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## “APPEARANCE AND THE SUPERSENSIBLE WORLD”\*: EMPTINESS OF THE BIOPOLITICAL CRITIQUE OF POWER

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This paper takes up for its subject the specific explanatory mechanism of biopolitical discourse. By drawing on two concepts from Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's philosophy, it argues that this type of discourse creates no hermeneutical surplus. The first concept can be found in *Phenomenology of Spirit*, in the chapter “Force and Understanding: Appearance and the Supersensible World”, and the second in *The Science of Logic* in the chapter “Formal Ground”. It will be demonstrated that the biopolitical critique of power does not distinguish between *explicandum* and *explicans* – at its core, it enacts a tautology. It takes merely one moment out of a complex phenomenon under interpretation (this being a moment of negativity), which is in fact common to all phenomena. Then it takes this moment to be *the* regulative principle guiding the dynamics of the interpreted phenomenon. The problem of this method of explaining is not that it is wrong, but that it is always true. Tautology is an empty always-truth. From beginning to end of this paper, biopolitical discourse is understood from the perspective of trust in the State organism as a central State-building virtue of the democratic culture. Ultimately, the paper shows that biopolitics is just one way of taking oneself out of the thought of the world, which inevitably inhibits the ability of the State to provide for the basic needs of the population.

**Keywords:** biopolitics, emptiness, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Michel Foucault, tautology.

### Introduction

Biopolitics has turned into a conceptual tool whispered in forums of both humanities and social sciences. It is popular with interpretation of phenomena concerning power, hierarchy,

penalization, exclusion, etc. Biopolitical discourse, however, as I intend to argue, is theoretically flawed. My critique will question its explanatory capabilities, showing that biopolitical discourse is in fact a hidden tautology. In order to carry the argument through, I will take

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\* “Appearance and the Supersensible World” (original title in German: “Kraft und Verstand, Erscheinung und übersinnliche Welt”) is a part of the title of third chapter of first division in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*.

recourse to Hegel's philosophy (mainly with reference to two chapters from his *Phenomenology of Spirit* and *The Science of Logic*). Biopolitical discourse slides into a typical philosophical mistake, which is isolation of and fixation on one moment out of a whole. It refers only to the negative part of a mutually interconnected and dependent moment, and for that reason the result of the interpretation remains a blind reflection of this isolating act. Since the biopolitical critique of power concerns the very core of democratic culture, it is necessary to discuss the consequences of this critique for the trust in the State.

### **Affirmative attitude towards the State and its obstacles**

Let me start with a concrete example, with the formation of the European Union (EU), as it offers an excellent opportunity for rehabilitating an important philosophical concept. EU is a political formation, comprising countries with varying degrees of ability to perform its tasks. On the one hand, there is a group of countries which are relatively weak in meeting the needs of the population for legal certainty and prosperity, displaying high levels of corruption, etc., while on the other there are countries relatively more successful in fulfilling the same criteria. What is interesting for the purpose of this study is the following: the differences described exist despite the fact that the countries have a very similar institutional framework. In fact, legal harmonization was the basic criterion for joining the EU. Therefore, where do these differences stem from?

We need to revise the naivety of a belief that our coexistence is regulated merely by rational rules – written down in law – and nothing else. It is necessary to take into account another phenomenon that is responsible for the substantial differences between these countries, irrespective of their uniform legal framework. This is what Hegel referred to with the term *Gesinnung*. It

is a way of thinking, a belief system, a mentality, more precisely, the attitude of the citizens towards their State, its legislation and its institutions. Free State organism unavoidably requires both components: “These two sides – the subjective conviction (i.e. *Gesinnung*. – R. S.) and formal constitution – are inseparable, and neither can do without other” (Hegel 1895: 256). Hegel's general message is that the State can only exist in the consciousness of its citizens. If it is not affirmed in the attitude of its citizens, the State does not exist at all. Without this, laws are merely printed text and institutions merely office spaces.

