THE PLACE OF HUMAN SUBJECT IN FOUCAULT'S AND DELEUZE'S PHILOSOPHIES

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ABSTRACT

THE PLACE OF HUMAN SUBJECT IN FOUCAULT'S AND DELEUZE'S PHILOSOPHIES

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The main objective of this master's thesis is to analyze the place assigned to human subjectivity by French philosophers Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze. In order to fulfil the requirements of this objective, what is focused on is their shared critique which is exercised against the traditional conceptions of humanity and subjectivity. Through the thesis, first Foucault's analyses which demonstrate that universal man as a construction emerges as an effect of discursive practices and power relations, and his archaeological method that illustrates knowledge

process is not dependent on transcendental consciousness are explained and discussed. Then it is argued that Deleuzian philosophy of becoming which does not submit to any transcendent unity that governs experience is an actual alternative to subject-centered understandings of the world. Throughout the course of arguments it is emphasized that according to both Foucault and Deleuze the human subject is an effect of network type relations that occur in a non-subjective fashion.

Keywords: Subject, Humanism, Discourse, Power, Difference, Becoming, Transcendence, Immanence

ÖZ

FOUCAULT VE DELEUZE'ÜN FELSEFELERİNDE ÖZNENİN YERİ

Taner, Erdem

Yüksek Lisans, Felsefe Bölümü

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Bu yüksek lisans tezinin temel hedefi Fransız filozoflar Michel Foucault ve Gilles Deleuze'ün özneyi yerleştirdikleri konumu çözümlemektir. Bu hedefi gerçekleştirmek için her iki filozofun geleneksel insan ve öznellik kavrayışına karşı geliştirdikleri eleştirel yaklaşımlar üzerinde odaklanılmıştır. Tezde ilk olarak anlatılan ve tartışılan, evrensel insan fikrinin, söylem pratiklerinin ve iktidar ilişkilerinin bir sonucu olduğunu göstermeye yönelik çözümlemeleri ve bilgi süreçlerinin aşkınsal bilince bağımlı olmadığını gösteren arkeolojik yöntemi ile Foucault felsefesidir. Daha sonra, Deleuze'ün, deneyimi belirleyen ya da açıklayan hiçbir aşkınsal bütünlüğü kabul etmeyen oluş felsefesinin dünyanın özne

merkezli algılanışına geçerli bir alternatif teşkil ettiği iddia edilmektedir. Tezin tamamında, hem Foucault'ya hem de Deleuze'e göre öznenin, özneye bağımlı olmayan ağ tipi ilişkilerin bir sonucu olarak ortaya çıktığı vurgulanmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Özne, Hümanizm, Söylem, İktidar, Fark, Oluş, Aşkınlık, İçkinlik

To My Parents

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The twentieth century witnessed multifaceted debates about the position and nature of human subject. The content of these debates included the ontological status of the subject as a thinking being as well as its epistemological function as the seemingly producer of knowledge. Although the subject as a philosophical topic is not absent in the history of philosophy, none of the previous philosophers had taken such a decentralizing stance towards it. The subject's relation to God, with what there *is*, its capacity to act as a free agent, how and with what certainty it possesses or produces knowledge, all these have been theorized and discussed at length, but the primary position of a human being as a conscious agent has never been disputed, perhaps with the sole exception of Friedrich Nietzsche. However, French philosophers who were later to be labelled as *the poststructuralists* undertook the difficult but hardly untimely project of dethroning the subject which has long been at the centre of philosophical investigation. This thesis, as a study of this decentralization that the subject has experienced, will be based on the works of two of these philosophers, Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze.

In the history of Western thought, the primacy of human subject is constituted through two distinguishable though interdependent frameworks. One of them is the conception of the ontological status of the phenomenon that is peculiar to human beings: the consciousness, the reason, the mind. Although in the philosophies of different philosophers the quiddity of this mental aspect of being human is analyzed within different conceptual networks and assigned different properties, in hardly any of them its privileged status is doubted. Its autonomy as a self-transparent entity was presupposed, and this presupposition as a philosophical attitude resulted in analyses of subjectivity that excluded worldly practices as tools of analysis. Subjectivity and its mental attributes are analyzed and explained either by subjecting them to transcendent entities, or by assigning them a transcendent status. This privileged ontological position of human subject implied a gap between human beings as rational, self-reflexive, conscious subjects and the empirical world in which they dwell. And once this ontological gap was admitted, the philosophical analyses concerning knowledge were bound to be constructed around it. The philosophical image of knowledge as a relation between an autonomous subject and the world that is to be known, produced what we may call the subject-object dichotomy. This dichotomy, and the subject-centered epistemologies that it brings about, form the second framework that fabricated and reinforced the primacy of human subject. Although in most subject-centered philosophies it is admitted that

worldly practices have effects on the process and limits of knowledge, these effects are taken to be accidental, whereas what is considered to be essential to knowledge process is the quiddity of human consciousness. Therefore, according to these philosophies, an analysis of knowledge has to be, essentially, an analysis of human subjectivity. It can be granted that, in the history of philosophy, the scope of the epistemological enterprise was not always limited to an analysis of knowing subject. Especially in the empiricist tradition, the nature of object was also analyzed profoundly and at length. However, even when the nature of object was taken to be a participant in knowledge process, the autonomy of subject was preserved. In short, the human subject was outside, and in a sense above, the empirical world ontologically, and it was at the centre of the world epistemologically.

If this thesis is to place Foucault and Deleuze in opposition to subject-centered conceptions of the world, what corresponds to such conceptions in the history of thought should not remain vague. Here, I would like to give three distinctive philosophical examples of subject-centered points of view, namely, Cartesianism, Kantianism, and humanism. These examples are far from being exhaustive, of course, but the objective of their being given is to illustrate the influential figures of Western thought. It must also be mentioned that the descriptions of these philosophical milestones are limited to their function within the scope of an introduction.

It is widely accepted that modern philosophy begins with Descartes. Not only his ideas, but also the problems of his philosophy influenced the way philosophers think and do philosophy profoundly. According to his conception of the world, there existed two distinct substances, namely *res cogitans* (that which thinks) and *res extansa* (that which is extended). And this partition of the world resulted in the notorious subject-object dichotomy.

As it is well-known, Cartesian philosophy is an attempt to reach, through systematic doubt, the clear and distinct propositions, truth of which cannot be doubted. As a solution to his systematic doubt, Descartes declares that even the fact that he is in doubt clearly implies an existence of a thinking being[1], hence his famous *cogito ergo sum*. This thinking being is the locus of knowledge, and as far as its capacity or conditions of knowledge is concerned, it is not dependent on the empirical world. Ontologically, the thinking being, or the mind, is what it is regardless of the object that it thinks. It is true that Descartes' thinking being is not totally autonomous, it is dependent on a superior being, namely God[2], but this relation of dependence is of a transcendent kind.[3] It is also true that in Cartesian philosophy a human person is not just a thinking being, it is

[1] René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy: With Selections from the Objections and Replies*, ed. by John Cottingham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 18.

[2] *Ibid*, 35.

[3] In fact, Descartes does not use the term transcendent. However, the relation of dependence that he constitutes between human mind and the superior mind is a necessary one and independent of experience, therefore, in the given context, I think the term transcendent is legitimate.

composed of both mental and material substances. However, that what distinguishes human beings from other worldly entities is the mental part of their existence, and this aspect is explicitly and absolutely distinguished from the material part. According to Cartesian philosophy, although a human subject dwells in the world materially, between its feature that makes it a *subject* and the empirical world, there is an unbridgeable gap.

After Descartes, the other main figure I would like to mention is Immanuel Kant. The main questions of Kantian philosophy are those concerning conditions, and the transcendental idealism that Kant fabricates so as to answer those questions define what we may call Kantianism. In his *opus magnum*, *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant demonstrates the transcendental conditions for empirical knowledge (which are, mainly, the pure concepts of understanding and the pure forms of intuition). Although the details of Kantian epistemology is beyond the scope of this thesis, what is significant in our context is the fact that all empirical knowledge is conditioned by transcendental principles, by a transcendental subjectivity. Every process of knowledge production, and in fact even every human experience (since it occurs in space and time), is dependent on necessary and universal forms and faculties of this transcendental subjectivity. And, being transcendental, this subjectivity is in no sense affected by worldly experiences. The part of human existence that gives us the conditions of knowledge does not exist in the world. Our existence in the world of appearances, according to Kant, is not the

existence of transcendental subject that constitutes the conditions for knowledge:

> Even the inner and sensible intuition of our mind (as object of consciousness) which is represented as being determined by the succession of different states in time, is not the self proper, as it exists in itself – that is, is not the transcendental subject – but only an appearance that has been given to the sensibility of this, to us unknown, being.[4]

Besides, in Kantianism, there is clearly an element of humanism. The reason does not only provide humans with conditions of knowledge, but it also gives them a privileged status regarding their position in the world in which they dwell. A human being is not just a part of nature, but "he is the true *end of nature*, and nothing which lives on earth can compete with him in this respect."[5]

The other significant example of subject-centered thought in the Western philosophical tradition is humanism. Perhaps humanism is too broad a term to define as a philosophical current. However, I will adopt its common use for systems of thought that developed specifically eighteenth century onwards, and that assign universal concepts to the nature, characteristics, faculties and values of human beings. Understood within these limits, humanism is a significant component of history of modern Western thought, and it reinforces the gap between man and nature, for the values and characteristics assigned to human beings do not derive

[4] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. by Norman Kemp Smith (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965), 440.

[5] Immanuel Kant, "Conjectures on the Beginning of Human History" in *Kant: Political Writings*, ed. by Hans Reiss, trans. by H.B. Nisbet, 225 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

from the empirical world, rather, they constitute the transcendent aspects of man. As Ernst Cassirer denotes, the eighteenth century "is imbued with a belief in the unity and immutability of reason. Reason is the same for all thinking subjects, all nations, all epochs, and all cultures."[6] To reach the knowledge of the universal features of being human, mostly characterized by being rational, were one of the main objectives of philosophy of enlightenment, since it was supposed to provide the rigorous ground for any other type of knowledge.

It is almost self-evident that the main line of thought in Western philosophy adopted a subject-centered point of view. However, as almost every conception of the world brings about its alternatives, there are schools of thinking that reject this main stream. Structuralism is such a school and had profound effects on the philosophers on which I shall focus in this thesis. Although both Foucault and Deleuze repeatedly declare that they are not structuralists, it is my conviction that their mode of analysis is strongly influenced by preceding structuralist currents. However, it must be noted that I would like to mention structuralism here not through an analysis of a particular structuralist theory, but as a general attitude concerning analyses, with its image of phenomena as a horizontal network.

Structuralism as a general attitude can be defined by its rejection of self-subsistent entities and emphasis on the network of relations.

[6] Ernst Cassirer, *The Philosophy of Enlightenment*, trans. by F. C. A. Koelln and J. P. Pettegrove (Boston: Beacon Press, 1955), 6.

Whereas in more traditional analyses, the units of analysis were considered as what they are in their independent existence, in structuralist analyses the relations among these units determine what they are. Therefore, structural anlyses seek to find the relational network, the structure, of the phenomenon that is to be analyzed. And the human subject, as the dominant centre of most traditional analyses, cannot escape a decentralization. As nothing but a node in the network, it does not possess the constituting role it once possessed. Todd May emphasizes this point by positing structuralism in constrast to existentialism, but it should be added that traditional analyses that we can consider to be in contrast with structuralism is not limited to existentialism:

> The rise of structuralism can be read in part as a reaction to the primacy existentialism places upon the subject. The anthropological works of Lévi-Strauss, the psychoanalytical texts of Jacques Lacan, the structural psychology of Jean Piaget, and the Marxism of Louis Althusser with its rejection of Marx's early humanism, share a common conception of the subject as produced rather than producing, as an effect rather than a cause. . . [T]he theme is the same: humanism as a philosophical project is fundamentally misplaced in seeking the constitution of the subject in a subjective essence.[7]

The world for structuralists is a world with no centres, and therefore, an important aspect of structuralist approach is that, when adopted, it does not allow assignment of universal properties to things, and by the same token, to subjects. When the primary reality of the world is taken to be relations, the nodes where the relations intersect become dependent, which renders the humanist perspective impossible.

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[7] Todd May, *The Political Philosophy of Poststructuralist Anarchism* (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994), 77.

