

MICHEL FOUCAULT



Michel Foucault and the Concept of Power

“Power Corrupts; absolute power corrupts absolutely.”

Lord Acton

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For decades, a *vespasienne* stood at the corner of the Rue Saint-Dominique and the Boulevard Saint-Germain, in Paris. I worked and live less than 50 meters away at 227 Boulevard Saint-Germain from 1968 until 1974. Quite often I would drive my Fiat500 to see my patients at the American Hospital after my last patient had left and came back at dusk –or later. The *pissoir* was attracting many gay men, and I remember seeing Michel Foucault cruising, then prowling on a young partner (he was also a *soupeur*). You could not miss him with his shining scalp, always wearing a turtleneck jumper, and he was a celebrity as Professor at the Collège de France, the most prestigious institution of higher education. We did not communicate then.



Then, from 1980 to 1983, I missed him again in San Francisco where he was a very active pillar of the gay bathhouses; he attracted crowds of devotees to his lectures at the University of California Berkeley –but I was working at Stanford. I learned, when he died of complications of AIDS in 1984, that he had been infected during his sado-masochist sessions in the Castro district (and elsewhere).

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His formative years at the Lycée Henri IV in 1945-1946 were critical; there, again, I could have met him when I joined Henri IV in 1946. Or at the seminars of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, at the Collège de France, that we both attended with attention and passion.

In retrospect, much of my life is populated by missed close encounters. Or just fugitive ones.

But later, I was impressed by his counterpoint to *The Praise of Folly* of Erasmus of Rotterdam, *Madness and Insanity: History of Madness in the Classical Age* (1960) – although these 943 pages of text were heavy on the mind and on the arms. It comforted my contempt for the official line of mainstream psychiatry, at the time.

Then his *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception* (1963) was published as a sequel to *Madness and Insanity*, while I was completing my medical thesis, getting ready for my independent life as a physician. These two volumes required weeks of attentive reading –and rereading, but I still remember whole chapters.

His attraction to **Power** was inlaid in Foucault's primal cogitations –and phantasms. *Discipline and Punish* (1970-1975) and his *History of Sexuality* (1975 -1979) illustrated his exploration of the '**repressive hypothesis**', and could well be his most contemporary reference books. Hence his (not so) sudden resurgence to the forefront of the philosophical discourse. His long exploration of transgression, of going beyond social limits, always inseparably linked to knowledge and power, is today even more important.

Foucault himself explained that *'his work was less about analyzing power as a phenomenon than about trying to characterize the different ways in which contemporary society has expressed the use of power to "objectivize subjects." These have taken three broad forms: one involving scientific authority to classify and 'order' knowledge about human populations. A second, and related form, has been to categorize and 'normalize' human subjects (by identifying madness, illness, physical features, and so on). The third relates to the manner in which the impulse to fashion sexual identities and train one's own body to engage in routines and practices ends up reproducing certain patterns within a given society.'*

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My interest in the (ab)use of power, independently of the recent US elections results, was already in alert: the number of autocrats that run countries with widely popular support, and reject basic social justice, healthcare and women's reproductive ones, bring the planet closer to a nuclear apocalypse, ruin nature and resources by scorning the evidence of climate change, devote more billions to the sterile military, all these narcissist, egocentric –and ignorant- figures increase in number, bask in power poorly challenged, and often adulated by the mentally imbeciles. This is the permanent show displayed on TV channels, radio and front page of a press that relies on the power's money.

That's not all: prisons are filling up; torture and killings are being normalized; sexual repression is reemerging fast; support for the victims of man-made disaster, or civil wars dwindles; judges are being selected for their obedience to the autocracy: Michel Foucault analyzed all just what seems *yesterday*. He did not precisely write about the resurrection of Joseph Goebbels' dialectic and omnipresent brain-washing propaganda; if he were still with us he would be screaming!

