

Section 2

Rethinking Confinement: Captive Bodies Beyond Foucauldian Theory

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Programme Outline

Monday, 24 September 2018, 13:30-15:15

Georgia Christinidis (Rostock)

The Heuristic Efficacy of the *Dispositif* of Confinement

Monika Fludernik (Freiburg)

Punitivity and Panoptic Disempowerment: Recent Developments

Monday, 24 September 2018, 15:45-17:15

Annika Wirth (Freiburg)

No Body Left Untouched: The American Gulf War Captives 1992-2011

Mark Schmitt (Dortmund) – *CANCELLED* –

Rioting Bodies: Captivity, Precarity and the Crowd in Judith Butler and Jodi Dean's Theories of Public Assembly

Tuesday, 25 September 2018, 15:00-16:30

Christoph Singer (Paderborn)

Administration as Confinement: The Temporalities of Deferral in Paul Graham's *Beyond Caring* and Ken Loach's *I, Daniel Blake*

Dominik Wallerius (Mainz)

“Panopticon or Point of View? Reading Masculinity in and with James Joyce”

Abstracts

Georgia Christinidis (Rostock)

The Heuristic Efficacy of the *Dispositif* of Confinement

Despite Foucault's political activism in the *Groupe d'Information sur les Prisons*, the function of prisons and other institutions of confinement in the context of his intellectual *oeuvre* is primarily heuristic; they serve to illuminate the interplay between power and freedom characteristic of liberal forms of governmentality. Foucault's conception of power is predicated upon the existence of some degree of individual freedom: the possibility of choice, of refusal, albeit at a cost, is what differentiates the exercise of power from coercion. Confinement delimits a field where the interplay of power and freedom may more easily be observed: prisons withhold from the prisoner the possibility of leaving their walls, yet they also impose upon him or her an obligation to (freely) choose how to behave within the realm of panoptical surveillance that they constitute; this is how they bring forth self-reflexive and docile subjects. By drawing attention to the subjectifying function of institutions of confinement, epitomised by the twin claims that disciplinary action upon the body brings forth the soul and that that "soul is the prison of the body", Foucault deconstructs the opposition body-soul and simultaneously metaphorises confinement, turning it from a condition defined by restrictions upon movement through space into a *dispositif* that transcends disciplinary institutions and makes possible—yet simultaneously regulates the exercise of—free, responsible, choices by (neo-)liberal subjects. Foucault engages with this *dispositif* throughout his later works.

I will reread the late Foucault through the lens of the *dispositif* of confinement, which yields two significant insights: (1) it elucidates the nature of the relationship between prisons, asylums, and other disciplinary institutions on the one hand, and biopolitical practices like behavioural economics on the other, thus clarifying the interaction between disciplinary and biopolitical forms of governmentality;¹ (2) it facilitates an understanding of the operation of ideology, and of the Foucauldian project as ideology critique, without being at odds with Foucault's explicit rejection of the concept of 'ideology'. While Foucault was deeply sceptical *vis-a-vis* ideology as 'false consciousness', his deconstruction of the opposition between the corporeal and the psychological permits us to rethink ideology in a way that does

¹ Based on Foucault's elaboration of the terms in "The subject and power", "Omnes et singulatim", *Society Must Be Defended*, and *The Birth of Biopolitics*, I take sovereignty, discipline, and biopolitics to denote three distinct forms of governmentality, the latter in its turn defined by Foucault as the conduct of conduct. The object of sovereignty is the territory, with human beings becoming subject to it as the inhabitants and cultivators of said territory. The object of discipline is the individual body. The object of biopolitics is the population; biopolitics are not, however, restricted to biological processes, although the term's first use in *The History of Sexuality* vol. 1 might suggest that. Foucault's elaboration in his lectures, especially in *The Birth of Biopolitics*, make it clear that biopolitics affect all areas of life rather than just births, deaths, illness etc. Generating incentive structures that make it more likely for a significant part of the population to choose a certain course of action over another, such as workfare programmes in Britain or the Hartz IV system in Germany, would constitute instances of biopolitics, as they are ways of conducting the conduct of the population. While the three modes of governmentality arose successively, with biopolitics the most recent and currently the most prevalent, Foucault stresses that all three forms continue to exist, and interact, in the present. Nevertheless, there has been little systematic engagement with the ways in which they interact.

not rely upon the separation of ideas from practices. Instead, the *dispositif* can be thought as a structure that is manifest in practices without having any existence outside them, somewhat like discourse may be understood as a structure or pattern manifest in individual utterances. The *dispositif*, then, serves as a performative reconceptualisation of ideology, which allows for the fact that agency is systematically confined, while eliminating the necessity of postulating a distinct realm of (illusory) ideas that determines agency.