As I have mentioned before, both Foucault and Deleuze reject any assignment of the label *structuralist* to their anlyses. However, there is a widely accepted categorization of their works under the title of, not structuralism, but poststructuralism. Whereas structuralism can be defined by its search for a deep-level structure to explain its objects of analysis, poststructuralism is characterized by its rejection of absolute structures. The term poststructuralist is commonly used for analyses that adopt the network-type relational image of the world, but insist on the fact that the structure of the network is also a variable in the interplay of relations. "Poststructuralism combines the structuralist *style* of objective, technical, and even formal discourse about the human world," but it does so "with a rejection of the structuralist *claim* that there is any deep or final truth that such discourse can uncover."[8]

In order to summarize Foucault's and Deleuze's position when posited in contradistinction to the Western tradition, we can say that both of them object to the traditional image of human subject. They reject the idea that the human subjectivity exists in the world with its completeness, finalized by a transcendence. In their philosophies, the subject is situated neither as an ontologically privileged being, nor at the centre of knowledge process, as the locus of transcendent contributor of knowledge. Rather, the subject is shown to be an effect, or even a side-effect, of relational practices. They share the same approach in the sense that, according to

[8] Gary Gutting, *French Philosophy in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 250.

them, in order to understand how the world operates, it is not the nature of human subject or its transcendent subjectivity that should be subjected to philosophical investigation. Since the subject is a product, the mechanisms of its production is the natural focus of philosophical investigation. However, whether the affinity of their projects go further than this point is not that clear. Despite their common conviction that the enthronement of human subject as the transcendent self-transparent agent of worldly experience is nothing but an effect of illusion, their answers to the question about the constitutor of the subject differ in almost every aspect. Whereas Foucault prefers to concentrate his studies on discursive practices and power relations, Deleuze focuses on machinic couplings and production within the framework of his philosophy of difference.

In this thesis, my study will be based on their philosophical quests concerning subject separately, and in the last chapter I am going to present a comparative and critical approach. It is my conviction that the poststructuralist philosophy is an attempt to bring the subject back to our world, and Foucault and Deleuze, although they philosophize by means of different tools of analysis and perhaps with different motives, exemplify how one can do philosophy without invoking a subjectivity that dwells outside this world. I will try to explain both the arguments in their philosophies which illustrate that the transcendence and centralization of

human subject is groundless, and the way they philosophize about the constitution of subject as an effect.

CHAPTER 2

FOUCAULT AND THE CONTEXTUALIZATION OF MAN

2.1. Foucaultian Project As Writing A History of the Different Modes By Which Human Beings Are Made Subjects[9]

Michel Foucault (1926 – 1984) is one of the major figures in the twentieth century Western thought. His works inspired many different studies in philosophy and history, as well as sociology, psychology, political science and relatively new areas like gender studies. This said, it is not easy to place him as a specialist in any of the mentioned disciplines. He is not a historian by trade, although almost all of his major works are about history in one way or another. He did study philosophy, but his works and concerns cannot be easily located under the strict topics of traditional philosophy, like metaphysics or epistemology.

That it is not easy to place any of Foucault's works under one of traditional topics can be claimed to be a fact. However, when we consider Foucaultian *œuvre* in general, matters get even more complicated.

[9] Michel Foucault, "Afterword" in *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, ed. by Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rainbow, 208 (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1982).

Throughout his major works, his focus always shifts among different units of analysis, and he avoids constructing a solid system of any kind. Nevertheless, there is a common classification of his analyses on which scholars seem to agree. According to this classification, there are three main themes on which Foucault has constituted his studies, and accordingly, they speak about three phases of Michel Foucault. Although these sorts of classifications are always open to debate, once it is admitted that they do not draw strict lines, they are quite useful for developing an overall understanding of a thinker, especially one like Foucault with his constantly changing focus of analysis.

First phase of Foucault, according to the classification mentioned above, is the archaeological phase. Major works of this period deal mainly with patterns of thought and the mechanisms that determine or permit the construction of such patterns. His three major books of history, *Madness And Civilization*, *The Birth of the Clinic*, and *The Order of Things* are written in this period, as well as the book in which he explains the methodology of the first three, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. All these books revolve around the problem of knowledge production and how this production is rendered possible by what Foucault calls discursive practices. Also, these books deal with the way knowledge relates to social practices. This approach, which invests considerable effort to discourse analysis and explains most of the issues it sets forth for itself as target (psychiatric and clinic institutions, human sciences) by means of this

analysis, attracted criticism, because the neglection of non-discursive structures was inevitably a source of questions and problems. In fact, although patterns of thought are the major theme in Foucault's first books, it must be noted that these patterns are always analyzed within their relationship with social practices. However, mostly the discursive practices seem to have independent mechanisms, and it is the social practices that are explained by means of discursive practices, not *vice versa*. Then, Foucault made a maneuvre and started to concentrate his studies on a less discursive subject: the problem of power. Although it would not be accurate to say that Foucault neglected the relation between knowledge and power in his first books, in his later works the effectiveness of power is clearly emphasized:

> [I]t is not the activity of a subject of knowledge that produces a corpus of knowledge, useful or resistant to power, but power-knowledge, the processes and struggles that traverse it and of which it is made up, that determines the forms and possible domains of knowledge.[10]

This new phase in which Foucault took power relations as his new area of study is labelled as his genealogical phase, so long as the classification mentioned above is considered. *Discipline and Punish*, the main book of this phase, deals with the way power relations constitute the human subject. This constitutive function of power is sometimes referred to as the *positivity* of power and conceived in contradistiction to the traditional image of power that is repressive. This objection has deep

[10] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, trans. by Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), 28. Hereafter cited as *DP*.

significance, for it was and actually is still conventional to see human nature, human essence as a free source of existence and power as a force that imposes its own limits and corrections on this existence. The positive conception of power, however, does not submit to a pre-power subject that exists as it is, regardless of the power relations that pass through him. On the contrary, it is the power relations that constitute the existence of the subject. If, in Foucault's first phase, it was the discursive practices that produced the subject, this time it is these power relations. The main theme that the subject is not the constituting agent but rather the one that is constituted, that the subject always comes after some kind of practices, could be observed as the continuous undertow of the seemingly different foci of Foucault's analyses. In my opinion, the following passage in *Discipline and Punish* summarizes this point:

> It would be wrong to say that the soul is an illusion, or an ideological effect. On the contrary, it exists, is has a reality. . . This real, non-corporal soul is not a substance; it is the element in which are articulated the effects of a certain type of power and the reference of a certain type of knowledge, the machinary by which the power relations give rise to a possible corpus of knowledge, and knowledge extends and reinforces the effects of this power.[11]

The third phase of Foucault, according to the mentioned classification of Foucaultian *œuvre*, is his ethical phase. His ethics is usually labelled as *ethics of the self* and is developed in his three-volume major work *History of Sexuality* and his *Technologies of the Self*. As the phrase *ethics of the self* clearly implies, the problem of subject is again a

[11] Foucault, *DP*, 29.

major theme in Foucault's works that are written in this phase. As I have mentioned, books of the first phase had been criticized because of the neglection of the effects of non-discursive practices over discursive formations, and Foucault, taking power into consideration, had shifted his focus. However, in the second phase of Foucault, the power relations enter the scene so strongly that it becomes impossible to escape their determining effects. The single sided relation between power and body reduced human beings to docile bodies and reduced resistence to normalizing effects of power to a desparate enterprise. This has led Foucault to reconsider the issue and, taking into consideration some notions of the Enlightenment such as autonomy, reflexivity and critique, he came up with a conception of a subject that could interrogate and at least partially refuse the effects of power. Although it may seem that Foucault undermines the main project of his earlier works by admitting the autonomy of human reason, it must be noted that "the aim of this autonomy is not to achieve a state of impersonal moral transcendence."[12] He is still against the idea of a rational human subject that possesses potentials of staying out of the power relations, potentials which characterize the transcendent feature of the traditional human subject. Nevertheless, he is after a conception of the subject that still inhabits this world of power relations, as a node in the network, but retains a possibility of transgression. This possibility does not emerge from an analysis of the

[12] Lois McNay, *Foucault: A Critical Introduction* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996), 145. Hereafter cited as *FACI*.

universal essence of human subject, on the contrary, it is given, just like the normalizing effects of power relations, in the analysis of practices. Foucault explains how he understands this possibility and how his project differs from that of standard Enlightenment thought in one of his late articles, topic of which is borrowed from one of Kant's articles, "What is Enlightenment?":

> [I]f Kantian question was that of knowing what limits knowledge has to renounce transgressing, it seems to me the critical question today has to be turned into a positive one: in what is given to us as universal, necessary, obligatory, what place is occupied by whatever is singular, contingent, and the product of arbitrary constraints? The point [...] is to transform the critique conducted in the form of necessary limitation into a practical critique that takes the form of a possible transgression.[13]

In the following parts of this chapter, I shall take into consideration the Foucaultian *œuvre* in general and try to focus on parts that could be related to the problem of modern subject. Although Lois McNay claims that "Foucault's whole *œuvre* is oriented to breaking down the domination of a fully self-reflexive, unified and rational subject at the centre of thought,"[14] one still needs to make effort to understand how and why Foucault undertook this enterprise. In my opinion, Foucault attacks modern subject in two different ways and within two different frameworks.

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[13] Michel Foucault, "What Is Enlightenment?" in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. P. Rainbow, 45 (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984). This change of attitude is apprehended by some commentators as a return to traditional ethical values. Roy Boyne, for example, asserts that Foucault's later thinking is connected to the ideal of freedom. (Roy Boyne, *Foucault and Derrida: The Other Side of Reason* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1990), 144.) However, this interpretation is not a common one. Although it is mostly accepted that in his later works Foucaultian skepticism against ethics is not as rigorous as his earlier studies, it not a straightforward subscription to traditional ethical values.

[14] McNay, *FACI*, p. 4.

First of his attacks is based on the abolition of the values and place humanism assigns to human beings and the critique of power relations this evaluation and placement brings about. The second attack is against the theories and histories of knowledge that take human subject as their primary unit of analysis and try to reach a complete explanation of knowledge production through these analyses. My study on Foucault will be based on these two points accordingly.

2.2. Foucault Against Humanism

As I tried to point out in the Introduction chapter, the humanist discourse gives human persons a special status above everything else in the world. It is constituted around concepts such as human reason and autonomy, and it is almost self evident that the main intention of the thinkers of humanism was to give human persons the dignity and freedom that they deserved and to free them from oppression. If humanism is considered within these superficial limits, it may be absurd to think that Foucault, who was a supporter of individualization and underminer of oppression both in his philosophical and political engagements, was against humanist ideals. Nevertheless, his anlyses were towards the interrelations between these seemingly innocent conceptions of humanism and the institutions and practices of oppression they brought about. In my opinion, Foucault analyzes the failure of humanist project which was

intended to establish autonomy and freedom of the individual in two different aspects. The first aspect of Foucaultian critique is based upon unintended but equally natural consequences of reference to an immutable human essence independent of any historical, social or cultural context. The second aspect is related to an understanding of power as opressive by its nature and therefore which must be understood as negative.

2.2.1. Against An Immutable Human Nature

As it is not easy to discern at one look how dreams of dignity of humanism brought about oppressive institutions, it is also not easy to discren how Foucault's historical books are meant to work against these discourses and institutions. The key to first point lies at the normalization practices that any reference to a fixed human nature inevitably brings about. Once an essence independent of any context is defined by the discourse, once it is admitted that a human person *is* a human person as long as his existence is consistent with his nature, the problem arises as to how one should deal with the ones who do not seem so human, as it is represented by this essence. The historical answer to this problem was organization and reinforcement of disciplinary institutions of discrimination. Foucaultian histories are significant to show how the possibility of these institutions lied in the history of thought and the discourses it formed.

Most of Foucault's books on history were about the people that were discriminated against, or, it was not about them, but about the way the society constructed the tools of this discrimination. These tools were not only the institutions that used brute force in order to keep the abnormal isolated, but also the intellectual atmosphere that rendered these institutions possible and had a mutual relation with them. He says in one of his late works that

> [t]hrough these different practices –psychological, medical, penitential, educational– a certain idea or model of humanity was developed, and now this idea of man has become normative, self-evident, and is supposed to be universal.[15]

Foucaultian project, or at least the part of it that is related to human subject, could be summarized as an attempt to bring man back to earth, to show how attempts of universalization of man can be contextualized. Or, to put it differently, how local and temporal this universal man was.

