FOUCAULT
STUDIES

Special sections ———————— Richard Shusterman's *Ars Erotica*

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EDITORIAL

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The editorial team is pleased to publish this issue of *Foucault Studies* containing no less than three special sections, two original articles, and eight book reviews.

SYMPOSIUM ON SHUSTERMAN'S *ARS EROTICA: SEX AND SOMAESTHETICS*
This issue presents five contributions from the Symposium on Richard Shusterman's magnus opus, *Ars Erotica: Sex and Somaesthetics in the Classical Arts of Love,* published in 2021. The first text by Stefano Marino (University of Bologna, Italy) introduces Shusterman's comprehensive encounter with the *ars erotica* that Foucault, in his *History of Sexuality*, initially considered an exciting alternative to Western *scientia sexualis* before later admitting that, from a scholarly point of view, he knew too little about it for it to be of real use in his own project. This is where Shusterman steps in, who not only goes back in time but expands our knowledge far beyond European territory (China, Japan, India, Islamic cultures) to explore all the true thinking concerned with aesthetic pleasures and forms of understanding, sensibility, refinement, skillfulness, ethics, and self-mastery that relate to sexual activity and the body. All the contributors are concerned with important avenues in and implications of Shusterman's work. Catherine F. Botha (University of Johannesburg, South Africa) focuses on the rapport between *Ars Erotica,* Nietzsche's legacy and the understanding of *sôphrosunê;* Leonardo Distaso (University of Naples Federico II, Italy) on the relevance of and the interests vested in the project of somaesthetics; and Leszek

Koczanowicz (SWPS University, Poland) on the notion of beauty as negotiated between repression and coercion. This is followed by a substantial reply to the symposium contributions from Richard Shusterman (Florida Atlantic University, USA) himself, in which he critically contemplates the implications of discussing the rapport between sex, emancipation and aesthetics from within the cage of Eurocentric Modernity, which is not necessarily just a prison to escape but also a cage to protect oneself from external dangers and temptations. Shusterman's works make us dare to know more about these somaesthetic zones.

SYMPOSIUM ON *INTOLERABLE:* WRITINGS FROM FOUCAULT AND THE GIP

As emphasized by Perry Zurn (American University, USA) in his introduction, the publication in 2021 of *Intolerable: Writings from Michel Foucault and the Prisons Information Group, 1970-1980,* represents a captivating archive of public announcements, manifestos, reports, pamphlets, interventions, press releases and interviews "that still has other lives to live." To celebrate the release of this groundbreaking testimony to the Prisons Information Group and Foucault's efforts to expose the problem of prisons in France in the 1970s, a book symposium took place in September 2021. We are pleased to bring a series of seven short essays written for this book launch event, including contributions from the two organizers and editors of the book, Kevin Thompson (DePaul University, USA) and Perry Zurn (American University, USA), as well as Bernard Harcourt (Columbia University, USA), Liat Ben-Moshe (University of Illinois, USA), Delio Vásquez (New York University, USA), Sarah Tyson (University of Colorado, USA), and Ren-Yo Hwang (Mount Holyoke College, USA). The symposium section also includes an interview conducted by Perry Zurn with Nicolas Drolc, a French cinematographer who created the first films on the Prisons Information Group, prison revolts in France, as well as the personal stories of the former prisoners who found their conditions to be intolerable.

CONTRIBUTIONS FROM THE FOUCAULT CIRCLE

As indicated by Edward McGushin (Stonehill College, USA) in his introduction, we are happy to challenge the tough conditions the coronavirus outbreak has set for the annual Foucault Circle meetings these past couple of years. In this special section, we present two papers given at previous meetings that have been reworked for the present issue of *Foucault Studies*. In his paper on "Genopower," originally presented in 2019, Joel Michael Reynolds (Georgetown University, USA) argues for the emergence of a new form of biopower which has, as its basic function, the capacity of genomics to provide new distinctions between disabilities and impairments, while its basic effect is to promote individualistic solutions to social issues using these distinctions. Originally presented at the annual meeting of 2017, Martin Bernales' (Universidad Alberto Hurtado, Chile) paper analyzes the articulation and legacy of the Spanish version of the Catholic doctrine of charity in the eighteenth century and how this experience was transformed into a new problematization of poverty and the poor without which the rise of the modern Spanish State institutions is not fully comprehensible.

ORIGINAL ARTICLES

Both original articles in this issue deal with Foucault and friendships: one is new and unfamiliar but reaches far back into his work, the other is well-known but treated in an entirely new way.

In the first article, "Foucault's Outside: Contingency, May-Being, and Revolt," Luke Martin (University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, USA) thus establishes a positive rapport between Michel Foucault's ongoing encounter with the Outside and Quentin Meillassoux's recent work on speculative materialism and anti-correlationist thinking. Analysing a wide selection of his texts, including those on Maurice Blanchot and Velázquez's "Las Meninas", Martin shows how Foucault's ongoing experimentation on the subject's relation and possible access to the *dehors* shares something central with a contemporary philosophical critique which challenges the deep-rooted notion that thought cannot think outside itself but only re-reflect upon the correlation between thought and being. At the same time, reading this critique concerned with may-being and absolute contingency in light of Foucault's concepts of thought and force allows Martin to point out a hitherto undeveloped but encouraging political dimension incipient in contemporary explorations into the Outside.

In the second original article, "Faux Amis, Vrais Amis? Amis," Jonas Oßwald (University of Vienna, Austria) discusses anew the relationship between Foucault and Gilles Deleuze by challenging the assumptions upon which the different stages of their friendship is usually understood. Exchanging a presupposed notion of the friend-as-familiar with the kind of friendship we would have if the ambivalent relation and various exchanges between Deleuze and Foucault was its model, Oßwald is not only able to discuss the development of their connection and the dissimilar philosophical concepts of friendship presented in their works. The analytical strategy also contributes originally to the understanding of distinctions and affinities between central and related notions in Deleuze and Foucault's thinking, including desire in relation to pleasure and assemblages (*agencements*) in relation to dispositives (*dispositifs*). Oßwald's analysis shows us the force of a solidarity in thought without a common cause.

REVIEW SECTION

The present issue contains eight book reviews:

- Dianna Taylor, *Sexual Violence and Humiliation: A Foucauldian-Feminist Perspective (Interdisciplinary Research in Gender)*. London and New York: Routledge, 2020. Reviewed by Sara Cohen Shabot (University of Haifa, Israel).
- Pierre Hadot, *The Selected Writings of Pierre Hadot: Philosophy as Practice*. London: Bloomsbury, 2020. Reviewed by Émile Levesque-Jalbert (Harvard University, USA).
- Mona Lilja, *Constructive Resistance: Repetitions, Emotions, and Time*. London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2021. Reviewed by Marco Checchi (Northumbria University, UK).
- Robert Mitchell, *Infectious Liberty. Biopolitics between Romanticism and Liberalism*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2021. Reviewed by Antonia Karaisl (Rescribe Ltd, UK).

- Marco Checchi, *The Primacy of Resistance: Power, Opposition and Becoming*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2021. Reviewed by Tomas Pewton (Sofia University, Bulgaria).
- Mitchell Dean and Daniel Zamora, *The Last Man Takes LSD: Foucault and the End of Revolution*. London: Verso, 2021. Reviewed by Jasper Friedrich (University of Oxford, UK).
- Lynne Huffer, *Foucault's Strange Eros.* New York: Columbia University Press, 2020. Reviewed by Theo Mantion (Harvard University, USA).
- David Macey, *The Lives of Foucault. A Biography.* London: Verso, [1993] 2019. Reviewed by Mike Gane (Loughborough University, UK).

SYMPOSIUM

Preface to symposium on Richard Shusterman's *Ars Erotica: Sex and Somaesthetics in the Classical Arts of Love:*

Sexuality and/as Art, Power, and Reconciliation

STEFANO MARINO

University of Bologna, Italy

> For all those who,
> following Nick Cave,
> are able to "let love in."

1.

"Are you tough enough to be kind? / Do you know your heart has its own mind?," asks Bono, the lead singer of U2, in the song *13 (There Is A Light)* from the band's 2017 album *Songs of Experience*. Allowing myself to freely interpret these lines of a rock song in a philosophical way, I think that we might say that such a metaphorical reference to the "own mind" possessed by our "heart" can be interpreted as pointing more in the direction of the autonomous sense and value of what is "other" (or, in an Adornian fashion, "non-identical") than "the mind" as we usually understand it and talk of it: namely, as understanding, intellect, conceptuality, reason, *Geist* etc. The intellectual and cognitive domain has been often understood in the Western tradition as being dualistically opposed to "the heart" and also as having a primacy over the realm of what we may call the *aisthesis* in the broadest sense of this word, i.e., the whole realm of the sensible and the affective. However, precisely the *aisthesis*, in the fullest and most encompassing meaning of this concept, represents the specific domain of aesthetics as a philosophical discipline, once aesthetics is not limited anymore to a mere philosophy of the fine arts

(as has happened from Hegel to Danto, so to speak[1]) but is rather understood as a philosophical theory of the aesthetic as such.[2]

Starting from the abovementioned metaphorical reference to "the heart" derived from a line of a song by U2, we can say that what we may call the sphere of sensibility and affectivity undoubtedly represents one of the most fundamental dimensions of human life – which, also with the advent of the so-called "Affective Turn" in various fields of the human and social sciences, has been the object of recent rediscovery and revaluation.[3] And we can add that, if this is true in general, it is probably even more accurate and more evident in the specific case of our experience with art and the aesthetic. In fact, fundamental elements or components of our sensible and affective relation to the real, such as sensations, perceptions, feelings, emotions, phenomena of empathy and sympathy, appetites, atmospheres, desires and moods, seem to play a particularly essential role (although in different ways) in aesthetics, often finding sophisticated and fascinating developments in the various experiences and practices that form the realm of the arts – including the traditional fine arts, but not reducible to them. This, in turn, can easily and above all coherently lead to a rediscovery and indeed a new and intensified philosophical interest in the human body, viewed as the original source and root of the *aisthesis* and the sphere of affectivity (that, as we can add now, clearly includes also sexuality). As noted by Richard Shusterman about somaesthetics, his original disciplinary proposal:

> the senses surely belong to the body and are deeply influenced by its condition. Our sensory perception thus depends on how the body feels and functions; what it desires, does, and suffers. […] Concerned not simply with the body's external form or *representation* but also with its lived *experience*, somaesthetics works at improving awareness of our bodily states and feelings, thus providing greater insight into both our passing moods and lasting attitudes.[4]

From a certain point of view, such a revaluation of the sphere of the *aisthesis* in its broadest sense and complete significance for human life corresponds to some of the original impulses that had led Baumgarten in the mid 18th century to found (or, so to speak, to "baptize"[5]) a new philosophical discipline, namely aesthetics, understanding it not simply as a theory of fine art and natural beauty but also as a theory of sensory cognition and perceptual knowledge. However, as noted by Shusterman, while "Baumgarten define[d] aesthetics as the science of sensory cognition and as aimed at its perfection," and while "the senses surely belong to the body and are deeply influenced by its

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[1] See Tiziana Andina, *Filosofie dell'arte. Da Hegel a Danto* (2012), in particular 11-37.

[2] On this topic, see for instance Giovanni Matteucci's recent works: *Elementi per un'estetica del contemporaneo* (2018) and, on a more theoretical level, *Estetica e natura umana. La mente estesa tra percezione, emozione ed espressione* (2019).

[3] On aesthetics and affectivity, let me remind the reader to the essays collected in the volume *Aesthetics and Affectivity*, ed. by Laura La Bella, Stefano Marino and Vittoria Sisca, *The Polish Journal of Aesthetics*, 60:1 (2021).

[4] Richard Shusterman, *Pragmatist Aesthetics: Living Beauty, Rethinking Art* (2000²), 265, 268.

[5] I borrow this concept from Leonardo Amoroso (ed.), *Il battesimo dell'estetica: Alexander G. Baumgarten, Immanuel Kant* (2008).

condition" (dependent as they are "on how the body feels and functions," on "what it desires, does, and suffers"), nevertheless Baumgarten, probably due to religious and philosophical prejudices, "refuse[d] to include the study and perfection of the body within his aesthetic program."[6] If it is so, then it can be reasonably said that somaesthetics, as a discipline of both theory and practice, on the one hand "shares the same enlarged scope, multiple dimensions, and practical element that Baumgarten urged, and also promotes precisely those aims that philosophy traditionally defines as central to its own project" (such as, for instance, "knowledge, virtue, and the good life"); however, on the other hand, "in pursuing Baumgarten's broad practical vision of aesthetics," somaesthetics "goes even further by also embracing a crucial feature that Baumgarten unfortunately omitted from his program – cultivation of the body."[7] According to Shusterman, "modern philosophy too often displays the same sad somatic neglect,"[8] although 20th-century thinkers like Dewey, Plessner, Merleau-Ponty, Marcuse, Foucault and still others surely represent notable exceptions to this general rule. This proves to be even more true and clear if the philosophical discourse on *aisthesis*, sensitivity, affectivity and embodiment is developed in the direction of a philosophical rediscovery of erotic experience – as Shusterman's recent book *Ars Erotica. Sex and Somaesthetics in the Classical Arts of Love* precisely does.

2.

"Sexuality is the strongest force in human beings," claims Joe, the main character (portrayed by Charlotte Gainsbourg) in Lars von Trier's famous, outrageous and much discussed film *Nymphomaniac* from 2013. Although one could surely put such a primacy into question and wonder whether sexuality is really *the* strongest force in humanity, it is anyway impossible to negate its being at least *one* of the strongest forces in our life. Now, as it also happens with things, events or persons who apparently display a huge power on us at various levels and in different ways, even in the case of erotic experience, it is not strange to discover that its overwhelming force may sometimes scare us. On this basis, it should not appear as surprising to observe how many people still nowadays tend to implausibly deny sexuality's extraordinary power, either embarrassedly retreating from freely talking about it or, vice-versa, almost obsessively talking about it all the time (thus letting the discourse further proliferate in our "hyper-sexualized" but perhaps still "repressed" age) but without paying attention to sexuality's profundity, complexity, diversity and plurality, and hence without fully recognizing its profound force while only scratching the surface of this phenomenon, as it were. In a sense, we might perhaps interpret this fact as a sort of self-defense process in front of a strong force that can sometimes be perceived as a danger or a threat to the human being's hard-earned self-control, stability and balance – that which implicitly confirms and even strengthens the idea of sexuality's overwhelming power, of course.

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[6] Shusterman, *Pragmatist Aesthetics*, 265-6.

[7] Ibid., 263.

[8] Ibid.

This general discourse can also be applied to intellectuals and, perhaps, especially to philosophers, who have been apparently conditioned by a centuries-long tradition of "sad somatic neglect"[9] that, as we said, has partially characterized the development of modern aesthetics and also, unfortunately, affected sexuality in the history of Western culture and philosophy. However, as a "philosophical" rock band like Pearl Jam is able to teach us in a touching, beautiful and at the same time powerful song like *Dissident* (from their 1993 album *VS.*[10]), "escape is never the safest path": that is – freely applying the words of this song to the present philosophical context –, escaping and denying the force of affectivity and especially of sexuality, and their fundamental role in human life, surely does not represent a good solution. This is especially true if – following the spirit and attitude of a "pragmatist meliorism [that] insists on improving the experience and conduct of life by addressing the real problems of ordinary men and women rather than retreating into purely academic problems of professional philosophy" – we are able to conceive of "the field of sexuality and erotic love" as presenting "a wealth of problems" that are also interesting at a philosophical level and that supply "a realm of experience rich with potential for communicative meanings and for joys of consummation that help make life worth living, while biologically ensuring continued life possible through sexual reproduction."[11] As has been noted by Shusterman in a recent article, what he calls *ars erotica*

> deserves serious critical and theoretical attention so that we can reconstruct our sexual attitudes, practices, and techniques to free them from flaws resulting from eroticism's long association with evils of predatory patriarchy and injustice. […] Old taboos on philosophizing frankly about sex may have faded, but philosophical discomfort and moral reluctance to write candidly about lovemaking and erotic experience still haunt our pragmatist tradition today. We worry that such writing exposes our "lower nature" or even constitutes a verbal form of sexual aggression on innocent readers. However, without forthright, concrete theorizing about sexual matters, we risk perpetuating mistaken assumptions and inadequate or harmful practices that result in experiences of painful disappointment instead of rewarding pleasure. Excited but still confused and uncertain about the promising pluralism of LGBTQ+ options, our culture needs more critical, yet positively reconstructive, thinking about sexuality and eroticism. This seems a worthy task for progressive pragmatist theory, if not also for other philosophical approaches.[12]

Generally speaking, it seems that the Western cultural and philosophical tradition has mostly tended to assign a certain idealistic primacy over the mortal and material body (that, as Shusterman correctly notes, is "distinctively and importantly sexed and sexu-

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[9] Ibid.

[10] On what I like to call "the philosophy of Pearl Jam," let me remind the readers of Stefano Marino and Andrea Schembari (ed.), *Pearl Jam and Philosophy* (2021).

[11] Shusterman, "Pragmatism and Sex: An Unfulfilled Connection," *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 57: 1 (2021), 2.

[12] Ibid., 21, 25.

al"[13]) to the supposedly immortal soul or, in the modern age, to the presumptively immaterial mind. If so, then the rediscovery of the full, rich and diversified significance of the body, i.e., of the embodied nature of our human condition and our way of being in the world, acquires a relevant and, to some extent, even revolutionary significance. Such a rediscovery is precisely at the core of Shusterman's philosophical project, at least since the original introduction of a new disciplinary proposal in the second edition of *Pragmatist Aesthetics* (2000), namely somaesthetics, that has gradually led him to investigate different fields and aspects of the human experience of life, including now sexuality and erotic love.

Following Shusterman's definition of somaesthetics, the latter must be understood as a "critical study and meliorative cultivation of the body as the site not only of experienced subjectivity and sensory appreciation (aesthesis) that guides our action and performance but also of our creative self-fashioning through the ways we use, groom, and adorn our physical bodies to express our values and stylize ourselves."[14] In this context, the soma, i.e., "the sentient purposive body," is philosophically conceived of "as both subject and object in the world," as both *Körperhaben* and *Leibsein*, leading to the insight that "[o]ur experience and behavior are far less genetically hardwired than in other animals": for Shusterman, "the soma reveals that human nature is always more than merely natural but instead deeply shaped by culture," and it expresses "our ambivalent condition between power and frailty, dignity and brutishness, knowledge and ignorance," proving to be "a single, systematic unity that however contains a multiplicity of very different elements (including diverse organs) that have their own needs, ailments, and subsystems."[15] On the basis of such a wide and far-reaching somaesthetic conception of our sentient purposive body, and on the basis of the distinctively and importantly sexed and sexual character of the soma, it must not appear surprising that somaesthetic investigations have ultimately led Shusterman to coherently and, as it were, systematically inquire into the phenomena of love and sex.

I have intentionally used the term "systematically" in the previous sentence because already a simple and quick look at the Table of Contents of *Ars Erotica. Sex and Somaesthetics in the Classical Arts of Love* shows how Shusterman's last book is aimed at offering to the readers a broad, complex, well-structured and very coherent presentation of his somaesthetic investigations of this field.[16] Starting from *ars erotica* and the question of aesthetics (and analyzing this first topic with reference to the terminology and conceptuality used, to the nature of aesthetics as a philosophical discipline, and to the fundamental purpose of self-cultivation that also philosophical inquiry must be functional to), Shusterman then takes into examination the dialectics of desire and virtue, and the relation between aesthetics, power and self-cultivation in erotic theories developed in the Greco-Roman context. The following chapters of *Ars Erotica. Sex and Somaesthetics in the*

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[13] Ibid., 2.

[14] Shusterman, "Bodies in the Streets: The Soma, the City, and the Art of Living," in Id. (ed.), *Bodies in the Streets: The Somaesthetics of City Life* (2019), 15.

[15] Ibid., 15-7.

[16] See Shusterman, *Ars Erotica: Sex and Somaesthetics in the Classical Arts of Love* (2021).

Classical Arts of Love offer a detailed and in-depth investigation of the Biblical tradition, with regard to both the Old Testament and Christianity ("desire as a means of production"), and then, in the multi-cultural attitude and openness to non-Western civilizations that has always characterized somaesthetics, they also focus on lovemaking, aesthetic stylization, the sensual and the sublime, the art of loving in the art of living, and the relation between sexuality and power in Chinese, Indian, Islamic and Japanese erotic theories, finally concluding his reconstruction and interpretation of the "adventures" of *ars erotica* with a chapter on erotics in Medieval and Renaissance Europe.

3.

An important role, in such a broad and complex philosophical work, is played by Shusterman's comparison and critical confrontation with Foucault's influential theory of the "aesthetics of existence," which conceptualized it in terms of an ethical and political practice of the production of subjectivity through processes of subjection and practices of subjectification that determine the relationship of the self with itself and with its *actualité*. [17] As Shusterman had already observed in *Pragmatist Aesthetics*:

> Michel Foucault's seminal vision of the body as a docile, malleable site for inscribing social power reveals the crucial role somatics can play for political philosophy. It offers a way of understanding how complex hierarchies of power can be widely exercised and reproduced without any need to make them explicit in laws or to officially enforce them. Entire ideologies of domination can thus be covertly materialized and preserved by encoding them in somatic norms that, as bodily habits, typically get taken for granted and therefore escape critical consciousness. [18]

Thanks to their openness, their interdisciplinary character, their common and indeed strong focus on the central role played by the dimension of the body in the whole of human experience, and their capacity to intersect different but related concepts and fields profitably, both Foucault-inspired aesthetics of existence and Shusterman-inspired somaesthetics are able to offer a complex and stimulating framework for the investigation of specific topics not only limited to the field of aesthetics narrowly understood but, rather, open to the connection between aesthetics, political philosophy and society. In general, both Foucault's aesthetics of existence and Shusterman's somaesthetics break aesthetics out of its narrow focus on art and beauty, while insisting on the fundamental somatic but also ethical, social, and political dimension of the aesthetics of life. In this perspective, the most recent developments of somaesthetics offered by *Ars Erotica* also provide a notion of somapower that presents a complement to (or, for some, an alternative to) Foucault's notions of biopower and biopolitics.

It is not possible here, i.e., in the context of a relatively short Preface to a symposium, to spell out and carefully analyze in detail the affinities and differences, the resemblances and contrasts, between the respective approaches to aesthetics, existence and

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[17] I would like to thank Valentina Antoniol for this definition.
[18] Shusterman, *Pragmatist Aesthetics*, 270.

erotic experience offered by the two philosophers. In general, it can be observed that both Foucault and Shusterman extend the aesthetics of life deeply into the realm of sexuality, and from a certain point of view *Ars Erotica* can be understood as an extension of Foucault's approach to this topic in his seminal and ambitious *Histoire de la sexualité* in three volumes (*La volonté de savoir*: 1976; *L'usage des plaisirs*: 1984; *Le souci de soi*: 1984),[19] but to some extent also as a critique of what Shusterman considers its limits. In fact, while there are some similarities in the two philosophers' historical and philosophical approaches to sexuality, there are also some obvious differences. For example, the serious consideration of non-Western cultures and an equally serious consideration of the experience of women in the historical development of various experiences and practices of lovemaking throughout the centuries and in different contexts surely played an important and indeed a central role in the book's motivation. Apropos of this, in a recent book review of *Ars Erotica*, it has been observed that Shusterman's new book especially leans on Foucault's "latest work, that is, the two latest volumes of *The History of Sexuality* (*The Use of Pleasures* and *Care of the Self*)," but then

> goes far beyond Foucault's Western ancient thinking on the subject matter. The views of Foucault have come to dominate many scholars' understanding of early modern, modern, and postmodern culture, and Foucault's version of the history of sexuality is relied on by many. Foucault's reading of the history of sexuality carries with its assumptions about the original, ubiquitous, and inevitable primacy of masculine subject-formation, of women's subjection and submission, if a woman is mentioned as subjects at all. Compared to Foucault's later works on the history of sexuality and Western culture, Shusterman's work *Ars Erotica* is much more global, gender-sensitive, multicultural, historical, and socio-political. *Ars Erotica* is a welcome and necessary rewriting of Foucault's story of sexuality and Western culture. […] The Latin term *ars erotica* relates to the aesthetic pleasures and qualities of understanding, sensibility, grace, skill, and self-mastery that go far beyond the limits of sexual activity. The varieties of erotically fueled edification range from self-knowledge and knowing other persons to a more general knowledge of culture and the world. Attentive discipline in lovemaking promotes observational and ethical skills in discerning the feelings of others; it teaches how to read subtle, unintended sensory signals that indicate a potential lover is reciprocally interested or erotically aroused.[20]

Of course, such an evaluation and judgment (like all evaluations and judgments) must not be "a priori" taken for granted and accepted, but it can be critically examined and discussed, especially with regard to the objections that the author of this book review of *Ars Erotica* apparently raises against Foucault's *History of Sexuality*. I think that this is something that is particularly important to underline in the context of a symposium published on a journal entitled *Foucault Studies*. However, whatever one's specific and autonomous judgment about the relation between the two philosophers' approaches

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[19] As is well-known, in 2018 a posthumous fourth volume, *Les aveux de la chair*, has appeared.
[20] Line Joranger, "Book Review: *Ars erotica: Sex and somaesthetics in the classical arts of love*," *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 7 June 2021 (https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/03616843211021833).

may be, what is for sure is: (1) that Shusterman, with his recent book, "in a critical, comparative, un-reductive, and gender sensitive way […] sheds new light on the dialectic relationship between erotic pleasure, sex, gender, politic, culture, religious beliefs, and habits"[21]; and also (2) that Foucault, with his seminal contribution to the history and philosophy of sexuality, apparently aimed to inscribe his analysis of this phenomenon into a more general context centered on elements and dimensions such as "instances of discursive production," "of the production of power," "of the propagation of knowledge."[22]

The connection of sexuality to "a transformation into discourse" and especially to "a technology of power"[23] plays a central and indeed fundamental role in Foucault's original project, and it seems to allow certain comparisons between his *History of Sexuality* and at least some parts and dimensions of Shusterman's broad, complex and multi-layered analysis in *Ars Erotica*. However, during the 20th century other thinkers and other philosophical traditions have also at times paid great attention to questions concerning the human body, in general, and erotic experience, in particular, thus potentially paving the way for different connections and other comparisons with Shusterman's pragmatist approach. In this context, I think that it can be worthy of attention to hint at the Frankfurt School's attempt to emphasize the relation of sexuality with domination in the unreconciled and administered world (in a somehow comparable perspective to Foucault's focus on power, notwithstanding the obvious differences between the concepts of *Herrschaft* and *pouvoir*) and, potentially, its relation with emancipation and freedom in the perspective of a future reconciled condition. In reflecting on the role played by the dimension of eros in the history of human civilization, most readers will probably and understandably think in a spontaneous way of Marcuse's classical book *Eros and Civilization* (1955) and other works by this author, but Horkheimer and Adorno also emphatically suggest that "sexuality is the body unreduced," "it is expression,"[24] and, as such, it bears the trace of a potential transformation to promote human liberation.

In some of my previous attempts to contribute to the open, multi-faceted and interdisciplinary field of somaesthetics, I have focused on the aesthetics of popular culture, trying to unite the stimulating influence of both Shusterman's thinking and Adorno's philosophy and musicology with my own views on this topic.[25] In a similar way, and in the present context of a symposium on Shusterman's *Ars Erotica*, I would like to mention the fact that some original insights on the philosophical significance of erotic experience were offered by a thinker, like Adorno, belonging to the tradition of critical theory, for whom the relation between eros and the aesthetic dimension was a fundamental and indeed constitutive one. As Adorno claimed in *Aesthetic Theory*, his great but unfinished

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[21] Ibid.

[22] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality. Vol. 1: An Introduction* (1990), 12.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments* (2002), 196.

[25] I allow myself to remind the reader of my essays "A Somaesthetic Approach to Rock Music: Some Observations and Remarks," *Pragmatism Today* 9:1 (2018), 109-25; "Angela Davis as a Commodity? On the Commodity Character of Popular Music and Nevertheless its Truth Content," in Colin J. Campbell, Samir Gandesha and Stefano Marino (ed.), *Adorno and Popular Music: A Constellation of Perspectives* (2019), 23-63; "Jazz Improvisation and Somatic Experience," *The Journal of Somaesthetics* 5:2 (2019), 24-40.

masterpiece in the philosophy of art: "[a]esthetic comportment assimilates itself to [the] other rather than subordinating it. Such a constitutive relation of the subject to objectivity in aesthetic comportment joins eros and knowledge."[26] Among other things, it is surely remarkable that in *Negative Dialectics*, his main work in theoretical philosophy, Adorno precisely used an erotic metaphor to formulate what he considered to be the final aim of philosophizing, as he wrote that "in philosophy we literally seek to immerse ourselves in things that are heterogeneous to it, without placing those things in prefabricated categories. We want to adhere […] closely to the heterogeneous."[27] Pietro Lauro, the Italian translator of *Negative Dialectics*, has argued that Adorno, in using the verb *sich anschmiegen* in this passage (translated as "adhering," and actually indicating a kind of "amalgamating oneself with the other," or also a kind of "coming together," inasmuch as an *anschmiegende Umarmung* is an amalgamating embrace, i.e., the union of two or more human beings in a sexual encounter), aimed to claim that "an erotic metaphor was able to express the fundamental question of non-identity. Just like in a sexual intercourse the individuals are united together but still different from each other, without cancelling their individuality;" in a similar way, a negative-dialectical form of philosophizing should promote a form of non-coercive union or fusion with the non-identical, without aiming anymore to arrive at "a Hegelian form of synthesis."[28] This may also remind us of a particularly impressive passage of Shusterman's reply to the three papers in the present symposium, where he notes that many people are used to "speak[ing] of the male as possessing, 'having' or 'taking' the female by penetrating her body through the vagina or, by extension, another orifice," but "topographically, it makes equal or more sense to say that the male organ is possessed, contained, held, or taken within the female's enveloping flesh." That is, sexual intercourse is *not* a one-sided activity, comparable to a boring monologue of an active subject with a passive recipient, but is rather comparable to a *dialectical* relation of simultaneous "entering in" and "being-received in" or "being-welcomed in," in which all the partners involved in the intercourse take part in an exciting intersubjective *dialogue* and quite often exchange their roles in a spontaneous and pleasurable way.

Not by chance, returning to Adorno, in his famous collection of aphorisms and maxims *Minima Moralia*, in critically discussing some Freudian ideas about eros, reason and society, the Frankfurt thinker even dared to establish a connection between sexual pleasure, truth and utopia. Here, indeed, Adorno claims that "he [or she] alone who could situate utopia in blind somatic pleasure, which, satisfying the ultimate intention, is intentionless, has a stable and valid idea of truth."[29] In a sense, this means that the joy of lovemaking, with the somehow "blind" character of the somatic pleasure that it brings, is nonetheless able to "open our eyes" (also at a philosophical level) more than many concepts and argumentations can do, if only we are able to overcome certain preconceptions and to fully understand the power and significance of erotic experience in

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[26] Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory* (2002), 331.

[27] Adorno, *Negative Dialectics* (2004), 13.

[28] Pietro Lauro, "Glossario," in Adorno, *Dialettica negativa* (2004), 370-1.

[29] Adorno, *Minima Moralia: Reflections on a Damaged Life* (2005), 61.

all its nuanced richness. As once noted by Marcuse, art as such "cannot change the world, but it can contribute to changing the consciousness and drives of the men and women who could change the world."[30] Shifting our discourse from artistic experience to erotic experience, we can perhaps paraphrase and reformulate Marcuse's convincing maxim by saying that perhaps a joyful sexuality as such cannot change the world (in an emphatic meaning of the idea of "changing the world"), but it can surely offer a glimpse of freedom and reconciliation even in an unfree and unreconciled world, perhaps pointing in the direction of a gradual transformation of the existing reality and of the human relations starting from our most intimate, delicate, beautiful, communicative and, for this reason, also powerful and sometimes life-changing experiences of unity, fusion, mutual permeation and interpenetration (or, so to speak, of merging together) with other human beings.

In conclusion, and finally returning to Shusterman after this short excursus on Adorno and Marcuse (after the equally brief digression on Foucault), among the many things that we can learn from a book like *Ars Erotica* – beside the breadth and complexity of its historical reconstruction of ideas and practices that are capable not only of exploring the profundity of erotic experience but also of turning lovemaking into an art –, I would also like to mention the possibility of conceiving of sexuality in a radically non-reductive way as a sort of actualization of something that, as we can learn from the Frankfurt thinkers' theories, also bears in itself a trace of the utopia of reconciliation between human beings. The magnetic and, in a sense, *radieux* words of *Paper-Thin Hotel*, one of the most wonderful and intense songs by Leonard Cohen, seem to testify all this, as they sing of the beautiful "struggle mouth to mouth and limb to limb" of two lovers and of "the grunt of unity when he came in": a grunt of unity that, following Adorno, with the "intentionless" nature and the intensity that characterize the experience of pleasure is able to satisfy the "ultimate intention" of life, namely happiness and the achievement of a non-suffocating and non-coercive but rather liberating unity between different human beings. In investigating this immense, theoretically fascinating and existentially captivating field from a pragmatist, intercultural, gender sensitive and meliorist point of view ("focused on concrete problems and specific improvements," as recommended in general by "the long-range aim of meliorism"[31]), Shusterman helps us to understand how a free, consensual, spontaneous and joyous sexual intercourse includes both the apparent superficiality of the physical contact between two or more bodies and the mental/emotional profoundness of an authentic "fusion of horizons"[32] between two or more

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[30] Herbert Marcuse, *The Aesthetic Dimension: Toward a Critique of Marxist Aesthetics* (1979), 32. We can also add to this passage from *The Aesthetic Dimension* a quotation from Marcuse's *Counterrevolution and Revolt* (1972, 116) "Art itself, in practice, cannot change reality, and art cannot submit to the actual requirements of the revolution without denying itself. But art can and will draw its inspirations, and its very form, from the then-prevailing revolutionary movement – for revolution is in the substance of art."

[31] Shusterman, *Pragmatist Aesthetics*, 177.

[32] I obviously borrow the concept of "fusion of the horizons" from Gadamer's hermeneutical conception of historical consciousness and freely apply it to the present discourse on sexuality (see Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 2004. For an interpretation of Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics based on his

human beings: in doing so, it represents one of the richest and fullest forms of expressions of our soma in its holistic entirety, and it also embodies in the actuality of the present moment the promise of a future conciliation at a broader and higher level. If this is true, then (following Nick Cave) let's "let love in" our lives.

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SYMPOSIUM

Ars Erotica and *Sôphrosunê*:
Examining Shusterman's Nietzsche

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Unlike Gerrit van Honthorst*'s Steadfast Philosopher*, Richard Shusterman rejects "[Western] philosophy's wilful, fearful blindness to the aesthetics of erotic experience."[1] Shusterman's aim is to "rethink the erotic arts in a truly aesthetic sense,"[2] a theme that receives an extended treatment in his 2021 *Ars erotica: Sex and Somaesthetics in the Classical Arts of Love.*

In that text, as well as in his 2007 "Asian Ars Erotica and the Question of Sexual Aesthetics," Shusterman is particularly critical of Western approaches to the erotic due to their tendency to define sexual experience in terms of its contrast to aesthetic experience.[3] As a result, he turns instead to an investigation of non-Western approaches to better explore his contention that we should think of the erotic arts as arts.[4]

I argue here that Friedrich Nietzsche's understanding of the ancient Greek concept of *sôphrosunê* could be a potent analytic tool in the context of Shusterman's rehabilitation of the aesthetics of erotic experience. At first glance, this may appear to be an unusual claim, since Shusterman only mentions the concept twice in his book – once in connection with Athenian society and once in connection with Michel Foucault's conception thereof.[5] In addition, despite acknowledging that Nietzsche grants the "possibility that the peculiar

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[1] Richard Shusterman, "Asian Ars Erotica and the Question of Sexual Aesthetics," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 65: 1 (2007), 55.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Shusterman specifically says that since the "Western intellectual tradition seems to offer very little guidance or encouragement in sexual aesthetics, it seems worth exploring the Asian traditions of ars erotica" (ibid., 57)

[5] Ibid., 42, 75.

sweetness and richness proper to the esthetic condition may involve a sexual ingredient,"[6] Shusterman maintains that Nietzsche "…conforms to the anti-erotic aesthetic tradition."[7]

However, if, with Shusterman, we define the aesthetic as including "not only matters of beauty and art, but also countless other attractive qualities (grace, elegance, harmony, refinement, sensitivity, intelligence, charm, style, care, expressive meanings) that pertain to one's person, character, and conduct of life,"[8] then it seems to me that the Nietzschean reading of the concept of *sôphrosunê* can provide useful insights into how the "art" in the erotic arts can be fleshed out. Specifically, if sôphrosunê is understood as "measure" (Maß) – as "the very principle of order rather than […] merely one of the qualities that have to be arranged"[9] – then it could, in my view, provide a guiding principle for understanding an aesthetics of erotic experience.[10]

To establish my position, I provide an interpretation of Nietzsche's conception of *sôphrosunê*, focusing only on his understanding of the Apollonian and Dionysian in the context of the aesthetics of existence. I begin with a very brief overview of the concept of *sôphrosunê* as it first developed in ancient Greek thinking, and its transformation in the teachings of Christianity. I then consider the key aesthetic features that Shusterman extracts from the major theories on *ars erotica.* This allows me to argue that a Nietzschean conception of the *sôphrosunê* can be of value in the development of a somaesthetics-inspired aesthetics of the erotic for which Shusterman, rightly I think, calls.

Sôphrosunê in Ancient Greece: Soundness of Mind

It is not possible here to provide an extensive historical overview of this complex concept and its long history of use. Like most Greek words that end on *–osynē,* the term denotes a personal quality.[11] Its etymological meaning is "soundness of mind" or healthy thinking, and as such, it is often equated with another Greek word – *epiphron* – meaning "sensible".[12] As such, in its beginnings, sôphrosunê is not a particular quality, such as grace or charm, but rather the principle that orders those qualities.

Four instances of the term (and its cognates) first appear in Homeric poetry,[13] but already at this point, the term's meaning and significance is disputed. Helen North claims, for example, that in the Homeric poems, *sôphrosunê* is devoid of its "moral and religious implications,"[14] while Adriaan Rademaker disagrees, claiming that North's claim is based

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[6] Ibid., 56.

[7] Richard Shusterman, *Ars erotica: Sex and Somaesthetics in the Classical Arts of Love* (2021), 2.

[8] Shusterman, "Asian Ars Erotica," x.

[9] Paul van Tongeren, "Nietzsche's Greek Measure," *Journal of Nietzsche Studies* 24 (2002), 9.

[10] I reserve the development of the second prong of my argument – an elaboration of a Nietzschean eroticism – for another occasion. I engage there with the work of Joseph Kuzma and Robert Pippin, who characterize the desire that forms the basis of a Nietzschean eroticism as an unconventional one of distance.

[11] Daniela Cammack, "Plato and Athenian Justice," *History of Political Thought*, 36:4 (2015), 616.

[12] Helen F. North, "The Mare, the Vixen, and the Bee: 'Sophrosyne' as the Virtue of Women in Antiquity," *Illinois Classical Studies* 2 (1977), 37.

[13] Adriaan Rademaker, *Sophrosyne and the Rhetoric of Self-Restraint: Polysemy & Persuasive Use of an Ancient Greek Value Term* (2017), 10.

[14] Helen North, *Sophrosyne: Self-Knowledge and Self-Restraint in Greek Literature* (1966), 3.

on an erroneous overemphasis on the diachronic perspective.[15] As a result, Rademaker's aim is to show how age, gender roles, and social setting all provide for very different uses of the word.[16]

In post-Homeric poetry, *sôphrosunê* takes on a host of new meanings, including religious and political ones that reflect the state of Greek society at that point. The concept is reflective of the Apolline morality that emphasizes "restraint, self-knowledge, and the acceptance of limits," with these limits being imposed "in some cases by the gods, in others by the state, and in the case of women by men."[17]

The concept also appears in various forms in Greek tragedy. In the work of Sophocles, for example, we see how the concept of *sôphrosunê* is closely linked to the concept of self-knowledge, even though the word and its cognates are not frequently encountered in his plays. In *Antigone*, for example, there is only one occurrence of the word, and yet, the issue of self-knowledge and self-restraint remains the enduring theme of the work.[18] In Sophocles' *Electra*, on the other hand, the reference to the concept of *sôphrosunê* is more direct, with the protagonist's failure to behave in a womanly fashion linked to the term.[19]

In the hands of Plato, we see the concept associated with Socrates, who is styled as the paradigm of the *sophron* because of his refined *eros*, and his relentless quest for self-knowledge. In Plato's *Charmides*, Socrates and two future tyrants, Critias and Charmides, engage in conversation about *sôphrosunê.* The account of *sôphrosunê* that emerges sees the concept identified with self-knowledge, where the amount of self-knowledge we have is linked to the proper scope of political power.[20]

As Curzer deftly explains, the familiar understanding of *sôphrosunê* as a separate virtue with its own area of application in the bodily pleasures of eating, drinking, and sex emerges in detail and depth in the work of Aristotle.[21] The concept of *sôphrosunê* as a midway between extremes is born, and, in fact, it is this interpretation of the concept that sees the virtue of temperance being taken up by Christianity, albeit in a new form.

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[15] Rademaker, *Sophrosyne and the Rhetoric of Self-Restraint*, 10.

[16] I cannot discuss this here, but my view is that Rademaker's criticism of North is too strong. North does, for example, acknowledge how the use of the word depends on, for example, gender roles, in her 1977 paper on women in antiquity.

[17] North, "The Mare, the Vixen, and the Bee," 37-38.

[18] Rosanna Lauriola, "Wisdom and Foolishness: A Further Point in the Interpretation of Sophocles' Antigone," *Hermes* 135:4 (2007), 397, n.37. See my 2011 "On the Way Home: Heidegger and Marlene Van Niekerk's *Triomf*" for a discussion of the Antigone-myth as it is interpreted by Martin Heidegger.

[19] Graham Wheeler, "Gender and Transgression in Sophocles' *Electra*," *The Classical Quarterly* 53:2 (2003), 377-388.

[20] Paul Stern, "Tyranny and Self-Knowledge: Critias and Socrates in Plato's Charmides," *The American Political Science Review,* 93:2 (1999), 399. My overview of Plato's position is exceptionally cursory here due to space limitations. In *Sophrosyne: Self-Knowledge and Self-Restraint in Greek Literature,* North provides a very detailed discussion, noting that "In later dialogues, as Plato moves away from the Socratic position, he becomes increasingly interested in sophrosyne as the means of controlling the irrational in man, and in the last of his works, the Laws, this conception of sophrosyne is completely victorious." (158) See also Stanley Rosen's "Sophrosyne and Selbtsbewusstsein" (1989) for an excellent extended discussion.

[21] Howard J. Curzer, "Aristotle's Account of the Virtue of Temperance in Nicomachean Ethics III.10-11," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 35:1 (1997), 5-25.

Sôphrosunê Transformed by Christianity: Abstinence

In the Christian interpretation, *sôphrosunê,* understood as the virtue of temperance, is again transformed, now into the virtue of abstinence from bodily pleasures, most especially the pleasures of sex and food.[22] As Griffith explains:

> For both patristic and medieval followers of the faith, the body was felt to be a burden that must be suffered resignedly during earthly life while yet remaining the crucial material out of which devotional practice and spiritual progress were forged. Thus the body, cultivated as an instrument for salvation, was to be endured, subjected to the scrutiny of the spirit, and strenuously disciplined.[23]

It is this understanding of *sôphrosunê* that is so familiar today, with its provenance in ancient Greek thinking almost forgotten.[24] It is also this interpretation of the concept that is examined in Foucault's monumental three-volume history of sexuality.[25] In the first volume of that history, Foucault introduces his distinction between the West's science of sexuality (*scientia sexualis*) and non-Western erotic arts (*ars erotica)* that is the starting point for Shusterman's analysis, and so it is to that I now turn.

Examining the Aesthetic Features of *ars erotica*

Shusterman defines the *ars erotica* as "…skilled methods or styles of lovemaking that are thereby elevated with the honorific term 'art.'"[26] In his detailed consideration of the sources of the term and concept, Shusterman notes that:

> The actual term "*ars erotica*" is of much more recent vintage. Its wide currency seems to originate with Michel Foucault's use of the term in his influential *History of Sexuality,* whose first volume distinguishes sharply between the modern Western study of sex as *scientia sexualis* and non- Western sexual knowledge in the form of *ars erotica.*[27]

Shusterman grants that his thinking on the *ars erotica* owes a "deep debt" to Foucault's ideas but notes that he diverges from Foucault's thinking in a number of significant

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[22] Paul van Tongeren, "Nietzsche's Revaluation of the Cardinal Virtues: The Case of Sophrosyne," *Phronimon* 3:1 (2001), 133.

[23] R. Marie Griffith, "'Don't Eat That': The Erotics of Abstinence in American Christianity," *Gastronomica* 1: 4 (2001), 36.

[24] In "Nietzsche's Greek Measure," Paul van Tongeren neatly summarises it thus: "The history of the idea of measure can be traced in the growth of these two roots of European culture: Greek culture and Christianity. On the one hand 'measure' connotes the classical virtue of sophrosyne, but on the other hand it conveys the Christian virtue of moderation and modesty" (6).

[25] As Shusterman also notes, a fourth volume was reconstructed from unpublished manuscripts and published in 2018 (Shusterman, *Ars Erotica*, xi). I do not rehearse Foucault's contested analysis here.

[26] Shusterman, *Ars Erotica*, 1.

[27] Ibid., 3.

ways.[28] As Shusterman himself points out, Foucault's work has been accused of "narrowness, sensualism, hedonistic triviality, and apolitical narcissism,"[29] as well as of being impotent as a theoretical basis for feminist theory, something that a somaesthetic approach aims to avoid.[30] What is of significance is that Shusterman identifies nine key aesthetic features that he claims govern the *ars erotica* understood as the erotic arts:

1) incorporation of the fine arts and other paradigmatically aesthetic activities into the practice of *ars erotica*
2) an emphasis on beauty and pleasure, rather than mere utility
3) the highlighting of form
4) the drive for stylization
5) symbolic richness
6) its evaluative dimension, i.e., a concern with beauty, performative virtuosity, or superior taste in critical judgments, connoisseurship, rankings, and competitions
7) exhibits a similarity with the fine arts in terms of the hybrid status of nature and culture
8) exhibits a further similarity with the fine arts since art involves the dramatization of experience by presenting and intensifying it within a formal frame
9) exhibits a final similarity with the fine arts in terms of cognitive and ethical ambivalence.[31]

These aesthetic features granted, the question remains as to how to understand the form, beauty, pleasure and style that Shusterman names as significant here. What do we mean exactly when we called a particular example of the art of love beautiful, stylish, virtuoso or distinctive? When would a sexual act not be seen as stylish or beautiful? Is there any room for the "ugly" or the "horrifying" in an aesthetics of the art of love?

Shusterman's masterful overview of *ars erotica* in selected Western and Asian traditions already gives us some suggestions as to how these questions can be approached. He explains, for example, that in the context of Chinese *QI* erotics, "Because the 'ugly man named Ai Taitou' had this calm harmony of inner virtue, he was irresistibly attractive so that 'men and women flocked to him' (CWZ 72)."[32] In addition, in the context of his over-

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[28] "Asian Ars Erotica," xi.

[29] Richard Shusterman, "Somaesthetics and Care of the Self: The Case of Foucault," *The Monist*, 83:4 (2000), 532.

[30] This point deserves further elaboration, but in short, as Jana Sawicki (1994), in "Foucault, feminism, and questions of identity" explains, many feminists refuse to abandon their commitment "to some essential, liberatory subject rooted in 'women's experience' (or nature), as the starting point for emancipatory theory" (289). As a result, Foucault is accused of reducing individuals to docile bodies, or to victims of disciplinary technologies, rather than subjects with the capacity to resist (Nancy Hartsock, "Foucault on power: a theory for women?" 171-172). In contrast, in his discussion of the *ars erotica*, Shusterman notes how class and gender are of significance when engaging in the erotic arts (*Ars Erotica*, 14, 15).

[31] *Ars Erotica*, 5-8.

[32] Ibid., 198.

view of the mystic tradition in Islamic culture, Shusterman notes that "…acts that conventional people regard as 'ugly,' immoral, or animalistic can be 'praiseworthy for the perfect gnostic' and even essential for his worship."[33] In addition, in his discussion of the tension between erotic love as irrational enchantment and prudent desire in the context of the Greek philosophers, Shusterman notes that philosophers diverged on this issue, "…partly because they differed on whether erotic mania was intrinsically deceptive and damaging or whether its crazed enthusiasm that overwhelms self-regarding self-control could instead awaken us beneficially to higher values and realities beyond ordinary rational self-interest."[34] These examples from three different traditions are suggestive of how the *ars erotica* is not limited to simplistic attributions of physical beauty but involves other dimensions of human existence in its relation to the aesthetic.

This is also well-supported by Shusterman's expression of the overarching aim in his book – to show how the *ars erotica* can provide sensory, emotional and ethical instruction. With regards to sensory instruction, he reminds us that in *ars erotica* the key medium is the human soma, and it is this medium that the erotic arts seek to cultivate.[35] With regards to emotional instruction, Shusterman contends that the *ars erotica* is a means of cultivating one's humanity, a method of care of the self that immediately implies care for others.[36]

Besides sensory and emotional instruction, *ars erotica* also fosters ethical learning in Shusterman's analysis thereof. First, he claims that when it is pursued as a "disciplined, reflective practice," it requires that ethical norms, values, and taboos in a society are understood and navigated.[37] Second, "mastery in *ars erotica* implies making oneself appealing enough to attract, charm, and satisfy one's lovers," and in that way fosters ethical learning.[38] Finally, *ars erotica* fosters learning in that it teaches us how to examine the character of others in order to promote erotic fulfilment.[39]

These suggestions are, I think, a fruitful starting point for an elucidation of an aesthetics of the erotic, particularly because of their emphasis on the embodied nature of human beings, as well as the intertwinement of the aesthetic with the ethical. I suggest in what follows that a Nietzschean understanding of *sôphrosunê*, understood as the principle of measure rather than a particular quality, can provide a potent supplement to this starting point for an aesthetics of erotic experience.

Reading Nietzsche on *sôphrosunê*

Recall that even though Shusterman acknowledges that Nietzsche recognises that "erotic 'sensuality' belongs to the generative roots of the 'aesthetic condition,'" he maintains that

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[33] Ibid., 286.
[34] Ibid., 60.
[35] Ibid., 70.
[36] Ibid., 9.
[37] Ibid., 12.
[38] Ibid.
[39] Ibid., 13.

Nietzsche remains part of the anti-erotic aesthetic tradition because of Nietzsche's insistence that "in genuine aesthetic experience this sensual moment must be 'transfigured and no longer enters the consciousness as a sexual stimulus.'"[40] How, then, could Nietzsche's understanding of *sôphrosunê* be harnessed in an attempt to understand the "aesthetic" dimension of the erotic arts?

Nietzsche does not read *sôphrosunê* as mere temperance or abstinence but develops a sophisticated view of *sôphrosunê* understood as "measure" (*Maß*) in the context of his reading of the ancient Greeks and his critique of contemporary European culture that spans his entire oeuvre.[41] In this section, I can only focus on one expression of "measure" as it occurs in Nietzsche's thinking – the concept as it emerges in his early view of the Apollonian and Dionysian – and its relation to the aesthetic. Despite this limited examination of the concept here, I think it is enough to demonstrate my point that Nietzsche's concept of measure is of value in the development of an aesthetics of the erotic that Shusterman advocates.

In the *Birth of Tragedy* (BT), Nietzsche makes it clear that Apollo's domain is culture. He is the god of sculpture. In Nietzsche's reading, the Apollonian *Schein* (BT 1)[42] gives rise to the idea of measured restraint (BT 1) that was called *sôphrosunê* by the ancient Greeks (BT 15). Apollo is also related to the sense of a limit to the individual (BT 4) and boundaries between individuals (BT 9).

The disciplined sensuality and impulse toward beautiful appearance is what places the Apollonian in a tensioned relation with the Dionysian, since Dionysus is associated with chaos and horror. How does this relate to art and the aesthetic? In his analysis of Sophoclean tragedy, Nietzsche highlights the Apollonian as a kind of mask:

> When, by means of an energetic attempt, we focus on the sun, we have, when we turn away, dark spots before our eyes by way of remedy alone: conversely, the luminous images of the Sophoclean heroes, in short, those Apollonian masks, are the necessary productions of a look into the horror of nature, luminous spots, as it were, designed to cure an eye hurt by the ghastly night. (BT 9)

The image of the sun evoked here can be read as a veiled reference to the cave allegory in which the shackled prisoners are said to eventually be able to emerge from their shadowed cave-prison and gaze upon the true reality represented by the sun – the Good. In contrast, by creating a tragedy which is "luminous," Nietzsche postulates that Sophocles is able to "cure" the audience of the terror that the abyss of darkness – the "horror of nature" – causes.

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[40] Ibid., 395.

[41] As Van Tongeren ("Nietzsche's Greek Measure," 11) points out, there are at least three different contexts in which Nietzsche uses the word and its cognates- ancient Greece, his engagement with contemporary culture, and his anticipation of the (new) nobility. I can only focus on one aspect of this usage in the current paper.

[42] All my references to the *Birth of Tragedy* are from Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writings* [1872] (2000).

Good art (in this case, the Sophoclean tragedy) is able to expose reality as dark and chaotic becoming but also provide the necessary illusion (the "Apollonian masks") to temper the fear that this realisation brings forth. However, what is most significant is that Nietzsche believes that good art sees its illusions for what they are without the illusions themselves being undermined.[43] As such, Nietzsche's point is not to encourage flight from the realisation that there is no stable centre – no sun – but rather that (good) art can be a means to cope with the flux that is reality.

As a result, Nietzsche objects to what he calls the "improvement morality"[44] that Socrates encourages – an attempt to flee the world of flux and change by means of a denial of the passions and the instincts. By denying appearance, the body, and Dionysus – that most radical realisation of multiplicity – Socrates believed human being would be able to access absolute, eternal Truth. On the contrary, in acknowledging that all is Becoming, and that there is no absolute Truth, Nietzsche encourages a life of lightness, play, and dance.

So, Nietzsche's measure is associated with Apollo and the Apollonian, and Apollo and Dionysus exist always together. Dionysus is the god in whom the excess of nature is deified, but, as Van Tongeren points out, the truth of this chaotic and tension-filled nature can only be acknowledged and enjoyed when it is counterbalanced by the Apollonian appearance of unity and order.[45] As a result, Nietzsche's most weighty discovery was that great Greek culture emerged not so much from the victory of Apollo over Dionysus, but from the continuing, agonistic struggle between the two.[46]

If we return to Shusterman's features of the *ars erotica*, then it seems to me that Nietzsche's conception of measure is able to provide a way towards addressing the questions I raised. Specifically, the form, beauty, pleasure and style that Shusterman names as crucial in the erotic arts can be understood as a product of the agonistic relation between the Apollonian and Dionysian. Each instance of the art of love could be called beautiful, stylish, virtuoso or distinctive because of the specific way in which measure is articulated in it. A sexual act would not be seen as stylish or beautiful if there is no unique measure demonstrated in it. Finally, there should be room for the "ugly" or the "horrifying" in an aesthetics of the art of love, in terms of allowing for the continuing struggle between the Apollonian and Dionysian elements thereof to be expressed.

Conclusion

Shusterman's somaesthetic consideration of the erotic arts is of great significance on a number of fronts, including, as Shusterman himself points out, that "the right sort of erotic knowledge could promote better affective relations between persons of all kinds, not just between lovers."[47] Indeed, as he also points out, we can approach the problems of sexism

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[43] Hussain, Nadeem J. Z., "Honest Illusion: Valuing for Nietzsche's Free Spirits," in *Nietzsche and Morality*, ed. Brian Leiter and Neil Sinhababu (2009), 172.

[44] GD/TI "Das Problem des Sokrates"/"The Problem of Socrates" 11 KSA 6.73

[45] Van Tongeren, "Nietzsche's Greek Measure," 13.

[46] Ibid.

[47] *Ars Erotica*, 2.

and heteronormativity in a better way if we understand their foundations in the history of erotic theory.[48] This paper has sought to draw out the strengths of the interpretation presented in his 2021 book by attempting to show how the Nietzschean conception of *sôphrosunê* can provide useful insights into how the "art" in the erotic arts can be fleshed out. There is ample room for a much extended investigation into what the limitations of the Nietzschean conception of *sôphrosunê* are in this context, as well as an elaboration of a Nietzschean eroticism, especially from the somaesthetic perspective that Shusterman has presented in the context of the *ars erotica.*

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[48] Ibid., x.

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SYMPOSIUM

On the Interest in the Art of Loving:
Richard Shusterman's *Ars Erotica*

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1.

Here, finally, is a book that takes the path of Michel Foucault's *The History of Sexuality*[1] but goes beyond its limits. I refer to Richard Shusterman's *Ars Erotica.*[2] It took a little more than four decades, since the beginning of Foucault's project of a genealogy of sexuality understood as an object of knowledge in relation to power, to develop a new, ambitious and complex project that does not limit itself to questioning Western thinking, and in particular that of the ancient Greek-Roman world. This book offers original reflections on the transcultural genealogies of the current globalized world; not from the usual economic and political perspective but rather from a novel philosophical point of view. In light of this, Shusterman's *Ars Erotica* marks a movement of progress toward a new understanding of our globalized world: more precisely, a critical understanding, rooted in history but capable of offering a potential improvement of existing realties, rather than limiting itself to a mere confirmation of the *status quo* or to a sterile exercise of non-constructive critique.

My contribution to this symposium on *Ars Erotica* will start from the author's concluding hypothesis that, in a sense, also underlies the general thrust of his book: namely, the hypothesis according to which the traditional paradigm of modern aesthetics (starting from the eighteenth century) can and perhaps must be overcome by means of a return to the communion of eros and beauty that had characterized philosophical aesthetics over the span of time from Plato to the Renaissance. The idea is that as long as eros "was defined as the desiring love for beauty expressed by a longing to intimately know and somehow unite with the beautiful object desired," and "beauty was conceived as

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[1] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality* (1980-1986).

[2] Richard Shusterman, *Ars Erotica* (2021).

the object of love and desire, with higher beauties inspiring nobler forms of love and desire,"[3] there was a close communion of eros and beauty that could offer a sensually grounded aesthetic paradigm that, throughout the centuries, laid the foundations for a radical aesthetic education. Such an aesthetic education was not understood as an academic discipline but rather as an art of living capable of "developing character, sensitivity, taste, and interpersonal awareness."[4] This exploratory essay of philosophical somaesthetics by Shusterman is not only meant to revive a philosophical discourse that was interrupted after Renaissance Neoplatonism and the advent of materialistic philosophies in the seventeenth/eighteenth centuries (with the birth of modern aesthetics thanks to the works of Baumgarten and Kant) but is also meant to further develop the path of somaesthetics as a general theory of knowledge and sensory perception (rather merely than a theory of beauty) and as a critical practice aimed at improving our aesthetic experience by focusing on the body, conceived of "as a sentient, purposive soma."[5]

Since his important work entitled *Body Consciousness* (2008), Shusterman's somaesthetics has criticized both the modern conception of art that separates the latter's spiritual authority from the seriousness of life, and the modern conception of aesthetic experience as confined to "important values central to the fine arts."[6] In the first chapter of *Body Consciousness*, which explains the three branches of somaesthetics (analytic, pragmatic and practical) while analyzing their presence in Foucault, Shusterman challenged the sharp separation between art and life by connecting the seriousness of art with the seriousness of life. This helps Shusterman to configure somaesthetics as an art of living based on the individual's ability for self-improvement in the conscious cultivation of one's soma and its powers of perception and performance. The enhancement of perceptual and sensory skills, in this context, is conceived of as a gradual refinement of self-awareness and self-positioning in a cultural and social milieu whose improved somatic consciousness can provide a synthesis of ethical-spiritual *áskesis* and aesthetic-sensorial *máthesis*. This synthesis allows Shusterman not to reject the domain of art but only its narrow conception as including only elite fine art (as he clearly explained since *Pragmatist Aesthetics* from 1992). His aim is rather to rethink aesthetic experience in light of its pre-eminent performative character, as opposed to the traditional contemplative view; witness his book *Performing Live* (2000). In this way, somaesthetics can be also conceived of as a theory of aesthetic education as creative self-fashioning of the self, as a form of self-cultivation and self-refinement,[7] as a process of increasing the development of a critical-reflective consciousness of one's body aimed at improving our involvement with the world and society, without losing contact with the particular cultural context in which one is rooted. This also involves, among other things, a refinement of our artistic taste, resulting from improved awareness of our sensory perceptions and our feelings.

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[3] Shusterman, *Ars Erotica*, 391.

[4] Ibid., 1-2.

[5] Ibid., 7.

[6] Ibid., 4.

[7] Ibid, 9.

Somaesthetic self-fashioning must continually recur or revise itself in concrete encounters with real life, with its frequent changes and surprises. It involves praxis, not mere contemplative abstraction. The consequent increase of our capacities is brought to perfection by what Shusterman calls "the art of living," based on an anti-dualistic paradigm that, in the moment in which it rejects the mind/body opposition, leads to the elaboration of a sophisticated integration of interiority and exteriority, of depth and surface, of the essential and the inessential (so to speak). From this basis, Shusterman developed a reflection on lifestyles and character as constituted and reflected by somatic attitudes, norms and behavior. Somatic behavior (including even somatic style) determines the social character of particular somatic abilities and forms of self-fashioning. Coherent with his anti-dualist stance, Shusterman is aware of the dangers caused by certain conventional somatic norms that risk crushing individual subjectivity under conformist body norms or the quest for stereotype forms of distinction that distract people from personal realization through effective participation in real life. On the other hand, it is through somaesthetic self-fashioning that the body, as the matrix of individuality, becomes a *second nature* that integrates the social elements within one's personality. The body is thus the all-interior that gets externalized in somatic expression, immediately corresponding to the all-external that somatizes what constitutes the individual's character. In this way the individual is seen as something integral only if one also takes into consideration his/her lifestyle, which is then nothing other than the somatic style of the self that constitutes his/her personality and character. Thus, what is called *the spiritual world of an individual is already always (and essentially) somatic*, just as *the somatic style of everyone has always been informed by the ethical-political character of the social world that he or she belongs to*. Overcoming the distinction between spirit and body means conceiving character and personal style as fused with the somatic dimension. The program of *saving individuals* in their somatic dimension is one with that of *saving the body* from the conceptual destruction wrought by dualism, as well as from the destruction that contemporary society wreaks on us through the consummation of appearance. The somaesthetic program of educational self-fashioning through a critical lifestyle that aims to achieve this double rescue seems to take concrete form in *Ars Erotica*'s attempt to bring us back to the intimate connection of eros and beauty.

Shusterman's important collection *Bodies in the Streets: The Somaesthetics of City Life* in 2019 clarifies further what the project of a pragmatist somaesthetics as an art of living consists of in terms of political interests and values. Going beyond the barriers of a mere theoretical and academic discipline to enter the paths of a philosophical practice as a form of bodily training aimed at enriching our consciousness, somaesthetics has a liberating and emancipatory character. The *second nature*, proper to the body, retains a critical element vis-à-vis the blind imprint of current reality because the creative self-modeling of experience and of one's own body has the improvement of oneself on an ethical and individual stylistic level as its objective. Acting according to the criterion of one's somatic efficacy would also have repercussions for the improvement of society, while not disrupting the societal balance, since somaesthetic practices are not governed by fixed

standards of virtue or justice but instead by aims of happiness. The expectation of an improvement in the social world depends on the pursuit of happiness, which, in turn, has a somatic character since it leads to a sort of conscious hedonism resulting from ascesis as an ethical cultivation of oneself: self-fashioning allows for an improvement of a perceptive awareness that is capable, in itself, of making you happier, more attentive and more responsible towards others. In this way the political level seems to be subordinated to the ethical level, promising a sort of common ethics no longer based on values but on the individuals' somatic demands. This aesthetic *koinonìa* would confirm the ethical character of the social model proposed by Shusterman (a kind of aesthetic anti-Machiavellianism that risks, however, slipping into the ancient Platonic plan of an ethical society), based on the belief that a conscious work of individual self-fashioning is necessary to improve the conditions of society and to satisfy everyone's aspirations for happiness through somatic self-cultivation and self-fashioning. It is certainly possible that this is necessary, but we can doubt whether it is sufficient. In many ethical societies, adapting oneself to values that are imposed, or generally accepted by common sense, inhibits precisely those liberating abilities that somaesthetics requires from all of us. Where ethical convictions regulate the totality of social relations, it becomes even more difficult to practice the kind of *dissent* that, in many cases, acts as a creative spring for a self-fashioning of the individual self and also of the community. Can changing the power relationships in place in current societies, acting directly on the production relationships that are established as forms of domination of individuals, or groups of individuals, for the sole purpose of maintaining unchanged certain privilege, also be the subject of a somaesthetic reflection that does not refer only to the individual and his or her practices in response to the needs for collective happiness? It would be interesting to develop a line of investigation putting somaesthetics into closer dialogue with strands of democratic Marxism and psychoanalysis capable of providing some answers to these doubts. Who can tell if the current system of ethical values (the product of certain dominant elements of a society) can improve itself by modifying the existing power relations in such a way that individuals can freely determine what makes them happy or not? And how could they open their creative potential in a regime of self-preservation after having introjected the democratic virtue of voluntary servitude? A radical and precise reflection on the concept of integration and on culture -- a sort of somaesthetic *Kulturkritik* -- could be an important step in the future of somaesthetics that is capable of reconfiguring the space of freedom and that of happiness.

2.

As I said before, Shusterman's *Ars Erotica* aims to reaffirm the *communion of eros and beauty*, based on desire, in opposition to the advent of modern aesthetics in the eighteenth century that produced an artificial separation between them on the basis, above all, of the principle of *disinterestedness*. According to Shusterman, libertine and materialistic philosophies of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries could not resist (and may

have spurred) the advancement of modern aesthetic discourses on beauty according to which beauty requires to be "appreciated through an attitude of disinterested contemplation rather an erotic desire of union." The point is that these philosophical currents, while admirable for their sensuous perspective, "helped generate the divorce by making it far more difficult to maintain the vision of erotic love as an uplifting spiritual desire for union of immaterial, virtuous souls."[8] The perceived insufficiency of physical love for spiritual uplift undermined the vision of lovemaking as providing an occasion for ennobling beauty, artistry, and aesthetic pleasure, which allegedly depended on disinterestedness. According to Kant's *Critique of Judgment*, the idea of contemplative disinterestedness is "the cornerstone for defining the distinctive aesthetic pleasure (and judgment) of beauty in opposition to the agreeable feeling of sensuality and satisfactions of appetite (and even of charm and emotion) that also give pleasure."[9]

In the first book of the Analytic of the Beautiful (§2), Kant distinguishes aesthetic judgments from judgments whose delight (*Wohlgefallen*) in a representation is linked to an interest and the real existence of the object. In such judgments, one feels oneself and one's feeling of pleasure or displeasure by means of the imagination[10] and does not represent an object through the intellect. In other words, its determining ground is purely subjective. For this reason,

> in order to say that the object is beautiful, and to show that I have taste, everything turns on the meaning which I can give to this representation, and not on any factor which makes me dependent on the real existence of the object (*was ich aus dieser Vorstellung in mir selbst mache, nicht auf dem, worin ich von der Existenz des Gegenstandes abhänge*).[11]

Before closing §2, Kant adds a short note that sheds a clarifying light on the disinterested character of aesthetic judgments, which reads:

> A judgment upon an object of our delight *may be wholly disinterested but withal very interesting, i.e., it relies on no interest, but it produces one*. Of this kind are all pure moral judgments. But, of themselves judgments of taste do not even set up any interest whatsoever. *Only in society is it interesting to have taste --a point* which will be explained in the sequel.[12]

After establishing that judgments of taste refer to a pure and disinterested delight that produces an interest only in society, Kant goes on in §3 of the Analytic of the Beautiful to try to determine the interest coupled with the delight that one experiences in the agreeable (*Angenehmen*). What is agreeable is what pleases in sensation, but in this regard Kant's doubt touches on the fact that this pleasure of sensation is unmistakable with the determined inclinations of *impressions of sense*. This leads Kant to conclude that

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[8] Ibid., 29.

[9] Ibid., 394-395.

[10] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment* [1790] (1911-1986), 203.

[11] Ibid., 205.

[12] Ibid.

there must be two different meanings of sensation (*Empfindung*): the first relates to the faculty of knowledge and is the (objective) representation of a thing through the senses; the second is a determination of the feeling of pleasure or displeasure (*Bestimmung des Gefühls der Lust oder Unlust*), which is subjective in the sense that it cannot refer to any representation of an object. This second meaning of *Empfindung* therefore does not refer to a sensation but to a *feeling* (*Gefühl*) whose subjective character is linked to disinterest and, at the same time, produces an interest that must possess a universal character (*Allgemeinheit*), although a subjective universal and not objective one. In §8 of Kant's third *Critique*, it is the subjective character of the universality of the judgment of taste that is combined with the disinterest in the existence of the object in the representation: this means that the universal subjective (aesthetic) validity of the judgment of taste is not based on a concept but on a *Gefühl*, a feeling that must be universally and selflessly valid for everyone. In other words, the expression *common validity* (*Gemeingültigkeit*) "denotes the validity of reference… to the feeling of pleasure or displeasure for every subject."[13] Therefore, the difference between the beautiful and the agreeable corresponds to that between judgments of taste (aesthetic judgments) and judgments of sense. Only aesthetic judgments of taste can combine the subjective character (reference to oneself) with its universality (validity for everyone within a social sphere that produces a common interest, as we have seen in reference to the note in §3).

This means that, for Kant, aesthetic judgments of beauty must be disinterested and yet *produce an interest* and retain the character of universality based on a kind of *Gefühl* that is not merely contemplative. The fact that Kantian aesthetic judgment is considered *merely* a disinterested and contemplative judgment probably derives from the romantic-spiritual twist given to the faculties of genius. (To establish this point a non-romantic rereading of §§46-50 of the *Critique of Judgment* would be necessary here, especially with regard to the definition of Kant's notion of aesthetic ideas in §49). It is true that in §5 Kant explicitly claims that "the judgment of taste is simply contemplative, i.e., it is a judgment which is indifferent as to the existence of an object, and only decides how its character stands with the feeling of pleasure and displeasure."[14] However, the contemplative and indifferent character refers to the moral pleasure for the object's existence and not to the mere pleasure in the representation of the object. This means that there is a difference between the pleasure of the representational object – which clearly has sensory as well as feeling traits – and the pleasure for the (moral) representation of the object, or for what the object is as actually existing. In other words, the disinterested character of aesthetic judgments of taste is given by the fact that the latter are neither theoretical-cognitive judgments nor practical-moral judgments, and on this path it is possible to recover the character of Kantian disinterest precisely at the level of sensory perception and feeling. Hence its disinterest must not be confused with indifference but must be understood as a creative distancing from mere conventional forms of existence and pleasure.

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[13] Ibid., 214.
[14] Ibid., 209.

The remarkable question in this case is: if the judgment of the senses must be rehabilitated in a somatic key, how can it be attributed a universal character, valid for everyone, so that it can be configured as valid for a common education? In the relationship between feeling and sensation, as Kant defines them, we could still find a possible answer.

3.

Another potential obstacle that interferes with the reunification of eros and beauty is represented by Nietzsche's anti-erotic aesthetics. Here, too, one could probably advance a further rescue by referring precisely to Nietzsche's *On the Genealogy of Morality* and finding out how, perhaps, Nietzsche can help us to take a look at a new form of sensualism.

Shusterman's main Nietzschean references, cited in *Ars Erotica*, are derived from the third essay in *On the Genealogy of Morality*, "What do Ascetic Ideals Mean?," whose §8 vehemently underlines the harmfulness of sexual activity for the artist's creativity or for the philosopher's powers of reflection. On the one hand, it is true that Nietzsche writes:

> Every artist knows how harmful sexual intercourse is at time of great spiritual tension and preparation; for those with greatest power and surest instincts, it is not even a case of experience, bad experience – but precisely that *maternal* instinct ruthlessly takes charge of all other stockpiles and reserves of energy, of animal vigor, to the advantage of work in progress: the greater energy *uses up* the lesser.[15]

On the other hand, however, he immediately adds a sentence that may appear ambiguous at first sight:

> But this certainly does not exclude the possibility that that remarkable sweetness and fullness characteristic of the aesthetic condition might well descend from the ingredient 'sensuality'… that in this way, sensuality is not suspended as soon as we enter aesthetic condition, as Schopenhauer believed, but it is only transfigured and no longer enters the consciousness as a sexual stimulus.[16]

The ambiguity of this last sentence lies in the fact that a certain aesthetic condition has its origin precisely in sensuality, but when the ascetic ideal takes over, it is not transfigured into a consciousness as a sexual stimulus. The obscurity of this sentence can be clarified by the explanation of what is at stake for Nietzsche: the ascetic ideal "belongs among the most favorable conditions for the highest spirituality;"[17] but what kind of ascetic ideal does Nietzsche have in mind? In §1 he first underlines that the ascetic ideal is the instinct for the most favorable conditions of higher spirituality, but then he gravely reproaches those who have tried (erroneously) to follow this instinct (the disgruntled)

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[15] Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality* [1887] (2006), 80.

[16] Ibid, 80-81.

[17] Ibid.

of having done so to endure the *horror vacui*, the non-sense of life, hence criticizing the fact that they preferred to will *nothingness* rather than *not* will.[18]

In §6, Nietzsche deals with the question of Kantian disinterestedness and does so precisely in light of some post-Kantian results of this conception. Nietzsche's reproach against Kant is that his claim of impersonality and universality shows how he targeted the aesthetic problem of art and beauty simply from the point of view of the spectator, "and thus inadvertently introduced the 'spectator' himself into the concept of 'beautiful.'"[19] Stopping with the first moment of the Kantian analysis, Nietzsche writes: "Kant said: 'Something is beautiful if it gives pleasure without interest,'"[20] and then Nietzsche compares this Kantian view with Stendhal's idea of the beautiful as *une promesse de bonheur*. The fact that Nietzsche judges, somewhat exaggeratedly, this point (*le désintéressement*) as the only relevant point in the Kantian aesthetic conception is more the result of the influence on him of a Schopenhauerian conception of art and aesthetics than the result of a scrupulous reading of the Kantian text. In fact, without paying an adequate attention to the difference between Kant and Schopenhauer, Nietzsche claims that:

> [Schopenhauer] interpreted the phrase 'without interest' in the most personal way possible… There are few things about which Schopenhauer speaks with such certainty as the effect of aesthetic contemplation: according to him, it counteracts sexual 'interestedness'… he never tired of singing the praises of this escape from the 'will' as the great advantage and use of the aesthetic condition.[21]

The idea that we can draw from these remarks is that, if Kant had started the process of "autonomization" of artistic values based on the spiritual ideality of the fine arts, and if Schiller had contributed to this path through the edifying ideals of aesthetic education, the actual affirmation of disinterestedness, to characterize the aesthetic experience as a contemplative experience, is due to Schopenhauer. If so, then the definitive divorce between eros and beauty is due more to Schopenhauer than to Kant. But, at this point, what should one think about Nietzsche's doctrine of the ascetic ideals in *On the Genealogy of Morality*?