Monika Fludernik (Freiburg)

Punitivity and Panoptic Disempowerment: Recent Developments

The punitive turn in American but also British penal legislation and carceral practice has been the subject of much criminological work by American, British and German scholars. David Garland and others have drawn our attention to the connection between the warehousing of (mostly coloured) prisoners and the continuation of ‘slavery’ under a different name. In the wake of Foucault’s work, the prison has been reclassified as a site of disciplining and panoptic surveillance – a model that does not work very well for the contemporary penal reality. The paper will look at reflections of punitivism and panopticism in a selection of literary texts including a scene from Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*, Sarah Waters's *Affinity* and Jenni Fagan's *The Panopticon*. It will argue that there is a development from the exposure of punitivism to an emphasis on embodiment in the experience of incarceration and on to disembodiment and disempowerment. An attempt will be made to explain these literary emphases by linking them back to penal practices and newer carceral predicaments.

Annika Wirth (Freiburg)

No Body Left Untouched: The American Gulf War Captives 1992-2011

Together with the American mass media, the non-fictional captivity narratives of the First and the Second Gulf War (1991-92 and 2003-11) create and maintain American individual and collective identities. More often than not, the captives’ biographical and autobiographical narrative testimonies are used to publicize an image of American supremacy and to justify the wars. These propaganda purposes are achieved by extensively displaying and discussing the captive’s body, especially any violations thereof, in text and image. It seems that the story of captivity and its obsession with the captive’s violated body is still elementary to America as a narrative community – as discussed by Ansgar Nünning in 2009 – and deeply rooted within the storehouse of stories the American community tells to construct itself.

In my paper, I will present some results from my research on Gulf War captivity narratives. The biographies and autobiographies I have compiled offer a significant contribution to the understanding of corporeality in modern day captivity narratives, especially in the context of the wars in Iraq the late 20th and early 21st century. Specifically, I will show that there are profound differences in the portrayal of male and female bodies in captivity. Whereas the male body is expected to resist all kinds of physical torture, the

possibility of sexual violence is never discussed. In contrast to this, the female captivity experience is reduced to the threat of rape, a narrative strategy that is contested by the female Gulf War captives in moments that apparently queer the notion of “properly endorsed male heroes and raped women” (Gruner 51). Moreover, I will ask what happens when the captive/captor constellation is reversed and it is the ‘enemy’s’ body that is violated as happened in the Abu Ghraib scandal of 2004. What are the implications for the American cultural narrative and what is the difference in the depiction of the bodies that can be attributed to the captive’s race, gender, or supposed religious conviction?

Works Cited

- Nünning, Ansgar. “Surveying Contextualist and Cultural Narratologies: Towards an Outline of Approaches, Concepts, and Potentials.” Heinen, Sandra and Roy Sommer. *Narratology in the Age of Cross-disciplinary Narrative Research*. De Gruyter, 2009. Page 48-70.
- Gruner, Elliott. "Forgetting the Gulf War POW." *Journal of American Culture* 12.1 (Mar. 1994): 47-52.

Mark Schmitt (Dortmund) – *CANCELLED* –

Rioting Bodies: Captivity, Precarity and the Crowd in Judith Butler and Jodi Dean’s Theories of Public Assembly

Recent years have seen an increasing demand for theorizing what Joshua Clover has called the “new era of uprisings” (2016). Public unrests such as the English riots of 2011 or the Ferguson unrest 2014, among others, bespeak a spontaneously erupting collective desire to change the political, economic, social conditions at a given moment. Apart from Clover, Judith Butler and Jodi Dean have recently provided new theoretical approaches to come to terms with collective political bodies and their public agitation. While Butler considers the assembly as a politically performative act which “delivers a bodily demand for a more livable set of economic, social, and political conditions no longer afflicted by induced forms of precarity” (2015: 11), Dean views the crowd as “the fundamental unit of politics” (2016: 4) and challenges the negative connotations of crowds and the masses. Both take their cue from the idea that individuals are ultimately trapped and confined within their own individuality and subjectivity. The individual alone is virtually impotent when it comes to overcoming its precarity and working towards a more egalitarian society, and it is primarily through concerted collective action that freedom can be gained. Both Butler and Dean take their cue from Michel Foucault’s conceptualisations of biopolitics and disciplinarity and argue that, ultimately, the individual as the primary category of agency and subjectivity is the effect of disciplinary efforts to limit the political power of collectivities and to hold the individual captive within itself.

