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Performative Politics of Subjugated Bodies in a Neoliberal Age

- Focusing on Jacques Rancière and Judith Butler -

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Abstract

It has been noted that neoliberalism is profoundly changing our ways of doing, being, and saying, as well as the institutional arrangement of society. But how exactly could it happen? In examining neoliberalism as a regime of truth, this thesis explores the basis of its power in changing the *modus operandi* of political subjectivity, especially in terms of bodies.

Theorizing bodies as the locus where a regime of truth draws its effect by symbolic and material invocation, the thesis argues that the current regime of truth is founded not only on its productive power of self-constitution but also on the modern, colonial, capitalist order of bodies. In particular, the thesis attempts to demonstrate that the neoliberal constitution of the 'self' who acts out the truth herself goes hand in hand with the otherization that involves the persistent, but more individualistically moralized mode of abjection, oppression, or exclusion of precarious bodies from the status of equal subjects.

At the same time, this thesis also argues that subjugation does not denote the complete subsumption or extinction of critical and resistant subjectivity if viewed through the ontological contingency lying in the notion of performativity. As in the decolonial prospects against the violence of colonial bodily schemes, subjectivation as the performative dis-identification from the norm, while not designating a regaining of lost mastery over things as the problematic modern political epistemology assumes, is still possible and is happening in borders of visibility and intelligibility.

Rearticulating Jacques Rancière's and Judith Butler's views on politics

and political subjectivity, this thesis attempts to read contemporary scenes where the very abjectified bodies act in concert to create transindividual modes of organizing and exercising power based on the radical equality of bodies. Importantly, if politics is viewed this way, whole different social and political imaginaries may open up. In the lens of performativity, bodies are primarily involved in a normative subjugation, but also is a site where the very vulnerability and dependency on the norms and others are experienced and acknowledged. Rather than falling in the readily available choice between negative nihilism or optimism, the gazes of which are narcissistically restricted to existing democracy, a performative view of politics suggests a non-subsumptive and reflective understanding of contemporary political situations, drawing on the alternative sense of bodily commonality.

Through this investigation, the thesis ultimately aims to contribute to the theoretical debate on a more nuanced and decolonized understanding of subject positions, subjectivity, and politics, concerning its implications for subjugated bodies in the neoliberal age.

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I.   Introduction

1.1.   The World We Live In: Aims and Study Questions

Intersecting critical theory, political economy, aesthetic analysis, and historical investigations, this thesis addresses the complex dialectic of subject positions and subjectivity in a neoliberal age, focusing on the body.

Although often disparaged as a fleeting fad or "the body shop" (Eagleton 1996, 25), articulating the body as a substantive player in subjectivity enabled another scope of thinking on the political that does not start from the '*cogito*'. Incorporating the notion of discursive formation of subjects, critical investigations on the relationship between power and subject by cultural, post-colonial, feminist, disability, and gender theories challenged the persistent framework in political analysis that regards the body as secondary to reason, mind, spirit, consciousness, or subjectivity itself.

Still, methodological rationalism based on the epistemological dichotomy is dominating the discourses on democratic politics and subjects. Problematizing the presupposition, this thesis addresses the body as the key site where the subject positions are formulated and the possibilities of political subjectivity lie. Since a subject relates with others and the world through and by the body, our modes of being are created and recreated through the constant dialectics between the self and the norms imbued in the world. In this thesis, I investigate the process that is dominant today while also examining the possibility that the norms could be transgressed via the body and through the bodies.

Even so, why does the re-articulation of the body matter in light of the political theory on political subjectivity? Most of all, it quintessentially reveals the instability of self and democracy's ground on a particular self-conception. In modern political philosophy, the truth of the self is conceptualized through reason. Due to its situatedness and vulnerability, the 'impure' body implied the epistemological limit, the 'other' of the subject. Ideas of the person, subject, community, political, and politics were articulated and practiced based on the demarcation, grounding the normative project of freedom and autonomy. For instance, the 'proper' subjects of community worth protection of the law are defined by one's self-consciousness, who could retain the wholeness of self through the reasoning capacity.

However, this consists of a persistent antinomy in modern democracy based on self-conception: The torn between the "ideal of the autonomous individual" and the "ideal of a rational and efficient social order" (Davis 1999 [1975], 263). Even though the former is antithetical to the subjugation of other beings, the latter establishes the 'unreason' and attempts to subjugate the bodily in the name of the 'good' of a community. Hence, there is, on the one hand, the political community defined by the exercise of freedom and, on the other hand, the instrumentalization of human existence and the destruction of bodily beings (Mbembe 2019 [2011], 68).

Nevertheless, the living and acting body, which resists being instrumentalized and destructed, discloses this schizophrenia of the order, once seen as insane and just. Appearances of outflowing and crossing bodies, the transgressive performances of bodies resist and undo the normative authority of self, including what it means to be 'common' that is worth

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defending. In this sense, centralizing the body in the notion of political subjectivity amounts to reconceptualizing democracy, not by the order and arrangements but by the assertion of radical equality. Even so, what if the practices of the lopsided self have been restricting the way we sense, move, act, and imagine in the world, thus mediating and conditioning the reality?

This question consists of the central theme of this thesis. By connecting the points to the world we are living in, it attempts to draw a topography of power, subjectivity, and the actual and potential dialectic between them. My formulation of the agenda adopts the theoretical insights of two thinkers, Jacque Rancière and Judith Butler. They are involved in the core objective of this thesis, which is to untangle the persistent and recurring antinomy that guides and constitutes society and subjectivity in light of the body. However, rather than providing a philosophical argument for their thought, this thesis aims to interpret contemporary scenes where our bodies are woven, referring to their core method of narrating politics.

Meanwhile, the term 'contemporary' may sound vague or even problematic for some readers. Meaningful criticisms against the coloniality and imperiality of the modern West—especially those who emphasize 'subject position' than subjectivity—had revealed the unjustifiability of constructing a unilateral space and linear temporal continuum as such (for instance, see Agnew 1996; Massey 2005).[1] Nevertheless, 'contemporary' in this thesis designates the world that is impacted by a special mutant or replicated version of Western modernity's scheme of value, namely, neoliberalism. The connotation is potentially political in that it is based on the awareness of being

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[1] For the distinction between the two focal points, see Oliver (2003).

together, without essentially conflicting with the problematics of provincialization (Chakrabarty 2007[2000], xiii).

To start with, there are two scenes that reflect important particles. First is a scene of subjugation, where a refugee claimant from Morocco who had to drink shampoo to make his claim for medical treatment heard, got 'Boston crabbed' in solitary confinement. Secondly, there is another scene where people gather and sing along to the song named "We Make Korea" by the band StopCrackDown, composed of documented and undocumented migrant workers in South Korea (Moktan 2008).

The former illustrates an incident in 2021 at Hwaseong Immigration Detention Center. Fueled by public remonstrations, the Korean Ministry of Justice investigated the case and concluded that the torture had been committed by "measures without legal bases".[2] This 'closure' conceals the following questions: Is the essence of the infliction on the body the illegality of measures? What is the logic behind the violence on the bodies of particular populations? Delving into what is presumed and made invisible by the conclusion may take us further into the kernel of the problem.

Chiefly, the incident reflects something more structural than some individual's legal offense. In part, it displays a trace of state violence, presumed to be legitimate as necessary to secure citizens from potential dangers.[3] The point here is not whether or not it is necessary or inevitable. Instead, what this thesis seeks is what is assumed to be in need of protection and 'against

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[2] See MoJ (2021, November 1).

[3] See MoJ (2021, September 29). Although the title of the ministry report proclaims that the action was necessary to protect the detainee, the report actually dealt with the inevitability of protecting state property and public officials.

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what' the acts of protection are performed.

As in this case, the protective measures paradoxically target some of the most precarious bodies in society.[4] The bodies are marked and represented as potential dangers and actual problems of the society, so that must be ostentatiously or tacitly subjected, controlled, or expelled for social order, rights, immunity, or soundness.

However, it is also antimonial that the law of the state is chiefly involved in producing the 'problematic' bodies. The government of South Korea, which has been highly dependent on exploitable migrant labor, promoted the inflow of bodies for a 'good' bargain—without extra investments for worker protection or transforming income and work structure. A representative of the spirit is the Employment Permit System (EPS), which is introduced to supply overseas labor efficiently to manufacturing and 3D (Difficult, Dangerous, Dirty) sectors 'proclaimed as' suffering from a labor shortage. Investing the employers and government with substantive power to regulate migrant workers, it made the life of the bodies crucially subjected to the employers' discretion and legal recognition. For security and efficient control of the foreign bodies, it made achieving and retaining documented status more exacting, actively producing the undocumented and the illegal. Hence, it left the bodies to choose between the life of the undocumented—completely unprotected and constantly being threatened to be deported—and that of documented—constantly tracked down and substantially subjugated without having rights to leave the workplace.

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[4] The symptomatic conflation of law, which defines the enactment of detention as an act of 'protection' exemplifies (Churipgukgwallibeob. 2010).

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If juxtaposed with the public loath against immigrants, refugees, and other ethnic populations, the conspiration of self- and other- constitution becomes clearer. They exhibit the entwinement of neoliberal rationality as well as the racism, sexism, and ablism that had been forming intricate relationships with modernity and capitalism. In the so-called "Jeju Island refugee crisis," antagonism toward incoming war victims burst out with the unmediated linking of the bodies to tax, crime, and security issues. Under it, the anonymous plural bodies are reduced to those who are sly, rapacious, or perverted, and thus, hazardous for 'our bodies'. Paradoxically, on the real figure of asylum seekers reported by media, people complained about their "unrefugee-like" behavior and clothing, saying that they are 'inauthentic' (Kwon 2018).

This reveals that the bodily beings' 'proper' or 'sensible' place and role are laid down perceptively. Everyday and often unseen insult, distrust, abuse, discrimination, and exclusion, reproduce the violence, reinforcing the distortional sensibilities. They are culturally, historically, and politically expanded and sustained, operating as the lens that produces the image of certain bodies as a mere instrument for production or a threat to the social body or citizens' bodies. Through this, they become not that of equal human beings, assumed to have the right to be protected and to lead livable life. They are the corps of sub- or non- humans, deemed as fungible and expendable cogs for society and individual prosperity or entirely outside of the ethical relationships. Drawing actual effects, it leads to material as well as symbolic dispossession of the already marginalized bodies under global capitalism. For instance, 63.4% of migrant workers were not provided with residential

housing (MoEL, 2021). The recent death of Seningmunchu, a 67-year-old migrant worker who lived next to a pig carcass and was dumped to conceal traces of exploitation he died is also notable (Lee 2023).

The neo-liberalizing state's law also works as a powerful agent practicing the scheme. The *Act on the Employment of Foreign Workers* starts with Article 1, "The purpose of the Act is to contribute to smooth supply of and demand for human resources and the balanced development of the national economy through the systematic introduction and management of foreign workers."[5] Though Article 22 promulgates the 'non-discriminatory' principle, it is strikingly abstract and void if compared with the schematized accounts of the employer's rights. It does not concern the actual states migrant workers are facing, presuming an abstract equal status between citizens and non-citizens as the default state. The discriminatory situations are described as exceptional and individual, negating the existence of constant structural violence.[6] They together exhibit how the law and the state are acting out the sensibility, treating some populations as no more than things that could be bought, managed, sold, and exploited.

Yet, these mechanisms of hierarchizing bodies do not pertain exclusively to the directly repressed: They are what constitutes our sensibilities and, thus, us. In the world where everything is being identified and located through the logic and institutions of the market that excludes the "unprofitable," every-

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[5] See Oegugingeullojaui goyong deunge gwanhan beomnyul (2021).

[6] In response to the media report on the death of the exploited worker, the Ministry of Employment and Labor released a statement in the 'Explanation on media reports' section, stating that the deceased was undocumented—thus needless to be protected—and that they would work to improve 'legal' workers' living conditions. MoEL (2023, March 8).

body is exposed to the demands to be profitable in order not to be unlivable. This condition constitutes and regulates the way we sense ourselves, others, and the world, and thus, becomes what we embody and act out.

If so, what does the second scene exhibiting seemingly groundless assertion that we have been making Korea by our bodies and feeble actions showing the capacity to speak and create commonality of the foreclosed bodies imply? What does the two scenes' contrast tell? Does the scene where the precarious body is treated like a thing confirm the ephemerality and impotence of collective bodily acts in the latter?

Instead, this thesis tries to reformulate the migrant workers' singing as the performative politics, the unique moment of de-subjugation. In brief, the migrant workers' assertion that they make Korea is counter-factual in two senses. First, it is 'impossible' in the scheme of prevalent sensibilities. Nevertheless, rather than a simple fancy, the singalong creates a temporary community of bodies where the world and words in lyrics serve their own truth that objects to the unrighteous logic of society. In a second sense, this subjectivation 'counters' the legitimacy of the historical and cultural sensibilities that are subjugating us. What they tell by singing goes beyond the need to procure or expand codified rights. In fact, by exhibiting enacting bodies collectively, they resist the perceptual framework that placed them in the role of the in-speak-able, claiming themselves as equal bodies.

But how could the enactments of the instrumentalized bodies inducing this counterfactual form of sensibilities be conceived as political and the disenfranchised singing bodies as the political subjects? What could this theorization mean to existing ideas on democratic politics?

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The democratic significance of the movement in positing equality against the neoliberal value system cannot be sufficiently grasped through the dominant vocabularies of understanding politics and democracy like rational choice, functionalism, and causality. Against them, this thesis puts forward a performative perspective on politics that can conceptualize sensibility-disrupting practices like this as quintessentially political. Viewing performatively is to conceive of political subjects and community not as given or readily endorsed by constitutional and legal prescription but as always provisionally constructed and in the constant reconstruction, on the other hand, by the grab of power and norms, and on the other, by the enactments against attempts of grabbing.

Further implications in adopting this view lie in its relation with the acknowledged and unacknowledged imaginaries that constitute the web of meaning or the configuration of the sensibilities that regulate and enable certain courses of action. The performative view, based on the so-called post-structuralist statement that there is no *a priori* meaning and structure exempt from contingencies, enables different understandings of contemporary political sceneries that are often narrated as (representative/liberal) democracy's demise or crisis. Capturing instances of political actions that were not recognized as political in the framework, especially the actions at the borders of current intelligibility, may contribute to rousing up our political imaginaries on agency, society, and democracy.

More importantly, this thesis suggests that when we view politics not as an enclosed milieu for programmed action but through the performative perspective, current situations could be read as an urgent call for critical

subjectivities and political imaginations. This 'dialectical' aspect between bodily performance and political imagination will be accounted for with the dialectic between subjugation and subjectivation in the next chapter. The point may be more contextualized through the analysis of the operation of neoliberal rationality that exerts a significant power on forming contemporary sensibilities and subjectivities.

This is the point where I refer to the problematizations of Judith Butler and Jacque Rancière, both of whom stress the constitutive role of the distribution of sensible, perceptibility, and intelligibility in politics and the political actions that incorporate the significance. Although the thesis's reference is not limited to them, it takes the critical reading of them regarding the formation of subjectivity and political action as an important task to find plausible ways of conceiving political subjectivities and politics today.

This process will entail an array of interlaced inquiries. First, I will investigate the forces that powerfully constitute contemporary political subjectivities. To address this, the thesis first examines the underlying rationalistic assumptions on the notion of the 'subject,' stressing the role of the historical perceptual and cognitive web of meaning in retaining them. The framework constructs the intelligibility of a subject, namely, whether or not a specific subject could be perceived and conceived of as proper and speak‐able. The supposition of individual autonomy and self‐sufficiency as the basis for political and moral citizenship is one version of it. This may reveal that the criteria for a subject is engulfed with a normative view of the person that, in fact, idealizes and privileges certain bodies.

As a matter of fact, there were various strands of contention against the

dominant view, which points out or attempts to revive what the assumptions exclude. Focusing on the inevitable deficiency and dependency of a subject, and the social situated-ness and surrounded-ness of bodies that are hidden, reveal the specificity and contingency of the rationalistic and modernistic assumptions that we are projecting upon subjects (Bourdieu 1977; de Beauvoir 1956[1949]; Haraway 1991; Kristeva 1982[1980]; Lacan 1988; Merleau-Ponty 1967[1945]). Nevertheless, even if this thesis will take a quasi-transcendental step of searching for the condition of subjects and practices, it does not necessarily follow them to draw on another cogito-centered phenomenology or substantial ontology assuming a fixed standpoint. Rather, it will theoretically criticize the changing naturalistic figures of 'normal' and 'proper' subjects that are assumed to own rightful voices in a political community by contextualizing their conditions. This may reveal one of the powerful mechanisms that socio-political power and norms have been affecting our subjectivities.

With critical eyes, the thesis will then try to investigate what is conditioning the society we are living in. Since every social structure and norm are historical and contingent, presenting the peculiar ways they constitute us would be possible only after that. What follows this is more empirical or observational inquiry: what are the contents of power and norms that affect and further constitute us and the political world in which we live and act?

After examining the nature of power and norms and particular sources of political subjectivities, the thesis asks what can be done to or 'with' it. Reviewing existing literature on the possibilities of practices, it asks, is the relationship between the power/norms and us unilateral and unreciprocated?

Will any *exodus* of our bodies from the predominant order of perceiving and thinking the world be possible? If not, would there be other ways for subjects not to be embroiled in a state of political melancholy?

More specifically, this is to ask if exposure to norms and social relations is inevitable for us to exist as subjects and partly due to the situatedness of physical bodies, is refusing to be governed by the given configuration of sensibilities possible? It is inseverable from the question, "How could the subjects disengage themselves from their contexts, even if they are deeply interlaced with and constituted by it?" Nevertheless, rather than simply neglecting one of the clauses, this thesis formulates it as the subjugated bodies' subjectivation, which, at first sight, seems like a catch-22. Here, the crux of the matter would be the relationship between the two states, or phase of political subjectivities—one, constituted, and the other, constituting—and the modes of the latter's appearance and enactment.

This leads us to finally question if the enactment of subjectivation ever exists, when, where, and how we could capture their existence and acting. What would be a prominent way to think of the place and form of political subjectivities today, and what would it mean for us? These questions will lead us back to the first question.

Notably, all of the themes resonate with the primary theoretical inquiries of Butler and Rancière: the formation of subjects through the normative social organization—in a broad sense—and the role of sensibility in the latter, the modes of political actions against it, and the relationship between norm and subject. On the other hand, though some of their central subject matter overlaps, they retain different focal points and also present

different answers. By critically exploring their view on politics and subjects, this thesis will theoretically give another performative view on politics: That which could capture various forms of dis-articulatory and re-articulatory practices, including subtle and elusive bodily acts at borders as politics and the display of political possibilities amid world.

1.2. Approach and Structure of the Thesis

Though the focal points overlap, the object of this thesis is not to suggest a plausible interpretation of Rancière's and Butler's political theory. In other words, the argument does not aim to intervene in the debate over their thought. Instead, it will address their problematics as the resources in illuminating the subject matter, not as a guiding principle. Starting from the points they intersect, the thesis will investigate the conditions and possibilities of being subjects and becoming agents of political performance in contemporary contexts. Through this, it aims to search for a productive point of intervention in the theoretical debates on the world we live in.