Before explaining how Foucault analyzed the constitution of the universal normal in Western thought by different disciplines and practices, it is necessary to understand clearly how he divides European history of the last centuries into different ages. According to him there are two fundamental breaks in the history of Western thought and his archaeological studies are performed based on three ages which are characterized by these two breaks. These three ages, all of which lasted

[15] Michel Foucault, "Technologies of the Self" in *Technologies of the Self*, ed. by L. Martin, H. Gutman and P. Hutton, 15 (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1988).

approximately one century and a half, are the Renaissance, the Classical Age and the Modern Age. He says that his archaeological inquiry

> has revealed two great discontinuities in the *episteme* of Western culture: the first inaugurates the Classical age (roughly half-way through the seventeenth century) and the second, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, marks the beginning of the modern age.[16]

Foucault's analyses show that although the enthronement of man which has close interconnections with human sciences has its roots in the Classical Age, these roots flourished in the Modern Age.

> Strangely enough, man – the study of whom is supposed by the naïve to be the oldest investigation since Socrates – is probably no more than a kind of rift in the order of things, or, in any case, a configuration whose outlines are determined by the new position he has so recently taken up in the field of knowledge. Whence all the chimeras of the new humanisms, all the facile solutions of an 'anthropology' understood as a new universal reflection on man, half-empirical, half-philosophical. It is comforting, however, and a source of profound relief to think that man is only a recent invention, a figure not yet two centuries old, a new wrinkle in our knowledge, and that he will disappear again as soon as that knowledge has discovered a new form.[17]

> One thing in any case is certain: man is neither the oldest nor the most constant problem that has been posed for human knowledge. . . In fact, among all the mutations that have affected the knowledge and their order [...] only one, that which began a century and a half ago and is now perhaps drawing to a close, has made it possible for the figure of man to appear.[18]

Foucault wrote his first major book of history on madness and studied how the exclusion and confinement of the mad was exercised in

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[16] Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994) xxii. Hereafter cited as *OT*.

[17] Foucault, *OT*, xxiii.

[18] Foucault, *OT*, 386.

the Classical Age. This study was important because the mad were one of the first and major *other*s of the discourses that took man to be rational and autonomous. One of the main claims in Foucault's history of madness was that the gap between reason and madness did not emanate from a presocial essence of madness, rather it was a result of sociocultural practices.[19] As a consequence of identifying human nature with rationality, madness had its place as an inhuman existence, or even as

> the paradoxical manifestation of non being. Ultimately, confinement did seek to suppress madness, to eliminate from the social order a figure which did not find its place within it. . . [B]y confinement, madness is acknowledged to be *nothing*.[20]

Mark Poster claims that existentialist themes are, at least partially, contained in Foucault's history of madness,[21] and Foucault admits later that the existence of mad person was overemphasized in *Madness and Civilization*, although he never calls any of his works *existentialist*.[22] However, after *Madness and Civilization*, the theme of existentialism is totally erased from Foucault's works, and the constitution of self and of man through different practices (be it a discursive practice or one of power relations) became dominant. In *The Birth of the Clinic* it was the patient

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[19] McNay, *FACI*, 18.

[20] Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization*, trans. by Richard Howard (London: Routledge, 2003), 109. Hereafter cited as *MC*.

[21] Mark Poster, *Critical Theory and Poststructuralism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 53. Hereafter cited as *CTP*.

[22] In *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault says that he is "not trying to reconstitute what madness itself might be, in the form in which it first presented itself to some primitive, fundamental, deaf, scarcely articulated experience, and in the form in which it was later organized [...] by discourses." (47) and then admits in the footnote on the same page that "[t]his is written against an explicit theme of [his] book *Madness and Civilization*."

and in *Discipline and Punish* the delinquent that, as individual subjects, "became cases, ruled by the normalizing power of the Cartesian scientific gaze."[23] In *The Order of Things*, an archaeology of sciences of man is exercised, to reach the point where one can trace back the discursive tool of *man* and see that what is distinctive in our modernity is not characterized "by the attempt to apply objective methods to the study of man, but rather by the constitution of an empirico-transcendental doublet which was called *man*."[24] And in *The History of Sexuality*, "the emphasis fell to the activity of self-constitution in discursive practices."[25]

All these histories about the constitution of the self and the *other* brings us to the question how these histories are related to the philosophical problem of subject. After all, taken as studies about past events, these books may seem more about disciplines such as history and sociology. However, a study showing that what seems to be universal has its roots in history and therefore is contingent is, in my opinion, a philosophical study in its strictest sense. In addition, Foucault not only shows that historical accounts of humanism were contingent and discourse dependent, but also stimulates a critique of our everyday understanding of universal truths about human nature. Gary Gutting says that "Foucault's ultimate goal in writing his history of madness in the Classical Age was to illuminate (or expose) the true nature of modern

[23] Poster, *CTP*, 54.

[24] Foucault, *OT*, 319.

[25] Poster, *CTP*, 54.

(nineteenth century to present) psychiatry"[26] and I think the same could also be said of his other histories.

In my opinion, the most important characteristic of Foucaultian project is that it does not take the *other* granted and seek ways to found a just and free society to serve that *other*. It is true that in his political actions he fought for the rights of the confined or the oppressed, his combat was akin to liberal or democratic movements. Nevertheless, what is fought against in Foucault's work is the idea that someone is what he is regardless of the objectification of power and discourse. He rejected the idea of a deep self that the disciplinary society was trying to normalize. When he speaks about the Information Group on Prisons (a political group in which Foucault played a leading role), for example, he claims that his political and philosophical project about prisons and prisoners has tasks different than those of humanism:

> The ultimate goal of [our] interventions was not to extend the visiting rights of prisoners to thirty minutes or to procure flush toilets for the cells, but to question the social and moral distinction between the innocent and the guilty [...] the humanist would say: "The guilty are guilty and the innocent are innocent. Nevertheless, the convict is a man like any other and society must respect what is human in him: consequently, flush toilets!" Our action, on the contrary, isn't concerned with the soul or the man *behind* the convict, but it seeks to obliterate the deep division that lies between innocence and guilt.[27]

[26] Gary Gutting, "Foucault And The History Of Madness" in *The Cambrige Companion To Foucault*, ed. by G. Gutting, 60 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

[27] Michel Foucault, "Revolutionary Action: 'Until Now'" in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, ed. by D. Bouchard, trans. by D. Bouchard and S. Simon, 227 (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1977).

According to Foucault, it is the discursive form of imposition that "all experience has an essential core or hidden truth that enables normalizing and, in the final analysis, oppressive systems of thought and behaviour to function."[28] He did not seek to fathom the *real* madness, for example, his aim was not to penetrate and scrutinize the inner self of the *real* mad person, isolated from the objectification of the eye of psychiatric discourse, since the main point in his enquiries was that no such discourse-free knowledge of the inner self existed.[29] He was well aware that the idea of a form of knowledge that transcended the socio-cultural context and achieved the inner truth of the individual was the main engine of the oppression he was against. He was aware that knowledge was

> not a form of pure speculation belonging to an abstract and disinterested realm of enquiry; rather it [was] at once a product of power relations and also instrumental in sustaining these relations.[30]

Foucault did not believe in any kind of innate, never changing human essence which formed the subject outside the world it inhabits and then made it possible for him to act based on that essence. Whether it is a sane person or an insane one, a criminal or a good citizen, noone possessed the properties that represented their position in the society before or outside the social relations within which they had their such positions. So, when he says that all his anlyses "are against the idea of

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[28] McNay, *FACI*, 9.

[29] This is not that clear in *Madness and Civilization*. However, in Foucault's subsequent works this point is distinctly emphasized.

[30] McNay, *FACI*, 27.

universal necessities in human existence,"[31] his critique is reflected upon an essential point of view which cooperates with systems of thought that claims to be in possession of the knowledge of the essence of some sort of human existence and takes that essence to be an object to work upon by means of power devices. Therefore, his project cannot be reduced to the common attitude that supports being a different individual against the oppression and clinging to that different identity. He says about antiauthority struggles that

> [t]hey are struggles which question the status of the individual: on the one hand, they assert the right to be different and they underline everything which makes individuals truly individual. On the other hand, they attack everything which separates the individual, breaks his links with others, splits up community life, forces the individual back on himself and ties him to his own identity in a constraining way.
> These struggles are not exactly for or against the "indvidual," but rather they are struggles against the "government of individualization."[32]

Up to this point, what I have tried to argue was that Foucault undermines the humanistic conceptions of Enlightenment such as rationality or autonomy of human subject by showing that those were not universal and necessary ideals, knowledge of which was achieved by pure speculation, but were interrelated with discursive practices and power relations. In addition, it was clear that those who seemed to have an existence conflicting with these ideals were not so because of their deep

[31] Michel Foucault, "Technologies of the Self" in *Technologies of the Self*, ed. by L. Martin, H. Gutman and P. Hutton, 11 (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1988).

[32] Michel Foucault, "Afterword" in *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, ed. by Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rainbow, 211-212 (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1982).

self, but their not being so was constituted by the same practices and relations. If Foucaultian *œuvre* took a neutral stand in the face of these practices and relations, if the function of Foucault's books could be limited to achieving an understanding of historical facts, this could be the end of the story. However, there is a flux in all of Foucault's works that provokes the reader. They do not seem to be written to inform the reader and go back to their places in the bookshelf. They show that what seems to be universal is actually contingent and therefore susceptible to change, and then, they demand the change too. This, of course, raises questions. If the ideals of humanism were nothing but illusions, if not only the concept of rationality but also the concepts of dignity and freedom of human persons are consequents of discursive practices and power relations, why are we expected to be against any of the oppressive practices? If we are not supposed to be against discrimination in the name of the dignity of human persons, how are we supposed to change the institutions of discrimination? Is there any ground on which we can legitimize our negative standpoint against current disciplinary regimes? These questions do not have answers directly in Foucault's books. Nevertheless, in my opinion there are two ways to approach them, although neither of them is totally satisfactory. Their being unsatisfactory resides in the fact that they seem to modify Foucaultian project in such a way that it is not clear if the spirit of the project can survive these modifications.

As it is not easy to legitimize Foucault's call for change, one may be inclined to divide Foucaultian project into two parts and evaluate them separately. This would not be an answer to the questions in the last paragraph, of course, but a way to escape them. This would make it possible to resist criticisms by detaching the part that attracts criticisms of legitimization and the part that is not susceptible to questions of this kind of legitimization. This is the first of the two approaches that I mentioned. According to this approach, when we divide the Foucaultian project into two parts, the first part would be the analysis and exposition of the interconnections between humanist discourse and its appropriation and function within the network of power relations. And the second part would be Foucault's call for change, the part that implies that we should try to achieve a new discourse independent of humanistic disciplinary regimes.

Nancy Fraser gives a fine example of this approach in her "Foucault's Body-Language: A Post-Humanist Political Rhetoric?"[33] She admits that the humanist notions such as reciprocity, dignity and human rights are parts of a metaphysics of subjectivity[34] and it is clear that in Foucault's works this kind of metaphysics is not welcome. As Fraser puts it,

> [f]or Foucault, the subject is merely a derivative product of a certain contingent, historically specific set of [...] social practices which inscribe power relations upon bodies. Thus

[33] Nancy Fraser, "Foucault's Body-Language: A Post-Humanist Political Rhetoric?" *Salmagundi* 61 (1983): 55-70.

[34] *Ibid*, 55.

> there is no foundation for critique oriented around notions of autonomy, reciprocity, recognition, dignity and human rights.[35]

Then, she mentions, as an example, Foucault's *Discipline and Punish*, and claims that it "depends for its *own* critical force on the reader's familiarity with and commitment to the modern ideals of autonomy, reciprocity, dignity and human rights."[36] She maintains that the rejection of modern regimes of power has two grounds, their oppression of the autonomy of individuals that people prefer to assign them and their hierarchical structure that disregards the mutuality and reciprocity.[37] Here, in the face of this intellectual attitude which involves a contradiction, at least on its surface level, a reader has to choose from either assigning Foucault a new kind of ethical structure, alternative to humanism, which renders the use of these seemingly humanist concepts such as dignity and human rights possible, or detaching the critical force of Foucaultian project that Fraser mentions from the main body of Foucaultian *œuvre*. Fraser chooses the latter on the grounds that no substantive alternative to humanism could be derived from Foucault's writings.[38] It is true that there are claims, or as Fraser puts it, hints that goes beyond the negation of humanism, but

> the alternative [that these hints] suggest seems vulnerable to precisely the sorts of objections which in Foucault's eyes vitiated humanism: it seems to involve a retreat from anti-

[35] *Ibid*, 56.

[36] *Ibid*, 57.

[37] *Ibid*, 67.

[38] *Ibid*, 56.