The *Gesinnung* has immense power. The institutional framework, the adoption of new laws, regulations, etc... all of this is no more than a conceptual cobweb that the *Gesinnung* of a cultural environment can easily tear apart, completely inhibiting or distorting the effectiveness of the institutions. Consider this textbook example: if it were possible to regulate coexistence simply by adopting a legal framework, Iraq and Afghanistan would be democratic countries by now. As we know, this can only be achieved through a long-term process that will have to go through the convoluted road of the development of the Spirit. Despite all its greatness, the State is really a weak entity. Its affirmation must travel through the eye of the needle of the consciousness of individuals, i.e. its citizens. At this point, the country is quite helpless. And if consciousness does not let it pass through, its vitality is not possible.

An affirmative attitude towards institutions and legislation requires existential courage. Individuals must give away the currency of their freedom, invest it in the game of coexistence, in the hope of getting it back enriched and multiplied. Therefore, respecting the State is, in a way, like taking a leap into the unknown, because the reward does not come immediately, directly, nor in any obvious way. For example, the reasons for paying taxes are far less tangible than the reasons for cheating the authorities. It is difficult to respect the law without a prior

fundamental trust in the State organism. Thus, trust is at the very core of a mature *Gesinnung* in relation to the State:

"This disposition (i.e. *Gesinnung*. – R. S.) is in general one of trust (which may pass over into more or less educated insight), or the consciousness that my substantial and particular interest is preserved and contained in the interest and end of another (in this case, the state), and in the latter's relation to me as an individual [*als Einzelnen*]. As a result, this other immediately ceases to be an other for me, and in my consciousness of this, I am free" (Hegel 1991: §268).

Without trust there can be no effective State and no protection of the fundamental interests of the individual. I maintain that the described difference between the two groups of countries corresponds to a different *level* of trust invested in the State. Some talk about the *internalization* of law and State. The genesis of different attitudes towards the State organism is the subject of the philosophy of history. This being a vast subject, I cannot afford to explore it here. Instead, I will focus on a contemporary concept which considerably contributes to undermining the trust in the State organism. This is the concept of biopolitics, a widely used tool for the interpretation of social phenomena, both in the social sciences and humanities. Michel Foucault, who made it popular, remains a key reference in most biopolitical interpretations.

It should be pointed out that this paper does not aim to put forth a comprehensive account of biopolitics. I intend to focus only on those aspects that hinder the development of an affirmative attitude towards the State, an attitude that is a *sine qua non* for democratic culture. In this, for example, Foucault's distinction between bio-politics and anatomo-politics will be neglected. The latter concerns the regulation of the individual and the former deals with the regulation of the population. In both cases it is about a new type of power that is not based on taking life, but on its promotion, strengthening, its multiplication. It deals with births, mortality, public health, etc. However, the constant in the

biopolitical analyses of social phenomena that is crucial for our analysis is the following thesis: the function of power is to control and manipulate bodies. What power strives for is not the "common good" or "justice", but to discipline the physical presence of the individual and the population as a whole.

Foucault sets for himself the goal of exploring the invisible forces of power relations, which, like cobwebs, pervade each of our lives. At a first glance, this is an agenda that stands in the tradition of the Enlightenment emancipatory project. After parting with the great totalitarian ideas, the role of thinking is to become conscious of the remnants of totalitarian practices, the so-called micro-fascisms, which are invisible from a bird's eye perspective. We will see, however, that this is not the case in the biopolitical critique of power. Biopolitics does not introduce a criterion that could distinguish between the hegemonic effects of power and a social arrangement in which the subject would be able to affirm himself. Free recognition is excluded from the start: in power relations the body is synonymous with passivity.