Importantly, this approach resonates with their theorization methods, which aim to intervene in contemporary society. Mainly, Rancière consistently resists his being read as a political philosopher rather than a spectator-interpreter, pointing out that political philosophy supposes the very logic that philosophers and himself try to refute. It is the notion of intellectual inequality between the active speaker and passive listener, positing the philosopher as an elucidator of sense—saying "you should see this"—

knowledge, thinking, and the proper action (Rancière 2003 [2002]; 2009 [2008]; 2010b). Whether or not his voice retains authoritative authorship is open to interpretation. Still, his theoretical trajectory is dedicated to criticizing positions that suppose or might concede the inequality between people's capacity to sense, know, think, and act.

Meanwhile, Butler critically weaves various strands of thought—that of Hegel, Lacan, Adorno, Benjamin, Althusser, Klein, Levinas, Arendt, Derrida, and Foucault, and more recent authors like Isabell Lorey—to intervene in the fields of discourses on which she thinks as 'present'. Yet, the fact that the way and degree they are addressed differ from work to work reflects the unboundedness of her method. Moreover, her focus and positions are operational, flexible to criticism, reflecting on her trajectory and the matter at issue, making a plane between works.[7]

Even so, why Rancière and Butler? Simply put, it is primarily because of their overlapping *leitmotif*. While criticizing the dominant discourses on politics and political subjects, they concern the performative dimension of politics and subjects, which is central to this thesis' claim.

Above all, they are against the fantasmatic *objet petit a* of the dominant political epistemology. Many political analyses focus on drawing the correlation between a phenomenon and the independent and autonomous subject's intention, capacity, and choice, disregarding what lies on the other side of the taken-for-granted approach. For Rancière and Butler, the

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[7] For instance, building up on her earlier arguments on gender performativity, she began to present a more or less agentic version of performativity, referring to diverse matrices and dimensions of subject formation operating, theoretical changes, and real-world events alluding to the political agency of subjects. See Butler (2015) and (2020).

relationship between politics and subjectivities is elusive. Subjects are always in the social force field, which conditions them and in the process of becoming and unbecoming, rather than being the preexisting homogenous entities that are easily quantifiable nor the agents of free choice that can be predicted.

On the formation of a subject, they both focus on the significance of social sensibilities, which cannot be grasped solely through the prevailing grammar of political knowledge. Here appears another common leitmotif, the sense and the distribution of sensible. For them, a certain configuration of sensibility is the frame and the set limit of social intelligibility. This 'what can be sensed and not' does not pertain to the form, scope, or capacities of individual perception or its construction but belongs to something that exceeds and exists prior to individuals. The configuration, built through intersections of power and knowledge, depends on a certain distribution of values and notions of truth and, thus, is highly normative. Moreover, since the subjects are not a priori but are socially situated, they sense and act but are simultaneously be (un)sensed through norms in social, cultural, political, and economic relationships with others and be constituted by them. The performative dimension of subject and politics lies here, the norm being a powerful reference point that subjects can sense and identify with, identify others by, and thus harkening back to the particular truth of the society.

Here, the body plays a vital role as the locus of the subject's social situatedness. For Rancière and Butler, who both emphasize the linkage between the social topology of the body and the ways of sensing and doing, the body is what makes subjects vulnerable to the distribution of sensible, locating them in a subject position, and constructing them as a particular

social subject. More importantly, their conceptualization of the body goes further to address what and how bodies act for and against the norm collectively with(in) the inevitable vulnerability rather than merely analyzing what 'is.' Thus, their thoughts provide points to think about the political agency of subjugated bodies, as well as the conditions.

The next chapter is allotted to compare this performative view of bodies which centralizes the body in subjectivities and politics, with more dominant discourses as a groundwork. Despite criticisms, common understandings of politics are still imbued with the philosophical and anthropological assumptions of reason and reasonableness. Reformulating the system of sensibilities through Michel Foucault's notion of the "regime of truth," I attempt to demonstrate the complex mechanism of symbolic repression of bodies that excludes or forecloses certain subjects from being rightful and legal persons in the political community. Citing Foucault may seem abrupt, but his view on power and subject imbued in the notion is the common reference for Rancière and Butler, from which they start and diverge. This may enable us to foreground how we could conceptualize politics, problematize existing sensibilities in light of the body, and investigate how the bodies had played and may play a crucial role in self and the world.

Finally, Rancière and Butler conceive of political subjectivity as something that should be built collectively. Just as the status of subjects, it does not preexist in individuals but is generated through disengagement and disagreement with the subjugating norms. In other words, it needs political 'subjectivation' that comes with performative de-articulation of one's identity allocated by norms and powers.

If so, what is performativity that consists of their point of contact? As the term got usage in various fields such as psychoanalysis, literary theory, performance studies, art history, artistic practices, critical theory, and gender studies, the connotation became versatile and nonconvergent.[8] Yet, I attempt to get a distance from the popularized usage of it that reduces the tension inherent in the term by focusing solely on the actor-led actions or speeches.

Instead, the thesis addresses performativity as the pragmatics of politics, implying that there is no meaning 'out there,' taken out of the community with grammar and norms of intelligibility.[9] The terrain constituted by shared sensibilities—including the convention, common understandings, or a methodology or standard of truth—between the speaker and the audience institutes a signifier and gives it signification. Thus, when one speaks, the speech itself is 'performing' a particular act toward the listener, as well as to the norm and the speaker herself, whether or not it is an affirmation or a deviation from the existing field of meaning. In the context of the relationship between a political subject whose 'body' got central and society imbued with certain norms, the term addresses two polarities: the introversion of the signifier to the actor and the extroversion of the actor to the outside (Parker & Sedgwick 1995, 2). In this sense, performativity helps this thesis explicate the process by which the norms act upon and produce its effects through the

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[8] Richard Schechner called this late 20th century's vigorous incorporation and appropriation of the notion as a 'performative turn' (Schechner 2003, 38). More than a mere fad, the induction of performativity triggered a paradigmatic and epistemological shift in human experience. However, there are quandaries coming from the prevalent usage of the term. For this, see Loxley (2007).

[9] It does not only pertain to the ontic dimension but constitutes the basic ontological presupposition of this thesis, following a vein of poststructuralism. See Howarth (2013).

body to constitute subjects and by which the subjects may act out toward the norm and the world.

Through this, the thesis will interpret the operation of power, subjects, political actions, and movements both conceptually and concretely, but also projects the concept as a practical tool that subjects can utilize to act against the normative subjugation—what is politics per se for Rancière. On this, Butler's political coinage of bodily performativity regarding the condition and agency of subjects is significant for us. Especially the term in her earlier writings was more on the explanation of the condition and limits of subjectivities, but in her later writings, it explicitly came to incorporate the power of collective agency through and by the body.

With this reformulation, a political scheme of performativity of collective bodily movement will be drawn as follows: As our bodies are constituted by norms and thus always entangled with them, what we 'act' out by bodies is acting "to" as well as acting "of" the norms, sometimes against their invocation of us. Especially visualizing muted bodies in concert, rejecting one's proper place according to the given identity, would be the bridgehead to de-constructing the coherency of the norms.

Accordingly, it enables us to see that although our existence as social subjects depends on the norms, we may resist the naturalization and, thus, question it by asserting the pragmatics of the body, the condition of exposure. This condition that all bodies share, the ineradicable exposure and reliance on social relationships and norms, invigorates the possibility for our collective performative actions, one political version of extroversion. Importantly, the performances may open up a different imagination on the politico-social

horizon than what we are entrenched in.

Although not as prominent as in Butler's works, Rancière's on subjects and politics incorporates the conception of bodily performativity at its core. First, his thought articulates how bodies are identified and subjugated socially through sensibilities. According to him, it is "an order of bodies that defines the allocation of ways of doing, ways of being, and ways of saying, and sees that those bodies are assigned by name to a particular place and task; it is an order of the visible and the sayable that sees that a particular activity is visible and another is not, that this speech is understood as discourse and another as noise" that governs a society and subjects first and foremost (Rancière 1999 [1995], 29). Sustaining the ontic positivity on what is present and real, this "realism" aims for the "structure of the visible where everything is on show and where there is thus no longer any place for appearance" (ibid. 103).

Against those schemes and realistic sensibilities, what he calls 'politics' starts from a disagreement through bodily appearances and movements. In this sense, the activities mundanely and commonly conceived as politics that are enacted in or pass off without reviewing the existing scheme of sensibility are not politics but are called the police (*la police*) as the scheme itself. Invoking the general order of a society, they reproduce the supposed norms that the body must do the 'proper role' designated by identity and occupy a certain place and time but no others. The politics of the body starts with acting out the questioning of the ordering principles and dislocating one's body from it, acting out one's possibility to exist another way, which is denied or marginalized socially.

Yet, Rancière does not go further to philosophically or phenomenally

reflect on the body itself or its relationship with the self, which are important to the claim of this thesis. The body, for him, even though denoting the political momentum, is mostly treated like a representative unit when it is viewed in light of the subject position, the locus where the glances and sensibilities are being projected. It is because his point is on the way a body is perceived and identified through the lens of existing logics of perception, the norms or normativity for Butler, and thus, be positioned hierarchically according to it.

In this sense, the schemes of thought on bodies and subjectivities in Butler and Rancière's writings at times meet but basically diverge. Nevertheless, working to (re)articulate Butler's and Rancière's perspectives on subjects and politics on these leitmotifs is still meaningful in presenting an alternative way of grasping politics and contemporary political scenes, i.e., performative politics. In the process, we may also conceptualize the subject in a different way as something that is ambivalent. Each has subject positions, interlaced with power and norms, but become subjects and actualize subjectivities of disclosing the injustices of the normative regime and destabilizing it with other bodies.

The approach matters especially in the current context where despite the critical debates' revolt against the superiority of 'rationality' in a narrowly woven sense, dominant discourses on political phenomena and politics still tend toward this without questioning their basis.[10] This overlook quickly leads

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[10] There are various strands of thought on this, including Straussian thought to revive the authority of reason *propre*, the Frankfurt School's criticism of instrumental reason and rationality defined by modernism, neo-Marxists' problematization of reproduction of

to disregarding the implicit consensus, the shared horizon of perception and conception that lies in every definition of analytical concepts and constitutes the field of thinking and acting. Hence, it ends up in the consequentialist analysis that contributes to retaining the lopsided epistemology and political prospects straightly deduced from the analysis of current status. This consists of a point that this thesis attempts to contest by putting forward another way of conceiving the contemporary scene with the alternative ontology.

In Chapter 3, I investigate this in tandem with the current social arrangements, which are powerfully impacted by the co-optation of neoliberal rationality with the existing logics bounded bodies. To be more specific, neoliberalism became a power that is seriously affecting our politico-social life through concurrent epistemological principles, producing norms, constituting bodies and selves, horizons of movements, and collective imagination. This ever-increasingly is rendering everything viewed through high-market economic rationality, not simply permeating in but also transforming our relationships and the world fundamentally.

As a matter of fact, neoliberalism is not the 'one and only' 'evil' that imperils us. As Balibar (2020) notes, the forms and origins of problems associated with political subjectivities—including the various forms of the tendency to exclude others—cannot be reduced to one another (Balibar 2020). Reductionism and unification in this regard only set up scarecrows by substantializing that there exists some monolithic entity as 'Neoliberalism,' which would be deficient analytically and politico-practically. Instead, this

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power through ideology, cultural and postcolonial theorists' attempt to reveal the discursive strategies in the notion, that differ in their problematics and alternatives.

thesis' focus on neoliberalism is their breadth and depth of impact that distorts and inflates what Western modernity and capitalism have been producing, especially the mechanisms of hierarchizing subjects and the symbolic and material production of non-subjects.

After analyzing subjects of our time and society, in Chapter 4, the thesis addresses the condition and modality of movement for us amid that neoliberal regime of truth's subjugation. This work would be performed by setting the link between the body, subjectivity, politics, and political imagination within the age of neoliberal capitalism. The objective will be to investigate how we could detach ourselves from normative interpellations. It asks, 'How could the bodies perform de-subjugation?', 'Are there any scenes that we could refer to or that embody the movements toward re-identification? The implications of the second scene presented in the preceding section also will be examined in the process of inquiring.

While doing so, this thesis will also examine the problems of recent discourses about the crisis of democracy in terms of imagination (Brown 2015; Martinelli 2016; Van der Meer 2017). Assuming that the democracy before several decades had a certain form of common consensus and momentum that sustained it—but usually amounts to the affirmation of the rules of the game— they diagnose the symptoms of their breakdown as the mortal threat to democracy. However, even if the phenomena they pick out as symptoms seem to be recent artifacts, it is wrong to consider them as the intruders of the normally sound democracy or unexpected foibles. Instead, they reveal the very tension and quandaries in the structure of modern democratic lives.

More than the polarization of political geographies and discourses,

what is devastating is the confinement of democracy in the rules themselves. Democracy may not lose its vitality through the very argumentation and performance against the unjustifiability of subjugation by the existing configuration of the sensible. This is why democracy does not live by autonomous individuals but by people's translation and intervention into the given horizon of thinking and acting via collective imaginations. These points will be addressed by investigating the relationship between political imagination and (truth-) events in the last chapter and Conclusion.

2. Bodies, Subjugated and Subjectivating

2.1. Setting the Scene: Scheme of Bodies

2.1.1. Propositions: The True Subject

> "There can be no possible exercise of power without a certain economy of discourses of truth [⋯] We are subjected to the production of truth through power and we cannot exercise power except through the production of truth." (Foucault 1980 [1976], 98)

Imbued with the sensibility, social and political imaginaries enable a subject to make sense of the world and act toward it in a certain way (Taylor 2004, 173). But what is their bedrock? It may include material conditions, available knowledge, and technologies, shared experiences, power structures, resources for discursive representation, etc. The thing is, they are created among, interact around, and through the powerful perceptual and cognitive

framework that is unique to a society, historically particular, complex, and rampant.[11] To put it another way, the social imaginary is not a protruding or individual fancy but the horizon that has its terms, yet constituting the field of intelligibility and hence the condition of possibility for anything to emerge (Laclau 1990, 64) regardless of how exactly they arise and fade away.

Yet, the status of truth tends to foreclose its particularity. If the truth is, as Foucault promulgated, either the "truth of demonstration" that is represented as scientific, universally accessible, and prevalent, or the "truth-event" that is dispersed, uncircumscribed, and eventfully appears, it is a quite modern situation where truth in its former sense was set as the first and foremost form of knowledge (Foucault 2006 [1974], 235). In so doing, the latter, including the collective social imaginary. is often relegated to the backward, though cannot be exterminated. An example is the conflation of information with knowledge itself and the former's becoming a primary form of knowledge (Stehr 2022). However, as one can notice, the phenomenon paradoxically exhibits the significance of a certain social imaginary.

Notably, the substitution corresponds to the split and hierarchy between scientific knowledge as the product of enlightened reason and imagination as the 'other' of it (Bottici 2014, 22). Through the recurring discursive practices, the latter is often relegated as threatful falsity in terms of reason in terms of reason-based society. It implies that this substitution or subsumption

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[11] To note, imaginaries and frameworks are both related to our possible course of thinking and acting and imbued with power. Yet, if imaginary here is not a strictly 'analytical' term that has distinctive referent and distinguishable boundary, the framework is more specific and analytical, which does not emanate from the faculty, but is a crucial effect of the regime of truth that selects, occludes, and forecloses trajectories of framing and acting.

projected the 'real' or reality that is mechanically uniform. This truncation of truth and degradation of the latter is the very condition of possibility for the modern regime of truth, "a relation to systems of power which produce and sustain it, and to effects of power which it induces, and which redirect it" (Foucault 1995 [1977], 14).

Produced in relation to a particular power and reality, a truth that is promulgated as universal is the reflection of a certain self, for instance, Western Europe male bourgeois (Foucault 1978 [1967], 125). Yet, through its own authoritative rationality and technologies, it orders society and renders a particular mode of perception and action as normal, appropriate, right, or authentic while rendering others as abnormal, inappropriate, wrong, or false. In relation to individuals, it places each in a sphere defined by rationality.

Especially on who can be counted as 'the subject' of a democratic political society, the notion of human decencies, or what it means to be a human at all regulates. As a matter of fact, underpinned in the particular credential is the specific social imaginary. Even before the modern, only the subjects with some credentials of personhood—like autonomy—were deemed as relevant to partake in the community, discrediting others (Esposito 2012, 2).[12] Notably, with the invention of essentialized category 'human' from the

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[12] However, it is crucial that the notion of autonomy designated 'self-rule' within a general order of a polity, although each political subject has typically been assumed as autonomous and self-sufficient. Even if Aristotle denying slaves' full citizenship negated their possession of complete faculties of the soul, the latter were not pre-political ones directed inward. Instead, they were essentially directed to the political relationship between ruling and being ruled. In addition, though the levels of natural thinking capacities among groups—free men (citizens), barbarians (non-citizens), women, children, slaves—were set as the tentative boundary of inclusion in polis life, the nature was not simply given since

European experience of Transatlantic colonial conquest, the rationalizing sciences, the "great transformation" (Polanyi 2001 [1944]), and the philosophical discourses that attempted to pull the 'self' out of the world full of unreasonable forces. Personhood came to designate individual properties, the parameter of one's rights (Dussel 1995; Rasmussen 2011, xi−xii). In addition, with the increasing importance of economic relations, the urge to eliminate or subordinate unnecessary dependence became more prevalent, setting individuals' autonomy against dependence and vulnerability. Stood between the seventeenth century and the eighteenth century, Locke's thought displays the orientation of change toward essentialized individualism.[13]

Distancing itself from the preceding truth that only transcendent law can be the regulating principle, his notion of political community consists of free persons, the "thinking intelligent being" who are assumed to be independent and autonomous (Locke 1997 [1690], 307). Each is the sole bearer of his rights, and the qualification emanates from one's capacity to retain the identity of "I", the consciousness directed inward. For Locke, possessing this makes a subject capable of making a legal pact, especially that which constitutes membership in a social and political body and economic contact based on self−ownership.[14] Hence, the consciousness, in a social

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the human faculties were contextualized in concrete common life. The inner qualities of a proper citizen were deemed as being shaped by politics, the development of which was relevant to others who live in the community (Tronto 1993, 30). See 1254b22−23, 1259b27−1260a15, 1327b25−1328a9, 1277b9−16 of *Politics*.

[13] On the related change of Western ideas on the relationship between the whole and the individual during this period, see Horkheimer (2004 [1947]).

[14] Hence implicitly excluded is the possibility for women's full citizenship since they, at that time, were not owners of property nor themselves. For this, see Pateman (1988).

context, is being translated into one's capacity to judge and act for what is good for oneself and expressed as the demonstrative truth. What makes man the proper political subject is mastery, making a circular logic that one is free in "so far as" he is "the proprietor of his own person or capacities, owing nothing to society for them" (Macpherson 1964, 3).

As a matter of fact, this criterion on reason which assumes a status prior to any social or cultural situation, was part of normative claims. The social order had to be redefined by the rational order of being, liberated from the traditional arbitrary bondage and authority. The notion that pre-political and independent men constitute the civil society through 'free consent' hence led to the idea of the political power's legitimacy: the *raison d'être* of a political body fundamentally lies in its function of protecting individual life, liberty, and property by its law and power.