> foundationalism and a turn towards a new metaphysics, one of bodies; and it may be no less subject to cooptation and mystification than Foucault claims humanist critique has been.[39]

Confronted with the absence of an alternative to humanism that legitimizes the negative attitude against regimes of power, Fraser chooses to consider Foucaultian project an incomplete one, and advocates focusing on its more complete aspects, namely its exposition of "the enormous variety of ways in which humanist rhetoric has been and is liable to misuse and cooptation."[40] Although this kind of an intellectual approach is not completely preposterous, I am not sure if any single part of this detachment could be asserted as *Foucaultian*.

The second approach that tries to confront the questions of ethical legitimization in Foucaultian project is the view that suggests that the values we generally ascribe to humanism are not peculiar to humanist discourse, that they formed our societies since long before there was humanism as we understand the term and therefore the apparent contradiction between Foucault's critique of humanism and his tacit affirmation of (at least some of) its values is not actually a contradiction at all. Alexander E. Hooke maintains this point of view in his article "Is Foucault's Antihumanism Against Human Action?"[41] He acknowledges the criticisms of Nancy Fraser and admits that "Foucault assumes some

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[39] *Ibid*, 59.

[40] *Ibid*, 69.

[41] Alexander E. Hooke, "The Order of Others: Is Foucault's Antihumanism Against Human Action?" *Political Theory* 15, No. 1 (February 1987): 38-60.

human values such as freedom, individuality, and reciprocity."[42] Nevertheless, he suggests that "Foucault can consistently believe in human values while rejecting modern humanism,"[43] and to make his point, he argues that it is not the values of humanism that brings about oppressive institutions against which Foucault excercises a critique. It is the way they are grounded, as transcendent and universal principles to guide us, as individuals, and also the society as a whole, that Foucault demonstrates to be behind the mechanisms of normalization and oppression. Among many seemingly humanistic values, Hooke chooses to focus on reciprocity as an example and quotes passages from *Madness And Civilization* to demonstrate that Foucault advocates reciprocity. I also think that reciprocity is one of the main values that Foucault acknowledges although never solidly grounds, and would like to quote a longer part where Foucault writes about the issue:

> [T]hereby a psychology of madness becomes possible, for under observation madness is constantly required, at the surface of itself, to deny its dissimulation. It is judged only by its acts; it is not accused of intentions, nor are its secrets to be fathomed. Madness is responsible only for that part of itself which is visible. All the rest is reduced to silence. Madness no longer exists except as *seen*. The proximity instituted by the asylum [...] does not allow reciprocity: only the nearness of observation that watches. . . The science of mental disease, as it would develop in the asylum, would always be only of the order of observation and classification. It would not be a dialogue.[44]

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[42] *Ibid*, 39.

[43] *Ibid*, 52.

[44] Foucault, *MC*, 237-238.

This is not the only context in which Foucault allows us to derive his sympathy for reciprocity. In *Discipline And Punish*, he says that the disciplines "have the precise role of introducing insuperable asymmetries and excluding reciprocities."[45] Therefore, I think that Hooke is totally justified when he ascribes a defence of reciprocity to Foucault. Besides, he thinks that that humanism supports the so called humanistic values is but an illusion, and in fact, what it participates in is "the rupture of possible reciprocal relations among humans."[46] He suggests that not only humanism did not invent human values, but also distorted them with its conception of these values as constituting essences of our lives. He gives Foucault's preface to Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus* as an example of his attitude, not against these values, but against the way they are apprehended.[47] He claims that Foucault suggests that the imposition of transcendental status for the current principles "tends to rigidify the standards and to obscure our appreciation of the damage (disciplines, exclusions) they produce."[48] Foucault appreciates the values that humanism and the Enlightenment advocates, nevertheless, he takes these values not as properties belonging to human nature and principles

[45] Foucault, *DP*, 222.

[46] Alexander E. Hooke, "Is Foucault's Antihumanism Against Human Action?" *Political Theory* 15, No. 1 (February 1987): 42.

[47] Michel Foucault, "Preface" in *Anti-Oedipus*, ed. by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, trans. by R. Hurley, M. Seem and H. Lane, xi-xiv (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992).

[48] Alexander E. Hooke, "Is Foucault's Antihumanism Against Human Action?" *Political Theory* 15, No. 1 (February 1987): 54.

that are given once and for all to guide our *surface* conflicts. When these values are considered to be such principles, they are assumed to dominate our earthly existence from outside, they are seen as laws *acting at a distance*, so to speak. However,

> [f]or Foucault, values such as freedom and individuality cannot be constructed as transcending [...] conflicts, either through intuition or given moral principles. These values are central to the conflicts themselves.[49]

Although Hooke's arguments for the dissociation of human values and humanism are solid, these arguments demonstrate nothing but that two parts of Foucault's project (that Fraser finds inconsistent) are not contradictory. Foucault still does not seem to have any grounds on which he can maintain his position in favor of human values, except that they are conventionally sound (which is, in my opinion, not sufficient in a philosophical discourse). Moreover, when Hooke argues that it is not the human values that Foucault is against, and that what he invites is another view of individuality[50] he gives no reasons whatsoever for us to believe that Foucault's invitation to this new view and his dependence on traditional values are interrelated. Therefore, his arguments are ineffective in the face of Fraser's arguments in favor of division of Foucaultian project into two.

Actually, in my opinion, this problem of legitimization in Foucaultian project is related to a more traditional problem in the history

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[49] *Ibid*, 54.

[50] *Ibid*, 58.

of philosophy. As I have argued, Foucaultian *œuvre* could be seen as an attempt to bring the human subject back to Earth, to dethrone the quasi-God of Enlightenment. However, once the human subject ceases to occupy its central place in forming and imposing ethical and political values, we do not seem to have another resort to derive these values. As a result, we are face to face with the well-known problem of *deriving ought from is*. The case is similar to that of death of God, and even could be seen as analogous to it. As Allan Megill clearly argues, Nietzsche's declaration of death of God was actually a declaration of a crisis, rather than declaration of his notorious hostility against religion.[51] This profound crisis was a consequence of the fact that almost all of the values of Western culture having their roots in Christianity. After the Enlightenment, as Christianity lost the discursive power it once exercised, these values lost the network within which they were justified. However, according to Nietzsche, this crisis was not fully acknowledged because the death of God was not finalized. He says that "we are not getting rid of God because we still believe in grammar,"[52] and this belief in grammar is, according to Michael Lackey, related to the belief in traditional subject as much as it is to the belief in God: "Nietzsche tries to eliminate God and the traditional subject through his extended analysis of what it means to

[51] Allan Megill, *Prophets of Extremity: Nietzsche, Heidegger, Foucault, Derrida* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 33-34.

[52] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Twilight of Idols*, trans. by D. Large (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 19.

'believe in grammar'."[53] Even though Nietzsche does not seem to have accomplished the mission he set forth for himself, Foucault and the poststructuralists in general undertook the enterprise of dissolving the subject. And now, after the death of God, we are face to face with the death of the subject, and Foucault, who is one of the leading executioners of this death, so to speak, does not seem to have invented any other source to derive values on the ground of which we could act. I think this is the reason why Foucault, like his predecessor Nietzsche, is accused to be a nihilist, although neither of them would be willing to be labelled as one. Because of this lack of source for values, philosophers who follow Foucault make much effort to bring pieces in his *œuvre* together to find a clue to escape this nihilism. However, they do not seem to achieve success, and maybe we will have to wait until knowledge discovers a new form.

2.2.2 The Positivity of Power

Foucault says that "[i]t was [...] necessary to expand the dimensions of a definition of power if one wanted to use this definition in studying the objectivizing of the subject."[54] If one side of Foucault's

[53] Michael Lackey, "Killing God, Liberating the "Subject": Nietzsche and Post-God Freedom" *Journal of the History of Ideas* (1999): 738.

[54] Michel Foucault, "Afterword" in *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, ed. by Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rainbow, 209 (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1982).

critique of humanism is based on his attack against the conception of a universal human essence, the other side is related to an understanding of power, which humanism reinforces, if not fabricates. In Foucaultian context, there are two aspects of this understanding of power that relates to the problem of subject. First of these acpects is the humanist assumption that power is, by its nature, suppressive.[55] This misconception of power that neglects the constitutive function of power network, along with an understanding of innate human nature that has the potentiality to flourish, gives us a picture of the world as it was depicted by the philosophical atmosphere of Enlightenment, a picture that Foucault rejects. According to this picture, man is born with a positive, constituting essence, an essence which is good by its nature, and comes face to face with suppressive sovereign powers that limit his existence.

> Whether one attributes to it the form of the prince who formulates rights, of the father who forbids, of the censor who enforces silence, or of the master who states the law, in any case one schematizes power in a juridical form, and one defines its effects as obedience.[56]

This juridical power, or as Foucault sometimes calls it, sovereign power, is only exercised as a negative force. “Sovereign power comes into play only at specific points where law or rights have been violated, and can only act to punish or restrain the violation.”[57] The only question

[55] Todd May, *The Political Philosophy of Poststructuralist Anarchism* (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994), 75.

[56] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality Vol. 1*, trans. R. Hurley (New York: Pantheon, 1978), 85.

for such an understanding of power is about deciding which powers can be *rightfully* exercised, and according to Foucault this question is ill-advised.[58] This image of power does not take into consideration the positive, constitutive function of power. When Foucault says that "humanism is everything in Western civilization that restricts *the desire for power*: it prohibits the desire for power and excludes the possibility of power being seized,"[59] he refers, in my opinion, to this conception of power. He is against the hypothesis of subjection of human persons to the *rightful* power for the sake of actualization of their true essence. He sees the roots of this hypothesis in the Roman law "that exists as a definition of individuality as subjected sovereignty," and he says that by means of the same conception of individuality, "humanism was institutionalized."[60]

The other aspect of the traditional conception of power that Foucault rejects is partially related to the first one, but is also related to a broader view about things and their properties. Power, understood in a traditional way, is something that a person or an institution *possesses*. According to this point of view, someone or some institution may or may not have power, and being in possession of power has little to do with

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[57] Joseph Rouse, "Power/Knowledge" in *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault*, ed. by G. Gutting, 100 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

[58] *Ibid*, 100.

[59] Michel Foucault, "Revolutionary Action: 'Until Now'" in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, ed. by D. Bouchard, trans. by D. Bouchard and S. Simon, 221-222 (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1977).

[60] *Ibid*, 222.

other properties of this person or institution. What one is, is independent of one's place in the power network. Although this second assumption is analogous to the first one in the sense that it disregards the positive function of power relations, it can also be seen as a part of a broader discourse that renders the first assumption possible on a deeper level. Here, the difference between the place assigned to power by Foucault and its traditional conception is not only about the function of power as constituting the ones who are part of power network, but it is also related to the century old debate about structuralism. Although Foucault repeatedly announces that he is not a structuralist[61], his insistence on the primacy of relations, formations, practices and operations rather than properties and localizations is not an attitude very far from structuralism, at least when structuralism is understood as a rather loose term. There does not exist a general category that corresponds to all theoretical standpoints before structuralism, but considering the primacy of things and their essential properties which is common to these standpoints, I think they could be called *essentialist*. According to essentialist points of view, the primary existence is that of *things* (and persons are also things in this sense), and relations into which these things enter are dependent to the properties of these things. It would not be fair to say that essentialist theories deny the fact that things undergo changes as they enter into relations with other things. However, in order to analyze these

[61] Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. by A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), 15. Hereafter cited as *AK*.

changes it is again necessary to fall back upon the properties of things since it is them that determine the characteristics of relations. When we consider structuralism in general, on the other hand, we see that relations are the primary focus of analysis. It is not the things, being what they are, entering into relations, characteristics of which they determine. Things are what they are as a result of the relational network of which they are a part. In my opinion, Foucault's conception of power is analogous to this relational understanding. When he says that subject is an effect of power relations, he does not mean that a powerful institution (the state, for example) decides and determines what subjects are. Quite on the contrary, he means that subjects and the institutions are all together results of relational power practices. Power itself and the agents of power relations can be analyzed only through these relations, and not *vice versa*. Deleuze explains Foucault's understanding of this relational characteristic of power by emphasizing the contrast of his analyses to the postulates of more traditional analyses of power:

> As the postulate of property, power would be the 'property' won by a class. Foucault shows that power does not come about in this way: it is less a property than a strategy, and its effects cannot be attributed to an appropriation 'but to dispositions, manoeuvres, tactics, techniques, functionings'; 'it is exercised rather than possessed. . . In brief, power [...] can be defined only by particular points through which it passes.[62] As the postulate of localization, power would be power of the State and would itself be located in the machinary of State to the point where even 'private' powers would only apparently be dispersed and would remain no more than a special example of the machinary of State. Foucault shows that, on the contrary, the State itself appears as the overall effect or

[62] Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault*, trans. and ed. by Sean Hand (London: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 25.

