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<p>The purpose of this thesis is to introduce and analyze Michel Foucault's (1926–1984) conceptions of <i>power</i> (<i>pouvoir</i>) and <i>violence</i> (<i>violence</i>). Foucault wrote extensively about power, but seldomly analyzed violence analytically. Nevertheless he argues that power and violence are connected. This thesis is an attempt to gain an understanding of the relation between power and violence and to open the field for questions on resistance.</p> <p>The questions of this thesis are approached through conceptual analysis and historical investigation. The main literature consists of Foucault's mid-70s works; from <i>Discipline and Punish</i> and <i>The History of Sexuality: Volume One</i> to his lecture series at Collège de France, especially "Society Must Be Defended" and <i>Security, Territory, Population</i>. Works on Foucault that are cited include Jeffrey Nealon's <i>Foucault Beyond Foucault</i> (2008), Kai Alhanen's <i>Practices of Thought in Michel Foucault's Philosophy</i> (2012) and Johanna Oksala's <i>Foucault, Politics, and Violence</i> (2012).</p> <p>Power is mainly approached through the concepts of cost and intensity, stressing Foucault's famous claim that "power produces", or that it is productive in itself. In contrast to power, violence is, according to Foucault, unproductive or even destructive in its effects. In order to understand how the concept of cost and the process of intensifying are interconnected with historical changes and the corresponding use of violence, Foucault's accounts on different historical modes of power are introduced and examined. This examination shows that historically the use of violence has developed from being excessive and brutal (the sovereign's "Right of Death") to normative and life-preserving (the biopolitical "Power over Life").</p> <p>The analysis shows that power and violence have a certain, historically contingent connection, which is perceived through the hegemonic political rationalities. According to Foucault, in order to resist violence, it is essential to understand the rationalities in question and to refuse to co-operate with the dominating practices they foster.</p>			
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“RIGHT OF DEATH AND POWER OVER LIFE”

An analysis of Michel Foucault’s conceptions of power and violence

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Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to introduce and analyze Michel Foucault's (1926–1984) conceptions of *power* (*pouvoir*) and *violence* (*violence*). Foucault wrote extensively about power, but seldomly analyzed violence analytically. Nevertheless he argues that power and violence are connected. This thesis is an attempt to gain an understanding of the relation between power and violence and to open the field for questions on resistance.

The questions of this thesis are approached through conceptual analysis and historical investigation. The main literature consists of Foucault's mid-70s works; from *Discipline and Punish* and *The History of Sexuality: Volume One* to his lecture series at Collège de France, especially "*Society Must Be Defended*" and *Security, Territory, Population*. Works on Foucault that are cited include Jeffrey Nealon's *Foucault Beyond Foucault* (2008), Kai Alhanen's *Practices of Thought in Michel Foucault's Philosophy* (2012) and Johanna Oksala's *Foucault, Politics, and Violence* (2012).

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The analysis shows that power and violence have a certain, historically contingent connection, which is perceived through the hegemonic political rationalities. According to Foucault, in order to resist violence, it is essential to understand the rationalities in question and to refuse to co-operate with the dominating practices they foster.

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Abbreviations

AK	<i>The Archaeology of Knowledge</i> (1972).
BB	<i>The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France 1978-1979</i> (2004).
DP	<i>Discipline and Punish</i> (1977).
EW1	<i>Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth. Essential Works vol. 1</i> (1998).
EW2	<i>Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology. Essential Works vol. 2</i> (1998).
EW3	<i>Power: Subjectivity and Truth. Essential Works vol. 3</i> (2001).
HM	<i>History of Madness</i> (2006).
HSI	<i>The History of Sexuality: Volume One</i> (1978).
P/K	<i>Power/Knowledge - Selected Interviews & Other Writings 1972-1977</i> (1980).
PP	<i>Psychiatric Power: Lectures at the College de France 1973-1974</i> (2006).
PT	<i>The Politics of Truth</i> (1997).
PPC	<i>Politics, Philosophy, Culture - Interviews and Other Writings 1977-1984</i> (1988).
SMD	<i>"Society Must Be Defended": Lectures at the Collège de France 1975-1976</i> (2003).
STP	<i>Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France 1977-1978</i> (2004)

1 Introduction

In this thesis I will introduce and analyze Michel Foucault's (1926–1984) conceptions of *power* (*pouvoir*) and *violence* (*violence*). By means of conceptual analysis of Foucault's published books, interviews, articles and lecture series, I will try to gain an understanding of Foucault's account of the rationalities of power and violence and to investigate the relation between these two concepts. For this thesis the most important question is: how is power related to violence in Foucault's thought? Apart from Johanna Oksala's recent book *Foucault, Politics, and Violence* (2012) very little academic attention has been directed towards the question of violence in Foucault's thought.¹ Nevertheless, as I will proceed to show, the concept plays an important role in his philosophy.

I have been occupied with the philosophical question of violence for most of my studies. I stumbled upon the question more or less by accident. This happened while writing my first seminar work on the ideological battle between Joseph Stalin and Nikolai Bukharin in 1930s Soviet Union, where Stalin, the brutal dictator, had already established a firm foothold on the newly emerged socialist state. It came to me as a surprise that although there were evidently more "humane" alternatives to the Stalinist model – like that of Bukharin's militant optimism – they all seemed to share the view that violence should be used to pave the way for the communist utopia. Studying the history of the Soviet Union presented the problem of violence very vividly, and made me wonder whether, although traditionally held as opposite ideologies, there really were any significant differences in the mode of operation between Nazi-Germany and the Soviet Union, the two great totalitarian regimes of the 20th century.

¹ Also Beatrice Hanssen's book *Critique of Violence – Between Poststructuralism and Critical Theory* (2000) makes an inquiry on Foucault's conception of violence as a part of a wider critique.

Something that is called 'violence' certainly plays a part also in liberal democracies and the legitimate use of it is a source of constant political debate. Strangely enough, the question of the philosophical foundations of the phenomena of violence has not aroused the attention of contemporary philosophers. In my inquiries I have come across only one philosophical anthology on the topic, Vittorio Bufachi's *Violence: A Philosophical Anthology* (2009). It seems that the vaguely defined but definitely real phenomenon of violence in societies is very seldom analytically questioned in Western philosophy. Why does violence seem to be taken as a self-evident fact in the modern political reality? How can normative theories on the justification or legitimation of violence be built without even understanding what violence is?

The Russian revolutionaries, who opposed the tsarist regime, used violence as an instrument to get rid of the people standing in the way of a better and perhaps eventually less violent and more "rational" society. But after a bloody civil war and years of internal struggles, the revolutionaries found themselves stuck in the same mechanisms of power that the revolution was supposed to get rid of. Perhaps Foucault's words in his 1978 lecture "What is Critique?" could also have been uttered by a dissident veteran of the Soviet revolution:

"For all the claim that our social and economic organization lacked rationality, we found ourselves facing I don't know if it's too much or too little reason, but in any case surely facing too much power. For all the praises we lavished on the promises of the revolution, I don't know if it is a good or a bad thing where it actually occurred, but we found ourselves faced with the inertia of a power which was maintaining itself indefinitely. And for all our vindication of the opposition between ideologies of violence and the veritable scientific theory of society, that of the proletariat and of history, we found ourselves with two forms of power that resembled each other like two brothers: Fascism and Stalinism." (PT, 54.)

To put it in poetic terms, maybe the veteran would ask himself: "Was it all that violence against our enemies that killed our revolution?"

Paul Veyne (1978, 217)² quotes Foucault, joking darkly: "The decisive test for the philosophers of Antiquity was their capacity to produce sages... in the modern era, it is their aptitude to make sense of massacres. The first helped men to support their own death, the second, to accept that of others." Indeed, the more I tried to make sense of the appalling massacres of the 20th century, the more critically I had to look on the rationality and history of modern societies. In a 1977 interview Foucault explains how the European experience of fascism and Stalinism, their lingering shadows, were influencing his investigations in power:

"[I]t started with a series of events and experiences since 1968 involving psychiatry, delinquency, the schools etc. These events themselves could never have taken their direction and intensity without the two gigantic shadows of fascism and Stalinism looming in the background. If the workers' misery [...] caused the political thinking of the 19th century to revolve around the economy, then fascism and Stalinism [...] induce political anxiety in our current societies." (PPC, 119.)

The inability to grasp the violent rationalities of these "gigantic shadows" was what essentially led me to study Foucault's thought. This thesis is an attempt to understand the rationalities behind violence. I am well aware of the almost hopelessly vast task of making an overall critique on violence. As Beatrice Hanssen remarks:

"Surely, a book dedicated to violence *as such* would have to be broad. It would be the largest possible global encyclopedia of human atrocities, systems of domination, oppression, and exploitation, without regard for national borders or cultural particularisms." (Hanssen 2000, 8.)

To deal with violence *as such*, is not the aim of this thesis. Instead I will keep my scope strictly on Foucault's account of certain aspects of the relation between power and violence. In my opinion, his thought offers a privileged standpoint from which to address the issue of a philosophical understanding of violence. As I will proceed to show in the following chapters, Foucault's unique, essentially historical, approach to the question of power makes it possible to

² Quoted in Paras 2006, 88.

shed light on the question of violence as well. As I will argue, it is possible to approach the concept of power in Foucault through the notions of *force* (*force*), *cost* and *intensity*. In the framework of these notions I will analyze the productive aspect of power. This aspect will be contrasted with the analysis of the non-productive, or destructive, rationalities behind violence. I agree with Beatrice Hanssen on the view that Foucault was not interested in all possible forms of violence.

”To some degree, Foucault [...] focused on state-sponsored and state-sanctioned institutional forms of violence, such as systems of surveillance, regimes of disciplining, and the advent of the modern penal system. But he also did decidedly more by shifting to the surreptitious manifestations that riddle civic space.” (Hanssen 2000, 10.)

Adopting Hanssen’s view on violence in Foucault’s thought will help me to demarcate violence as a political phenomenon. I will show how power and violence are connected in different power relations, such as the relation between the sovereign and his subordinate, and give historical examples of the manifestations of these relations. In the last chapters I will analyze what Hanssen describes as ”surreptitious manifestations” when analyzing the role of violence in pastoral and bio-political forms of power as well as Foucault’s account of the relations between violence and what he calls ’discourse’.

I will start this inquiry in the following two chapters by describing the main points of Foucault’s philosophical project. In chapter three I will take a brief look at Foucault’s *archaeological* and *genealogical* approaches. In chapters 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 I will examine Foucault’s ideas concerning power, and then, in chapter 5.1, focus attention on what he calls *governing*. In the chapters 5.2 and 5.3 I will use the *sovereign* and *pastoral* modes of power as a reference point of historically specific modes of governing and examine the role that violence plays in them. This will be followed in chapter 5.4 by an inquiry into Foucault’s concept of *bio-politics* and its normalizing function. In chapter 6.1 I will compare Foucault’s conception of violence to those of Hannah Arendt and Slavoj Žižek. This will be followed in chapter 6.2 by an analysis on the relation

between the subject and violence. In the last chapter I will take a brief look at the possibility of resistance in Foucault's thought.

The main literature for this thesis is made up of works Foucault wrote in mid-70s; from *Discipline and Punish* (French original, *Surveiller et Punir: Naissance de la Prison*, published in 1975) and *The History of Sexuality: Volume One* (*Histoire de la Sexualité: La Volonté de Savoir*, 1976) to his lecture series at Collège de France, especially "Society Must Be Defended" (1975–1976) and *Security, Territory, Population* (1977–1978). In order to describe Foucault's approach and examine the changes in his thought, I will also quote his earlier works *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (*L'archéologie du Savoir*, 1969) and *History of Madness* (*Folie et déraison: Histoire de la Folie à L'âge Classique*, 1961). As an addition, I will use many interviews and articles published in *Power/Knowledge - Selected Interviews & Other Writings 1972–1977* (1980) and in the posthumously published tripartite compilation series, *Essential Works of Foucault* (1997–2000). As for works on Foucault, Jeffrey Nealon's *Foucault Beyond Foucault* (2008), Kai Alhanen's *Practices of Thought in Michel Foucault's Philosophy* (2012) and Johanna Oksala's *Foucault, Politics, and Violence* (2012) have provided valuable insight on different aspects of Foucault's thought. The chapters dealing with Foucault's conception of violence in Thomas Flynn's book *Sartre, Foucault and the Historical Reason* (2005) and Beatrice Hanssen's *Critique of Violence – Between Poststructuralism and Critical Theory* (2000) served as a great reference point. Also the works on Foucault by Gilles Deleuze and Eric Paras' provocative book, *Foucault 2.0* (2006), have been a source of inspiration for this thesis.