Then on March 15, 2017 –a few days ago, a remarkable short article was published in *Aeon* (www.aeon.co), and reprinted in *the Atlantic*; its author is Colin Koopman, PhD, from the Department of Philosophy at the University of Oregon (and formerly at the University of California Santa Cruz). It is referenced, and I urge you to read it. I shall excerpt several paragraphs –with some editing; they will serve brilliantly as an introduction to other materials, opinions and concepts.



The Power Thinker

The single word that best captures Michel Foucault's ideas is certainly *power*. His two most referenced works, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1975) and *The History of Sexuality, Volume One* (1976), are the central sources for his analyses of power. Rather than staying in the world of words (like most of his contemporaries e.g. Jacques Derrida, Jacques Lacan, Richard Rorty, Jürgen Habermas), in the 1970s he shifted his philosophical attention to **power**, an idea that promises to help explain how words, or anything else for that matter, come to give things the order that they have. But Foucault's lasting importance is not in his having found some new master-concept that can explain all the others. Power, in Foucault, is not another philosophical godhead. For Foucault's most crucial claim about power is that we must refuse to treat it as philosophers have always treated their central concepts, namely as a unitary and homogenous thing that is so at home with itself that it can explain everything else. He did not himself offer a philosophy of power. How could this be possible?

Foucault never denied the reality of state power in the Hobbesian sense. But his political philosophy emanates from his skepticism about the assumption (and it was a mere assumption until Foucault called it into question) that the only real power is sovereign power. Foucault accepted that there were real forces of violence in the world, and not only state violence. There is also corporate violence due to enormous condensations of capital, gender violence in the form of patriarchy, and the violences both overt and subtle of white supremacy in such forms as chattel slavery, real-estate redlining, and now mass incarceration. Foucault's work affirmed that such exercises of force were exhibits of sovereign power, likenesses of Leviathan. What he doubted was the assumption that we could extrapolate from this easy observation the more complex thought that power only ever appears in Leviathan-like form. *Power is even more cunning because its basic forms can change in response to our efforts to free ourselves from its grip.*

In seeing through the imaginary singularity of power, Foucault could also envision it set against itself. He could hypothesize, and therefore study, the possibility that power does not always assume just one form and that, in virtue of this, a given form of power can coexist alongside, or even come into conflict with, other forms of power.

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Such coexistences and conflicts, of course, are not mere speculative conundrums, but are the sort of stuff that one would need to empirically analyze in order to understand.

Foucault wrote about the way in which a classically sovereign space such as the judicial court came to accept into its proceedings the testimony of medical and psychiatric experts whose authority and power were exercised without recourse to sovereign violence. An expert diagnosis of *'insanity'* today or *'perversity'* 100 years ago could come to mitigate or augment a judicial decision.

Foucault showed how the sovereign power of Leviathan (think crowns, congresses and capital) has over the past 200 years come to confront two new forms of power: disciplinary power (which he also called anatomo-politics because of its detailed attention to training the human body) and bio-politics. Bio-power was Foucault's subject in *The History of Sexuality, Volume One*. Meanwhile the power of discipline, the anatomo-politics of the body, was Foucault's focus in *Discipline and Punish*. More than any other book, it is *Discipline and Punish* in which Foucault constructs his signature, meticulous style of enquiry into the actual mechanisms of power. Discipline, according to Foucault's historical and philosophical analyses, is a form of power that tells people how to act by coaxing them to adjust themselves to what is *'normal'*. It is power in the form of correct training. Discipline does not strike down the subject at whom it is directed, in the way that sovereignty does. Discipline works more subtly, with an exquisite care even, to produce obedient people.

Foucault famously called the obedient and normal products of discipline *'docile subjects'*. The exemplary manifestation of disciplinary power is the prison. For Foucault, the important thing about this institution, the most ubiquitous site of punishment in the modern world (but practically non-existent as a form of punishment before the 18th century), is not the way in which it locks up the criminal by force. This is the sovereign element that persists in modern prisons and is fundamentally no different from the most archaic forms of sovereign power that exert violent force over the criminal, the exile, the slave and the captive. Foucault looked beyond this most obvious element to see more deeply into the elaborate institution of the prison. Why had the relatively inexpensive techniques of torture and death gradually given way over the course of modernity to the costly complex of the prison? Was it just, as we are wont to believe, because we all started to become



