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DECLARATION
In accordance with Rule G4.6.3 I hereby declare that the above mentioned treatise is my own work and that it has not previously been submitted for assessment to another university or for another qualification.

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In the African tradition, the conflicts and drama of Raskolnikov are an impossibility.

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Abstract

This treatise will focus on a critical examination of Gavin Hood’s South African Oscar-winning film, *Tsotsi* (2006), in the interest of exploring how the mass media creates a problematic configuration of the subject, in virtue of its valorization of the continued discursive colonization of Africans (identified broadly in geographical rather than racial terms). That is, within the narrative of the film, the protagonist, after engaging in a crime spree, gives himself over to the state authorities and emotively confesses to his transgressions. Importantly, this dramatic confession is represented as a triumph of the human spirit – in the form of an autonomous rehabilitation on the part of the criminal. However, if one understands the protagonist as a subject constituted by what Foucault terms the discursive regimes of disciplinary/bio-power, what emerges into conspicuity is that the protagonist’s actions rather than being the result of his growing maturity and concomitant augmenting ‘humanity’ are the consequence of a set of discursive imperatives which render him docile and prostrate. Arguably, what this serves to represent, and, indeed, propagate, is more of a superimposition of Western cultural discourses on African subjects, and less of a negotiation with such discourses by such subjects. The treatise aims to provide a theoretical solution to the negation of alternative modes of being by disciplinary/bio-power imperatives inextricable from neo-liberal subjectivity. However, in its attempts to encourage cultural negotiation between North and South, the treatise will avoid simplistic, ‘orthodox’, Marxist solutions and will instead critically contend with the theory of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, and their perspectives on how radical democracy can be achieved.

**Key words**: disciplinary/bio-power, neo-Marxism, dependency, structural imperialism, subjectivity, radical democracy, neo-liberal hegemony
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INTRODUCTION

With the recent success of South African film on the international circuit, in the form of Gavin Hood’s *Tsotsi* (2006), which has received critical acclaim, it would be tempting to assume that within the international communication framework, South African voices are finally being heard. That is, if one were to see this South African film as an example of a growing trend, one might assume that previously disenfranchised voices, or communication stemming from the South,\(^1\) is finally being allowed to enter into cultural negotiation with the North.\(^2\) However, if one examines the messages carried by this cultural text, it rapidly emerges that rather than cultural negotiation between North and South becoming a reality, the South continues to operate within ever-more restrictive discursive parameters, only receiving recognition from the North for its output when this output is little more than a repetition of Western/Northern modes of existence. That is, in order for the South to be accepted and heard within the all-encompassing sphere of international communication, it must subordinate itself to a number of severely restrictive discursive imperatives, which negate its various cultural practices, and which render its various populations docile and prostrate by replacing a plethora of subjectivities with a confining, homogenous subjectivity. In this regard, this treatise will examine how the mass media creates a problematic configuration of the subject, in virtue of its valorisation of the continued covert discursive colonization of Africans (identified broadly in geographical rather than racial terms). In effect, the treatise seeks to identify how cultural negotiation between North and South remains highly unbalanced, because the cultural output of the South is undermined by discursive imperatives stemming from the North, which continue to be exported to the South through a proliferation of international communication networks within our globalized era.

To this end, the first chapter will begin by critically engaging with the debate between exponents of modernization theory, on the one hand, and exponents of dependency and structural imperialism theory, on the other hand, namely Lerner/Schramm and Schiller/Galtung, respectively. These theories form the basis of a broad array of critical positions adopted within the academic field of international communication. That is, on the one hand, exponents of modernization theory, such as Lerner and Schramm, advance that Western cultural imposition on Africa - specifically in relation to the technological advancement that accompanies it - is profoundly positive for the

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\(^1\) The South refers to the developing world, or what is commonly termed the Third World – these countries have struggling economies and are located primarily within the Southern Hemisphere, hence their name e.g. African nations, South American nations, the Philippines, Indonesia, the Indian subcontinent, etc.

\(^2\) The North refers to the developed world, or what is commonly termed the First World – these are predominantly Western countries with highly developed economies e.g. U.S.A, Canada, the states that comprise Western Europe, Japan and Australia, etc.
development of the continent as a whole. On the other hand, this is contested by the likes of Schiller and Galtung, among others, who point out that technology is used in a manner which promotes Western socio-cultural imposition and, conversely, broad spectrum dependency on the part of Africa.

The second chapter will extend the parameters of such deliberation, insofar as it will elaborate upon the positions of Schiller and Galtung in its criticism of disciplinary/bio-power as a form of discursive colonization in the contemporary era. That is, while Schiller and Galtung place emphasis on the structural discrepancies that undermine any potent cultural negotiation between North and South, they do not focus on what is implicitly communicated through the information that flows from the North to the South, en-masse and without reciprocation. In an effort to address this oversight, this section draws heavily on the work of Michel Foucault and seeks to augment the scope of Schiller’s and Galtung’s respective work by including Foucaultian discourse analyses within their ambit of concern.

The third chapter will apply Foucault’s understanding of contemporary subjectivity as something constructed by disciplinary/bio-power imperatives, to the emerging subjectivity of the South. Arguably, subjects of the South are, through the proliferation of international communication networks, and via the messages they implicitly contain, being forced into a highly restrictive and disempowering dynamic, in a way that denies them the opportunity to participate in any meaningful cultural negotiation with the North. In this regard, this chapter will examine Gavin Hood’s Oscar-winning film *Tsotsi* (2006), in which the protagonist, after engaging in a crime spree, gives himself over to the state authorities and emotively confesses to his transgressions. Importantly, this dramatic confession is represented as a triumph of the human spirit – in the form of an autonomous rehabilitation on the part of the criminal. However, if one understands the protagonist as a subject constituted by what Foucault terms the discursive regime of disciplinary/bio-power, what emerges into conspicuity is that the protagonist’s actions, rather than being the result of his growing maturity and concomitant augmenting ‘humanity’, are the consequence of a set of discursive imperatives which render him docile and prostrate. Arguably, what this serves to represent, and indeed propagate, is the further superimposition of Western cultural discourses on African subjects, and, conversely, the dissolution of the possibility of negotiation with such discourses by such subjects.

The fourth chapter will attempt to find a solution for the South in the form of a practical political strategy, and to this end will turn to Laclau and Mouffe’s *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* (2001). In this work, Laclau and Mouffe critique the neo-liberal hegemony, which in many ways constitutes the political face of disciplinary/bio-power imperatives. In doing so, Laclau and Mouffe resist the temptation to grasp at a simplistic Marxist solution in that they refuse to merely re-articulate those problematic theories traditionally
used by the Left, in its attempts to dismantle the restrictive, non-democratic dynamics of Capitalism. Instead, Laclau and Mouffe re-negotiate and critically contest Marxist theory and thereby usher in the possibility of democracy, not only in the North but also in the South, insofar as their political strategy for the establishment of Left-wing hegemony is devoid of the cultural baggage that previously limited the appeal of Marxism.

Finally, the treatise will conclude with an overview of the material covered, and with a few recommendations of ways in which the various subjects of Africa could approach international communication in the future, with a view to lending balance to North/South cultural negotiation.
CHAPTER 1

The international communication debate: Dependency Theory and Structural Imperialism versus the Modernist Perspective

The following chapter will present an overview of international communication theory with specific focus on the tensions between, on the one hand, the modernist perspectives of Daniel Lerner and Wilbur Schramm, and, on the other hand, the dependency theory of Herbert Schiller and the structural imperialism theory of Johan Galtung.

From an examination of the respective theories of the above four thinkers, two trends of thought emerge which are still prevalent today. On the one hand, there is the ‘free flow’/modernist perspective first made popular by Lerner and Schramm. This mode of thinking subscribes to a belief that technology is a neutral force, capable of achieving remarkable social change through its implementation. Additionally, a main component of this belief is that technology can give those from the South access to a Western system of politics, economic practices and cultural values. Unfortunately, what soon becomes clear is that, in terms of this Western political and economic systems, as well as Western culture is superior to any other value system, in whichever field it is located (politico-economic and/or socio-cultural). On the other hand, there is the dependency perspective of Schiller, supported and given more gravity by the structural imperialism theory of Galtung. These theories dismiss the notion that technology is a neutral force and argue that as a result of a political and economic system which favours the North, the South’s access to technology, and by extension cultural production, is limited by a set of conditions which disallow cultural contestation, or negotiation, of any significance.

With the prevalence and ever-increasing, totalizing spread of Western culture into the South, a number of problematic consequences begin to emerge. Perhaps the most pressing being the effect that such an imposition has on the identity of an individual within the South. If the populations of the South are disregarded in terms of cultural negotiation, as explained earlier, it becomes impossible for them to retain any sense of autonomy or cultural identity. This is further problematized when one considers that indigenous knowledge systems offer a differing perspective on a variety of subjects. When such porous perspectives are eroded as a result of an imbalance within a newly established form of imperialism, homogeneity of perspective is the only consequence that can result from such a biased interaction. The issue becomes even more sinister when one begins to critically examine the effects of a Western identity (with all its associated and highly problematic paradigms). This identity begins to displace the subjectivity of an individual from a nation classified by the North as developing or under-developed. Not only is that person then the victim of a disfigured balance in terms of political and economic power, but also their
identity (an integral form of culture) is replaced covertly by one which contains within it a plethora of problems.

It is hard to disagree with the assertions of Schiller and Galtung. It stands to reason, that an economically/politically dominant group would use that which is available to it to, firstly, generate wealth accumulation, and to secondly, ensure that they remain in their position of power. Technology, and specifically technology which revolves around the production and dissemination of communication, is used in this manner. Messages that implicitly and explicitly promote a continuous communication of the North’s superior political, economic and cultural lifestyle permeate the populations of the South, thus quelling resistance and negotiation and in doing so; ensure that the status quo remains. This is a well-travelled thread in literature discussing the role of the media within society. Theorists such as Gramsci, Chomsky, the Frankfurt School (Adorno, Horkheimer, Althusser, etcetera), Habermas and Stuart Hall have all extensively detailed the ways in which the technology of information is used in the service of the dominant elite (What Schiller would term the powerful elite within a modern world system and what Galtung would term the core of the centre nation).

In effect, the chapter will engage with the aforementioned theories and will attempt to demonstrate the nature of international information flow, as well as the implications of the nature of such flow on the possibility for cultural negotiation between these two ‘regions’. This will then allow an analysis of how international communication flow informs subjectivity in the South and to illustrate this statement, the protagonist in Gavin Hood’s 2006 film text, *Tsotsi*, will be subjected to critical scrutiny.

**1. Modernization Theory**

In order to engage critically with the modernization theory propagated by Schramm it is essential to first consider the conceptual parameters of the theory which preceded it, and which allowed Schramm’s modernization theory to gain momentum and legitimacy, particularly among Western academics; as a more formidable perspective than its predecessor.

The ‘Free Flow of Information’ theory of Daniel Lerner, which developed after the end of the Second World War (1945), appeared at a juncture in history when the world was a bi-polar space of two trends of thought regarding the role of the media. For the supporters of Capitalism, international communication was construed as a tool to be used to promote the idea of the free market and democracy; for the supporters of Marxism, international communication was something that required the regulation of various media outlets in accordance with an array of socialist principles. In essence, the ‘Free Flow of Information’ model proposed that with the development of the media in economically underdeveloped countries, information would be able to move back and
forth with increasing fluidity between the rich states and their struggling counterparts. Accordingly,
this information exchange would not only open up access to trade but would also promote cultural
understanding between divergent cultures. However, Thussu, among other prominent critics, argues
that “The ‘free flow’ doctrine was essentially a part of the liberal, free market discourse the
championed the rights of media proprietors to sell wherever and whatever they wished” (Thussu
2000:55). In other words, the Western media, informed by Western economic ideals, promoted the
idea of no trade barriers and neoliberalism, such that it became an apparatus for the propagation of a
capitalist ethos. As such, although disguised as an attempt to exchange information, rather than
being a truly free flow of information, the exchange was one-way; that is, from the developed to the
developing world, and hence didactic in orientation. In effect, the countries that comprise the region
popularly referred to as the “North” (the developed, ‘First World’ nations) bombarded the countries
of the “South” (the underdeveloped, ‘Third World’ nations) with their ideals, associated consumer
products, and representations of the South from the perspective of the North. So, rather than
promoting a cross-cultural dialogue, the voice of the North simply dominated the exchange of
information, in a manner that negated the possibility of any meaningful cultural negotiation.

Modernization theory, as advocated by Schramm, began as a complimentary theory to
Lerner’s ‘Free Flow of Information’ doctrine. Despite it having been subject to severe criticism
over the decades, the mode of thought associated with it has prevailed, and moreover, has still
permeated increasing sectors in the West (or North) beyond academia, such as the general public
and the popular. Indeed, following the failures of modernization to uplift impoverished
communities from their unfortunate economic positions, a large portion of Western scholarship,
rather than accepting that technology is not the only solution to the various crises in the world, has
developed a resolute faith in new information and communication technologies as the panacea for
all possible ills; socio-cultural, environmental, or otherwise. Critics such as Mosco have labelled
this position as “a neo-developmentalist view” (Mosco 1996:130) whereby a flawed theory is
continuously invested in, and propagated, with the emergence of new technologies. As such, it is
plausible to suggest that, despite the plethora of objections to it, modernization theory has gained
immense discursive momentum in the West, and has thereby become imbued with an aura of
legitimacy.

To a large extent, this perspective was endorsed and sanctioned by Daniel Lerner’s text, The
Passing of Traditional Society (1958). In this regard, Lerner, who sees information flow as an
unbiased and equal exchange, through which developing or under-developed nations could benefit
from their developed counterparts as a result of such a dynamic; sees “technical assistance” (Lerner
1967:106) as a key part of this exchange of information. In effect, he argues that by the North
developing the media within a nation classified as developing or under-developed, lines of
communication can be opened up and ideas, participatory change and negotiation on socio-cultural/politico-economic issues can flourish. In principle, this may sound like an excellent (if idealistic) proposition, but crucially, Lerner ignores a number of important factors which determine the nature of both information flow and information itself. Arguably, this ideological naivety is explicit when he muses,

Some countries, mainly in the East (South), have less and want more. Other countries, mainly in the West (North), have more and are willing to help those in the East to get more. Under these conditions, putting Western aid to work for Eastern development should be easy (1967: 104)

Such a perspective is inherently problematic due to its subscription to an ethnocentric attitude, and, for that matter, its unquestioning and non-critical ethic when it comes to promoting a Western politico-economic ideal. The text assumes that a Western model is inherently superior and is thus highly disparaging of modes of thought falling outside of an accepted Western framework, which are labelled as suffering from “traditional fatalism” (Lerner 1967: 104). In sum, while the ‘Free Flow of Information’ school of thought, characterized by Lerner, proposes an ‘equal’ exchange of ideas, it immediately disallows any mode of thought outside of the dominant framework (that is, a Western framework) to gain purchase and discursive momentum. For obvious reasons then, this immediately discredits its claim that it seeks to promote diversity in thought, as it only privileges perspectives that do not contest the legitimacy of the dominant nations that it supports through broad-casting.

Schramm’s book, *Mass Media and National Development* (1964), following Daniel Lerner, rapidly became an influential text within the field of international communication theory. Importantly, it was published in conjunction with UNESCO, thus imbuing it with instant widespread legitimacy and making it broadly accessible to incumbent key decision-makers in terms of communication policy. As Thussu notes, Schramm “saw the mass media as the vehicle for transferring new ideas and models from the North to the South, and within the South, from urban to rural areas” (Thussu 2000: 57). It is of course important to acknowledge that Schramm, in all likelihood, did not seek to disenfranchise the South further, but rather sought to uplift these disenfranchised communities through development. However, it is also crucial to acknowledge that, its benign intentions notwithstanding, much of the modernization theory that subsequently developed in the wake of Schramm’s work, was politically motivated. Indeed, regardless of whether or not Schramm’s intentions themselves were benign or not3, he was undoubtedly strongly influenced by the discourses of his day. Consequently, much like the writings of Lerner, Schramm’s

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3 Insofar as he was operating within what Kilbourne, Beckmann and Thelen term the D.S.P. (Dominant Social Paradigm).
writing assumes and excludes certain details, thought processes and counter-arguments regarding
the entry of Western-produced and controlled information technology into the South.

When one reads the preface of Schramm’s major work on international communication, *Mass Media and National Development* (1964), a number of criticisms can be immediately launched against the text, criticisms which strongly problematize the argument presented by Schramm and thus call both the legitimacy of it, and all subsequent modernization theory, into question. In the preface to his book, Schramm writes,

> One aspect of communication development is of special concern to the new and emerging countries. This is the contribution that effective communication can make to economic and social development. Free and adequate information is thus not only a goal: it is also a means of bringing about desired social change. Without adequate and effective communication, economic and social development will inevitably be retarded, and may be counter-productive. With adequate and effective communication, the pathways to change can be made easier and shorter” (Schramm 1964: ix)

This statement is initially hard to fault, couched as it is in overtly benevolent and progressive terms, until one asks the question of what kind of desired social change is to be accomplished through the use of free, adequate and effective communication. In this regard Schramm clearly presents achieving a model based on Western economic and social values as the epitome of what he terms ‘desired social change’. This ethnocentricity in his understanding of desired social change disregards viewpoints, traditions and cultures which are at odds with such values and which may find themselves ‘outside’ of the Western economic and social model. Indeed, rather than engaging with these divergent modes of thought and the possibilities they offer, theorists such as Schramm consider them as being fatalistic, or, in other words, as being regressive and counter-productive. In fact, he even writes that the mass media in the South face the challenge of “rous[ing] their people from fatalism and a fear of change” (Schramm 1964:130). This is a very prejudicial analysis, not only because it excludes the viewpoints of the South rather than entering into a negotiation with them. In addition, it is highly prejudicial in so far as it sullies modes of existence or thought processes which are incongruous with Western economic, social and cultural norms and paradigms, through the use of disparaging comments - such as labelling alternative viewpoints as being those adopted by the ‘doomed’. Arguably, it would not be unfair to assert that these viewpoints border on excessive *hubris*, and echo the arrogance of prominent theorists such as Daniel Lerner, who, as discussed, preceded and influenced Schramm, and who stated that Western society provided “the most developed model of societal attributes (power, wealth, skill, rationality)” (Lerner 1958:47). In many ways though, this arrogance leads to the formation of a philosophical blind spot, because the modernization theorists fall prey to an array of startling contradictions within their assertions. Based
on the ‘Free Flow of Information’ theory, which argues for an equal exchange of information, most respected proponents of modernization theory seem to dismiss the information stemming from the South - rubbishing it as backward – and by doing so, push forward Western notions of development, without regarding any potentially legitimate counter-argument or mode of thought, as worthwhile. What emerges here is that their perspectives are couched in the belief that Western society, through its affiliations with technological development, has become the epitome of evolutionary advancement, affording a highly-functional democracy and a more comfortable standard of living. While this may be true within the context of the North, what the above does not take into account are the implications of transferring technology from the context of the North to the context of the South.

By the 1970’s, modernization theory had gained substantial credence and by this stage, “modernization theorists started to use the level of media development as an indicator of general societal development” (Thussu 2000:57). That is, they determined a nation’s level of societal progress by how established and widespread the media had become in that particular nation. However, what was misunderstood by the proponents of this theory and by the use of the media as indices in this fashion, was that the media is not a neutral force and that those who control the technology that has been transferred to the South, namely the powerful monoliths of the North, have an agenda to remain in positions of political power and economic dominance. In other words, those who control the production of information, control the nature of information, and thus any relation between the North and the South will almost invariably be skewed in favour of the North. In effect, theorists such as Lerner, and the UN-sponsored Schramm, ignored the fact that the media is a product of various conditions; social, political, economic and cultural. Another significant misunderstanding on the part of these thinkers was that they measured development according to a Western model of wealth accumulation; that is, they saw development through the prism of the GNP (Gross National Product) of a nation. The obvious mistake here was that, as Thussu notes, they

failed to recognize that the creation of wealth on its own was insufficient: the improvement of life for the majority of the population depended on the equitable distribution of that wealth and its use for the public good. [They] also failed to ask questions like development for whom and who would gain or lose, ignoring any discussion of the political, social, or cultural dimensions of development. In many Southern countries, income disparities in fact increased over the succeeding thirty years – despite a growth in GNP (Thussu 2000: 58)

So, although Schramm may designate the title of ‘underdeveloped’ or ‘developing’ to a nation that “is one in which the annual per capita income is $300 or less” (Schramm 1964: 09-10), his proposal
that the modernization of communication networks will bring prosperity is flawed, as demonstrated by the quote above. In short, Schramm’s ethnocentric approach is the downfall of his proposition as he designates the term ‘underdeveloped’ or ‘developing’ to nations from a Western economic framework, thereby disregarding non-Western systems of wealth classification. A Western media imposition and growth within these nations would then only serve to propagate such a classification, rather than spread understanding, exchange and societal improvement.

Yet, despite such tautology the legacy of Schramm’s work remains prominent in current Western literature on the subject of development. That is, although current modernization literature may have distanced itself from some of the ‘oversights’ of its most influential contributors, it certainly retains its emphasis on Western technology as something that is crucial for the transformation of states into prosperous nations. It is argued by today’s exponents of modernization that for developing regions to reach prosperity, they need to focus on acquiring advanced telecommunication as well as computer infrastructure, most preferably through private, efficient, and, most notably, Western corporations. This subscription to information technology as the panacea for all socio-cultural and politico-economic ills still persists today and it has become imbued with the legitimacy formerly conferred on Schramm’s notions of modernization, as key to a better standard of living for those of the South. Nowhere is this more evident than in David Rothkopf’s In Praise of Cultural Imperialism? (1997), in which Rothkopf - a senior official in the US department of commerce at the time of writing – argues that the use of technology can present the South with an entry into a globalized economy, thus acting as a catalyst for progressive change. In this regard, Rothkopf writes,

Much has been written about the role of information technologies and services in this process. Today, 15 major U.S. telecommunications companies, including giants like Motorola, Loral Space & Communications, and Teledesic (a joint project of Microsoft’s Bill Gates and cellular pioneer Craig McCaw), offer competing plans that will encircle the globe with a constellation of satellites and will enable anyone anywhere to communicate instantly with anyone elsewhere without an established telecommunications infrastructure on the ground near either the sender or the recipient. (Rothkopf 1997:38)

Here, the author, in a manner akin to Lerner and Schramm, falls into the trap of a blind subscription to the benefits of technology, just as Schramm did. As outlined already, technology is not a neutral force, but a development steeped in political conditions, economic power relations, and a vertical relationship in terms of cultural exchange. In other words, the producer of the technology controls what is transmitted through that technology and thereby dictates which information is excluded or included, and decides on the agenda to be pushed forward. While such developments may bring
technological infrastructure to the regions of the South, it is important to note that they are also indiscernible from the propaganda of Western perceptions of the South as well as Western cultural norms. Rothkopf’s above statement, typical of the statements of the Western school of thought on development shows a deliberate misunderstanding of the negative implications of Western cultural imposition into the South through technology. Rothkopf, and others of his ilk, seem to believe that the West wishes to spread a system of tolerance, bringing with it the ostensibly unequivocally positive values of the West, which presupposes that the values of the West are preferable to those of the South. This demonstrates not only arrogance, but also short-sightedness. The West is not a bastion of ‘goodness’ as reflected in the writings of a plethora of modernization theorists, past and present, its values and its forms of culture are highly problematic and have received countless criticism over the last few decades\(^4\). Through technology, the West aims to bring capitalist modes of culture into new markets as though such capitalism is devoid of any negative features. It is fallacious to state that the reason for their cultural imposition onto the South is for the sake of peace and open cultural exchange without also stating that, while such peace is afforded through the obliteration of modes of existence that are incongruous with the capitalist ethos, such cultural exchange is only permissible when it involves the exchange of varieties of capitalist culture. As outlined above, open cultural exchange is an utter impossibility if all the channels of communication, as well as the socio-cultural and politico-economic nature of the exchange favour only one side of the exchange. In effect, information exchange and the development of the socio-cultural and politico-economic features \textit{indigenous} to the South is not possible if the relationship between the North and South continues to operate within a restrictive dialogue, whereby only one side, namely, the North, is allowed to propagate its ideals.