Schopenhauer described only one of the effects of beauty, that of calming the will; Stendhal, endowed with a more successful sensual nature than Schopenhauer's, highlighted that beauty promises happiness or "the excitement of the will ('of interest') through beauty."[22] This points to a problem with real stakes for Nietzsche: It seems that there is a positive and fruitful ascetic ideal, necessary and capable of leading to happiness, and there is a sick and unhappy, failed and unsuccessful ascetic ideal. The sort of distancing operated by Nietzsche towards Schopenhauer precisely concerns this decisive point. Schopenhauer is the most eloquent example of a philosopher in whose think-

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[18] Ibid., 68.

[19] Ibid., 74.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid., 74-75.

[22] Ibid., 75.

ing "exists a genuine philosopher's irritation and rancor against sensuality."[23] The positive ascetic ideal towards which Nietzsche sets out is what he pursues when he writes that "the philosopher smiles because he sees an optimum condition of the highest and boldest spirituality", in particular "he does *not* deny 'the existence'… but rather affirms *his* existence and *only* his existence… *pereat mundus, fiat philosophia, fiat philosophus, fiam!*"[24] The philosopher walks into the desert (which can also be the wonderful study in Piazza San Marco!) As a place of quiet, far from current events, "[w]e appreciate peace, coldness, nobility, distance, the past… without speaking loudly… every spirit has its own sound and likes to hear it."[25] It is in this desert that the philosopher reactivates the sensuality that the Schopenhauerian aesthetic state had transfigured. With this sensuality, the Nietzschean ascetic philosopher prepares the descent among human beings. From this point of view, the ascetic philosopher accustomed to the desert is the opposite of the ascetic priest. The latter represent the realization of the type of 'contemplative man' that the result of an ascetic misconception of oneself – believing oneself to be a philosopher in denying "the world, [hating] life, [doubting] the senses, desensualized, which has been maintained until quite recently to the point where it almost counted for the philosophical attitude as such."[26] This ascetic misconception of oneself has led to the development of a false conception of seriousness, namely a *seriousness hostile to life* dominated by a form of *ressentiment* without equal that, instead of saying: 'Yes! to life', cultivates "an unfulfilled instinct and power-will that want to be master, not over something in life, but over life itself and its deepest, strongest, most profound conditions."[27] Nietzsche lashes out with vehemence against this false and self-contradictory ascetic ideal, which turns an angry gaze against "the physiological growth itself, in particular the manifestation of this in beauty and joy."[28] He is against the self-contradiction of the false asceticism that conceives of 'the life *against* the life' that says 'No! to life' and, at the same time, thinks of tricks that preserve this false life inhabited by the disgruntled. "The ascetic priest is the incarnate wish for being otherwise, being elsewhere, indeed, he is the highest pitch of this wish, its essential ardor and passion: but the *power* of his wishing is the fetter which binds him here."[29] In short, the ascetic priest is an enemy of life and "belongs to the really great conserving and yes-creating forces of life" that are typical of the sick man who has rented virtue. Against these beautiful souls, who vainly show "their purity of the heart," "their wrecked sensuality on the market" and their battered sensuality, Nietzsche redeems a human type who, for him, is successful: it is those who are healthy with a successful body capable of overturning the false ascetic ideal in the service of a preordained aberration of feeling.

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[23] Ibid, 76.
[24] Ibid., 77.
[25] Ibid., 79.
[26] Ibid., 84.
[27] Ibid., 86.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Ibid., 88.

The ending of §22 adds this consideration: "The ascetic ideal, you have guessed, was never anywhere a school of good taste, still less of good manners – at best it was a school for hieratic manners… it contains within itself something that is the deadly enemy of all good manners."[30] It has ruined health and taste; therefore, it is necessary to analyze what it means and "what lies hidden behind, beneath and within it."[31] For this, Nietzsche sets out towards the opposed ideal, namely the ascetic reverse of the ascetic ideal whose goal is to stop believing in the truth as the will to truth: "*there is a new problem as well*: that of the *value* of truth – the will to truth needs a critique… the value of truth is tentatively to be *called into question*."[32] This critique of the value of truth leads to *the denial of any denial of sensuality*. This critical attitude would lead the ascetic ideal to its sensual presupposition (Dionysian, as the Nietzsche of *The Birth of Tragedy* would say). It fights not the ascetic ideal itself, "but at its outworks, its apparel and disguise, at the way the idea temporarily harden, solidifies, become dogmatic – science liberates what life is in it by denying what is exoteric in this ideal."[33] It is about fighting against the old dualism of Plato (the great slanderer of life) and Homer (its involuntary idolater), defeating both to affirm the anti-metaphysical catastrophe following the fall "of a two-thousand-year discipline in truth-telling, which finally forbids itself the *lie entailed in the belief in God*."[34] Nietzsche stands against the ascetic ideal, which, for him, offered an abstract 'No! to life' and a 'will [to] nothingness' as an answer to the absurdity of suffering, as a semblance of sense in front of the non-sense of the life, to which it has corresponded "a new suffering with it, deeper, more internal, more poisonous suffering, suffering that gnawed away more intensely at life: it brought to suffering within the perspective of *guilt*."[35] Nietzsche opposes a categorical 'No!' to this false ascetic ideal based on a will that led to

> this hatred of the human, and even more of the animalistic, even more of the material, this horror of the senses, of reason itself, this fear of happiness and beauty, this longing to get away from appearance, transience, growth, death, wishing, longing itself.[36]

This kind of 'will of nothingness' is nothing else than an aversion to life to which Nietzsche responds with an invitation 'not to will' that reopens the doors to intelligent and intellectual sensuality.

Perhaps Nietzsche's *On the Genealogy of Morality* can still be functional to a somaesthetic philosophy aiming to overcome the contemplative paradigm of aesthetic disinterest that has divided eros and beauty, and it can be so because Nietzsche is not *at the beginning* of modern aesthetic reflection but *at its end*, precisely at the moment when contemporary somaesthetics began its path of aesthetic education as self-cultivating refine-

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[30] Ibid., 108.
[31] Ibid., 109.
[32] Ibid., 113.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibid., 118.
[35] Ibid., 120.
[36] Ibid.

ment, self-stylization, and self-fashioning, in view of the realization of a form of conscious hedonism resulting from *asceticism as ethical cultivation of himself.*

4.

In order to advance the project of somaesthetics as a critical and meliorative study of the experience and use of one's soma in perception, performance and creative self-fashioning aimed at bringing philosophy back to its original practice as an art of living, there remain some urgent questions. If the transition from individual self-cultivation refinement to collective refinement is possible, can we say that the Western tradition – as it is outlined in *Ars Erotica*, including the modern anti-sexual aesthetic that we need to overcome – has within itself the subversive elements needed to proceed towards these paradigm shifts? Could we define these changes as forms of emancipation and liberation from old and antiquated, predominant cultural structures? In short, does the Western lifestyle, compared to the other global styles analyzed by Shusterman in the book, preserve (and favor the adoption of) an emancipatory attitude? This is not the place to give an exhaustive answer to these questions that bring to the fore one of the main programs of the future of somaesthetics: that of analyzing the passage from the individual consciousness to a collective one, i.e., to society, and then of returning from this collective to the individual again. If the work plan remains that of separating virtue from truth to make it join again its unity with happiness, then the decisive stage proposed in *Ars Erotica* – that of combining eros and beauty – should also be able to answer the questions we have set out above. *Ars Erotica*'s global somaesthetic anthropology promises to be very fruitful in this sense when it is able to account for the social and collective plan of the subjects involved in the art of lovemaking. This would be further proof of the cultural character of sexuality as an art of love that is not based solely on the biological factor. The complexity of the concept of love in ancient Greek culture – inasmuch as there are 12 types of love in ancient Greek: *Eros* (passionate, sensual, desiring), *Philia* (friendship, trust and loyalty), *Agape* (pure love without any expectation), *Storge* (love for family or parents), *Philautia* (love for oneself, to perfect oneself), *Pragma* (giving of love without having to receive as a commitment), *Mania* (the unconditional desire to love and possess), *Charis* (idyllic love within physical and spiritual joy), *Pothos* (fleeting infatuation), *Thelema* (passion for work or spiritual pursuits), *Himeros* (irrepressible desire, primitive and impulsive physical desire), *Anteros* (reciprocal marital love) – helps one understand the strictly cultural elements of sexual life which underly the performatively artistic dimensions of sex capable of realizing the educational model proposed by Shusterman's project. We like to think that a somesthetic program that sweeps away the misunderstandings of a supposed gap between eros and beauty, characteristic of modern aesthetics, can not only clarify the terms of their reunion but also offer the space for an *amiable subversion* of somatic consciousnesses asleep and subdued by repressive forms of domination.

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Leonardo Distaso's most recent research has had as reference authors such as Nietzsche, Benjamin, Adorno, Marcuse and Lukács, and the context of the Frankfurt School, in a reflection on modern art and aesthetics and their relations with society. Issues such as the relationship between art / life and art / society, as well as investigations on the different relationships between figurative arts and music, and between vision and listening, have involved a plexus of problems that start from the meaning of the Shoa and anti-Semitism for contemporary thought. The recent critical research on the figure of Richard Wagner fits into this context. Among the latest publications: *Il veleno del commediante. Arte, utopia e antisemitismo in Richard Wagner* (2017); *Textura rerum. Parvenza apparenza appariscenza* (2015); *Estetica e differenza in Wittgenstein* (2014); *Musica per l'abisso. La via di Terezìn. Un'indagine storica ed estetica 1933-1945* (2014); *Da Dioniso al Sinai. Saggi di filosofia della musica* (2011); *The Paradox of Existence. Philosophy and Aesthetics in the Young Schelling* (2004).

SYMPOSIUM

Beauty between Repression and Coercion:
A Few Thoughts on Richard Shusterman's *Ars Erotica: Sex and Somaesthetics in the Classical Arts of Love*

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Love and sex are central notions in all reflection on humanity. And for obvious reasons, too. These notions defy any simple definition because they connote and reference an almost innumerable multitude of things. Moreover, these notions are highly amenable to social factors and have always been enmeshed in plentiful limitations, prohibitions, and precepts. Consequently, when pondering them, thinkers inevitably find themselves speaking from particular political and cultural discourses and cannot possibly retain a neutral distance to their object of research. Another noteworthy thing is that all considerations of sexual life provoke questions about modernity and postmodernity in this respect. The profound changes that have swept across this sphere of human life over the last 150 years prompt historical – or, to use Michel Foucault's term, genealogical – research aimed at establishing what factors made them possible or, even, what brought them about.

In his *Ars Erotica: Sex and Somaesthetics in the Classical Arts of Love*, Richard Shusterman addresses an extremely fraught and intricate theme which requires not only a thorough knowledge of the issue itself but also a proficient scrutiny of all the related factors mentioned above. In focusing on the art of love, Shusterman inexorably had to confront, on the one hand, Michel Foucault's groundbreaking *The History of Sexuality* and, on the other, the vast tradition of psychoanalytical writings on sexuality with their fundamental premise of repression, that is, of the problem being expunged from the consciousness of individuals. In this paper, I argue that Shusterman's perspective on *ars erotica* represents an original alternative to these two towering frameworks. Shusterman's immense erudition in his explorations of the discourse on eroticism in various cultures is strictly subordinated to his theoretical design, which stems from his conception of somaesthetics.

Shusterman defines somaesthetics, an original interdisciplinary project which he has been developing for many years now, as "concerned with the critical study and meliorative cultivation of how we experience and use the living body (or soma) as a site of sensory appreciation (aesthesis) and creative self-fashioning."[1] Two elements of this definition are pivotal in the context of *ars erotica*. Firstly, somaesthetics investigates the ways in which we experience our bodies and construct them (in and through self-fashioning). The body (soma) is living matter which may be shaped with more or less skill. Emphatically, the form the body adopts to a large extent depends on our consciousness, including our bodily awareness. Secondly, the body is a locus of meliorative interventions. Perfecting our bodiliness entails perfecting all our relationships with our natural and social environments.

Importantly, as I have discussed in detail elsewhere,[2] Shusterman's framework stands in opposition to psychoanalysis and biopolitics; most crucially in that somaesthetics celebrates the body as a potential vehicle for both individual and social emancipation. In all its various incarnations,[3] biopolitics insists that bodiliness is a site where power institutes its rules to produce what Foucault calls "docile bodies."[4] Of course, the rules governing the subjection of the body to power may be determined in more or less democratic ways, but this does not prevent the body either from having no subjectivity or from being passive, at least in the sense that the only thing it can do is to yield or to try to avoid some external pressures.

In its various iterations, psychoanalysis offers highly complicated models of corporeality, starting with Freud's classic framework, where bodily drives – the sexual drive and the death drive – are subject to complex social processing, which leads to the formation of identity. This model has since been recast in many ways, mainly as a result of the debate over how much the mechanisms of repression and sublimation are intrinsic to human nature and to what extent they are bound to culture and society. In the latter case, the emancipation of the body from external restrictions and the liberation of drives from repression mechanisms must bring forth radical social change.

This vision was propounded by Herbert Marcuse, who envisaged a social utopia of complete liberation from economic and sexual constraints.[5] While Marcuse's framework parallels somaesthetics in the sense that both models foreground the body as a vehicle for emancipation, the two differ considerably in all other respects. Like advocates of biopolitics, when Marcuse calls for change in the principles of social life, he means for the body to *become liberated* rather than *liberating itself.* The potential of corporeality is released in and through revolutionary endeavors against the social order in place:

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[1] Richard Shusterman, *Body Consciousness: A Philosophy of Mindfulness and Somaesthetics* (2008), 1.

[2] Leszek Koczanowicz, "Toward a Democratic Utopia of Everydayness: Microphysics of Emancipation and Somapower," *History of European Ideas* 46:8 (2020).

[3] Thomas Lemke, *Biopolitics: An Advanced Introduction* (2011).

[4] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of Prison* [1975] (1995), 135-169.

[5] Herbert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization: A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud* (1954).

> This qualitative change must occur in the needs, in the infrastructure of man (itself a dimension of the infrastructure of society): the new direction, the new institutions and relationships of production, must express the ascent of needs and satisfactions very different from and even antagonistic to those prevalent in the exploitative societies. Such a change would constitute the instinctual basis for freedom which the long history of class society has blocked.[6]

Somaesthetics does not seek such a global transformation and tends to locate the potential of melioristic metamorphosis in the ethical and aesthetic betterment of bodiliness.

Shusterman's monumental study overawes the reader with its wealth of facts and analyses. Shusterman is admirably at ease traversing multiple classical cultures: ancient Greek, Judaic, Chinese, Islamic, Indian, Japanese, and European medieval and Renaissance. From this perspective, the book lends itself to being read and interpreted as a model piece of cultural-studies research. *Ars erotica* is examined in a wide-ranging context of culture, social rules, fine arts, and literature. Global references and comparative insights shed additional light on sexual practices in these cultures. For example, it is particularly illuminating to find out that Japanese and Islamic *ars erotica* took shape after the so-called axial age, that is, the period when various cultures discovered transcendence. Remote though the art of love and transcendence may seem, Shusterman masterfully bridges the gap between them in order to explain the "belated, derivative status" of Japanese and Islamic erotic theories.[7]

Shusterman's book abounds with such unobvious and surprising observations. I believe that his revision of the Foucault-disseminated notion that the West and the East vastly differ in their attitude to sex is particularly significant. Foucault made this influential distinction in the first volume of *The History of Sexuality*:

> Historically, there have been two great procedures for producing the truth of sex. On the one hand, the societies—and they are numerous: China, Japan, India, Rome, the Arabo-Moslem societies—which endowed themselves with an *ars erotica*. In the erotic art, truth is drawn from pleasure itself, understood as a practice and accumulated as experience; pleasure is not considered in relation to an absolute law of the permitted and the forbidden, nor by reference to a criterion of utility, but first and foremost in relation to itself; it is experienced as pleasure, evaluated in terms of its intensity, its specific quality, its duration, its reverberations in the body and the soul.[8]

On the other hand, "[o]n the face of it at least, our civilization possesses no *ars erotica*. In return, it is undoubtedly the only civilization to practice a *scientia sexualis*; or rather, the only civilization to have developed over the centuries procedures for telling the truth of sex which are geared to a form of knowledge-power strictly opposed to the art of

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[6] Herbert Marcuse, *An Essay on Liberation* (1969), 4.

[7] Richard Shusterman, *Ars Erotica: Sex and Somaesthetics in the Classical Arts of Love* (2021), 250.

[8] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: Volume I. An Introduction* [1976] (1978)Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, 57.

initiations and the masterful secret: I have in mind the confession."[9] In his study, Shusterman questions Foucault's differentiation and points out that:

> Chinese theories of lovemaking … deploy sexual pleasure to serve overarching health and medical aims. Far from unrestrained hedonism, China's *ars erotica* is deeply concerned with matters of religion, ritual, government and household management, and ethical self-cultivation through disciplined self-regulation. Lovemaking, moreover, has ontological import. It not only furthers life through procreation, but its creative union of opposite sexes symbolizes (as it enacts) the fruitful cosmic unity of complementary opposites (like heaven and earth) that produces the rich manifold of things.[10]

In the chapter devoted to the art of love in ancient China, Shusterman comprehensively justifies his position by citing texts directly focused on love and sex alongside philosophical treatises. His critique of Foucault's stance concerns not only China but implicitly extends to the other cultures Foucault evokes in *The History of Sexuality* but which, as Shusterman asserts, produced their own modes of corporeal development on the basis of their *ars erotica*.

Crucially, the matter at stake is more serious than simply correcting a mistaken factual view, likely resulting from Foucault's limited access to original sources and reliance on the not necessarily dependable secondary literature. The point is that, for Foucault, the idea that the West has a unique attitude to sex is centrally important, for example, because it helps him show that Christian practices – primarily confession – became axial components of Western culture. As argued by Joel Whitebook,[11] there is a paramount sequence at work that has the practice of confession at its root: "Through suggestiveness and stimulation of the confessional process, pastoral power implants particular desires in the penitent's soul so that it can later take hold of and manipulate them."[12] Of course, the transition from confession to a *scientia sexualis* in the framework of generally understood modernity triggers the emergence of biopower, which:

> seeks to create a population whose sexual and familial life is organized in such a way it will reliably reproduce itself and socialize the young in a way which will provide workers and consumers for the economy. Through the interventions of its regulatory agencies, it seeks to bring about changes that will steer the population into conformity with its statistically determined requirements.[13]

Channeled through the institution of confession, the unique attitude to sex in Western culture has fostered a society in which biological life itself, of which sex is one of the major expressions, has become an object of regulation – of biopower. Psychoanalysis has played a prominent role in *scientia sexualis* by introducing an ostensibly neutral language in

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[9] Ibid., 58.

[10] Shusterman, *Ars Erotica*, 23.

[11] Joel Whitebook, "Michel Foucault: A Marcusean in Structuralist Clothing," *Thesis Eleven* 71:1 (2002).

[12] Ibid., 58.

[13] Ibid.

which restrictions imposed on sexual life (and, in more general terms, on desires as such) are considered natural and intrinsically human.

Shusterman's book does not offer as elaborate a conception of society grounded in and at the same time grounding sexual life as Foucault's account. In the preface, Shusterman briefly outlines his connection with Foucault: "Foucault … insisted that this lived aesthetics had a crucial somatic dimension in which one's sexuality (one's erotic desires and the way one expressed and managed them) played an important role."[14] Yet, while highlighting his indebtedness to Foucault, Shusterman underscores points of difference too, such as Foucault's preoccupation with the culture and society of the West. Shusterman also references their disparate personal erotic experiences, suggesting that his book can be read as complementary to Foucault's study:

> Foucault always arouses my admiration for his powerful work as an advocate, activist, and theorist of homosexual erotic life. His trailblazing study of eroticism, however inspiringly insightful, understandably reflects his own personal interests and enthusiasms, as it should. Because my erotic experience has been mostly heterosexual, this book presents a somewhat different perspective than Foucault's, but one that hopes to complement rather than replace his impressive work.[15]

Shusterman is certainly right to point to a certain complementarity of his *Ars Erotica* vis-à-vis Foucault's *The History of Sexuality*, but the two studies actually produce quite divergent accounts of the body, society, and their mutual relations. However, this overall perspective must be gleaned and pieced together from Shusterman's remarks scattered across the text, as well as from his previous works.

Vital to this venture is the "beauty hypothesis," which appears at the beginning of Shusterman's book and is evoked in its concluding remarks. It holds that:

> [a]fter millennia during which beauty was intimately linked to eros, and indeed conceptually defined by it, as the object that inspired desiring love, the eighteenth century witnessed, in the birth of the field of aesthetics, a new discourse of beauty. An important aspect of this new aesthetic discourse was that beauty should be appreciated through an attitude of disinterested contemplation rather than an erotic desire for union. If the divorce of beauty from eros was a factor that helped generate modern aesthetics, it is possible that currents of materialism and libertinism in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries helped generate the divorce by making it far more difficult to maintain the vision of erotic love as an uplifting spiritual desire for union of immaterial, virtuous souls. If it was harder to distinguish love from lust, then it was safer, for high-minded or pious thinkers, to separate beauty from eros and its associations with carnal appetites for sensual delights and union. If Europe invented modern aesthetics to displace beauty's earlier discourse of love, then modern aesthetics' neglect of *ars erotica* seems perfectly logical, however unfortunate and misguided.[16]

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[14] *Ars Erotica*, xi.
[15] Ibid., xii.
[16] Ibid., 29.

This beauty hypothesis is consequential in several respects. For one, it holds Shusterman's book together and encourages one to read it as a justification of the first part of the hypothesis. Beauty is what connects the iterations of *ars erotica* in various cultures; more precisely speaking, they share a desire for beauty corporeally understood as a certain state of the body which generates certain states of mind. Very intricate depictions of sexual activities, courtship conventions, coveted relationships, emotions, and excitations coalesce in this desire to attain beauty. This was eloquently conveyed by Plato in his love-focused dialogues, such as *Phaedrus* and *The Banquet*, but, as Shusterman competently argues, the craving for beauty is ubiquitous, surfacing in countless variants in all cultures. As its invaluable asset, Shusterman's book meticulously reproduces the aesthetic elements of numerous manifestations of the art of love. Shusterman is definitely on the mark when he observes that Foucault never ventures beyond formal analysis in his grand work:

> Foucault provides detailed descriptions of various erotic choices and the criteria governing them but does not explain what makes these choices specifically aesthetic. The mere use of formal principles or stylization does not entail distinctively aesthetic forms or styles; nor does mere orderly or moderate behavior.[17]

How the idea of beauty functions in respective cultures, and within one culture, in various authors and thinkers is what Shusterman attends to with utmost care. Furthermore, he shows how aesthetics dovetails with ethics. Rather than being informed by purely hedonistic motives, the art of love, whether in the East or in the West, is always an exercise in self-discipline and/or a touchstone of human relationships.

The thought of ethics brings us to the second part of the beauty hypothesis, which concerns the parting of ways between beauty and bodiliness at the onset and rise of modernity. To comprehend the full meaning of this part of the hypothesis, one must grasp the difference between somaesthetics and Foucault's aesthetics of existence. The two projects are essentially divergent in that the aesthetics of existence is, above all, an exercise in self-discipline, whose aesthetic dimension lies in turning one's life into a work of art. This approach can be traced back to ancient Greece: "This elaboration of one's own life as a personal work of art, even if it obeyed certain collective canons, was at the centre, it seems to me, of moral experience, of the will to morality in Antiquity."[18] This idea reappears in modernity as an expression of a conscious relation to the self and the attitude "of acting and behaving that at one and same time marks a relation of belonging and presents itself as a task."[19]

Though also emphasizing the interconnectedness of ethics and aesthetics in respect to bodiliness, the somaesthetic approach is radically different. The difference results from the pragmatist idea of amelioration and development as pivotal to understanding the potential of the body. For this reason, Shusterman's profound explorations of the role of *ars erotica* in various cultures consistently highlight how the search for beauty is inscribed in

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17 Ibid., 55.
18 Michel Foucault, *Politics, Philosophy, Culture: Interviews and Other Writings 1977-1984* (1988), 49.
19 Michel Foucault, *Ethics, Subjectivity and Truth* (1997), 309.

ethical, social, and even medical discourses. The desire to experience beauty is the binding element that organizes all these discourses or, to use John Dewey's wording, "rounds them up" and imbues them with unique completeness.[20] The remarkable philosophical accomplishment of Shusterman's book lies in mobilizing such a vast and diversified material to show that the aesthetic value bound up with desire promotes the somaesthetic development of the body. Moreover, the volume effectively evinces the immense methodological potential of somaesthetics by showing that it is perfectly applicable to an array of humanities and social sciences as a useful analytical and interpretive tool.

Notably, the beauty hypothesis has implications for understanding (post)modern society. Shusterman persuasively argues that, in the classical period, the art of love realized the value of beauty rooted in corporeal desire in both Western and Eastern cultures. There is no room in this model for either repression or a system of cold rules for classifying and, ultimately, normalizing sexual behavior. However, what happens to the art of love at the dawn of modernity, when, in line with the beauty hypothesis, a split takes place between beauty and desire, between the corporeal and the sublime? It is not a reviewer's task to answer this question, but, without a doubt, to examine this issue, somaesthetics would have to engage with political thought, which could reveal the complicated relations between the body and modernity.

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SYMPOSIUM

Sex, Emancipation, and Aesthetics:
Ars Erotica and the Cage of Eurocentric Modernity
Response to Botha, Distaso, and Koczanowicz

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1.

In an interview, two years after publishing the introductory volume of his *Histoire de la sexualité* (*La Volonté de savoir*), Michel Foucault boldly claimed that the future of philosophy depended on looking beyond its European home. "It is the end of the era of occidental philosophy," Foucault declared to his priestly interlocutors on his 1978 visit to a Zen temple in Japan. "Thus, if there is to be a philosophy of the future, it must be born outside of Europe or it must be born as a consequence of encounters and impacts (*percussions*) between Europe and non-Europe."[1] Although he had already celebrated Asian *ars erotica* in contrast to the West's *scientia sexualis*, Foucault did not explore the practices and discourses of those erotic arts in his subsequent work on the history of sexuality. Instead he confined himself to Europe, going back to the Greeks and developing his inquiry into Roman and ultimately Christian theorizing concerning sex. Overcoming that severe limitation was a key motivation for my writing *Ars Erotica*.

There were two good reasons for Foucault's concentration on European sexuality. First, he was primarily concerned with understanding contemporary Western culture's problematic attitudes toward sex. He sought to explain the stubborn discomforts "We 'Other Victorians'" still have with sex by showing the error of the conventional Freudian repression thesis and replacing it with a theory of discursive power networks focused on the truth of sex (among them psychoanalysis). These networks have their potent historical

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[1] Michel Foucault, "Michel Foucault et le zen: un sejour dans un temple," in *Dits et Ecrits* (1994), vol. 2, 622-3. It is worth noting how Foucault's rhetoric ignores and occludes the American option by simply equating occidental philosophy with European philosophy, identifying "the crisis of occidental thought" with the fact that "European thought is at a turning point" as a result of "the end of [European] imperialism" (622).

roots in the Christian pastoral tradition of confession (with its array of sexual sins) that itself has roots in Greek philosophy's ascetic ideologies and techniques of self-knowledge through self-exposure to a significant and worthy other, often an older intimate person. Such a relationship was traceable to the young beloved/older lover (*eronemos/erastes*) bond in ancient Athens. This Christian but Greek-rooted pastoral focus can explain why Foucault never investigates Old Testament sexual discourse, despite its obvious influence on the Christian theorists he studiously examines and who helped forge that crucial European pastoral tradition. The title of Leszek Koczanowicz's insightful text in this symposium, "Beauty between Repression and Coercion," deftly signals both Foucault's essential politico-theoretical agenda of displacing Freud's repression theory with his own theory of coercive normalization and control through biopower, and also (through the orientation to beauty) the somaesthetic alternative for sexual emancipation that is neither psychoanalysis nor biopolitics.

The other likely reason for Foucault confining himself to European ideas was his greater familiarity with this tradition. To venture beyond European ideas meant going far beyond his comfort zone as a scholar-thinker, evidently too far for him to make the effort. Foucault had already shown intellectual courage in going beyond his established expertise in modern European thought to explore with admirable depth the sexual thought of ancient Western culture, though his inquiries were largely guided by his preoccupation with contemporary culture's biopower and its deployment of truth and heteronormative ideology. Foucault thus remained within the cage of European culture, and, one might argue, largely within the problematics of Western modernity. He could only peek through the bars of that cage into Asian cultures, which he romanticized as an exotic other rather than studied with the dedication and brilliance that he elsewhere displayed.

I speak of a cage rather than a prison because cages do not always entail involuntary imprisonment that precludes leaving the cage. Cages can also serve as protective confinement from foreign dangers outside the cage (as in shark cage diving, where the divers are protected by being caged). Keeping confined to one's expertise provides a cage of protection from error and folly (cardinal sins for the social field of academic research whose ideals are truth and respectability). Moreover, such confinement protects against temptations of curiosity that, in our culture of quantitative performance, would distract us from maximizing our research output through focused use of the research capital we already possess.

In examining the insightful contributions of Botha, Distaso, and Koczanowicz to this symposium on *Ars Erotica*, I see traces of the cage of European modernity and its dominant philosophical mainstream. Discussion of the non-Western erotic traditions is minimal, yet those traditions form the bulk of *Ars Erotica*. Botha's and Distaso's papers deal much more with Kant and Nietzsche than with Foucault and the historical erotic discourses he and I analyzed. Kant and Nietzsche belong only to my book's short "speculative postscript," which briefly explores the hypothesis that the birth of aesthetics in modern times came with a decoupling of beauty from erotic desire and lovemaking. This

hypothesis could help explain why modern aesthetics does not offer an *ars erotica* or consider lovemaking an aesthetic enterprise.

Maintaining that we need to look beyond the dominant tradition of modern aesthetics in constructing an aesthetic *ars erotica*, my book devotes long chapters to the sexual theories of seven influential premodern cultures. Instead, from the sturdy cage of European modernity in which Kant and Nietzsche are towering figures, Distaso and Botha argue that we can interpret these masters as somehow supportive of a robustly aesthetic *ars erotica*. Distaso makes the case for both Kant and Nietzsche; Botha for Nietzsche alone. I recognize the genius of Kant and Nietzsche and their rightful place in modernity's aesthetic pantheon, just as I appreciate the interpretive ingenuity and scholarship of Botha and Distaso. However, the value of Kant and Nietzsche for an aesthetics of lovemaking remains questionable and quite limited compared to what we find beyond Europe. Why, then, focus again on reinterpreting them instead of more profitably looking elsewhere?

No matter how we interpret Kant's notion of aesthetic disinterestedness, how could we enlist him to guide our *ars erotica* given his restrictive views on sex? He defines sexual union as "the reciprocal use that one human being makes of the sexual organs and capacities of another."[2] This "is either a *natural* use (by which procreation of a being of the same kind is possible) or an *unnatural* use, and unnatural use takes place either with a person of the same sex or with an animal of a nonhuman species." Since, for Kant, such "unnatural" and "also unmentionable vices, do wrong to humanity in our own person, there are no limitations or exceptions whatsoever that can save them from being repudiated completely." Moreover, since "the natural use that one sex makes of the other's sexual organs is enjoyment, for which one gives itself up to the other, [in sexual activity] a human being makes himself into a thing, which conflicts with the right of humanity in his own person." For Kant, "[t]here is only one condition under which this is possible: that while one person is acquired by the other *as if it were a thing*, the one who is acquired acquires the other in turn; for in this way each reclaims itself and restores its personality. But acquiring a member of a human being is at the same time acquiring the whole person, since a person is an absolute unity."

Marriage, conceived as reciprocal possession, is therefore the only legitimate realm for sex, even if sex still condemns the couple to thinghood. Kant concludes,

> it is not only admissible for the sexes to surrender and to accept each other for enjoyment under the condition of marriage, but it is possible for them to do so *only* under this condition. That this *right against a person* is also *akin to a right to a thing* rests on the fact that if one of the partners in a marriage has left or given itself into someone else's possession, the other partner is justified, always and without question, in bringing its partner back under its control, just as it is justified in retrieving a thing.

A somaesthetics of sex should aim at empowering people to be emancipated, enriched, and enriching somatic subjectivities, not bodies as things restricted to heteronormative marital use and owned by one's spouse.

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[2] Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals* (1996), 61. For subsequent Kant quotations, see ibid., 62.

I turn now to Nietzsche, whom I frequently enlist as a somaesthetic ally and forefather of somaesthetics, not only because of his emphasis on the body but also for his central theme of self-fashioning or creatively stylizing oneself.[3] In *Ars Erotica* I again invoke Nietzsche as "opposing [the modern anti-erotic aesthetic tradition] by ridiculing its prudishness" and its disinterestedness thesis, while "recognizing that erotic 'sensuality' belongs to the generative roots of the 'aesthetic condition.'"[4] However, I regretfully note that he ultimately "conforms to the anti-erotic tradition" in not proposing an art of lovemaking or even defending the idea of lovemaking as an aesthetic art but instead insisting that the sexual impulse should be sublimated for it to achieve true artistic character. Warning artists "how harmful sexual intercourse can be" to their efforts,[5] Nietzsche urges sublimating the sexual impulse in artistic creation rather than in artfully performing the sexual act with sensitive, reflective, meliorative aesthetic care.[6]

In short, while constituting a far better ally than Kant, Nietzsche provides inadequate support for my aims in *Ars Erotica*. Although he sees an intimate link between the erotic and the aesthetic, Nietzsche ultimately advocates a relationship of aesthetic sublimation of sexual excitement rather than one of aesthetic artistry in sexual performance. His notion of *sôphrosunê*, the focus of Catherine Botha's paper, relates to the same aesthetic demand for sensible sublimation, in which the term "sensible" means not only relating to the senses (hence also to sensuality) but also being sensible in the sense of reasonably measured, moderate, or temperate. This ambiguity is reflected in Nietzsche's somaesthetic advocacy "of an ever greater spiritualization and multiplication of the senses" (WP 820), an advocacy I commended in *Performing Live* (PL 152), though noting it remains "far too vague" and abstract to be adequate for a pragmatic somaesthetics. His eroticism similarly remains too abstract and sublimated; the Dionysian frenzy he believes indispensable to aesthetic experience and that derives "above all [from] the frenzy of sexual excitement" should be mastered by the Apollonian moment of *sôphrosunê* for the creation of a work of fine art, not for the refined, artful movements of physical lovemaking, which we find in Asian *ars erotica*.[7]

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[3] See Richard Shusterman, *Performing Live: Aesthetic Alternatives for the Ends of Art* (2000), 147-8, 154, 204-12; *Body Consciousness: A Philosophy of Mindfulness and Somaesthetics* (2008), 49-51; *Thinking Through the Body: Essays in Somaesthetics* (2012), 145-6. Hereafter these texts will be abbreviated as PL, BC, and TTB respectively.

[4] Shusterman, *Ars Erotica: Sex and Somaesthetics in the Classical Arts of Love* (2021), 395; hereafter abbreviated in the text as AE.

[5] Cited in AE 395 from Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future* (2002), 80-1; hereafter abbreviated in the text as BGE.

[6] In another passage of his *Nachlass*, Nietzsche similarly explains, "A relative chastity, a prudent caution on principle regarding erotic matters, even in thought, can belong to the grand rationale of life even in richly endowed and complete natures. This principle applies especially to artists, it is part of their best wisdom of life." See Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power* (1967), section 815; hereafter abbreviated in the text as WP, with references to section numbers.

[7] "If there is to be art, if there is to be any aesthetic doing and seeing, one physiological condition is indispensable: frenzy. Frenzy must first have enhanced the excitability of the whole machine; else there is no art. All kinds of frenzy, however diversely conditioned, have the strength to accomplish this: above all, the frenzy

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Besides the sublimated abstraction and vagueness of Nietzsche's erotic theory, with its lack of pragmatic, melioristic methods of lovemaking, his value for constructing a somaesthetically satisfying *ars erotica* is diminished because of his questionable attitude towards women. Although interpretive ingenuity may manage to rescue Nietzsche from charges of sexism, I am uneasy with repeated utterances that ring with sexist overtones, affirming woman's "instinct for the *secondary* role" (BGE 102) and claiming that any man

> who has depth, in his spirit as well as in his desires […] must conceive of woman as a possession, as property with lock and key, as something predestined for service and attaining her fulfilment in service – in this matter he must take his stand on […] Asia's superiority of instinct, as the Greeks formerly did: they were Asia's best heirs and pupils and, as is well known, from Homer to the age of Pericles, with the *increase* of their culture and the amplitude of their powers, also became step by step *more strict* with women, in short more oriental (BGE 166-7).

The strategy of my book was instead to condemn the sexism of classical Asian sexology while extracting its most aesthetically rewarding techniques and strategies of erotic performance for the enjoyment of both men and women, so that we could see how they might be reconstructed for effective use today and perhaps extended to new gender identities beyond the traditional binary of male/female.[8]

Kant and Nietzsche had further reasons for not venturing into the aesthetics of *ars erotica*. They had very little experience of physical lovemaking (Kant evidently had none at all, while Nietzsche's sex life seems a vacant mystery, where nothing is known for certain[9]). The Horatian motto *Sapere aude* ("Dare to know") that Kant hailed as expressing his Enlightenment ideal did not extend to a quest for their knowing in the biblical sense of carnal knowledge. Foucault by contrast was a boldly adventurous carnal knower with a distinctly developed erotic taste, even if some might find it too demanding, limited, or even morally suspect.[10]

In rejecting Kant as a guide for aesthetic eroticism and in noting Nietzsche's limitations in that role, I am not concluding that modern European philosophy has nothing valuable to offer *ars erotica*. While highlighting the dominant anti-erotic tradition of modern aesthetics, I noted two eighteenth-century materialist philosophers of the French Enlightenment who took a vivid interest in sexual matters and who in some way straddle the divide that Foucault suggests between *ars erotica* and *scientia sexualis*. I refer to Denis Diderot –

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of sexual excitement, this most ancient and original form of frenzy." Friedrich Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols* in *The Portable Nietzsche,* ed. Walter Kaufmann (1954), 518.

[8] Ancient cultures reveal a multiplicity of gender identities and roles beyond the simple male/female distinction.

[9] Currently there is considerable speculation about his being a homosexual, but no conclusively compelling evidence that he was. For a biography that presents the most extensive case for the gay thesis, see Joachim Kohler, *Zarathustra's Secret. The Interior Life of Friedrich Nietzsche* (2002).

[10] See my somaesthetic analysis of Foucault's views regarding contemporary sexual practices, including his advocacy of consensual S/M, in *Body Consciousness*, ch. 1, "Somaesthetics and Care of the Self: The Case of Foucault."

philosopher, art critic, author of erotic fiction, co-creator and chief editor of the influential *Encyclopédie* – and Julien Offray de La Mettrie, medical doctor, physiologist, philosopher, and author of poetic essays celebrating the pleasures of sex. La Mettrie's materialist sensualism was so scandalous that he was compelled to flee, first France and then Holland, to find refuge with Frederick the Great in Berlin, where he allegedly died by overeating a pheasant pâté. Despite their materialism and critique of traditional sexual morality, both Diderot and La Mettrie rejected sexual libertinism as corrupt, jaded, immoral, elitist exploitation, while Diderot also prudently distanced himself from La Mettrie's extreme hedonism.

Foucault's *History of Sexuality* ignores La Mettrie.[11] However, it does include one noteworthy mention of Diderot. Foucault invokes the "great chase after the truth of sex, the truth in sex"[12] by means of Diderot's *Les Bijoux Indiscrets*, an erotic novel concerning the Congo Sultan Mangogul, who is very curious about woman's sexuality and virtue, and especially concerned about the fidelity of his beloved mistress Mirzoza. By rubbing a magic ring and pointing it at any woman, the sultan is able to make the woman's vagina speak out her owner's sexual truth, thereby exposing the lies the woman has told with her mouth and thus creating embarrassed confusion for the woman but also for others closely connected to her (such as the unsuspecting lover or husband wrongly convinced of the woman's sexual fidelity[13]). If Diderot, like his fictional sultan, was curious about the mysteries of female sexuality (while feeling comfortably familiar with his own), Foucault hardly seems interested in female sexuality per se but instead is interested in inquiring about our culture's heightened interest in the individual's own sexuality and about what powers direct this interest and inquiry. Taking woman's sexualities and subjectivities more seriously than did Foucault was a central feature of my *Ars Erotica* project, as Botha and other commentators have realized.[14] The other two principal ways my work transcends the limits of Foucault's is by detailed study of non-Western erotic cultures and by in-depth analysis of *ars erotica*'s aesthetic features, as the symposiasts here recognize. The

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[11] The texts of La Mettrie focusing on eroticism are *L'école de la volupté* (1746) and *L'art de jouir* (1751). Towards the end of the former there is a stunning description of how to enjoy lovemaking in a dreamy, drowsy state when one is already sleepy from prior consummations. La Mettrie details how the woman enjoys the breathing of her sleeping lover and with closed eyes feigns sleep herself as her lover awakes to rediscover her naked charms, first with his eyes and then through touch, arousing her first gently and then with increased passion, at which point she opens her eyes and adds her energetic response to the passion as they move toward ecstatic climax.

[12] Foucault, *The History of Sexuality. Vol. 1: An Introduction* (1980), 79; hereafter abbreviated in the text as HS1.

[13] Denis Diderot, *Les Bijoux Indiscrets* (1748) translated as *The Indiscrete Toys*. The book's chapter 16 clearly points to Foucault's theme of the priestly interest for power through confession of sexual truth. When women find muzzles to silence their talking vaginas, the priests insist that the women "submit […] to the will of Brama […] to awaken [their] conscience […] by confessing the crimes [they] were not ashamed to commit." Diderot's writings (in fiction and philosophy) mix science and eroticism, anatomical reflections and colorful descriptions of erotic desires, seductive methods, and lovemaking (including same-sex couplings and even bestiality).

[14] See, for example, Line Joranger who critiques Foucault's neglect of women's sexuality, noting that "*Ars Erotica* is much more global, gender-sensitive, multicultural" in her review of the book in *Psychology of Women Quarterly* (2021).

difference of cultural scope is too obvious to warrant discussion, but the aesthetic difference between my *Ars Erotica* and Foucault's *History of Sexuality* deserves highlighting.

2.

Foucault clearly suggests that aesthetics is central to his study of sex because he characterizes his history through the notion of "aesthetics of existence," "the long history of these aesthetics of existence and these technologies of the self."[15] He speaks of Greek "aesthetics of existence […] [as] as a way of life" that shone with "the brilliance of beauty" through its "visibly beautiful shape" (HS2 89). However, there is no substantive discussion of the aesthetic principles or source of that beauty. We learn that that life's "moral value did not depend either on one's being in conformity with a code of behavior, or on an effort of purification, but on certain formal principles in the use of pleasures, in the way one distributed them, in the limits one observed, in the hierarchy one respected" (HS2 89). Foucault then relates this "aesthetics of existence" to a voluntary ascetic of "stylization" through "rarefaction of sexual activity"; "sexual moderation was an exercise of freedom that took form in self-mastery […] [as] self-restraint," "the necessary ascesis had the form of a battle to be fought […] [for] dominion of self over self" (HS2 91).

However, we get no real analysis of what the formal or stylizing principles were or in what sense they were aesthetic. Nor do we get an aesthetic analysis of the qualities and forms of pleasure that one had and used in one's sexual activities. Instead, Foucault focuses on "a 'quadri-thematics' of sexual austerity – formed around and apropos of the life of the body, the institution of marriage, relations between men, and the existence of wisdom" (HS2 21); "the concern with sexual austerity was endlessly reformulated" and served "to define an austere style in the practice of pleasures" (HS2 22, 24). With his one-sided emphasis on austerity, Foucault does not give us a proper appreciation of the aesthetic joys of sex, which, though more evident in Asian erotology, also existed within Greco-Roman culture, as *Ars Erotica* makes clear.

A key aim of my book is exploring the aesthetic dimensions of *ars erotica* to show how they could also serve ethical aims of care for self and others, thus providing an aesthetic education and refinement of character through erotic energy and practice that could have broader social and political benefits. All three symposiasts recognize the central role aesthetics plays in my somaesthetic approach to sex. Botha notes "nine key aesthetic features" that I delineate in *ars erotica*, in the book's general introductory chapter, while the subsequent chapters flesh out the concrete forms these principles take in the different premodern cultures I examine. Many of these forms depart from the sexual austerity on which Foucault focuses, even when they show similar ethical concerns of care for self and other. There is more to the pleasures and beauty of sex than the pleasures of self-mastery and victorious self-restraint. Cultivating such pleasures, moreover, has more than selfish

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[15] Foucault, *The History of Sexuality. Vol. 2: The Use of Pleasure* (1985), 11; hereafter abbreviated in the text as HS2.

effects. Even if Foucault's driving aim in his study of sexuality is not aesthetic but political, he should not shortchange the aesthetics of *ars erotica*.

The aesthetic power of shared erotic pleasures is key to the political, emancipatory dimension that both Distaso and Koczanowicz discern in my book and that I share with Foucault. Although the book's historical chapters trace how political factors (laws, institutions, wars, and religious conflicts) have shaped premodern sexual ideology and often constrained the paths of erotic pleasure, while also showing how systematic pursuit of such pleasures sometimes served as a form of resistance to conventional norms, I offer no detailed analysis of how a somaesthetics of sex could serve emancipatory political projects today. Koczanowicz and Distaso, though very sympathetic to this liberational strategy, understandably ask for further discussion. Pleasure and its sociopolitical dimensions have long been part of my pragmatist program in aesthetics. Two Parisian philosophers highlighted this democratic hedonic thrust already in *Pragmatist Aesthetics* (1992), one of them claiming that my revaluation of popular art imaginatively suggests "a *con-sensualist* society rather than a merely consensual one," a society whose democratic ideal is to afford egalitarian access to "pleasurable activities."[16] Although that book did not explore sex, some of its arguments for the pleasures of rap, rock, and embodiment could have been extended to sexual pleasures. They were surely in my mind at that time, though not explicitly in my conscious authorial ambitions; but nor was the articulation of my somaesthetic project.

The sociopolitical issues raised by Koczanowicz and Distaso require more extensive thought and detailed argument than I can deliver here, but let me address some of them, however briefly. In speaking of the aesthetic power of shared erotic pleasures as a tool for emancipatory happiness that is not only personal but more generally social and political, we need to understand the complex notion of shared pleasure in the public sphere. When two or more people enjoy pleasure together in sexual activity, this is only the first level of shared pleasure, the pleasure enjoyed by the direct participants. However, the pleasure that those participants enjoy radiates into feelings of satisfaction, well-being, or positive mood that influence the participants' attitudes and behavior in a constructive way as they emerge from their sexual experience into the social world. This positivity and its resultant actions create in turn a favorable, cheerful atmosphere that influences the feelings of those who were not directly involved in the erotic transaction but nonetheless benefit indirectly from its positive effects. Those who benefit need not have any direct contact at all with the satisfied lovers, because the beneficial atmosphere can extend from the positive attitudes of the lovers (call them A) and those that directly encounter their positivity (call them B) to other people (C) who encounter only those B people; and the affect recursively extends to others who encounter the positively affected C people. On the one hand, this notion of the radiation of erotically generated positive affect resembles Plato's famous

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[16] I cite here from Antonia Soulez, "Practice, Theory, Pleasure and the Forms of Resistance: Shusterman's *Pragmatist Aesthetics*," *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 16:1 (2002), 3. See also Rainer Rochlitz, "Esthétiques hédonistes," *Critique* 540 (1992), 353-73. These articles discuss my *Pragmatist Aesthetics: Living Beauty, Rethinking Art* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992).

image of how poetic beauty extends from the muse to the poet, then to the rhapsode and finally to the audience, like the way a magnet's positive pull affects a chain of iron rings. On the other hand, this recognition of the crucial social importance of indirect effects converges with Dewey's definition of the public. "The public consists of all those who are affected by the indirect consequences of transactions to such an extent that it is deemed necessary to have those consequences systematically cared for."[17]

This means that a happy con-sensualist society need not be one in which everyone would directly enjoy sexual pleasures, though everyone could indirectly benefit from the atmosphere created by such pleasures being freely enjoyed by those who wish to enjoy them. In my view, a happy society is one whose freedom means that attaining personal happiness is not an obligation, where unhappiness is not a stigma or a sin. In short, my vision of a good society reflects my pragmatist prejudice for pluralism and appreciation of difference. That is one reason why I do not share Kant's commitment to the necessary, universal validity of aesthetic judgment, and why Distaso need not worry that my somaesthetic approach would impose a set of ethical values that would preclude dissent. Somaesthetics, as I conceive it, is especially sensitive to pluralism and freedom rather than advocating a uniform right way of doing things. This pluralism reflects the somatic recognition that our bodies are often very different (with respect to age, gender, size, strength, health, etc.) and that one can perform the same bodily act or movement in a variety of different ways (for example initiating it from different body parts). In practical somaesthetic workshops, we explore these varieties so that individuals can find which option works best for them.

Appreciation of difference is central to what I've elsewhere presented as a three-pronged argument for participatory democracy based on the aesthetic values of enriched communicative experience and self-realization.[18] First, as humans are social creatures, an individual's free and active participation in democratic life make will make her experience richer and fuller in terms of self-fashioning in her aesthetics of existence. Second, if shared experience is richer and more fulfilling than an individual's isolated experience (recalling Dewey's "[s]hared experience is the greatest of human goods"[19]), then the free sharing of democratic life will further reward our lives with greater meaning and satisfaction. Third, democracy's advocacy of the free participation of different types of people (with different views and attitudes) provides an attractive diversity of culture that adds not only the spice of variety to communal life but also gives the individual a heightened sense of her own distinctive perspective and identity in pursuing her aesthetics of existence.

Distaso wonders whether our modern Western tradition contains "subversive elements" that can help us move from individual self-cultivation to more collective cultural refinement and emancipation. Properly answering this question requires more study and analysis than I can provide here, but one might start to look for such helpful elements (subversive or not) in Diderot, Schiller, and in some strands of Marxian thought, including

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[17] John Dewey, *The Public and its Problems* in *John Dewey: The Later Works* (1984), 245-6.

[18] Shusterman, *Practicing Philosophy: Pragmatism and the Philosophical Life* (1997), 96-7.

[19] Dewey, *Experience and Nature* (1981), 157.

that of Wilhelm Reich, the psychoanalytic sexologist whom Foucault mentions briefly but approvingly, and in Foucault himself.[20] I also appreciate the idea Distaso mentions of loosening the coercive bond that ties virtue to truth so that we can move ethics closer to beauty and happiness. Nietzsche seems an ally here through his critique of truth and the dangers that the relentless pursuit of truth presents for happiness and well-being. I likewise recognize (and have always insisted) that somaesthetic approaches are only *one* tool for dealing with problems that trouble the social world and the life of individuals. Effective progressive reform requires addressing economic and political dimensions of power relations, but somaesthetics can be enlisted to aid such broader economic, political, and social struggles.

Somaesthetic reflection and critique can reveal and highlight troubling discomforts resulting from social ills, while somaesthetic cultivation can sharpen perceptual and performative skills and build confidence to resist the power relations that generate these discomforts, enabling micro-emancipations that can also eventually build into macro-movements of freedom. *Kulturkritik* has always been part of somaesthetics. In fact, the project of somaesthetics arose in large part through *Kulturkritik* of consumer society's preoccupation with stereotype representations of bodily beauty and norms of well-being that serve the profit motives of the advertising, fashion, dieting, cosmetics, and cosmetic surgery industries rather than the genuine well-being and happiness of the public. The project began by highlighting experiential somaesthetics (and its inner felt beauty and pleasures) in contrast to the conventional emphasis on beautiful external appearance or representations defined by conventional stereotypes that reflect societal power relations and dominating norms. Experienced pleasures of beautiful subjective feelings offered a possible realm of freedom and happiness that could grow through reflective cultivation into greater skills for living well and that could build confidence and powers for taking on social challenges beyond the individual's private concerns.

3.

In pursuit of this project of creating a society with greater freedom and eudaimonia, Distaso rightly remarks "it would be interesting to develop a line of investigation putting somaesthetics into closer dialogue with strands of democratic Marxism and

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[20] Foucault admits the importance of Reich's "reinterpreting the deployment of sexuality in terms of a generalized repression; tying this repression to general mechanisms of domination and exploitation; and linking together the processes that make it possible to free oneself both of repression and of domination and exploitation. […] The importance of [Reich's 'historico-political critique of sexual repression'] and its impact on reality were substantial. But the very possibility of its success was tied to the fact that it always unfolded within the deployment of sexuality, and not outside or against it. The fact that so many things were able to change in the sexual behavior of Western societies without any of the promises or political conditions predicted by Reich being realized is sufficient proof that this whole sexual 'revolution,' this whole 'antirepressive' struggle, represented nothing more, but nothing less – and its importance is undeniable – than a tactical shift and reversal in the great deployment of sexuality. But it is also apparent why one could not expect this critique to be the grid for a history of that very deployment. Nor the basis for a movement to dismantle it" (HS1 131).

psychoanalysis." That line of inquiry has already begun with a somaesthetic study of Frantz Fanon and with Leszek Koczanowicz's insightful study of Herbert Marcuse's emancipatory theorizing in the quest of a non-repressive, happier social order through release from sexual repression and the forging of new forms of human relationships nourished by the erotic energy thus released.[21] Koczanowicz further advances this promising line in his symposium text, which astutely suggests that a somaesthetic approach to eroticism can provide a useful alternative both to Freud's repressive hypothesis and Foucault's biopolitical analysis of sex as pastorally inspired *scientia sexualis*.

I share Koczanowicz's sympathy and appreciation of Marcuse's theoretical efforts and utopian hopes for liberation toward greater individual and social happiness. I also share the view that Marcuse's notion of somatic liberation is defined in terms of the removal of external repression that would release "the instinctual basis for freedom which the long history of class society has blocked,"[22] so that the body, in Koczanowicz's words will "*become liberated* rather than *liberating itself*." In contrast, somaesthetics holds less faith in the uncultivated powers of the "instinctual basis" of our bodies (even in such allegedly instinctual matters as sex) but instead regards the soma as powerfully shaped by culture and believes that without such shaping our bodies would be miserably inept (even if some cultural shaping is unhappy misshaping). Somaesthetics therefore insists on working through the body as a tool of liberation that can be coordinated with and supported by activist efforts for sociopolitical change and that can reciprocally support them. Distinctively somatic *praxis* thus forms an important part of somaesthetics, which can also contribute to varieties of political praxis. Marcuse's program of body liberation provides no substantive discussion of the body, its powers, parts, and training.[23] Not only is Marcuse's account of the body too vague and abstract, but his aesthetic theory remains too limited to the bourgeois aesthetic tradition of formalism, disinterestedness, and art as "beautiful illusion (*schöner Schein*)" rather than performative action for it to satisfy my somaesthetic erotic agenda (AD 48).

Given this interest in developing a dialogue between somaesthetics and democratic Marxism, why not go back to Marx himself? Although I've rarely written about Marx, my pragmatist and somaesthetic projects have a clear relationship to Marx's thought, which scholars in mainland China have analyzed.[24] Here is not the place to explore this

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[21] See Shusterman, "Somaesthetics and Politics: Incorporating Pragmatist Aesthetics for Social Action," in *Beauty, Responsibility, and Power*, ed. Leszek Koczanowicz and Katarzyna Liszka (2014), 5-18; and Leszek Koczanowicz, "Toward a democratic utopia of everydayness: Microphysics of emancipation and somapower," *History of European Ideas* 46 (2020), 1122-33.

[22] Herbert Marcuse, *The Aesthetic Dimension* (1978), 4; hereafter abbreviated in the text as AD.

[23] Pierre Bourdieu offers a much more detailed, social class-centered, and largely Marxian-inspired discussion of the body and its incorporation of *habitus*, but, unhappily, his view is overly deterministic and pessimistic. See Pierre Bourdieu, "Belief and the body," in *The Logic of Practice* (1990). For an example of my critique of Bourdieu's deterministic outlook, see Richard Shusterman, "Pierre Bourdieu and Pragmatist Aesthetics: Between Practice and Experience," *New Literary History* 46:3 (2015), 435-57.

[24] Baogui Zhang, "The possibility of life becoming art: A comparison of Marx's and Shusterman's life aesthetics," (in Chinese) *International Aesthetics* (Beijing) 29 (2018), 213-28. 张宝贵,"生活成为艺术的可能性:马克

relationship in detail, but let me note some key elements of Marx's *1844 Manuscripts* that strongly resonate with central somaesthetic themes.[25] First is the overarching goal of cultivating the senses to make our human existence richer, more insightful, more satisfying, and more humane (an agenda outlined in my "Thinking through the Body. Educating for the Humanities" and in my initial "Somaesthetics: A Disciplinary Proposal"). With his materialist insistence that "*Sense-perception* (see Feuerbach) must be the basis of all science," Marx argues that "the sense of an object for me goes only so far as *my* sense goes" and that "the *senses* of the social man [formed and cultivated by a humane society] are *other* senses than those of the non-social man," who exists under oppressive capitalist society dominated by private property rather than by the social and humane (PPC 108). As somaesthetics views the soma (its habits, powers, and sensibilities) as essentially shaped by its social (and natural) environment and as currently constrained by contemporary society's excessive consumerism and obsession with image, so Marx complains that capitalism has corruptively impoverished our senses. "Private property has made us so stupid and one-sided that an object is only *ours* when we have it. […] In place of all these physical and mental senses there has therefore come the sheer estrangement of *all* these senses – the sense of *having*." Humanity has lost its "inner wealth" of sensuous social satisfactions to the barren logic of private ownership. "The transcendence of private property is therefore the complete *emancipation* of all human senses and attributes; but it is this emancipation precisely because these senses and attributes have become, subjectively and objectively, *human*" (PPC 106-7).

For Marx, what makes our experiences and actions human and social is *not* that they are done in the company of others but that they have "lost their *egotistical* nature" so that "the senses and enjoyments of other men have become my *own* appropriation" (PPC 107). Marx explains, "[o]nly through the objectively unfolded richness of man's essential being is the richness of subjective *human* sensibility (a musical ear, an eye for beauty of form – in short, *senses* capable of human gratification, senses affirming themselves as essential powers of *man*) either cultivated or brought into being" (PPC 108). In contrast to "*sense* caught up in crude practical need" which is "only a *restricted* sense," cultivation "is required to make man's *sense human*" so that our senses and sensibility develop "to the entire wealth" of human potential, to produce "man in this entire richness of his being," as "*profoundly endowed with all the senses*" (PPC 109). For Marx, as for somaesthetics, one's cultivated senses are not merely perceptive but also critical and reflective, and in this sense theoretical. He speaks of socialism providing us with "positive self-consciousness" that "proceeds from the *practically and theoretically sensuous consciousness* of man." "The senses have therefore become directly in their practice *theoreticians*" (PPC 107, 113).

思与舒斯特曼生活美学思想之比照,"*外国美学*,29 (2018), 213-28. Key to his comparative analysis are the themes of materialism, sensuous embodiment, meliorism, democratization, concern with the social shaping of experience, emphasis on praxis and changing reality rather than simply describing it.

[25] I confine my discussion to the manuscript "Private Property and Communism," in Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* and the *Communist Manifesto* (with Frederick Engels) (1988), 99-114; hereafter abbreviated in the text as PPC.

Marx shares with somaesthetics a pluralistic, holistic vision that seeks to reconcile presumed oppositions, "subjectivism and objectivism, spiritualism and materialism, activity and suffering" (PPC 109), or as Dewey would say "doing and undergoing," whose apparent opposition is synthesized in every experience. Among these false dichotomies, Marx claims, "[w]hat is to be avoided above all is the re-establishing [*fixieren*; fixating] of 'Society' as an abstraction *vis-à-vis* the individual. The individual *is the social being*" (PPC 105), as the soma is socially shaped and is eminently social; its social character is evident even in activities done alone rather than among others (for instance doing yoga in the privacy of one's room). As Marx writes, "[s]ocial activity and social consumption [*Genuß*, perhaps better translated here as 'enjoyment'] exist by no means only in the form of some *directly* communal activity" (PPC 104). Somaesthetic self-fashioning (like the self it fashions) is always already the product of social existence and is performed with social consciousness, no matter how narcissistic, unconventional, or antisocial. As Marx puts it: "my *own* existence *is* social activity, and therefore that which I make of myself, I make of myself for society and with the consciousness of myself as a social being" (PPC 105).

Finally, somaesthetics and Marx converge on the meliorist primacy of practice and the view that the problems of philosophy find their real solution not through pure theory but through changes of practice that theory can suggest but not accomplish in itself. For Marx, as for somaesthetics, "the resolution of the *theoretical* antitheses is *only* possible *in a practical* way […] Their resolution is therefore by no means merely a problem of knowledge, but a *real* problem of life, which *philosophy* could not solve precisely because it conceived this problem as *merely* a theoretical one" (PPC 109). That is why somaesthetics insists on the element of actual somatic practice and on including practical workshops for in its study and instruction. Reconciling the apparent antithesis of the sexual and the spiritual requires actual changes of practice and attitudes, not merely theoretical gestures to ancient cultures in which the erotic and the spiritual (at least theoretically) converged. However, the study of *ars erotica* in those ancient cultures provides helpful examples to inspire such change of attitudes and practice.

4.

Koczanowicz is correct that *Ars Erotica* does not present a comprehensive contemporary "conception of society grounded in and at the same time grounding sexual life." It could not do so because the book instead sought to explore a variety of different premodern cultures with importantly divergent religious, cultural, social, and political ideologies. To synthesize them in a single vision of society would be to flout or obscure the book's concern for the values (pragmatic as well as ethical and aesthetic) of respecting difference and appreciating variety. Oversimplification and ethnocentric assimilation plague our cultural understanding, even when we try to avoid it. Recognizing these dangers, I equally recognize the danger of shrinking from the search for important factors shared by the different erotic cultures that the book treats and that shape our own. I therefore conclude

by suggesting four such factors shared by the past and still maintaining much (though less) of their power at present.

These interrelated factors are patriarchy, progeny, possession, and penetration. Patriarchy would make little sense if there were no progeny or no knowledge of paternity as causing progeny. As knowledge of the seed-giving father's identity was always far less certain than knowing the birth-giving mother, patriarchy served as a structure to establish well-defined, stable, socially endorsed, and biologically-grounded paternity for progeny by means of greater control of women through male authority.[26] Paternity was a matter not only of knowledge but also of power through the patriarchal possession of one's progeny-producing wives or concubines and of one's children (whose labor and obedience the father possessed). Sexually, possession was understood as penetration, because penetration by the male genitals of the female's genitals was required for conception of progeny, unlike the spawning of fish, as Diderot's dreaming D'Alembert laments.[27] We speak of the male as possessing, "having" or "taking" the female by penetrating her body through the vagina or, by extension, another orifice. But topographically, it makes equal or more sense to say that the male organ is possessed, contained, held, or taken within the female's enveloping flesh. This notion of penetration-possession as active piercing for producing progeny helps shape the patriarchal principle of heteronormativity and masculine notions of potency and erotic action as conquest through stabbing-like violence. If, in cultures of the past, the demand for progeny prescribed heteronormativity, which in turn promoted gender binarism, today's new technologies of fertilization weaken the claim that offspring requires heterosexual coitus and thus weaken the gender binarism that heterosexuality implies.

However, despite the prominence of these factors, we find in premodern erotic thought a recognition of gender roles beyond the heterosexual binaries and an appreciation of erotic satisfactions beyond those of penetration and genital contact. If Abelard was too macho, too insecure, or too penitent to embrace those non-penetrative options (that Heloise longed to provide), other clerics, courtly lovers, and laypersons (Christian and non-Christian) were willing to accept them. Even the avowedly "impertinently genital" Montaigne recognized these non-genital, non-penetrative erotic pleasures (AE 375, 377-9). In this spirit, without advocating a utopian future free from "the deployment of sexuality" and its genital "sex-desire," somaesthetics converges with Foucault's pluralistic call for greater appreciation of "bodies and pleasures" in their polymorphic diversity of possibilities, for "inventing new possibilities of pleasure […] through the eroticization of the

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[26] The anthropologist Malinowski alleged that the matrilineal, non-patriarchal Trobiand society of Melanesia was "ignorant of physical fatherhood," that is, its members failed to recognize the father's coital act of inserting semen as having a role in conception. "The father is […] not a recognized kinsman of the children […]. Real kinship […] exists only through the mother," and the "mother's brother represents the principle of discipline, authority, and executive power within the family." See Bronislaw Malinowski, *Sex and Repression in Savage Society* (2001), 9-10.

[27] Diderot, "D'Alembert's Dream," in *Rameau's Nephew/D'Alembert's Dream* (1966), 175.

body" beyond its conventional erotic zones and modes (HS1 157).[28] Our powers of invention, our ability to think beyond the dominant contemporary presumptions, can find support from historical inquiry, even if one's aims are ultimately more philosophical and transformative than purely historical. Foucault brilliantly applied this insight to sexuality as well as to other domains. By studying more premodern cultures than Foucault did, *Ars Erotica* aims to provide materials for a broader palette of somaesthetic possibilities of pleasure, including non-sexual aesthetic pleasures that somehow contribute to the arts of making love. It is also worth recalling, in conclusion, that somaesthetics' pluralism embraces a wide range of somatic pleasures that are neither sexual nor erotic and that range from the intense to the subtle, the fierce to the gentle. This broader range of pleasures marks another difference with Foucault.[29]

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[28] See also Foucault, "Sex, Power, and Politics of Identity," in *Foucault Live: Collected Interviews*, ed. Sylvère Lotringer (1996), 384.

[29] See BC 33-42.

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FOUCAULT STUDIES

SYMPOSIUM

Intolerable: A Book Symposium

PERRY ZURN

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The present symposium celebrates the release of *Intolerable: Writings from Michel Foucault and the Prisons Information Group, 1970-1980*. This groundbreaking collection documents Foucault and the GIP's efforts to expose the problem of prisons in France in the early 1970s. Marshalling public announcements, manifestos, reports, pamphlets, interventions, press releases, interviews, and roundtable discussions, it curates an unusually prescient archive of resistance. In today's political climate, marked by an ever-expanding carceral archipelago, forceful protests against police violence, and the mainstreaming of the term "prison abolition," *Intolerable* invites readers to learn from an earlier moment in time. What does it mean to think (and speak and act) in decarceral ways? Whose voices are lifted up? Whose frameworks are used and applied? What relationships is the work built upon? And what is the scholar's place (and the artist's, and the lawyer's, and the organizer's, and the prisoner's)? The GIP dramatizes endlessly innovative strategies and tactics for anticarceral activism and scholarship, and that archive is now finally available in English translation.

Symposium contributors explore what *Intolerable* contributes to ongoing conversations in prison activism, critical prison studies, and Foucault studies. Bernard Harcourt, Liat Ben-Moshe, Delio Vásquez, Sarah Tyson, Ren-Yo Hwang, Kevin Thompson, and I offer brief essays that connect the GIP archive to a range of issues, including contemporary prison uprisings, Indigenous resurgence, disability justice, critical praxis, the figure of the intellectual (and the academy), the tension between reform and abolition, and the necessity of hope. Refusing the carceral enclosures of disciplinary constraints and authorial hierarchies, contributors fashion an assemblage of interventions that multiply lines of flight from this archive to the present (and to other archives and other presents). It is the kind of archipelago that, to invoke Édouard Glissant, pits a poetics of relation against the forces of territorialization. The GIP is one model of that anti-carceral archipelagizing work. One invitation. May *Intolerable*—and this symposium that celebrates it—be yet another.

Harcourt sees the GIP archive as an invitation to critical praxis and, indeed, as a confrontation to those who would speak and write about the prison but absent themselves from the work of prison abolition. That work, Ben-Moshe argues, requires a dis-epistemology or otherwise ways of knowing which are traceable in the disability and anti-psychiatry struggles at the heart of the GIP's mobilizations. Vásquez takes the GIP as an opportunity to link critical prison studies with critical university studies, identifying the carceral tactic of "concealment" and invisibilization common to both institutions. Turning to think carcerality and colonialism, Tyson allows the recent "news" of Residential School mass graves to reverberate throughout her rereading of Gayatri Spivak's "Can the Subaltern Speak?," itself a response to one source document in the GIP archive. Heeding the GIP's call to specificity and current prisoner struggles, Hwang identifies a recent prison insurrection in St. Louis, prompted by the carceral crisis of COVID-19, as a contemporary moment of intolerability and accountability. Thompson sets out to think globally about the GIP and Foucault's intertwined but separable legacies and offers illumination on their respective relationships to reform, abolition, and problematization. Finally, Zurn, turning to letters the GIP published from H.M., a repeatedly incarcerated queer crip figure, argues that there is a hope—and indeed a prophetic imagination—at the heart of the GIP and of abolition.

As a companion to the symposium, we include an interview with Nicolas Drolc. Drolc is a documentarian who created the first film on the GIP (*Sur les toits*, 2014), as well as a second film devoted to Serge Livrozet (*La mort se mérite*, 2017), a former prisoner, writer, GIP member, and cofounder of the GIP's successor organization: the Prisoners Action Committee. Drolc's shoe-string aesthetic and anarchist philosophy make him the perfect contemporary counterpoint to the GIP. His firsthand accounts of witnessing incarceration, venturing into the Nancy archives, interviewing still-local former GIP members, developing an unbreakable bond with Serge Livrozet, and wrestling with the soullessness of the film industry bring home precisely the urgencies and intimacies he documents.

We hope readers are here unshakably gripped—as we still find ourselves—by an archive (and a moment) that has still other lives to live.

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1970-1980 (2021), *Curiosity Studies: A New Ecology of Knowledge* (2020), *Carceral Notebooks* 12 (2017), and *Active Intolerance: Michel Foucault, the Prisons Information Group, and the Future of Abolition* (2016).

SYMPOSIUM

"Let those who have an experience of prison speak": The Critique & Praxis of the Prisons Information Group (1970-1980)

BERNARD E. HARCOURT

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As the May '68 revolution reached a boiling point, a remarkable assemblage of philosophers, writers, and incarcerated persons, doctors, nurses, social workers, and sociologists, activists and organizers, and militants in France turned their attention to the problem of the prison. At a time when prisons were mostly hidden from view, practically impenetrable in France to outsiders, at a time long before we recognized mass incarceration in countries like the United States, the Prisons Information Group (the *Groupe d'information sur les prisons* or the "GIP") coalesced to spotlight the travesty of justice that is the prison—one that continues unabated today or, even worse, is exacerbated in Western liberal democracies. As I write these words, people are being violated, slashed, stabbed, and deprived of food and security at the jail on Rikers Island in New York City, with almost a third of the guard staff not even showing up for work.[1] As of mid-October 2021, thirteen people imprisoned at Rikers have died this year.[2] Our jails and prisons are broken—an intolerable crisis, as the GIP maintained already in 1970.

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[1] George Joseph and Reuven Blau, "Self-Harm is Exploding in New York City Jails, Internal Numbers Show," Gothamist. https://gothamist.com/news/self-harm-exploding-new-york-city-jails-internal-numbers-show-rikers (accessed September 7, 2021); Jonah E. Bromwich and Jan Ransom, "An Absolute Emergency at Rikers Island as Violence Increases," New York Times, https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/24/nyregion/rikers-island-emergency-chaos.html (accessed September 7, 2021).

[2] Jan Ransom, "Rikers Death Pushes Toll in N.Y.C. Jails to 13 This Year," New York Times. https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/15/nyregion/rikers-death-toll.html (accessed October 15, 2021); Editorial Board, "The Endless Catastrophe of Rikers Island," New York Times. https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/15/opinion/rikers-island-de-blasio-close.html (accessed September 15, 2021).

The story of the GIP has been told in French and documented.[3] Now, we have the archive in English, presented in such high-definition and multi-dimension that we may finally be able to recognize this historical experience for what it truly was: a unique, remarkable, leaderless/leaderful, experimental, intersectional, abolitionist movement, and prison revolt that changed the carceral landscape of France in the 1970s.

We think we know the story: Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze, Jean-Marie Domenach, Pierre Vidal-Naquet, and others created the conditions of possibility for the men and women in prison to be heard. The GIP aimed "to let those who have an experience of prison speak. Not that they need us to help '*raise consciousness*': awareness of oppression is crystal clear there; they know the enemy well. But the present system denies them the means to express and organize themselves," a GIP tract declared on March 15, 1971.[4] That was, indeed, one way to recount the intervention—one that would trigger the ire of other critical theorists, such as Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. Targeting Foucault and Deleuze especially, Spivak responded, sharply: "The ventriloquism of the speaking subaltern is the left intellectual's stock-in-trade."[5] Feigning to not speak for those in prison, Foucault, Deleuze and others had nonetheless represented their oppression. But that critique also fell victim to the same charge. Why had postcolonial critiques too placed the French philosophers at the center of their attention? As Biodun Jeyifo notes, so many leading figures of postcolonial theory rehearsed the privilege and gained "global visibility not on the basis of work on Third World writers, but on account of powerful engagements of Western poststructuralist figures, principally Michel Foucault (Said), Jacques Derrida (Spivak) and Jacques Lacan (Bhabha)."[6]

This GIP archive, though, lays all of those internecine conflicts to rest. The archive is so rich and encompassing that it no longer needs to be tethered to Foucault or Deleuze. Other scholars had already spotlighted the many other women, men, and queer people who made up and worked with the GIP and who were, so often, sidelined in the histories. Kalinka Courtois shined a light on Danielle Rancière, Claude Liscia, Hélène Cixous, and Ariane Mnouchkine;[7] Shai Gortler on Christine Martineau, Daniel Defert, and Catherine von Bülow;[8] Phillippe Artières on the collaboration of prison chaplains, especially L'abbé Velten during the mutiny at the Toul prison;[9] Benedikte Zitouni on Jacques Donzelot,

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[3] Philippe Artières and Laurent Quéro, *Le Groupe d'information sur les prisons: Archives d'une lutte 1970-1972* (2004); Audrey Kiéfer, "Michel Foucault: Le GIP, l'histoire et l'action" (2006); Fabienne Brion and Bernard E. Harcourt, "The Louvain Lectures in Context," in *Wrong-Doing, Truth-Telling* by Michel Foucault, ed. Fabienne Brion and Bernard E. Harcourt, trans. Stephen Sawyer (2014), 271-322. See, generally, Bernard E. Harcourt, *Critique & Praxis* (2020), 439-445 and all the references cited thereto.

[4] Michel Foucault, "On Prisons" [1971], in *Intolerable*, ed. Kevin Thompson and Perry Zurn, trans. Perry Zurn and Erik Beranek (2021), 66.

[5] Harcourt, *Critique & Praxis*, 17.

[6] Biodun Jeyifo, "Inside and Outside the Whale: 'Bandung', 'Rwanda', Postcolonial Literary and Cultural Studies," 2002 Annual Invitational Lecture, Society for the Humanities, Cornell University (2002).

[7] Kalinka Courtois, "The 'Groupe d'information sur les prisons': French Intellectuals and Activism Post May '68," (2019).

