



Happiness without Power

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Critique of Power

'No Power for Nobody' was a moment in the self-understanding of the protest movements of the 1970s, which the German band *Ton Steine Scherben* voiced with their eponymous song in 1972. The aim was to create conditions under which no one could claim power for themselves and, above all, no one could exercise power, because they would be so constituted that there simply would be no power. This aim concisely summarized in one sentence what was the subject of comprehensive criticism: the endless ideological discourses of politics, radio and television, consumerist privatization and individualization, the smugness and narrow-mindedness of everyday life, the authoritarianism of the institutions, the mendacity of democracy – all the fears and resentments, the restrictions and norms in everyday life, the constraints of the work and insurance society, the bureaucratic paternalism and the anti-emancipatory orientations, the military and police violence. The great insight evident in this sentence was to identify all these everyday practices as phenomena and processes of power. But is this an insight – or not rather an anarchistic dream?

The existence of power is not necessarily denied in bourgeois society; it is certainly conceded that there is power – and not just incidental, occasional power. But most of the time, it is seen as limited to the sphere of politics. Accordingly, people speak of a de-differentiation and over-politicization of society when it is observed that power extends beyond the political sphere. The emancipatory goal of a society free from power and domination is derided or combated as a social-revolutionary romanticism and anarchism, as an unrealistic expectation regarding the possibilities of human coexistence. So is it theoretically well-informed disillusionment when it is said that the aim of freeing ourselves completely from power is an illusion (cf. Mouffe 2000: 22)?

Surprisingly, Michel Foucault's analysis of power becomes the point of reference for such a disillusioned attitude towards power. With a severity that almost no one else had used, Foucault challenged power at the beginning of the 1970s. For him, it consisted in oppression, repression, confinement and exclusion, power from above over those who are subject to it. Starting in the mid-1970s, he then self-critically modified and specified



this analysis and turned against the repressive hypothesis. He emphasized the productive character of power. This was meant as an intensification of the critique of power; the previous critique of power was still too harmless, since it could be suggested that there was a point of reference for resistance in those oppressed and excluded practices and forms of knowledge. Foucault radicalizes his critique of power. It is not that an original freedom is restricted, as could be assumed in the liberal tradition; rather, the subject, the will, autonomy and freedom are constituted as a strategic level of power, at which its tactics, which produce specific forms of subjectivation and family, desire, governmental and sexual practices, are aimed. Astonishingly, in the reception, these analyses were understood to be affirmative of power, as if Foucault were uncritically arguing in favor of minority sexualities, of forms of government or of technologies of the self (cf. Demirović 2015). His reflections on resistance were interpreted accordingly. The critical attitude as a virtue, as he reconstructed it for the time at the end of the 18th century, appeared as a model for a cautious critique of power. Foucault himself, in the context of his deliberations on the emergence of governmentality – i.e., of a historically specific art of government – puts it thus: At this point in the late 18th century, it was no longer a question of the radical demand, ‘We do not want to be governed, and we do not want to be governed at all!’, but of a more cautious form of critique: not being governed like that, not so much, and not by them (cf. Foucault 2007: 44). In the discussion of the lecture “What Is Critique?”, in which Foucault presents these reflections, he considers the will not to be governed at all as a theoretical paroxysm of this will not to be governed in this or that way. “I was not referring to something that would be a fundamental anarchism, that would be like an originary freedom, absolutely and wholeheartedly resistant to any governmentalization. I did not say it, but this does not mean that I absolutely exclude it.” (Foucault 2007: 75) Foucault does not reject the basic critique of power. He only opposes the assumption of an originary freedom, and thus a certain assumption about human beings; secondly, he emphasizes that he does not actually speak to the radical critique of power. But he also suggests that a demand for the overcoming of power must not be a childish dream, but that it would be an endpoint in which would culminate the many experiences of all those struggles that have been fought against all the technologies of power and practices of leadership. Just as the local powers and tactics are condensed into complex strategies and hegemony, there may also be an increase in that will which no longer criticizes power only with regards to this or that modality, but aims at the overcoming of power as such. Foucault suggests this, it is, in his view, not to be ruled out, but there is also no inevitability; rather, a beyond of power would arise through the concrete power-critical process. For this last turning point to be reached, the analysis must take full account of the complex strategies and tactics, the new dynamic and forms of power.



It may be an anarchist ideal or a utopia, but the overcoming of all power is necessary if the goal of social development is to be that human beings should not be degraded, not be enslaved, not be governed by others. For whoever argues in support of the inevitability or necessity of power always argues in support of the fact that the lives of human beings are in one way or another and to a certain extent determined and directed, restricted, controlled, sanctioned, threatened and imperiled by various individuals. A compromise between these two alternatives is conceivable: because power cannot be removed from human life, but human beings strive for freedom, power itself must be limited, pushed back, controlled and monitored, directed, civilized, shared and sublimated, so that positive things may be achieved with its help – namely the establishment of spaces of freedom and of protection. But such compromises always have their costs and sacrifices; always certain people, their interests, their forms of life must be restricted, pushed back, or formed. Overcoming power also requires the overcoming of certain forms of life, i.e., requires the constitution of conditions under which the exercise of power over others is not necessary and possible. All would win, free, self-determined. The vocabulary for the new still follows the historical, surviving ideas of emancipation. The question remains which forms of life are established, how the collective coordination is carried out, what the semantics of a life free from power would be like.