To sum up, although the modernist perspective has thrived despite its omission and dismissal of non-Western views, it is apparent that this ostensibly legitimate theory is a highly problematic one. While it may be ‘well-intentioned’, its fundamental flaw is its aforementioned exclusion of views stemming from the spaces in which the theory is applied. In effect, technology, contrary to the thesis of the proponents of modernization theory, has not brought wealth to the populations of the South, but has rather, disempowered them by robbing them of the means by which to engage in any from of negotiation, in politico-economic and socio-cultural terms with the North.

\textbf{2. Dependency Theory}

\(^4\) Prominent theorists such as Foucault, Althusser, Adorno, Horkeimer and celebrated writers such as Faludi, among many others, have documented and explored the problematic nature of Western culture and value systems, tackling a number of issues surrounding living within the West in this regard. These topics include confession and panopticism, mass culture, Ideological State Apparatus’ and ornamental culture.
Dependency theory arose predominantly as a backlash against the ‘Free Flow’ doctrine and the modernization theory of international communication, which preceded it. One of the most vocal of this group of thinkers was Herbert Schiller; as the notable international communication scholar John Tomlinson notes, “Schiller is one of the best known and most prolific writers on media imperialism and has maintained a consistent line on these issues over a long period” (Tomlinson 1991: 37). In many ways, Schiller both informs and encompasses the dependency trend of thought in terms of international communication, and so, with a view on elaborating on this trend, in what follows, the focus will fall on his contribution to this body of literature.

Thussu neatly summarizes this school of thought when he asserts that, although as “grounded in the neo-Marxist political-economy approach…dependency theorists aimed to provide an alternative framework to analyse international communication” (Thussu 2000: 60). While the likes of Schramm saw information flow as a process unimpeded by political and economic interest, and tended to dismiss the negative impact of Western dominance in terms of exchange, dependency theorists argue that transnational corporations based in the North exercise control and dominance over the developing nations because they set the agenda, or terms, for global trade. In this way, any global political and/or economic ‘negotiation’ has invariably come to favour the priorities and interests of the North. Moreover, this has been supported with legislation by the respective countries of the North, where the corporate monoliths in question are based, which allows them to aggressively pursue their politico-economic interests abroad (specifically within the developing or under-developed countries). The cultural aspects of a Western technological entry into the latter areas has also been examined rigorously by this school of thought, in sharp contrast to ‘Free Flow’ doctrine and modernization theorists, who as already discussed, couched their perspectives in an ethnocentricity which relegated cultures of the South to an inferior realm of social evolution, and which valorized the “benefits” that Western cultural practices could bring. In sum, the dependency theorists “aimed to show the links between discourses of ‘modernization’ and the policies of transnational media…and their backers among Western governments” (Thussu 2000: 61).

In order to understand the main set of ideas present in dependency theory, Schiller’s ‘much-cited’ text,5 National Sovereignty and International Communication (1979)6, and in particular, with his short paper, Transnational Media and National Development.

In this paper, Schiller begins with a short account of how the world works in term of economics. He argues that, in both implicit and explicit ways, the world is organized -aside from

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5 The prominent cultural theorist and international communication scholar John Tomlinson attributes this to Schiller in his text, Cultural Imperialism (1991: 37).
6 In fact, this text is a collection edited by Schiller and Kaarle Nordenstreng (at the time a Professor of Communication and the Chair of the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Tampere).
the remaining few State-controlled and planned societies - according to a ‘modern world system’; and except for these aforementioned states he interprets this system of economic organization in the following way:

What this amounts to, in fact, is a global market economy, presiding with varying flexibility over the allocation of resources, human and natural. Within this near-world orbit, each nation-state seeks, as a minimum, to provide its governing stratum protection and support in the system’s overall operation. At the same time, the international division of labour and the allocation of resources are largely influenced by, if not determined by, and in, the advanced, industrialized centres of the global structure (Schiller 1979: 21)

Schiller’s point here is that as a result of these imbalances in divisions of labour and resource allocation, the developed North holds a position of power over the developing, or under-developed, South. This then elevates the importance of the transnational corporations that come from, and reside within, the developed sector of the modern world system. Transnational media monoliths, which expand their reach, and simultaneously minimizing the number of voices present within the media through mergers form part of this collection of transnationals spanning the globe. Although profit appears to be their main motive, it is essential to understand that “they comprise…the ideologically supportive informational infrastructure of the modern world system’s core” (Schiller 1979: 21). What this translates into is information transmission to developing regions from the developed regions, which control the production and distribution of information, in a manner which enforces already existing inequalities. The communication flow is thus explicitly not a negotiation, and neither is it collection of messages and images free of bias, as thought by previous theorists who did not consider the implications of the location of content production. Rather, cultural content, layered with political and economic ideology, is produced in that sector of the modern world system which is economically dominant, namely the North, and, in effect, exported to the South where it informs subjectivity in a very powerful manner. Thus, in summary, it becomes plausible to suggest that due to an economic imbalance, information stemming from the economically dominant sector of an economically-driven paradigm can not be free of ideology which will enforce its viewpoint in order to sustain a power-relation that favours its position.

Not only does Schiller trace the development of this system of power, and the manner in which information, and by extension, those who produce and distribute it on a mass scale, operate within this structure and are therefore informed by its ideology, but in addition, he argues that cultural imperialism has flourished due to the American ‘empire’ having displaced declining

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European colonial power. According to Schiller, due to technological prowess and economic strength, US-based transnational dominance in the world market has ensured that these transnationals have “become one of the chief organizers and manufacturers of the international flow of communications” (Mowlana 1975: 89-90).

Through this domination of global information, it is messages from the North (primarily, from the USA; the world’s main and most privileged exporter of cultural content) that find their way to the populations of the developing and under-developed countries. With such a vast discrepancy in the power of cultures to exchange information, it is the mass culture exported by the advertising industry and the ideology of consumerism attached to the transnational media that gains increasing legitimacy around the globe, in a manner that disallows viewpoints from outside of this dominant sector of the modern world system. As Thussu writes, “According to Schiller…since media exports are ultimately dependent on sponsors for advertising, they endeavour not only to advertise Western goods and services, but also [to] promote, albeit indirectly, a capitalist ‘American way of life’, through mediated consumer lifestyles” (Thussu 2000: 62). Since content production in the North must contain within it a push for consumerism in a bid to survive within its own competitive climate, and since content production is (due to the modern world system) concentrated in the North, it is inevitable that any viewpoint that threatens the money-earning potential of the communication coming from the North will be disallowed. Indeed, so long as such vertical flow of information exists, owing to the concentrated location of transnationals in the North and their technological and economic dominance, it is doubtful that any dissenting voice from the South will even be heard.

In sum, unlike Schramm, who believes in a horizontal information exchange, Schiller clearly demonstrates the problems inherent in such a view of international communication, and tends, instead, to propagate the notion that due to a modern world system, information exchange has become vertical in orientation. As a result, any form of negotiation, particularly, cultural negotiation, between the North and the South becomes a largely impossible process, insofar as the South remains heavily impeded when trying to present its versions of culture and its understanding of political-economy.

3. Structural Imperialism Theory

The theory of structural imperialism, attributed to the Norwegian sociologist Johan Galtung, resonates profoundly with the arguments proposed by Schiller. Much like Schiller and other dependency theorists, such as Oliver Boyd-Barret and John Tomlinson, Galtung offers an explanation of the role of international communication in maintaining and enforcing structures of political and economic power. That is, like them, Galtung dismisses the idea of information flow as
something neutral and horizontal; however, unlike the dependency theorists, Galtung examines those elites within the South that have benefited from unequal communication flow between the North and the South. The lack of critical examination into such areas of concern on the part of the dependency school of thought allowed their theory to come under justified criticism, as it was cast aside as simply harbouring an anti-North agenda, without taking into account the flaws of the South, particularly its political leadership. Galtung’s structural imperialism theory rectifies the aforementioned theorists’ oversights and by doing so, further disredits the assertions made by the proponents of ‘free flow’ and modernization theory.

Galtung argues that “the world consists of developed ‘centre’ states and under-developed ‘periphery’ states. In turn, each centre and periphery possesses a ‘core’ – a highly developed area – and a less developed ‘periphery’” (Thussu 2000: 64). In other words, while in every centre state there exists both a core and a periphery, similarly, in every periphery state there exists a core (or more developed area) and a periphery. As such, on the periphery of the most peripheral state one finds the most disenfranchised, impoverished and victimized social group within that already generally disenfranchised developing country. Galtung describes structural imperialism as a highly sophisticated relation of dominance, in which those from the centre within the centre nation establish ties with the centre groupings of the periphery nations. Here, both these centre groups benefit tremendously, while the periphery - in either the developed or developing nation - is left out in the cold, so to speak, not enjoying any substantial access to or benefit from this relationship. In effect; a dominant elite within a Northern country, classified as being developed, benefits from the resources, consumer potential, etcetera, of a Southern country classified as being developing/under-developed. In order to keep a foothold within that country, the former establishes a ‘symbiotic’ relationship with the elite of that struggling country. As a consequence of such a relationship, those outside of the elite within the developing country are kept in a subordinate position, as their leaders build a closer union to their ‘First World’ allies, rather than establishing a better functioning relationship with their own people. As they become more estranged from their populations, their decisions begin to be employed in a manner that perpetually disregards this periphery and propels them towards an even more disenfranchised social position.

Such a view is not difficult to correlate with dependency theory and its focus on transnational corporations and their ever-increasing influence over the elite groups within peripheral states. In particular, this is because these corporations are not under the ownership of the people of the North, but are rather controlled by what Galtung would term ‘the centre’ (or dominant elite) within the North. If one applies Galtung’s configurations to dependency theory, one can quite easily see how neither periphery (either in the developed or developing nations’ involved) would benefit from any exchange between a transnational corporation and the closed-circle government of a
Southern country. Not only would there be no benefit to the population at large of the developing/under-developed country, but also, as Thussu points out both

Maintain that the structure of political and economic domination exercised by the centre over the periphery results in the re-creation of certain aspects of the centre’s value system in the periphery (Thussu 2000:66)

Here, it once more becomes evident that communication, moving in a vertical direction from North to South, in what could be understood as a near-constant drone without critical response or adequate cultural challenge begins to impact powerfully on the cultural norms of a nation of the South. The South cannot offer a meaningful response, due to political and economic factors, and as a result of its dependence on the technological prowess of the North. What then occurs is that the ‘balanced’ information exchange proposed by those who adopt the view that technology will allow for equality and meaningful cultural negotiation either never becomes instantiated or remains skewed. No form of negotiation can take place if only one side is allowed to provide input into a particular discussion. The dominant position of the North, enforced by interest-motivated elites within the nations of the South disallows the cultural views of the periphery to enter mainstream discussion, rendering such discussion, at best, pantomimic and disingenuous.

In addition, Galtung identifies a number of supplementary elements which attempt to explain the type of information that flows between the North and South, and which display the varying sectors within these two in which this specific information makes itself present:

Firstly, Galtung defines five types of imperialism which he argues form a syndrome of imperialism. These are; the economic, the political, the military, the communicative and the cultural types of imperialism. These are closely interwoven and combine with one another to reinforce the dominant paradigm that exists between the centre and the periphery. For example, he states that “communication imperialism is intimately related to cultural imperialism and news is a combination of cultural and communication exchange” (Galtung 1971: 93). In effect, what Galtung proposes is that any neo-imperialist imposition on the South could contain within it any one of these factors, while simultaneously, being devoid of others, such as, for instance, the military element.

Secondly, as there is a ‘symbiotic’ relationship between the centres within both the developed and the developing nations, as Galtung suggests, the institutions (whether they are government institutions or private entities) within the centre sector of the periphery nation tend to rapidly become a simulacra of the attitudes and value systems of the developed nation from which they derive their ability to sustain and enrich themselves.

Thirdly, Galtung argues that there is a basic mechanism of structural imperialism, which revolves around two forms of interaction, namely, the ‘vertical’ and the ‘feudal’. On the one hand,
in terms of the vertical interaction, information flows in a manner alluded to earlier, that is, it flows from North to South, or from developed nation to the developing/under-developed nation. In a reciprocal flow, that is, from the South upwards, it is the North that benefits economically from this disfigured relation of power and information flow. In other words, financial reward makes its way to the North from the South in the form of cheap labour, new consumer markets, or the exploitation of abundant raw materials, while, cultural/communication information is either commodified or not privileged in terms of coverage. Feudal interaction, on the other hand, involves an “interaction along the spokes, from the periphery to the centre hub; but not along the rim, from one periphery nation to another” (Galtung 1971: 89). So, for instance, while countries from the South are constantly bombarded with communications from the North, they very seldom, if never, receive any information regarding fellow countries from the South. Moreover, if they do, it is from a Northern perspective, which mediates and thereby disallows cultural and communicative interaction between Southern states. This lends itself to a profound disempowerment and a refusal, albeit a covert one, to allow nations in similar positions to interact with one another and to possibly find a viable alternative to a clearly unfair and exploitative relationship.

To summarize Galtung’s argument, which severely problematizes the benign optimism of modernist perspectives, one can refer to Thussu, who writes the following when providing a summary of Galtung’s theorizations. Referring to Galtung, Thussu maintains that; “the identity of interests between the centre and the periphery greatly influences the acceptance of an international agenda” (Thussu 2000:66). When this agenda is one in which the North aims to entrench its dominance (whether it be politico-economic or socio-cultural) in order to benefit itself, any information flow from the North will then naturally be used to support this aim. Therefore, by default, it becomes naive to argue that information flow is an innocuous process within which an exchange of ideas is simply entered into; an exchange of information that ultimately benefits the developing or under-developed countries in the long run.

4. Conclusion

This chapter has presented two perspectives with regard to international communication, and has attempted to dismantle the assertions made by modernization theory, which as demonstrated, is still seen as a legitimate standpoint and as such, is propagated by not only those in the mainstream Western academic community, but also by important policy makers with government. This is hardly surprising, as both modernization theory, and its predecessor, the ‘Free Flow of Information’ doctrine, enforce existing power hierarchies – structures which are maintained partly by the continued re-legitimation of the aforementioned modes of thought within the international communication realm. Through an examination of the propositions put forth in terms of dependency
theory and the theory of structural imperialism, the self-serving nature of ‘free flow’ and modernization theory soon becomes apparent. Through Schiller and Galtung’s respective writings, it not only becomes clear that information flow is not an equal exchange between North and South, but rather something skewed with little room for negotiation of any kind, whether it be politico-economic or socio-cultural. In addition, what also emerges is that technology is not a neutral force, but rather something that is used by those who own it to re-enforce their relationship of command.

Having established that information flow is a vertical process, in other words, a one-way flow from North to South rather than an equal and fair exchange between the two (i.e. horizontal flow), it now becomes imperative to ask what type of information is being sent en-masse towards the South. In this regard, the paper will attempt to examine possible points of interface between the perspectives of Schiller and Galtung, and the discourse analyses of Michel Foucault. In essence, the paper will extend Schiller’s and Galtung’s respective areas of focus through an inclusion of Foucault’s discourse analyses within their ambit of concern. In his work, Foucault details the emergence of disciplinary/bio power and its influence on the Western subject. The Western media, which contains within it this discursive formulation, and its increasing imposition into areas of the South through its superior positioning within a modern world system/centre-periphery relationship partly due to its technological prowess, then transports this ideological creation to the South. There are a conundrum of implications as a result, especially when one considers that the Western subject has come under severe scrutiny and is trying to escape this entrenched formulation of the self. The exporting of such an identity to developing or under-developed areas is to further disenfranchise a sector of the world’s population who are already marginalised. To imbue them with such an ideological configuration of identity would only disempower this group of people further. The following chapter will thus provide a further examination into this topic, and by doing so, will extend upon the positions of Schiller and Galtung in terms of the international communication debate.
CHAPTER 2
Extending Schiller’s and Galtung’s respective areas of focus through an inclusion of Foucault’s discourse analyses within their ambit of concern.

Having determined that international communication flow is a process which does not allow for an equal measure of information to be exchanged between the North and the South, but rather privileges the content of the North while disallowing content from the South, it is imperative to determine exactly what information is distributed through these North-serving channels. While Schiller and Galtung place emphasis on the structural discrepancies that undermine any potent cultural negotiation between North and South, they do not focus on what is implicitly communicated through the information that flows from the North to the South, en-masse and without reciprocation. In this regard, this chapter will turn to Michel Foucault’s various genealogical analyses in an attempt to demonstrate how the subjectivity of those in the South is implicitly informed by a Western discursive configuration. Arguably, the latter approach holds great promise, insofar as it stands to surmount a short-coming on the part of Schiller and Galtung. That is, in their respective critiques of international communication both Schiller and Galtung work back only to the 19th century, and trace the various communication developments that took place from this point in time onwards. For instance, the development of the telegraph in 1837 is noted, and from this point onwards various breakthroughs in communication technology are thematised. However, while Schiller and Galtung demonstrate the structural bias that occurs in terms of international communication due to the location of these new communication technologies, they fail to take into account crucial discursive developments within 18th century Europe; developments which subsequently inflected the content of the messages being exported by these new communication channels. Thus, their focus is slightly myopic, as they regard Western subjectivity within the 19th century as the status quo, rather than as the result of a crucial discursive shift within society during the 18th century. As such, they only contend with the networks and dynamics of communication exchange. Analysing the use of language at the level of structure, or at a macro-level, so to speak, they fail to take into consideration the ways in which language operates at a far more nuanced and implicit level, or, in other words, at a micro-level, where the constitution of subjectivity occurs. In contrast, in his article The Subject and Power – Why Study Power: The Question of the Subject, Foucault writes, “My objective…has been to create a history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects…The subject is either divided inside himself or divided from others. This process objectifies him” (Foucault 2003: 126).

Crucially, rather than working with the presupposition that the subject, as it is currently understood, is a concrete entity that has existed since before the 18th century (as Schiller and Galtung do),
Foucault brings this notion into question. Indeed, through his work on how the subject is ‘divided from others’ and ‘divided inside himself’, disciplinary power and bio-power, respectively, are drawn into conspicuity. With a view to exploring, in the following chapter, the impact of this discursive shift on the people of the South - via messages communicated from the West/North through new international communication channels - this chapter will explore Western/Northern subjectivity through the writings of Michel Foucault; primarily his texts *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1975) and *The Will to Knowledge: The History of Sexuality: Volume 1* (1976).

That is, in the interest of applying Foucault’s discourse analysis, in the following chapter, to those who reside within the politico-economically and socio-culturally disenfranchised space of the South, it is first necessary, in this chapter, to demonstrate how the Western subject has been informed by what Foucault terms disciplinary/bio-power. In this regard, this chapter will begin by outlining and explaining the emergence of disciplinary power in the early 18th century, and, after this, will elaborate on the emergence of bio-power in the late 18th century. In particular, attention will be paid, firstly, to the broad spectrum discursive changes that occurred when disciplinary bureaucracy replaced monarchic formations of power; secondly, to the manner in which these changes ushered in new divisions of space and new regulations of time; thirdly, to the creation of individuality through the disciplinary techniques of the dossier and Panopticism; and fourthly, to the instantiation of confession as a key factor within a progressive society. Finally, the focus will fall on the normativity that disciplinary/bio-power imbues itself with, and the inextricable link between this normativity and international communication networks.

1. The emergence of disciplinary power

1.1 From Monarchy to Bureaucracy

In order to contextualize the above mentioned developments, it is imperative to engage with the changes that precipitated and succeeded the French Revolution of 1789. It is at this point that monarchic formations of power were replaced with bureaucratic formations of power, leading to a number of important consequences. It is important to note here that this change in dynamic does not imply a sudden shift with instantaneous implications on a discursive level. This is because, “the exercise of power is not a naked fact, an institutional given, nor is it a structure that holds out or is smashed; it is something that is elaborated, transformed, organized; it endows itself with processes that are more or less adjusted to the situation” (Foucault 2003: 141). In other words, a technology of power is not a sudden development, but rather a result of a discursive momentum; a product of a continuum of discourse (Foucault 1991: 138). A fundamental change in the exertion of power from
the pre-Revolution monarchic system to the post-Revolution bureaucratic system was centred on the broad social transformation of anonymity to identity. In the setting of a monarchy, only the aristocracy had a thoroughly established and broadly recognizable identity, while those governed remained largely anonymous. Within the bureaucratic context, which emerged following the French Revolution, the above dynamic became inverted, insofar as the masses became imbued, through various processes, with identity. At this juncture in history, the ruling sector transformed into vast, uniform, anonymous government institutions, devoid of ‘individuality’, which began to act like a powerful cipher – able to inflict punishment, but seldom held accountable as, quite literally, in this confusing matrix of government controls, sub-levels and stacks of paperwork, few ‘individuals’ could be identified as exercising sole power. Conversely, power needed to be exerted over the population in a manner “more or less adjusted to the situation” (Foucault 2003: 141). Whereas previously, in order to enforce obedience and to punish transgression, the monarch was obliged to resort to brutal spectacle, within a post-Revolution framework it was the body itself that was discovered as an “object and target of power” (Foucault 1991: 136), rather than as the object of physical torment. Having entered a cultural space where the use of brutality to enforce order would be seen as a return to a recently deposed (and much despised) system of government, power transformed and organized itself to function in a far more discreet, yet simultaneously more pervasive, manner. A critical aspect of the technology of disciplinary power is that it exerts its control over the body in a manner that forces the subject into a state of docility. However, it did not resort to previous physical and geographical restrictions - such as slavery, serfdom, and service – but rather took place in a far more intrusive and far less obvious manner. For example, unlike slavery, people were not bought by others; unlike serfdom, people were not property attached to the land; and unlike service, their loyalty was not paid for. Instead, the exertion of disciplinary power involved exercises of control that were subtle and implicit, yet inherently more capable of exerting dominance and subjugating those within its ambit than any of its predecessors. This technology of power allowed for the element of spectacle to be eradicated, as power was no longer exercised through inducing collective fear (as it was during the time of monarchy) but rather operated on a discursive level – surreptitiously and enduringly informing the gestures of the body and thereby facilitating its constant docility, through the scale of its control, the specific object of that control, and the modality of control (Foucault 1991: 136-7). As will be discussed in what follows, this technology of power functions through the regimentation of space and time, and, in relation to this, through the surveillance mechanisms of the dossier and Panopticism.