more humanitarian in the 18th century? Foucault thought that such an explanation would be sure to miss the fundamental way in which power changes when spectacles of torture give way to labyrinthine prisons. The purpose of constant surveillance is to compel prisoners to regard themselves as subject to correction. Importantly, all the elements of prison surveillance are continuously made visible. That is why his book's French title *Surveiller et punir*, literally 'Surveil and Punish', is important. Prisoners must be made to know that they are subject to continual oversight. The purpose of constant surveillance is not to scare prisoners who are thinking of escaping, but rather to compel them to regard themselves as subject to correction. From the moment of morning rise to night's lights out, the prisoners are subject to ceaseless behavioral inspection.

The crucial move of imprisonment is that of coaxing prisoners to learn how to inspect, manage and correct themselves. If effectively designed, supervision renders prisoners no longer in need of their supervisors. For they will have become their own attendant. This is *docility*.

One need not be locked away in a prison cell to be subject to its designs of disciplinary dressage. The most chilling line in *Discipline and Punish* is the final sentence of the section entitled '*Panopticism*' (from Jeremy Bentham's infamous *Panopticon*), where Foucault wryly asks: '*Is it surprising that prisons resemble factories, **schools**, barracks, **hospitals**, which all resemble prisons?*' If Foucault is right, we are subject to the power of correct training whenever we are tied to our school desks, our positions on the assembly line or, perhaps most of all in our time, our meticulously curated cubicles and open-plan offices so popular as working spaces today. Classically, power took the form of force or coercion and was at its purest in acts of physical violence. Discipline acts otherwise. It gets a hold of us differently. It does not seize our bodies to destroy them, as Leviathan always threatened to do. Discipline rather trains them, drills them and (to use Foucault's favored word) '*normalizes*' them. All this amounts to, Foucault saw, a distinctly subtle and relentless form of power. To refuse to recognize such disciplining as a form of power is a denial of how human life has come to be shaped and lived. If the only form of power we are willing to recognize is sovereign violence, we are in a poor position to understand the stakes of power today. If we are unable to see power in its other forms, we become impotent to resist all the other ways in which power brings itself to bear in forming us.

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Disciplinary anatomo-politics persists alongside sovereign power as well as the power of bio-politics. In his book, *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault argued that bio-politics helps us to understand how garish sexual exuberance persists in a culture that regularly tells itself that its true sexuality is being repressed. Bio-power does not forbid sexuality, but rather regulates it in the maximal interests of very particular conceptions of reproduction, family and health. It was a Bio-power wielded by psychiatrists and doctors that, in the 19th century, turned homosexuality into a '*perversion*' because of its failure to focus sexual activity around the '*healthy*' reproductive family. It would have been unlikely, if not impossible, to achieve this by sovereign acts of direct physical coercion. Much more effective were the armies of medical men who helped to straighten out their patients for their own supposed self-interest.

He is the first thinker of immobilization. As soon as the Berlin wall came down - in the former Soviet bloc republics, but also in Latin American countries where the Marxist reference was prevalent e.g. in Argentina, Brazil or Chile- his books, but also his lectures and teachings spread like fire.

Other forms of power also persist in our midst. Some regard the power of data – that is the info-power of social media, data analytics and ceaseless algorithmic assessment – as the most significant kind of power that has emerged since Foucault's death in 1984.

