

BAUDRILLARD VS. FOUCAULT: REVOLVING CONCEPTIONS OF POWER IN FOUCAULTIAN WRITINGS

DANIEL DE OLIVEIRA GOMES¹

TRANSLATED BY FELIPE ZOBARAN

ABSTRACT: This article aims at investigating, specifically, the critical fixation of author Jean Baudrillard against the idea of power as defended by Michel Foucault. The later – an exponent author from post-structuralism, often studied both by Literature and Law specialists – explored the concept of “micro-physical power”, which sees that all the legal or political discourses could not handle any longer all the possible practices of power acted upon the social subjects, broadening the concept of power in several publications and putting it in the dimension of a new approach. Baudrillard, on the other hand, considers power as a doomed value that is to disappear due to the volatility of politics. We tried to analyze the ideas in the discourse of Baudrillard in the book in which he debated with the ideas of Foucault, *Oublier Foucault*, in which there was an attempt of dismantling the literature by Foucault about power, explaining this literature as, itself, a spiral generator of power.

KEYWORDS: Foucault; Baudrillard; power; writing; literature.

“This writing (Foucault) is too beautiful to be true”
(Jean Baudrillard)

BAUDRILLARD VS. FOUCAULT

We tried to connect the original names of Michel Foucault and Jean Baudrillard as unique characters into the entire “group” of French philosophers that worked with power since the 1960s until today. One of the

¹ Doctor degree in Literature at Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina (UFSC), with internship in Paris. Professor of Literature at Universidade Estadual de Ponta Grossa (UEPG), in the Department of Post-Graduation in Language, Identity and Subjectivity. Ponta Grossa, PR, Brazil. CV Lattes: <http://lattes.cnpq.br/0593810363013174>. E-mail: setepratas@hotmail.com

best-known sentences by Michel Foucault, which went viral on the internet, is “Do not ask who I am and do not ask me to remain the same.” This sentence illustrates that Foucault wouldn’t want to be subdued to a device which would keep him as a prisoner inside this “group”. In order to reach the roots of these philosophers we have to go back to past. Any types of studies about power related ideas since the post-structuralism need to be aware they reflect several indomitable questions, as well as a feeling of change that was vibrating in the 1970s. Students’ protests, labor riots, against culture protests, as well as prisoners protests which resulted in a creation of groups like GIP (Prison Information Groups). These groups represented movements of great impact for the social universe and for the conservative academic universe in the sixties in France. All the movements disturbed the country as well as the static notion of the thinkers from this time. It came as a definition of immutability of the academic figures that became impossible to maintain as they were before. It means that it was impossible to stay the same if people took Foucault as a mote. That is, there were historical situations that were so intense that unchained the “homo-academics” of the old dean’s office, showing power as intellectual practice. Both Foucault and Baudrillard considered being responsible for the revolution of the intellectual subjectivity in Europe. Power as a sociological view, since this time, started to be seen as a new practice with new magnitude, which nowadays we see as away from different contexts. We take for granted things that were assimilated. We went over all that was restructured related to the social genesis of what is humanity all about. For example, for Foucault in the specific case of a meaning for humans, it is actually an inexistent definition because this is a question with no definition and yet was distinctive from that time. We inherit these types of perspectives which shaped decades.

The goals of this paper are to investigate the relations and differences between these two philosophers, the similar influences in which their productions related to power and the meaning for the society (taking into

consideration their speeches). Relations and differences specially among authors which sometimes are considered to have the same views and sometimes distant views. What we will try to investigate are the disparities among them when it comes to the topic of power.

We will search, in parallel, for the multiplicity of processes and the constitutions that for times are related to each other in relation to the idea of power they defend. When, for instance, Foucault alludes the population, he is not necessarily referring to subjects in a territory, but referring to a bio political objective, meaning that for the mass it would be under an autonomous control of relations. When power is defined as a biological multiplicity it becomes bio power (a general theme, opened or where usually the author is misunderstood, we can guarantee), power becomes beyond a disciplinary level, also an organic level of control. In short, he shows that there is always over crossing power of the subject and that power is not compressed into the law level but into disciplinary mechanics or bio politics.

When, for example, Baudrillard described the “shadows of silent majorities” and he refers to the population, exploring the mass concept as neutral, he does not claim that mass is something without social energies. Quite the opposite, for Baudrillard, mass would be full of social energies, expecting the right moment to star the story and their power status. That is, there is an over crossing of power in the subject, anyway. More to say, there is a mass power waiting to be revealed. In the same way, we cannot say that for Baudrillard power lies only at the law level (nomos). Both authors show a purifying obsession of power - being that in the virulent degradation of history pointed by Baudrillard, in the corruption, in the advertising pollution, social, ethics, racial, etc.; being that in eugenic policies, hygienic, prophylactic over masses, when life becomes an element of a politician, for Foucault – André Duarte (2006), in the analysis *Bio politics and resistance*, would remind the Nazism and Stalinism as the pinnacle of this fact, in a foucaultian bio politic way.

However, if we measure, both authors as creators of enemy enunciations, thinking about the pure essence in the relation between mass and power, we could on the other hand reinforce the differences between them. We could say that while Foucault articulates man as the one who functions as a subject inside of society, in short as supporting actor in the spontaneous history play of life, Baudrillard would be quite the opposite, where the mass is an abortion of the play, of the stereotypes with no political will. We could say, so, that under Foucault's view, mass is purely power order where the subject plays and in Baudrillard's definition is pure disorder of power, an unclear subject (offstage), which could be a huge interpretative mistake even if the latter brought to attention the fact that mass is never organized, it is non sense, chaotic, failure of power and conduction crystalized of directions. Both authors work with the idea of social power in a way many times similar, this is what this article proposes as rearing. For example, when they posit that subjects of masses don't pose a fixed essence, not being masses, many times, mystified, repressed in their revolutionary spontaneity, because, being honest the masses are deceived, manipulated by power (Foucault would define it as repressed by an ideology). They would, for both authors, be gatopic and not utopic. That is, the masses have no representative nature, but are created by devices of simulation and acting of subjects (under "technologies of power", for Foucault). That is how Foucault and Baudrillard touched, sometimes, the topic of how contrastive present and past are in the Renaissance, considering the evidence that then it assumed the more of the form of a game, aesthetics, theater, painting, a search for virtue, and not something true that sent it back to a subject. Only after the French Revolution, social life triumphed and gained power over politics, and, then, the "people", as a new character, entered the stage, newly figured as a supposed political will in the theater of power, something that Baudrillard criticizes, showing that Marxism, for example, started off the end of politics, that is, when politics become a "mirror of the social life". Well, this article does not focus properly in numbering the similar ideas developed by both authors, but to register how we analyze punctual aspects in the matter of power analysis.