[8] Shai Gortler, "Carceral Subjectivity and the Exercise of Freedom in Israel-Palestine," (2020).

[9] Philippe Artières, "Les mutins, la psychiatre et l'aumônier. Archéologie d'un silence foucauldien," *Le Portique* 13-14 (2004).

Louis Aragon, Louis Casamayor, Halbwachs, and Marianne Merleau-Ponty.[10] This archive further reinforces Artières, Courtois, Gortler, and others, and powerfully demonstrates that the GIP was an expansive, broad-based, intersectional experiment in social movement work, one that pushed aside the model of the popular tribunal and disavowed the prosecutorial approach, the indictment, the trial. It did not sit in judgment or accusation—as other brilliant critical thinkers, such as Jean-Paul Sartre, were prone to do. It investigated instead. Inquired. Published eye-witness reports. Conducted surveys. Accompanied prison revolts. Publicized demands.

Now, against this backdrop, we can better debate today new and different forms of critical praxis. This GIP archive offers a new lens to discuss and engage the "Black People's Grand Jury" in Ferguson, Missouri.[11] It allows us to rethink transformative justice projects—for instance, how to engage in processes of transformation in cases of police killings of people of color.[12] It compels us to rethink how we tell the stories of social movements without eliding the voices of the people so often marginalized in the telling of those histories—and to ask ourselves what work it does to bring them back into the fold.[13]

What then does this new archive reveal? A powerful foil to debate, today, our own abolitionist practices? The place of experiment in resistance? The leaderful force of leaderlessness? The importance of intolerance? Yes, all that, plus the inevitability of failure as well[14]—for, as all successful interventions must hope to be, it too, in its attempt to unveil illusions, inevitably created new ones.

It also reveals, especially for those reading a journal like *Foucault Studies*, a terrible absence: Where are our academic philosophers today on the problem of racialized mass incarceration? In the United States, the horrors of the punitive society are worse than they were in France in the early 1970s. As I noted earlier, Rikers Island is descending into chaos and inferno. Nationwide, we reached a full one percent of the American adult population behind bars in 2008.[15] Covid has decimated prison populations around the country at far greater rates than the general population.[16] And yet, our academic philosophers are

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[10] Benedikte Zitouni, "Michel Foucault et le groupe d'information sur les prisons. Comment faire exister et circuler le savoir des prisonniers," *Les Temps Modernes* 4-5:645-646 (2007), 268-307.

[11] Brie McLemore, "Procedural Justice, Legal Estrangement, and the Black People's Grand Jury," *Virginia Law Review* 105:2 (2019), 371-395.

[12] Omavi Shukur, the Practitioner-in-Residence at the Initiative for a Just Society at Columbia University, for example, is currently working to create meaningful change through police violence litigation using facilitated conversations between police officers and victims' family members as well as public inquests.

[13] Che Gossett, the Racial Justice Postdoctoral Fellow at the Initiative for a Just Society at Columbia University, is doing this as they work on a biography of Kiyoshi Kuromiya, an activist and writer situated at the intersection of several major social justice movements, including the Civil Rights Movement, the Gay Liberation Front, ACT UP Philadelphia, and the Critical Path Project. Through archival work, Gossett is trying to highlight the role of the previously marginalized queer Japanese-American activist, Kiyoshi Kuromiya.

[14] Perry Zurn, "The GIP and the Question of Failure," *Carceral Notebooks* 12 (2017), 36-46.

[15] Adam Liptak, "1 in 100 U.S. Adults Behind Bars, New Study Says," New York Times. https://www.nytimes.com/2008/02/28/us/28cnd-prison.html (accessed October 17, 2021).

[16] In April of 2021, the *New York Times* reported that, on average, more than 1400 new COVID cases among incarcerated individuals and seven deaths had been reported in jails and prisons each day. One year after the pandemic began, it was known that one in three incarcerated people had been infected with COVID. At

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nowhere to be found, missing in action. And the few critical theorists who do not expressly espouse prison abolition but nevertheless write about the prison can be counted on our fingertips. This archive—this GIP archive of intolerance—this is the real material for philosophical debate.

The archive, now in English, is a treasure trove for critical thinkers today—and for all abolitionists who are seeking new ways and methods of experimentation to overcome the carceral state and the punitive society we live in.

We are indebted to Perry Zurn, Kevin Thompson, and Erik Beranek for their editing and translation. The excerpts from the four "intolerable inquiries," originally published by Gallimard but never discussed in the English language, the report of Edith Rose on shackling and restraints in the prison, the interview with Hélène Cixous, the writings by Jean Genet and Daniel Defert, the myriad anonymous GIP tracts—any one of those is worth the price of admission.

Let us now turn to this rich archive to confront our critical praxis. It is time to study, again, and act, anew.

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least 2,700 incarcerated individuals died in custody from COVID in the first year of the pandemic. These numbers are likely lower than actual figures as prisons and jails have consistently underreported COVID deaths and infections. Eddie Burkhalter et al., "Incarcerated and Infected: How the Virus Tore Through the U.S. Prison System," New York Time*s*. https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/04/10/us/covid-prison-outbreak.html?smid=url-share (accessed October 17, 2021). See also The Marshall Project, "A State-by-State Look at 15 Months of Coronavirus in Prisons," The Marshall Project. https://www.themarshallproject.org/2020/05/01/a-state-by-state-look-at-coronavirus-in-prisons (accessed October 17, 2021); The Covid Prison Project. https://covidprisonproject.com/ (accessed September 14, 2021); UCLA Law COVID Behind Bars Data Project. https://uclacovidbehindbars.org/about (accessed September 14, 2021).

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SYMPOSIUM

Challenge to What Is: The Effect and Aftermath of Exposing Intolerable Conditions of Confinement

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This collection could not have come in a more prescient time. As the editors suggest, "The present volume is, at once, then, a historical archive, a conceptual challenge, and a tactical tool kit."[1] I will focus my comments on some tactical questions regarding the effect and aftermath of the GIP investigation on the intolerability of incarceration. What effect did it have on those incarcerated? On prison conditions? On the rationale of confinement?

My own work focuses on the connections between prison abolition and anti-disability confinement, especially the movements of deinstitutionalization and anti-psychiatry. To me, this monumental collection/translation project highlights again the continuity of disability confinement – mental crisis in prison is a general condition not an exception, as seen by many testimonies; in addition, "prison suicides in France marked not only a symptom of these desperate conditions, but also a final form of protest and escape;"[2] and the GIP, through Foucault's work, also saw the connections to psych incarceration outside the walls of the prison (the psych information groups that I hope someone translates next..).

The GIP (Prisons Information Group) "sought to make the intolerable physical, mental, and emotional conditions of incarceration visible in ways that provoked and supported public intolerance of them."[3] The role of the GIP, then, was: "to unite the interior and exterior of the prison in the same struggle."[4] In my work,[5] I discuss the cumulative effect

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[1] Kevin Thompson and Perry Zurn, "Introduction: Legacies of Militancy and Theory," in *Intolerable: Writings from Michel Foucault and the Prisons Information Group, 1970-1980,* eds. Kevin Thompson and Perry Zurn (2021), 7.

[2] Thompson and Zurn, "Introduction," 7.

[3] "Introduction: Legacies of Militancy and Theory," 8.

[4] Groupe d'information sure les prisons, "Back Cover of *Intolerable* 1," in *Intolerable: Writings from Michel Foucault and the Prisons Information Group, 1970-1980*, ed. Kevin Thompson and Perry Zurn (2021), 94.

[5] Liat Ben-Moshe, *Decarcerating Disability: Deinstitutionalization and Prison Abolition* (2020).

of litigation and exposés of institutions for people with intellectual, developmental and psychiatric disability labels, especially in the 1960 and 1970s, which is when the GIP was active (1971-72). The value of many of these investigations of intolerance was to bring attention to the conditions of confinement in prisons and mental institutions, to which the general population was oblivious.

The symbolic value of such inquiries was much bigger than their effect on specific demands and specific facilities, however. One such effect was that it constructed and reified those incarcerated and institutionalized as people deserving of rights and protection from the State. As Foucault remarked on the Toul uprising in 1972: "They inverted the functions of the wall, the bars, and imprisonment itself. On that day, they did not want to get out of prison, but rather to be free of their status as humiliated prisoners."[6]

Although I critique, following many others, the rights framework throughout my work, it is important to note that obtaining rights as incarcerated people was not a small or obvious feat. Without perceiving those imprisoned (and in deinstitutionalization those with psychiatric and intellectual disabilities) as groups deserving of rights, no appeals to justice or legal reform could have been brought. On the most fundamental level, they had to be perceived, by the court and the public, as *people* and not as property of the state, otherwise any discussion of *human* rights is non-sensical. What is of interest then is that the era of prisoners' rights had to begin with granting prisoners' not rights but selfhood. The perception of prisoners as property of the state and as objects was not questioned in the US legal system in a sustained fashion before the 1960s, the era of reform litigation and early feminist and Black power.

These exposés went beyond the scope of the rights of those incarcerated though. Prison uprisings, the GIP investigations (and lawsuits in the US context) acted like exposés in questioning the efficacy, legality and to some extent the legitimacy of carceral institutions, whether for punishment or for rehabilitation. This was evident in the list of demands in the prison revolts in France in 1972. As Foucault stated at the time: "these are not merely details, or rather, every detail is essential when one struggles to obtain, against a boundless arbitrariness, a minimum of juridical status, when one struggles to have the right to demand. It is important to have the right to wash, but it is essential when one obtains it in this way."[7] Even though some of the prisoners' demands may seem mundane (temperature, nutrition, visitation) they also encompassed a comprehensive ideal of justice, and the two are inextricably linked. As Hélène Cixous states in the excellent interview in this collection, an honorable system of justice and specific demands (for food, visitation) are the same thing: "they are all inscribed in reality and in the flesh."[8]

Prisoners' rights, rebellions and litigation made the prison a topic of public discussion. It made those incarcerated visible on a national scale, especially in this era, 1968 to 1972,

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[6] Michel Foucault, "To Escape from Their Prison," in *Intolerable: Writings from Michel Foucault and the Prisons Information Group, 1970-1980,* ed. Kevin Thompson and Perry Zurn (2021), 234.

[7] Foucault, "To Escape from Their Prison," 235.

[8] Perry Zurn, "Hope is the Blood of it: The GIP, Paris 8, and the Urgency of Writing," in *Intolerable: Writings from Michel Foucault and the Prisons Information Group, 1970-1980,* ed. Kevin Thompson and Perry Zurn (2021), 395.

which Berger and Losier name, in the US context, 'the prison rebellion years.'[9] Therefore, these investigations, lawsuits and exposés became a powerful pedagogical and mobilization tool. The prisoners' rights movement and prison uprising (as well as anti-psychiatry and self-advocacy movements) galvanized and politicized those inside as well as those not incarcerated to understand confinement as a host of social and not just individual issues.[10]

These investigations enabled those incarcerated to collectivize across facilities and borders. It also created coalitions of resistance beyond the prison or asylum bars (lawyers, families, doctors – many of them whistleblowers in the deinstitutionalization and anti-psych movements as well). In this sense, "to unite the interior and exterior of the prison in the same struggle" was achieved as a goal, at least in that era.[11] (Notwithstanding the permutable lines between 'inside' and outside). To be clear, the GIP did not make the revolts in the prisons happen, but it did amplify them.

What were the lingering effects of such amplifications? One might think that attention to prisoners' rights and uprisings has eviscerated since the 1970s. It is true that the image of the revolutionary prisoner, a la George Jackson (who the GIP devoted one of their investigations to), has subsided, but it is equally important to remember the gendered dynamics of that image. Elsewhere I discuss more fully how the image, tactics and populations targeted by prison litigation and prison rebellion had shifted but did not die; they only became less masculine and able-bodied and therefore less known or discussed.[12]

If the image of THE prisoner in the 1970s was that of (mostly black) revolutionary figures, and in the 1980s the frivolous complainers (the image that led to the creation of the notorious Prison Litigation Reform Act in the US), the image of the prisoner in the 2000s is that of the overcrowded, mentally and physically injured incarcerated individual, as Jonathan Simon suggests.[13] In other words, at least in the US, from 2000 onward, state violence manifested not just in incarceration and its conditions but in its quantity; the mass character of it. The effects of which (disabling and maddening nature of solitary confinement and supermax prisons and its opposite of extreme overcrowding) led to debilitation en masse. This became deathly apparent with the spread of COVID in prisons across the US from the beginning of the pandemic.

Exposing and activating intolerance does not necessitate an action from the state, or at least not the one desired by those who are doing the exposing. COVID campaigns to release those incarcerated from prisons and nursing homes (#Free Them all) have not resulted in mass or even small-scale acts of decarceration. In addition to the symbolic and collectivizing power of these investigation of the intolerable, in the US at least, the focus on deplorable conditions did not lead to abolishing them; instead, it led to calls to reform

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[9] Dan Berger and Toussaint Losier, *Rethinking the American Prison Movement* (2017).

[10] See Groupe d'information sur les prisons, "Preface to *Intolerable* 1," in *Intolerable: Writings from Michel Foucault and the Prisons Information Group, 1970-1980,* ed. Kevin Thompson and Perry Zurn (2021), 89-90.

[11] GIP, "Back Cover of *Intolerable* 1."

[12] Ben-Moshe, *Decarcerating Disability*.

[13] Jonathan Simon, *Mass Incarceration on Trial: A Remarkable Court Decision and the Future of Prisons in America* (2014).

them, which often aided in their expansion. As Rachel Herzig suggests regarding campaigns to reform prison conditions: "Improved conditions allow imprisoned people to resist that inhumanity... They also make it possible to stay alive while living in a cage."[14] However, "it can further entrench the popularly held assumption that imprisonment is a necessary evil."[15] What reform litigation did in the US after the 1970s, cumulatively in addition to a politicizing and collectivizing effect, was to usher more *effective* ways to incarcerate, and those two effects do not necessarily negate each other. In addition to indifference, invisibility or abuse, now those incarcerated are treated with bureaucratic measures, often measuring the excess and not rationale of confinement (not too crowded, too hot, too much death).

But perhaps this is not a critique of the GIP project. As Cixous states in the collection: "it wasn't meant to be a success, it was meant to be a testimony."[16] One of the most pervasive critiques of the abolitionary framework is that it does not provide specific solutions but only critiques of the present system, and this critique has been often laid out in relation to the GIP as well. I critique this elsewhere and suggest that embracing dis-epistemology and letting go of specific attachment to finite solutions is a strength of abolition work.[17] In a later interview, Foucault asserts that critique "should be an instrument for those who fight, those who resist and refuse what is. Its use should be in processes of conflict and confrontation, essays in refusal. It doesn't have to lay down the law for the law. It isn't a stage in programming. It is a challenge directed to what is."[18] To me, this challenge towards "what is" is the unfinished work of abolition today.

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[14] Rachel Herzing, "'Tweaking Armageddon': The Potential and Limits of Conditions of Confinement Campaigns," *Social Justice* 41:3 (2015), 190-195.

[15] Herzig, "'Tweaking Armageddon'", 193.

[16] Zurn, "Hope is the Blood of It," 399.

[17] Liat Ben-Moshe, "Dis-epistemologies of Abolition," *Critical Criminology* 26:3 (2018): 341-355.

[18] Michel Foucault, "Governmentality," in *The Essential Foucault*, ed. Paul Rabinow and Nicolas Rose (1994), 236.

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SYMPOSIUM

The Problems of Concealment: Reformism, Information Struggles, and the Position of Intellectuals

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Intolerable: Writings from Michel Foucault and the Prisons Information Group (1970-1980) is a body of texts that urges and insists that its readers think *practically*. It is a compilation that makes accessible and comprehensible the historical participants' real experiences: experiences of differing and converging political desires, of organized group actions and violent state repression, of thoughtfully-timed group analysis and critique—in short, experiences of internal and external 'contradictions' typical in social movement struggle. As writings that focus almost exclusively on questions of strategy and efficacy, they draw attention to the reality that honestly grappling with tensions within movements is not a choice but a matter of political necessity. We *do* inevitably deal with the conflicts that arise in any space—just less or more successfully. Through the irreplaceable intellectual labor of painstakingly compiling, translating, editing, and historicizing these materials over the course of a decade, Thompson, Zurn, and Beranek thus manage to effectively draft the reader too into strategic political thinking.

Inspired by the populist and Maoist politics of both the French mass organization Gauche Prolétarienne and the U.S.-based Black Panther Party, the Groupe d'Information sur les Prisons (GIP) worked to open up to critique those contradictory relationships between educated professionals and those who are paid to surveil and criminalize, to foster sympathies between the organized French working class and the unemployed at society's margins, and, crucially, to connect the struggles and worldviews of self-identified political prisoners with those of common-law prisoners. Regarding this first relationship, throughout the compilation we see the GIP grappling with the politically ambivalent role of judges, psychiatrists, social workers, and prison guards; people whose willingness to disrupt and reconfigure their own roles in the penal system effectively allowed the GIP in turn to support the struggles of prisoners. Discussing social workers in the prison, one GIP internal document proclaimed: "They are not all scoundrels bankrolled by those in

power. Hence the need to intensify the ideological struggle with them."[1] A balance was pursued between denunciation and efforts to leverage the real discontentment of those workers who most directly reproduce the system; a particular tactic within a larger strategy. As this compilation makes evident, without its informants and collaborators, the GIP would not have been able to accomplish much at all.

"Information is a struggle," co-founder Daniel Defert affirmed, and in order to reorient the flow of information and connect these groups, the GIP emphasized the experiences of those who were most dehumanized, conducting inquiries among the prisoners, publicizing their statements, instigating protests, distributing pamphlets, producing street theater and film, and publishing exposés penned by collaborator-members inside.[2] Throughout the '70s, the activist intellectuals who spoke for the group consistently maintained that the formation's motivating aim was never to "reform" the prison but instead to make the thoughts, words, and experiences of the 'most oppressed' clearly heard by mainstream society—"for the prisoners themselves and their families to be able to speak, to speak for themselves."[3] Placed within the context of the insurrectionary politics from which the GIP derived, the implication was thus that combatting the societal segregations cultivated during the historical development of capitalism would in turn invigorate new perspectives, politicized subject positions, and militant action. And, indeed, insider exposés like the "Report by Doctor Rose, Psychiatrist at Toul Prison"—which described prisoners forcibly restrained to beds in their own excrement for days on end—produced popular outrage.[4] For France's prisoners, who had been engaging in demonstrations, revolts, and occupations for years with little acknowledgment, the new societal awareness allowed them to 'seize the time' and revolt, with some protesting to obtain changes to their conditions of imprisonment, some demanding to be freed, and some taking matters into their own hands through the tactic of the prison-break.[5] In the bigger picture, the GIP's efforts led to a cultural legitimization of the prisoners' political organizations and of their suffering more broadly, as well as the creation of new organizations, including other "information groups" throughout France focused on the marginalized and institutionalized. Once these aims had been accomplished, the GIP dissolved itself in early 1973.

By the late 1970s, however, the GIP was being disparaged in retrospect for having been both reformist *and* inadequately so. More precisely, the group was characterized by critics as reformist in light of their actions' limited reformist effects within popular culture and state policy. Writing at the end of the decade, Paul Thibaud, who replaced Jean-Marie

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[1] Groupe d'Information sur les Prisons, "The Second Front (The Neighborhoods)" [2003], in *Intolerable: Writings from Michel Foucault and the Prisons Information Group (1970-1980)*, ed. Kevin Thompson and Perry Zurn (2021), 326.

[2] Daniel Defert, "When Information is a Struggle" [1971], in *Intolerable: Writings from Michel Foucault and the Prisons Information Group (1970-1980)*, ed. Kevin Thompson and Perry Zurn (2021), 70-74.

[3] Gilles Deleuze, "Foucault and Prisons" [1986], in *Intolerable: Writings from Michel Foucault and the Prisons Information Group (1970-1980)*, ed. Kevin Thompson and Perry Zurn (2021), 387.

[4] Édith Rose, "Report by Doctor Rose, Psychiatrist at Toul Prison" [1971], in *Intolerable: Writings from Michel Foucault and the Prisons Information Group (1970-1980)*, ed. Kevin Thompson and Perry Zurn (2021), 243-251.

[5] Jean-Marie Domenach, "To Have Done with Prisons" [1972], in *Intolerable: Writings from Michel Foucault and the Prisons Information Group (1970-1980)*, ed. Kevin Thompson and Perry Zurn (2021), 328-345.

Domenach (a founding member of the GIP) as editor of the journal *Esprit*, criticized "the GIP 'reformists' who, technically, succeeded no better than others in finding a way out of the present impasses."[6] Strictly speaking, both the GIP's descriptions of their own anti-reformist aims *and* the critics' characterizations of the GIP's real-world effects as reformist were, as best as I can see, accurate.

Under modern liberal society, political protest typically functions as a highly visible form of public expression that is ultimately designed to convince the state or other parties with formal institutional power to act on behalf of those protesting. This appears as counter-productive reform when parties in positions of formal authority end up enacting as policy some version of the protestors' campaign that in fact better serves the interest of those authorities or their allies. In response to accusations of 'reformism' circling the GIP as early as 1972, member Gilles Deleuze retorted that when reforms are sought out by the oppressed parties themselves, as with prisoners who sought reforms, this instead produces in effect a "revolutionary action that questions the totality of power and the hierarchy that maintains it" in a fundamental way.[7]

Deleuze's point fails however to adequately address Thibaud's later criticism. The reality is that 'revolutionary questions' are often answered with 'reformist' or even 'reactionary' answers. That is, radical questioning may open up radical possibilities, but it does not produce change in itself. Furthermore, the modern liberal frame of political mediation and interpretation effectively disables the likelihood of interpreting certain "questions" as radical at all, instead absorbing virtually all such expressions into mere fodder for possible co-optation.

On the other hand, the very question of revolution-or-reform typically reflects an excessive and blinding focus on what the state does, whereas the unspoken political perspective from which the GIP was operating was quite different. According to the *dialectical* understanding of politics that informed much GIP action, all of culture is to be interpreted as a terrain of struggle within which 'winning hearts and minds' is part of a larger political strategy. According to that perspective, then, the GIP was not trying to convince authorities to enact reforms but rather trying to compel the masses to radicalize towards a 'revolutionary' goal that treated the state as merely a means to an end. Their view assumed that a set of tactics can produce effects that may partially converge with the interests of authorities and elites while also producing other long-term effects that improve the real conditions of possibility for truly transformative ('revolutionary') struggle, opportunities

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[6] Jean-Marie Domenach, Michel Foucault, and Paul Thibaud, "Still Prisons" [1980], in *Intolerable: Writings from Michel Foucault and the Prisons Information Group (1970-1980)*, ed. Kevin Thompson and Perry Zurn (2021), 380.

[7] Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze, "Intellectuals and Power" [1972], in *Intolerable: Writings from Michel Foucault and the Prisons Information Group (1970-1980)*, ed. Kevin Thompson and Perry Zurn (2021), 282: "This is why the notion of reform is so stupid and hypocritical. Either reforms are designed by people who claim to be representative, who make a profession of speaking for others, and they lead to a division of power, to a distribution of this new power that is consequently increased by a double repression; or they arise from the complaints and demands of those concerned. This latter instance is no longer a reform but revolutionary action that questions (expressing the full force of its partiality) the totality of power and the hierarchy that maintains it."

which *then* must be actively converted into reality by relevant parties. In the case of the prison, this 'revolutionary' reality would presumably be the physical destruction of the actual prison and the elimination of cultural support for it.

Thibaud was launching this critique at the GIP precisely because he was aware of the total rejection of prisons expressed and theorized by several of the intellectuals within the group. Thibaud was thus praising the theory but criticizing the incomplete practice, posing the question to Michel Foucault in particular:

> Why did the great critiques of post-'68 (those of Illich or your own) wash over us in all their force and truth, without provoking an equivalent wave of creativity? To me, this fact obliges us to ask ourselves together certain questions about the way in which culture and politics function in our country.[8]

Thibaud later insisted:

> In France, a productive equilibrium has not been found, with respect to prisons as in other domains, between principled critique and reformist activism. That is due to the concealment of the question of law and right, as I said in this text where Michel Foucault sees only a quarrel.[9]

Indeed, much like Karl Marx appears to have 'hidden' at the very end of the penultimate chapter of *Capital* his illegal incitement and militant call that "the expropriators are expropriated," so did Michel Foucault in 1975 seemingly 'conceal' at the end of the penultimate chapter of *Discipline and Punish* his claim that "it may so come to be …that crime constitutes a political instrument …for the liberation of our society."[10]

On that matter of "the question of law and right," the GIP compilation provides some insights. In "The Second Front (The Neighborhoods)," a GIP internal document on how to "advance the idea of a popular justice at the level of neighborhoods," the activists turn to the local for sources of counter-law that could effectively produce a fundamental critique of the state's monopolistic hold on law.[11] In addition, Daniel Defert's opening reflection in the compilation includes a discussion of the role of anarchists within the prisons in the 1970s, including their role in establishing GIP-offshoots.[12] And, in a couple of prefaces written between 1972 and 1973 also included, Michel Foucault explores both the transgressive and captured dimensions of popular law-breaking.[13]

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[8] Domenach, Foucault, and Thibaud, "Still Prisons," 380.

[9] Ibid., 382.

[10] Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Vol. 1* (1976), 929. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* [1975] (1979), 289. I borrow the suggestion about Marx from Balibar: Étienne Balibar, "Revisiting the 'expropriation of expropriators' in Marx's 'Capital'," in *Marx's Capital After 150 Years: Critique and Alternative to Capitalism*, ed. Marcello Musto (2019), 41-42.

[11] Groupe d'Information sur les Prisons (GIP), "The Second Front (The Neighborhoods)," 326.

[12] Daniel Defert, "The Emergence of a New Front: The Prisons" [2003], in *Intolerable: Writings from Michel Foucault and the Prisons Information Group (1970-1980)*, ed. Kevin Thompson and Perry Zurn (2021), 41.

[13] Michel Foucault, "Preface to Serge Livrozet's *De la prison à la Révolte*" [1973], in *Intolerable: Writings from Michel Foucault and the Prisons Information Group (1970-1980)*, ed. Kevin Thompson and Perry Zurn (2021). Michel Foucault, "Preface to Bruce Jackson's *In the Life: Versions of the Criminal Experience*" [1975], in

These ideas, however, were often expressed in an indirect way so that their implications within the larger GIP strategy remained ambiguous. As a result, the GIP's strategic decision to conceal their 'revolutionary' strategy behind the image of a 'reformist' protest made it more difficult to diagnose and openly discuss their failures after the fact, as practically necessary as such concealment was. Simply put, they took the necessary steps to avoid the terrible repressive power of the state. And yet, the GIP operated also from the assumption that the abolition of the penal system would never be brought about by lawful means. Thibaud thus points out the dilemma of those intellectuals who found themselves in effect silencing themselves. If the aim of the GIP was to increase flows of information between segregated parts of society, then the many 'problems of concealment' may be analyzed also as problems of information flow, both segregating intellectuals from the broader society and sometimes inhibiting clear exchanges amongst intellectuals given their vigorous efforts at protecting themselves and each other.

And it does seem to be that the GIP's "concealment of the question of law and right" relates broadly to a larger cluster of related obstacles for intellectuals: the circulation of euphemisms, forms of censored speech in the social community of scholars, and hindrances to productive engagement with the most pressing or difficult questions. One of the most intellectually stifling dynamics is the resultant multiplication of limits on the scholar's horizon of thought altogether. As Foucault importantly explained, the force of even the most powerful aspects of disciplinary society rely upon and are magnified by the dispositions of the surveilled subject.[14] And perhaps most problematic of all, the problems of concealment have often left later generations of scholars in the dark about the origins, hard-fought historical gains, and political urgency behind whole fields of study. On the matter of the prison in particular, the practice of deferring the most difficult questions and problems may indeed, in the long run, foster conditions that worsen and broaden the problems of the prison for all, but especially so for the most oppressed sectors of our society.

Writing with considerable foresight in 1991 about "The Dilemma of the Black Intellectual," Cornel West proposed that "since we live our lives daily and penultimately within this system, those of us highly critical of the bourgeois model must try to transform it, in part from within the White bourgeois academy. For Black intellectuals—in alliance with non-Black progressive intellectuals—this means creating and augmenting infrastructures for Black intellectual activity."[15] Elaborating on these infrastructures, West then adds that such "alternative practices result from the heroic efforts of collective intellectual work and

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Intolerable: Writings from Michel Foucault and the Prisons Information Group (1970-1980), ed. Kevin Thompson and Perry Zurn (2021). See also: Michel Foucault, "No, This is Not an Official Inquiry…" [1971], in *Intolerable: Writings from Michel Foucault and the Prisons Information Group (1970-1980)*, ed. Kevin Thompson and Perry Zurn (2021).

[14] On the other hand, as Foucault also noted, the process of disciplining may have a contrary effect: "Military discipline increases the skill of each individual, coordinates these skills, accelerates movements, increases fire power, broadens the fronts of attack without reducing their vigour, increases the capacity for resistance, etc." Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 210.

[15] bell hooks and Cornel West, *Breaking Bread: Insurgent Black Intellectual Life* (1991), 140.

communal resistance which shape and are shaped by present structural constraints, workings of power, and modes of cultural fusion."[16] As with all prior generations of scholars, the intellectual ends up in the position of trying to strike the right balance between the necessarily isolated character of her labor against the strengths and difficulties of collectivist and cumulative forms of meaningful human knowledge and possible social change.

In Jean-Marie Domenach's radical 1972 statement "To Have Done with Prisons," he quotes extensively from the remarks of one 'Judge Casamayor,' a founding but clandestine member of the GIP whose real name was Judge Serge Fuster. Reflecting on the hanging of prisoners after a prison revolt, Casamayor offered an honest analysis of the many layers of function and failure operating within the justice system, placing blame on guard and prisoner alike. The majority of his remarks focused, however, on the perpetually conflicted role of his colleagues working within institutions of law, at a remove from but within sight of the penitentiary system:

> "Justice is an excellent alibi: a fine-tuned machine in which oral discussion is free and public[, it] cannot but lend confidence to public opinion. It will judge the judgement, it will find it to be good or bad, and the trick will already have been played, for no one will see that the trial that unfolds before them is not the real trial."[17]

Revised October 2024

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[16] Ibid., 145.

[17] Domenach, "To Have Done with Prisons," *Intolerable*, 330.

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SYMPOSIUM

Shirts and Hearts

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Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this extraordinary archive. Writing on the land of the Arapaho, Cheyenne and Ute nations, at the convergence of the Platte River and Cherry Creek, I want to share how this archive recontextualized for me a well-circulated part of this archive: "Intellectuals and Power." As I suspect is true for many, my reading of this piece owes much to Gayatri Spivak's "Can the Subaltern Speak?"

This time, through this archive of the work of the GIP, much of what Foucault and Deleuze discuss took on different form, as, for instance, I understood anew which "Maoists" they meant. Spivak diagnoses: "Maoism here simply creates an aura of narrative specificity, which would be a harmless rhetorical banality were it not that the innocent appropriation of the proper name 'Maoism' for the eccentric phenomenon of French intellectual 'Maoism' and subsequent 'New Philosophy' symptomatically renders 'Asia' transparent."[1] I agree with this diagnosis. Yet, as I read it this time, it is also clear that Foucault and Deleuze referred to people they knew, people the GIP organized sometimes against and sometimes with as the situation developed.[2] I note this in the spirit of the macrological project Spivak urges, while putting an emphasis on the micrological work of the GIP onto which *Intolerable* gives us a window.

I could catalogue this experience of reading at length and proliferate examples. But instead, to traverse this tension between the micro- and macrological, I turn to recent and long-unfolding events, trying to stay attuned to the troublesome slippage Spivak identifies in Foucault's work from "rendering visible the mechanism to rendering vocal the individual."[3] She questions what the GIP called giving the floor (*donner la parole*).

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[1] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?," in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (1988), 67.

[2] See, for instance, Daniel Defert, "The Emergence of a New Front: The Prisons," in *Intolerable: Writings from Michel Foucault and the Prisons Information Group (1970–1980)*, ed. Kevin Thompson and Perry Zurn (2021), 35–54.

[3] Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?," 81.

Phyllis (Jack) Webstad (Northern Secwepemc (Shuswap) from the Stswecem'c Xgat'tem First Nation Canoe Creek Indian Band), executive director of the Orange Shirt Society, and Canadian residential school survivor begins her story this way:

> I went to the Mission for one school year in 1973/1974. I had just turned 6 years old. I lived with my grandmother on the Dog Creek reserve. We never had very much money, but somehow my granny managed to buy me a new outfit to go to the Mission school. I remember going to Robinson's store and picking out a shiny orange shirt. It had string laced up in front, and was so bright and exciting—just like I felt to be going to school!

> When I got to the Mission, they stripped me, and took away my clothes, including the orange shirt! I never wore it again. I didn't understand why they wouldn't give it back to me, it was mine! The color orange has always reminded me of that and how my feelings didn't matter, how no one cared and how I felt like I was worth nothing. All of us little children were crying and no one cared.[4]

Webstad's account is circulating anew after the confirmation of two mass graves of children this summer. The first confirmation by radar was of 215 bodies at the Kamloops Indian Residential School, the grounds of which were searched by the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation. The second, of 751, was at the Marieval Indian Residential School in a search conducted by the Cowesses First Nation. [5]

Deleuze comments in "Intellectuals and Power": "If the protests of children were heard in kindergarten, if their questions were attended to, it would be enough to explode the entire educational system."[6] As Spivak did with Deleuze's reference to "*the* workers' struggle," we might call this "baleful in its very innocence."[7] Which children in which kindergarten? And what do we mean by "explode"?

In conversation with Spivak, Jodi Byrd (Chickasaw Nation of Oklahoma) observes: "The Indian model, like the nomad, assembles for Deleuze the site of movement, escape, difference—it is a stateless war machine, existing outside of and rupturing the state."[8] And, further: "What we imagine to be outside and rupturing to the state, through Deleuze, already depends upon paradigmatic Indianness that arises from colonialist discourses justifying expropriation of lands through removal and genocide."[9]

I am trying to bring together the Indian and the kindergartener in order to consider these graves, to at least raise the question of their consideration. Or as Byrd writes: "The question now has become how, and by what and whom, is the subaltern silenced."[10] The

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[4] Phyllis (Jack) Webstad, "Phyllis' Story: The Original Orange Shirt," Orange Shirt Day. https://www.orangeshirtday.org/phyllis-story.html (accessed July 2, 2021).

[5] Ian Austen and Amber Bracken, "With Discovery of Unmarked Graves, Canada's Indigenous Seek Reckoning," *New York Times*. https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/26/world/canada/indigenous-residential-schools-grave.html (accessed June 26, 2021).

[6] Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze, "Intellectuals and Power," in *Intolerable: Writings from Michel Foucault and the Prisons Information Group (1970–1980)*, ed. Kevin Thompson and Perry Zurn (2021), 282.

[7] "Can the Subaltern Speak?," 67.

[8] Jodi A. Byrd, *The Transit of Empire: Indigenous Critiques of Colonialism* (2011), 14.

[9] Byrd, *The Transit of Empire*, 14.

[10] *The Transit of Empire*, xxxi.

kindergarten radiates with the innocence of the settler project, so it is easy to think that Webstad's account and the graves point to its abuse, its misuse, its miscarriage.[11] That the settler project let itself down.

In his response to Deleuze, Foucault asserts: "Prison is the only place where power is manifested in its naked state, in its most excessive form, and where it is justified as moral force. …What is fascinating about prisons is that, for once, power doesn't hide or mask itself; it is cynical and at the same time pure and entirely 'justified,' because its practice can be totally formulated within the framework of morality. Its brutal tyranny conse-quently appears as serene domination of Good over Evil, of order over disorder."[12]

Deleuze's response denies the singularity of prisons, calling, once again, on children: "Yes, and the reverse is equally true. Not only are prisoners treated like children, but chil-dren are treated like prisoners."[13] These mass graves are sites of a cynical and at the same time pure and entirely "justified" brutality, formulated under the banner of morality. The residential schools were meant to, in the words of Captain Richard H. Pratt, progenitor of the US system: "kill the Indian, and save the man."[14] Webstad gives us insight into the mechanics of how boarding schools made kindergartners out of Northern Secwepemc and Cowesses children and the children of hundreds of other nations. The graves evidencing, once again, that creating—in order to eliminate—the Indian was always the centerpiece of the project.[15] Foucault's gloss of prisons is too singular, Deleuze's reversal too easy. We must attend, as Spivak calls us to, to the specificities of the mechanisms; to the giving and taking of a shirt as part of "imperialist subject-constitution."[16]

In an action that attests to the relationship between the Mission schools, prisons, and the ongoing colonial making of Canada, as well as the startling ability of people to make themselves into a collective, on "Canada Day" this year, July 1, people imprisoned in seven institutions in Canada went on a hunger strike and hung orange hearts in their cells.

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[11] Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, "Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 1:1 (2012), 1–40.

[12] Foucault and Deleuze, "Intellectuals and Power," 283.

[13] Foucault and Deleuze, 283.

[14] My preliminary understanding of the boarding schools, and assimilationist projects, as well as this specific phrase of Pratt's as eliminatory owes much to Patrick Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," *Journal of Genocide Research* 8:4 (2006), 397. That understanding has been deepened by Nick Estes, "American Indian Boarding Schools with Denise Lajimodiere," The Red Nation podcast, https://podm8.com/episodes/the-red-nation-podcast/american-indian-boarding-schools-w-denise-lajimodi-ere-90DQI6C-W (accessed August 31, 2021) and the second of season of Rebecca Nagle's "This Land" pod-cast, https://crooked.com/podcast-series/this-land/ (accessed August 31, 2021).

[15] Natalie Cisneros has developed the concept of "massive elimination" in Foucault's work while investigat-ing the specific mechanisms of immigrant detention, deportation of migrants, and the illegalization of mi-gration in the contemporary US as a strategy of massive elimination. Her work to connect these practices to the intolerable theorized by Foucault and the GIP skillfully navigates the terrain of the micro- and macrolog-ical to advance our understanding of imperialism, see Natalie Cisneros, "Resisting 'Massive Elimination': Foucault, Immigration, and the GIP," in *Active Intolerance*, ed. Perry Zurn and Andrew Dilts (New York: Palgrave Macmillan US, 2016), 241–57, https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137510679_17.

[16] Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?," 90.

They were responding to the discovery of the mass graves and participating in the Orange Shirt Day movement Webstad helped create.[17]

Deleuze asks: "But how are we to define the networks, the transversal links between these active and discontinuous points, from one country to another or within a single country?"[18] Foucault's answers by contrasting fighting against exploitation with fighting against power. Suggesting the first framing positions the proletariat as the leaders and definers of the fight.[19] Of the second framing, he argues: "But if the fight is directed against power, then all those on whom power is exercised to their detriment, all who find it intolerable, can begin to struggle on their own terrain and on the basis of their proper activity (or passivity.)"[20] As Andrew Dilts has glossed this passage, Foucault suggests that what is continuous in this second framing is the intolerable power against which people struggle.[21]

Spivak critiques Foucault in this passage for missing "the broader narratives of imperialism"—the macrological.[22] I think Spivak is being arch when she says: "That Deleuze and Foucault ignore both the epistemic violence of imperialism and the international division of labor would matter less if they did not, in closing, touch on third-world issues."[23] For, after all, her critique is that Deleuze elsewhere and Foucault here, in his theorization of fighting against power, in what she calls "an admirable program of localized resistance," miss the macrological.[24] It is hard to imagine that what they ignore—the places rendered the third- (and fourth-)world in its macrological relation to their work with the GIP—really would matter less to her critique for being passed over in silence. Perhaps it is worth saying that when I first read all of this, I didn't even know any of it could be funny.[25]

I cannot fault Spivak's critique. Reading this archive of the GIP, however and moreover, has given me insight into the micrological such that I appreciate now that Spivak leaves room for it, as necessary to the macrological work. Reading those orange hearts in Canadian prisons is not so simple a task. In another place, years after "Intellectuals and Power," in a sort of exasperated defense, Foucault explains: "One of our principles was in some way to make it so that prisoners and, around them, an entire fringe of the

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[17] "Coordinated Hunger Strike Across Seven Canada Prisons Honours Indigenous Children," *Perilous* (blog). https://perilouschronicle.com/2021/07/01/coordinated-hunger-strike-across-six-canada-prisons-honours-indigenous-children/ (accessed July 1, 2021).

[18] Foucault and Deleuze, "Intellectuals and Power," 288.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Personal correspondence.

[22] "Can the Subaltern Speak?," 86.

[23] Ibid., 84.

[24] Ibid., 85.

[25] Gilles Deleuze, "Foucault and Prisons," in *Intolerable: Writings from Michel Foucault and the Prisons Information Group (1970–1980)*, ed. Kevin Thompson and Perry Zurn (2021), 385.

population, could express themselves. The GIP texts were not the elaborations of a noxious intellectual, but the result of this attempt."[26]

Because of this archive, I now read "*donner la parole*" as a shorthand for "in some way" and for "the attempt." Spivak is right to question giving the floor. Through this collection, we can see that the attempt, shot through with failure, can nonetheless be generative, inviting us to consider the ground upon which we stand and our relationships to it. I am grateful for the opportunity to think this all anew.

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[26] Jean-Marie Domenach, Michel Foucault, and Paul Thibaud, "Still Prisons," in *Intolerable: Writings from Michel Foucault and the Prisons Information Group (1970–1980)*, ed. Kevin Thompson and Perry Zurn (2021), 379.

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SYMPOSIUM

Abolitionist Broken Windows and the Violence of Power Relations

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Intolerability, at its core, is a state of not being able to endure any longer—a kind of impossible weight which aims only to break the bearer. What does it mean to expose that which is intolerable? Is it a call to reform the intolerable to a state of bearability for some momentary span of time? Is it rationalizing the conditions of intolerability as circumstantial and/or unprovable? Is it developing and reproducing institutions, infrastructure, ideological apparatuses and administrative power that simply predetermines what is and is not tolerable in the name of justice? Or is it predetermining the correct pathways in which dissent and protest are allowable in the name of intolerability?

At first sight, what appears as a mundane taupe administrative building with enormous blue windowpanes on its façade, upon closer inspection, dons opaque sea glass windows that deliberately produce a feigned sense of transparency. Through a subtle mirroring back to onlookers, the building offers the illusion that one should simply keep calm, complicit and carry on. This building, of a generic pro-institutional aesthetic of the early aughts, is in fact the St. Louis City Justice Center (CJC), a euphemistic moniker for the city's main downtown jail of largely pre-trial detention. In the early hours of February 6, 2021, at 2:30am, over 100 incarcerated individuals at the CJC took control of its two units by collective force, staging death-defying pleas to the outside world to witness the intolerable COVID-19 conditions within. Safety and safe quarantining within prisons remains an oxymoron given the impossibility of social distancing and the lack of personal protective equipment (PPE) and crucial access to hygiene. The CJC was the third-reported prisoner-led protest over COVID-19 carceral conditions since December 2020. How does one therefore advocate for the improvement of life within the belly of the beast of the carceral universe?

Those inside, rather than following the approved reporting mechanisms such as procedurally onerous inmate grievance forms, broke the very rules that permit state-

sanctioned tolerability of death and conditions of dying unseen and/or slowly. Following in the legacy of prison revolt insurrection strategies, in order to expose intolerability, those caged at the CJC took back space through the destruction of the carceral institutional infrastructure surrounding them. One of the many viral images documenting this revolt show three large blue windowpanes of the CJC exterior impeccably shattered. With the majority Black and brown men holding signs and makeshift torches from these new breaches, wearing orange correctional uniforms and white tees as face coverings, the images show a large black sheet that is banner-dropped with writing scrawled across it in white toothpaste with numbers such as "Free W92M." Large black plastic tub lids are waved around, improvised protest signs, with messages such as "Free 57." These numbers are likely "inmate registration serial numbers", an index to how warehousing people requires total abstraction, objectification, and itemization to be catalogued and tracked.

For those of us witnessing on social media, national coverage news outlets or on the streets of St. Louis, photos and viral video clips circulated showing the raining down of institutional blue chairs, tables, computers, correctional uniforms, all emptied from four floors above pedestrian street level. The sound of crashing pieces of large, mundane office furniture breaking on the concrete sidewalk is only matched with the shouting and chanting of onlookers— many of whom are the family of those incarcerated gathered to cheer on their loved ones. As onlookers, we hear one of the men incarcerated shout from above, "We want a court date!" This is a reminder that it is not only COVID-19 that kills and makes for intolerable conditions but the very violence of power relations in which one can be disappeared into juridical limbo.

A second uprising would occur again at the CJC on April 4 2021, this time with a larger looming fire set on the outside against the building and beneath another set of broken windows. The scenes of insurgent communication from broken windows remains reminiscent of the Tombs Rebellion/Uprisings (Manhattan Detention Complex) of August 10, 1970, which is considered the direct precursor to Attica, as many of the prisoners who organized the Uprisings were relocated upstate to Attica. Setting fires and breaking windows is one mode of *taking the floor*, or what Groupe d'Information sur les Prisons (GIP) describe as *prendre la parole*. These defiant acts of insurgency mean those inside the CJC were willing and pushed to risk it all—more retaliation, more punishment, more convictions, more time away from those they love, who are now within shouting distance. To seize back the means of transparency—abolition's broken windows— is to reconstitute, reclaim and reappropriate the violence of power relations and turn it on its head. The power of exposing those juridical relations constituted on violence means to take the floor through instrumentalizing the disorder, chaos and disruption that belies the criminological sensemaking of "broken windows."[1]

The Transgender Advocacy Group formed in early 2018 as a decarceration and abolitionist centered coalition of nonprofit workers, legal advocates, and community activists,

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[1] Referring here to the popular 1982 "broken windows theory" by social scientists Wilson and Kelling. See G. L. Kelling & J. Q. Wilson, "Broken Windows: The Police and Neighborhood Safety," *The Atlantic* 249 (1982), 29-38.

as well as formerly incarcerated and allied volunteers seeking to support and free incarcerated transgender and nonbinary communities inside public prisons in the state of California. In the last two years of my participation with TAG, I have learned how imperfect and sometimes contradictory strategies across organizations and geographies remain necessary in order to actively expose the violent and deathly carceral conditions experienced by our loved ones inside. To forge a collective intolerability of systematic, racial, gender, ableist and sexual violence—from malnourishment, lack of privacy, physical, medical and psychological abuse to the very exasperating use of isolation units as a mental health response to suicidal ideation— requires a constant *taking the floor* even when it seems no one is listening. With COVID-19 outbreak surges within prisons in 2020, we in TAG, alongside our siblings inside prison, launched a digital campaign to spotlight several facilities with the highest number of COVID-19 outbreaks. It was reported to us by our people inside that it became routine practice for those incarcerated to be left uninformed or misinformed about their health status, especially as they were constantly shuffled between makeshift building facilities set up for ad hoc quarantine. Like those reports coming out of the CJC, TAG members inside prisons reported being shuffled from different buildings, yards and cafeterias in an incredibly chaotic way—being moved frequently without notice and not being told why or when they were housed with symptomatic individuals who tested positive.[2]

The collective demand for an early release of immunocompromised, at-risk, and elderly populations was underscored by the slogans "Free Them All" and "Free Them All 4 Public Health." We demanded an end to the virus-spreading practice of transfers between agencies and facilities such as California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation's (CDCR) cooperation with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). On multiple occasions, the CDCR denied releasing into ICE custody those who had served their time, only to place them into deportation proceedings soon after. #CDCRLies and #StopSATFOutbreak were some of the hashtags we developed in order to put pressure on CDCR officials and political representatives in order to center the voices and demands of those incarcerated. Although the campaign did not succeed in any recognizable way in terms of halting deathly COVID-19 conditions or providing any actual direct emergency release, those inside the prison were encouraged to continue organizing and making demands, knowing that their resistance was necessary to all of our collective survival.

Intolerable: Writings from Michel Foucault and the Prison Information Group (1970-1980) is a compelling archive of complex work by the GIP in France in the 1970s, offering readers critical insights, questions, and a transnational context in which the struggles for abolition must not only be guided by but remain in inextricable relationship to those impacted by carceral institutions—those whose survival necessitates everyday resistance to state-sanctioned mechanisms keen only on destroying life. The GIP published and amplified the *list of demands organized by prisoners at Toul Prison* (Cahiers de revendications sortis des prisons lors des récentes révoltes) where the 1971 photo of those caged inside Ney Prison in Toul,

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[2] Additionally, many incarcerated individuals have reported correctional officers and staff refusing to wear masks on site, wearing them only before entering the facility but not after.

France, is linked to and inspired by the Attica uprisings just three months prior.[3] These GIP communiqués connect those struggles between imprisoned Algerian freedom fighters of the National Liberation Front to the Attica Prison Rebellion on Turtle Island; and as similarly inspired by the resistance, life, death and intellectual discourse and scholarship of Black Marxist-Leninist revolutionary George Jackson. As scholars and activist *in but not of* academia, to borrow from Moten and Harney, we are called to critique not from the positionality of disembodied intellectuals but as critical interlocutors.[4] To be interlocutors with those on the ground impacted everyday by carceral violence is not a means to extract knowledge but rather to theorize together as a liberatory praxis, or to quote the GIP, "We do not conduct our inquiry in order to accumulate knowledge, but to heighten our intolerance and make it an active intolerance."[5] It is from such an archive of writings, personal communications, published correspondences, newsletters, interviews, and prisoner demands that abolitionist organizers, scholars, and activists can, in our contemporary moment, witness and learn from the cyclical longstanding tensions between reforming the intolerable carceral institutions and the work of abolishing them altogether.

What does it mean for abolitionist praxis to always be and remain in relation to not just those behind cages and institutional walls but, to quote Foucault, to be concerned about any shared practice in which one tolerates the "[pushing of] a portion of the population to the margins?"[6] This is a critical metric by which we must trouble the dead-ends of reforming and making incarceration more tolerable, remaining in its original form, versus the breaking open and anew that is the promise, hope and horizon of abolition.[7] Reforms fail to explain, extrapolate, and challenge the systems, logics, and punitive measures by which some portion of the population is required to be pushed into and remain in the margins. The Latin root of the term "margin" or *margo* means quite literally the edge or border— that which exists outside of the frame or legible page. To be pushed to the

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[3] The list of demands published by the GIP from Toul Rebellion are similar to those from the CJC revolt in 2021 to the Pelican Bay Hunger Strikes of 2013. This infinite loop of intolerable misery continues as politicians and city officials simply argue as to how to control dissent and prison uprisings while only entertaining civil legal action to make the carceral institution perhaps selectively less miserable for some.

[4] "To abuse its hospitality, to spite its mission, to join its refugee colony, its gypsy encampment, to be in but not of—this is the path of the subversive intellectual in the modern university." (p. 101). See Fred Moten and Stefano Harney, "The University and the Undercommons: Seven Theses," *Social Text* 22:2 (2004), 101–115.

[5] "A public announcement written by Michel Foucault," originally published in *J'accuse*, 3 (1971), 26. Republished in Kevin Thompson and Perry Zurn, eds., *Intolerable: Writings from Michel Foucault and the Prisons Information Group, 1970–1980*, trans. Perry Zurn and Erik Beranek. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press (2021), 66.

[6] Originally from Niklaus Meienber, "Die gross Einsperrung" in *Tages Anzeiger Magazin* 12 (1972), 15, 17, 20 and 37. Republished in part in *Intolerable: Writings from Michel Foucault and the Prisons Information Group, 1970–1980*, 277.

[7] Liat Ben-Moshe describes the genealogy of reformist reforms via Andre Gorz as follows: "Reformist reforms are situated in the discursive formation of the system as is, so that any changes are made within or against this existing framework." See Liat Ben-Moshe, "The Tension between Abolition and Reform," in *The End of Prisons: Reflections from the Decarceration Movement*, ed. M. Nagel and A. J. Nocella II (2013), 87.

margins, according to Foucault, is to exist in a disappeared space, a forgotten place, that is, behind an opaque sea glass window. It is our collective responsibility to be in an integrated, critical interlocking relationship to those in shrouded corners and punitive margins of psychiatric facilities, ICE detention centers, juvenile halls to military bases and detention camps. The violence of power relations remains in its ability to enact a severing of each of our deep-rooted connections—through materializing and weaponizing margins through carceral infrastructure to system classification through law and order that make categories of disposability the architectonic to liberal democracy. Collectively practicing intolerance towards the deplorable mechanisms of carceral archipelagos, redacted geographies, and militarized borders requires that we, as scholars, activists and organizers, resist the impulse to repair or reform broken windows, as they are a living, breathing archive of a shared grammar of insurrection.

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SYMPOSIUM

Reform, Abolition, Problematization

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I would like to take the occasion of the publication of the English translation of the GIP archive to briefly gather some reflections and lessons on three axes of resistance for which the GIP has served, for me and I hope now for others, as an important point of intersection: reform, abolition, and problematization. My hope is that this distinctive archive will become a catalyst to spur further consideration of these and so many other axes for present struggles and beyond.

It is clear throughout the GIP materials that, even in the group's brief existence, the codified trope of responding to criticism with the countercharge of failing to offer plans for reform reverberates. To be against the prison, to be against incarceration, against the carceral, against the punitive society is never enough. Those who condemn, those who protest, those who expose, those who seek to give the floor to the marginal – they all must take on the burden of crafting the reform, of projecting the vision, for the very institutions and practices that they critique.

For the GIP, this charge came to its head most clearly in the exchange that Foucault and Jean-Marie Domenach, representing the GIP, had with Paul Thibaud, the editor of *Esprit*, in January of 1980. The issue of the journal from November of 1979, "Toujours les prisons", had included an extensive roundtable discussion of the GIP featuring a former member of the judiciary, François Colcombet, a former prison physician, Antoine Lazarus, and a former activist, Louis Appert (the pseudonym that Foucault adopted for this discussion), all of whom had been involved, in varying ways, with the GIP's campaigns. In his introduction to the volume, Thibaud charged that the GIP, like so many other activist groups, had ultimately been ineffective in bringing about social reform because they had failed to lay out a program for improvements in the penal system. Foucault's reply is succinct and biting:

> One of our principles was in some way to make it so that prisoners and, around them, an entire fringe of the population, could express themselves. The GIP texts were not the

elaborations of a noxious intellectual, but the result of this attempt. That is why the GIP never considered itself charged with proposing reforms.[1]

Domenach concurred:

> From the beginning, Michel Foucault, and I, along with all the initiators of the GIP, agreed not to propose a reform plan and not to substitute our discourse for that of the prisoners.[2]

To abandon representation, to abandon mimesis, to resist the 'indignity of speaking for others' is thus to abandon reformism.

But another of the GIP's tactics also led it towards this same resolute silence. The most famous of the so-called "intolerance-investigations" that the GIP conducted remains, perhaps, its first, "Intolerable 1. Investigation into Twenty Prisons," where the group reported on and reproduced surveys of prisoners regarding the conditions of their incarceration. Here, the prisoners take the floor (*prendre la parole*) and its back cover proclaims: "The goal of the G.I.P. is not reformist, we do not dream of an ideal prison: we hope that prisoners will be able to say what is *intolerable* in the system of penal repression."[3] We see this same commitment again in the publication of the demands from the prisoner uprisings, but perhaps in its most personal form in "Intolerable 4. Prison Suicides," which reproduces a series of letters that a prisoner, H. M., sent to his family, his friends, and others. While in prison, H. M. had been sentenced to solitary confinement for homosexuality, and he eventually took his own life there. His letters thus served as documents for a "lived analysis of the personified mechanisms that ceaselessly push them [young people] into reform schools, hospitals, barracks, and prisons."[4]

Yet, it is "Intolerable 2. The GIP Investigates a Model Prison: Fleury-Mérogis" that initiates a different kind of challenge to the demands for reform. This booklet drew from prisoners' descriptions of the ways of life and built environment of what at the time was proclaimed to be an ideal prison, a prison of the future, to show that even the most humane and efficient form of incarceration, the most reformed means of punishment, remained nothing other than an extension of the punitive logic of society more broadly. The fundamental issue for the GIP was thus not the failure of prisons to live up to the demands of being more gentle, acceptable, and efficient; in a word, to being reformed institutions. Rather, what was at stake was always calling into question the social and political functions of punishment and illegalities.

Was the GIP ultimately fighting for the abolition of the prison system? To this we must say yes and no. Yes, if what we mean is that to become intolerant of prisons and to abolish criminal records was, for the GIP, inextricably part and parcel of the project of abolishing

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[1] Kevin Thompson and Perry Zurn, ed., *Intolerable: Writings from Michel Foucault and the Prisons Information Group, 1970-1980*, trans. Perry Zurn and Erik Beranek (2021), 379.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid., 93.

[4] Ibid., 191.

the entire carceral system of which these were and are but instruments. Yes, if what we mean is, as Jean-Marie Domenach himself proclaimed already in 1972:

> All the reforms are worthwhile, but they don't get at what is essential. It is really a question of breaking down prison walls, of destroying the carceral universe, which doesn't mean, as they feign to believe, entering into a universe without sanctions overnight.[5]

And finally, yes if what we mean is how the GIP laid the foundation and handed its work off to the CAP (Comité d'Action des Prisonniers), the group led entirely by former prisoners, which explicitly dedicated itself to abolishing not only the penal system but the death penalty, and ultimately all forms of social inequality and oppression.

But we must say no if what is meant is that the GIP sought, myopically, to destroy the prison, to tear down its walls, where such work unintentionally also serves to further entrench the interconnected logics of marginalization and the microphysics of power, where the destruction of the institution never gets at the root practices from which it emerged.

And further, we must also say no where the struggle for abolition becomes detached from the ground level of incarcerated lives and the always difficult and challenging work of forging public support. The danger here, as Foucault noted in 1976 clearly referencing his experience in the GIP and the CAP, always remains this separation and the growth it permits of certain ideologies about criminality:

> The struggle around the prisons, the penal system, and the police-juridical apparatus, because it has developed alone among social workers and former prisoners, has tended increasingly to separate itself from everything that would have enabled it to grow. It has allowed itself to be penetrated by a completely naïve and archaic ideology that makes the delinquent at once into the innocent victim and the pure rebel, the lamb of great social sacrifice and the young wolf of future revolutions . . . The result has been a deep split between this monotonous and lyrical little chant, which is only heard in very small groups, and the masses who have good reason not to take it as 'money down,' but who also—thanks to the studiously cultivated fear of criminality—accept the maintenance or, even, the reinforcement, of the judicial and police apparatus.[6]

This is surely at least part of what Foucault meant when, as Deleuze and others so often tell us, he said that the GIP, for him, had been a failure. But what we also can see here is that the GIP's resolute commitment to the specificity of the struggles in which it took part always stood as both its challenge and its opportunity to call into question the entanglements of knowledge and power, of representation (truth) and control (government), that defined these distinct domains and the broader social architecture of which they were but one part.

Finally, in an interview from April of 1984, Foucault proclaimed that the GIP had been "an enterprise of 'problematization,' an effort to render the evidences, practices, rules,

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[5] Ibid., 342.

[6] Michel Foucault, "Entretien avec Michel Foucault" [1976], in *Dits et écrits II, 1976-1988* (2001), 157-158; English translation as "Truth and Power," in *Power: Essential Works of Foucault, 1954-1984*, Volume 3, ed. James D. Faubion (New York: The New Press, 2000), 130 [translation modified].

institutions, and habits that had remained sedimented for decades and decades problematic and doubtful."[7] Problematization is invoked here in its critical as opposed to its methodological sense.

In its methodological sense, problematization designates the object of historical investigation. Accordingly, in *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault set himself the task of tracking the emergence of the modern problematization of punishment, that is, the distinctive way in which punishment became cast as a self-evident matter of thought in terms of the denial of liberty and the requirement to work under the disciplinary terms of the normative gaze. Problematization, in this sense, refers to the discursive and nondiscursive practices whereby something is constituted as a field—with a definite set of objects, rules of action, and forms of self-relation—from which the subsequent reflection of the period takes its bearings.

The task of critique is importantly different than historical inquiry. It is to step back and reflect upon whatever entrenched practice or position, due to a complex of social, economic, and political processes, emerges as uncertain or unfamiliar and to seek not a resolution to these difficulties but a new way of posing what is at stake in the matter at hand. For critique to be able to do this, thought must be relieved of all that it has taken for granted about this issue so that it can pose a fundamentally new problematization, otherwise it threatens merely to throw out but one more solution to an already established problematic. Foucault spoke of this work of untethering or emancipating thought from its prior commitments to a preceding form of problematization as also being a kind of problematizing – a critical problematizing. Here, to problematize means not to pose a new set of objects, relations, and rules, as in the methodological sense, but to disinter thought from its entrenchment in calcified forms of thinking and practice:

> The work of thought is not to denounce the evil that secretly dwells in everything that exists, but to sense the danger that threatens in all that is habitual, and to render problematic all that is solid.[8]

To problematize in this critical sense, then, is precisely to aid reflection in awakening thought from its dogmatic slumber. And, certainly, archaeological and genealogical investigation of the history of problematizations of punishment is one way to contribute to the work of critique, but critique requires other forms of intervention as well.

To be sure, none of the GIP's activities were historical, let alone archaeological or genealogical. Nonetheless, they were profoundly critical in that they rendered the sedimented procedures and commitments upon which the penal system stood problematic, and they did this in a number of ways: not just by creating spaces within which prisoners could speak of their own experiences and be heard, and not just by producing

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[7] Michel Foucault, "Interview de Michel Foucault" [1984], in *Dits et écrits II, 1976-1988* (2001), 1507; English translation as "Interview with Actes," in *Power: Essential Works of Foucault, 1954-1984*, Volume 3, 394 [translation modified].

[8] Michel Foucault, "À propos de la généalogie de l'éthique: aperçu du travail en cours" [1984], in *Dits et écrits II, 1976-1988* (2001), 1431 [this is the French edition of the interview with Dreyfus and Rabinow for which Foucault made several important revisions; the passage cited is one of these].

documentaries, street theatre, dramas, investigations, leafleting, and public protests, but by also enabling those with authority and expertise within these systems of power to testify and denounce the specific operations of power that they themselves inhabited. As Foucault put it, speaking of the testimony of Doctor Édith Rose, the staff psychiatrist at the prison at Toul:

> As someone within a system of power, instead of critiquing how it operates, she denounced what happened there, what had just happened, on a certain day, in a certain place, under certain circumstances.[9]

For the GIP to engage in genuinely critical problematization required that it have in its arsenal the courageous truth-telling of those whose status, site, and position entitled them to intervene in local struggles, that is, it required, among other forms of resistance, the work of what Foucault came to call specific intellectuals. And it is precisely the specific intellectual whose epistemic authority is able to link local struggles over administrative practices within a specific facility, such as the uprising at Toul, to the more general battle contesting the historically shifting rules of veridiction and jurisdiction that govern the carceral system itself. In their simple truth-telling, specific intellectuals move beyond calls for reform to actually provoking the public's intolerance for this way of punishing, this problematization of punishment, and, in this way, contribute to the problematization of this seemingly self-evident practice.

To render problematic and doubtful all the long entrenched evidences, practices, rules, institutions, and habits that have sustained the problematization of punishment and the carceral archipelago more broadly demands an expansive and creatively shifting and changing array of tactics of resistance and struggle. This, I would say, is the lesson that stands at the very core of the GIP and stands for us now as its legacy. My hope is that the challenge that this lesson poses will remain vital for us today as we continue the struggles against the intolerable.

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[9] *Intolerable*, 253.

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SYMPOSIUM

Abolition and the Prophetic Imagination

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"We wanted no prescription, no recipe, no prophecy."[1]

—Louis Appert (aka Michel Foucault), "Struggles Around the Prisons"

"Le songe prophetique est comme la voie oblique de la philosophie."[2]

—Michel Foucault, "Dream, Imagination, and Existence"

There is something prophetic about abolition; some element of the elsewhere that marks its practice, and its discourse. In the work of undoing, there is a crack. In the refusal, a moment of imagination. Abolition is driven by definitive demands as much as by what is yet to come and what is still unfinished.[3]

For some, Michel Foucault is a prophet. He is a prophet in exile and a prophet in extremity.[4] As the "power-thinker," he offers a diagnosis of oppressive power formations and a vision of resistance—always at the edge of what is and in the hope of what is to come. But Foucault himself has a certain allergy to the prophetic, a certain visceral intolerance for the word. "I never behave like a prophet,"[5] he insists, and "the role of the

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[1] François Colcombet, Antoine Lazarus, and Louis Appert, "Struggles around the Prisons," in *Intolerable: Writings from Michel Foucault and the Prisons Information Group, 1970-1980*, eds. Kevin Thompson and Perry Zurn, trans. Perry Zurn and Erik Beranek (2021), 370.

[2] Michel Foucault, "'Introduction' to Ludwig Binswanger's *Le Rêve et l'Existence*," in *Dits et Ecrits* I (2003), 83.

[3] Liat Ben-Moshe, "'The Institution Yet to Come': Analyzing Incarceration through a Disability Lens," in *The Disability Studies Reader*, ed. Leonard David (2013), 119-132.

[4] Christina Hendricks, "Prophets in Exile: A Diagnosis of Foucault's Political Intellectual" (2000); Allan Megill, *Prophets of Extremity: Nietzsche, Heidegger, Foucault, and Derrida* (1987).

[5] Michel Foucault, "An Ethics of Pleasure," *Foucault Live: Collected Interviews, 1961-1984*, ed. Sylvère Lotringer (1996), 380.

intellectual today is not that of proposing solutions or prophesying."[6] To Foucault's ear, a prophet is more of a reformist than an abolitionist, ready to make recommendations rather than insistent on the necessity and yet indeterminacy of change. From this vantage point, the trouble with being a prophet, with saying such-and-such a thing needs to change in such-and-such a manner, is twofold. First, it closes down possibility, answering frozen formulas with yet another sovereign injunction rather than opening up a praxis of vigilance and vulnerability. Second, it is often just not one's place. Solutions need to be as local as the problems and led by those closest to them. Universal pronouncements about what ought and ought not to be are useless and embarrassing. Those abstracted from these contexts have no business hawking quips – or wrangling armchairs for a seat.

When it comes to Foucault's involvement with the Prisons Information Group (Le Groupe d'information sur les prisons, GIP), he is especially insistent. He wants nothing to do with recommendations of reform. As an information group, he says, the GIP had "nothing to propose;" "we wanted no prescription, no recipe, no prophecy."[7] It aimed only to make known that "the existence of the prison posed problems, just as much as what happened there."[8] No prophecy, then, only problematization. No proposals for alternative penalties, improved facilities, or corrections to the correctional system. Only an insistent analysis of how the problem of criminalization gets crafted, gets tuned such that prison is the only imaginable solution—and a terrible one. For Foucault, problematization refuses all unfounded presumptions of access and authority requisite to deciding what ought to be done and what ought to be thought. It is a humbler task of understanding the present and its history rather than deciding its future. As such, for Foucault, the GIP's work is incongruous with reform and falls far short of prophecy.

But there is always more to the GIP than Foucault would understand – and more to problematization and to prophecy.

The GIP had a prophet in its midst. Gerard Grandmontagne, a young man who, after being repeatedly incarcerated for petty theft and drugs, and finally placed in solitary for homosexuality, took his own life. The GIP published Grandmontagne's letters under the pseudonym of H.M. The letters are torrid scrawls. Words of refusal and of hope, of longing and of delight, of stupor and rage, of belonging and alienation. And words of prophecy. According to Walter Brueggemann, the prophetic message does not paint a definitive picture of the future but rather galvanizes the suffering of a people so as to viscerally critique an oppressive system and energize the oppressed with lyric possibility.[9] The prophet does not decide nor totalize. Instead, they grieve, they grieve in community, and in doing so they forge the path of freedom. H.M. is this sort of prophet.

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[6] Michel Foucault, *Remarks on Marx* (1991), 157.
[7] Colcombet, Lazarus, and Appert, "Struggles around the Prisons," 370.
[8] Ibid.; Cp. Perry Zurn, "Publicity and Politics: Foucault, the Prisons Information Group, and the Press," *Radical Philosophy Review* 17:2 (2014), 403-420.
[9] Walter Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination* (2018).

"I'm a voice crying in the wilderness," H.M. writes.[10] It is an explicit reference to the Judeao-Christian faith, recalling the cries of John the Baptist (John 1:23) and Isaiah before him (Isaiah 40:3). As foretold by Isaiah, John the Baptist cried out in the wilderness on the cusp of Christ's first coming, preparing hearts and minds for a time of radical change. Indeed, H.M. uses the same locution as that which appears in the French Bible at the time: "*je suis la voix [de celui] qui crie dans le désert*." H.M. thus archives himself in one of the longest, most legible of all prophetic lineages. In doing so, he lends credence and clarity to his voice, sharpening it. The passage is less a testament to erasure than it is a protest, an insistence on meaning-making, belonging, and even hope, within and against a system that aims to quell precisely that meaning, belonging, and hope.

Across the Old and New Testaments, the wilderness is a waiting ground that precipitates revelation. The same word is used to refer to the Israelites wandering in the wilderness for 40 years to inherit the promised land (Acts 7:36). That waiting ground, moreover, is typically a place of political exile, even social abandonment. But it is consistently, also, a place of unusually intimate companionship, especially with the divine. As such, the very notion of belonging is reframed in the liminal space of the wilderness; God appears to his people in a pillar of fire, a voice on the mountain top, a wind outside Elijah's cave, and in a burning bush. It is here, in this space of abandonment and yet belonging that Old and New Testament prophets find their voice. It is standing on the outskirts of empire that they launch their searing critiques, proclaiming and mobilizing a kingdom not of this world. The Greek *érēmos* and the Hebrew *midbar*, translated as wilderness, typically refer to an "uninhabited," "uncultivated, unpopulated place," or even an "unappropriated territory."[11] It is an anti-imperial, even anti-carceral space of possibility.

The letter in which H.M.'s cry from the wilderness is inscribed is dated September 9, 1972. It begins with a deep frustration, common to many prisoners, that he writes and writes but barely ever receives mail. H.M. begs his friend S. to please write something, and to please write regularly, so as to remind H.M. that he is not "all alone." The letter then describes the kind of furtive companionship H.M. is building in prison (with his doctor, his psychiatrist, his cell mate, a new cell arrival, and a book), and the community he hopes to be a part of upon release (a communitarian hideaway, "a small farmhouse," "a goat and a few sheep"). H.M. then launches a clear anti-carceral screed. Insistently, brazenly he speaks: "Society has rejected me, but I'll survive without it. It can't harm me anymore. […] I will howl [*hurlerais*] injustice, I will proclaim [*proclamerai*] the corruption of the police and their barbaric and arbitrary methods. Whatever it costs me, I will speak [*dirai*] the Truth." This is H.M. the prophet, this is H.M. speaking from exile, yes, but also after drawing strength from insurgent intimacies and forbidden belongings. As he speaks

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[10] Groupe d'information sur les prisons, "Letters from H.M.," in *Intolerable: Writings from Michel Foucault and the Prisons Information Group, 1970-1980*, ed. Kevin Thompson and Perry Zurn, trans. Perry Zurn and Erik Beranek (2021), 172.

[11] See James Strong, *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance* (2003).

Truth to power,[12] he insists that carceral space is never total or totalizing—there is a de-territorializing wilderness even here, in the Fresnes Prison. And it is through his furtive sociality and his "howling" speech that H.M. makes the cracks of carceral expansion yawn still wider.

In retrospect, perhaps H.M. is not the GIP's only prophet. Hélène Cixous, Jean Genet, and Serge Livrozet (as well as George Jackson and Angela Davis to whom the GIP looked) launched incisive critiques of capitalism, racism, homophobia, xenophobia, misogyny, and classism from the wilderness of carceral enclosures, while simultaneously energizing all who would listen with a vision of otherwise possibilities. A certain hope in sorrow. They, too, insisted on the life left to live in excess of oppressive structures. They, too, demanded the prison—and its many injustices—be razed to the ground, but also identified new forms of sociality already rising in its wake. Together, they engaged a kind of prophetic abolitionism.

Foucault was perhaps appropriately tentative about specific calls for change, which are so easily touted by hubristic intellectuals and coopted by established forces. But the GIP was always messier and more complex than he knew. The prophetic dreams in the GIP's orbit paint an oblique path to doing sociality differently, and to thinking it differently. Thinking behind and to the side of carceral logics. Thinking the act of belonging in the crack of isolation. Thinking abolition.[13] Hope lies in the fact of structural frailty in the face of these dreams. "Hope," Cixous would say, "is the blood of it."[14]

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[12] See Christina Hendricks on parrhesiast as prophet in "Prophecy and *Parresia*: Foucauldian Critique and the Political Role of Intellectuals," in *Conceptions of Critique in Modern and Contemporary Philosophy*, ed. Karin de Boer and Ruth Sonderegger (2012), 212-230.

[13] Ladelle McWhorter, "The Abolition of Philosophy," in *Active Intolerance: Michel Foucault, the Prisons Information Group, and the Future of Abolition*, eds. Perry Zurn and Andrew Dilts (2016), 23-40.

[14] Perry Zurn, "Hope is the Blood of it: On the GIP, Paris 8, and the Urgency of Writing," An interview with Hélène Cixous, in *Intolerable: Writings from Michel Foucault and the Prisons Information Group, 1970-1980*, ed. Kevin Thompson and Perry Zurn, trans. Perry Zurn and Erik Beranek (2021), 401.

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INTERVIEW

Two Friends and a Camera: Foucault, Livrozet, and the Guerilla Art of Documentary Film

PERRY ZURN
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INTERVIEW. An interview conducted by Perry Zurn with Nicolas Drolc on March 15, 2019, in Nancy, France. Nicolas Drolc is the director of *Sur les toits* (2014) and *La mort se mérite* (2017), two documentary films devoted to Le Groupe d'information sur les prisons (GIP) and Serge Livrozet, respectively. Nicolas is the son of Gérard Drolc, the photojournalist who covered the Nancy Prison Revolt in 1972, a resistance effort supported by Michel Foucault and the GIP. Nicolas is also the informally adopted grandson of former prisoner Serge Livrozet, a GIP member and the founder (with Foucault) of the GIP's successor: Comité d'action des prisonniers (CAP). Here, Nicolas discusses the process of making these films, the anti-capitalist, anarchist ethos behind his work, and the revolutionary character of friendship.

Perry Zurn: How did you get involved in renegade filmmaking?

Nicolas Drolc: When I was a kid, before the internet, I was fascinated with archival footage. Back then the only way to see it was in documentary films. That's how it all started. I said, "Well, I want to work with archival footage, so I'll have to make documentaries." When I was 18, I got in touch with a German independent film company, Slowboat Films. They were really into guerrilla filmmaking, shooting on a shoestring budget. That was really appealing to me. I thought, "This is the best way to tell a story." And then I met people who were actually doing it, and they said, "Just do it! Find an interesting topic and make a film. It's totally doable without much money, technical knowledge, infrastructure, or crew." And that's how I got started. I was already a film buff, into all kinds of films. But I knew that for me, it would be low-budget documentaries. That was the only way I could tell something worth telling. Of course, my story is also rooted in my family. My father was a photojournalist and my mother a radio journalist. So I had the image on one side, and the content on the other. And I thought, "What if I put the two together and start making films?"

PZ: Why are low-budget films so appealing to you?

