaces of masculine and feminine, parent and teenager, education and fun, sex and love, as separate spaces; only in rare moments these spheres become visible as potentially connected.

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2. The position of *ressentiment* assumes that everything which is not a friend, which is *the other*, is in advance marked as "evil". Likewise, *ressentiment* can be directed towards oneself if an actor considers himself to be guilty and bad. For Nietzsche, the forces in question in that case are the ones that established their own will, while the will of the actor is subject to shaping.

3. pesma *Moj lepi*, Mina Kostić

The spaces that are mutually exclusive and cannot communicate with each other (the space of the family home, school, school practice) are joined when the main protagonist goes to school practice and meets a girl who has only one year left to live. This situation opens the door for Jasna's empathy, which she directs towards the sick girl. In this way she confirms her attachment, becomes aware of her worry and pain directed towards the situation in her own family, which was hidden by different mechanisms of intergenerational exclusiveness and trendy bonding, as well as identification within the virtual sphere.

However, the movie implies that its main character, Jasna, should be stigmatized with guilt because she overlooks her father's sickness. However, there is a dialogue between Jasna and her mother in which the girl replies to her mother's lament intended to provoke a sense of guilt: "But, you already buried him". This scene in a certain sense reflects the resistance aimed towards the overall state of apathy, melancholy and magnetism of Thanatos.

This scene speaks metaphorically about the general state of the society that gives up in advance, doubting the mere possibility of changing perspective. A society that lost all hope for dealing with the problems that seem either impossible or just too vast to overcome. The main character's response to her mother reflects a kind of a resistance to a state of apathy in the society - especially considering the fact that the patriarchal system uses guilt as an instrument of subjecting women to sacrifice themselves and serve others.

Jasna overcomes her resignation understanding the system in apathy through the family pain, and through the generational aspect she tries to stir it by detecting the conformist mechanism involved in self-understanding. The reality in the movie is radicalized through economic deprivation, patriarchy and health (which represent the personal level of every subject). In that context we wished to explore how the productive resistance could be contemplated from the given situation if a "fully" radicalized moment is contemplated, displaced from the linear time orienteer, which could serve as a starting point for judging, starting from the outcome of a situation, which is in advance thought of as being necessary, in a negative manner. This is the way in which we wanted to depict how the situations that bring limitations can be thought of.

We aimed to show that even in such radical interpretation of a decadent image one can find contours that can be used for contemplating the productive methods for overcoming the petrified net of apathy, which permeates the social body. A vital moment in the movie is seen at the personal level of protagonist's pain and desire, through which her existential situation is affirmed as having the potential to communicate with the environment and step out of the frame of acting which is limited to the mere articulation through an encircled identity.

We believe this to be a good way of thinking about the active *processual* identity, in which a subject is not just seen as a section of different identities, but an actor who affirms and reconstitutes himself in that section over and over again.

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CIP - Каталогизација у публикацији - Народна библиотека Србије, Београд

14 Фуко М.(082)

INTERNATIONAL Conference Engaging Foucault (2015 ; Belgrade)

Engaging Foucault. Vol. 2 / edited by Marjan Ivković, Gazela Pudar Draško, Srđan Prodanović. - Belgrade : Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory, 2005 (Beograd : Colorgrafx). - 252 str. ; 24 cm. - (Edition Conferentia)

"This Volume is collection of papers presented at the International conference Engaging Foucault, held in Belgrade 05-07 December" --> kolofon.  
- Tiraž 300. - Napomene i bibliografske reference uz tekst. - Bibliografija uz svaki rad.

ISBN 978-86-82417-88-0

а) Фуко, Мишел (1926-1984) - Зборници  
COBISS.SR-ID 220471052