And, further on, we analyze the ideas of Baudrillard's discourse in the book he used to oppose to Foucault's ideas, *Oublier Foucault*, in which he tried to dismantle foucaultian writings about power, explaining this literature by itself as a generative spiral of power.

In an interview published in the Brazilian newspaper *Correio do Povo*, from the city of Porto Alegre, one can read Baudrillard discussing his criticism to the foucaultian idea of power:

Has the analysis about power made by Foucault convinced you?

Jean Baudrillard – No. I have never considered it an appropriate analysis. For me the fundament of power has disappeared due to the volatilization of politics. It was useless, thus, to search for it in microscopic happenings of the daily basis. This is also a correction I propose over the microphysics of desire by Deleuze and Guattari. It is all very beautiful, even though it corresponds to an ulterior stage of the same logic, when we are, in my opinion, besides it all, which can be seen by watching the development of the political scenario, a dead zone, to which no one seems interested anymore, and even references to Berlusconi and audiovisual power disappear with ease. The political sphere is over. We deal not with the perpetuation of power under a new form, but with its disappearance. The conception by Foucault was definitive and too broad to be true. We had to go though it or take a new way. I tried to do it, not against Foucault, and I actually considered defending his ideas when “political correctness” censored him regarded a position in relation to Iran (Baudrillard, 2013).

Has Foucault, in your view, made criticism to modernity or to capitalism? This question makes sense considering that many Marxist thinkers, after the fall of Soviet Socialism, rediscovered Foucault, who was ignored before that, and assumed a good deal of his positions to themselves.

Jean Baudrillard – The regretful ones are many. Post-modern thinkers claimed the inheritance of Foucault. Marxist thinkers followed new ideas as well. It is all part of the order of recovering things and fraudulent intellectual operations. But Foucault did not build criticism of capitalism; it is more interesting than that. As we see ourselves no longer in a typical situation of capitalism, we lack an instrument of adapted reflection, not to post capitalism, but to new data, as we are leaving a system of production, of poverty, of lack of external reality. We need to rediscover our way of analyzing extreme phenomena. The strategy of Foucault was a paradox and, however, we seem to need something even

more strange in that paradox. As for situationism, which was already very strong, it has lost validity for being too extreme, of a critical Subject, without explaining the paradox. We need an objective extremism that is developed straight out from things. This is my problem. Foucault does not inspire me currently (Baudrillard, 2013).

To a certain extent, Baudrillard defends in a lonely but persistent way that the idea there should be in the production by Foucault and Deleuze was the “disappearance of power”, and not the creation of a new mode for assisting power². But he highlights the fact that he does not want to position himself against Foucault, he shows he understands well the possibility of a paradoxical order that he raises as an extreme strategy, even if he considers his own methodology as connected to deeper dives in the paradox of present. Foucault does not inspire him in present days, and has actually never inspired him, by the simple fact that his problem is of a different

² Here I recall my book *Dissonâncias de Foucault (Dissonances of Foucault)*, in which I analyze the paradox of the Foucaultian militance: “In 1961, while defending his doctorate dissertation *The history of madness in the classical age*, when he is hugely and momentarily successful; soon he meets Deleuze and enters the editorial council of the journal started up by Bataille, *Critique*, when – 3 years before releasing *Words and things* – he published *The birth of clinic*. Deleuze was to him the window for a new theoretical complicity, and they soon published together the French edition of the Works of Nietzsche. However, in all that time, when in Foucault there is already a dimension of an original work whose basic guidelines will mark all his future production, one cannot highlight a more intense militant participation of the author. If there was such a thing, it was more of a combatant position than the one of a *gauche* activist. By considering himself as a “diagnostician of the present”, Michel Foucault apprehends from Nietzsche an illegal, primal attitude towards philosophy. In a way that the deed in question, within a group of analyses, is the act of looking at oneself unattached of their time, in attempt to give back to the present its own pathologies and instabilities, which we already know. / The first paradox of engagement in Foucault is in the theoretical activism with the ontological question of language and *épistémè* themselves. Foucault does not want to immobilize the past, he worries with defining a new ethical concern in relation to minorities, whose practices, either religious or sexual, are the “target” of memorization, in moments when memorizing is moralizing. Italo Tronca, in an article entitled “Foucault e a linguagem delirante da memória” (“Foucault and the delirious language of memory”), asks himself what is the difference between history and memory in Foucault, or, what is the place occupied by delirium in this difference? He explains that memory is usually in the order (disorder) of a delirious language – involuntary memory. History, usually, is a place of erasing memory as delirious language to give way to a continuous language – knowledge memory. He explains, also, that for Foucault language is “pure transgression”, even though it is not a psychopathological category as delirium, it is delirious. In the ontological problem under the limitation of linguistic nature, the central matter lies in the fact that the strangeness of existence is an effect of the strangeness of the signs, the madness of language. For Foucault: the strange existence of language, say, excluded from matter – not a thing, not fully ‘significant’ – becomes a constitutive part of the Being” (Gomes, 2012, p. 103-104).

order, let us say, of an order that still cannot distrust/avoid completely the dimension of politics. See: by propagating the banner of the end of politics is Baudrillard still reflecting about a political search, whereas Foucault does micro politics? Or, if not reflecting about, he actually ended up adding a part of the simulation of politics? The same politics he states has disappeared, but that throughout his writings about Foucault seems to demand reappearance. Anyhow, we understand a certain extremism of questions in Baudrillard which is more objective, material. Regardless of the possibility of believing one can read in the complete works of Baudrillard a foucaultian inspiration, against his own words, in order to dismantle him the same way he tried to dismantle Foucault, we have to respect this logic of an objective extremism he imposes as action. However, I do not believe Foucault had or has a less effective intellectual action, sociologically-wise, than Baudrillard.