ND: Well, I was exploring the possibility of making *Sur les toits* for television early on. I was pretty skeptical, though, because I don't really like television. I never really liked it. It's just people throwing films together to make a quick buck. I knew that freedom, real freedom, would be making films for cinema. In television, a big documentary is 52 minutes, for the stupid reason that you put 8 minutes of commercials at the end to make an hour. I'm not willing to do that. But the fact is, if you want to produce a documentary and you need funding, you get a TV channel to buy it. So for *Sur les toits*, I went to three television stations: a local one here in Nancy, another in Les Vosges, and a third in Paris (Planet Justice). I talked with the woman on the phone at Planet Justice. After my pitch, she said, "Oh hang on, I have a guy on the other line who's making a film about a surfer who puts his head in the mouths of crocodiles." And I thought, "This is not going to work." Everyone around me was convinced I was being pretty arrogant. They said, "Don't turn down the offer! People wait until they're 45 to get an opportunity like this." I was only 24 at the time.

But I knew that my idea for *Sur les toits* was a good one. And I thought, "They're going to take my idea and squeeze it and wash it until there's nothing good left. It'll be superficial." It just didn't work for me. I don't want anybody to decide for me what's interesting and what's not about my film. I knew that if I wanted to keep control of the film, I just had to do it on my own, and I had to do it for cinema. That let me make a 95 minute film. And to be honest, a guy like Serge Livrozet, who played a huge role in the Nancy Prison Revolt and on *Sur les toits*, can't be on TV. Not only does he say the poor have a legitimate right to steal from the rich (and you can't say that on TV), but he's an old guy with a speech impediment. They would have cut him.

So, I decided, "Fuck your TV. I'm going to make a low-budget documentary for cinema, and we'll see what happens. If cinema doesn't want it, that's fine. We'll do DVDs, we'll do the internet, we'll do whatever." I decided to make the film I wanted to make and not have people in a suit and tie tell me how to do it. The decision was not good for my career, but it was great for the film, because it allowed the film to really reach its potential. It's fucked up that the funding system for films is easy once you get a TV deal but really hard otherwise. If you do a documentary for cinema, hang on tight because you won't get much money. But that's the price of freedom.

PZ: And how did you get the idea for *Sur les toits*?

ND: I grew up here in Nancy, near the prison. Walking back and forth to school every day in junior high, I would pass Charles-III Prison. At 8am, noon, 2pm, and 5. Four times a day I would hear the prisoners yelling from the windows. I would see families come for visitation. But visiting hours were never long enough, so they would park the car in front of the prison and keep talking through the windows. I witnessed this. The prison was very present for me. In social history—or the "people's history" as Howard Zinn calls it—

the prison is everywhere. I was interested in prison like I was interested in punk rock, the Beat Generation, or other countercultural movements. So many of these topics lead right back to the prison. Given my interest in the history of social minorities, the prison would always be close to my heart. And I had read Livrozet's book, *De la prison à la révolte* when I was a rebel 16-year-old.[1] It was published by L'Ésprit Frappeur, which put out a lot of leftist anarchist books. So I was aware of these issues.

Then, in 2009, my father [Gérard Drolc] retired from the local newspaper and brought home photographs he had taken of the Nancy Prison Revolt. At the time, I was living in Belgium and eager to find a good idea for a film. And I thought, this is it! This is the good idea. And then I started doing research. I had heard the stories, but I asked my dad again, "So tell me about the prison riot thing. What happened exactly?" I tried doing research on the internet, but back then you couldn't find much about Nancy's prison. There was only Philippe Artières' work.[2] Reading that, I realized, "Wow, this was the epicenter of a movement. Someone needs to do this film." And it was the perfect film for me. Nancy is a small city. People from here pretty much stay here. Chances are that people in prison in 1972 are still around, so they might not be too hard to track down and interview. It might be relatively easy to get everything together to make the film. Pretty cheap, no travel costs, etc. So that's how it happened.

PZ: What did your dad think of the idea?

ND: He was ambivalent. Every parent wants their kid to achieve whatever they want to achieve. He knew it was going to be a hell of a project. He told me it was a great idea, but if it didn't work out it would be okay. And, of course, his position as the photographer was pretty special. He photographed the Nancy Prison Riot because it was his job that day. But for 40 years working as a local photojournalist, his job was not that interesting. As a kid, I remember him mostly covering football games. For him, photography was not an artistic profession. It was a job to feed the kids. So he said, "I don't want to be the highlight of this film, it was just my job that day. I was there and I went and I took pictures. Just like any photojournalist would have done." He didn't glory in it. He was skeptical about Artières' recent photobook about the riot,[3] too. Not super enthusiastic about the whole thing. But then my film came out, and he was proud. "You did it!," he said. He was pretty impressed.

PZ: So the Nancy Prison Revolt captured your imagination. What did you find compelling about the GIP, the more you learned about it?

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[1] Serge Livrozet, *De la prison à la révolte* (1973). The book, for which Michel Foucault wrote the foreword, was then republished by L'Ésprit Frappeur.

[2] Philippe Artières, Laurent Quero, Michelle Zancarini-Fournel, eds., *Le Groupe d'information sur les prisons: Archives d'une lutte* (2003).

[3] Philippe Artières, ed., *La Révolte de la prison de Nancy: 15 Janvier 1972* (2013).

ND: It was a unique moment in history. You had the intellectual elite side-by-side with the perpetual underclass. Most of the people who participated in the Nancy Prison Revolt dropped out of school at age 14. So most of them had no idea what philosophy was. The word probably wasn't even part of their vocabulary. But these groups joined forces, they shared in a common goal, a common aspiration. That's really what fascinates me.

The more I dug into the story, the more I realized the revolt was not just a social movement on the inside, it was paired with a social movement on the outside. Contemporary French philosophers served as a credible relay. Guys like Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze – these were huge names. Of course, none of the prisoners knew who these guys were, their names didn't ring a bell, but they were cool about it. Okay, some Parisian guys are behind us, we like that.

Of course, it is important to distinguish between the GIP and the prisoners. The GIP needed the prisoners to give credibility to their movements. And the prisoners needed a relay system to give credibility to their movements as well. So there was a fascinating conjunction of common interests that made the whole thing work. And that's probably what's missing in contemporary social movements like Gilets Jaunes.[4] Where are the Michel Foucault's, the supportive intellectuals in this crisis? It's probably the same in the US with the protests in Black communities and all that. You need an outside support system, a credibility relay. And that's what they had with the prison riots.

PZ: So, you read Livrozet's book when you were 16. When did you read Foucault's *Discipline and Punish*?

ND: I read *Discipline and Punish* right in the middle of producing *Sur les toits*. In high school, I did a year of philosophy, but we didn't talk about Foucault. And I chose not to pursue higher education. I did study some cinematography at the University of Metz, but we never read Foucault there. So it's something I had to learn on my own. I thought, "I've gotta read that book! Sounds like it's filled with stuff for the story." I read it with a pad of paper beside me, taking notes like I was a real philosophy student.

PZ: How would you compare the two books? *Discipline and Punish* and *De la prison à la révolte*?

ND: They are totally different. One book was written by a professor. One book was written by a guy who dropped out of school at age 14 and started educating himself in prison. Their backgrounds couldn't be more diverse. Foucault's book takes a historical perspective. It puts discipline and punishment back into historical context, from the Middle Ages to the present. Livrozet's book is just one guy's experience, but an experience that is relevant to so many other issues. It asks for the first time, "What if it's not some bad

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[4] Gilets Jaunes [Yellow Vests] was a workers' movement for economic justice that swept France from October 2018 through Summer 2019. Jackie Hoffman, one of the prisoners to participate in the Nancy Prison Revolt of 1972, was also quite active in the Gilets Jaunes.

chromosome that makes a guy a criminal?" If society manufactures consent,[5] as Noam Chomsky argues, what if society also manufactures delinquency?

That's Livrozet's idea. It's pretty provocative. Society gets what it deserves. It generates social hierarchies, and then it creates the need to fight over the crumbs of social success. If there's stuff I want and can't afford, at some point I'm going to get it, one way or another. This is down to earth stuff, but it was pretty new back then, and that's what Foucault really liked. Livrozet's book also insists that we break from the prison mentality. He says, let's take another look, let's go behind the materiality of the prison itself. Let's ask why some people tend to become delinquent and others don't. Why are 95% of people in prison poor? These questions might seem really elementary, but that's what Foucault liked about them. Let's go back and figure out why capitalist society needs prison as a tool to suppress revolt. Delinquency is a form of revolt. I don't want to eat soup for the rest of my life while other people eat caviar. Why can't I eat caviar too? We're two human beings, we're supposed to eat the same thing.

PZ: What was it like to track down former prisoners in Nancy for the film?

ND: The process took a while to get started. First, I did a lot of research. I went to IMEC and the Departmental Archive here in Nancy.[6] I got the names of the ringleaders from Artières' book and from newspapers at the time. In the Nancy archives, there were police records, including a report of the prison riot. It was a 12- or 14-page document, recording the results of the police investigation. Everything that happened that day. 6:30 am blah blah blah, at coffee time this happened, then that guy opened that door, and then this guy was seen on the roof with that guy, etc. At the end, there was a list of a dozen or so names with dates of birth, parents' names, known professions, current addresses, etc. It was a gold mine. I stole the whole thing, took it home, and worked with it.

I looked the names up in a phonebook. I called a guy named Richard Bauer. I saw he was living in one of the largest suburbs on the outskirts of Nancy, so it might be the right guy. I picked up the phone and I said, "Richard Bauer? January 15, 1972, does that date ring a bell?" And the guy was like, "Yeah, the riots, Charles-III, I was there, I was one of the last guys on the roof, who are you?" I said, "I'm Nicolas Drolc. I'm 24 and I want to make a film about it." He said, "Great, let's get some food, let's talk." So I went to his place. He said, "You have to talk to Jacky Hoffman, too. Do you know him?" I said, "Only by name." He said, "I can put you in touch." So he put me in touch with Hoffman. I went to coffee with him, and he said, "I'd love to talk about it. I was tried as the ringleader of the whole thing." He was proud of that. And then he said, "There's my buddy Roberto. I'm having a party with him on Saturday. He was there too. Do you want me to call him up, so you can interview him?" And I said, "Yeah, sure, call Roberto." That's how it went.

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[5] Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* (2002).

[6] The Institute Mémoires de l'Édition Contemporaine (IMEC) is an archive located in L'Abbeye d'Ardenne, just outside of Caen, France. At the time, it housed the GIP archive and much of the Foucault archive.

The guard had a different story. I placed an ad in the local newspaper saying I was making a film and looking for records. If anybody shot the riots on Super-8[7] or something like that, I'd be interested in having a look. Someone contacted the newspaper saying, "I was a guard at Toul Prison back then, and I'd like to meet the guy making the film and tell him my story." The newspaper gave me his contact info, and I went and did an interview. In a sense, it was random to have a guard in the film. But it was also important. I got a lot of heat for it from the super radical anti-prison movement in France. They all loved the film, but they didn't like that I included a guard. I thought that was dumb. If you make a film about the Shoah, you talk with ex-SS officers. If you make a film about prison, you need to have the guard's point of view. After all, in the prison system, the guards and the prisoners are at some level the same. They all come from the poor under-class. At some point, a guy says, "Okay, it's a shitty job, but it's a job for someone with no qualifications," and he takes it. But he comes from the same social class as the prisoners he supervises (and represses). And that's the issue. Prisoners hate guards, but it's not the guards that make the prison what it is. It's the people in power who pit the poor against each other, so they don't really see what's happening further up the chain. The guard I interviewed told me a story about how one day a couple [of] newly convicted guys at Toul Prison saw him and said, "Hey, we worked together at the same breeze blocks factory a few years ago!" He said, "Sure enough," and shared his tobacco stash with them.

I contacted Daniel Defert. He obviously had to be in the film to tell the story of the GIP. While there were other possibilities, he seemed like the best character. I gave him a call. He said, "Yeah come to 285 Vaugirard," so I did. The same thing happened with the lawyer Henri LeClerc. "Of course I remember! The Nancy trial was one of the most important trials of my career. I'd love to talk about it." So we did. The last guy I interviewed on the film was Livrozet. Prisoner, writer, intellectual. He merged all the worlds. And I needed someone to synthesize what I was saying. Most prisoners at Nancy didn't go as far as Livrozet went. They would have protested simply for better living conditions, but they may not have been willing to do what the CAP did afterwards, which was question the whole system. Livrozet went farther. And he was brutally honest. We got in touch and he said, "Yeah, I can talk about this, but it's not going to be a pretty story." And I said, "I want to listen to that. I want to hear you out."

It was a provocative way to conclude the film. The story of the prison riots is not just: everything was terrible, they got up on the roofs, they won heat for the winter, and the right to read newspapers, and then everything was cool. It's not that simple. The film ends with the theme of failure. As Livrozet put it, "In 1972, there were 35,000 prisoners in France. In 2015, 80,000 (more than double). So yeah, the Nancy prisoners may have won heat that winter, but the fact is there are more prisoners now than ever before. It's the same in the States. The numbers just keep going up, and up, and up. Our goal was to make the prisons empty, but they have never been so full."

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[7] The Super 8mm camera was first manufactured in 1965 by Kodak.

PZ: The theme of failure comes up in both of your films. Do you agree with Livrozet that the GIP was a failure? Or do you find that it was successful in certain ways?

ND: It's a lot like all the other emancipation movements of the late '60s and early '70s. They were radical movements, but society has since been depoliticized. You could tell the same story about the women's liberation movement. They won abortion rights, and then two years ago you have people protesting it. Or you have the FHAR[8] in the '70s and then in 2010 people are protesting against gay marriage. This is absurd. There is a weird regression in terms of rights and freedoms for everyone. The prison is no exception. I think society was more politically aware and people were more politically evolved in the '60s and '70s than they are today. In that sense, the GIP was a failure.

But it wasn't a complete failure. Without the Nancy Prison Riot, without the GIP, without the CAP, there would be no abolition of the death penalty in France in 1981. And that's huge. When Livrozet talks about this, he gets tears in his eyes. When the CAP first demonstrated against the death penalty in 1976, advocating that even murderers not be executed, Livrozet recalls, "People looked at us like we were crazy." Now everybody thinks it's great we abolished the death penalty. On a human level, this seems like obvious progress. So the GIP had some concrete results. It was a success. What really hasn't changed, though, is people's sense that prison is legitimate. People believe that now more than ever. If a crime is committed, a person has to pay. They're stuck in the mindset that, "If a guy does something bad, he should go to fucking prison." This is absurd. If I was to have a kid and my kid was murdered, the fact that some guy would spend 30 shitty years in prison doesn't bring my dead kid back. People need to grow out of this vengeance. I really consider it archaic. But public opinion doesn't really evolve. When I say, "Prison is medieval," most people look at me like I'm a freak.

PZ: How did your filmmaking grow or change in the second film, *La mort se mérite*?

ND: In *Sur les toits*, I really liked protocol, we had to do things correctly. I needed friends to help me with the camera. I needed a guy with a boom and all that. With the Livrozet film, I made a bet. In order to get the level of intimacy I wanted, I had to be alone with him 95% of the time. To get that quality of relationship with him, I had to kill part of the technical quality of the film. I would have to do more with less. The lack of technical sophistication in the film, the pour sound quality, the pour image quality, the shaky cameras and stuff turned into a style; something a bit like Cinéma Vérité.[9] Fuck the technique, we just want to bring the cameras out into the street and shoot in Super 8, amateur-style. The fact that it was technically cheap would ultimately bring more value to the film. At first, I

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[8] The Front homosexuel d'action révolutionnaire (FHAR) was a French gay liberation movement of the early '70s.

[9] Cinéma Vérité was a French film movement in the 1960s emphasizing natural actions and authentic dialogue.

was pulling my hair out because I kept thinking, "This is not well shot, this is out of focus." But I had to say, "Fuck all of that. The whole film is going to look hand-made."

And I really don't regret that. Just let the camera roll. The level of intimacy that provided was worth it. But that made it complicated to shoot and really complicated to edit. By contrast, *Sur les toits* was fully scripted. I wrote the whole film out before shooting it. I knew that it would develop chronologically from the *enquêtes* at Toul, through the trial at Nancy, and then end with the GIP's denouement. The film would scroll logically, from one chapter to the next. But with Livrozet, nothing was scripted. It is a digressive film. There's nothing written. I just had a notebook where I wrote down a couple themes like prison, writing, anarchy, women, getting old, Nice. I circled what I thought I could connect. And then I tried to merge everything, without really knowing how.

It was very much improvised. I would say, "Okay, now we're going to talk about Foucault. Now we're going to buy some cheese and we'll shoot you buying cheese. And then we're going to walk by the seaside and shoot some stuff." The film doesn't have a straight narrative. It moves in every direction. It's a weird way to make a film. Totally unscripted, totally improvised. Everything gets built in the editing process, and that's tricky. I tried it many, many different ways. This is working, this is not working. It was only scripted through the editing, which is how I think documentary films should be. You are dealing with reality, and, in reality, it's not clear what is going to happen. That's definitely not how they tell you to make films. In film school, they say, "You script the thing and then you raise money for it." We didn't do that at all for Livrozet.

I never even really decided to make the film in the first place. I finished *Sur les toits* and was kind of frustrated that Livrozet only got to talk for 10 minutes. "That guy. I could do a whole film about him," I thought. A lot of people told me I was crazy. After *Sur les toits*, we stayed in touch. He called me up not long afterwards and said, "I really enjoyed the interview we did. It was great. Come back to Nice whenever you feel like it. You can stay at my place. I'd be happy to have you here." So I went to Nice two or three times. Time flies by, and it's December 2015, just before Christmas. I'm at IMEC, and I get a call from Livrozet. He says, "I'm dying." I say, "What?" And he says, "My health is getting really bad and I'm probably going to die."

He got an operation in Monaco. Three days after that, I was in Nice. "I have to go there with a camera," I thought, "even if he talks for only half an hour and then he's dead, I would at least have shot that." I didn't even give him a heads up, "Hey, I'm going to film you." I thought maybe he wouldn't make it another a month. That's how we got started. Just filming one or two sequences in December. Then in March I said, "Can I come back? There is more stuff I want to film." It just fell into my hands like that. That was four years ago. I don't even think he knew, in the process, what it would become. When we finished the film and the surgery was over, he said, "Well look at that. Now you'll show it?" But that's what makes the film what it is. You don't watch it and think, "This guy's a serious filmmaker." It's just two friends and a camera.

PZ: In the film, Livrozet says you share the same social and political ideas. Do you agree?

ND: Absolutely. Here's the thing. When there is one cake and four people sitting around the table, we should split the cake into equal parts. Not have one guy eat 2/3rds of the cake and leave 10 guys with the crumbs. What's really fascinating about Livrozet is he's not all talk. In the '80s, he started a publishing company called Lettres Libres. At its peak, he had six employees, and his salary was the same as the cleaning guy's. That's a real anarchist idea. From each according to his ability, to each according to his need. That's what we believe. We believe that there's nothing that justifies one human being eating more than another just because he has a better job, because he got a university education, because he grew up in a family with better housing. The boss I have now makes 3000 bucks a month, while the secretary makes 1000. We believe that's not fair.

We share a lot of the same traditional anarchist ideas. We don't believe in the leading political class. We believe in people organizing themselves. We are also both strongly anticlerical. We see religions as the root of all evil. People might think Livrozet was anticlerical because his mother was a prostitute. But she was also a Catholic, so he went to Catholic school in Avignon, where he had to pray on his knees as a kid. As he recalls, "When I was six years old, they told me the Holy Trinity is a mystery, and I should believe without understanding it. At that point, I knew, these people don't want me to think." If you're supposed to believe in something without understanding it, that's the opposite of rationality, reflection, intelligence. You're supposed to just accept something blindly.

PZ: What was it like living with Livrozet while you shot the film?

ND: Sharing his life today as an 80-year-old solitary guy, going through his world. Sharing his past life as an activist, going through the stories he tells, surrounded everywhere by his books and his archives. You're really soaking in the past because it's all around you. He has boxes of letters between him and Foucault. And at the same time, you're soaking in what it is for him to be where he is now. For me, it's like having a grandfather. I lost my own grandfather when I was pretty young, never really had one. When I go see Livrozet, it's like going to my family, my second family. I have a room there. "This is Nicolas' room," he says. It's not just talking about Foucault, it's talking about cinema, cooking together, doing things friends do together. Eating, drinking, watching *Terminator* and *Mad Max*. When the new *Mad Max* came out, he bought the DVD and asked, "Have you seen this one?" I said "No, I missed it." He said, "Okay, we'll watch it together." So we watched it together, then we talked about Foucault for an hour and went to bed.

And it's always emotional because he's a super emotional guy. There's always a point where he talks about his wife who passed away in 2004. There's always a point where he talks about Foucault. He goes deep. It's paradoxical, too, because we end up being disappointed together by our fellow human beings. We're convinced that 90% of people on Earth are doing everything wrong. But then we also find ourselves being super hopeful about the humanity we see in certain people. I think we are two sensitive souls and we are impressed by humans who have that same sensitivity. Sometimes that means we're

super hopeful for humanity, but then we remember that 90% of people just want to watch the football game.

PZ: Why do you think Foucault and Livrozet got along? What was the heart of their friendship?

ND: Well, I would say the heart of their friendship was political. When Foucault started the GIP, I think he dreamed of finding a guy like Livrozet. And when Livrozet was in prison, I think he dreamed of finding a guy like Foucault. They started writing to each other when Livrozet was in Melun Prison. It was like a big printing plant, and the prisoners did the print work. Livrozet organized a strike, heard about the GIP, and started corresponding with Foucault. When he got out (he's told me this story a thousand times), he just went to a phone booth, called Foucault, and said, "This is Serge Livrozet, I'm out now." And Foucault said, "You're out? Okay, great, come to my place. We need to talk." And that's how they became friends. Foucault was super enthusiastic about meeting a prisoner who shared his ideas and probably thought, "This is the guy I've been waiting for." Livrozet probably thought the same thing. Livrozet said he met a lot of these guys (e.g., Deleuze, Guattari, etc.) but they were not his friends. Foucault and Livrozet became friends, real friends. It was more than a work relationship. They just got along super well. They would do friend stuff together. Go to restaurants. One day, Foucault had a problem with his washing machine. He called up Livrozet and said, "Hey, want to come over and help fix my washing machine?" Things like that. They helped each other out in a lot of ways. It was a mutual relationship.

PZ: The Livrozet film has a poetic character, and it is laced with literary quotes. Why?

ND: In a way, the film is really about a writer and about literature. Before he became a political activist, Livrozet wanted to be a writer. Sure his mother was a prostitute, and he dropped out of school and became a plumber, but he always aspired to be a writer. And he did, society be damned. I really wanted the film to represent him as he is, a man of literature. So I thought it would be good to have passages from great literature in the film. I picked quotes from people I like, but also from people Livrozet likes. The first line in the film is from Alfred de Vigny: "The man of the people is necessarily either resigned or in revolt." That sums up everything about Livrozet. It also opens *De la prison à la révolte.* The last line in the film is from Jack Kerouac. "My whole wretched life swam before my weary eyes, and I realized no matter what you do it's bound to be a waste of time in the end so you might as well go mad." That's the insignificance of life.

PZ: What do you mean by the insignificance of life?

ND: Right at the beginning of the film, I have several sentences scroll across the screen. In English it's something like, "How long is history? The earth is a billion years old, and then

you have 5000 years of human civilization. The significance of a life that lasts for 80 or maybe 100 years is just miniscule." This is a Shakespearean moment, inviting us to remember that as much importance as we like to give ourselves, one person's life is nothing in the scale of history. It's insignificant. That's an important lesson. A lot of people say, "Not true! Everyone is capable of doing many things." But I think it's good to keep in mind that people have been trying to do many things for many, many, many years. Each of us is relatively unimportant. We are ships, briefly wandering the universe.

It's a good approach because it forces you to have a lot of humility. Don't take yourself too seriously. Don't think you're going to reinvent the wheel. Keep it modest, you know? What Livrozet tried to do, lots of anarchists have tried to do, whether in the Ukraine, in Spain, or in the US. I'm thinking about Emma Goldman here.[10] You have to put your actions and your life in perspective. That doesn't mean you shouldn't do anything, but you should keep in mind the potential insignificance of everything. That's the great philosophical lesson. It doesn't mean you shouldn't do anything. But you should always keep in mind the relative insignificance of everything you do.

PZ: What keeps you going?

ND: I was thinking about that recently. It's getting harder and harder to find the energy to do everything. With the first film, you are just running around all the time. You rush boldly through every door. But after a while it gets kind of tiring. Filmmaking is really a hypocrite's profession. It's 95% bullshit. Scheduling things, getting people together, doing the communications, the advertising, getting the film screenings, etc. Most of it is not super sexy or super interesting. But it has to get done. You just have to keep thinking, "Well, at the end, it's going to be a good film. It's not going to look like anything else, and people involved in the process are going to be happy." That's what keeps me going. It's also intellectually stimulating. For me, *Sur les toits* was my thesis. If I could go back and do it again, I would. I wouldn't change a thing. But it's not a job for lazy asses, that's for sure.

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[10] Emma Goldman (1869-1940) was an important anarchist political activist and writer in the US.

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INTRODUCTION

Special section: Contributions from The Foucault Circle – Coordinator's introduction

Edward McGushin, Stonehill College, USA

As a result of the coronavirus outbreak, the Foucault Circle did not hold its annual meeting in either 2020 or 2021. Nevertheless, thanks to the efforts of our authors and referees, and the editors of *Foucault Studies*, all working under unprecedented, challenging conditions, we are able at last to bring out this Special Section of papers from the Foucault Circle. Joel Michael Reynolds (Georgetown University, USA) and Martin Bernales (Universidad Alberto Hurtado, Chile) have given us two excellent papers that engage not only with Foucault's text but also, in the spirit of Foucault, make original use of his insights and methods to provide critical genealogies of our present, of who we are today.

In "Genopower: On Genomics, Disability, and Impairment," originally presented at the 2019 meeting of the Foucault Circle at Stonehill College (Easton, MA) Reynolds argues that genomics represents a new configuration of power, government, knowledge, and subjectification. While Foucault's genealogy of biopower gives us a framework for thinking critically about genomics, Reynolds argues that genomics is distinct from other modes of bio-power in its function and in its 'social uptake' as well as in its rapid rise as a key element of our present: "We live in an age of genomics" (Reynolds, p. 143).

Reynolds argues that

> genomics is indeed noteworthy as a unique form of biopower and that its primary function is to precisify impairments in contradistinction to disability. I call the force at play in this process *genopower*. I discuss how this impacts Foucault-inspired debates in philosophy of disability and critical disability studies over the meaning of the disability-impairment distinction, and I argue that insofar as genopower gears into powerful cultural tropes that promote individualistic solutions to social issues, the socio-political effect of genomics with respect to disability—despite the aims of many of its practitioners—is indeed to normalize what Rosemarie Garland-Thomson calls "velvet eugenics." (p. 144)

Reynolds' paper brings into focus some of the crucial ethical, social, and political questions this increasing prevalence of genopower raises for us:

Are we human animals that are genomically different in ways that, while having no bearing on worth, bear upon how we should treat each other given those differences such that we should aim to create a world that is equitable in light of such differences? Or, are the differences genomic science discovers ultimately *irrelevant* given the tasks that confront building equitable societies, meaning that we should instead aim for a world that is just and equitable without needing to or caring to take into consideration such differences? The impact and import of these very different responses to the "facts" of genomic difference can hardly be overstated. (p. 160)

In light of his deep, critical engagement with the scholarship on disability, impairment, and genomics, Reynolds is led to frame genopower as "the foreclosure of a complex, human past, present, and future invariably lived in community that limits its meaning to an individual's genetic expression […]" (Reynolds, p. 158). Over and against this fore-closure, which would presume to hand each one over to the individual fate inscribed in their genes, Reynolds invites us to consider instead the "communal hope" that given "egalitarian frameworks, precisifying impairments could be a boon" (Reynolds, pp. 160-161).

In "The Forgotten Spanish Charity: Love, Government, and the Poor," originally presented at the 2017 Foucault Circle meeting at Loyola Marymount University (Los Angeles, CA), Bernales "analyzes the articulation and legacy of the Spanish version of the Catholic doctrine of charity at the moment of its decline" in the eighteenth century (Bernales, p. 120). The excavation of this moment, he demonstrates, is crucial because it was in part through displacing the Catholic deployment of charity and taking over its work in a new form that the modern Spanish State was able to extend and intensify modern governmentality:

The charitable pastorate was not forgotten but became a building block against and upon which the Spanish police of the poor [was] established for creating a powerful and happy State. This unlikely encounter was the beginning of a conceptual and technological invention still in need of being fully traced for Spain and *América*—a moment when a distinctive pastoral power [was] incorporated into the modern State along with two concerns that will be critical for it, i.e., poverty and the poor. (Bernales, p. 138)

What is the distinctive form of pastoral power appropriated into the modern Spanish State? While we are inclined to see charity and almsgiving as synonymous, Bernales shows that the deployment of charity in the Catholic pastorate was a more complex and far-reaching phenomenon:

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, Spanish Catholic charity was not simply an informal and voluntary tithe but a doctrine with its own truths and its rules. Charity had its own knowledge and ways of conducting men and women […] the critical goal of becoming a charitable believer entailed something else than to state "I believe"—it required a distinctive practice of self-mortification directed towards eliminating self-

love and thus allowing the love of charity to shape the believer's will in depth when a distinct number of crucial issues arise. (Bernales, p. 121)

To be charitable was not merely to give to the needy nor to have a compassionate feeling. Through careful examination of the archive, Bernales details how charity was developed and practiced as a government of oneself and others, involving among other things the "truth acts" of almsgiving and tribulation, and culminating in the constitution of the "charitable believer." The wealthy and the poor alike had to play their parts in this pastoral government of souls.

Bernales shows that the rise of the modern Spanish State took over and transformed this experience in order to solidify its hold on life: "the institutional deployment of the police of the poor was envisioned in part as the means by which the king and the citizens fulfilled their pious duties and thus helped out to forge a happy and powerful Nation" (Bernales, p. 135).

The problematization of poverty in the situation of the modern State cannot be properly understood outside of its genealogy. And in the moment when the State, in this case the Spanish State, established its grip on life, on the government of the living, we can see this problematization taking shape through the re-invention of the pastoral deployment of charity.

We are extremely happy to publish these two excellent papers, which represent so well the sort of scholarly conversations that we have all come to expect and cherish at the Annual Meetings of the Foucault Circle. After missing two years, we eagerly look forward to resuming these conversations when we meet in 2022 at Emory University in Atlanta. In the meantime, we can engage with the thought-provoking work of Reynolds and Bernales, which is sure to spark further discussion, critical investigation of the archive, and many experiments in new ways of thinking about and resisting configurations of power-knowledge in our present.

Many thanks to our peer reviewers and to the editors of *Foucault Studies* for their excellent work and patience in bringing this Special Section out during such challenging times.

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SPECIAL SECTION

The Forgotten Spanish Charity:
Love, Government, and The Poor

MARTIN BERNALES-ODINO
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"Ella me avisó que vendría… y hoy precisamente."[1]
— Juan Rulfo, *Pedro Páramo*

INTRODUCTION

The recently published book by Michel Foucault, *Les aveux de la chair*, challenges us to recognize once again the relevance of Christianity for the philosophical project of writing a historical ontology of the present.[2] This paper follows that invitation and analyzes the articulation and legacy of the Spanish version of the Catholic doctrine of charity at the moment of its decline. During the eighteenth century, the articulation of the doctrine was based on urging the believers to undergo a transformation according to the complex love of charity. The first section of this paper analyzes the "practice of the self" that believers had to perform for undergoing such a transformation and thus realizing the truth act of charity. Section two studies almsgiving and "tribulation" as the two truth acts Catholic believers had to perform while dealing with the poor's needs and poverty's pains. In their respective and hardly compatible ways, these exercises of charity modeled not only a charitable believer but also made that believer a steward for others. Thus, they were critical pieces for forging a charitable pastorate, which formed a distinctive reciprocity between the members of the Spanish Catholic community of the eighteenth century. The third section of this paper will claim that the charitable pastorate was neither abolished nor forgotten when the Spanish Monarchy established the police of the poor—a new type of giving led by the State. Rather, the charitable pastorate became a building block for the Spanish police of the poor. Thus, this unlikely encounter between charity and the police

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[1] "She told me you would come...and that you would come precisely today."

[2] Michel Foucault, *Histoire de la Sexualité. Les Aveux de la Chair* (2018). This book is yet another reminder of the central place of Christianity in the historical ontology of ourselves, see James Bernauer, "Michel Foucault's Philosophy of Religion: an Introduction to the Non-Fascist Life," in *Michel Foucault and Theology. The Politics of Religious Experience*, ed. James Bernauer and Jeremy Carrette (2004), 77.

of the poor was not a seminal moment for a process of secularization. Instead, it gave rise to a distinctive pastoral power integrated into the State along with two of its primary concerns, i.e., poverty and the poor. As in Juan Rulfo's novel quoted above, paying a visit to the ancient Catholic charity is the beginning of a long overdue journey that is filled with characters who live and speak to us out of a past that has forged our present.

1. IT IS NOT ENOUGH TO SAY, "I BELIEVE"

"*Horum autem maior est charitas*[3]"
— St. Paul, *Corinthians*, 13

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, Spanish Catholic charity was not simply an informal and voluntary tithe but a doctrine with its own truths and its rules. Charity had its own knowledge and ways of conducting men and women. The present section will explain that the critical goal of becoming a charitable believer entailed something else than to state "I believe"—it required a distinctive practice of self-mortification directed towards eliminating self-love and thus allowing the love of charity to shape the believer's will in depth when a distinct number of crucial issues arise.

The matters that the doctrine of charity concerned itself with were not banal but as serious as the material needs of the poor, the spiritual life of believers and their neighbors, hatred for one's enemies, and the subject's own pain. Despite the fact that we are used to considering charity and almsgiving to be synonymous, the latter did not encompass all the facets of the former. Indeed, almsgiving was only one of the five exercises that forged the Catholic doctrine of charity.[4] Is this a historical example of that game written by Borges that made Foucault laugh? Maybe. In any case, it is important to trace and organize charity's forgotten governmental knowledge not because of its originality but due to its capacity to usher in for us the Spanish problematization of poverty before it was transformed and gave rise to the police of the poor.

Charity not only comprised a number of exercises but also had a unique position for the Spanish Catholicism of the time—it was the queen of all virtues through which the enigmatic encounter of the Creator and His creature was carried out in a privileged way. One of Joseph Climent's (1706–1781) sermons vividly expresses this point. Climent, who would later become bishop of Barcelona, explained the centrality of charity by recalling its relationship with the virtue of faith:

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[3] "The greatest of these is charity." Unless otherwise noted, translations from Latin are mine.

[4] A varied range of texts, from theological treatises to the manuals of confessors, regulated the distinctive exercises of charity that each Catholic had to perform to confront these urgent matters. These exercises, which ranged from almsgiving to fraternal correction, avoiding scandal to loving thy enemy and tribulation, modulated those actions that dealt with those issues that urged charity.

the virtue of faith, according to St. Thomas, is called alive when charity accompanies it; and dead when it lacks charity. The former is also called a formed faith, charity being its form; whereas the latter is amorphous because it does not have the form of charity.[5]

This account of the connections between these two theological virtues was not Climent's eccentricity but a common way to explain their intertwinement and underline charity's primacy—a dominance that Paul of Tarsus made explicit to the Corinthian Christians by saying that among charity, faith, and hope, "*horum autem maior est charitas*" ("the greatest of these is charity"; St. Paul, 1 Cor. 13).[6]

The Jesuit Pedro Calatayud, in turn, expressed the central place of charity using an unusual version of the Prometheus myth. "The love of charity is of the nature of fire," the Jesuit preacher said, but the poets pretended that it was Prometheus who stole the celestial fire and, by infusing it into a human body made out of clay, gave the body life. The truth is that this portion of celestial flame does not come from the Greek gods but rather God, who gives it freely by pouring it out in the human heart—charity is the fire of God that gives life to the believer.[7] The infused nature of charity described by Calatayud through the metaphor of a fire given gratuitously by God did not rule out that the queen of all virtues also depended on the activity of the subject. As Calatayud asserted, charity is also like fire because it must be constantly activated in order to stay alive.[8] The theological texts confirm this crucial feature of charity by recalling that charity as a virtue demands the Catholic's action and his habit to act.[9]

The varied and vital virtue of charity unfolded at the heart of Spanish Catholicism. According to the cartography established by the Catholic doctrine of the time, it was in the human heart where those passions that each believer must govern moved—and stirred up the inclinations that must be conquered by the love of charity in order for a man to be not only an animal or a rational man but a divine one. The heart thus was not a tranquil bay but a battlefield or, as Calatayud said more beautifully, like an ocean in constant movement – always stirred by passions that could lead to both vice and virtue.[10] The heart's concerns were acute if those disorderly motions shook it up; whereas if correct

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[5] Josef Climent, *Sermones*, vol. 3 (1815), 143–144. The same analogy is also found in Francisco Echarri, *Directorio Moral*, vol. 1 [1728] (1776), 113; Francisco Echarri, *Directorio Moral*, vol. 2 *[1728]* (1776), 3–4.

[6] The texts of the eighteenth century used Saint Paul's dictum to describe the place of charity among the other theological virtues. See, for instance, Jose Faustino Cliquet, *La Flor del Moral*, vol. 2 (1734), 82; Francisco Larraga, *Promptuario de la Theologia Moral* [1706] (1726), 215. On the primacy of charity, see Francisco Echarri, *Directorio Moral*, 2:23; Pedro de Calatayud, SJ, *Doctrinas Practica,* vol. 2 [1737] (1797), 129. Unless otherwise noted, the translations from the Spanish texts are mine.

[7] Calatayud, *Doctrinas Practicas*, 2:131-132.

[8] Ibid., 2:130–131.

[9] Jose Faustino Cliquet, *La Flor del Moral*, vol. 1 (1733), 187. In *Les aveux de la chair*, Foucault referred to the duality composed by grace and virtue in the section "Le Recours à Dieu" (Appeal to God). He did not cancel the importance of grace but directed his attention to the articulation of virtue through the examination of the self and the direction of the soul. Foucault, *Les Aveux de la chair*, 127, 132–133. Unless otherwise noted, the translations from *Les aveux de la chair* are mine.

[10] It was not a matter of rejecting those passions, which were thought of as morally neutral. Rather, the task was to govern them with a perfect understanding and will. *Doctrinas Practicas*, 2:241–242, 252.

reason and a will embedded by the divine love of charity blew, it floated on a peaceful sea.[11]

Significantly, when the time came to act and thus to govern in a specific way those passions that arose concerning the matters that urged the doctrine of charity—it was the spiritual power called will that was ultimately involved.[12] Thus, to give life and form to the subject's faith meant not only knowing and accepting certain revealed and natural truths but also shaping the believers' will so that will could move according to the love of charity in the midst of those issues that triggered charity's anxieties. In other words, in order for a believer to be charitable, the doctrine of charity required a constant government of the self that focused on forming the believer's will.[13]

More precisely, forming the human will by the love of charity required the subject to govern his passions in a way that demanded an examination of the type of love that formed her own will. The doctrine of charity distinguished between two kinds of love, and thus installed a binary division within love itself. On the one hand, it was the love of charity and, on the other, it was self-love (*amor propio)*, which was also called self-will (*voluntad propia)*. They were the "two clashing loves"[14] that moved the subject's heart in opposite directions and constantly stressed the subject's will. Unfortunately for the believer, both loves resemble each other regarding the type of movements they originate in his heart, and the power that they have to govern that "race of slaves" called passions.[15] As the human heart could not live without love, the battle between these two loves was inescapable for the subject. For the constitution of the Catholic subject, the correct resolution of this unavoidable dispute between these two loves was crucial because it would enable the believer to forge himself as a divine human being—i.e., a charitable believer— or put him into the path of condemnation.[16] Thus, in order to give life and form to the Christian faith, the believer had to constantly examine and govern his will without ever relying on its power or its movements—his ceaseless task was to give rise to a charitable will by eliminating his self-will.

Consistently, the various exercises of charity shaped a practice of self-mortification that would form the believers' wills anew by killing self-love and thus sin—"Do you have charity and the love of God? Well, you have already killed off every sin."[17] During this process of converting the subject's heart, each believer must recall and trust in the transformative strength of the charitable fire, which was as powerful as death—"*fortis est ut*

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[11] The heart does not replace the soul in the Catholic doctrine of the time, but its presence seems to generate a displacement regarding what should be conducted for becoming a charitable believer—the heart was like an embodied soul. *Doctrinas Practicas,* 2:229–230, 234, 235, 260.

[12] *Doctrinas Practicas,* 2:237, 240.

[13] Cliquet, *La flor de la moral*, 1:187. Interestingly, the pivotal role of the will to become a subject in the doctrine of charity seems to coincide with Foucault's account of the issue of the will in Augustine. *Les aveux de la chair*, 325–361.

[14] *Doctrinas Practicas*, 2:127.

[15] Ibid., 2:241, 270, 273–274.

[16] Ibid., 2:149.

[17] Ibid., 2:131.

mors dilectio" ("charity is as powerful as death").[18] For the constitution of the Catholic believer, the doctrine of charity thus constituted a specific regulation of the subject's conversion towards God that passed through the formation of the believer's will. For explaining such a conversion, the fire metaphor will be used once again. In the process of becoming a virtuous Catholic, charity has effects similar to those of physical fire; namely, it enlightens, warms, and burns. The fire of charity illuminates the human understanding to discover many eternal truths, fires up the human heart to love and yearn for God while fulfilling its moral duties, and crucially burns the soul to purify it.[19]

Love of charity was not a love free of difficulties that smoothly and purely flowed from the heart. On the contrary, it was a laborious, suffering, demanding, bellicose, and, to a significant degree, humanely unattainable type of love.[20] This peculiar love of charity was called to shape the believer's will and thus constitute the subject according to the love of God—one of the most central of the Catholic truths. The usual criticism directed against the voluntary nature of charity loses sight of this critical point: namely, the fact that for charity the will was the crucial surface for the constitution of a charitable subject—the battlefield of a strenuous and endless practice of the self.[21]

In sum, it was not enough for a believer to simply say "I believe" in order to have a faith that was formed and alive.[22] It was not even enough to comply externally with the true religious precepts such as that of almsgiving. No, Catholic charity was not superficial. For those who walked towards their salvation, the exercises of charity demanded a timely practice of self-mortification while confronting those urgent matters regulated by the doctrine. In other words, as long as material wants, spiritual needs, hate, pain and harmful behavior existed in the subject's life, the exercises of charity required the subject to become charitable by governing his heart's passions and shaping his will according to the love of charity. For an act to be truly an exercise of charity, it had to be part of a conversion through which the believer had to constitute his will in a way that made charity his truth and thus manifested the truth of charity. The exercises of charity were, therefore, distinctive acts of truth for the believer.[23] Significantly, these truth acts of charity did not only

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[18] Both *dilectio* and charity properly formed the love of God. While *dilectio* separated the will from everything except what had to be loved, charity properly allowed an inner esteem of what is good. *Doctrinas Practicas,* 2:129, 132.

[19] *Doctrinas Practicas,* 2:132. We thus find operative herein that the purity of the subject's heart was necessary for God's contemplation and entailed the abandonment of the believer's own will. *Les aveux de la chair,* 144–145.

[20] Despite the fact that charity was a virtue and the subject had to use different techniques to expel self-love, such a result demanded the divine power—it required a supernatural love that could dominate and thus transform the subject. In other words, God's infused love was indispensable. *Doctrinas Practicas,* 2:146, 149.

[21] For the pivotal and paradoxical role of the will for Christian subjectivity with a reference to the works of mercy, see *Les aveux de la chair*, 125–126.

[22] It was not enough to believe that God existed (*credere Deum*) and believe in His words (*credere Deo*); one must love God and strive to have Him be the ultimate end of the believer's life (*credere in Deum*). This last requirement, albeit enunciated concerning the virtue of faith, could only be fulfilled by the virtue of charity. *Directorio Moral*, 2:3–4.

[23] Michel Foucault not only unearthed the notion of the truth act from the medieval regulation of the sacrament of penance but also used it to designate and to analyze any regulated form through which a subject

revolve around the verbal manifestation of the truths hidden in the subject's soul—a focus Foucault emphasized in his studies[24] and was also present in the eighteenth-century doctrine.[25] Rather, being charitable also consisted of performing specific acts—the exercises of charity, which as distinctive and regulated practices of the self, permitted the most prominent of all virtues to shape the believer's heart in truth.

2. POVERTY, BETWEEN ALMSGIVING AND TRIBULATION

The exercises of charity defined specific ways by which the Catholics of the eighteenth century manifested their own truth. Almsgiving and tribulation were two distinctive and hardly compatible exercises that each believer had to perform for the manifestation of a crucial Catholic truth—God's charity as a governing force in each subject and the world when the needs of the poor and the pain of poverty loomed. The following two sections will spell out the architecture of each one of these truth acts so as to characterize in the third section the charitable pastorate they forged.

A. Almsgiving, a government of need and abundance

"Non deerunt pauperes in terra habitationis tuae, idcirco ego praecipio tibi, ut aperias manum tuam fratri tuo egeno & pauperi."
— Deuteronomy, 15

Almsgiving was a law each believer had to fulfill once he faced the needy. Such a precept was articulated through the mandate to compare needs and abundance in order to give. This section will explain such a legalistic articulation and evince that it aimed at a much more critical goal for Catholicism—creating pastors of the poor to govern needs and abundance within the congregation.

The problem of almsgiving was the need of the neighbor, evidenced by the presence of the poor who lived with the believer. "There will always be poor people in thy land: therefore I command thee to open thy hand to your neighbors and to the poor" (Deuteronomy, 15) was one of the biblical texts (one that is shared with the Torah) that will be repeated in Spain at the beginning of the eighteenth century.[26] This text summarizes with particular effectiveness both the emergency that had to be faced— i.e., the concrete existence of the poor rather than an abstract conception of poverty—and the precept to which Catholics must submit— i.e., that they ought to give the poor the alms they need. Thus, the exercise of giving alms begins by recognizing that everyone is subject to a divine and natural law,

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produces and is required by his truth in connection to both a government of men by truth and the technologies of the self. On the concept of the truth act, see Michel Foucault, *On the Government of the Living: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1979-1980* [2012] (2014), 48, 52, 81–82, 101.

[24] Notwithstanding that Foucault primarily analyzed the reflexive truth act of confession in *The Government of Living* and elsewhere, he did not limit the insertion of the subject in the government of men by truth to confession alone. Foucault, *On the Government of the Living*, 81–82.

[25] The sins against charity had to be confessed. See, for instance, Juan de Ascargorta, *Manual de Confessores ad Mentem Scoti* [1713] (1743), 178–182.

[26] Calatayud, *Doctrinas Practicas* [1737], Vol. 4 (Madrid: Benito Cano, 1798), 382. *Directorio Moral*, 2:32.

not a recommendation,[27] which compels every believer to give his neighbor in need to become a true Catholic.

At first glance, the organization of almsgiving by the doctrine of charity appears to follow a juridical pattern. The precept that mandated the giving of alms articulated one principle with a number of rules. The principle was uncomplicated: whoever has goods in abundance must give the excess to whoever lacks them. The rules organized the contrast between abundance and lack, detailing the types of needs and goods that created the situations in which one must become a giver. Importantly, that principle and the rules did not affirm the precept of "giving what is left over, as it seems to you." The laws of almsgiving were, as we shall see, demanding. They may be considered too extreme for our taste and strange to any way of life that promotes either the accumulation of goods or a life of luxury that forgets the needs of the poor.

The rules that organized the obligation of giving alms were based on a twofold classification. On the one hand, the needs of the poor were placed into three categories: extreme, severe, and common. Though their respective definitions slightly varied according to the writers, they remained the same at their core. Extreme necessity materialized when the neighbor faced the danger of death, the loss of his senses or a major part of his body, or the incurrence of severe illness. Grave necessity occurred when a person confronted an evident danger of suffering great damage to his life, fortune, honor, and/or status. Finally, common necessity appeared when one suffered for lack of means but did not have a very painful and miserable life. On the other hand, in order to respond to these needs, the goods of the rich invariably are divided into three types: what was necessary for the life of the owner and his family, what was needed to maintain his status, and what was superfluous for both his life and status.[28]

The rules of almsgiving correlated these three types of goods with the poor's needs in the following way. Almsgiving's fundamental rule was that the needs of the poor established an obligation for the rich to give what was superfluous—that is, what was not necessary to support the rich man and his family's life and status to solve the poor's severe and common needs.[29] For confronting the poor's extreme needs, the rich were obliged to give more than the superfluity. Namely, they were required to hand over to the poor even what was necessary to their status in order to remedy such a calamity.[30]

The explanations offered above may encourage us to understand almsgiving as a legalistic matter alone. However, and this feature is consistent with a truth act based on a

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[27] Concerning the precept's twofold nature, see *Directorio Moral*, 2:33; *La flor de la moral*, 1:190.

[28] See these definitions in Calatayud, *Doctrinas Practicas*, 4: 384; Daniele Concina, *Theologia Christiana Dogmatico Moral*, Tomo I [1749] (1776), 136-140; Larraga, *Promptuario de la Theologia Moral*, 215. *La flor de la moral*, 1:199–200; *Directorio Moral*, 2:33.

[29] The definition of rich was not linked to a social category of people but rather whoever had goods in abundance after taking all that was necessary to maintain himself and his family's decent status. *Doctrinas Practicas*, 4:385.

[30] *Doctrinas Prácticas*, 4:386–387; Concina, *Theologia Christiana Dogmatico Moral*, 137, 138; *Promptuario de la Theologia Moral*, 216. *La flor de la moral*, 1:200, 201; *Directorio Moral*, 2:33, 34.

distinctive practice of the self, giving alms was instead a prudential issue.[31] Thus, the doctrine of charity never dictated in advance a specific value to hand over and rejected the use of force by any authority to enforce the payment of this peculiar levy.[32] Instead, the doctrine emphasized that almsgiving rested on the subject's self-government, which should be diligently and carefully assisted by the pastors.[33] Such a characteristic did not mean informality or arbitrariness—almsgiving had both criteria that oriented the giving and commands that formalized it. Rather, it emphasized that the subject had to consider at each moment what was appropriate to give to the needy not only following the aforementioned contrast between need and abundance but mostly according to the internal acts of love that must shape the subject's will in order to give.[34]

Thus, to give a small amount was not to give alms.[35] However, the insufficiency did not amount to just a simple infraction of the duty to which one had consented as a believer. It was instead a failure to realize an act of truth and, as such, evidence of a subject who impeded the divine government of the world and was consequently in need of conversion. Indeed, and this specification speaks of the requirement of conversion, if the excessive attachment to earthly goods defeated the giver, then his salvation would be at stake in the final trial: "What do you respond, oh miserable! to the judge? You dress your walls and do not dress a man? You adorn the horses with trappings and despise your brother dressed in rags?"[36] As for the divine government, every rich man who opulently lived amidst the poor was unjust because he rejected God as a governor by despising the poor's lives while keeping to himself those goods which did not belong to him. This breached the fifth commandment of Moses, i.e., the prohibition on killing another human.[37]

The aforementioned reference to justice relied on an understanding of the property of goods, which, though curiously forgotten today, was critical for the constitution of the

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[31] Foucault noted that the Christian pastorate forged distinctive imperatives of truth. One of them, called the imperative of prudence by Foucault, refers precisely to the worldly issues such as the neighbor's needs. *Les aveux de la chair*, 393–395.

[32] The texts of the time did not set a strict amount destined for alms. However, if we follow the examples offered by these texts, then we will notice that between thirty and forty-five percent of the subject's annual wealth was considered superfluous. In other words, such amounts were considered to be allocated, at least in principle, for the poor. See, for instance, *Promptuario de la Theologia Moral*, 215; *Doctrinas Practicas*, 4:385 and *La flor de la moral*, 1: 200.

[33] It was a confessor's duty to guide and correct the believers, especially the nobility, the powerful, and royalty, concerning the appropriate use of their goods. *Doctrinas Practicas*, 4:417; *Theologia Christiana Dogmatico Moral*, 141, 142. *Directorio Moral*, 2:30.

[34] For loving "your neighbor, it is not enough to help him outwardly concerning his needs, but necessary is to engage with him and talk to him—to do an inner act of loving him and wishing him well." The rejection of such a requirement, Cliquet reminded his readers, was condemned by Pope Innocent XI in 1679. *La flor de la moral*, 1: 190–191.

[35] *Doctrinas Practicas*, 4:399–400.

[36] St. Basil quoted by Concina in *Theologia Christiana Dogmatico Moral, 133*. Detailing the cases of mortal sin, see *Doctrinas Practicas, 4:389–393*. The word satin is a speculation because the handwriting of the manuscript is not clear at that point.

[37] *Doctrinas Practicas*, 4:337–456; Calatayud, *Doctrinas Practicas* [1737], vol. 5 (1798), 1-122; *La flor de la moral*, 1:200; Ascargorta, *Manual de Confessores*, 219.

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self in the exercise of giving alms. Almsgiving supposed, on the one hand, that the giver was the legal owner of his goods. Indeed, it was due to his status as legal owner of these goods that he was obliged by the precept.[38] On the other hand, the giver's duty to hand some of these goods over was justified through the universal destination of the earthly goods, which in turn entailed that the Creator had a preeminent property over those goods He created:

> Why? Do I not own my goods? That is so; but God is also and a much more proper owner than you of them: *meum est aurum, meum est argentum* ('Gold is mine, silver is mine') and he has placed on the goods He gives you an irredeemable levy, which is that you have to distribute them among the poor...for this purpose, he gives them to you.[39]

Property rights, therefore, were not understood as the unconditional rewards of the activity by which one intervened in this world and modified it to create something new.[40] Property rights were not absolute; nor were the subject's abilities to transform the world due exclusively to his merit. Instead, they were only intelligible due to the assertion of a God who was both a loving creator and a just governor, and as such was a benefactor of all His creatures. This included those who intervened in the world and generated innovation within it, as well as those who could not. In other words, a sort of commonality of goods was primary[41] and meant that, for each believer, property rights were limited by the poor's shortages.[42]

Thus, for realizing the truth act of almsgiving, the believer must constitute himself through the practice of evaluating both his own and the poor's needs, as well as his abundance of wealth. During this examination, he would learn not only about others' needs and his own excess but also about those passions that pulled him towards immoderately accumulating material goods and thus put him at risk of becoming greedy and losing eternal life.[43] By governing those passions according to the love of charity, the subject would be able to constitute himself as a charitable believer and thus allow the justice of God's creation and His love to manifest in his heart and the world. This government of the self was the way to become a charitable believer concerning his goods; that is, to become God's *limosnero* (giver of alms) or *mayordomo* (steward). Meaningfully, such a

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[38] *Theologia Christiana Dogmatico Moral, 140, 141*.

[39] *Doctrinas Practicas*, 4:397, 398. A similar exhortation is found in *Theologia Christiana Dogmatico Moral*, 133, and Climent, *Pláticas Dominicales*, vol. 1 (1793), 46, 50.

[40] Indeed, the universal destination of the subject's earthly goods is predicated not only on those things that he inherited but also on those gained by his effort. Climent, *Pláticas Dominicales*, Vol. 3 (1793), 56.

[41] This conclusion seems to be the continuation of an old doctrine still present in the Spanish scholasticism of the sixteenth century. Diego Alonso-Lasheras, *Luis de Molina's* De Iustitia et Iure *: Justice as Virtue in an Economic Context* (2011), 99–124.

[42] Thus, when necessity entailed the danger of dying, losing one's senses or body parts, or experiencing a severe illness, all goods not necessary for the owner's life became common to all: *"In extrema necessitate omnia bona sunt communia, preter necessaria ad vitam"* ("In extreme need, all goods are common, except those necessary for the owner's life"). *Promptuario de la Theologia Moral*, 215–216.

[43] The reference to the vice of greed was particularly important because it referred to a passion that prevented men from continuing the community of goods present at the beginning of the world. See, for instance, *Promptuario de la Theologia Moral*, 216.

subjectivation will be explained using the evangelical call to be poor in spirit; to live in a way where everything is primarily held in common or, inversely, where nothing is held exclusively as your own.[44]

In sum, the apparently simple and almost legalistic mandate to compare need and abundance was simply the beginning of the charitable act of giving, and aimed to provoke a truth act that would constitute a charitable Catholic—that is, a steward for the poor who allows God to govern the world. Thus, giving alms would commence the believer's transformation into God's *limosnero* by fulfilling one of the main goals of the Catholic pastorate: feeding thy neighbor.[45]

> Minister, you are of our good God and are dispenser and steward of your fellow men. Do not believe that all these riches have been prepared only for your stomach; take as belonging to others those goods that are in your hands; they will gladden you for a short time; then they will pass as transient goods, and God will ask you for a complete account of them.[46]

B. Tribulation, a government of pain

Doctrines VIII and IX on tribulation and patience end the treaty of charity written by the Jesuit Pedro Calatayud. They show a different and crucial dimension of the problematization of poverty as it was constituted by the Catholic conception of charity in the eighteenth century— they regulated how to govern the pains provoked by poverty.

The point of departure for the government of pain forged by the exercise of tribulation was thus the affliction experienced by the believer because of the lack of sufficient means to sustain his life or status.[47] A crucial element that shaped this self-government was the separation of the subject's pain from its cause.[48] It was not relevant to tribulation whether the affliction was provoked by God in His constant effort to lead human beings or if it originated in the Devil; whether it was incited by the injury produced by a neighbor or by our *amour-propre*.[49] What was at stake for this exercise of charity was a peculiar government of the self by which the believer would unite with God, who was discovered precisely in the pain of his indigence, and thus become an afflicted (*atribulado*) believer.[50]

Thus, the truth act of tribulation urged the believer to take his painful experiences as opportunities to detach his will from worldly goods.[51] During these labors, God was

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[44] Climent, *Pláticas dominicales*, 1: 48–49.

[45] Ibid., 1:50. On this goal, see *Les aveux de la chair*, 385–386.

[46] St. Basil quoted by Concina in *Theologia Christiana Dogmatico Moral* Ch. 5. See also *Doctrinas Practicas*, 4:398, 408, 409.

[47] Poverty was not the only affliction that concerned tribulation. The list included agonies due to the loss of life, health, body, worldly goods, fame, virtue, and conscience. Calatayud, *Doctrinas Practicas*, 5:2.

[48] This separation was not unique to tribulation but was also visible in other exercises of charity such as the management of hatred involved in the exercise of loving thy enemy. *Doctrinas Practicas*, 4:338–341.

[49] *Doctrinas Practicas*, 5:2, 22.

[50] Ibid., 5:1, 2.

[51] Since self-love is at the origin of pain, the subject must be convinced that the tribulations suffered are due to his own faults, and thus he must accept them with resignation. *Doctrinas Practicas,* 5:24, 43–44.

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envisioned as a doctor who, by hurting, permitted believers to heal.[52] Thus, the practice of feeding one's tribulation taught the subject a crucial truth; namely, that divine love sometimes hurt,[53] or, as previously said, the love of charity sometimes burned. In any case, a hurtful love was what allowed believers to die patiently for their sins. Poverty and any other agony regulated by tribulation were thus opportunities not only to show strength and self-control[54] but also to cook those afflictions "with the heat and fire of charity."[55] Interestingly, the instances of afflictions that Calatayud spoke of could have been either the evidence of a divine betrayal or an occasion of rebellion, but instead they were trans-figured into privileged moments where the subject could encounter the Divine through the certainty of a hurtful love that must be endured with patience.

To realize this exercise of charity, the subject's will was once more at stake. Tribulation consisted in deploying a practice of knowing and conquering oneself in order to "remove the will from the worldly goods and tastes in which it is muddled."[56] Consistently, one of the remedies suggested by pastors was meditating on "the great good and sweetness that brings the mind to conform with the will of the Lord in everything."[57] The acceptance of God's will was the goal of tribulation, which required the believer to humble himself and be stripped of his self-will.[58] Such a transformation during the terrible afflictions of pov-erty enabled the believer to govern himself and thus become master of his own heart[59]—paradoxically, this self-government came into being when he allowed God to govern him.[60]

Did tribulation demonstrate indifference to the pains of poverty? No. For the truth act of charity, it was instead a commandment to transform that pain into a master and thus into a pathway to happiness and eternal salvation. In other words, the well-lived tribula-tion of poverty could amend the believer[61] and transform him in an afflicted subject—one who has accepted pain as the teacher sent by God and thus has become peaceful, free, and happy.[62]

At the end of his treatise on charity, Pedro Calatayud, S.J. presented the example of the conversion of Johannes Tauler and with it the possibility that tribulation helped one to become a pastor. Tauler was a medieval mystic who converted after he witnessed and talked to a beggar that left himself entirely in God's loving hands. Though this beggar still suffered the afflictions of material needs, he had shaped his heart entirely according to God's charity and was therefore perfectly happy. The exalted example offered by Calatayud was, in other words, a mendicant who had become voluntarily poor—a subject

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[52] *Doctrinas Practicas*, 5:4, 27.

[53] Ibid., 2:165.

[54] Ibid., 5:17, 18.

[55] Ibid., 5:3.

[56] Ibid., 5:28.

[57] Ibid., 5:45.

[58] Ibid., 5:44, 23, 28.

[59] Ibid., 5:24, 23.

[60] Ibid., 5:28.

[61] Ibid., 5:16.

[62] Ibid., 5:19, 44, 47.

who learned to govern himself through the exercise of tribulation and received God's loving grace during that process. Significantly, the mendicant's life not only underlined the fundamental insufficiency of earthly goods for men to carry out their destiny and ground their actions but also that it is those who are able to be *atribulados* (afflicted) in poverty who God will choose for "the guidance and rule of many souls."[63]

In sum, material necessity cooked by the fire of charity allowed the believer to obtain what was more important than earthly goods; namely, the ability to conquer the self during times of scarcity as a path towards God's salvation. It was the tribulation's promise that such a face-to-face encounter with the divine—the fundamental and mysterious promise of every exercise of charity—occurred while suffering poverty. As a result, this exercise reaffirmed not only the secondary role that the body had in comparison to heavenly salvation but also indicated that it was not through earthly goods that believers achieved happiness. Additionally, those able to govern poverty's pain through tribulation could be chosen to be pastors of other souls.

C. Towards a charitable pastorate

Almsgiving and tribulation forged a distinctive charitable pastorate, which was both global and specific, individualizing and incorporating. This section will briefly point out those features and then analyze the type of reciprocity the charitable pastorate modeled between the members of the Spanish Catholic community of the eighteenth century.

Almsgiving and tribulation forged a distinctive charitable pastorate concerning the poor, one in which the government of the self was inextricably interwoven with the government of others. Thus, one of the crucial effects of these exercises of charity consisted in the fact that their respective truth acts forged a charitable steward that conducts others. The rich who governed themselves with regard to their material goods would not only avoid the sin of greed but also become stewards for the poor; and the voluntary poor who endured the afflictions of poverty through tribulation would not only live peacefully but could also be shepherds for many souls. There was a distinctive charitable pastorate embedded in almsgiving and tribulation—one that asked for and even rested upon a peculiar government of the self that was directed to perform the truth act of charity.[64]

This Spanish charitable pastorate of the eighteenth century was characterized by some important features. To begin with, it was not exclusively located at the high end of the Catholic hierarchy. Rather, all the charitable congregants shared, at varying levels of intensities and at different moments, the pastorate. Priests and bishops were not the only pastors of the poor; every believer who had riches beyond his needs was compelled to fulfill by deeds what Foucault called the nutritional principle and thus become a steward for the poor.[65] By bearing in mind this apparently simple aspect of the charitable government of others, we can discern two critical features—it was global inasmuch as it

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[63] *Doctrinas Practicas*, 5:11.

[64] On the intertwinement between the government of the self and the other, see Michel Foucault, *About the Beginning of the Hermeneutics of the Self : Lectures at Dartmouth College, 1980* [2013] (2016), 25, 26.

[65] *Les aveux de la chair*, 385–386.

concerned every member of the community and specific since it had distinctive goals (i.e., feeding the poor) and methods (i.e., almsgiving).[66]

Secondly, the charitable pastorate was an individualizing and incorporating type of government. It was individualizing insofar as the truth act of charity meant that the believer subjectivized himself according to charity's exercises and, connected to such subjectivation, it allowed the pastor to scrutinize his heart and conduct his will to achieve charity's salvation. Thus, charity formed *"un lien de formation et transmission de vérité"* ("a bond for the formation and transmission of truth").[67] Additionally, fulfilling the commandment to not kill thy neighbor by giving alms effectively incorporated the poor into the congregation, occasionally by requiring givers to risk their own economic status. Certainly, such an incorporating effect could have been articulated along with an individualizing power exercised by the rich stewards of the poor, but it is crucial to notice that such articulation is not necessary and does not rule out the demand for integration. As Michel Senellart suggested, the incorporating effect of the charitable stewardship contained a promise and a permanent yearning to build a fraternal bond—one that would recognize and include the givers and those who were worse off within a utopian body.[68]

Thus, the charitable pastorate generated a distinctive type of reciprocity. In order to characterize it, we must first notice that destitution generated a point of tension between the government of needs and excess crafted in the exercise of almsgiving, and the government of pain explained in the exercise of tribulation. On the one hand, the subject must hand over his goods and, in extreme cases, get rid of that which might be necessary for his status in order to cover the poor's needs. He was called to be God's steward for the poor and subsequently to take responsibility for their lives. However, at the moment of giving, he could not help but ask: Should I not judge carefully before giving? Am I hastily finishing a tribulation that has not yet produced its effects? Am I fostering a way of life that is not grounded on God's love, but on laziness? On the other hand, the pain caused by lacking worldly goods must be borne with patience, even if it was caused by another's unjust action. The poor was called to be an afflicted subject, which means that he was urged to welcome the pain of poverty as a bridge towards God. Thus, before asking for alms to relieve such poverty, he should consider: how can I urgently ask for help in relieving my own need if that is a proof of impatience or of lack of the necessary openness for the learning process triggered by tribulation? Nevertheless, if God's creation is for all, should I not demand that my neighbors fulfill their duties?

The tension expressed in the questions asked above supposed a peculiar reciprocity that has given charity its ignoble reputation. Namely, almsgiving and tribulation tended to complement each other in the following way: the wealthy were called to be poor in

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[66] On these characteristics of pastoral power, see *Les aveux de la chair*, 390.

[67] *Les aveux de la chair*, 395. In earlier studies, Foucault had already underlined the pastorate's individualizing function. See, Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977-78* [2004] (2007), 183–184; Michel Foucault, "Omnes et Singulatim: Towards a Criticism of 'Political Reason'," *Tanner Lectures on Human Values* (1979), 237–238.

[68] Michel Senellart, "Gouverner l'être-autre. La question du corps chrétien," in *Foucault(s)*, ed. A. Braunstein, Jean François; Lorenzini, Daniele; Revel, Ariane; Revel, Judith; Sforzini, Arianna (2017), 205–21.

spirit and, therefore, were the stewards of the poor concerning their goods, while the poor were called to be happy in their tribulation despite their poverty. As a consequence, involuntary poverty remained in the uncertain terrain between the opportunity for salvation and iniquitous suffering; amid the tension of bearing tribulation and asking for alms due; between being a peaceful believer and manifesting just indignation against those who had not given the believer the alms that are their due. For the eighteenth-century conception of charity, there did not seem to be a way to resolve these tensions without a personal examination. Nor does the concept leave room to envision the possibility of changing the social circumstances that created people's destitution—in fact, the opposite seems to have been the case.

The theologian Daniel Concina (1687–1756) will summarize the rigid character of charitable reciprocity by asserting

> the rich and the poor are two opposite, but very necessary parts. If everyone had the same riches or the same needs and poverty, there would be no friendship between them, nor would there be society. No one would need the help of the other, no one would subject himself to the other, no one would be a servant, no one would be a lord, there would be no opportunity to exercise charity and mercy, and there would be no tolerance of need and poverty. Therefore it is expedient that some should be rich, others poor, that they may all live together, with a mighty and everlasting bond of love.[69]

Thus, the Catholic reciprocity seemed to accept (or perhaps was part of the production of) a community marked by both a social hierarchy based on the complementarity of the believers' riches and a distinctive power granted to the wealthy as stewards for the poor concerning their goods.

Voluntary poverty gave charitable reciprocity both its exalted manifestation and its limit. As the beggar found by Teuler evidences, to become voluntarily poor was not just a stoical test but a way of life[70]—one that was based on and pointed to the source of the steward's authority; namely, God's love. Thus, to be voluntarily poor meant dwelling in a place of truth upon which all human authority was built and, perhaps, a place where all existing human authority could be dissolved. Consequently, the act of truth that Teuler's beggar realized by voluntarily experiencing poverty's afflictions transformed him, a simple poor person, into a candidate to govern other's souls—it anointed a poor mendicant as a possible steward. Crucially, what surfaces with this voluntary poverty is a Catholic stewardship that did not rely on any material goods or social position—one that furthermore evinces a paradox internal to the governmental knowledge of charity. The same exercises of tribulation and almsgiving were capable of both entrenching a rigid social hierarchy in which stewardship by the rich was indispensable and of containing the seeds to subvert such a hierarchy by recalling that the ultimate foundation of the Catholic

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[69] *Theologia Christiana Dogmatico Moral*, 132.

[70] Michel Foucault, *The Courage of Truth: Lectures at the Collège de France 1983-1984* [2009] (2011), 256–261. For these and other instances of Foucault's analysis of poverty, see Edward McGushin, "Reflections on a Critical Genealogy of the Experience of Poverty," *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association* 79 (2005), 117–30.

stewardship was not those riches but the love of charity that organize the distribution of such riches.

The incorporating facet of charitable reciprocity—that which demanded that no member be left outside the congregation, emphasizes the primary role of charity's love. As God's steward for the poor concerning earthly goods, the rich had to give to the poor and thus effectively incorporate them into the community. In doing so, they did not do philanthropy, nor were they merely generous, but instead they gave what God had created for all.

This incorporation of the poor into the congregation through almsgiving manifested a crucial truth of the Catholic governmental knowledge: that all believers were part of what we could call a loving family with a common patrimony. A loving bond was displayed when the love of charity that formed the giver's will met with the poor's love of survival, which moved them to ask for alms.[71] Crucially, such a fraternal encounter was the germ of what we could anachronistically call a social bond founded on Divine love. Thus, the laborious love of charity was able to constitute not only each charitable subject but also bring about a Catholic community upon which political institutions could be established. As for the family patrimony, the maintenance of the poor by the rich displayed the justice of God, who had created the world and its goods for all. He appointed each person a role, which was not to own the earth and simply profit from its fruits but to serve as a steward for the poor regarding earthly goods.

The charitable reciprocity was able to achieve a pivotal twofold effect. Giving alms allowed for the survival of the individuals, which was the elementary building block for the physical existence of the human community. Additionally, the maintenance of the poor, through acts grounded in the love of charity and the endurance of the afflictions of poverty, manifested that the ultimate foundation of the congregation, i.e., the love of God, virtuously united the community in moments of destitution. Almsgiving and tribulation both sustained the congregants' physical life and offered them a way to live virtuously together. Thus, they crafted a solution to the two ancient political goals classically formulated by Aristotle that will soon obsess the police.[72] Consequently, failing to comply with the giver's duties would involve consequences at both the individual and communal levels. For the former, neglecting almsgiving would entail committing a theft and being condemned to eternal fire;[73] whereas for the latter, it would breach the due reciprocity that allowed the existence of a Catholic community.

3. GLIMPSING THE FUTURE OF CHARITY

Glimpsing the future of charity means noting an event we might easily overlook, namely, the charitable pastorate integrated into the Spanish State through the police of the poor established by the Monarchy at the end of the eighteenth century. The present section will

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[71] *Doctrinas Practicas*, 2:151.

[72] Aristotle, *Politics* (1944), 1252b29-30; 1278b17-24. Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 326–327.

[73] See, for instance, *Doctrinas Practicas*, 4:401 and Climent, *Pláticas dominicales*, 3: 52, 53, 56.

briefly point out one critical aspect through which such integration occurred. Namely, the police of the poor relied on charity and almsgiving and consequently asked believers to become charitable by assuming the role of the stewards for the poor.

By the standards of today, the future of charity does not look promising. The concept is presently looked down upon, and it seems that charity cannot add anything important to the current debates about poverty. It could even be argued that, by the end of the Spanish eighteenth century, charity began its inexorable journey towards oblivion. Indeed, between the years 1775 and 1783, the Bourbon King Charles III enacted a corpus of laws to form the new Police of the Poor—a State-led endeavor that would organize the assistance to the needy and eventually banish destitution from Spain.[74] Notably, this new institutional order did not entail the complete replacement of the old Catholic charity by the new Police of the Poor. Rather, it was the moment of a complex and early-asserted alliance between the two.

The most prominent of the Catholic virtues found a new partner. Instead of faith and hope—the other two theological virtues—charity began to be accompanied by the police. The governmental knowledge of the police, which, as Foucault noticed, did not have a great beyond, not only embraced but created a new home for charity—a religious virtue through which Spanish Catholicism gave life and form to its faith and accounted for the enigmatic encounter between God and his creatures. In order to remove destitution and thus create a powerful and happy monarchy, the declared goals of the science of the police,[75] it seemed necessary that these two bodies of knowledge would be able to "come up with a thousand ways to alleviate" the poverty of the poor.[76]

Unsurprisingly, charity's presence was rather omnipresent at the moment when the Catholic men of the Spanish Enlightenment lost their familiarity with the poor and poverty—i.e., when they began to refashion the way they thought about and governed the poor with the police of the poor. The Spanish poor laws, for instance, referred to the relevance of the older concept of charity on two critical occasions, both in justifying the new police institutions and considering how to maintain them. Thus, the institutional deployment of the police of the poor was envisioned in part as the means by which the king and the citizens fulfilled their pious duties and thus helped out to forge a happy and powerful Nation.[77] In other words, the police of the poor relied on asking believers—including the

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[74] Despite numerous laws enacted before and after those years, the core of the new policy towards the poor took place between the enactment of the 1775 law that extended the notion of vagrancy and mandated that vagabonds be sent to hospices, the army, and the navy, and the law of 1778 that established *Juntas de Caridad* (Councils of Charity) to reach other poor people within their homes. They were both strengthened by a law enacted in 1783 that recalled that everything has been done for the good police of the poor. *Novísima Recopilación de las Leyes de España, Mandada Formar por el Señor Don Carlos IV* (Madrid, 1804), book XII, title XXXI, law VII; book VII, title XXXVIII, laws IV-VII; title XXXIX, laws XVIII-XX, XXII-XXIV; Pedro Escolano de Arrieta, *Practica del Consejo Real*, vol. 1 (1796), 488.

[75] On these goals, see Johann Heinrich Gottlob von Justi, *Elementos Generales de Policia* [1756] (1784), 1.

[76] Bernardo Ward, *Proyecto Económico* (1779), 199.

[77] See *Novísima Recopilación de las Leyes de España*, book I, title XXV; book VII, title XXXIX, laws XX, XXII; title XXXVIII, law V. Notably, neither taxes nor any other civil obligation was used by Spanish reformers to justify and sustain the new policy.