1.2 The Division of Space and the Regulation of Time
In terms of the division of space, Foucault divides the 18th century *art of distributions* into four distinct categories, namely; enclosure, partitioning, the use of functional sites, and the creation of rank. To begin with there was “*enclosure*, the specification of a place heterogeneous to all others and closed in upon itself” (Foucault 1991: 141). What this then produced was a “protected place of disciplinary monotony” (Foucault 1991: 141), in which one could only do certain things in certain places, giving rise to the use of *functional sites*, or the “coding of a space that architecture [had previously] generally left at the disposal of several different uses” (Foucault 1991: 143). This classification forced into existence an entire range of location-orientated appropriate behaviours, and in doing so, dictated how the individual should regulate him/herself according to the space they found themselves in. This *enclosure*, as Foucault calls it, was not only overt, such as in prisons for instance, but also covert and pervasive, in that it became implemented in institutions of education, places of work, and even “communal houses for the sick” (Foucault 1973: 40). In these houses, for example, as outlined in Foucault’s *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception* (1973), while the sick would fall under “the gaze of compassion”, their sickness would also be thoroughly scrutinised (Foucault 1973: 40). Here, in these disciplinary spaces, the movements of the individual, whether they had committed a societal transgression or not, became constantly regulated through the regulation of space. Thus, the workplace became a place where only work could occur, and this work was obliged to lead to a maximum output – there was no place for actions outside of that desired outcome of maximum productivity. In this way, the subject became firmly pressurised by disciplinary processes to behave/act in a manner deemed appropriate, rather than in a more autonomous manner. In terms of scale, this involved a highly significant change in that disciplinary power exerted itself over the subject, or individual body, in an ever more expansive manner. While the above exercise in control over the body may have occurred at the institutional level, that is, at the level of the school or the work space, the principle of enclosure was neither “sufficient nor constant” (Foucault 1991: 143) insofar as, via it, the individual body was only located within a general space for a set period of time. To be able to exercise further control, at a more specific level, disciplinary power engaged with space in a far more intrusive manner. It did so through what Foucault terms *partitioning*. Here, the individual is allocated to a particular working space and obliged to operate there. As Foucault puts it, “Each individual has his own place; and each place its individual” (Foucault 1991: 143). This functioned quite effectively to dissolve resistance, insofar as it disallowed a concentration of individuals by spreading them out and disconnecting them from each other. Foucault explains this exercise in control in the following terms:

Avoid distributions in groups; break up collective dispositions; analyse confused, massive or transient pluralities. Disciplinary space tends to be divided into as many sections as there are bodies or elements to
be distributed. One must eliminate the effects of imprecise distributions, the uncontrolled disappearance of individuals, their diffuse circulation, their unusable and dangerous coagulation; it was a tactic of anti-desertion, anti-vagabondage and anti-concentration. Its aim was to establish and to locate individuals, to set up useful communications, to interrupt others, to be able at each moment to supervise the conduct of each individual…It was a procedure, therefore, aimed at knowing, mastering, and using (Foucault 1991: 143).

In sum then, the above regulation of space was used to organize individuals in a manner that disallowed their resistance to build; in a way that, through their precise distribution in space, rendered obvious any alternative or non-compliant behaviour on their part. No individual body was left unaccounted for through this detailed organization of space, and any transgressor of disciplinary spatial imperatives was easily identifiable. Thus, for any given society, disciplinary power “organizes its disorder [and] its most uncontrollable aspects” (Foucault 1972: 228). Furthermore, in order to ensure that the individual complied with such spatial regulation, the creation of rank became essential; Foucault states that rank is “the place one occupies in a classification” (Foucault 1991: 145). In relation to rank, discipline does not individualize bodies through setting them in a fixed location, but rather “distributes them and circulates them in a network of relations” (Foucault 1991: 146). An individual’s rank can change, and changes according to a variety of elements, one of which could be classified under the term ‘behaviour’, or the absolute compliance and subordination of oneself to disciplinary imperatives. The most important point, though, is that rank “is a perpetual movement in which individuals replace one another in a space marked off by aligned intervals” (Foucault 1991: 147), with higher ranks performing a supervisory or surveillance function in relation to lower ranks. For the most part, as Foucault intimates in The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language (1972), this competitive arena provides the impetus for people to simply slot into an existing discourse, rather than to be critical of it and to opt for the creation of an alternative discursive framework (Foucault 1972: 215). In effect, what is guaranteed through rank is not only “the obedience of individuals” (Foucault 1991: 148), but also “a better economy of time and gesture” (Foucault 1991: 148), as people willingly adopt disciplinary codes and propagate the idea of their necessity in order to advance their personal importance and status within their given community.

In terms of time, and its use, Foucault argues that the regime of discipline “poses the principle of a theoretically ever-growing use of time; exhaustion rather than use, [...] extracting…from time…ever more available moments and, from each moment, ever more useful forces” (Foucault 1991: 154). What this means is that, within a disciplinary environment, one is obliged to make use of every possible fragment of time, and to use it as efficiently as possible, to allow for even more time to be created for the execution of further tasks. This exhaustive use of
time is highly problematic in that it forces individual bodies to constantly be engaged in efficient application. Concomitant with the regulation of space, this exhaustive use of time places an enormous strain on the individual body, allowing no pause or respite, but only an impetus to perform in an ever more efficient and productive manner.

When the location of an individual body within a regulated space is coupled with the exhaustive use of time, it has severe implications on the desire for power on the part of the subject. In *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice* (1977), Foucault argues the following:

> Better yet, the more you deny yourself the exercise of power, the more you submit to those in power, then the more this increases your sovereignty. Humanism invented a whole series of subjected sovereignties: the soul (ruling the body, but subjected to God), consciousness (sovereign in a context of judgement, but subjected to the necessities of truth), the individual (a titular control of personal rights subjected to the laws of nature and society), basic freedom (sovereign within, but accepting the demands of an outside world and “aligned with destiny”) (Foucault 1977: 221).

So, if disciplinary society heralded the birth of humanism, it did not do so without implicitly introducing a number of disciplinary structures that, in effect have severely restrictive effects for the subject. Located precisely within disciplinary space and time, the subject is increasingly disabled from exercising any substantial form of autonomy. This is the effect of disciplinary power – it is a restrictive discursive economy that disallows resistance to its imperatives, and engenders an infantilized subjectivity characterized by docility and complicity with its imperatives.

### 1.3 Individuality as a product of the Dossier and the Panopticon

Within this milieu of spatial-temporal regimentation, the ‘individual’ was born, and the midwives of this process were the dossier and Panopticism. That is, while the regulation of space and time restricted and inhibited the movement and activities of individual bodies, it was the dossier and Panopticism that imbued these bodies with increasing individuality and, ultimately, led to the emergence of disciplinary/bio power subjectivity.

Under the new bureaucratic formation of disciplinary power, it was the masses who were thrust out of their erstwhile relative anonymity and who became individually identifiable. This development was significantly facilitated by the creation of the *dossier*. This term refers to an intricate and detailed record of anything relating to a particular person. This would include their

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8 Apart from activity becoming increasingly controlled due to divisions of space and time in the manner already described, Foucault points out a number of closely related disciplinary imperatives that force the body into docility; these are *the time table, the temporal elaboration of the act, the correlation of body and the gesture, and the body-object articulation* (Foucault 1991: 149-153).
place of residence, their place of work, educational records, accounts of hospitalisation, and so forth. Foucault accounts for this change in the status of the ordinary man when he argues that within the “political axis of individualization” (Foucault 1991: 192) a reversal took place. He argues that, previously, under monarchic power, “the more one possess[ed] power or privilege, the more one [was] marked as an individual, by rituals, written accounts or visual reproductions” (Foucault 1991: 192). In a disciplinary society, however, which took hold when these higher echelons of society had been disposed of as a result of the French Revolution, power became far more anonymous and began to operate on a far more practical, strategic and efficient level. Since then, “those on whom it is exercised tend to be far more individualized” (Foucault 1991: 193). It is important to note, at this point, that disciplinary power does not exclude, repress, censor, abstract, mask and conceal (Foucault 1991: 194); rather, it should be seen as a regime that creates a reality in that “it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth” (Foucault 1991: 194). One such object was the individual, and the ritual of truth from which ‘modern humanism’ was born was the “meticulous observation of detail…for the control and use of men” (Foucault 1991: 141). The dossier, in turn, was a further ritual of truth that imbued the individual with a personal history. In effect, under these disciplinary imperatives, the general will had been cast aside for the pursuit of automatic docility (Foucault 1991: 169) through its production of identifiable subjects with individualized histories.

However, if the dossier, or the documentation surrounding each individual body, functioned as a means of disabling their autonomous action in relation to the dominant power structures, through the creation of their personal history as a hand- hold for power, then it was the *panopticon* which constantly observed this individual that rendered him/her docile. To understand Foucault’s use of the term ‘panopticon’, it is essential to briefly explain what this term meant in its original context. Foucault explains it in the following way:

> At the periphery, an annular building; at the centre, a tower; this tower is pierced with wide windows that open onto the inner side of the ring; the peripheric building is divided into cells; they have two windows, one on the inside, corresponding to the width of the tower; the other, on the outside, allows the light [from the tower] to cross the cell from one end to the other. By the effect of backlighting, one can observe from the tower, standing out precisely against the lights, the small captive shadows in the cells of the periphery…each actor is alone, perfectly individualized and constantly visible…Full lighting and the eye of the supervisor capture better than [the darkness of the dungeon]. Visibility is a trap (Foucault 1991: 200)

In addition to the individualizing function that this prison structure performs, its other effect is that it disallows contact between individuals, while supervising all of them at once. On the part of the supervisor, he never comes into contact with the individualized prisoners, instead remaining
anonymous. In this case then, those in power enforce their dominance through invisibility. This separation of prisoners/workers/patients, et cetera, and their constant visibility, lead to the power of the crowd being greatly diminished. In this regard, Foucault states, “The crowd, a compact mass, a locus of multiple exchanges, individualities merging together, a collective effect, is abolished and replaced by…separated individualities” (Foucault 1991: 201). This is the function of the panopticon – to arrange a permanent state of visibility and in doing so, to assure the authority of disciplinary power structures. The most effective aspect of this structure was that the inmate could never know for sure that they were being observed. As such, because they became aware that they could always be observed at any given moment, they altered their behaviour accordingly. However, Panopticism does not only relate to surveillance in itself, it is also a generalized function of disciplinary power that creates new objects of knowledge truths, and allows for power to function in a subtle manner. In doing so it acts as a laboratory of sorts, where behaviour modification could be carried out. As Foucault states, Panopticism allows for “the penetration of regulation into even the smallest details of everyday life…[it assigns] to each individual…his ‘true’ name, his ‘true’ place, his ‘true’ body, his ‘true’ disease” (Foucault 1991: 198). This disciplinary function, primarily recognized for its ability to constantly observe, leads to the individual “assuming responsibility for the constraints of power” (Foucault 1991: 202), and, in doing so, simultaneously “avoids any physical confrontation” (Foucault 1991: 203), while training and correcting individual behaviour, and, in the process, creates new objects of knowledge (Foucault 1991: 203-204). In effect, the panopticon does not only survey, but through its surveillance, it allows for the exercise of power to be ‘perfected’. As Foucault argues,

It does this in several ways: because it can reduce the number of those who exercise it, while increasing the number of whom it is exercised. Because it is possible to intervene at any moment and because the constant pressure acts even before the offences, mistakes or crimes have been committed. Because, in these conditions, its strength is that it never intervenes, it is exercised spontaneously and without noise, it constitutes a mechanism whose effects follow from one another. (Foucault 1991: 206)

The use of the dossier and Panopticism in the early 18th century served to create what one could term a disciplinary individuality, born out of the spatio-temporal regulations of the disciplinary bureaucracy which emerged during this time period. The creation of the ‘individual’ allows for disciplinary power to exercise its control over the subject, by creating a fiction of individuality around that subject (through the dossier and the panopticon). As Foucault writes, “The individual is no doubt a fictitious atom of an ‘ideological’ representation of society; but he is a reality fabricated by…’discipline’. The individual and the knowledge that may be gained of him belong to this production” (Foucault 1991: 194). This production can undoubtedly be attributed greatly to the use
of the dossier and Panopticism as instruments of disciplinary power. In the late 18th century, this would become bio-disciplinary individuality, whereby there would be an exponential increase in the ‘depth’ of the individual, most notably through imperatives to confess under the auspices of bio-power.

2. The Emergence of Bio-Power

While disciplinary power was the discursive development that gave birth to the docile subject, the emergence of bio-power in the late 18th century modified and extended the parameters of this docility, and made the subject even more prostrate - most notably through imperatives to confess. In short, these imperatives arose on the back of the increasing legitimacy with which the technology of secularized/medicalized confession became imbued (Foucault 1998: 96). Having examined how the subject becomes increasingly individualized under the regime of disciplinary power, the following section will examine “the way a human being turns him- or herself into a subject [through the] domain of sexuality” (Foucault 2003: 126) and in relation to such confession. As Foucault notes in an interview entitled, ‘The History of Sexuality’, “One finds in the West a medicalization of sexuality itself, as though it were an area of particular pathological fragility in human existence” (Foucault 1980: 191). In effect, while individual autonomy comes under siege with the emergence of disciplinary power in the early 18th century, it is with the emergence of bio-power in the late 18th century, via the increasing legitimation of psychiatry (and in particular, psychiatry and its ability to locate truth within sex) that individual autonomy is thoroughly subordinated, and through this, subjects become controlled not only pervasively but also invasively.

However, before embarking on the above exploration, it is necessary to place these developments in context, through an examination of the different ways in which confession has operated at different times in history. In this regard, a brief historical outline of the different forms of confession that occurred from the 13th century to the late 18th century is required. That is, in The Will to Knowledge, Foucault states that, “From the Christian penance to the present day, sex was a privileged theme of confession” (Foucault 1998: 61). However, while this is certainly true, it is essential to contend with the changing nature of confession from the aforementioned historically distant era to the present day, in terms of sex. The focus on sex within the 13th century, or the era of pastoral power, related to the subject confessing sexual acts performed outside of marriage that would potentially threaten a political alliance. By admitting fault and repenting for their actions, those who had put strain on alliances through fornication would be able to not only preserve their marriage/union, but also to re-establish the political ties (and wealth) attached to such a union. Foucault refers to this as the ‘deployment of alliance’, and explains it in the following way: “The
deployment of alliance is attuned to the homeostasis of the social body, which it has the function of maintaining; whence its *privileged* link with the law, whence too the important phase for its ‘reproduction’” (Foucault 1998: 107). In effect, for the *privileged* few to maintain their fortunate position, they were required to confess to any transgressions committed. So, while there was certainly an imperative to confess, crucially, these confessions related to surface level phenomena, so to speak, or in other words, to acts performed (or not performed) and their relations to societal stability. As Foucault notes in *Abnormal* (2003), in the 13th century, a priest was only obliged to “hear the sin, and decide whether to apply a penalty according to an obligatory tariff or one chosen arbitrarily by himself” (Foucault 2003: 180).

However, when one compares this to 16th century confession, and pays particular attention to the role of the priest within such confession, one can see that much had changed over the course of three centuries. Foucault writes that, by the 16th century, “the priest must proceed to the examination of conscience itself” (Foucault 2003: 181 -182). In other words, he was now required to look beyond the physical act to uncover the *motivations* behind the actions of the subject. That is, unlike in the 13th century, it was no longer adequate to simply state in confession what had been done to receive penance, because by the 16th century, confessing subjects were now required to decipher themselves and to disclose the insights thus gained to the representatives of pastoral power. Foucault represents this shift succinctly in ‘Confessions of the Flesh’ when he muses,

> The Christian says, ‘Listen, the trouble is that I can’t pray at present, I have a feeling of spiritual dryness which has made me lose touch with God’. And the director says to him, ‘Well, there is something happening in you which you don’t know about. We will work together to find it out’. (Foucault 1980: 216)

This increasing emphasis on self-decipherment in the 16th century demonstrated not only the progressive and subtle shift away from the relative self transparency and superficiality of confession in the 13th century. In addition, it also constituted an important elaboration on the principle of the subject, which first emerged in the 13th century – the principle of a “knowing” subject. That is, theology, through the influence of

> Aquinas,…claiming…to be rational reflection founding a faith with a universal vocation, founded at the same time the principle of a knowing subject in general…the correspondence between an omniscient God and subjects capable of knowledge, conditional on faith of course, is undoubtedly one of the main elements that led Western thought…to free itself…from the conditions of spirituality that had previously accompanied it…[T]he major conflict running through Christianity from the end of the 5th century…to the 17th century…was…between…spirituality and theology (Foucault 2005: 25 - 26).
By the 16th century, theology had begun to supersede spirituality, with the change in subjectivity part of the process which had led to this development. By the 17th century, the element of spirituality with which Christianity was previously associated had been replaced by the legitimacy of theology.

As such, the question that then emerges is as to how “the modern Western State has integrated into a new political shape an old power technique that originated in Christian institutions” (Foucault 2003: 131). Clearly, a shift had already occurred by the 16th century in terms of the ‘depth’ attached to a confession, and by implication, the ‘depth’ with which the confessing subject was imbued. Moreover, so firmly entrenched did such confession become that it did not disappear with the emergence of disciplinary/bio-power in the 18th/19th century, even though this was concomitant with the progressive secularization of society. As Foucault writes, “There is a network or circuit of bio-power, or somato-power, which acts as the formative matrix of sexuality itself as the historical and cultural phenomenon within which we seem at once to recognise and lose ourselves” (Foucault 1980: 186). With scientific discourse replacing pastoral power in the late 18th century due to the death of God, (Nietzsche 1941: 785), confession adapted to the secular realm.

On the one hand, although secularized/medicalized confession replaced Christian confession in the late 18th century, it also inherited various facets of its predecessor; in particular, it was the quasi-religious element that crept into secularized/medicalized confession in this period that allowed for bio-power to operate with such a degree of legitimacy.

On the other hand, it differed, in that, while confession (in the 13th century) had served to preserve political unions, as already mentioned, by the late 18th century, because of the rise of the bourgeoisie, there were no severe political implications attached to such transgression any longer. Yet, confession continued unabated. As Foucault states, “The deployment of sexuality has its reason for being, not in reproducing itself, but in proliferating, innovating, annexing, creating, and penetrating bodies in an increasingly detailed way, and in controlling populations in an increasingly comprehensive way” (Foucault 1998: 107). The deployment of sexuality created a myth of sexuality and by doing so informed and constructed identities around the issue of latency. Arguably, this aspect of bio-power is far more invasive than the panopticon; for instance, an individual may momentarily escape the gaze of the panopticon, but that individual cannot escape the effect that the deployment of sexuality has on their subjectivity. Latency disallows an escape from the totalizing regime that is disciplinary/bio-power in that it can be likened to functioning like a mirror – the subject constantly looks, examines and probes for a ‘deeper’ meaning, replacing self transparency with a compulsive decipherment of the self, and subordinates him or herself to these deductions (which are in themselves informed by disciplinary/bio-power imperatives). Realizations are made on the part of the subject, without that subject realizing that the conclusions they have come to
regarding themselves, are not independent, but rather facilitated by a discursive regime – an example is the homosexual for instance\(^9\). As Foucault states with regard to latency, “It is no longer a question simply of saying what was done; but of reconstructing, in and around the act, the thoughts that recapitulated it, the obsessions that accompanied it, the images, desires, modulations, and quality of the pleasure that animated it” (Foucault 1998: 63).

It is because of such ostensible opacity within the mind of everyone, that confession became more important than ever before. In this regard, Foucault equips us with five ways in which to understand how confession became imbued with scientific discursivity, and thereby, with the power of truth:

The first manner in which confession is located within the field of science is through a clinical codification of the inducement to speak. Here confession is not an isolated occurrence, but is rather combined with examination, personal history (reminiscent of the dossier), and other forms of interrogation, such as “the exacting questionnaire and hypnosis” (Foucault 1998: 65). In this configuration, where confession is partnered with combinations of the above, it is allowed to discreetly slip into the scientific realm and to be imbued with comparable credence.

In addition to this, confession was no longer seen as adequate unless it provided exhaustive answers to the question posed. As Foucault states, “Having to tell everything, being able to pose questions about everything, found their justification in the principle that endowed sex with an inexhaustible and polymorphous casual power” (Foucault 1998: 65). In other words, not only was it necessary to confess in absolute detail, but also, sex could be held accountable for “any and everything” (Foucault 1998: 65), and became imbued with limitless dangers and in doing so, it allowed itself to become the subject of limitless scientific inquisition.

Through the principle of latency, imperatives to confess found a larger scope. In terms of sex, Foucault explains that “by integrating [sex] into the beginnings of a scientific discourse, the nineteenth century altered the scope of the confession: it tended no longer to be concerned solely with what the subject wished to hide, but with what was hidden from himself” (Foucault 1998: 66).

Bear in mind that sex could be held accountable for all ailments (physical and mental), and bearing in mind that the subject did not know what he or she was hiding from him, or herself, it stands to reason that confession entered a phase in which its power grew exponentially. This was

\(^9\)For example, as Foucault states, “We must not forget that the psychological, psychiatric, medical category of homosexuality was constituted from the moment it was characterized – Westphal’s famous article of 1870 on “contrary sexual relations” can stand as its date of birth – less by a type of sexual relations than by a certain quality of sexual sensibility, a certain way of inverting the masculine and feminine in oneself. Homosexuality appears as one of the forms of sexuality when it was transposed from the practice of sodomy onto a kind of interior androgyny, a hermaphroditism of the soul. The sodomite had been a temporary aberration; the homosexual was now a species. (Foucault 1998:43)
because one had to subordinate oneself to it due to one’s incapability to locate the cause of one’s problems oneself.

This is most clearly evinced through the method of interpretation, in which one party must confess and the other must then interpret and subsequently, either validate or invalidate, that particular confession. Arguably, through this method of interpretation the confessing party subordinates themselves to the mythology of sexuality, allowing their autonomy to be discarded as the listener becomes the “master of truth” (Foucault 1998: 67). Here, a subjective deciphering becomes heralded as objective, scientific discourse, and thus confession is imbued with even more legitimacy, regardless of it being a mistaken following on from the deployment of alliance.

Lastly, the imperative to confess left its erstwhile domain of spiritual salvation and entered the arena of temporal salvation through the medicalization of its effect. The effect of confession could now be seen as a “therapeutic operation” (Foucault 1998: 67) whereby, distinctions could be made between that which was normal, and that which was pathological (Foucault 1998: 67). In other words, it was the truth that could now heal, and it could allow the subject to cross the threshold from the realm of the pathological to the domain of normality.

Understandably, at this point, the subjects autonomy was severely diminished, as they were no longer imbued with the capacity to understand the reasons, or rather, the ‘dark forces’, behind their own desires and actions, and were therefore obliged to subordinate themselves to the machinery of secularized/medicalized confession in order to find the truth. As such, it can be argued that, bio-power enforces disciplinary power in that it infantilizes the docile subject; by informing them that they are under the control of powerful unseen forces - attributed broadly to sex - and that the only way to find peace and healing is through a search for the truth via secularized/medicalized confession. In effect, disciplinary/bio-power imperatives have the ability to extract the truest confessions from a shadow (Foucault 1998: 159).

3. Disciplinary/Bio-Power, Normativity and International Communication

When disciplinary power and bio-power combined in the 18th/19th century to form what can be termed disciplinary/bio-power, the individual became subject to a highly pervasive and invasive totalizing power structure that effectively disarmed most attempts at negotiation with its discourse. Arguably, this was due to the normativity that this discursive dynamic carries with it; disciplinary/bio-power demands that the subject conform to the specifications it has advanced. As Foucault argues in Questions of Method (1991), “these programmes…crystallize into institutions, they inform individual behaviour, they act as grids for the perception and evaluation of things” (Foucault 1991: 81). Almost all spaces for critical resistance, or awareness for the introduction of
counter-discourse, are denied or blocked within a disciplinary/bio-power regime as the subject ‘sees’ according to a grid of perceptions and ‘notes’ according to a specific code (Foucault 1991: 56). In other words, normativity is established and any mode of being that falls outside of its categorisations is immediately treated with suspicion and construed as abnormal. The population must govern, conduct and direct itself and others according to this power schema (Foucault 1991: 82), or face falling outside of established, recognized and socially-sanctioned norms. Much is expected from the individual within such a regime of power. In terms of societal transgression, for instance, in his article *About the Concept of the “Dangerous Individual” in Nineteenth-Century Legal Psychiatry* (2003), Foucault writes, “Beyond admission, there must be confession, self-examination, explanation of oneself, revelation of what one is” (Foucault 2003: 209). Any alternative, idiosyncratic and nuanced response to such a transgression is regarded as invalid, or more disturbingly, as dangerous.