What we see in the countless books by Baudrillard – such as *The transparency of evil*, *The system of objects*, *America*, *Simulacra and simulation*, *Screened out* or *The shadow of silent majorities* – is that they are nothing more than a collection of seductive essays that, similarly to Foucault, seem to be obsessed with the present, with the fragmentation of power in present time, and in an apparently fascinating way, anarchic and full of an intern logic that is as powerful as the censorship that he proposes versus Foucault. It is in this aspect that, from here-now, I suggest a fixation on the criticism there is against Foucault's writings, in order to think not only to what extent it is valid, but to find within the same criticism its own nodes and bonds, strengths and coercions, against a view of power that is in Foucault. This I do in order to read Baudrillard versus Foucault as well as one next to the other. Both face-to-face. Let us guard this kind of “enemy friendship” (as would say Blanchot) there is amongst them. To do so, obviously, we have to check, thoroughly, the book in which, as a French intellectual analyzing the complexity of the idea of power in those 1970s, he articulates in distance to the myth Foucault – in the work entitled *Oublier Foucault*.

GENEALOGICAL CULPABILIZATION OF FOUCAULT

Baudrillard opposes to possible limitations in the foucaultian idea of “power”. Better stated, he criticizes the need for re-updating the analysis of power since Foucault. If the philosopher, so silent and at the same time with a megaphone in his hands, on the one hand, said power is not vertically located in an institution, in a structural conception, etc., on the other hand, showed power as a strategic situation that regulates the social field. However, for Baudrillard, who knows this idea comes from an extremely functional view in the context of production of an age of extremism. It would be functional, considering whether it was trying to escape from reality, towards hyper-reality, forgetting to face power as power even if in order to virtualize itself as a parallel idea to the present itself. In such a hiatus, in such a gap, Foucault would remain, by abandoning the past to the past itself, the old power still propagating, unbalancing, in a paradoxal, unarticulated way. It is not so invisible, fragmented, as Foucault wanted, it is, however, more visible than ever as the climax of its thoroughly analyzed end. And it is not a moral power anymore, but a power of catastrophe, the catastrophe of the endless power. So, this is what happens when Baudrillard says that “the political terrain is over. We don’t deal with the perpetuation of power under a new form, but with its disappearance”.

Even if “powdered”, “moleculized”, read by a microscopic, genealogic point of view, power in Foucault, according to this significant criticism, is an exaggerate conception, analyzed and framed within a historic polarity, structuring, transmitting itself erroneously, with an unsurpassable link:

Desire and intensity remain as ideas/*force*, power in Foucault remains, even if dismantled, a structural idea, an impassable polar idea, perfect in its genealogy, unexplainable in its presence, insurmountable even though it constitutes a kind of latent denunciation, wholesome in each one of its microscopic points or dots (Baudrillard, 2001, p. 55).

For Baudrillard, genealogy as a method in Foucault is a utopia still, which ignores the question that power is about to die. A death that makes it propagate in silence. But, what does Baudrillard mean when he says that power is not only “powdered” but also “powdery”? What is this luminous

power that is mined by a reversion, a death, that Foucault could not see genealogically? Baudrillard, in *The transparency of evil*, proposes that power is anything that passes through the masses and puts them inside an equal zone, swampy, that forces them to reject politics, to reject power. He said that “power is fundamented in aversion” (1990, p. 81). It is in this point the way that Baudrillard conserves the idea of power includes a certain obscenity that Foucault denies? There is an evil in power that Baudrillard observes as anything subject to being put in an aversion tactics, but that in Foucault cannot be done like that. Baudrillard conserves evil by seeing in Foucault a dissimulation of power that is not something abominable, so it is not power specifically anymore. It seems to me that power to Baudrillard; we want it or not, is always promiscuous.

Even if, for Foucault, genealogy represented a research against globalizing, memorializing discourses, analyzed with hierarchic instances of knowledge – in the objective of, by fighting it, reactivating memories that are local, un-continuous, etc. –, the author of *Oublier Foucault* sees in this method a mere return, maybe a positivistic one, of a device that, even though revolutionary, continues to be centralizing, filled with effects of power. In Baudrillard, promiscuity still exists in the synergy of politics, in the collective poisoning of the masses. He sees, so, a damned part of Foucault, in his culpability, regarding a certain denial of political moral, as if it has already finished or did not exist. Baudrillard talks about “trans politics”, or that element that gets wrecked in a world where evil, unable to be announced, simulates its absence, its ghostliness, when it is actually everywhere. On the other hand, the masses, for him, this which was called “masses” and that grew in obscurity of politics, like a virus to politics, constitute a secret part of power, even if lacking any essence. The masses let themselves, precisely, be thought of as alienated, in second place, and, contrarily, this is the superiority of the masses. Baudrillard attempted to evaluate, in this aspect, the question of alterity: “The secret of the other is that they are never myself and that I only exist because of the fatal declination of something that comes from another place (1990, p. 175). The masses have no self-will; they no longer have anything with the extradition

of politics. The extradition of the other is a mistaken Christian utopia, which constantly makes itself present in contemporary times, when the individual becomes responsible for their own will, by their own responsibility, servant of a power of the self (a “care for the self”?). In this subject, Baudrillard sees that the genealogical method might underestimate the fact that in every relation of power there is a dynamics of alterity. As a consequence, genealogy does not have so much of a sense, and is still an instrument that engineers power:

I continue to think that the constructivism of the thought of Foucault, even if too critical, in its connection to Nietzsche, has produced an extreme reflection, which is still an instrument of intellectual power. He made an excellent analysis of power, but ended up being the very incarnation of power (Baudrillard, 2013).

As it is known, genealogy as a method works from dispersion, thus, it cannot position itself in the old continuous line of history. Judith Revel, when diagramming some essential concepts of Foucault, cannot avoid mentioning genealogy as an idea that is not a simple empiricism. For her: “the genealogic method is, hence, an attempt of excluding the subject of historic knowledges, that is, making them capable of opposing and fighting against the *order of the discourse* (Revel, 2004, p. 52).

