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### The Evolution of Power, "the Docile Body," the "Disciplined Man," and the Modern Environment of the Mind

Today, society and culture is a global phenomenon, a byproduct of transnational corporations, and transnational media, instituting power structures, ingenious in design and both effective and efficient in application. In addition, these power structures are highly anonymous in origin, analyzing and astutely monitoring culture and tastes to effectively institute, and construct choices for the individual. In the following paper, I will be examining Michel Foucault's theories on power and knowledge described in *Discipline* and *Punish: the Birth of the Prison*, and the nature of power structures since the post-war era of the 1940's, to the present day state of biopower and the "docile body." The biopower state of the present is a complex network of anonymous capillaries, analyzing and systematically categorizing the "disciplined body," producing a "docile body:" A voluntary, compliant participant, "highly individualized," and existing harmoniously in the current power structure; this power structure devised through individual inherent and instinctual entities to survive (Schiller 30-45, Fraser 160-170).

## I. The cognitive evolution of the "disciplined man" and the "docile body:" Analyzing $20^{th}$ and $21^{st}$ century power structures.

The evolution of the current biopower structure of control originates from the post-war model of Fordism. Fordism's founder, Henry Ford and The Ford Motor Company, utilized the assembly line to deploy a system of mass production of goods, efficiently and affordably. In addition, "living wages," the result of contracts between unions and the Ford Motor Company, secured production of goods and employees. The "living wage," also

secured the basic economic model of supply and demand, devising a secure employed population base, willing and able to consume the goods by which it produced. This phenomenon led to the rise of the financial industry, with the introduction of credit, and debt as a means of attaining the "American dream." The Fordism model, and social phenomenon which resulted, eventually transitioned into the transnational corporation, a hybrid of the system, which today extends its reach globally (Encyclopedia Britannica Online, Fraser *From Discipline to Flexibilization: Rereading Foucault in the Shadow of Globalization* 160-163).

With the rise of Fordism, and the corporation, the federal government in response to union advocacy instituted municipal, state and federal regulatory agencies. These agencies, devised to ensure public health and safety, eventually led to national practices of normative human behavior studies. Manuals on raising children, proper domestic home care, social etiquette, entertainment and family life, emerged. According to Jeffery Nealon, in Foucault Beyond Foucault: Power and its Intensification since 1984, this new social emergence of normative societal behavior practices, allows for the individual to voluntary monitor one's self, utilizing self-discipline and motivation, instituted through certain conditional guarantees of employment, security, choice, and comfort. Furthermore, according to Nancy Fraser, a critical theorist, of Political and Social Science and professor of philosophy at The New School in New York, this new human model, is the result of a conditioned, autonomous self-regulating entity, enabling the "disciplined man" to be more productive and useful to the control entity. The new man is now an, "ideological representation of society; but he is also a reality fabricated by this specific technology of power that I have called discipline" (194). (Foucault, 195-194, Fraser, From Discipline to

Flexibilization: Rereading Foucault in the Shadow of Globalization 161-164, 42-50 Nealon).

In addition, three key policy events over the last 100 years fostered new political and corporate partnerships, furthering the evolution of powers structure of today. According to Herbert Schiller, Professor Emeritus of Communications at the University of California and author of, Culture Inc., The Corporate Takeover of Public Expression, 1886 marks the beginning of a new role for the corporation in America. The equal protection clause passed in 1886, under the 14th amendment, allows corporations equal rights, or personhood. The next corporate gain occurred in 1947, exercising corporate power over labor unions. The, "Red Scare" or McCarthyism, produced the Taft-Hartley Act, forced union officials to sign affidavits contending not to be affiliated with the communist party, members that signed were prosecuted for perjury, and those who did not, lost government protection, and support over employment practices, hence, weakening the labor unions. Then in 1978, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of corporate political speech in, *The First* National Bank of Boston v. Bellotti. In addition, in 1980, Consolidated Edison Co. of New York Inc. v. Public Service Commission of New York, Central Hudson and Gas & Electric Corp v. Public Service Commission of New York, strengthened corporate speech rights by limiting the state's or municipality's rights to monitor corporate speech (Schiller 24, 50-51).

Gradually the top executives of America's largest corporations would come to view themselves as 'corporate statesman,' responsible for balancing the claims of stock holders, employees and the American public. Surprisingly the American public would come to share this view (Clark, Gaile 18).

The next stage of corporate growth evolved in the 1980's, with the institution of "free trade," expanding marketplaces to a global level. This expansion of the marketplace,

incorporated into the Fordism model, production and consumption, introduces the power structure known today as biopower: A transnational corporate and financial model, enabled by global communications and transportation, producing markets dependent upon global trade and production. In the next paragraphs I will be defining and supporting the ideas of the biopower or the "capillary" of power, the current model of power, defined in Foucault's, Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison, and furthered analyzed in Nancy Fraser's, From Discipline to Flexibilization: Rereading Foucault in the Shadow of Globalization. In addition, I will be analyzing the implications that arise in society in response to the global state of power structures (Fraser 165-169, qtd. May).