Therefore, biopolitics is merely the medium in which, in the postmodern jargon, the self-isolation of man from the world continues. It belongs to the tradition of weak thinking that cannot face and endure existence. In Hegel's words: "It (*the consciousness*. – R. S.) lacks force to externalize itself, the power to make itself a thing, and endure existence" (Hegel 1910: 667). Consequently, biopolitical critique of power is not a true critique. It is a manifestation of pre-existent "dogmatic" perceptions of a failed affirmation of man's existence within given social structures. I will examine this weakness further on in the paper.

## Marxist and biopolitical critique

Before launching into the problems of biopolitical discourse, it is necessary to first distinguish between two concepts of a critique of the democratic State. It is clear that the concept of biopolitics that defines man as a naked body

hinders the development of one's free, uncoerced recognition of the State. At a first glance, a similar, absolute asymmetry of power relations can be seen in Karl Marx's criticism of the bourgeois society. He writes about the

"formation of a class with radical chains, a class [...] which does not stand in one-sided opposition to the consequences but in all-sided opposition to the premises of the German political system [...] which is, in a word, the total loss of humanity" (Marx 1992: 256).

Despite the fact that the proletariat appears to be the closest to the production process, it is in fact totally excluded from it. This is even more so than with a slave, since a slave's death is already part of the calculation within the economy. As with the perspective of the biopolitical critique of power, institutions are something external and foreign to the proletariat:

"Your very ideas are but the outgrowth of the conditions of your bourgeois production and bourgeois property, just as your jurisprudence is but the will of your class made into a law for all, a will whose essential character and direction are determined by the economical conditions of existence of your class" (Marx, Engels 2014: 19).

But there is a radical difference between these two concepts. Marx's philosophy is at its core soteriological. It all leads to a – scientifically proven and materially necessary – end of the alienation in the act of production. Despite ample descriptions of human misery in the world, Marx's thoughts are cheerful and full of longing: "Let the ruling classes tremble at a Communistic revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win" (Marx, Engels 2014: 37). This perspective is completely absent from biopolitics. Power relations are not based on the "will of your class made into a law for all", but on a specific principle. Foucault explicitly removes the moment of will from the discussion of power-relations, which he succinctly summarizes in the exclamation, "the power does not exist!" He announces the shift in his research-approach in the following way:

"In other words, rather than asking ourselves what the sovereign looks like from on high, we should be trying to discover how multiple bodies, forces, energies, matters, desires, thoughts, and so on are gradually, progressively, actually and materially constituted as subjects, or as the subject" (Foucault 1997: 28).

Foucault often described the principle that organizes power-relations as a *discourse* that is *eo ipso* violence: "We must conceive the discourse as a violence which we do to things, or in any case as the practice which we impose to them; and it is in this practice that the events of discourse find the principle of their regularity" (Foucault 1981: 67). These regularities are what power needs so as to function. As a result, "Power is essentially that which represses. Power is that which represses nature, instincts, a class, or individuals" (Foucault 1997: 10). It is not about a sovereign or about his hegemonic will. Such *is* the nature of power! This is a principle which cannot be changed. Much as one cannot change the principles of nature. The creator of the "will made into a law for all" can be removed from the throne and there can at least be hope for change. Within biopolitics, resistance is futile, because the foreignness of the world does not stem from any centers of power. Therefore, it does not result in soteriological longing. But this is not its major weakness. In the period following the fall of the Berlin Wall, radical criticism of society by referring to the revolution would possibly even make it lose its plausibility. Drawing attention to hegemonic practices in a static, analytical way, appeals much more to the Spirit of the 21st century. Therefore, the concept of biopolitics is an extremely widespread instrument for the interpretation of social phenomena.

### **Biopolitics as a tautology**

There is also another reason to why the concept of biopolitics is so widespread. It is an extremely effective tool. This stems from the fact that its explaining of the social phenomena is not

explaining at all. It is a tautology. We will see that this explaining is merely a way of expressing the inability of consciousness to recognize itself in the world, to “endure the existence”. Biopolitical critique of power is oblivious to the fact that by explaining social phenomena it fails to distinguish between *explicandum* and *explicans*. In its judgments, it merely repeats a *moment* – isolated and fixed – of the phenomenon being explained. A moment that in fact belongs to each and every phenomenon.