Criticizing an excess of apolitical determination in Foucault is comprehensible, as in this moment of a second Foucault, less archaeological and more concerned with power relations over the bodies, naturally the foucaultian objectives are more related to the will of instituting a vision that is not deceived with the old models of historic analysis. That is, Foucault wanted more to re-politize the politics of power than to support a politics of power (as malevolently Baudrillard suggests). But such genealogy has always been, somehow, present in the author. Thus, Baudrillard walks by the shadow of the other, blaming him for determined genealogical empirism, as if it were like that, as if it were acceptable to exclude Nietzsche from the inspiration of Foucault; while, as we know well, his own investigative work could not have an effect if we still saw power with the eyes of the old materialist analysis. The one who forgets Foucault is, thus, Baudrillard, even unconsciously attacking his memory, all the time, by producing his sociologic reading of the era of extremism. Baudrillard flies, completely, from the context in which the author was in his time, under a

defined and important mission for the philosophical intellectuality, even though it is coincident to historical and social aspects that have influenced other different sociologic and legal theories. The escape of a coercive speech, in that time of power analysis, was a shocking posture that needed to be frontal. In a different way, Deleuze, while understanding this context, told us that: the passage from knowledge to power, in the hall of interests of Foucault, was not only about a sudden thematic alteration, but a complete innovation of archives on the relations of strength, on the dimension of power.

I believe that Baudrillard ends up demanding from Foucault a logic that cannot be specified, at least, in two senses. Firstly, in the sense that this criticism is only assumed within the logic of Baudrillard himself under the shadow of Foucault. He blames Foucault for a position (less frontal) that could never be of a Nietzschean character, thus, putting itself in the dimension of power of discourse that Foucault himself only denies. Then, in the sense that, within that context of creation of conditions of post-structuralism, the search of Foucault was to surpass dialectic or revolutionary, avant-garde theories that had no effects anymore, both for practical and for theoretical matters. So, for example, Foucault has never revealed himself as an anarchist, openly.

Why would Foucault feel guilty for mirroring the idea of power he describes? Well, how is it possible to demand traces of structurability in foucaultian writings when Baudrillard criticizes exactly the generalization that comes up with post-structuralism? One should consider that *Oublier Foucault* was produced before the 1980s and already manifests a perspective of questions (such as the catastrophe of reality, hyper-reality, transparency, etc) that will mark his work in the future. And, crescently, the production of Baudrillard insists on an isolated dimension of analyses that deal both with an investigation of old aberrations in the present as well as by new external phenomena. However, so, what he does, blaming Foucault, is less of aniquilating the genealogic intellectuality of the author and more of creating conditions of trying to see him in the extremity of his own discourse. Such conditions are of total responsibility of Baudrillard, and nor

of Foucault, to me. The blame is more of Baudrillard's. He prefers to face we are no longer in a period of production of power, but of pure reproduction, in an ultra-real context, of a total prosthesis. However, also in my opinion, he forgets the relevance of the debate that Foucault opens up from his own commission as an intellectual and the anarchy that his idea of power established in tradition itself.

ANARCHY AGAINST AN ANARCHIC KNOWLEDGE

However, we are back to an old question, why has Foucault never called himself an anarchist? Let us see. Margarete Rago starts her book *Foucault, história & anarquismo (Foucault, history and anarchism)* with words from Deleuze:

Believing in the world is something that we lack; we have lost completely the world, it has been taken from us. Believing in the world means mainly raising up events, even small ones, that escape control, or connect to new space-times (Deleuze *apud* Rago, 2004, p. 4).

I want to analyze this citation because it makes evident that Baudrillard claims in Foucault a knowledge that makes it possible to regain the world, a Foucault that should be forgotten, because, somehow, he does not escape from the control that he himself investigates in a micro-physical way in the world. Or, maybe, on the contrary, claiming a Foucault that ousts the world even further? Because what Foucault does is, precisely, to my understanding, raising new discourse events, and maybe, in this broad perception of micro-physical power, which comes together with it focuses on the strange impossibility of avoiding the complete submission to a control. Baudrillard does not peregrinate completely in vain through the blames of Foucault, through the cracks, but does not recall, also, that resisting is, in Foucault, dealing with control, operating control, operating the relation between knowledge and power. And there is an anarchic potency in that. What wreckages reality is not pure inertia, as defends Baudrillard.

We revoke the objective of Foucault himself, which was potentializing ever further the relation between power and knowledge. Foucault said that “power, far from stopping knowledge, produces it” (1999, p. 148). There is, indeed, power in everything Foucault says and knows about power itself, he is fully aware of this fact, so let us ask ourselves: what is the fault in it if

Foucault was one of the first thinkers to state discourse is always power? It so happens that Foucault does not forget or erase, suddenly, an old idea of power, as Baudrillard defends in *Oublier Foucault*, he simply expands it, takes it out of a dangerous and sheer simplification: seeing power only as an ideological practice or police practice. Could the anarchy of a discourse about power not be full of power itself?

Let us remember *The microphysics of power*, when the author says:

It is not about freeing the truth of every system of power – which would be chimerical as truth itself is power – but about unbinding the power of truth from the forms of hegemony (social, economic, cultural) in the interior of which it works at a given moment. [...] In summary, the question of politics is not the error, the illusion, the alienated consciousness or ideology; it is the truth itself (Foucault, 1999, p. 14).

One could attempt to dismantle Baudrillard by stating that the question, therefore, is not in an ideology more or less equitable, more or less political, more or less powerful, that the intellectual is supposed to defend. The question is in the institutional regime of production of truth. The problem of Foucault is much more linked to this attempt to build a political view in relation to the ones who build the truth in societies. If this direct relation happens through micro physics, the question is, therefore, faced. Baudrillard, on the other hand, many times restricts Foucault to a reading of truth as if it were merely circled, capillarized and structural, in procedures that are still regulated by production. As if Foucault did not notice its own specificity. As if he reproduced a simulation of power, without knowing it.

Another question: is Baudrillard ironically reading Foucault as an utopic anarchist? Or is he proposing he should, in his unstabilizing effects to the old conception of power, have proceeded even more anarchically? Probably yes, the second question fits best. And in order to save him from the trap set by Baudrillard, we urgently need, so, to observe better the anarchy of his discourse, or even, to notice the analogy between anarchism and the foucaultian word that leads it to a new idea of power, in a given situation of the French thought.