As the 'economic' theory of person became popularized with the social contract framework throughout the eighteenth century, as outlined in Locke's thought, the ability of a person to judge one's interest came to imply the basis for an individual's judicial personhood (Foucault 2008 [1979], 273; Habermas 1991 [1962], 159; Horkheimer 2004 [1947]). If so, what is the ramification when human decency is defined in terms of self-serving reason? What does this have to do with political subjectivities and imaginaries?

As liberty is incorporated in the concept of property which a political society should protect, autonomy in the sense of individual self-sufficiency became a powerful way of determining who may occupy the status of a subject that had to be protected. Likewise, this legal application shaped the conceptions of a proper 'boundary' of community, citizens, and their political

status. As citizens are the masters of themselves and their property, a political community is a society of masters who must secure liberty by being protected from irrational dangers or sources of future irrationalities.[15] Hence, the 'security' became directly related to the 'liberal' political community. The prominent eighteenth and nineteenth-century political thought said, "political liberty consists in security or, at least, in the opinion one has of one's security" (de Montesquieu 1989 [1784], 188) and when met with the conception of progress, it becomes: "The greater security of property is one of the main conditions and causes of greater production, which is Progress in its most familiar and vulgarest aspect" since "[t]he release of the individual from the cares and anxieties of a state of imperfect protection, sets his faculties free to be employed" (Mill 1977 [1861], 386).

As shall be promulgated in the following sections, the modern rationale's normative stretch again interacts with understandings of the world, practices of the self, as well as modes of engagement with others, hence exerting a constitutional effect on social imaginaries. Importantly, this 'rationalization' is how the power gets inscribed and reproduced in and through the individuals, not exclusively by drawing "acts of obedience and submission" out, but by making "subjects as actors, spectator witnesses, or objects in the manifestation of truth procedures" (Foucault 2014 [1980], 82).

However, the partiality and constructed-ness are not usually 'sensed' since it is permeated in the very way things around us, our ways of thinking, acting, and being. For instance, regardless of which register of human

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[15] Neocleous (2008), focusing on Locke's fugitive empowerment of prerogatives against internal and external threats, insists that Locke's philosophical scheme on the political body and individual liberty marks the onset of liberalism's anxiety for security and order.

existence the explanandum is concerned with, the mathematical explanandum is omnipotent, understood as the rational, objective, and official way of explaining things today. Although the ascription of 'truth' to this specific scientific rationality is a uniquely epochal phenomenon undergirded by modern institutions and evolving technologies, this author's conflict with other rationalities, or even the existence of others, is likely to be unseen. This naturalization of authorship, with the label of the objective or the neutral, makes the rationality escape being individually and culturally scrutinized.

It is the very force of making rationality commonsensical, habitual, or 'clear and distinct' as the truth that enables the regime's constitution of subjects and the world. Through a long-range process, a specific notion of reason—implying mastery over scientifically comprehended and calculated things—and rationality prevail over others, institutionalizing our socio-political life as mastery over need (Oakeshott 1962). In our period, the process became self-fulfilling when scientific rationality's method like computation got highly specialized, authorized, and took over other ways of interpreting the world—the spiritual, hermeneutical, artistic, etc.—immunizing our sense from them (Lyotard 1984 [1979], 7). Seen as such, one can say that this type of science is the "very specific 'truth games' related to specific techniques" of understanding and world-building (Foucault 1997[1982], 224).

2.1.2.   Subject Without Bodies, and Negative Bodies

"The unity of discourses on madness would not be based upon the existence
of the object 'madness', or the constitution of a single horizon of objectivity;

it would be the interplay of the rules that make possible the appearance of objects during a given period of time: objects that are shaped by measures of discrimination and repression, objects that are differentiated in daily practice, in law, in religious, casuistry, in medical diagnosis, objects that are manifested in pathological descriptions, objects that are circumscribed by medical codes, practices, treatment, and care." (Foucault 1972 [1969], 32–33)

Before addressing the regime of the truth of the present, another question needs to be answered: if the subject had been defined by its reasonableness, what happens to other parts of a human being, and especially to a 'body'? Do they remain simply as the remnant?

Apparently, the body exercises no significant influence in shaping the authoritative definition of the political subject. Nevertheless, this seemingly minimal or functional definition of what it means to be the proper subject is substantive, in which the body, both materially and symbolically, is concerned. For instance, the power in modernizing societies from the eighteenth century on became prevalent with the economic management of bodies.[16] The bodies were perceived, predicted, analyzed, ranked, trained, and constituted for their embodiment of efficiency and productivity, the value in the evolving regime of truth (Foucault 1995 [1977], 144). The workers' and peasant soldiers' bodies were tamed, shaped, and guided through an array of institutions— including the institution of fixed timelines. Hence, the body is then conceptualized as "something that had to be molded, [⋯] must acquire aptitudes, receive a certain number of qualities, become qualified as a body capable of working" (Foucault, 2001 [1973], 82). Importantly, these

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[16] On the characteristics of social change in this direction, see Lyotard (1984 [1979])

techniques of power are not external but constitutive of the subjects. It created particular types of individuals that fit into the general order of the political body, becoming the prerequisites for modern capitalism's success (Rabinow 1986 [1984], 18).

This empirically proves that materiality itself is conceptually and actually entwined within the regime of truth. More generally, despite the apparent conceptual abandonment, the body is not at all negligible. Nevertheless, its status had never been rehabilitated from inferiority within the enduring tendency of dualism in the dominant notion of truth. Even before those techniques of power inflicted on bodies, the modern selfhood, the "I" that seems to be grounded on an independent standard of reason, fundamentally depended on its other, the irrational bodily beings. In other words, the equation of the 'reasonable' beings with the legitimate political subject was viable through the very demarcation.

Under Cartesian dualism, the body is conceived of as an object or material, physical, or mechanical locus of irrationality. Mind, in contrast, had been regarded as the locus of rationality, thought, language, and knowledge, namely the capacity for truth. As the body owner, the person defined by the mind got its qualification by the 'distance' that separates itself from the body (Esposito 2012, 5). For instance, in Locke's thought, the distinctiveness of a person is embossed if only being contrasted with an animal, a living organized body without sufficient reason (Locke 1997 [1690], 300). The man as well owns the body, but his identity is defined by his reason. Though Locke presents unreasonableness as a cognitive deficiency that all human beings could fall into, it is represented by the figures of "*children*, *idiots*, *savages*, and

the grossly *illiterate*," "madmen," or "changelings," which were like monsters, or at best "something between a Man and Beast" (ibid., 73; 504-6).

Those existences were socially and politically left out of the boundaries that formed the community of equals whose rights were to be protected since they did not deserve the status of the subject: they were incapable of understanding the law of nature, lacked self-consciousness and autonomy that makes proper and free agents of decision and choice. It then becomes logical that they cannot partake in the fictional social contract since they lack the capacity to make their own consent. As a matter of fact, Locke is not the founder of those images. As implied in the category of human and its other, those subjects have already been made into dependent and inferior figures through subjugation and repressions (Federici 2004).[17] Nonetheless, they were the anthropological 'paragons' for Locke when he is further inferencing whether or not the rights of the under- or un- educated or the ineducable should be recognized or not.

In contrast, the person, the subject of legal rights, is an entity whose physical body does not matter in one's social definition as far as they are subdued under the reason. However, it is paradoxical that one's reasonableness was prejudged through the perception of bodily characteristics and behavioral patterns. This seeming contrast commands us to ask, "whose partake in the community of equals is taken to be granted automatically,

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[17] Esposito (2013) points out that the original notion of person in Roman law that impacted the new conception of autonomy in modern society was already reflecting the exclusionary sensibilities. From the outset, it was constituted by "the presumed difference from men and women who are not persons, or who are only partially and temporarily persons and as such always at risk of falling into the status of thing." (Esposito 2013, 115)

naturally, or without any further investigation for one's quality?"

As pointed out by critical scholars, it was the particular bodies, that of unimpaired white males, that were presumed as rational, eligible, and thus, citizenly (Clifford 2014; Mills 1997, 53; Pateman 1988). As those particularities are promulgated as the universalizable figure of humans, the modern subject, it built the social reality into a "system of visible and invisible distinctions" with the demonstrative truth. This involved the inward—in homogenizing identities of citizens or humans as those particular 'self'—and outward process—via the colonial relations that involved the subjugation of others (Santos 2007, 45)—namely, the construction of 'self' and the Others, the non-subjects.

As this "Cartesian" subjecthood was built upon the binaries—the civilized/the barbaric, master/slave, man/women, white/colored—in which the former is associated with the mind and reason, it had agency over the latter, presented as bodily, in the name of the civilization (de Kock 1996; McClintock 2013 [1996]; Žižek 2000[1997]). [18] This scheme involved essentializing differences as a fixed signal of subordinacy, going hand in hand with constructing the imaginary of political society via the practices of self-consolidation. For instance, the primary source for modern scientific observations in framework building were the reports of travel toward the New World and Africa, which were related to increasing politico-economic need

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[18] For the sixteenth-century figure Francisco de Vitoria, who was known as more 'humane' than other colonial scholars on the domination of Indigenous people, Indians were those who were able to use reason but "a little short of that condition," namely, being intelligent. Hence, he says that they " are unfit to found or administer a lawful State unto the standard required by human and civil claims. Accordingly, they […] are not even capable of controlling their family affairs"—namely, the economy (Vitoria 1917 [1557], 161).

for raw materials, new markets, and extra labor force, often involving violent methods to subordinate the inhabitants (Carey 2006; Bryan et al. 2018).[19]

As a constitutive part of the regime, anatomy and biology created numerous scientific and natural categories of organisms and human beings like race, cramming up the bodies and movements into those categories (Stephan 1982). However, since the whole process was the *cogito*'s self-projection, it entailed normalization and exclusion. The self-centered scientific enterprises on human behaviors further made constructed differences into the deviancies that are given, contained in the body, in its nature abnormal, thus, morally problematic and had to be controlled in the lens of general societies (Foucault 2001[1978a]; Haraway 1991).

This process is not that of a distant past. It was nineteenth-century colonial Australia where British biomedical science officially found 'whiteness' as a standardized type of human being with rational and physical ability, contrary to non-whites (Anderson 2005 [2002]). The taxonomies conscripted all the signals of presumed differences—from the identity of European white male with property—as objective being, while consolidating what is assumed as common, the consensus on what is to be normal and citizen-like (see Hume 1985 [1777]).

Furthermore, entwined with political practices that aimed for the mastery of the world and other subjects, the division between the subject and

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[19] It is in the sense that though influential speakers like Locke should not be taken as simple ideologues who drove real-world political events, their words powerfully contributed to the historical field of imagination, which yielded socio-political reality in a special way. For instance, his theory on person and property was commented by legal scholars and politicians of his time and their descendants as providing applicable words for explaining seventeenth-century Atlantic colonial capitalism's reasonableness (Ince 2018, 38-40).

non-subject got universal, and the projected self-conception structured the world. For instance, the European capitalist states' conception that access to power remained for adult males with property—which represented the experiences of the white bourgeois and was basically heterosexual and excluding women from the sphere of knowledge and politics—had weaved the world according to their very conception of what normal sexual relations is. When colonizing and acting out their "civilizing mission" in perceived-to-be inferior African societies where categorized gender norms were nonexistent, the colonizers could "only recognize" the male chiefs in those countries, not even acknowledging female chiefs could exist (Oyěwùmí 1997, 124). The governing institutions they thus built in those countries were arranged according to their static identification of sexual differences and hierarchy, excluding all the non-presumably male chiefs. This shows how the dominant patriarchal view of colonizers was projected, furthering what was perceivable and intelligible for them.

Exactly from when and where they were driven via the politico-economic initiatives is relatively unimportant here, unlike Foucault's point (Foucault 1998[1984], 116). What we focus on is how the body itself has been and is a crucial element in building up the regime of truth through the configuration of the distribution of sensible—the imaginary of self and other, the human and sub- or in- human, the existent and nonexistent.

In the next chapter, I argue that this construction of bodily schemes can be viewed as a generalized mode of practicing truth through the formation of subjects. Different forms of normalization of the particular self, involving "race, class, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity", are constantly being played

in variance to subjugate and make subjects (Wynter 2003, 260). Hence is the reason scholars studying colonialism, racism, and feminism tried to challenge by making the body a site for agency and political struggle of the historically oppressed (Gatens 1996; Goldberg 1993; Laqueur 1987; Young 1980). Concerning this, starting with the body's involvement—as a figure and as a material—in the political subjectivities seems to be necessary for the thesis' project to argue on the dialectic of subjugation and subjectivation in our political world.

2.1.3. Policing Bodies, Policing Self

We might effectively dwell on this matter by viewing the mechanism as what the Rancière calls as the police (*la police*). According to him, it is the "symbolic constitution of the social" which attempts to organize common life or socio-political body in terms of an order without excess (Rancière 2010 [2001], 36). Inwardly, it functions as the norm that defines what is—or, deemed as—the commonality between legitimate participants of the society (Rancière 1999 [1995], 29). What we were talking on, the view on distinctive human capacity for reason and the resulting communicability typically formulates this. However, the qualifications for commonality may be various depending on the regime of truth, or the society: the *logos* as speech(voice) or rationality, a nationality, civilization, or, 'coupling off' for the members of the society in Yorgos Lanthimos' film *The Lobster* (2015). Yet, these are not neutral marks, as the constitution of the normal or decent was a projection of certain self or ideal that entails the incapacitation of others and making of the abnormal and indecent. Through this, a particular

standard of commonality becomes the privileged symbol of 'capacity' to partake in a society, and at the same time, the ground for hierarchical social ordering, expressed as and founded on the truth regime.

Based on it, the truth regime exerts its effect by configuring the distribution of the sensible (*le partage du sensible*) with the complex of knowledge, power, and subject formation. Here, *le partage du sensible* has two meanings: on the one hand, sharing a commonality—between (legitimate) citizens; on the other hand, the division that implies exclusion and inequality. The configuration is the principles which delineates the boundaries of intelligibility, and more fundamentally, what can be seen, heard, said, and acted out by some parts of population, or whether something is visible or not. It is, only certain 'ways of doing, ways of being, and ways of seeing' is perceived as relevant, or recognized as exists—imaginable and intelligible—while the relevance or possibility of others are denied, or unrecognized.[20]

Recall Plato's ideal polity in *Politeia*, where everybody is sorted by three dispositions of soul, equalized with each of the classes and is expected to do what one has and can (Plato by Bloom, 1991). According to Rancière, this is made possible by the constitution of "the anthropological conception of the political," "a systematic inventory of the qualifications required for governing and the correlative qualifications for being ruled" (Rancière 2010 [2001], 41). As polity is defined by the allocation of dispositions, and politics becomes the reasonable ordering of them through knowledge, those who rule are assumed

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[20] This phrase of Rancière seems to resonate with Foucault's: "how a certain number of institutions, beginning to function on behalf of reason and normality, had brought their power to bear on groups of individuals, in terms of behaviors, ways of being, acting, or speaking that were constituted as abnormality, madness, illness, and so on." (Foucault in Foucault & Trombadori, 2001 [1978], 283)

to have exceptional capacities in reasoning, what the ruled—for instance, artisans—lack. Here, actually distributed and perceived are the bodies "assigned by the name to a particular place and task" (Rancière 1999 [1995], 29). All should do the work "appropriate to the (in)capacities allocated them by nature." (Rancière 2009 [2008], 20). Yet, the consensus on the inherent difference of capacities had to be drawn by repetitive cultural staging of differences, like the spread of myth, education, persuasion, etc.

Even without the divinely ordained hierarchies as the explicit basis for the distribution of power as the basis for consensus, different modes of interpreting and distributing bodies operate. As implied in the introduction, the universalistic motif regarding human freedom and equality in democracy based on the commonality of reason relied on the hierarchizing and naturalizing axis operating in the name of 'humanity'. During the growing advocacy on parliamentary constitutionalism in Europe, or in the twentieth-century American democracy, those deemed as 'aberrant' from the commonality were made into the non-subjects or the owner of the abnormality, lawlessness, and irrationality who needed to be subordinated depending on the circumstance. Moreover, rather than being simply left out, they were symbolically and physically exploited or abused—sometimes with the aim of extinguishing—for the social body or the citizens' prosperity and soundness (Federici 2004, 87; Foucault 2001[1973], 78; 1980, 55). What is operating here is the logic of the normative view of the body as an autonomous entity. Since it is free only when 'bodily' matters are subdued or absent, the democratic political body, a system of collectivity or the aggregation of citizens, had to be protected against the externalities' intrusion

into arranged order like the internal order of decent human beings (Douglas 1984[1966]). The others' bodies, as the vulgar, excessive, and destructive obstacle to the constitution of rationality, had to be controlled and repressed to achieve human excellence, or the orders between equal and decent human beings for it (Arendt 1958; 2003, 205).

Thus, there goes the notion of order and security, equalized with immunization from those potential dangers. Everything had to be put in order to protect the political society composed of decent individuals, and the externalities of that human decency—the alter-bodies—which could pollute the community had to be regulated in some way. The concatenation of immunity and policing for autonomy was not only figurative. As Lupton (2005 [1995]) noted, with the developing knowledge of hygiene, the indigents and Chinese immigrants in colonial Australia were preemptively made into a figure to be blamed for their uncleanness to care for the imagined selves—"the rational, unified self, consciously making decisions about one's conduct in everyday life" (Lupton 2005 [1995], 33-36). They became the targets of compulsory management and were concealed, confined, and deported from where they lived, strengthening the image of decent 'selves' and putting the imperatives for selves to regulate their environment voluntarily.

As such, norms "produce a differential sense of who is human and who is not, which lives are livable, and which are not" (Butler 2004a, 4). Aristotle's distinction between men who have logos or voice conceived as having political capacity, and animals like women and slaves that can only make noise with their organs and thus not have their seats in the community—goes far than describing who has the freedom of speech and define individuals' biological

and social lives (Rancière 1999 [1995], 1–3).[21] The signifier of commonality operates as a differential norm for distributing bodies, making some recognized as leading, or should lead livable life, thus having to be protected, respected, and grieved, and others who are not. Hence, the question, "What will and will not constitute a subject?" (Butler 2002 [1990], xxii) or "What constitutes those human beings as legitimate participants of a community" denotes something more than one's linguistical existence. As far as the power and police operate, "what makes some bodies and their lives intelligible, and not others" is interlinked with the physical lives and their livability (Butler 2009; 2015; Butler & Athanasiou 2013).