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sovereign—to do what they must, i.e., become charitable for the sake of them and the State.[78]

The police of the poor not only relied on charity but also transformed it. One of the crucial innovations of this police consisted in encouraging vassals to become givers not at every encounter with the poor but through the new institutions created to impose order on this giving. In other words, the police asked the believers to channel their charities through hospices and *Juntas de Caridad*—the new organizations created to assist the poor. Only these institutions could guarantee the due *discreción* (prudence) of the old charity by organizing a way of knowing the poor and giving the alms that suited each poor subject.[79] Consequently, the police of the poor was deployed to become the primary giver of the State or, more accurately, the governmental means for the State to be the charitable giver par excellence—the one able to know, assist, and thus lead the poor to achieve the happiness of the State.

The new police institutions assisted the poor in different ways. The most relevant of these was preparing the poor for working or, if possible, providing them with jobs. "We will never satisfy the obligation we have to help the poor better than by providing food to them through their work, as it is necessary to acquire our bread".[80] Work became the quintessential police almsgiving; not only because it sustained the physical life of the poor but also because working entailed a practice of the self for the recipient. In tune with the truth act of charity that called for a personal transformation, the police of the poor aimed at providing jobs in order to help the poor constitute themselves as religiously productive subjects.[81] Thus, the institutions that forged the new stewards for the poor "will act more justly" when, instead of indiscreetly giving to the poor, they "correct those who unjustly ask alms."[82]

Interestingly, the police of the poor not only accepted the mission of caring for the poor but also put the needy into the same place in which charity had placed them. As it was explained in the previous section, the exercises of charity that assured both the poor's physical existence and the congregants' virtuous lives were called on to actualize God's power. In other words, for charity, the divine power and glory were at stake in the social

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[78] Supposing such a duty, the Brief by Pius VI of 14 March 1780 grants to the Spanish king the "faculty to demand of the dignities, canonries and other benefits the third part of their products" for continuing his material and spiritual assistance of the poor. See *Novísima Recopilación de las Leyes de España, Mandada Formar por el Señor Don Carlos IV* (Madrid, 1804), book 1, title XXV.

[79] To be a prudent giver was to restrict the alms given to the undeserving poor, which was only possible when such a giver examined the poor. The police of the poor's institutions aimed at both knowing the poor and handing out charities appropriate to each type of poor person.

[80] Tomás Anzano, *Elementos preliminares para poder formar un systema de gobierno de hospicio general* (1778), 16. On the duty of working in the hospices, in the Army, and in the Navy, see especially *Novísima Recopilación de las Leyes de España*, book XII, title XXXI, law VII; book VII, title XXXVIII, laws IV-VII and title XXXIX, laws XVIII-XX, XXII-XXIV.

[81] The Spanish laws about the hospices are particularly eloquent on this goal. More generally, the science of the police circumscribed the role of religion to create useful vassals for the State. Justi, *Elementos Generales de Policia*, 126. *Novísima Recopilación de las Leyes de España*, book VII, title XXXVIII, laws IV-VII.

[82] Anzano, *Elementos preliminares para poder formar un systema de gobierno de hospicio general*, 17.

body's weakest members.[83] Notably, the poor will remain in this position for the police of the poor. Remedying poverty was the way to realize the glory of the Monarch and create a happy State.[84] In order to achieve these goals, these needy vassals were regarded as key elements of the State's population that the State had to activate.[85] Thus, for the police, the entire political body seemed to rest on adequately governing those humble subjects.[86]

In sum, the police of the poor was a peculiar invention that channeled a Catholic pastorate into the modern State. Such integration was crucial not only because a distinctive pastoral power was incorporated into the modern State through the police of the poor[87] but also due to the fact that, through such a police, the Spanish State took responsibility for issues that will become of its primary concern—poverty and the poor.

FINAL REMARKS

We must add the forgotten Spanish eighteenth-century conception of charity as one of the sections found in the ambivalent archive of love and the fraught archive of government.[88] Instead of considering this ubiquitous notion as the ideological façade of a police wielded by Spanish absolutism, these pages have analyzed the old conception of Catholic charity to evidence that eighteenth-century Spanish Catholic charity was not an informal and merely voluntary tithe but a doctrine with its own knowledge and ways of conducting men and women. For those believers who walked towards their salvation, the critical goal of becoming a charitable believer entailed something else than to state "I believe"—it required a distinctive practice of self-mortification directed towards allowing the love of charity to shape the believer's will in depth. Such a practice of the self was regulated by a number of exercises of charity that constituted distinctive acts of truth that must constitute the believers in a way that made charity their truth and thus manifested the truth of charity.

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[83] This pivotal position of the poor was not forged by the eighteenth century but had been in place at least since the controversy about the poor during the sixteenth century. See the telling metaphor used by Domingo de Soto, *Deliberacion en la Causa de los Pobres* (1545), 141, 142.

[84] Bernardo Ward, *Obra Pía y Eficaz Modo Para Remediar La Miseria de La Gente Pobre de España* [1750] (1767), 9.

[85] The Spanish texts accepted the direct connection between increasing the number of inhabitants and augmenting the power of the State. Such a position supposed the productive activation of the vassals to justify the key importance of their increment. Thus, those texts subscribed to what Foucault called the "classic" view of population. *Security, Territory, Population*, 55–79; Pedro Rodríguez conde de Campomanes, *Discurso Sobre el Fomento de la Industria Popular* (1774), 66; *Elementos Generales de Policia*, 38; Jakob Friedrich Freiherr von Bielfeld, *Instituciones Politicas*, vol. 1 [1760] (1767), 115.

[86] Justi confidently asserted that the science of the police's main tasks were assisting the miserable and putting to work the idle poor. *Elementos Generales de Policia*, 165.

[87] On the critical importance of the integration of the pastoral power to analyze the modern States, see Michel Foucault, "The subject and the power" [1982], in *Michel Foucault. Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, ed. Dreyfus, H. and Rabinow, P. (1983), 213-215. Interestingly, before Foucault coined the concept of pastoral power, he had acknowledged the intertwinement between police and religion by concluding that they were transparent to one another during the classical age. See, Michel Foucault, *History of Madness* [1961] (2006), 76.

[88] Matthew Chrulew, "Suspicion and Love," *Foucault Studies* 15 (February 2013), 9–26.

The critical goal of becoming a charitable believer was particularly urgent when the poor's needs and poverty's pains were aroused. As soon as those urgent matters appeared, almsgiving and tribulation were called to regulate two distinctive and hardly compatible acts of truth that each believer had to perform. On the one hand, the apparently simple and almost legalistic mandate to assess the giver's wealth and the other's needs regulated by almsgiving was merely the beginning of the believer's conversion into a charitable Catholic—that is, a steward for the poor who allows the justice of God's creation and His love to manifest in his heart and the world. On the other hand, the government of pain crafted by the exercise of tribulation did not attempt to consider the causes of the subject's destitution and any injustice related to them. Instead, this exercise consisted in deploying a practice of knowing and conquering the self in times of scarcity as a path towards the encounter with God and His salvation. Thus, the charitably *atribulado* (afflicted) could also become a steward of other souls.

Almsgiving and tribulation forged a distinctive charitable pastorate concerning the poor, one in which the government of the self produced a charitable steward who could conduct others. Such a pastorate was not exclusively located at the top of the Catholic hierarchy. Rather, its specific goals and methods were globally triggered from different points within the congregation. Additionally, this pastorate articulated not only an individualizing power concerning the subjects but also a force towards the incorporation of the poor within the Catholic community. Thus, these exercises of charity articulated a way to sustain the congregants' physical life and created a path to virtuously live together when poverty loomed over the Spanish Catholic community of the eighteenth century.

The connections between the rich and the poor through almsgiving and tribulation formed a hierarchical and highly rigid reciprocity between them. Nevertheless, such a reciprocity did not account for the entire scope of the old theological virtue. Those voluntary poor exalted a different and ambiguous possibility—they dwelt in a place of truth on which all human authority was built and, perhaps, where all existing human authority could be dissolved. Strikingly, the exercise of tribulation could thus have two radically different roles—entrenching a rigid social hierarchy in which the stewardship of the rich was indispensable but also containing the seeds of this hierarchy's subversion by recalling God's charity, i.e., the ultimate foundation of any authority and reciprocity.

The charitable pastorate was not forgotten but became a building block against and upon which the Spanish police of the poor established for creating a powerful and happy State. This unlikely encounter was the beginning of a conceptual and technological invention still in need of being fully traced for Spain and *América*—a moment when a distinctive pastoral power incorporated into the modern State along with two concerns that will be critical for it, i.e., poverty and the poor. Thus, studying the forgotten Spanish charity and its legacy seems to be a critical step towards delineating the Spanish-American problematization of poverty and writing the genealogy of the modern States in Spain and *América*.[89]

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[89] For undertaking such endeavors, we should rely on Foucault's early detection of the emergence of a new type of way of governing the poor during the classical age and keep in mind different chronologies and

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distinctive deployments for the Spanish American Monarchy. The chronological caveat is justified geographically. The reception of the science of the police in Spain was a late acquisition that began exactly at the time that Foucault recognized its decay in those places he analyzed, i.e., France, Germany, and Italy. For Foucault's analysis, see especially Michel Foucault, *History of Madness*, 44-77, 381-418 and *Security, Territory, Population*, 341–358.

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SPECIAL SECTION

Genopower: On Genomics, Disability, and Impairment

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ABSTRACT. Since the completion of the human genome project in 2003, genomic sequencing, analysis, and interpretation have become staples of research in medicine and the life sciences more generally. While much scholarly ink has been spilled concerning genomics' precipitous rise, there is little agreement concerning its meaning, both in general and with respect to the current moment. Some claim genomics is neither new nor noteworthy; others claim it is a novel and worrisome instrument of newgenics. Contrary to the approaches of Foucault scholars in both of these camps, in this paper I utilize research in philosophy of disability to argue that genomics is indeed note-worthy as a unique form of biopower and that its primary function is to precisify impairments in contradistinction to disability. I call the force at play in this process genopower. I discuss how this impacts Foucault-inspired debates in philosophy of disability and critical disability studies over the meaning of the disability-impairment distinction, and I argue that insofar as genopower gears into powerful cultural tropes that promote individualistic solutions to social issues, the socio-political effect of genomics with respect to disability—despite the aims of many of its practitioners—is to normalize what Rosemarie Garland-Thomson calls "velvet eugenics."

Keywords: Philosophy of Disability, Genomics, Biopolitics, Disability Studies, Eugenics

INTRODUCTION[1]

It was life more than the law that became the issue of political struggles, even if the latter were formulated through affirmations concerning rights. The "right" to life, to one's body, to health, to happiness, to the satisfaction of needs [Le droit à la vie, au corps, à la santé, au bonheur, à la satisfaction des besoins]…was the political response to all these

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new procedures of power which did not derive, either, from the traditional right of sovereignty.

—Michel Foucault[2]

It would be wonderful if, as Left-leaning social genomicists…hope, their research could enable social scientists to control for genetic differences and thereby do better social science research, leading to more effective social programmes. But even if that vision materialises, Left-leaning social genomicists must face the fact that their big politically relevant insight – that what we achieve is due in part to our draw in the genetic lottery – can readily be recruited by those leaning Right. Today, more than ever, it's a mistake to soft-pedal that danger, and more important than ever to curb optimism about the political benefits this research will yield.

—Erik Parens[3]

We live in an age of genomics. Research and Markets, the world's largest market research company, reports that "the Global Genomics market is expected to reach $33.46 billion by 2026 growing at a CAGR (compound annual growth rate) of 10.1% during 2018 to 2026."[4] In light of the fact that the human genome was first mapped in 2003 in an effort costing roughly $2.7 billion, these numbers represent the results of massive investment in both clinical and consumer sectors as well as a meteoric advance and interest in sequencing abilities, informational processing, and translational research. Whether one looks to the initiatives, policies, or rhetoric of local healthcare systems, national governments, or international bodies over the last two decades, genomics has been and still is today treated as a frontier of knowledge-building in the life sciences.[5] However, multiple scholars have used Foucault's oeuvre to downplay or equivocate about the import and novelty of genomics. For example, Marilyn E. Coors argues that genomics does not lead to any distinctive forms of oppression; Thomas Biebricher endorses the genomic enterprise as a form of counter-conduct; and Ladelle McWhorter finds genomics' valence and impact mixed.[6]

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[2] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: Volume 1: An Introduction* (1990), 145; Michel Foucault, *Sécurité, Territoire, Population: Cours au Collège de France, 1977-1978* (2004), 93.

[3] Erik Parens, "Social Genomics Can Combat Inequality or Be Used to Justify It," https://aeon.co/essays/social-genomics-can-combat-inequality-or-be-used-to-justify-it (accessed September 28, 2021).

[4] Research and Markets, "Global Genomics Market Analysis 2020," https://www.researchandmarkets.com/reports/5024850/global-genomics-market-analysis-2020#pos-0. Valuates Reports, another such company, has similar expectations: "the global Genomics market size was valued at USD 13.4 Billion in 2019 and is projected to reach USD 27.8 Billion by 2026, at a CAGR of 11%" https://reports.valuates.com/market-reports/QYRE-Othe-4C280/genomics

[5] That is to say, whether one looks to the National Institute of Health in the United States, the National Health System in the UK, or the World Health Organization, to take just a few examples, initiatives and funding for genomics is treated as a vanguard.

[6] Marilyn E. Coors, "A Foucauldian Foray into the New Genetics," *Journal of Medical Humanities* 24:3 (2003), 279–89; Thomas Biebricher, "(Ir-)Responsibilization, Genetics and Neuroscience," *European Journal of Social Theory* 14:4 (2011), 469–88; Ladelle McWhorter, "Governmentality, Biopower, and the Debate over Genetic Enhancement," *Journal of Medicine and Philosophy* 34:4 (2009): 409–37. On the relationship of disability to a

Yet, while many Foucault scholars claim genomics is neither new nor noteworthy, other scholars across a range of fields claim it is a novel and worrisome instrument of newgenics.[7]

Contrary to the approaches of Foucault scholars in both of these camps, in this paper I utilize research in philosophy of disability to argue that genomics is indeed noteworthy as a unique form of biopower and that its primary function is to precisify impairments in contradistinction to disability.[8] I call the force at play in this process *genopower*. I discuss how this impacts Foucault-inspired debates in philosophy of disability and critical disability studies over the meaning of the disability-impairment distinction, and I argue that insofar as genopower gears into powerful cultural tropes that promote individualistic solutions to social issues, the socio-political effect of genomics with respect to disability—despite the aims of many of its practitioners—is indeed to normalize what Rosemarie Garland-Thomson calls "velvet eugenics."

An initial qualification is in order. What follows is not a blanket indictment of genetics or genomics as such. It is also not a blanket indictment of the many researchers who work in or with close relation to genomics-related and genomics-informed scholarship. Despite how many might interpret the phrasing and framing deployed so far, I am myself skeptical of claims about "genomics" as such, and whether or not such claims are in fact defensible at that level of generality is not addressed here. As Colin Koopman astutely notes, "it is by no means the case that these varied scientific projects are all, at bottom, somehow the same. Rather, there is increasing complexity in the very practice of the genetic sciences."[9] My aim, on the contrary, is to focus upon the socio-political *uptake*, clinical or consumer, of research in contemporary genomics.[10] Whether or not genomics is in fact the monolith that such socio-political uptake assumes (unsurprisingly, non-genomicists are not well-informed regarding the complexity of the state of the field and its many peripheries) will be set to the side, and I defer to the significant amount of scholarship that takes

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subset of *genetics*, see Anne Waldschmidt, "Who Is Normal? Who Is Deviant? 'Normality' and 'Risk' in Genetic Diagnostics and Counseling," in *Foucault and the Government of Disability*, ed. Shelley Tremain (2005), 191–207; Shelley Tremain, "Reproductive Freedom, Self-Regulation, and the Government of Impairment in Utero," *Hypatia* 21:1 (2006), 35.

[7] Kimberly TallBear, *Native American DNA: Tribal Belonging And The False Promise Of Genetic Science* (2013); Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, "Eugenics," in *Keywords for Disability Studies*, ed. Rachel Adams, David Serlin and Benjamin Reiss (2015), 215–26; Jasmine Zahid, "A Defense of 'The Case for Conserving Disability,'" *AMA Journal of Ethics* 18:4 (2016), 399–405. To get a grip on the wider stakes of "newgenics," I highly recommend Robert A. Wilson, *The Eugenic Mind Project* (2017).

[8] The term 'precisify' was coined and has been used since at least the mid-1990s, starting in sub-disciplines within Anglo-American philosophical traditions. Although never widely adopted, I find it very useful for this project, and I explicitly and gratefully follow Kittay in her recent adoption of the term. See Eva Feder Kittay, "We Have Seen the Mutants—and They Are Us: Gifts and Burdens of a Genetic Diagnosis," *Hastings Center Report* 50:S1 (2020).

[9] Colin Koopman, "Coding the Self: The Infopolitics and Biopolitics of Genetic Sciences," *Hastings Center Report* 50:S1 (2020).

[10] There are multiple spaces where instead of uptake, one finds refusal. I am thinking, for example, though especially, of 2013 TallBear; Jessica Kolopenuk, "Provoking Bad Biocitizenship," *Hastings Center Report* 50:S1 (2020).

that concern seriously.[11] Here, my focus is instead on the import of genomics for life, not theory—life as it is lived in the wake of knowledge, the determining contours of which are all-too-often out of our grasp and which, if we are to even attempt to grip them, require a continual return to animating conditions, from archives to habits to apparatuses of power. This is, put crudely, part of what makes the following a genealogical as opposed to an historical analysis. With such an aim in mind, I find myself in this project far closer to the contemporary practices and norms of sociology than those of many practitioners in philosophy in the sense that my animating concern is less what X means and more on how people live with the meanings they ascribe to X and the sociopolitical implications of such living in contexts wherein X exerts significant power and force to shape one's world. To those who might balk at such an alignment, one could conceptualize this in a more philosophy-centric way by simply thinking of what follows as pragmatist: it is a project that attempts to take seriously aspects of our current moment and ask what might *be done* if our hermeneutic lodestar shines in the sober light of *how we tend to feel about and use* genomic knowledge.

I. THE SOCIOPOLITICAL POWER OF GENOMICS

Nikolas Rose and Carlos Novas argue:

> The responsibility for the self now implicates both "corporeal" and "genetic" responsibility: one has long been responsible for the health and illness of the body, but now one must also know and manage the implications [the "facts" of one's past, present, and future] of one's own genome. The responsibility for the self to manage its present in the light of a knowledge of its own future can be termed "genetic prudence." Such a prudential norm introduces new distinctions between good and bad subjects of ethical choice and biological susceptibility.[12]

The norm of genetic prudence and the practices to which it relates are predicated upon the fact that the knowledge arising from genomics is *true*; that the informational outputs of genomics accurately tell one about the material reality of one's body from the womb to the grave. And one is *responsible for* learning these truths. "Several scholars," Sandra Soo-Jin Lee notes, "have theorized that market capitalism and neoliberal governance have created a set of expectations that individuals should be responsible for their health status and that it is incumbent on them to apply individual risk information in their daily decision-making to improve their health."[13] Rose, Novas, and Lee each focus on the implications

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[11] Consider the work of Sandra Soo-Jin Lee, Catherine Bliss, Jenny Reardon, and Kaushik Rajan, among others. Sandra Soo-Jin Lee, "Excavating the Personal Genome: The Good Biocitizen in the Age of Precision Health," *Hastings Center Report* 50:S1 (2020); Catherine Bliss, *Social by Nature: The Promise and Peril of Sociogenomics* (2018); Jenny Reardon, *The Postgenomic Condition: Ethics, Justice, and Knowledge After the Genome* (2018); Kaushik Sunder Rajan, *Biocapital: The Constitution of Postgenomic Life* (2006).

[12] Nicholas Rose and Carlos Nova, "Biological Citizenship," in *Global Assemblages: Technology, Politics, and Ethics as Anthropological Problems*, ed. Aihwa Ong and Stephen J. Collier (2008).

[13] Sandra Soo-Jin Lee, "Excavating the Personal Genome: The Good Biocitizen in the Age of Precision Health," *Hastings Center Report* 50:S1 (2020), 54– 61.

of genomic knowledge for one's present and future, but there are also implications for one's past. In fact, the "womb to the grave" phrase used above is too narrow a qualification, for this information concerns "facts" from before the womb to after the grave; this information is fundamentally about the lineage, the links, and the threads from where one comes, how one becomes, and after which one is.

Ancestry-related genomic testing is a massive and growing sector of the genomics industry, and this is a cultural moment in which the import of genomics to *determine* the truth of one's past can hardly be overstated. A particularly striking example comes from the United States' 2020 election and the case of Democratic presidential nominee Elizabeth Warren. She responded to disputes concerning her self-proclaimed Native American ancestry by publicly releasing a "DNA Test" carried out by population geneticist Carlos D. Bustamante.[14] Just two days after this news hit the national media, sociologist Alondra Nelson responded in a profound, hard-hitting op-ed in *The New York Times*, stating, "the truth is that sets of DNA markers cannot tell us who we really are because genetic data is technical and identity is social."[15] Warren assumed that the public would judge the truth or falsity of *who she is* in light of the results of genomic sequencing. While the pushback from experts on the issue, including and most importantly Indigenous experts, was notable and pointed, Warren's ploy seemed to work on the whole, for polling did not show a significant dip in overall support due to her efforts on this front.[16] On the contrary, her continued support could be interpreted as a reward for her demonstration of the requisite "genetic prudence" and adherence to the "duty to know" one's genomic information; she turned to genomic knowledge to *prove* the truth of *who she is* and, correspondingly, claims concerning her present and future.

As Catharine Bliss points out, "a collective concept of race that presumes there are, or were at some point in the past, discreet genetic groups that have tracked along continental lines and that those differences are the fundamental basis for our folk and political groupings of white, black, Asian, Native American, and Pacific Islander is a fallacy that will always lead to social inequality."[17] While most working in genomics *know* this is a fallacy and repeatedly talk about how mistaken it is, racial categories are nevertheless used both in the research and the reporting of results in academic and non-academic spaces.[18] There is a fundamental tension between the inaccurate socio-political racial taxonomization utilized in genomics and the knowledge concerning genomically distinct cohort-groups that the field of genomics in fact explores. To risk belaboring this point, while experts know

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[14] Asma Khalid, "Warren Releases DNA Results, Challenges Trump Over Native American Ancestry," NPR.org, https://www.npr.org/2018/10/15/657468655/warren-releases-dna-results-challenges-trump-over-native-american-ancestry (accessed September 21, 2021)

[15] Alondra Nelson, "Elizabeth Warren and the Folly of Genetic Ancestry Tests," New York Times. https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/17/opinion/elizabeth-warren-and-the-folly-of-genetic-ancestry-tests.html (accessed September 21, 2021).

[16] See Kim Tallbear, "Elizabeth Warren's Claim to Cherokee Ancestry Is a Form of Violence," High Country News, https://www.hcn.org/issues/51.2/tribal-affairs-elizabeth-warrens-claim-to-cherokee-ancestry-is-a-form-of-violence (accessed September 21, 2021).

[17] Catherine Bliss, "Conceptualizing Race in the Genomic Age," *Hastings Center Report* 50:S1 (2020).

[18] Bliss, *Social by Nature*.

socio-political categories that track race and ethnicity are not what genomic cohorts track—the problem is that much of the public does not know this or, in some cases, acts in willful ignorance of that (readily available) knowledge.[19]

The problems related to genomic descriptions/explanations of disability are in many respects different. To explain someone's form of embodiment in terms of genetic variation is more often than not to explain how/why they *as an individual* are impaired as they are, sometimes in relation to a distinct group-identity that carries socio-political import (like Down syndrome or d/Deafness) and sometimes in relation to a condition that does not (like Lesch-Nyhan syndrome, lymphangiomatosis, or filariasis). Such definitions, if left merely at that, run roughshod over even the most simplistic forms of social models of disability, which suggest that—whatever we make of the phenomena of disability—we must distinguish between impairment and disability; between how we find ourselves and how we treat each other in society. This is why I here focus upon the *socio-political work* of genomic knowledge. To focus upon genomic knowledge as it is understood by clinical or corporate practitioners instead of as it plays out societally risks missing what genomics is in fact *doing* as a human practice and how it in fact impacts human life. Having now provided a cursory background concerning genomics, I turn to the issue of its historical import. I engage research in philosophy of disability to argue that the primary function of genomics is to precisify impairments in contradistinction to disability. To appreciate what that claim means, I'll begin by analyzing and critiquing debates made concerning that distinction by Foucault scholars.

II. DISABILITY, IMPAIRMENT, AND GENOPOWER

As most historians tell the story, the "social model of disability" is based upon a binary conceptual distinction: impairment vs. disability.[20] The concept of "impairment" refers to atypical bodily differences, whereas the concept of "disability" refers to cultural, social, and political responses to such bodily differences that result in stigma, discrimination, and oppression against disabled people. While one may be impaired insofar as one uses a wheelchair for mobility, is d/Deaf, is blind, or has major depression, etc., what disables one is a world that is inaccessible except for the ambulatory by design, a world that fails to support the widespread use of braille, alt-text, and visual description, a world without audible walks signals and highly expensive or impossible to get guide dogs, and a world demanding constant labor, valorizing positive affect, and operating without, or with poor,

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[19] Ibid.,

[20] There are actually *multiple* social models, as anyone familiar with disability studies knows. I will not place great weight on the many differences at play in these distinct models because they are not relevant for the purposes at hand, but that is not to say they are not of theoretical import. Furthermore, there are scholars who do not treat this distinction necessarily as a binary, but instead as picking out two poles, nodes, or fill-in-your-favorite-metaphor that are in relationship with one another (this is one way to interpret Tom Shakespeare's work). It is increasingly frustrating that decades into the field of philosophy of disability, and many more decades into the interdisciplinary field of disability studies, the thinnest, least sophisticated version of what goes under the moniker of "the social model" often plays a role when the history, use, and theorization regarding "social models of disability" are in fact extremely complex, diverse, and even conflicting.

mental health services. That is to say, what is disabling is a world that is on the whole oppressive towards, hostile to, and stigmatizing of disabled people.

Shelly Tremain draws upon Michel Foucault's work to combat the social model's understanding of disability and impairment. She argues that both concepts appeared and developed along with bureaucratic techniques and apparatuses of governance in the long 18th and 19th centuries. They are *products* of the historical emergence of biopolitics as a dominant modality of modern governance.[21] Tremain's aim is to "develop a conception of disability that does not rely upon a natural, transhistorical, and transcultural metaphysical and epistemological foundation (impairment)."[22] She writes:

> To understand disability as an apparatus is to conceive of it as a far-reaching and systemic matrix of power that contributes to, is inseparable from, and reinforces other apparatuses of historical force relations. On this understanding, disability is not a metaphysical substrate, a natural, biological category, or a characteristic that only certain individuals embody or possess, but rather is a historically contingent network of force relations in which everyone is implicated and entangled and in relation to which everyone occupies a position. That is, to be disabled or nondisabled is to occupy a certain subject position within the productive constraints of the apparatus of disability…Just as people are variously racialized through strategies and mechanisms of the apparatus of race, but no one "has" a race or even a certain race and, furthermore, just as people are variously sexed through strategies and mechanisms of the apparatus of sex, but no one "has" a sex or even a particular sex, so too people are variously disabled or not disabled through the operations of the apparatus of disability, but no one "has" a disability or even a given disability. In short, disability (like race and sex) is not a nonaccidental attribute, characteristic, or property of individuals, not a natural biological kind.[23]

I will call the idea that disability is an apparatus (*un dispositif*) the *apparatus thesis*. Tremain here leverages increasingly common knowledge about the concepts of "sex" and "race"—namely, that they do not refer to purely natural facts of the matter about human difference—to argue that the concept of "disability" is in the same boat. She claims that just as there are many different ways in which people are racialized and many different ways in which people are sexed, there are many different ways in which people are produced as disabled.[24] These processes are not the results of mere facts about bodies but instead emerge from a historical context in which those concepts come to mark social differences

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[21] To get a sense of what this claim amounts to, I suggest starting with Fiona A. K. Campbell, "Legislating Disability: Negative Ontologies and the Government of Legal Identities," in *Foucault and the Government of Disability*, ed. Shelley Tremain, (2005); Shelley Tremain, *Foucault And The Government Of Disability* (2015); Fiona Kumari Campbell, *Contours of Ableism: The Production of Disability and Abledness* (2009); Margrit Shildrick, *Dangerous Discourses of Disability, Subjectivity And Sexuality* (2009); Licia Carlson, *The Faces Of Intellectual Disability: Philosophical Reflections* (2010); Shelley Tremain, *Foucault and Feminist Philosophy of Disability* (2017).

[22] Tremain, *Foucault and Feminist Philosophy of Disability*, 9.

[23] Ibid, 22.

[24] The phrasing is difficult here—relative to Tremain's argument, it would be more accurate to say, however awkwardly, "are disableized."

between beings in ways that distribute power relations. And Tremain extends the apparatus thesis to the concept of *impairment* as well. "Another aim of my inquiry," Tremain writes, "is to show how a certain regime of power has produced impairment as both the prediscursive—that is, natural and universal—antecedent of culturally variant forms of disability and a problem for this regime of power to which the regime offers solutions."[25]

The apparatus thesis is very compelling, and, importantly, it builds upon what I take to be an exceptionally productive route for research in philosophy of disability. However, the apparatus thesis, all on its own, does not get one very far in understanding the specific meaning of disability in particular contexts. To say that "X is a product of force relations" is a claim that demands further specification. What sort of product? What sorts of forces? What sorts of relations? In what sorts of contexts? Under which sorts of constraints? Etc. In many ways, this lack of clear inferences applies even more so to questions of impairment than of disability, and that is no small matter, for the concept of impairment's fate has very high stakes not only with respect to disability politics but also disability (social) ontology.

When Tremain defends variations of the following formula: "impairment—the naturally disadvantageous foundation of disability," she reinforces a version of the bad-difference view of disability.[26] Namely, instead of splitting discrimination from difference, she assumes that differences (differences described by the concept of impairment as social model supporters on the whole understand it) are themselves bad. But that is by no means a given, and that is certainly not the overarching point of the social model's understanding of impairment as a conceptual category (whether one looks to the complex history of disability activist practitioners of social models in the US, UK, or elsewhere).

Impairments, as most disability activists utilizing the social model make clear, are assumed to be *just* differences or, insofar as they are differences that present functional or other sorts of limitations, differences that *should not make a difference* socially and politically. In short, it is inaccurate to say that "impairment" is conceived to be a naturally disadvantageous foundation in disability activism as well as in disability theory writ large. What's more, many of the debates that gained steam in the 90s about the "forgetting" of chronic pain and chronic illness in discourse and activism around disability rely heavily on this very point: impairments had often been seen as/treated as neutral, but some of them *are not*.[27] That is to say, part of the reason debates about chronic pain and certain chronic illness launched in the first place is because some disabled people have said, "Hey, my impairment *actually is bad*, is 'naturally disadvantageous,' and it is not so thanks to living in an ableist society or due to the way that biopower has produced/produces disability as an apparatus."[28] If impairment, on the whole across disability activism and

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[25] *Foucault and Feminist Philosophy of Disability*, 5.

[26] Ibid., 6.

[27] I am thinking especially of the work of Liz Crow and Susan Wendell, among others. See also chapter three of Joel Michael Reynolds, *The Life Worth Living: Disability, Pain, and Morality* (2022).

[28] As Elizabeth Barnes painstakingly points out, to be disabled does not *automatically* mean that one's life, *on the whole*, will go worse. It might, though, go worse in certain ways and with respect to certain local goods. Barnes' choice example is the inability of certain humans (typically called "males") to reproduce human life.

disability studies, were understood as "naturally disadvantageous," as Tremain argues, then what were these scholars arguing against?

Tellingly, most of the activists and scholars Tremain references do not in fact give into a simplistic "realist ontology," as Tremain claims they do.[29] They are instead trying to take seriously the ways in which aspects of the suffering of one living in, for example, chronic pain, can transcend the particular discursive (social, cultural, political, historical, linguistic, etc.) processes that a figure like Foucault uncovered. The ancient Athenian in chronic pain and the present-day American in chronic pain, whilst certainly experiencing that pain in differing ways shaped by a host of context-dependent factors, will each require interventions that go beyond the domain of distributive (or other forms of) social justice. To fix chronic pain requires more than a different social order or even a perfectly just world, for there are forms of suffering "which justice [alone] cannot eliminate," as Susan Wendell aptly puts it.[30] This is true of a host of other things, from epilepsy to cystic fibrosis to Alzheimer's disease.[31]

Part of the issue here is that over the last few decades "impairment" has shifted in some people's eyes from an understandable move in multiple political/philosophical projects

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From that fact we do not assume their lives will, on the whole, necessarily go worse. Crucially, Barnes' view decidedly leaves open whether or not *some* cases of impairment are in fact bad-differences, whether some do in fact make one's life go worse in at least some respects and perhaps also on the whole (she often cites chronic pain as one such likely exception). Elizabeth Barnes, *The Minority Body* (2016). I cannot broach it here, but there is also a whole line of work in disability studies that tries to understand what it means to fight against bad-difference views of disability and, at the same time, fight against the purposeful *debilitation* of certain groups, populations, etc., i.e., targeted debilitations that center on racial, sexual, gendered, ethnic, national, etc., group-differences. See Jasbir K. Puar, *The Right to Maim: Debility, Capacity, Disability*, 2017; Nirmala Erevelles, *Disability And Difference In Global Contexts: Enabling A Transformative Body Politic* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

[29] And contemporary scholars in similar spaces today certainly do not — see, e.g., the 2020 special issue: Corinne Lajoie and Emily Douglas, "A Crip Queer Dialogue on Sickness (Editors' Introduction)," *Journal of Critical Phenomenology* 3:2 (2020), 1–14.

[30] Susan Wendell, "Unhealthy Disabled: Treating Chronic Illnesses as Disabilities," *Hypatia* 16:4 (2001), 31. Cf. Susan Wendell, *The Rejected Body: Feminist Philosophical Reflections On Disability* (1996).

[31] This is not to say that pain or what we today call "epilepsy" and "Alzheimer's" are thereby "politically neutral," for, to repeat, of course political factors play a role at the level of one's lived experience and the related social-political-discursive recognitive community involved in such phenomena. To claim that the problems a given phenomenon poses cannot be solved by X factor/domain of explanation or is not fully determined by X factor/domain of explanation does not thereby mean that X plays no role in shaping that phenomenon. Consider the following claim from Tom Shakespeare: "impairment is not a pre-social or pre-cultural biological substrate (Thomas, 1999, 124), as Tremain (1998) has argued in a paper which critiques the untenable ontologies of the impairment-disability and sex-gender distinctions. The words we use and the discourses we deploy to represent impairment are socially and culturally determined. There is no pure or natural body, existing outside of discourse (Tom Shakespeare, "The Social Model of Disability," in *The Disability Studies Reader*, ed. Lennard J. Davis (2014))." To say that embodiment is shaped by discursive practices is not to say that there is no body to which those practices refer—it is not to say that there is no "there" there which scientists, for example, might garner some insights about that humanists will, given their methods, not be able to uncover. Are words and discourses socially and culturally determined? Of course. But that does not mean they do not, in some way, refer to something real; to something that is *more than* a *mere* product of social-cultural practice. To argue so gives into the sophomoric, straw version of social constructivism as well as an either/or, culture/nature divide that is indefensible.

(disability activism, disability studies, etc.) to a red herring for imprecision. The term has lost its initial analytic power by often being strawed in ways that do not attend to its deployment in specific contexts. This strikes me as a grave mistake—especially with respect to the history of disability activists who have so insightfully worked, and in highly creative ways, with that term in difficult, conflicting, and often hostile environments. I find it quite important to hold onto the concept of "impairment."[32] However, let us do so in a way that is honest about its complexity.

To be clear, Tremain is right that certain groups—the Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS), for example—define impairment in a way that *seems* both evaluative and also naturalistically so.[33] UPIAS defines impairment as "the lack of a limb or part thereof or a defect of a limb, organ or mechanism of the body" and disability as "a form of disadvantage which is imposed on top of one's impairment."[34] One should keep in mind, however, that the UK disability rights approach was operating within a Marxist framework—"from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs"—such that making a claim about basic "ability" phrased in terms of lack or defect was thought to lead to claims of social obligation regarding needs. It is telling that, by contrast, one of the earlier disability movements in the USA (which centered in part on Ed Roberts's fight with UC Berkeley and came to be called the Independent Living Movement) did not conceive of the impairment-disability divide in this way. Ed Robert's writes, "If someone comes up to me and doesn't look me in the eye, if all they see is my ventilator and my chair, I can tell right away. If they don't see me as a human being, if they only see my equipment, I know that I can get whatever I want out of them. As long as this is not used pathologically, but to create beneficial change for others, it is a strength. Disability can be very powerful."[35] Roberts implicitly refers to the impairment-disability distinction here, and he is crystal clear that when another takes his way of being in the world *as negative*, this becomes a tool for him to fight—but, to belabor the point, only and precisely insofar as his impairment does not *in fact* render him defective, lacking, or naturally disadvantaged but, instead, just as human as any other human.

To run together the UK and USA disability rights activists (as well as disability scholarship as practiced in those places and beyond over many decades and across shifting political contexts) as if the concept of "impairment" is definitely treated as a "natural disadvantage" by and across both contexts and spanning decades of on-the-ground political battles far oversimplifies the picture. Furthermore, it makes a generalization across

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[32] I am thus, I think, at odds with Barnes on this particular point. Cf. Elizabeth Barnes, "Against Impairment: Replies to Aas, Howard, and Francis," *Philosophical Studies* 175:5 (2018). I say "I think" in part because the context of Barnes' argument there is operating primarily in the space of contemporary debates in social ontology and not in the space of debates, methods, and concerns related to genealogy.

[33] Shelly Tremain, "On the Subject of Impairment," in *Disability/Postmodernity: Embodying Disability Theory*, ed. Tom Shakespeare and Mairian Corker (2002), 33ff.

[34] It would be an uphill battle to construe "lack" and "defect" as neutral here, although it would not be impossible (perhaps by linking them to questions of typicality in a purely statistical sense).

[35] Ed Roberts, "On Disability Rights: Highlights from Speeches by Ed Roberts", Commonlit, https://www.commonlit.org/texts/on-disability-rights-highlights-from-speeches-by-ed-roberts (accessed September 21, 2021).

activism and the academy that is tenuous at best. One cannot simply read a made-for-academics theoretical account from the Realpolitik in which activists are engaged, just as one cannot simply read a detailed politically-engaged account from the theory-building in which scholars (typically, if not always) are engaged.

II.I RACE, THE DISABILITY/IMPAIRMENT DISTINCTION, AND DEBATES IN PHILOSOPHY OF MEDICINE

To better understand the stakes of interpreting the apparatus thesis, consider the example of race that Tremain often deploys to make analogies concerning disability. Tremain's arguments would lead one to think that in the same way that there is no biological (genomic or otherwise) meaning to the term "Black," there is no biological (genomic or otherwise) meaning to a disability like "Down syndrome" (or, so the argument is also supposed to go, to impairments that comes along with the disability category of "Down syndrome."[36] But analogizing across race and disability in this way makes no sense. While it is certainly not *all* that Down syndrome means, there is a specific biological meaning to the term: it means that a person has extra copy of chromosome twenty-one.[37] That is not at all the same as claiming that being "Black" means, to take just one egregious example, that one is biologically more susceptible to hypertension.[38] Although arguments over natural kinds are perennially labyrinthian, one can at least say that whatever Down syndrome (in part) refers to biologically, it is disanalogous in important ways relative to a term like "Black," which refers to *nothing* biological at all.[39] One is, fundamentally, a socio-political term; the other is, fundamentally, a genomic term. This is not to say that an extra copy of that chromosome should exhaust the meaning of Down syndrome. Far from it. As former IVF doctor David Sable starkly noted in a recent lead article for *The Atlantic*, "The concept of counting chromosomes as a definitive indicator of the truth—I think we're going to look

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[36] To repeat from above: contemporary genomics does hold that there are such things as genetic cohorts, but the point is that there is no one genetic cohort that maps on to those who are racialized as "Black." "Black" is a socio-political-historical designation, not a biological one.

[37] And, to anticipate claims I make in more detail below, knowledge of this information can, in at least certain contexts, be *positive* in the sense that it allows one to better care. See Kittay, "We Have Seen the Mutants—and They Are Us,".

[38] The large body of research concerning the development, approval, and marketing of the drug *Bidil* is instructive on this point.

[39] Even if one replaced "Black" with, say, "African-American," the analogy fails. To be clear, one could say that "Black" does refer to something biological relative to contexts where white supremacy and the legacies of white settler colonialism after the Middle Passage structure social life. And thus being "Black" will involve biological differences, namely, those that result from moving in and through an anti-Black world. I appreciate that concern and find it important, but I do not see how it undermines the point immediately at hand with respect to the conceptual and practical differences I am picking out between discussions of race and disability. Even if Blackness does refer to *something* biological in a meaningful sense (bracketing for a moment the tensions between the socio-political meaning of that term and whatever it might mean in various domains of the life sciences), it does not in the same way that having an extra copy of a particular chromosome does. Or, even if one were to maintain that it does in *similar* ways, my argument here hinges on the differences between these cases.

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back on that and say, 'Oh my God, we were so misguided.'"[40] Furthermore, this is not to claim that we should hold onto the term "Down syndrome" *merely* in the sense of "extra genomic material on chromosome 21." My point is not that Down syndrome is fully captured by a chromosomal difference. My point is instead to show how that difference is (a) disanalogous to racial difference/differences of racialization and (b) refers to a "nonaccidental" difference at the level of what on the social model is conceptualized as *impairment*.

Note also that talking about Down syndrome with respect to its status as an impairment is importantly different from talking about, say, congenital blindness. The former is a *syndrome*—a catch-all phrase for a *set* of various phenotypic expressions, the variability of which can be in flux but the direct genetic cause of which is known. Yet, often, a syndrome can also refer to "a recognizable complex of symptoms and physical findings which indicate a specific condition for which a direct cause is *not necessarily understood*."[41] To further complicate the picture, some syndromes are diagnoses insofar as they automatically indicate a certain diagnosis, while others do not, and "due to the imprecision of natural language, some syndromes could also imply a simple pathological finding (vasculitis) or just a physical finding."[42] Congenital blindness, on the other hand, is a *condition*—it refers primarily to a state of one's body and not to an array of current or potential expressions.[43] While a syndrome or disease or specific genetic variation may be the *cause* of congenital blindness, the meaning of "blindness" is closer to describing a static state of being (as defined relative to the existence or absence of a major, typically (statistically) present sensory-perception system) than it is to a set of potential expressions over one's development or even life course.

And both Down syndrome and congenital blindness are distinct from, say, fibromyalgia, the medical meaning of which is contested. It was previously understood as "an inflammatory musculoskeletal disease but is now considered to be an illness that primarily affects the central nervous system."[44] Yet, to be clear, even its status as an illness is debated. We do not need consensus over the content of the medical concepts under discussion nor do we need consensus over matters of precision with respect to their analytic boundaries to see that, however we categorize them, there *are* characteristics or properties of individuals at play here. Our words are in relationship with things. They are so in a manner that does not annul the idea that there is *something to which* they refer. This is not to say that humans can comprehend reality without the use of language; it is only to say

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[40] Sarah Zhang, "The Last Children of Down Syndrome," theatlantic.com. https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2020/12/the-last-children-of-down-syndrome/616928/?fbclid=IwAR0aUjido-HySTvzBi9sTvw1zAssLrDNOfrqWYeGOxU5MhrGCfxc1fRaOFE0 (accessed September 21, 2021).

[41] Franz Calvo et al., "Diagnoses, Syndromes, and Diseases: A Knowledge Representation Problem," *AMIA Annual Symposium Proceedings* 2003:802 (2003), 802.

[42] Ibid.

[43] There are storied debates in philosophy of medicine and philosophy of science over these terms. I do not want to get into those debates here, and I realize some will disagree with my gloss of terms like "syndrome" or "condition". However, one prefers to define these terms, the fact that the referents ("Down syndrome," "congenital blindness," etc.) in the cases under discussion are distinct allows my larger point to stand.

[44] Gold L. Donberg and et al., "Understanding Fibromyalgia and Its Related Disorders," *Primary Care Companion to The Journal of Clinical Psychiatry* 10:2 (2008), 133–44.

that the role of the linguistic and the discursive is a *role* played in a very real, very serious, and very high stakes relationship to the world. The fact that genomic explanations provide novel insights into and further precision concerning differences between things like syndromes, conditions, and diseases—as well as differences within such categories—is notable. To reduce such explanations to the level of the merely discursive is to misunderstand the nature and import of such explanations, and what is more, it is to disregard the life-or-death stakes such explanations can carry. Knowing more about these differences can be *the* difference between medical regiments and social policies that save a person's life/make their life livable or not. Knowing more about these differences can also be the difference between becoming highly stigmatized, discriminated against, and oppressed in various ways (whether within the clinic or outside). But neither the type nor the precision of knowledge at play is in and of itself determining whether it turns out to be negative or positive for a person, a family, or a community.

It would be very strange to say that no humans were born with an extra copy of chromosome twenty-one before 1866 (when the category of "Down syndrome" came to be). But to deny the concept of impairment any "prediscursive" meaning alongside that of disability and to claim that disability is "not a nonaccidental [i.e., it is accidental] attribute, characteristic, or property of individuals," as Tremain does, commits one to such a view. Even if how we categorize and conceptualize various characteristics or properties (such as those captured by the term "Down syndrome") is always a product of shifting epistemes and larger forces of relation (a claim I wholeheartedly accept à la the pioneering work of Foucault, Kuhn, and, later, Rose, McWhorter, and others), the idea that (at least certain) "impairments" are a biological fiction in the way that "race" is a biological fiction is simply untenable. That does a disservice to careful thought on both issues and the many fields that try to carry such work out. There are important differences between disability and race (and sex, which I do not have space here to discuss), and in the long fight to improve philosophical thinking about disability, it is crucial that we attend to such differences.

Importantly, my claims so far do not in fact undermine the apparatus thesis as a whole—far from it. As I hope to have made clear above, I find this thesis helpful and productive in many respects. I have instead argued that (a) conceiving of disability as an apparatus does not entail that there is no such thing as impairment or that impairment is social all the way down (that it is fully "discursive") analogously to race, (b) treating disability as a product of forces of relations requires a significant amount of downstream theoretical labor because, among other reasons, the heterogeneity of cases and processes at play is enormous, (c) giving credence to the concept of impairment in contradistinction to disability does not commit one to a bad-difference view of disability, and (d) treating the concept of impairment as a bad-difference is an inaccurate way to describe its actual *function* across the complex history of disability activism and scholarship.

II.II ON GENOMICS AND THE MEANING OF IMPAIRMENT

A further comment is called for at this point. It is telling to me that arguments against the concept of impairment are often anchored in analyses whose respective central concepts, methods, theories, and cases do not straightforwardly align with those guiding much research and practice in *contemporary* biomedicine and its omnipresent connection to political economy. Namely, they are not anchored in the massive and still ongoing transformation of the life sciences, basic and clinical medical research, and medical practice since the completion of the Human Genome Project (HGP) in 2003.[45] Under contemporary medical paradigms of knowledge, what a "real" impairment consists of should have (or at least could have) a genomic explanation, not merely an explanation in the flesh, in tissue-damage, the brain, or the like. If this seems absurdly reductionist, just consider those who are actively working to explain what we today take as largely behavioral differences (and differences that are so varied the term "spectrum" is regularly deployed) like Autism in primarily genomic terms.[46]

Yet, genomic explanations come in many different varieties, and they do not function in the exact same way that other explanatory domains—whether vis-à-vis physiology, biology, anthropology, or what have you—do. For example, some genomic explanations are at bottom claims about risk; claims about the propensity or disposition towards some specific bodily state. Some genomic explanations are claims about cause; claims about why one's body is the way it is. Some genomic explanations are claims about being; about how one's body fundamentally is or a cohort-group of bodies fundamentally are. This taxonomy could go on for quite a bit, and I leave sketching out its complete parameters to others. While these explanations are often run together and, in certain cases, even belong together, the point I wish to highlight is the distinct force of each with respect to the constitution of impairment.

It is profoundly different to be told that one has the HD gene on chromosome 4, which means that one *will*, assuming one lives long enough, develop Huntington's disease, vs. being told that one has the Celiac genes HLA DQ1 and HLA DQ3, which *generally predispose* one to the disease. Thirty percent of the general population has a genetic susceptibility to celiac disease, but only three percent develop it. It is also profoundly different to be told that one has three copies of chromosome twenty-one instead of two in each cell of the body (such that one *will* develop certain expressions correlated to "Down syndrome") vs. being told that one has a polygenetic predisposition for epilepsy. "It is estimated that there is an underlying genetic predisposition for epilepsy in approximately half of [all] individuals, with monogenic epilepsies accounting for less than 1 percent."[47] And even if one ends up with epilepsy, what that impairment will mean varies significantly between

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[45] Jenny Reardon, *The Postgenomic Condition: Ethics, Justice, and Knowledge after the Genome* (2018); Kaushik Sunder Rajan, *Biocapital: The Constitution of Postgenomic Life* (2006); Bliss, *Social by Nature*. Since 2003, there have been numerous large governmental efforts to increasingly translate genomics directly into clinical practice such as the 2016 Precision Medicine Initiative, which is today's All of Us research program of the NHGRI.

[46] Cf. Robert Plomin, *Blueprint* (2018).

[47] Jennifer A. Kearney, "Advances in Epilepsy Genetics and Genomics," *Epilepsy Currents* 12:4 (2012), 143–46.

various social contexts, access to effective medications such as phenobarbital, and questions of accessibility along a number of axes.

One effect of genomic information has been to make more precise, to *precisify*, how we think about various impairments and between impairments that, for example, differentially track the concepts of "syndrome," "disease," "condition," etc.[48] This is simultaneously a strength and a weakness. Getting more precise genomic information can be a boon—it can sustain, save, and further lives. It can also be the beginning of new and even life-ending processes of surveillance, discrimination, oppression, and other such forms of subjugation.[49] As I argue in more detail below, the true danger of the precisification of impairment is the way it can totalize the meaning of *disability* (whether one wants to hear that in a social model, apparatus-based, or some other critical sense).

Furthermore, insofar as the socio-political uptake of the precisification power of genomics—of what I below describe as *genopower*—contributes to and culminates in a focus on the individual, it cannot but evoke the terrifyingly unjust origins of medical practice. It returns us to frameworks that focus on privileged individuals (those who have money and/or access to medicine's wares and who are "lucky enough" to have some important aspect of their experience in the cross-hairs of its contemporary methods) instead of a focus on society and the goal of caring for everyone justly and equitably. This, as work in public health and social epidemiology has made painfully clear, is a grave mistake and a problem we are witnessing in real-time and real deaths as COVID-19 rages highly inequitably within countries and across the globe as a whole. As the now canonical research finding goes: your genome is not the best predictor of your health…*your zip code is*.

III. THE BOOK OF LIFE

Just three years before the map of the human genome would be fully completed, Francis Collins, Director of the National Human Genome Research Institute, spoke at a large press release at the USA's White House. With characteristic—and, to be fair, funding-necessitated—political bravado, he proclaimed, "today, we celebrate the revelation of the first draft of the human book of life," furthering declaring that this breakthrough would let humans, for the first time, read "our own instruction book."[50]

It is hard to overstate the sociopolitical power wielded by concepts like the "book of life" as well as less explicitly metaphoric concepts utilized in genomics research, such as "race" and "ancestry," "allelic shifts" and "allelic drifts," "mutations" and "abnormalities," or what have you. At the very core of genomics' socio-political import is the idea

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[48] Cf. "We Have Seen the Mutants—and They Are Us."

[49] Joel Michael Reynolds, "Health for Whom? Bioethics and the Challenge of Justice for Genomic Medicine," *Hastings Center Report* 50:S1 (2020), 2–5.

[50] Katrin Weigmann, "The Code, The Text and The Language Of God," *EMBO Reports* 5:2 (2004), 116–18. As historian of science and philosopher Lily Kay argues, "the information-based models, metaphors, and linguistic and semiotic tools that were central to the formulation of the genetic code were transported into molecular biology from cybernetics, information theory, electronic computing, and control and communications systems" (1995, 611).

that it tells us *the truth of where we come from, who we are, and what we will become*. The concepts that mediate this truth are, more often than not, taken to be descriptions, not interpretations, of how the world works.[51] The enormous labor that in fact goes into the interpretation of this knowledge—an effort of translational work within the life sciences which requires systemic coordination of computer scientists, biologists, and clinicians, among many others—is too often taken for granted. Part of the reason is because of the simultaneous mystery and prestige of work that goes under this name. The truth of genomics is a truth whose veracity is thought to be decided by genomics and genomics experts—a self-verifying, closed, albeit ever-evolving, system.

What the preceding analysis shows is that the socio-political work of genomics—which is to say, the general socio-political effect of all that led up to and has followed from the Human Genome Project—is to *define and delimit the capacity* of human beings at the level of their individual possibilities. Genomics transforms health futures into health fates, one primary effect of which is to delimit the more meaningful frameworks in which and through which care could actually be provided—namely, socio-political frameworks.[52] In short, genomic knowledge fixes bodies and minds to themselves, in effect excising them from larger communal practices of care that might otherwise provide equitable support to them. As I argued above concerning the impacts of genomic precisification of impairment (it can be a boon; it can be a detriment), this does not follow necessarily from genomic sciences. If genomic knowledge production was tied to a just society, a society that provides basic supports for everyone, this story would certainly become more complicated. The power of *fixing* a subject to their genome would still be at play, but the meaning of that fixation might look different and might gear into creating a more equitable world.

In defense of the claim that genomics—relative to its socio-political uptake today—more often than not transforms health futures into health fates, consider qualitative sociological work concerning how parents interpret certain genetic and genomic sequencing results. Take one parent interviewed with respect to a chromosomal microarray screening.

> I never shared it [the results] with any family [members]. My dad would treat [the child] differently even though the results don't say anything definitive. If she drops a ball or says something really stupid, he would say 'oh, there's something wrong with her; she's retarded, or she's autistic.' He would just go there.[53]

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[51] Cf. Alondra Nelson, *The Social Life Of DNA: Race, Reparations, And Reconciliation After The Genome* (2016).

[52] By "care," I in fact mean "CARE" as Kittay defines it in Eva Feder Kittay, *Learning From My Daughter: Valuing Disabled Minds and Caring That Matters* (2019). In other words, this is not a question of particular caring interpersonal relations but of general socio-political norms that generate obligations to care.

[53] Allison Werner-Lin et al., "'They Can't Find Anything Wrong With Him, Yet': Mothers' Experiences Of Parenting An Infant With A Prenatally Diagnosed Copy Number Variant (CNV)," *American Journal of Medical Genetics* 173:2 (2016), 449. I discuss this example and others in far more detail (with very different aims at hand) in Joel Michael Reynolds, "'What If There's Something Wrong with Her?'- How Biomedical Technologies Contribute to Epistemic Injustice in Healthcare," *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 58:1 (2020), 161–85; Joel Michael Reynolds, "Health and Other Reveries: Homo Curare, Homo Faber, and the Realization of Care," in *Normality, Abnormality, and Pathology in Merleau-Ponty*, ed. Talia Welch and Susan Bredlau (2022), 203–24.

In a study where secondary or incidental findings became available (those that were not indicated by the child's medical condition or concerns), parents reported "a sense of self-imposed obligation to take on the 'weight' of knowing [this information], however un-pleasant."[54] That is to say, even after being told that the information could be ambiguous and without *any* actionable medical significance, parents reported an obligation to know this information. One parent stated,

> How is he supposed to go on and live a happy and productive life... when... he has pretty much a guillotine hanging over his head of all these possible things that are going to go wrong? (Anderson et al., 2016)

"All these *possible* things that are *going to* go wrong…" This knowledge, explicitly presented to patients as knowledge concerning one's essential self—even when fundamentally ambiguous in nature—is in fact predicated upon a foreclosure of the meaning of oneself as a being who cares, a being whose fate is just as equally, if not better, predicated by practices of communal hope, not individual fate.[55]

While there are certainly downstream exceptions, the "normal science" of genomics functions today in society to singularize the patient-subject as a product of its genomic fate and divorce its connection to communal practices of caring (living wages, universal healthcare coverage, equality regardless of social identity, guaranteed housing, truly equal political representation, permeable/open borders, etc.). This is the dangerous side of *genopower*: the foreclosure of a complex, human past, present, and future invariably lived in community that limits its meaning to an individual's genetic expression understood in terms of individual diagnostics, symptomatology, and assumptions concerning one's own "book of life." Even though the force of this power originates from research on populations, the ultimate object of genopower is the individual. Whereas biopower is a question of governance of populations, genopower is a specification of that power by fixing individuals' socio-political fates relative to genomic science…and the way we typically fix those fates today is unjust, inequitable, and demands change.[56]

IV. TRANSFORMATION, ACCESS TO TRUTH, AND THE SUBJECT

I hope to have demonstrated that the meaning of genomics cannot be decided solely by what it has produced or produces today. How it is produced, how its production is interpreted, and the power wielded by its production are results or factors relative to its uptake

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[54] J. A. Anderson et al., "Parents Perspectives on Whole Genome Sequencing for Their Children: Qualified Enthusiasm?" *Journal of Medical Ethics*, 43:8 (2016), 535–39.

[55] Alexandra Stern, *Telling Genes: The Story of Genetic Counseling in America* (2012).

[56] Cf. Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at The Collège De France: 1978-79* (2008); Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at The Collège De France, 1977-1978* (2009). In this respect, genomics, understood as a body of knowledge and practices whose force relations constitute *genopower*, is a form of prophesy. By that, I do not mean the contemporary sense of that term which assumes prediction concerning the future but instead the ancient sense of warning people about the implications of past sinful actions, as in the traditions of the prophets of the Tanakh/Christian Old Testament. The "truth" of "heredity" is always present in genopower, as is the "truth" of "fate" and "destiny."

in a given milieu. So, what then does this critical analysis of genopower imply for the relationship between humanity and genomics? In order to approach this question, one must, I think, turn to the fraught, historically variable relationship between truth and the subject/self. Insofar as genomics promises to deliver truth directly to oneself about oneself, one must assume that the knowledge genomics provides is not only true, but that one has immediate access to its truth. In other words, genomic knowledge must be the sort of knowledge that is imparted solely through the mere passing of information. As Foucault writes, "I think that if we do not take up the history of the relations between the subject and truth from the point of view of what I call, roughly, the techniques, technologies, practices, etcetera, which have linked them together and established their norms, we will hardly understand what is involved in the human sciences."[57]

Genomics is a paradigmatic example of the idea that one can have access to knowledge without transformation. One can know one's ancestral past, present, and future by simply reading the *output* of bio-informational sequencing. One can know the truth of one's body, one's genetic code, by simply *reading*. Near the outset of the 1981-82 lectures given under the title of *Hermeneutique du suject*, Foucault offers a distinction between philosophy and spirituality, a distinction which he at times treats as a mere heuristic and at other times as a powerful *hermeneutic* insight into the history of philosophy. This distinction is made as part of a larger inquiry into the relationship between the subject and truth. He there defines *philosophy* as "the form of thought that asks, not of course what is true and what is false, but what determines that there is and can be truth and falsehood and whether or not we can separate the true and the false…[philosophy] asks what it is that enables the subject to have access to the truth and which attempts to determine the conditions and limits of the subject's access to the truth."[58]

Spirituality, on the contrary, refers to "the search, practice, and experience through which the subject carries out the necessary transformations on himself in order to have access to the truth….["spirituality" is the] set of these researches, practices, and experiences, which may be purifications, ascetic exercises, renunciations, conversions of looking, modifications of existence, etc., which are, not for knowledge but for the subject, for the subject's very being, the price to be paid for access to the truth." Put simply, traditions that align with the philosophical assume the subject to have access to, to be "capable of truth," just as they are, and those that align with the spiritual assume the subject to not have access to, to not be "capable of truth," as they are. Yet, it should be noted that this distinction requires a horizon in which such philosophical determination and such spiritual practice have social meaning in the first place, namely, a recognitive community. Neither philosophy (so construed) or spirituality (so construed) can have an impact on a life except insofar as they can be taken up in ways that others recognize.

It is for these reasons that I think the historical stakes of the relationship between the self and truth are not best captured through the distinction between spiritual and philosophical attitudes towards truth; between an understanding of the self as needing to be

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[57] Michel Foucault, *The Hermeneutics of The Subject: Lectures at The Collège De France, 1981-82* (2005), 188.
[58] Ibid., 15.

transformed and prepared for truth vs. the self as an open receptacle. This relationship is instead ultimately captured through the distinction between *individual fate* and *communal hope* as differing attitudes towards the plight of others, between the self as predestined to its own fate and responsible solely for it and the self as responsive towards and responsible for the suffering of others. Individual fate and communal hope are two profoundly different answers to the question of the meaning of care as the ground of the relationship between the self and truth.

V. WHAT, THEN, ARE WE TO DO?

I began this essay by stating that we live in an age of genomics. Part of what such a claim implies is, to return to the opening epigraph from Foucault, that we live in age wherein "the 'right' to life, to one's body, to health, to happiness, to the satisfaction of needs" is in part determined by the knowledge provided by genomics. As Erik Parens' insight adds to this dilemma, we must come to appreciate the fact that this credence is shared by people across political spectrums but in ways whose *practical implications* are in tension. While we can disagree about Zeno's paradoxes or the Sorites paradox without much effect on our lives, it is another thing to disagree about the role that genomic knowledge plays in the fate of individuals and societies. Genomic interpretation is not simply debated/debatable. The political implications of contestation over it are enormous because they go to the very heart of disagreements concerning how we ought to treat one another.

Are we human animals that are genomically different in ways that, while having no bearing on worth, bear upon how we should treat each other given those differences such that we should aim to create a world that is equitable in light of such differences? Or, are the differences genomic science discovers ultimately *irrelevant* given the tasks that confront building equitable societies, meaning that we should instead aim for a world that is just and equitable without needing to or caring to take into consideration such differences? The impact and import of these very different responses to the "facts" of genomic difference can hardly be overstated.

However one responds to these questions, the primary uptake of genomics has been and is today to tell us about how human organisms are *different* (presumably, both relative to differences within *homo sapiens* and also to other species), and, it seems to me, the differences in question, given our highly social nature and given the increasingly wide dissemination of genomic knowledge, cannot but be translated into frameworks of comparison like that of equality and/or inequality ("natural ability," "congenital defect X," etc.). In this light, the problem with genomics is not a problem with genomics per se—it is a problem with society. On egalitarian frameworks, precisifying impairments could be a boon. On non-egalitarian frameworks, precisifying impairments seems to play directly into multiple historical legacies of inequality and even the aims animating eugenics.

At the same time that whole genome and whole exome sequencing enters into an increasing number of clinical and consumer spaces and funding for genomic research continues to expand across multiple sectors, there are—to focus just on the USA—growing

state and federal-level attempts to weaken the Americans with Disabilities Act, under-
mine equal access to education, and destabilize just forms of care for underserved groups.
At the same time that prominent geneticists like Richard Plomin argue for a "new genetics
of intelligence,"[59] racialized and ableist eugenics of mass incarceration continue unabated
along with systemic police brutality, gun violence, and tax policies that are systematically
stripping social supports from economically-insecure citizens and redistributing wealth
upwards, as codified in the most recent federal tax bill.[60] Added together, these concerted
domestic policies show that eugenics has not gone anywhere in the USA and that ge-
nomics is increasingly susceptible to becoming one of its more potent arms, especially
potent because it operates under the longstanding aegis of scientific prestige. It is in this
sense that the socio-political *function* of genomics today far too easily supports what Rose-
marie Garland-Thomson calls "velvet eugenics."[61] This is not the only outcome of this
research. But given the conditions under which the genomic sciences are carried out to-
day, its current socio-political effects are hardly surprising. Perhaps this should cause
those carrying its banner more pause.

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[59] Robert Plomin and Sophie Von Stumm, "The New Genetics of Intelligence," *Nature Reviews Genetics* 19:3
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[61] Garland-Thomson, "Eugenics."

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ARTICLE

Foucault's Outside: Contingency, May-Being, and Revolt

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ABSTRACT. In this paper, I argue for an alternative reading of Michel Foucault as an anti-correlationist thinker. Specifically, I position him as aligned with what philosopher Quentin Meillassoux calls speculative materialism (an offshoot of speculative realism). Given the resurgent and exciting prioritization of speculative ontology over concrete politics among these thinkers, coupled with the need for a revolutionary anti-capitalist political movement, my approach aims to take speculative materialists' claims regarding access to the in-itself seriously while also devoting attention to their (underdeveloped) political dimension. It is in this latter realm Foucault proves particularly helpful to think alongside. Though Foucault has often and convincingly been portrayed as an anti-universalist, postmodern, and epistemologically-oriented figure, I present him as concerned with the subject's access to the Outside (the great outdoors, things-in-themselves) as well as the politics of such access. I do so through a study of a wide selection of his works (books, essays, interviews, articles), a comparison between his philosophical position and that of Meillassoux's, and an expansion upon Foucault's analysis of Diego Velázquez's "Las Meninas" in The Order of Things, positing the artwork as a speculative object. I suggest, in short, that Foucault's concepts of thought, force, and the subject have surprisingly striking similarities to Meillassoux's absolute contingency and his political subject (the 'vectoral militant'). We can, then, begin to see a revolutionary politics arising out of what I understand as Foucault's speculative stance—hopefully providing an opportunity to both (re)consider Foucault and highlight the politics incipient in contemporary explorations into the Outside.

Keywords: Michel Foucault, Quentin Meillassoux, Las Meninas, speculative materialism, correlationism, the Outside, politics.

I. INTRODUCTION

Michel Foucault's relatively early essay on Maurice Blanchot, "Thought of/from the Outside" (1966), elaborates on three important concepts that appear throughout his writings:

thought, force, and the Outside.[1] Framed by his later writing on friendship, the self, and ethics, the relation between these concepts may offer a more overarching theory of being generally absent, or at least not explicit, in his oeuvre.

A particular mode of thought, which we will analyze by way of "Thought of/from the Outside" coupled with Foucault's analysis of Diego Velázquez's painting "Las Meninas" in *The Order of Things*, can be positioned as a means of realizing the subject beyond finitude, of hacking into the absolute. Force, our second key term, operates as a kind of universal medium for thought-bridges to the absolute and, somewhat surprisingly, finds strong resonance in speculative materialist Quentin Meillassoux's ontological thesis of *may-being* deduced from his argument for absolute contingency, in which being is divested of vitalist tendencies and sutured instead to the materialist property of contingency. At its core, force is a *peut-être*, being [être] subsumed by a perhaps [peut-être], the quavering result of a 'dice throw' emitted (voiced) anew with each thought. The Outside, our final term, contains that which is absolute and anonymous, the real uncorrelated to thought, an indifferent exteriority which floods and suffuses the so-called finite.

In sum, thought, contingently activated, facilitates a subjective apprehension of a field of force, a field of the 'perhaps' or may-being, in which the presence of the Outside becomes dangerously and seductively knowable and sensible, while also indistinguishable from the rapidly dissolving subject. The ethical consequence of this conceptual arrangement is a way of life in which the self or subject opens its-self—shifting from identity to an uncertain diffusion of identity—to the Outside. Though Foucault is commonly (and justifiably) thought of as the thinker of various 'insides,' that is, de-absolutization, epistemes, grids of intelligibility, and ever-shifting regimes of truth, his interest in the Outside—that which is universal and eternal, referred to interchangeably by him as non- or un-thought, the absolute void, the being of language or nondialectical language, the placeless place of transgression—serves as a hidden foundation to his rigorous analyses of *how* structures emerge in history.[2] It points toward a speculative trajectory harbored, and often ignored, in his work.

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[1] Foucault is not always clear on the distinction between force and power. Drawing from Deleuze's *Foucault*—and for reasons that will be evident later in the paper—what Foucault often refers to generally as power, I will distinguish as force.

[2] Two initial clarifications, which will be expanded upon throughout the paper. First, I say 'universal and eternal' because, in contrast to the typical (and again, justifiable) relegation of Foucault to a thinker of local irruptions and resistances, his references to the Outside consistently and additionally point toward these two designations. For instance, in "A Preface to Transgression" [1963], in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, ed. Donald F. Bouchard (1977): an "*essential* emptiness and *incessant* fracture," "transgression *incessantly* crosses and recrosses," a "profane *Absence*," "this opening where its *being* surges forth," "the *void* into which the die is cast" (48, 34, 31, 43, 44, my emphases). There is a necessity or essential nature to this Outside, void, or doubling. He, moreover, claims philosophy has lost sight of this fact, i.e., "the profound silence of a philosophical language that has been chased from its *natural* element" (41, my emphasis). The task is how to link back up with Absence (note the capital letter and the fact it is not a dialectical 'negative' but rather something more permanent). Foucault is careful, meticulous, slow, and critical in his work—however, this does not mean his sights remain within the (necessarily non-transgressive) finitudes of the Inside; instead, they are self-consciously oriented *elsewhere*. Second, for references to the 'interchangeable' terms above, see this incomplete list:

By way of this schema, I posit that Foucault distinguishes himself from the 'correlationist bunch' which occupies most of Kantian and post-Kantian thought and, moreover, can be allied with Meillassoux's particular anti-correlationist position. Correlationism, a term coined (and attacked) by Meillassoux in *After Finitude* (2006/2008), rejects the Outside either as non-existent or inaccessible to us. Correlationist thought, which Meillassoux claims has imprisoned Western philosophy since Berkeley (subjective idealism), securing its chains with Kant (critical philosophy), holds that thought cannot think outside itself, that any attempt to think is auto-mediated by its own processes, history, and circumstance, entrapping thought forever with access only to the correlation between thought and being (the 'for-us') and never either term separately. Simply put, for the correlationist thought cannot access being. Meillassoux's argument against correlationism forms the basis for his proposal of a knowable absolute, that is, the necessity of contingency, reviving the "pre-critical" (pre-Kantian) project of thinking what is 'without-us.' Ever-elusive (is he a postmodernist, anti-realist, structuralist, poststructuralist, activist, anti-Marxist, anarchist, Kantian, anti-Kantian, Nietzschean?[3]), though in nearly all cases assumed to be a correlationist, it appears, as I hope to demonstrate, that Foucault can be securely positioned as a comrade to this recent speculative materialist and anti-correlationist thought.[4]

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1. "A Preface to Transgression": "an absolute void—an opening which is communication" (43); the being of language as "this continuous language, so obstinately the same," and again as "another language that also speaks and that he [a subject] is unable to dominate," and even more convincingly a "language" which "arises from…absence" (42, 41); transgression, again, as "a void…a multiplicity" (42); "our task for today is…this nondiscursive language" (39).

2. Michel Foucault, "Maurice Blanchot: The Thought from the Outside" [1966], in *Foucault/Blanchot* (1987): "placeless places" (24); a placeless place that is outside all speech and writing" (52); un-thought as a "thought that stands outside subjectivity" (15); un/non-thought as "what in a word we might call 'the thought from the outside'" (16); "the being of language is the visible effacement of the one who speaks" (54).

3. Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of Human Sciences* [1966] (2005): see the section on 'The Cogito and the Unthought' (351-358); also, "the unthought is not lodged in man like a shriveled-up nature or a stratified history…the inexhaustible double…as the blurred projection of what man is in his truth…a preliminary ground" (356); it is by way of this absolute and Outside double-zone "man would be erased" (422) and along with this formation of man "historicism," "positivity," "finitude," and "knowledge" (406).

³ The confusion with his positions comes at various moments in his interviews and writings. For instance: "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History" [1971], in *The Foucault Reader* (1984) (Nietzsche); "What is Enlightenment," in *The Foucault Reader* (1984) and "What is Critique" [1978], in *The Politics of Truth* (1997) (Kant); "The Subject and Power" in *Critical Inquiry* (1982) (Kant / anti-structuralism); "Truth and Power" [1977], in *The Essential Works of Foucault: Power* (2001) and "Considerations on Marxism, Phenomenology, and Power" [1978], in *Foucault Studies* (2012) (Marxism); *Foucault and the Iranian Revolution* (2005) and "Michel Foucault on Attica: An Interview" [1972], in *Social Justice* (1991) (anarchism). He is even associated with the neoliberals, drawing in part on his lectures on biopolitics and *The History of Sexuality, Vol 3: The Care of the Self* [1978] (1986) (this, to me, seems off-base, but has gained traction).

⁴ C. J. Davies' article "Nietzsche Beyond Correlationism: Meillassoux's History of Modern Philosophy," in *Contemporary Philosophy Review* (2018), has a similar claim regarding Nietzsche, though critiquing Meillassoux's anti-correlationist argument by demonstrating an example of someone prior who was neither correlationist nor anti-correlationist. His main stake is that Meillassoux's philosophical history is incorrect in *After Finitude*. This, supposedly, causes the collapse of Meillassoux's ontological and epistemological claims. This seems unconvincing to me and, in addition, misinterprets several elements of Meillassoux's argument

As such, he would offer a wealth of analysis and thought for the fraught and as-yet underdeveloped ethics and politics of these positions.

Of course, speculative materialism (a cousin of the more well-known Speculative Realism) is a complex and expanding field with significantly diverging positions. It is held loosely together by the so-called originary 2007 conference with Meillassoux, Graham Harman, Iain Hamilton Grant, and Ray Brassier—its four grounding thinkers—as well as their general agreement that correlationism must go. My argument focuses solely on the Meillassouxian direction (which is very different than, for instance, Harman's pseudo-vitalist position). I am primarily interested in how Foucault finds himself, in his pursuit of the Outside, aligned with Meillassoux's primary and distinct thesis of absolute contingency—as well as how he ought to be part of any discussion of Meillassoux's deductively connected ethical project hypothesizing the inexistence (and coming birth of) God along with the 'Fourth World' of justice and immortal beings. My aim is to take Foucault seriously as someone laboring not for thought's inescapable entrapment in various historical epistemes and discourses but rather thought's apparent entrapment *and yet* unrealized ability to access what lies beyond its discursive spheres.[5] I pursue this chimera in Foucault's work through the topics of friendship, Blanchot, "Las Meninas" (*The Order of Things*), homosexuality, and the Iranian revolution, all of which are tied together by his particular (anti-Hegelian and anti-Kantian) understanding of 'transgression.'[6]

(Davies hedges in footnotes; 'Meillassoux would of course disagree with X…'), but nonetheless is an opposing take on a related project. My focus is, instead, on a re-reading of Foucault, not a critique of Meillassoux.

[5] A parallel project has been recently published with Graham Harman's Speculative Realism series on Edinburgh University Press, regarding Foucault's friend and comrade Gilles Deleuze's alignment with speculative realism (more closely to Harman's system, which is very different than Meillassoux's system): Arjen Kleinherenbrink, *Against Continuity: Gilles Deleuze's Speculative Realism* (2019).

[6] To note: Meillassoux makes only two references to Foucault in his work published in English (to my knowledge), both in interviews (2012, 2021). Both are quite similar in content and dismissive of Foucault—I would say they are reductive (though by no means unusual)—as a correlationist.