#### **Biopower: societal implications**

Nancy Fraser's essay, From Discipline to Flexibilization: Rereading Foucault in the Shadow of Globalization, outlines specific characteristics of a biopower state. The first characteristic that is identified is the deregulation and privatization of government agencies, resulting in a decentralization of power structures, or capillaries. Applying Foucault's idea of the capillary to a contemporized model of power structures and the decentralization of government, one observes the birth of this capillary-like model in the 1980's under the Reagan administration. Furthermore, this decentralization and privatization of government agencies marks a major shift in the development and livelihood of the state and the municipality. According to Susan Clarke and Gary Gaile in The Work of Cities, new federal policies in the Reagan administration withheld money to the state and the municipality, producing a new reliance on the corporation for growth, and sustenance. In response, to this new reliance, states instituted tax incentives, privatized some publically financed agencies, and deregulated some corporate practices in order to secure the wealth in the community (Fraser, Foucault on Modern Power 272-285, Gaile, Clarke 55-87).

Another characteristic and social phenomenon of a biopower structure of control, according to Fraser, is increased social instability and inequality (167). This instability and inequality is observed, in response to the expansion of the marketplace to a global arena. This expansion interrupted the Fordism balance of dependence between corporations and employees, securing the wealth of the middle-class. The corporation is no longer dependent upon the American employee for production, outsourcing its production lines to more affordable non-union, deregulated nations. In response, corporations still operating in America are hesitant to raise employee wages, and instead, consolidate production, limit employees to the most essential, and transport the non-essential American jobs overseas to employees willing to work for fraction on the dollar. Today, the wealth of the upper 1% of Americans grew considerably in accordance to this new model, while the latter 99% experienced a decline. In a recent Pew Research Demographics and Social Trends Survey, from 2009 to 2011, reports:

...the mean wealth of the 8 million households in the more affluent group rose to an estimated \$3,173,895 from an estimated \$2,476,244, while the mean wealth of the 111 million households in the less affluent group fell to an estimated \$133,817 from an estimated \$139,896 (Fry, Taylor Online).

This social trend is responsible for creating a deeper divide between classes, a nation increasingly more politically and socially divided, resulting in less stability in government and the stagnation of social progress (Clarke, Gaile 55-87).

Another attribute of the biopower state, according to Fraser is the growth of the prison-industrial complex (167). This new profit-based industrial complex began in 1973 with the transition of state and federal operated institutions, to profit-based corporate institutions. According to *Pro Publica*, the populations in profit-based prisons increased 37% from 2002 to 2009, in addition, the Corporate Correctional Association (CCA)

brought in 1.7 billion dollars in 2011 and contributed 17.4 million dollars in the last 10 years to lobbying groups. These new private institutions are financially motivated to keep inmates incarcerated, lobbying for social programs such as the "war on drugs" to secure financial dollars through the vast collection of law violators. The incarcerated individual is now an economic mode of production, and additionally serves as a disciplinary example to society (Suevon, Online, *The Sentencing Project* Online).

According to Fraser, the transnational firm is another characteristic of a biopower state, and the most integral (168). Today the corporation is apart of a vast global chain of production, controlling multiple brands, goods and cultural services. According to *The Economist:* Of the 100 top transnational organizations founded in America, 17 hold 90% of wealth abroad, GE-holding 70% of 500 billion, Mobil 73% of total wealth, Shell 60.1% and BP 79.8%. Furthermore, the global production of wealth allows corporation freedom to operate internationally in tax-free nations, while investing wealth in other nations. This transnational corporate model of investment, often results in vulnerable, instable regions both economically and socially, contrasting regions of wealthy investment where communities maintain higher levels of social development and progress (The Economist Online).

The final characteristic of a biopower state is the utilization of dissent by the non-conforming individuals to the method of control (168). According to Foucault, *In*Discipline and Punish: Birth of the Prison, rather than rejecting the dissenting class, the controlling mechanism or capillary, utilizes the social sciences to examine, categorize and label the individual within a normative context, while the abnormal individuals are addressed as a tool for study and research. The dissenting class primarily composed of individuals with mental abnormalities, are often unable to contribute to the economic

model. However through the advanced studies of medicine and psychology, this class of individuals can often be treated, assimilated and once again apart of the model (171-193). **Biopower, societal and cultural implications: Analysis and interpretations.** 

Fraser speculates that the combination of the latter characteristics of a biopower state completes a cycle from oppression to repression. This new era of repression is the result of the biopower, effectively efficiently and anonymously manipulating the "disciplined man" within a global scale, and transforming him into a "docile body" (169). This transformation according to Nealon, also marks the transformation from the "disciplined man" to the man of *homo oeconomicus*, a neoliberal individual, that basis decisions in terms of investment, risk and return (Nealon, 38-53). Expanding upon these ideas and implications of the biopower, and the new era of repression, in the following paragraphs, I will be analyzing the definitions of oppression and repression, and the some of the implications it projects upon the individual.