2 Foucault, Politics and Philosophy

Foucault has been highly influential in modern politico-philosophical thought by analyzing power through discourses, practices and techniques, which penetrate all spheres of societies. However, before coming to the point of explicitly examining power, Foucault studied the multifarious events and processes that shape our thought and create what we call 'knowledge'. Foucault was interested in the connection between knowledge and power, which served as the basis for his criticism on universal truths concerning human nature and the violent mechanisms of normalization. Foucauldian analysis leads us not to the question of "*who holds the knowledge*" or "*who has the power*", but to ask questions about how knowledge is formed and what kind of practices direct the course of action of individuals and societies.

Foucault's vast literary heritage – his books, articles, interviews and lectures, forming his *oeuvre* – is dealing with countless topics from a wide range of themes including knowledge, power, aesthetics and ethics. He also gave numerous interviews and wrote critical articles to French newspapers, such as the social-democratic weekly magazine *Le Nouvel Observateur*, in which he examined philosophical and political topics such as class struggle, war and the Gulag. (Miller 1993, 296) The abundance of material gives room for varying and often interdisciplinary approaches, but also poses challenges in terms of the selection of sources. Almost 30 years after his death, Foucault is perhaps more popular than ever among scholars from varying fields. On the other hand, the aims and presupposition of his unique historico-philosophical project are a source of constant debate among Foucault scholars, who mainly tend to place Foucault's thought in post-structuralist or post-phenomenological framework or try to apply it to new fields of study. (Alhanen 2012, 3)

Foucault himself had his reservations concerning the concept of scientific discipline and he never wanted to define himself as a member of a certain scientific community. Although Foucault held a chair at the Collège de France

with the title 'History of Systems of Thought', he never defined himself specifically as a historian, philosopher or sociologist. Denying specific academic roles was in fact very characteristic of Foucault. For example, when speaking about his Kantian stance on social critique in "What is Critique?" Foucault remarks, half-seriously: "I am not attempting to recoup Kant's entire critical project in all its philosophical rigor... I would not allow myself to do so before such an audience of philosophers, since I myself am not a philosopher and barely a critic." (PT, 49) Nevertheless, Foucault's thought has been applied to a wide variety of academic fields, including philosophy, sociology, political and literary studies and even geography.³

Foucault's work always had a lively connection with contemporary political events. He was deeply influenced by the European student uprisings of 1968 and wrote passionately about the prison revolts in France in the early 1970s, as well as the Iranian revolution in 1979. Foucault's listeners in the lectures series at Collège de France were mesmerized by his peculiar ability to use history as a reflection of contemporary reality. As the English series editor Arnold Davidson says in his introduction to the *Security, Territory, Population* lectures: "He could speak of Nietzsche or Aristotle, of expert psychiatric opinion or the Christian pastoral, but those who attended his lectures always took from what he said a perspective on the present and contemporary events." (Davidson 2004, xv)

With his *oeuvre*, Foucault is opening a flexible field of study. Foucault stated:

"I am an experimenter and not a theorist. I call a theorist someone who constructs a general system, [...] and applies it to different fields in a uniform way. That isn't my case. I'm an experimenter in a sense that I write in order to change myself and in order not to think the same thing as before." (EW3, 240.)

The experimental nature of Foucault's thought indeed makes it challenging to build a coherent picture of his philosophy. Eric Paras claims that Foucault was

³ See "Questions on Geography". (P/K, 63-77)

sometimes criticized for this. (Paras 2006, 32-33) Foucault answers to an imaginary critic in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*:

"What, do you imagine that I would keep so persistently to my task, if I were not preparing - with a rather shaky hand - a labyrinth into which I can venture, in which I can move my discourse[,] [...] in which I can lose myself[.] I am no doubt not the only one who writes in order to have no face. Do not ask who I am and do not ask me to remain the same: leave it to our bureaucrats and our police to see that our papers are in order."
(AK, 17.)

Jeffrey Nealon believes that Foucault's dream was to be a "high-modernist impersonality", to attain a certain anonymity in the face of a society which bases all of its functions as well as its ethics on faces and identities. (Nealon 2008, 75) In a 1980 interview Foucault says that he chose anonymity "[o]ut of nostalgia for a time when, being quite unknown, what I said had some chance of being heard. [...] The effects of the book might land in unexpected places and form shapes I had never thought of. A name makes reading too easy." (EW1, 321) Thus, the often quoted phrase, "I am no doubt not the only one who writes in order to have no face" suggests that Foucault's thought should never be understood through his personality, his "face", but be used as it is: a literary piece, a series of ideas, a toolbox for a philosopher; or perhaps as a weapon for the revolutionary. In fact he claimed that the societal process of denying "who we are individually" and instead imposing a scientifically backed identity, a "face", to everyone is part of what he calls "economic and ideological state violence". In a 1982 article Foucault says:

"[A]ll these present struggles revolve around the question: Who are we? They are refusal of these abstractions of economic and ideological state violence, which ignore who we are individually, and also a refusal of scientific or administrative inquisition that determines who one is." (EW3, 331.)

I will argue that for Foucault identifying this "administrative inquisition" with its rationalities and resisting its functionings is part of the struggle to resist violence as well. I will come back to the question of resistance in the final chapter.

Foucault's description of his project – or rather an advice to his readers – reminds me of Wittgenstein's famous paragraph in which he advised the reader to use his *Tractatus logico-philosophicus* as ladders, of which one can, and indeed should, get rid of when reaching the destination. (Wittgenstein 2010, 90) As an addition, for Foucault, philosophy can have a radical mission of acting against established power relations. "Maybe philosophy can still play a role on the side of counter-power, on condition [...] that it gives itself the task of analyzing, elucidating, making visible, and thereby intensifying the struggles that take place around power." (Foucault 1978, 540)⁴

I have so far explained why the topic of violence is of great personal interest to me as well as briefly analyzed the starting points of Foucault's philosophy as well as the influence he has had on scholars in varying fields. Next, in order to understand the way the historical material Foucault uses is connected to his philosophy, I will proceed to take a brief look at his *archaeological* and *genealogical* approaches

⁴ Quoted in STP, 374.

3 Archaeology and Genealogy

Foucault's thought is strongly connected with the way he uses historical material. The concepts of power and violence have for Foucault a historically contingent rationality, which could be analyzed only through rigorous historical approach. Also, as mentioned in the previous chapter, philosophy can, in Foucault's view, have the radical mission of unveiling and challenging the rationalities of power relations. In order to do this, one has to approach history in a certain manner.

In the starting lines of *The Archaeology of Knowledge* Foucault describes what he saw was the method of historians of his time:

"For many years now historians have preferred to turn their attention to long periods, as if, beneath the shifts and changes of political events, they were trying to reveal the stable, almost indestructible system of checks and balances, the irreversible processes, the constant readjustments, the underlying tendencies that gather force, and are then suddenly reversed after centuries of continuity, the movements of accumulation and slow saturation, the great silent, motionless bases that traditional history has covered with a thick layer of events." (AK, 3.)

Whether Foucault's description is accurate or not, adopting a historical stance like this would hinder the possibility to understand power and violence as historically contingent phenomena. If in fact history is constructed of long periods, of which the historian is studying in order to "reveal the stable, almost indestructible system of checks and balances", then it follows that the phenomenon of violence, for instance, is an inevitable result of a continuous historical process. In the next chapters I will argue that this is not the case.

Foucault approaches different modes of power and forms his conception of violence through unique historical approaches, of which *archaeology* and *genealogy* are of great importance for the questions dealt with in this thesis. In order to grasp how Foucault forms his ideas, I will in this chapter briefly explain the main points of these approaches.

After releasing his tide shifting work on human sciences, *The Order of Things* (*Les Mots et les choses: Une archéologie des sciences humaines*, 1966) Foucault received fierce criticism, especially from Sartre, who accused him of lacking precision and originality. (Sartre 1966, 87-88)⁵ Partly as an answer to his critics, Foucault wrote *The Archaeology of Knowledge* in which he studied the conditions of possibility of knowledge from a historical point of view. (Paras 2006, 31) Kai Alhanen argues that *The Archaeology of Knowledge* is, however, not a historical investigation:

"Instead, it is Foucault's examination and elaboration of the philosophical underpinnings and methodology that shape and inform his historical work. Therefore *The Archaeology of Knowledge* is both a postscript to Foucault's earlier investigations and an attempt to develop a new approach to the study of discourses." (Alhanen 2012, 38-39.)

In the book Foucault introduces series of highly elusive concepts, such as *the statement* and *discourse*. In this chapter I will try to explain how Foucault uses these concepts and the relation these concepts have to his archaeological approach.

As a philosopher who's reflecting his ideas toward a historical background, Foucault was well aware of the methodological problems he was facing. These include, for instance, the selection, relevance and coherence of the body of documents to be used, the choice of the level of analysis and questions of interpretation. He argues that these problems are part of the methodological field of history. (AK, 10-12.) Foucault was highly critical of the given unities of any particular discipline, including history. He poses the question of whether the quite recent categories of 'politics' or 'literature', for instance, can be accepted as such, since there are major problems in applying them outside of the current historical context. (ibid, 22) From a Foucauldian point of view, it is not possible to talk about politics of the Classical period in the same sense as we talk about politics of the 21st century. For Foucault's project it is absolutely

⁵ Quoted in Paras 2006, 31.

essential to challenge these unities and show their lack of internal coherence and dependence on authority.

"These pre-existing forms of continuity, all these syntheses that are accepted without question, must remain in suspense. They must not be rejected definitively of course, but the tranquility with which they are accepted must be disturbed; we must show that they do not come about themselves, but are always the result of a construction the rules of which must be known, and the justification of which must be scrutinized." (AK, 26.)

Foucault uses these given unities only insofar as to study them, to understand their "secretly formed laws". Therefore he does not place himself inside of these unities, defined by the discipline in question, more than is absolutely necessary to build a theory of them. (AK, 26.) So, with minimal interpretation, these discourses are used as raw material. "One is led therefore to the project of a *pure description of discursive events* as the horizon for the search for the unities that form within." (ibid, 26-27)

Foucault makes clear that his approach is not that of language analysis. While language analysis asks the question of the rules of a certain statement and is trying to find out how, by using these rules, it would be possible to produce similar kinds of statements, "[t]he description of the events of discourse poses a quite different question: how is it that one particular statement appeared rather than another?" (AK, 27) Paras claims that for the archaeologist "[t]he history of knowledge was the unfolding of an anonymous process: a process of the formation and transformation of bodies of *statements* according to isolable rules." (Paras 2006, 35)

Perhaps the most central concept of *The Archaeology of Knowledge* is that of *discourse (discours)*, which Foucault defines, quite simply, as "the group of statements that belong to a single system of formation." (AK, 107) Discourses are therefore groups of statements which are governed by certain unwritten set of rules. In order to study discourses, it is important to focus attention on the form of statement, its field of application and the position of the one who enunciates it. Thus, when in *History of Madness* Foucault quotes the statements of early psychiatrists about the conditions of the madmen,

published in official annals, he is making an archaeological study on the discursive practices of madness in that particular historical period.

Alhanen claims that for Foucault archaeology is not just an arbitrary metaphor. (Alhanen 2012, 55) The archeologist works in an excavation in hope of finding remains and artifacts of an ancient civilization. By putting fragmented pieces together she is trying to build a coherent picture of the changes and fluctuations in that civilization. She is not interested in the question of what the maker of this or that artifact had in mind while producing it. Instead the key point of interest is the way the artifacts were produced and the materials that were used. In a similar manner, an archaeologist of knowledge studies the history of thought: by putting together statements, organizing them into groups and trying to spot regularities between them she is trying to figure out the building materials, the rules, of these statements. (ibid, 55-56.) The archaeologist is studying the transformation of civilizations, the archaeologist of knowledge the transformation of systems of knowledge.

Beatrice Hanssen claims: "Foucault's archeological [sic] excavations were aimed at the sedimentary strata of occidental knowledge, meaning to lay bare its topography, architecture, or spatial regimes of ordering systems." (Hanssen 2000, 42) Thus, the aim of archaeological analysis is to show the systems of thought "laid bare" without layers of interpretation and meanings and thus opens the field for a critical study. When history is no longer seen as an "indestructible system of checks and balances" it is possible to see how ordering systems have developed and enables the archaeologist to ask questions on the reasons why certain rationalities have become accepted as part of the accepted discourse instead of others.

After *The Archaeology of Knowledge* a major shift took place in Foucault's thought. In Foucault's vocabulary there was suddenly a new concept that borrowed its name from Nietzsche's *The Genealogy of Morals* (1967). Eric Paras remarks:

"It is one of the ironies of Foucault's career that the towering edifice assembled with infinite care and labour in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* was essentially given over to dereliction

immediately upon its completion. Foucault never applied the rigorous formal method that he christened "archaeology"; indeed, after 1970, he rarely even used the word." (Paras 2006, 10.)

