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DOI 10.24917/20838972.16.5

Productive Violence
Reading Foucault's Analysis within the Historical Problem of Violence and Power

Violence as a philosophical problem

When we try to understand the phenomenon of violence, an immediate problem arises. For a long time, philosophers believed that violence is a set of hostilities that take place between symmetrical forces. With the philosophy of Hobbes or Rousseau, for example, it arises that disciplines such as anthropology, sociology and psychology could be responsible for explaining violence through natural, biological, social or political causes. Contemporarily, philosophy can no longer understand violence merely as a "fact," but must try to understand the phenomenon of violence itself, within a set of historical relationships inscribed in the subjects in the formation of their subjectivity. This however, makes understanding of violence as phenomenon much more complex.

The problem, no doubt, becomes more multifaceted when we suspect that violence is more than mere physiological imposition, the physical expression of the discontent of a group, or the "state of war" within governments. When Heraclitus said: "Πλεμος πντων μν πατρ στι," he claimed that there is a structure of inherent oppositions in nature, emerging latently in the natural evolution of history. But for Heraclitus the question never related to violence as such, just as the "Master and the Servant" dialectic of Hegel never dealt with the problem of violence itself. Hegel's aim was rather to explain the self-knowledge structure, where domination is embedded in the dialectical process of oppositions[1]. The breaking of these determinations about violence may be with Kant,

1 In chapter IV of *Phenomenology of the spirit* entitled "The truth of the certainty of the self", it appears how the question of domination is part of a theoretical framework that seeks to unravel rather the movement of self-consciousness under the forms of autonomy and non-autonomy and, the foundation of consciousness in its "becoming" (277) is much more important than the question of domination as the central problem.

when the question of cosmopolitan law (Weltbürgerrecht) is raised. As Étienne Balibar remakrs on this Kantian influence:

> (...) the humanity of man is identified not with a given or an essence, be it natural or supra-natural, but with a practice and a task: the task of self-emancipation from every domination and subjection by means of a collective and universal access to politics.[2]

According to this way of understanding violence, the legacy of the Kantian enlightenment will grow in utopian socialism, when the concern about violence, manifested by class and gender injustices, emerges among the oppressed ones. Flora Tristan defend the education of men and women in 1843: "so that all citizens can permanently compare the acts of government with the object of any social institution, and never let themselves be oppressed or debased by tyranny"[3], noting the contemporary problem of ideology as it would be developed in the future by Karl Marx.

In this sense, we can ask ourselves: in which moment the philosophical tradition asks about violence "in itself"? Perhaps we should go even further and ask if there is something like a "philosophy of violence"? If we focus on the moment, in which the concern about "violence in itself" arises, we should look at the history of philosophy and claim that philosophy has understood itself as "responsible for violence" only in the case of the individual responsibility for the violent action. This understanding emerged from the reflections on the crimes of the First World War and its crisis of values and consequently, after the war crimes of the Second World War, in which violence against people reached a level unprecedented in the history of mankind[4]. Perhaps it should be noted that the philosophical theory of violence points to a type of morality "with the aspiration" of universality, in the name of all forms of violence against which we have to (or should) act. Thus, classical philosophy formulated the question of "what to do with violence" or "how do we explain violence" rather than the question of the status of violence itself. Perhaps

2 Éttiene Balibar, *Supporting the subject* (New York: Verso 1994), 12.

3 Flora Tristán, "Unión Obrera," *El Sudamericano*, March 6th, 2018, https://elsudamericano.wordpress.com/2017/03/06/catalogo-de-la-coleccion-socialismo-y-libertad.

4 One of the most tenacious formulations is found in Jaspers' 1945 work: The question of german guilt about the role that the entire German population had in allowing the holocaust. And in Eric Weil's reflections on violence in *Logic of the philosophy* of 1950 that found repercussion in the work of Emmanuel Levinas (1961), which, denouncing the violence, elevates the principle of "you will not kill" to the place of metaphysical foundation.

the reflection on the very content of violence, in the times, which saw atomic bombs fall on entire cities, is required.