> result of a series of interacting wheels or structures which are located at a completely different level, and which constitute a 'microphysics of power'.[63]
>
> As the postulate of essence or of 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 practised (dominated). Power has no essence; it is simply operational. It is not an attribute but a relation.[64]

As a result of his analyses of power not as a property or a possession but a certain type of relation, Foucault sees human subjects as nodes in power network, not as determining how the network operates, but rather as a consequents of its operation. Hence, "the individual is the product of power."[65]

2.3. The Place of Subject in Knowledge Production

As I have mentioned before, Foucaultian dethronement of subject has two separate though interrelated aspects. First of them is to show that the ontological status of human persons cannot be grounded outside the world. To illustrate this, Foucault analyzes how their existence is fabricated here on Earth, through power relations and social practices, how seemingly universal values attributed to human persons have historical and discursive backgrounds. I have tried to explain the main

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[63] *Ibid*, 25.

[64] *Ibid*, 27.

[65] Michel Foucault, "Preface" in *Anti-Oedipus*, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, trans. by R. Hurley, M. Seem and H. Lane, xiv (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992).

analyses of Foucaultian *œuvre* concerning the ontological status of human persons in the previous part.

The other aspect of the dethronement is to show that the central role assigned to subjectivity in the process of knowledge production is misleading and alternative analyses of knowledge that does not give primacy to subjects are possible. In the history of philosophy, when the thinkers attempted to analyze and understand how and what kinds of *knowledge* is possible, how the mechanisms of knowledge production operate, they have always considered human subjects as their natural focal point. It is true that different philosophical systems emphasized different aspects of human existence; in some of them human reason was analyzed, in others human experience was claimed to have the clues to answer the questions about knowledge. However, the framework was always constituted in such a fashion that in order to understand knowledge it was necessary to understand man – the quiddity of knowledge has always been considered to depend on what man is. Foucault, on the other hand, proposes an alternative method for the analysis of knowledge, which he calls the *archaeological method*. The archaeological method decentralizes the subject, or, as McNay puts it, "makes it possible to dispense with a conception of the sovereign subject as the source of all knowledge."[66]

[66] McNay, *FACI*, 54.

Foucault, in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, gives a detailed picture of his analysis of knowledge. As the book in which Foucault explains the methodology of his first three books (*Madness and Civilization*, *Birth of Clinic* and *The Order of Things*), *The Archaeology of Knowledge* would be the one to be chosen, if one wanted to assign a special status. In his first three books, Foucault analyzed the mechanisms of specific discourses and the function they had in the way we conceive ourselves and the others. In the *Archaeology*, he focuses on how these discourses are formed and he does so without refering to the consciousness of subjects who participate in the formation of the discourses. Actually, even before the *Archaeology*, in the preface of *The Order of Things*, he declares that his attitude towards the role of subject in discursive formations is totally different from the traditional view:

> Discourse in general, and scientific discourse in particular, is so complex a reality that we not only can, but should, approach it at different levels and with different methods. If there is one approach that I do reject, however, it is that (one might call it, broadly speaking, the phenomenological approach) which gives absolute priority to the observing subject, which attributes a constituent role to an act, which places its own point of view at the origin of all historicity – which, in short, leads to a transcendental consciousness. It seems to me that the historical analysis of scientific discourse should, in the last resort, be subject, not to a theory of the knowing subject, but rather to a theory of discursive practice.[67]

With the *Archaeology*, focus of Foucaultian project shifts from history of practices and interrelations of these practices with discourses to a historical and theoretical analysis of discourses themselves. Whereas in

[67] Foucault, *OT*, xiv.

his first three histories the theme of discourse was an explanatory tool for psychiatry, medical practices and social sciences, in the *Archaeology* it is the discursive formations themselves that are analyzed. However, what we should keep in mind is that its Foucault's conviction that his earlier books were also part of "an enterprise in which the methods, limits, and themes proper to the history of ideas are questioned; an enterprise by which one tries to throw off the last anthropological constraints,"[68] and this enterprise as a whole is also related to the problem of sovereign subject. Foucault claims that the discipline of general history has undergone a change which is characterized by the transformation of traditional questions to new ones. Whereas the questions of traditional general history were supposed to find causal successions, continuities, totalities among detached events, new history is after finding discontinuous series of events and series of series.[69] However, this change in general history was compensated, according to Foucault, by the conservation of continuities in the history of ideas. Events could be admitted to have breaks or ruptures, they could represent a history with no singular objective or even no objective at all, but the history of ideas, which represents the story of human reason, had to remain intact and continuous.

> If the history of thought could remain the locus of uninterrupted continuities, if it could endlessly forge connexions that no analysis could undo without abstraction, if it could weave,

[68] Foucault, *AK*, 15.

[69] Foucault, *AK*, 3-4.

> around everything that men say and do, obscure synthesis that anticipate for him, prepare him, and lead him enlessly towards his future, it would provide a privileged shelter for the sovereignty of consciousness.
> In various forms, this theme has played a constant role since the nineteenth century: to preserve, against all decentrings, the sovereignty of the subject, and the twin figures of anthropology and humanism.[70]

The Foucaultian project is, on the other hand, "to define a method of historical analysis freed from the anthropological theme."[71] On the other hand, although Foucault's main concern is the field of knowledge that could be categorized as *social sciences*, he declares that his analysis of practices of discourse cannot be considered to be solely about such a field; and "that the division of this field itself cannot be regarded either as definitive or as absolutely valid; it is no more than an initial approximation."[72]

Foucault clearly states that his book *The Archaeology of Knowledge* "belongs to that field in which the questions of the human being, consciousness, origin, and the subject emerge, intersect, mingle, and separate off."[73] There are two main themes in the *Archaeology* that operates to decentralize the subject. First of them is the substitution of discursive formations for subjectivity, as the main unit of analysis for understanding knowledge. The second theme is the demonstration of the mechanisms of discursive practices that produce points of subjectivity, or,

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[70] Foucault, *AK*, 12.

[71] Foucault, *AK*, 16.

[72] Foucault, *AK*, 30.

[73] Foucault, *AK*, 16.

what Foucault calls “enunciative modalities.”[74] Although this second theme is one of the constitutive parts of the first one, that is, it is about explaining the rules of discursive formations, it also operates on a different level to show that the points of subjectivities which seem to be the source of knowledge are actually made possible by non-subjective mechanisms. In other words, these mechanisms do not only have a primary role in the course of producing knowledge, they also produce the subjectivities which were considered as the centers of knowledge production. Therefore, the subject undergoes a two-folded decentralization. It not only loses its place as the founder of the conditions of knowledge, but also is shown to be a product of practices concerning knowledge.

Since discursive practices are the substitute for the central role of subject, it is necessary to understand these practices in order to apprehend the substitution. To start with, a discourse is a body of knowledge. However, this body of knowledge is not an essential and integral unity which could be represented *or* analyzed by universal necessities. It is formed through an interplay of statements as these statements are grouped, accumulated, binded together, obeying rules of formation. Foucault’s aim is to analyze these rules and to “describe the relations between statements.”[75] In order to understand discursive formations, then, it is necessary to understand what a statement is, since

[74] Foucault, *AK*, 50.

[75] Foucault, *AK*, 31.

Foucault does not use the word synonymously with either proposition or sentence. On the other hand, Foucault does not give a strict definition of statement either. He defines the statement rather negatively, explaining what it is *not*, and leaves us with the only piece of positive definition that it "appears as an ultimate, undecomposable element [of knowledge] that can be isolated and introduced into a set of relations with other similar elements,"[76] and the result of these relations is the discourse. When we consider the negative definitions of the statement, we see that it is specifically distinct from three units of anlysis, with which it could be confused.

- A statement is not identical with a *proposition*. It does not obey the rules that a proposition does, and cannot be identified with the autonomy or truth function of a proposition.[77]

- A statement is not identical with a *sentence*. It cannot be subjected to the grammatical schema like a sentence. Moreover, some pieces of knowledge (like classificatory tables or growth curves) are statements in their own right whereas they have to undergo changes to become sentences.[78]

- A statement is not identical with a *speech act*. Mostly a speech act is made up of more than one statement and even if we try to establish a relation of correspondence between

[76] Foucault, *AK*, 80.

[77] Foucault, *AK*, 80-81.

[78] Foucault, *AK*, 81-82.

statement groups and speech acts, a speech act is not identical with the sum of statements.[79]

Thus statements are the atomic units, interrelations of which constitute the discursive formations. There are well-known unities that the traditional analyses tend to accept as natural binding groups of statements, but Foucault warns us against these allegedly natural unities and says that a vast field that "is made up of the totality of all effective statements"[80] should be approached with no unity prior to analysis. These traditional unities are mainly the *book*, the *œuvre* (or the *author*), and the *discipline*. He does not assert that these unities should be rejected, but claims that "[t]hese pre-existing forms of continuity, all these syntheses that are accepted without question, must remain in suspense."[81] What the archaeologist should do is, then, to seek to discover how these statements interact, how they accumulate in their dispersion forming areas of density, how they form regularities and unities to generate discourses; but he should do so without submitting to the seemingly natural unities. The reason for searching unities different from traditional ones is not, of course, the naïve urge for innovation, but the fact that traditional unities are not sufficient tools for an overall understanding of knowledge production and the role of the interrelations of statements in this production. It is true that the standard history of thought also deals

[79] Foucault, *AK*, 83-84.

[80] Foucault, *AK*, 27.

[81] Foucault, *AK*, 25.

with discursive totalities, however, these totalities are considered in such a paradigm that the task of the scholar is to penetrate the statements and behind them grasp "the intention of the speaking subject, his conscious activity, what he meant, or, again, the unconscious activity that took place ..."[82] The archaeology, on the other hand, seeks to conceive relations and regularities freed from such quests for *deep* intentions, it operates, so to speak, on the surface. The relations it seeks to find out are

> [r]elations between statements (even if the author is unaware of them; even if the statements do not have the same author; even if the authors were unaware of each other's existence); relations between groups of statements thus established (even if these groups do not concern the same, or even adjacent, field; even if they do not possess the same formal level; even if they are not the locus of assignable exchanges); relations between statements and groups of statements and events of quite different kind (technical, economic, social, political).[83]

The task that Foucault sets for himself as the archaeologist is, then, to study how the statements are grouped to form discourses, or as he puts it, how discursive formations operate. In order to explain the discursive formations, he describes four distinct regularities that define the unities of discourse. These unities are characterized by the formation of objects, of enunciative regularities, of concepts and of strategies. Although the analysis of formation of enunciative regularities deals specifically with subjectivity, all analyses concerning discursive regularities operate against the traditional conception of human subject

[82] Foucault, *AK*, 27.

[83] Foucault, *AK*, 29.

and its role in knowledge production. They demonstrate that the human subject is not the constitutive agent of the conditions of knowledge.

First of the regularities that gives a discourse a unity is the formation of objects. Actually, traditional anlyses of knowledge also consider unities of knowledge (discourse) to be dependent on the emergence of objects. However, for such analyses, the study that explains the emergence of an object of knowledge always depends on the human subject that is the agent of knowing. The conditions of the process through which something becomes an object of discourse is to be found either in the mechanisms of human experience, or in the faculties of human reason. According to Foucault, on the other hand, specific non-subjective relations provide us with the conditions of producing knowledge about an object, "it is not enough for us to open our eyes, to pay attention, or to be aware, for new objects suddenly to light up and emerge out of the ground."[84] The explanation of emergence of objects do not depend on an analysis of the relation of objects with the *foundation of things* either.[85] As far as the conditions of knowledge of an object is concerned, the relations between *words* and *things* are as irrelevant as the ones between *subjects* and *things*. The non-subjective relations that we should search for are primarily, according to Foucault, the ones within the body of existing knowledge, that is, between statements. Foucault gives the example of the objects of psychiatric

[84] Foucault, *AK*, 44-45.

[85] Foucault, *AK*, 48.

discourse, and says that "[i]f, in a particular period in the history of our society, the delinquent was psychologized and pathologized," it is due to "[t]he relation between planes of specification like penal categories and degrees of diminished responsibility, and planes of psychological characterization."[86] These relations are not sufficient for a total explanation of a discursive regularity of objects; relations between authorities of different types, relations between social institutions also enter play significant roles, but what is distinctive is that the analysis of emergence of objects does not depend on subjective relations at all.