I would argue that what Paras calls a 'towering edifice' – Foucault's meticulously built system, by which he locates his level of analysis – was created to deal with certain kinds of questions. But since by the mid-70s Foucault was already dealing with different questions than five years earlier, a new approach was needed. Thus, contrary to Paras' view, archaeology was not completely forgotten and left behind. Instead, as Foucault insists in "What is Critique", it works contemporaneously with genealogy as another dimension in the same analysis. (PT, 65) Moreover, the genealogical approach resembles archaeology in its opposition to the scientific way of locking knowledges to a certain power-hierarchy, that is, making some statements appear rather than other.

In *Society Must Be Defended* Foucault explains genealogy in the following terms:

"Compared to the attempt to inscribe knowledges in the power-hierarchy typical of science, genealogy is, then, a sort of attempt to desubjugate historical knowledges, to set them free, or in other words to enable them to oppose and struggle against the coercion of a unitary, formal, and scientific theoretical discourse. The project of these disorderly and tattered genealogies is to reactivate local knowledges. [...] To put it in a nutshell: Archaeology is the method specific to the analysis of local discursivities, and genealogy is the tactic which, once it has described these local discursivities, bring into play the desubjugated knowledges that have been released from them." (SMD, 10-11.)

This is essentially what Foucault is doing in *Discipline and Punish* and *The History of Sexuality: Volume One*. He does not merely describe the penal practices or the birth of what is called 'sexuality'. Instead Foucault opens a new critical field that can be used to study the effects of these practices on what he calls *subjectivation*, the forming of individuality through power relations. This is what Foucault means when he says that the aim of genealogy is to "bring into play the desubjugated knowledges". With the help of the genealogical approach, it is possible to desubjugate, to change, and perhaps to free, the power-relations that are in operation whenever knowledge – and through that knowledge, subjects – are formed.

In *Discipline and Punish* and *The History of Sexuality: Volume One*, Foucault, for the first time, explicitly shows how power-knowledge forms and shapes the subjects. Unlike the biblical term *genesis*, genealogy is not trying to find some fundamental starting point from which all further developments have emerged. Instead it is "something that attempts to restore the conditions for the appearance of a singularity born out of multiple determining elements of which it is not the product, but rather the effect." (PT, 64) In *Discipline and Punish* and *The History of Sexuality* Foucault is recreating the historical conditions for the appearance of such ever-changing and subject-swallowing categories as the 'delinquent' or the 'pervert', for instance. If the archaeological question in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* is: "How is it that one particular statement appeared rather than another" (AK, 27), the genealogical question in *The History of Sexuality* is: "What paths have brought us to the point where we are "at fault" with respect to our own sex?" (HSI, 9)

This short introduction on Foucault's archaeological and genealogical approaches will serve as a basis for understanding how Foucault dealt with historical material. In the later chapters I will argue that the questions of the appearance of certain statements rather than another or becoming "at fault" with respect to our own sex are – through the effects language has on the subject and through the normalizing function of the discourse on sex – fundamentally connected with Foucault's conception of violence.

4 Power and Violence

4.1 Foucault and the Question of Power

Foucault deals explicitly with the theoretical background of his conceptions of power in the main corpus of his work only in a few, relatively short passages in *Discipline and Punish* and *The History of Sexuality: Volume One*. (Nealon 2008, 97) Luckily, more material can be found from the numerous articles and interviews where Foucault explains and clarifies his ideas on power. He approached the theme from different perspectives during his lifetime but the question of power was always strongly present in his work. Although above mentioned books, both written in mid-70s, are perhaps Foucault's most often quoted works on power, in a 1977 interview Foucault says that also his earlier works, such as his doctoral thesis, *History of Madness*, were at least indirectly devoted to the topic. (P/K, 115) Foucault further elaborates that it was the political situation in France in the early 1960s that made it so difficult for him to pose the question of power directly. He explains how his generation was brought up in the French orthodox Marxist tradition, which viewed power mainly as a property of the ruling class and used as an instrument of class domination and violence against the proletariat. He claims that among the French Marxists power was mostly posed in terms of the capitalist or bourgeois State apparatus. (ibid, 115-116.)

Foucault's early teacher Louis Althusser, a distinguished Marxist philosopher who had a major influence on young Foucault (Miller 1993, 57), was an exception among the French Marxists in the sense that in his view power is not merely repressive. He divides the functions of what he calls 'apparatuses' in two categories: *Ideological State Apparatuses*, such as the educational institution, and *Repressive State Apparatuses*, such as the military and the police. Nevertheless, Althusser perceives power's functionings mainly through the State and the ruling classes: "The State is a 'machine' of repression, which enables the

ruling classes to ensure the domination over the working class, thus enabling the former to subject the latter to the process of surplus-value extortion[.]” (Althusser 2008, 11) Foucault joined the French Communist party under the influence of Althusser (EW3, 250), but resigned soon afterward. He grew frustrated by the fact that the French orthodox Marxists were not interested in questions he saw crucial for understanding power: how it was exercised or what kinds of techniques or tactics were employed. (P/K, 115-116)

I will next move to the topic of power. I will start by briefly considering the relation between the concepts of power and force. Understanding this relation and Foucault’s usage of the word ‘force’ is important in relation to Foucault’s concept of violence. After this I will analyze Foucault’s critique on the Marxist view on power and proceed to approach power through the concepts of cost and intensity, which, in my opinion, illuminate the question of how power functions and why it has taken certain historical forms. In the last pages of this chapter I will introduce Foucault’s concept of governing and his account of three historical modes of power. Lastly, I will examine Foucault’s concept of bio-politics.

4.2 Force, Cost and Intensity

In Foucault’s view, it is misleading to pose the question of power merely in terms of the State apparatus as the French orthodox Marxists did. (P/K, 115-116.) Instead power is intrinsic to all social relations; it functions in a social space between actors: individuals, groups of people or classes. This is why, in order to understand power’s immense role in our social relations, it is misleading to ask questions like “*who has the power*” or “*where is power exercised*”; the visible level of the functioning of power is merely the tip of the iceberg. One has to dive deeper to figure out the existential level of power: how individuals, groups of people or classes are formed by power’s functionings. Instead of independently constituted subjects – such as the

members of the ruling class – exercising power on others, power in fact constitutes these subjects and controls their conduct.

There is an important relation between the concepts of power and force in Foucault's thought. Johanna Oksala notes that Foucault uses the notion of force in elusive and often contradictory ways. Sometimes he uses the concept to describe something that can be possessed, a tool or a weapon in the struggles that happen around power. On the other hand Foucault was often referring to "relations of force", which echoes the Marxist notion of relations of production. (Oksala 2012, 45.) Kai Alhanen, following Deleuze, claims that Foucault understands force as capacities of action. People have the capacity to labor, exercise, study, imagine, and so forth. When power is exercised, these forces of humans are directed and governed in a certain domain. Alhanen further claims: "Power can be also used strategically, namely by assembling and directing relations of force towards some specific goal in a centralized fashion on the level of society as a whole." (Alhanen 2012, 118-119.)

When power is "put into action", it acts on the capacities of action. Or as Deleuze puts it, "power is a relation between forces, or rather every relation between forces is a 'power relation'." (Deleuze 2010, 59.) Power directs the forces, the acting capacities of its subjects. For example, the *armed forces* can be detached to help in a humanitarian catastrophe. The capacities of soldiers can be used to save people from their flooded houses. But in a similar manner, the soldiers can be ordered to destroy an enemy village and kill all of its inhabitants.

What Foucault undoubtedly got as an influence from the Marxist tradition (or rather from the works of Marx) is the view that the historically significant changes in economic and political relations that happened from the 16th and 17th centuries onwards have had a major impact in the exercise of power. As new capitalist, or industrious societies emerged, questions of the organization of production arose on the agenda of economic and political debate. As

Foucault notes: "Techniques of power are invented to meet the demands of production. I mean production here in the broad sense - it can be a matter of the 'production' of destruction, as with the army." (P/K, 161)

Since, in Marxist terms, production of surplus value is one of the basic attributes of a capitalist economy, and the various techniques of power are invented to meet the demands of production, I would argue that what Foucault is basically saying is that certain modes of power are intrinsic to capitalist economy. However, it is important to note that Foucault does not use the notion of a 'capitalist economy' to mark a difference with a socialist or communist economy. He uses the words 'capitalist' and 'industrial' almost synonymously, and designates these definitions to describe the birth of an essentially *modern* economy. (HSI, 69; SMD, 277-278) Whether it is historically accurate to do so is debatable, but in my opinion Foucault's tendency to equate these two words is meant to highlight the fact that capitalism was born in the wake of Industrious Revolution and has since more or less been the dominant way of organizing production.

Contrary to the French orthodox Marxist notion of the State apparatus as a mechanism invented intentionally by the bourgeoisie to repress the working class, Foucault held the view that power works in economy nonintentionally. He insists that power is not in the hands of people who make important economic or political decisions. (HSI, 95) However, in his 1975–1976 lecture series *Society Must Be Defended*, Foucault notes how, at a certain historical moment, certain techniques of power – the exclusion of madmen to asylums, for instance – became politically, or even economically profitable. This is why the bourgeoisie invested in those techniques – not because they would care how the madmen were treated – but because the technique of treating madmen in a certain way became, for various reasons, profitable. (SMD, 32-33)

"[T]o the extent that these notions of "the bourgeoisie" and "the interest of bourgeoisie" probably have no content, [...] what we have to realize is precisely that there was no such thing as a bourgeoisie that thought madness should be excluded[.] [B]ut there

were mechanisms to exclude madness[.] At a given moment, and for reasons that have to be studied, they generated a certain economic profit, a certain political utility, and they were therefore colonized and supported by global mechanisms and, finally, by the entire system of the State.” (SMD, 33.)

As one can see, Foucault is not at all clear on the details or the mechanisms of operation behind this "interest of the bourgeoisie" and is even skeptical of this kind of notion. However, in my opinion, with this notion, Foucault highlights the idea that the scientific discourses that define madness and the practices that exclude the subjects that fall into this category, are unintentional, but, historically speaking, they have had a tendency to increase in their productivity, or to be more accurate, to be productive in themselves. Scientific practices, such as psychiatry, produce knowledge as well as applied categories or taxonomies, such as the "madman" who stand in a striking contrast to the "mentally healthy". This process can flow in profits to the ones who invest in it, but this does not mean that the ones investing are in charge of the overall changes in power relations. Deleuze argues:

"As the postulate of essence or of the attribute, power would have an essence and be an attribute, which would qualify those who possess it (dominators) as opposed to those on whom it is practiced (dominated). Power has no essence; it is simply operational. It is not an attribute but a relation: the power-relation is the possible set of possible relations between forces, which passes through the dominated forces no less than through the dominating, as both of these forces constitute unique elements[.]" (Deleuze 2010, 24.)

Following Deleuze, I would argue that investing in the available mechanisms to exclude madmen did not "buy" the bourgeoisie away from the reach of power. With its functionings, power can produce economic profits and political utility, but it also produces knowledge, categories and taxonomies and, for instance when applied to the military context, destruction. The set of mechanism to control subjects, "does generate a bourgeois interest that functions within the economico-political system as a whole." (SMD, 33) In Foucault's view "power produces; it produces reality[.]" (DP, 194) In the social reality, produced by

power relations, the forces of the subjects of power, whether bourgeoisie or working class, are conducted in one way or another.

I would claim that with the word 'power', Foucault refers to a specific social relation and is not trying to create a complete and all-embracing theory. Therefore it is difficult, if not impossible, to find a common denominator for all forms of power. However, sticking to the economic aspect of power, Jeffrey Nealon argues that it could be fruitful to approach the Foucauldian notion of economy and its relation to power through the concept of cost. (Nealon 2008, 17-18) What is relevant here is that some techniques of power are more costly than others, both in economic and political terms. In the process of increasing productivity, the less costly means of implementing power tend to take over.

Foucault starts *Discipline and Punish* with a painstakingly detailed analysis of public executions in 16th century France. He claims that as a form of exercising power, public executions became a political danger since they were costly and inefficient. (DP, 63.) To prove his point, Foucault uses public executions as an example, telling how they were a constant source of unrest and illegalities among the people to whom they were addressed:

"It was evident that the great spectacle of punishment ran the risk of being rejected by the very people to whom it was addressed. In fact, the terror of the public execution created centres of illegality: on execution days, work stopped, the taverns were full, the authorities were abused, insults or stones were thrown at the executioner, the guards and soldiers; attempts were made to seize the condemned man, either to save him or to kill him more surely; [...] But above all - and this was why these disadvantages became a political danger - the people never felt closer to those who paid the penalty in those rituals intended to show the horror of the crime and the invincibility of power[.]"

(DP, 63.)

Considering the cost of the public execution in terms of lost lives, property and work hours, it is a small wonder that in the end of the 18th century reformers of penal practices were insisting on the abolition of the executions. (DP, 63) Torturing and executing a criminal publicly became by any measurement too costly and clumsy a way to punish. However it is important to note that cost is

not something of a natural order, but essentially socially defined criteria of measurement. (Nealon 2008, 17) What is considered too costly in one social sphere is perhaps not considered too costly at all in another. It is the rationality of the hegemonic political system, through which the cost of different practices is mirrored. Public executions, for instance, were abolished in the Western societies by the end of the 18th century, but some societies hold to similar punishment practices to this day. Obviously enough, Foucault never claimed that power has any universal functions, although, historically speaking, it seems to have shared some tendencies, at least in the Western world.