First, in "Interview with Quentin Meillassoux," in *New Materialisms: Interviews and Cartographies*, ed. Rick Dophijn and Iris van der Tuin (2012): "[Foucault] can bring us nothing in regards to the disqualification of strong correlationism…Foucault does not say anything that would embarrass a correlationist, as all his comments can easily be considered as a discourse-correlated-to-the-point-of-view-of-our-time, and rigorously dependent on it. This is a typical thesis of some correlationist relativism: we are trapped in our time, not in Hegelian terms, but rather in a Heideggerian fashion—that is to say in the modality of knowledge-power that always already dominates us."

Second, in "Founded on Nothing: Interview," in *Urbanomic Documents* (2021), and in response to a comparison made by the interviewer of his thought to Foucault's (and *apropos* of this paper): "I won't talk about Foucault here, because his fundamental problematic, it seems to me, is an analysis of knowledge-power, not the constitution of an ontology. A Foucauldian ontology, if such a thing were to exist—which in itself is already a problematic thesis—would require a reconstruction that would be entirely hypothetical, in order to 'compare' it to my own approach."

It should be said that Meillassoux's presentation of Foucault (as with thinkers like Nietzsche and Deleuze; see "The Immanence of the World Beyond," in *The Grandeur of Reason* (2010), ed. Conor Cunningham and Peter Chandler, and "Subtraction and Contraction: Deleuze, Immanence, and Matter and Memory," in *Collapse III* (2007)) follows their more generally accepted understandings. This is precisely what my argument (and Meillassoux is correct, it *must*) pushes against. It is important to also note that Meillassoux positions Foucault as a 'strong correlationist' (noumena may exist but they are unknowable, unthinkable, and meaningless) by aligning him with Heidegger—and this is the very position, as opposed to Kant's weak

In Foucault's late essay on Kant, "What is Enlightenment" (1984), he proposes developing a "philosophical ethos" of transgression: a critique of and through a "historical ontology of ourselves," seeking to give a "new impetus…to the undefined work of freedom."[7] Foucault's aim is to, ironically, re-focus on (Kantian) 'limits' as a means to move beyond the finitude of the typically resultant "outside-inside alternative." His 'work of freedom,' again aiming to turn Kant inside-out, is not deconstructive but speculative, oriented toward apprehending ourselves as linked up to an Outside.[8] What he calls a "new" form of critique (Kant's is the "old" critique) refuses to set as its goal the identification of boundaries of thought (what is "impossible for us to do and know," regulative and legislative apparatuses), while simultaneously refusing to jump naïvely into that so-called impossible space. Transgression requires strategy and historical awareness.

Like Kant, Foucault engages critique as a defense against dogmatism, but in contrast he does not want to be imprisoned by limits. At the same time, overcoming limits--teleological or mystical progress—cannot be the answer. In the latter sense, he rejects the Hegelian dialectical process, in which any Outside or Other is sublated and synthesized along a path of interior progress. Instead of being moralistically duped into loving one's prison, as with Kant, this would make the prison transparent, erasing its visibility (and the apprehension of the Outside) altogether. As opposed to both well-worn strategies, Foucault hopes to locate "the possibility of no longer being, doing, or thinking what we are, do, or think."[9]

It is experimental: Foucault wants to see what happens when you cast Kant adrift on the sea and steal away his compass and map, while simultaneously sabotaging Hegel's runaway train of history. His question, ultimately, is how can we know what is either before or after the human and thought itself, as an emancipatory praxis: how can we access the 'without-us?' His method, aiming to disentangle being from thought as a mode of becoming-free, is immanent (archeological and genealogical) and centered on the act of transgression:

> But if the Kantian question was that of knowing what limits knowledge has to renounce transgressing, it seems to me that the critical question today has to be turned back into a positive one: in what is given to us as universal, necessary, [and] obligatory, *what place is occupied by whatever is singular, contingent, and the product of arbitrary constraints*? The

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correlationism (noumena exist and are thinkable not knowable), which Meillassoux 'flips' into absolute contingency. This is to say, it is closer to Meillassoux's thought than it may seem. My project of course, however heretical, is to argue that Foucault is not a correlationist at all.

[7] Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?," 11.

[8] By speculative, I mean thought has the capacity to apprehend the absolute. Colin McQuillan's article "Beyond the Analytic of Finitude: Kant, Heidegger, Foucault," *Foucault Studies* (2016), makes a similar connection between Foucault, finitude, and Kant (not Meillassoux): "that Foucault discovered a different way to read Kant during the late 1970s and early 1980s suggests that he was making progress in his attempt to overcome the analytic of finitude" (15).

[9] "What is Enlightenment," 11.

point in brief is to transform the critique conducted *in the form of necessary limitation* into a practical critique that *takes the form of a possible transgression*.[10]

The question becomes one of experimenting with a practice of transgression, an emancipatory (and perhaps artistic, following Nietzsche) act of thinking and speaking: "nothing can limit" the "moment" of "'I speak.'"[11] The search aims at the "contingent," which exists in the very space of "transgression" (speaking, action): not one nor the other, not a thesis nor antithesis, but a diagonal and unpredictable upsurge of unthought (unthinkable) space cast like a constellation into and from the Outside. In the "Thought of/from the Outside," for instance, transgression "obstinately advances into the opening of an invisibility" and "insanely endeavors to make the law appear in order to be able to venerate it and dazzle it with its own luminous face." It is a punk-ish, unhinged, and impossibly unpredictable strategy which hopes to transform the subject into "something unnamable, an absent absence, the amorphous presence of the void and the mute horror of that presence."[12] Kantian limits are dictums of finitude and the moralistic policing of that which transgresses. Transgression is a claim beyond finitude by way of the contingent and diagonal. Tugging on this red thread throughout Foucault's writing will, I hope, justify our repositioning of him as a speculative thinker.

II. FRIENDSHIP, A CONSTELLATION

Foucault's writing on friendship offers an arrangement of thought, force, and the Outside which I would like to position as a kind of 'constellation' guiding our exploration: an accessible practice of co-transgression. While Foucault generally describes friendship as "a mutual, egalitarian, and lasting [relationship]…a life in common, reciprocal attention, [and] kindness to one another," it persists in his thought due to its power to initiate or activate an ontological field of transformation.[13] Friendship is a relation developed with someone 'outside' of oneself in which a subject must grapple with an abyss between the self and the world (the other) which becomes folded, doubled back, and cast toward an unknown interior space in a non-dialectical fashion. Genuine friendship—which we will trace through Foucault's treatments of so-called self-care, Greek and Roman ethics, and homosexuality—is always transgressive. It does not result in compromise, synthesis, sameness, nor separation and difference, but rather a kind of fundamental hesitation or uncertainty.

This line of thought has been obscured in part due to the misleading translation, which we will rectify here, of "le souci de soi-même" into English as "care of the self." First, "le souci" is more accurately "concern," which is distinct from "care:" to have concern is, following the Latin, to perceive, to distinguish, to touch; to care is more ambiguous and does not carry with it the 'perceiving' capacity of concern. Second, "soi" is not well-

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[10] Ibid. (my emphasis).

[11] Foucault, "The Thought from Outside," 25.

[12] Ibid., 35, 39.

[13] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Vol 2: The Use of Pleasure* [1976] (1985), 234.

represented by "self:" whereas "self" indicates identity, *soi*, like *on*, is exactly the opposite, that is, a non-identity, an anonymity, a diffusion of self as self. "Le souci de soi-même" is, in fact, a project to perceive the diffused-self, to diffuse the self, which is always, too, a project of perceiving that which hesitates between being and non-being (as dissolved sugar in water hesitates between liquid and solid). This is distinct, as Marie-Christine Leps also points out, from 'care of the self' as well as from the neoliberal distortions of the concept into 'self-care' or 'self-help.'[14] Our translation distinguishes itself by indicating a project of perceiving another as absolutely independent of oneself *and* non-self-identical, realizing and allowing them their richness of being while paradoxically retaining a communal connection. To see another absolutely and as a *soi*, and to labor together in that manner, is a mode of being (a practice) beyond limits and progress. Moreover, it rejects understandings of friendship as an economic relationship, a means to an end, a non-essential aspect of life, or a way to further isolate, individualize, and define the self.

Following what Foucault delineates as the Epicurean model, a friendship is something one has, a possession, an initializing "utility" ('I have a friend…'), while simultaneously "something other" than utility.[15] The model situates itself squarely in the paradox of (non)possession, an unlocatability between definability and indefinability that is nonetheless relational. It finds itself as force, the feeling of becoming friends: that which is both non-existent and purely relational. To practice friendship is to gain a deeper understanding of force and its operation in the world. A friend is possessed and used while also possessive and using; friends develop trust in the face of what can be felt so strongly, that is, the contingent rearrangements of the relational field. This kind of perception or trusting is developed by "parrhesia," speaking the truth to power. While on one level, "parrhesia" means speaking out against "rhetoricians and flatterers," on another level it means that, through friendship, a person prepares themselves such that they can speak *as force*, or rather so that force speaks through them (*per-sonare*, a sounding-through). This form of truth is something deeper than what appears in Foucault's 'regimes of truth.' Speaking in such a way—which is to say, speaking in the contingencies of force, apprehending the absolute and Outside—is a revolutionary mode of speech central to Foucault. A friendship exists in the folds of force and is a practice of knowing and speaking this truth by way of the absolute. In the Roman model, Foucault ties this to a kind of divine relation. He emphasizes their understanding of friendship as a "soul service" and as integral to one's concern for the diffused-self ('concern for the soul'). That is, friendship is at base the act of taking care of beings within a field of force. An everyday practice of soul-care (not self-care), the Romans thought of friendship as a means to "see more clearly" such that they could "see God."[16] It conditions the (speculative) self to erupt—to contingently become otherwise—from an interior void connected to an exterior abyss. Friendship for

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[14] Marie-Christine Leps, "Thought of the Outside: Foucault Contra Agamben," *Radical Philosophy* 175 (2012), 32.

[15] Michel Foucault, *The Hermeneutics of the Subject, Lecture Series 1981-1982*, (2005), 194.

[16] Ibid., 117.

Foucault is an alien love, care among the mad, diseased, criminal, and forgotten: a sociality of the Outside(rs).

In *Care of the Self*, too, friendship follows this extreme dual movement outward/inward as a paradoxically "cosmic and individual force."[17] As cosmic, friendship links with the inexplicable, massive, and infinite; it provides access to a pure exteriority, the possibility of reality independent of thought, of what *is* before and after humanity. As individual, it links with the finite subject, the self, and the present; it is a cut, an immediacy. In both it is (significantly) described as force, something anonymous which slides everything toward its own anonymity.[18] This friendship, and its anonymous force, allows "man to escape from immediate necessity," offering a condition for the "acquisition and transmission of knowledge."[19] Friendship is therefore a way out, an "escape" beyond the "necessity" of the Kantian, Hegelian, and correlative and into the contingent and non-necessary. It is a literal "knowledge" of this oscillatory cosmic-individual movement, which is to say, (to make an imprudent leap) to know God and the self precisely *as* diffused and non-necessary.

Finally, Foucault gave a short interview late in his life (1981) concerning homosexuality and friendship, again promoting an ethics of friendship as a means toward the anonymous Outside. Following Deleuze and Spinoza in their descriptions of bodies as speeds and assemblages, he describes friendship as an opportunity to "reopen affective and relational virtualities [force]," specifically referring to the "'diagonal lines'" of homosexuality as friendship which can "allow these virtualities to come to light."[20] Friendship opens the subject to virtual reconfiguration which, in his terminology, could be recast as opening oneself to the Outside. Homosexuality, in the historical configuration of the 1970s and 1980s, was therefore a possible vector of transgression which we ought to take seriously because of its *positionality*, not (necessarily) its form, that is, "it is not a form of desire but something desirable." It is this specific anti-Kantian and anti-Hegelian mode of transgression itself which is desirable, an act that contorts the subject such that "they have to invent, from A to Z, a relationship that is still formless, which is [more generally] friendship."[21] Friendship here takes on an ontological valence in that we must not be distracted by how it may appear but rather apprehend its being. Foucault's central question in the interview is, "what relations, through homosexuality, can be established, invented, multiplied, and modulated?"—which is to say, with friendship actualized through the contingent vector of homosexuality we have, as a relation, a pathway through which the self can realize its capacity to be transformed into something outside of correlative thought.

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[17] Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Vol 3: The Care of the Self*, 218.

[18] See free jazz and experimental saxophonist Joe McPhee's piece "Cosmic Love" (1970), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bCmo30r3OXI.

[19] *The Care of the Self*, 218.

[20] See: Gilles Deleuze, "Spinoza and Us," *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy* [1970] (1988). And, Michel Foucault, "Friendship as a Way of Life" [1981], in *Foucault: Ethics, Subjectivity, and Truth, Vol 1,* ed. Paul Rainbow (1997), 138.

[21] Ibid., 136.

Again, this is not an unusual or late concern of Foucault's. In point of fact, this interview echoes a key passage in "A Preface to Transgression" (1963), perhaps the clearest expression of Foucault's interest in the Outside. Describing a kind of perpetual dance—a light, affirmative, and active dancing, following Nietzsche—between the limit and its transgression, Foucault points toward the key space of an absent-absence. That is, he identifies the fissure of the limit itself *as it is* transgressed as a space of vibratory inhabitation unfolded not on the other side of transgression but in the very act: "the limit opens violently onto the limitless, finds itself suddenly carried away by the content it had rejected and fulfilled by this alien plentitude which invades it to the core of its being…to experience its positive truth."[22] To trace this, Foucault calls for a "nondialectical form of philosophical language" which arises from the "void into which the die is cast."[23] This is a speculative language of the void and the die and in pursuit of that "plentitude" of the Outside—a dialectic suspended between self and other, a mode of being grounded absolutely in the contingency that embodies the fusion of the void and chance.

By way of this small aperture, a curious 'friendship' between writers—Foucault and Meillassoux—can come into view, along with three axioms inspired by this resonance. 1) There is a radical exteriority, an Outside, the real distinct from thought (i.e., the materialist hypothesis); 2) the Outside is accessible and knowable by rational thought as an absolute (i.e., principle of unreason); 3) this absolute or Outside is solely defined as contingent and non-totalizable (i.e., absolute contingency and proof of the transfinite).[24] These statements are rigorously argued in Meillassoux's work and offer a basis for understanding Foucault's Outside.[25]

Briefly, as it has been extensively covered in the secondary literature on his work, I will highlight areas of Meillassoux's basic argument—laid out centrally in *After Finitude*—as it pertains to these points.[26] First, he is concerned that we have lost 'the great outdoors' of pre-critical philosophers. While by this he means 'speculative' philosophy has been cast

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[22] "A Preface to Transgression," 34.

[23] Ibid., 48, 44.

[24] On point 2: while the knowledge of the nature of friendship by way of 'unreason'—and then its praxis through 'unreason-able' care—could be considered a rational form of access, this point will be more clearly supported in other areas of the paper.

[25] For instance (all texts by Meillassoux): *After Finitude* [2006] (2008)*, Time Without Becoming* [2008] (2014)*,* and many articles, including "Potentiality and Virtuality" [2006], in *Collapse II,* ed. Robin Mackay (2007); "The Contingency of the Laws of Nature" [2004], in *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* (2012); "Iteration, Reiteration, Repetition," in *Genealogies of Speculation: Materialism and Subjectivity Since Structuralism*, ed. Armen Avanessian and Suhail Malik (2016); and "Immanence of the World Beyond" (2010).

[26] Nearly every article engaging Meillassoux's thought has some form of a summary of his arguments, with a small number also explaining his post *After Finitude* writing, one of the most concise and helpful being Cat Moir's "Beyond the Turn: Ernst Bloch and the Future of Speculative Materialism," in *Poetics Today* (2016). Ray Brassier's chapter "The Enigma of Realism" on Meillassoux in his book *Nihil Unbound: Enlightenment and Extinction* (2007) is, I have found, nearly unparalleled in its detailed analysis, critique, and breakdown of *After Finitude*. The most comprehensive source, however, is Graham Harman's book *Quentin Meillassoux: Philosophy in the Making* (2015) in which he expertly summarizes Meillassoux's arguments, each article (up to 2015) post *After Finitude,* and the ethical-theological direction Meillassoux takes absolute contingency in the unpublished *Divine Inexistence*.

out by critical philosophy and its permutations (e.g., the linguistic turn), or at worst become illegitimate, he does not want to return to either the naivete of dogmatic empiricists (Kant's enemy number one) nor dogmatic metaphysicians (Kant's enemy number two). We are, as he says, the heirs of Kantianism, whether we like it or not. For Meillassoux, the Outside must be non-dogmatically maintained as an accessible real exterior to thought. This means speculation (the absolute) must not be denied, the mode of speculation must position the absolute as exterior not interior (materialist not idealist), and it must reject the principle of sufficient reason (anti-dogmatic, anti-metaphysical). As with Foucault, we cannot throw the baby out with the bathwater: Kant did us a great service in his banishment of various dogmatisms. Unfortunately, to do so he also imprisoned us in finitude by outlawing (regulating) speculative thought. To lead us out of this aporia, and to his speculative materialist position, Meillassoux offers an argument via 'ancestrality.' The ancestral is any reality that existed prior to the emergence of the human; this is marked by an 'arche-fossil,' that is, a material that, today, indicates such an existence. Or, more abstractly, science clearly indicates thought's ability to think that which is outside of it (e.g., the date of the origin of the universe), and yet philosophy responds with either a strong skepticism ('strong correlationism') in that such facts must only be 'for-us' and are in reality unthinkable simply because they pass through the medium of thought, or an agnostic skepticism ('weak correlationism') in that it is true things exist outside of thought but we cannot know such things. In all cases, speculation appears laughable, and any materialism (any Outside) is lost; we are left only with comfortable solipsistic variants of idealism. Resisting this at its root requires positing the materialist hypothesis of the uncorrelated Outside.

Second, Meillassoux aims to revive materialism (anti-metaphysics) with his 'principle of unreason.' In this he happens to follow, too, Foucault's path between Kant (critical philosophy, weak correlationist) and Hegel (absolute idealist, strong correlationist). For the former, the Outside is thinkable but not knowable; Meillassoux claims it is thinkable and knowable while retaining Kant's critiques of metaphysics. For the latter, the Outside is unknowable, unthinkable, meaningless, and therefore impossible, making any supposed Outside always already subsumable as an Inside (-to be); Meillassoux refuses to absolutize this (human-world) correlate which sees our incapacity to *not* subsume the Outside within our own thought as a mark of our finitude. It is from here he proposes 'unreason,' "whereby everything in the world *is* without reason, and is thereby capable of actually becoming otherwise without reason."[27] Our supposed incapacity to discover an ultimate truth outside of the correlate without being dogmatic—the principle of sufficient reason— is our very capacity to think and know that the ultimate truth is, ironically, contingency itself. This is the anti-metaphysical principle of unreason. The correlationist must admit, to maintain their position, they cannot know why things *are*; and Meillassoux flips this non-knowledge into absolute knowledge: things are or are not for no reason at all (i.e., unreason). The answer has been in front of us all along. It is not about Kantian critical limits, nor Hegelian sublation and progress, but about what happens within the space,

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[27] Meillassoux, *After Finitude*, 53.

following Foucault, of transgressing both paths; a third hidden stream which opens onto the unthought, spilling out of the dazzling vibrancy of non-necessity.

Third, this absolutized contingency is distinct from common understandings which equate it with chance. Contingency holds that any totality, even an infinite totality, is subject to non-totality. Unlike chance, it does not operate according to any laws of probability; anything (possible or impossible) can happen without cause. Meillassoux proves the distinction between chance and contingency, like Badiou, via Cantor's mathematical theory of the transfinite. This holds that given an infinite set, you can always combine its elements such that a larger infinite set results, and then you can do the same to that larger infinite set, and so on. Probability, the consideration of pre-determined possibilities, becomes an illogical proposition. Choosing among transfinite objects, I can never say what statistical 'chance' I have of picking X item because there is never a static denominator. In other words, "there is no totality of all conceivable numbers…the Cantorian transfinite means that for every infinite that exists there is an even greater infinite, with no limit to this ultimate series of infinitudes."[28] Thus the placeless place of transgression, the Outside, and the absolute is, fittingly, transfinite. This is something altogether, and excitingly, different from Kantian and Hegelian methods. Meillassoux spins these arguments out, in a rigorously deductive fashion, in his later work toward the contingent (non-dogmatic) and pure possibility of the birth of God—something quite easy to imagine given the transfinite—as well as the advent of a 'new shift' of reality after what he calls the first three Worlds of Matter, Life, and Thought. Each shift indicates an irreducible change in which some advent occurred that would be impossible to both conceive of and happen emergently without the principle of unreason and the absolute. The final World, as we will see later, is that of Justice, in which the human subject attains a "forgotten" *materialist* divinity: they "find [their] verticality without religion or metaphysics. It does not separate [them] from gods, but…gives [them] access to the true god, one that is material and born of chance…[a] materialism [that] saturates the space of thought with the absolute."[29] The birth of God, subordinated to the absolute ('born of chance'), inaugurates this world of Justice because justice, like God, has yet to exist in history (both are impossible due to the infinitely horrific atrocities that have occurred throughout time, a line of thinking explicated in detail in Meillassoux's article, "Spectral Dilemma").[30]

Instead of a pure rejection, Foucault and Meillassoux move beyond Hegel and Kant toward what Foucault calls a nondialectical language and what Meillassoux calls in his more recent writing an apprehension of the "meaningless sign."[31] It should be noted that

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[28] "Immanence of the World Beyond," 448-9.

[29] Quentin Meillassoux, "The Coup de Dés, or the Materialist Divinization of the Hypothesis" [2012], in *Collapse VIII*, ed. Robin Mackay (2014), 815-6.

[30] In response to the frequently made claims that Meillassoux practices metaphysics (even though his system is premised on its explicit anti-metaphysical position)—and my goal is not to spend time arguing otherwise beyond this final note—it would be appropriate to refer to the beginning of "Immanence of the World Beyond" as well as the first half of "Iteration, Reiteration, Repetition."

[31] Meillassoux is often misinterpreted in the secondary literature as being purely anti-Kantian and/or anti-Hegelian. Any reading of *After Finitude* will prove the great respect (if critical) Meillassoux has for Kant via

both are after a form of language and relationality which is anti-correlationist, existing regardless of what we think about it ('without-us'). Meillassoux provides beautifully hazy outlines sufficient for both thinkers in his study of Mallarmé, *Number and the Siren*, with language uncannily reminiscent of Foucault's in "A Preface to Transgression:"

> What is required is to capture a sudden modification, a transfiguration, a fulguration that abolishes in an instant the immobility of place, but also any possibility of change taking hold. A speed that interrupts the immutable, but also movement: a passed movement, annulled as soon as it is initiated. Thus a movement of which one could doubt whether it ever took place. An identity of contraries: a movement that is (perhaps) not a movement, an immobility that is (perhaps) not immobile. *A dialectical infinite, then, that includes its other, but without invoking any dynamism—in this sense a non-Hegelian dialectic, without progress, without any surpassing of one step by the next.* A treading water that would not be an extinguishing, but the pulsation of the eternal—a hesitation of being. A flickering of the fan, unknotting of hair, whirlwind of muslin, white clothes on the edge of the water that seem fleetingly to be a bird on the wave. *So many signs recalling to us, more or less the structure of Chance: to remain in itself alongside its contrary, to contain virtually the absurd, to be the two sides of its own limit.*[32]

Thus I would like to propose the following diagram or constellation as central to Foucault's thought, especially as it intersects with Meillassoux:

Ø = Outside
T = Thought
F = Force
K = Knowledge
P = Power
R = Resistance
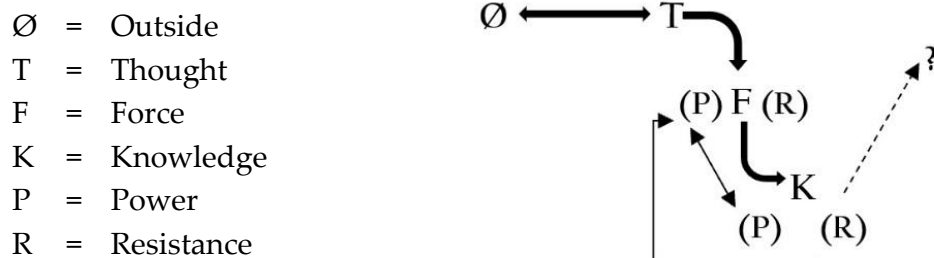
Thought opens a channel to the Outside, through which anonymous Force flows (an impossible distance toward an impossible intimacy); the Outside takes on contingent, particular points, empty 'diagrams' in a (social) field of Force. Force operates in the relational non-space of these anonymous diagrams—a kind of map-making—and splits into Power (anonymous intentional force) and Resistance (anonymous unintentional force). Power enters into feedback loops with Knowledge, while Resistance, also through Knowledge, offers the sparkling *may-be* of new realities and relationships. The contingent-Outside

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the great respect he has, as repeatedly brought up by Graham Harman, for correlationist thought. Of course, correlationism forms part of the bedrock of his turn toward (the 'inside job' argument) absolute contingency. Regarding Hegel, Meillassoux mentions in an interview (see *Philosophy in the Making*) that Hegel is a significant inspiration and, in fact, he has an unpublished manuscript on him. Nathan Brown's work on Meillassoux, too, picks up this Hegelian thread (see Nathan Brown, *Rationalist Empiricism: A Theory of Speculative Critique*, 2021).

[32] Quentin Meillassoux, *The Number and the Siren*, (2012), 140-141 (my emphasis).

nearly imperceptibly flows from, back, and between Thought, Force, and Knowledge, as a kind of lost, forgotten, and separated immanence.

III. THOUGHT (I): THE PRE-POSITIONAL AND THE DOUBLE

In this arrangement, thought opens a portal between finitude and infinitude.[33] Though it might appear to be the case, finitude and infinitude are not two separate realms and do not imply a metaphysics or theory of transcendence; and yet, they cannot be naively traversed. Following the Meillassouxian axioms above, absolute contingency (marking infinitude) is the single truth in the universe which inheres materially in all beings, that is, as an immanent property. Most thinking beings are, however, tethered to logics of finitude found primarily in representative modes of thought. Every representation is a finitization of presence; 're-' pre-fixes, qualifies, frames, and annihilates 'presentation,' an actual experience of infinitude, those 'signs calling us to chance.' Thinking beings, following Meillassoux, have access to this presentation beyond finitude. How does one, then, shed the tethers of representation and, with it, correlationist thought? Not necessarily into non-representation, which is simply a modality of representation, but into a dance with contingency, as contingency—into the concern for the soul one finds in Foucault's friendship and the fractured space of transgression?

Access to the absolute is not through a naïve realism (simple affirmation) nor dialectical sublation (affirmation-negation) but what *may* take place—always uncertain—between the two. Every thought opens a gateway; more precisely, every thought conjures forth a host of teeming beyond-thoughts, diffused shadow-thoughts—and thought's result, surrounded and swirled by these ghosts, is borne by uncertainty, casting into doubt the original act of thinking itself. Though rarely apprehended as such, thought is a throw of dice. This was Mallarmé's project in *Coup de dés*, of which Foucault was certainly aware: the infinitization of the Master's hesitation to throw the dice as he sunk under the sea, the seemingly null result of his throw realized and transfigured. *A cosmic and individual force*: a Constellation of Chance splashing across the night sky (cosmic), a Siren smashing the impeding rock (individual, the Master transfigured), a mist descending (uncertainty). There remains only what is so beautifully and devastatingly evoked by any shipwreck—a calm sea, which appears afterward as if nothing happened (did anything happen at all?). It is not a re-presencing, nor presencing, but rather an absence-in-presence, or Foucault's absent-absence. In other words, from Mallarmé we can grasp thought's capacity to be a eucharistic diffusion of a perhaps; an impossible to identify suffusion of contingency within the self. In this we may be reminded of Foucault's desire to outline a 'historical

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[33] Though a well-worn question, there are several issues inherent in giving thought—or the thinking being—such a superior role. This may be a challenge for Meillassoux's project, perhaps most evident in the presupposed humanism that comes along with it (Christopher Watkin considers this in *French Philosophy Today: New Figures of the Human*, 2016). The closest he comes to doing so, which is satisfactory to counter any humanism (not thought), is saying that the thinking being is the human *contingently*.

ontology of ourselves' by way of the space—now understood as the absolute contingency of the Outside—of transgression.

Foucault elaborates his own 'coup de dés' in the beginning of *Order of Things*, where he analyzes the painting "Las Meninas." He claims, ultimately, that Velázquez's work contains "an essential void" and is "representation, freed," that is, not unlike Mallarmé's constellation, "representation in its pure form."[34] It seems, though, that this conclusion warrants further investigation: what does Foucault really mean (he does not explain in full) by pure representation? Does the painting offer anything further? Could this, like his later writing on Kant, the Greeks, friendship, and the self, be a kind of speculative move? To further substantiate the connection between thought and the Outside in diagram above, we will take "Las Meninas" as a kind of case study of a thought-portal to the teeming Outside and possible diffusion of contingency (a la Mallarmé) in the real. This requires three steps. First, an analysis of the major text in Foucault's oeuvre explicitly addressing thought and the Outside ("Thought of/from the Outside"); second, a demonstration of how the painting operates along these lines; and third, an expansion on Foucault's analysis of the painting which would integrate an act of transgression. The latter would fulfill the trajectory of Foucault's analysis, bringing "Las Meninas" past the ambiguous 'pure representation' and securely into the realm of the absolute.

Foucault wrote "Thought of/from the Outside" around the same time as *Order of Things* and, in it, he specifically focused on the essential void space also identified in "Las Meninas." As with *Care of the Self*, our way in is through a key slippage in (mis)translation of the title itself, "Thought *of/from* (the) Outside."[35] Foucault's topic (aside from his use of Blanchot as an object of analysis) is the yet to be coined 'correlationism:' he is to grapple with the (non)relation between thought and being (the Outside). It is published with two translations: "The Thought *of* the Outside"[36] and "The Thought *from* Outside."[37] In the case of 'of,' the Outside is positioned as an object of thought, measurable and definable. It could also be seen, albeit more awkwardly, as the Outside's thought (i.e., the cat of Foucault equals Foucault's cat), thus making the essay an elegy for a perhaps ungraspable form of thought which does not move toward us but belongs solely to an absolute. On the other hand, 'from' implies a movement of the Outside, by way of thought, into an indeterminate inside. In this case both thought and the Outside take on anonymous, indifferent, and confused positionalities, weakening the correlationism of being and thought—the 'for-us'—by an influx of the absolute (what was seemingly never for-us). Between these two translations, one exclusive and the other inclusive, is a non-place and double-movement toward and through which 'of' and 'from' orient themselves: inside-out (thought of the Outside) and outside-in (thought from the Outside). This paradoxical contortion refuses the Kantian critique (of so-called speculative arrogance) while

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[34] Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of Human Sciences*, 18.

[35] Étienne Balibar brings this up in his lecture on the book, "A Thought from/of the Outside: Foucault's Uses of Blanchot," at Kingston University (2013). The French title is "La pensée du dehors."

[36] Michel Foucault, "The Thought of the Outside" [1966], in *Foucault: Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology, Vol. 2*, ed. James Faubion (1998), 147-170.

[37] Foucault, "The Thought from Outside" [1966] (1987).

simultaneously upholding the necessity of critique as the inhabitation and vibration of the limit, namely, where things reveal themselves as functioning, changing, perishing, and persisting without reason (this is what results from Foucault's, as above, 'new critique'). Of/From enact a hidden and (dis)locating gap, an abyss or void, across which—or rather, on both sides of which—there is a self gazing at a blurrily reflected form of itself, which gazes back at it. Both are suffused with that which pours forth from the uncertain *pre-positional* (we might say a priori) space of 'of/from.'

This strange relational space is prepositional, yes, but *as a space* it is a preposition 'cut loose' (where 'of' and 'from' have lost their referents), uncorrelated with noun, adjective, or verb, simply *apositional*, an unfixed position. This is the locus, for instance, of a 'spectral encounter,' where, by happenstance, the very distinctions of life and death are called into question and implicated, specifically, as contingent divisions: nouns shorn like corpses and cast as dice. The grammatical transgression of 'of/from' makes 'thought' and 'Outside' (again, being) *appositional* as opposed to a sprawling *a*positionality—the unfixedness of the prepositions offers up the new ante-grammatical and diagonal place of sutured nouns, in what can only be described, following Foucault, as a 'placeless place' in which the dead and living are indistinct: "thought outside / outside thought." The figures, outside and thought, now directly modify and position themselves without needing to be correlates, both wavering in their nounness made uncertain (is outside an adjective now?). Too, they resonate with the sovereignty of Foucault's introductory object of analysis in his essay: the phrase 'I speak.' 'Thought outside / outside thought' is ambiguous *and* definitive, existing without object or discourse (outside of what? thought about what?) not only because it is missing, as in 'I speak,' but also because it is unknown (what is an outside? what is thought in relation to it?). Here the pure exteriority and rawness of language may come into view—to note, this is not the correlationist's language, which Meillassoux attacks as a self-fashioned prison of mediation, but rather the being of language itself, the language of the Outside. The forces from such an Outside-language agrammatically seep forth from within the title's claim, holding together in a field of may-being both a pure exteriority and pure interiority.

This brings us to the other half of the essay's title and its object of analysis, Maurice Blanchot. Foucault argues, following what I understand as an intentional ambiguity in the French title (*du*, of/from), that Blanchot's narratives open a self-constituting discourse of/from the Outside. This is precisely why Foucault is interested in Blanchot: he offers "a meticulous narration of experiences, encounters, and improbably signs—*language about the outside of all language*, speech about the invisible side of words." This necessitates a "listening less to what is articulated in language than to the void circulating between its words, to the murmur that is forever taking it apart…the fiction of invisible space in which *it* appears."[38] 'It,' that 'improbable sign,' heralds the apprehension of the unnamable or meaningless sign, the transgressive experience of absolute contingency as and in an object occupying both sides of its own limit, at once having no reason to be as well as no reason not to become anything at all. Foucault even goes as far as to list a genealogy of thinkers

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[38] Ibid., 25-26.

vectoring in this manner and rebelling against "the age of Kant and Hegel," including those such as Dionysus, Marquis de Sade, Hölderlin, Nietzsche, Mallarmé, Artaud, Bataille, Klossowski, and finally Blanchot, who is "perhaps more than just another witness to this thought [of the Outside]…he is that thought itself." His writing on Blanchot is clearly intended to be part of the unveiling of such a genealogy: "it will one day be necessary to try and retrace its [the Outside's] path, to find out where it comes to us from and in what direction it is moving."[39]

Foucault develops his argument for Blanchot's connection to the Outside most explicitly in the last two short chapters, focusing on Blanchot's frequent deployment of the 'companion,' a concept he later translates in his own work as the shadow and double. In Blanchot's stories, the narrator's companion is distinct from operating simply as an "interlocutor" and "subject." Instead "he is the nameless limit language reaches" and, like a cosmic and individual force (external-internal), "the companion is also indissociably what is closest and farthest away."[40] He is the 'I that speaks' and yet brings forth the "void" and "immeasurable distance" within language, that is, the shadowy and pre-positional meaninglessness of each utterance, the of/from which serve as contagions or vectors of uncertainty—utterances at once sovereign and meaningless. This is what Foucault identifies as the drive of Blanchot's writing and why it conjures forth the Outside: it is an artistic act which conditions possible transgression, "plung[ing]" the reader into "a placeless place that is outside all speech and writing, that brings them forth and dispossesses them…that manifests through its infinite unraveling their momentary gleaming and sparkling disappearance."[41] Being becomes hazy and contingent, coming forth just as easily and unreasonably as it disappears, and this turns upon language's dislocation from meaning (its limit); not into skepticism or untruth, nor truth in meaning (constructivism), but into a sovereign space between meaning and the total loss of meaning. For Foucault, this is a possible portal for legitimate truth (from the Outside), and it must be re-discovered at all costs: "language…is neither truth nor time, neither eternity nor man; it is instead the always undone form [not content] of the outside. It places the origin in contact with death, or rather brings them both to light in the flash of their infinite oscillation—a momentary contact in a boundless space."[42] Language, by way of Blanchot's artistic work, may offer a vehicle for the Outside. In a sentence resonant with Meillassoux's more poetic passages about 'may-being,' Foucault concludes "what language is in its being is that softest of voices, that nearly imperceptible retreat, that weakness deep inside and surrounding every thing and every face"—a fog pulsing from each being, quietly insisting on the shadowy possibilities of chance.[43]

Foucault examines this shadowy space in his introductory chapter on "Las Meninas" in terms of 'doubles,' most clearly summarizing his argument toward the end of *Order of*

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[39] Ibid., 16, 19.

[40] Ibid., 51.

[41] Ibid., 52.

[42] Ibid., 57.

[43] Ibid.

Things in the chapter "Man and his Doubles." The double, based upon Blanchot's companion-figure, shakes the certitude of being and is constantly murmuring, babbling, and beseeching the subject to reach beyond itself. In fact, it must—to survive—compose itself on the quavering foundation of non-being, which is to say, on "[that] inexhaustible double that presents itself to reflection as the blurred projection of what man is in truth, but that also [is the] preliminary ground upon which man must…attain his truth." The "unthought," for Foucault, has always shadowed thought, "mutely and uninterruptedly."[44] More explicitly:

> Though this double may be close, *it is alien*, and the role, the true undertaking, of thought will be to bring it as close to itself as possible; the whole of modern thought is imbued with *the necessity of thinking the unthought*—of reflecting the contents of the *in-itself* in the form of the *for-itself*, of ending man's alienation by reconciling him with his own essence, of making explicit the horizon that provides experience with its background of immediate and disarmed proof, of lifting the veil of the Unconscious, of becoming absorbed in its silence, or of straining to catch its endless murmur.[45]

Foucault then asks, presaging his central question in "What is Enlightenment" (above): "what must I be, I who think and who am my thought, in order to be what I do not think, in order for my thought to be what I am not? What is this being, then, that shimmers…in the opening of the *cogito*, yet not sovereignly given in it or by it?" He is—*speculatively*—searching for where thought "addresses the unthought and articulates itself upon it."[46] The figure of the double, of Blanchot's companion, casts itself—via thought—across the void, doubled, doubling itself, and folding itself in infinite repetition, a vibratory reflection, the realization of a ground which is also unground, imbued with the pre-positional, and on which, anarchically, new formations may emerge.

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[44] *The Order of Things* 356.

[45] Ibid.(my emphasis).

[46] Ibid., 354. This is further elaborated on by this long, beautiful quote (that resonates strongly with Meillassoux's project): "…[the] existence—mute, yet ready to speak, and secretly impregnated with a potential discourse – of that *not-known* from which man is perpetually summoned towards self-knowledge. The question is…How can man think what he does not think, inhabit as though by a mute occupation something that eludes him, animate with a kind of frozen movement that figure of himself that takes the form of a stubborn exteriority? How can man be that life whose web, pulsations, and buried energy constantly exceed the experience that he is immediately given of them? How can he be that labour whose laws and demands are imposed upon him like some alien system? How can he be the subject of a language that for thousands of years has been formed without him, a language whose organization escapes him, whose meaning sleeps an almost invincible sleep in the words he momentarily activates by means of discourse, and within which he is obliged, from the very outset, to lodge his speech and thought, as though they were doing no more than animate, for a brief period, one segment of that web of in numerable possibilities? – There has been a fourfold displacement in relation to the Kantian position, for it is now a question not of truth, but of being; not of nature, but of man; not of the possibility of understanding, but of the possibility of a primary misunderstanding; not of the unaccountable nature of philosophical theories as opposed to science, but of the resumption in a clear philosophical awareness of that whole realm of unaccounted-for experiences in which man does not recognize himself" (Ibid., 352).

IV. THOUGHT (II): THE DOUBLES OF "LAS MENINAS"

Moving from one form of artistic work to another—and we shall see this transform again via politics and the Iranian revolution—Foucault opens *The Order of Things* with an interpretation of Velázquez's painting "Las Meninas" (see appendix).[47] Its connection to the Outside is only revealed disjunctively at the end of the book, shown briefly above by way of his 'Doubles' chapter; however, I posit a possible extension of his interpretation of the artwork such that it might be more precisely connected to his adjacent writing on Blanchot, transgression, and the Outside (not to mention on friendship). There are three central doublings in "Las Meninas:" the Artist, the Sovereigns, and the Visitor. Each is a 'cast of the dice,' or the casting of thought, across an abyss that appears uncrossable.[48] The frightening claim is that each cast is successful. It is not a gamble on a particular result but instead an affirmation of the contingency of the cast itself. Successful doubling is not simply a representation of something but a diffusion of the Outside via its (non)result. Essential is that the (non)result—this diffusion and affirmation of contingency—is anonymous and infinitely dispersed; it retroactively throws into question its own occurrence. The double made-visible, in this case, is a kind of unconcealing of a shadow, a presence both uncertain and undeniable.

The doubles in "Las Meninas" operate on three levels. First, the artist is represented as the Artist in the painting. The real Velázquez casts himself into the fictive realm by painting himself in the midst of painting. Though containing the infinite slippage of the double, it is a basic act of representation: I see myself, I paint myself. Second, the Sovereigns are represented, hauntingly, in the luminous mirror at the center back of the painting. As Foucault argues, they occupy a non-position, the reflection of a frontal absence that turns the painting inside-out and on which nearly everyone in the painting appears to fix their gaze. This is a representation of a representation, a fiction of an absent fiction, a double of a (basic) double. It is complex: I cannot see a person, and yet I paint that person. The mirror 'captures' only a wisp of a double, its atmosphere. Thus we feel a sort of veiled threat in their appearance: where do they come from? is there a hidden depth to the mirror through which they have floated? who is capturing who? Their silent, impassive, and as Foucault also says "pale" distanced-distance carries with it the force of a brutal noise that spreads (from) within the Spectator's mind. The ultimate derivation of that noise is uncertain—a hesitation between inside and outside—leaving us with the feeling of being dis-eased. Third, placed directly to the right of the mirror, and on the opposite side of the central bifurcation of the painting itself, is the Visitor: somewhat indistinct but present. He is suspended on the stairs in a prolonged hesitation, "the ambiguous visitor is coming in and going out at the same time, like a pendulum caught at the bottom of its swing…repeat[ing] on the spot." The Sovereigns are "challenged by the [Visitor's] tall, solid

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[47] See Appendix for various versions of "Las Meninas" related to this section and the next: painting right-side-up; painting upside-down; Princess Infanta's gaze; the Beaker/Keyhole right-side-up; the Beaker/Keyhole upside-down.

[48] This comes from Mallarmé's final line in *Coup de Dés*: "Every Thought Emits A Throw Of Dice." In other words, every thought voices (emits) the Chance/Contingency of the Outside.

stature," his relative oppositional positioning, and sheer uncertainty embodied by his "appear[ance] in the doorway."[49] As Joel Snyder also points out in his critique of Foucault's "Las Meninas" chapter, the "orthogonals" of the painting do not converge at the aptly titled "vanishing point" of the mirror, but instead at that which is just beside it: "Las Meninas is projected from a point distinctly to the right of the mirror…we could not see ourselves in the mirror." In other words, the ambiguous Visitor is the true vanishing point of the painting, "not…the point of view taken by the absent king or queen."[50] The Visitor is the impossible representation of the *unknown and anonymous* Spectator—the uncorrelated sovereign, being thought separately from the subject—who comes and goes. Foucault hints at this but seems to hold his follow through in abeyance. The Spectator invoked by the Sovereigns is, contrastingly, a *known* Spectator, constituted, positioned, and defined in reaction to the *re*presentation of absence (also aspiring to a certain power and necessity), as opposed to being the uncertain action presented by this suspended Visitor. Thus in its impossibility, the Visitor most accurately 'doubles' the (true) Spectator, catching them as they come and go; a real cast across the abyss—'that isn't me. …or, wait, is it?' The Spectator, in this affirmative and active mode—not reactive—must reveal themselves, spurred by accident, as doubled by the Visitor ('It is me!'), and yet effaced ('perhaps…').

Even with all this, we must admit the Spectator, unlike the Visitor, ends their hesitation because they accomplish a (finite) coming and going. Thought identifies the represented Artist, brings forth the haunting uncertainty of the Sovereigns in the mirror, and then reveals the true sovereigns finally made flesh, if represented flesh, by the hesitating Visitor—the double moves degrees closer to the reality of the (unknown, uncorrelated) Spectator and the accomplishment of a true, that is, unthinkable, doubling (a literal melding of fictive and real doubles). This 'vanishing point' is, of course, also the point of contact (contagion) with the Outside; or as Foucault says when writing about Blanchot, the "power of dissimulation that effaces every determinate meaning and even the existence of the speaker [Spectator], in the gray neutrality that constitutes the essential hiding place [or vanishing point] of all being and thereby frees the space of the image [i.e., Outside incursion]."[51]

This brings us basically to the limit of Foucault's analysis. And yet, there is something even more dramatic at play; we are poised for something 'to happen' which does not, a leap into the vanishing point unrisked. What would literally de-correlate the Spectator? There remains, unconsidered, all the other characters in the painting. For the most part, they look outside of the painting, directly at a supposed Spectator. What if these characters were not looking at the contingent Spectator who strolls before them, pausing to think and look, but instead *behind* the Spectator? The figures do, after all, continue to look, their undead eyes forever fixed, before and after the 'Spectator' visits the painting. They are entranced by what lies beyond (their) representation, that 'great outdoors' prior to or after

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[49] Ibid., 12.

[50] Joel Snyder, "Las Meninas and the Mirror of the Prince," *Critical Inquiry* 11:4 (1985), 548.

[51] "Thought from the Outside," 57.

the extinction of a witness. In other words, they are entranced by the transgressive possibility of what is up the stairs and through the door, what is made luminous by the Visitor's—and thus, in reality, the Spectator's—hesitation, what is outside the room they are frozen into, the room doubled in the world of the Spectator who gazes back. Most importantly, their eyes are fixed on the contingent possibility of a literal open door appearing behind the Spectator. Our admission becomes obvious and necessary: of course they do not look at the subject-Spectator, an assumption which can only, in the end, be the result of a kind of arrogance or narcissism on our/the Spectator's part (analogous to the anthropocentrism speculative materialism challenges). Their essential and overlooked post/pre-Spectator and post/pre-human gaze—also the teeming double of the Spectator's gaze—strikes in the heart of the certitude of the real world, transgressing their representational finitude by unveiling the fissure within that very limit. There is a kind of threat in what we might call their proletariat (non)presence, something much more frightening (and hopeful) than the Sovereign's threat: the shadows (the doubles) might invade. They call us toward an access beyond correlative logics and toward revolution and truth, beyond Foucault's all-too-humble 'pure' representation; they await the absolute's contingent revelation, allusively gazing with (its) force. Thus it is not just, as Foucault says, the mirrored sovereigns that sneak into the situation ("that reflection which has slipped into the room behind them all, silently occupying its unsuspected space…they stand outside the picture…withdrawn from it in an essential invisibility").[52] *Rather, what Foucault misses is that the open door next to the mirror is what most strikingly slips behind the Spectator*. Exerting a kind of gravitational energy, it is diffused, not represented, in real space as the Spectators slip toward an Outside suddenly transported into an intimate interiority. The door uncovers a hole that leads to a 'placeless place' "in which the speaking subject disappears" and the being of contingency appears.[53]

"Las Meninas," then, is an answer to the central and, what we would call today, staunchly anti-correlationist question articulated in his study of Blanchot: "how can we gain *access* to this strange relation [to the Outside]?"[54] It requires a certain kind of thought, "a form of thought…that stands outside subjectivity."[55] One must become complicit with anonymous forces and thought.[56]

V. THOUGHT (III): THE HIDDEN ACT

With this accumulation of thought and its teeming uncertainties, there remains the question of a physical-act, that is, an action itself. Foucault does not explore this in his analysis of the painting, likely because it would require answering an absurd question: what single, literal act must the Spectator (the person existing the real) do to bring the anonymous

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[52] *The Order of Things*, 15.

[53] "Thought from the Outside," 10.

[54] Ibid., 15.

[55] Ibid.

[56] This phrase comes from Reza Negarestani's *Cyclonopedia: Complicity with Anonymous Materials* (2008), a book that haunts this paper and my thinking.

forces potentialized by the painting into reality—what is a transgressive (hidden) act in the particular situation of looking at this painting? In other words, how must the Spectator prepare themselves and the situation for the contingent event, in order for it to be realized? If a contingent event occurs without subjective preparation, then the subject is not transfigured (only the situation is); if a subject prepares, but the event does not occur, then the subject is not transfigured—the subject must dislocate or de-correlate themselves in order to (possibly) take in that which is absolutely Outside as a change in itself.[57] This is also the question of representation: how can someone elide representation, non-representation, and even Foucault's "pure representation?"[58] The open door doubled behind the Spectator comes close to doing so but has one foot bound to metaphor. There needs to be a material consideration, a presentation; transgression requires a *space* to be opened. The answer is as simple as it is absurd: *the painting must be flipped upside-down.*

Before tracing out some consequences of this act, there are several clues that lead to its thought. First, there is the proliferation of doubles, understood in a broad sense that includes apparent oppositions, which range far past the Artist, Sovereign, and Visitor outlined above. The simple emphasis on doubling is, itself, a basic clue—what is the double of right-side-up? Upside-down. Furthermore, what is the double of the primary space filled by people and light? The absent space above, the truly ignored space (not the mirrored-Sovereigns), a desert of shadows and blurs without people (a la Blanchot's companion-figure). If flipped, this absent space floods forth, paradoxically, from the primary position. There are, too, the living doubles: 1) Painter-Painter, 2) Sovereigns-Mirrored Sovereigns, 3) Visitor-Spectator, 4) Right attendant-Left attendant, 5) Princess Infanta-Queen (as Foucault also identifies, she models herself after the Queen via the angle of her profile), 6) Dwarf-Dwarf, and 7) Bodyguard-Chaperone (back right). It must be remembered that the role of the double for Foucault is not dialectical but rather an arrangement or movement that reveals a hidden fissure within the movement itself, that vibratory 'perhaps' which unfolds as a field or space of its own—the siren's call to the Outside, Meillassoux's 'may-being.' There remains only the dog without a double, which Foucault dismisses as the "only element in the picture that is neither looking at anything nor moving, because it is not intended…to be anything but an object to be seen."[59]

The dog is unique because it does not have an obvious role nor double. Foucault's conclusion that it is intended as an object may not be wrong, but his devaluation of the dog, and thus dismissal of its possible doubling, proves to be a key error. The dog as 'dog'

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[57] This is analogous to the question of Meillassoux's 'vectoral militant' who prepares for his 'Fourth World of Justice.' How should such a figure act when the moment of transfiguration (mortal to immortal) is absolutely uncertain? Until it happens they are 'spectator' to a 'spectacle' (something not yet real) and nonetheless must ethically position themselves as a non-spectator (an actor) in a de-spectacularized (current, Third) world.

[58] This is sought not in order to bring *presence* (e.g., Christ's appearance) as that follows a transcendent model, and not one in which contingency is alone necessary, but instead to bring diffusion (e.g., the Eucharist divorced from Christ) which follows an immanent model. See the chapter in Meillassoux's *The Number and the Siren*, "Representation, Presentation, Diffusion." Also, in relation to subjective preparation, Meillassoux makes congruent claims in "Immanence of the World Beyond."

[59] *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of Human Sciences*, 15.

implies physical action: it is an animal, a being (understood at that time as) not endowed with thought nor speech but with impressive physical abilities. Moreover, it is the only thing in the room not gazing (its eyes are closed), it is nameless (the other figures can be traced to names, people; even the chaperone), and traditionally it exists between human and object, a living thing outside the discourse of portrait painting. Still, what could be the dog's double? It should exist in an in-between state (like the dog), be nameless and non-seeing, and its discovery must evoke the contingency foundational to the act of doubling. Perhaps it is an apparition, like the mirrored sovereigns, or a pure opposite, like the ceiling and ground? It cannot be any of the 'taken' doubles, and there are no other animals. Foucault, unknowingly, provides us with a hint: the dog has *no importance* to the picture. Thus, its double might have the *most importance* (Being shadowed by the void).[60]

The first place to look, in terms of positioning of importance, is in the bottom-third center. As expected, there stands Princess Infanta, gazing straight at us—as if daring us to make a (the) connection. While she is already doubled (it cannot be her), her head is precisely positioned between the mirror and the open door, a liminal space between the Spectator made finite and known (seen in the mirror, the Sovereigns) and the Spectator made infinite and unknown (seen in the door, the Visitor). What is her significance? She gazes, somehow knowingly, toward the real Spectator caught *between* the finite and infinite, correlate and uncorrelated; the Spectator who hears the call of the divine, who feels its pull, and yet is held back by a subjectivity tethered to a metaphysics of sufficient reason, a subjectivity that can only ever understand 'divinity' as something transcendent as opposed to immanent. Upon closer inspection, what appears to be an odd red blotch is placed where her right hand should be. The blotch is, in actuality, a red beaker, held out by the attendant, likely offering water to the Princess. And yet, after the initial moment of noticing, it now stands out as if on the surface of the painting, refusing to be ignored, magnetizing the eye with a weird, almost alien force—could this be it? It is in a central location, offered to the most important person in the painting, and a child no less, a symbol of hope, renewal, innocence, and even speculation. The beaker is non-human and, as an object, it cannot see. It is held up by the attendant, while the dog is held down by the foot of the dwarf. Like the dog, it is hard to ascertain a specific purpose to the object, in an otherwise meticulously composed painting. Looked at more closely, it also appears to be held up by a blur (a plate, in reality), an odd purely horizontal brushstroke in an otherwise heterogeneously brushed painting. There is something 'off' about the placement of such an unimportant object near the center of the painting and, moreso, obscuring a part of Infanta—an encroachment of the purity of the Princess. The object, vibrating with uncertainty, appears to be held forth with a sort of reverence. It is almost as if she is offering the Princess her crown—or rather, offering the Spectator the 'crowning' moment of the painting, the hidden double and its hidden force.

It must be the dog's double, a transfigured dog—a kind of double within the fissure of other doublings. But what is so important about this unseeing beaker? Why is it the *most*

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[60] Coincidentally, DOG reversed is GOD. Also: 0/1 & 1/0; zero intensity as an undefined infinity; death as that which surpasses limits of finitude.

important thing, even more than the child? It contains another secret double in its depths, that placeless place conditioned by a transgressive double: it looks like a *keyhole*, only positioned upside-down. The position of the Princess between the mirror and the open door is a marker, but not the thing itself; the Princess is no metaphysical being guarding some sort of gate to the Outside. She simply holds the contingent material access to such a thing: a keyhole requiring no key save a subjectivity that realizes its (non-unique) ability to access the uncorrelated infinite. Thus, in a central location, the odd nagging anonymous red blotch becomes a potential opening that requires a worthy subject to activate. *The painting itself must be turned, by way of an immanent discovery along a path of uncertainty, as the key that flips the keyhole right-side-up, orienting the painting such that it can make its final statement.*

As the Spectator flips the painting, transgressing the sovereign line between Spectacle and Spectator (making the institution housing it admit its presence as complicit with the cops they will call), the ground becomes ungrounded, filled with shadows and blurry paintings. The light and figures are cast aside and the void takes hold. The only remaining light sources in focus are the edges of the mirror and open door—still essential doubles, paths to the Outside. Everyone's positions, real and fictional, are revealed as contingent. The Spectator, inspecting and thinking about the painting right-side-up, has been fragmented by the onslaught of doubles and made uncertain, furtively glancing over their shoulder for a contingently opening door, feeling the 'pull' of the Outside, its force. Flipping the painting, they are overcome by the absence and shadow which doubles their very being; they find themselves physically, not metaphorically, absent*ed* in their action, their 'self' made non-dialectically diffuse. Until then, all could be brushed away, in the last instance, as nothing but unsettling representations. The physical act, though, irrevocably alters the situation. This act, furthermore, needs to be absurd and *un*reasonable. It must fill the Spectator with laughable uncertainty. Why would anyone ever do this? And yet the thought of it, followed by the act, opens one to the Outside: they are no longer spectating a piece of art as 'spectacle' but activating a hidden pathway within it (it is the flip that matters, not the resultant content which can only be markers or signs). Thus the act of absurdity/uncertainty that Foucault set the groundwork for—the act of transgression— diffuses into the Spectator beyond the finitude of representation. They are melded, momentarily, with Contingency. This is the true 'key' of "Las Meninas."

VI. FORCE: RESISTANCE AND MAY-BEING

Thought can thus become aware of the deserts that surround it, perceiving and feeling the presence of non-thought in (the absent-absence of) being, the absolute Outside. This absolute unfolds onto a social field as *force*.[61] Force, which operates as a kind of virtuality (in Deleuze's immanent sense), always bifurcates simultaneously into power and resistance, the former shadowed by the latter.

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[61] In terms of the humanist issues with thought, Foucault's (and Deleuze's) conception of force has a democratizing effect, spanning across environments, things, animals, and humans. Still, we must remain suspicious of vitalist (correlationist) tendencies with regard to force.

Foucault's force is relational. It is not a vital flow or thing: "power [force] in a substantive sense does not exist."[62] It is "omnipresent," and not a metaphysical "omnipotent" cause; it is "not built up of wills (individual or collective), nor is it derivable from interests."[63] Force is the smooth non-agential space on which the Outside scatters in contingent maps and diagrams, constellations with innumerable points. It unfolds as the field of the virtual real and may-being, a shadowy non-space that continually beckons the finite toward knowing the truth of its infinitude. It is, to put it in other words, that which is apprehended within the affect of genuine friendship, flipping "Las Meninas," or, more broadly, transgression.

Force can be most easily contrasted with Knowledge, which is its stratification and finitization: "the relations between forces, which are mobile, faint, and diffuse, do not lie outside strata [knowledge] but form the outside of strata."[64] Knowledge is the actualization and then institutionalization of power, which is force sutured to intentionality. Power-Knowledge is the framing and manipulating of force such that it appears necessary (ideology, cathedral-ization, correlationism), delegitimizing the Outside and absolute. This is not to say knowledge necessarily results in negative (transcendental) institutionalization, as it can also reveal aspects of force as (immanent) resistance. This form of knowledge, which we call Resistance-Knowledge as opposed to Power-Knowledge, follows from the instantiation of Force as Resistance—that is, a transgressive act, like flipping "Las Meninas," which follows rationally from the Outside, i.e., absolute contingency. It is resistant not because it is oppositional to Power, nor chaotic, but *anarchic,* that is, sutured to the non-intentional and transfinite. Each Foucauldian analysis of an episteme is tied back to a plane of forces, and thus to the Outside, from which contingent power-knowledge regimes come to being. It is doubtless that these epistemes exist, but we are by no means bounded by them; they are, in the end, contingently made and, like force, subject to a universal contingency. The plane of forces is a history shadowing that of Power-Knowledge, revealing the illusions of historicism and causality.

Force, therefore, exists non-dialectically in suspended contradiction between these poles. On the one hand, power becomes stratified into knowledge, correlated, always-already together; knowledge supports this vicious circle, adding certainty to power, hastening its accumulation, and fracturing its original nature as uncertain. On the other hand, resistance flows into and frees knowledge to think toward the absolute; a kind of anti-power. The contingency of everything does not necessarily hinder any power-stratification, though; just as anything can change for no reason at all, everything could also remain the same, become increasingly concretized, or function according to an intra-worldly correlative logic. In this way, power and knowledge are *contingently correlative*, always together but never leading to a metaphysics of power-knowledge.

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[62] Michel Foucault, "The Confession of the Flesh (Interview)" [1977], in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings,* ed. Colin Gordon (1980), 198.

[63] Michel Foucault, "The History of Sexuality (Interview)" [1977], in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings,* ed. Colin Gordon (1980), 188.

[64] Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault* [1986] (1988), 85.

This limit is expressed in the nature of force itself: it continues to operate, infinitely spawning new diagrams, new constellatory points—and, thus, along with the advent of power is the advent of resistance in contingent forms. Deleuze describes this clearly:

> The power to affect or be affected is carried out in a variable way, depending on the forces involved in the relation. The diagram, as the fixed form of a set of relations between forces, never exhausts force, *which can enter into other compositions*. The diagram stems from the outside and *the outside does not merge with any diagram, and continues instead to 'draw' new ones*. In this way the outside is always an opening onto a future: nothing ends since nothing has begun, but everything is transformed. In this sense force displays potentiality with respect to the diagram containing it, *or possesses a third power which presents itself as the possibility of 'resistance.'*[65]

Deleuze implicates, here, a theory of eternal becoming, which is distinct from Meillassoux's (and our) theory of contingency. His description of power, resistance, and the Outside is perfectly applicable but not as governed by an eternal and necessary transformation. With absolute contingency, things, laws, people, and so on can be annihilated or appear *ex nihilo*. In that sense—and not 'in this sense' that Deleuze describes with regard to his claim that 'nothing ends since nothing has begun'—force, and thus the Outside, is even more significant. It does not "open onto a future," but makes uncertain the very possibility of a future and of time itself. Deleuze is correct—and especially so when he says (along with Étienne Balibar) that "the appeal to the outside is a constant theme in Foucault"—but he does not take it far enough. Resistance is not the realization of a positive hope, but the very marker by which we can know and be filled with the absolute. To be suffused with such hesitation, such uncertainty, such vibrancy, is to reject any necessary being or cause. Grounding and transforming hope in that non-progressive space is akin to absolute resistance, which is to say (following Deleuze), "a liberation of forces which come from the outside."[66]

In the final analysis, force is the omnipresent instantiation of the Outside as that which shadows and haunts being. Finding oneself in the folds of force is akin to, following Meillassoux now, shifting one's position from (illusory) being to (real) may-being. May-being unites an ontology of absolute uncertainty with an ethics of absolute possibility.[67] In it, one must base their existence upon a wager—or, as Meillassoux argues by way of Mallarmé, who we must recall is counted by Foucault as among those thinkers who have "experienced the Outside," one must base their existence upon a *peut-être* [perhaps].[68] It is this same quavering of the *peut-être* (potentialized-being, uncertain-being, a being of force) that spreads from thinking the open door and keyhole of "Las Meninas" and that sustains our Foucauldian diagram of the Outside, thought, force, and knowledge.

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[65] Ibid., 89 (my emphasis).

[66] Ibid., 87.

[67] Meillassoux discusses this in "Immanence of the World Beyond" and *The Number and the Siren*.

[68] Meillassoux, *Number and the Siren*. See the chapter "At a Stroke."

Foucault's invocation of Mallarmé in "Thought of/from the Outside" highlights the resonance between may-being as *peut-être* and force:

> …what precedes all speech, what underlies all silence: the continuous streaming of language. A language spoken by no one: any subject it may have is no more than a grammatical fold…It opens a neutral space in which no existence can take root. *Mallarmé taught us that the word* [i.e., peut-être is *the* word par excellence] *is the manifest non-existence of what it designates; we now know that the being of language is the visible effacement of the one who speaks:* 'saying that I hear these words would not explain for me the dangerous strangeness of my relations with them…They do not speak, they are not inside; on the contrary, they lack all intimacy *and lie entirely outside…this anonymity of language* […] It is only a formless rumbling, a streaming.[69]

It must be emphasized that Foucault, by way of Mallarmé and Blanchot, is talking about the *being* of language, that is, language uncorrelated to us, or again, an absolute language, the language of the Outside. It is a 'neutral space' of 'no existence'—the flooding forth of blurs and shadows in the flipped "Las Meninas." This is the space of may-being, in which (the language of) force is precisely understood as *peut-être*: an emancipatory movement transgressing speech and non-speech and ushering in the contingent Outside.

VII. CONCLUSION: THE OUTSIDE AND REVOLT

The organization diagrammed at the start is clear and yet quavers at every point. To recapitulate our arrangement before proceeding toward its conclusion: each thought is (emits, voices) a 'dice throw.' That act is founded upon a perpetual hesitation and *peut-être*, a 'may-ifying' of being called forth by the desert of non-thought surrounding it. The Outside, heralded by doubles and shadows, flows forth and arranges contingent diagrams of force in a social field. Force splits into power and resistance; power stratifies into knowledge (but can contingently be transmuted) and resistance evokes an irreducible virtuality shot through from the Outside. There may be an ethics of the Outside, perhaps even realized by a particular kind of friendship, but it is a challenging thing to conceive of, much less engage with in practice. Nonetheless, it is difficult to deny Foucault's Outside is akin to Meillassoux's absolute contingency, and even more difficult to deny Foucault is, throughout all his work, grappling with (and toward) this subterranean speculative trajectory.

What is especially interesting, though, is that for Foucault the drive of such an obscure and unfixable speculative diagram remains emancipation: as in our introduction, we must recall he claims the path of transgression (the Outside) is created by the laborious and "undefined work of freedom." How does the quavering inherent in the Outside allow for or hinder emancipation from our finitized subjectivities? Emancipation is an intentional struggle, and yet we have been entirely focused on the unintentional and non-necessary. Taken in a broad sense, this point can be reconfigured as a more fundamental

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[69] "Thought from the Outside," 54-55 (my emphasis).

philosophical question: how, or even whether, do we engage with something indifferent and exterior? If, as we may assume, this engagement, this subjectivity of absolute resistance, holds a key to freedom, but refuses intentional action ('undefined'), operating only in anonymity—what is to be done? How does a materialism grounded in ontological contingency link up with revolutionary politics? Flipping paintings is both not enough (what about militant actions?) and cannot exhaust the possibilities of action. More brutally: in the face of sheer infinitude, is action useless?[70]

What could be required is a transgression of the self as finite, that is, the transmutation of the subject into a being worthy of their own infinitude. A subject's infinitization—or, per Meillassoux, *divinization*—must paradoxically be recognized (known) as contingent as well as prepared for: a subject founded on nothing. This quite specific form of 'worthiness'—one linked to, and only to, absolute contingency—is, in fact, the key act toward agential resistance. It is a labor undertaken with conviction divested of dogmatic and moralistic superiority. Without such a worthiness, a contingent transformation of life by the Outside—the work of freedom—would simply result in a superficial change, a chance which refuses to grasp its own non-necessity and sustains itself within feedbacks of Power and institutionalization instead of the flows of Resistance grounding change in itself. In this way, friendship, concern for the soul, and the perception of the double as the Outside all appear again as possible practices oriented toward justice and emancipation, which is to say, toward becoming worthy.

Foucault addresses a similar question during his engagement in the Iranian revolution, in his 1979 article "Useless to Revolt?" Responding to the claim, which parallels that of nihilism in the face of absolute contingency, "'it is useless to revolt; it is always going to be the same thing,'" he offers hope deriving from a pure refusal of authority and power: "'I will not obey.'"[71] There are three elements of this ethic of refusal that, taken in the context of our discussion, channel the Outside: 1) death, or the risking of life; 2) an "outside [of] history;" and 3) the role of religion and spirituality. The project of Foucault's refusal is to look askance at negation to unveil the possibility of genuine transgression beyond simple opposition. It is through revolt—militant resistance—that a subject (positively) short circuits our diagrams of thought, power, resistance, and knowledge, activating force as a direct mode of tearing through to the Outside and as a worthiness conditioning emancipation.

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[70] Meillassoux formulates this question across much of his work. It is clear here: "I would like to indicate what is opened up by these reflections on the contingency of laws. The general perspective is that of a redefinition of reason, once the latter has been entirely extirpated of the Principle of Sufficient Reason. I seek to redefine a rational necessity subtended by the impossibility of real necessity (physical necessity). I seek, that is, to establish that one can reason in the absence of reason. For I believe the most precious result of the preceding analysis is the following: if what is has no reason to be as it is, certain consequences follow for what is, consequences that are neither trivial nor negligible. [...] I seek to develop a style of argumentation that establishes the nontrivial consequences of the absence of reason. In other words, I seek to prove that there do indeed exist necessary properties of being but that these properties are the very consequences of the contingency of being. Everything is contingent, but its being contingent implies that not everything is possible" (Meillassoux, "Contingency of the Laws of Nature," 333).

[71] Foucault, *The Essential Works of Foucault: Power*, 452, 449.

First, to revolt may involve (and does in the Iranian case) the "impulse" to "throw the risk of life in the face of an authority" which is "unjust." It is an "irreducible" act.[72] The militant revolutionary is, by this action Foucault describes, the condition for what Meillassoux separately terms the "spectral dilemma," in which he also considers the role of and desire for emancipatory action in the face of an indifferent contingency/Outside.[73] Meillassoux argues that all those who died unjust, horrendous, inexplicable deaths will forever haunt the world, drowning it and the living in despair, depression, and death.[74] The only possible mourning for these impossible deaths is an impossible mourning; to accomplish this, to satisfy the infinite "essential spectre" (i.e., Foucault's martyred militant), one must engage an infinite "essential grief," that is, an unending linkage with the dead. To condition the resolution of the spectral dilemma, one must practice going beyond finitude by developing a subjectivity worthy of immortality. In his delineation of the Fourth World to come, all subjects become contingently immortal. Only the worthy subjects, though, are considered Just (those who can grieve infinitely, exacting a genuine connection to the dead beyond the finitude of the life/death divide). It requires, as above, a simultaneous preparation for the contingent advent of immortality while realizing the non-necessity of its occurrence: superficial change is the unworthy subject becoming immortal (eternal injustice, denial of the absolute, rejection of the dead); change in itself is the worthy subject becoming immortal (eternal justice, integration of the absolute, embrace—and in doing so resurrection—of the dead). Becoming worthy, then, is both a stretching toward a world-to-come as well as what will enact change in the present. Analogously, Foucault's revolutionary figure risks death as a dual-resistance to power/authority exercised in the here-and-now (the dictator, the capitalist, the police) as well as that of finitude, as death, itself. The refusal to be oppressed is singularized in the figure's ultimate wager. They cast their self between here and there, between life and death, the non-place of transgression where "authorities can no longer do anything" and where the stratification of power is overcome by the contingency released in their resistance (this bridging figure is what Meillassoux calls the "metaxu," who is "already between here and there," referring to the Third and Fourth Worlds).[75] The revolutionary figure, in an act of ontological hacking, reaches toward an impossible (a Just) world, creating a rapid influx of the Outside in the present; a moment of irreducible hope and tragedy. They manage to emit what we could call a 'spectral cry:' a scream of resistance that melds with the spectre's haunting calls—*while still alive*—creating the conditions for the resolution of 'essential spectre' and bringing it, momentarily, into the world as an embodiment of resistance.

Second, these moments of revolt create a map of an "outside [of] history," and yet are "in history."[76] By this, Foucault means that the act of wagering one's life occurs within a dominant, historical temporality, but also, because of its invocation of the infinite in death,

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[72] Ibid., 449.

[73] Meillassoux, "Immanence of the World Beyond"

[74] To be clear, Meillassoux ultimately argues against death *qua* death, as a kind of triumph of finitude; the spectral dilemma is an evocative and keystone example within his more universal struggle against death.

[75] Ibid., 478.

[76] *The Essential Works of Foucault: Power,* 450.

it necessarily (dis)locates itself beyond the finitizing movements of history. It offers a history "beneath" and "behind" history.[77] This is the history of the Outside as it reveals itself in formations of resistance, as a double and a shadow. It is a history that demands, in order to grapple with it, a wagering of the self, an internalization (or rather realization of the inherency) of contingency. In "Thought of/from the Outside," Foucault, quite significantly, tasks us with bringing this to the surface: "it will one day be necessary to try to define the fundamental forms and categories of this 'thought from the outside.' It will be necessary to retrace its path to find out where it comes to us from and in what direction it is moving."[78]

Third, Foucault identifies a religious/spiritual dimension of revolt, which we might call, too, a speculative dimension: "one understands why uprisings have so easily found their expression and their drama in religious forms."[79] It is telling that Meillassoux, also, arrives at the religious question in his nascent considerations of the ethics and politics resulting from contingency (e.g., in the only partially published *Divine Inexistence*). For Foucault, the Iranian revolt is founded in a politicized religiosity due to "years of censorship and persecution, a political class kept under tutelage, parties outlawed, revolutionary groups decimated." This spirituality is not located in any institutionalization but rather in the revolutionaries who "went to their deaths," thus conditioning the possibility of a visceral, speculative, connection between the living and dead as the grounding of resistance.[80] Martyrdom is a speculative act. Resistance is founded upon this "eschatological subject" who opens themselves directly to the Outside.[81] It is through their action that "subjectivity (not that of great men, but that of anyone) is brought into history, breathing life into it. A convict risks his life to protest unjust punishments; a madman can no longer bear being confined and humiliated; a people refuses the regime that oppresses it."[82] This act is indistinguishable from the movement of the Outside; it offers the advent of an impossible, anonymous subjectivity of forces, bolstered, infinitized, and made immortal by its diffusion beyond finitude.

Moreover, it follows Meillassoux's criteria of worthiness (derived from his spectral dilemma) in which the thought of the Fourth World (immortalized subjects, resurrected spectres, universal justice) motivates the genuinely just and worthy revolutionary, as opposed to the laudable but unworthy revolutionary who militates for the sake of militancy itself. Struggle must always be oriented toward its contingent overcoming, toward that which is Outside—and which, necessarily, engages a form of religiosity (historically a site which has embraced the invasions and epidemics of the Outside). That is, both the Foucauldian and Meillassouxian resistance fighter operate under the sign of the absolute (the Outside) which can *alone* bring about genuine change, as opposed to the idols of false

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[77] Ibid., 455.

[78] "Thought from the Outside," 16.

[79] *The Essential Works of Foucault: Power*, 450.

[80] Ibid., 451.

[81] A term also used by Meillassoux to describe his 'vectoral subject' that follows a 'divine ethics.'

[82] Ibid., 452.

change erected by ongoing iterations of resistance disconnected from the Outside. The latter are, following our diagram of the Outside, in fact nothing but accumulations of power donning the righteous façades of resistance.

And, so, where do we begin? Perhaps in front of "Las Meninas;" perhaps among our closest friends and comrades; perhaps in the throes of revolt and rejection of capital. The worthy act of revolt—the sudden leap into the abyss and annihilation—is prepared by a practice forged in resistance to power, a practice of Foucauldian friendship-in-struggle (in *force*) and of the diffused-self which hopes, in its laborious movement, to found a just world. This is to say, finally, that it is only the transgressive subject, the unreason-able subject, who justifies nothing—and, in doing so, can leap into that very nothingness: the Absence, the Outside.

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Appendix[83]

"Las Meninas" (right-side-up)

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[83] Velázquez, Diego, "Las Meninas," Madrid: Museo del Prado, 1656. Public Domain.

"Las Meninas" Focus: Princess Infanta 'Daring Look' and the 'Beaker/Keyhole'

"Las Meninas" Focus: Princess Infanta 'Daring Look' and the 'Beaker/Keyhole'

"Las Meninas" Upside-Down

FOUCAULT STUDIES

ARTICLE

Faux Amis, Vrais Amis?
Amis.

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ABSTRACT. Recent commentaries on the relation between Deleuze and Foucault often operate with an implicit idea of compatibility or consistency that postulates systematic harmony as the decisive criterion for the affinity between them. Accordingly, the predominant question is whether Deleuze and Foucault are "true" friends philosophically and politically. Although the assessments differ, they share a likewise implicit notion of the friend as familiar that excludes any form of ambivalence in amicable relations and consequently cannot fully account for the dynamics and variability of the relation between Deleuze and Foucault. This article tries to address this problem by suspending the notion of the friend-as-familiar, effectively posing the question of what concept of friendship we would have if the ambivalent relation between Deleuze and Foucault would be the model. For this, the reconstruction begins with the early encounters and follows their relationship until the supposed split in the context of the desire-pleasure-debate. What becomes apparent is the dialogical structure of the philosophical friendship between Deleuze and Foucault that entails convergences as well as divergences, which will eventually be related to their own and fundamentally different concepts of friendship. Deleuze and Foucault, as will be argued, are neither "vrais amis" nor "faux amis" but simply *amis* that practised *a* form of philosophical friendship, lasting for more than 15 years.