Oppression, the central characteristic of the age of the sovereign, is a method of control exercised in a physical manner onto another individual, in order to express one's power and will. In contrast, the age of repression, the current state of biopower today, is defined as a method of control voluntary inflicted by the individual through the internal mechanisms of the mind. The latter state, repression differs significantly to oppression, due to the emphasis on self-discipline. This act of self-discipline is a product of key events in history over the last 100 years, enabling the progression and advancement of the human mind. The individual responding to opportunity, education, training, and "living wages," generated by Fordism, produced a "disciplined man." This "disciplined man," a hybrid of the previous, is significantly more educated, and capable of analytical and critical thinking. In addition, this societal trend produces individuals more civilized, utilizing tools of the mind rather than physical means to succeed. As a result, this new method of success

produces a significantly higher measure of self-awareness in the individual, through highly self-critical mental processes that negotiate and manipulate the intended favorable result furthering the advancement and success of the individual. In addition, this self-awareness produces individuals increasingly more individualized, with a significantly greater sense of worth. Generationally, this event would produce the individual of the biopower state, a hybrid model of the "discipline man" (Foucault 170-194).

"In a disciplinary regime, on the other hand, individualization is 'descending:' as power becomes more anonymous and more functional, those on whom it is exercised tend to be more strongly individualized..." (Foucault 193).

The new generational model of the individual today is a hybrid of the "discipline" man" resulting in a "docile body." The "docile body," of the present day, is the product of generations, molding and refining youth in order to succeed and thrive, in current cultural structures. These hybrids are progressively more disciplined, self-serving and selfregulating. The result, is an individual that is highly individualized, situating identity and personhood central to its being, and in turn regulating and filtering this identity as needed. This identity today is highly dependent and influenced upon cultural structures, utilizing the structure in order to progress one identity and in turn progress the structure further. This results in a cultural structure, which is also a hybrid, consisting of Fordism power structures of production and consumption, added to a globally anonymous, highlyintellectual, highly regulated, and highly systematically functioning system composed of the social model. This hybrid construct, the biopower, or the capillary, is a construct based on millions of interconnected networks of financial markets and transnational megacorporations, utilized by the "docile body." The individual joins the production side of the model, now defined by it and inseparable from it (Foucault, Discipline and Punish 195308, qtd. Nealon Online, Fraser From Discipline to Flexibilization? Rereading Foucault in the Shadow of Globalization, 272-286, Foucault on Modern Power: Empirical Insights and Normative Confusions 160-171, Schiller 89-174, Foucault, Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 134-145, Grenz 103-120).

This anonymous constructed structure of power is a vital aspect of society and culture today. Contrary to the reign of the sovereign, legitimizing itself based upon its subjects acknowledgment of its identity, the power structure of today bases its legitimacy upon the recognition by the individual, of the symbols and brands it deploys. In addition, the capillary utilizes the behavioral sciences, to target the individual's intrinsic human attributes, such as desire, socialization and communication. This strategy is highly successful utilizing the will power, of the individual to weaken its resistance, and persuade the body to accept, crave, and honor the symbols and material items it produces. In addition the individual's livelihood and happiness is dependent upon the structure, utilizing social necessities such as, malls, shopping centers, cell-phones, Internet and media all provided by the capillary to advance the individual's success, and the consumer supply-side of the model. This strategy enables the individual to further its quest for identity and individualization, as a member of production as well as a consumer.

#### **Power: Conclusions**

In *Discipline and Punish: Birth of the Prison*, Foucault never reaches any final conclusions on power, the state of the "disciplined man" and the "docile body," however he does illustrate its archaic nature and fundamental necessity to humanity. In order to survive, all living things must express power. Power institutes order, strategically identifying natural destructive human instincts, and then manipulates impulses and emotions to encourage compliance, thus securing society, and itself. In addition, power assists in preserving the vitality of the species, specifically producing reward and

fulfillment to satisfy the instinctual nature of the individual to thrive. Fordism utilized this idea of reward and fulfillment, basing compliance upon production and consumption, generating a strong middle-class capable of consuming its products, hence creating order in society, through incentives, disciplinary strategies and the individual will to achieve the "American dream." Biopower utilizes this model as well, progressing it further, instilling an intimate relationship with its consumers by targeting one's identity, and individuality as a means to success and the survival of one's legacy. The use of power in the latter, hybrid strategy is most effective and discreet, manifesting its strength under the name of freedom.

To fully comprehend the archaic existence and necessity of power, whether a model of the sovereign or a model of the biopower, requires an analyses into other fundamental, human composed constructs of survival. Similar to power, language, allowing for inter-species communication is another human composed construct crucial for all living things to survive. It is through language, similar to power, in which a species is able to master the evolutionary model and gain strength and dominance in its habitat. Both power and language are crucial to life, instituting genetic codes inscribed in DNA, forever altering the specie's evolutionary model. These natural codes, and constructs are now more powerful than any living thing, their origins resting in the conspicuous model of evolution. Martin Heidegger contended that, "Man acts as though he were the shaper and master of language, while in fact language remains the master of man" (Stanford Online). Derrida, contended, "everything is arranged so that it be this way, this is what is called culture" (Internet Encyclopedia of philosophy, Online). These two vital evolutionary components of life, power and language, provide the species with a tangible method of survival, while simultaneously allowing the species to adapt it accordingly to its environment, and thus acquiring ownership of it. It is by acquiring ownership of these two vital evolutionary

components, the constructs are most successful, owning the species, rather than the species owning it.