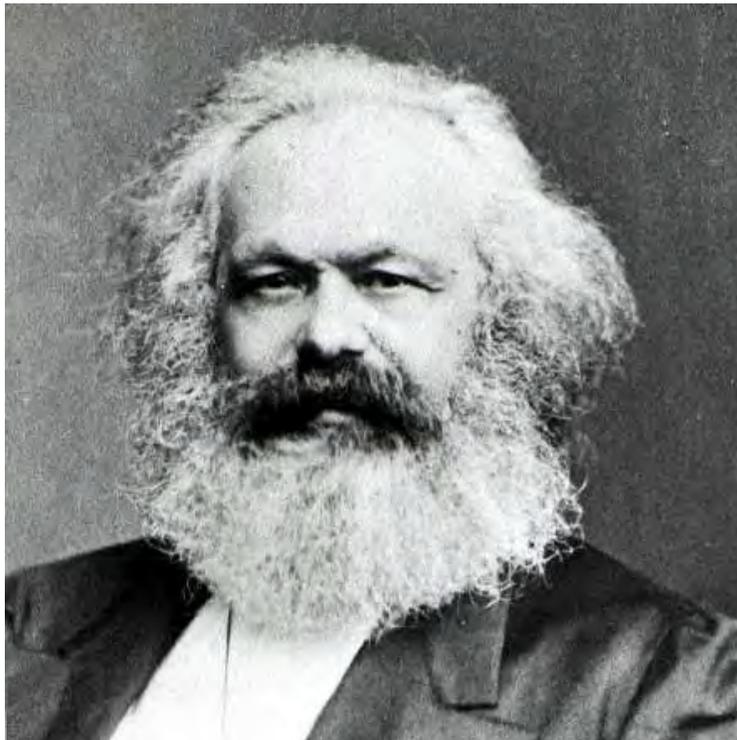
Foucault's signature word – '*power*' – is not the name of an essence that he has distilled but is rather an index to an entire field of analysis in which the work of philosophy must continually toil.



Foucault, Karl Marx and Others

Power relationships are the foundation of culture and society. For centuries, philosophers, cultural scholars, social scientists, political theorists, and others have been trying to capture the nature, function, and mechanisms of power that structure the dynamics of social life.

Karl Marx, whose historical materialism launched an attack on German idealism, attempted to bring *power* out of the sphere of ideas to address its relation to the material underpinnings of everyday life. Power, for Marx, was not a religious / philosophical / political dogma, but a resource. And as a resource, power is always in limited supply. It is therefore concentrated among certain actors and groups – namely, the ruling class and the State – who wield it over an unsuspecting proletariat population.



Its instrumentation is always captured by economic processes, and the logic of its distribution is the accumulation of capital. Although the origins of power are

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material, its effects are less so, since power -conceived as the control of economic processes translates into the control over ideas. Ideas feed back into material reality, where they are implemented in everyday life as ideologies that lure the working class into a false consciousness, thereby ensuring their subordination. Power, for Marx, is negative, insofar as its effects are repressive e.g. the loss of freedom. Power obscures “*truth*.” A counter-attack by the working-class subject, which would reveal the “*truth*” that power hides from view, is only possible once the scales have been lifted from his eyes.

For **Foucault**, *power* is not a resource, but a relation. It is never “*held*” nor “*owned*” but is strategically exercised. Furthermore, the logic of its distribution does not always imply the accumulation of capital. Although like capital, power is distributed unevenly, it exists and is exercised throughout the social body. And wherever there is power there is always counter-power. Perhaps most importantly for Foucault, power has *positive* effects. It is not repressive, but incredibly productive. Its instrumentation, moreover, is highly specific, and cannot be captured by economic processes alone. While Marx refers to economic processes in capitalism as the sole technology of power, Foucault identifies at least two political technologies of power, which he refers to as disciplinary power and bio-power.

In analyzing *disciplinary power*, Foucault saw a kindred spirit in Marx. He draws heavily upon Marx’s discussion from *Capital* concerning the disciplinary practices necessary for the development of the productive factory worker. In this context, Foucault recognizes a Marx who acknowledged the infiltration of power outside the specific domain of the State, which could be exercised within and across differing institutions where, importantly, it lays hold on the body.