Keywords: Deleuze, Foucault, friendship, dialogue, power, desire.

I

Between friends – what do we mean, when we speak of the friend, philosophically? Are we still asking, like Plato, what differentiates the true from the false friend?[1] Are we still in need to know the truth about an amicable relation, to know the truth about the reality

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[1] See Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?* [1991] (1994), 2-6.

of its desire ("Mais que fabriquent donc les hommes ensemble..."[2])? Or is the friend philosophically conceived in terms of the social relation called friendship, in all its historical contingency? Is the friend in philosophy in the end a double of the empirical friend? And if so – which empirical friend exactly is the model of the philosophical friend? The free and equal man of the *pólis*? Faderman's romantic woman-friend?[3] Our childhood friends?

The problem of the friend in philosophy becomes even more delicate when it comes to friendships between philosophers. More delicate not because these types of friendships would be exceptional in any way but insofar as the intermingling between the empiricity of a social relation called friendship and the quasi-transcendental meaning of *phílos* as a prerequisite for philosophical practice is almost inevitable. At the same time, the problem becomes more concrete insofar as the opportunity is provided to suspend the usually moralising approach to speak *about* the friend *in abstracto*, to define its essence, to categorise its phenomenal abundancy, that characterises philosophies of friendship from Plato to Montaigne. Instead, friendships between philosophers, philosophical friendships, allow for a consideration of a mode of speaking *to* the friend retraceable in the respective writings.[4] Friendships between philosophers provide the opportunity to consider the practice of (philosophical) friendship *in actu*, so to speak, before or beyond its projection onto ready-made images of friendship.[5]

A recent and often commented example of these kinds of philosophical friendships would be the relationship between Gilles Deleuze and Michel Foucault. Besides the well-known biographical reconstructions of their shared philosophical and political engagement,[6] the comments on their philosophical convergences and divergences – a debate that starts as early as the 1970s and thus doubles not only their reception but also

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[2] Michel Foucault, "Michel Foucault, une interview: sexe, pouvoir et la politique de l'identité" [1984], in *Dits et Écrits, Tome 4: 1980-1988* (1994), 745.

[3] See Lillian Faderman, *Surpassing the Love of Men: Romantic Friendship and Love Between Woman from Renaissance to the Present* (1981).

[4] This possibility of addressing the friend in philosophy appears, at latest, with Michel de Montainge's self-inquiry that was initiated and structured by the event of the death of his friend Étienne de La Boétie (see Michel de Montaigne, "Of Friendship" [1580], in *The Essays of Montaigne* (2013)). As such, "Of Friendship" marks a caesura as well as a mediation insofar as Montaigne draws on antique debates about friendship that had come to a halt during the times of the Christian overcoding of *philía* through *agape*, while establishing the form of the essay as an actualised form for this debate. This mode of writing *to* and *for* the friend has been readopted in the 20th century by philosophers like Jacques Derrida and Avital Ronell. See Jacques Derrida, *The Work of Mourning*, ed. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (2001) and Avital Ronell, "On Friendship; Or, Kathy Goes to Hell" [2002], in *The ÜberReader: Selected Works of Avital Ronell*, ed. Diane Davis (2008).

[5] Arno Böhler similarly conceives of friendship as a field where the empirical appearance of living bodies starts to matter and the singularity of some-body, of an other, becomes significant. See Arno Böhler, *Unterwegs zu einer Sprache der Freundschaft. DisTanzen: Nietzsche – Deleuze – Derrida* (2000) and Arno Böhler, *Singularitäten. Vom zu-reichenden Grund der Zeit. Vorspiel einer Philosophie der Zukunft* (2005).

[6] See especially the biographies of Foucault – Didier Eribon, *Michel Foucault* [1989] (1991), James Miller, *The Passion of Michel Foucault* (1993), and David Macey, *The Lives of Michel Foucault* (1994) – as well as of Deleuze respectively Deleuze and Guattari – François Dosse, *Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari: Intersecting Lives* [2007] (2010) and Frida Beckman, *Gilles Deleuze* (2017).

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the very relation it comments upon[7] – show very clearly how difficult it is to do justice to the singularity and processuality of *a* friendship, i.e., to suspend the ideas of what a "true" friendship ought to be in favour of its concrete, sometimes ambivalent givenness. The respective comments could be roughly grouped according to two more recent, almost emblematic, publications, namely Wendy Grace's "Faux Amis: Foucault and Deleuze on Sexuality and Desire"[8] and Christian Gilliam's "Vrais Amis: Reconsidering the Philosophical Relationship Between Foucault and Deleuze,"[9] inasmuch as the faux/vrais-distinction marks the overall coordinates along which large parts of the debate is conducted. The question is whether Deleuze and Foucault are "true" friends philosophically and politically.

To be clear: It is not about denouncing Grace's or Gilliam's take on this subject or the debate on Deleuze and Foucault in general; quite the opposite. I am also aware that the notion of the friend has no explicit conceptual status in Grace or Gilliam but reacts, in the case of Grace, to an overly sympathetic reading of Deleuze and Foucault that focuses almost exclusively on their commonalities, thus highlighting important differences, towards which Gilliam, in turn, reacts, emphasising a fundamental, ontological continuity. Grace's "faux amis" and Gilliam's "vrais amis" are not even pre-conceptual figures but catchwords for their respective assessments of Deleuze's and Foucault's philosophical compatibility that should not be overinterpreted as such. Nonetheless, Grace's and Gilliam's accounts, as well as the majority of the corresponding scholarly "camps," revolve around an implicit idea of compatibility, consistency or commonality that postulates systematic harmony as the decisive criterion for the affinity between Deleuze and Foucault. The problem is that the concrete givenness of the differential and ambivalent relation between Deleuze and Foucault is measured against a pre-given and hardly questioned ideal. The *difference* can be semantic at most; philosophically, ontologically and politically there is either harmony or not, either *philía* or not.

Given this ideal of systematic harmony, it is not by chance that the *ami* comes to be the headline under which the compatibility of Deleuze and Foucault is assessed, despite the fact, again, that the friend is not an explicit analytical notion. For how do we understand the notion of the friend, of friendship, contemporarily? The friend is first of all a confidant, a familiar, at least since Montaigne, whose considerations on friendship mark the definite conclusion of a process of displacement of the political, public meaning of the friend towards an almost exclusively private, depoliticised one. What was once an equal and rival in public debates is now a familiar to which I privately confide, so to speak. As said, there are contemporary attempts of a rehabilitation of a public (aestheti-

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[7] See for example Jacques Lagrange, "'La Volonté de savoir' de Michel Foucault ou une généalogie du sexe," *Psychanalyse à l'université* 2:7 (1977), and Maurice Dayan, "D'un ci-devant sujet," *Nouvelle Revue de psychanalyse* 20 (1979), as Wendy Grace noticed (see Wendy Grace, "Faux Amis: Foucault and Deleuze on Sexuality and Desire," *Critical Inquiry* 36:1 (2009), 53).

[8] Grace, "Faux Amis."

[9] Christian Gilliam, "Vrais Amis: Reconsidering the Philosophical Relationship Between Foucault and Deleuze," *Foucault Studies* 25 (2018).

co-ethical) or transcendental/noological notion of the friend, as, for example, in Foucault and Deleuze, but the overall idea of the friend, its *dóxa* or cliché that comes automatically to our minds when we think of the friend, does rather correspond to the image of the friend-as-familiar.

This habitual figure of the friend appears to be what Deleuze calls a "subjective or implicit presupposition."[10] That is the presumption that everybody knows what is meant by friend or friendship and that therefore these notions can provide the mutually accepted beginning of the enquiry (as for Descartes the notions of self, thinking, being, for example). As Deleuze shows, however, subjective or implicit presuppositions are contained in mere opinions or feelings, thus repeating or doubling their historical context and reducing every problem to the recognition of the already known. Subjective presuppositions only ever allow for the explication of the implicit opinions or *dóxa* in which they are contained.

In short: Besides all content-related criticism one could have regarding Grace's, Gilliam's or any other faux/vrais-approach, the critique also needs to be extended to the model of friendship implicitly at work in these approaches, a model that seems to merely copy a common sense idea of the friend, thus hypostatising it, which in sum equals more or less a crypto-normative evaluation of a concrete relationship according to a pre-given, almost transcendent ideal. In other words, it is less about a criticism of a specific reading of Deleuze and Foucault and more about a problematisation of the categories in terms of which these readings and the corresponding debates are conducted. If we say that the basic category of these readings is the friend-as-familiar, the fundamental aim of this contribution would be a suspension of this category. As we will see, this suspension ultimately leads to a notion of the friend that oscillates between agreement and distance, thus acknowledging the possibility of ambivalence in amicable relations as well as a perspective on Deleuze and Foucault that accounts also for the dynamics, the temporal succession and variability of their relation.

For this, I will start from the actual material, the implicit and explicit references between Deleuze and Foucault, and the assumption that their relationship can be in fact described as a friendship. In other words, I am posing the question of what concept of friendship we would have if the relation between Deleuze and Foucault would be our model, instead of asking whether Deleuze and Foucault are true friends in a meaning superimposed on their actual relation and modelled after the *dóxa* of the friend. In order to avoid the pitfall of an overly affirmative and in itself hypostatising conceptual elevation of an empirical fact (a social relationship), I will relate the dialogical conception of friendship indicated by the relation between Deleuze and Foucault with their own concepts of friendship. The idea is to show that the respective philosophical behaviours, the convergences and divergences, are related to the respective concepts of friendship, thus bringing the idea of a unitary conception of the friend and of friendship at all into question. The dialogical model of friendship is thus just one possible type or form of friend-

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[10] Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition* [1968] (1994), 129.

ship among others, which specifically aims at the relationship between Deleuze and Foucault.

Though there is a connection between Deleuze's and Foucault's philosophical relation, characterised by the dialogical model of friendship, and their respective conceptions of friendship, they are not identical. The main concern of this article is, as said, the implicit model of friendship operative in large parts of the commentaries on the relation between Deleuze and Foucault that is challenged by a dialogical model of friendship. Deleuze's and Foucault's conceptions of friendship come into play only where they correspond to this dialogical model and explain some aspects of the way they perceived and enacted their relation, but they are not the conceptual resources of this dialogical model. In other words: It would be absurd if the dialogical model representing the relation between Deleuze and Foucault would have nothing to do with their conceptions of friendship, but it is not an interpretation, systematisation or variation of these conceptions. The dialogical model concerns the overall structure of the philosophical, not biographical or personal, relation between Deleuze and Foucault, conceptualised as this specific type or form of friendship that emphasises temporal dynamicity and amicable ambivalence in its performance. The question of whether this image of friendship could be a productive complement to, alternative to or critique of the socially, politically, and – as accordingly modelled – also philosophically predominant image of the friend-as-familiar shall remain open, since it is not the concern of this contribution. The construction of an inverted image of the friend-as-familiar serves the methodical purpose of taking the entirety of the relationship between Deleuze and Foucault into account without its hasty projection onto the *dóxa* of the friend.

II

First, however, we should have a closer look at the comments. As said, we could roughly group the literature on the philosophical relationship between Deleuze and Foucault according to Grace's and Gilliam's faux/vrais-distinction inasmuch as both approaches presuppose the same image of the friend-as-familiar, while differing in the assessments of whether the relationship between Deleuze and Foucault meets this criterion or not. In presupposing this – generalised and simplified – ordering of the rather abundant literature, I am passing over a third camp – for the sake of consistency rather than elegance we could call it post-faux/vrais-approaches – that is negligible for my purposes insofar as there is no implicit or explicit concept of the friend or of friendship at work, as far as I am aware, except for Christopher Penfield's contribution, which will be discussed in section IV. Generally, these approaches postulate either to investigate the conceptual tensions between Deleuze and Foucault further, as these tensions seem to represent the actual productive encounters,[11] or they are stressing some sort of dynamicity or tem-

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[11] See Dianna Taylor, "Uncertain Ontologies," *Foucault Studies* 17 (2014), Leonard Lawlor and Janae Sholtz, "Speaking Out for Others: Philosophy's Activity in Deleuze and Foucault (and Heidegger)," in *Between Deleuze and Foucault*, ed. Nicolae Morar, Thomas Nail and Daniel W. Smith (2016), and Thomas Nail, "Bi-

poral aspect in the relation between Deleuze and Foucault.[12] Post-faux/vrais-approaches thus relate Deleuze and Foucault without subsuming one under the other through a consideration of the shared becoming of and between Deleuze and Foucault. This is important since almost all faux/vrais-approaches are systematising ones but only inasmuch as they are implicitly or explicitly adopting and privileging one side, which consequently amounts in showing whether the other side conforms with the adopted one or not. What seems to be left unconsidered in these approaches is the possibility that there could be some sort of dialogue, some sort of back and forth movement, or some sort of reconsideration of older positions.

Vrais

The subsumption of one under the other is especially prevalent in vrais-approaches, which, interestingly enough, are often adopting a Deleuzian standpoint or framework corresponding to the double meaning of the virtual multiplicity as an ontogenetic as well as noogenetic concept. Primary examples for these approaches would be John Protevi, who understands Deleuze's concept of multiplicity as the basis for Foucault's analytics of power, and Colin Koopman, who tries to mediate Deleuze's and Foucault's critiques against the backdrop of Deleuze's theory of thinking in *Difference and Repetition*.[13]

A second starting point for systematising approaches, and generally the most important aspect discussed when it comes to the question of true friendship between

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opower and Control," in *Between Deleuze and Foucault*, ed. Nicolae Morar, Thomas Nail and Daniel W. Smith (2016).

[12] See Judith Revel, "Foucault lecteur de Deleuze: de l'écart à la différence," *Critique* 591/592 (1996), Ralf Krause and Marc Rölli, "Die Subjektivierung der Macht. Zu Begehren und Lust bei Gilles Deleuze und Michel Foucault," in *sinn macht unbewusstes, unbewusstes macht sinn*, ed. Ulrike Kadi and Gerhard Unterthurner (2005), Marc Rölli. "A Pragmatism of Difference? Gilles Deleuze's pragmatic move beyond structuralism," *Deleuze Online* 1 (2008), Christopher Penfield, "Toward a Theory of Transversal Politics: Deleuze and Foucault's Block of Becoming," *Foucault Studies* 17 (2014), Kevin Thompson, "Foucault and the 'Image of Thought': Archeology, Genealogy, and the Impetus of Transcendental Empiricism," in *Between Deleuze and Foucault*, ed. Nicolae Morar, Thomas Nail and Daniel W. Smith (2016), and Wendyl Luna, "Re-Thinking Thought: Foucault, Deleuze, and the Possibility of Thinking," *Foucault Studies* 27 (2019).

[13] See John Protevi, "Foucault's Deleuzian Methodology of the Late 1970s," in *Between Deleuze and Foucault*, ed. Nicolae Morar, Thomas Nail and Daniel W. Smith (2016), Colin Koopman, "Critical Problematization in Foucault and Deleuze: The Force of Critique without Judgement," in *Between Deleuze and Foucault*, ed. Nicolae Morar, Thomas Nail and Daniel W. Smith (2016), and Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 129–167. Similar to Protevi, Marco Checchi, Erinn C. Gilson and Gordon C.F. Bearn develop ontological Deleuzianisms in order to mediate between Deleuze and Foucault (see Marco Checchi, "Spotting the Primacy of Resistance in the Virtual Encounter of Foucault and Deleuze," *Foucault Studies* 18 (2014), Erinn C. Gilson, "Ethics and the ontology of freedom: problematization and responsiveness in Foucault and Deleuze," *Foucault Studies* 17 (2014), and Gordon C.F. Bearn, "Careful Becomings: Foucault, Deleuze, and Bergson," *Human Affairs* 27 (2017)). Marc Rölli adopts a mediary position in this regard, inasmuch as he presupposes a Deleuzeo-Spinozistic *potentia/puissance* as the basis of his considerations without neglecting the importance of historical shifts in the relation between Deleuze and Foucault (see Marc Rölli, "Deleuze as a Theorist of Power," *Coils of the Serpent* 1 (2017)). Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, on the other hand, operate, similar to Koopman, in a general political Deleuzian framework, where Foucault acts as a cursory source of inspiration (see Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (2000)).

Deleuze and Foucault, is the desire-vs.-pleasure-debate. One could even argue that it is *in nuce* this problem that provokes the abundancy of literature regarding the relationship between Deleuze and Foucault at all since almost every scholarly comment on this topic addresses the problem in one way or another. In a recent take on this subject, Nicolae Morar and Marjorie Gracieuse, for example, argue that there is, against Deleuze's and Foucault's own views, no real tension between Deleuze's desire and Foucault's pleasure but rather a common enemy, namely liberationist theories.[14] Similarly, Gilliam argues in his "Vrais Amis" that there is just a semantic difference between Foucault's power-knowledge/pleasure and Deleuze's micropolitics/desire, while the real and underlying consistency is to be found in a shared ontology of immanence (via Nietzsche, not Spinoza).[15] Desire and pleasure are different on an ontic level but ontologically they are consistent insofar as both notions are committed to an ontology of pure immanence. The difference is semantic inasmuch as it expresses a difference in emphasis concerning the affectivity of power; both desire and pleasure, however, express first of all an increase in power understood, fundamentally Deleuzian, as an affective-virtual multiplicity.[16] While it is certainly true that there is an idea of immanence in Foucault, it remains arguable if this immanence can be identified with Deleuzian immanence, as we shall see later, since it seems to be a consequence of a non-substantialist concept of power, whereas Deleuze's immanence has its origins, besides Nietzsche, precisely in the Spinozistic premise of the equivalence of substance, power as *potentia/puissance*, nature, and god. In postulating precisely this – that Foucauldian immanence is more or less identical with Deleuzian immanence – however, Gilliam reads Foucault from a Deleuzian perspective, effectively claiming him to be a sort of crypto-Deleuzian.

Besides this contentual critique, which is again not the main concern here, Gilliam, similar to Morar and Gracieuse, makes a crucial point for the entire debate when he clarifies that Deleuzian desire has to be understood in terms of Nietzschean will to power: Far from being some sort of "pre-symbolic libidinal flux,"[17] desiring-production and social production are exactly the same. There is no separation between an originary libidinal domain of desire and a secondary, essentially repressive and overcoding social domain in Deleuze and Guattari – an idea that would rather resemble liberationist theories – but an immanence of both. This remark is highly important because the majority of the faux-approaches base their argument in one way or another on the difference between the affirmation of a supposedly natural and primordial desire on behalf of Deleuze and a less naïve distancing of this notion in terms of a cultural-historic method on behalf of Foucault.

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[14] See Nicolae Morar and Marjorie Gracieuse, "Against the Incompatibility Thesis: A *rather* Different Reading of the Desire-Pleasure Problem," in *Between Deleuze and Foucault,* ed. Nicolae Morar, Thomas Nail and Daniel W. Smith (2016).

[15] See Gilliam, "Vrais Amis," 194.

[16] See Ibid., 209.

[17] Ibid., 199.

Faux

One early example of this strategy that heavily influenced the faux-camp would be Judith Butler, who grants Deleuze to have left behind Marcuse's binary scheme (eros vs. civilisation).[18] Nonetheless, Butler continues, Deleuze neglects the cultural history and cultural constitution of desire in favour of an ontological conception, which Butler calls an "erotics of multiplicity,"[19] that has its origins in his reading of Nietzsche.[20] Foucault, who reads Nietzsche as a theorist of discursive power, in turn, acknowledges the historical constitution of desire and is able to avoid the problem of a naturalisation of desire.[21]

While, as already said, it is true that Deleuze's concept of desire is essentially ontological, it is not a libidinal conception in the first place. To add a Spinozistic remark to Gilliam's Nietzschean one, we could say that desire is an ontological concept inasmuch as it means something like *potentia* or *natura naturans*, but it is not a mere ontologisation or substantialisation of libido. It seems important to repeat this since subsequent faux-approaches agree with Butler in this regard and take the Deleuzian notion of desire more or less literally as sexual, libidinal desire, which Foucault opposes insofar as it is a naïve naturalisation of a cultural-historical complex. Grace, for example, contends a general irreconcilability on the basis of the desire-pleasure-difference.[22] In doing so, Grace expands Butler's thesis, which was limited to the very notion of desire, inasmuch as she grants only Foucault to have a fundamentally new conception of (productive) power.[23] This new conception poses power-relations as primary, meaning primary also to relations of production, which is incompatible with Deleuze and Guattari as they remain stuck in an anachronistic Marxism that operates with the conception of power as repression.[24] Thus, Deleuze and Guattari are perfectly in line with Freudo-Marxisms à la Reich or Marcuse inasmuch as they repeat the traditional equation of power-as-repression and the state in general: the state has power insofar as it represses through laws.[25] Much like Gilliam, Grace concentrates her arguments around the desire-pleasure-problem, although, like Butler, situated in a general Foucauldian framework, and corresponds her assessment with Deleuze's and Foucault's ontologies derived from their respective readings of Nietzsche. Similar to Gilliam, Grace thus tends to assume a specific Foucauldian ontology that now, of course, is more or less the negation of Deleuze's on-

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[18] See Judith Butler, *Subjects of Desire: Hegelian Reflections in Twentieth-Century France* [1987] (2012), 213.

[19] Ibid., 216.

[20] See ibid., 214-215, 219.

[21] See ibid., 214-215.

[22] See "Faux Amis," 53. For a similar standpoint, see also David Rabouin, "Entre Deleuze et Foucault: le Jeu du Désir et du Pouvoir," *Critique* 637/638 (2000), and Frida Beckman, *Between Desire and Pleasure: A Deleuzian Theory of Sexuality* (2013).

[23] See "Faux Amis," 58.

[24] See ibid., 63.

[25] See ibid., 71. Grace substantiates the thesis of a fundamental irreconcilability between Deleuze and Foucault in a further article that relates the respective standpoints – in a manner similar to Butler as well as Gilliam although with different results – to their readings of Nietzsche, which basically amount to an ontology of beings on behalf of Deleuze and an ontology of culture on behalf of Foucault. See Wendy Grace, "Foucault and Deleuze: Making a Difference with Nietzsche," *Foucault Studies* 17 (2014).

tology but in line with Butler's accounts of Foucault's reading of Nietzsche. But both Grace and Gilliam are very quick to assert a Foucauldian ontology. We discussed the purpose of this in the case of Gilliam already – constructing a systematic harmony on the basis of an ultimately Deleuzian ontology, adopted also by Foucault – but in contrast to Gilliam, for Grace this requires the construction of a genuine Foucauldian ontology radically different to Deleuze's. Grace implements this in suggesting an ontology of culture. But what does an ontology of culture mean other than a theory of culture? And would the difference still seem as radical if we oppose a Deleuzian ontology to a Foucauldian theory of culture? Nonetheless, it is certainly true that Foucault's reservations against the notion of desire cannot be argued away.[26]

In the light of this discussion – where to start the reconstruction of the relationship between Deleuze and Foucault? First of all, the predominant concentration on the desire-pleasure-debate seems to be a major problem insofar as it generally leads to a homogenisation and reduction of the relationship between Deleuze and Foucault – supported by their own statements of course – to a conceptual difference that seems to be obvious, mutually accepted, and determinant. A relationship that lasted for about 15 years is thus considered in terms of some – not even all – of the reciprocal references in the years 1976 and 1977.[27] Starting from this, the enquiries tend to substantiate their assessments through the reconstruction of matching ontologies that serve as the secret reason for either the consistency or inconsistency of their standpoints. Ultimately, this means that the entire relationship between Deleuze and Foucault is read against the desire-pleasure-problem through a systematic homogenisation and ontological founding, which effectively equals a liquidation of the relational dynamics and postulates a stasis and conformity in the respective perspectives that were factually related in a continuous movement of convergence and divergence. Accordingly, we would need to invoke a temporal perspective that would also take account of the early encounters. Insofar as the space is limited here, I can only roughly outline the early years of their relationship. But this should suffice to invert the predominant perspective that starts from the end and reads the relationship entirely according to this end, subsuming it under the categories already mentioned. In contrast, coming from a consideration of their early years should

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[26] Daniel W. Smith, for example, also claims that the incompatibility of Deleuze's and Foucault's concepts of resistance relates precisely to Deleuze's specific notion of desire (see Daniel W. Smith, "Two Concepts of Resistance: Foucault and Deleuze," in *Between Deleuze and Foucault*, ed. Nicolae Morar, Thomas Nail and Daniel W. Smith (2016)). Similarly, Paul Patton relates Foucault's polemics against the state phobia to political differences with Deleuze and Guattari and understands the difference between Deleuze and Foucault as a political-philosophical rather than ontological one (see Paul Patton, "Activism, Philosophy and Actuality in Deleuze and Foucault," *Deleuze Studies* 4 (Supplement 2010) and Paul Patton, "Deleuze and Foucault: Political Activism, History and Actuality," in *Between Deleuze and Foucault*, ed. Nicolae Morar, Thomas Nail and Daniel W. Smith (2016)).

[27] The *loci classici* would be, of course, Michel Foucault, *The Will to Knowledge: The History of Sexuality, Volume 1* [1976] (1978) and Gilles Deleuze, "Desire and Pleasure" [1994/1977], in *Between Deleuze and Foucault*, ed. Nicolae Morar, Thomas Nail and Daniel W. Smith (2016).

lead to a reassessment of the desire-pleasure-debate and the period 1975-1978[28] that also accounts for the fundamental ambivalence and dynamicity.

III

Apropos ambivalence: As Morar and Gracieuse demonstrated, it is questionable whether Foucault's critique of desire was actually aimed at Deleuze and Guattari or rather targeted pre-Deleuzeo-Guattarian notions of desire that conceived of desire as a permanently assignable character trait of an individual, as the truth of the individual that reveals its essence ("Tell me what your desire is, and I'll tell you what you are as a subject").[29] Besides, it is also questionable whether Foucault in fact tries to establish the notion of pleasure as an alternative to desire or if he rather confines himself to a historical scepticism towards this notion in general ("I'm fundamentally not attached to the notion of pleasure, but I'm quite frankly hostile to the pre-Deleuzian, non-Deleuzian notion of desire").[30] There is even a sort of late, positive reappearance or adoption of desire understood as an aesthetico-ethical possibility for creation in Foucault ("Nous devons comprendre qu'avec nos désirs, à travers eux, s'instaurent de nouvelles formes de rapports, de nouvelles formes d'amour et de nouvelles formes des création").[31] But on the other hand, Foucault's interview with Jean Le Bitoux from 1978 also shows the possibility that the difference between Deleuze and Foucault regarding the notion of desire is even more profound inasmuch as Foucault's general criticism concerns the explanatory role typically assigned to desire, which Deleuze and Guattari perpetuate to some degree,

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[28] Besides the debateableness of any periodisation, we could structure the interchange or dialogue between Deleuze and Foucault in the narrower sense (i.e., despite their earlier encounters, for example, due to their work on the French translation of Colli and Montinari's Nietzsche-edition and the cooled down politeness after 1978) in three phases: 1. From 1965-1969 there is a shared engagement with and critique of transcendental philosophies, resulting in Deleuze's transcendental empiricism and Foucault's archaeologies of knowledges as a sort of historical transcendentalism. 2. From 1970-1974 and roughly co-extensive with the existence of the GIP (*Le Groupe d'information sur les prisons*) the subject of dialogue becomes predominantly the question of what new figure of the intellectual one could construct that would correspond with May 1968. This most convergent phase is related to an activist reading of Nietzsche, hence to a Nietzschean politics. 3. From 1975-1978 the focus of their dialogue shifts to the question of the state and the role of repression due to the impression of the failure of the revolution 1968 and the subsequent backlash. Marx is the shared but hidden point of reference here, although the conclusions regarding state, repression, revolution, and resistance differ fundamentally.

[29] See Morar and Gracieuse, "Against the Incompatibility Thesis," 241, and Michel Foucault, "The Gay Science" [1978], *Critical Inquiry* 37:3 (2011), 390. That Foucault actually had Freudo-Marxisms like Marcuse or Reich in mind when he criticised desire is also made plausible by an entry in one of his personal notebooks, accessible at Bibliothèque Nationale de France, from 1st January 1973, where Foucault explicitly opposes Marcuse's production-eros-dichotomy with Deleuze's (and Guattari's – though Foucault does not mention him here) differenciation of productive and anti-productive forces. See Michel Foucault, "72–73 Pouvoir-Savoir" [1972-1973], Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Département des Manuscrits, Fonds Michel Foucault, NAF 28730, box 92, document 14. I would like to thank Arianna Sforzini and Laurence Le Bras for their invaluable help with the *Fonds Michel Foucault*.

[30] Foucault, "The Gay Science," 390.

[31] Foucault, "Michel Foucault, une interview," 735. See as well "Against the Incompatibility Thesis," 242.

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although rather in the philosophical tradition of the principle of sufficient reason.[32] And interestingly enough, it is not questionable at all if Deleuze was sceptical towards the notion of pleasure; on the contrary, he was explicitly against this notion ("I cannot give any positive value to pleasure because pleasure seems to me to interrupt the immanent process of desire").[33] But we will come back to all that later on. First, we should have a look at their early encounters before reassessing the well-known references from 1975 onwards.

The early and middle years: 1965–1974

Generally, we could say that the dialogue between Deleuze and Foucault in the narrower sense starts more or less in the middle of *The Order of Things* with the chapter on "Man and His Doubles" inasmuch as Deleuze takes up the idea of the irreducible and inevitable structure of reduplication in the modern episteme, especially the reduplication of the empirical in the transcendental, in *Difference and Repetition*, where he attributes it – in contrast to Foucault – as a hidden gesture or even method explicitly to Kant.[34] What, at first glance, seems to be a singular and cursory reference to Foucault turns out to be decisive in the light of Deleuze's review of *The Order of Things* as well as an article with the instructive title "How Do We Recognize Structuralism?," written about the same time, where Deleuze stresses the need for a new transcendental philosophy given Foucault's analysis of the modern episteme and, more generally, of a new image of thought.[35] Deleuze conforms to this claim with the doctrine of transcendental empiricism and a critique of what he calls the dogmatic image of thought that is, among others, built upon the transcendentalisation of the empirical act of recognition and hence upon an empirico-transcendental reduplication.[36] So, in general, we could say that the Nietzscheo-Kantian theme of a critique of habits of thought and Deleuze's alternative to that is, to a significant degree, influenced by Foucault's analysis of the modern episteme and its specific anthropological structure of reduplication. But *The Order of Things* also plays a role in *Anti-Oedipus,* where Deleuze and Guattari reference Foucault for having analysed the pivotal role of production for the breakdown of representation in the transition from the classical to the modern episteme while also accounting for the re-establishment of repre-

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[32] See "The Gay Science."

[33] Deleuze, "Desire and Pleasure," 228.

[34] See Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archeology of the Human Sciences* [1966] (1970), 330-374, and *Difference and Repetition,* 135, 143, 144, 159, 161. Besides this theme, Deleuze also takes up Foucault's discussion of the role of identity and resemblance for representation in the classical episteme. See Foucault, *The Order of Things*, 54-74 and *Difference and Repetition*, 262, 320. Deleuze's account of representation – one of the mainly criticised concepts in *Difference and Repetition* – is thus also at least partly shaped by Foucault's historical analysis.

[35] See Gilles Deleuze, "Humans: A Dubious Existence" [1966], in *Desert Islands and Other Texts, 1953-1974,* ed. David Lapoujade (2004) and Gilles Deleuze, "How Do We Recognize Structuralism?" [1972/1967], in *Desert Islands and Other Texts, 1953-1974*, ed. David Lapoujade (2004).

[36] See *Difference and Repetition*, 143-144, 133-137.

sentation through the human sciences in the course of the 19th century.[37] Nonetheless, it is predominantly Foucault's *History of Madness* to which Deleuze and Guattari respond as well as conform in *Anti-Oedipus*, be it either in the account of the intertwining of psychoanalysis and a certain familialism or in the diagnosis of the completion of 19th century psychiatry through contemporary psychoanalysis.[38]

On behalf of Foucault, the influences of, adoptions of, or reactions to Deleuze and Deleuze and Guattari are far more general and summary, which is probably the reason why there have been quite a few comments that estimate the role of Deleuze and Deleuze and Guattari as indispensable. As for explicit references, there are mainly two points of influences in the years 1970-1975. On the one hand, we have the general acknowledgment of the importance of *Anti-Oedipus* for *Discipline and Punish* in particular and subsequently the analytics of power in general: "In any case, I could give no notion by references or quotations what this book owes to Gilles Deleuze and the work he is undertaking with Félix Guattari."[39] Of course, it is always somehow speculative to attribute this acknowledgement, which almost seems like a personal dedication, to a definite concept or figure of thought one could find in Deleuze or Deleuze and Guattari, but the literature usually assimilates it with the adoption of a general pluralism via the concept of multiplicity.[40] And in fact – this would be the second point – the idea of Foucault's "pluralistic conversion" under the impression of *Difference and Repetition* makes not only perfect sense in the light of the fundamental difference between the epochal and monolithic structures of *The Order of Things* and the distributed micro-physics of power in *Discipline and Punish*. It is also made plausible by Foucault's own evaluation of his relation to Deleuze:

> La pensée de Deleuze est profondément pluraliste. Il a fait ses études en même temps que moi et il préparait un mémoire sur Hume. J'en faisai un sur Hegel. J'étais de l'autre côté, car, à cette époque j'étais communiste, tandis qu'il était déjà pluraliste.[41]

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[37] See Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* [1972] (1977), 299, 303 and *The Order of Things,* 208-211, 253-256. For the theme of representation and the classical episteme in Deleuze, see also footnote 34.

[38] See Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 50, 82-83, 271, 259 and Michel Foucault, *History of Madness* [1961] (2006), 489-493, 506, 511. See also Penfield, "Toward a Theory of Transversal Politics" for a detailed discussion of the relation between *History of Madness* and *Anti-Oedipus.* References to Foucault's role in this regard can also be found in Gilles Deleuze, "Capitalism and Schizophrenia" [1972], in *Desert Islands and Other Texts, 1953-1974*, ed. David Lapoujade, (2004), 234-235, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, "Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari on *Anti-Oedipus*" [1972], in *Negotiations: 1972-1990* (1995), 18, and Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues* [1977] (2007), 84.

[39] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* [1975] (1977), 309 (note 3 on p. 24).

[40] See for example Revel, "Foucault lecteur de Deleuze," "Toward a Theory of Transversal Politics," Protevi, "Foucault's Deleuzian Methodology of the Late 1970s," or Thompson, "Foucault and the 'Image of Thought'." For Deleuze's account of multiplicity, see *Difference and Repetition* as well as Gilles Deleuze, *Bergsonism* [1966] (1988).

[41] Michel Foucault, "La vérité et les formes juridiques" [1974/1973], in *Dits et Écrits, Tome 2: 1970-1975*, ed. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (1994), 627. The *mémoire* Foucault addresses here – as apparently the only occasion in his work – was called "La constitution d'un transcendantal historique dans la Phénoménologie de l'esprit de Hegel" (see Didier Eribon, *Michel Foucault et ses contemporains* (1994), 315) and is in

Similar to Deleuze's reception of the problem of the empirico-transcendental reduplication in the modern episteme, the pluralisation of Foucault's thought becomes apparent in his reviews of *Difference and Repetition* and *Logic of Sense.* One of the main themes of these reviews concerns philosophy's possibilities associated with the emancipation from the dogmatic image, which revolve around a thought of the intensive ("[p]enser l'intensité"[42]) understood as pure difference or difference in itself ("[…] car l'intensité, bien avant d'être graduée par la représentation, est en elle-même une pure différence"[43]). With the emancipation from the dogmatic image of thought comes an emancipation of difference from identity: difference becomes "un pur événement."[44] Broadly speaking, this thought of intensive difference or the event enables Foucault to change the perspective from the epochal structures of the episteme to the contingent, aleatory, and differential micro-milieus that give rise to these structures in the first place. The famous "Nietzsche, la généalogie, l'histoire" could be regarded as an early operationalisation of this Deleuzian influence that elaborates a historical adaption of intensive difference and the event in the sense of concrete historical struggles that determine a status quo.[45]

It is important to note, however, that this emerging micro-logical conception of power as an immanent complement to knowledge (power-knowledge) integrates intensity whereas Deleuze differenciates power from intensity, reserving the notion "power" ("pouvoir") for concrete instances of power in contrast to intensity as a transcendental field of force relations. Roughly speaking, we could say that Foucault has a notion of essentially productive not repressive *potestas* (pouvoir), while Deleuze has a dual conception of repressive *potestas* (pouvoir) and productive *potentia* (puissance). Nevertheless, it is Deleuze's conception of a multiplicity of intensive difference that serves as a vector of pluralisation for Foucault. The way Foucault adopts this conception indicates that it serves first and foremost as a conceptual grid, a scheme that enables the analysis of relations of power without recourse to a substance or transcendence of power (like the sovereign). There is no reason to assume that this import implies further ontological assumptions like a dimension of virtual, affective power in the Spinozistic sense. One could even go as far as to say that if there was such a "pluralistic conversion" then it leads to some sort of ironic Deleuzianism insofar as it causes the disappearance of every

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possession of Foucault's family as Holden Klem learned from Jean François Bert, secretary of the *Centre Michel Foucault* in 2014 (see Holden Klem, *Hegel und Foucault*, ed. Andreas Arndt, Myriam Gerhard and Jure Zovko, (2015) 180).

[42] Michel Foucault, "Ariane s'est pendue" [1969], in *Dits et Écrits, Tome 1: 1954-1969*, ed. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (1994), 770.

[43] Michel Foucault, "Theatrum philosophicum" [1970], in *Dits et Écrits, Tome 2: 1970-1975*, ed. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (1994), 89.

[44] Ibid., 88.

[45] See Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, la généalogie, l'histoire" [1971], in *Dits et Écrits, Tome 2: 1970-1975*, ed. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (1994) as well as the inaugural lecture at the *Collège de France*, Michel Foucault, "The Order of Discourse" [1970], in *Untying the Text: A Post-Structuralist Reader*, ed. Robert Young (1981), which operates with Deleuzian concepts like the incorporeal event from *Logic of Sense* or the Deleuzeo-Nietzschean dice-throw.

aspect of affirmation that inheres in Deleuzeo-Spinozistic conceptions of *potentia*. A multiplicity of powers means foremost a multiplicity of dominating, subjecting – not repressive, but nonetheless hardly affirmative or affirmed – powers in Foucault, so to speak, which are as such omnipresent but not omnipotent.[46]

Foucault's nuanced adoption of Deleuze's concepts is also reflected in the famous conversation "Intellectuals and Power" from 1972. Though Foucault declares his obligation to *Nietzsche and Philosophy* and *Anti-Oedipus* in questions of power and struggle, the theme of power, as mentioned, is already established before 1972, as for example in "Nietzsche, la généalogie, l'histoire."[47] Deleuze's influence on Foucault's conception of power stems thus primarily from *Difference and Repetition* and less from *Anti-Oedipus*, with which it certainly converges in central aspects. "Intellectuals and Power," in contrast, is especially interesting because of the indicated points of divergence.[48] For Foucault, for example, theory is a praxis ("C'est en cela que la théorie n'exprimera pas, ne traduira pas, n'appliquera pas une pratique, elle est une pratique,")[49] while for Deleuze there is a transversal relation of potentiality or transgression between theory and praxis that is systematically distinguished throughout the conversation ("La pratique est un ensemble de relais d'un point théorique à un autre, et la théorie, un relais d'une pratique à une autre").[50] This slight difference corresponds to Foucault's claim that theory develops within a system of power in which intellectuals inescapably participate:

> Eux-mêmes, intellectuels, font partie de ce système de pouvoir […]. Le rôle de l'intellectuel n'est plus de se placer 'un peu en avant ou un peu à côté' pour dire la vérité muette de tous; c'est plutôt de lutter contre les formes de pouvoir là où il en est à la fois l'objet et l'instrument: dans l'ordre du 'savoir', de la 'vérité', de la 'conscience', du 'discours'.[51]

This claim is quite misinterpreted by Deleuze, who instead attributes to Foucault his own, obviously oppositional idea of a mutual exclusion of power and theory ("C'est le pouvoir qui par nature opère des totalisations, et vous, vous dites exactement: la théorie par nature est contre le pouvoir").[52] The reason for these differences lies again in the fact that we have a dual conception of power in Deleuze (virtual-intensive fields of force re-

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[46] For this last point – omnipresence vs. omnipotence – which is probably also a major difference in Deleuze's and Foucault's conceptions of power, see: Michel Foucault, C. Gordon and P. Patton, "Considerations on Marxism, Phenomenology and Power. Interview with Michel Foucault; Recorded on April 3rd, 1978" [1978], *Foucault Studies* 14 (2012), 107.

[47] See Gilles Deleuze and Michel Foucault, "Les intellectuels et le pouvoir," in *Dits et Écrits, Tome 2: 1970-1975*, ed. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (1994), 313, Gilles Deleuze and Michel Foucault, "Intellectuals and Power" [1972], in *Desert Islands and Other Texts, 1953-1974*, ed. David Lapoujade, (2004), 211 and Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy* [1962] (2006). See also "Toward a Theory of Transversal Politics," 143-146.

[48] See Mathias Schönher, "Deleuze, a Split with Foucault," *Le Foucauldien* 1:1 (2015), who also emphasises the looming differences in "Intellectuals and Power."

[49] Deleuze and Foucault, "Les intellectuels et le pouvoir," 308. See also Deleuze and Foucault, "Intellectuals and Power," 207.

[50] "Les intellectuels et le pouvoir," 307. See also "Intellectuals and Power," 206.

[51] "Les intellectuels et le pouvoir," 308. See also "Intellectuals and Power," 207.

[52] "Les intellectuels et le pouvoir," 309. See also "Intellectuals and Power," 208.

lations vs. actualised instances of the exertion of power) that differenciates strictly between social production and social repression, in contrast to an integrated conception of power that is productive without being a power of activation or affirmation in the Deleuzian sense:[53] Theory and power can be mutually exclusive only if theory appeals to a dimension beyond power in the sense of *potestas*, namely to the purely productive potentiality of the social field. If there is no such conception of a power beyond *potestas* or if there is no such strict differenciation, then this means that theory develops and expresses within power. Nonetheless, these different conceptions share an interventionist ethos: It is still power in the sense of *potestas* that is the enemy here.[54]

In sum, we have a quite active conceptual interchange between Deleuze and Foucault in the years 1965-1974, where Deleuze and Foucault employ very different applications of the other's concepts and ideas: While Deleuze adopts concrete arguments, ideas, and problems, i.e., content from Foucault, and incorporates them systematically in his respective projects, Foucault is more hesitant in this regard and rather adopts a general style, gesture, movement or type of problematisation, i.e., a certain tendency from Deleuze. This is related to the different concepts of friendship, as we shall see later.

The period until 1975/1976 is also characterised by a general sympathy and theoretical convergence, besides the looming points of divergence mentioned above, compared to the rather distanced years of 1975-1978. For Foucault, it even seems as if they, together with François Lyotard, are participating in a collective project. After a summary of *Anti-Oedipus* as a disclosure of Oedipus as a medico-psychiatric instrument of power that aims to grasp desire and the unconscious, Foucault affirms, in his Rio-de-Janeiro-lecture from 1973, an interest in the same problem:

> J'avoue qu'un problème comme celui-là m'attire beaucoup et que moi aussi je me sens tenté de rechercher, derrière ce qu'on prétend qu'est l'histoire d'Œdipe, quelque chose qui a à faire non pas avec l'histoire indéfinie, toujours recommencée, de notre désir et de notre inconscient, mais avec l'histoire d'un pouvoir, un pouvoir politique.[55]

This history of power, however, should not be mistaken with a research on general structures: "Ni Deleuze, ni Lyotrard, ni Guattari, ni moi, ne faisons jamais des analyses de structure, nous ne sommes absolument pas 'structuralistes.'"[56] Instead, it consists in a series of historical self-enquiries, in "recherches de dynastie," that try to expose that which "dans l'histoire de notre culture, est resté jusqu'à maintenant le plus caché, le plus occulté, le plus profondément investi: les relations de pouvoir."[57] Thus, the collective

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[53] For Deleuze's dual conception, see "Les intellectuels et le pouvoir," 312 ("Intellectuals and Power," 210), where Deleuze claims that the real cannot be fully captured by power and "Les intellectuels et le pouvoir," 314 ("Intellectuals and Power," 212), where power is thought to be dependent on investments of desire that shape or form concrete exertions of power. Desire demarcates here the intensive *potentia* aspect for Deleuze. For Foucault's productive *potestas*, see "Les intellectuels et le pouvoir," 310 ("Intellectuals and Power," 208-209) and Foucault's description of the generative, productive functioning of the penal system.

[54] See "Les intellectuels et le pouvoir," 311. See also "Intellectuals and Power," 210.

[55] Foucault, "La vérité et les formes juridiques," 554.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Ibid.

project of a historical analysis of power relations complements Marx's analysis of economic relations: "Curieusement, les structures économiques de notre societé sont mieux connues, mieux inventoriées, mieux dégagées que les structure de pouvoir politique."[58] These passages are not only additional evidence for the inspiration of Foucault's analytics of power by Deleuze, they also point out that there was at some point in Foucault's work a certain affinity to a Deleuzeo-Guattarian theory of power. In an interview from 1975, two years after the Rio-lecture, it almost seems like Deleuze and Foucault – from Foucault's perspective at least – would have one and the same objective, approached in a sort of division of labour:

> La 'familialisation' de la psychanalyse est une opération que Deleuze a démontrée avec beaucoup de force, une critique que lui, en tant que théoricien du désir, fait du dedans, et que moi en tant qu'historien du pouvoir ne suis capable de faire que du dehors.[59]

Until 1975, in a word, everything seems quite "vrais" between Deleuze and Foucault: One's internal theory of desire is completed by the other's external history of power.

The later years: 1975–1978

As it is well-known, this concord changes quite rapidly after the publication of *The Will to Knowledge* in 1976, and Deleuze anticipates this divergence in a letter to Guattari presumably from the same year but before reading *The Will to Knowledge*:

> Comme d'habitude, après mon entrain, les doutes me viennent. 1) Donc Foucault dit qu'il n'aurait pas pensé à notre prédiction, mais qu'elle le convainc. Je me demande jusqu'à quel point il rigole, mais aussi jusqu'à quel point il est sincère. Je lui dis que j'ai vu B.-H. Lévy. Là-dessus il me dit qu'il a dîné chez 'quelqu'un' avec Attali et Lévy, et que Lévy est resté timide et silencieux. Je lui dis notre souci de ne pas avoir l'air de le tirer à nous. Il répond qu'il n'y a aucune crainte à avoir... et que pour son compte il achève un petit livre pour dénoncer l'identification du pouvoir avec la loi. Sa position semble être: allez-y, on verra bien si vous faites des gaffes (une certaine solidarité plus ou moins secrète, sans cause commune).[60]

So besides the question of whether Foucault actually had Deleuze and Guattari in mind when he criticised the notion of desire in *The Will to Knowledge*,[61] Deleuze at least seemingly perceived it this way. And instead of waiting on Foucault's definite verdict, Deleuze goes for an active engagement with and own critique of *The Will to Knowledge*. Or at least so it seems, given the more or less immediate response the year after in the form of notes that 17 years later come to be published as *Desire and Pleasure*.

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[58] Ibid.

[59] Michel Foucault, "Michel Foucault. Les résponses du philosophe" [1975], in *Dits et Écrits, Tome 2: 1970-1975*, ed. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (1994), 815.

[60] Gilles Deleuze, *Lettres et autres textes*, ed. David Lapoujade (2015), 51. The "petit livre" is of course *The Will to Knowledge*.

[61] See for example Foucault, *Will to Knowledge*, 81, 82, 85, 90, 157.

And yet it is not clear at all what the particular object of Deleuze's critique is: Pleasure as the antithesis to desire or rather a presumed concept of power in Foucault? It seems likely that both concepts are intended from Deleuze's perspective since he already worked on a critique of pleasure earlier.[62] But it seems also likely that Foucault had the impression of being misunderstood since he obviously felt compelled to distance himself from the notion of pleasure in the interview with Le Bitoux a year after he received Deleuze's notes on *The Will to Knowledge* through François Ewald.[63]

In any case, the main problem of *The Will to Knowledge* in relation to *Discipline and Punish* for Deleuze seems to be that the *dispositifs* of power are no longer normalising but constitutive, in this case of sexuality.[64] But why is this a problem? Although Deleuze acknowledges that Foucault differentiates micro and macro and explicitly refuses to conceive of *dispositif*-power as a miniaturisation of macro-power, i.e., state-power, he doubts that Foucault can actually sustain this difference given the fact that he still employs the notion of power for either kind of analytical level.[65] Deleuze thinks that Foucault's use of the notion of power discloses that he actually operates with a notion of state-power on a micro-level:

> Does this difference in kind [between micro and macro, J.O.] still allow us to talk about *dispositifs* of power? The notion of the State is not applicable at the level of a micro-analysis, since, as Michel says, it is not a matter of miniaturizing the State. But is the notion of power still applicable? Is it not itself the miniaturization of a global concept?[66]

This suspicion seems to be the crux of Deleuze's and Deleuze and Guattari's reservations regarding Foucault in this respect since the consequence of this suspicion would be that power, understood as repressive state-power, was constitutive of social ensembles in general, which would essentially be the same as to postulate that society is grounded by a sort of negativity, an idea obviously not acceptable for Deleuze. In other words, Deleuze conceives of Foucauldian power in general as exclusively repressive *potestas/pouvoir*, which he contrasts with an idea of productive *potentia/puissance*, itself

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[62] See Gilles Deleuze, "Dualism, monism, multiplicities (26.03.1973)," webdeleuze.com. https://www.webdeleuze.com/textes/167 (accessed July 10, 2021). See also *Between Desire and Pleasure,* especially pp. 16-29, for a detailed study that focuses predominantly on the libidinal or sexual aspects of the desire-pleasure-problem. Though it is clear that "desire" and "pleasure" refer to different approaches to sexuality, as Beckman shows, as well as conceptions of power, the latter dimension seems to be more relevant for the purposes of this article, especially in the light of the thematic consistency of the dialogue between Deleuze and Foucault. For example, it seems plausible to assume that desire has conceptual precursors in *Difference and Repetition*, especially in the concept of the virtual multiplicity, and generally has to be understood as a virtuality. The sexual interpretation and implications would thus be instances or special cases of the more fundamental framework of virtual multiplicities that, in turn, relate to a conception of *potentia/puissance*.

[63] See "The Gay Science," 390.

[64] See "Desire and Pleasure," 224.

[65] See ibid.

[66] Ibid.

constitutive of power as *potestas/pouvoir*, that he calls desire.[67] Instead of micro-*dispositifs* characterised by power (*potestas*), we would have *agencements* circulating with desire (*potentia*).[68] Thus, there is a rough equation of *dispositif* and *agencement* and a sharp distinction between power and desire: "If I speak, with Félix, of the *agencement* of desire, it is because I am not sure that micro-*dispositifs* can be described in terms of power."[69] Deleuze cannot allow *dispositif*-power to be constitutive, since he understands it to be essentially secondary to *agencement*-desire. But this means, of course, that *dispositifs* of power are components of *agencements* of desire; *agencements* assemble, constitute *dispositifs*.[70] So rather than an opposition, we have a subsumption of *dispositif*-power under *agencement*-desire, which would mean that Deleuze is not contesting the effectiveness of *dispositifs* but the nature of their effects: *dispositifs* are repressive, not constitutive, since there are primary, essentially multiple, and constitutive *agencements* whose manifold dimensions would be captured and unified, i.e., repressed, by *dispositifs*:

> I thus have need of a certain concept of repression, not in the sense that repression would be brought to bear on a spontaneity, but because collective *agencements* would have many dimensions, and *dispositifs* of power would be only one of these dimensions.[71]

Dispositifs would be instances of singularisations of the manifold dimensions of *agencements*; *agencements* – more or less equivalent to desire[72] – would inherently bring about the new and be as such the sufficient reasons for given historical situations respectively the fact of social change. The *agencement* is the reason for the appearance of a specific *dispositif* and at the same time an inexhaustible reservoir for its (potential) change: "I would say, for my part, that a society, a social field, does not contradict itself, but what is primary is that it takes flight; it first of all flees in every direction."[73] The repressive character of *dispositifs* thus arises out of their subsumption under *agencements*: If there are principally multitudinous modi of constitution, then those realised by a *dispositif* are repressive inasmuch as their realisation inhibits the realisation of the remaining.

Regardless of the plausibility of Deleuze's reading of Foucault, there is a definite distancing and even an attempt to correct what Deleuze perceives to be a mistake in Foucault's approach. A distance that is increasingly rigorously expressed in the following years: In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari acknowledge a further dimension of power in Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* that resembles somehow the desire/*potentia*/*puissance* aspect as explicated in *Desire and Pleasure* and acts as a sort of res-

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[67] See also ibid., 225.

[68] See ibid.

[69] Ibid., 224.

[70] See ibid., 225.

[71] Ibid., 226.

[72] "[…] desire is one and the same thing as a determined agencement, a co-functioning." (ibid., 225).

[73] Ibid., 226.

ervoir for the "assemblages [*agencements*, J.O.] of power, or micropowers,"[74] i.e., *dispositifs*. It is what they call a diagram; a sort of empty, purely formal process of ordering that can be applied to any content. In *The Will to Knowledge*, this diagram is substituted by a "biopolitics of population" characterised as an "abstract machine"[75] that was not mentioned at all in *Desire and Pleasure*. However, Deleuze and Guattari continue, there are points of disagreement: On the one hand, the assemblages/*agencements* are not characterised by power – like *dispositifs* – but by desire. On the other hand, the diagram/abstract machine on which they depend is characterised by primary "lines of flight" that are purely creative and positive and thus do not equal "phenomena of resistance or counterattack."[76] This clearly formulated divergence is re-affirmed by Deleuze in a letter to Arnauld Villani in 1982: "[…] une société ne se définit pas d'abord par ses contradictions, ni même par des centres de pouvoir et des lignes de résistance (Foucault), mais par un véritable champ de fuite, nécessairement synthétique, comme vous dites."[77] Foucault is almost canonised by Deleuze and thereby classed with the long series of important but ultimately insufficient theories of society. Perhaps this enclosing canonisation finds its conclusion in Deleuze's *Foucault*, intentionally or not.[78] In any case, by the time of *A Thousand Plateaus*, at the latest, we have a fully pronounced disagreement, almost a contradiction, regarding the nature of the social on behalf of Deleuze.

And on behalf of Foucault? Despite the critical notes on *The Will to Knowledge* he received from Deleuze, Foucault writes a very sympathetic preface for the English translation of *Anti-Oedipus* in 1977.[79] Besides the general praising tone, it is telling how Foucault deals with desire here. The question of desire, Foucault claims, is addressed not in terms of a why but in terms of a how:

> How does one introduce desire into thought, into discourse, into action? How can and must desire deploy its forces within the political domain and grow more intense in the process of overturning the established order? *Ars erotica, ars theoretica, ars politica*.[80]

Desire does not have its typical explanatory role in *Anti-Oedipus* but is infused into theory and practice with revolutionary intentions. Desire is not problematised here, like in *The Will to Knowledge*, precisely because it does not have the same meaning; it is a different concept which Foucault acknowledges.[81] Nonetheless, Foucault is aware of the risk

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[74] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* [1980] (1987), note 39 on pp. 530-531. Brian Massumi translates *agencement* with assemblage, while Daniel W. Smith prefers to leave the notion untranslated in *Desire and Pleasure*. I follow Smith in this regard.

[75] Ibid.

[76] Ibid.

[77] Deleuze, *Lettres et autres textes*, 81.

[78] See Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault* [1986] (1988).

[79] See Michel Foucault, "Preface," in *Anti-Oedipus* (1977), xi–xiv.

[80] Ibid., xii.

[81] See also "The Gay Science," 389-390, and *Between Desire and Pleasure,* 3, 12, 25, 28, where it is noted that Deleuze's discussion of desire in the end remains stuck in a psychoanalytical discourse, whereas Foucault accomplishes it to broaden this historical, cultural and gender-theoretical very narrow context by reclaiming the pre-Oedipal history of the notion of pleasure. It seems as if Foucault acknowledges Deleuze and

that, despite this fundamental difference, Deleuze and Guattari are involuntarily rein-troducing "some of the medico-psychological presuppositions *[prises]* that were built into desire, in its traditional sense,"[82] which would be avoidable by the use of pleasure. But why is this so? Desire is still operating in terms of the principle of sufficient reason in Deleuze and Guattari and thus not leaving the general 19th century medico-psychological framework of explaining, for example, homosexual desire. Even if we are talking about an immanence of social and libidinal production, which is how we could understand Foucault, there is still the problem of the explanatory role of desire; the problem of the medico-psychological access to sexual behaviour through diagnostics. Similarly, Foucault invokes a slight critique at the end of his preface to *Anti-Oedipus* where he postulates that "Deleuze and Guattari care so little for power that they have tried to neutralize the effects of power linked to their own discourse."[83] The problem is less that there are power-effects in Deleuze and Guattari's own discourse than that they are unaware of them and even underestimate the necessity of power-effects for the in-tervention in theory and practice. The critique would thus be: Become aware of your own power-effect in order to be able to use it. So in contrast to the clear disagreement on behalf of Deleuze, there is no real divergence with Deleuze and Deleuze and Guattari on behalf of Foucault but rather a sort of critical distance. Altogether, Foucault has a benev-olent reception of Deleuze and Guattari even though he retains some reservations and tries to anticipate potential risks or pitfalls. Perhaps we could say that Foucault appreci-ates the revolution Deleuze and Guattari try to initiate in thought, political discourse, and the ethics of the intellectual, without adopting their approach fully in content.[84] As said above, it is more a general gesture, tendency or movement that Foucault is interest-ed in when it comes to Deleuze and Deleuze and Guattari in general. Coming from Fou-cault, we could thus say that there is a convergence in gesture or style without a conver-gence in content.

IV

A clear disagreement on behalf of Deleuze; a convergence in gesture and critical dis-tance in content on behalf of Foucault in the period 1975-1978. An active interchange of concepts as well as a general sympathy, and even the idea of participation in a common project or cause in the period 1965-1975. Given this overall ambivalence and temporal dynamicity, it does not seem appropriate to categorise the relationship between Deleuze

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Guattari's attempt to subvert the psychoanalytical notion of desire while at the same time attempting to leave this discourse completely. Deleuze and Guattari's notion of desire is thus not the real problem for Foucault, inasmuch as it subverts the psychoanalytical discourse, but it is not the real solution either, inas-much as it remains bound to the psychoanalytical discourse.

[82] Ibid., 389.

[83] See Foucault, "Preface," xiv.

[84] In this sense, we could perhaps regard Foucault's "What is Critique" as written in the revolutionary spirit of *Anti-Oedipus*. See Michel Foucault, "What is Critique?" [1978], in *The Politics of Truth*, ed. Sylvère Lot-ringer (1997).

and Foucault as either "faux" or "vrais"; it does not even seem appropriate to speak of a "vrais amis" until *The Will to Knowledge* that, in the end, turned out in fact to be "faux amis" given Foucault's benevolent reservation with regard to *Anti-Oedipus* and the question of desire, for example. If we want to invoke a concept of philosophical friendship that specifically accounts for the concrete givenness of the relation between Deleuze and Foucault, it would rather be the friend as a vis-à-vis, as a dialogue partner, one that participates in a basic concern (e.g., a radical pluralistic and non-fascist form of life, a new way of thinking, a new role of the intellectual etc.), a basic gesture or style (e.g., an interventionist approach to theory and practice), or even strategy (e.g., a consideration of power relations, complementing the analytics of economic relations). A content-related consistency may be given sometimes, but this does not matter so much insofar as there is a dialogical consistency, a continuous engagement with one another that implies – as every dialogue – convergences as well as divergences while accounting for the importance of divergence or disagreement in particular: The elaboration of the concept of *agencement* in *A Thousand Plateaus* probably would have been different if it were not for *The Will to Knowledge*. Similarly, it is arguable if Foucault would have pursued the project of *The History of Sexuality* with *The Use of Pleasure* without Deleuze's critique in *Desire and Pleasure*.[85] Such a dialogue-based friendship would, in contrast to a familiarity-based friendship, not be determined by criteria like allegiance, harmony or any other pre-given ideal, standard, or norm. It would simply conform to the course of the factual dialogue with and in all its eventual ambivalence and variability. As such it would be a continuous creation, a form of collective thought, practice, and life in the making, so to speak. And it would end when the dialogue ends.

In an interview in 1975, Foucault already expresses this dialogical tension in relation to Deleuze. In response to the question of whether he is "d'accord, au fond, avec Deleuze," Foucault states: "Nous discordons sur quelques points, mais je suis fondamentalment d'accord avec eux."[86] This simultaneity of distance and convergence, this ability to tolerate a fundamental ambivalence, is related to Foucault's subtle account of friendship. In an interview in 1978, i.e., after the supposed split with Deleuze, Foucault articulates the difficulties he has with the association of political or academic affinity with friendship. Instead, "l'amitié, c'est pour moi une sorte de franc-maçonnerie secrète."[87] Friendship cannot be identified with political or academic affinity – a common cause, an allegiance, a harmony – because it resides on a different level; because it is not a public expression of agreement but a secret freemasonry. Friendship is first of all an ethical affair for Foucault and a practice of freedom that as such implies a degree of secrecy as a sort of protection against the absorption into political or academic bonds. Friendship, subsequently, is less a question of contentual accordance than participation

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[85] See Michel Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure: The History of Sexuality Volume 2* [1984] (1985), and "Faux Amis," 73.

[86] Michel Foucault, "Asiles, Sexualité, Prisons" [1975], in *Dits et Écrits, Tome 2: 1970-1975*, ed. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (1994), 781. "Eux," that means Deleuze and Guattari, of course.

[87] Michel Foucault, "La scène de la philosophie" [1978], in *Dits et Écrits, Tome 3: 1976-1979*, ed. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (1994), 589.

in this ethical practice of freedom. And it is, of course, not by chance that Foucault mentions Deleuze right after this account of friendship: "[…] une sorte de franc-maçonnerie secrète. Mais elle a des points visibles. Vous parliez de Deleuze qui est évidemment quelqu'un pour moi de très important, je le considère comme le plus grand philosophe français actuel."[88] In a variation of this idea, Foucault characterises friendship in an interview from 1981 as a "mode de vie," a way of life which expands the ethical concept to an aesthetico-ethical one inasmuch as the question is not to identify the truth about one's desire (i.e., the recognition of one's homosexual desire) but to invent a desirable way of life, meaning a new mode of conduct, perception, experience in general.[89] Similar to his preface to *Anti-Oedipus*, Foucault tries to substitute the explanatory role of desire with an interventionist role; it is about desirable things rather than one's desire as the reason for one's behaviour, and about the means that make these desirable things possible: "S'interroger sur notre rapport à l'homosexualité, c'est plus désirer un monde où ces rapports sont possibles que simplement avoir le désir d'un rapport sexuel avec une personne du même sexe, même si c'est important."[90] In one of his last interviews, Foucault clarifies that this desirable way of life, friendship, is not only a way to make homosexual relations possible but a general historical possibility to rethink more or less every type of social relation inasmuch as it draws on and actualises historical forms of friendship up until the 18th century, where new institutions of disciplinary power blocked these ways of life.[91] In short, friendship for Foucault has not so much to do with familiarity, allegiance, or harmony but rather designates a desirable way of life; desirable inasmuch as it reveals the abundance of possible relations one can have with the other.

Penfield's reading of Foucault's conception of friendship elaborates on this idea of an aesthetico-ethical practice of creation and emphasises the formlessness of friendship that calls for its continuous invention, leading to a shared and pleasurable becoming that is constitutive for the friends related in this movement.[92] This constitutive in-between-space, as Penfield continues, is similar to Deleuze and Guattari's transversal relation in *A Thousand Plateaus* as it implies a co-constitutive genesis of the relation's terms that are precisely not given in advance.[93] Friendship as a transversal relation initiates dynamics of de-individualisation and becoming that displaces the sovereign self in contrast to the other. The problem is, as Penfield notes, that this co-constitutive becoming could be understood in terms of identification or strict and mutual dependency, which would erase the difference between the friends as the relation's terms. Penfield evades this by defin-

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[88] Ibid.

[89] See Michel Foucault, "De l'amitié comme mode de vie" [1981], in *Dits et Écrits, Tome 4: 1980-1988*, ed. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (1994), 163-165.

[90] Michel Foucault, "Entretien avec M. Foucault" [1982], in *Dits et Écrits, Tome 4: 1980-1988*, ed. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (1994), 295.

[91] See "Michel Foucault, une interview."

[92] See "Toward a Theory of Transversal Politics," 165.

[93] See ibid., 166.

ing the friend's becoming as a mode of life in which difference or differentiation is the genetic principle.[94]

As intriguing and pioneering as Penfield's transversal friendship is with regard to the relation between Deleuze and Foucault, the idea of differentiation as the genetic principle of a co-becoming that therefore is not equivalent to an identification of the friends seems to be at least an incomplete solution. It is incomplete inasmuch as it cannot really account for the distancing between 1975-1978 other than in terms of an exhaustion or standstill of their becoming. What is left unconsidered is the active character of the distancing, as we could see in Deleuze's disagreement, the active and deliberate dissent, and the decision to engage in different and incompatible becomings.[95] One reason for this could be that post-faux/vrais-approaches generally tend to underestimate the figural-affective aspects as well as the polemical or agonal development of the friendship between Deleuze and Foucault, which is why they usually do not operate with conceptions of friendship with respect to their philosophical relation. The "third camp" essentially conceives of this relation as a relation of concepts, be it with emphasis on conceptual tensions or agreements. But the relationship between Deleuze and Foucault amounts to more than a conceptual relation: there are also affective aspects that shape their philosophical friendship and consequentially also conceptual movements.[96] A conception of dialogical friendship would need to correspond to these figural-affective aspects (the friend as a vis-à-vis) as well as the distancing between 1975-1978 without falling behind Penfield's critique of friendship as a relation between sovereign selves. This conception thus suggests a sort of mediary position that acknowledges the constitutive transversal becoming of friends as well as the deliberate dissent that implies the relative stability of the figure of the friend. In Deleuzian terms, we could say that friends resemble metastable *agencements* that relate to each other through disjunctive syntheses.

One example for this deliberate dissent would be Foucault's self-criticism at the beginning of his 1976 lecture-course. Foucault feels trapped in a research project that "we've been working on for four or five years,"[97] hence since his earliest lectures at the *Collège de France*, and that he feels has not much progressed: "It's all repetitive, and it doesn't add up. Basically, we keep saying the same thing, and there again, perhaps we're not saying anything at all."[98] This research project concerns, of course, Foucault's genealogies or "recherches de dynastie" that he conceives, as we have said, as a collec-

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[94] See ibid., and *Difference and Repetition,* 207-210 for the notion of differentiation.

[95] The possibility of a break, a split, or an ending seems to be an important point of differenciation between friendship and other social relations like kinship, nationality, ethnicity etc. that cannot be suspended at all or at least not deliberately.

[96] Eleanor Kaufman invokes the related point that Deleuze and Foucault were fully aware of the publicity of their friendship. See Eleanor Kaufman, *The Delirium of Praise: Bataille, Blanchot, Deleuze, Foucault, Klossowski* (2001), 80 and Beckman, *Gilles Deleuze,* 56. Philosophical friendships are not only enacted privately, but also publicly: a veritable "dramatisation."

[97] Michel Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975-1976* (2003), 3.

[98] Ibid., 4.

tive research of power relations also pursued by Deleuze and Guattari.[99] Inasmuch as Foucault perceives a standstill in his research, we could say that Deleuze is quite correct in diagnosing an impasse in Foucault's thinking of power.[100] Foucault's solution, however, implies a clear break with the premises of the power-theoretical research agenda shared with Deleuze and Guattari, which would first of all concern what he calls "Nietzsche's hypothesis"[101] or the assumption that the "basis of the power-relationships lies in a warlike clash between forces."[102] Foucault tries to free himself from said impasse through the analysis of a specific thought of power that he practiced for some time alongside Deleuze and Guattari. Interestingly enough, Foucault describes this auto-analytical distancing in the same terms with which he characterises friendship: "All this quite suits the busy inertia of those who profess useless knowledge, a sort of sumptuary knowledge, the wealth of a parvenu […]. I am talking about the great, tender, and warm freemasonry of useless erudition."[103]

Deleuze, on the other hand, has a good intuition of Foucault's "franc-maçonnerie secrète" when he tells Guattari about Foucault's "solidarité plus ou moins secrète, sans cause commune"[104] towards them. Friendship in the narrower sense, meaning not so much as a way of life or historical possibility but as a concrete Foucauldian practice, could be very well described as a secret solidarity without the necessity of a common goal. It is almost like sitting in the same boat…[105] And for Deleuze? Would he agree? Probably not. Besides the concerns regarding the contentual differences to Foucault which he expresses in his letter to Guattari, his explicit thoughts on friendship have a completely different inclination. In his correspondence with Dionys Mascolo, it becomes apparent that the friend has a meaning for Deleuze only inasmuch as it is a genetic element of thought.[106] Deleuze is interested in the friend not as an aesthetico-ethical con-

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[99] Following Claude-Olivier Doron, this equation of genealogy and "recherches de dynastie" is at least imprecise. See Doron's characterisation of the dynastic in contrast to the genealogical in Michel Foucault, *Penal Theories and Institutions: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1971-1972* (2019), footnote 16, 51-53.

[100] See Deleuze, *Foucault*, 96.

[101] Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended*, 16.

[102] Ibid.

[103] Ibid., 3-4.

[104] *Lettres et autres textes*, 51.

[105] In this sense, Foucauldian friendship as freemasonry has significant similarities with the idea of an inverted teleology in Nietzschean Politics that Deleuze expresses with the figure of "being in the same boat." See Gilles Deleuze, "Nomadic Thought" [1975], in *Desert Islands and Other Texts, 1953-1974*, ed. David Lapoujade (2004), and William S. Burroughs, "The Limits of Control" [1975], *Semiotext(e): Schizo-Culture* 3:2 (1978).

[106] See Gilles Deleuze and Dionys Mascolo, "Correspondence with Dionys Mascolo" [1988], in *Two Regimes of Madness, Texts and Interviews 1975-1995*, ed. David Lapoujade (2006), 327-332. Charles J. Stivale clearly shows in his *Gilles Deleuze's ABC's: The Folds of Friendship* (2008) that there are different aspects or "folds" of friendship in Deleuze which are central to his thought, as for example pedagogy, the comical, thought, encounter or the impersonal (see also *Gilles Deleuze*, 45-71, who develops this reading further). With respect to Deleuze's explicit conceptual engagement with friendship, however, there is an emphasis on the relation between thought and friendship, as in his correspondence with Mascolo or in Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 4-5, which is why the paper focuses on this aspect or "fold" under the headline of transcendental friendship. Perhaps we could also speak of at least two phases of Deleuze's thought on friendship,

cept but as a transcendental one. Throughout the course of their correspondence, Deleuze speaks from the standpoint of philosophy where Mascolo speaks from the standpoint of friendship: Deleuze takes an already established community of friends as his starting point and tries to think the genesis of thought proceeding from that, while Mascolo, probably related to his experiences in the *Résistance* and the regular, clandestine meetings of "friends," i.e., members of the *Résistance*, at Marguerite Duras's place during the war,[107] tries to think the genesis of friendship from a distress in thought.[108] The friend is, for Deleuze, eventually one with whom one is "going through trials […] necessary for any thinking,"[109] a companion in thought, a familiar even, in contrast to Mascolo or Foucault, who insist on a conception of friendship as a way of life not least out of their experiences of resistance, marginalisation, and concrete threats of power. In contrast to this aesthetico-ethical friendship, we have an almost neo-classical actualisation of the *phílos* in Deleuze as transcendental friendship. Inasmuch as the friend, in this perspective, has meaning only in relation to the process of thought, it makes no sense to speak of friendship any longer if the differences in thought between one and the other become substantial. They are no longer friends when they are not going through trials together, so to speak. In an interview from the same year as his correspondence with Mascolo, Deleuze characterises this mode of friendship, with respect to his work with Guattari, as a sort of pre-personal field:

> But we didn't collaborate like two different people. We were more like two streams coming together to make 'a' third stream, which I suppose was us. One of the questions about 'philosophy', after all, has always been what to make of the *philos*.[110]

And his take on the *phílos* would be: The friend constitutes a pre-personal transcendental field, a plane of immanence, as the precondition of any thought. A plane of immanence, a plane of friendship, however, that perseveres just as long as there are no substantial differences; that perseveres as long as there is a dialogue, so to speak.

When we said that there is a difference in the employment of the other's concept between Deleuze and Foucault, it hopefully becomes clearer in the light of the difference regarding their conceptions of friendship. The "trials of thought" imply for Deleuze the possibility to adopt concrete arguments, ideas, figures of thought etc. as long as there is a plane of immanence, a plane of friendship, while Foucault's secret freemasonry allows

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with an initial critique of philosophy's *philìa* through Proust and Nietzsche in *Difference and Repetition* and a subsequent renewed interest in "a-philiatic" forms of friendship in the context of his work with Guattari (see Stivale, *Gilles Deleuze's ABC's*, 1-2, who underlines Guattari's role in this shift, and Beckman, *Gilles Deleuze*, 53, who elaborates on his complicated friendship with Guattari). The fold of the impersonal as developed throughout *Dialogues*, for example, would be a result of this second inquiry of friendship inspired by the collaboration with Guattari, just like the transcendental fold developed in his correspondence with Mascolo. These aspects or folds of friendship in the thought of Deleuze, however, have to be differentiated from the heuristic model of the dialogical friend as suggested in this paper.

[107] See Michael Munro, *The Communism of Thought* (2014), 52.

[108] See Deleuze and Mascolo, "Correspondence with Dionys Mascolo," 329-331.

[109] Ibid., 329.

[110] Gilles Deleuze, "On Philosophy" [1988], in *Negotiations: 1972-1990* (1995), 136, see as well 141.

for the adoption of a general aesthetico-ethical tendency or gesture, as one can see in his aesthetical reading of *Anti-Oedipus* as a new style, or *ars erotica, theoretica, politica*, while keeping his distance to the notion of desire. This being said, the conception of friendship corresponding to the philosophical relation between Deleuze and Foucault proposed above, the friend as a vis-à-vis, as a dialogue partner, would be no more than that: a sort of common ground, a grounding for a specific productive engagement – in its convergences as well as divergences – lasting for more than 15 years. Deleuze and Foucault are neither "vrais amis" nor "faux amis" but simply *amis* that practised *a* form of amicable relation, a philosophical friendship, out of an abundance of possible relations. Perhaps the most important aspect of this relationship, besides the collective character of large parts of their respective works, is precisely its irreducibility, its resistance to pre-given categories of friendship or any other relationship and, not least, the careful consideration of its limits.