The normativity established by the discursive momentum of disciplinary/bio-power was initially a Western development, insofar as it operated almost exclusively within a Western context. However, through the establishment of vast international communication networks, and as a result of those networks being operated and financed by the North/West, disciplinary/bio-power imperatives have entered and become instantiated within the South. Yet, this is where theorists such as Schiller and those of the Dependency Theory school of thought, and Galtung and those who promote Structural Imperialism theory, make a grave omission. While they point out and analyze the power dynamics of the vertical and non-reciprocal nature of information flow between the North and the South, they do not see what is being implicitly communicated by the messages of this flow. That is, they miss the manner in which through the messages of such networks, the disciplinary/bio-power imperatives that constitute subjectivity as something infantilized have become the international status quo. Furthermore, what is not discussed by the above two mentioned theorists, and others of their ilk, is that the populations of the South, who had not undergone all the process that had occurred in Europe as a result of the shifts in the 18th/19th century, were subjected to a ‘discursive colonization’ through these communication networks. In this regard, it is certainly plausible to suggest that within the realm of international communication, communication networks are inextricable from disciplinary/bio-power. The Western individualized subject is a recently created discursive phenomenon, and the exporting of this mode of being, along with its subordination of the self to various disciplinary/bio-power imperatives, to the South, is a highly problematic development (specifically when one considers the implications for cultural negotiation in terms of a recently established normativity - a normativity that is highly questionable, if not dubious).
If these networks serve to engender an infantilized subjectivity through their messages, then surely they should be contested. For Schiller and Galtung, a change to the structure of international communication would serve to eradicate the discrepancies that occur between North and South. However, through an application of Foucault’s writing on disciplinary/bio-power, it becomes clear that such a change would be irrelevant to the subject of the South, as that subject has been exposed to and ‘discursively colonized’ by Western discursive imperatives. This ‘colonization’ disallows any negotiation from occurring, and thus, to be able to contend with discrepancies between North and South in terms of international communication, it is essential to contend with subjectivity, rather than with structure.

As such, wherever these communication networks reach into today – and this is increasingly expansive - they carry with them the various imperatives inherent within disciplinary/bio-power. This is the contribution that can be achieved in extending Schiller and Galtung’s ambit of concern with the theory of Foucault. Not only does the West privilege its information as a result of their dominance within the structures of international communication, but also, that information is presented as truth, with no local counter-discourse admissible or acceptable. It also changes subjects, who become incapable of articulating different perspectives even if the structures were to be reversed. If one performs even a cursory overview of popular communication networks, from the broad to the innocuous, one will quickly see how indissociable these networks are from the various dynamics that Foucault outlines in his explanations of the discursive regime of power that is disciplinary/bio-power.

There are various communication structures operating within a disciplinary discursive framework within the South. For the purposes of constructing a clear schema, the essay will divide these communication structures according to Space, Time and Rank, the Dossier; Panopticism; and lastly, imperatives to confess:

For instance, in terms of Space, Time and Rank, the South in itself is a space created as an opposition to the North. In other words, the South has been classified and enclosed as a troubled area in relation to the prosperous, normal North. The normativity that the North applies to itself forces the South to regulate itself accordingly in order to benefit from any relation with the North. Differing applications towards policy (be it politico-economic or socio-cultural) based on a mode of being outside of disciplinary/bio-power imperatives, must be curtailed and under a transformation if the South is to find acceptance and co-operation from the North. North-controlled institutions apply ranks to nations according to development, and in order to achieve a better rank and to escape the defined space that is the South and all the negative connotations associated with it, the nations of the South must adopt Western (Northern) modes of being. This does not just limit cultural negotiation, as argued by the Dependency theorists and Structural Imperialism theory, it disallows it
completely. Western discourse becomes truth, even though it is simply a relatively new discursive development. To achieve social recognition, the South cannot operate outside of disciplinary/bio-power imperatives; it must simply mimic what is being practiced and said in the North, and thereby confess to the truth. The North, as outlined above, operates under the imperative to confess, and so, in order to profit from the politico-economic dominance of the North, the South must subject itself to such imperatives. This has severe implications. Due to its subordination of itself, within the South, those in power, that is, the North and its allied centre (Galtung) constitute the subjectivities of those not in power. As a result of this, within the South,

People appear who make it their business to involve themselves in other people’s lives, health, nutrition, housing: then, out of this confused set of functions there emerge certain personages, institutions, forms of knowledge: public hygiene, inspectors, social workers, psychologists (Foucault1980: 62).

If one further extends such an analysis to news coverage in itself, one can see how these powerful, global communication networks also conform to disciplinary/bio-power imperatives. For instance, the instantaneous and constantly content producing nature of these news networks allows for a feeling of immediacy. This exhaustive use of time, coupled with the manner in which these news networks compartmentalize the globe, demonstrates that they too, are both informed by and serve to perpetuate disciplinary/bio-power imperatives.

Social networking websites, such as Facebook, MySpace and Twitter can be seen as an adjunct to this, and can be likened to the notion of the dossier. Here, people willingly divulge details about their lives while building up a profile of themselves with personal pictures, petty observations on their daily routines and a vast array of personal details – from home addresses, relationship status’s, and even their sexual orientations. This constant manufacturing of information reflects elements of disciplinary/bio-power, whereby individuals seem to be compelled to constantly inform others about themselves. This arena of confession certainly reinforces the notion that modern society is under the directive of disciplinary/bio-power imperatives, and that their understanding of the self stems from this discursive formulation of man. At this point, it is important to note that while these aforementioned technologies stem from the North, they are widely used within the South and have gained a significant level of popularity. The casual nature of confession, as demonstrated by these websites, shows the implicit nature of disciplinary/bio-power imperatives, and also demonstrates how communication networks are inextricable from these imperatives. In effect, the internet, rather than being the heralded space for the creation of counter-discourse, seems little more than an immense surveillance network. When one considers systems such as ICANN\(^\text{10}\),

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\(^\text{10}\) Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN)
which privilege internet domains from the North over those from the South, according to rankings based on finance (Antonova 2008: 02), to argue that the internet is open and devoid of disciplinary regulation seems absurd.

It is essential to note that these networks all originate from, or, in other words, have their location of distribution in, the North. There are a number of correlations between existing communication technologies which extend their reach into the South and disciplinary power imperatives. For instance, the popular *Google Earth* can easily be associated with performing a panoptical function. In *Questions on Geography* (2003), Foucault points out, “By the term Panopticism, I have in mind an ensemble of mechanisms brought into play in all the clusters of procedures used by power” (Foucault 2003: 71). When one considers that this internet technology has the ability to locate virtually any residence on the planet, it is certainly not implausible to suggest that such a technology, with its ability to locate and individualize the social body according to regulated spaces, serves a panoptical function which allows for the “management of population in its depth and details” (Foucault 1991: 102). While *Google* applications and social networking websites can be viewed as disciplinary/bio-power imperatives in operation at a micro-level, at a macro-level, by applying Foucault’s theory, it becomes clear to see that disciplinary/bio power informs and operates within the very structure of international communication. Schiller and Galtung show the division of the globe in terms of North/South and centre/periphery respectively. By applying Foucault, one can see how the various states that fall under the classification of the South are, in effect, made into subjects under the firm control of disciplinary/bio-power imperatives.

Lastly, in terms of confession, one can clearly see from the above analysis that whether it is at a macro-level, or at a micro-level, confession is encouraged implicitly by Western communication networks, which not only dominate communication structurally, but also implicitly undermine any attempt by the South at negotiation due to their inextricable link from disciplinary/bio power imperatives.

With even such a cursory overview, two insights emerge clearly. The first is that international communication networks, which stem from the West (North), and thus are both informed by, and promote, disciplinary/bio-power imperatives are inseparable from those imperatives. Following this, through their global reach, they implicitly export these imperatives to the South and in doing so, help to constitute nations of the South into being disciplinary/bio powers subjects.

4. Conclusion

If such a dynamic occurs in terms of the country of the South, the next question that emerges must necessarily relate to the effects of disciplinary/bio-power’s entry into the South on the individual
body residing within the South. In this regard, the next chapter will critically contend with the South-African Oscar-winning film *Tsotsi* (2006) in which the main character, instead of demonstrating a creative, nuanced and idiosyncratic response to his circumstances, simply mirrors the behavioural dynamics of a Western subject thoroughly informed by the discourses of disciplinary/bio-power. Importantly, the film by Gavin Hood (a white South African) is an adaptation of a play by another white South African, Athol Fugard. When one takes into account that these two, undeniably under the influence of dominant discourse originating from the North/West, attempt to represent the actions of a young, disenfranchised black South African male, further complications arise.
CHAPTER 3
From Raskolnikov to Tsotsi: The development of Fyodor Dostoyevsky’s character in the work of Athol Fugard and Gavin Hood

Having shown in the previous chapter that a disciplinary/bio-power ‘discursive colonization’ of the South has occurred, most notably through the expansion of international communication networks into the nations that fall under this classification, this chapter will demonstrate the totalizing nature of disciplinary/bio-power imperatives on the subjectivity of the South. That is, this chapter will critically engage with Gavin Hood’s internationally acclaimed 2006 film, Tsotsi; a text that tells the story of a disenfranchised black youth who confronts his past, as well as his present lifestyle, when he mistakenly kidnaps an infant during a violent car ‘hi-jacking’. Arguably, the manner in which Hood’s protagonist deciphers himself and his actions demonstrates how he is thoroughly informed by disciplinary/bio-power discursive imperatives. That is, rather than presenting an idiosyncratic, nuanced and/or alternative response to the situation in which he finds himself, Hood’s protagonist simply mimics a Western response to such a predicament. This adherence to disciplinary/bio-power imperatives on the part of the film, in its representation of the protagonist’s development as a ‘moral’ human being, serves to display the totalizing nature of the imperatives that have discursively colonized the South. The conclusions that one could reach from such an observation are twofold: Firstly, even though the film presents itself as a critical South African text, it cannot present an independent, non-Western perspective as it allows its protagonist to act in a manner that mirrors the behavioural dynamics of a Western subject, informed by disciplinary/bio-power. This problematizes the film’s ability to contribute to any form of valuable ‘conversation’ with the North/West regarding the subjectivity of the South.

The irony of this can scarcely be missed. Post-Apartheid South Africa was supposed to offer those who were previously oppressed an opportunity to negotiate a new cultural identity for themselves, in a rapidly changing world characterized by globalization. While the Apartheid system was ‘Fascist’ in orientation, a post-1994 South Africa ostensibly offered a chance at a more open society that would allow for the generation of more porous cultural dynamics and exchange. However, if one examines a text such as Gavin Hood’s Tsotsi (2006), one can see that its narrative is pervasively subordinate to disciplinary/bio-power. This discursive development and its entry into Africa (or the South in general), inhibits cultural negotiation as it renders the subject docile and prostrate through its dissolution of autonomy, particularly, through the institution of confession. The actions of the film’s protagonist clearly demonstrate this, and for the purposes of showing how the character of Tsotsi is thoroughly informed by disciplinary/bio-power imperatives, the chapter will begin by considering the comparable character of Raskolnikov in Dostoyevsky’s Crime and
Punishment - a novel set during the emergence of disciplinary/bio-power society in Russia in the 19th century – to that of Fugard’s Tsotsi, as well as to Hood’s Tsotsi. That is, in various ways and to various degrees, the character of Tsotsi emerges as little more than a facsimile of the character of Raskolnikov. Arguably, this is all the more problematic because, while the discursive formation of such subjectivity has become a point of contestation in the West, ironically, in Africa, through ostensibly critical films such as Tsotsi (2006), it continues to be implicitly valorised and embraced as a cultural norm and, indeed, as something necessary for broader social acceptance. In fact, Tsotsi’s ultimate act of confession is seen as a triumph of his ‘humanity’; an autonomous rehabilitation of his ‘criminal’ self – it is rarely read as a subordination on the part of a subject of the South, to the disciplinary/bio-power imperatives that make him docile and prostrate.

1. Raskolnikov’s Confession

Before an analysis of Dostoyevsky’s text can be performed it is necessary to consider the context within which Crime and Punishment was written, and to which the actions of the protagonist of the novel, Raskolnikov, constitute a response. In this regard, in what follows, Dostoyevsky’s text, written in (and set in) the 19th century, will be provided with a historical backdrop in order to provide further insight into the text. Additionally, in order to demonstrate the validity of analyzing the protagonist as a product of disciplinary/bio power imperatives, it is crucial to engage with a number of writings on Dostoyevsky’s texts. While there have been numerous interrogations of the above-mentioned writer’s literary output, none seem to share Dostoyevsky’s preoccupation with the troubling discursive changes that his characters, and particularly, his protagonist, Raskolnikov, grapple with throughout Crime and Punishment.

In order to provide a historical context for the above-mentioned novel, it is essential to contend with two major developments within Russian society in the 19th century. The first development would be the manner in which the Tsars ruled within this period of time, favouring a number of reforms that would create multiple reactions, confusion and unease within the Russian Empire. The second development to be engaged with would be the anarchism or “intellectual rationalization of terrorism” (Clarkson 1969: 324) that permeated Russia as a result of the various reforms instituted by Tsar Alexander II between the period 1857 and 1875 (Clarkson 1969: 293):

As Dostoyevsky’s text was published in 1866, it is plausible to suggest that its author not only observed the various reforms constituted by the new emperor, Alexander II, but also had his text informed by the regulations imposed upon Russian society by the previous Tsar, Nicholas I. For instance, in terms of the legal system, under Nicholas I
The most weighty evidence was a confession; a litigant under these rules was well advised to present evidence of an educated male noble, or, if a noble was unobtainable or unbrirable, of a priest of the Orthodox faith” (Westwood 1973: 89).

So, while, upon examination of Dostoyevsky’s text, his protagonist’s actions clearly operate within this form of judicial practice, it is also made clear within the text that Raskolnikov certainly benefits from the changes imposed upon the legal system by Nicholas’ successor, Alexander II. Firstly, Raskolnikov, a law student, is allowed the opportunity of studying within a less restrictive realm as a result of the educational reforms pushed through by Alexander II. In terms of the statute of 1863, universities in Russia were given as much independence as any institution and professors were given the right to lecture whatever way they chose (Stephenson 1969: 113 – 114). Developments like these, arguably, allowed for Raskolnikov to take a far more progressive stance in his writings on law and morality. Add to this the relaxation of censorship under Alexander II and the reformation of the courts, and it is plausible to suggest that the actions of the protagonist are given both impetus and momentum by the changes sweeping various sectors in Russian society, due to Alexander’s ascendance to power. In terms of the legal system reform,

The hand of the liberals was nowhere more clearly seen than in the legal reforms of 1864. Zarudny, the official chief concerned, prepared himself for the work by several years of study in the West. In the end he decided upon a completely new departure; Russia was to be made to accept legal institutions which had taken centuries to evolve in Britain and France and which fitted very different social conditions. (Stephenson 1969: 110)

This Westernization of the legal system brought with it a number of problematic issues. Firstly, the brutal legacy of Nicholas’ legal system permeated many individual cases; bureaucracy often disallowed for just trials, and most profoundly, a Westernized court system brought with it Western discursive imperatives, namely the disciplinary/bio-power imperatives which were inextricable from the legal systems of continental Europe. Thus, Dostoyevsky’s character finds himself in a highly ambiguous context, where an “immense bureaucracy” (Stephenson 1969: 117), still immersed in, and to an extent governed by, the legacy of Nicholas’ rule, was now increasingly becoming informed by problematic discursive imperatives (Western in origin), all of which created a space for social upheaval, while simultaneously crushing any hint of rebellion.

It is in such a context that anarchism first made itself evident in Russia. Despite the Westernized reforms across various sectors within Russia society (Stephenson 1969: 110-124), Alexander II was driven back to adopt a conservative position as a result of “the rapid development of a revolutionary movement in Russia itself” (Stephenson 1969: 128). This development, whose “roots went back to the previous reign” (Stephenson 1969: 128), was carried by “young students
armed with little more than ideas” (Stephenson 1969: 128). Declaring itself with an attempt on the Tsar’s life in 1866 by a student named Karakozov (Westwood 1973: 113), the movement would eventually triumph in 1917 under the banner of Marxist ideology. It would not be a far stretch of the imagination to suggest that Raskolnikov - with his status as a law student, his progressive thinking in terms of the law and society, and his rebellious attitude to the society he finds himself trapped within - fits into the mould of the anarchism making itself evident in Russia in the 1860s. Nevertheless, Raskolnikov’s quest for autonomy and humanity is severely undermined by the disciplinary/bio-power imperatives operating within Russia in the 19\textsuperscript{th} century, as a result of Alexander’s Westernization of an already highly problematic set of societal structures.

In light of the above contextualization of Dostoyevsky’s world, it is now necessary, for the reasons already mentioned, to briefly examine a number of analyses of his work. This set of ‘explanations’ of Dostoyevsky’s work, which characterize the limited way in which Dostoyevsky’s output has been examined, because they fail to take into account the various (disciplinary/bio-power) discursive changes sweeping through Russia at Dostoyevsky’s time of writing. While Dostoyevsky is particularly preoccupied by how discourse affects his characters, and comes across as being particularly wary of psychology, critics nevertheless repeatedly missed this pre-occupation all together. For instance, in his review on Dostoyevsky, the French critic Andre Gide, labels Dostoyevsky a “supreme psychologist” (Gide 1967:09), and follows by saying that in Dostoyevsky’s text, it is the “the will to power [that] inevitably leads to ruin” (Gide 1967: 93). Such a statement demonstrates a very one-sided reading of a character such as Raskolnikov – rather than being ruined by a will to power, it is plausible to suggest that Dostoyevsky examines Raskolnikov as a victim of the strange discursive nuances suddenly present within 19\textsuperscript{th} century Russia. Similarly, rather than being a ‘supreme psychologist’, as Gide asserts, it appears that Dostoyevsky is highly uncomfortable with both psychology, and its new-found usage in Russia.

Indeed, as one peruses through the various analyses of Dostoyevsky’s fiction, and in particular his Crime and Punishment, it becomes evident that most writers on the subject see the author as a master psychologist who understands the ‘mentality of the criminal’ (Gide 1967; Peace 1971; Offord 1983; Pike 1983) and who can thus perform a profound psychological analysis of that criminal. In contrast, it is the assertion of this chapter, that Dostoyevsky’s focus is to probe and question psychology itself, rather than to regard it as the status quo. That is, rather than passing off Raskolnikov’s multiple confessions as irrational moments (Peace 1971: 21), it is imperative to examine them as the result of a discursive framework taking hold in Russia as a result of the Westernization of Russian society. As has been pointed out before, Westernization brings with it Western discursive practices, most notably, disciplinary/bio-power imperatives, which certainly
take hold of Raskolnikov (as will be demonstrated in the course of the chapter), and ultimately render him docile and prostrate.

While disciplinary/bio-power emerged in the Western world in the period between the early and late 18th century, it only entered into Russia within the 19th century. It is plausible to suggest that this was a result of the Russian empire’s ‘backwardness’ in terms of industrial development, etcetera, in relation to Europe. Russia’s lag in terms of industrial development, constitutional reform and exposure to the above mentioned discursive imperatives, is a well-noted phenomenon, documented extensively by many writers in a variety of fields such as Alan Ebenstein, Norman Davies, and David Conway.\(^1\) Arguably, the resulting emergence of disciplinary/bio power in Russia within the 19th century is nowhere more emphatically captured than in Dostoyevsky’s famous text, in which, through the character of Raskolnikov, we find the author to be preoccupied with the uncomfortable discursive changes that he observes within his society, but which he cannot fully comprehend.

Dostoyevsky’s *Crime and Punishment* is set in the impoverished sector in St. Petersburg, where the protagonist, Raskolnikov - a struggling law student - lives in a cramped room in a boarding house. The opening chapters reveal Raskolnikov to be a sensitive, intelligent young man, with noble aspirations and a distaste for the growing mediocrity of the society in which he finds himself. This revulsion, at the socio-economic ills and injustice that plague his surroundings, leads him to debate with himself on whether or not he should kill Alyona Ivanova, a local money-lender; despised by her community for her spitefulness and her exploitation of others’ suffering. Soon, he becomes preoccupied with the thought, and on overhearing a conversation in a tavern regarding the money-lender, in which one participant asks the other if a crime should be disqualified if it helps hundreds in exchange, Raskolnikov plans the murder of the old money-lender. Preparing meticulously, and convinced that “his design was not a crime” (Dostoyevsky 1964: 65), Raskolnikov enters the old woman’s flat and murders her with an axe. During the encounter, the old woman’s sister, Lizaveta, described as “timid, submissive and almost idiotic” (Dostoyevsky 1964: 56), walks in. Lizaveta, who had too been a victim of the money-lender’s exploitation, is murdered by Raskolnikov in his blind panic. Raskolnikov eventually manages to leave the scene and initially escapes any form of punishment, or even suspicion, for the crime. However, he begins to suffer tremendously as a result of his growing paranoia and guilt, and almost gives himself up to the police on numerous occasions. On the verge of confession, Raskolnikov is seemingly saved by the confession of a painter, Nikolay, who pleads guilty to the old woman’s murder. Later, however, it emerges that the said painter confessed under duress, and tried to hang himself, presumably from

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anxiety. Despite this reprieve, Raskolnikov is plagued by guilt and even confesses his culpability to both a workman and a police officer, Nikodim Fomtich; but this talk is dismissed as a product of delirium. It is with the entry of Porfiry Petrovich, the officer charged with managing the case of the old woman’s murder, that Raskolnikov’s subordination to the disciplinary/bio-power imperatives, emerging in Russian society at the time, comes to the fore. The astute Porfiry pursues Raskolnikov, but never overtly. Throughout the ensuing tussle between the two, Porfiry (and by extension, Dostoyevsky) seems to have a palpable intuition of the dynamics at play that will lead to Raskolnikov’s ultimate confession. This is well demonstrated when, during one of these exchanges, Porfiry argues that those who commit a societal transgression will always “chastise themselves with their own hands” (Dostoyevsky 1964: 233). By the latter stages of the text, Porfiry, or perhaps, more succinctly, disciplinary/bio power imperatives, win the tussle with the transgressor, Raskolnikov. In one of Porfiry’s final encounters with Raskolnikov, before the latter’s confession, he tells the shattered Raskolnikov:

If I leave one man quite alone, if I don’t touch him and don’t worry him, but let him know or at least suspect every moment that I know all about it and am watching him day and night, and if he is in continual suspicion and terror, he’ll be bound to lose his head. He’ll come of himself, or maybe do something which will make it as plain as twice two are four - it’s delightful. (Dostoyevsky 1964: 300 – 301)

This statement on the part of the investigator serves to demonstrate the change that had occurred in the modality of the subject. It shows an awareness of the discursive momentum, precipitated by disciplinary/bio-power imperatives, which now force the subject into docility before the dominant power structures, as a result of the growing weight of these imperatives. As Porfiry puts it, “he is psychologically unable to escape” (Dostoyevsky 1964: 301). Even when, after these harrowing encounters, Raskolnikov realizes that there is no factual evidence against him with regard to the murder - due to Nikolay’s convenient confession - Porfiry’s assessment proves correct. Raskolnikov confesses to the murder of Alyona Ivanova, unable to free himself from acquiescence to the discursive imperatives that propel him towards this act.