Furthermore, all inquiry into the role of power structures in humanity, eventually yields to the basic premise of power, illustrating that the polar opposite of power, anarchy is essentially a blurred entity of its source. Anarchy is not a plausible state of existence, it does not account for the primitive substances of life, which requires an entity to seek out survival in the face of all consequences, thus expressing power. It is within this survival model of all life, where these types of paradoxes of existence occur. To attempt to discover fundamental truths of existence, such as power, or language, one only finds that the truth discovered, is only a temporary model, and most often contradictory in nature and origin. The only one true non-contradictory, permanent component of existence is death, and to die is to relinquish power along with all the contradictory, and pesky elements of existence.

You know, to learn how to live - this is always narcissistic. You want to live as long as you can, to save yourself, to persevere, and to cultivate all these things that, I infinitely larger and more powerful than you, are nonetheless part of this "I," from which they overflow on all sides. To ask me to renounce what has shaped me, what I have loved so much, is to ask me to die (Derrida, Stanford online).

In conclusion, Foucault wrote *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, as an introspection into the current capillary-like modes of power or biopower. Biopower, evolved in the post-war era of Henry Ford, and his model Fordism, production and consumption. Today this model is a globally functioning model, generating complex networks of anonymous capillaries, analyzing and categorizing individuals to produce compliant "bodies". The result is the individual of today, a "highly individualized" entity, shifting its focus internally rather than externally, and producing a highly groomed and

meticulously constructed identity, devised by the symbols deployed by the capillary. This individual, now harmoniously exist in the current power structure, one archaic in design and vital in origin.

Examining and understanding the history of power today, is crucial in understanding oneself. The recent historical origins of power, Fordism, in addition to a series of historic corporate gains over the last 100 years, generate the consumer culture of today, infiltrating one's life into the living space, the mind and family. Furthermore, the evolution of Fordism and corporate gains, produce the state of repression the individual exists within today. This state of repression is composed of a series of societal attributes including, the deregulation and decentralization of government, the use of dissent, the emergence of the "prison-industrial complex," the transnational corporation, and social instability and inequality. These attributes combined with additional beneficial accomplishments over the last 100 years such as, education, domestication, security and cognitive intellectual advancements, progress the intellectual state of the mind, simultaneously contributing to a state of self-repression, a distinct characteristic of the individual in a biopower state.

Foucault's insightful introspection of power structures historically and currently produces an engaging text, generating conversation of the nature of power, and its role in society and life. In addition, Foucault's analogies of power are inconclusive, paralleling the nature of inquiry into subjects of this kind. However the examination of power is crucial to understanding oneself in the contexts which one exists. The individual is a product of several circumstances dependent upon certain fundamental elements such as, DNA and evolution. Power structures are similar in their composure. Power, and other life-giving constructs are products of evolution, and the inherent instinctual nature for an entity to

live. Power, similar to water, is a complex phenomenon, existing infinitely alongside all living entities, it is as life giving as it is life taking.

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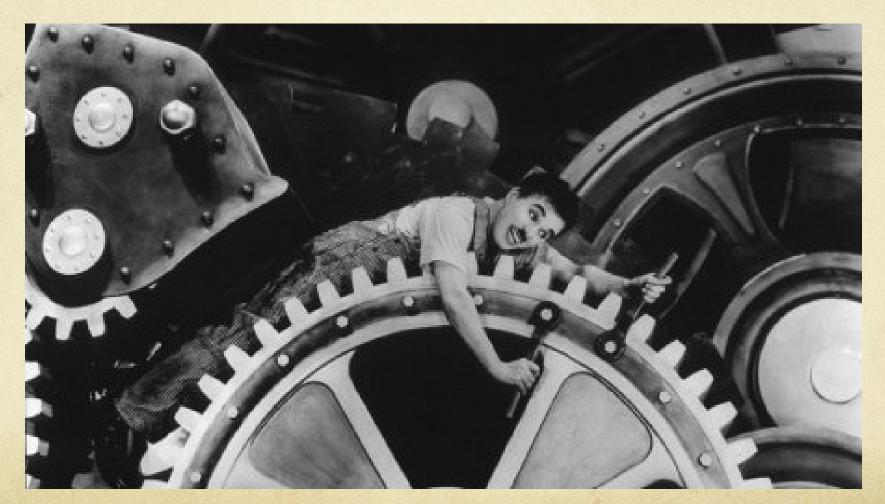
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The Evolution of Power, the "Docile Body," the "Discipline Man" and the Environment of the Mind.

#### O Thesis statement:

In the following paper I will be examining Michel Foucault's theories on power and knowledge described in Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison, and the nature of power structures since the post-war era of the 1940's, to the present day state of biopower and the "docile body." The biopower state of the present, is a complex network of anonymous capillaries, invading the "disciplined body" through the newly emerging social sciences, and consumer culture, shaping a "docile body:" A voluntary, unaware, highly individualized participant, devised of symbols deployed by the capilliry, producing the participants identity, that which distract and defend the individual from true existence (Schiller 30-45, Fraser 160-170).