Even if the goal of overcoming power in human coexistence may, on the one hand, be utopian, it would, on the other hand, hence be naive if the consequences of power, of its dynamic and continuity were not taken into consideration. “Power is of itself evil” (1979: 67) – I would like to follow this argument by Jacob Burckhardt. But why can power be considered evil? ‘Evil’, in spite of the distinctly moral emphasis, is here primarily to be understood as a reference to a defining logic, which itself still is related to unfreedom. Power does not remain external, is not an instrument; it affiliates itself with the actors who rely on it,¹ permeates the relations and reflexively utilizes itself on itself. Why is power evil for Burckhardt? It is, first of all, external and internal violence: conquering, subjugating, enslaving, looting. This violence turns into force, has to become law and takes the form of culture – but these moments remain subordinate to power. For Burckhardt, it would be unbearable if the evil were no longer regarded as evil because the people exercising power were pretending and, out of expediency, began to act good. For it would still be power, which, according to its own dynamic, tactically and strategically, penetrates its opposite as well. But these people would still be inwardly evil (Burckhardt 1979: 332). Power pushes for centralization, for the formation of a unified will, and lays claim to what is common. The evil of power is its inherent dynamic. For it wants to ‘round itself off’; in the supposed interest of the community, it expands and encroaches on anything and everything (Burckhardt 1979: 332) – it does not

¹ On this issue, cf. Ibrahim al-Koni’s powerful novel *Das Herrscherkleid* (2010).



tolerate discontinuity. “Whenever a man – or a party – wearies, another is waiting to take his place, and though he may, in his turn, be extremely inadequate to his moment, the whole movement may crystallize round him just for that moment.” (Burckhardt 1979: 233) Power reaches out and rounds off, in order to prevent the emergence of a vacuum that could be occupied and utilized by another power for its own growth and continuity. “It is not a persistent force, but is a lust and ipso facto insatiable; therefore it is unhappy in itself and must make others unhappy.” (Burckhardt 1979: 139) Power is undoubtedly productive, but this productivity permeates, forms, homogenizes, disambiguates, fixes, and gives the further development continuity and a certain direction which is to ensure the preservation and the increase of power.

Such reflections on power can be disputed because they are based on the quite problematic assumption of a zero-sum game. The power which ego does not possess will be appropriated by alter; ego must preempt it. Otherwise, ego’s freedom would be restricted and its chances of getting its will would be reduced. As Max Weber writes: “In general, we understand by ‘power’ the chance of a man or a number of men to realize their own will in a social action even against the resistance of others who are participating in the action.” (1978: 926) This is a liberal model, which is based on the model of competition and contest: power is like a possession which ego can have at its disposal. According to this model, ego, in a competitive game, has opportunities it must use. If it does not seize these opportunities, there is the risk that other actors will reduce the opportunities of ego by their actions in order not to be disadvantaged. Hence, to make sure that the risk for it of losing power due to the action of others does not increase, ego must get ahead of them and increase its power at their expense, must restrict their opportunities for action. Thus, ego must preemptively take possession of power which would otherwise be appropriated by alter.

Not to play the game of power is not possible, since power would immediately use this attitude to increase its scope. There are two ways to react to this challenge of power: one is not to fall for power, not to be obsessive about power, but to nevertheless regard power as an unavoidable level of the social. It is a question of learning to handle the relentless reality of power in an aloof and virtuoso way. Power leads to the requirement that we face this reality and develop an identity that allows us to practice power. This is the by no means cynical Machiavellian point of view: to use power sometimes in a violent, sometimes in a civilized manner, as the case may be, but to not be overpowered by power. The other way is more general, intellectual, and less negative. In this case, power is understood in a similar way as Marx conceives of production as a “rational abstraction”:

All periods of production, however, have certain features in common: they have certain common categories. Production in general is an abstraction, but a sensible abstraction in so far as it actually emphasises and defines the common aspects and



thus avoids repetition. Yet this general concept, or the common aspect which has been brought to light by comparison, is itself a multifarious compound comprising divergent categories. Some elements are found in all epochs, others are common to a few epochs. The most modern period and the most ancient period will have (certain) categories in common. Production without them is inconceivable. But although the most highly developed languages have laws and categories in common with the most primitive languages, it is precisely their divergence from these general and common features which constitutes their development. It is necessary to distinguish those definitions which apply to production in general, in order not to overlook the essential differences existing despite the unity that follows from the very fact that the subject, mankind, and the object, nature, are the same. (Marx 1970: 190)

Thus, a rational abstraction is a concept which emphasizes some common features in order to be able to determine concrete practices, but which, in this generality, has little meaning and always requires a more exact historical determination. Just as humans generally have to work, it seems they also have to exercise power. This is to be understood quite positively. For humans have the ability to do something differently from how it was done before, i.e., they are capable of creating alternatives and in this way influence the action of others; humans also have the ability to change things in the outer world. They have this double power over the outer and the social world.