Moreover, Foucault articulates that the rise of disciplinary power as a central feature of modern society went hand in hand with the development of the capitalist mode of production, which was a necessary condition for the management of a rapidly growing population – and thus, a bigger labor force – in a burgeoning factory system. To manage its workers properly, the space of the factory had to be organized in such a way that guaranteed the docility and utility of its workers: “*The growth of a capitalist economy gave rise to the specific modality of disciplinary power, whose general formulas, techniques of submitting forces and bodies, in short, ‘political anatomy,’ could be operated in the most diverse political regimes, apparatuses or*



institutions". This is to say, the productivity of disciplinary power – which produces docile bodies – is intimately related to the need for controlling human subjects under capitalism, by regulating the movements of their bodies in time and space. With that said, however, Foucault is also quick to point out that understanding the material bases of disciplinary power is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for analyzing power. While examining the relations of production in capitalism might tell us **why** disciplinary power operates, it does not tell us **how**.

The *why* of Marx and the *how* of Foucault point to another significant difference in approach each takes to understanding power. We might characterize this difference as the relative uniformity of the former and specificity of the latter. Foucault saw it this way, when he addressed Marx in his "Two Lectures" by asking, "*Is power always in a subordinate position relative to the economy? Is it always in the service of, and ultimately answerable to, the economy? ...Or, on the contrary, do we need to employ various tools in its analysis...*"

What Foucault's question points to is the basis for his analysis of power as **micro-politics**. Foucault recognized that by remaining fixed on the economic landscape of power, Marx risked overlooking its specificities. Foucault wants to emphasize that an analysis of power must attend to details, an idea which is conveyed in his use of the term "*micro-politics*." Micro-politics implies an analysis of power that works from "*the bottom up*." Such an analysis must then begin by examining its most minute mechanisms and intricate procedures and the ways in which these operate directly on individual bodies. Micro-politics, for Foucault, is power working at a level of extraordinary detail; it is "*the conduct of conduct*".

In Marxist thought, the material basis of ideas provides an answer to the question of where consciousness -and culture- comes from. Since material life determines, or at least 'conditions' social life, the primary direction of social explanation is always from material production to social forms, and thence to forms of consciousness. Put another way, ideas become ideology once they are integrated into our everyday activity, where they become normalized and naturalized (and thus invisible). Ideas become ideology becomes culture. According to Marx, it is the ruling class which has the power to disseminate its ideology to the working-class proletariat; thus, it is also the ruling class which has the power to shape consciousness and society as a whole. As Marx famously put it, the ruling ideas are those of the ruling class. If you want to



change culture, you must first dismantle the social and material base that conditions it since, after all, “*The ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relationships...*”.

Knowledge, then, is understood by Marx as a resource used in the services of power, which is shaped by the political and professional interests of those who control the economic means of production.

Naturally, the maintenance of this system of production – the different roles human beings play within it, the hierarchical class relations it reproduces – is the most fundamental interest of the ruling class. This being the case, knowledge serves a social function of legitimation. It functions to mask the manipulation of human beings to ensure the stability of the social order and the accumulation of private profit for the upper class. As Marx understands it, the relationship ideas (or knowledge) have with power hinges on a false promise, which is the basis of his ideology critique. Power manipulates human beings, masks reality, and therefore compromises knowledge’s claim to truth.

Marx’s conception of ideology thus reduces the relationship of power and knowledge to a question of class power and class interests, and situates it in a binary of truth/falsity. But is it possible to think about knowledge as something other than “*true*” or “*false*”? Foucault certainly thought so, and we can turn to his writing about the co-constitutive relationship of power and knowledge as a way of moving out of this binary, toward a theory of power that is generative, that makes things thinkable and do-able.

In **Foucault**, *power/knowledge* refers to the co-constitutive capacities of knowledge and power to produce apparatuses of control, regulation, and production. Knowledge, then, is not simply descriptive; it is productive. What it produces, among other things, are normative categories (i.e., sick/healthy), prescriptions for proper conduct, and relations of power (i.e., patient/doctor). Power and knowledge come together in Foucault’s notion of discourse. Discourse, as something immaterial, appears initially as anti-Marxist. And, in a sense it is, since it does not necessarily revolve around empirical reality. The use Foucault puts to discourse, however, is primarily to reveal the materiality of power relations within discrete sites – the prison, the hospital, the mental institution, and so on, which is to say, it has a materiality. Discourses, like science, medicine, or psychology, assert their monopoly



over truth claims, which also gives them power to determine the face of “*reality*” at a given moment. This is not incompatible with a Marxist conceptualization of ideology, except that it does not necessarily refer to a prevailing mode of economic production. In Foucault, power/knowledge and the way they come together in discourse, are not repressive (as is power in Marx) but extraordinarily productive., Power is that which makes things do-able and thinkable. Even more, power is that which “*makes*” individuals.