Existence of every phenomenon is logically defined as something individual, i.e. as separated from another phenomenon. This condition is described by the principle of traditional ontology: *omnis determinatio est negatio*. Similarly, any regulation of social relations has a moment of negativity: the prohibition. Each “determination” of prescribed practices *eo ipso* also means the “negation”, i.e. prohibition of any behavior that is *different*. If the law says that all traffic must keep to the right side of the road, it implies that driving on the left side is not allowed. And so on. When Foucault points out that entities such as “culture”, “author”, “rules”, etc., do not enrich, as tradition would have it, but “dilute”, “eject”, etc., ways of speaking, it is as if he is kicking in an open door. To analyze the biopolitical interpretation of power relations, I wish to draw on two concepts from Hegel’s philosophy. The first one can be found in his *Phenomenology of Spirit*, in the chapter “Force and Understanding”, while the second one in *The Science of Logic* (original title in German: *Wissenschaft der Logik*, first edition between 1812 and 1816) in the chapter “Formal Ground”. The first concept analyzes the attempt of consciousness to explain the multitude of sensual phenomena with a single principle. After a failed attempt to organize the relationship between the one and the many within the domain of sensual perception itself, consciousness now seeks to achieve this by treating things as thought-entities (*Gedankendinge*). Thus the unity of sensual phenomena can be explained by the above-sensual world which is now the

“unconditioned universal” (Hegel 1910: 125). It is located “beyond” the sensual world, first appearing in the form of “force”, and later in the form of “laws”. This “beyond” is no longer something obvious; unlike the sensory multitude, it is accessible only through thought.

This line of thought, however, is not yet at the level of the notion: “but, on the other hand, consciousness is not yet the notion explicitly or for itself, and consequently it does not know itself in that reflected object” (Hegel 1910: 125). We are still far away from idealism. In other words, consciousness does not recognize itself in the objects and consequently places them as something contrary to itself. This shortcoming<sup>1</sup> will result in problems which will foil the plan of the consciousness to explain the sensory multitude using thought-entities. The main problem is that the carrier – the super-sensual object that is located “beyond” – is empty: “It is empty, for it is merely the nothingness of appearance, and positively the naked universal” (Hegel 1910: 138). As it turns out, all that can be said about the thought-entity is that it is *not*-sensation. But it was meant to be its truth. Consciousness stumbles into tautologies, because what appears in the multiplicity of the phenomena can only be “explained” with its repetition, in the form of (in an empty beyond) reflected universal law. For example, opium’s soporific power is due to its ingredients, which have a soporific effect.

Hegel emphasizes the fact that the empty beyond is not unknowable:

“owing to reason being too short-sighted, or limited, or whatever you care to call it [...], but on account simply of the nature of the case, because in the void there is nothing known, or, putting it from the point of view of the other side, because it’s very characteristic lies in being beyond consciousness” (Hegel 1910: 138, 139).

<sup>1</sup> The *Phenomenology of Spirit* as such is dedicated to the explication of the reasons why this ontological concept is wrong. Given the vastness of the subject, we cannot delve into it in the present discussion.

Empty packaging is launched towards the skyline of thought, which is supposed to “explain” events unfolding on the ground. Therefore, it is easy to “fill it up with dreamings, appearances, produced by consciousness itself” (Hegel 1910: 139). This is the mechanism through which biopolitics analyzes the power. It understands itself as the exploration of the *hidden* laws of power: “power is tolerable only on condition that it mask a substantial part of itself” (Foucault 1978: 86).<sup>2</sup> In other words, only on condition that it is concealed “beyond”. But this revealed law (“discourse is a violence”), is really nothing more than the isolation and fixation of the moment of each and every regulated relationship (*omnis determinatio est negatio*), which the biopolitical analysis of power first relocates into the empty beyond and then “unmasks” as the sinister mechanism of power.