Fordism, the rise of the mega-corporation, credit, debt and dependence, the cultivation of the "disciplined man."



Charlie Chaplin

## The regulatory system: government, axis of power



1907, the interstate trade commission, attacking wall street.

## The rise of the middle class, post-war America



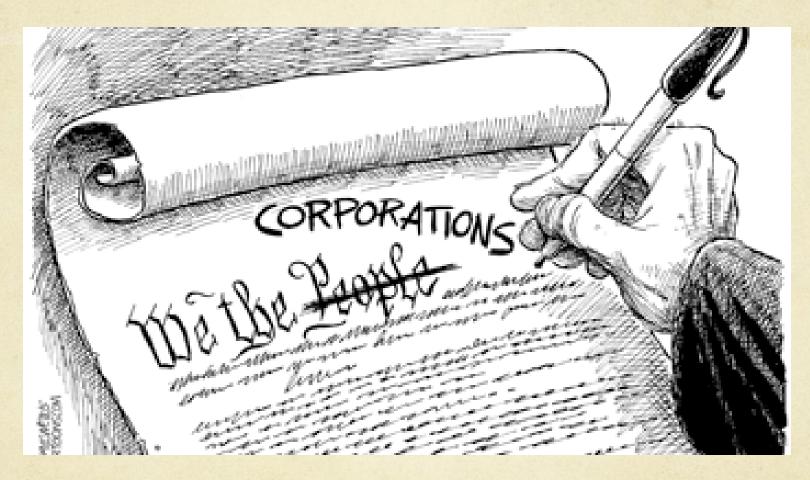
Ford Thunderbird Interior, the American Family

# Self-regulatory model, of the "disciplined man"



Norman Rockwell. Barbershop Quartet.

## 1886: 14th amendment



The "Red Scare," Cold-War, anti-communism, anti-unionism, growing strength of the capillary.



Anti-communism propaganda

Rise of film-rise; rise of propaganda entertainment, for the "disciplined man."



I Married a Communist. (I Married and Axe Murder?)

1978-corporate biopower, Nancy Fraser, Foucault on Modern Power: Empirical Insights & Normative Confusions, From Disciplined to Flexibilization? Rereading Foucault in the Shadow of Globalization. Attributes of a biopower state.



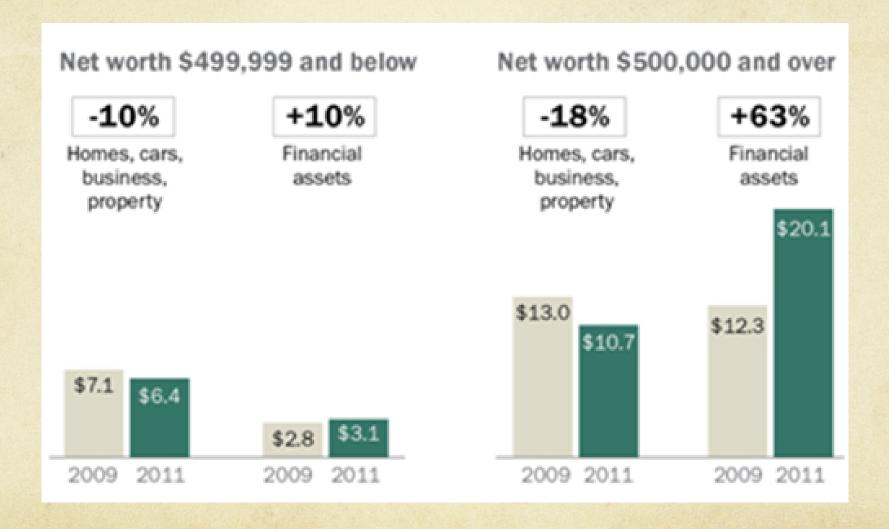


#1 De-centralization of power structures: tax incentives to corporations, privatization of social services and intuitions.



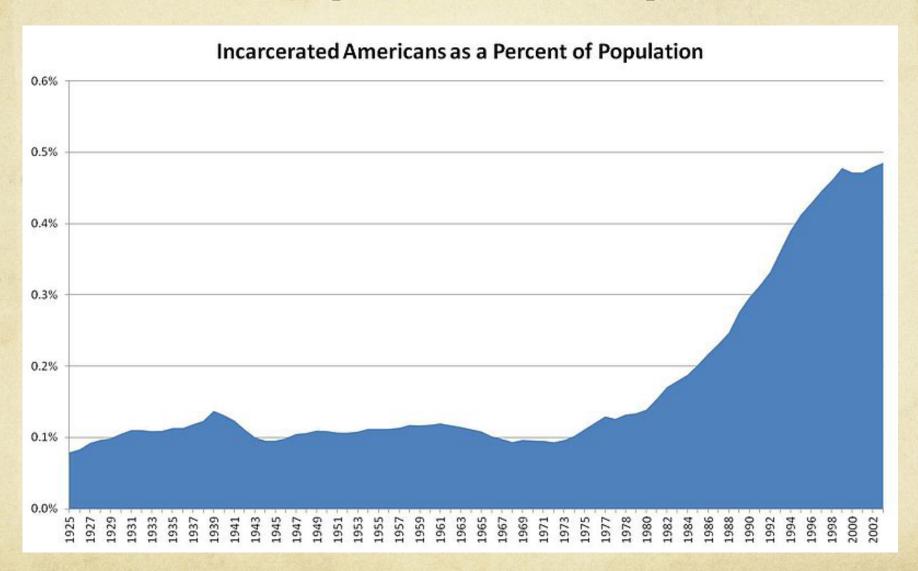
Yeah! Thanks Ronny!