Power is everywhere, it is immanent in all conditions. From this, however, two completely different, indeed, contradictory conclusions can be drawn. In one case, it appears that, since power is everywhere, it can only be altered incrementally, and that power over people can be restricted, controlled, or reconfigured. But in no case could it be eliminated as such, because this would amount to the elimination of human coexistence and of the ability of humans to do things differently. In the second case, it is in fact a question of changing and eliminating precisely the social relations that are interwoven with power, that are constituted by power, that reproduce power and are reproduced by power. This also means examining whether the way in which we think about power and the conditions is not still determined by power, i.e., whether we are dealing with power/knowledge which forms our knowledge of power in such a way that the conditions do not become intellectually accessible to us, because our concepts are time and again constituted and formed by power.

If power is a rational abstraction, i.e., if it means something universally human, if it is connected with the human appropriation and shaping of the world, then the possibility of a radical critique of power is cancelled. Heinrich Popitz (2017) distinguishes between four anthropological basic forms of power:

a) Power as power over other living beings: the power to act and to injure. Humans are dangerous to others, they can threaten with violence, make use of it, they can injure, withdraw means of subsistence, destroy resources, or revoke membership.



b) Humans can control, direct or lead the action of other humans. One means for this can be the threat of violence, i.e., the creation of alternatives of avoidance: obey, carry out my will if you want to receive a reward or avoid punishment. Horizons of expectations, fears and hopes are created which establish a long-term power relation between those who are powerful and those who follow.

This notion also includes the idea of the contract: the expectation that others might take away my property or kill me is, as Hobbes says, already part of a war of all against all. Because of this, the individuals give up their power and subordinate themselves to a social contract. Once this has happened, the parties to the contract submit to no foreign power, but to their own will, which comes before them as state power (cf. also Foucault 2003: 89-100).

c) Power is internalized. Individuals adopt attitudes, perspectives and criteria. The basis of power here is the anthropological need for orientation, self-esteem, certainties, symbols of proof (of one's worth). This results in the power of those who set standards, i.e., who possess authoritative power.

d) Power constitutes facts and data: the natural given is transformed to our benefit – a settlement is planned, designed and built, roads are built, a particular product is created, etc. This form of power is a power of the maker, it is mediated by and through objects and retreats into the invisibility of anonymous circumstances. But does the fact that humans always construct their 'world', that they always establish data, mean that this must always be power?

It is certainly right when Marx emphasizes that men (sic), in order to survive, must always produce, and also that this general conception of production barely says anything about the manner in which men produce and about the social conditions they create in order to make possible a certain way of appropriating nature. But is this equally true of power? Would men not be able to preserve themselves if their conditions were no longer a priori determined and permeated by power? The sociological analysis of power universalizes and states that power should be understood as analogous to production. But is that true? Is power necessary in a similar way to production, i.e., the appropriation of nature through labor?

In fact, power can also be understood differently. Precisely because humans can act differently, they have, to put it paradoxically, the power not to act powerfully. Popitz says this himself when he speaks of the power to inflict injury: "humans never must but always can act violently; they never must but always can kill: by themselves or in groups, on their own or within a division of labor; [...] for all thinkable purposes. Anybody can." (2017: 31) Power remains vague – everything could also be different: humans do not have to act violently, power exists, but is not necessary. One could also



conceive conditions that do not generate power. Therefore, an analysis of the causes of power is important. For if one knows the causes, then one can not only limit power, but perhaps even make it superfluous.

The Immanence of Power

The question of the causes of power is misleading. This question suggests a particular paradigm according to which power is a possession, a resource; someone appropriates it and has it at their disposal. Thus, means of violence, members of an organization, knowledge or money can be resources of power. This implies a separation between the sphere in which power comes into being but has not yet been applied, and another in which it is exercised; power appears as a more or less external consequence of the conditions, whereas the conditions themselves are not considered forms of power. But power can be conceived more generally. Max Weber argues that power is amorphous because “[a]ll conceivable qualities of a person and all conceivable combinations of circumstances may put him in a position to impose his will in a given situation.” (1978: 53) Thus, power does not depend on such individual qualities. The amorphous nature of power is not a theoretical underdeterminedness, but can be understood as one of its central features: its apparent indeterminacy, its fluid character, the fact that it comes from everywhere and can be found everywhere. It cannot be derived, not from God, not from the economy, not from the state, not from men (sic), not from the means of violence. It is in the particular conditions in which it exists. Power and the social relations are coextensive. Following Michel Foucault, I will call this the principle of immanence of power. Since power is an internal mechanism, the conditions have to be understood as powerful.