A similar explanation, although occupying a very different place in the system of Hegel’s philosophy, is found in *The Science of Logic* in the chapter “Formal Ground”. There, it relates to explaining the phenomena in which

“the assigning of a ground remains a mere formalism, the empty tautology of repeating in the form of immanent reflection, of essentiality, the same content already present in the form of immediate existence considered as posited” (Hegel 2010: 304).

Example:

“If to the question why does this man travel to the city, one were to give as ground that there is in the city an attractive force impelling him to it, this kind of answer would be deemed

brainless – yet it is the kind of answer which is sanctioned in the sciences” (Hegel 2010: 304, 305).

The problem of this method of explanation is not that it is wrong, but rather, that it is *always* true. It cannot be wrong, because it takes one element out of the phenomenon and declares it as its principle. And this is why this way of explaining phenomena is inevitably “successful”:

“It is that on the basis of which that existence is supposed to be understood; but, conversely, it is inferred from the latter and is understood from it. [...] And since on this procedure the ground is arranged to fit the phenomenon, and its determinations depend on the latter, the phenomenon unhindered flows smoothly out of the ground with full wind in its sails” (Hegel 2010: 305).

### *Ex vacuo quolibet*

In order to show how biopolitical analysis of social phenomena is always successful, i.e., arbitrary, let me give an example from Foucault’s work *Discipline and Punishment: The Birth of the Prison* (original title in French: *Surveiller et punir: Naissance de la prison*, first edition in 1975). With the attention of a historical anthropologist, Foucault studied the written sources of punitive practices in the modern age. He noticed that the end of the 18th century, there was a major change in punishment practices. Penalties become more humane, they were enforced behind the walls of institutions, torture as a component of criminal proceedings was abandoned. Cruel punishment was replaced by the principle of hermetic control, epitomized by the ideal of the Panopticon. This took the place of the death penalty as the sovereign’s power right to punish.

We know that the changes in power relations described above are historically legitimized at the level of ontology. These are extremely far-reaching shifts dictated by the development of the entire history of metaphysics. What

<sup>2</sup> Elsewhere, he points out: “To say that the problem of sovereignty is the central problem of right in Western societies means that the essential function of the technique and discourse of right is to dissolve the element of domination in power and to replace that domination, which has to be reduced or masked, with two things: the legitimate rights of the sovereign on the one hand, and the legal obligation to obey on the other. The system of right is completely centered on the king; it is, in other words, ultimately an elimination of domination and its consequences” (Foucault 1997: 26).

commands a different principle of punishment can be summarized by two points. First is the creation of the conditions necessary for the concept of human dignity to become legally and politically effective. Dignity as a constitutional determinant of a human being is not an invention of the Enlightenment. Christian anthropology, with the concept of *imago dei* and the godlike humanity, is the definition of humanity through human dignity. Similarly, Stoic Cosmopolitanism, even before Christianity, declared the absolute equality of all thinking creatures. At the same time, Stoics were still owners of slaves and even Thomas Aquinas justified slavery in the High Middle Ages. The obstacle existed at the level of ontology, the understanding of man's place in the wholeness of being. Therefore, the idea of equality or dignity remained legally and politically ineffective, in Stoicism as well as in Christianity. Each time it tried to leave the realm of spirituality and approach the legal and political reality, it "burst into flames like a comet entering the atmosphere" (Höffe 1998: 118).

It was not until the Cartesian turn that a new understanding of the (social) world was made possible, in which the subject held a central role. This is described in Thomas Hobbes' philosophy, where all social structures are created by a willing act of the subject. With the social contract, *ex nihilo*. From then on, the world belongs *entirely* to man. Now, the transition of the idea of dignity into the legal-political reality is no longer obstructed by the Christian ontology of the two worlds. The discrepancy between idea and reality, for the first time in thousands of years, can give birth to a tension that has a revolutionary tendency. The release of this tension comes with the French Revolution.