Foucault shows in *Surveiller et Punir* (1975), how the ways of concealing violence directed against the criminal subject begin to work, describing the way in which the mechanisms of punishment change towards the end of the 18th century:

> Punishment had gradually ceased to be a spectacle. And whatever theatrical elements it still retained were now downgraded, as if the functions of the penal ceremony were gradually ceasing to be understood, as if this rite that 'concluded the crime' was suspected of being in some undesirable way linked with it. It was as if the punishment was thought to equal, if not exceed, in savagery the crime itself, to accustom the spectators to a ferocity from which one wished to divert them, to show them the frequency of crime, to make the executions resemble a criminal, judges murderers, to reverse roles at the last moment, to make the tortures criminal an object of pity or admiration.[5]

In this way, contemporary philosophy is constantly in concerned about violence, either because of the trauma generated by wars or due to the double game of contemporary mass media, which massively records violent actions and, at the same time that they are disseminated, they are condemned, repressed or hidden.

In general terms, theories of contemporary philosophy of violence can be encompassed in the following way. On the one hand, there is a tendency to represent violence as something that, in normative terms, should be avoided through the use of reason. Among thinkers, who defend a universal tolerance – as is the case of Hannah Arendt – violence is seen as a negative obverse of human reason. According to Arendt's definition, clearly of Kantian influence, violence is not to be found in a deep irrationality hidden in the *psyche*, but in a forgetfulness of the conditions of human action, determined by the awareness of the means and ends. On the other hand, violence is represented by thinkers, seeking its justification. Impregnated with a legitimacy given by the inevitability of the historical future, violence emerges as the right of the oppressed. The case of Frantz Fanon (1961) is central: those oppressed know that liberation will not be given to them, but what they need to do is fight for it, with all their weapons. Therefore, violence depends on a degree of contextual legitimacy, according to which its validity is based on a momentary instrumentality, in the heat of the controversy. The expression of this is to be found in the phrase of Malcolm X, in the context of

5 Michel Foucault, *Discipline and punish. Birth of prison* (New York: Random House, 1995), 9.

American racism: "I am in favor of violence if nonviolence leads us to extend indefinitely the solution of the black problem, under pretexts to avoid violence"[6]

These two poles of the controversy around the concept of violence, acquire greater complexity in the current political philosophy that arises from the "war model"[7] established by the Prussian strategist Carl von Clausewitz in his work *On war* (1832): "War is the continuation of politics by other means," with the zenith of tradition materializing in the assumption, that war is not only the object of scientific knowledge, but also the model from which to think of any political relationship. "From this, war is proposed in a field where all ethics dissolves and all ethical consideration is not only unnecessary but dangerous"[8]. With this model, the challenge of social thought is to understand the clash of forces that are no longer part of the classical politics of modernity. According to Clausewitz, the current policy is only a consequence of the model of war followed by other means, whereas Nietzsche's philosophy is paradigmatic, since the totality of relations between forces are understood from the model of the *will to power*. According to this principle, we are condemned to the elimination of a critique of violence. The path opened by Nietzsche disrupts the way of understanding violence to this day, and opens up new ways of understanding this phenomenon in the so-called post-structuralist philosophy. In biopolitics, anticolonialism, feminism and deconstructivism, the question of violence becomes a disturbing problem due to Nietzsche's formulations. And these, formulations in turn follow the principle of a *war model* according to which, violence must be treated in the most strategic way possible, not overcome, not legitimized, but used and perhaps even hidden.

Therefore, we have two dominant ways of presenting violence as a philosophical problem, say "Fanonian" and "Arendtian", whose focus is, on the one hand, on the question of the legitimacy and illegitimacy of violence, and on the other hand on the positions of Clausewitz and Nietzsche, presented as radical positions that put us in a Heraclitean scheme or the Nietzsche Hypothesis, where the warlike violence is the vertical column on which the political structures shaping social reality are built.