A node that displays this is the "spectacle lynching" against black males in the United States after the abolition and Reformation.[22] The targeted attacks against the particular bodies were performing the socio-political ordering based on the collective sensibility within racial dynamics. Before the eruption of lynching, there were concentrated struggles against enslavement and oppression to render enslaved bodies as citizens and free laborers. Nonetheless, the bodies were not deemed as ordinary human beings, and the racialized perception and belief that the bodies should stay within the radius

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[21] To note, Rancière's notion of police is focused on the distribution of the (in)capacity to have voice, the qualification to partake in political community. Here, how individual bodies come to embody social schemes and how this affects one's life seems to be relatively out of focus. However, his inquiry into police operation incorporates the dimension of livability: "[p]olitics for me has always played out around these questions: are these humans true humans, do they belong to humanity, or are they half-human or falsely-human? Are these people, who are making a noise with their mouths, speaking or not speaking?" (Rancière 2016 [2012], 162)

[22] Although the estimation differs by analyses, roughly more than 4,000 Black Americans were killed between 1877 and 1950, mainly with a formidable level of cruelty, humiliating, torturing, hanging, mutilating, often burning the bodies, and exhibiting the dead body.

of action as the wretched in a society retained for long.[23] The fact that the bodies can speak, think, and act just like them, or more than themselves—what escapes their imaginary—threatened the police order.

Juxtaposing black male bodies—rapist, monstrous, and lecherous—against the "taintless" white female bodies—conceived of as needing masculine protection—were the powerful ideology that foreclosed their capacity (Hall 1993). Black men were lynched and killed because of their "uppity," not taking one's hats off before white women, and being deemed the rapist (Williamson 1984, 203). A note pinned on a hanged body said, "Warning to all Negroes that are too intimate with white girls. This work of one hundred best citizens of the South Side." (Markovitz 2004, 1).

Notably, the perpetrators were positing themselves as the "best citizens," protecting their political body and sub-citizens from "all Negroes", the uncivil bodies (Hall 1993, 194). The self-projecting police mechanism that delineates who can be counted as the people or not is working and expressed obviously and explicitly here. In this case, extreme violence was supported by the public cause of paternalistic chivalry, presenting white men as the only subjects to act out politics. As Fanon says, "[p]rojecting his own desires onto the Negro, the white man behaves 'as if' the Negro really had them," the rape (Fanon 1986 [1952], 165).

In addition, the lynches were staged before thousands of spectators and photographed, and the scenes were sold as popular souvenirs—the postcards. Hunter or fisherman-like poses of the lynchers and spectators in photographs

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[23] On this, see Du Bois (2012 [1935]). Historians like Robin Blackburn (2011) see that the routinized lynchings were raised against the abolition, primarily aimed at foreclosing Black American's rights claims and claim for subjectivities.

bluntly represent this consciousness, the act of which asserts that "white bodies are deserved to stand above black bodies." The framework of 'immunity' regarding the political body as well as the regime of truth that defined black bodies as 'the black' and the infra-human were operating. Under the configuration of this frame, black bodies were anything but those of equal subjects, no more than corpses of animals or the host of unsanitary against the society and social subjects that have to be protected.

This reveals the intricated relationship between 'being made into a decent subject' and 'being recognized as having the value to live'. In other words, the schemes of intelligibility not only set limits to the recognition of political capacity, but also distributes values to bodies determining which are more livable and which are not in a political community. This could also be observed in the public officials' perception and cognition of the colored and precarious bodies mentioned above, that they deserve no legal protection and subhuman treatment. Expressing resistance and wrong that one should see a doctor and get appropriate treatment were not allowed ways of acting. The continuum of violence to the unlivable follows, extending from insult, social death, harassment, pathologizing, criminalization to lynching. These are the enactment of norms that form differential effects on the subjects regarding the due protection of law, which conceptually is at the core of the legitimacy of modern state power.[24]

Regarding this, one would say that this simply reflects the very logic of

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[24] In this sense, this seemingly fundamental gap between the two concepts is not incompatible in the end. I am not trying to squash the fundamental difference between (un)intelligibility and (in)visibility, but this articulation certainly gives accessibility to thinking about various forms of police and its effects on subjects.

hegemonic antagonism. Since the white-male supremacist view assumed the 'core self' and projected the self toward the world, the contour might be true. Yet, this does not explain the scene involving numerous people. [25] Let alone the fact that the people engaged in the action—including teenagers and women—were not simply unreflective to be indoctrinated by some, and we must be aware that there was an 'era' or the 'society' of lynching characterized by the prevalence and extensiveness of public involvement. Various modes of participation, the popularity of the photographs as commercial goods, and the so-called "Black Codes" of Southern states that criminalized Black Americans—related to the racialization of criminality—adumbrates that people 'lived with' that logic lying in the perpetual scheme, and how the latter was socio-politically productive in constituting subjectivity.

Importantly, they were not performing the 'whiteness' but the bodily scheme itself, reiterating the discourse—"'large groups of statements' governing the way we speak about and perceive a specific historical moment or moments" (Salih 2002, 47)—by which the identity of self and other are constituted. As a matter of fact, the act of lynchers and participants were impacted by the representation of the black and white bodies already assuming the 'white' and 'male' normalcy, which was operating for a long time. However, rather than reflecting the referent preexisting, the representations people acted out are the meditation that organizes a way of perceiving and

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[25] This is not to reject that the white farmers' economic concerns were involved in the violence. Researchers found out that the lynchers and spectators in the South were deeply resistant to their loss of labor force after the Emancipation Proclamation and the share of property rights with Black Americans after the Amendment. My claim is that all aspects are interconnected, and the reason cannot be reduced to simple economic concerns, which could only be some pretext for, or at most, the partial promoter of widespread violence.

conceiving the world, constituting the process where the object—the blackness and whiteness—emerges as such by being inserted in the realm of representation. Since the category—in this case, race—itself refers to "some intrinsically insignificant geographical/physical differences between people," what was at play was the imaginary than the real, as a result constituting the real—self-other (Dyer 1997). In other words, the identity is performatively being constructed "by the very 'expressions' that are said to be its results" (Butler 2002 [1990], 33) and, as a result, reformulating the regime of truth that distributes livability among subjects according to the identification.

Some readers may feel that lynching as an extraordinary instant is inappropriate in founding general claims stretching unto today. However, this is the continual *modus operandi* of the regime of truth, by constituting subjects that perform the truth. That obtrusive violence was the constellation of everyday performance of power relations among subjects in the perceptive and cognitive scheme everyone lives with and through.

For sure, the police operates in more quotidian modes of setting the boundary of intelligibility by our conscious and unconscious assumptions and actions according to the schemes of perception and cognition. Even the commonplace acts such as "A girl!" that people enact when a baby is born may start it. Growing up, one will get "pink" clothes as baby gifts, be taught to use the "women's" bathroom in elementary school, be imposed to check 'female' in the sex field where there are two choices when singing up, etc. Each practice is the social language game that inserts the represented or interpellated subjects and the representer or the interpellating one in the regime of truth. Hence, the truth "'acts' or 'functions'" in such a way that it

'recruits' subjects amongst individuals [⋯] or 'transforms' individuals into subjects" by its interpellation including "the banalest everyday policing (or other) operation"; "[h]e has recognized that the interpellation is 'indeed' addressed to him, and that 'it is indeed he' who has been interpellated (and not another)." (Althusser 1971 [1970], 174)

These repetitive actions construct the bodies themselves—in this case, the "woman" or "girl" and, in the previous case, the "black" or "white"—that regulates one's self and life. In reverse, this denotes that there is no 'fixed' border between subjects. It is the ongoing game that the particular bodily properties are picked up from the infinities of them, and come to be regarded as a socially significant difference that signifies the capacity. Anderson's historical analysis empirically proves this. In nineteenth-century Australia, the notion of "whiteness" is provided with different implications, fluctuating over time. According to Anderson, the racial category did not designate fixed qualities but was a reactive subject position that was constructed as a variable signifier of hierarchical distinction (Anderson 2005 [2002], 255).

If so, unlike what existing discourses on politics of recognition deal with, these 'wrongs' inflicted on the bodies are not simply reducible to the misrecognition of a particular subject. This might be one instance or form of the wrong. However, on the other side, the recognition itself cannot be understood as merely positive or right since what is at stake is the reproducing framework of the hierarchy itself imbued with the sensible constitution— implying recognition and intelligibility—and norms of a society that precedes individual subjects and 'institutes' subjectivity. This is what leads to the "institutionalized patterns of interpretation and evaluation"—the matter of

recognition, as Fraser puts it—that constitutes a being as normal/abnormal, ideal/unideal, and worthy/unworthy of political entitlements and respect (Fraser 2013, 176). If then, how can the subjects break out of the performance of acting out the framework by themselves?

2.2. Dissenting Bodies

2.2.1. Subjugation and the other way

Previously, this thesis went through the operation of regime that work through the enactments that represent the distribution of sensibility of a society that aim to arrange and immunize itself by locating the bodies according to its own truth. The process often institutes the 'zone of nonbeing', or 'the nonexistent', as Fanon puts it (Fanon 1986 [1952], 10, 137), and if as Butler sees it, the situations of discourse denote encountering of other's face, "a refusal of discourse that produces dehumanization as a result" (Butler 2004a, 36). Yet, whether or not one is the inflictor, all subjects come into a certain social being by being inserted in 'the order of signifiers' (Lacan 2001[1977]) by the iteration of truth. Although the categories are contingent, bordered bodies are made into carriers of politico-social norms: White, able-bodied male indicates the only subject, the 'capable' decent citizen; Female bodies denotes the dependency, obedience, and weakness; Black bodies are those that are most bodily—ignorant, lustrous, and perfidious—which might

deteriorate this social arrangement if they are not repressed.

Yet, how does the norms exactly be inscribed into the person? According to Butler, it is the repetition of particular discursive acts combined with knowledge or certain self-conception that is contingent performatively bring the identified bodies into being. What Young (1980) put as the 'situatedness' also draws a point to dwell on this. Discussing the construction, identification, and inferiorization of women, she asserts that the importance of the situatedness of the body in the figuration, or identification that reaches to self. It is, since bodies are exposed to the male gaze, one gets to objectify oneself through the norm that judges from our materiality and becomes anchored to them (Young 1980). Frantz Fanon's experience described in *Black Skin, White Masks* gives some indications on this in another way:

> "Look, a Negro!" It was an external stimulus that flicked over me as I passed by. I made a tight smile.
> "Look, a Negro!" It was true. It amused me.
> "Look, a Negro!" The circle was drawing a bit tighter. I made no secret of my amusement.
> "Mama, see the Negro! I'm frightened!" Frightened! Frightened! Now they were beginning to be afraid of me. I made up my mind to laugh myself to tears, but laughter had become impossible. (Fanon 1986 [1952], 111-12)

He goes on to confess, "I subjected myself to an objective examination, I discovered my blackness, [⋯] My body was given back to me sprawled out, distorted, recolored [⋯] The Negro is an animal, the Negro is bad, the Negro is mean, the Negro is ugly" (ibid. 112-86). Alienated from his corporeality, the body was 'given back' to him, circumscribed as the threatening. This scene concretely and symbolically displays how repetitive interpellation, symbolized

in the white child's perceptive scheme expressed as "a Negro!", creates the "dialectic between one's body and the world," which slowly compose his self as a body amid the "white world," which was a "structuring of self and of the world" (ibid., 83).

To generalize Fanon's hypochondria—the incongruency between one's sense of self and the bodily status—as one finds or becomes a body in the object position encoded with the evaluation under the historic-racial scheme and as a signifier, it returns to construct one's perception and conception of the world itself. As Freud says, it may be that "[t]he ego is first and foremost a bodily ego; it is not merely a surface entity but is itself the projection of a surface" (Freud 1989 [1923], 20). Even if one can deny the direct transposition of the perceptive scheme toward one's sense of self that is implied in Freud's view, it becomes that the sense of self is powerfully conditioned by the social-normative reading of one's body. Hence, as bell hooks says, the colored bodies living in white society, materially dispossessed and left as the wretched of society for a long time, are not only "reduced to the machinery of bodily physical labor." Instead, they learn "to appear before whites as though they were zombies, cultivating the habit of casting the gaze downward so as not to appear uppity" (hooks 2015 [1992], 255).

Though Fanon shows the stage of internalization does not for all erode one's subjectivity, it, on the one hand, demonstrates how a scheme of sensibility is inscribed on the subject by repetitive performance of it. On the other hand, this adumbrates the intrinsic interrelationship between the physical body and the symbolic or social one—or, to say it, the corporeal and the epidermal: living with one's material body and being rendered as a certain

subject, for example, by being called pejoratively as "a Negro," interacts. The social language is projected onto one's physical body, shaping the meaning of materiality. This positions the subject to reflect upon themselves and regulates what can be perceived, cognized, and not, impacting actual social relations and practices as well as one's self. It is, ideas "produce material realities, taking over bodies, giving them a map of the visible and orientation for moving." (Rancière 2009a, 114).[26]

On the other hand, vindicating that the identification originates from a subject's located-ness, it tells the body's relational and intersubjective mode of existence. Likewise, the physical body, constituted as a social phenomenon through the "organization and disposition of the visible," is and is not mine at the same time (Butler 2004a, 26;206). However, does this view that something that pre-exists and exceeds us defines us cast a dim outlook on the possibilities or room for creating and exercising subjectivity? How could a subject break out of the dialectic between self and the perception in the 'humanist' world that dehumanizes and delimits one's contact with others and possible action?

Critics of Foucauldian approach to power commonly contend in a similar manner that in this scheme, power is everywhere, and no room is provided for freedom or the exercise of active subjectivity (McCarthy 1994;

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[26] Fanon's remarks are referrable on the matter: "There is, first of all, the fact that the colonized person, […] like the men in underdeveloped countries or the disinherited in all parts of the world, perceive life not as flowering or a development of an essential productiveness, but as a permanent struggle against an omnipresent death. This ever-menacing death is experienced as endemic famine, unemployment, a high death rate, an inferiority complex and the absence of any hope for the future. All this gnawing at the existence of the colonized tends to make of life something resembling an incomplete death (Fanon 1965 [1959], 128).

Stehr & Adolf 2018; Taylor 1986). An important assumption in this critique is that the field of power is where the delimited scope of thought and action is accepted, and the whole range of behaviors except them are deemed as deviant so that one who acts that out could not subsist more and be eradicated. Thus, power and freedom, power and subjectivity, come to be the antipode to each other, which shares no different point concerning the supposed-to-be autonomous 'subjectivity' of modernity.

Nevertheless, the regime of truth operates 'through', not only 'on,' the subject rather than sole repression of it. As we have seen, the truth cannot persist without the perceptual framework and the subjects embodying and enacting it. Recalling the regime of truth's operation on constituting self and others, it is not hard to accept the presupposition that all artificial social formation needs to reproduce its conditions for production in order to survive (Althusser 1971 [1970], 127). The means and modes of reproduction are variegated and overlap, for instance, with the sheer force of violence against the nonconforming, or the education of decency and manner (see Elias 1969 [1939]), or through the production of material or instrumental methods, or through that of the scientific knowledge.

On a discursive level, the matrices of power and discourse depend upon the performances of truth—the repetitive and complex iteration of it—toward and by the bodies. Moreover, we could further say that all the divergent reproductive mechanism inclines toward making certain subjects, a certain selfhood. In this sense, as the practice of concrete subjects are constitutive of truth (Althusser 1971[1970], 173), the body is the animated and deaminated 'life' of the historical regime of truth.

The political significance of this perspective on the body and its role becomes apparent when compared with the idea of the body as an object that is disconnected from one's subjectivity or as something that is given and fixed. For instance, if 'race' or 'gender' is not the structure of the object—the body—or a coherent condition of a person as an entity, a gendered body could be seen as the body 'with' a label that can be performatively disengaged. It comes to be seen as a contingent trait that might have been different without the repetitive (re)signification and embodied enactment of that very norm (Zaharijević 2020, 151). In another sense, we could imagine that, if not in the 'white society' projecting gaze imbued with white supremacy and colonialism, the "slow composition" of oneself would happen otherwise, rather than rendering one as a Negro body (Fanon 1986 [1952], 111). In other words, these constitutions and signification of bodies are 'contingent,' as are power and relations.

In addition, if the body and the subject are viewed this way, it becomes possible to postulate that the regime that relies on performances also is structurally undecided, which cannot help but repetitively fail to stabilize meaning. To put it another way, "the meaning and identity of beings depend upon the historical and relational contexts in which they appear" through preconditioning and regimes of practices (Glynos & Howarth 2008, 10).

In this sense, discussing the objectionable subjugation as well as the ways to undo them becomes possible. To do this, especially with regard to our contemporaries, examining historically distinctive social relations that transcend individual boundaries is needed, rather than focusing solely on the extrapolation of norms or individual subjects' internalization. Foucault's

notion of *Assujettissement*, which denotes the process of becoming subjects, provides a point to think with (Foucault 1997 [1985]). Although the term is often translated in English as 'subjugation', implying the passivity of subjects in relation to the norm, it refers to two different states at the same time: the process by which the subjects are constituted within the nexus of power relations, being subjugated, and becoming subject, which implies the active involvement in the constitution of self with one's agency (Butler 1997, 32–33; 43; 101; Milchman & Rosenberg 2007, 55).[27]

As the word demonstrates, being a subject does not indicate mastery of one's being and action. The notion or ideal of complete autonomy is also to be refuted because of the inevitable embeddedness of us that enables the transformation of somatic singularities to subjugated individuals (Barry 2020, 103). However, as Fanon's description notes, in constructing the relation of the self with the norms, there is room for subjects to reflect on them—if without extreme violence—creating the dialectic, the spark of subjectivation. In this sense, the fact that we are bodily beings living in the social world where we appear, interact, and live with others living within the normative matrix

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[27] Chambers (2013) points out that though Butler sufficiently acknowledge the intricate meanings of *assujettissement*, she confused matters by translating this to 'subjectivation' (Chambers 2013, 99–100). For Foucault, subjectivation was "the procedure by which one obtains the constitution of a subject," which is "one of the given possibilities of organization of a self-consciousness." (Foucault 1990[1985], 253) However, I don't think that Butler was indifferent to the difference between subjectivation and *assujettissement*. Rather, I think her choice of the word 'subjugation' was intentional, which appears in her subsequent proposition of the inevitable double boundness of the subject–agency. As we will see later, she stresses that the perfect 'self' constitution of oneself like what Foucault saw in ancient Greek is impossible, because we are always dispossessed by the world that exceeds us. Accepting this, she is asserting that this 'dispossession' is itself could become the foundation of our political actions (Butler 1997; 2015; Butler & Athanasiou 2013).

of power does not simply efface subjectivity.

In reverse, as long as we are not pure minds that could escape from the social world, and because the power could only draw effects through our bodies, the body is in the position for reiteration. The materiality of ourselves, namely, the body that feels full or hungry, pain or hurt, creates the condition for realignment, destabilizing the chain of meanings via the very being with others, as we will soon see. Hence, some subjects become 'the wretched' of the society by the norms, but in a position to subjectify in a direction that halts the smooth flow of the regime and activates the possibility of society's structural undecidability.