### #2: Growing inequality and instability of society



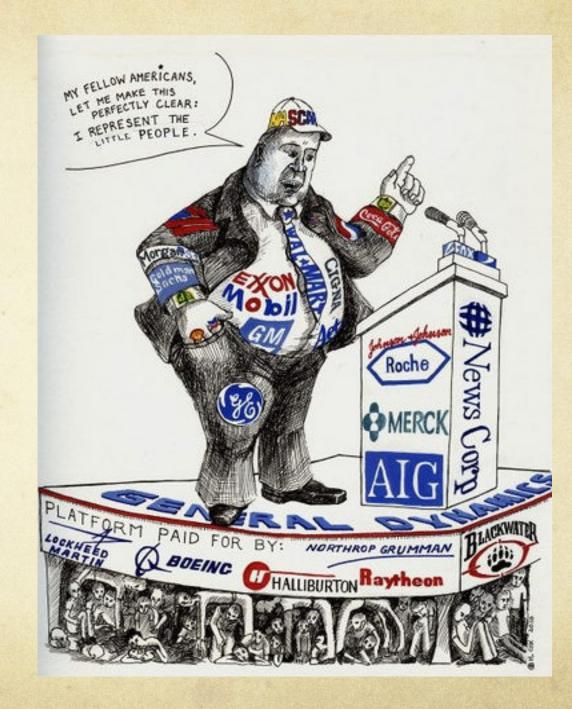
2009-white, 2011-green, Pew Research: Demographics and Social Trends

### #3 The prison-industrial complex

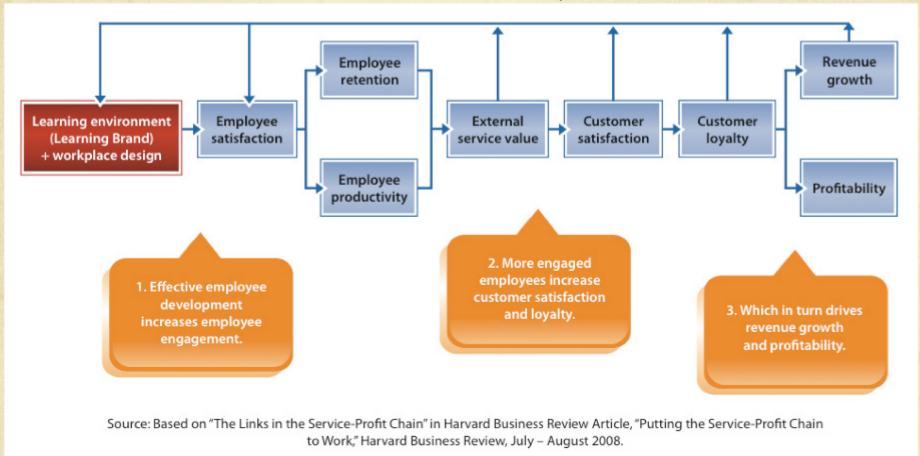


1925-2002, "The Sentencing Project," Prison Policy.org

#4: Return of repression: Citizens
Untied v. Federal
Election Commission,
Buckley v. Valeo.
Corporate personhood.



#5: "The Disciplined man," and the "docile body," (or homo economics, according to Jeffery Nealon, Foucault Beyond Foucault: Intensification of Power Since 1984)



"disciplined man" is a means of production and then consumption: social sciences, increase control of capillary of power, creating a consumer cycle of dependence for "disciplined man"/"docile body," increased profitability for capillary. Man of enterprise, investment, risk and return, neoliberal individual.

### #6: Transnational firms

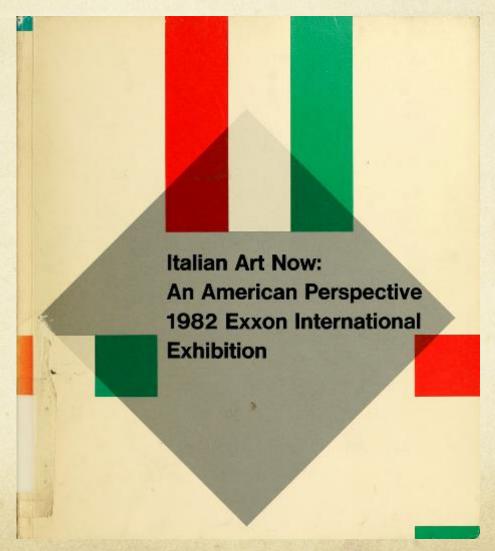


Trans-border, wealth, power, production and consumption. The new "global market place"

#7: Utilize dissenters, as a veil of freedom and independence, then, pill, place and pass on. (social sciences, medicine, psychology, sociology, behavioral economic etc.)