In my talk, I will explore how Butler and Dean’s approaches to crowds and assembly can be used to theorize the public embodiment of a collective political subjectivity which not only challenges the disciplinary regimes that render bodies precarious through processes of political and social marginalisation in terms of race, class, sexuality and gender (among

others), but also refigures individualism as a form of isolation and captivity that prevents political struggle. To illustrate this argument, I will look at recent unrests in Britain and the US where bodies were rendered precarious in terms of race and class (among others) through processes of social abjection (Tyler 2013), and in which these bodies subsequently came into view as “vectors of power” (Butler 2015: 84) in the performative act of public assembly and unrest.

Christoph Singer (Paderborn)

Administration as Confinement: The Temporalities of Deferral in Paul Graham’s *Beyond Caring* and Ken Loach’s *I, Daniel Blake*

This paper will read administrative temporalities, especially deferral and delay as a form of confinement. To that end, I will map the iterative time-scapes of waiting rooms, as presented in Paul Graham’s photographic series *Beyond Caring* (1984/5) and Ken Loach’s film *I, Daniel Blake*. With Javier Auyero I will analyse administrative processes as a specific temporality that “(re)creates subordination. It does so, I argue, by producing uncertainty and arbitrariness. [...] To put it bluntly, everyday political domination is what happens when nothing apparently happens, when people ‘just wait’” (Auyero 2012, 19).

As such waiting rooms provide an interesting field of temporal research. Waiting simultaneously serves as a method of exerting power and as an analytical tool to question these power structures. I will discuss how the temporalities produced by administrations do not only confine the waiting subject to a seemingly eventless state, but more importantly complicate narratives, e.g. social biographies, by keeping individuals and large parts of society confined to specific *time-tracks* (Lyman and Scott 1970, 189). This type of confinement recalls Walter Benjamin’s argument that the “more life is regulated by administration, the more people will have to learn to wait.” (Ehn and Löfgren 2010: 35)

Dominik Wallerius (Mainz)

“Panopticon or Point of View? Reading Masculinity in and with James Joyce”

Masculinity is notoriously difficult to theorise. If there is one point of agreement among researchers, it is that there cannot be a single theory about masculine gender. However, thinking about masculinity often employs notions of confinement, restriction, regulation and surveillance. For instance, psychoanalytically oriented critics view masculinity as centrally organised around the subject’s immersion in language and thus the restricting interdictions of the Nom/non du père. Foucauldian views, on the other hand, stress the panoptic mechanisms of masculinity and posit that performances of masculinity are fundamentally based on the surveillance through other male and female subjects, which, they argue, enforces heteronormative masculinity.

Ultimately, those approaches see masculinity as restrictive and confined through external forces. But why, to paraphrase sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, do the thus dominated

play along and accept their domination? Do we not simplify gender construction through the metaphor of the natural and social body as a prison confining the (docile) subject?

I propose that these questions can be fruitfully discussed by taking a detour and looking at the fiction of the Irish modernist author James Joyce. In fact, the trope of the passive and dominated subject is mirrored in Joyce's criticism of his countrymen as culturally and morally inert. My argument posits that by analysing Joyce's criticism of Irish paralysis we can learn to view the confining nature of masculinity in a different light. Joyce's art shows that notions of restriction and confinement are not sufficient in order to understand how masculinity is constructed and maintained. Rather, I draw on alternative concepts – Bourdieu's habitus and doxa as well as Raewyn Connell's hegemony and complicity – to suggest a more flexible way of thinking about masculinity in Joyce's work and beyond. In this approach the subject is not simply a docile body or victim of the nets of discourse. Rather it is actively engaged in the process of domination, from which suffering results for both male and female subjects.

Masculinity in Joyce can be understood as a prison, but one in which the confinement is itself part of the structure that intrinsically motivates male subjects to perpetuate this structure. This approach avoids to limit discussions of gender as discursive performances and opens the view of gender as a part of viewing and understanding the (social) world. This "doxic" (Bourdieu) approach, I argue, can be most fruitfully used in the analysis of fictional narratives, and thus my focus on masculinity in Joyce's work will highlight blind spots in established theories of masculinity as well as in Joyce's critique of Irish paralysis.