Maybe the most certain of all philosophical problems is the problem of the present time, and of what we are, in this very moment.

Michel Foucault, “The Subject and Power”

In Marx, the formation of subjects is always tied to the development of a capitalist system, and cannot be extracted from the relations of production that structure individuals’ experience of the world. In *Gundrisse*, Marx uses the term “*fixed capital*” – a term he generally associates with machinery, factories, and other investments in the means of production – to refer to subjectivity. He refers to the subjectivity of the worker, whose concrete essence is defined in terms of his labor. Gradually, as man labors, his worker’s subjectivity develops alongside the progression of capital until he is himself incorporated into its machinery and becomes a replaceable “*cog in the machine.*”

The capitalist system can transform man’s essence precisely because it is what transforms labor into surplus value, into profit. Because labor, for Marx, is part of the sphere of exploitation, subjection is a necessarily exploitative process. Yet again, it the power that “*makes*” subjects working through an ideology of individuality, a “*false promise*” that alienates the working subject from his labor power, from other workers, and from himself. This conception of the subject is **negative**: It hinges on the repression of an identity whose truth has been subsumed in machinery. This negative conception of the subject of power stands in marked contrast with the subject in Foucault, whose relation to power is **positive**, in the sense that his “*truth*” is not repressed, but rather generated through the different technologies of power.

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Despite this fundamental dissimilarity, there is a resonance between Marx and Foucault on the topic of labor, which both thinkers – albeit in different ways – understand as a catalyst, that forges a powerful link between systems of power and the subjects they address.

It is perhaps surprising that Foucault did not see power, but rather the subject as his main scholarly project. If we look closely at the two “*technologies of power*” that divide the first and second half of his writing, we see that the most profound task of each is the production of a particular kind of subjects. In *Discipline and Punish* and the rest of his work that precedes *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault identifies a technology of power he calls “*disciplinary power*,” which generates norm-governed “*disciplinary subjects*,” whose subjection is ensured through their production as obedient and efficient “*docile bodies*.”

Beginning with *The History of Sexuality* Foucault identifies a second technology of power which developed within, and ultimately transformed, disciplinary power. This “*new*” power is what Foucault terms ***bio-power***.

Bio-power and disciplinary power differ in the objects each addresses: while discipline addresses the individual subject through power exercised directly on the (corporeal) body, bio-power takes as its central object the social body. Bio-power belongs to system of government that addresses the population body (rather than the body of individuals) vis-à-vis the biology of individual bodies. In doing so, it can manage social risks (which would formerly have been responsibilities of the State – preventing illness, unemployment, poverty, etc.) by re-casting them as individual problems of self-care.

We can see how Foucault echoes a Marxist emphasis on labor when he discusses bio-power and the “*making*” of bio-political subjects. Contrary to Marx’s worker subject, bio-political subjects are not “*cogs in the machine*.” They are active participants (and not un-knowingly) in the process of their own subjection. As such, subjection is not imposed on them from above, but through themselves. Put another way, the bio-political subject is a self-governed individual. She governs herself through forms of regulation and modulation that Foucault refers to as ***technologies of the self***. Taking an example from medicine, we can see how technologies of the self (i.e., birth control) function as conduits through which social problems (population control) become individual problems (unwanted pregnancy/motherhood), which necessitate a kind

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of labor that the bio-political subject is obligated to perform (i.e., taking her pills on time, every day). Her labor, which has been recast in terms of self-care, ensures her continued (self-) subjection.

Currently “...all networks of power exercise their power by influencing the human mind predominantly (but not solely) through multimedia networks of mass communication. Thus, communication networks are the fundamental networks of power making in society” (M. Castells, *A network theory of power*, 2011).