The second regularity that binds the statements of a discourse together is the enunciative modality, or, the type of apparent subjectivity that makes the statements possible and assign them their place in the network. This regularity is specifically significant, in my opinion, for it is the mechanism where the subject plays a relatively major role. Foucault admits that through the process in which a piece of knowledge emerges, the person who utters or writes that piece of knowledge is not totally irrelevant.[87] However, this does not mean that he falls back upon inner mechanisms of subjectivity in his analysis of knowledge. Although the status or the identity of the subject that seems to be the source of knowledge has a disticnt role in rendering that piece of knowledge significant for a specific discourse, it is not the subject itself where this

[86] Foucault, *AK*, 43.

[87] Foucault, *AK*, 50.

piece of knowledge acquires its significance. Foucault says that he does not

> refer the various enunciative modalities to the unity of the subject – whether it concerns the subject regarded as the pure founding authority of rationality, or the subject regarded as an empirical function of synthesis.[88]

The point of subjectivity from which the subject produces knowledge is a result of non-subjective relations; its status is not to be derived from an analysis of the inner self of the person that occupies that point, quite on the contrary, the person is defined by the point of subjectivity. The piece of knowledge that is produced is not, therefore, an expression of the subject, but the subjectivity is, so to speak, an expression of the relations that make that piece of knowledge possible.

> In the proposed analysis, instead of referring back to *the* synthesis or *the* unifiying function of *a* subject, the various enunciative modalitites manifest his dispersion. To the various statuses, the various sites, the various positions that he can occupy or be given when making a discourse. To the discontinuity of the planes from which he speaks. And if these planes are linked by a system of relations, this system is not established by the synthetic activity of a consciousness identical with itself, dumb and anterior to all speech, but by the specificity of a discursive practice. I shall abandon any attempt, therefore, to see discourse as a phenomenon of expression – the verbal translation of a previously established synthesis; instead, I shall look for a field of regularity for various positions of subjectivity. Thus conceived, discourse is not the majestically unfolding manifestation of a thinking, knowing, speaking subject, but, on the contrary, a totality, in which the dispersion of the subject and his discontinuity with himself may be determined. It is a space of exteriority in which a network of distinct sites is deployed.[89]

[88] Foucault, *AK*, 54.

[89] Foucault, *AK*, 54-55.

The third regularity in discursive formation is that of concepts. Certain concepts appear and reappear in certain discourses and they are one of the group of elements that holds the discourse together, like the objects and enunciative modalities. To trace back the emergence of such concepts and to analyze their consistent appearance in a certain discourse, Foucault proposes, once again, to look for non-subjective relations among statements, rather than their emergence and definitions in subjective consciousness. Through these discursive relations of statements, one tries

> to discover how recurring elements of statements can reappear, dissociate, recompose, gain in extension or determination, be taken up into new logical structures, acquire, on the other hand, new semantic contents, and constitute partial organizations among themselves.[90]

And Foucault clearly states that what is described through these recurrences is "not the laws of the internal construction of concepts, not their progressive and individual genesis in the mind of man – but their anonymous dispersion through texts, books, and *œuvres*."[91] It is not the meaning or the referent of the concept, which would subject the concept to a subjective consciousness that constitutes the referential connection, that allows the constant usage of it, but specific rules of formation. And these rules of formation, far from being derived from the knowing subject, impose themselves on any subject that appear in the course of knowledge process. Foucault insists that in the analysis he proposes that

[90] Foucault, *AK*, 60.

[91] Foucault, *AK*, 60.

> the rules of formation operate not only in the mind or consciousness of the individuals, but in discourse itself; they operate therefore, according to a sort of uniform anonymity, on all individuals who undertake to speak in this discursive field.[92]

To put in other words, briefly, it is not the conceptual faculty or capacity of the knowing subject that should be analyzed in order to account for the conceptual unity of a discourse, rather, it is the non-subjective interrelations of statements.

The fourth regularity that makes it possible for a discourse to have its role in knowledge process is that of strategies. A strategy, in Foucaultian terminology and in this context, is a theme or a theory that becomes possible through the mechanisms of discursive formations, and, in its turn, it constitutes the fourth regularity of a discourse. Here again, Foucault refers to the interplay of statements and the constitutive role of this interplay, however, the formation of strategies is the only discursive formation where Foucault clearly emphasizes the role of non-discursive practices.[93] Nevertheless, these non-discursive practices are not subject to subjective consciousness or human experience. Neither the emergence of the possibility of a theory nor its actualization depend on a universal rationality or subjective opinions. The interplay of opinions, as Foucault puts it, is a surface effect which should not be confused with the formation of theories or strategies. They are dependent on and

[92] Foucault, *AK*, 63.

[93] Foucault, *AK*, 68-69.

analyzable through a set of relations which determine the “regulated ways [...] of practising the possibilities of a discourse.”[94]

[94] Foucault, *AK*, 70.

CHAPTER 3

DELEUZE AND THE DECENTRALIZATION OF SUBJECT

3.1. Deleuze, History, Difference and Machines

Gilles Deleuze (1925 – 1995) is one of the most controversial philosophers of the twentieth century. He wrote extensively on other philosophers and appropriated some of their themes, to the extend that some call overinterpretation. He developed his philosophy of difference, which could be regarded as an alternative to Hegelianism[95] that then dominated the French intellectual atmosphere, or even a reversal of Platonism,[96] in *Difference and Repetition* and *Logic of Sense*. And, with Félix Guattari, he wrote a number of books which some assign a place at the margins of philosophy. It is still not certain whether Deleuze is going to be considered as a great philosopher in the future; however, what Foucault said about him is already part of the popular culture in

[95] Ronald Bogue, *Deleuze and Guattari* (New York: Routledge, 1989), 2.

[96] Michel Foucault, "Theatrum Philosophicum" in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, ed. by D. Bouchard, trans. by D. Bouchard and S. Simon, 167 (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1977).

philosophy: "... perhaps one day, this century will be known as Deleuzian."[97]

At the time Deleuze studied philosophy, on the one hand the French intellectual background was dominated by Hegel, Husserl and Heidegger, a philosophical tradition that Deleuze calls "a scholasticism worse than that of the Middle Ages," and on the other hand, a dominant language was flourishing which was determined by Marx, Freud and Saussure.[98] Although Deleuze acknowledges his debt to Marx and Freud, he chose to concentrate on a different line of philosophers who were not traditionally considered to form a stratum: Lucrèce, Spinoza, Hume, Nietzsche and Bergson.[99] It is certain that these philosophers present so many theses and ideas that a reduction to a common theme would be an unfair one, nevertheless, in my opinion, one can still see a rejection of an organizing principle that imposes itself from outside the world common to all of them. This rejection of transcendent principles, including transcendent ethical codes and *a priori* unities such as self or subject, is a recurring theme in Deleuze's philosophy and could be seen as at least one of its cores.

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[97] *Ibid*, p. 165. Deleuze's response to Foucault's gesture gives clues about the way he sees what he is doing: "Maybe that's what Foucault meant: I wasn't better than the others, but more naive, producing a kind of *art brut*, so to speak: not the most profound but the most innocent (the one who felt the least guilt about "doing philosophy")." Gilles Deleuze, "Breaking Things Open, Breaking Words Open" in *Negotiations*, trans. by Martin Joughin, 89 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995).

[98] Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues*, trans. by Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 12-14.

[99] Gilles Deleuze, "Letter to a Harsh Critic" in *Negotiations*, trans. by Martin Joughin, 6 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995).

Face to face with the dispersion of his books, I will try to constitute a three-fold approach to the Deleuzian critique of subject. First, I will pinpoint the appropriations of Deleuze from other philosophers that relates to the problem of subject, self, consciousness and humanism. Then, I will try to show how a connection and interdependence between the primacy of difference/becoming and abolution of subject as a transcendent principle can be established. The decentralization of subject through the Deleuzoguattarian theory of machines as an example of philosophy of difference will be my third and last theme.

3.2. Deleuze And The History Of Philosophy

Although there are many themes in Deleuzian philosophy that provokes the reader against the Western philosophical tradition, it cannot be considered, in my opinion, to be written from *outside* the tradition. It is, rather, an attempt to emphasize an alternative reading of that tradition. His fabrication of concepts can be regarded as moves within the network of Western philosophy, with their specific intensities at some of the nodes of that network. It is certain, at least for his studies before his cooperative works with Félix Guattari, that Deleuzian philosophy was against a specific line of thought in Western tradition (which one may call the transcendental idealistic current), but not the tradition as a whole. Or, as Michael Hardt puts it:

> Many read Deleuze's work as a rejection of Western philosophical thought and hence the proposition of a postphilosophical or postmodern discourse. Indeed, Deleuze himself provides numerous statements to substantiate such an interpretation. However, when we look closely at his arguments, we find that not only is his thought saturated with the Western philosophical tradition, but even when his examples seem "unphilosophical" the coherence of his positions and the mode of explanation that supports them remain on the highest logical and ontological planes.[100]

Therefore, a study of his appropriation of philosophers that constitute the edifice which we call Western philosophical tradition is not just a survey about the history of philosophy, but a study concerning Deleuzian philosophy itself.

3.2.1. Spinoza, Hume, Kant: Between Transcendence And Immanence

Traditional history of philosophy places Spinoza's philosophy next to Descartes' as a continuation of Cartesian *rationalism* (with, of course, an emphasis of rejection of Cartesian dualism). What attracts Deleuze in Spinoza's philosophy is, on the other hand, its practical core, a core that denies "the existence of a moral, transcendent, creator God,"[101] a core that devalues transcendent concepts such as consciousness, good and evil, in favor of worldly concepts such as thought, body, good and bad. At first look, the emphasis on unity and singularity of substance in Spinoza's

[100] Michael Hardt, *Gilles Deleuze: An Apprenticeship in Philosophy* (London: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), xviii.

[101] Gilles Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, trans. by Robert Hurley (San Francisco: City Light Books, 1988), 17. Hereafter cited as *SPP*.

philosophy may seem contrary to Deleuzian themes such as multiplicity and difference. It is actually undeniable that Deleuze's attitude against unities is sceptical; in fact, his philosophy could be seen as a deconstruction of unities of any kind. However, the unity of substance in Spinoza's philosophy is not a transcendent, *a priori* unity that dictates the conditions of the world or the experience from outside. That substance, that *causa sui* is what there *is*, it is not *a priori* to existence, it is what exists – it is immanent. And the singularity of substance in Spinoza is never a negation of Deleuzian multiplicity, since in that idea of singularity, as Deleuze also asserts, resides the alternative of Hegelian dialectics. As opposed to Hegelian difference in terms of opposites, Deleuze appropriates Spinoza's singularity as difference *qua* difference, he presents "the singularity of substance as an extended meditation on the positive nature of difference and the real foundation of being."[102]

In order to appreciate Deleuze's appropriation, it is important to take into consideration that Spinoza's world is a world of encounters, and these encounters are not governed at a distance by a subjectivity or a subjective consciousness. Within the world, the thoughts and the bodies enter into composition, affect each other, causing a greater or lesser perfection, without the participation of a transcendent cosciousness. Maybe we should not even say *within the world*, since these compositions which are consequents of non-subjective encounters are the constituents

[102] Michel Hardt, *Gilles Deleuze: An Apprenticeship in Philosophy* (London: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 60.

of the world and do not occur in an empty world which governs them as a unity in the form of a medium. Although consciousness is considered traditionally to be the cause or constitutive agent of encounters, it is, in fact, "inseparable from the triple illusion that *constitutes* it, the illusion of finality, the illusion of freedom, and the theological illusion"[103]:

> [C]onsciousness will satisfy its ignorance by reversing the order of things, by taking effects for causes (*the illusion of final causes*): it will construe the effect of a body on our body as the final cause of its own actions. In this way it will take itself for the first cause, and will invoke its power over the body (*the illusion of free decrees*).[104]

Whereas consciousness itself is the product of the transition from one degree of perfection to another, it represents itself as the cause of the transition. These transitions are brought about by the encounters and consciousness is taken for a property of the encountering subjects, where, in fact, it is just an informational awareness of transitions – "it is not a property of the Whole or any specific whole."[105] Consciousness is not a detached part that determines our worldly existence; our existence through encounters and transitions takes place on a plane of immanence that cannot be derived from or reduced to transcendent categories.

Another aspect in Spinoza's philosophy that relates to the problem of subject is its relational characteristic regarding the essences. In subject centered philosophies, the human subject exists in the world with finalized properties. Although it could be granted that these properties

[103] Deleuze, *SPP*, 20.

[104] Deleuze, *SPP*, 20.