Precisely because power thus appears extensive and indeterminate, it is examined more specifically by the analysis of concrete conditions and practices. Max Weber shifts to the level of authority. If power means “the chance of imposing one’s own will on a social relationship even against resistance no matter what this chance is based on”, then authority is more concrete. For it is defined as the chance “to find obedience among specifiable persons for a command of a given content” (Weber 1978: 20). The distinction between power and authority suggests the possibility of criticizing authority and rejecting forms of authority without immediately having to address and challenge the more indeterminate power as well. But authority is subject to the dynamics of power. When Weber examines authority, he does not call it evil. But, in substance, he is given to a consideration quite comparable to Jacob Burckhardt’s. For him, too, power rounds itself off. It is the modern power of rationalization, which, in a more and more comprehensive sense, organizes the world in a purpose-rational manner, i.e., efficiently controls coexistence to such an extent that meaning is fully absorbed by it. In the end,



everything results in so rational a world that free action is no longer possible. The rational arrangement of the social conditions itself proves to be compulsory for the individuals. But he abstains from the value judgment that power is evil. For this rationalized context appears as without alternative. But does the evil of power not consist precisely in rounding itself off to such an extent that it appears as without any alternative? Since it becomes coextensive with the conditions themselves, since it penetrates the latter more and more and forms them according to its own logic, since the distance between cause and effect no longer exists, these conditions themselves appear as no longer alterable.

Michel Foucault remains at the level of power. Power, he suggests, means the multiplicity of force relations; the struggles which transform, strengthen, reverse these force relations; the support which these force relations find in one another by forming systems; the strategies in which they take effect and whose institutional crystallization is embodied in the state apparatuses, in the formulation of the law, and in the social hegemonies (1978: 92-94). Power mechanisms, he argues, have to be deciphered on the basis of a strategy immanent in the force relations (1978: 97). On this view, domination is a final form of power, a particular way of coding power, a specific power relation; from this point of view, state apparatuses appear as “a concentrated form, or even a support structure, of a system of power that goes much further and deeper” (Foucault 2015: 229). Strategically, this means that it is not enough to criticize domination or single state apparatuses; so it is also not enough to control or smash them (cf. Foucault 2015: 229). Emancipation must start at a local level, at the very bottom of power practices, and then work its way up to these final, more visible and official, strategic forms. Power, in turn, is never as aporetic as Weber says it is, because it is internally always related to resistance; it is never so powerful that it could separate itself from the force relations.

Thus, Foucault conceives of power as immanent to social relations. These relations would not be what they are, and they would not reproduce themselves, if they were not permeated and created by power. Power, in turn, does not exist elsewhere – in the will of a ruler or in a resource which is used; its cause is not to be found in social conditions from which it is derived – rather, it is exercised “in all the depth, over the whole surface of the social field” (Foucault 2015: 228), it is effectuated in and through these specific conditions, of which it is constitutive. Foucault analyzes power with terms such as ‘strategy’, ‘tactics’, ‘technique’ and ‘technology’. Techniques could be technicistically misunderstood as mere instruments. However, Foucault conceives society and its development from the point of view of the emergence, refinement, diffusion of these techniques. In this, he builds on Marx:



Social relations are closely bound up with productive forces. In acquiring new productive forces men change their mode of production; and in changing their mode of production, in changing the way of earning their living, they change all their social relations. The hand-mill gives you society with the feudal lord; the steam-mill, society with the industrial capitalist. [...] There is a continual movement of growth in productive forces, of destruction in social relations, of formation in ideas[.] (Marx 1847: 48f)

This reasoning of Marx has often been understood as technology-deterministic, but that is not what it is. Rather, Marx suggests that the kind of cooperation as it is mediated by technology constitutes precisely the field of immanence of society. This anti-deterministic reading is also reaffirmed by Gilles Deleuze: “Types of machines are easily matched with each type of society – not that machines are determining, but because they express those social forms capable of generating them and using them.” (1992: 6)

Foucault himself refused to submit a theory of power. It is precisely the objectivization connected with theory that he rejects, as if the object of analysis has nothing to do with us. Theory asks questions about the grounds and causes of power. In doing so, it separates the social conditions and power; social conditions, power, authority appear as merely external. Although Foucault does not develop a theory of power, his analyses of power, which he pursued for many years, tend towards a certain systematic coherence. Foucault himself did not pursue this coherence and did not examine it as an internal connectedness. This connectedness of powers is, in turn, closely connected with the modern bourgeois relations, which, from this perspective, are deciphered as power relations. In the following, I would like to explain this connectedness of the powers that Foucault distinguishes in his analysis of power.