As it is possible to understand in the book by Salvo Vaccaro *Foucault and anarchism* (1995), Foucault has always had a certain anarchist touch, even if his words about it were nor precise and oscillated considerably.

Margarete Rago reminds us that “not all anarchists call themselves foucaultians, with very few exceptions, and neither has Foucault meant to be an anarchist” (2004, p. 10). One can see in post-structuralism itself, because of its decentralizing operations, as a “contemporary form of anarchism”, as defended by Todd May (*apud* Rago, 2004, p. 15)... Edson Paseti, on the other hand, says that:

Foucault, many times, set himself apart from the *classification* of anarchist, including an extravagant and academic tradition that insisted in naming him a thinker of the left. The intention of directly connecting anarchism to Foucault is the same thing as to propose to run in circles trying to bite one’s own tail, and, after spinning so much, ends up hurting and stinking. The writings by contemporary anarchist authors that relate to Foucault show certain closeness to the destroying attitude on the border. Power seen as relations of force displaces and unsettles the liberal and socialist traditions that see power as a consequence of sovereignty effects and their political and legal consequences. Relations of power are not practices that evidence thinking, and are domesticated and transformed into instruments according to the *best one of the sides* that rules the State. Power to Foucault is a practice that serves as basis for authorities in positionings, in moves that happen in people’s lives at home, at work, in love and sexual relationships, in science, and that creates resistance, correlated and multiple practices that can make existence as a *nomad* thing, resulting in counter positionings, heterotopias, anarchistic heterotopias that highlight their stories and that leave the accumulated mold that comes from the cult of past history registers (Paseti, 2006, p. 110-111).

Rago also reminds us, in a critical way, of José Guilherme Melquior, an author that cited moments of a “neo-anarchist” Foucault, in his criticism to the political utopia or in the way he exerted his militance against any institutional base, against any form of order, even a revolutionary order. And Salvo Vaccaro points out, amongst several anarchistic pabels given to the author, the feminist words of Kate Soper, who would call him an “anarchic-existentialist”. The proposal of Rago helps us go beyond Baudrillard – beyond the anarchism of Baudrillard *versus* Foucault, we could say – as it is a proposal of not framing Foucault, not restricting his ideas to a political or apolitical, historical or non-historical disposition. As for that, it fully respects the famous Philosophical citation: “do not ask me who I am and do not tell me to remain the same”. Because of that, Rago gives us a possible convergence between the foucaultian renovations of the

conception of power and the libertarian conceptions by the Italian author Luce Fabbri.

Luce Fabbri (*apud* Rago, 2004), in her productions that, even before Foucault, articulated plural discussions, roaming through the fields of History, Poetry and Politics, reveals herself, similarly to Foucault, an anarchic of the “critical to power” type. However, differently from the “non-place” of foucaultian identification, she attempted to objectively affiliating to anarchism. Perhaps, Foucault is more of a nietzschean thinker that cultivates a genealogy, moving against the memory that is filtered by History, by Anthropology. This does not stop Margarete Rago of clarifying, brilliantly, that much of what Foucault proposed with obsessive overcoming, as a supra-historical search (overcoming the past, the sacralization of memory, etc, always aiming at a production of a diagnosis of the present), many times, ended up in questions that the Italian thinker proposed under a more extreme militant posture.

Let us go hunting for anarchism as a political premonition of present times, as a libertarian discourse within the trace of an instant. Such investigation of here and now means “to feel present moving towards something, towards an end, it means feeling it in a libertarian way, towards liberty” (Fabbri *apud* Rago, 2004, p. 20). Rago says:

As libertarians, both authors see power in its countless manifestations and branches as their main target to attack, attempting to demystifying it in its minimal actions; as for Luce, based on political and historical writings in which she deals with specific topics; as for Foucault, by creating sophisticated concepts, which he materializes in his analysis of the historical appearance of prison, as well as the analysis methods, as done in the genealogy of History. Both refuse to accept the legal conception of power and of the production of a displacement that makes them see it in multiple fields of social life, as a positivity. Therefore, they value a “direct action”, as a strategy of resistance to power. Autonomous, both see themselves as extreme critical thinkers regarding political representation, seen as the action of delegating power to others and, thence, as a refuse to the possibility of taking direct decisions, exerted in all areas of action in social life (Rago, 2004, p. 21).

However, Rago’s analysis makes it clear that, after all, historian Luce Fabbri cannot reach the same level of uncontinuity, of demystification, of historical identity, that Foucault’s writings probably proposes much more extremely and breaking, as a libertarian practice. However, we acknowledge

the fact that Foucault did not see himself as an anarchist excluded from History and the past, on the contrary, he brings back a *penser autrement* and takes advantage of the historic experience, however, in order to investigate the problem of tradition of power, aiming at a genealogic research, also anti-anthropologic, agonizing, full of multiplicity and paradox³. Thus, it aims at triumphing against a given idea of totality that Baudrillard probably reintroduces as a powerful methodology (and a “cursed” one, in his own terms) and square-shaping.

It is typical of Baudrillard to criticize the melodrama of all network, virtuality, fragmentality, segmentarity, micromolecularity... And, logically, the system of Foucault could possibly be less anarchic to him, considering the philosopher puts himself as a prophylactic effect to the conception of power. The problem lies in the insistence to notice the fear of Foucault as pathological. Fear that creates, revolutionarily, a new form of power, cleansing to the extreme all power from the past, material power, vertical, repressive, etc, but does not cease to be material, it is a mere *performance* that simulates not including the fascinating phenomenon of the principle of evil. Baudrillard, on the other hand, insists in not willing to observe that, in the foucaultian breakthrough of the notion of experience, of individuality, etc, remains the same anarchistic breakthrough of the notion of power that had been expected even before Foucault. If Foucault is fascinating – this discourse of Good that in nothing and never claims himself as a “savior” – is necessary to learn again to state the Evil, and we see ourselves in extreme impossibility, as he searches for that which in