Some cues might also be drawn from the notion of performativity that Butler recently presented, which focused more on how we politically act to resist being delegated to the state of sub-human is presented than before.[28] It especially indicates 'the conditions and possibilities for acting' of subjects as well as 'the processes of being acted on' as the introversion of the norms to the subjects (Butler 2017, 177-78). Here, the subject is the bodily located concrete individual and a discursive category, which cannot be subsumed by one another. This distinction enables the conceiving of agency as an actant that exceeds the norms though nothing in common with the free, capable

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[28] In fact, as Butler herself stipulates in the 1999 Preface of *Gender Trouble*, there are some gaps between her notion of gender performativity, and this latter notion of performativity (Butler 2002 [1999], xiv). Notably, it is when began to explicitly deal with general issues—such as 9/11, and war—in her book *Precarious Life* (2004), *and Giving Account of Oneself* (2005), and *Frames of War* (2009) she began to find if there could be any room for reflexive agency, or deliberating subject. Especially in the *Precarious Life*, She says, "We are at once acted upon and acting, and our "responsibility" lies in the junction between the two. What can I do with the conditions that form me? What do they constrain me to do? What can I do to transform them?" (Butler 2004a, 16)

agent assumed in liberal anthropology.

Fanon said his experience was the process of "slow" composition of self. It is 'slow' because the process of self-formation involves complex, repetitive, and, most importantly, ongoing dialectics between the third-person perspective imputed on him and the remaining first-person perspective. Thus, in the very process lies the instance where the instability of the norms can be revealed. To illustrate, the view conceptually indicates that there is a physical body that is not crushed with that symbolization and identification. Since the first-person perspective involves noting the foundation of our existential condition in the world, this instance also prompts us to acknowledge the discordance between one's body-self and the framework. If the identity is "both produced and destabilized in the course of this reiteration," this very instability consists of the "de-constituting possibility in the very process of repetition." (Butler 2011 [1993], xix).

In this regard, the issue is not a complete subjugation or a sculpture of norm, bereft of any freedom. Rather, the norms are open to resignification and thus are the bodies themselves—for instance, sex as the effect of gendered discourse though this also would not be something performed by sovereign individuals. Even so, then what does it mean for the subjects' doing otherwise under the regime of truth that too powerfully constitutes us?

2.2.2.   (Im)Possibility of Bodily Action

This does not mean that I can remake the world so that I become its maker. That fantasy of godlike power only refuses the ways we are constituted, invariably and from the start, by what is before us and outside of us. My agency does not consist in denying this condition of my constitution. If I have any agency, it is opened up by the fact that I am constituted by a social world I never chose. That my agency is riven with paradox does not mean it is impossible. It means only that paradox is the condition of its possibility (Butler 2004b, 3).

One could recall that bodies are always amid sensibility that defines one 'as such.' In the everyday experience, bodies are under the gaze of others who invokes them as "Dirty nigger!" and are often exposed to extreme threat due to those schemes of sensibilities (Fanon 1986 [1952], 82). Like this, we are surrounded by those forces that identify and regulate us, which cannot be overcome by one's will. If so, could the bodies decide to act and live otherwise than just being subjected to those forces and assigned different life values? How could the subjects derail from the process of normalization? Is there any room for an alternative agency?

As Martha A. Fineman notes, the 'liberal subject' model, which has been prevailing in modern to contemporary political and legal thoughts and practices, view that the political agency is related to the work of persons who are politically and legally identified with their autonomy (Fineman 2004). As we've seen through a rough genealogy, the regime which assumes this seemingly neutral conception also presupposes the non-neutral and far-reaching body-mind distinction, which tends to conceal the socio-political property of the body.

In addition, social relationality, which inherently involves bodily movement and interactions, is neglected since the sources which hamper an

individual's mastery over self and environment need to be suppressed or quarantined in one's private life. Hence, the 'inherent vulnerability,' a human condition emanating from our corporeality, neediness, and affective and social natures, which makes dependency on others inescapable, disappears offstage. Hence, within the dominant ontology, it becomes hard to capture how those 'bounded' bodies under the complex and powerful regime of truth could act and perform politically with others.

Considering this, even for the theoretical articulation of subjectivity, it is hard to deny that the analysis must capture the embodied subjectivities rather than restrict the body by its fidelity to disembodied reason and rational individual subjects. This is why conceiving the body as the center of the subject's sociality is requested. Here, the body's living experiences in time and space reveal inherent 'entanglement' with others and dependency of ourselves, which may come to light as the starting point of subjectivation despite and against the norm. Nevertheless, if subjects, and especially 'selves,' are in a state of being saturated by the norms, politics as a disagreement must involve some sort of divergence and invention of subjects. This is why Rancière's politics, which involves nothing other than the projection of political subjugation, starts with moments of "disidentification."

For Fanon, disidentification and subjectivation start from the very violence on one's body and physically toxic abjection of selfhood—the undoing of one's personhood, the capacity to persevere in a livable life (Butler 2004b, 1). Since the institutionalized abjection induces the meditation between the world, the body, and the self—as in the dialectic—the destruction of the pathogenic subjectivity may start from the very point. Thus, even though a

preceding self that does not come to exist through the norm is not presupposed, one must break out of the identified self to keep the self 'beside' and be bounded to one's body (Fanon 2004 [1961]). Thus, the 'final prayer,' in a first-person perspective, prays to one's body, "O my body, make of me always a man who questions!" (Fanon, 1986 [1952], 232)

How could then the body, if asked, respond? Here, I would like to investigate Rancière's oft-quoted example: a carpenter Gabriel Gauny's diary published in a workers' newspaper, The Workers' Warning Bell (*Le tocsin des travailleurs*). Gauny wrote,

> "Thinking himself at home, as long as he has not finished the room in which he nails down the boards, he likes the layout of the place; if the window opens onto a garden or over a picturesque horizon, he stops moving his hands for an instant and shifts his thoughts toward that spacious view in order to enjoy it better than the owners of the neighboring homes." (Gauny 1983, 45–46; quoted in Rancière 1989 [1981], 81; 2004, 199; 2009, 71)

This description, written in a third-person perspective of what he is doing presents a typical form of disidentification: In the given distribution of the sensible, being a worker meant "a determinate body, a determinate coordination between the gaze and the arms," "a correspondence between a sensory equipment and his destination." Gauny broke out of and deconstructed the sense that match one's condition. Disengaging the laboring arms and the distracted gaze, he subverted the appropriate relationship between what a 'humble' body can do and cannot (Rancière, 2009, 71).

What is important here is not only that a 'granted' docile incarnate being is messing around, doing other than what is given. Rather, Gauny is staging the capacity of reason no differently from bourgeois—assumed to be the bearer of reason—which is negated when he is identified as 'a worker.' In

other words, he is displaying a capacity that disrupts the naturalness of separation between two kinds of human beings—the proletariat and the bourgeois (Rancière in Gage & Rancière 2019 [2016], 12).

As a matter of fact, Gauny's case is political in a particular sense, and what the scene itself contains is not politics per se, as we will see soon. For Rancière, politics designates the subject's disruption of the regime of truth or the police by its violation of assumptions. If the police count and distribute bodies according to its naturalized hierarchical and exclusive logic, the politics occurs in the intermittent acts of dissenting against its smooth flow, claiming equality as a body—in the name of a citizen or a human being that was deemed as unimaginable before, as Rosa Parks' Bus Boycott. Likewise, "[P]olitics exists wherever the count of parts and parties of society is disturbed by the inscription of a part of those who have no part." (Rancière 1999 [1995], 123) To put it another way, it is the very positing of exceeding and refuting bodies against the unequal distribution of the sensible that excludes some from sharing the world—of which bodies do—that challenges the naturality or necessity of arrangement.

In this sense, the scene of Gauny symbolically exhibits the structure and potentiality of politics: how disbanding the presumed ways of doing, ways of being, and ways of saying rather than expressing one's identity could be waged as the attempt to refute the denial of equality entailed by police logic; how certain population who are denied of one's capacity, or even humanity could project their voice; refusing to stay in the frame of social destiny by projecting one's body into a new configuration of the sensible.

However, "the political" here is a fictional dramaturgy, or at least,

abstraction from realities.[29] On the one hand, it is literally fictional: It is counterfactual. Gauny is not merely asking why his reason is being denied while others are recognized but enacted the very denied capacity. On the other hand, like a theatrical performance, the action is ephemeral in that the moment of disidentification does not fit into the logic of ordinary life, and the actor, Gauny himself, does not control the meaning of the action. In other words, his action ends and stops in that scene, but its implications start after because of the body and movement's situatedness. Rather than affirming that the unjustifiably unequal social resources made the body 'incapable' of a political act, this very action illustrates that there is not a pre-determined capacity to act out politics—or to start something new in Arendt's terms. Thus, not repeating the same logic which politically dispossesses the dispossessed subjects from the community of equals, it accuses the wrong of the distribution of sensible itself.

One may contend that Gauny's bodily movement is 'autobiographical' thus, does not involve the invention of new subjectivities, which must be formulated collectively. However, seen from our view, it is the situatedness of the body which makes it political. Dissensus here does not lie in staging a once-and-for-all monologue or soliloquy that stands apart from the world of interpretation and reiteration. Even though this scene seems to remain distinct from society in general, the historically-politically constituted identity of the body implies the link, which paradoxically becomes the starting point of challenging the broader distribution of bodies. In this sense, Gauny himself,

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[29] Though Rancière (2009b) explicitly mentions on 'dramaturgy of politics' (Rancière 2009a, 117; 119), the dimension of dramaturgy is comparatively neglected in literatures on Rancière's work. Work of Etxabe (2018) is referential concerning the matter.

as a "locus in which an incoherent (and often contradictory) plurality of such relational determinations interact[s]" (Certeau 1984, xi), becomes political.

In addition, as Rancière points out, the fact that the diary is 'published in laborer's newspaper' is important (Rancière 2009 [2008], 71). The situatedness in space, within relations, and in certain states, imputing norms on what one can and cannot do or imagine doing becomes public. The condition of our existence as a body that is ineliminable and exceeds the norm promulgated in "Acting in Concert," "Beside Oneself: On the Limits of Sexual Autonomy," which the chapter title of Butler's Undoing Gender (2004), is the point as like Fanon's subjugation—the violence and abjection. The sources of agency come as follows: though each individual body or some bodies contain the trace of norms, in the assembly of bodies, the "I" and the "we" are equivocated, and the meaning of the speeches is generated between bodies.

In distinction with the performativity in the process of subjugation, in Dispossession: *The Performative in the Political* (2013) and *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly* (2015), Butler draws the significance of performative subjectivation, which forms collective subjects, the assembly of bodies that present themselves against subjugating and silencing norms. The bodies' collective appearance is performative because they are exhibiting concerted enactment that the regime of truth hadn't expected or made unintelligible.[30] Mainly, it makes present the failure of complete subsumption

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[30] For sure, considering the subjugating aspect of performativity that lifted the body out of the natural 'such' is one thing, but theorizing bodily performativity can be more variegated than this. However, this transition is not a severance from the former notion but a plausible way to articulate the ontic-level analysis with ontological arguments. Butler's statements on her earlier notion of performativity and the later one is notable. According to her, "[w]e might be tempted [..] to say, 'but if it signifies, it is surely

of the norm, projecting the room for agency which exceeds and defies the discursive injunction (Butler 2002 [1990], 72). Here, bodily performativity is no more individual—that which is the exteriorization of interiority, or interiorization of exteriority—but emerges when operated collectively. In other words, when the bodies gather due to the very exposure to the unjustifiable operation of power or repressive power matrix that disregards some body's livability, even without explicit speech, articulates meaning—we are livable bodies even before the regime of truth's recognition and identification.

　　Hence, it is not in a strictly identarian sense—which inevitably assumes the fixed, unitary, undissolved self—that the bodies claim. Since the bodies do not share anything other than the common existential condition of vulnerability, their making of a temporary political community or assembly casts off the presumed sources of 'commonality'—the core of police logic— the qualification for being livable as well as the capacity to have a voice. Not the equality of the reasoning capacity or mastery but the equal inescapability of dependency as bodies are presented, which refutes existing logic by their act of staging. Also, they not merely create a chain of equivalence but also antagonism. They denaturalize and destabilize the scheme of intelligibility by not doing what is viable and deductible from the logic of the given truth. By doing so, their performance comes to reveal and accuse of the unjustifiable condition, yet not strictly claiming one's negated piece of cake.

　　Admittedly, the institutional recognition of worker's rights is

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discursive,' [⋯] But that rejoinder, even if it holds, does not let us examine that important chiasmic relation between forms of linguistic performativity and forms of bodily performativity. They overlap; they are not altogether distinct; they are not, however, identical with one another." (Butler 2015, 8-9)

important, but if the imagination on 'what we can do' is limited to the viable tactics for achieving them, the disagreement may be nothing other than the expansion, repetition, or, at most, variation of the logic of police rather than disrupt it. Instead, politics as a collective staging of dis-identificatory performance become foreseeable through connecting the unlinked, hypothetically or in real. The subject that intervenes upon the visible and sayable does not exist before the act. Rather, the act itself is the production of the subject that was not given and was unthinkable in the police logic (Schalk 2018, 2). As the "person" who became the actor in the destruction of the network of shared values that underpinned hierarchical intelligibility, a collective sense, and the political imagination—the framing of different collective life—which, in turn, enables resistance against the dominating politico-social security logic by appropriating common bodily experiences of subjugation as a starting point for political subjectivation.[31] As the fiction allows us to imagine otherwise, envisioning an alternative configuration of world is not impossible.

In this sense, rather than the expression of a given identity, politics' norms of evaluation are in the democratic equality that is denied, which assumes everybody's right to have a part in the community of citizens—the right to be perceived and conceived of as having a political voice. Radically recasting the existing distribution of the sensible, the performance gets to reconfigure the

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[31] Thus, the subjects performing politics are acting "as artists who make exist in a new configuration what doesn't exist in the present configuration. The key point is that they do not enact it as their capacity as a group, as the capacity possessed by the group of "the workers," but as the capacity possessed by those to which the capacity is denied in general. So they affirm the common capacity, the universal capacity as the capacity of those to whom it is denied in general, or the capacity of anybody." (Rancière in Rancière & Honneth 2016, 94)

unequal logic and order through its performing of equality in the capacity to take charge of what is common to the community (Rancière 1999 [1995], 30).

Nevertheless, this 'fictionality' of politics seems to draw practical problems: if the existing configuration of social sensibility is what precedes, exceeds us, and thus, as Butler's remarks at the start of this section denote, what we cannot control, can this scheme of politics, or the dramaturgy be employed in more complicated and elusive circumstances? For now, let me reserve the answer, but keep this thread of thought in mind when closely examining our present quandaries in the next chapter.

3.   Bodies in Neoliberal Age

3.1.   Neoliberalism and Governmentality

3.1.1.   Articulation: Views on Neoliberalism

Previously, this thesis addressed the general framework of performative politics. In this chapter, investigating the time or condition we live in, I will readdress the link between subjugation and subjectivation, normalization and political subject, and subjugation and agency more concretely.

The primary objective is to articulate the *modus operandi* of power that authoritatively produces subject positions and conditions of political subjectivities today. This is to inquire into the regime of truth and its underlying logic behind our experience of being subjects. Though the answer

could be varied, I investigate something extensive, prevalent, and, thus, powerfully intervening in the subjugation of bodies: neoliberalism.

In 2005, David Harvey proclaimed that "[t]here has everywhere been an emphatic turn towards neo-liberalism in political-economic practices and thinking since the 1970s." (Harvey 2005, 2) Yet, stretching up to today, the prefix neo- that spliced in 1938 is no longer living up to its name. Neoliberal practices and modes of thinking are not novel but have become hegemonic.

After the term became chief academic parlance in the 1990s, a plethora of literature focusing on the economic paradigm shift was produced. Nevertheless, with its becoming a powerful force that conditions society around the world, what the term designates became murky. Some explicitly contend that neoliberalism has no analytical power or lost it due to the inundation of ambiguous usage (Boas & Gans-Morse 2009; Ferguson 2010).

However, neoliberalism is not a stable and neatly delineated economic program nor a coherent theory without contradiction. As we will soon see, it consists of multiple strands of thought, practices, and logic behind them, which cannot be reduced to a definitive set of descriptions. In addition, they straddle various social, political, cultural, and economic phenomena and institutions at different levels of complexity and transparency. The norms and principles of neoliberalization are also elastic, quintessentially exhibited by its fugitive bonding with discourses on human rights and tolerance to extremely exclusionary and discriminatory ones like the criminalization of immigrants. The ideas and programs of neoliberalism have absorbed various worldviews to straddle into political contestations, regardless of whether an agenda is that of traditional left or right and conservative or progressive. This "capacity to

bring forth countertendencies" (Tickell & Peck 2003, 165) partly explains the difficulty of reaching a consensus on the conception.

If so, is the term useless in analyzing contemporary regime of truth? It's hard to conclude hastily. Strategically, it is a lens that enables us to politicize what is powerfully building up our subject position and subjectivity. Especially, as we will see in this chapter, the epistemological grammar of the neoliberal regime of truth tends to obscure its political aspects from our view. Thus, to re-articulate, the term needs to be mobilized. Analytically, the term enables us to grasp the continuity and transformation of the regimes of truth through a historical lens. Still, the connotation must be delineated to be utilized as a tool. Through a brief investigation into existing approaches to neoliberalism in critical literature, I will clarify the thesis' approach that fits its objective.

On this, I refer to the classification of Ward and England (2016), which covers a range of approaches without locking them up in excessive nomenclature. According to them, there are four approaches to analyzing neoliberalism, each of which sees it as policies and programs, a state form, a systemic and hegemonic project, and a governmentality (Ward & England 2016, 11).

Though they put each approach as distinctive, retroductively testing each approach in the account, I incorporate the first and second one for theoretical distinction since the methodological independency of the second is doubtful. Also, they are similar in basic epistemology regarding the nature of explanatory concepts, causal narrative, and understanding of social relations, power, and agency, but only in the view toward the primary site of historical

structural change. Hence, a refined version of the cartography that this thesis presents will be the approaches analyzing neoliberalism as (1) A set of or crystallization of reformist policy and programs. (2) A hegemonic program or ideology. (3) One form of governmentality.

The first approach presents neoliberalism as a regime of policies or programs reconfiguring social arrangements, especially the state-market relationship. The majority of social scientific analysis aligns with or partly adopts this approach for clarity and parsimony. Thus, there are variegated perspectives on the essence of transformations among people employing. For some, neoliberalism is "an economic policy regime" whose core lies in the desire for monetary and fiscal stability (Callinicos 2012, 67; Arestis 2023), the institutionalization of deregulation (Buch-Hansen & Wigger 2010), or the center of shifting national policy interconnected with other socio-economic relationships (Hockfield 2020). Despite the differences, they reveal that neoliberalism is an extensive social restructuring program involving the state power it denies. On a more abstract level, the essence of neoliberalism is condensed into several modes or patterns of change and initiatives: the relegation of state/public ownership and management to private agents such as the market, corporations, and international/global institutions, embodied in slogans such as "retreat of state regulation," "liberalization," "deregulation," and "privatization of state process" (Peck 2010).

However, not all adopting this approach provide sufficient explanations on why the changes in that very structure and institutions by deregulation are—not only the result of but—crucial in articulating the problem. In assuming the universal meaning of signs and definitive causality between

phenomena, they tend to focus on what is readily observable within the formalistic logic—like tax rate, unemployment rate, public spending, number of labor unions, legal reforms on the regulation of private enterprise. In other words, relying on the presumed functional differentiation of labor, the arguments tally or enumerate the phenomena from each realm. Hence, focusing on the sediment itself rather than sedimentations, they tend to garble neoliberalism itself with its symptoms or end-state results while circumventing the various social logics that conditioned and sustain neoliberalism.