At the same time, Hobbes' philosophy gave rise to another circumstance that called for a change in the practice of punishment. With the social contract, the individual is placed at the very core of the State. The power relationship can no longer be a transitive, one-way relationship between the sovereign and his subjects.

Henceforth, the power relationship is a reflexive relationship: power is merely the emanation of *my* will, which has empowered someone to govern, via the social contract. The *volonté générale* could not be what it is without the will of each and every individual being confirmed through it. Therefore, the power of the state is no longer something that is alien, foreign or hostile in the eyes of the individual. Now, everyone can say: I am the State.

All this – combined with the consciousness of the subject that he has the right to be satisfied in his own particularity – required a different kind of state, and a different kind of power-relationship. The authors who predict, derive and reflect upon this transition – of which modern democracy is the heir – are Hobbes, Samuel von Pufendorf, John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Immanuel Kant and many others. In the field of punishment, one author who deserves special mentioning is Cesare Beccaria, the Italian Enlightenment philosopher, who has transferred the concepts of Enlightenment directly into the criminal procedure and made the greatest contribution to the eradication of torture.

What are Foucault's views on these transitions? The concept of dignity and of the subject's participation in power, the abolition of torture and of the death penalty as a spectacle – at first glance, all of this opposes the premise of biopolitics, according to which the power relation is merely manipulation of bodies. But this so far does not present a problem for the tautology of the biopolitical analysis, and its premise is easily confirmed. Foucault urges us not to be naive:

"We must first rid ourselves of the illusion that penalty is above all (if not exclusively) a means of reducing crime and that, in this role, according to the social forms, the political systems or beliefs, it may be severe or lenient, tend towards expiation of obtaining redress, towards the pursuit of individuals or the attribution of collective responsibility" (Foucault 1977: 24).

The only function of discipline is "to increase the possible utility of individuals"

(Foucault 1977: 210). The control system, which seems to be more humane, is merely a more effective method for manipulating bodies:

“As soon as power gave itself the function of administering life, its reason for being and the logic of its exercise – and not the awakening of humanitarian feelings – made it more and more difficult to apply the death penalty” (Foucault 1978: 138).

To put it differently: “How could power exercise its highest prerogatives by putting people to death, when its main role was to ensure, sustain, and multiply life, to put this life in order?” (Foucault 1978: 138).

Is Foucault wrong? No, he is right! Because it is simply not possible for him not to be right. Any shift in the practice of punishment would easily confirm the premise of biopolitics. If we were to abolish prisons – as Foucault suggests we should – one could argue that this would be in the interest of power, as more bodies would be available to be part of the production process. Or, if we were to go to the other extreme and if, one day, crime completely disappeared, biopolitics would view this as proof that the body finally broke down under power’s pressure. Tautological explanations can cope with each and every situation. The arbitrary nature of these kinds of explanations becomes even more apparent if we try and apply it at the opposite end. Biopolitics isolates the negative moment in power relations, its “suppression” of bodies. We can easily put ourselves on the other side and, from the power relation – whatever it may be – isolate the opposing, affirmative moment. In this way, we can once again prove that power strives for what is “good” and that it is there to “protect” some interests or “pursue” some goals, etc.

This is Slavoj Žižek’s strategy in relation to Stalinism, especially when he wants to protect the differentiation between Stalinism and Nazism. He describes the difference between Nazism and Communism as follows:

“Stalinism still conceived itself as part of the Enlightenment tradition, within which truth is

accessible to any rational man, no matter how depraved he is, which is why he is subjectively responsible for his crimes, in contrast to the Nazis, for whom the guilt of the Jews is direct fact of their biological constitution” (Žižek 2009: 289).