In this context, Foucault's philosophy offers a perspective, in which the question of legitimacy or illegitimacy can be flanked, by means of

6 Malcolm X, *Vida y voz de un hombre negro* (Tafalla: Txalaparta, 1991), 28.

7 This "war model" was probed by Foucault at the 1976 conference *Il faut défendre la société*, and is called the Nietzsche Hypothesis.

8 Idelber Averlar, *The letter of violence. Essays on narrative, ethics and politics* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 3.

understaning how the historical nature of violence arises. Its historical character, according to Foucault, drifts from the forms of rationalization that take place in history, and not only in the course of a history of criminal law or psychiatry, but also in a history of practices and the ways in which the relationships of the subjects between themselves are modeled. It is also with Foucault's philosophy that the question of the Nietzsche Hypothesis is reformulated following its analysis of power, where it is power and not violence that has an ontological primacy[9]. Finally, a positive - in descriptive way - conception of power allows us to explain how Foucault's philosophy calls into question the formulations of several of the classical "theories of repression", according to which violence is exerted on basis of the internal drives of individuals, who, in the forms of the liberation of pleasures or the expression of their own authenticity, manifest what is hidden in the depths of their *psyche*. In this way, Foucault's philosophy appears from within the historical and political contingency. By acknowledging that violence is not an alien or defective element of human rationality this position becomes opposed to the belief that delegates violence as a mere psychological fact.

Considerations on the repressive hypothesis

Probably one of the strongest claims of Foucault is his criticism of repression models. According to Foucault, Classical philosophy assumed that power is something that only represses, hides or limits the region of authenticity, goodness or justice, and that repression theory has been, so to speak, one of the principles of philosophy. Foucault states that power has actually allowed people to declare who they are. In *History of sexuality I* (1976) he claims that sexuality has an increasingly large focus of interest during the Victorian era, when a double game is generated: Concealment and silence, as well as the exposure of the individuality itself and, with it, the search for the reproduction of particular sexual practices.

"If sex is repressed, that is, destined for prohibition, non-existence and mutism, just talking about it, and talking about its repression has

9 The diffuse line between domination and power would open the door to criticism such as that of Richard Rorty, who affirms: "We liberal reformists think that Foucault's work is dominated by a weary ambiguity between "power" as a pejorative term and as a neutral and descriptive term", I claim that the problem glimpsed by Rorty is not at all founded on the double meaning of the concept of "power", but on lack of understanding of this concept by Rorty. Power is be found in the background of every relationship of agency but, nevertheless, could tend towards freedom or towards domination depending on its conditions of historical appearance. See: Richard Rorty, *Consecuencias del pragmatismo*. (Madrid: Tecnos, 1996), 272.

an air of deliberate transgression"[10]. It is certainly ironic, how Foucault begins the first book of his History of sexuality, recounting the way in which the truth about sex is conjured. "We, the Victorians", talk about how in our mental scheme, we consider ourselves repressed and how we, children of a tyranny over ourselves, have only "the prohibition", "the absence" and "the silence" that weigh on our sexuality. It has been achieved that, in the manifestation of sexuality, this "feeling" of transgression is experienced. In the enjoyment of the experience of telling our truth, declaring our sexuality, manifests itself as an experience of "liberation." Foucault is clear enough that sexuality is only one of the aspects that have long been taken as "repressed."

The repressive hypothesis has been used mainly by the psychoanalytic tradition as a model of thinking that consciousness is one of the spheres that have become the focus of political interest. Sexuality, along with crime and madness are intended to "liberate" within the correlated clinical and legal processes. Foucault claims that the Christian act of confession has impregnated the tenor of sexual behavior since – at least – the year 1545. The realization of a meticulous confession, in which sex can no longer be named without prudence, has following consequences: "its aspects, correlations and effects have to be followed even in its finest ramifications: a shadow in a reverie, an expelled image too slowly, a bad conspiracy between the mechanics of the body and the complacency of the spirit."[11] In this sense, confession creates the "self", which always implies a "cost of enunciation", as Foucault explains in his 1981 lecture *Mal faire, dire vrai: Fonction de l'aveu en justice*. The subject-enunciator is "compromised by his enunciation."[12] The commitment is that the subject, by his statement, will change his relationship with himself and with the other. The relationship between the subject-enunciator and his confessional statement becomes a type of regime. The "incitement to speeches" shows that the weight of that statement begins to crystallize in such a way that the subjects identify themselves in this or that manner – and beyond that – they are identified by others. Within history, this way of being for others, depends on a subjectivation that will not be complete until the subjects identify in themselves the constant need for self-manifestation.[13]