This approach to power, which takes communication as its primary object, is essential for communication scholars, cultural studies practitioners, and anyone who writes about media, politics and/or popular culture. Neither Marx nor Foucault attended to this dimension. Marx, because he could not possibly have envisioned it. Why Foucault neglected communication networks is more difficult to understand – particularly when we consider his emphasis on discourse. Indeed, Foucault has been criticized for his over-reliance on discourse, which led him to ignore the more coercive and violent forms of power exercised by the State. While Marx envisioned a kind of struggle that would dismantle power relations by overthrowing the system of capitalism, he devoted little time to describing the logic, mechanisms, and techniques of a revolutionary counter-power. The same can be said about Foucault, who insists time and time again that power is always accompanied by counter-power but says little else about what counter-power might look like.

But power that moves through **communication networks** has a unique ability to shape the human mind, in part because it is accessible by nearly every individual in every society, and in part because it is tightly controlled by a concentrated media elite whose discourses it tends to reproduce. Communication power in its most effective form is the power to persuade, to change people’s minds.

Though power may certainly operate economically, politically, and strategically, it is not merely an impassive force (as in Foucault) nor a machine (as in Marx). Fundamentally – and above all else – **power is human**.



The Modern Real Powers

'Better to be a dog in a peaceful time, than to be a human in a chaotic (warring) period' (寧為太平犬, 莫做亂離人) is usually translated and promoted as "**May you live in interesting times**".

The original Chinese expression applies much better to our times; we live indeed in chaotic times, where values taken for granted for thousands of years, ethics as we understand and revere them, are just trampled, and money –**BIG** money- reigns and buys people as strawmen or puppets. Since a free, investigative, honest, independent press has existed the hopes (and trust) of *We the People* seemed to have a securing ally. This concept is melting faster than the Arctic ice. We now depend, in (too) many countries, on filtered, manipulated, stamped-for-approval or –worse- *alternative facts*' delivered and imposed as **truths**. Behind this quasi-universal perversion is a coterie of few filthy wealthy people who change regimes, make juicy borderless deals, control the stock exchanges and make elections a masquerade. Just check Jane Meyer's piece on Robert Mercer in *The New Yorker* (and her book now in paperback- *Dark Money*): she is just pointing to the surface of the tip of a humungous iceberg; and it is just the beginning. This is the **real network of Powers** that is growing like the plague, the cholera or the 1917 influenza. It affects, infects (almost) **every** organization –local national, international- from the European Central Bank, the United Nations, ASEAN, the Papacy, and many more. Among the few exceptions that come to my mind are Médecins sans Frontières, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, The American Civil Liberties Union or Amnesty International.

As mentioned in the previous paragraph, these **powers** infect and use liberally the current social, mass and sophisticated media –that depend on **money** and **profit**. Long gone are the Woodward and Bernstein, the Daniel Ellsberg; or, in France, Emile Zola or *Le Canard Enchaîné*; in Japan, the *Shūkan Post*; or, in the UK, the reporters of the *Dispatches*. The acquisition by a few of much of the media has resulted in giant conglomerates, owned by multi-billionaires (e.g. Rupert Murdoch of News Corp., Gracia Martore of Gannett, Thomas Rabe of Bertelsmann, and recently Steve Bannon of Breitbart News) or autocratic governments (Xinhua, TASS, etc.). They **make** elections a farce. They run the show to fill their coffers and rot the rest. It seems that we live in parallel universes.



Indeed, now more than ever –and that will not change anytime soon- **Money IS (and buy or owns) Power.**



Acknowledgements

I was probably nursing this essay for years, but the recent evolution of the US (November 8th, 2016) presidential election, the Brexit campaign and election results, soon the French one, the Park Geung-hye impeachment, the Rodrigo Duterte extrajudicial killings, etc. prompted me to reflect in depth and try to make some sense of the state (and future) of our societies. My sources are listed, and my still standing memory helped. Wikipedia and other were plundered. And Yves P. Huin managed to orchestrate, shape, edit and manufacture the final draft.



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