Some properly attempt to historicize their observations by finding neoliberal policies' historical and theoretical roots. Often, the policies and their impacts are seen as the actualizations of the visions in "Ur-texts" or pre-established principles, literality, and direct correlations assumed (Jones 2012; Chomsky 1999; Robinson et al. 2006). While the conceptual epidermises were extracted in a list, a "Whiggish" pedigree stretching from von Mises or Hayek—occasionally ascending to Smith on "invisible hand" and Locke's "natural rights" liberalism—reaching its golden age through the radical state restructuring of Thatcher-Reagan to present days is constructed.

In so doing, the contingencies of doctrines and programs are relatively ignored, and how a certain political matter has consolidated as the regime of truth to draw substantive impact. For instance, even if the economic "scientism"—the belief that true economic science will constitute the solution to socio-political problems and thus should direct political decisions—of Friedman, Rüstow, and Eucken is taking over, others like Buchannan, Röpke, and Hayek had ad different vision, opposing the inordinate emphasis on

human rationality. Yet, what conditioned the former modes of thinking's taking the authorship to make a particular version of rationality as a work that could be recited? Without excessive generalization, a neatly arranged genealogy cannot explain it.

Notably, political chains have been changed in response to real-world situations like the national crisis or the emergence of a new powerful foe of market freedom. Also, programs took on many forms and produced variegated results due to their transmutational nature, shaped by spatial and temporal circumstances, historical context, and existing power relations. All of this post the insufficiency of analyzing neoliberalism solely through the formalized lens.

To take what conditioned and enabled the hegenomization of neoliberal policies and programs fully into accounting neoliberalism, something far more than the examinations of the current mechanisms and their effects is needed. Rather than the sediments, the sedimentation of different social logics in the long term as well as the relationship between ideas and practices, should be addressed since neoliberalism is not a static, evolutionary project with a singular ideology. With a lens that can encompass the interaction of the transmogrifications with the socio-political imaginaries, visions, and forms of power, each of which is contingent, we may better understand how neoliberalism is exerting constitutive effects today.

The second prominent approach sees neoliberalism as a comprehensive hegemonic and systemic project of capitalism. In other words, neoliberalism is the initiative of capitalist class corporate—involving the state, transnational capital, technocrats, elite networks, and right-wing politicians—promoted by

their crisis awareness at the end of the 1960s and the 1970s (Duménil & Lévy 2004; Harvey & Risager 2016). The cause for restructuring capitalism through globalization is also obvious: It is the 'imperative' of capitalism which could not retain itself without expanding the market, and the "'method' of Capital" (Guattari & Aliez 1984, 275) to maintain a lopsided market that exploits and poverties laborers without structural transformations toward substantive equality. The subsumption of everything under "the semiotic system of capitalism" (Guattari & Aliez 1984, 273) powerfully reproduces these social relations. To sustain capitalists means overproduction, social structure based on exploitative relationships, subsidizing apparatus—law, ideas, police, entertainment, state-market relations, education, etc.—and feigned sensibility that obscures or conceals the personified interests are instituted. Hence, inequalities could grow while the flexible and mutually accelerating means of production enable their concentration, leading to the global "re-proletarianization of the working class" (Balibar 2014, 158). The current global hegemony of neoliberalism exhibits the prosperity of this centripetal project.

All in all, literature employing this approach tends to distinguish itself from others by focusing on the social structure rather than dispersed economic and political policies. Hence, they are particularly adept at pointing out the integrality of neoliberalism's social and political dimensions. For instance, some provide meaningful criticisms against the assumptions in scientific discourses that ideologically subsidize economization and insufficient alternatives—such as supply-side economics, monetarism, and the "Third Way" (Clarke 1988). In addition, since social structures and relations are

conceptualized concretely, it also sees how a subject's body is immanently involved in the operation of power within and through the process of production and reproduction (Federici 2020). These are the points on which the surface-level examination cannot address.

As such, their criticisms against the hierarchical dispersion of power and dimensions of oppression hidden in the naturalized presuppositions, concepts, and categories that implicate subjects in the reproduction of power structures concur with what this thesis is trying to do. To borrow Bidet's interpretation, the "modern character of 'truth' resides in its reference not only to science and technical efficacy" but also "to its public character" (Bidet 2016 [2014], 80). Likewise, universal good or imperative such as "more liberty" or the "playing field for all" are critical tenets of social arrangements, exploitative institutions, and practices that enable some to earn by siphoning off others' security are mapped out. The 'tender' discourses assist the concentration of the social and intellectual authorities—as a 'diligent and smart entrepreneur'—and the technological means of material production in some, making them exercise unjustifiably high leverage on society in general (Barkan 2013; Littler 2013).

However, affirming the points is one thing, and conceptualizing the current system as the procurement of a party with definitively existing collective identity and interest is another. Under this scheme, the power is either in our hands or theirs; as implied in the traditional notion of 'ideology,' social discourses are either truth or false—if 'they' are pertained. In this sense, as far as they are based on certain forms of class relations, qualitative differences between modern bourgeois society and the current become collateral. In other words, neoliberalism becomes just one version of

capitalism and is no other than "neoliberal capitalism" or "advanced industrial capitalism" (Williams & Satgar 2021). Often, literature implicitly expresses the uncomfortableness of the term "neo-liberal" by using the word "late capitalism" to emphasize continuity from the assumed-to-be core (Jameson 1991 [1989], xii).

Admittedly, the feasibility conditions for capitalism's hegemony have gradually accumulated, integrating more and more core institutional spheres and social relations under modernistic instrumental reason with the evolving system of technology (Adorno & Horkheimer 2002 [1944]). However, neoliberalism and capitalism are not synonymous. Theoretical and practical interventions and mediations related to neoliberalization are specific and contingent. Although neoliberalism utilizes the logic of capitalism already in operation, it did not glide along a teleological track. In other words, like the historicity of capitalism as the system grounded on the private ownership of the means of production, the advent and solidification of neoliberalism are specific and could not be pinned down as mere background.

More importantly, though class and relations in production are two determining forces, the structure of social order cannot be captured fully if the relationships of domination and oppression are grasped schematically. If neoliberalism can be viewed as a certain regime of truth and contains the performative construction that we've seen above, only some part of the power operation under this complex and intricate regime of truth could be captured through the distinction between the oppressor and its victims. Neoliberalism's 'elitist' roots can only denote the preliminary formation of truth but cannot secure the current modes of dispossession, involving micro-logical processes

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where subtle and routinized operations of power that subjects perform toward others and themselves. More problematically, it also fails to capture the subtle bodily practices that challenge the subjugating norms, which are crucial in light of political subjectivity.

Concerning this, the diagram of domination-oppression makes it hard to properly articulate the complex relations of power in the current age and concrete practices. Thus, as Stuart Hall said, even if its ideological aspects are underlying in the term neoliberalism, in analysis, the term is "politically necessary," even to "give the resistance to its onward march content, focus and a cutting edge" (Hall 2011, 706).

The third perspective articulates neoliberalism as more than an agentic method of oppression or a set of theoretical programs or policies of a state or market. Instead, it sees neoliberalism as a form of governmentality driven by a distinctive economic rationality that enables its operation. Especially the neoliberal version of rationality is a specific political ontology based on the privileging of the free-standing market—as a logical construct and a material reality. It translates, narrates, and evaluates things through peculiar economic parlances, following the neoclassical emphasis on preference, choice, profit- and utility- maximization. Hence, neoliberalization is about depoliticizing power by molding government according to market logic and values (Foucault 2008 [1979]).

Moreover, the term govern-mentality designates an array of institutions, logics, knowledge, tactics, and practices of peculiar techniques and procedures that direct individuals' conduct and relationship with self. The concept assumes the connectivity between the supra- and infra- or macro- and

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micro-operation and technologies of power without a fixed locus. In one sense, neoliberalism, uniquely appropriating Western colonial modernity's epistemological and cultural developments in a lopsided mode, is the universalization of particular instrumental economic rationality, the logic of the capitalist market. This depoliticizing political economism not only shapes the policies and practices of the economy but also affects and changes individuals' psychic and physical lives profoundly. In other words, neoliberalism is a form of government that iterate the rationality toward 'oneself' by the apparatus of 'truth.'

Likewise, the approach captures the constitutive relationship between the self and the world, which cannot be understood in a purely empirical or (the distribution of) power-makes-the-world manner. Through this, we can investigate the complex and subtle interactions between sensibility, epistemic principles, and politics rather than reducing one to another. As I claimed, this intersection powerfully builds up the regime of truth, involving the sense and state of what, where, and why we are and what we could do or not. Hence, the method is especially appropriate to dwell on the regime of truth which produces contemporary subject positions, subjectivities, and imaginaries: the form of ourselves and relationships among and between people; how people come to embody particular social valuation; how the 'technologies of the self' is working and constituting us; the scope our political thinking and especially that of alternatives.

However, there are concerns about governmentality's usage as a catch-all term that ends up divorcing social analysis from historical contexts (see Dean 2010). This caution is plausible since the broad concept of

governmentality could lead to an analysis that subsumes everything under it, thereby obscuring the distinctiveness of phenomena. Admittedly, some literature on neoliberal governmentality obviously exhibits this tendency, ironically reifying the concept by presenting that everything has the function of fulfilling neoliberal imperatives.

In addition, although this thesis agrees that neoliberalism is a crucial rationality in making sense and claim of the world today, I deny that a strictly neoliberal one is "the" rationality of the present. Indeed, it constructs a complex regime of truth, but the construction itself is not the solo work of it. This goes without introducing serious antinomy with the concept of governmentality itself, a historical form of power that had emerged in the late modern but sedimented within the grip of the preceding techniques of government involving the historical schemes of colonial/capitalist modernity. Still, as a unique theory and practice on subjectivity, neoliberalism at its core involves governance through the moral and sociological normalization of a certain frame on 'what it means to be human at all.' Intersecting with other persistent sensibilities that suppose hierarchy between bodies, neoliberalism draws the market agent's normativity for reconstructing the social order, sensibilities, and subject.

Likewise, with sufficient circumspection on the ongoing transformations and interstices, it is hard to say that the governmentality approach could be more reductive than others. Instead, the method is keen on capturing its manifold dimensions, depth, and mutability far beyond the purview of economics and the governmental policy sector, including our focus, the configuration of sensibilities, and bodies. The comprehensive mechanism

and ramifications of the "economic analysis of the non-economic" and the market logic that stretch from the dimension of knowledge to our self-conception are what this approach focuses on (Foucault 2008[1979], 243). It enables us to ask, "What happens to our self and relationship when all aspects of our lives tend to be retroactively linked to market valuation as a logic of truth?"

These three approaches, whose focuses range from institutional changes to the subject formation, are not exclusive and share the view that neoliberalism is a mutant of modern and globalized capital imaginaries that impacts the current political world. They can all concede that neoliberalism is affecting the scope of our thinking, individual and collective action, decisions, relationships with others, etc., in-depth. Still, contestations between the approaches also activate the theoretical debates and articulations on what is the essence of its power and, thus, what should be criticized primarily to confront its unjust ramifications.

In addition, with some de-essentialization of basic epistemology, they can also be blended. Significantly, the second and third approaches, on some points, tend to draw similar curves in a different dimension: for instance, in articulating 'the logic of instrumental extraction and commodification' (the second) and the result of the 'rationalization of the market as the site of truth' (the third). What they share as a critical thinking method of "regime of practices" is the revelation of "what type of assumption, of familiar notions, of established, unexamined ways of thinking the accepted practices are based," estranging what are "taken for granted" (Foucault 2001 [1981]).

In analyzing the society impacted by neoliberalism, this thesis also will

take a non-isolated approach. While mostly focusing on neoliberalism as a theory and practice of subjectivity through performative meaning- and value-making, it also addresses the complexity of power that articulates various social logics, including capitalism and racialization. Criticisms of capitalist rationalities in the early twentieth century—such as Adorno or Marcuse—are referenceable. This is to seek a ground not based on prevailing formalism which exaggerates the autonomy of each element, nor on the instrumentalism that, in a reductionist mode, sees every element as the intended means of domination.

As a matter of fact, analyzing neoliberalism through this lens should not lead to asserting that all the power and norms impacting us are essentially rooted in neoliberalism or that it is the only reality we are living by. Not all the politico-social quandaries we encounter can be traced back to neoliberalism, and it is through the intersections of other police schemes it draws power, not as some Being that exists steadily and substantially. Assuming or asserting a solid and omnipotent substance of neoliberal evil would be to set up scarecrows, which would be moot.

Still, the striking similarities between the three incidents across the world suggest the need for conceptualizing neoliberalism via its performative dimension with subjectivity: the collapse of an Amazon warehouse in Edwards, Illinois, due to a tornado, a fire at a Coupang warehouse in South Korea, and a fire at the Tazreen Fashions factory in Bangladesh in 2012. In all these workplaces, where speed and efficiency are the priority goal, workers were not allowed to prepare for accidents or leave their stations after the outbreak of fires to evacuate. Instead, they were forced to continue working

by their managers, being told "neglect the alarm" or "it hasn't broken out. Keep work."

Even if each place mentioned takes up a different topography in the geographies of global capitalism—at the Global South or North, or the 'core' or 'periphery' of the global system (Murray and Overtone 2016; Balibar 2020, 271)—it seems that 'certain' forms of subjectivity are being staged. Promulgating that the neoliberal regime of truth is powerfully reconstructing politico-social realities and imaginaries across the world through the subject constitution as such, I will investigate its footings in the next section.

3.1.2. Sedimentations: Settlements of Neoliberal Governmentality as a New Regime of Truth

"Economics are the method. The object is to change the heart and soul"
(Thatcher in Butt and Thatcher, 1981)

Previously, this thesis promulgated the approach we will take to interpret reality by how it will conceptualize neoliberalism. In this chapter, we briefly go through the process in which neoliberalism has been settled as a new regime of truth in order to dwell on the ground and interstices of subject positions and subjectivity.

In those recurring scenes mentioned above, blaming the managers for their ruthlessness—or the lack of virtue—will circumvent the structural nature of the problem staged in the detention center case. To deal with it, dwelling

on what enables the plot to be repeated in different spatiotemporal stages is needed. Following the notion of the regime of truth, we may presume that they are exhibiting how subjects embody and animate the operational principles of the contemporary, especially in a neoliberal age.

Regarding the role and status of the "manager," the instances are particularly significant in addressing the matter. Managers meditate between the laborers and the giant corporation (the owner) and between the market and individuals. Management today denotes exercising the 'technologies' of capital toward people. For a person in a managerial position to be recognized as prominent, one has to be proficient at using the technologies of government for the smooth flow of capital—like an orchestra conductor (Marx 1991 [1894], 507). In other words, in a situation where each laborer is reduced as a numerical component in market logic, managers are those who project the dictates of capital toward individuals. In this sense, one can say that the dictates directly regulate the subjectivity of the manager herself. Hence, as the embodiment of the ethos of neoliberalism, their actions crucially reveal the normally concealed modus operandi of neoliberal rationality.

In this sense, the incidents show how neoliberal rationality governs "the sayable, the intelligible, and the truth criteria" (Brown 2006, 693), thus taking hold of our subjectivities and imagination. Via the gaze, workers' voice for safe returning home is nothing but a "noise" that disrupts the opportunities for gain. It does not make any sense in terms of effective management for profit maximization. Instead, what is concerned the 'speech' might be the following: Resources had to be allocated optimally, and costs must be minimal; Since all labor is converted into costs, wages, and preventive and protective measures

are the loss, especially to the existence which are nothing other than instruments; What they do is to carry out the order of the corporation, the market, or the capital; As expendable, replaceable components of market, they are non-persons that do not deserve the costs for safety.

Likewise, the effects of neoliberalism on our subjectivities are powerful. It projects market rationality toward the process of our thoughts and conducts and, in turn, elicits material impacts like the persisting unlivable labor environment or the foreclosed bodies' deaths. To gain a deeper understanding of the matter, the thesis will now explore and examine the conditions that enabled the projection of rationality and its permeation.

To note, the preceding statement at the start of this section is that of Margaret Thatcher, who launched extensive state reformation agendas in the United Kingdom during the 1980s. Her remark is noticeably prophetic in exhibiting what is at the heart of governmental rationality. Yet, what does it mean to change "the heart and soul" of people, and what may enable, or has enabled, this? The 'heart and soul' in the phrase may encompass a subject's desire—the heart, expressed as one's ideal and inclination towards certain values—and self—the soul, absorbed in and moves for specific values. Seen as such, what it aims to change would be the very subjectivity of the people.

Yet, what exactly is to utilize "economics" as the mean? An intuitive answer could be the use of economic knowledge and market-oriented logistics for initiating public policy based on certain logic of economics, which distribute social goods, including authorities, properties, opportunities, and stability. Even so, how can an academic discipline be the guiding principle of "the heart and soul," which seems to have far more weight and deeper breadth

than the former?

In this case, the 'truth' weaving them is the economy and economic mode of thinking. Yet, far more than using academic knowledge as references for decision-making, it actually means making them the primary principle of desire and self, thus rendering economics the *modus operandi* of subjects. And yet, the question "through what?" is still unresolved. This leads us to the concept of 'governmentality'. More than just a centralized action of government, it encompasses an array of mechanisms from material to symbolic devices which swirls into making individual subjects.

However, the idea of changing heart and soul through economics is not an out-of-blue pledge or project of those in power like Thatcher, the almighty dictator. Instead, if we look into the remark from a performative perspective, it must be the interpellative mobilization of the social logic that is in operation. However, many literatures explain it as showing the 'summit' of neo-liberalization, narrating the change starting from the impact of the catastrophic World Wars and the rise of socialism. For sure, they formed a generalized sense of social crisis, providing room for problematizing 'state planning' itself and presenting an alternative locus of human freedom by some intellectuals and politicians. Nonetheless, that circumscribing periodization may equalize a particular political regime with the regime of truth, focusing only on the topical political alignment of neoliberalism while belittling the complexity of the regime of truth and how it is formed. Even if various 're-liberalizing' campaigns were formulated from then on, neoliberal agendas did not roll up to their full scale or pull oneself from a schismatic status even after the end of Thatcher's mandate (Pijl 2012[1984], xii).

Hence, those events are insufficient in explaining why neoliberal initiatives could prevail till now, pushing aside others. What enabled the regime of truth to be acceptable and authoritative? Even from the perspective of historicity and contingency, neoliberal initiatives were in line with a multifaceted and long-ranging ensemble of practical and discursive transformations, yet not as a natural course of development. Instead, in a way more expansive and comprehensive than said, it is an 'ongoing' process that is transforming the configuration of the distribution of sensible. In this section, this thesis draws a broad-brush picture of this change, especially focusing on how the field of imagination has been altered by several acts of make-visible (Rancière 2007[2003], 113-14).