It is interesting how Foucault uses the concept of cost also as something concerning the object of the practices of torture. He is talking about the offenders as "those who *paid* the penalty", which seems to refer to the offender as someone who, by being punished, restores the strictly economic balance his crime has violated – *pays his dues*, so to say. According to Nealon, Foucault borrows the concept of cost from Nietzsche's work *The Genealogy of Morals*, where it occupies a central place. Nietzsche asks: "Have you ever asked yourselves sufficiently how much the erection of every ideal on earth has cost?" (Nietzsche 1967, 95)⁶ Every ideal, indeed every truth, has its price. Foucault takes the question further by asking: "At what price can subjects speak the truth about themselves? [...] How [does one] state the truth of oneself, insofar as one might be a criminal subject[?]" (EW2, 444) One can even claim as Nealon does that the question of the *price of truth* for the subject is Foucault's main question, not the narrow question of power. (Nealon 2008, 19) Foucault maintains that for the individual subject, it is possible to resist power, but it comes with a price. I will arrive at the topic of resistance in the last chapter.

Nealon further argues that through the concept of intensity one can shed light on the historical mutations of power, such as previously mentioned reforms in penal practices to abolish public execution. Because of the constant tendency to seek more economical profit and political utility, power relations saturate. To

⁶ Quoted in Nealon 2008, 17.

say that power *intensifies* is to say that more cost-efficient and wide-reaching power mechanisms are implemented. In their most intense form, these mechanisms reach everywhere, touch everyone and are almost self-sufficient in their cost-efficiency. It is important to notice, however, that the process of intensification does not happen suddenly. It is a question of slow mutations, draws and setbacks as well as uneven distributions of new techniques to support the mechanisms of power. When Foucault explains in *Discipline and Punish* the *raison d'être* of the penal reforms in the eighteenth century, he also defines a sort of a general formula for power's intensification: (Nealon 2008, 35, 38.)

"Shift the object and scale. Define new tactics in order to reach a target that is now more subtle but also more widely spread in the social body. Find new techniques for adjusting punishment to it and for adapting its effect. Lay down new principles for regularizing, refining, universalizing, the art of punishing. Homogenize its application. Reduce its economic and political cost by increasing its effectiveness and by multiplying its circuits." (DP, 89.)

From these new, intensified, more cost-efficient and wide-reaching techniques, which slowly, starting from the 17th century, replaced the archaic and violent ones, such as torture and public executions, emerges what Foucault calls 'disciplinary power'. Prisons, barracks, clinics, madhouses and other similar institutions were erected in the 17th and 18th centuries to exercise power in more intensified and less costly manner. These new techniques were essentially targeted to the body in a new, more meticulous and calculative way:

"In the old system, the body of the condemned man became the king's property, on which the sovereign left his mark and brought down the effects of his power. Now he will rather be the property of society, the object of collective and useful appropriation." (DP, 109.)

What transforms, then, when the power of the sovereign is mutating to disciplinary power is the relation to the human body, its usefulness for the productive mechanisms of the society. In short, disciplinary power targets the body and its *utility*. The word 'utility' is interesting here. What is for Foucault the

most intense form of disciplinary power was in fact invented by the father of the theory of utilitarianism, Jeremy Bentham. The panoptic prison model, which Bentham designed as a mechanism and ideal of perfect surveillance, aims essentially to reduce the cost of the prison system and increase the utility of the bodies of prisoners to the maximum. In fact, Foucault argues in numerous instances, that utilitarianism is not a philosophy or ideology: it is a technology of government. (DP, 200; P-K, 148; BB, 41)

I have now explained my account on the concept of 'force' as well as its relation to power. I also introduced my approach to power, which is defined through the concepts of cost and intensity, and gave a historical example of the intensification process of the penal system, which started in the 17th century. In the next chapter I will discuss the relation between power relations and violence.

4.3 Power Relations and Violence

The chapter "The Great Confinement" in *History of Madness* starts with a curious statement: "After defusing its violence, the Renaissance had liberated the voice of Madness. The age of reason, in a strange takeover, was then to reduce it to silence" (HM, 38) The chapter, as its name suggests, describes the birth of the houses of confinement for the madmen, in which their violent, animal spirits could be locked up and concealed to be treated in various ways from pure torture to theatrical spectacles⁷. I can't help but notice Foucault's tendency to romanticize the madmen, to portrait them as the "speakers of truth", or his tone of moral resentment towards the merciless practices of torture he describes. He paints horrifying images of madmen and -women chained to the walls or kept on a leash for years. Foucault questions the

⁷ Foucault cites interesting anecdotes on the early attempts to bend the unreason of the madmen: "One example quoted was the case of a patient who believed himself to be dead, and who was genuinely dying by starving him to death: 'A troop of people, pale and dressed like the dead, entered his room, set up a table, brought food and drink, and sat down to eat. The dying man, who was ravenous, looked on, and the dead expressed surprise that he was not eating, and convinced him that they ate just as much as the living. He quickly became accustomed to the idea.'" (HM, 331)

necessity of these practices and strips away all intrinsic meaning of them, stating:

“The violence of these practices demonstrates quite clearly that they were not governed by a consciousness of the need to punish, or by the duty to correct behavior. The notion of resipiscence is quite foreign to the whole system.” (HM, 147)

On the other hand, Foucault does not offer any moral base from which make these kinds of judgments. This flaw in Foucault’s reasoning is corrected in his later works, but is never completely solved.⁸

It seems that in *History of Madness* Foucault perceives violence as a manifestation of the absolute ‘unreason’ and ‘animality’ of madmen, a sort of a rebellion against the ‘reason’ and ‘humanity’, promoted by the Enlightenment. On the other hand Foucault claims that the exercise of power towards madmen can reach a threshold in which it transforms into violence. Thus, in *History of Madness* Foucault uses the concept of violence on the one hand to designate a sudden, dramatic and in a sense rebellious force and on the other an intensified functioning of the corrective mechanisms which sometimes can take brutal forms. This tension between violence as a rebellious force of individuals or groups and as a revelation of the “ugly face” of power remains throughout his *oeuvre*.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, in *Discipline and Punish* Foucault describes the shift from the largely excessive and violent form of sovereign power to the more subtle and cost-efficient disciplinary system. He argues that the carceral system “gives to the power to inflict legal punishment a context in which it appears to be free of all excess and all violence.” (DP, 302) As I argued, historically speaking, it was exactly the tremendous political and economic cost of direct violence, mirrored through the changing political rationalities, which influenced the intensifying process of the mechanisms of power and gave birth to the carceral system to take care of the age-old problem of legal punishing. There are many reasons why the historical change

⁸ For a more detailed analysis on the change in Foucault’s account of ethics, see Paras 2006, 149-158.

from the violent and brutal forms of exercising power to the “gentle way in punishing” happened, but it is quite clear that during these shifts calculations of the cost of different forms of punishing were made. Foucault explains the reasoning as follows:

“There is [...] a specifically political cost. If you are too violent, you risk provoking revolts. Again, if you intervene in too discontinuous a manner, you risk allowing politically costly phenomena of resistance and disobedience to develop in the interstices. This was how monarchical power operated.” (P/K, 155.)

Foucault continues to claim that theorists in the 18th century were arguing that the violent monarchic model of exemplary punishments was too costly in proportion to its results. “A great expenditure of violence is made which ultimately only had the force of an example.” (P/K, 155) For the theorists the question was: Is all this costly violence necessary in order to attain our aims? Could there be more efficient and wide-reaching ways of punishing? In other words, in the name of cost-efficiency it was necessary to figure out the appropriate mechanisms and techniques to attain a perfect equilibrium of violence and other “gentler” ways of exercising power.

Foucault’s account of the relation between power and violence is not exhaustive and is at its best ambiguous. It is also not clear what kind of part violence plays in Foucault’s historical analysis. Flynn asks, “if power relations more often than not are accompanied by violence and yet are not identical with it, how does violence enter into Foucauldian history?” (Flynn 2005, 254) Flynn’s suggestion is that the link is knowledge, or power-knowledge relations, the “instinctive violence” of the Nietzschean will to knowledge. (ibid, 255) Paras claims that Foucault detached himself from the notion of autonomous discourses and thereby aligned himself with the Nietzschean genealogy:

“The genealogical imperative – to confront the past in the full knowledge that every “eternal truth” is a violently imposed interpretation – allowed Foucault to situate his formerly free-floating discourses within a conditioning structure of practices.” (Paras 2006, 53-54.)

Indeed, in his 1970 Collège de France inaugural lecture Foucault discusses the relation between discourses and violence. He states: “We must conceive discourse as a violence that we do to things, or, at all events, as practice we impose upon them; it is in this practice that the events of discourse find the principle of their regularity.” (AK, 229)

Alhanen claims that with *discursive practice* Foucault means a “socially stabilized manner to produce statements”, which “makes its participants talk about things, and also understand them, in some particular way.” (Alhanen 2012, 55) It is very curious that Foucault says: “violence that we do to things.” Taking into account the central place that discursive practices play in Foucault’s concept of knowledge-power relations, one could argue that as these relations are everywhere, so is violence. Since for Foucault most power relations are non-violent, meaning that they direct rather than destroy capacities of action, this kind of claim indeed seems dubious. Although it is probable that Foucault used the concept of violence quite carelessly in his inaugural lecture, the idea that discursive practices and violence are somehow connected comes up in a slightly modified manner in one of Foucault’s lectures a few years later.

In the first lecture of the 1973-1974 *Psychiatric Power* series Foucault explains in more detail his account of the institutional mode of violence. He argues that violence is at the heart of the rational, calculative exercise of power.

“When in fact we speak of violence, and this is what bothers me about the notion, we always have in mind a kind of connotation of physical power, of an unregulated, passionate power, an unbridled power[.] This notion seems to me to be dangerous because, on the one hand, picking out a power that is physical, unregulated, etcetera, allows one to think that good power, or just simply power, power not permeated by violence, is not physical power. It seems to me rather that what is essential in all power is that ultimately its point of application is always the body. All power is physical, and there is a direct connection between the body and political power.” (PP, 14.)

Foucault’s main concern here is that the usage of the concept of violence as “an unbalanced force” covers up the meticulous, calculative practices of power.

He insists that the examples from the early asylums described in *History of Madness* show clearly that psychiatric power, which bases itself on the discourse of mental illnesses and functions through the body of the madman, are by their essence violent. “Taken in its final ramification, at its capillary level, where it affects the individual himself, this power is physical and, thereby, it is violent.” (PP, 14) Violence as a term for this is, however, misleading. “Rather [...] than speak of violence, I would prefer to speak of a micro-physics of power.” (PP, 16)

Foucault deploys the term ‘micro-physics of power’ in *Discipline and Punish*, where he denotes with it the new mechanisms of power that were imposed on the body through the disciplinary system.

“In becoming the target of new mechanisms of power, the body is offered up to new forms of knowledge. It is the body of exercise, rather than of speculative physics; a body manipulated by authority, rather than imbued with animal spirits; a body of useful training and not of rational mechanics, but one in which, by virtue of that very fact, a number of natural requirements and functional constraints are beginning to emerge.” (DP, 155.)

To control the body’s functionings in a certain way needed not only knowledge of the correct end, the norm, but also exercise permeated by a notion of a progressing, evolutive time. This mode of controlling is what Foucault calls ‘micro-physics of power’. “[A] micro-physics of power made possible [...] the integration of a temporal, unitary, continuous, cumulative dimension in the exercise of controls and the practice of dominations.” (DP, 160) Thus, the micro-physics of power is in action for example when the subjects are bended to the timetables and regulations of the factory, the school or the asylum. These small streams of everyday practices join up with each other, forming the mainstream of the society. Beatrice Hanssen argues:

“As a *micro-physics* of power, Foucault’s analysis also permitted the examination of power’s *macro-structures*, to the extent that the interface between general structural, or institutional, power relations and micro-operators transpired as the interplay between strategies and tactics, meaning that the “global strategies” that “traversed and

utilized the local tactics of domination” needed to be mapped as well.” (Hanssen 2000, 124.)

Through micro-physics of power, Foucault shows how political rationalities and scientific knowledge boil down to the individual body and forces it to meet the demands of production or political utility. Sticking to the definition of violence as destructive action towards the capacities of action of the subject, micro-physics of power is not a violent mechanism in itself. In fact, at least to a certain degree, it is meant to increase the utility of these capacities.