In order to demonstrate the disempowering nature of the imperatives that are liable for Raskolnikov’s succumbing to the pressure exerted on him by Porfiry, it is necessary to contend with a number of instances in the text that show the entry and growing influence of disciplinary/bio-power into Russia. Throughout the text, a number of interactions between characters occur that denote a discomfort, on the part of Dostoyevsky, with the discursive changes in 19th century Russia. His preoccupation with these changes is evident early in the narrative, when, at a tavern, Raskolnikov overhears a local drunk, Marmeladov - formerly employed as a civil servant -
lamenting his unfortunate position. In his impassioned speech, Marmeladov tells the owner of the tavern that, according to his employer, “compassion is forbidden nowadays by science itself” and then proceeds to explain that “that’s what’s done in England now” (Dostoyevsky 1964: 11). This engagement on the part of the author with the discursive impetus that allows for the generation of such statements, arguably sets the tone for the novel. In effect, it involves a discomforting reflection on the manner in which new ideas, imported from the West, are affecting Russian subjectivity in a profound manner. Moreover, this theme re-occurs on numerous occasions throughout the text. For instance, the use of secularized/medicalized terminology, which is concomitant with disciplinary/bio-power, is critiqued by the likes of Raskolnikov himself, when he says, “A percentage! What splendid words they have; they are so scientific, so consolatory…Once you’ve said percentage there’s nothing more to worry about” (Dostoyevsky 1964: 46). Although the protagonist is uneasy and critical of the entry of such language and its associated prejudices, the likes of Porfiry, the head police officer, and Zossimov the doctor, seem to embrace and propagate the use of this discourse. That is, just as Porfiry delights in the ‘psychological’, so too Zossimov, who often speaks of familiar psychological phenomena (Dostoyevsky 1964: 200), echoes and thereby further legitimates the increasing belief in the schemas of truth, created by disciplinary/bio-power. In fact, Zossimov’s tendency in this regard is salient enough to be commented on by the character of Razumihin, when he describes the former by saying; “A doctor[‘s]…duty…is to study man…and human nature” (Dostoyevsky 1964: 125). This not only demonstrates the arrival of bio-power in Russia, but also neatly illustrates the manner in which it has already informed subjectivity; so much so that even a constantly critical character such as Razumihin does not think it necessary to critique the medical professions new-found capacity to comprehend ‘human nature’. Dostoyevsky’s main contention seems to be this belief in the possibility of a scientifically accurate appraisal of the subject, or an understanding of the subject based on such a schema, and, many elements that would fit into a disciplinary/bio-power code of operation can be found within the text, such as allusions to disciplinary bureaucracy, Panopticism, the regulation of space and exhaustive practices of confession.

To begin with, in terms of disciplinary bureaucracy, one only needs to look at the officious character of Luzhin, or the legal obligations Raskolnikov faces as a result of his failing to repay a creditor, for which he is summoned to a government office and given a deadline for repayment (Dostoyevsky 1964: 88). Similarly, while Panopticism is present in Porfiry’s assertions, mentioned previously, that a man is not able to psychologically escape if he suspects that someone is watching him, in terms of a regulation of space, even though Raskolnikov lives in seemingly ‘anonymous’ poverty, he is tied to his ‘identity’ through his address, which is committed to document by the government (Dostoyevsky 1964: 83). Lastly, when Raskolnikov does confess, first to Sonia
(Marmeladov’s daughter), and then to the authorities, both are exhaustive in their demands for Raskolnikov to detail not only what he did, but also to explain why he committed the act. Along with the increasing conformity to a secularized/medicalized understanding of the subject, as a result of the increasing proliferation of disciplinary/bio-power imperatives (as outlined above), Raskolnikov finds himself in a highly restrictive discursive framework.

Suffocated by this discursive configuration, it is Raskolnikov who attempts to be different, only to be crushed by disciplinary/bio-power. To best understand the magnitude of Raskolnikov’s ultimate subordination to disciplinary/bio-power imperatives, it is necessary to consider his article entitled ‘On Crime’, and Porfiry’s contentions concerning this piece of writing. Raskolnikov’s article, written before his murder of Alyona Ivanova, advances that one can classify men into the ‘ordinary’ and the ‘extraordinary’. This classification, reminiscent of Nietzsche’s contention that “man is something…to be surpassed” (Nietzsche 1941: 785), states that the man who is ‘extraordinary’ has “an inner right to decide in his own conscience to overstep…certain obstacles, and only in case it is essential for the practical fulfilment of his idea [and] of benefit to the whole of humanity” (Dostoyevsky 1964: 230). In doing so, that is, in having the ability to act in such a manner, these ‘extraordinary’ men, as Raskolnikov terms them, have the ability “to utter a new word” (Dostoyevsky 1964: 231). It is entirely plausible that Raskolnikov attempts to introduce a counter-discourse, or at least longs for the emergence of a counter-discourse that will open up the restrictive dynamics of disciplinary/bio-power operating within his context. In contrast, Porfiry, with his devotion to disciplinary/bio-power imperatives, blatantly mocks Raskolnikov’s argument, introducing “playful, psychological idea[s]” (Dostoyevsky 1964: 235), and claiming that the so-called ‘extraordinary’ man cannot exist because he will always undermine himself, as “he is psychologically unable to escape” (Dostoyevsky 1964: 300). This exchange between Raskolnikov and Porfiry serves not only to demonstrate the adherence to disciplinary/bio-power imperatives on the part of the legislative powers in Russia, but also, through Raskolnikov’s ultimate confession to Porfiry, shows the manner in which these imperatives force the subject into being docile and prostrate – all their efforts to the contrary, notwithstanding. After all, Raskolnikov’s ‘extraordinary’ man is ‘defeated’ ultimately by Porfiry’s ‘psychological’ man.

In light of the above, it would be hard to present Raskolnikov’s confession to the authorities as some sort of triumph of his ‘humanity’. Dostoyevsky is clearly concerned with his protagonist’s path towards the act of confession, and his protagonist’s confrontation with disciplinary/bio power shows, powerfully, the restrictive effects on humanity that this discursive configuration has.

In order to contend with Athol Fugard’s play *Tsotsi* (1980), it is first essential to provide a context for this author and his works. In this regard, it is essential to examine critical ‘white’ writing during the time of Apartheid South Africa. Certainly, Fugard falls into this category; Fugard, a “white South African who began playwriting in 1958” (Long 1993: 01) was highly critical of Apartheid South Africa and its various discriminatory policies. Long contends that Fugard’s development as a writer is primarily concerned with one issue; that is, “the quality of life in South Africa” (Long 1993: 03), particularly for the large sections of the population discriminated against primarily on the grounds of their race. Fugard, who has always resided in South Africa despite multiple opportunities to live abroad (Long 1993: 04), has throughout the scope of his work, shown “a tremendous sense of moral responsibility” (Long 1993: 04), taking the side of the marginalised consistently. In terms of ‘white’ prose in South Africa, Fugard certainly conforms to the following assessment of ‘white’ writing during the Apartheid period, made by Richard Peck. He argues:

Most fiction from South Africa focused on the political question of who gets what in South African apartheid society. Opposition to apartheid motivated much of the fiction, so it is not surprising that fiction writers disliked the increasingly repressive policies of the National Party and the racist laws it enacted and enforced between 1948 and 1990. (Peck 1997: x)

In terms of his play *Tsotsi*, it is important to note that although published in 1980, the play was written in 1960 (Long 1993: 211). Certainly, finding himself in the midst of Apartheid’s operation, and with no end in sight, the liberal Fugard - influenced by the existentialism and the writings of Camus (Peck 1997: 124) - turned to extreme pessimism, taking “apartheid as part of the absurd human condition” (Peck 1997: 125). However, although inclined towards a pessimistic appraisal of the ability of marginalised South Africans to break the shackles of Apartheid, in *Tsotsi*, Fugard does offer a solution of sorts. Sadly, as will be discussed through an analysis of *Tsotsi* below, the solution offered valorises disciplinary/bio-power, finding a solution only within its confines. So, while Fugard was certainly critical of the Apartheid regime at the time of writing, his inability to see past the Western discourse that informs him, renders his solution problematic insofar as it fails to resist the discursive forces that would ultimately render freedom from Apartheid meaningless in terms of individual autonomy. Don Maclennan, in his appraisal of Fugard, argues that “we can remake ourselves through [stories]” (Barbera 1993: 518), and points out that Fugard’s is essentially orientated around a humanistic approach (Barbera 1993: 518). While this is certainly a fair point, and while Fugard is deserving of praise for his stand against a highly repressive and unjust political system, it must be conceded that the solutions he is able to provide are limited through such

12 At the time of writing, Fugard still resides in South Africa.
humanism, as they are thoroughly informed by a discursive framework which itself acts as a great ‘silent’ repressor. In effect, when one applies this schema of naivety to ‘white’ prose during Apartheid, it becomes clear that the major shortcoming in ‘white’ writing during this period is a lack of interrogation of Western discursive practices; this limits the white writer’s capacity to provide a meaningful solution to the loss of autonomy by black South Africans.

While Dostoyevsky appears to be wary of, and concerned with the effects of, disciplinary/bio-power on the subject, Athol Fugard’s *Tsotsi* (1980), set in Apartheid South Africa, seems far less aware of the restrictive nature of disciplinary/bio-power. That is, although Fugard’s text responds to racist injustices and preconceptions, crucially, it is the text’s denouement that ‘misunderstands’ disciplinary/bio-power, so to speak, finding the protagonist’s resolution to his conflicts, within its discursive confines. In this regard, Fugard, informed by Western discursive imperatives, transposes his own discursive bias onto his protagonist, thus disallowing that character a nuanced, idiosyncratic and alternative interpretation of his life. Rather, the protagonist conforms to a Western interpretation of his actions and, in doing so, simply mimics the actions of Dostoyevsky’s character, Raskolnikov. This emerges into conspicuity through an overview of Fugard’s text.

Set during Apartheid South Africa, the story follows a young man from the township known only as Tsotsi.13 The reader is introduced to Tsotsi’s gang of four, which comprises of the aforementioned character, ‘Boston’, ‘Butcher’ and ‘Die Aap’. The group engages in a host of criminal activities, ranging from theft to murder and it rapidly emerges that Tsotsi is the leader of the operation. While Butcher and Die Aap are largely peripheral characters - both loyal to, and, to an extent, afraid of, their leader - Boston troubles Tsotsi with his inability to be ruthless, and with his constant questions about Tsotsi’s past and personal motivations. Following a murder, when the four men are drinking in a tavern, Boston begins to pester Tsotsi again, and Tsotsi beats him mercilessly, leaving Boston critically injured. Following this incident, he begins to walk home alone, and while he is doing so, he encounters a young woman walking hurriedly, looking mortally afraid. Sensing an opportunity, Tsotsi confronts her, and as he does this she throws a shoebox at him. She flees, and Tsotsi, examining the shoebox, finds an infant in it. This incident affects him profoundly and, ultimately, dramatically alters his perception of himself. He begins to care for the child and, in doing so, allows himself to remember his own traumatic childhood; but these thoughts soon begin to consume him and, partly as a result of his new pre-occupation, his gang disintegrates. Plagued by memory, and unable to return to his past occupation, Tsotsi seeks out Boston. In their encounter, he confesses to Boston, recounting his past to him and pleading for his former friend’s forgiveness - Boston tells him that he is different and that he is changing (Fugard 1980: 152).

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13 South African slang for ‘thug’; ‘hoodlum’; ‘gangster’.
Evidently, Tsotsi’s encounter with Boston affirms his new found ‘humanity’, and by the end of the text, Tsotsi states, “My name is David Madondo” (Fugard 1980: 166). He is no longer simply a criminal with no ‘positive’ intention, but an ‘individual’ who is capable of redemption and thus, empathy. The benefit of Tsotsi’s new understanding of himself is valorised by Fugard in the conclusion of the text, when Tsotsi dies while trying to save the infant from the bulldozers that are destroying the ruins he has hidden the baby in. Fugard writes, “All agreed that his smile was beautiful, and strange for a tsotsi” (Fugard 1980: 167).

However, the somewhat elegiac tone of the above, notwithstanding, Fugard’s representation of the positive changes that his protagonist undergoes is profoundly problematic. This is because it intimates that a Western understanding of the self, informed by disciplinary/bio-power imperatives, is the only manner in which a subject of the South can access their ‘humanity’. That is, Fugard’s text presents a Western discursive regime as a schema from which the subject can decipher himself and his actions, as well as decide on his future behaviour. Here, the author does not take into account that this understanding of the self is a relatively new development, gaining momentum only in the 18th century. Rather, he presents this relatively new Western discourse as the ‘natural’ status quo, and as the mode of being that should be aspired to. In doing so, he disregards modes of being outside of the disciplinary/bio-power framework. Yet, unlike Dostoyevsky, Fugard is seemingly unaware of the disciplinary/bio-power discursive dynamics at play within the context of Apartheid South Africa. That is, while he is rightly critical of the racially discriminatory power structure of Apartheid South Africa, what he fails to take into account are the ‘other’ discursive imperatives operating within South Africa at the time, and rendering all subjects powerless. Much like Schiller and Galtung, Fugard advances that if the racially discriminatory structure is dismantled, then the previously disadvantaged subject will gain access to power. However, as discussed previously, this remains somewhat utopic in orientation because a subject cannot gain power if they are held firmly under the sway of discursive imperatives that render them docile and prostrate.

To illustrate the above point, the chapter will briefly trace Tsotsi’s path towards confession and ‘redemption’. In the opening exchanges of the text, Tsotsi is ruthless and refuses to allow anyone to pry into his past. He despises the questions posed to him by Boston, who continually attempts to interrogate Tsotsi about his “real name” (Fugard 1980: 16), and other things relating to his past. Fugard tells us that Tsotsi hated the questions “for a profound but simple reason. His not knowing himself had a deeper meaning than his name” (Fugard 1980: 19). In doing so, Fugard already begins to implicitly legitimise the concept of latency, and soon, the character is further imbued with ‘profound’ meaning when Fugard writes about, “His rule…never to disturb his inward darkness” (Fugard 1980: 31). Arguably, these revelations serve as a transposition of Western values, informed by disciplinary/bio-power imperatives, onto a character that seems to initially act,
or operate, outside of a Western discursive framework. His chance encounter with the baby, who he subsequently cares for, acts as a catalyst towards his ‘moral re-awakening’, or his path towards ‘re-discovering’ his humanity. However, what must be asked is whether his beginning to conform to Western discursive imperatives is a ‘re-discovery’ of his ‘humanity’, or simply a succumbing to disciplinary/bio-power imperatives. In this regard, towards the end of the text, Boston tells him that “[he] is different… [and that he] is changing” (Fugard 1980: 152), and buoyed by these words, Tsotsi, in the following chapter, is a virtually unrecognizable character to the one introduced to the reader in the first exchanges of the text. Crucially, his new-found ‘humanity’ is a result of his ‘return’ to his past, his allowing himself to become saturated with memory, his understanding of himself as a result of that ‘return’, and finally through his ultimate confession to Boston. In other words, Fugard, albeit inadvertently, shows the reader that Tsotsi has accessed ‘humanity’ through acquiescence to disciplinary/bio-power ideas of the subject, and through his conformity to its associated imperatives.

The above analysis is even more disconcerting when one considers the wary manner in which Dostoyevsky treats the entry of disciplinary/bio-power imperatives within his context of 19th century Russia. While these imperatives are treated as points of discussion and contestation within Dostoyevsky’s text, Fugard’s text accepts them uncritically and, in doing so, implicitly valorises them by seeing them as the only legitimate manner in which a subject can access their ‘inherent humanity’. However, while Fugard’s text certainly has its flaws in terms of its ‘misunderstanding’ of how disciplinary/bio-power renders subjects docile and prostrate, it certainly does not subject its protagonist to an exhaustive examination. Secondly, if one takes the context into account, it becomes understandable that Fugard’s imbuing of his protagonist with Western subjectivity is politically motivated, in that it attempts to facilitate empathy and understanding on the part of the white audience within Apartheid times. But these factors notwithstanding, Fugard’s text provides an unintentional endorsement of the need for subordination to disciplinary/bio-power imperatives. Indeed, it begins a trajectory that is continued by Gavin Hood in a way that - at the levels of both content and form - exponentially exacerbates the problem.

In order to contextualize Gavin Hood’s 2006 film adaptation of Athol Fugard’s 1980 play, it is essential to briefly examine South African film in the post-Apartheid era. According to Martin Botha, “Post-apartheid cinema is characterized by the emergence of new voices and a diversification of themes” (Botha 2007: 34). While this may be true, it is imperative to examine what is being said by these ‘new voices’, rather than simply being content with their emergence. In other words, while “marginalized communities finally have a voice” (Botha 2007: 36), it is
important to contend critically with the messages of these voices. It cannot be denied that, in terms of theme, the general orientation of South African cinema undoubtedly relates to “how South Africans are dealing with the traumatic past and how they are adjusting to the dramatic socio-political changes in contemporary South African society” (Botha 2007: 37). In addition, Botha argues that, “Post-apartheid features also deal overwhelmingly and by necessity with the lives of Black South Africans” (Botha 2007: 39).

Yet, although the stories told by post-Apartheid film-makers centre on the lives of black South Africans, a large number of the film-makers ‘telling’ the stories are white. Examples of this phenomena include Oliver Schmitz’s Hijack Stories (2000), Darrel Roodt’s Yesterday (2006) and Killer October (2004), directed by Garth Meyer. Arguably, this is a problematic development, which does not conform to Botha’s assertion that in post-Apartheid cinema, a multiplicity of voices can be heard. That is, while the story-tellers might be liberal and open-minded, they still reflect a particular discursive mode of being, and then transpose it onto their characters. For instance, Schmitz tells the tale of a syndicate from the township that forms an unlikely bond with a black middle-class aspiring actor; Roodt’s film follows a black woman, originally from a rural area, who is struggling with HIV/AIDS and its devastating implications while Meyer contends with African mythology in his focusing on a young boy who has lost a loved one to an unnamed illness. Indeed, when one examines post-Apartheid cinema, particularly the films directed by white South Africans, it is essential to examine whether they have asked the ‘hard’ questions, and interrogated society, or whether they have simply chosen the safe, ‘politically correct’ option, endearing them to Western favour in terms of sponsorship and recognition. In many ways, Hood’s Tsotsi (2006) is a very good example of such transposition. A “South Africa/Great Britain co-production” (Botha 2007: 47), Tsotsi achieved international recognition for telling the tale of how a young hoodlum, or ‘tsotsi’, is forced to “confront his own humanity” (Botha 2007: 47). Yet, Luc Renders, in his article entitled Redemption Movies, argues that with Hood’s film, and with post-Apartheid film directed by white South Africans in general, the hard questions have been avoided. On the issue of Hood’s Tsotsi, Renders writes:

Indeed, in the movie the sharp edges of the harsh township conditions have been rounded off. Even the shacks in Sophiatown manage to look almost cosy and Tsotsi’s shack in particular is quite comfortable. Apart from the brutal murder on the train and Tsotsi’s assault on Boston, the gang members do not come across as very intimidating. The movie has an outspoken feel good quality to it, which is enhanced by the pulsating township beat...The message is ‘politically correct’. In South Africa there is once again room for moral values such as repentance, remorse and forgiveness. (Renders 2007: 244).
Renders’ assertions are hard to discard. Indeed, rather than subjecting the ‘new’ South Africa to a critical interrogation, the director of the film is content to gloss over controversial issues within South Africa today, opting rather for a message inspired by a feel-good “Christian outlook on life” (Renders 2007: 244), which completely ignores alternative subjectivities operating outside of such a framework. Renders outlines the issues at stake succinctly when he writes,

> Could it be that the perspective in the novels and movies discussed above, which have all been written and directed by white writers and directors, is just a little too lily white?...more importantly, the positive endings of the movies are very much in line with attempts by the post-apartheid government to bring reconciliation about between the races. The movies communicate the politically correct message of guilt, atonement, redemption, and reconciliation. Is this not too good to be true or truthful? Is the present-day South Africa helped by upbeat answers to a bewildering array of seemingly intractable problems? (Renders 2007: 245)

While, Hood’s has been one of the most commercially successful South African film, replaced only by Neill Blomkamp’s *District 9* (2009), it is certainly not an isolated example of the problematic portrayal of post-Apartheid South Africa by white directors. In short, the following chapter, although operating against the backdrop of the above, will argue beyond such a perspective, in that it will demonstrate how text’s such as Hood’s not only ignore pertinent social issues, but also valorise the continuing discursive colonization by the West of non-Western identities.

As will be discussed in what follows, the protagonist of the aforementioned film does not access an idiosyncratic humanity, but rather Hood’s version of humanity - a version that is concomitant with disciplinary/bio-power imperatives that inform Westernized subjects. This version of humanity, underpinned by disciplinary/bio-power allows for international audiences, or rather, Western audiences, to relate to Hood’s protagonist – and hence lends to the film’s economic success - one wonders how much recognition the film would have achieved were it to have featured a version of humanity that would have been experienced as alien to the Western viewer. Botha ends his above-mentioned article on South African film by concluding that “at last our films are internationally recognized” (Botha 2007: 47). What he fails to take into account is the highly problematic message of these films in general, and Hood’s *Tsotsi* in particular, and the fact that it, in effect, excludes marginalised voices, giving privilege only to a voice that has always been privileged, both in Apartheid South Africa, and in post-Apartheid South Africa.

Gavin Hood’s film adaptation\(^{14}\) of Athol Fugard’s novel is different to the original text in at least two prominent respects. Firstly, while Fugard’s text is set within the highly politically

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\(^{14}\) It is important to note that Hood both wrote the screenplay to *Tsotsi* (2006), as well as directed it. It is thus fair to presume that the amendments made to Fugard’s original storyline can be attributed wholly to Hood.
restrictive context of Apartheid South Africa, Hood’s film text places the character of Tsotsi (Presley Chweneyagae) within a post-Apartheid context. Secondly, unlike Fugard, Hood places far greater emphasis on Tsotsi’s confession, and, in doing so, his protagonist mirrors Dostoyevsky’s Raskolnikov far more than Fugard’s Tsotsi. As such, while Dostoyevsky is questioning of disciplinary/bio-power imperatives, and while Fugard uses them in an attempt to correct a racially discriminatory political structure, Hood revels in these imperatives, uncritically placing immense emphasis on them within his text. Thus, instead of this South African film opening up a forum for cultural negotiation, it remains critically acclaimed rather than critical, insofar as it allows for its protagonist to contend with himself through the prism of Western discursive imperatives. So, while the protagonist may not be structurally subordinated any longer - that is, while the subject may have shaken of the shackles of a discriminatory Apartheid political system - it appears that the subject of the South cannot escape the restrictive nature of disciplinary/bio-power imperatives now operating with complete abandon across the domain of the South. Indeed, that an ostensibly critical South African film carries this message serves not only to demonstrate the totalizing nature of the aforementioned imperatives. In addition, that this film was greatly lauded world-wide and was even awarded an Oscar, also neatly illustrates that the West only recognizes information from the South that mimics its discursive agenda. This lack of interrogation, on the part of Hood, yet again, makes its plausible to suggest that the subject of the South is, at this point, so thoroughly informed by disciplinary/bio-power imperatives stemming from the West, that they do not see it necessary to question the problematic nature of these imperatives, and their highly negative effects on subjectivity. This in turn, demonstrates that to contend critically with imbalances between North and South, the South needs to contend with its colonized subjectivity, rather than with its lack of representation within international communication flow.

In terms of amendments to Fugard’s play, beside the change in historical setting, Hood also alters the original storyline significantly. Firstly, rather than coming into contact with the baby while attempting to attack a young woman in the township, Tsotsi mistakenly kidnaps an infant after hi-jacking a motor vehicle in a wealthy suburb. However, crucially, because his interaction with the baby does not function as a catalyst, as it did in the play, as, in the film, Tsotsi experiences prolonged ‘flashbacks’ to his past well before his encounter with the child. Secondly, due to the post-Apartheid context of the film, Tsotsi’s separation from his parents’ during his childhood is not based on an act of violence and terror on the part of the former regime; rather, Hood shows that his separation is as a result of his mother being seriously ill, and his alcoholic father reacting violently to this illness upon his return home. Besides this, characters such as Fela (Tsotsi’s competitor, played by Bonginkosi “Zola” Dlamini) and the kidnapped child’s parents are given a fair, yet shallow, amount of attention by the director, while Boston’s tale is omitted, to allow for a
hyperbolic focus on Tsotsi. In addition, the people whom Tsotsi’s gang encounter and murder throughout the novel, are not given introductions, or personal histories, as they are in Fugard’s play, presumably again, to allow the focus to fall exclusively on Tsotsi. In other words, this representation of the original storyline functions in a manner that allows for the focus to be firmly rooted upon the protagonist, Tsotsi, whereas in the novel, a more porous and open approach was taken by Fugard, in that; Tsotsi consistently escaped the examination of the author. Hood’s text may briefly shift away from Tsotsi to the missing child’s parents for instance, but this serves only as a means to provide the storyline with an ability to move forward. Lastly, unlike in Fugard’s play, Tsotsi does not perish in an attempt to save the infant, but rather returns the child to its parents care, and in doing so, allows himself to be arrested. Interestingly, having dropped the child off at the main entrance to the house, and after ringing the bell, Tsotsi has adequate time to escape. Nevertheless, he stays, clutching the baby and weeping, presumably so that he can confess to the parents of the child. This pause ultimately leads to his arrest as he is soon surrounded by the police, who have shortly before managed to connect him to the ‘kidnapping’.