Acknowledgedly, attempts to introduce economy—"the correct manner of managing individuals, goods, and wealth within the family"—into state management were already forming a part of the sixteenth-century discourses. Yet, political economy was not about a system with self-sufficient operating principles immunized from other metaphysical principles and spheres of life (Eggers 2016, 86). However, with the development of capitalism, forced onwards by the desire for profit, such an embedded conceptualization of economy gave way to that of economy possessing its own interior time, being an entity "which grows in accordance with its own necessity and develops in accordance with autochthonous laws." (Foucault 2005 [1982], 245). This shift was supported by the philosophical and juridical recognition of the individual as an economic agent, equally sharing self-interestedness as a fundamental constituent of human nature—like in Quesnay's and Bentham's.

Replacing the intrinsic values with extrinsic valuation—the

measurement—anthropology came to ground discourses on public matters when the good government came to be equalized with economic government. Notably, under the formally egalitarian legal framework of the eighteenth-century, there was the logic of instrumentalism bolstered by the economy's becoming a 'lawlike science' for the common good (Harcourt 2020, 209; Sewell 2021, 286).[32] The disciplinary mechanism is introduced and expanded, which turns each human body into a useful instrumental force for capital accumulation in the name of the general good while reducing their political force (Foucault 1995 [1977] 221-22). Within developing capitalism, this individualization and instrumentalization comprised the kinesthetic experience of social and economic life (Stiegler 2011).

However, it was after the early twentieth century that the idea of economy as a "self-contained, internally dynamic, and statistically measurable sphere of social action, scientific analysis, and political regulation" became mainstream, the logic of truth (Mitchell 2002, 4). A vital contribution to steps toward the direction was made by the re-liberalization campaigns and thoughts after the economic and political crisis and wars. They set themselves against things that were seen as the core elements in the depravity of humans, the sources of totalitarianism, and the excessive control of society. Notably, this setting of a stage (where drama can be unfolded) was largely impacted by the American technological and economic power, which posited

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[32] "The general juridical form that guaranteed a system of rights that were egalitarian in principle was supported by these tiny, everyday, physical mechanisms, by all those systems of micro-power that are essentially non-egalitarian and asymmetrical that we call the disciplines. […] The real, corporal disciplines constituted the foundation of the formal, juridical liberties." (Foucault 1995 [1977], 222).

the era where the new ways of life driven by the continuing development of technoscientific capitalism should begin (Abbinnett 2020). This making-visible highly impacted the sphere of discourses, what can be anticipated and understood. In the discourses, the capitalist market was hypothetically conceptualized the market as a space of individualistic freedom due to its very constructive principle of competition, the salvational antipode of unilateral planning (Foucault 2008 [1979], 118).[33] Moreover, more than a site of production, consumption, and exchange, it was illuminated as the result and ground of human lives *per se* (Innset 2020, 186).

This change was nonnegligible, as the theoretical apostles were regarded as the bearers of social knowledge in the prevailing affection of indeterminacy, thus highly impacted how to imagine a society anew as well as the spirit of public policies (Pühringer 2020). This marked a shift from the previous understandings of those realms that they are domains of politicians, not of engineers.[34] With the wobbling Keynesian welfarism, the epistemic, normative, and political power is in the hands of market proponents and monetarism (Clarke 1988, 287). In Europe and the United States, initiatives on marketization, deregulation, and privatization soared, with the economists'

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[33] Still, the opinion that the human-involved market would bring corruption without regulation prevailed among influential figures like Jacob Marschak and Friedrich August von Hayek. This testifies that the conceptions of human beings and agency were yet to be completely dis-embedded, in that their fallacies were importantly considered as the things to be kept in check. On this, see Marschak (1974) and Hayek (1976).

[34] Theoretically, the calculability of social good by the sum of individual actions was contentious till Hayek's time (for example, Mill 2015 [1861], 137). Yet, this exhibits that the possibility—which is the cornerstone of the fictional structure of a dis-embedded market—came to the fore, consisting of a social imaginary through the debate.

gaining public influence through their technical and epistemic expertise. [35] Importantly, their expertise insulated the initiatives from being politicized, accelerating the institutional transformation toward neoliberal polity.

Inside this depoliticizing 'political' change, there were fundamental transformations in the meaning of knowledge and epistemic practices itself. Especially from the mid-twentieth century, computational-algorithmic technology and functionalistic statistics—including the Bayesian decision theory and modeling—got their wings. Their developments were propelled by the ascending power of the US and its Cold War strategy after the war, which subsidized formalistic and applied sciences as well as their techniques in political motivation (Botz-Bornstein 2019, 38; Solovey 2013). Through the attempts to establish and impose "what rationality should mean," a particular form of reasoning, which colligated human sciences with biology, mathematics, statistics, and computer science, was shaped and spread.[36]

With the expansive utilization of models in public matters, "experience-based thought" was replaced by "technical, formal-logical manipulations", auto-referential and information-like (Adorno 2009[1941], 464). In this sense, it substituted the social "why" question with the "how" question, drawing radical finitude in the scope of politics and eluding it through extensive reliance on the 'black box' of machinery and data.

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[35] For instance, in the US, as the growth rate decreased and economic profits fell in the 1970s, anti-interventionalists—from the neoclassicists like Friedman and Robert Lucas to the protagonists of Public Choice School who were devoted to applying experiments and behavioral models to analyze human choice and utility—dominated the public sphere.

[36] In *How Reason Almost Lost its Minds*, the authors call the cast the "Cold War rationality," shaping the world henceforth with the shift in the intellectual trend toward mechanical application, formalization, and decontextualization (Erickson et al. 2013, 3).

During the last century, this manipulative and technological rationale not only settled in as the criterion for knowledge and good policy but has been translated 'into' human beings. Especially, the variable 'choice' and 'preference' enabled the individuals and their relationships in the world to appear "determined by objective qualities and laws" "as calculable manifestations of (scientific) rationality" (Marcuse 2006 [1964], 172). They convert all values into them, rendering self-concerning desire and ethico-moral stance indistinguishable from each other as well as standardizing all 'choosers.' Hence, these 'representations' dispossessed human beings of other agency—in politics and ethics—except economic rationality. Yet, this disenchantment drew the social power of rationality as the credible evaluative standard, grounding neoliberal transformations, as well as rationalized ways of imagining society.

Moreover, the full-out financialization from the 1970s radically leveled and disembodied human beings, propelling the degree of reification in the capitalist society. If finance designates the "management of money's ebbs and flows" (Martin 2002, 3), the extension of the financial mode of perceiving and thinking did more than increasing the liquidity or agglomerating upward distribution of income and power. With its reliance on the self-referential imaginary of money, mathematical calculation, and computerized stochastic modeling, financial derivatives were largely left in a "black box of technique" (Maurer 2002), which conceals the underlying epistemological assumptions—which is political—but owing to that, draws indexical power. In other words, the insulation from public contestability—including that of hidden value or worker's contestations—drove finance's power to "point towards and refer to

the truth-value" of other phenomena in the empirical world (ibid. 29).[37]

This enabled the subordination of every object to the objectified future, validating the neoliberal regime of truth (Lazzarato 2012 [2011], 45). Notably, the signification of value itself is not merely descriptive nor simply representative but performative. While subjecting all other—political, religious, and aesthetic—absolutes to "[e]conomic absolutes," the latter alone left ontologically autonomous, owing to their very appearance of objectivity—the quantifiability and calculability—as the things to be sought for (Botz-Bornstein 2019, 61).

In this process, "the social logic of derivatives, hedging, and portfolio management" in the world of ever-changing risks and uncertainties (Meister 2020, xi) is deeply infiltrated into our social relations, institutions, and life cycles, thus micro-regulating our bodily allocations and movements. In other words, it generates values and orientations that it proclaimed to represent by signifying the standard of good at every level in the uniquely economic parlance. The implication is crucial: the subsumption of every object and the ways of being under naturalized economic relations.

The enormous popularity of National Public Radio (NPR)'s podcast program *Planet Money: The Economy Explained* is symptomatic. In their episodes, all strands of our lives, including work, education, public safety, hobby, minority rights, marriage, gun control, immigration policy, and climate change, are analyzed through the parlances of economics. Although not in a *pro-lasses-faire* mode, the show exhibits how complex and high-

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[37] On how specifically the techno-experts drove their authority by depoliticizing the matter—situating it outside of the scope of public contestations—during the consolidation of neoliberal regimes of the United Kingdom, see Glynos et al. (2012).

count human existence is being communicated, flattened under one dimension of the functionalist economy, which cannot imagine everything without presupposing function. Hence, "there turn out to be general principles of practical reasoning (including, in more modern dress, *cost-benefit analysis*), that can be relied upon to impose themselves on all life forms anywhere" (Dennett 1995, 132, emphasis in original).

In other words, it testifies the economic rationality's being the "coin" of our perception and experience, the way we understand and reach the world, thus replacing the role of various forms of thinking and thought via data in information. Through these long-reaching epistemological and sociological transformations, human beings became a functional component of the market, radically objectified. Hence not only consumed "the stuff of total administration" in the world but also the administrators themselves (Marcuse 2006 [1964], 172). Even if that is, where exactly comes its metaphysical and practical power in making ourselves its agent?

It is in the dualistic operation of rationality, at once homogenizing human beings as numbers and at other times interpellating them as individual subjects. The 'tango' of two draws normalizing power, which *signifies* and *prescribes* to subjects in the name of Law. Our reduction into numerical figures denotes more than simply denoting our being systematically dealt with that way. It is, by the process, our becoming the agents whose self-conception operates via economic logic. Notably, it connotes the self-conduct of our 'heart and soul' and possible movements by the prevailing epistemic and normative framework, rather than strictly compulsive imputation on subjects, much more than architecting institutional environments.

3.2. Governing Bodies

3.2.1. A Neo-Normality?

In the preceding section, we examined some pivotal elements that contributed to the establishment of a neoliberal regime of truth. As revealed, the profound transformation of the landscape we live in was not a one-time project but the sedimentation of interconnected moments and instances that moved a field of imagination on what is viable in an individual and collective life. Through the complex truth games, the narrowed-down market logic has settled down as the powerful norm which designates the normalcy—as the state of being, as the standard of value, and the ideal presumed that each should seek—of society and human life, as well as being the method. In other words, metaphysically and practically, it comes to regulate the distribution of the sensible and the bodies.

Yet, does it differ from other regimes of truth that stood before the settlements of neoliberal discourses and institutions? Or, did it simply the extension or ramifications of the modern understanding of epistemological and political practices, based on the conception of personhood defined by its independence and rational capacity—without fundamental changes? Are there significant ruptures that introduced a newly envisioned framework?

Some, like Jameson, definitely view "whether the present is to be seen as a historical originality or as the simple prolongation of more of the same under different sheep's clothing" as a matter of decision which is not empirically or logically certifiable (Jameson 1991 [1989], xii–xiii). Yet, even if it may depend on one's perspective, the matter is crucial for us. If today's

distribution of sensible is not distinctive from what existed before its ascendency and before the transformations of epistemic conditions that we've seen through, the change must be collateral in building the world we live in, hence, worthless to be considered seriously to talk about subjectivity.

One may view that the 'germs' of neoliberalism had been embedded in the liberal vision of humanity and the world. Evidently, many elements in modern liberal sensibilities are not wrecked or overturned, as one could see the striking 'coincidence' of diagnosis on modernity written in the mid-nineteenth century toward the midst of the twentieth century and current situations. Concerning this, neoliberalism might be a degenerated version or the evil face of modernity.[38]

Notably, liberalism was left with thinned revolutionary vitality already in the second half of the nineteenth century, igniting criticisms and modernism against reifying modernity (Griffin 2007; Bronner 2012). However, liberalism and its critics alike were unable to sever themselves from the tradition of imposing one's common sense as true common sense. If viewed as the configuration of the sensible rather than a set of definitive principles other words, it is understandable that things cannot be easily amputated once and for all. In addition, though the self-identity is in the process of transformation, the desire for self-projection toward all others in the name of "universal" and

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[38] Depending on one's definition of modern, or modernity, such as changes in the perception of time or continuous expansion of rationalization along with capitalism, one may insist that there is no distinctiveness that sets contemporary regime apart (cf. Adorno & Horkheimer (2002 [1944]); Bell (1978 [1976]); Castoriadis (1987), especially pp. 156–160; Marx (1991 [1894]); Osborne 1995). However, I argue differently from the potentially retrospective perspective since I view neoliberalism as the nodal point where various contingencies—which are not independent but neither in a necessary relationship—that are not predestined.

the epistemological and social attempts to "fill the world with their presence" (Fanon 1986 [1952], 176) persist.

If the currency for the qualification for political and legal equality and freedom were equated with the Anglo-Saxon race—legitimate to build a civilization empire that dominates "Barbaric races"—and the 'civilization' before the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century, this colonial and imperialistic distinction, in a mediated mode, remained (Merriam 2018 [1903]; Mitchell 2000). Historically, some Progressives tried to define their ideals as authentically humanitarian, contrary to Enlightenment. Still, the label "liberal" came to be dominated by thought and projects that refined latent coloniality in a changed circumstance. [39] For sure, there were divergent intellectual strands aiming to transform society at that time, like the New Deal liberal and socialism as well as the proclaimed-to-be Neoliberals (Hobsbawm 1994). However, they all put forward a certain 'technical resolution' to the crisis, putting forward their own criteria for rationality and substituting the moral and ethical crisis with them (Foucault, 2008 [1979]).

In the case of intellectuality, it is worthwhile to add up the fact that its early development was initiated 'exclusively' by the already decent people who were fully embodying the propositions of free, equal, and rational citizens of liberal democracy (Innset 2020, 97-110). Even if their arguments were not

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[39] This sensibility is well reflected in the international law regime, which was, from the outset, embedded in the distinction between the civilized worlds and the noncivilized. Even when the Leagues of Nations tried to improve the legal status of the repressed groups, such as former colonies and minority groups in the interwar period, the latter were unilaterally classified by Western civilizational standards. Most of the time, the voices of the repressed were no more than the "informat" for already recognized-to-be civilized people (LoN 1938; C.312 M.118. 1926).

grounded in a unitary model of human beings, the liberty projected as their rationale by them reflected their own ego, which was immunized from the acknowledgment of one's bodily situatedness and of the materiality of others. Thus, their arguments on what a political society rationally should be did not break out of the self-assertive notion of human that has been excluding Others by its criteria of reasonableness.

The extreme attention paid to the imperative to take into account the subjectivity of colonized others during and after the war did not alleviate this tendency. It rather exposed the distorted vision of self-projection. Early neoliberalism was definitely guarding against the alliance of communism and decolonial movements. Paradoxically, the 'threatening' movements were appropriated to construct the legitimacy of their own rationality when they appropriated it in defining the market as a free, benevolent, and peaceful sphere against the unfree, coercive, and violent political sphere (Whyte 2019). Importantly, the assertion entailed the elucidation of the colonial ego: the 'chivalry' narrative of Western emancipators; the belief that the human race is inherently unequal; the 'authoritative' projection of their "truthful" civilizational standard toward others; the judgment that the decolonized were too immature to be provided with the right to self-determination.[40]

Likewise, the standard of decency based on the experience of the 'few' are put as the universal standard for a globalizing world, measuring everything through them and powerfully reproducing the normative order. As Derrida sees it, in so far as it is based on the ideal of rationality, freedom, and self-

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[40] For instance, see Frankel (1953), Shenfield (1957), Rüstow (1960 [1957]). Also, see von Mises (2005 [1927]) for the basic ontology underlying these accounts.

sufficiency, the exercise of power only becomes the rearticulation of the distinction between civilization-barbarism (Derrida 1974). Within the American context, where the hegemony over the truth is taken over, these impulses are symbolically expressed in large-scale city renewal projects. Driven by the urge to driven by the urge to establish the city—especially Manhattan—as the "icon of global power" and "capital of international modernity," they standardized the districts and demolished the decayed side—mostly the home of the wretched (Zipp 2012, 5). If this is the incarnation of the way of thinking that formed the groundwork for contemporary world with a more radical reunification of knowledge, what neoliberal rationality imposes on us could be viewed in a more comprehensive manner.

However, even if they imply some continuity—not a fault-line rupture—from the complex truth apparatus of Enlightenment—particularly the compulsory logic of instrumentalized and functionalized reason (Adorno & Horkheimer 2002 [1944], 23), the *modus operandi* became more intricate with the help of neoclassical economy and technologies. Neoliberal rationality uniquely entails the radical expansion in the degree and scope of rationalization, as we saw in the epistemological transformations during the last century. As we will soon see, the universalization of this rationality 're'-iterates the sensibility and mechanism of bodily hierarchization as a necessary part of self-formation.

In consolidating the neoliberal regime of truth, the discourses relied on existing thought and logic of capitalism. Yet, even with the relative consistency in the object of reference, the meaning and point changed in the reiteration in a new context. Especially reason was definitely being substituted

with narrow rationality by the prevailing mathematization of knowledge, without reflexivity but exclusively productive and algorithmic. With the technological and epistemological changes in real-world affairs, it has been reduced to "the consistency of a set of formal relations" and is "simply taken for granted as a prelude for making further generalizations about the trajectory of economics after 1980" (Mirowski 2017, 21).

What stands out in this new prominent notion of rationality is the emphasis on economic conduct uniquely constructed, abandoning other truth-acting, and radicalizing itself. Thus, the properties of norm had also been transformed, accompanying the dissolution of existing politico-social authorities, institutions, and communities as well as discourses that supported them, which protected an individual from becoming unlivable due to market failure. Especially with the erosion of protection and unbridled glorification of the market as a locus of life, impositions on individuals became more radical: personhood now belongs to those who could survive and lead one's life well in the market.

This new anthropological point is well-explicated by a prolific and influential Nobel laureate, Gary Becker. In *Accounting for Tastes* (1996), this Chicago School economist analyzes human taste in terms of good choice.[41] In investigating addiction, he says,

> "Someone who places greater weight on the future consequences of current choices is more likely to engage in activities that raise future utilities, perhaps partly at the expense of current utility. Such a person is less likely to become addicted to harmful substances like drugs, alcohol, and cigarettes,

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[41] Becker contributed to developing human capital theory, incorporating business-labor market, education, and health policies as the point of analysis through formal value theory on individual utility-maximization.

[…] and to acquire beneficial habits like exercise and coming to work on time. As a result, individuals who are more future-oriented develop habitual and other preferences that have more beneficial future consequences." (Becker 1996, 11)

From this short phrase, we can clearly see some powerful conceptual corollaries of neoliberal market rationality: competition, efficiency, management of life, capital value, and risks. In showing the crystallization of knowledge apparatus into the generalized framework of perception, it is assessing individual choices by utility without further justification. All the features and enactments of a person—industriousness, exercise, addiction—are conversed to utility -reducing or -increasing, and taken into calculation.

More importantly, each individual is supposed to be motivated only by the desire for utility-maximization of oneself. With this, an individual's life is presented as an independent totality that all the calculations sum up to, just as an enterprise-like project. In this sense, human beings themselves become the capital, as theorized by Schultz (1961) and Becker (1962). When individual behaviors were narrated through the grammar of neoclassical economic theory, the subject is not dealt with as a citizen, mother, criminal, student, employee, etc. Individuals are those who strive to enhance their own economic value, and thus in lifelong competition to get more investment based on the business-like ambition to generate future income and avoid loss.