10 Michel Foucault, *Historia de la sexualidad I. La voluntad de saber*. (Madrid: Siglo XXI, 1991), 13.

11 Ibid., 27–28.

12 Michel Foucault, *Obrar mal, decir la verdad: La función de la confesión en la justicia* (Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI, 2014), 26.

13 What we observe here is an economics of discourses based on statements about sexuality: When Foucault analyzes criminal justice and the conformations of "immoral" speeches in *Les 120 Journées de Sodome* by Sade, it becomes necessary to show what

What does this mechanics of sexuality, that Foucault traces at the beginning of *History of sexuality I,* imply for the theory of repression? In addition to being interested in how, after the Council of Trent, a dispositive of confession has been promoted, Foucault concludes, that confession has become a self-productive apparatus of subjectivity itself. But the great gain that is generated by the incorporation of the "productive" knowledge and practices that were once repressive, is that through the "productive" criterion, it generates a way of understanding the power relations that impregnate the links between individuals not only as a repressive apparatus, but also, as a productive apparatus. And although it considers the network of obligations, mutism, punishments and prohibitions, within that network a production of subjectivity is achieved.

Criticism of the repression model explains the original violence introduced by the imposition of a subjectivation. This mode of subjectivation that includes the subject "away from himself" is also observed in Marcuse's approaches from *Eros and Civilization*[14]. Already in *Surveiller et Punir*, Foucault shows how morality that looms on the death penalty or torture begins to change, based on another more subtle disposition. The search for evil within itself, thus, the objective of killing the offender, as well as the torture of prisoners, enemies of society, begin to be dominated by the model of the panoptic, a prison structure with a vigilant eye over the subjects, which, in turn, cannot be observed. This criterion generates the so-called disciplinary society, and consists of establishing the model of the panoptic, not only by the external figure of the observer of improper behavior, but also through establishment of the immanent relationship with oneself that strives to observe each behavior and each thought. What is controlled is no longer just crime, but also will, creating an observance based on the subject's productivity model: observing their relationships with themselves.

This "positive obverse" of repression theories ends up generating a critique of the way of conceiving power from the standpoint of original negativity that limits, prohibits and that ultimately prevents actions, giving way to a conception of power in positive terms. Power becomes something that "produces", establishing normalization criteria on which the conception of the subject is inscribed.

It is from the model of a power that exerts its "positivity" that certain interpretative lines such as Byung-Chul Han have recently emerged. In

is at stake in the premise that "everything must be said", both in the subject-offender's statement and in the attempt to sublimate the desire through writing.

14 In Marcuse's text, Freudian philosophical foundation will be based on ontogenesis and phylogenesis, as explanatory criteria of the way in which the self-destructiveness to which societies and the subject are subjected. In this way, the repression mechanisms of the superego would be applied to the repressed.

Psychopolitics (2000) he affirms that the true nature of power consists of its concealment. Han claims that regimes of truth, imposed by late capitalism are the most consolidated forms of power. The mechanism that operates in the information economy of social networks such as Instagram or Facebook is similar to that imposed by Christian confession in 16th century. The ideal of the confession is reintroduced through the rhetoric of freedom proper to neoliberalism. The trick that hides in the way of relating to the mass media control devices would be – rather than a mandate to recognize oneself through confessionary act – a network around the desire to show oneself on one's own accord. Byung-Chul Han, following the same criticism as Foucault regarding the repressive hypothesis, states that neoliberalism uses freedom based on a productive model and creates a new model of subjectivation that is to be an entrepreneur of oneself.