In order to critically engage with Hood’s film text, the chapter will now offer a close reading of the text, providing a chronological analysis of the protagonist’s presentation to the viewer, from his introduction as an anonymous hoodlum devoid of ‘humanity’, through to his radical transformation into a subject with an influential, latent past and an ability to experience his ‘humanity’. This analysis will show how Hood’s representation of Tsotsi differs radically from Fugard’s original script in that it allows for a painfully prolonged and weighty emphasis on both Tsotsi’s past and on the role of confession in his redemption.

The opening scene shows the gang, comprising of Tsotsi, Butcher (Zenzo Ngqobe), Die Aap (Kenneth Nkosi) and Boston (Mothusi Magano), playing dice in Tsotsi’s shack, trying to pass away the time before the crime that they are planning to commit that night. It is intimated that this is a regular occurrence, and that the group is experienced in this type of activity. Eventually, the group leaves for the train station, the location for their planned crime, and as they do so, are harassed by Fela, who taunts Tsotsi, asking him if he has learned to drive yet. At the station, they spot their victim for the night, a well-dressed man whom they see paying a hawker by taking an envelope of money out of his pocket. The gang silently and cunningly execute the well-dressed man in a train compartment and flee the scene. The last shot of this sequence shows Boston becoming violently sick with nausea, clearly affected by the gang’s killing of the man at the station.

Interestingly, Hood represents the township, as well as public service areas used by the working classes, as chaotic, beset by frenetic bustling and devoid of police presence. It is amongst these conditions of South Africa, that Tsotsi and his gang operate ruthlessly – buoyed by these circumstances that, paradoxically, allow them to operate efficiently. Following their activities at the
train station, the gang is drinking at a township tavern, run by a woman named “Soekie” (Thembi Nyandeni). It is here, that a crucial confrontation occurs between Tsotsi and Boston. The confrontation provides an insight into Tsotsi’s mode of being, before it becomes increasingly subordinated to disciplinary/bio-power imperatives as the film progresses. Butcher and Die Aap are mocking a drunken Boston for his weakness; that is, for his inability to stay unaffected by his activities, at which point Boston directs his attention towards Tsotsi. He attempts to interrogate Tsotsi, unnerving him by demanding to know his real name, and wanting to know if Tsotsi knows what ‘decency’ means. The term ‘decency’ takes on a significant meaning here; although Boston’s history is not explored at length, the film provides us with a quick insight into his past. The gang mock Boston by calling him “Teacher Boy” and it emerges that the gang is under the impression that Boston was once a teacher, although later in the film, it is explained that he had studied towards a teacher’s qualification at a college, but never made the final exam due to his inability to pay the fees. From this insight, it is plausible to suggest that Boston’s understanding of the term ‘decency’ is one that is informed by a Western moral understanding of the word, insofar as disciplinary/bio-power is indissociable from the education system. Therefore, his use of the term in his attack on Tsotsi brings Tsotsi’s mode of being into direct confrontation with Western moral understanding, informed by disciplinary/bio-power imperatives. Boston’s attempt at forcing Tsotsi into a confession ultimately results in Tsotsi violently attacking Boston – leaving him unconscious and badly injured. After this attack, Tsotsi flees the scene, seemingly panicked, and unable to contend with his violent actions. One could argue that it is at this point that Tsotsi’s begins to subordinate himself to Western discursive imperatives. Indeed, in the next scene, Hood cuts between the adult Tsotsi running, and images of Tsotsi as a little boy, running, tears rolling down his cheeks. Hood switches rapidly between the scenes, and the protagonist is suddenly imbued with a new depth; it is clear that his life will be dramatically altered from this point onwards. This is because he has allowed a kernel of memory to infiltrate into his current mode of being –a mode of being that previously fell outside of the disciplinary/bio-power framework, but that is now in the process of being co-opted. Tsotsi’s subjectivity may have been alien to dominant discourses previously, but once his resistance is broken through his acquiescence to the legitimacy of latency, his subjectivity starts to mould itself into an acceptable Western mode of being. Hood allows the disciplinary/bio-power viewer to ‘bond’ with the character, as he slots his protagonist into a far more comfortable and familiar framework of self-examination. His protagonist’s previous mode of being, that is, one outside of the ambi of latency and confession (or outside of disciplinary/bio-power imperatives) is immediately disqualified as underpinned by repression, instead of being allowed to exist as an alternative mode of being.
Having grown tired from his running, Tsotsi finds himself walking towards the wealthy suburbs that border his township, and at one point, stops to rest. Sitting under a tree as the rain pours down, he remembers himself as a child, sharing a pipe as shelter with another child. Once more, Hood’s ‘flashback’ serves only to pull his protagonist towards the light of self understanding in terms of latency that is a Western subjectivity. By this stage, Tsotsi’s actions can easily be interpreted by the audience according to a disciplinary/bio-power schema. His violence, previously terrifying due to its lack of ‘humanity’, is consistently replaced by Tsotsi’s own ‘humanity’, insofar as the reasons for his actions become far more identifiable; it is his miserable childhood, and his feelings of rage against his situation, that led him to act out violently. What is thoroughly eclipsed is the possibility that the reasons for his actions fall outside of such Western-based discursive explanations; instead, Hood opts for the easier option and imbues his protagonist with disciplinary/bio-power subjectivity – in this way, both the audience and, for that matter, the protagonist begin to understand the reasons behind Tsotsi’s criminal activities. Following Hood’s changing of Tsotsi into a Western subject, or at least, into a subject that mimics Western subjectivity, the film pushes forward when Tsotsi spots an opportunity. A luxury car pulls up to the driveway opposite the place where Tsotsi’s attempts at self-decipherment have commenced, and a black woman steps out. The remote-controlled gate has jammed as a result of the downpour and she presses the inter-com system, asking her husband, John, to let her in. As she does so, Tsotsi approaches her and, at gun-point, takes her car keys. As he attempts to pull away, the panic-stricken woman yanks the car door open, screaming hysterically. Tsotsi panics and shoots her, and manages to speed off. On the outskirts of the township, he hears a cry and realizes that there is an infant inside the car. In his panic, he crashes the car. Unable to abandon the baby, plausibly due to his changing subjectivity, he places it into a shopping bag and abandons the vehicle instead.

The following scene shifts away from Tsotsi briefly, in that Hood switches his attention to the grief-stricken parents, John and Pumla Dube (Rapulana Seiphemo and Nambitha Mpumlwana). The mother of the child, who was shot by Tsotsi, is informed she may not be able to walk again, although this hardly troubles her as she is focused on her child’s safe return. As she lies in hospital, being comforted by her husband, two detectives, Smit (Ian Roberts) and Zuma (Percy Matsemela), approach the couple. The conversation between the two provides an important insight into the nature of disciplinary/bio-power when once considers the ending of the film. During the conversation, when asked about whether the police can catch the perpetrator of the crime, Smit tells the parent’s “This bastard’s a nobody” (Hood 2006), and thereby advances Tsotsi’s lack of disciplinary identity. The police conclude that the perpetrator is from the township, to which Zuma adds, “There’s a million people in there. It’s chaos” (Hood 2006) in a manner that articulates the township as a non-disciplinary space. However, even though the police make an admission that the
township is an area not regulated strictly in disciplinary terms, the fact that Tsotsi gives himself up regardless, serves as a testament to the totalizing nature of bio-power. Even though he is not controlled, or restrained, in physical terms, as might have been the case in Apartheid times, it appears that that which constrains Tsotsi is far more pervasive, and indeed invasive. It is almost as if Tsotsi’s ultimate action of confession conforms to Porfiry’s belief that he need not take action against a transgressor of societal laws because of that transgressor’s psychology. Tsotsi, the ‘nobody’, gradually makes himself identifiable through his urge to confess to his wrong-doing. This imperative to confess, which had its parameters extended in the late 18th century, ultimately disallows an escape from the intrusive discourse that is disciplinary/bio-power.

Meanwhile, as the conversation takes place, Tsotsi wakes up, and checks on the baby. He changes its nappies with his knife, which is undoubtedly meant to serve as a powerful metaphor for his impending transformation – from heartless thug, to relatable subject. As this connection is made by Hood, Tsotsi’s gang (minus Boston) knocks on his door, wanting to wile away the time before the crime they are planning to commit that night.

The gang decide to gather at the station again, and as Tsotsi makes his way to meet up with Butcher and Die Aap, he trips over the wheelchair of the crippled beggar, Morris Tshabalala (Jerry Mofokeng). This character was introduced in the opening scenes of the film, when Tsotsi’s gang passed him at the same station. At that juncture in the film, the camera lingered on this character for long enough to intimate that he will play a role within the development of the film. The beggar screams at him and in his rage, spits on Tsotsi’s shoes. Tsotsi stares at the beggar and follows the unfortunate man through the station to a desolate area. Another crucial confrontation, which demonstrates Tsotsi’s changing subjectivity, occurs when Tsotsi and the beggar enter into an initially heated exchange. Tsotsi tells the crippled beggar to stand up and walk, to which the beggar responds with an array of insults, fuelled by his obvious anxiety. He tells Tsotsi to take his money and to leave him alone. Tsotsi kicks the money away and, panic-stricken, the beggar begins to hurl stones at Tsotsi. An irate Tsotsi pulls out a gun, and, in doing so, ends the beggar’s attempt at resistance. He walks up to the beggar and tells him, “I saw a dog once, two kicks, and its back was broken” (Hood 2006). This is a reference to his past, as will be confirmed later in the film, and hence forms part of the process whereby Tsotsi imbues himself with ‘memory’, latency that presumably determines his criminal actions in the present. This understanding of the self, which conforms to the notion that one’s past determines one’s actions in the present, is a Western belief informed by disciplinary/bio-power imperatives. Hood directs his character into mimicking this partial self-decipherment, and, in doing so, disallows the character from operating outside of a disciplinary/bio-power framework. By this stage of the film, the subjectivity of Tsotsi has already been altered dramatically. His conformity to dominant discourse has made him an intelligible
character, moving towards finding his ‘humanity’ through a subscription to disciplinary/bio-power imperatives. In fact, his new subjectivity has become so firmly entrenched that he, in turn, wants to know the story behind the crippled beggar’s unfortunate physical state. If one recounts the opening exchanges of the film, where Tsotsi violently attacked Boston for questioning him about his past, it is clear to see that the character has changed significantly, in that he now places store in such past events, both in his own life and in the lives of others.

The story progresses when Tsotsi returns home from the above encounter to find the infant covered with ants and looking sickly. Worried, he decides to take action; he places the child in the shopping bag and follows a young woman (Terry Pheto) carrying an infant with her to her home. He holds her up at gunpoint, forces her inside her home, and then forces her to breast-feed his child. As he watches her, the camera focuses in on him, and the viewer sees that he is visibly moved by this scene, presumably recalling a fond memory from his childhood. Once more, Tsotsi’s ‘new’ emerging Western subjectivity is on display, and it becomes increasingly obvious that he is accessing his ‘humanity’ through sensitivity and openness towards such memories. That he can only be considered as a relatable, and by extension, valuable, human being through a subscription to disciplinary/bio-power imperatives remains, however, a contentious issue, even though, Hood does not acknowledge such an issue; presumably seeing this aforementioned subscription as a positive, affirming experience, highly beneficial to his protagonist.

In the hospital, the police are with the couple, attempting to trace a photographic identification of Tsotsi based on the mother’s description of him. The mother becomes increasingly frustrated and upset with the authorities inability to apprehend her child’s kidnapper, and with their lack of progress in terms of identifying any possible avenues of investigation. Meanwhile, Miriam (the woman Tsotsi initially forced to breast-feed his child) washes the child of her own will. As she does so, Tsotsi slips into a reverie, briefly remembering his own mother, who is characterised as gentle and caring. Yet, his remembrance of such kindness is apparently not without complications, insofar as he experiences it as awkward, awakens, and leaves in a stricken state, taking the child with him. Tsotsi’s constant entry into his past is juxtaposed starkly with his former cohorts’ mode of being. In a scene, which directly follows Tsotsi’s latest memory, Butcher and Die Aap are drinking in a tavern with Fela, while Boston looks on, lying in bed, and consuming alcohol. As the group play a card game, Boston and Fela get into a heated conversation regarding the term ‘decency’. Boston argues that Fela does not understand the term as he never attended school. Fela is incensed by this and replies, “Decency means making a fucking decent living, sonny” (Hood 2006), to which Boston replies, “Respect man, for yourself” (Hood 2006). This starkly different interpretation of the term by the two characters serves to demonstrate two approaches to being, one that falls outside of a Western discursive framework, and, alternatively, one imbued with Western
discursive imperatives. This duel between the characters with regard to the term could have been a point of contestation in the film, but Hood commits to neither perspective within the scene. Moreover, as the film progresses, it becomes apparent that it is Boston’s view that is valorised, as Tsotsi confesses to him and thereby, allows himself to obtain ‘respect’ for himself. That this ‘respect for the self’ is one that is determined by the aforementioned imperatives, or rather, is one that is defined by them, is not contended with. In this regard, Fela’s alternative understanding of ‘decency’, one that falls outside of dominant discourse, is cast aside, and not afforded the opportunity to present itself to the audience.

The juxtaposition between Tsotsi’s former mode of thinking, characterized by Fela’s approach to a Western interpretation of ‘decency’, and his new approach to himself, is further advanced in the scene following the discussion above. Here, while staring at the baby, Tsotsi completely succumbs to memory – allowing himself to relive the traumatic experience that has turned him into the supposedly ‘dehumanised’ gangster presented to the audience in the opening scenes of the film. Crucially, it is during this scene that the audience learns Tsotsi’s real name; David. This revelation functions as a symbol for the character’s ‘profound’ transformation – he is no longer Tsotsi, and by association, he no longer subscribes to the mode of being that characterized him in the opening scenes of the film. He is now David, an individual with a personal history, imbued with meaning, and most importantly, now ‘empowered’ to access his ‘humanity’. Again, this is profoundly problematic as the latter character is one that is informed by the restrictive nature of disciplinary/bio-power imperatives. His subscription to this ideology will not bring him to a discovery of his true self, as intimated, but will rather ultimately render him docile and prostrate.

The memory, the longest ‘flashback’ in the film, shows Tsotsi’s mother calling out to him by the name David, and telling him not to be afraid. His father enters, hovering in the doorway of the shack, and tells the young boy to leave. To add to the tension, the family’s dog keeps barking hysterically. David/Tsotsi runs away and hides behind a stack of debris. The dog keeps barking incessantly and Tsotsi’s infuriated and intoxicated father, attacks it. He kicks it twice, breaking its back. The young Tsotsi begins to cry, and as he runs away weeping, his father’s cries for him to come back fade out into the background. As he runs, the director allows the audience to realize that this is a full recount of the definitive moment in Tsotsi’s life – the various fragments of memory that have been presented by the director up to now, are strung together, to present a clear picture of Tsotsi’s traumatic past. His father’s vicious attack on the dog allows for the audience to understand Tsotsi’s encounter with the crippled beggar, and, furthermore, shows that he has been operating under disciplinary/bio-power imperatives by that stage of the film’s progression, because he too evidently understands himself in terms of this memory.
After having these *haunting* thoughts interrupted briefly by an unexpected visit from Die Aap, Tsotsi turns his attention to the infant, who begins to infuriate him with its constant crying. Firmly located within a disciplinary/bio-power framework, he sarcastically asks the child whether it misses its luxurious home and tells it, “I’ll show you a home” (Hood 2006). He takes it to the squalid pipes he resided in as a child, once more, acting like a Western subject imbued with the aforementioned imperatives, attempting to relive an original trauma. After a brief encounter with the children who now reside in Tsotsi’s former ‘home’, he returns to Miriam’s residence. Here, Hood projects the past onto the present, when Miriam asks Tsotsi what the child’s name is. He responds that its name is David, thereby transposing his newly constituted identity onto the child. Through this action, that is, through his naming of the infant after his *real* name, he implicitly valorises the imperatives that have allowed him to ‘understand’ himself and his actions, and the *truth* behind that identity and those actions. It is also thereby intimated that Tsotsi wishes for the child to find meaning in a framework outside of his former, non disciplinary/bio-power mode of being. This appears to spur Tsotsi on to action - action which involves repentance for his former crimes - and leaving the baby with Miriam, he leaves her residence in haste, presumably to find peace through the disciplinary/bio-power practice of confession.

Tsotsi walks towards the tavern where his former gang are sitting around Boston, who is still bed-ridden. On his arrival, the gang become tense and the tavern owner, Soekie, tells Tsotsi to vacate her premises. She bemoans Boston’s condition, explaining that his condition is deteriorating as his injuries have become infected. Tsotsi tells her that Boston can stay with him, and the two become involved in a heated argument. Tsotsi, now operating from a Western discursive position, recalls how he took care of Boston, when Boston first came to the city. This argument dismisses Soekie’s counter-claims effectively, and the gang take Boston to Tsotsi’s dwelling. Reunited, Boston confesses that he was never a teacher, but rather was studying towards a teaching qualification before he failed to take his final exam as a result of financial constraints. Tsotsi informs Boston, and a confused Butcher and Aap, that they will obtain the money needed for Boston to register for his final exam. Here, the gang, and in particular their leader, have moved from engaging in criminal activities for an unspecified reason, to a group who are to commit a crime for the sake of a fellow member, to help him escape a life of crime through the Western education system. While the implications of this are debatable, what is clear is that the representation of the group, and in particular Tsotsi, have altered significantly towards conformity to disciplinary/bio-power imperatives. That is, the gang are allowed representation within the realm of ‘humanity’ due to their operating within the aforementioned framework. In the opening exchanges of the film, the gang (aside form Boston), who, including Tsotsi, operated outside of these imperatives, are shown as not possessing any ‘humane’ traits. This not only calls into question
the discriminatory nature of such discursive colonization, but also brings into conspicuity the term 'humanity', its usage and its implications for those who operate outside of its privileged definition. As argued in the previous chapter, the term became imbued with meaning in the early to late 18th century, and thus it should be contended with, and not subscribed to whole-heartedly. This is Hood’s consistent mistake, much like Fugard; he does not see Western discursive arrangements as being problematic, or an issue to be contended with. Rather, his answer to societal problems is an application of disciplinary/bio-power imperatives, which, accordingly, will both regulate and dismantle the issue or problem at hand, and simultaneously rectify the subject responsible for such problems.

Tsotsi, Butcher and Die Aap are shown sitting outside the luxury house where the crime that eventually leads to Tsotsi’s transformation takes place. Despite Butcher and Die Aap pestering Tsotsi nervously about why he has chosen this particular house as a target, Hood’s protagonist does not respond; instead, he resolutely stares ahead at the fortified villa. John Dube (the kidnapped child’s father) returns home, presumably from the hospital, and seizing their opportunity, the gang follow him inside the house, sliding through the security gate before it is fully closed. They hold the unfortunate Dube up at gun-point, tie him up and begin to look through the house for money and for expensive items. While Butcher searches for valuables, and Die Aap watches Dube, Tsotsi once more slips into his newly ‘adopted’ discursive framework. He is first unnerved as he sees photographs of the infant and his mother together, and then enters the child’s room. He sits down in the room and enters into reflection, scanning his surroundings and becoming completely distracted with the supposed task at hand. Eventually, Tsotsi takes formula, as well as the child’s collection of plush toys, hiding them in his bag, before returning downstairs to rendezvous with his gang. Butcher, who has meanwhile found a gun, attempts to shoot Dube. The gun jams, and as he attempts to fire upon Dube for the second time, Tsotsi dramatically enters the scene and shoots Butcher, killing him. Again, a clash in terms of discursive frameworks has occurred – Butcher’s reasoning for wanting to murder Dube was that he would later be able to identify the three. While this is certainly a calculated ruthlessness, Tsotsi, who formerly would have sanctioned such a move, now rejects the notion completely, killing his fellow gang member instead. This is, of course, not to say that Butcher’s attempted actions are justifiable, but in terms of a change in discursive orientation, the scene clearly evinces Tsotsi’s change as a result of his becoming imbued with disciplinary/bio-power imperatives. That this change has spared an innocent man’s life seems to overtly valorise these aforementioned imperatives; however, what is never contended with is that these imperatives also have profoundly disempowering effects on the subject. A scene, such as the one examined above, with its powerfully emotive message, obscures the problematic nature of disciplinary/bio-power and its multiple effects on the subjectivity of those residing within the
South. When these imperatives are only linked to positive outcomes, the complexity of the issue becomes obscured. Following this dramatic clash of discursive identities, with one mode of being violently suppressing another in symbolic terms, Tsotsi and Die Aap flee the house. Later, Die Aap tells Tsotsi that the gang is over, accusing Tsotsi of picking off the unit individually. Tsotsi hands Die Aap some of the stolen money and leaves. It is plausible to suggest that this is Hood’s representation of his protagonist finally rejecting his former values completely, on his way to a form of disciplinary/bio-power redemption.

Leaving Die Aap behind, Tsotsi makes his way towards Miriam’s home to seek out the child; he is visibly shaken and cannot eat the food she prepares for him. He attempts to hand her some money from the robbery, but she refuses it, informing him that she knows that the child in her care has been kidnapped, and that she learned this information from the newspaper. Miriam pleads with Tsotsi to return the child, emotively telling him, “She [the child’s mother] might not walk again…you can’t give her back her legs, but you can give her back her child” (Hood 2006). This unnerves Tsotsi further; specifically Miriam’s reference to the woman’s legs. Feeling even guiltier for dispossessing the woman of her ability to walk - much like his father’s breaking of his dog’s back - Tsotsi decides to correct his wrongs, and in doing so, makes a decision to break the hold that he now understands his past as having over him. The manner in which he plans to do this is one informed by disciplinary/bio-power. He plans to confess to his misdeeds in a manner that will ultimately lead to his arrest.

Importantly, the above scene between Tsotsi and Miriam, besides heralding Tsotsi’s decision to return the child to its mother, also signals Tsotsi’s conforming to the normativity of disciplinary/bio-power. As he leaves, he asks Miriam if he can still visit her, even after he has returned the child. She nods in approval and, quite clearly, the two have entered into what could be construed as a romantic relationship. His ability to enter into such a normal relationship; that is, a Malthusian/monogamous/heterosexual relationship due to his subordination to Western discursive imperatives, further allows the audience to accept the character. It is almost as if Hood intimates that through conformity to Western discursive imperatives, the subject of the South is able to ‘obtain’ that which previously eluded him, due to a subscription to an alternative set of discursive codes. Problematically, Hood does not realize that these ‘breakthroughs’ are little more than a progressive subordination of the subject to the norms proposed by a specific discursive regime, that is, the Western discursive regime of disciplinary/bio-power.

In accordance with Tsotsi’s decision to locate his own truth through confession, he enters into a dialogue with Boston. He apologises to the latter, who is still grievously injured, and through his actions, shows both Boston and the viewer that he is undoubtedly a different man to the one who, earlier, attacked his friend at the tavern for interrogating him with regard to his personal life
and his real identity. Having found this identity himself, Tsotsi’s previous actions seem repulsive to him and he confirms his subscription to disciplinary/bio-power by offering Boston a sincere, if misguided, apology.