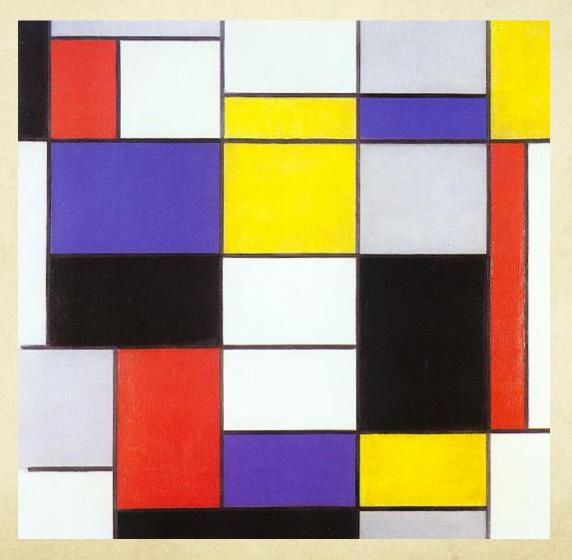


Fordism to the "panopticism," "disciplined man," and "docile body," CULTURE.



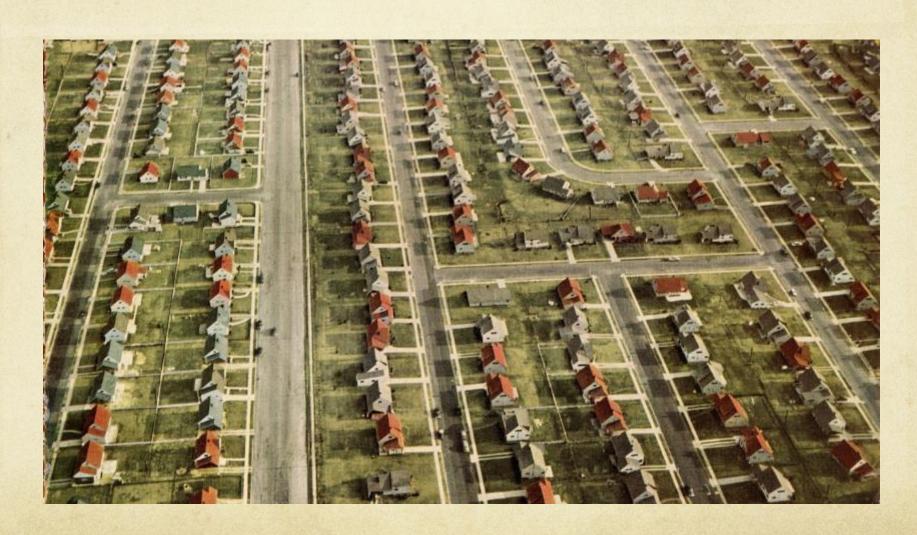


According to Schiller, art is abstracted to the spectacular, and controversial topics are removed

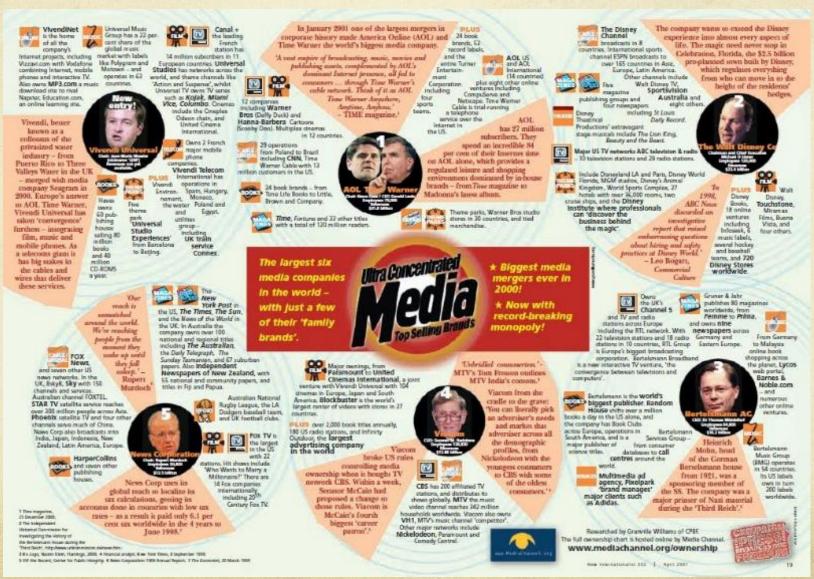


Mondrian. Oil on canvas. 1923.