³ “In Foucault, the voice (voices) speaks (speak); texts write and select facts: the activist subjects as a medium and an effect of combat. The strange scalpel that cuts and, at the same time, establishes itself in the *corpus*. Its unbinding character becomes visible not only as a considerably unsafe way that he used to speak in many of his famous conferences at the *Collège de France*; or in the way he disconnected himself from areas, statements, investigative traditions, etc. The diagnoser speaks of no *topos*, he swirls around. His unbinding is also visible in the dissipation of this cut: detailed sentences, or, as Artières says, ‘similarly to an anatomopathologist with dead bodies, he cuts political tissues apart and moves forwards’ (p. 30). It is very visible the acute difference compared to the posture taken by Sartre, in the historical relation both had with the GIP (Group of Information about Prisons), when the attention of the intellectuals of the time, in France, was related to the protests before the prison system improvement in the country. Foucault believes in a crowd of historical tissues and not a single History, but it does not make him destroy the voice of History, he goes on, actually, to sew it up in his way, but, however, he exchanges the boat of present in order to, as said by Philippe Chevalier, ‘separate instead of unify’ (p. 49), which gives him a warlike sense of power and freedom of thought (in Foucault’s neologism, agonism -‘*agonisme*’ – as a counterpoint to the word ‘antagonism’)” (Gomes, 2012, p. 108).

Baudrillard himself is nothing but a theoretical circle. Baudrillard is also not immune to evil, or promotes the savior discourse to the subject. It is important to notice that, differently from what he expects, Foucault does not abandon the individual to an incoherent and inactive dimension, forgetting to place him within the “simulacrum” (in the present)⁴. The so-called “thought as action” is what makes us recall Margarete Rago and is what helps us dodge from this criticism that sees them apolitically. That is, many critical readers, against Foucault, in an insistent way...

refuse to notice another delicate and complex point, that is, the representation of the space with which they operate: empty space, where the subject is allocated previously and out of History, on the background. In this sense, Foucault observes, when he mentions “outside spaces” (espaces du dehors) – as utopias and heterotopias – that we do not live in the interior of a void space, in which we can place individuals, as people usually think when they talk about a universal subject. On the contrary, we live inside a space filled with relations (Rago, 2004, p. 53-54).

The secret of Baudrillard’s criticism, who knows, remains on the very fact that it proposes anarchy against an already anarchical knowledge. He refuses, at all costs, to see this game of relations, of strategies that still appear in the material reality; denies the possibility of this space, even if void, not being void. And that which can be seen as incoherence or power in Foucault is exactly that always when departing from a posture that is connected to the universality of the subject, something that cannot be conceived anymore after reading Foucault. And, in the same rigorous way, Baudrillard persists in demanding from Foucault’s writings another arsenal of anarchy that probably the author himself discarded because it did not coincide with the sophistication of his view of the deadlocks of power. Foucault is an ultra-historian. If the philosopher becomes something like an extremist sociologist, semiotic, who would be, then, reflected in that mirror, if not Baudrillard himself? This is the critical domain to which maybe

⁴ Considered a “diagnostician of the present,” the fact is that Foucault never ignored the various active multiplicities producing historically the individual. As he said on one occasion: “My hypothesis is that the individual is not a datum on which power exercises and kills. The individual, with characteristics, identity, set within themselves, it the product of a relationship between the power that is exercised over bodies, multiplicities, movements, desires, forces” (Foucault, 1999, p. 161).

Baudrillard is tangled so vigorously and anarchically towards the author of *History of sexuality*. Baudrillard, besides denying the mirror, contradictorily, demands a mirroring of his own theory, instead of seeing, in the thought of the other, another thought to be recalled.

THE SPIRAL OF POWER

After an era of power characterized by theology – theological power (the divine hunt for power) –, a new order started with teleological power (search for the ends, regularities, patterns). Foucault, according to Baudrillard, helps us define the conception of a teleonomic power:

Down with theological power, down with teleological power, hail teleonomic power! Teleonomy is the end of any final decision and any dialectic: it is a kind of generative inscription, early, immanent, inevitable, always positive, the code which only results in infinitesimal changes. Looking carefully, in Foucault power strangely resembles "this conception of such new social space as the current physical and mathematical places", as Deleuze states, suddenly blinded by the benefits of science. It is precisely this complicity that should be denounced, or which we should laugh about (Baudrillard, 2001, p. 47-48).

However, the importance of Foucault is too disadvantaged by Baudrillard. And he pairs Foucault up with Deleuze, many times along the book, as if both of them were reduced to the same teleological pattern, under the same analytical intensities. Intensities that summarize every kind of relation of forces in fragmentation, in interstice, in a curious multiplicity always resulting in atomic an invisible scale. The excess of segmentarization, capillarity, that leads to the obsession of Foucault and Deleuze about the constitution of power and desire, ends up being put in total coincidence. As if power in Foucault was nothing but desire to Deleuze. If there is no finalism anymore in the old vision of teleological power (doctrinaire and teleological vision), the way to see the power that remains is teleonomic (mechanical view of their structures).

I believe that we should rethink the intellectual and methodological role of Foucault in relation to subject and power, because this is what Baudrillard fights against. In the 1980s, Michel Foucault and François Edward (a.k.a. Maurice Florence) cited the methodological principles of Foucault – in the entry of the *Le Dictionnaire des philosophes*. Among

them: as a starting point, it was urgently necessary to avoid the anthropological universal hindrances at all cost, interrogating the subject in its governmental, historical constitution, among others (the danger of proposing the pure disappearance of the subject is clarified, in favor of a new objectivity; but it is not what it wanted to do, it is clear, or better, the intention was not to throw oneself into an abyss of new truths, but to try and build a new critical history, in which the domain that divides discourses between true or false ones were, at least, clear to see). However, what makes the criticism of Baudrillard is searching for the masses, not the subject, and thus, precisely, narrates that Foucault cannot see this very danger of suppressing politics, in his discourses about sexuality, mental illness or delinquency. Considering both authors: who is the one that generalizes and violates politics the most? Another principle was “the address to practice as a domain of analysis: the approach of studying oneself from the standpoint of *what was*” (Florence, 1996, p. 7). Hence, these practices are seen as means for acting, thinking, understood as means of objectification of the subject, in several cultures, in several procedures of power. Foucault does not intend to be a revolutionary in the sense of modifying reality, he aims at creating conditions of investigating the bases of what we consider as object and/or subject, the structural bases of alterity that generates powers, the “practices” that make subjects and powers exist.