1. The first form of power is the power resulting from oppression, legally coded violence, repression. Foucault observes practices of illegalism among the bourgeoisie and among the subaltern classes, i.e., smuggling, theft, highway robbery, idleness. For as long as this illegalism was directed against feudalism, there was approval of these practices. This changed with the transformations of property relations in the 18th century. The bourgeoisie begins to fight the illegalism of the people. For it is the workers who, because of their work and their connection with the newly developing apparatus of production, are directly linked with the wealth of the bourgeoisie. They can steal from the warehouses, sabotage and destroy machines, render material useless, or reduce their ability to work. In the emerging criminal law debate, a variety of grades of physical penalties are argued for. What is surprising for Foucault is that in criminal law, the prison sentence prevails and is accompanied by a multitude of paralegal processes. These include the surveillance of port facilities or factories by private police forces; the moral education of the workers by entrepreneurs and moral societies through workbooks, familiarization, saving or old-age provision. But in addition, criminal law is



from the onset accompanied by a knowledge and a diagnostics which analyze and evaluate the perpetrators with a view to their reintegration into society. The judges, who often back off from the severity of the judgments prescribed by the law, rely on such psychiatric consultants, who allow them to differentiate their administration of justice case-by-case.

In his analyses of power, Foucault does not specifically address administrative procedures, censorship, state of siege, police persecution, or class justice. He discusses these power processes rather critically under the name of the repressive hypothesis. On the basis of his studies on penal authority, Foucault considers the assumption of an oppressive, constraining, levying power based solely on violence to be misleading, inadequate, if not false. In a way, this is regrettable, as there are numerous allusions to practices of violent state power in his work, be it medically assisted torture, executions, military and police violence part of combating demonstrations, class justice, camps, and forced labor. His analyses focus on the disciplinary techniques which paralegally accompany the formal repressive apparatuses and support their functioning. In contrast, the rationalizations and mechanisms of said violence, the specific power/knowledge-practices that come into play here, the juridical training and legislation, the strategic and tactical calculations in the use of violence as well as its function and mode of action, spying and spy networks, political persecution, the forced disappearance of oppositionists, the reactions of the individuals subjected to violence – from fear, despair and self-abandonment to resistance and organizational practices – are oddly enough not investigated by Foucault. The administrative techniques of the modern state apparatuses remain outside his view, too: the files, the bureaucratic procedures, the training and the knowledge of the administrative officers, the decision-making procedures, the judicial authorities, the techniques and practices in dealing with the population, the police and military strategies and tactics of control and riot prevention. It seems as if Foucault considers violence, administration, and the law as somewhat boring and self-explanatory or already well-explained practices of power.

2. Foucault puts the emphasis on another aspect of power. In his view, there is a shift in power in the course of the 18th century. The exercise of sovereign violence is not appropriate in the context of capitalist relations, which are only developing. The bourgeois actors realize that they cannot govern people through violence. Mutilating, torturing and killing do not yet make people function and obey in their everyday lives. In addition, people become valuable because of their training, their labor capacity, their skills. Also, far too many areas can be disturbed by disobedience and deviation: the thefts in the stockyards at the ports, the sabotage of the machines in the factories, the strikes, the chains of command in military operations. It is no longer a question of obedience to a specific command, but of obedience in general, a generalized willingness to obey, the willingness of individuals to be deployed productively and to fit themselves



into the rhythm of the machines. The sovereign power of law can only levy resources and forces, it can try to restrict action with prohibitions, but it cannot prevent it or positively guide it in a certain direction. In his studies, Foucault shows how, in the schools, factories, the military, and the prison, a multitude of techniques of power – the cell, the examination, surveillance, the division of time and space, the analytical decomposition of bodily processes, and the conditioning – are combined into the great strategy of the modern disciplinary technology. The bourgeois class constitutes itself as the ruling class with the use, the strategies and tactics of these disciplinary technologies, with their development, application, refinement, and interconnection. In these power relations, in the relations between the power techniques and the resistance, the social classes each take concrete shape. Through the practices and techniques of the exercise of power, the bourgeois class gains knowledge of itself and of those over which it exercises power.

With such an analysis of discipline as a strategic bundle of techniques Foucault expands on the traditional approaches of the unorthodox Marxist tradition. By this I mean, on the one hand, the approach of Gramsci, and on the other, the approach of Freudo-Marxism. These authors realized that the bourgeois class cannot rule by force alone. The military-police's effort of surveillance, disciplinary measures, and persecution is too high personnel-wise and financially. Large-scale and general practices are also imprecise and can disadvantage individual members or groups of the bourgeoisie. Moreover, the use of force remains unpredictable in its effects. For not only does it not prevent many practices of resistance in everyday life (which are not legally codified), but it can paradoxically also contribute to their emergence (through arbitrary brutality or provocative activities of the organs of repression).

a) Gramsci explained the fact that the subaltern accept the power exercised over them with consent. The rulers create a form of universality which not only mechanically makes allowances for aspects of the ways of thinking, life forms, and interests of the lower classes, but also positively incorporates them. The exercise of domination is carried out in a variety of apparatuses of civil society. In many of them, the consensus between the rulers and the subaltern is reproduced everyday: in school, in church, in magazines and newspapers. Above all, however, domination consists in the fact that the subaltern, through the organization of the social division of labor, i.e., through the function of the intellectuals in civil society, are deprived of the opportunity to work on their thinking and feeling and bring them up to the level of intellectual skills.