It is indeed important to note that the disciplinary mode of power is not in itself violent. Since according to Foucault, power is “a set of actions on possible actions” (EW3, 341), destroying subjects’ possibilities for acting by using violence will also make it impossible to affect her productive forces. In his 1982 article “The Subject and Power” Foucault seems to have abandoned his, perhaps too hasty, equating of violence with the micro-physics of power. “A relationship of violence acts upon a body or upon things; it forces, it bends, it breaks, it destroys, or it closes off all possibilities.” (ibid, 340) Following Foucault, I argue that violence is partly so costly because it is destructive; it nullifies the capacities of its targets without asking for consent. Violence bends the acting capacities of the targets to the point where it destroys them. This kind of destruction is a serious hindrance to the enhancement of production through the utility of the subject. Although power can certainly include an element of this kind of violence, it is evident that power cannot be equated with it. As Johanna Oksala argues, violence is, for Foucault, “clearly a capacity [...], it is a force we exert over bodies and things, and it must therefore be demarcated from power.” (Oksala 2012, 74.) Foucault further explains the relation between power and violence as follows:

”Obviously, the establishing of power relations does not exclude the use of violence any more than it does the obtaining of consent; no doubt, the exercise of power can never do without one or the other, often both at the same time. But even though consent and violence are instruments or results, they do not constitute the principle or basic nature of power. The exercise of power can produce as much acceptance as may be wished for: it can pile up the dead and shelter itself behind whatever threats it

can imagine. In itself, the exercise of power is not a violence that sometimes hides, or an implicitly renewed consent. It operates on the field of possibilities in which the behavior of active subjects is able to inscribe itself. It is a set of actions on possible actions; it incites, it induces, it seduces, it makes easier or more difficult; it releases or contrives, makes more probable or less; in the extreme, it constrains or forbids absolutely[.]” (EW3, 341.)

It is interesting that Foucault states: "consent and violence are instruments or results, they do not constitute the principle or basic nature of power." Thus, in Foucault's view, power and violence cannot be equated, but they can coexist. In fact they have to coexist, since there cannot be a relation of violence without a relation of power. As Thomas Flynn notes: "if all violence attaches to relation of power, not all relations of power necessarily entail violence." (Flynn 2005, 244.) A relation, where the subject has no choice but to act in a certain way is, according to Foucault, not a power relation. As he says: "Where the determining factors are exhaustive, there is no relationship of power: slavery is not a power relationship when a man is in chains[.]" (EW3, 342) This notion is interesting from the perspective of violence, since it indicates that when power relations transform from productive to destructive, the subjects have to have a possibility to resist. A mindless slaughter of people who do not even have a theoretical possibility to escape has nothing to do with power, but by any standards it can have something to do with violence. In such scenes, as witnessed in the totalitarian regimes of the 20th century, the acting capacities of the subjects are destroyed once and for all without asking for consent. On the other hand Foucault is not at all clear when he says that slavery can be a power relationship "only when he [a slave] has some possible mobility, even a chance of escape." (ibid) How theoretical does this possibility have to be for a relationship of slavery to become a power relation? If a relationship of slavery cannot be a power relation, can it be a relation of violence?

If power and knowledge are in a relation that makes possible the establishment of mechanisms of domination that act through the bodies of subjects, as in the early psychiatric institutions, but not all knowledge-power relations are necessarily violent, then the essential question is: What kinds of power relations entail violence? Perhaps it can be fruitful to approach this question

through an analysis of the relation of power to the dominant political rationalities in certain historical periods. In the next chapter I will examine the question of the relation between power and violence through different modes of what Foucault calls 'governing'.

5 Historical Modes of Governing

5.1 Governing

The concept of governing occupies a very central position in Foucault's thought in the years after the release of *Discipline and Punish*. In the *Security, Territory, Population* lecture series Foucault traces the genealogy of the technique of governing all the way to the Stoic question of "how to govern oneself". He further claims that the idea was reformed in the 16th century with the Reformation, Counter-Reformation and the great problematic of pedagogy, when it starts to be posed in terms of "how to be governed, by whom, to what extent, to what end, and by what methods." (STP, 88-89.) Foucault argues that after the French revolution, along with thinkers like Rousseau, the notion of governing acquires a new meaning. (SMD, 35) The question of how to govern a constantly growing entity of what Foucault calls *population*, a mass of people that is an object of control through statistical means, rises to the center of political science.

The new political theorists of the 18th century had high doubts of whether the king by himself, and without any help from any kind of administration, could do away with the new duties assigned to him. Thus, in order to govern the growing population, the importance of disciplining their conduct was highlighted. Population, which is disciplined for the common good of the society is easier, and most importantly, less costly, to control. (STP, 90-92) For this purpose, different kinds of governmental apparatuses had to be established. One of the most important apparatuses is that of *the police*, which is "directed towards men's activity, but insofar as this activity has a relationship to the state." (ibid, 322) Unlike the modern police, the 18th century police was concerned with a wide variety of societal issues including the number of men, their health and activity and the immediate necessities that people need for living. Police, which was established as an aid for the

king to produce information about the population and to govern its living conditions, was soon established as a science. The German universities were pioneers in this respect, creating theories, books and manuals for administrators that produced an "enormous bibliography of *Polizeiwissenschaft* in the eighteenth century." (ibid, 318.)

Foucault argues that historically the change didn't occur from a sovereign society to a governmental society through a disciplinary society (STP, 106-107.) In "What is Critique?" Foucault claims that the question, "*How to govern?*" was one of the most fundamental question for statesmen, economists and experts of all sorts, already in the 15th and 16th centuries. (PT, 44) He says:

"It is a fundamental question which was answered by the multiplication of all the arts of governing - the art of pedagogy, the art of politics, the art of economics, if you will - and of all the institutions of government, in the wider sense of the term government had at the time." (PT, 44)

Although Foucault is using the term widely in his lecture series, his definition of governing is ambiguous. Johanna Oksala notes that in his lecture series (from 1975 onwards) Foucault starts to prefer the word 'government' to the word 'power'. (Oksala 2012, 29) This can be seen, for example, in a 1976 interview, where Foucault seems to supplant what he calls *discursive formations*, one of the most essential functioning of power in relation to knowledge in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* with the notion of governing: "It is a question of what *governs* statements, and the way they *govern* each other so as to constitute a set of proportions that are scientifically acceptable and, hence, capable of being verified or falsified by scientific procedures." (P/K, 112.)

In so far as governing is a specific form of power, it is not orchestrated by some conspirators, but has gradually emerged through the functioning of whole machinery built for this purpose. It seems that using the notion of governing is Foucault's way to designate how power, since the 17th century at least, has been practiced in the realm of whole societies, on a particular target,

which is the population. It is actions directed towards the conduct of the population through various techniques. Governing is more than what Foucault defines as sovereign or disciplinary power, but acts as an element in both of them. In the next three chapters I will introduce Foucault's account of three historical modes of governing and analyze their relation to violence.

5.2 Sovereign power

Foucault argues that, according to Machiavelli and other classical philosophers and theorists of sovereignty, "the Prince exists in a relationship of singularity and externality, of transcendence, to his principality." (STP, 91) He claims that this link between the Prince and his principality is in itself purely synthetic, (ibid) but in practice the Prince reigns in a territory which he has, by conquests, by negotiations, or by other means secured for *himself*. Foucault says:

"[T]hese lands may be fertile or barren, they may be densely or sparsely populated, the people may be rich or poor, active or idle, but all these elements are only variables in relation to territory that is the very foundation of principality of sovereignty." (STP, 91)

In Foucault's view, what the classical theory of sovereignty holds true is that the sovereign's responsibility concerns essentially his territories. The variables of this territory are secondary, although important, parts of his rule. Essentially sovereignty is about ownership of, first and foremost, a territory, and, secondly, of the "variables", such as his subordinates.

In Foucault's view, while territory is the sovereign's principality, the right over life and death is his most fundamental and basic attribute (SMD, 240): that is, qualities attached to his singularity. Echoing the Roman principle of *patria potestas* - which granted the father of the family the right to 'dispose' the life of his children or slaves - the sovereign has the ultimate power to decide over the life and death of his subordinates. (HSI, 135) Thus, for the sovereign power "life and death are not natural or immediate phenomena which are primal or radical, and which fall outside the field of power." (SMD, 240) The king, who is

a living manifestation of the sovereign power, does not only possess the lawful right over life and death, but also practices it in the act of torture on the body of the one who has dared to violate the king's property.

When the sovereign power is in action, it is clear that "[b]esides the immediate victim, the crime attacks the sovereign: it attacks him personally, since the law represents the will of the sovereign; it attacks him physically, since the force of the law is the force of the prince." (DP, 47) In sovereign power, punishment has essentially the function of revenge; the sovereign's body is attacked⁹ and the king requires retribution. Foucault insists that body is not used here in a metaphorical sense. Historically speaking, the king's body was a political reality. The king had to exist physically and be present in order for the monarchy to work. (P-K, 55.) Foucault notes that the violation of the king's body's corporeal integrity had to be restored in rituals (ibid), such as the public execution. It is not completely clear, what, for Foucault, is the division between the metaphorical and physical body of the king. But he seems to maintain the idea that the king's body, both in the metaphorical and in the physical sense, has a direct relation to the functioning of the kingdom.

Quite contrary to the classical theorists of sovereignty, such as Machiavelli, according to Foucault, the scholastic thought – he refers to Thomas Aquinas in particular – attributed also the governing of the people to the sovereign. In fact, the sovereign was to reproduce God's government on Earth. According to Foucault, Aquinas' argument says that art is excellent as far as it imitates nature, which is created and governed by God. The sovereign's art of governing will be excellent only as far as it imitates the order of nature, that is, the order of God. Just as God created nature, the sovereign founds a state or a city and governs it the way God governs nature. (STP, 232-233.) This stands in contrast with the classical theory of sovereignty, which portrays the king as a holder of a territory and not essentially being in charge of the people inhabiting that territory, except as his personal property.

⁹ This happened quite literally in 1757, when Robert-François Damiens attempted to assassinate King Louis XV. Foucault dedicates the starting pages of *Discipline and Punish* (3-6) to vividly describe the king's maiming on Damiens body in the form of torture.

Along with the huge changes in the "variables" of the territory – improved agricultural methods and vast population growth for instance – the sovereign mode of power mutates and acquires new forms in the 17th and 18th centuries. The establishment of municipalities and the changes that happened through the Industrious Revolution changed power relations dramatically. The king was still the ruler in these newly emerged societies, but during these times new attributes of governing began to be attached to sovereign's personality. Although in Foucault's view this notion of the sovereign, with the help of his administrative body of jurists and other specialist, governing people and things, is a clear mutation to the old mode of sovereign power, it has long historical roots. (STP, 236-237)

I would argue that along with these new attributes, the caretaking and controlling of population, that were assigned to the sovereign's personality, the way the king used violence towards his subordinates changed as well. As described before, in the classical mode of sovereign power, violence could be used carelessly to restore the balance in the kingdom. The king's army spared no mercy when finding the offenders who dared to violate property of the sovereign.

Along with the adaptation of the scholastic idea of the sovereign's mission to govern the population, the role of violence had to reform. The subordinates started to be treated as something different as merely variables inhabiting the sovereign's territory. Because of its tremendous economic and political cost, and changes in the political rationality, violence towards the subordinates had to be reduced to minimum. In what Foucault calls pastoral power, the role of the king changed from the absolute ruler who had the divine law on his side to the pastor of a flock whose mission is to take care of each one of its members. I will next try to clarify Foucault's account of the pastoral mode of power. The pastoral aspect of governing will serve as an introduction to Foucault's account on bio-politics.

5.3 Pastoral power

In *Security, Territory, Population* Foucault dedicates a lot of time to make a genealogical analysis of pastoral power. He claims that pastoral power is a specific, historical mode of power, which can be traced back as far as ancient Egypt.

”The title of shepherd (*pâtre*) or pastor (*pasteur*) of men, is one of the royal titles for the Babylonian monarchs. It was also a term designating the relationship of the gods, or god, with men. God is the pastor of men. In an Egyptian hymn, we can read something like this: ”Oh Ra who keeps watch while all men sleep, who seeks what is good for your flock...” God is the shepherd (*berger*) of men.” (STP, 124.)

It is not at all clear what the difference is between these three terms for the shepherd (*pâtre*, *pasteur* and *berger*). It might be that Foucault makes a methodological division between different culturo-historical usages of the concept of the shepherd (*berger*), which he for most of the time uses to designate the leader of a flock of men.

What Foucault means with the pastoral relationship between the shepherd and his flock is essentially analogous to what, in Judeo-Christian tradition at least, is understood to be the relation between God and men. The shepherd, a king, a prophet or a priest receives a flock of men directly from God, and it is God to whom the flock has to be returned. So essentially, what Foucault claims is that the pastoral relationship is about God’s relationship to men.

(STP, 124-125.) Foucault notes, however, that the pastoral relationship does not hold for the Greek conception of god.

”Whatever the intimacy between the Greek gods and their city, and it is not necessarily very great, it is never that kind of [pastoral] relationship. [...] The god is consulted; he or she protects and intervenes; he or she is sometimes angry, and then makes peace; but the Greek god never leads the men of the city like a shepherd leads his sheep.” (STP, 124-125.)