Regardless of the millions of victims, the gulags, the barbaric practices of the authorities, we can still isolate the fact that no one was killed or tortured out of *particular* motives, as an affirmative moment. In other words, *anyone* could find themselves in their place. From here on, the path towards proving the “humane” core of Stalinist horror is open. The universality of communism, according to Žižek, is evident for example in the fact that after every speech, Joseph Stalin “stands up and joins others applauding” (Žižek 2009: 291). Or in the fact that he was sent a birthday card from a gulag, or the fact that the Soviet Union had more spies than Nazi Germany, because the people were more moral and did not spontaneously spy on others.

This is a maneuver that at first glance sounds compelling. But now we find ourselves within a horizon that the Sophists had once experienced. The “Antilogies” of Protagoras are just that: in every phenomenon, we can find a moment that can be seen as “beneficial”, “good”, etc. Or *vice versa*. The arbitrary *pro-et-contra*-freedom in every situation. In an environment dominated by negative attitudes towards the state, such a maneuver is effective as “proof”. All we have to do is to use a thought-operation that Hegel describes in his *Phenomenology of Spirit*, where the “dreamings, appearances, produced by consciousness itself” (Hegel 1910: 139) are moved into empty and “hidden” beyond. In this way “the ground is arranged to fit the phenomenon, and its determinations depend on the latter, the phenomenon unhindered flows smoothly out of the ground with full wind in its sails” (Hegel 2010: 305). These can be used to “explain” anything with anything. You could say, *ex vacuo quolibet*.

## Hypocrisy as a new State-Constituting virtue

The *proton-pseudos* of the biopolitical critique of power is the isolation and fixation of the moments of a phenomenon. In this way, it defines all three elements of power relations – both parties and the relationship in itself. It takes the basic hierarchy of traditional practical philosophy, the human being comprehended as the *animal rationale*. The conflict between the animal and the rational parts of the relationship is now exacerbated to the extreme. Thus it is separated into two parts. Power is mere rationality, without a body: "power does not exist!" On the other hand, we have a man who is just a body without rationality. Therefore, the recognition (*die Anerkennung*) of institutions is excluded from the start, ensuring their irreducible foreignness. And the *relationship* between the rational (disembodied) power and the physical (thoughtless) man is defined by the formula *omnis determinatio es negatio*: discourse is dilution, violence. To summarize, the power-relation is invisible, a *logos* of subjugation of bodies that is not located anywhere.

This is a pattern that has been hugely successful, because of its efficiency in the analysis of social phenomena. It is easily used to carry out "a critical" analysis of any sphere of coexistence. It easily allows someone to "unmask" the truth behind power relations and thereby to establish oneself as a free and autonomous person, excluded from the "conspiracy" of the world. But this is a worthless kind of freedom, freedom at the expense of the world and one's own satisfaction in it. Hegel writes:

"So far it (*the conscience*. – R. S.) has been concerned merely with its independence and freedom; it has sought to save and keep itself for itself at the expense of the world or its own actuality, both of which appeared to it to involve the denial of its own essential nature" (Hegel 1910: 223).

It is, first and foremost, a freedom without a world, which translates into one's inability to

endure existence, an elitist withdrawal from the unthinking herd.

It is hard to imagine a more destructive attitude for the *Gesinnung* of trust in the State. If the underlying agenda of power is the manipulation of bodies and man is seen merely as a piece of meat, a citizen will inevitably keep the state organism outside of himself. He will not allow for a place where the state exists to be created in his consciousness. However, this shutting-out is not a hundred percent complete. This is where, once again, the difference between biopolitics and the theory of ideology comes to the fore. Although Marx outlines the world of the capitalist economy with darker hues, his thought is rather more positive. It is a secular gospel that brings hope and longing.

This is a sentiment unknown to biopolitics. The position of man is not determined by a foreign will, but by an objective mechanism. Discourse *is* violence and it always will be. This is a sentiment of existential bitterness, grimness and spitefulness. It stems from the belief in the *coexistence* of evil in the world and its inevitability. This is where a new virtue in relation to the State is born. Revolutionary rebellion no longer makes sense; the state should be accepted and its rules observed. But not with devotion. Not with enthusiasm. This is the only way to protect ourselves from spiritual collaboration. A judge, for example, must only come to work, nothing more. A clerk must sit in his office for eight hours, and nothing more. A citizen must fulfill his duties, but his involvement must not include active citizenship.