This position, in which the positive dimension of power is understood in its productive capacity, also explains Foucault's radical stance against Chomsky in 1971, in the well-known debate about human nature. In this discussion, it is enlightening to observe how Foucault's position is clear in identifying the conditions, on which the speeches that point to "progress" of society are inscribed:

> It seems to me that the real political task in a society like ours is to criticize the functioning of institutions that seem neutral and independent; criticize and attack them in such a way as to unmask the political violence that has been exercised through them in a hidden way, so that we can combat them.[15]

This remark (a position that Foucault does not abandon throughout the debate) may be understood as an inclination to suspect that there are hidden ways, in which institutions, which have productive ends (for example: schools and medical institutions, defended by Chomsky), exert forms of violence unthinkable by the subjects. The position developed by Byung-Chul Han approaches one of the dangers that Foucault observes in his debate with Chomsky, at the moment when he supports the critical observance of the power relations, related to the institutions in their political function. If this is achieved, we have the influence, and therefore, some kind of political oversight. When Byung-Chul Han states that "neoliberal psychopolitics (…) seizes emotion to influence actions at this prereflective level, it shows that, through emotion, it reaches the depths of the individual. Thus, emotion represents a very efficient means for the

15 Noam Chomsky, Michel Foucault, *La naturaleza humana. Justicia versus poder. Un debate* (Buenos Aires: Katz, 2007), 23.

psychopolitical control of the individual"[16], he is referring to a domain of desire that takes hold of emotionality based on the productive model; something that Foucault and – in a certain way – Deleuze, have made the object of their political inquiries. Having defined the "positive" character of power, based on Foucault's philosophy, and defined some possibilities of analysis that he delivers, it is necessary to define what his notion of power consists of and how it differs from the notion of violence.

Foucaultian dynamics of power and violence

As a critic of the universal notions of power and violence, Foucault states that in order to talk about power, one must attend to the faculty that has the power to interact with things, which allows one to modify, use, consume or destroy them, "a power that rests on attitudes directly inherent to the body or underlying external instruments"[17]. Different from these faculties to get involved with things, namely capabilities, are power relations, that bring into play relations between "individuals" or "groups," in such form that there are people who exercise power over others. There are also communication relationships that transmit information through language, conjunctions of signs or symbolic means.

These distinctions raise two questions about the treatment of power. The first question is: what status do these "coordinated domains", that Foucault distinguishes, have in relation to transcendentalism?, The second question is: taking into account the separation between capabilities and power relations, are we facing on the one hand a classical structure that distinguishes nature from humanity and, on the other hand, an ideal of a communication that would turn us to think of something as a communication without power relations?

The answer to the first question is a little easier to answer. Foucault goes ahead to define these models based on a critique of Habermas's position that distinguishes between domination, communication and finished activity[18]. According to Foucault, the domains operate in a "transcendental scheme", that is to say, an invariable structure that allows categorizing reality, or perhaps we should say: the subject. The attempt is rather to distinguish and establish, from a static structural conception, capacities, power relations and communication relationships, understanding them as analytical domains from which to probe practical

16 Byung-Chul Han, *Psicopolítica* (Barcelona: Herder, 2014), 75.

17 Michel Foucault, "El sujeto y el poder" in: *Michel Foucault: más allá del estructuralismo y la hermenéutica*, ed. Hubert Dreyfus (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Nueva Visión, 2001), 250.

18 This becomes clearer when in *Theory of Communicative Action II*, the author refers to these systematic domains of the life-world.

relationships, not understood as transcendental ones. This attempt to generate a kind of analytical apparatus, leads to the answer to the second question, clarifying that these three analytical domains never work in separate ways. As Foucault claims:

> It does not mean that the field of things, of perfect technique, of work and of the transformations of the real is on one side; on the other, that of signs, communications, reciprocity and the production of meanings; and finally, the mastery of the meanings of coercion, of inequality and of the action of some men over others. It is a matter of three types of relationships that in fact always overlap one over the other, mutually supporting each other as means and ends.[19]

The coordination between these domains is non-uniform and non-constant; its designation is not built upon a balance between the domains. On the contrary, the interrelation is molded and undergoes changes related to specific models. These models, which always have a historical context, provide ways in which domains interact. The historical disposition produces "blocks" in which capacities, power relations and communication relations are put into practice. The crystallization of these blocks generates the coordinated domains, observed by Foucault, called *disciplines*.