[105] Deleuze, *SPP*, 21.

are not exhaustive for an explanation of his existence, they constitute the essence that fulfills the conditions of being a human subject. Also for Spinoza, an "individual is [...] a singular essence."[106] However, what is distinctive in Spinoza is the conception of this essence as a degree of power that determines the individual's capacity for entering into relations, with the irreducibility of these relations to the essences. The relations constitute *common notions*, which are not derivable from the essences:

> According to Spinoza, every existing thing has an essence, but it also has characteristic relations through which it enters into composition with other things in existence, or is decomposed in other things. . . [A] given body enters into composition with some other body, and the composite relation or unity of composition of the two bodies defines a common notion that cannot be reduced either to the essence of the parts or the essence of the whole.[107]

The themes of immanence and relationality in Spinoza echo Deleuzian project of decentring the transcendent subject, in spite of their close interconnection with traditional concepts such as essence and reason. Within this network of affinity, Deleuze is a Spinozist, and as a Spinozist, he does not "define a thing [...] as a substance or a subject."[108]

Although Deleuze emphasizes the immanence in Spinoza's philosophy, he admits that the entire history of philosophy could be regarded as the constitution of a plane of immanence.[109] However, what

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[106] Deleuze, *SPP*, 27.

[107] Deleuze, *SPP*, 114.

[108] Deleuze, *SPP*, 127.

[109] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, trans. by Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchill (New York: Verso, 1996), 44. Hereafter cited as *WP*.

we should be aware of is that mostly this immanence in the history of philosophy is not immanence *qua* immanence.[110] The plane of immanence in Spinoza's philosophy does not allow a conscious subject to rise above the worldly encounters, for consciousness is considered as a result of those encounters. Nor does it submit itself to a superior God as the condition of worldly existence, that is to say, it is not subjected to an external transcendence (an external One-All). In this respect, Spinoza's position is quite unique, and Deleuze denotes that in the history of philosophy, the attempt to alternate the relation of immanence to an *external* One did not always result in a Spinozistic rejection of transcendence. There is a philosophical current that treats the plane of immanence as the locus of transcendent subject, and transforms its dependence on a transcendent externality to a dependence on a transcendent internality (not in the sense of a psychological inside, but rather as the internality of a subject superimposing itself even on psychological aspects). Deleuze gives Kantian transcendental subject as the example of such a treatment of immanence. Kant, as the philosopher who rejects the transcendental syntheses of reason, enthrones the transcendental subject:

> Beginning with Descartes, and then with Kant and Husserl, the cogito makes it possible to treat the plane of immanence as a

[110] "But a risk of confusion soon arises: rather than this substance of Being or this image of thought being constituted by the plane of immanence itself, immanence will be related to something like a "dative," Matter or Mind. This becomes clear with Plato and his successors. Instead of the plane of immanence constituting the One-All, immanence is immanent "to" the One, so that another One, this time transcendent, is superimposed on the one in which immanence is extended or to which it is attributed." Deleuze and Guattari, *WP*, 44.

> field of consciousness. Immanence is supposed to be immanent to a pure consciousness, to a thinking subject. Kant will call this subject transcendental rather than transcendent, precisely because it is the subject of the field of immanence of all possible experience from which nothing, the external as well as the internal, escapes. Kant objects to any transcendent use of the synthesis, but he ascribes immanence to the subject of the synthesis as new, subjective unity. . . Kant discovers the modern way of saving transcendence: this is no longer the transcendence of a Something, or of a One higher than everything (contemplation), but that of a subject to which the field of immanence is only attributed by belonging to a self that necessarily represents such a subject to itself (reflection).[111]

Another philosopher whom Deleuze appropriates as an alternative to subjection of immanence to transcendence is Scottish empiricist David Hume. If empiricism is characterized by the rejection of external principles that dominate experience, than Deleuzian philosophy is an empiricism in its strictest sense,[112] and Deleuze, being an empiricist, welcomed Hume's emphasis on externality of relations. Although in Humean empiricism experience is taken as "human or conscious experience,"[113] the aspect of Hume's philosophy that Deleuze devotes his

[111] Deleuze and Guattari, *WP*, 46.

[112] "Deleuze therefore qualified his particular form of empiricism as a 'radical empiricism', a 'superior empiricism' and a 'transcendental empiricism'." Claire Colebrook, *Gilles Deleuze* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 87. Claire Colebrook explains the difference between the transcendence that Deleuze rejects and Deleuzian transcendental empiricism, in the fourth chapter of her book, pp. 69-90. According to that explanation, what Deleuze objects to is a transcendent image that limits and accounts for experience. Against the transcendent subject that is posited as a condition for the givenness of the world, Deleuze refers to experiences themselves as transcendental. In this sense, for transcendental empiricism, there is no primary being or subject; the start point of our investigations must be experiences and perceptions. However, we should not assign these experiences to a privileged locus such as subject. "[T]his refusal to attribute experience to an observer or subject, makes experience transcendental. It allows experience to act as a transcendental principle: a principle that does not set itself up outside the given in some grand position of detached judgement." (88)

[113] *Ibid*, 87.

concentration is the path drawn from experience to "the idea of something that is not presently given."[114] This path is what Deleuze calls a *relation* in this context. And when he claims that in Hume the relations are external to their terms, he means that there is no transcendent principle that superimposes itself over these relations – neither the terms of the relations themselves, nor a deeper and more comprehensive term to which the relation would itself be internal.[115] Therefore, when one passes from an experience to knowledge of what is not given, this passage is not determined by a transcendence. Nevertheless, it is determined, and it is the *human nature* that determines it. The term human nature mostly assosciates with an ideal of humanity and not considered as a worldly mechanism. However, Deleuze insists that human nature in Hume's philosophy is not a transcendent subjectivity that renders the syntheses possible. He posits it in contrast to Kantian subject:

> We can clearly see the point where Kant breaks with Hume. Hume had clearly seen that knowledge implied subjective principles, by means of which we go beyond the given. But these principles seemed to him merely principles of *human nature*, psychological principles of association concerning our own representations.[116]

Here we see that although Hume takes subjective experience and human nature for granted, he does not situate them above or outside the nature. Their contribution to knowledge process is not a transcendent one,

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[114] Gilles Deleuze, "Hume" in *Pure Immanence: Essays on A Life*, trans. by Anne Boyman, 39 (New York: Zone Books, 2002).

[115] *Ibid*, 37.

[116] Gilles Deleuze, *Kant's Critical Philosophy*, trans. by Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990), 12.

and therefore the knowledge acquired through them is, as Deleuze calls it, fiction. The Self, the World, and God, the three great terminal ideas of metaphysics, as Deleuze puts it,[117] are, not transcendent principles of our experience, rather they are constitutions of this fiction:

> This is what Hume will show in his most subtle, most difficult, analyses concerning the Self, the World, and God: how the positing of existence of distinct and continuous bodies, how the positing of an identity of the self, requires the intervention of all sorts of fictive uses of relations. . .[118]

Through all his appropriations of Spinoza and Hume (and also Nietzsche), we see that Deleuze develops an attitude which is not always welcome in philosophical tradition. His studies on these philosophers are clearly of a selective nature in the sense that not the whole system of a philosopher is taken into account. However, this does not mean that Deleuze is imprecise. His works have the philosophical rigour in its full sense, but deal only with selected themes. Therefore, perhaps it is better to treat them, not as studies on the history of philosophy *per se*, but as constitutive parts of an original philosophical project – as "punctual interventions."[119]

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[117] Gilles Deleuze, "Hume" in *Pure Immanence: Essays on A Life*, trans. by Anne Boyman, 39 (New York: Zone Books, 2002).

[118] *Ibid*, 43.

[119] Michael Hardt, *Gilles Deleuze: An Apprenticeship in Philosophy* (London: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), xix.

3.2.2. Deleuze's Nietzsche

For Spinoza, as it is mentioned above, consciousness was nothing more than an informational consequence of encounters that took place between bodies and thoughts. However, he still believed in essential entities, and the encounters were brought about by those entities (although the encounters were not reducible to their essences). When we study Nietzsche, on the other hand, and Deleuze's Nietzsche in particular, we come to see not only that consciousness is an effect of relations, but also that there are no self-subsistent entities that enter into relations. Nietzsche's world is a world of interacting forces, and not only consciousness, but also bodies are product of these forces: "Any two forces, being unequal, constitute a body as soon as they enter into a relationship."[120] And being constituted by a plurality of irreducible forces, a body has, inevitably, a multiple existence. What it is and what it can do depends on the nature of forces and their mutual relationship.[121] Besides, relations of forces are characterized by being relations of domination, and in the unity of domination that they constitute, there are active and reactive forces. Both Nietzsche and Deleuze emphasize that consciousness is always an expressesion of a reactive force. As it represents itself as transcendent, consciousness is claimed to have a meta-position in this

[120] Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, trans. by Hugh Tomlinson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 40. Hereafter cited as *NP*.

[121] Deleuze, *NP*, 40.

domination relationship network and to possess the faculty to gather the knowledge of these forces. However, as a product of forces, and specifically reactive forces, its capacity to characterize the forces is limited. Consciousness, as a phenomenon derivable from an interrelation of forces, is not a substantial entity to be analyzed once and for all as an answer to philosophical problems. Hence, Deleuze asserts that consciousness should be considered not as a transcendent principle, but merely as an effect:

> To remind the cosciousness of its necessary modesty is to take it for what it is: a symptom; nothing but the symptom of a deeper transformation and of the activities of entirely non-spiritual forces.[122]

This project that Nietzsche undertakes is a critique in its full sense, according to Deleuze, as it does not stop until it reaches the rockbottom: Nothing escapes from it, neither the capacity of knowledge of conscious subject, nor the morality that it represents. It is a critique in the sense that it is a quest concerning conditions – conditions of experience and knowledge. Deleuze compares Kantian and Nietzschean critiques, and claims that where Kantian critique brings itself to an end is the point where the transcendent subject enters the scene. However, it is Nietzsche who pushes the critique to its limits:

> Nietzsche, in this domain as in others, thinks that he has found the only principle of a total critique in what he calls his "perspectivism": there are no moral facts or phenomena, but only a moral interpretation of phenomena [...]; there are no

[122] Deleuze, *NP*, 39.

> illusions of knowledge, but knowledge itself is an illusion; knowledge is an error, or worse, a falsification.[123]
> Transcendental philosophy discovers conditions which still remain external to the conditioned. Transcendental principles are principles of conditioning and not of internal genesis. We require a genesis of reason itself, and also a genesis of the understanding and its categories: what are the forces of reason and of the understanding?[124]

These being said, another basic element of Nietzschean philosophy seems to contradict with this subjectless picture of the world: the will to power. However, the important aspect of Nietzschean will to power is that it is not a conscious will of a subject. It is the productive feature of the interplay of forces, playing a role in their genesis; nevertheless, it does not submit itself to a subjectivity. "The will to power is [...] added to force, but as the differential and genetic element, as the internal element of its production."[125]

3.3. Philosophy of Becoming

It is possible to place Deleuzian critique of subject in a broader context, in his philosophical attitude against the philosophies of being in favor of becoming and difference. As it is mentioned before, one aspect of subject centered philosophies is the ontological status assigned to human subjects. According to such philosophies, human reason, even when it is subjected to a superior being (God or the Spirit), is a distinguished entity

[123] Deleuze, *NP*, 90.

[124] Deleuze, *NP*, 91.

[125] Deleuze, *NP*, 51.

with its faculties and properties, and these faculties and properties belong to the innate essence of being rational, being human. It is an (or sometimes *the*) ontological enterprise, then, for such philosophies to analyze or investigate the reality of subjectivity, with attributes proper to it. What is common to all subject centered views is the idea that a human person, either as subjected to the greater unity of humanity or as an entity in its own right, has a detachable and analyzable esential existence. This attitude towards subjects is actually a part of a more fundamental ontological attitude, one that takes things or entities as its primary unit of analysis, rather than their relations and differences. Although it would be unfair to say that relations are totally ruled out for such ontologies, it is always things (with their non-relational properties) that determine the nature of the relations and relational properties. A relation or a difference is always conceived to be one between two preconceived entities. These ontologies belong to the philosophies of being, and the alternative to them is the philosophies of becoming – Deleuzian philosophy is, in every aspect proper to it, always a philosophy of becoming.