Actually, the fact that the philosophical writings by Foucault has no happy ending does not mean that everything fits within a fascinating and contradictory doomed part of philosophy, or in the absolute void of politics (as, on the other hand, one can perfectly see in Baudrillard’s catastrophic ideas). The one who reduplicates illusions, in many senses, is much more the matrix intellectuality of Baudrillard himself, which would explain why the writings of this author are so cyclical and repetitive, as if always pushing the same buttons, under different modulations, to the point of reconvicting forever the reader about the transparency of this Evil, of this world that demands the simulacrum, in a clinic virulent state.

The intellectuality of Foucault, on the other hand, has the function, in my conception, to sabotage this Evil and not merely reduplicating it. What we considered as the political role of the intellectual in the beginning, either as repressing proletarians or as expert-intellectuals, has never been more

than a role of discourse marked by invisible political powers. Foucault is not the one who makes invisible the subjects and the powers that run through them, that objectify them. Foucault distinguishes himself, in a circularity that does not repeat itself. It is similar to what his friend Paul Veyne says, “if there is something that distinguishes Foucault's thought of the others, it is the firm intention of not falling into a repeat, not redoubling our illusions” (Veyne, 1996, p. 53).

I believe the problem is in the difficulty of Baudrillard to visualize work in Foucault as work in motion. It is fundamental that Foucault has analyzed the social repression in order to configure, since *Discipline and punish*, for example, a discourse about the relation between power and body that is wider and goes beyond the implications and restrictions that the simple idea of repression conveyed. However, in an exhaustive way, Baudrillard suggests it is incoherent to put repression and ideology in second place, in my view. Or, at least, he attempts to show that in such a microscopic (for him: teleonomic) search – which supposes the desacralization of generalities as objects and forgetting certain scenes in favor of investigating scenarios – in the end, it is simply a way of resuming and praising generality. To criticize, for example psychoanalysis, all Marxism, all jurisdiction, all politics, putting them in a cozy zone of deletion. For him, by trying to stop the idea of repression of power itself, who knows, is only substituting it by the idea of production. By searching conditions of power that act over spaces, we forget repression itself in the space of power, since for Baudrillard's argument, every liberation is promoted by repression, liberation of words, liberation of the words by Foucault:

What Foucault tells us (under protest) is this: nothing works because of general repression, everything works through the production - nothing works because of general repression, everything works thanks to freedom. But it is all the same. Any freedom is fostered by repression: the productive forces as desire, bodies as women's, etc. There is no exception to the logic of the freedom: every force, every word set free, is a turn in the spiral of power (Baudrillard, 2001, p. 35).

Baudrillard's idea is that, this way, in this teleonomic search for analyzing power, what is done is only reassuring power, roaming through new concepts, in the spiral of power. Spiral of one power, now a ghostly

one, but that keeps on existing as a repressive form in all accumulation (of desire, of words, of signs, of production, of money, etc). If power emanates in religion, in sexuality, in psychoanalysis, in desires, as an unstoppable flow, it does not stop to propagate always in a marketing way, as a production effect, of exchange, of money. Thus, Baudrillard recommends a new inversion, when he reads the proposition of a “liberation” in Foucault. Repression and freedom are two sides of the same imaginary, sometimes. Obligation of the flow, of putting into motion the libido, the psychical, but that, to him, means nothing more than falling over marketing values, values that need to be spread out to infinity, simulacra of that same power, or idea of power, that Foucault analyzed. That is, unavoidable and unstoppable power that works in all directions and in all places, being them central ones or heterotopic ones.

From now on, no longer will say, “You have a soul, you must save it”, but “You have genitals, you should find them a good use.” “You have an unconsciousness, you need to know how to set it free.” “You have a body, you should know how to enjoy it” / “You have a libido, you should know how to spend it,” etc., etc. This obligation to flow away, in accelerated circulation of the psychic, sexual and bodies is the exact replica of the value that governs goods: the capital circle, there is no more gravity; fixed point, that the chain of investments and reinvestments is constant, the value radiates relentlessly in all directions - this is the current form of realization of value. This is the form of capital, sexuality, sexual slogan, sexual model is a way to show the level of bodies (Baudrillard, 2001, p. 32-33).

I believe the problem lies in the beginning of the book *Olvidar Foucault*, that is, the interpretation of Foucault as, when writing, discursively, a perfect “spiral generative of power” (Baudrillard, 2001, p. 7) that is hooked to infinity. What is the difference, in this spiral of power, between the political metaphor and the psychic metaphor, when it is up to each one of them to legislate about a sexual, body-related legislation as a “ghostly expansion of private property” (Baudrillard, 2001, p. 35)? The unconsciousness, the libido, the psychic, etc., as goods to be trades, must never stop their circulation, management, dissemination, in the search for freedom, thus, they are the product of work, or of management, over one’s own body, mind, sex, libido, discipline, etc.... But, therein lies a trap, as would not this be exactly an expansion of that which Foucault denied as

disciplinary, teleological power? To what extent is it possible to frame a power as a counter-power in the subject on their own, when they replicate still in the logic of the very exacerbated production, diffraction to infinity, that always reappears in anything that is reactive?

In *Microphysics of power*, Foucault criticizes the way how intellectuals self-proclaimed of the left used to speak out with interest to become the owners of the truth, that is, the intellectual power as a power of universal representation of the masses. It reminds us of the figure of the intellectual who bears the Law, the truth, facing proletarians, defending just social reform (highlighting, for example, Voltaire), not really related to a sociological or political sense, but a lot with a legal sense, considering that: “the ‘universal’ intellectual derives from the noticeable-jurist and has his most complete expression represented by the writer” (Foucault, 1999, p. 11). Thereafter, there is the passage to another type of intellectual power that is closer to that of the scientist-expert, a power of specificity (highlighting, for example, Darwin). The intellectual as a historical character with power is, basically, anchored by two different stereotypes for Foucault, who believes that the space-and-time is a recreation of the specificity of the intellectual. On the other hand, Baudrillard thinks that the intellectual age, in which Foucault is, is placed, maybe in a naïve way, aside from any intellectual inheritance or from any intellectual power, in a new world where power has no political essence whatsoever:

The new power wants to be in theory a cultural and intellectual one. It does not want to be a cynical historical power; it wants to be the incarnation of values. Having betrayed its political essence, it wants intellectuals, on the other hand, to betray theirs, and pass to the side of reconciliation of the concept, wants them to forget the duplicity of the concept as well as their past loss of the duplicity of politics, and let themselves go towards the side of reality, towards a discreet beatification of their hopes, towards a polite reconciliation of reality and rationality, or of reality and the imaginary. This is the contract that is proposed to us with this new contract of power, which is not even a power – the apex of democracy, hypocritical power of virtue – and we were taken. Because the intellectual unfortunately is always virginal in order to be an accomplice of the repression to vice. He also is not comparable to the cynical exercise, that is, the immoral and ambiguous exercise of thought, as well as politicians are not comparable to the exercise of power (Baudrillard, 2004, p. 49).