In this way the Foucaultian program shows the "how" of power: only an empirical analysis can explain how certain disciplines have been constituted and how the capacities, power relations and relationships of communication can "weld each other". On the one hand, the survey of "power relations", like obedience in monastic or penitential ways of life, ends up articulating specific forms of obedience. On the other hand, there are "activities" with a purpose, such as the productive activity of workshops and hospitals. And finally, in the domain of "communication relationships", the various ways of imparting education can be observed. It would be far-fetched to say that monastic lifestyles or that "activities with a purpose", as in workshops or hospitals, do not include forms of communication or that ways of providing education do not include forms of obedience. For Foucault there are cases in which there is a "saturation" of the three types of relations. This can be observed in military discipline, "where a plethora of signs indicates, to the point of redundancy, power relations strictly linked and carefully calculated to produce a number of technical effects."[20] In this example, power is not separated from its contextual forms of appearance. And what is achieved is not the

19 Michel Foucault, "El sujeto y el poder," 250.
20 Ibid., 251–252.

establishment of transcendental behavior, but rather, the formation of criteria of analysis, with which power can be probed historically.

Here, we must analyze the way Foucault distinguishes two concepts: the concept of power and the concept of power relations. And what emerges between them is a conceptual gap. The author proposes two nominal ways of understanding power. First, he emphasizes that what constitutes the specific nature of power[21] is that it is something, that is executed. Thus, the question of power turns to the conditions of the field of possibilities of action. In a multidimensional way, therefore, the power itself is what exists only when it is "put into action", in the execution of a type of action, and therefore, it is not something that can be "possessed". Power acts even when it is integrated between disparate possibilities.

Power, therefore, is not a function of consensus. Power relations may be the result of a consent, but not the result of the manifestation of a consensus. The difference between power and power relations is that the latter are defined by a mode of action that acts "immediately on their actions" and does not act directly or immediately on others. As Foucault says: "An action on an action, on existing or other actions that may arise in the present and in the future"[22].

It may seem that what establishes the former, the relationship of power, would always be founded on a relationship of violence. The force of the imposition of the order, the mandate and even the interpellation would bring coercion within the action of the subject. However, a caveat has to be established before thinking about this solution. Violence that has been enunciated would rather be an extreme case of a power relationship. The essence of the relationship of violence closes the door to all possibilities for the subject. The dimension that Foucault has in view is mainly a bodily dimension. When referring to "lowering, breaking and destroying" he rather relates to the way in which the forces concentrate on the most visible dimension of action, at the moment when the power is observable and tries to limit actions through the use of physical power. However, when we say "close the door to all possibilities", it is possible to think of a type of potentiality. If the possibilities of any action are included, we should consider to include the signs of a reaction, a response or resistance to oppression as possibilities of action. If, following Foucault, we want to attend to the kind of relationship in which the power rela-

21 Foucault himself affirms a methodological nominalism in reference to power: "one must be nominalist, no doubt: power is not an institution, and it is not a structure, not it is a certain power that some would be gifted: it is the name that lends itself to a complex strategic situation of a given situation." Michel Foucault, *Historia de la sexualidad I. La voluntad de saber*. (Madrid: Siglo XXI, 1991), 113.

22 Michel Foucault, "El sujeto y el poder," 253.

tionship is exercised, even the violent power relationship, then it could only be articulated on the basis of two indispensable elements:

1. That "the other", on whom an action of power is exercised, must be recognized and preserved until the end of the power exercise as an active person[23]

2. In front of a power relationship, a whole field of responses, reactions, results and possible inventions is possible.

It seems logical, that the quality of "the other" is identified within this scope, since Foucault identifies power relations as being mobile, reversible and unstable. Thus, it must also be noted that there can be no power relations except to the extent that the subjects are free. If one of the two subjects were completely available to the other and became an object on which the second could exercise infinite and unlimited violence, there would be no power relations.[24]

Conclusions

Foucault's position in the framework of the historical discussion of violence is controversial, and it remains especially controversial when it opposes several of the ideas that were pre-conceived in the discussions on the concept of violence. The consequences of Foucault's position on violence reveal that the pole of violence is passivity, and the opposite pole of violence is resistance.