Shortly after this exchange, the film advances towards its denouement as the audience learns that Soekie has informed the police about Tsotsi and his place of residence. The police burst into Tsotsi’s shack only to discover a shocked Boston, whom they initially mistake for Tsotsi. The authorities leave the shack despondent. However, their despondency, in hindsight, is not justified, as Tsotsi soon drives himself towards his ultimate confession, and his subsequent arrest. Again Porfiry’s assertion that the transgressor is unable to escape psychologically echoes loudly through Hood’s narrative, as Tsotsi polices himself through disciplinary/bio-power imperatives, having easily evaded the frustrated disciplinary authorities.

The last sequence of the film begins with a smartly dressed Tsotsi making his way towards the infant’s suburban home. As he makes his journey toward the suburbs, Hood has Tsotsi return to the train station, the location of the first murder by the gang, and has him re-encounter the crippled beggar. Tsotsi’s reaction to this demonstrates the extent to which he has changed. He is presented as a normal and respectable character on the train without a hint of criminality, and in his encounter with the beggar, he acts empathetically, giving the man a large sum of money. Eventually, Tsotsi makes his way to his destination – the house from which he originally ‘kidnapped’ the child. He rings the inter-com system and says, “Your baby…I’ll leave it here” (Hood 2006). Having every opportunity to escape, with no police at the scene yet, he cannot bring himself to leave. The infant begins to cry and he hesitantly returns to it, holding it in his arms and comforting it. As he does so, the police arrive on the scene and surround him. Simultaneously, the parents rush out to the gate and plead with Tsotsi to return their child to them safely. Tsotsi, who is now overcome with emotion, begins to weep and holds the baby tightly, looking at it intently and caringly. As the police and the parents issue him with orders, he tries to say something, but cannot. Realizing the volatility of the situation, the father of the child begs both his wife and the officers to calm down, asking the police officers to lower their weapons. After a tense stand-off, in which Tsotsi is seemingly paralysed with emotion, the husband steps forward and takes the infant from Tsotsi’s arms. He quickly returns it to safety, handing the child to its mother, while, Tsotsi is still attempting in vain to say something. He is told to raise his hands by the commanding officer Smit, and as Tsotsi does so, he is arrested.

This ending sequence allows for multiple conclusions to be reached with regard to a number of points in terms of disciplinary/bio-power’s entry into, and application within, the South. Firstly, the protagonist’s inability to leave the scene, demonstrates his inability to act outside of disciplinary/bio-power – it now has an all-encompassing hold over him. Secondly, his inability to
speak, that is, to explain himself, demonstrates the nature of disciplinary/bio-power. That is, it is a restrictive economy which reduces the subject’s ability for self understanding insofar as it involves the negation of the ‘self-decipherment’ of pastoral power, in favour of the advancement of the ‘decipherment of the subject’ of bio-power. Tsotsi inarticulate weeping clearly evinces a conversion to the latter. Lastly, Tsotsi’s arrest and subsequent conviction reflects disciplinary/bio-power’s lack of openness – even though Tsotsi has submitted to the imperatives of this discourse, he cannot expect it to show him any understanding due to its schematic rigour. Informed by these imperatives, but unable to understand why he is compelled to perform the actions that he does, Tsotsi undoubtedly becomes a docile and prostrate character, subject to the impetus of the Western discursive imperatives which not only interrupt his life, but also, transform it irreversibly. Hood’s ending may be satisfactory in terms of its easy resolution, but the ideological naivety represented in this ending certainly demonstrates a profound misunderstanding of how subjectivity is both informed, and disempowered by, dominant Western discourses.

4. Conclusion

Having compared the above three texts; that is, Fyodor Dostoyevsky’s *Crime and Punishment*, Athol Fugard’s play *Tsotsi* (1980), and Gavin Hood’s film *Tsotsi* (2006), what clearly emerges is a progression in terms of each writer’s response to the disciplinary/bio-power imperatives that grip their respective protagonists. While Dostoyevsky is wary of these imperatives, and cautious of the ‘benign’ nature of his character’s confession, by 1980, Fugard uses these aforementioned imperatives as a way of freeing his protagonist from the restrictive and prejudicial racial binds of Apartheid. Set in a post-Apartheid era, which was supposed to offer the previously disadvantaged subject an opportunity to negotiate cultural identity openly, Hood’s characterization shows us instead that, the subject of the South is even more restricted than before, albeit through more covert discursive applications. Throughout the text, Western disciplinary/bio-power imperatives inform the protagonist’s subjectivity with far greater power and subtlety, and, as a result, he ultimately throws himself, docile and prostrate, before these imperatives.

Such a progression, that is, from Dostoyevsky’s concern, through Fugard’s partial naivety, to Hood’s thorough ideological blindness to the issue, serves to demonstrate the manner in which disciplinary/bio-power imperatives have become entrenched in South African society, so much so in fact, that an ostensibly critical South African film valorises a subscription to such Western discourse. Hood does not contend with the visibly disempowering effects that disciplinary/bio-power has on his protagonist, but rather demonstrates his own discursive bias, informed by this Western discursivity, when he valorises Tsotsi’s new framework and denigrates his previous mode of being.
But it remains necessary to ask how, in the supposedly open realm of post-Apartheid South Africa, a subject of the South can still be so obviously disenfranchised and disempowered. Certainly, the Fascist orientation of the previous Apartheid regime may be gone, but it would appear that it has surreptitiously been replaced by a new form of oppression insofar as the subject cannot access a platform for negotiating their cultural identity. Instead, they have become increasingly subordinated to Western norms of acceptability (informed by disciplinary/bio-power) whose representations, be it in film, television, or through the news, consistently find funding and exercise influence over audiences. It appears that their support is determinant on their conforming to Western discursive normativities, and thus, in order to find sanction, they do not present modes of being outside of a disciplinary/bio-power framework. A constant media repetition of such values ultimately leads to the subject of the South, albeit inadvertently, subordinating him/herself to the messages implicitly contained within these texts, and, much like Tsotsi, they progressively imbue themselves with the restrictive dynamics that are concomitant with disciplinary/bio-power imperatives.
CHAPTER 4
Recommendations for resisting neo-liberal hegemony and the disciplinary/bio-power imperatives that are inherent within this ideology

As discussed, theorists such as Schiller and Galtung propose that if one were to unpack the prejudiced structures operating around politico-economic and socio-cultural relations between the North and the South, then cultural negotiation would become possible. However, through an application of Foucaultian discourse analysis, it becomes clear that even if such structures were to be dismantled - along the lines proposed by the dependency and structural imperialism theorists - the subjectivity of the South would remain the same, as a result of disciplinary/bio-power imperatives that have been firmly entrenched within these regions. In other words, unpacking the biased structures of international communication is not a viable counter-action as cultural negotiation is severely inhibited by far more subtle and covert disciplinary/bio-power means. In this regard, the impossibility of negotiating cultural identity as a result of disciplinary/bio-power imperatives was practically explored in Chapter 3 of this text. It is, therefore, essential, in this chapter, to search for a possible means of resisting the proliferation of such imperatives.

However, while disciplinary/bio-power itself is elusive, on account of it operating at an implicit or covert level, and hence remains difficult to grapple with in terms of political strategy, neo-liberal hegemony, arguably the political face of disciplinary/bio-power, is a far more salient target. In effect, neo-liberalism’s call to “increasingly separate the political system from society” (Laclau & Mouffe 2001: 173), demonstrates that neo-liberalism has as its design the “depoliticization of fundamental decisions, at the economic level as well as at social and political levels” (Laclau and Mouffe 2001: 173), in a manner that resonates clearly with the disciplinary/bio-power projects of docility.

That is, neo-liberal hegemony, through employing as its voice the prejudicial structures of current international communication networks, not only facilitates the proliferation of such hegemony – extending it from its ‘birth-place’ in the North to the regions of the South – but also thereby implicitly extends the disciplinary/bio-power domain. As such, to critically engage with neo-liberal hegemony at an explicit level is indissociable not only from a problematization of the above mentioned prejudicial structures of current international communication networks, but also from an implicit problematization of the discursive imperatives of disciplinary/bio-power. It is for this reason that although Ernesto Laclau’s and Chantal Mouffe’s Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics (1985) is couched in Foucaultian terms, the primary orientation of the work remains the advancement of strategies for the re-politicization of the subject, in the face of its increasing de-politicization through neo-liberal hegemony.
As such, having shown the totalizing nature of Western disciplinary/bio-power, and its negative effects on the subjectivity of the South, it is necessary to produce a credible counter-proposal to the neo-liberal hegemony that has spread across the South through the proliferation of international communication networks. To this end, the following chapter will attempt to construct a schema for resisting these totalizing imperatives which negate any form of cultural negotiation. Neo-liberal hegemony dictates that the human being understand him or herself through its rigid schema, and in doing so, disallows modes of existence outside of that ideological construction.

The major opposition to neo-liberalism within the political realm has traditionally derived from the Left. However, the proliferation of neo-liberalism, and the ever-decreasing influence of the Left, has problematized the solutions proffered by Leftist thought. In effect, the chapter will explore the problems with the peoples of the South embracing a simplistic, ‘orthodox’, Marxist solution. In this regard, the chapter will turn to Laclau and Mouffe’s *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* (1985), in which, it is argued that within a Marxist schema for combating neo-liberal hegemony, insufficient attention is paid to multiplicity. Crediting Foucault, Laclau and Mouffe argue that neo-liberalism is insurmountable unless the “category of ‘Man’ [is no longer] maintained as a unified subject” (Laclau & Mouffe 2001: 115). In other words, Laclau and Mouffe argue that for viable resistance to neo-liberalism, every subject must be seen as a ‘subject position’; that is, the understanding that the social body is a totality must be abandoned, and the ‘subject position’ must be regarded as far more porous and open in character (Laclau & Mouffe 2001: 115). According to Laclau and Mouffe, such an approach to combating neo-liberal hegemony would allow for radical democracy to flourish, as resistance would not be subordinate to an alternative dogma (a-la-Marxism), but would rather depend on the success of each highly fragmented subjectivity, organized within coalitions of interest, rather than traditional political alliances. As such, Laclau and Mouffe argue that hegemony should be used as a *tool* of the Left, rather than as a something that the Left must subordinate themselves to in order to combat an existing hegemonic force.

1. Problematic Marxist and Neo-Marxist Solutions

1.1. Why Marxism has failed to displace neo-liberal hegemony

Although Marxist thought, in its various guises, has valid points to make against the excesses of capitalist society, it has largely failed to destabilize the neo-liberal hegemony that has taken root and developed across the world, and which has pushed more socialist-orientated thinking firmly to the margin. The Left, drawing on the writings of Marx, Adorno, Horkheimer and Althusser, in its attempts to discredit the capitalist ethos, has seen its multiple critiques find little purchase. This
requires an explanation. That is, it is essential to consider why the Marxist form of resistance to neo-liberalism has failed to (and will not) constitute a viable universal strategy. This chapter has located two reasons for the Left’s marginalization:

Firstly, in their attempts to combat neo-liberal hegemony, Marxist theorists have failed to offer ‘freedom’, because they have instead asked the subject to subordinate themselves to a different hegemonic project. In doing so, Marxist thought, from its origins to more recent re-articulations, has allowed itself to harbour a glaring contradiction within its theoretical structure. That is, it is highly problematic to argue against homogeneity, when one’s ultimate aim is to promote homogeneity of a different sort. In effect, subordination to Marxism is still subordination, and thus contradicts the central Marxist tenant of guaranteeing freedom to those who embrace its principles.

Secondly, neither Marx, nor the neo-Marxist theoreticians who succeeded him, radically revised his theory concerning the concept of individuality. Marx’s human essence, as communicated in his Manuscripts, consists of autonomy, sociality and aesthetic appreciation, and is a very definitive concept of the subject that does not necessarily resonate with different cultural conceptions of subjectivity – for instance those of the South. Nevertheless, this conception of the subject has for the most part been treated as a ‘fact’ by subsequent Marxist theorists. In doing so, it shares a marked similarity with neo-liberalism in its rigid understanding of the subject within society.

These issues reveal that contemporary Marxist theory has largely ignored the above structural problems, focusing on a re-legitimation of Marx’s theory. As Laclau and Mouffe write, “[Marxist theory attempted] either to negate the changes, and to retreat…to an orthodox bunker; or to add, in an ad hoc way, descriptive analyses of…trends which were simply juxtaposed – without interrogation – to a theoretical body which remained largely unchanged” (Laclau and Mouffe 2001: viii) What is needed instead, is a critical interrogation of Marxist theory, in order to allow for Left-wing thought to experience resurgence and thus become a possibility for providing resistance to neo-liberal hegemony.

1.2. Marx

David Conway, in his text, A Farewell to Marx: An Outline and Appraisal of his theories (1987), demonstrates how Marx believed that Capitalism produced alienation, whereas Communism had the potential to overcome the human being’s feelings of alienation. He argues that it was Marx’s view that “capitalism prevents the distinctively human potentialities of its individual members from being actualized to any significant degree” (Conway 1987: 34). According to Marx, this essence was made up of three potentialities, namely; “a potentiality for autonomous action, a potentiality for
sociality and lastly, a potentiality for aesthetic enjoyment” (Conway 1987: 31). In terms of Marx’s argument, a human being starts to become alienated when their potential for gaining autonomy becomes diminished. In this regard, Marx identified two ways in which the human being is prevented from gaining autonomy by capitalism. The first derived from the role of the market in capitalism because “the impersonal forces of the market…determine economic activity in society, not conscious decision” (Conway 1987: 36). Quite clearly, the argument suggests that autonomy is lost with subordination to market forces beyond the control of individuals. Secondly, Marx argues that the means of production within a capitalist schema alienates human beings in that “capitalism causes productive activity to become as intrinsically unpleasant, monotonous and soul-destroying as it is possible for such activity to become” (Conway 1987: 36-37). This occurs because “the purpose of production in capitalism is profit… [and thus] capitalists seek to minimize their costs of production” (Conway 1987: 37) through the division of labour and the simplification of tasks. In addition to these economic forces that dictate an inhuman mode of being, Marx points out that working conditions estrange both worker and employer from each other due to the employer having to, in effect; coerce the worker into performing unpleasant work. This then leads to “deep social rifts and hostility between classes” (Conway 1987: 39) which prevents the emergence and development of the second human potentiality, namely, sociality. Lastly, under capitalism, it is argued that the human potentiality of “aesthetic enjoyment fares no better” (Conway 1987: 39), as only owning things and accumulating capital is seen as worthwhile. In effect then, the “sense of having [replaces] all the physical and intellectual senses” [My Italics] (Conway 1987: 39). As a result of the above factors, Marx saw capitalist society as being unable to allow the human being access to their “human essence” (Conway 1987: 30).

For Marx, while capitalist society was incapable of engendering these potentialities, a Communist utopia would allow for humanity to flourish, encouraging that which stimulated its development (Conway 1987: 41). Marx offers several reasons why this would be the case. To begin with, unlike in the capitalist schema, production would be under the “conscious and planned control [of] freely associated men” (Conway 1987: 42), and would hence involve autonomy. Additionally, the division of labour would be abolished, leading to great creativity and the ability to develop and engage in a wide variety of activities, rather than subordinating oneself to simple repetitive processes which dulled the mind. Furthermore, the dissolution of radical pay differentials would dissolve problematic class divisions. Although Marx later oscillated between such naive statements and more mature ones, fundamentally, he never relinquished the belief that “communism maximized free activity” (Conway 1987: 43) and that it thereby allowed the human being to pursue their autonomous and social needs, as well as their need for aesthetic enjoyment and activity.
While this utopian vision has certainly been revised by those who subsequently re-articulated Marx’s position, other aspects of his writing were re-articulated without much critical interrogation by the Left. The most glaring of these is Marx’s assertion that Communism offers the individual ‘autonomy’, because, to achieve this autonomy, that human being must subordinate themselves to a specific doctrine which advances an idea of what subjectivity is. In effect, Marx’s formulation of the human being into the three potentialities that constitute the human essence is a very rigid structure, which disallows alternative interpretations of being. Moreover, it very much resembles the understanding of the self attributed to the rise of disciplinary/bio-power. The various subsequent re-articulations of Marx, while taking a far more sophisticated approach to his more optimistic assertions, for the most part failed to recognise this contradiction. In effect, they operate under the misguided understanding that to ‘free’ human beings, one must place them under an alternative hegemonic structure that forces them into subordinating themselves to a specific doctrine of the subject.

1.3. Adorno and Horkheimer

If one examines the work of neo-Marxist thinkers such as Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, it becomes apparent that, although the parameters of Marxist critique have been extended, to include a heightened focus on the emerging culture industry, such critique remains solidly entrenched around a very limited ‘orthodox’ idea of the subject.

That is, whereas Marx’s critique of capitalist society focused on industrialization, and showed how its various dysfunctions and prejudicial structures created alienation, theorists such as Adorno and Horkheimer extended such criticism by examining how the growing culture industry dismantled any opportunity for critical resistance to the skewed principles of capitalism. In their famous article, ‘The culture industry: enlightenment as mass deception’ (1947), Adorno and Horkheimer set out to demonstrate how cultural production within a capitalist system negates cultural negotiation, disallowing the public to produce or receive a multiplicity of voices and to operate outside of a capitalist framework. According to their argument, meaning is generated at the level of production. Thus, if a cultural text is produced as a business product, with its intention to secure profit and thus provide income for the industry from which that text originates, then it cannot claim to operate as art, but rather only as propaganda. That is, these commodities must generate profit to guarantee the continued existence of their manufacturers, and thus the public becomes a range of consumers, monitored and analysed for their likes and dislikes (Adorno and Horkheimer 2000: 08). In doing so, the public becomes little more than a target for consumption, and is treated largely as a homogenous mass, rather than as a collection of highly fragmented and differing identities. Consequently, such fragmented and differing identities disappear over time. To this end,
the products of the culture industry are marked by two distinct features, namely; “cultural homogeneity and predictability” (Storey 1998: 105). As such, any ‘authentic’ form of culture is either negated, or co-opted, and thus multiple interpretations of being and alternative modes of existence become silenced by the overwhelming nature of capitalism’s culture industry.

Within their critique, Adorno and Horkheimer refine a number of Marx’s points on leisure within a capitalist society. Unlike Marx, who saw capitalism as denying the human being any significant opportunity for leisure, Adorno and Horkheimer show how post-work entertainment produced by the culture industry serves two functions, firstly, to distract the worker from their legitimate grievances, and secondly, to continue to ‘dumb down’ their character, as relaxation after work does not include much intellectual material that requires significant cognitive effort. In effect, they argue that while leisure time is certainly available, this leisure time is rendered redundant by the activities proffered by the culture industry and engaged in by the public. They conclude by arguing that, as a result of the all-encompassing nature of capitalism’s culture industry,

Individuals have ceased to be themselves and are now merely centres where the general tendencies meet… [Consequently it is] possible to receive them again, whole and entire, into the generality. In this way mass culture discloses the fictitious character of the ‘individual’ in the bourgeois era. (Adorno and Horkheimer 2000: 12)

In sum then, Adorno and Horkheimer demonstrate how a capitalist society forces its population into a highly restrictive dynamic, one which promotes homogeneity and which subsequently negates the possibility of critical resistance to the status quo, through its refusal to enter into a cultural negotiation with alternative voices. In doing so, it undermines the very tenants of democracy that it supposedly upholds.

While Adorno and Horkheimer certainly make a number of plausible points in their critique of the mass culture created by the culture industry, their solution to combating the homogeneity created by mass culture is highly problematic. This is as a result of their adherence to the simplistic Marxist concept of the subject, which they simply re-articulate rather than contend with. Indeed, while they seem to be working in terms of a binary opposition which condemns capitalism as unsalvageable, and which valorises Marxism, again, what is not considered by these prominent theorists is that their solution for the population - disenfranchised by their acquiescence to capitalism - is to subordinate themselves to the orthodoxy of Marxist thought with its very particular idea of the subject. In other words, Adorno and Horkheimer may lament the lack of multiplicity operating within a capitalist society as a result of the culture industry, but they fail to take multiplicity into account when they promote their idea of what the human being is and how that human being should act. The latter is what they term ‘authentic’ culture. Arguably, what these
theorists are suggesting is that one restrictive system of operation be replaced by another, equally restrictive operation.

Even a cursory overview of the Left’s most celebrated intellectual criticisms of capitalist society demonstrates how, although the various criticisms levied against capitalist hegemony are plausible, the solutions offered are steeped in a dogmatic understanding of the ‘universal’ subject that problematizes their validity. As Storey writes, “the Frankfurt School attack[ed] mass culture because it threaten[ed] cultural standards and depoliticiz[ed] the working class,…thus maintain[ing] the iron grip of social authority” (Storey 1998: 114). However, adhering to an alternative, yet equally stringent, social authority, while it might be appropriate for certain limited groups in Europe, might just as easily be highly problematic to populations outside such a domain, whose cultural understanding of the subject remains very different.

1.4. Althusser
At a certain level there is some improvement in this regard in the work of Althusser insofar as he concedes that subjectivity is a construct; however, his recourse to psycho-analysis also undermines such progression because it indicates that certain aspects of subjectivity are not constructed but are rather, in a sense metaphysical. That is, Althusser’s writing, specifically his article, ‘Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards an Investigation)’ (1970), is crucial in that it extends Marxist theory by demonstrating how ideology, via the education system, functions to inhibit and negate any form of resistance. In doing so, it moves beyond Marx’s somewhat simplistic analysis of the oppressive state apparatuses, however, importantly, although it allows for more latitude in understanding the human essence a-la-Marx, it gravitates strongly around a psychoanalytic understanding of the subject.

As Althusser writes, “in order to understand further the mechanisms of the State in its functioning, I think that it is indispensable to add something to the classical [Marxist] definition of the State as a State apparatus” (Althusser 1994: 108). In effect, Althusser provides a far more sophisticated critique of capitalism than his predecessors, in that he not only attributes repression of the population within a capitalist system to the economic realm (Marx), or to a monolithic culture industry produced by economic conditions (Adorno and Horkheimer). Instead, Althusser centres on the manner in which ideology functions in a capitalist society to replicate the conditions favourable to its continued existence and expansion.

Althusser does so by rejecting “both the mechanistic interpretation of the base/superstructure formulation and the Hegelian view of the social totality, insisting instead on the concept of the social formation” (Storey 1998: 115). This formation consists of three practices, namely; “the economic, the political, and the ideological” (Storey 1998: 115). By using such a
theorization, Althusser demonstrates that that which underpins society is not rigid, but rather shifting and dynamic. In other words, the ‘structures in dominance’ are open to change, and Althusser argues that in the contemporary era, a shift within the above structures has taken place, namely from politics to ideology, underpinned by economic necessity. For example, while economy within the feudal era did not demand the use of ideology, industrial economy demands the use of it. Thus, the state makes use of a number of ideological state apparatuses (ISA’s), rather than only the single State Apparatus spoken of by Marx, to consolidate its power over the population. Althusser writes that ISA’s are “a certain number of realities that present themselves to the immediate observer in the form of distinct and specialized institutions” (Althusser 1994: 110). He lists these as the following:

The religious ISA (the system of the different churches); the educational ISA (the system of the different public and private ‘Schools’); the family ISA; the legal ISA; the political ISA (the political system, including the different Parties); the trade-union ISA; the communications ISA (press, radio and television, etc.); the cultural ISA (Literature, the Arts, sports, etc.). (Althusser 1994: 110-111)

Furthermore, Althusser adds that ideology is little more than the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence (Althusser 1994: 123). In other words, ideology functions to “dispel contradictions in lived experience” (Storey 1998: 116). In effect, it represses by offering solutions to and justifications for problems and injustices occurring within society. In doing so, through “myths, concepts, ideas, images, discourse” (Storey 1998: 117), ideology obscures and dismantles any form of critical resistance. Importantly,

Because ideology for Althusser is a closed system, it can only set itself such problems as it can answer; that is, to remain within its boundaries (a mythic realm without contradiction) it must stay silent on questions that threaten to take it beyond these boundaries. This formulation leads Althusser to the concept of the ‘problematic’. (Storey 1998: 117)

Althusser sets himself the task of deconstructing the ‘problematic’, that is, to deconstruct the pseudo-answer provided by ideology, in order to uncover the question to which it constitutes a response. In other words, he proposes that to be able to contend with ideology critically, it is essential to perform an analysis of a cultural text’s ‘latent’ content, or that which is not contained within its ‘manifest’ content.