# Fordism: "disciplined living spaces"



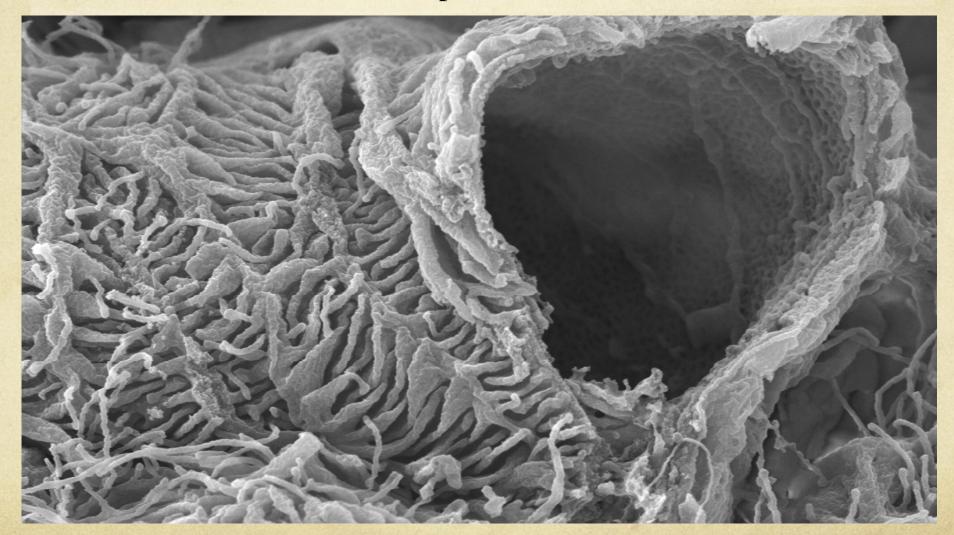
## 1980's-today: culture, a product of the capillary, creating a self-imposed "panopticon"



## The mall, the social space for "discipline man", a privatized space of the capillary



The "docile, disciplined man," current nature of power and the environment of the mind; conclusions and interpretations



Mouse kidney capillaries







carter's







aturalizer :







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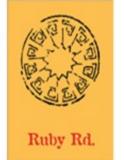


IZOD













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GLORIA VANDERBILT





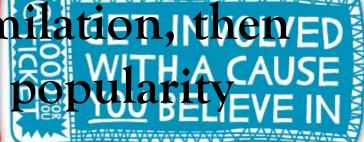
## TIPS TO STRESS LESS:













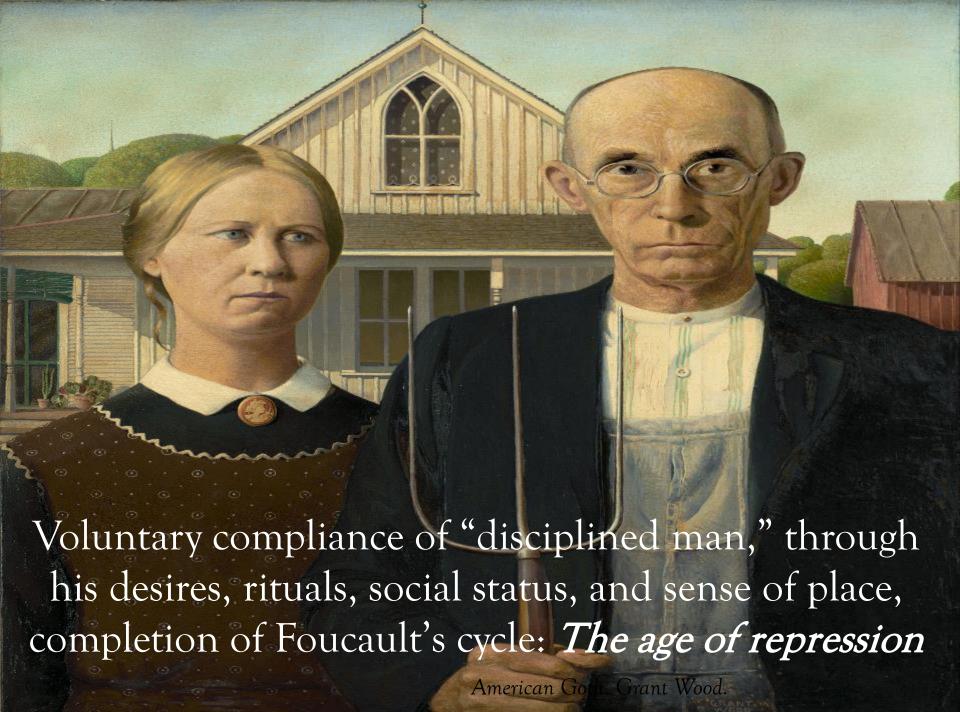












Franco 'Bifo' Berardi: On power and finance, the current capillaries of the "docile man." Another interpretation of modern power. Bansky. Let Them Eat Crack. New York, NY. 2008







Absence of power is anarchy. Anarchy in the presences of the ego transgress to back to oppression, and another cycle is formed. The Abyss?

Power, is a construct of the human-psyche produced by the ego. The ego is a product of individual; a relentless quest to defy one's own humanity, and the one truth of existence, death.

- "You know, to learn how to livethis is always narcissistic. You want to live as long as you can, to save yourself, to preserve, and to cultivate all these things that, infinitely larger and more powerful than you, are nonetheless part of this "I', from which they overflow on all sides. To ask me to renounce what has shaped me, what I have loved so much, is to ask me to die."
  - o -Jacques Derrida, I am at war with myself"