b) Critical Theory, too, concerned itself with the notion that force alone is not enough to maintain domination. The authority of the powerful is accepted by the ruled because the former control the apparatus of production and, with their decisions and the command over labor, promise to ensure the survival of all. In this case, too, domination



can be exercised in the name of the general will. There are, however, two reasons to suggest that this general will contains a form of irrationality: first, the productive forces have developed so much that nobody's self-preservation and survival has still to depend on submission to the guiding reason of others; second, the productive forces and the wealth produced are used by the powerful as a means of destruction in order to maintain their power in this way. Critical Theory holds the view that people certainly experience the state of development, but that they forbid themselves conceptual insight, since, in consequence of such insight, they would be compelled to oppose power. Psychodynamically, the libidinal energies oriented towards self-preservation thus turn away from rational knowledge and invest authority positively. Knowledge, experience, inner insight must be warded off.

With his analyses, Foucault develops a link which mediates between the analyses of Critical Theory and the analyses of Gramsci. On the side of Critical Theory, he investigates the construction of the 'soul' as a target of power. However, he does not look at the internal, socio-psychological and emotional aspects of power practices, but at the problematization and rationalization strategies connected with them. The subject of his analysis are the disciplinary subject-constituting techniques which, beyond the immediate work process, constitute the conditions of its reproduction. The patterns, the categories in which subjects experience power, do not feature in Foucault's work. On the side of Gramsci, and with regard to the numerous processes and apparatuses of civil society, as well as to the function of the intellectuals, Foucault's analyses prove to be fruitful because they broaden the spectrum of the apparatuses of power: hospitals, psychiatric wards, schools; he also looks at the order of the factory regime, the everyday life of the wage-dependent permeated by ethical norms and prescriptions. In detail, they provide an idea of the processes in which intellectuals are active in order to develop, organize, improve or refine power techniques, and of how they thus contribute to the development of the modern power methods of individualization, the relation to the body, socio-technical control, and the formation of habits.

3. In his analyses of power/knowledge, Foucault arrives at a point where he goes beyond the distinction between coercion and consensus, which is widespread in the Marxist discussion, but also beyond Weber's distinction between coercion and discipline. The constitutional state restricts the action of individuals by means of violence, the law and administration. Discipline prescribes norms and assesses the behavior of individuals from the point of view of compliance with or deviation from these prescriptions. When individuals do something forbidden or deviate from the disciplinary norm, they are sanctioned to either prevent a mode of behavior in the future or to improve, 'resocialize' the individual. In both cases, the individual is individualized. In the first case, the state does not claim to know the inside of the individual; it remains agnostic. In contrast, the disciplinary technologies work twofold: firstly, they turn an



analytical gaze on the individual and its body, dismember it into movements, into spatial and temporal processes, and train it, so that the body meets the productivity requirements regarding learning in school, killing in the military, and working in the factories with near-automated perfection. Secondly, they construct a soul in order to normalize the individuals through a variety of psychopolitical strategies. From within, the individual sees itself as a subject who feels interpellated by the authority and who knows that it is supposed to obey and conform. It is constituted as an obedience-subject, whose behavior is monitored, analyzed, surveyed, evaluated, and predicted. Despite a comprehensive refinement of the power technologies, which now become operative in the capillaries of everyday habits, these two power technologies are faced with the same problem: they are both rigid and thus subject to the counter-circuit of power (cf. Luhmann 1979). This counter-circuit of power emerges because the individuals do not follow the rules in everyday life, or do not follow them closely enough, i.e., they intentionally or unintentionally disregard prohibitions or do not meet disciplinary norms. Power has to react to these deviations. This can be done in a particular case and in specific contexts, but not when these processes become more frequent and occur in broad social practices which are beyond direct control. The problem of power is that, in a certain way, it still remains too passive and acts upon the behavior of individuals from above.

This changes with the emergence of a third form of power, which Foucault terms governmentality. It consists of a large number of institutions, analyses and reflections, whose main target is the population, whose most important form of knowledge is the political economy, and whose main technical instruments are the security *dispositifs* (cf. Foucault 2009: 162). Foucault dates the emergence of the technique of security to the late 18th century. This power practice operates in the midst of a multitude of events, and therefore on the basis of frequencies and regularities. A statistically determined average of events is defined as the normal: traffic accidents, right-wing attacks, floods, strokes, cases of pickpocketing, or drug-related deaths. Based on such frequencies, regularities and deviations are observed and measures are taken to return to an ideal normality curve of incidents. However, there are no attempts to prevent the occurrence of such events. Freedom becomes a function of security. It is not restricted or limited from outside, but security operates on this field of freedom and on the regularities which are observed statistically. Power techniques are developed on the field of these events through analyses of regularities, statistical projections and expectations. The security *dispositif* includes statistics, demography, hygiene and the health police, birth and health policies.