However, although Althusser certainly operates from a far more sophisticated context than Marx and Adorno/Horkheimer, there are two problems within his argument that render it structurally weak for the purposes of addressing the issues faced by the South, which were discussed in earlier chapters. The first is that Althusser constantly lapses into a Marxist dualism in
that although he rejects the notion of ‘the social totality’, he conceives social relations as totalities in that he sees them as being governed by a single determinative principle (Laclau & Mouffe 2001: 97). As such, at the very least, the peoples of the South would be obliged to accept this determinative principle as an article of faith before they could utilize Althusser’s framework as a political modus operandi. Secondly, Althusser’s non-critical use of psycho-analytic tools within his analysis does not take into account contentions, such as those advanced by Foucault, regarding the legitimacy of psychology and its understanding of the human being. Instead, Althusser treats the psycho-analytic formulation of man as the status quo, rather than as a relatively new discursive development, as outlined by Foucault in his analysis of the rise of disciplinary/bio-power. Thus, Althusser’s critique, while it provides the peoples of the South with a more dynamic political framework, also asks of them a high price in terms of worldview and subjectivity before they can avail themselves of its cutting edge.

2. Laclau and Mouffe
In the interest of presenting a new political strategy, rather than simply re-articulating problematic Marxist notions, in a manner akin to the theorists discussed above, Laclau and Mouffe provide a theoretical means for the Left from which to contest the increasingly hegemonic nature of capitalism, in the form of neo-liberalism. Importantly for the South, their nuanced position on political strategy allows for a break from the structural and cultural discrepancies that have previously robbed the Left of its universal appeal. Arguably, their political strategy constitutes a viable solution for the South in their struggle against neo-liberal hegemony, and its negative impact on the multiplicity of subjectivities. As mentioned previously, neo-liberal hegemony disallows for alternative subjectivities to exist as a result of its rigid schema for determining how the subject should act within society. Moreover, it not only refuses to enter into any form of cultural negotiation in this regard, but also, on account of the disciplinary/bio-power imperatives which inform it, facilitates the dissolution of any potential resistance to its normative claims – through the disciplinary/bio-power projects of docility, already discussed. As such, neo-liberalism’s negation of such negotiation is, in effect, nothing less than the negation of democracy.

Laclau and Mouffe, in *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* (1985), proffer resistance to neo-liberal hegemony by advancing that, firstly, rather than establishing an alliance between given interests against the non-democratic practices of neo-liberalism, a coalition of interests should be established (Laclau & Mouffe 2001: 184). Such an approach would guarantee that individual democratic struggles are dependent on the success of other individual democratic struggles, thus, increasing co-operation and the establishment of a functional resistance to neo-liberal hegemony. Secondly, Laclau and Mouffe argue for the
proliferation of political spaces and political subjects, rather than the traditional field of ‘citizenship’, which discourages any form of plurality (Laclau & Mouffe 2001: 185). This would, according to them, allow for an expansion beyond current political restrictions for the subject, insofar as it enables subjects to engage in a far more effective and critical manner with dominant power structures. Thirdly and closely associated with the above assertions is their view that hegemony should be used as a tool of the Left, rather than as something to which the Left simply responds antagonistically. If this is to be achieved, Laclau and Mouffe argue that “it is only when the open, unsutured character of the social is fully accepted, [and] when the essentialism of the totality and of elements is rejected, that…’hegemony’ can…constitute a fundamental tool for political analysis” (Laclau & Mouffe 2001: 192) on the part of the Left. Such an approach offers a far more open understanding of the subject, free of dogmatic postulation concerning its ‘nature’, and in doing so, allows for multiplicity in terms of subjectivity. Such an understanding of the subject strongly echoes Foucault’s contentions and thus lends credence to the argument that for cultural negotiation to be made possible, it is not the structure that must undergo a change, but instead, a change must occur in our understanding of how conformity to any rigid structure disallows a multiplicity of subjectivities to operate freely and openly. In effect, Laclau and Mouffe creatively appropriate the intellectual position of Marxism, rather than simply re-articulating it (what Foucault would term ‘commentary’), and thus, direct their reader beyond the cultural prejudices and problematic structures that have robbed it in the past. This becomes clear from a circumspect approach to the above-mentioned three points of their argument.

2.1. Equivalence between different democratic struggles

To contend with Laclau and Mouffe’s first point on the formation of a coalition of interests, in place of the traditional alliance between interest groups, it is essential to examine what the theorists mean by their use of the term ‘coalition’. Laclau and Mouffe’s democracy involves the establishment of “an equivalence between…different struggles” (Laclau & Mouffe 2001: 184). That is, whereas the Left has traditionally placed faith in the “establishment of an alliance between given interests” (Laclau & Mouffe 2001: 184) under the auspices of Marxist doctrine, Laclau and Mouffe suggest that for democracy to be able to flourish, and in doing so, replace the restrictive dynamics of neo-liberal hegemony, it is crucial for groups to understand that the individual successes of interest groups within a coalition are entirely dependent on the successes of others within that coalition. In this way, a wide variety of interests can be represented without conflict. In other words, rather than subordinating themselves to an alliance operating under the auspices of a specific doctrine, within a

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15 Laclau and Mouffe credit Foucault within their text and appropriate his writings on subjectivity into their schema for resisting neo-liberal hegemony. (Laclau & Mouffe 2001: 7, 105 – 107, 115, 145 – 147, 152)
coalition each group operates in an autonomous manner, but without ever distancing itself from the collective project of democracy. As Laclau and Mouffe write,

One of the central tenets of *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* is the need to create a chain of equivalence among the various democratic struggles against different forms of subordination. We [argue] that struggles against sexism, racism, sexual discrimination, and in the defence of the environment [needs] to be articulated with those of the workers in a new left-wing hegemonic struggle. (Laclau & Mouffe 2001: xviii)

To be able to implement such a radicalization of what is today seen as ‘democracy’, it is necessary not only to define the opponent to democracy, as the Left has traditionally done in its attempts to critique neo-liberalism, but also to establish an “adequate grasp of the nature of power relations, and the dynamics of politics” (Laclau and Mouffe 2001: xix). That is, the Left needs to critically examine its theoretical, and in doing so, move beyond the structural flaws that have inhibited Leftist critique from promoting itself as a credible international alternative to neo-liberalism. The first step is to contend with the ability for people to align as a single hegemonic force against restrictive political establishments. As Laclau and Mouffe write, there may be multiple antagonisms on the part of society, but this certainly does not establish them as a collective, or an alliance (Laclau & Mouffe 2001: 150). In short, for any Left-wing hegemonic struggle to succeed, the Marxist tendency to attempt to doctrinally align vastly different social groupings must be abandoned. Instead, what is needed, according to Laclau and Mouffe, is for each group to understand their success as being dependent on the successes of other groups within a coalition housing a multiplicity of democratic interests. This then allows for the articulation of a multiplicity of voices, rather than the veneer of their ‘collective’ subscription to the ‘myth’ of a united social body operating in terms of an often foreign socialist agenda.

### 2.2. Plurality versus Citizenship

Much like with the above Marxist theorization that an alliance between given interests has the ability to displace neo-liberal hegemony, the concept of ‘citizenship’ hinders the ability of the Left to produce a legitimate counter-proposal to the aforementioned structure in dominance of neo-liberalism. Against this, Laclau and Mouffe argue for ‘plurality’ instead of ‘citizenship’, because it “broaden[s] the domain of exercise of democratic rights beyond the limited traditional field of ‘citizenship’” (Laclau & Mouffe 2001: 185). That is, rather than limiting oneself through a subscription to the limited conceptualization that is ‘citizenship’, Laclau and Mouffe argue that what should be promoted is the “proliferation of radically new and different political spaces...[along with] the emergence of a plurality of [political] subjects” (Laclau & Mouffe 2001:
To do so, much like with the switch from alliance to coalition, Marxist theory must be re-appropriated if it is to serve any meaningful purpose for the South.

In terms of the creation of ‘radically new and different political spaces’, Laclau and Mouffe argue for the proliferation of political spaces. That is, their theorization attempts to discredit the centrality of political action, a centrality that has undermined the Left’s attempts to counter neo-liberal hegemony. As they write, political spaces should be seen as “floating signifiers” (Laclau & Mouffe 2001: 186), independent of the centrality or totality of social organization – a fundamental tenet in most Marxist writing, and a type of organization that inhibits, rather than produces, democratic action.

In terms of the ‘emergence of a plurality of political subjects’, Laclau and Mouffe argue for the proliferation of multiple and highly fragmented subjectivities, united by a common democratic cause. In effect, rather than unifying under the banner of a political doctrine and assuming the limited mantle of ‘citizenship’, Laclau and Mouffe argue that it is essential for political participation to be extended, and to be understood as operating within a far more open realm – or, in the realm of ‘plurality’. Much like with the formation of a coalition, whose existence encourages co-operation without the loss of autonomy, so an adherence to ‘plurality’ would, according to Laclau and Mouffe, allow for more porous subjectivities to find credence, while simultaneously avoiding conflict. In other words, in terms of ‘plurality’, there are no longer just political rights and duties in the senses of citizenship (like voting and taxes), but also discursive commitments, hence private action taking on political significance, and vice versa. This is certainly a far more plausible alternative to the Marxist theorizations which assumed in a highly dogmatic manner that social formations exist as a large dispossessed mass, rather than as fragmented collection of ‘identities’, who exist in a realm of great differentiation between and amongst various classes and groups (Laclau & Mouffe 2001: 30).

2.3. Hegemony as a tool for political action

Against the backdrop of the above, Laclau and Mouffe’s assertion that hegemony should be used as a political tool of the Left to combat the increasingly hegemonic character of neo-liberalism, may seem contradictory. However, this is only until one examines the manner in which hegemony has been understood by Marxist theoreticians, from Marx, through the Frankfurt School, to Althusser. In this regard, Laclau and Mouffe write,

In the mid-1970’s, Marxist theorization had clearly reached an impasse. After an exceptionally rich and creative period in the 1960s, the limits of that expansion – which had its epicentre in Althusserianism, but also in a renewed interest in Gramsci and in the theoreticians of the Frankfurt School – were only too
In effect, while neo-liberalism is expanding and protean, Marxism and its re-articulations, with their focus on totalities, are static by comparison. To be able to engender resistance to neo-liberal hegemony, the static nature of Marxist theory must be moved away from. According to Laclau and Mouffe, if radical democracy is to be ushered in, hegemony cannot be understood in ‘total’ terms, rather, the social body must be understood as something that is “open [and] unsutured” (Laclau & Mouffe 2001: 192). In other words, the fundamental mistake of previous Marxist theoreticians is their commitment to understanding the social body as a whole, rather than as a collection of disparate ‘identities’. In doing so, they inadvertently disallow for the much needed multiplicity of positions within the social body that need to be articulated if any opposition to neo-liberal hegemony is to be successful. In effect, they ask for subordination on that part of the social body to their pre-determined notions of the human being and his/her role within a society. In contrast, Laclau and Mouffe argue that “when the essentialism of the totality and of the elements is rejected, [the] potential [for change] becomes clearly visible and ‘hegemony’ can come to constitute a fundamental tool for political analysis on the left” (Laclau & Mouffe 2001: 192-193). In other words, what Laclau and Mouffe call for is for a relinquishing of the dogmatic commitment on the part of the Left to the “essence of the social” (Laclau & Mouffe 2001: 193), in favour of a commitment to the position that recognizes the “contingency and ambiguity of every ‘essence” (Laclau & Mouffe 2001: 193). Understandably, this makes resistance to non-democratic political practice more efficacious as various democratic struggles can recognize that they are unified despite their differences, rather than attempt to find ‘common ground’ in a vague problematic concept of what hegemonic resistance should be. Laclau and Mouffe describe it best when they advance that, “the field of the political [should be a] space for a game which is never ‘zero-sum’, because the rules and players are never fully explicit” (Laclau & Mouffe 2001: 193) It is this version of hegemony, with its dynamism, its acceptance of multiple voices, and its lack of structural impediments that has the ability to successfully contest the non-democratic practices that the Left has historically tried in vain to contest.

2.4. Conclusion

In sum, Laclau and Mouffe’s position is one which offers any subject, regardless of culture or geographical location, who wishes to contest a restrictive political structure, the means to do so in a manner that does not require the subject’s acceptance of certain (alien) normative principles as a pre-requisite for action. In order to achieve this, Laclau and Mouffe advance that it is crucial to critically contend with the traditional political standpoints of the Left. By engaging in such a critical
‘deconstruction’ of Marxist thought, what is illuminated is that there are consistent structural flaws and contradictions within its theorizations – flaws and contradictions which have hitherto impeded the Left’s ability to constitute a viable political alternative. As Laclau and Mouffe write, there exist “‘epistemological obstacles’ which, from Lenin to Gramsci, prevent a comprehension of [Marxism’s] radical political and theoretical potential” (Laclau & Mouffe 2001: 192).

Marxist thought, from its inception to its more modernized versions, fails to acknowledge that ideals such as ‘alliances’, ‘citizenship’ and ‘hegemony’ cannot gain universal currency, as society cannot be viewed as a whole, or a ‘totality’, because it comprises of a multiplicity of identities operating within the dynamic context that is the social. If Laclau and Mouffe’s understanding of the social were to be adopted by the people of the South, the Left would be able to transmute Marxist theory from utopian postulations to realistic and applicable schemas, from which positive social change could emerge.

This is important for the current work as it poses a significant challenge to neo-liberalism’s totalizing actions within the South, in that it bypasses the various structural flaws that have rendered previous Leftist challenges to neo-liberal hegemony within the South ineffective. In terms of African subjectivity, or to be more specific, multiple African subjectivities, an application of Laclau and Mouffe offers the possibility of the introduction of cultural negotiation between the neo-liberal agenda and marginalised modes of existence operating outside of this restrictive ethos. Following Foucault’s understanding of subjectivity as a product of the exchange between multiple discourses within a specific context, Laclau and Mouffe’s assertion that multiple subjectivities exist, and that these subjectivities can operate in a ‘coalition’ against the restrictive, non-democratic principles of neo-liberal hegemony, directly addresses the current need for fairer international communication exchange.
CONCLUSION

In any attempt to proffer a solution to the problem of non-reciprocal international communication flow, it is crucial not to lapse into the same misunderstanding of the social that has traditionally been associated with the Left, in its various attempts to contest capitalism and neo-liberal hegemony. That is, in terms of Africa, it is essential to note that this geographical space houses a wide collection of modes of being, such that African subjectivity is something of a misnomer. Rather than understanding subjectivity within the South as a specific mode of being, it is necessary to recognize that a multiplicity of identities exist within the highly specific and differentiated cultural contexts of this domain. Each of these identities should have the right to respond to the North and its international communication networks, to its covert discursive practices, and to its rigid schemas of the subject – in which individuals are reduced to economic function and viability. In sum, rather than African subjectivity (or Southern subjectivity) engaging in democratic struggle against the North, African subjectivities, or more broadly, the subjectivities of the South, need to engage in democratic struggle against neo-liberal hegemony and the disciplinary/bio-power that underpins it.

Unfortunately, for the most part, those tasked with creating change in this arena have largely failed, as they were mostly concerned with transforming the structure of international communication. Dependency and structural imperialism theorists call for a change to the prejudiced flow of information, that is, the non-reciprocal flow from North to South. They argued that if the flow of information were more evenly distributed, cultural exchange and negotiation would ultimately occur. Although noble in their intentions, these theorists fail to recognize that, on account of the disciplinary/bio-power imperatives covertly exported from the North to the South, through the messages delivered en-masse (and without reciprocation) to the South, changes to the structure of international communication would not necessarily be synonymous with the introduction of cultural negotiation between the North and South. Through an application of Foucault’s theories it becomes apparent that Northern/Western subjectivity, and the disciplinary/bio-power imperatives which constitute that subjectivity, undermine any cultural negotiation through their covert subordination of the Southern subject to disciplinary/bio-power normativity. The Southern subject is then informed by disciplinary/bio-power imperatives, before even entering into cultural negotiation with the North, and thus their ability to negotiate is heavily undermined before they can even begin to contest Western hegemony.

Laclau and Mouffe’s theorization of the subject within society, reminiscent of Foucault’s theorizations, demonstrates a commitment to seeing both the subject and society as porous, dynamic, open and ever-shifting, and, in doing so, caters for a multiplicity of subjectivities. In this
way, their schema plots a far more realistic and pragmatic approach to combating the non-
democratic practices promoted by neo-liberalism, which, as discussed, is underpinned by
disciplinary/bio-power. In effect, what is needed to combat the ever increasing hegemonic influence
of neo-liberalism on the South is a commitment, like the one that Laclau and Mouffe propagate, to a
far more complex understanding of both subjectivity and human relations.

Their position contrasts markedly with the position of Gavin Hood who, in his 2006 film
Tsotsi, advanced that to be recognized as human, one needs to fling oneself before disciplinary/bio-
power, docile and prostrate, and attain salvation in proportion to one’s approximation of the ideal
neo-liberal subject, Western in origin and increasingly monolithic. To combat such ideological
positions, which have become increasingly prevalent in the South as neo-liberalism becomes ever
more influential, it is essential to rethink previous political strategies, particularly those predicated
on notions of cultural homogeneity, and to critically engage with their fallacies, which have hitherto
undermined the possibility of an appropriate and effective response to this oppressive situation.

In fact, African theorists have long-debated the issue of how to effectively respond to the
cultural colonization of Africa by the West. From prominent and prolific writers such as Ngugi Wa
Thiong’o and Chinua Achebe to theorists such as Frantz Fanon, the effects of Western cultural
influence on the continent have been responded to by a number of differing positions. However,
these resistance endeavours have been rendered largely ineffective in their attempts to combat the
increasing ‘Westernization’ of Africa. In this regard, before proceeding, it is essential to briefly
assess the positions maintained by various African writers up to this point.

In the article *The Language of African Literature* (1981), Ngugi Wa Thiong’o argues that
producing African literature in indigenous languages would be a form of resistance that would
ultimately, protect the various subjectivities present on the African continent (Ngugi Wa Thiong’o
2006: 263 - 267) from Western domination. Calling Western language the means of “spiritual
subjugation” (Ngugi Wa Thiong’o 2006: 265), and arguing that “culture is almost indistinguishable
from the language that makes possible its genesis, growth, [etc]” (Ngugi Wa Thiong’o 2006: 267),
he asserts that by writing in one’s own African language one is directly part of an anti-imperialist
struggle, allowing for the reclamation of African pride, dignity and self-determination.

This is countered by the likes of Chinua Achebe and Raja Rao, both of whom attempt to
diffuse Ngugi Wa Thiong’o’s simplistic perception of the ‘problem’ of Western languages within
Africa. In his article *The Politics of Language* (1989), Achebe points out that often the acquisition
of Western language was seen as desirable by the inhabitants of Africa (Achebe 2006: 270), thus
dismissing the ‘imperialism-unwilling native’ dualism advanced by Ngugi Wa Thiong’o. Additionally,
Achebe argues that English (in this instance) was, and continues to be, seen by many
as a tool for the unification of modern African states, as it overcomes communication problems
caused by the linguistic plurality of these states (Achebe 2006:271). Raja Rao agrees with this standpoint, and in *Language and Spirit* (1937), demonstrates that English - or any Western language brought to a particular nation as a result of colonialism - does not necessarily serve an oppressive function. He writes, “English is not really an alien language to us. It is the language of our intellectual make-up – like Sanskrit or Persian was before – but not our emotional make-up” (Rao 2006: 276). Rao is very astute in his observation; while embracing an initially foreign language may be fine at the level of literature, one should be very wary of the worldviews and conditions that come attached with the embracing of any such language. In this regard, Rao actively engenders the communication of the *spirit* of one’s indigenous culture as a means of resistance and cultural propagation (Rao 2006: 276).

Yet, using this assertion as a point of departure, it is still necessary to locate the issues that seethe underneath the above points of contestation. In his text, *The Wretched of the Earth* (1968), Frantz Fanon demonstrates that independence does not necessarily equate with equality and the emergence of autonomy, or self-reliance, due to the newly independent state’s economic dependence on its former oppressor. As a result of such dependence, the use of language takes on a far more significant role, as language is used to orientate the liberated population around various ideological positions (Fanon 2006: 119-122). Philip G. Altbach, in his article, *Education and Neo-colonialism* (1971) agrees with such sentiments. He writes, “On the ruins of traditional colonial empire…has emerged a new, subtler, but perhaps equally influential, kind of colonialism” (Altbach 2006: 381). He argues that neo-colonialism, particularly in terms of education within former colonies, “inculcate[s] Western values and views in the schools” (Altbach 2006: 381). Thus, it begins to emerge that language, or rather Western language operating within these former colonies, brings with it a number of worldviews, values and belief systems that push alternative (indigenous) modes of being to the side, expelling such worldviews from importance and consideration - and by doing so, the cycle of domination is perpetuated, rather than alleviated. Arun P. Mukherjee, in his text, *Ideology in the Classroom: A case study in the teaching of English Literature in Canadian Universities* (1986) expands on such argument, maintaining that neo-colonial education not only indoctrinates those within the former colonies, but also refuses to allow for a political contestation of itself by shrouding education in the West with humanitarian platitudes that conceal issues of both the “role of ideology” (Mukherjee 2006: 388), and the “role of literature as a social institution” (Mukherjee 2006: 388). Clearly, such use of language disallows a critical appraisal of both history, and the present (contextualised by history).

Kirsten Holst Peterson and Anna Rutherford, in the text, *Enigma of Values* (1976), argue that in sum, originality can only be achieved if an engagement with history occurs (Peterson and Rutherford 2006: 139). If one reads originality as an ability to engage critically with the past in
order to rectify continuing injustices within the present, then it becomes evident that the obscuring of such critical engagement by neo-colonialism is a covert means of perpetuating and propagating neo-liberal hegemony. After all, how does one criticize neo-liberal/neo-colonial developments if one is unable to contend with one’s own history. In this regard, language takes on a critical political importance. In fact, Ngugi Wa Thiong’o himself continues in this vein through his demonstrating of how alternative viewpoints are excluded completely from history. In his later article *Borders and Bridges* (2000), he asks:

> How do you teach that portion of… [history] that is Renaissance and post-Renaissance without going into notions of say, slavery and colonialism? We know that there is no post-colonial Renaissance economics, history, and culture without colonialism…Again…we see a lot of studies on and comments on the notion of the modern and the post-modern. But they ignore what constitutes modernity. If you think of Western modernity in terms of Renaissance or post-Renaissance Europe, that modernity is bound up completely with colonialism. There is no way of extricating it from colonialism, and, in fact, in some cases it is directly reflected in the literature itself. (Ngugi Wa Thiong’o 2006: 391)

Such examples serve to demonstrate how critical, alternative viewpoints are marginalised by Western discursive imperatives that isolate, condemn and obliterate alternative viewpoints. If one extends this to subjectivity, and if one takes into account the textual and cinematic portraits painted of Africa (or of the South) by various agents discussed in this treatise, it becomes evident that the plurality of African subjectivities is severely undermined by the Western discursive imperatives that are inextricable from Western languages. After all, languages do not exist within a vacuum, but come from a context that is informed discursively and historically. In order to resist these totalizing and disempowering imperatives, it is arguably essential to reclaim history through critical interrogation, and, as Laclau and Mouffe posit, to propagate a multiplicity of subjectivities, rather than to break down alternative subjectivities and to incorporate them into a singular, restrictive Western subjectivity, which is itself highly problematic in orientation.
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