The pastoral relationship between humans, of a king to his people for instance, seems to require recognition of a pastoral god which takes care of its flock and delegates this relationship to his equivalent in the human world.

As Foucault argues, for the Greeks the pastoral god was a foreign idea. Perhaps this is why the Greek philosophers, especially Plato and Aristotle, did not essentially base their ethics and political philosophy on the community, but in the character traits of the individual, who, by his virtuous actions, can affect the community. This is completely opposite to the later scholastic philosophy of the pastoral sovereign, on which the subjectivating, disciplining or normalizing powers of later eras were based. Indeed, Eric Paras quotes Foucault saying that "[t]he subjectivation of Western man is not Greco-Roman, but Christian." (Paras 2006, 101) This does not mean, however, that Foucault was in the opinion that Greco-Roman culture was completely unaware of the pastoral form of directing men. He merely wanted to show, that:

"[T]he Greek thought hardly resorted to the model of shepherd to analyze political power and that the theme of the shepherd, so often employed and so highly valued in the East, was employed in Greece either as a ritual designation in ancient texts, or, in the classical texts, to describe ultimately local and circumscribed forms of power exercised, not by magistrates over the whole city, but by certain individuals over religious communities, in pedagogical relationships, in the care of the body, and so on." (STP, 164.)

The form of pastoral power is in many respects contrary to the form of sovereign power. Sovereign power is exercised over a territory, pastoral power over a moving flock; the sovereign power is exercised over the bodies, pastoral power mainly over souls. Unlike the sovereign, the pastor of the flock is dedicating his whole existence for the welfare and salvation of the flock.

"Pastoral power is not merely a form of power that commands; it must also be prepared to sacrifice itself for the life and salvation of the flock. Therefore, it is different from royal power, which demands a sacrifice from its subjects to save the throne. [...] It is a form of power that looks after not just the whole community but each individual in particular, during his entire life." (EW3, 333.)

It is interesting how Foucault maintains that "[p]astoral power is not merely a form of power that commands". This formulation, however, does not rule out the idea that even in the pastoral power the leader of the flock can, if needed, force the subjects to its rule. If it is indeed true that the shepherd "looks after the whole community and each individual", it naturally follows that the shepherd has to have the means to know what is good for each individual. If in sovereign power the offender is brutally punished if he violates the king's body, how is it that in pastoral power, the individual who disagrees with the imposed "good", is treated? Can this treatment be violent in nature?

Foucault does not offer a clear answer to the question of the role of violence in pastoral power. It is possible, however, to approach the question of violence in pastoral power similarly as the relation between discourses and violence; as "violence that we do to things." In *The History of Sexuality: Volume One*, Foucault claims: "Since the Middle Ages at least, Western societies have established the confession as one of the main rituals we rely on for the production of truth." (HSI, 58) In pastoral power, confession as a peculiar technique of what he calls "traditional technologies of the flesh" – the Christian technologies based on the body and defined through the Lateran Council – offers the means to set the flock to a certain subject position. Foucault claims that the Christian technique of confession has become "one of the West's most highly valued techniques for producing the truth."

"The confession has spread its effects far and wide. It plays a part in justice, medicine, education, family relationships, and love relations[;] [...] one confesses one's crimes, one's sins, one's thoughts and desires, one's illnesses and troubles[.] One confesses in public and private, to one's parents, one's educators, one's doctor[.] One confesses – or is forced to confess. When it is not spontaneous or dictated by some internal imperative, the confession is wrung from a person by violence or threat." (HSI, 59.)

He uses sexuality as an example to argue that the relation of the subjects to the "truth" of sexuality requires "the social body as a whole, and virtually all of its individuals, to place themselves under surveillance." (ibid, 116) In the ritual of the confession every individual is thus forced to examine her sexuality, reflecting it against the "truth" about herself, defined through the social body.

This is part of what Foucault calls 'normalization', which I will analyze more closely in the next chapter.

The role of violence in pastoral power is certainly as ambiguous as Foucault's account on the relation between discourses and violence. If violence destroys the productive capacities of the subject, confession falls to the regime of violence only as far as it is forced out of the subject by directly violent means. This could be the case for instance if a person is tortured in order to obtain a confession. To prove that the gentler ways of seducing or persuading the person to confess are violent is a harder task. The production of truth without destroying the productive capacities of the subject is, according to Foucault, "merely" a power relation. He says: "[Power] operates on the field of possibilities in which the behavior of active subjects is able to inscribe itself. It is a set of actions on possible actions; it incites, it induces, it seduces, it makes easier or more difficult." (EW3, 341.) Thus, I would argue that in pastoral power, the means of confession can take a violent turn if the subjects consent of producing the "truth" about himself is not achieved by gentler means. But, opposed to sovereign power, there is clearly no rationality of violence inscribed in the exercise of the power itself. That does not mean however, that implementing certain techniques, such as confession, could not have violent outcomes.

So far I have examined Foucault's concept of governing and introduced the sovereign and pastoral modes of power. I have also shown how violence is, historically connected to governing. In the next chapter I will proceed to examine Foucault's concept of bio-politics. It has a direct relation to the pastoral mode of power, but it is more complete system of governing and differs in its scale and objectives as well as in its connection to violence.

5.4 Bio-politics

In his 1975–1976 lecture series *"Society Must Be Defended"*, Foucault introduces the audience to what he was contemporaneously working on in writing *The History of Sexuality*:

"Now I think we see something new emerging in the second half of the eighteenth century: a new technology of power, but this time it is not disciplinary. This technology of power does not exclude the [...] disciplinary technology, but it does dovetail into it, integrate it, modify it to some extent, [...] embedding itself in existing disciplinary techniques. This new technique does not simply do away with the disciplinary technique, because it exists at a different level, on a different scale, and because it has a different bearing area, and makes use of very different instruments. Unlike disciplinary, which is addressed to bodies, the new nondisciplinary power is applied not to man-as-body but to the living man, to man-as-living-being; ultimately, if you like, to man-as-species." (SMD, 242.)

Foucault calls this bio-power or bio-politics. Foucault uses these terms in a similar manner, which justifies the assumption that bio-power and bio-politics essentially refer to the same phenomenon. According to Kai Alhanen, Foucault links the emergence of bio-politics to a slow historical process that was influenced by series of events, such as an upward trend in population growth and development in agricultural methods. (Alhanen 2012, 139) The capitalist economy required more cost-efficient means of production and more efficient placing of workers in the productive machinery. At the same time the newly emerged sciences of biology and medicine made possible detailed and calculative interventions to biological life-processes. Alhanen claims: "With bio-politics human *life* became an object of efficient and meticulous governing in western societies." (Alhanen 2012, 139.) With its emphasis on taking care of an entire population, bio-politics resembles the pastoral mode of power, but the historical emergence of bio-politics brought along something completely new as well. Instead of obedience in the form of subjection to the king's will or docility in the face of the disciplinary system, the aim of bio-politics is *normalization (normalisation)*.

As an example of early forms of bio-politics and its normalizing function, Foucault traces the genealogy of what he calls *scientia sexualis*, a complete and thorough control of sexuality. His approach challenges the commonly held view that during the Victorian age sex was entirely repressed and is only now slowly being liberated. Instead his working hypothesis in *The History of Sexuality* is that the bourgeois, capitalist society "did not confront sex with a fundamental refusal of recognition. On the contrary, it put into operation entire machinery for producing true discourses concerning it." (HSI, 69.)

Historically, the transformation of sex into discourse in the 19th century introduced legal sanctions against perversions and pleasures that didn't have a direct relation with reproduction, and the introduction of educational and medical discourses into the sexual domain. Sex was no more merely dependent on the Christian thematic of confession and sin.

"Through pedagogy, medicine, and economics, it made sex not only a secular concern but a concern of the state as well[.] [I]t expanded along three axes: that of pedagogy, having as its objective the specific sexuality of children; that of medicine, whose objective was the sexual physiology peculiar to women; and last, that of demography, whose objective was the spontaneous or concerted regulation of births. Thus the "sin of youth", "nervous disorders," and "frauds against procreation" [...] designate three privileged areas of this new technology." (HSI, 166-117.)

To highlight the contrast between the Western and the oriental approach to sexuality, Foucault makes a division between *ars erotica*, the oriental art of initiating and guiding to the pleasures and mysteries of sexuality and the Western *scientia sexualis*, which is essentially about establishing a generally acceptable, scientifically articulable, true discourse of sexuality. (ibid, 36)

In *Society Must Be Defended*, Foucault talks about the normalization of technical and medical knowledge. He argues that in the 18th century, in order to attain the goals of selection, normalization, hierarchicalization and centralization of knowledges certain institutions and projects, such as the hospital and the mental asylum, were established. These institutions are run by

experts from various fields, and their aim is to figure out how to impose practices of standardized, correct way of living to people. (SMD, 181.) Foucault says: “At the end of the eighteenth century [...] the mechanisms [of power] are adjusted to phenomena of population, to the biological or biosociological processes characteristic of human masses.” (SMD, 250)

In *Security, Territory, Population* Foucault further develops his ideas concerning the mechanism of normalization. He argues that although disciplinary power uses partly the same mechanism, the bio-political functioning of power is more adjusted and covers a wider segment of population. (STP, 56-57) Thus, the exercise of power is not limited to the public domain, as in sovereign power, in which the law guarantees a social sphere, such as the family, where king has no influence. Instead, through normalization, bio-politics penetrates deep into the souls of the people. In a bio-political society the behavioral patterns of subjects are affected, their thoughts and desires shaped. The subject is forced to meet the demands of a correct way of being a member of the society. Nealon argues:

“To use a Foucaultian economic figure, the sovereign power of the king was very inefficient “wholesale” mode of power’s distribution to the socius (early modern spectacles of execution and torture were expensive and not particularly effective in keeping royal order.) Discipline, by contrast, discovered and deployed a much more economical and effective “retail” power over individual bodies at particular, transversally linked sites of training (the family, the school, the clinic, the factory, the army.) Biopower, then, goes one step beyond discipline in the intensification of power, working on individuals “really and directly”[.] (Nealon 2008, 46.)

Thus, bio-political normalization takes the pastoral confession and disciplinary training one step further. In pastoral power, for example the pagans could quite easily avoid the grip of the Christian “technologies of flesh” and the confession. In a disciplinary society the individuals with permanently disabled bodies would not be subjected to disciplinary training. Although both of these modes of power radiate their influence to the whole social strata, bio-political normalization seeks, by definition, no restrictions, in so far as its subjects can be defined as belonging to the species of human.

In order to underline the primacy of the norm, Foucault introduces the concept of 'normation' (*normation*) to characterize the difference between disciplinary and bio-political normalization. (STP, 57.) The disciplinary power of normation breaks down individuals in order to make them visible from a general mass of people. It defines the best actions for achieving a particular result and modifies individuals to achieve this result. The norm, an ideal model, such as the best way to operate a machine in a factory, is constructed in terms of the result, for example the maximal amount of produced goods per time unit. The normation in disciplinary power thus functions to classify individuals as normal or abnormal according to their ability to reach the norm, the best achievable result. But, as Foucault underlines, "it is not the normal and the abnormal that is fundamental and primary in disciplinary normalization, it is the norm." (STP, 57.) So, what disciplinary normation does is that it molds bodies and their actions to a certain pattern, defined and constructed by specialist apparatuses such as experts in the field of factory work. Along with the factory Foucault often uses the military apparatus as an example. When a detachment is in formation, the individual merges into the whole like a cog in a perfectly functioning machine.

As we can see, for example with *scientia sexualis*, the process of bio-political normalization is something quite different. The docile body ceases to be the main target of power. Instead bio-politics focuses "on the species body, the body imbued with the mechanics of life and serving as the basis of biological processes: propagation, births and mortality, the level of health, life expectancy and longevity[.]" (HSI, 139) When the bio-political mode of power is in operation, the normalization is not in any ways restricted to institutions such as the factory or the military barracks, but is practiced on the whole population. During a series of mutations and intensifications, the sovereign's power over life and death has "now carefully supplanted by the administration of bodies and the calculated management of life." (ibid, 139-140)

In my opinion, it is hardly a surprise that it was precisely the topic of sex that was among the first fields, along with demography, to encounter the

mechanisms of bio-politics, since it has everything to do with the management of life. In order to weed out sexual practices that do not have to do with reproduction and to embrace those that do, it is necessary to construct a scientific truth about sexuality.