Commentary on the subject is also controversial and, in some cases[25], has led to raise the question of the transcendental conditions of the subject in Foucault or even, of a transcendentalist Foucault interpretation. The problem of power implies, in some degree, a type of agency, which is taken into account at the time of action. It would seem necessary to focus on the concept of "intention" in order to obtain the analytical distinction between the resistance, caused by the capacities and the resistance that is observed in power relations, where what remains at stake are the possibilities of action of an agent, whose specific quality is precisely "to be able to act." However, it must be remembered that such distinctions are never to be found in isolation. On the contrary, the resistance caused by an agent is inseparable from the ability of this agent to resist that pow-

23 This position, which assumes a primary recognition of the other, undoubtedly echoes the Hegelian theory of recognition. And it is similar to the way in which Simone de Beauvoir addresses the issue of gender-based violence, in the introduction of her *Second sex*, when referring to the conditions that prevent reciprocity. This explains the impediment of participating in human *Mitsein*.

24 Michel Foucault, "El sujeto y el poder," 258.

25 Neve Gordon, "Foucault's subject: An Ontological Reading", *Polity* 31 (1999): 408.

er, without which, he would only have to succumb; become completely objectified.

We may understand now, why Foucault never gives violence the final word. The basic nature of power is not defined by violence, because in itself, the exercise of power is not violence. Understanding power as violence would imply observing any relationship between people as a relationship of an original concealment. And in such situation, Foucault would not escape from what he himself calls the Nietzsche hypothesis, as for power relations, it is necessary to appeal to some idea of freedom. And the reason why the conception of freedom becomes necessary is, in the end, the relevance of safeguarding the aporia of the concept of the "dispositive" that underlies the analysis *History of sexuality I*. Due to the criticism formulated by the thinker directed against the so-called repressive hypothesis, what is called into question is the "negative character" of power. This negative character does not take into account the way in which the imaginary, the concepts and with these the discursive and non-discursive practices are built around violence, which results in producing a specific form of subjectivity: building the subject on basis of a mere subjection.

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Produktywna przemoc
Czytając analizy Foucaulta w kontekście historycznego problemu przemocy i władzy

Abstrakt

Niniejszy artykuł ma na celu zbadanie filozoficznego problemu przemocy z perspektywy Foucaulta. Proponowane jest oderwanie się od klasycznych paradygmatów przemocy, opartych na teoriach represji, teoriach psychoanalitycznych i modelu wojennym, ponieważ są one problematyczne w odniesieniu do pojęcia przemocy. Filozofia Foucaulta stanowi alternatywę dla zbadania luki w relacji pomiędzy władzą i przemocą. W tym sensie, możliwe jest uratowanie modelu proponowanego przez Foucaulta przed zarzutem niemożliwości krytyki przemocy w obrębie jego filozofii. Jednocześnie wskazane zostaje, że model ten pozwala na radykalną krytykę zarówno filozofii przyrody, jak i antropologii filozoficznej.

Słowa kluczowe: Foucault, Nietzsche, przemoc, władza, represje.

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Productive Violence
Reading Foucault's Analysis within the Historical Problem of Violence and Power

Summary

The following research aims to investigate the philosophical problem of violence from Foucault's perspective. The attempt is to break from the classical paradigms on violence, founded on the repression theories, psychoanalytic the-

ories and in terms of a war-model, because these are controversial, regarding the concept of violence. Foucault's philosophy allows for an alternative to examine the gap in which relations of power and violence are separated. In this sense, it is possible to save Foucault's model from the impossibility of a critique of violence in his philosophy, but at the same time, it is emphasized that this model allows a radical critique of both the philosophy of nature and of philosophical anthropology.

Key Words: Foucault, Nietzsche, violence, power, repression.

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