But Foucault made it clear that the truth stated by an intellectual is always located inside another power, it never exists without power. Foucault is, thus, conscious that his new intellectual role is, still, a role of power, a powerful role.

Foucault is, for Baudrillard, a pure mirroring of something he himself attempts to convey regarding the content of his ideas. Foucault is seduced to such extent by the symbolic discovery of power that the way he presents himself in terms of discourse is an orbital, circular operation. This way, Foucault is taken by the very spiral of power, according to Baudrillard.

ON THE PROPOSAL OF COMPLETELY FORGETTING FOUCAULT

By reading Foucault, Baudrillard differentiates his interpretation from the ones of Deleuze or Blanchot because he raises, constantly, doubts on what the philosopher proposes so clearly. It is the intention of breaking the spiral of power, as a tease. If Foucault bothers him so much to the point of creating “another side”, it is not about defending one side or another. Having said that, I mean it is not enough to counter-criticize Baudrillard, but trying to do what we intend here: investigate the connections and the powers, the spirals via which doubts and harsh questions by Baudrillard pass, opposing him to Foucault. I believe Baudrillard keeps up a certain similarity with Foucault because his discomfort with power is one of the discursive places that Foucault predicts, proposes. It is impossible to state, primarily, that Baudrillard did not see, did not understand, and did not apprehend Foucault. Or that, in the topic of power in the era of extremes, in post-modernity, he did it in a minor way. I am not falling, at last, in the trap of valuing, of choosing which one of them both is the fairest one to remember. I will remember that what remains between both authors is what excludes me from forgetting Baudrillard.

Which contributions can, hence, Baudrillard give to a fanatic, defensive foucaultian or even to a beginner, oscillating reader of Foucault? He helps us, I think, to understand that the very things that Foucault supports as the content of discourse, which he explains in his genealogical phase, is nothing far from that which he does, institutes, in a powerful way. We are talking about a coherence between what one says and the act of saying, between what is written and the act of writing, between the power of

which he speaks and the power of his speech. That is where I observe that what Baudrillard sees as a great incoherence in the writings of Foucault, in a spiraling writing that flows unboundedly seduced by his conceptual discoveries-inventions is, on the contrary, of a gargantuan coherence. The ambiguity really is there.

The difference is that Deleuze, in the book *Foucault*, praises the ambiguity of the writings of Foucault as a mythical device in a new universe of powers. Such ambiguity assumes, then, an important character. Blanchot, in *Michel Foucault tel que je l' imagine*, decides to imagine Foucault as an intellectual that transpires the dangers of his own demands, in which he sees himself equally as a mythical device⁵. Once again, Foucault is an endangered man, as read by Blanchot and Deleuze, showing the power devices of which he discusses in the transparency of his own *savoir-faire*. However, such ambiguity, to him, is apolitical. And, since it is apolitical, it is not convenient.

Hence, let us consider the cruel, heavy, difficult title of Baudrillard: *Forget Foucault*. Why forget Foucault? Baudrillard is not able to teach us anything but recalling him. We are, alongside with him, celebrating and recalling Foucault all the time, of the dangers of discourse, of post-structuralism, of the Foucault that (even) Foucault himself should recall... So, there is no way to do it: if we forget Foucault, immediately another Foucault will appear, filling the void (saying “what matters is the one who speaks”), the presence of this deletion, even if in the case of Baudrillard, what saves him from the negativity of the deletion, or, maybe, pessimism. Because, after all, I can say that Baudrillard is as strategical, structural, orbiting, circular as the Foucault he wants to forget or exclude to a silent shadow. What is memory hereby? How is it possible to recall of forget an

⁵ Blanchot observes Foucault as "a man in motion, solitary, secretive and, because of that, who distrusts the prestige of interiority, refuses the pitfalls of subjectivity, looking for where and how a surface discourse is possible, effulgent, but without mirages; not a foreigner, as was believed, the search for truth, but revealing (after many others) the dangers of this demand as well as the ambiguous relation of this with the various power devices"(Blanchot, 1986, p. 5).

author that should not be taken by any fixing device, who used to question first of all the form of subjetification of a thinking subject, saying one was never thinking the same thing, which was the reason why his books were “experiences”, an author who, again, used to say: “do not ask me who I am, and do not ask me to remain the same”. Foucault is so passionately seduced by power (power is, after all, seduction, and not production, to Baudrillard) that he returns to this experimental power passed to his writing identity, his speaking style.

The censorship by Baudrillard points to a conclusion in the general concepts of power and desire, in post-structuralism, as if it were nothing more than new edifications of production. Could it be that Foucault is eminently connected to an unavoidable writing production highly cumulative (and not discontinuous, as he meant), progressive, institutionalized, economic, powerful (in a bad way), political, mythical, etc.? To what extent do all this criticism, by mentioning Foucault, is not connected or seduced by it also? Right. This may not be the question that rids us of the proposal of forgetting him. Let us put one against the other once more. The intention of Baudrillard falls back to the following deadlock: is the writing of Baudrillard more seductive than producing? Is his logic inescapably a reflection of what he is opposed to: the “sublime” existence of microphysical power?

For Baudrillard: power is simulacrum; power seduces, and does not produce. It is necessary to un-sublimate power and not sublimate it. It is his difference, what can be highlighted when comparing him to the author of *Discipline and punish*. Has he enticed us enough? Has he seduced us to forget, in legal terms, what cannot even be forgotten? Baudrillard is as seductive as Foucault; there is no doubt about it.

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