I would argue that from a bio-political viewpoint the exclusion of non-productive sexual practices aims to foster the reproduction of the individuals for the needs of the society. As I have noted, Foucault places the birth of *scientia sexualis* to the 18th and 19th centuries, to the precise time when the demographic shifts in populations, as well as the implementation of new technologies of production in the wake of Industrious Revolution, demanded more efficient placing of workers in the productive machinery. The medical discourse, which produced the discourse of sexuality, was partly an effort to answer to the question of how to improve the health and longevity of population as a whole and the workers in particular. In an article titled "The Politics of Health in the Eighteenth Century", Foucault says:

"The great eighteenth-century demographic upswing in Western Europe, the necessity of co-ordinating and integrating it into the apparatus of production and the urgency of controlling it with finer and more adequate power mechanisms cause 'population', with its numerical variables of space and chronology, longevity and health, to emerge not only as a problem but as an object of surveillance, analysis, intervention, modification etc. The project of a technology of population begins to be sketched: demographic estimates, the calculations of pyramid of ages, different life expectations and levels of mortality, studies of the reciprocal relations of growth of wealth and growth of population, various measures of incitement to marriage and procreation, the development of forms of education and professional training. [...] The biological traits of a population become relevant factors for economic management, and it becomes necessary to organise around them an apparatus which will ensure not only their subjection but the constant increase of their utility. (P/K, 172.)

Thus in a bio-political society the normalization of the subjects is part of an intensification process, which increases the utility of the subjects and widens the scope of power. By making interventions in the biological life processes, it is not only possible to direct the actions of the subjects in relation to the norm,

but to define whole populations in terms of cost-efficient economic management.

So far I have introduced bio-politics as an essentially modern form of power with its wide-reaching scope and unique aims. I argued that the bio-political mode of power differs from sovereign and disciplinary power, but includes elements from both of them, and that the difference can clearly be seen in the difference between disciplinary 'normation' and bio-political 'normalization'. This division, although not used by Foucault in *Discipline and Punish* and *History of Sexuality: Volume One*, was introduced in order to contrast the differences between the disciplinary and bio-political modes of power. Next I will analyze in more detail the connection between bio-politics and the economy, which will bring me back to the previously introduced notions of cost and intensity.

Johanna Oksala claims that the bio-political mechanism is linked with a liberal notion of the economy. (Oksala 2012, 125) There is no sovereign body to guarantee the functioning of the society. Along with the intensification process, which has made power more wide-reaching and cost-efficient, the sovereign loses influence to experts who have to produce the truth of the "natural laws", which have to be respected or manipulated to ensure society's prosperity. But on the fundamental level, the liberal economy is based on the fact that there is no guarantee for what happens in the economy. This is in high contrast with the sovereign's knowledge, which is almost divine in its certainty. Referring to Adam Smith's famous concept, she argues that "the invisible hand is invisible precisely because there can be no totalizing sovereign view." (ibid)

This brings me back to the notion that economic aspects are closely linked to power's functionings. The liberalization of economy from the authority of the careless 'visible hand' of the sovereign has essentially let the exercise of power intensify. The Western societies have thus slowly, accompanied by numerous draws and setbacks, shifted from a recklessly extravagant, violent and authoritative form of sovereign power to the highly cost-efficient, life-preserving and calculative bio-political form of power, in which the governing of

the population is of key significance. One might argue that these developments are elements of progress and should be embraced. In Foucault's view, these kinds of arguments are, if not false, at least wrongly constituted.

"I adopt the methodological precaution and the radical but unaggressive scepticism which makes it a principle not to regard the point in time where we are now standing as the outcome of a teleological progression which it would be one's business to reconstruct historically: that scepticism regarding ourselves and what we are, our here and now, which prevents one from assuming that what we have is better than - or more than - in the past. [...] And I don't say that humanity doesn't progress. I say that it is a bad method to pose the problem as: 'How is it that we have progressed?' The problem is: how do things happen? And what happens now is not necessarily better or more advanced, or better understood, than what happened in the past." (P-K, 49-50.)

Foucault does not pose the question of power in terms of good and bad, but instead in terms of existence. In my opinion he is a typical Enlightenment thinker in the sense, that in order to even reach to the source of something called ethics, we must first thoroughly understand through what kinds of developments we have arrived to the present. This does not mean, however, that Foucault would have dismissed the obvious problems arising along with power's process of intensification. I would argue that for Foucault the individual misery caused by the exercise of power is anti-essential, an outcome rather than a determined essence of power. Quoting Marx with a free hand, Foucault argues that when faced with the problem of workers' misery, he:

"[R]efused the customary explanation which regarded this misery as the effect of a naturally rare cause of a concerted theft. And he said substantially: given what capitalist production is, [...] it cannot help but cause misery. Capitalism's *raison d'être* is not to starve the workers but it cannot develop without starving them." (PPC, 113)

Foucault approaches the dominating or violent effects of power in a similar manner. For him, demonizing power by considering it mainly in terms of its repressive function misses the point. As Foucault insists, when power functions, it is productive. However, as I have already shown, violence plays a role in all historical modes of power. The role is mirrored through the

hegemonic political rationalities. I will now proceed to analyze the relations among these rationalities, violence and the subject.

6 Violence and Political Rationalities

6.1 Foucault, Arendt, Žižek

Although Foucault uses the term 'violence' considerably often, especially in his early works such as *History of Madness* and *Discipline and Punish*, he never gave a crystal clear definition of it. Considering how strongly power is linked to violence for such classical theorists of power as Hobbes, who Foucault ends up opposing in many instances, it is quite puzzling why Foucault does not give violence the same kind of analytical treatment as he gives to other power related and historically important terms, such as 'the sovereign', 'the state' or 'war'. However, as I have already shown, Foucault does not leave the concept of violence completely without attention.

As mentioned in the opening chapter, violence, although arguably an important and widely used concept in modern political discourse, has been receiving quite little philosophical attention. Hannah Arendt's was one of the few 20th century philosophers who devoted a whole book to the topic. For her, violence is purely instrumental in its character, a tool for attaining certain political aims. Arendt maintains that power and violence are opposites; where one rules, the other is absent. She maintains that violence can destroy power, but is utterly unable to create it. Thus, as she insists, phenomenologically violence is close to strength. The implementations of violence are tools for "multiplying natural strength until, in the last stage of their development, they can substitute for it." (Arendt 1970, 56; 46-47.)

Johanna Oksala's recent book *Foucault, Politics, and Violence* is, as the title suggests, a study on the relations between politics and violence from the perspective of Foucault's thought. She argues that the justification of violence, which she vaguely defines as intentional bodily harm, is what is usually questioned, not the definition of violence itself. (Oksala 2012, 8-9) Violence is

taken as it is and considered to be beyond philosophical analysis. She takes as a starting point the Foucauldian notion that our reality is constructed through political struggle and is always contestable. Thus also the concept of violence, its rationality and necessity in the political sphere can be questioned. She does not share Arendt's universal and ahistorical definition of violence as a purely instrumental form of strength. Instead she claims that violence has a culturally and historically specific rationality, which has to be studied in order to be able to criticize practices of violence in certain power networks. (Oksala 2012, 8-9.)

Slavoj Žižek offers a slightly different kind of analysis in his 2008 work on violence. He situates violence in the framework of the capitalist economy. He takes a kind of neo-Marxist standpoint, claiming that what he calls 'objective violence' is a result of the historical developments of capitalism and, in fact, intrinsic in its operations. Žižek opposes objective violence to 'subjective violence', which is the form of violence that always has an agent in operation, a "monstrous" subject who engages in acts of violence. He claims that the attention directed towards rapes, assaults, murders and other acts of subjective violence in media and popular culture is producing a hypocritical and highly subject-based discourse on violence and, perhaps intentionally, hiding the real "monster". (Žižek 2009, 10) According to Žižek, in order to figure out how violence is working and what kind of misery it produces, we would have to focus our attention to the "self-propelling metaphysical dance of capital" wherein "resides the fundamental systemic violence of capitalism, much more uncanny than any direct pre-capitalist socio-ideological violence, but is purely 'objective', systemic, anonymous." (ibid, 11)

With his idea of power as an intrinsic element of all social relations, Foucault stands in a strikingly different position from that of Arendt. On the other hand Foucault's high reservations towards ideology as an explaining factor do not lend support to Žižek's claim that capitalist *ideology* in itself produces violence by its pure functioning.¹⁰ Oksala, who disagrees with Arendt's idea of the

¹⁰ In a 1976 interview Foucault gives three reasons for why the notion of ideology appears to him difficult to make use of: "The first is that, like it or not, it always stands in virtual opposition to something else that

instrumental nature of violence and adapts a considerably narrower definition of violence than Žižek, bases her reflections mostly on Foucault's late works, especially the Collège de France lecture series. In my opinion, the lecture series present only a small, although significant, portion of the sources available on the topic of violence. In order to contrast and highlight certain aspects in Foucault's conception of violence, I will in the next chapter use the thought of Arendt, Žižek and Oksala as analytical reference points.

6.2 Violence, Politics and The Subject

The role of subject in Foucault's thought is arguably very central. Foucault says it very clearly in the first chapters in his 1982 article "The Subject and Power":

"I would like to say, first of all, what has been the goal of my work during the last twenty years. It has not been to analyze the phenomena of power, nor to elaborate the foundations of such an analysis. My objective, instead, has been to create a history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects." (EW3, 326)

Foucault then makes the famous tripartite analysis of his work. In the first part of his work (*The Order of Things, The Archaeology of Knowledge*) he dealt with the objectivizing operations of sciences, such as linguistics, economics or biology. The second part (*The Birth of the Clinic, Discipline and Punish, The History of Sexuality: Volume One*) consists of studying the objectivizing of the subject through dividing practices, such as defining the sick and healthy or the "criminals and the 'good boys'" (EW, 326).

is supposed to count as truth. [...] The second drawback is the concept of ideology refers, I think necessarily, to something of the order of a subject. Thirdly, ideology stands in a secondary position relative to something that functions as its infrastructure, as its material, economic determinant, and so on. (EW3, 119.)

In the third part (the last two volumes of *The History of Sexuality*) Foucault, through the example of sexuality, tries to figure out the way “a human being turns him- or herself into a subject. [...] [H]ow men have learned to recognize themselves as subjects of ‘sexuality.’” (ibid, 327.) Johanna Oksala argues, following Foucault, that “[a]ll identities and subject positions are constituted through practices of power and knowledge. Rather than existing between subjects with predetermined identities, power relations are constitutive of the subjects themselves.” (Oksala 2012, 74.) The question is, then: what, if anything, is violent in this process? Perhaps an answer could be found in examining Foucault’s analogy of *the machine*.

Foucault uses the analogy of the machine in several occasions to describe the ideal functioning of the disciplinary system. In *Discipline and Punish* he says:

“The power in the hierarchized surveillance of the disciplines is not possessed as a thing, or transferred as a property; it functions like a piece of machinery. [...] Thanks to the techniques of surveillance, the ‘physics’ of power, the hold over body, operate according to laws of optics and mechanics, according to a whole play of spaces, lines, screens, beams, degrees and without recourse, in principle at least, to excess, force or violence.” (DP, 177.)

Gilles Deleuze argues that the machine is not just a metaphor or an analogy for Foucault. He says: “Machines are social before being technical. Or, rather, there is a human technology which exists before material technology.” (Deleuze 2010, 34.) What Deleuze says, basically, is that material technology is produced for a certain social purpose and, in fact, designed and manufactured in a particular social process. Foucault refers to this in a passage in *Discipline and Punish*:

“Compared with [...] the blast furnaces or the steam engine, panopticism has received little attention. [...] But it would be unjust to compare the disciplinary techniques with such inventions as the steam engine[.] They are much less; and yet, in a way, they are much more.” (DP, 225)

The relation between technologies of power and the subject is an interesting one. From the point of view of the subject, the formation and application of new technologies functions in a similar manner as the formation and application of expert knowledge. They both define the subject without letting the subject influence these definitions.

Charlie Chaplin's 1936 silent film *Modern Times* depicts the struggle of an individual in an utterly disciplinary society. The movie has a scene, where, quite literally, the clumsy main character gets swallowed by colossal machinery. Curiously, although obviously in agony, the character is trying to perform his duty as an employee, screwing the nuts of the machinery while being twisted by the giant cogwheels. Miraculously he gets rescued from the guts of the machine, but, as a result, suffers a nervous breakdown and is hospitalized.¹¹ Could it be that Foucault perceives subjects of power as cogs in a colossal machine? As long as the subjects co-operate, no violence is needed. But if they refuse to function according to the norm, they will pay the price of being "swallowed by the machine", labeled an outcast or locked up in an institution; and the machinery continues to work mercilessly in its quest for more cost-efficient ways of exercising power. This interpretation comes very close to what Žižek means by 'objective violence'. There are no faces to be recognized behind the operations of the violent machine, because it is the stone cold rationality of extracting more profit that upholds the system and produces death and agony.¹² Although, according to Flynn, "Foucault's account holds quite well for 'structural' violence," (Flynn 2005, 258) which is roughly what Žižek means with his notion of objective violence, this comparison is perhaps too hasty. In order to better account for the violent side of power relations, a closer look at its rationality has to be taken.