The *dispositif* of security also comprises a large number of apparatuses and safety measures: the management, planning and monitoring of urban spaces, the construction of normal biographies, and the arrangement of collective habits and procedures (the



establishment of hospitals and orphanages, the familiarization of workers); scenario techniques that look at which infrastructures of society are particularly threatened, such as bridges, power stations, train stations and railroad systems, airports, and telecommunication facilities. Based on risk assessments, preventive measures are initiated, exercises conducted, and coordination centers between emergency aid, fire departments, disaster control, hospitals, and the police established (cf. Lentzos/Rose 2009). In accordance with such scenarios and risk calculations, preventive security *dispositifs* are created or refashioned: the surveillance of public and private spaces (train stations, airports, subways, stores, streets, buildings) and the development of the necessary software, which allows the automated identification of suspicious behavioral patterns even in large crowds of people (at sports or cultural events, demonstrations or in station concourses) and which sets off an alarm in the event of a projected risk. The behavior on the internet and in the social media is watched and email traffic monitored and searched with so-called 'selectors' (i.e. many thousands of keywords).

In many respects, security refers to the technologies of disciplinary power and to those of administrative and repressive power. This set of power practices, which Foucault calls biopolitics, is aimed at the population as a biological entity. Besides the control of births, family formation, hygiene, or the mechanisms of immigration control, the introduction of the modern social security system is one of the most severe forms of biopolitics, because this entails the construction of an extensive *dispositif* of normality. The courses of life are homogenized on a high scale level, structured according to a certain rhythm, and organized according to a normal distribution: with the entry into wage labor, there is insurance against risks of life: unemployment, illness, disability, and finally pensions (often connected with the dependency of wives and children on the working men). Thus, a certain expectation of normality is attached to the CV, i.e., the conformity of habits such as work, diet (meat, alcohol, smoking), leisure behavior (membership in a club, sports, television). Statistically, a certain number of sick days, hospital stays and a mortality rate are assumed, which also form the basis of financial calculations, insurance contributions, and state measures. The first and decisive power practice is that of the subjection to a principle of solidarity, based on the principle of insurance. Claim rights to solidarity are not simply granted to individuals, but only on the basis of past achievements and of a certain normality pattern of the homogenized individual life course, which is culturally and politically assumed and ratified by statistics and the state. If deviations are too high, solidarity is called into question, too: non-marital relationships, of non-heteronormative sexual orientations, of diseases, in the case of abortions or deviant consumer habits, in the case of too high life expectancies. On this basis of new everyday habits in smaller social units, a new power practice was deployed from the 1990s onwards, which can rely on actuarial models: specific risk groups are identified, new classes of normality are formed and accepted (cf. Schmidt-Semisich 2000). They become a special target of commercialization strategies



and moralization campaigns. Life forms that are associated with so-called 'good risks' are encouraged, those with 'bad risks' are exhorted and subjected to extensive educational practices (diet, sports). The appeal addresses all those individualized in the collective – they are interpellated as entrepreneurial free men (sic), who do not bind themselves to a knowledge, a competence, to relationships, to an institution, to a company.

4. The discussion of the three forms of power mentioned makes it clear that there is an inner tendency of power to differentiate itself and round itself off, and that it successively forms, generates, intensifies, and penetrates more and more areas – but that, at the same time, it changes in this process, too. Foucault says nothing about the overall dynamic of this power that rounds off. But its inner coherence is obvious. Everything suggests that the power technologies, their development, their expansion, and their refinement, constitute precisely the continuous-discontinuous process of the modern exercise of power through which the bourgeois class keeps on reproducing itself on ever higher steps of the ladder. Foucault seems to be suggesting that power did not stop with the three power technologies of sovereign, disciplinary, and biopower. In its own logic, power, in the face of ever new resistances, pushes for the expansion of the terrain of powers and for the discovery, exploration or formation of new areas of problematization and rationalization. Foucault observes a form of power which he often does not clearly distinguish from security or biopolitics. Yet, this form of governmental power, of governmentality, is a separate and specific power practice. This power can be traced back to a long historical tradition, which, for many centuries, was particularly mediated by the Catholic Church: the art of the arts, namely the leadership, the government, of people and their souls, which Foucault calls pastoral power. The pastoral establishes the relation between shepherd and flock: the shepherd takes care of the welfare of the flock as a whole, but he also takes care of every single member of this flock. In the 18th century, this pastoral technique becomes the basis for a reorganization of the administrative state. This state develops the modern *Polizey*, i.e., an apparatus that focuses on the well-being of the collective and constructs the sphere of economics, i.e., the amount of grain, the number of workers, the imports and exports, the processes of price formation. Society is constituted and governed by the means of political economy.