Biopolitics develops a new State-Constituting virtue, which inspires neither democratic trust nor revolutionary resistance. A citizen should not *trust* the State organism, or leap blindfolded into coexistence, participating in its enjoyment. By doing so, he would lose his "critical" attitude towards the world. On the other hand, resistance is also not an option and neither is tactical conformity that will attempt subversive action at a later stage. Man is caught in the destructive duality of evil

and its inevitability. Today, the only possible attitude towards the state organism is *hypocrisy*: respecting State institutions, but always making sure not to fulfill one's duties sincerely. This is a *Gesinnung* that does not allow the State to exist in the minds of citizens, but at the same time, it is never banished from them either. It is kept somewhere in between, somewhere between life and death.

## Conclusions

I started out by analyzing the emptiness of biopolitical discourse as applied concretely to the problem of democratic culture. The difference between states in their capability to carry out the State's tasks is closely linked with a different level of trust citizens have in it. A low level of trust in the institution is not necessary a consequence of rational criticism. Western metaphysics has long tradition of mistrusting the state and law, and biopolitical discourse is one of the concepts of rejecting the recognition of the state in advance. This is reflected in its tautological structure. After differentiating this critique from the Marxist critique of the state, biopolitical discourse was subjected to a notional analysis, with reference to two of Hegel's concepts that describe the mechanism of empty explanations and demonstrate the arbitrary consequences of such an approach. Foucault's arbitrary focusing on the negative part of the dialectics was illustrated with the example of his writing on penalization. The last section looks at the dire consequences of the biopolitical discourse for democratic culture in general, showing how hypocrisy is its only possible outcome.

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## „REIŠKINYS IR ANTJUSLINIS PASAULIS“: BIOPOLITINĖS GALIOS KRITIKOS TUŠTUMAS

Rok SVETLIČ

Šiame straipsnyje gvildinamas klausimas – specifinis aiškinamasis biopolitinio diskurso mechanizmas. Remiantis dviem Georgo Wilhelmo Friedricho Hegelio filosofijos konceptais, įrodinėjama, kad šio tipo diskursas nesukuria jokios hermeneutinės pridėtinės vertės. Pirmasis konceptas randamas *Dvasios fenomenologijoje*, skyriuje „Jėga ir intelektas: reiškiny ir antjuslinis pasaulis“, o antrasis – *Logikos mokslo* skyriuje „Formalusis pagrindas“. Parodoma, kad biopolitinės galios kritikos atžvilgiu nesama perskyros tarp *explicandum* ir *explicans* – iš esmės ji įveda tautologiją. Iš interpretuojamo kompleksinio fenomeno pastaroji išskiria tik vieną dalyką (tai – negatyvumo momentas), kuris iš tikrųjų yra bendras visiems fenomenams. Vėliau šis dalykas tampa reguliatyviuoju interpretuojamo fenomeno dinamikos principu. Šio aiškinamojo metodo problema – ne tai, kad jis būtų klaidingas, o tai, kad jis visada teisingas. Tautologija – tai visada tuščia tiesa. Šiame straipsnyje nuo pradžios iki pabaigos biopolitinis diskursas suprantamas iš pasitikėjimo valstybės organizmu, kaip svarbiausia valstybės kūrimo vertybe demokratinės kultūros sąlygomis, perspektyvos. Straipsnio pabaigoje parodoma, kad biopolitika tėra būdas išeiti anapus mintijimo apie pasaulį, neišvengiamai kliudančio valstybės labai pasirūpinti svarbiausiais populiacijos poreikiais.

**Reikšminiai žodžiai:** biopolitika, tuštumas, Georgas Wilhelmas Friedrichas Hegelis, Michelis Foucault, tautologija.