¹¹ Interestingly, according to Eric Flom, the movie was inspired by Chaplin's concerns about the economic chaos of the 1930s as well as a conversation with Mahatma Gandhi, who condemned "machinery with only consideration of profit." (Flom 1997, 80)

¹² Žižek ironically points out that the 'faces' of capitalism never show the grim side of its actions: "The same philanthropists who give millions for AIDS or education in tolerance have ruined the lives of thousands through financial speculation and thus created the conditions for the rise of the very intolerance that is being fought." (Žižek 2008, 31.)

According to Flynn, Foucault was persistent in uncovering the “immanent logic” or “rationality” of dominating, destructive practices “while calling for the names of those responsible for fostering such practices and urging us to resist” (Flynn 2005, 245.) As Foucault says in “What is Critique?”:

”The identification of the acceptability of a system cannot be dissociated from identifying what made it difficult to accept: its arbitrary nature in terms of knowledge, its violence in terms of power, in short, its energy. Hence it is necessary to take responsibility for this structure in order to better account for its artifices.” (PT, 62)

Foucault seems to argue that since power is everywhere and it is practiced on every one of us, as long as we conduct accordingly or co-operate, we are all responsible for societal structures that foster destructive practices of violence. The first step would be to uncover the political rationalities through which these practices are implemented; the second would be to refuse to co-operate, to resist. I will elaborate on this point in more detail in the next chapter.

Violence functions in power relations. According to Flynn it is “with that species of power which Foucault calls “domination” and which we might label “negative” power that violence seems necessarily associated.” (Flynn 2005, 245) As Western societies have evolved from the highly dominating and excessively violent sovereign power to a machine-like disciplinary power and further towards the normalizing mode of power called bio-politics, practices of violence have changed as well.

The historical evolution of machines roughly depicts the change in the violent practices of domination. The machines of ancient regimes were in the hands of a few, they were crude in design and used an excessive amount of energy in proportion to their output. With the invention of the steam and combustion engines, the use of machines spread to new fields, becoming more complicated and able to perform vast tasks with less energy. Modern machines are everywhere, requiring little energy and being able to perform very complicated tasks with an astonishing accuracy. I suggest that the use of violence has gone through a similar kind of development. In the sovereign

power, excessive amounts of violence are used towards a few hapless individuals in such instances as the public executions. In the disciplinary mode of power, practices of violence become less severe but wider in their reach, such as slapping disobedient pupils or imposing electric shocks on mental patients. Along with bio-politics physical violence has become too costly to be exercised on subjects directly. Although, as mentioned previously, it is difficult to locate the role violence plays in bio-politics, perhaps the normalization of subjects can have violent outcomes. One example of this could be the recent attempts to reduce the risk of recidivism of pedophiles by offering them a possibility to have their reproductive capabilities destroyed through chemical castration.

Already since the 1970s, along with the neoliberal as well as the anarchist movements, the status and rationality of the welfare state has been challenged. Foucault wrote in 1979:

"[W]hat is currently challenged, and from a great many perspectives, is almost always the state: the unlimited growth of the state, its omnipotence, its bureaucratic development, the state with the seeds of fascism it contains, the state's inherent violence beneath its social welfare paternalism[.]" (BB, 187.)

In her work, Johanna Oksala analyzes Foucault's account of neoliberal political rationality. She points out that while this critique aims at the "inherent violence" of the state adopting neoliberal policies, it does not automatically lead to the reduction of state violence. (Oksala 2012, 137.) She says that the strong point in Foucault's analysis of neoliberalism in *Birth of Biopolitics* is that it clearly shows how it is not the reduction of the state that neoliberal policies are aiming at, but a certain way of governing. (ibid, 138.)

"The government should not interfere with the effects of the market, nor should it correct its destructive consequences for society retroactively. It has to intervene in the very being of society in order to make competition the dominant principle for guiding human behavior. It has to construct legal, institutional, and cultural conditions that give competition between enterprises and entrepreneurial conduct maximal range. It also has to maintain these conditions through effective policing." (Oksala, 141.)

The political rationality of neoliberalism forces the players to stay in the economic game and to accept competition as their guiding principle. "For the economic rationality of market mechanisms to extend maximally throughout society, the possibilities for engaging in practices with alternative, non-economic rationalities must be restricted, by violent means if necessary." (Oksala 2012, 141.)

Neoliberalism attacks what it deems irrational or acting against its political rationality. What is labeled as a freedom fight against "the state's inherent violence beneath its social welfare paternalism" is in fact a mechanism to impose the principles of competition and cost-benefit calculations on everyone, not just within the nation state, but along with the processes of globalization all around the globe. Foucault did not live to witness this triumph of neoliberal policies. But as Oksala says: "Almost thirty years after its expanding application, Foucault's topic and his insights appear farsighted, almost prophetic." (Oksala 2012, 137) Oksala does groundbreaking work in analyzing the role of violence in modern societies. Considering the huge role of neoliberal policies in contemporary political reality, more analysis on the connection between neoliberal political rationality and violence is certainly needed.

This brief detour on neoliberal policies brings me back to the trembling voice of the Soviet dissident. He said: "For all the claim that our social and economic organization lacked rationality, we found ourselves facing I don't know if it's too much or too little reason, but in any case surely facing too much power." (PT, 54.) Although Foucault's conception of violence does not have a clear continuum and he uses the concept in very ambiguous ways indeed, I have argued that it is useful to approach the Foucauldian history of violence in the Western societies through the history of its economic rationality. Although it is clear that this approach leaves open many questions concerning the different cultural and political meanings of violence, it can, in my opinion shed light on certain aspects of it. As I have shown, when power intensifies, the costs of its exercise reduce and the scope of its reach widens. In the process, the

politically and economically costly practices of direct, physical violence reduces and becomes reserved to specific areas. At the same time, the subject has been interwoven as a part of an extremely complicated power network. In contemporary Western societies, the subject seldom has to face the "negative" side of power, its "ugly face", if the subject takes care of her productive activities and situates herself inside the constantly mutating field of normality.

6.3 Resistance

Frantz Fanon, an Algerian psychoanalyst and a fierce critic of colonial practices, wrote in 1963:

"Violence alone, violence committed by the people, violence organized and educated by its leaders, makes it possible for the masses to understand social truths and gives the key to them. Without that struggle, without that knowledge of the practice of action, there's nothing but a fancy-dress parade and the blare of the trumpets. There's nothing save a minimum of readaptation, a few reforms at the top, a flag waving: and down there at the bottom an undivided mass, still living in the Middle Ages, endlessly marking time." (Fanon 2001, 118.)

Fanon repeats the message of the Algerian revolutionary group *Front de Libération Nationale*, asserting that "colonialism loosens its hold when the knife is at its throat." (Fanon 2001, 48.) He firmly believed that there was no rationality behind colonialism, it is "not a thinking machine", but instead "violence in its natural state, and it will only yield when confronted with greater violence." (ibid) Thus, for Fanon, the struggle to free the Algerian people from the grip of the "negative" dominating power of the colonial machine had to happen by imposing well-planned violent strategies upon the ones responsible for fostering and upholding colonial practices. In short, for Fanon, colonialism was violent machinery that had to be destroyed once and for all.

For Foucault resistance must take quite a different form. Without understanding that every kind of power relation has a rationality behind it, one

can never get rid of the domination caused by it. In a 1978 interview Foucault remarks:

“I don’t believe that this question of “who exercises the power?” can be resolved unless the other question [sic] “how does it happen?” is resolved at the same time. Of course we have to show who those in charge are, we know that we have to turn, let us say, to deputies, ministers, principal private secretaries, etc., etc. But this is not the important issue, for we know perfectly well that even if we reach the point of designating exactly all those people, all those “decision-makers,” we will still not really know why and how the decision was made, how it came to be accepted by everybody, and how it is that it hurts a particular category of person[.]” (PPC, 103-104.)

Trying to seek answers to the question ‘how’ in relation to the question of power is, for Foucault, what philosophy is essentially about. He himself never wanted to take the mantle of what Lenin would have called *revolutionary intelligentsia*, who would first locate the violence and excesses of power and then, with fierce conviction, lead the revolution to overthrow the regime. Foucault did not see intellectual as any kind of prophet or a paragon of virtues.

“I dream of the intellectual who destroys evidence and generalities, the one who, in the inertias and constraints of the present time, locates and marks the weak points, the openings, the lines of force, who is incessantly on the move, doesn’t know exactly where he is heading nor what will he will think tomorrow for he is too attentive to the present; who wherever he moves, contributes to posing the question of knowing whether the revolution is worth the trouble, and what kind (I mean what revolution and what trouble), it being understood that the question can be answered only by those who are willing to risk their lives to bring it about.” (PPC, 124.)

The fact that Foucault says: “the question [of revolution] can be answered only by those who are willing to risk their lives to bring it about,” indicates that he understood that resisting a violent regime can possibly be a deadly affair. This would indicate that resistance eventually boils down to the subjects, who, in the light shed by philosophy, have to make the choice whether or not “the revolution is worth the trouble”.

Foucauldian philosophy encourages us all to find out whether we are ready to pay the price of “speaking the truth” about ourselves and others and our place in the networks of power. Foucault says:

At what price can subjects speak the truth about themselves? At what price can subjects speak the truth about themselves as mad persons? At the price of constituting the mad person as absolutely other, paying not only the theoretical price but also an institutional and even an economic price[.] An ensemble of complex, staggered elements where you find that institutional game-playing, class relations, professional conflicts, modalities of knowledge and, finally, a whole history of the subject and of reason are involved.” (EW2, 444.)

Although this kind of revolutionary talk might sound like distant echoes from the 60s, I would argue that the question is indeed essential to anyone who, also in contemporary Western societies, is willing to challenge the normative rules of the society. The question of the price of “speaking the truth about themselves” presents itself very vividly to those individuals who are, for example, taking part in civil disobedience or activities that run on the borderline of criminality, such as squatting houses or refusing the military service.

As Oksala argues: “Foucault drew a distinction between power and violence, but argued that the rationalities upholding practices of domination were often compatible with practices of violence.” (Oksala 2012, 12) Answering violence with violence, as Fanon suggested, would merely mean accepting its rationality and trying to develop the practices of revolutionary violence, the “good” violence, to such intensity that the regime would have no other choice but to surrender. Now I come back, once again, to the Soviet dissident veteran and his poetic question: “Was it all that violence against our enemies that killed our revolution?” I would answer to this question in rather Foucauldian terms: “Yes, violence perhaps helped you to overthrow the tsarist regime. But since you never questioned the rationalities upholding the dominating practices and in fact embraced many of them, you never managed to cut the head of the king. And that, dear comrade, killed your revolution.

7 Conclusions

In this thesis I have introduced and analyzed Foucault's conceptions of power and violence. By conceptual analysis, I tried to gain an understanding of the different political rationalities and their relation to power and violence. First, I analyzed power through the concept of force and defined power as a set of actions on possible actions, as a relation, which directs the forces, or acting capacities, of subjects. I then showed how, by approaching power through the concepts of cost and intensity, we can discover the economic aspect of power relations. I argued that power produces, or that it is productive in itself, and opposed it to violence, which is unproductive, or destructive.

Continuing to approach power through the concept of cost, I applied the concept to analyze how, by depending on Foucault's historical analysis, it is possible to argue that violence has a certain political and economic cost, which is defined through the political rationality in question. Following Jeffrey Nealon's analysis, I argued that power has had the tendency to intensify, to become more wide-reaching and effective. In order to clarify how the concept of cost and the process of intensifying are connected to the historical changes in the use of violence, I introduced Foucault's account of four historical modes of governing: sovereign power, disciplinary power, pastoral power and bio-politics. To sum these developments up, I used the analogy of the development of machines, from being crude in design and in the hands of a few to being extremely sophisticated and practically everywhere. I argued that in a similar manner the use of violence has developed from being excessive and brutal (the sovereigns "Right of Death") to normative and life-preserving (the bio-political "Power over Life").

The relation between power and violence in Foucault's thought is certainly an ambiguous one. As Thomas Flynn says: "If all violence attaches to relation of power, not all relations of power necessarily entail violence." (Flynn 2005,

244.) In this thesis I have tried to clarify these relations by approaching them through Foucault's account of historical developments of different political rationalities. Nevertheless, my analysis leaves many questions open. When exactly does a power relation turn to violence? What kinds of acts of violence can be understood as state-sponsored and state-sanctioned institutional forms of violence" (Hanssen 2000, 10)? What is the role of agency in all of this? Considering the importance of violence in modern societies, more philosophical research on the topic is needed.

Perhaps Foucault's dark joke is indeed to be taken seriously, and the decisive test for the philosophers of the modern era is our aptitude to make sense of massacres. As we have entered the 21st century, which some thinkers call postmodern, the grim shadow of the century of totalitarian regimes is fading. Instead, the triumph of neoliberal policies, for which Foucault did not live to witness, opens a new field of investigation. In order to understand the phenomena of violence in our contemporary societies, the studies on the thought of Foucault will be more important than ever.

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