Perhaps the best way to approach Deleuzian philosophy of becoming would be to situate his understanding of difference in contrast to Hegelian difference. Hegelian difference is that of negation: It requires negativity of its terms in order to operate. This understanding of difference is the core of Hegel's criticism of Spinoza for his denial of the negative element of the world. According to Hegel, Spinoza's world does not

provide the component that is required for change, or for difference. According to Michael Hardt, one of Hegel's strongest arguments for the ontological movement of negation is as follows:

> Being not determined through negation will remain indifferent and abstract, an finally, since it is not held different from its opposite, it will fade into nothingness. Hegel insists that if we are to recognize difference, the real difference that characterizes the particularity and individuality of being, we must first recognize the negative movement of being; or else, we must disappear along with Spinoza in "acosmism," in the indifference of pure, positive ontology.[126]

According to Deleuze, on the other hand, difference is not in need of a substantial negativity. Against the conception of difference as the difference of something that differs from other things,[127] Deleuze posits a Bergsonian difference: an internal difference. Here, difference is not defined by two contradictory terms, but by itself, as a thing,[128] as *causa sui*.[129] The picture is inverted: What there *is*, is not substantial entities that differ from each other and produce change through their differences, but the *difference* itself, and the different (or opposite) entities are nothing but sediments of this world of differences. This world is not composed of self-subsistent things, but of things that differ from themselves, or, in other

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[126] Michael Hardt, *Gilles Deleuze: An Apprenticeship in Philosophy* (London: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 3-4.

[127] "According to Hegel, the thing differs from itself because it differs first from everything it is not, and thus difference goes as far as contradiction. The distinction between opposite and contradiction matter little in this context, since contradiction, like the opposite, is only the presentation of a whole." Gilles Deleuze, "Bergson's Conception of Difference" in *Desert Islands and Other Texts*, ed. by David Lapoujade, trans. by Michael Taormina, 42 (New York: Semiotext(e), 2004).

[128] *Ibid*, 37.

[129] Micahel Hardt, *Gilles Deleuze: An Apprenticeship in Philosophy* (London: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 6.

words, of the transitions of things from one state to another: This is the meaning of the philosophy of becoming.

This conception of philosophy with the primacy of difference and becoming has far reaching effects. First of all, the basic questions of ontology are to be answered regarding not the nature of substantives (including the human subject), but by a characterization of transitions. The questions concerning the quiddity of being human or being subject are false questions, not only in the sense that they do not push the critique to its limits and question the real mechanisms, but also as an intellectual attitude that confines every experience, every becoming to preconceptualized essences. An experience, when not submitted to a subjective consciousness, is a diffference in itself, it is not a fulfilment of a Platonic ideal of that type of experience. However, whenever the experience is taken to be *of* someone, it inevitably becomes subjected to a predetermined subjectivity and loses its differentiality. When Claire Colebrook claims that "[t]he obstacle to thinking becoming, according to Deleuze, is humanism and subjectivism,"[130] she emphasizes that the reduction of difference to its so-called formal origin (source of which is preconceived subjectivity) is nothing but a denial of difference. I think this is why Deleuze always philosophizes about *becoming woman*, *becoming animal*, *becoming child*; philosophy's quest is not about what a woman or a child *is*, but rather the transition from the major figure of male adult

[130] Claire Colebrook, *Gilles Deleuze* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 125.

human to those minor figures. And whenever these figures are conceived as *essential beings* rather than *becoming*, and especially when they are reduced to the only figure of *being human*, the profound critique is missing. This reduction, if we are allowed to label it informally, is a philosophical racism, since it denies the differential core of the world:

> In an age of "multiculturalism" where it is asserted that we are all human and the same deep-down, Deleuze insisted that the human was an imposed image that imprisoned us, the most racist of all images.[131]

These said, there is another perspective which could render Deleuzian understanding of becoming more solid. Within this perspective, which I am going to propose, Deleuzian philosophy is situated against, not Plato or Hegel, but against an approach which could be associated with Immanuel Kant. According to the Kantian understanding of experience, there are constituents of experience that is not given experience; the pure forms of intuition are universal participants of experience, while not being experienced. In Deleuze's arguements we find, in my opinion, that the major figures of being, the models which we take for granted, function in a fashion analogous to Kantian forms. The models are not experienced, but constitute the schemata by means of which the experience is formed. They function as fictitious major figures so as to govern the existence of becoming which occurs as a multiplicity, and impose the univocal form of being. However, Deleuze insists that the creative power to surpass the major models and invent lines of becoming never ceases to exist. The

[131] *Ibid*, 66.

majority, which is defined by the obligation to conform to a model, functions to schematize experience, but "[e]verybody's caught, one way or another, in a minority becoming that would lead them into unknown paths."[132] The unknown path is certainly a creative experience which does not submit to a pre-formed subjectivity or identity, but rather operates through individualization.

3.3.1. Deleuzoguattarian Theory of Machines

Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari develop in *Anti-Oedipus* an ontology based on machines and machinic production. In this book, the theme of primacy of becoming is projected through the concept of production – production as process. In this part of my thesis, I will try to explain how this process operates and how its operation relates to the decentralization of subject. In my opinion, the theory of machinic production in *Anti-Oedipus* present a perfect example of philosophy of becoming.

Deleuze and Guattari use the term *machine* throughout their book, but do not give a brief definition of it. Or rather, they define it so many times throughout the book that one needs an overall understanding of their project in order to apprehend its quiddity and importance. However, as the fundamental element of their project in *Anti-Oedipus*, we

[132] Gilles Deleuze, "Control and Becoming" in *Negotiations*, trans. by Martin Joughin, 173 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995).

need to provide an answer: What is a machine? First of all, Deleuze and Guattari clearly declare that their use of the term machine is not a metaphorical one.[133] When they talk about a machine, there is a production of one kind or another, and the machine is that which is capable of that production. Secondly, the term machine is not a substitute for a person, just invented to emphasize the productive aspect of persons. And even though organic parts or mental features of persons are extensively referred to as machines by Deleuze and Guattari, the machines are not exclusively aspects of human persons. Besides, machines are not to be understood as atoms of Deleuzoguattarian world. More than one machine can combine together to form another machine. The nature itself is a machine, as well as the unconscious. A machine is what participates in production. In this sense machines can be considered as substantives and contrary to Deleuzian philosophy of becoming. However, we have keep in mind that machines are defined by production, by a transition from one state to another.

Actually, Deleuzoguattarian machinic production fits perfectly to the picture of the world as difference that I tried to explain in the previous part. Whenever there is a becoming, Deleuze and Guattari claim, we can spot a machine at work. They define machinic process through three phases: production of production, production of recording, and production of consumption. Through all three phases of production, the world that is

[133] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, trans. by R. Hurley, M. Seem and H. Lane (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992), 2. Hereafter cited as *AO*.

never subjected to human subjects operate. A subject, in this world, is merely a consequence of machinic couplings, and appears only after the primary act of producions:

> [R]ecording is followed by consumption, but the production of consumption is produced in and through the production of recording. This is because something on the order of a *subject* can be discerned on the recording surface. It is a strange subject, however, with no fixed identity, [...] always remaining peripheral to the desiring-machines, being defined by the share of the product it takes for itself, garnering here, there, and everywhere a reward in the form of a becoming or an avatar, being born of the states that it consumes and being reborn with each new state.[134]

Here we see that Deleuzoguattarian becoming does admit the existence of the subject but only as a break in the chain of production, and as a product among other products, caused by the interruption. One point is clear, the production does not find its roots in the subjective lack, it is not an intentional move to bring about some product governed by a psychological principle that operates in accordance to needs defined by a subjective point of view. It operates through becomings, that is, through transition of the participant machines from one state to another, and as the subject emerges, it "consumes and consummates each of the states through which it passes, continuously emerging from them as a part made of parts."[135] As far as the primary productive process is concerned, the human subject is far from having an integral unity, even as a form of coupling machine: Its parts are coupled with parts of other productive machines, and these parts are formed, integrated and disintegrated

[134] Deleuze and Guattari, *AO*, 16.

[135] Deleuze and Guattari, *AO*, 41.

through the process of production. They do not accord to conceptual or preconceptual unities. A human subject does not function as a unifier centralized by its consciousnes, but rather the consciousness (along with the unconscious) enter into couplings of their own, producing their own effects.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

Throughout the works of Foucault and Deleuze, we find the motive for an empirical philosophy. Although in their projects they repeatedly invoke concepts, such as discourse and machines, that do not seem to correspond to empirical observations, in their philosophies they insist on staying on the world in which we dwell. And their deconstruction of the subject is not, in this sense, an attack on humanity, but on idealistic accounts of humanity which operate in reality as restrictions. While rejecting the assignment of preconceptualized properties and identities to individuals, they support individualization. The true individualization, according to them, cannot be acquired through the transcendent status of subjectivity, but by an openness to difference, to creativity and to production. And this individualization is far from assigning the subject a status *outside* the socius, through which it actualizes itself as an individual. The individual is in the midst of a multiplicity, within which it only occupies a node, and nothing more. It is neither the unifier nor the governer of this multiplicity:

> The concept of multiplicity serves to connect the regimes of knowledge, power and self and the topological relation of forces between them as concrete apparatuses [...] by dispensing with the subject as preliminary unity (e.g.,

> transcendental unity of apperception, phenomenological subject, etc.) and ceasing to oppose the multiple as a predicate or attribute of a One (unity of object in the subject) that would determine its conditions of possibility or account for its origins.[136]

It is a fact that Foucault's philosophy does not invoke an ontological standpoint, whereas for Deleuze the ontological plane of immanence is the only locus where an attack against subject-centered and idealistic conceptions of the world can be exercised. Specifically Foucault's earlier studies which focus on discursive practices which over-emphasize However, some of Foucaultian notions, especially ones like power or self-creation which are developed in his later works, also permit a derivation of anlayses as to where to find the preliminary core of existence.

As with the affinity of their projects, the main criticisms directed towards them also emanate from the same problematic of their systems of thought. This criticism is the one concerning the ethical (and relatedly political) position of their philosophies. Does the world, depicted by Foucault *or* Deleuze, or by any poststructuralist for that matter, allow an ethical stance in life? The critical problem here is that, generally and traditionally, ethical theories presuppose a unified conscious subject as the agent of ethical behaviour. However, the subject that is merely an effect of non-subjective relations (be it the discursive relations of statements, or machinic couplings of production) seems to lack this

[136] Keith Robinson, "Thought of the Outside: The Foucault/Deleuze Conjunction" *Philosophy Today* 43 (Spring 1999): 62.

privileged position to be the source of ethical attitude. Here, what we must be aware of is that the problem does not arise from an understanding of philosophical ethics as a transcendental enterprise. Every principle that guides actions of human beings, regardless of its being developed transcendentally, presupposes a consciousness upon which it is supposed to act.

Moreover, when a person is nothing more than a node in the grid of network of practices, lacking a transcendent understanding of the network as a whole, the consequences of his actions are blurred. Since he cannot comprehend the intersections of the practices in their totality, he is in no position to be certain about the practices in which he participates. Therefore, as a political agent, the decisions made by such a subject appear as insignificant, since his actions, independent of the motives behind his decisions, are always under the risk of being incorporated by practices or productions that he is not even aware of. The problems that the political philosophies of Foucault and Deleuze has to face in this respect is beyond the choice of the right action. The possibility of any righteous action becomes problematic as the practices coincide and clash with each other.

Both Foucault and Deleuze, but especially Foucault, participated in and supported political movements that demanded the destruction of oppressive practices. Their books as well as articals suggest a political standpoint and inspire socal engagements of one kind or another.

However, this attitude which is pre-eminent in their personal lives and informal articles and interviews, as well as in the background spirit of their philosophical works, does not seem to allow a derivation of a rigorous political philosophy. Whereas it can be claimed that the themes of politics and political philosophy were always an integral part of their philosophies, those themes never acquired the level of distinctiveness and precision of their shared critique of subjectivity through ontological and epistemological analyses. Their philosophical analyses function as tools (or even weapons) of politics, but the etical core which would legitimize the use of those tools lacks.

It is my conviction that the ontological and epistemological approach developed by Foucault and Deleuze meets the need of our age for a non-transcendent account of human subjects. However, their shared approach which is sometimes labelled as poststructuralist still seems to be in need for a non-subjective ethics. If the ethical enterprise is considered to be constituted through rules or codes of one kind or another, to whom or to which part of multiplicity these codes are to be addressed is a problem that leads to more severe crises than that of the quiddity of the codes themselves. As the intersubjective alternative is also ruled out with the demonstration of the dependence of subjective relations on the primacy of non-subjective ones, the solution of the crisis lies in changing the conception of ethics as a guide to obedience. This kind of a profound change in ethical understanding would be an answer to

criticisms of legitimization and an alternative to millenia old answers of philosophers, as well as their questions. Whether such an ethical philosophy is possible, is a question that Foucaultian and Deleuzian philosophers cannot escape.

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