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REVIEW

Dianna Taylor, *Sexual Violence and Humiliation: A Foucauldian-Feminist Perspective (Interdisciplinary Research in Gender).* **London and New York: Routledge, 2020. Pp. 128. ISBN: 978-1-138-58143-2 (hardback). ISBN: 978-0-429-50542-3 (e-book).**

The phenomenon of sexual violence poses an important problem for feminist theory. On the one hand, feminist discussions of sexual violence understandably have aimed to make this violence visible, to contest the attempts of patriarchal culture and society to normalize it by either hiding it, denying its existence, or blaming its victims. However, making this violence visible can potentially come at great cost for its survivors: trapping them within it, defining them through it, limiting them to being essentially and ontologically the (humiliated) survivors of sexual violence.

Dianna Taylor's book on sexual violence and sexual humiliation is one of the most innovative analyses of how feminist theory might deal with this challenge to have been published. While deep and philosophically rigorous, the book is fluidly readable, both engaging and exciting: it opens the reader's mind and motivates action, movement, and political change. It will be useful to feminist activists as well as to researchers and graduate and undergraduate students in a number of fields, including political theory, philosophy, and gender studies.

Taylor's six chapters (including the introduction and the conclusion, which are important chapters in themselves) offer an original solution to the feminist dilemma: to liberate victims of sexual violence and humiliation from being ontologically defined by that violence, we must abandon "the subject" as a stable, well-formed, constant, and self-contained concept while seeking other, less constrained ways of self-relation. This destabilization of subjectivity, performed mainly through subversive acts of truth-telling, is neither easy nor risk-free: "Constituting oneself in terms of unpopular truths entails the taking on of risk, including the risking of one's own intelligibility; it is therefore characterized by courage" (p. 6). "Loosening attachments to subjectivity" (p. 10) is non-trivial, especially for those who have historically been denied stable, unified, recognizable subjectivity and have required painful struggle to achieve it: namely women. For privileged subjects, the idea of detaching themselves from stable subjectivity might be unthreatening (sometimes even pleasurable), but how can we feminists ask women to seek alternative modes of self-relation, thereby risking our long-deferred achievement? Taylor shows this to be possible

and desirable: a risk worth taking. The main device with which Taylor builds this risky alternative—which nevertheless provides an empowering solution to the feminist dilemma of how to confront sexual violence and sexual humiliation without being reduced to its object, an "it"—is a deep, meticulous analysis of Foucault's critique of "the subject."

But to understand how Taylor constructs this solution, we must first understand the problem: what it means for the victim of sexual violence to be humiliated, and why a stable, self-contained subject might impede the victim in fighting against this humiliation. Chapter 2 is dedicated to the problem of sexual humiliation. Objectification, Taylor argues, is not the only harm of sexual violence. Sexual violence (and specifically rape) seeks to humiliate its victim, transforming her into a less-than-human or nonhuman being by truncating her possibility of freedom, of becoming something different than what she is now. This humiliation succeeds when the victim internalizes the dehumanization, perceiving herself as determined, unfree, detached from others: "Internalization entails being exposed and displayed before oneself as radically individuated: stigmatized, and therefore unworthy of freedom and inclusion in the human community" (p. 39). It might be appealing to attempt to counter humiliation by sticking to "the subject": Taylor shows how often victims try to escape humiliation by trying to retain control, sometimes denying the sexually violation or humiliation—a defensive tactic. This tactic is mostly ineffective, however: because the untouched subject is preserved, so too is the possibility of it being ultimately defined by humiliation:

> Constituting, understanding, and relating to oneself as a subject entails constituting, understanding, and relating to oneself in terms of the individuation and internalization that enable and characterize humiliation. Invoking subjectivity in order to counter the harm of sexual violence masks this interconnection and thereby reasserts its violation; when that harm in turn becomes constitutive of who one is, one attaches to oneself in terms of it. (p. 56)

What, then, are the forms of resistance that allow us to counter humiliation without remaining defined by it?

Foucault's critique of the subject, Taylor argues, offers alternatives. Her first chapter discusses how Foucault (and Butler, following Foucault) proposes new forms of thinking about how to relate to ourselves; forms not bounded to subjectivity but opposing normalizing powers precisely by detaching from subjectivity, challenging "the subject" as the only and/or preferable form of self-relation. Chapters 3 and 4 exemplify this alternative through feminist forms of resistance, which Taylor sees as putting into practice the ancient exercise of *parrhēsia* or "truth-telling." As Foucault writes, through speech acts or embodied performances, we estrange ourselves from ourselves, make ourselves others, disobediently detaching from subjectivity and contesting our ontological stability. These "ontologically risky practices," Taylor argues,

> that direct humiliation outward by means of publicly, assertively, or even aggressively confronting its source disrupt the internalization upon which humiliation hinges […] [They] inhibit the formation of a self-renouncing, obedient and conformist self-relation

> that views and experiences itself as unworthy of being otherwise. Crucially, risking one's ontological status disrupts the cycle of self-assertion and renunciation that threatens to produce a self-relation of domination unable to resist and counter normalizing power relations more broadly. (p. 66)

Thus, through risky speech acts and embodied performances, survivors of sexual violence, instead of turning inwards in self-abjection and self-attachment, can tell their truth by "turning sexual humiliation back against its source and then externalizing it in a way that reverberates outward rather than redoubling back toward them as speakers" (p. 72).

Chapter 4 looks at *parrhēsia* as performed bodily by the SlutWalk protesters and the performance "Mattress Performance/Carry that Weight" (MPCW). Taylor shows how these "militant bodies" are reminiscent of the Cynics' response to humiliation, turning it "back against its source" (p. 82) and actually risking their lives, i.e., what Foucault recognized as "ethical *parrhēsia*": "not a means of gaining knowledge about the nature of truth [but] . . . a way of practicing or manifesting the truth through one's overall mode of existence: one's relationship to oneself, and to others, and to the world more broadly" (p. 84). In this response to humiliation, embodiment is utterly present; a subversive embodiment that refuses to be enclosed in a stable, unchanging subjectivity and is defined, instead, by continuous transformation, detachment, risk: "Through publicly and corporeally expressing both precariousness and its exploitation, the protesters in question gain a different, counter stigmatizing (and therefore counter-humiliating), potentially empowering experience of their own embodied self-relation" (p. 94). The disruptive weapon against sexual humiliation that Taylor constructs throughout the book is to shamelessly turn humiliation outward, towards the humiliaters, in an act of self-transformation and of ontological risk through "othering" ourselves.

There is, however, another, more insidious, way to throw humiliation back against its source, which remains untreated in Taylor's engaging analysis: revenge. Revenge as a response to sexual violence has been discussed in the context of rape-revenge narratives and films.[1] In my essay on Von Trier's Dogville,[2] I address the main character (Grace)'s sexual humiliation (which dovetails with Taylor's description of sexual humiliation: Grace is made non-human by Dogville's inhabitants, violated and grotesquely chained to keep her from escaping) and her revenge: she murders the people of Dogville and demolishes the town. Revenge is not easy or unproblematic, but if we agree with Taylor on the redemptive possibility of throwing humiliation back against its source, we must discuss revenge. My analysis used Beauvoir's insights into what revenge has to offer in countering oppression. Beauvoir believes that the "freedom to oppress" is not "real freedom," and thus must be contested.[3] Revenge, she writes, is not a "useless passion" but a powerful, passionate, embodied response to evil—a legitimate response to oppression (and, we

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[1] Alexandra Heller-Nicholas, *Rape-Revenge Films: A Critical Study* (2011).

[2] Sara Cohen Shabot, "Dogville or the Ambiguity of Oppression—A Beauvoirian Reading," *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 26:3 (2015).

[3] Simone de Beauvoir, *The Ethics of Ambiguity* (1948).

could add, to humiliation).[4] For Beauvoir, moreover, revenge restores the humanity of the oppressor, making them responsible for their deeds. With it, we stop patronizing the oppressor, demanding from them instead the accountability we demand from free agents. As I write in my essay:

> According to *Dogville*, there are crimes and actions that cannot be forgiven and that must be punished, even at the price of turning ourselves into perpetrators. By punishing these kinds of crimes and actions, we are relating to their perpetrators and making them into true free agents. Not punishing them would be an act of arrogance, since it would mean that we consider ourselves owners of moral standards that others cannot be expected to live by. If we forgave them, we would be arrogantly treating these others as unfree agents who could not be expected to act morally. Beauvoir can help us make sense of this. This is the ambiguity of oppression, she argues: we will never be able to get rid of oppression by nonoppressive means, and that is all right, since the freedom of the oppressor is not a real freedom and must not be respected. It is only when we punish oppression that we restore free agency to the oppressors; it is only when we abolish oppression that we set not only the victims but also the oppressors free.[5]

Taylor concludes her book by discussing "gestures of solidarity," the (embodied) ways in which we can stand in solidarity with survivors of sexual violence. In concordance with her proposals throughout the book, Taylor reminds us that such solidarity needs to flourish through relationships, through staying connected while we transform ourselves and others, through making space for freedom and through riskily detaching ourselves from subjectivity. These gestures do not consist in words, or not only in words, but, frequently, in embodied forms of "sympathetic outrage," since "Sympathetic outrage doesn't reduce what happened to me, to me or, therefore, reduce me to my own sexual humiliation; in that way, and consistent with gestures of solidarity, it constitutes a disclosive transformation with broader counter-normalizing/counter-humiliating implications" (p. 108). Can revenge count, too, as a "gesture of solidarity"? Can it function as a form of "sympathetic outrage"?

In her film *Promising Young Woman*, Emerald Fennell offers a fresh take, both beautiful and disturbing, on revenge as a gesture of solidarity in the story of Cassie, who attempts to avenge the rape of her late best friend. The film clearly turns humiliation back against its source. Moreover, the fact that the main character is not the victim of sexual violence herself, but the victim's best friend, makes a powerful case for interconnection, solidarity, mutual transformation, and friendship as tools for counter-humiliation: Cassie's deep connection to her deceased friend Nina almost forces her to avenge the sexual violence

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[4] For more on a Beauvoir-based "phenomenology of revenge," see Kruks's illuminating analysis of Beauvoir's "eye for an eye" essay: Sonia Kruks, *Simone de Beauvoir and the Politics of Ambiguity* (2012), 151–181.

[5] Cohen Shabot, "Dogville or the Ambiguity of Oppression," 157. The complex question of when and which acts of revenge deserve to be avenged themselves requires further discussion. Kruks, *Simone de Beauvoir and the Politics of Ambiguity*, deals with Beauvoir's ambiguous perspective on this; in my analysis of Dogville, I see it as a problem that leaves the movie ethically unresolved.

and humiliation that Nina suffered. This is what it means to be (bodily) bonded with others, intimately intertwined with the other's flesh:

> The fact that we are situated subjects, constantly bonded with others through our flesh, makes us desire revenge not only for ourselves but also on behalf of others who have suffered; the more involved we feel with the bodies of others, the more we feel in our own bodies the atrocities committed against them.[6]

Taylor writes this book as a survivor of rape herself. Her discussions of the various forms of feminist political strategies to counter sexual violence and humiliation are already very rich, and I hope she will, in the future, also address revenge as another complex strategy for resisting sexual violence and humiliation. She fails, however, to describe one final strategy, one that constitutes a potent expression of solidarity and an important tool for counter-humiliation: the writing of a book like this, the reading of which moves us so strongly towards transformation and empowerment.

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[6] "Dogville or the Ambiguity of Oppression," 158.

for instance on Beauvoir's concept of freedom and the erotic body in *Feminist Theory* (2016); on the phenomenology of childbirth pain in the *European Journal of Women's Studies* (2015); and on obstetric violence as gender violence in *Human Studies* (2016, 2021), *Hypatia* (2018), *Feminist Theory* (2020), and the *European Journal of Women's Studies* (2020).

REVIEW

Pierre Hadot, *The Selected Writings of Pierre Hadot: Philosophy as Practice*. **London: Bloomsbury, 2020. Pp. 320. ISBN: 9781474272971 (hardback).**

What do philosophers do? For the French philosopher and historian Pierre Hadot (1922-2010), philosophy is an exercise. Philosophers exercise themselves. They exercise for the transformation of their souls in pursuit of beatitude, wisdom, and peace. Hadot developed this understanding through a comprehensive approach to ancient philosophy that pays attention to the philosophical practices of authors like Plato, Aristotle, and Plotinus, attending not only to their treatises on philosophy but also to their other activities. Teaching, meditation, and lifestyle take on an essential role in their practice of philosophy. As this new publication shows, it is by shifting the emphasis from thinking as the construction of systematic or abstract knowledge to non-discursive philosophical exercises that Hadot was able to produce the image of philosophy as a way of life."

The Selected Writings of Pierre Hadot: Philosophy as Practice, translated by Matthew Sharpe and Federico Testa, compiles 14 texts that had never-before been translated into English. This publication serves both as an introduction to Hadot s work as well as a valuable complement to those already acquainted with it. It is intended as a response to the ever-widening reception of his work in the anglosphere; the rise of scholarly attention to his work, principally for its influence on the philosopher and public intellectual Michel Foucault, and, as Matthew Sharpe points out in his introduction to the volume, also for its criticisms from analytic" philosophers and scholars. Moreover, Hadot s engagement with ancient philosophy resonates with the resurgence of public interest in Stoicism and personal development. It is with those conversations in mind that the translators selected the texts for the volume.

The 14 chapters are split into 5 parts that progress from the introduction and exposition of Hadot s framework and key concepts to more particular engagements with specific notions and debates. This development, which does not follow the chronological order of the original publications, has the pedagogical benefit of progressively leading the reader into Hadot s thought while guiding readers with more specific interests. After having presented each part, I will reflect on the current challenges that Hadot raises for contemporary philosophical and theoretical issues for critical engagement in ways of life."

The first part, titled Key Parameters," is composed of four pieces that provide very useful entry points into Hadot s methodology and concerns. Serving more as an introduction, those texts show the two essential moves made by Hadot. The first one is the move away from the modern conception of philosophy as argument towards the ancient practice of spiritual exercise. This shift has important consequences for the meaning of philosophy itself and its relation to political and religious contexts. The second move consists of the inclusion of non-discursive activity as part of the practice of ancient philosophers. For example, Hadot exposes, in the piece My Books and my Research," the influence that Wittgenstein had on him with his notion that signification depends on and is informed by a community of speakers and a form of life (i.e., the language game). It is through this important encounter that Hadot changed his approach to ancient texts. For him, language is not a translation of thoughts but an effort to modify and transform the self" (34). Hence, this effort is enmeshed in a cultural and social context. The article The Oral Teaching of Plato" makes the case for the importance of oral teaching in the philosophical practice of philosophers. In doing so, Hadot promotes the effective and transformative goal of this philosophical activity, a practice that was erased by the exegetic and text-centric mode of philosophizing of the modern era.

The following three chapters that comprise the second part, Aspects," present three features of Hadot s conception of ancient of philosophy. This part is of particular interest since it presents a deeper engagement with the constitution of philosophy as a discipline and also an anticipation of later criticisms by analytical scholars such as Martha Nussbaum, Brad Inwood, and John M. Cooper. Chapter 5 focuses on how the spiritual conversion' to a philosophical school differs from the evangelical form of conversion. The next one gives us a survey of the way philosophy was divided in antiquity. Hadot shows that debates on the theoretical and hierarchical divisions also corresponded to expository strategies and pedagogical concerns. In Chapter 7, Hadot highlights the status of dialectic and rhetoric in the classical and imperial periods as constitutive parts of the logical and pedagogical training. Consequently, the rigorous rational argumentation" of dialectic, instead of being devalued, played an important role in the process of philosophical conversion. Thus, the three pieces in this section explore and expose the constitutive rationality of what Hadot calls spiritual exercises." In contrast to religious and mystical experiences, the philosophical transformation of the soul is the result of a pedagogical process of argumentation and self-reflexivity.

The next two chapters constitute the section on Nature." This part introduces an often-neglected aspect of Hadot s work: his research on the western understanding of Nature. As Matthew Sharpe indicates in his introduction, Chapter 8, Ancient Man and Nature," serves as an introduction to Hadot s distinction regarding two attitudes towards nature that would be later developed in Hadot s book on the topic called Le Voile d Isis." In response to the attitude that conquers and seizes nature for Man s benefit, Hadot exposes the more respectful alternative of living according to nature." Chapter 9, a brief but highly compelling meditation on travel in antiquity, contrasts the geographical movement of ancient pilgrimages with the turn inward" promoted by philosophy, to change

the soul, rather than the place," as Hadot puts it. By acquiring the ability to see Man s position and participation in Nature s whole, Platonists and Stoics acquired a sense of cosmic belonging and admiration that filled the need for pilgrimage and mystic experiences.

The extensive part four, called Figures," gathers together three chapters that will be most useful for readers interested in contemporary thought and debates. Chapter 10 focuses on the figure of the sage and argues for its central role in the constitution of ancient philosophy. More than a conceptual persona, Hadot argues, the figure of the sage becomes a role model for philosophers who were obliged to think, act and even feel according to this model. The philosopher is the one who sets his mind, body, and soul on the horizon of wisdom. Correlatively, chapter 11 shows how the meditations of Marcus Aurelius should be understood not as pessimistic lamentation but rather as spiritual exercises." Introducing this important notion in this chapter, Hadot situates the Emperor s writing in the lineage of the Stoic practice of indifference" toward the physical world and its chain of causes. A form of detachment from what the individual cannot control that invites to consider the perennial organization of nature over the temporal fragility of human affairs. In this vein, chapter 12 addresses the notion of culture of the self" as an aesthetic of existence" developed by Foucault. Contrary to the author of *The Hermeneutics of the Self*, Hadot insists on the moral and transformative aspect of the practice of philosophy. For him, it is the good" and not beauty" that acts as the guiding star of the life and practice of ancient philosophers.

The last part includes two essays on the notions of Ends." Chapter 13 proposes a detailed historical survey of the decline of philosophical schools. By situating the End of Paganism" in the larger political, psychological, theological, and philosophical context, Hadot explains the rise of superstitions in the later ancient world. Instead of a coalescence of philosophy with revealed religion or theurgy through the Christian doctrine, Hadot underscores how suprarational dimensions gained importance in later philosophy. The closing chapter relies on the other meaning of the word end as a goal. Presenting the notion of happiness in competing philosophical schools, Hadot shows how the ancient practice of self-cultivation was less an egoistic enterprise than one oriented toward justice and benevolence. Most importantly, Hadot stresses that the goal of philosophical practice is to overcome the ego to reach the greatness of the soul that characterizes the sage.

This careful translation takes on important tasks. In addition to highlighting the multiple facets of Hadot s work, the critical apparatus rigorously provides important terminological nuances that might have been lost in translation otherwise. Even though the abundance of translator s notes affects the design of the book and is often redundant with the translator s preface, this volume will serve as a reference and an example for the later translation of Hadot s work. It also contributes immensely to the debate regarding the distinction between spiritual exercises" and Foucault s technologies of the self." The pieces of evidence gleaned in chapters 3, 5, 6, and 7 illustrate the specificity of Hadot s notion, distinguishing it at the same time from Foucault s aesthetics of existence" and existentialism. Through this, there emerges a different account of the notion self in which

individuality and self-centrism is overcome through a   superior self" resulting from the practice of philosophy as self-transformation.

Besides that, I cannot help but note that this publication resonates with a certain valorization of the self in theoretical and critical reflections, especially in the American context, developed in recent years by feminist, queer, and black writers and artists, notably under the influence of Foucault. The affinity of Hadot s   philosophy as practice" with cultural criticism and what has been called   Autotheory" highlights its relevance and necessity for ongoing public conversations and scholarly debates outside the discipline of philosophy. Even though feminist and queer thinkers and writers like Paul B. Preciado, Audre Lorde, Maggie Nelson, or Adrian Piper would reject the model of wisdom and the figure of the sage , their insistence on thinking the self from its inextricable position in moral, social, and political issues should be put in dialogue with Hadot s shift to philosophy as   a way of life." Rather than dissociating philosophy from those trends, I believe Hadot allows for a productive dialogue between the history of the discipline and emerging modes of theory and self-cultivation.

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REVIEW

Mona Lilja, *Constructive Resistance: Repetitions, Emotions, and Time*. London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2021. Pp. 184. ISBN: 9781538146484 (hardback).

When Resistance Constructs:
Change and Transformation Beyond Opposition

There is a sedimented understanding of resistance that reduces it to a reactive practice of opposition and negation. Resistance says no to power; it pushes back against domination and repression. From this perspective, resistance only resists: it can only be defined in the negative as something that tries to halt the whims of power. But when we look at the actual practices of resistance, the tactics, the emotions, the subjectivities at stake, we find an excess: resistance constructs, creates, affirms, proposes alternatives. In *Constructive Resistance*, Mona Lilja unpacks the creative potential of resistance and its ability to induce social and political change beyond the mere opposition to power. Lilja's conceptualization proposes a distinctive and innovative characterization of those aspects of resistance that exceed opposition and create alternative discourses, ways of life, desires and bodies. Her concept of constructive resistance is an original and complex combination of theoretical reflections inspired by a series of case studies analyzed and discussed both at the level of practices and in terms of discourses. The theoretical framework of the book combines an attentive reading of Foucault's work on power and resistance with a focus on everyday practices of resistance inspired by Scott, while engaging with a materialist perspective that touches upon the work of Butler, Barad and Braidotti.

The book is divided in three sections where Lilja explores the relations between constructive resistance and three concepts that are key for the understanding and the practice of resistance: repetition, emotions and time. The section on repetitions is primarily about identifying tactical ways for constructing alternative discourses by intervening in meaning-making processes. Discourses are here understood from a materialist perspective that emphasizes how artifacts, bodies, figurations and linguistic statements concur in the production and the circulation of meaning. Repetitions are presented as tactical means for constructing effective resistance. Chapter 2 reflects on the border dispute between Cambodia and Thailand regarding the Preah Vihear Temple. The focus is on the

short-lived construction of a replica of the contested temple on the Thai side of the border. This form of repetition unsettles the understanding of authenticity, questioning the very idea of the original, which turns out to be a repetition of previous patterns. Chapter 3 identifies three technologies of repetition in the discourse of environmental movements in their communications on climate change. Here Lilja proposes three patterns of repetition that can help to maintain and strengthen the effectiveness of these resistant discourses: reiterating the message with slight variations to keep the recipient engaged; the careful interplay between simplification and the delivery of the complexity of the issue; the twisting of naturalized discourses in order to undermine their solidity. The last case study elaborates on Braidotti's concept of figurations to unravel how Cambodian female politicians construct their everyday resistance. By repeating traditional stereotypes, they create a space to perform unexpected or dangerous positions.

The second section of the book discusses the role of emotions in motivating and fueling resistance but also how resistance generates emotions. Chapter 5 draws on Butler to discuss public assemblies and large gatherings as a form of acting in concert that disrupts the normality of public spaces by exposing their concrete, precarious or suffering bodies. Resistance is accelerated and up-scaled as a result of an affective intensification of emotions evoked by these embodied representations. The second case study focuses on Japanese social movements and NGOs fighting against the exploitation of farmers in Cambodia and the Philippines. Lilja looks at strategies of representations of these precarious lives aimed at provoking an emotional response that mobilizes these organizations' members or potential members. This is a form of proxy resistance carried out in solidarity with those living precarious lives. In chapter 7, this idea of proxy resistance is explored in the case of two art exhibitions in Sweden (Destination X and History Unfolds), where artifacts and objects belonging to migrants generate an emotional encounter with the living experience of precarity and vulnerability.

The section on time is perhaps the densest from a theoretical perspective. The underlying polemical target is a notion of resistance understood in terms of spectacular and often violent events. As in the previous sections, resistance is here presented as a slow transformation. In chapter 8, Lilja reviews the temporality of different strategies of resistance. Memory is presented as a contested terrain where the present remembers or dis(re)members the past while shaping expectations for the future. Dinshaw's idea of queer historical touches opens the possibility of an affective connection with the past, generating communities across time. Furthermore, Lilja discusses prefigurative politics as resistance that brings the future within the present.

Chapter 9 offers a comprehensive and original review of Foucault's scattered conceptualization of resistance. For each modality of resistance, Lilja tries to interrogate the specific temporality at stake. Counter-conducts assert the possibility of a final time that decrees the end of the indefinite governmentality of the state. By projecting the end of the time of the state, counter-conducts depict a rupture that will initiate a utopian timeless future. In stark opposition to this, Lilja looks at anti-authoritarian struggles as presented in *The Subject and Power*. As localized struggles, the temporality of this form of

resistance over subjectivation is the here and now. With regards to the first volume of the *History of Sexuality*, Lilja reflects on the relation between the swarm of points of resistance and the possibility of their strategic codification into a revolution. This process of codification is presented in terms of a 'time-delay' or a 'time lag' (p. 144). The author then reviews resistance as reverse discourse, particularly in relation to homosexuality. Resistance here performs a repetition of the dominant discourse through its rearticulation in 'a temporal pattern which simultaneously displays both continuation and change' (p. 146). In relation to technologies of the self, Lilja recuperates Foucault's discussion of the hypomnemata, notebooks where memories and teaching of the past are recorded in the present in order to guide future potential courses of action.

The last chapter discusses a series of photos of the desert of Western Sahara, where bodies are intentionally left out by the artist to represent the permanence of the desert and its marks over the contingency of the conflict. Although referenced in the text, to some extent this analysis is reminiscent of Foucault's *La force de fuir*. This is perhaps the chapter that better marks an opening to a materialist and posthuman perspective which is nevertheless present throughout the book. This can also be taken as a further attempt to exalt the potentialities in Foucault's work for a posthuman turn.

The strength of *Constructive Resistance* lies in the ability to combine innovative theoretical insights with a series of empirical examples that come from very diverse contexts and display a variety of practices of resistance. This expresses the complexity of resistance and highlights how the plurality of forms it takes implies that resistance resists its own conceptualization. Yet, there are examples that question the idea of resistance altogether. Before analyzing whether these are forms of constructive resistance, there are times where it is legitimate to question whether these practices can be defined as resistance in the first place. This is particularly evident in the case of the Preah Vihear Temple, where it is the initiative of a Thai military general to finance the construction of a replica of the temple to be considered as an act of resistance. Lilja leaves this question open: 'One question that remains, however, is if the construction of a replica can be viewed as resistance that is carried out by subordinate locals (local administration and a few persons of the military establishment) on the border area or should it be viewed as a power-strategy by a more powerful neighboring nation?' (p. 40). Likewise, when discussing examples of proxy resistance, Lilja considers the inherent risks beyond the emancipatory intent: 'in the attempts to display the migrant figuration, there is a risk that it becomes exotic and hypervisible, which thereby strengthens the divide between "us" and "them"' (p. 117). These open questions are the result of the intimate intertwinement between power and resistance and how the latter can either result in a new form of power or can reinforce the power that it seeks to oppose. Yet, this risks lumping together whatever practice emerges from a contingent position of subjection. If a discourse or a practice, even unintentionally, happens to reinforce power, would it still make sense to define it as resistance? This perhaps unveils how the openness of the concept risks reducing its potential. It might be argued that conceptualizations of resistance need a more robust enunciation of its distinctive features.

Perhaps the idea of a constructive resistance is a step in this direction. It helps to emphasize the often-neglected creative side of resistance, its capacity to transcend opposition and instigate social and political change. Lijla does not fully engage with the question of what this distinction actually aims to exclude though: what would the opposite of a constructive resistance look like? Do we need to think of constructive resistance in a dichotomic relation with nonconstructive resistance? Lilja excludes that this question should be responded to according to an either/or logic: 'Many practices of resistance contain both constructive and nonconstructive elements, and these in fact work together to undermine systems of domination. Sometimes, constructive resistance is more constructive and less in oppositions: it is a sliding scale' (p. 18). Although the idea of a scale between constructive and nonconstructive helps to engage with the complexity of practices of resistance, it might be argued that the strength of the concept could have been followed through to the point of negating the possibility of a nonconstructive resistance altogether. Once we establish the affinity between resistance and the constructive affirmation of new and alternative practices, discourses, desires, subjectivations and ways of life, it is much harder to entertain the idea that some specific forms of resistance might entail no constructive element at all.

A more general concern is the unresolved question of how resistance relates to power: 'even though power and resistance are constituted together, resistance sometimes transcends the whole phenomenon of being against something: instead, it constructs alternative or prefigurative social institutions or discourses' (p. 18). This marks the affirmative role of resistance and, to some extent, even its primacy. At other times though, resistance is presented as parasitical or as a reaction. This risks canceling the relationality between power and resistance. Power seems to emerge on its own, in its primacy, as an affirmative and autonomous gesture. Only after that, resistance appears and contests it. But the contested nature of the relationship should be maintained throughout. Otherwise, why should resistance turn to something constructive? And once it becomes constructive, creates new discourses and new practices, what happens to power? Does it not have to react? Does it not have to parasitically use that resistance in order to develop alternative tactics and strategies?

Overall, Lilja's book is a brilliant contribution to recent efforts in conceptualizing resistance beyond its oppositional stance. This view highlights the emancipatory potential of resistance and refines an understanding of power, showing how resistance dynamically contests the dominant order through a rich and creative variety of discourses and practices, while opening trajectories for exploring alternative worlds, desires, forms of subjectivation and ways of life. Once we understand resistance as constructive, this unleashes the infinite potential of what we can construct through resistance. *Constructive Resistance* is a fundamental and much needed contribution to the emerging field of resistance studies, but it also promises to influence debates on power and resistance in philosophy and social sciences. The idea of constructive resistance and its impact on social and political change reflects what resistance has come to represent in the last dec-

ades, after a wide disillusionment with direct opposition and armed struggle in the fight for power.

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REVIEW

Robert Mitchell, *Infectious Liberty. Biopolitics between Romanticism and Liberalism.* New York, NY: Fordham University Press, 2021. Pp. 304. ISBN: 9780823294596 (paperback).

Romantic-era novelists and liberal theorists of political economy rarely cohabitate in discourse, conceivably because the Romantic penchant for individual uniqueness and the philosophers' birds-eye perspective on collective behaviour do not make for easy bedfellows. Thus, Robert Mitchell's *Infectious Liberty* spans an unusual arc by revisiting works associated with Romanticism and liberalism through the lens of Michel Foucault's concept of biopolitics. The book's purpose is twofold: firstly, Mitchell aims to redeem Romantic literature as what Foucault termed 'technologies of the self,' as means to facilitate critical review and an expanded perspective of central biopolitical concepts. Secondly, he seeks to untether biopolitics from the frame of liberalism with the help of Romantic-era thinking and push it "toward a positive, affirmative and just version," a collective strategy intent on self-transformation over self-preservation – with a view to the political and ecological challenges of our own times (p. 5).

Each of the book's six chapters reviews a particular biopolitical concern within Romantic-type literature or liberal theory, starting with the topic of genius. The vicissitudes in the lives of extraordinary people are a regular theme in Romantic literature, yet typically portrayed from an individual's perspective. Examples like Thomas Gray's *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard* (1751) also ponder the collective fate of obscure geniuses, dwindling unrecognized where hampered by poverty. William Wordsworth, moreover, alerts to the threat of technological progress pushing substance by the wayside; he fears that the economics of the printing press will submerge high-value literature in a flood of lighter, more popular fare. For both these authors, the loss of talent and their positive contribution to society is not merely the individual's issue but a national problem, and a collective response an imperative to forestall the consequences. Their discourse thus promotes a form of biopolitics targeting individual uniqueness.

Fiction in general has the scope to portray populations in a way that theories of political economy cannot, according to Mitchell. Romantic-era authors in particular developed approaches capable of representing different population models, the forces they are subject to and their capacity to create and shape norms, yet with the individual's uniqueness in

mind. Such works reflect in a more subtle way the "difference-oriented theory of population" which eighteenth-century physiocrats and political theorists employed (p. 81). Using the debate between William Godwin and Thomas Malthus as an example, Mitchell presents two different models of population and their ramifications. Malthus conceives of population as a homogenous mass and the exogenous factors that most determine its crucial metric – growth – as beyond human reach. The population itself hence needs to reduce itself to ensure survival. Godwin, in response, stresses the perfectibility of society, manifest in institutions that form a continuous track record of collective progress and improvement – the endogenous saving grace to its long-term wellbeing. Mitchell then contrasts these two population models with alternatives from Romantic literature, notably Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) and its protagonist Victor's ponderings over the life and death of the population he was essentially to create – not just with one manmade creature but with the monster's mate and therefore reproductive capacities, autonomy and heterogeneity. Rather than reading Victor as a model authoritarian ruler, Mitchell sees *Frankenstein*'s purpose in sketching the world in terms of alternative types of populations rather than endorsing one model over another.

Not just science fiction but also realist novels of the nineteenth century bear marks of biopolitical consciousness. Mitchell discusses two Romantic-era literary techniques of particular relevance in that regard: character-systems and free indirect discourse. Character systems continuously expanded from the Romantic period and came of age in the nineteenth century novels of authors like Émile Zola, Herman Melville and Honoré de Balzac. These increased casts of human and non-human characters exemplify reciprocal relationships between individual characters or factors and the novels' populations at large. The literary device of free indirect discourse provided these entities with a medium of expression and the authors with a means to represent "unarticulated logics, comportments and forces" (p. 100). Thus, authors could express their observations on populations at large and channel their own scientific interests through their creative franchise – Flaubert his theories on art, Zola and Balzac their interest in milieu, and George Eliot her curiosity in evolutionary sciences.

Some examples from Romantic-era literature show that the interaction between human populations and external forces were also imagined to work in reverse. In contrast to contemporary anxieties fuelled by the dawn of the Anthropocene, a number of Romantic authors made enthusiastic projections about how the global climate could be deliberately changed in order to achieve more hospitable seasons in certain localities. Erasmus Darwin's poem *The Botanic Garden* (1791), for example, speculated that the local weather could be amended by shifting the global position of polar ice masses and consequently redirecting wind flows. Shelley's idea of climate change in *Queen Mab* (1813) approaches the issue from a biopolitical perspective, locating terraforming powers within the population's food habits and resulting flows in economics, politics and nature. By including a recent science-fiction novel, Kim Stanley Robinson's *Aurora* (2015), Mitchell adds a Neo-Romantic scenario where terraforming ambitions are recast in a future age of space exploration, launched in response to the self-destructive cusp of the Anthropocene. To Mitchell, both

Robinson and Shelley present reparative rather than utopian scenarios, seeking to redeem the relationship between humans and nature through a positive, joyful process of engagement.

The book's last two chapters offer a comparative review of two central biopolitical concepts in liberal theory: collective experiment and self-regulation. The analysis seeks to demarcate the line where biopolitical experimentation, intended to maximize human capacities, slips into 'immunitary logic,' a term coined by Roberto Esposito, whereby isolated parts of a population are deliberately disadvantaged or made to suffer for the sake of the collective's survival. Mitchell's other concern is to map the relationship and difference between neo- and liberal tendencies with a view to biopolitics. He investigates conceptions of collective experimentation from the early eighteenth century to modern days by surveying five authors' reflections on the theme: John Arbuthnot and mass inoculation as a liberal experiment; Edmund Burke's appraisal of traditional social order as a guarantor for organic societal experimentation; John Stuart Mill's reinvention of government as a central repository for information gained through collectives' experiments; and Friedrich Hayek's neoliberal appraisal of the market as the sole legitimate mechanism of collective knowledge processing and dissemination. The survey concludes with the contemporary sociologist Ulrich Beck and his concept of 'risk society' where the forces of modernity rebound through the negative environmental side effects that now affect our collective development worldwide. To Beck, the idea of a risk society accounts for the fact that the global population, unwittingly, is subject to collective self-experiments, e.g., by being exposed to environmental hazards. The key challenge for both scientific and lay communities is to recognize the experiments as such, gather and assess perspectives, and synthesize them into one common experience.

Self-regulation, on the other hand, was for Foucault the one principle of social relations responsible for the simultaneous emergence of biopolitics and liberalism in the eighteenth century. To Mitchell, the then-discovery of this principle also explains the centrality of the term 'regulation' in novels, discourses and debates around the turn of the nineteenth century. Some interpretations imagine the existence of an invariable standard, pronounced by a divine imperative. Alternatively, a variable standard for self-regulation is conceptualized whereby the ultimate knowledge is not located in an omniscient sovereign but a collective of fallible individuals. Romantic-era authors, in Mitchell's view, made inroads in identifying and concretizing the second, variable standard of regulation and the crucial questions it beckons for our society. The invariable standard appears in Malthus' theory, who believes in divine, static principles organizing the waxing and waning of populations through exogenous factors like food supply. Burke, too, imagined taste to rely on stable principles. Kant's reflection on regulative thinking, in contrast, declares the faculty of human judgment as the sole stable factor, not the content of it. Here, self-regulative thinking is a social activity that requires the individual to think from another person's standpoint in order to judge the validity of their own behaviour.

The role of self-regulation gains new currency in post-Romantic debates amongst ecologists and neoliberalists alike. Environmental science commonly casts the role of humans

as a disruptive factor to an ecosystem's natural balance. The concept of the Anthropocene, in contrast, "is precisely intended to understand how human activities are part of an ecological process"– unconsciously, automatically (p. 217). The neoliberal School of Chicago, in contrast, contended that exactly the conscious reflection of this integral role was the first necessary step to individual self-regulation, albeit that this mode of thinking was limited to economic considerations only, by definition fundamental to human cognition. The solution to contemporary challenges, for both left-wing and neoliberal circles, relies on the commons, according to Mitchell, a format for self-regulation embedded in a social organization that is valued precisely because it is assumed to be organic but not automatic. Although each camp depicts different scenarios, they both emphasize local embeddedness, a community's autonomy to act through collective decision making and the importance of learning from collective experience over time.

Mitchell closes the discussion by drawing on Hannah Arendt, Roberto Esposito and Bruno Latour with a view to the global future. Latour in particular claims that the only constructive way for humanity to evolve in times of the Anthropocene is to continuously expand the commons worldwide, by creating and intensifying interconnections between human and non-human allies and making the world ever more inclusive in order to address environmental challenges ahead. His argument, however, deliberately eclipses the concept of self-regulation and stresses active participation instead. The debate is concluded by Mitchell with the closing question as to whether the global threat will be enough to unify communities worldwide – and the projection "that perhaps this is the case – but only if what unites these common worlds is not a threat but rather a promise … of greater flourishing in the future" (p. 229).

Published in 2021, Mitchell's book, with or without the recurrent theme of mass inoculation, is an undeniably timely read during the current global pandemic and its unprecedented level of biopolitical experimentation on an international scale. Precisely because this link is so obvious, Mitchell explicitly vows to abstain from direct references; yet the message does not lose in poignancy, and his careful analysis of biopolitical concepts in theoretical discourse and literature successfully expands the reader's awareness of biopolitical consciousness in unexpected corners. The term 'Romanticism' is somewhat stretched throughout the book both chronologically and thematically. Although Mitchell admits to a less-than-canonical definition with the intent "to underscore the continuing persistence of Romantic-era approaches, framings, dilemmas, and considerations into the present," some of the examples he associates with the period do not comfortably seem to fit that category (p. 9). Granted these cases serve the discussion no less effectively, they could perhaps have stood just as well without this label. The impression that lasts is that Mitchell, alongside a thoughtful semantic study, manages to import a fundamentally positive and transformative attitude from a period of unbound enthusiasm for the human spirit into an age where global environmental disaster could but inspire collective despair instead.

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REVIEW

Marco Checchi, *The Primacy of Resistance: Power, Opposition and Becoming*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2021. ISBN: 9781350124462 (e-book).

With *The Primacy of Resistance*, Marco Checchi hopes to generate a 'Copernican revolution' in our understanding of Foucault's power-resistance relationship. The traditional view of this takes power to be the primary, affirmative and dominant force, with the majority of Foucault interlocutors either neglecting a discussion on resistance or solely focusing upon its relation to power.[1] Resistance is therefore considered subordinate, reactionary and determined by the more important, powerful and primary power. Contrary to this, Checchi begins his study of the power-resistance relationship from a neglected perspective of Foucault revealed in a 1982 interview:

> If there was no resistance, there would be no power relations. Because it would simply be a matter of obedience. You have to use power relations to refer to the situation where you're not doing what you want. So resistance comes first, and resistance remains superior to the forces of the process; power relations are obliged to change with the resistance. So I think that resistance is the main word, the key word, in this dynamic.[2]

This interview is one of the rare occasions where Foucault directly addresses the primacy of resistance, which may explain its historical neglect. Checchi considers how far we can take such an idea and, because of the limited account given by Foucault, he traces a line of thought which includes La Boétie, Spinoza, Nietzsche, Tronti, and Deleuze. Around these thinkers, Checchi focuses upon four main trajectories, with a chapter dedicated to each, that will help to reveal the primacy of resistance; nature, labour, politics and ontology.

The work opens with a passage from Salvatore Capograssi, a member of the resistance during the Nazi occupation of Italy, whose memoirs are here translated for the first time. Such a resistance is given as an example of the traditional and common understanding, Resistance with a capital R, as a reactive event which causes a temporary fracture to the

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[1] See Nicos Poulantzas, *State, Power, Socialism* (1978); Mark Philp, "Foucault on power: A problem in radical translation?" *Political Theory* 11:1 (1983); Lois McNay, *Foucault: A Critical Introduction* (1994).

[2] Michel Foucault, *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth. Essential Works of Foucault 1954–1984* (1997), 167.

dominant power structure. If the Resistance is successful, it is soon replaced by another stable and dominant power structure or, as usually happens, the Resistance is quickly crushed. Such a view not only reaffirms the primacy of power, which Resistance is born from, defined by and ends with, but also reveals the paradoxical nature of Resistance seeking its own end. Opposing this, throughout his memoirs, Capograssi states that resistance against fascism actually began in 1919 and continued long after 1945; it was a "lifetime engagement" (p. 2). Capograssi's resistance is the primary, creative, continuous and affirmative force of life. Reducing it to a temporary and reactive event cancels "the possibility of thinking resistance *as* expansion: proliferation, creation, openings, becomings" (p. 5). It will be this that *The Primacy of Resistance* seeks to reveal.

Readers expecting a focus upon concrete historical examples of Resistance, an expectation that is fueled by the early discussion on Capograssi and the *operaismo* (workerism) movement, will be disappointed. Resistance, with the capital R, is barely touched upon and, apart from a brief call to arms in the conclusion, it is hard to see the work making, or motivating, an appearance at the barricades. But, as the work progresses, we soon learn that this is because Checchi wants to escape this traditional understanding of resistance. When we reach the theoretical conclusion of resistance as creativity and affirmation, then the practical applications do become clear.

Staying true to a Foucauldian framework, Checchi embarks upon a historical analysis of the primacy of resistance. This begins in chapter two with a discussion on Étienne de La Boétie's theory of 'natural companionship,' which is coupled with resistance. La Boétie considers the primary state of nature to be one of solidarity, cooperation and freedom, with this also securing it as prior to power. The historical inversion of placing power as primary to companionship, and later resistance, was due to humanity entering into 'voluntary servitude.' Checchi illustrates this through a critique of thinkers such as Hobbes and Rousseau up to Rawls and Nozick. Such consensual contractual theories present freedom as something granted, restricted and secondary to a primary power. Such theories do not realise that this power rests upon us relinquishing our natural freedom, of misusing our nature, which leads to our 'denaturation.' Although critiques of power can be noted in these thinkers, they fall into the trap of the "*art of not being governed like that*," Resistance with a capital. In contrast to this, the state of nature and the primacy of resistance practice the "more radical and absolute *art of not being governed at all*" (p. 52). Checchi humorously summarises this with the conclusion; "if Hobbes's *Leviathan* were recorded on vinyl, when played backwards it would have revealed the masked message: 'resistance comes first'" (p. 69).

La Boétie's ideas would go on to influence Autonomist Marxism and the *operaismo* movement that thrived in Italy during the mid-20th century. Mario Tronti was a key figure within these and in chapter three Checchi begins from Deleuze's suggestion that "in Foucault, there is an echo of Mario Tronti's interpretation of Marxism."[3] Tronti inverted the Marxist labour-capital relationship by placing labour and working struggles

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[3] Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault* (2006), 120.

as primary to capital by revealing the latter's dependence and birth from the former. This guarantees the freedom, creativity and primacy of labour, which has been historically inverted by the exploitation and subordination of capital. Checchi traces this history to the contemporary neoliberal 'biofinancialization' of labour. Here, labour is reduced from an originally creative, affirmative and cooperative activity and is engulfed, alongside everything else within and including society, by capital. From this another original revelation of the primacy of resistance is also revealed that the traditional view neglects; resistance does not seek, or even need, opposition. The reactive power, which is itself a resistance to the original creative resistance, is but a "tedious burden" (p. 16). Checchi gives the examples of colonialism and *operaismo*; how the natives were primary to the colonialists and the workers struggle to capital. Such an idea also finds striking relevance in contemporary matters, such as environmental struggles, but these are sadly left undiscussed.

The notion that power is a reactive force can be found throughout Foucault's body of work: it is "an action upon an action" and a "management of possibilities."[4] Chapter four is the least controversial and original part of the book as it expands upon the reactive nature of power, but readers can still find interest in the dialogue Checchi reveals between Foucault and Spinoza, who is discussed via Ranciere's and Negri's interpretations. The binary of resistance-power is analogised with Ranciere's *politics-police* and Spinoza's *potentia-potestas*. Similarities are found between resistance, *politics* and *potentia* in their creativity, continuity and openness, whereas their opposition seeks stability, domination and totality. Being, which is here presented as a hybrid of *politics, potentia* and resistance, is a continuous, spontaneous and dynamic flux and therefore must be "a physics of resistance."[5] Power, *police* or *potestas* is now the temporary and reactive fractious event, an interruption to the ever dynamic, transformative and possibility of being.

In chapter five, Checchi turns again to Deleuze to reveal the ontological primacy of resistance and give further proof of its active and creative nature. Whereas a clear and brief background is offered to other writers who may be unfamiliar to the reader, a basic understanding of key Deleuzian concepts, such as 'virtuality' and 'war machine,' are required. It is in Deleuze's *Foucault* where the primacy of resistance is first emphasised and most clearly formulated.[6] This reveals that Checchi depends as much on Deleuze as he does Foucault; the primacy of resistance is revealed through their intertwining. Following Deleuze's interpretation, power is confined to the 'actual,' whereas resistance always brings with it possibilities which are found in the 'virtual' or outside. Resistance, although finding itself outside, also bears effect upon the 'actual' in its possibilities and the actualization of these which will go on to transform the 'actual.' Even if no resistance can be perceived, there is always "the distant roar of the battle,"[7] thus revealing the 'transversality' of resistance. Leaning upon Nietzschean terminology, resistance is now

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[4] Michel Foucault, *Power. Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984* (2001), 340-341.

[5] Antonio Negri, *The Savage Anomaly: The Power of Spinoza's Metaphysics and Politics* (1991), 226.

[6] "[Foucault's] final word on power is that it comes first" (Deleuze, *Foucault*, 89).

[7] Michel Foucault, *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison* [1975] (1995), 308.

revealed to be an 'active' force and therefore primary, whereas power is 'reactive' and secondary. The ontological primacy of resistance, and historical analysis that has been traced throughout, reveals a diagram of creativity, possibility, continuous transformation and becoming. This is an optimism that, in the conclusion, Checchi aligns with several contemporary struggles that seek to overcome and transform dominant power relations.

A question that continuously confronts Checchi is whether he widens the scope of resistance to an extremity that escapes the Foucauldian framework. Although Checchi states at the beginning that the primacy of resistance is only an intuition that he tries to transform into a fully formed concept, unacknowledged Foucault statements, such as "there is no escaping from power," or "power is everywhere,"[8] haunt the book. These seem to contradict Checchi's claim that resistance can do without power, that power is only a 'tedious burden,' while also doubting his claim that power is confined to the 'actual.' Checchi seems to restrict the productivity and creativity of power that Foucault mentions, and it must be remembered that he mentions these qualities as belonging to power much more frequently than with resistance. Likewise, the work seems to rest upon the presupposition of taking La Boétie's idea of 'natural companionship' as granted. We are presented with an extremely idealistic view of nature where inequalities are naively given as an opportunity to help those who are weaker. A work concentrating on the primacy of power would surely offer the contrary Darwinian view and be able to present support for such a view that is sadly lacking here.

Problems such as these are bound to appear whenever a long-held position is confronted with a 'Copernican revolution,' but such revolutions also bring advantages. In acknowledging the primacy of resistance, we are reminded that political and ethical action must not consist of the reactive form, but that we must utilise its creative and dynamic nature to create new 'diagrams' and relations. *The Primacy of Resistance* reveals the endless possibilities and ever-open door of socio-political change, action and ethics. Consequently, it can also be used to escape the charge of pessimism or moral relativism that Foucault is often criticised for.

The Primacy of Resistance realises an important step in recognizing an oft-neglected part of Foucault's work while also opening it up to new perspectives and possibilities. Whether Checchi takes it to an extreme is an interesting debate to be had, and while others will surely disagree with the premise and find much counter evidence from within Foucault's work, this reveals one of many avenues that the book can stimulate. Another is the interesting dialogue that is to be had between Foucault and La Boétie, which has only just begun to be explored[9] and feels the most underdeveloped part of the work. While Foucault uncovered a genealogy of power, the whole theory of resistance, its history, relation to power, society and history, remains unexplored. Foucault traces a clear historical line of power through pastoral, sovereign and disciplinary to biopower, but the work spends surprisingly little time on resistance's relation and influence upon this;

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[8] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: Volume 1: An Introduction* [1976] (1978), 82-93.

[9] See Marc Schachter, "Foucault and La Boétie," *Storia del pensiero politico* 5:2 (2016), 241-259.

especially as this seems to reveal the following power as a resistance to the prior dominant power. For example, when do the techniques and strategies of disciplinary power, which destabilise the dominant structures of sovereign power, stop being resistance and become power?

The Primacy of Resistance is a beginning and foundation from which to develop such theories. Checchi has opened the door and is welcoming us in. His conclusion is not a conclusion per se but, like resistance itself, "an opening, a multiplicity of new creation, resistant re-existences" (p. 24). This makes the work a welcome contribution to the contemporary field of Foucault studies and also creates a new and rich avenue of possible further study. While Foucault has long been described as the "philosopher of power,"[10] if we are to take Checchi's interpretation seriously, he must become the 'philosopher of resistance.'

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[10] Leo Berseni, "Michel Foucault: Philosopher of Power," washingtonpost.com https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/entertainment/books/1981/03/15/michel-foucault-philosopher-of-power/3cc27899-6c0f-4b60-a8a5-007e112ef9ae/ (accessed July 5th 2021).

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REVIEW

Mitchell Dean and Daniel Zamora, *The Last Man Takes LSD: Foucault and the End of Revolution*. London: Verso, 2021. Pp. 256. ISBN: 9781839761393 (hardback).

The debate about how to interpret Foucault's writings on neoliberalism has been going on for a while now: where some see in *The Birth of Biopolitics* a devastating critique of neoliberal reason, others see a laudatory exposition. Mitchell Dean and Daniel Zamora's recent book *The Last Man Takes LSD: Foucault and the End of Revolution*[1] is the newest contribution to this dispute. In it, the two authors rearticulate in book-length the position they have previously defended in several articles and book chapters: that Foucault was enticed by neoliberal thought and that his reading of Gary Becker and others significantly affected the intellectual trajectory of his later years.[2]

While this book adds very little that is new to the already-extensive debate about the correct understanding of Foucault's neoliberalism lectures, its appearance is nevertheless justified because it promises to go beyond narrow, scholarly spats about the proper interpretation of the French philosopher's writings. Aiming to deliver '[p]art intellectual history, part critical theory',[3] Dean and Zamora want to explore, through Foucault, how 'certain currents on the left … came to appreciate the opportunities' of anti-collectivist elements of neoliberalism. They provide a genealogy of a certain Foucauldian 'thought style' characterised by a marriage of progressivism and individualism in order to reveal the shortcomings of Foucauldian thought for contemporary Left politics. While the arguments about what Foucault *really* thought of neoliberalism are central to the book – and many will no doubt find fault with its interpretation of Foucault in this regard – I set the somewhat tired exegetical debates aside for the purposes of this review. Instead, I focus on the book's, in my opinion, more interesting project of analysing the broader relations between neoliberalism, Foucauldian thought and Left politics. Despite being a well-written and in many places highly interesting and worthwhile book, it ultimately falls short of a compelling analysis in this regard.

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[1] Originally published in French in 2019, the English version is a substantially revised edition with two completely new chapters.

[2] E.g.: Daniel Zamora, "Foucault's Responsibility," *Jacobin* (Dec 15, 2014), and contributions to Daniel Zamora and Michael Behrent (eds.), *Foucault and Neoliberalism* (2016).

[3] Quote from the inside of the dust cover of the hardback edition.

First of all, readers who expect *The Last Man Takes LSD* to be about Foucault's experience of doing drugs in California will be disappointed: the LSD episode serves merely as a catchy frame story to introduce the analysis of Foucault's relationship with neoliberalism. Hyperbolic statements about how his LSD experience changed the entire trajectory of Foucault's thought have been made before and debunked,[4] but Dean and Zamora judiciously avoid making too strong claims here – the introduction makes it clear that the authors are using the LSD story metonymically to stand in for a whole host of 'limit experiences', including BDSM, visits to Zen monasteries, and the Iranian revolution. But while these personal 'experiments' do play a role in the authors' account of Foucault's thought, it is the 'surprising encounter with a new and increasingly influential form of political thought, neoliberalism, that [is] decisive' (p. 11) – and this is the book's focus.

Chapter 1, then, introduces this 'encounter' in the shape of Foucault's *Birth of Biopolitics* lectures and places both Foucault's analysis of neoliberalism and its reception in France and abroad in its historical context. Dean and Zamora persuasively argue that much of the work employing Foucauldian notions of governmentality has ignored the historical context in which he developed them. Chapter 2, 'Searching for a Left Governmentality', elaborates on this theme by further analysing the political context of Foucault's reception of neoliberalism. This was a context, of course, where elements of the French (and global) Left turned increasingly against traditional state-, class-, and party-centred politics following disillusionment both with the development of Soviet communism and the growing institutionalisation and ideological rigidity of domestic communist parties. The way this context is presented, however, leaves something to be desired. No real attempt is made to understand the New Left's critique of the 'Old' Left and its statist politics – were they really just duped by neoliberals or is it possible that a compelling critique of the capitalist welfare state was simply co-opted by neoliberal-leaning politicians? Dean and Zamora also conflate opposition to welfare state capitalism with opposition to Marxism – thus completely ignoring the fact that Marxist thinkers have long criticised capitalist welfare programmes as 'an anesthetic, distracting the oppressed from the true causes of their problems'.[5] While there is no doubt an interesting confluence between these two trends on the Left (arguably exemplified in Foucault), they cannot simply be equated with one another – analysis of such complexities is sorely missing from *The Last Man Takes LSD*.

If the beginning of the book stresses a certain discontinuity in Foucault's thought brought about by his encounter with neoliberalism, the two chapters that follow instead stress continuities between the French philosopher's earlier and later works. These are the most compelling and interesting chapters of the book, making the argument that Foucault's late writings on neoliberalism and the self, as well as his questionable take on the Iranian revolution, 'are consistent with his more general habits of thought, not only in the

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[4] See, for example, Simeon Wade's book on the LSD episode and Kurt Borg's review of it. Simeon Wade, *Foucault in California: A True Story – Wherein the Great French Philosopher Drops Acid in the Valley of Death* (2019); Kurt Borg, "Foucault on Drugs: The Personal, the Ethical and the Political in *Foucault in California*," *Foucault Studies* 28 (2020), 142-164.

[5] Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (2005/1968), 152.

late 1970s but also throughout his career' (p. 124). Dean and Zamora show how we can trace the writings on the ethics of self with their focus on invention over interpretation back to Foucault's early writings on textual interpretation and his critique of the sovereignty of the author (chapter 3), and how his interpretation of the Iranian revolution as an 'ordeal' or '*épreuve*' can be connected to his earlier work on technologies of truth (chapter 4). These chapters reveal the resonances between Foucault's earlier and later work in a way that dispels the exaggerated idea of a sudden break (let alone one brought about by taking drugs in California) but without imposing artificial unity on his thought either. These chapters, while at times less directly critical of Foucault, form a crucial part of the book's argument: if one is convinced that there are some problematically individualist currents in Foucault's late work, then these cannot simply be dismissed as a fluke; we must, rather, look at the French philosopher's entire oeuvre and ask 'what parts of it might still illuminate the dilemmas of our time, our present and our struggles, and what parts of it can now join the dusty shelves' (p. 232).

Chapters 5 and 6 take up this question more explicitly and argue, by and large, for the 'dusty shelves' option. The fifth chapter, 'The Revolution Beheaded', returns to Foucault's *Birth of Biopolitics* lectures. In many ways, it constitutes the backbone of the book's argument, setting out Dean and Zamora's controversial interpretation of Foucault's analysis of neoliberalism. The argument – that Foucault saw in neoliberal thought a mode of governing compatible with a large degree of freedom to 'invent' oneself – will not be new to those familiar with the debates on Foucault and neoliberalism. The chapter adds nothing substantially new to this dispute, and it will be convincing to those who already agree with Dean and Zamora's position and unconvincing to those who do not. Chapter 6 picks up on another well-known debate, namely that on Foucault's normativity. Here, the authors refreshingly deflect the technical debates, inspired by Habermas' critique, of whether or not Foucault's framework can account for its own normative force and show instead that Foucault, throughout his life, clearly *did* take coherent, normative stances. Against the overly restrictive interpretation of normativity found both in critiques and defences of the French philosopher, Dean and Zamora argue that his is an 'exemplary normativity' (p. 173). The point of the chapter is, in part, to show that Foucauldian analysis cannot be seen as ideologically neutral, and this point is made most forcefully in the section about his lack of attention to inequality – be it the economic inequalities between classes or even the power inequalities inherent in personal and sexual relations (arguably the most compelling critique of Foucault presented in the book).

Throughout, however, the real source of the resonances between Foucault's normative stance and neoliberal thought remains unexplored. Dean and Zamora are well aware that Foucault was not a 'card-carrying' neoliberal (p. 189), but they claim that his 'encounter [with neoliberalism] was the crucible for a certain "thought style" which, while not self-consciously neoliberal, imagined itself as progressive and practical, on the one hand, while absolutely rejecting older socialist and social democratic approaches on the other' (p. 195). This implies a simplistic and unidirectional transfer of ideas from neoliberals like Gary Becker to Foucault and then to wider discourses within left politics and the

humanities.[6] Surely, the story is more complex than that. Dean and Zamora could have found inspiration, for example, in Nancy Fraser's much more nuanced account of how the once-emancipatory feminist critique of welfare state capitalism became co-opted by neoliberal politics, thereby entering into a 'dangerous liaison'.[7] *The Last Man Takes LSD* never puts Foucault into conversation with feminist, or indeed Marxist, critiques of the welfare state and ends up painting a nostalgic and rosy picture of post-war state-managed capitalism. It is paradoxical for a book that wants to interrogate the value of Foucauldian thought for leftist politics and, moreover, rightly insists on a historically contextualised approach that it never seeks to understand what motivated large sections of the left to resist state-managed capitalism.

The lack of analysis of the paradoxical confluence between left and right criticism of welfare capitalism continues in the final chapter, which moves on from Foucault's writings to give an account of neoliberalism. The chapter paints a straightforward picture of the rise and dangers of neoliberal politics – which, ironically for a book lamenting Foucault's enduring influence, reads like a mixture of the opposition to identity politics found in Foucauldians like Wendy Brown with the critique of neoliberal government offered by Foucauldians like Nikolas Rose. Dean and Zamora point to the similarities between Foucault's 'experimental' politics geared towards the liberation of subjectivity and neoliberalism's embrace of risk and the development of enterprising subjects – but they never convincingly explain these. If the authors had paid more attention to the motivations behind the left critiques of the welfare state, of which Foucault's was one, they also would have been better placed to explain how neoliberalism became so successful precisely by tapping into and appropriating the dissatisfaction with post-war capitalism (compare Boltanski and Chiapello's account of how the 'new spirit of capitalism' was shaped by incorporating 'creative' critiques of state-managed capitalism).[8] Such an approach would be able to account *both* for why Foucault's centring of the self in politics was compelling in its context *and* why it might be limiting in the current political environment. Unfortunately, then, Dean and Zamora never truly deliver on the promise to interrogate the relation between Foucault and neoliberal thought and its relevance for 'the dilemmas of our time, our present and our struggles'. Nevertheless, readers – even those who disagree with the book's fundamental theses – will find some compelling analyses in it and perhaps even inspiration to undertake a fuller study of the 'fortunes of Foucauldianism' (to riff off Nancy Fraser's 'fortunes of feminism').

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[6] Compare also: '[Foucault's] complete redefinition of politics in terms of subjectivity must […] be seen as a *starting point* for the production of a neoliberal left' (169, my emphasis).

[7] Nancy Fraser, *Fortunes of Feminism: From State-Managed Capitalism to Neoliberal Crisis* (2020), 219.

[8] Luc Boltanski and Ève Chiapello, *The New Spirit of Capitalism* (2018/1999).

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REVIEW

Lynne Huffer, *Foucault's Strange Eros*. Columbia: Columbia University Press, 2020. Pp. 280. ISBN: 9780231197144 (hardback).

Lynne Huffer's 2020 book *Foucault's Strange Eros* is the final installment of a trilogy that started in 2010 with *Mad for Foucault* and was followed by *Are the Lips a Grave?* in 2013. All three volumes are part of an attempt at mapping grounds for an ethics of Foucauldian *eros*. Throughout this series of books, Huffer argues against the repressive hypothesis of Freudo-Marxian claims, and the epistemologies of the closet that feed on the oppositions inherited from sexual politics, in order to think of an ethics of sexuality articulated from the border of historical configurations.

Foucault's *History of Sexuality*, *Volume 1* traces the emergence of *life* as a historical and political event. Against the transhistorical idea of life as being intrinsically driven by an eros waiting to be freed from the repressive structures of modern capitalism (Marcuse), Foucault's genealogy offers a different practice that Huffer identifies in his "ethopoiesis" of the archive. Prowling her Foucault in search of his strange eros, Huffer uses Foucault's *History of Madness* to show how he destabilizes the present, estranging it from the Hegelian, dialectical and teleological readings of history. In doing so, Huffer identifies a poetics of liminality; of *touching* the temporal borders that estrange our sexual identities and practices. Eros as a process, as *erosion*, is about the touching of borders that has us welcome the infinite murmur of things falling apart.

From the outset, Huffer reminds the reader about Foucault's "ethics of eros" as "thought-freeing speech." An "erosion of interiority," it opens the historically concatenated subject to an ethics that fractures the modern conflation of eros and sexuality. A genealogical soundscape is excavated where eros is the "murmuring background noise out of which sexology extracts the language of sexuality and produces sexual subjects as objects of knowledge" (p. 3).

Pushing back against "garrulous" biopolitical *scientia sexualis* that strengthens the self, the "ethics of eros plunges speaking subjects into the dissolution of their speech" (p. 3). By using the untranslated Greek word, Huffer reinforces the strangeness and indefinability of eros and engages in a "recursive" (p. 15) process through which Foucault's archival practice is the "unbinding of a subject bound by the sexual dispositif

of [their] time" (p. 5). Huffer is careful in acknowledging that "our affirmation of ourselves as women, men, trans, or queer" is an act through which "we extract ourselves as truth from a background that falls away" (p. 20) – eros being precisely that "falling away." In doing so, Huffer warns us against the "canned speech" of Marcusean anti-repressive politics but also of "institutionalized queer studies" (p. 157) and their sometimes identitarian overtones: Foucault's eros is not normative, nor is it anti-normative *à la* queer theory.

Against such moralizing tendencies, Huffer insists on Foucault's ethics as "a way of life, a not-at-all-personal mode of *invention* that opens other possibilities for existing" (p. 32, underlining mine) rather than a mere "telling others what to do" (p. 9). Indeed, if Foucault's method is "a strange erotic excavation of the historically sedimented network of relations" (p. 8), the archival practice not only is "a limit-experience that suspends" (p. 9), but as "the archive becomes an ethical invitation to philosophical investigation as an aesthetic practice," it is also an "ethopoietic" (p. 11). Ethopoiesis appears under Huffer's pen as an actualization of the question of ethics (how am I to live?) from "inside the techno-grid that puts us under surveillance and turns each of us, in our turn, into ever more effective surveillants who keep track of ourselves and others as so many forms of life" (p. 33). Foucault's strange eros intrudes as a soft background noise that erodes the self and opens a space for what Huffer refers to as Deleuzian "styles of life" (p. 32).

The opening chapter, "Eros is Strange," reads as a *problematization* of Foucault's historical a priori and its strange contingency. Against the Freudian conflation of eros and life, Huffer sees Foucault's practice in line with Sappho's eros, which is about "fracturing energies" (p. 52). Working with "unreason" as a parallel to eros, premodern eros disappears as *scientia sexualis* becomes a defining feature of modernity. Huffer asks: How does such indefinable and untranslatable eros keeps returning? With Foucault, the "static dualism of the sterile paradox becomes the recursive movement of spiraling time where something disappears and returns with a difference" (p. 57), Huffer argues. That "something" is the *matière première*, the murmur of a linear construction of history, reason and madness through time. However, Huffer returns to Foucault's other "conception of time," a "'strange return' [that] allows us to hear the distant "background noise" out of which reason's time was extracted" (p. 58). Huffer's argument becomes clear: the spiraling movement of a Foucauldian eros "makes the familiar ground of my now queered sexual knowledge strange again, restoring its rifts, its instabilities, and its flaws" (p. 58), while introducing "the possibility of unbinding and ethical transformation" (p. 57) against the dialectical opposition of repression and liberation.

The book is multilayered; its points of entry multiple. "A book in fragments" (p. 36), its structure is that of repetition with variation; the liminary remarks mushroom again throughout the book in a spiraling movement that reads as a tribute to Foucault's own imagery of the spiral, with which he "introduces the possibility of unbinding and ethical transformation" (p. 57). Each chapter stems from a fragment of Chapter 1. Chapter 2, "*Ars Erotica:* Poetic Cuts in the Archives of Infamy," engages with the question "How … does eros return to us, in all its untimeliness, to make our present strange?" (p. 56). The answer

is that "Foucault's rhythmic hand is the hand of a poet in the archives" (p. 89). "Fragmented *poiesis* of archival lives offers reading pleasures that might, indeed, be masochistic. The strange eros out of which those lives are extracted undoes those who encounter it in the archive," (p. 90) Huffer continues. "Erotic Time: Unreason, Eros, and Foucault's Evil Genius," is the title of Chapter 3, where the question is: "What does it cost to tell the truth?" (p. 93). Huffer argues that the "evil genius" from Descartes to Hegel has been a "fiction of eros" (p. 43) that fragilizes the Hegelian claims of truth in history by exposing its very violence. In Chapter 4, "Prowling Eros: Carriers of Light in the Panopticon," Huffer explores Foucault's anti-prison activism in relation to his ethical critique of the rhetoric of persuasion. Through the lens of *History of Madness*, Huffer explores "the GIP's[1] politics of speech as a response to the logic of Foucault's strange eros: the extractive gesture by which deviants and abnormals are simultaneously produced and marginalized" (p. 126). Eventually, Huffer hears the detainee's voice as a "counter-archival 'voice'" (p. 143); a "not speech" whose strange erosion of history undermines the idea of prison as "a 'black box' without history" (p. 143). The final chapter, "Now Again (δεῦτε): Foucault, Wittig, Sappho" is a resplendent *envoi* where Monique Wittig's *Le Corps lesbien* illustrates "the poetic limit-experience Foucault calls desubjectivation" (p. 155) in the context of the Anthropocene—a geological era in which humanity becomes a major agent in the transformation of the Earth system. Wittig's split lesbian *j/e* is a fossil of "an era that has long been displaced by queers and pansexuals of various kinds" (p. 156). Wittig thus "reinscribes Anthropocenic violence as Foucauldian genealogical edges to be worked" (p. 164): against the antitextualism of new materialism, Huffer sides with Wittig's (erotic) play with edges (edging, really) as a "geontological" (p. 164) intervention. By focusing on the relationship between *j/e* and *tu* not as concepts but as linguistic utterances where the eroding murmur intrudes, Wittig's lesbian "I" opens itself to the other in an ethical move that Huffer offers as an alternative to the politics of "a fallen subject … burned at the stake of a man-shaped Anthropocene in a speculative mystification of objects" (p. 180).

What does it mean to practice genealogy today? Ultimately, Huffer's intervention is also a profound reflection on the crisis of the literary humanities. Foucault's work has often been read in political science or in approaches to literature that use the text as a "positive" political intervention. Huffer's Foucauldian ethical turn rather pushes in favor of an aesthetics where the murmur of Foucault's eros informs an ethical positioning in the world. The murmur Huffer uses to describe the negative space of erosion is a poetic act that the literary humanities are best equipped to attune to. As an alternative to the politics of new materialist democratic ontology (think of Bruno Latour's "parliament of things"), Huffer calls for a literary humanist ethics that allows for instabilities, fractures and *failles* to proliferate in the reading experience.

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[1] The Prisons Information Group was founded by Foucault and others in 1970-1971. A radical movement, the collaborative project involved prisoners, intellectuals and activists advocating for profound transformations of the French police system.

In Huffer's attempt at rethinking sexuality through the lens of eros, relationality is redefined as the erotic touch at words' edges. The truly ethical position is one that welcomes the shaking grounds of genealogical enquiry. When our geological era sees the ground unravel, is there a better ethics than the Foucauldian eros? Has the poetic murmur ever been so important in a world where clear-cut categorization and the commodification of identity (see Huffer's rant against Facebook) threaten the very existence of the "outside"? Contrasting with queer theory's insistence that there is no *outside* of the heterosexual matrix, and thus no alternative to *playing* with its categories (see Butler's dismissal of Wittig in *Gender Trouble*), Huffer's text reads as a powerful call to an ethics of eros where the flaws provide poetic grounds to construct an ethics of erosion.

Huffer's writing is outstandingly poetic; the book is structured in such a way that Foucault's ethical murmur (which although different in nature, as Huffer makes clear, reminds one of the Levinasian murmur of the "il y a") becomes a poetic device. Like a fabric, the book's "aesthetic is disintegrative and rift-restorative" in ways that bind and unbind Huffer's (erotic) *ethos*.

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REVIEW

David Macey, *The Lives of Michel Foucault. A Biography.* **London: Verso, [1993] 2019. Pp. 613. ISBN: 9781788731041 (hardback).**

This edition of the standard biography of Foucault comes with an essay by Stuart Elden, an 'Afterward: Afterlives,' pp 481-491, which itemizes the materials that have come to light since the biography was published in 1993. Certainly, it was in the 1990s that a certain Michel Foucault and debate around his work was established with competing bio length studies by Didier Eribon (1989) and James Miller (1993), and by 2000 the two massive volumes of *Dits et écrits* (in French) and the three volumes of *The Essential Foucault* with magisterial introductions by Faubian, Rabinow, and Gordon. One could say that at that point Foucault's own wishes that there be no more posthumous book publications had been fulfilled. That was the sort of legacy that he had hoped for. The scene today is different. Not only have many further minor pieces and interviews been collected but also the Collège de France lectures, while the History of Sexuality series has been completed and other lecture courses from each stage of his career have been published, some very recently. If Macey (1949-2011) was writing today, the biography would be different.

The biography works through the 'lives of Michel Foucault' chronologically in eighteen chapters. Macey read virtually everything that was available and interviewed key informants on Foucault's life and on his work. It is written in an objective style which presents brief summaries of articles, books, and lectures; often, given Macey's erudition, brilliantly placing arguments in the context of intellectual and political debates. He then discusses the reception of these ideas and how Foucault dealt with criticisms. As the biography moves through the years, Macey follows Foucault's personal relations, his career, and his political activities. There is a clear thematic in the biography that respects Foucault's own view that this was not a single life with a single unchanging character. I was present at the Foucault conference in London in 1994 when James Miller presented his account *(The Passion of Michel Foucault)*, which takes the line that there was a constant thread: the limit experience that Foucault constantly sought and which explains why his work has an exceptional dynamism.[1] Indeed, I introduced Macey to Miller during an interval at the conference expecting some fiery exchanges, but the encoun-

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[1] Stuart Elden wrongly gives the title as *The Passions of Michel Foucault*, p.555, n.12.

ter was glacial. Macey was highly political but with one or two exceptions not given to polemics. Miller's study is an engagement with a Foucault who lived his life in a certain challenging way, and who could be respected but also critiqued at a personal and ethical level. Macey tried to produce an objective account and withheld his political and theoretical reservations.

The biography, if written today, would certainly be different, as Elden says. As Elden himself has written three long studies which amount to an intellectual biography of Foucault, it might be thought that Macey's study is now redundant. But this is not the case, since Elden essentially adds to Macey's chronological account (see Gane, 2018). The major additional material includes lectures on sexuality given in the 1960s at Clermont-Ferrand and at Vincennes and continues in the 1970s with the yearly Collège de France lectures, which were not available to Macey. So as the biography charts Foucault's activities in these years, it is now possible to see how the enormous work invested in the lectures reveals a level of intellectual involvement and development unknown to Macey. Stuart Elden reveals that the store of Foucault's archive contains a further 117 boxes containing as yet un-catalogued materials from some 37,000 pages. Further documents and correspondence remain in private hands.

There is a problem for readers, evidently: the volume of material on and by Foucault. There is no shortage of guides, but Macey's book remains a key reference point not just for information but also for judgement. For example, on the question of Foucault's visit to California in May 1975, Macey simply says 'Reports from those who claim that he told them that it changed his life should probably be treated with some scepticism; the insights granted by LSD tend to be short-lived and illusory…' (p. 339). Miller, on the other hand, had access to Simeon Wade's manuscript detailing Foucault's visit to Death Valley and taking LSD, and he interviewed Wade. His chapter 8 starts with an account of this 'limit experience' and emphasises its life-changing effects for Foucault. The chapter is chaotic, meanders through various interviews and short pieces, and presents a picture of Foucault as searching, experimenting, unsettled, and refusing to be closed down. Had Macey read the Wade manuscript, no doubt his judgement would have been more nuanced. As Wade's text has now been published (2019), the reader has access to a firsthand account of how Foucault experienced not only LSD but the university scene and its onerous demands. Recently, Wade's book has been cynically exploited by Mitchell Dean and Daniel Zamorra to promote an all-out attack on Foucault.[2]

The new edition of the biography should come with a warning note, however. The addition of the 'Afterward: Afterlives' by Elden has simply been added as a chapter before the endnotes. As the excellent index, which includes indexing the notes, follows on, a problem has been produced: the index has not been adjusted to account for the insertion of the Elden chapter, so all the index pagination for the endnotes is wrong by about

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[2] Dean and Zamorra's first version (2019) was aimed at the debate in France around the 50th anniversary of May '68, the second version (2021) has a different sub-title for the Anglophone audience. Their attitude of cynicism is explicit: 'Status-seeking is neither a positive nor negative feature of the habitus of the intellectual. Rather, it defines it.' (2021: 33). Foucault's view, expressed many times, was different, but it certainly defines the opinion and casuistic practice of these two authors.

12 pages. Thus, for example, the Althusser indexed reference for page 537 is actually on 549, and so on.

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