Foucault suggests that in the 18th century, pastoral power became an integral moment of governmentality. But it cannot be reduced to this form of power. With regard to his deliberations in *The Will to Knowledge* on the practices of confession, with which the subject speaks the truth about itself, explores itself, observes its feelings, analyzes its emotions, fixes and intensifies them, and binds itself to them, it can be said that the pastoral technology has developed into a comprehensive power practice of the guidance of souls, which is condensed in a number of practices and institutions such as psychotherapy, meditation, medical care, relationship talks and counseling sessions, in



coachings or guided self-evaluations. Political strategies for addressing, fathoming and guiding emotions by politicians can also be counted among the pastoral technique, for in many cases, leaders constitute a 'mass', a 'herd', to which they promise to look after and whose physical and spiritual well-being they take care of.

5. The power technologies presented so far constitute and form the conditions under which the power practices are carried out and the disputes about power and resistance take place. They are elements of the field of immanence in which the power practices, the power technologies and the social relations form a historically specific unity: 'society', economy, government, police, insurance, discipline, school, military, prison, factory, psychiatry, hospital, and health – they all form that whole that is modern bourgeois society. It does not make sense to speak of society and then of the hospital or school, of society and of governmental practice, as if the one – the school, psychiatry – were derived from the other – from society, from bourgeois class domination – or vice versa: as if modern society could exist without the hospitals and the power practices of corporate domination, without social security, without the culture industry or discipline in schools, and without the order of knowledge of statistics. But all these power technologies still remain external to the individual or subject. Foucault says that power forms the soul and the body, that it individualizes and subjectivates. Power does not content itself; it also wants to penetrate into the outermost and innermost areas of what is regarded as an individual – the undivided – or as a subject – which is autonomous and only follows its own will. It wants to construct and individualize this subject, to govern it, by permeating it, by structuring it according to its own ideas, by shaping it, by analyzing its various impulses, acting upon them, fixing or intensifying them. One of the decisive effects of power which make it possible to subjectivate the subject is the sexualization of the individual, i.e., the binding of the subject to a sexual orientation and corresponding practices. According to Foucault's analysis, this is done by means of special technologies of subjectivation, as a truth-telling about oneself. By making the individual figure out who it is, and in this process penetrate further and further into itself, observe itself more and more closely, speak about itself, tell the truth about itself in an intensive way, it binds itself to itself and to its identity. Telling the truth about oneself is a performative act, in which the individual constructs itself and binds itself ever closer, ever more intensively and of its own accord, to itself and to an identity. The subject is thus not oppressed, not hindered from doing something; these discourses hence do not serve the liberation of a sexuality, of a previously blocked will, the realization of a deeper subjectivity that was hitherto lying dormant. Rather, these are technologies of the self in which the subject constantly generates itself anew through a special relation to the truth-telling about itself. The technologies of the self, however, go far beyond the binding of the self to a sexual orientation as the true identity of the subject. The technologies of the self also include techniques of public truth-telling, of the



relation to one's own body, to diet or to the aesthetics of the body (conveyed through sports, music and dance, or aesthetic surgery).

Particularly Foucault's analyses of power reveal that the bourgeois social formation is indeed traversed by an immensely broad network of power practices. Although his analyses of power are not carried out with such a claim, they make clear that there is an inner coherence of the power practices, which results from the fact that the powers expand, relate to one another, complement and merge into one another. This happens in contingent processes and because of the struggles. In these, new types and techniques of power develop which work on problems that could not be solved by previous power strategies and tactics. Power rounds itself off. The five forms of power which Foucault has distinguished for modern capitalist society, and which have taken up and updated numerous power techniques of the past millennia, do not by any means complete the development of modern power. Finally, an essential aspect of power is the intelligibility of the relations themselves, which, in the face of this organization and expansion, of the intensity, the ramifications and interrelations, as well as the organic unity of power and knowledge, elude comprehension – or rather than elude, convey the impression that conditions of a globally coordinated and cooperative coexistence are not at all possible. Indeed, the powers cannot be abstracted from these relations, as if they were not an alloy but merely a coating applied to the surface. They are an integral, organic component of the existence of the 'social' relations; if they were not powerful, these relations would not exist, not reproduce.

Because of its immanence, challenging power thus entails challenging, reconstructing, producing and constituting new relations. Therefore, the question of emancipation is neither solely about the struggle against the state apparatuses, nor about an abstract struggle against power as such – but neither is it about a transformation of the relations which does not concern itself with the power permeating and constituting them, just as if power would simply dissolve once the relations were altered. The challenge is to reject the concrete powers and thus also the identities they have constituted. This power-critical practice should not be turned into the affirmative. There is no reason to hope that another modality of the exercise of power, another measure of power practice, other rulers or other identities will appear better to us. Why should people resist if they must expect that the removal of the present powers will not bring about the better, but might also mean losing the good they may already have gained? The enormous number of power tactics and power strategies must be analyzed in detail, i.e., the relations must become the subject of the analysis regarding their power-knowledge articulation, in order to disarticulate the rounded-off power itself and to step by step completely dismantle those power technologies accumulated and refined over the past thousands of years, so that no remnant of power will remain which could then once again push for totalization. This can only be achieved if relations are



structured in such a way that the problems and rationality aspects to which power technologies provide an answer themselves disappear.

translated from German by Florian Cord

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