Likewise, individuals select their behavior or action just like the manager does to increase corporate value, imposing to give up utility-reducing habits and reduce hindrances to render the best prosperous version of their lives. The meaning of being prosperous is not strictly defined here, but could be read as becoming an upper hand in a competitive and resource-limited society: in this context, if individuals fail to achieve it, the whole

biological and social life of one would be anything but unlivable and futile.

Notably, these seemingly neutral narratives are not mere descriptions of the status quo nor a deduction from facts of human existence. In this sense, we could read that they are implicitly 'prescribing.' Most of all, it prescribes that people 'should' abide by the rules of a profit-oriented society without questioning them. In this lens, human agency lies in the form of calculating—departed from producing bartering, trucking, or trading—and arranging oneself through it: For instance, one must live healthily day to day to develop lucrative habits for no reason other than nurturing capital-ability. Compliance of bodies to market-oriented logic and system becomes what a person should do, hands down, for a non-futile life.

Precisely, the phase 'compliable to something' is ungraspable in the language game constructed as such. That is because, in this scheme, a human individual is nothing other than an independent entity that starts from and ends in itself. Schizophrenic contacts are made between one's rationality and lethargic bodily desire, supposed to suppress the latter for one's own utility. Performing the utility-diminishing behavior is irrational or 'unimaginable' in this perspective, and an individual who chooses to do so in one's totality becomes irrational. Defying being workable means no other than defiance to oneself since workability as the investment value is an individual quality produced or conferred to oneself and enacted solely by oneself.

An addiction to potentially harmful substances, as presented here, also is a uniquely individual problem. Especially there are no other contributing factors than individual doers' failure to control themselves, who are short-sighted and viable to be unprofitable, and thus, worthless. It is because

addiction is the result of their "free and autonomous" choice between using or not using the substance. A drug addict is nothing but an independent individual who does not take their future seriously to curve one's bodily desire. Here, in no way addiction and social failure of non-profitable individuals are conceived as socially induced problems.

However, these explicit and implicit narratives that seem to be inferred naturally from the start rely highly on their own presuppositions, including the enclosed human nature and ability, making a closed-circuit. In fact, the presuppositions are established by obscuring some of the basic conditions of human life by conferring all the authority that defines it by an individual's master choice in a market situation. Hence, the road to conclusion is also self-referential and tautological: by reducing what humans can do—the sphere and scope of human agency—and invoking it, it equalizes the 'can' and 'should,' in the end performatively rendering the 'is'—the status—and 'ought' indistinguishable.

In this substitution, all other perspectives and scenarios are excluded or faded into shades. In terms of the concept of person: the possibility for a person and its body to be gauged through a lens other than one's present and future utility; the possibility for a person to have a desire other than to be a valuable asset; the possibility for a person to question and defy the given production system. From a more relational perspective: the impact of society on an individual, thus, a possibility to see a person's life courses as the social product; the possibility to perceive a problem like poverty and addiction in terms of enduring social discrimination and inequality; the need to introduce costly social solutions to individual's misery; finally, a plausibility of a need

to reform the system to where the failure in competition does not automatically disrupt one's livability.

Although the assumption and demand for self-sufficiency is built up within preceding liberal views on individuals, the radical reductionism of human existence and other possibilities is the very motor for neoliberal governmentality in configuring the distribution of the sensible. It says that rational economic actors are those who have agency and control over their lives through brewing the latter for market survival, and it is what all human beings are and are supposed to be by struggling to be so or pretending to be so. Without obtaining their ability—defined as capital-ability—people could not survive and could not be valued as human beings. However, to have agency over their lives, people should not be in a state of market straggler. Hence, even though individual autonomy and self-sufficiency are not factually or readily achieved state, they are compelled to act like agents "equipped with a neoclassical conception of reality and motives of ineffable self-interest" and strive to improve their lot in life by engaging in a competitive world (Mirowski 2009, 437). Through this path of interpellation, the internalization of the particular economic logic to one's self becomes the token of a decent human being, or, to say it, a *homo economicus propre*.

If we read this through the dual lens of governmentality and performativity, they are not mere idiosyncratic arguments of some oddballs. Becker's definition of the human being as such introduced a profound transformation in the notion of *homo economicus* (Foucault 2008[1979], 270) and political anthropology in general: rather than simply imposing, it renders subjects as the crucial part of the regime. The prescription is a potent regulator

of our subjectivities and imagination, normatively inducing the bodies to speak and act in a certain way.

Conspicuously in the narrative, the figure of an economically rational subject is equalized with the morally responsible one by the very ignorance of any other coercion coming from labor relations as well as other political and ethical relationships. Hence, it not only assumes but makes the standards of the market the powerful force that regulates individuals' behavior and action. Thus, provided for individuals is imperative to self-discipline oneself amidst and in alignment with the market situations. As we will see in the following section, the variants of this imperative are drawing a powerful force for allowing neoliberalism to change our hearts and soul stealthily.

3.2.2.   Bounded Body and Bounded Self

The prescriptive anthropology is, to a certain extent, the representative of our social imaginary, the ground of the regime of truth. Yet, how exactly this are being imposed on the subject? Although authors like Wendy Brown had promulgated the normative force of the neoliberal interpellation of homo economicus, without further investigation into the problem, the mechanism of the performative power of norm is left aloof. In this section, this thesis examines how the regime of truth mediates our experience and relationship between the self and the world, starting from the body.

Within the schemes of calculation and prescription that mobilize and radicalize logics of individualism in liberal imaginations, living bodies are

entrapped in the repetitive and compulsive movement for value production and self yet-to-be-reached. In addition, any conduct or movement is supposed to have a 'function,' the utility of which is calculated referring to the nonexistent goal of life that cannot be met but to be pursued endlessly.

The proof of capital-ability is how the social sensibility, as well as the corporate and investors in actual situations, judge individuals. Nevertheless, the calculus of cost-benefit of the market in the grammar of self-management is "a somatic condition," whether or not a body can sleep at night (Martin 2010, 57). As the way we primarily appear through our bodies, the evaluation leads to the Fanonian oscillation between the self and world, making one experience self simultaneously in and as our bodies. Hence, the invocation through numerical evaluation is not simply attached to bodies like a price tag but makes us sense and conceive of ourselves through the very criterion, more like a microchip. Considering this, we could say that although neoliberal anthropology is extending the modern liberal ones that presuppose the individual as the master of oneself, what molds us is the economic and functionalistic evaluation in a more limited sense, the quantified indexical capital-ability or the current and potential profitability.

However, this homogenization of personhood reveals its inherent concatenation with what is at the heart of the age-old sensibility of decency: the primacy of reason over other senses. Contemporary governmental rationality imposes a person to follow the hierarchy between reason and body by continuously managing and disciplining the latter's dysfunction. Retaining it "consistently" and "incessantly" becomes key by suppressing and dominating the bodily proclivity through the power of calculating reason inverted and

reduced to the rationality in the market.

The traces of repression are especially palpable in the relationships of production through longer working hours, more unpaid overtime, decreasing real wages, increasing workplace insecurity, and rising risk in employment. With the crumble of social security infrastructures that protected, or at least assisted, maintaining lives, the imposition got more intense. With authority in social and individual decisions given to fragmentary and capricious market information, we are in a state of existential insecurity (Lorey 2015) that now became the *de facto* living condition. The extension of the social analytical term, 'precarity,' reflects the situation.

'Précarité (precarity)' originally signified poverty and social exclusion but later became a more general label for designating collateral changes in social life. It mainly concerned transformed working conditions induced by neoliberal restructuring and the collapse of welfare institutions (Bourdieu 1998). Currently, as an oft-cited word for describing the status of contemporary subjects' lives, it encompasses a field of experiences in the extreme socio-economic insecure status (Neilson & Rossiter 2008).[42] In other words, it designates the status of individuals who should constantly struggle to adapt to the logic to preserve themselves that had been already lost in it. If not, the liability for one's false choice, signified as the failure of a body, falls upon the individual: It is not attributable to the society or policies but the fault and failure of the individual in calculation and management.

Burchell (1996) coined this as the mechanism of "responsibilization"

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[42] However, Judith Butler distinguishes between 'precarity' and 'precariousness,' accommodating the common usage of precarity to the latter. This will be explicated in the last chapter of this thesis.

(Burchell 1996, 29). It is the very process and the result of the relegation of responsibility for ensuring livable life from social and public dimensions to individual and private spheres: Individuals, who are deemed as the free and rational choosers of their lifestyles, bodies, education, etc., must conduct themselves by themselves in desirable ways. The recast of obesity as an issue of an individual's lifestyle choices rather than class- and resource-based inequality exemplifies the impact on hearts and souls (Evans & Riley 2014).

Especially it was in the late 1990s that fatness was casted as an "global epidemic". These discursive constructions of a danger—which involved powerful agents such as the World Health Organization (WHO)—aroused the imperative to lose weight and stay fit for individuals. This was the prescription to act assuming the risks of one's conduct and actions, directly related to the responsibilization for one's "poverty, precariousness, welfare benefits, low wages, reduced pensions, etc." and the ab-normalization of bodies with that state (Lazzarato 2012 [2011], 51). Pathologizing and medicalizing fat bodies in the name of public health, a pervasive culture of fatphobia has been created, which is based on the view that those bodies are a moral and economic threat to society (Braziel & LeBesco 2001). As such, this neoliberal normalization of self-caring individuals is paradoxically producing worthless, expendable, and disposable subjects, who are taken into account as mere numbers for cost-benefit or present-future productivity calculations.

Here, we could see a grave selection and reduction of what could be sensed and not, especially 'in accordance with a regime of under-determination, but not 'really' making visible (Rancière 2007 [2003], 113):

what is assumed, proclaimed, and celebrated are the independence, autonomy, and freedom of individuals, while the vulnerability coming from our bodily situatedness is to be negated, or even disparaged as abnormal. Likewise, in the neoliberal world, where the body, in general, is tentatively and actually discarded more than ever, it is becoming the critical site where this process of self-constitution is acted upon.

The responsibilization displays the very mechanism of creating subjectivity that conducts one's conduct, as well as various subjugated subject positions. Of course, the meaning of 'conduct' in the 'conduct of conduct' does not necessarily indicate the relationship between the master and slave, who commands and gets commanded. However, as bodies in the social matrix, we could not help but feel the pressure to embody what the neoliberal 'code of conduct'—the regulated vision of the possible field of action (Foucault 2001[1982], 341)—prescribes.

It then constructs "[h]ow individuals come to think about themselves, take stock of how they are doing and what they have accomplished, and how they know themselves to be moving toward through the measured paces of finance", and thus, through the yielding of a particular subjectivity (Martin 2002, 9). Hence, as Lazzarato (2014) notes,

> "Contemporary subjugation subjects the individual to 'infinite' evaluation and makes the subject his own primary judge. The injunction to be subject, to give oneself orders, to negotiate permanently with oneself, is the fulfillment of individualism." (Lazzarato 2014, 187)

Here, bodies come to be in the infinite dialectics with the social field where the acts of self-governance for profit are viable, while other acts are made more improbable, constrained, or forbidden. Hence, both as subjectivity and moral code, this governmentality sustains the neoliberal regime of truth,

leading the "circle of precarization" (Butler 2015, 15).

Likewise, although neoliberal anthropology of self-reliance seems to put individuals in a flexible arena where they are left to choose freely, it is highly responsibilized and moralized. Thus, one may say that what is left after all with the homo economicus is struggling individual bodies, repudiated to be cared for by society but in a pseudo-society melted down into markets.

Currently, the ongoing evolution and spread of micro-surveillance technologies, the goal of which is to seize and modify our behaviors, are accelerating the process beyond any preceding degree. Reflected here is the desire to read and arrange human bodies—or architect human brains—through machines, reversing the preceding motto of constructing a computer that is analogical to the human brain (Mirowski 2002, 467-68).

Workers' bodies—even those in the 'digital' economy—are seized by cutting-edge technologies like automated biometric computation, GPS, and productivity tracking, which generate them as a moving machine supposed to be without the 'violation and defects'—the faults that Amazon listed up and detects in their workers, making them 'pee in a bottle' while keep producing (Ghosh 2018). Moreover, even if one is outside of the direct relations of production, the movements are collected and predicted by the Big Data collecting technologies via the ubiquitously networked devices, making a body have nowhere to hide and be controlled by the technological design for profit. [43] In both cases, the body has more than ever become the "raw material" that

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[43] On the inhumane degree of subjugation, especially for the laborers deemed as 'replaceable at any time,' see also Hamilton (2023). Zuboff (2019), calling the system 'surveillance capitalism,' presents an in-depth investigation of the relationship between technology and the system.

is readily there to be exploited or extracted by the capitalist economy.

Bodies here, especially their appearance, the style of life, as well as behavior and conduct included, are perceived, assessed, invoked, and distributed by the codified profitability. Hence, literally being expanded is the status of thingly beings to nearly all bodies at an ever-increasing level. Basically, it extends capitalism's mode of subjugation by the universalization of the identificatory value denominator, the monetary value. As Simmel saw it, it subsumes all the methods of calculation, relationships of social actors and labor, laws concerning contract and property, laws of circulation and market, and relationships of control and regulation, thus emptying "the core of things, their peculiarities, their specific values and their uniqueness and incomparability" (Simmel 1971[1903], 330). However, as the permeability of calculation got more finespun and prognostic, bodies are radically identified and located in the community with the monetary value, thus, not only being conditioned but also bound by it. Concerning 'what it means to be a body,' the degree of instrumentalization gets intensified than what the capitalist social relations were imposing: To be a body is to be—or nothing other than— the moving sources of human capital which need to be productive without possessing sources of hindrances.

Still, when normalized anthropology is actualized as entitlement or eligibility in conjunction with legal measures, the differential impacts on the body become conspicuous. At border regimes within the spheres where borders are selectively opened for those who are 'eligible' for residency or citizenship, the property of neoliberal rationality is nakedly projected toward the vulnerable beings by the logics of securitization reformulated in the

economic parlance, walling off those who are deemed as lacking capital-ability (Chung 2020). In view of neoliberal rationality, the entitlement to live as the speakable being emanates from the incessant hauling of one's body and soul to develop one's value in and through the market, the sole and true locus of human life. It is that "[t]he individual's life itself [···] must make him into a sort of permanent and multiple enterprise" (Foucault 2008, 241). Since those who only succeeded in retaining this hierarchy "deserve" the share as the eligible and capable, but those who do not are ineligible and incapable of having deservingness, we could not help but adjust ourselves to the code.

However, it is essential to note that the subjugation is, to a certain extent, explicitly compulsory and especially violent to the bodies in a precarious state since the bodies, at any rate, need jobs that (may or may not) provide material resources to subsist. Because the delivery platform pays an additional 240-dollar-incentive for delivering 275 packages in a week—achievable when working 90 hours a week—than 200, laborers have no choice but to overspeed while dozing off, often getting into accidents but without insurance or compensation from the company (Yun 2023).

This bodily evaluation and extraction system is intrinsically linked to the hierarchized bodily regimes of capital-modernity. Conceptually, the term 'disability' was initially coined to designate 'nonproductive' bodies that cannot work because of injury (Mitchell & Snyder 2015. 211). In a sense, neoliberal rationality, theoretically based on the individualized figure of a "flexible" able-bodied subject, aggravates the (ab-)normalization, reiterating it in various ways. The similarity of the status of devalued and exploited bodies today with that of the thingly figures in modern/colonial relations is

not coincidental. The "normal" or "decent" and, thus, deserving bodies are not simply those who are economically productive and prospectively nonfungible but also meet the standard of modernist/colonialist decency.

Hence, while the discriminatory hierarchization of body persists, in neoliberal contexts, bodily appearance currently is "being taken as a reflex of the self," and the difference is lowering "one's acceptability as a person, as well as an indication of laziness, low self-esteem, and even moral failure" (Featherstone 1982, 26). Hence, ironically, under this framework, it becomes inevitable for some bodies to be excluded and reproached for their 'being' rather than for what they did.

In its actuality, for example, the border, immigration law, criminal law, and policing are increasingly referring to each other to constitute the complex mechanism of enforcing hierarchization. This 'crimmigration' render the culturally otherized and precaritized bodies to a more vulnerable existence (Golash-Boza 2015). As well reflected in the South Korean Immigration Act (see footnote 5), immigration laws are increasingly usurping the grammar and vocabulary of criminal law. Subjected to the ethnic-racialized, gendered, and class-based categorization of the body during and after entering a country, and get surveillance of the highly developed technology—including statistics, racial profiling, and algorithmic predictions—and legal means without protection (Chung 2020; Feldman 2012; Macías-Rojas, 2016; Shin 2021). [44]

As such, the orientation of social protection is definitely 'against' some bodies, 'for' the society of decent, rational, and profitable citizens that may or

[44] The assimilation of immigration enforcement agencies with criminal law enforcement organizations in the United States is another example. On this, see Stumpf (2006), and on how the mechanism is aggravating racial and ethnic injustices, see Arriaga (2016).

may not exist. This feeds back to reinforce and reproduce palpable expressions of existing inequalities between bodies. As Harvey (2005) argues, "In the United States, incarceration became a key state strategy to deal with problems arising among discarded workers and marginalized populations. The coercive arm of the state is augmented to protect corporate interests and, if necessary, to repress dissent." (Harvey 2005, 77). Wacquant's analysis in *Punishing the Poor: The Neoliberal Government of Social Insecurity* well demonstrates the tendency: "in all the countries where the ideology of submission to the 'free market' has spread, we observe a spectacular rise in the number of people being put behind the bars as the state relies increasingly on police and penal institutions to contain the social disorders produced by mass unemployment, the imposition of precarious wage work and the shrinking of social protection." (Wacquant 2009[2001], xi).

In this sense, this new regime of truth is more profound than something that can be turned over through institutional and policy reforms. This extension and distortion of the scheme that binds are developed into the "institutional practices and rewards for enacting this vision," more than reducing social, cultural, and political life into the calculus (Brown 2005, 40). The provision that equalizes a particular "is" and "ought" stretches to performatively adjusting social elements where we sense and experience the world, thus, constructing our sense of the world, self, and imaginary and imagination.

3.2.3. Bounded Imagination: Securitization and Otherization

"[t]he very logic of science was that of an endless deferment of the promise. The science that promised freedom was also the science of total process whose effect is endlessly to generate its own ignorance." (Rancière 2009 [2008], 43–44)

If so, what happens to our social imaginary when our bodies and selves are being bounded by the logic of production, technology, investment, and competition as such? As we've seen, neoliberalism depends on the idiosyncratic mechanism of individualization, prescribing individuals to govern themselves through their freedom of conduct—whether or not to hit the gym, eat low-calorie foods, take the supplement, dope up, go to sleep, etc.—to lead a valuable—with no content of its own—life in a society. Whether it is desirable or not, this self-government and self-constitution currently ground our being acknowledged as a 'moral agent' who has the right to have socio-political voices and leverage. But if the market had eaten society away or at least replaced the supporting organizations in society, what is the reference for judging one's moral worth or value?

Yet, it is notable that even the hard-boiled proponents of *laissez-faire* do not deny the significance of the vision on society in general. Some ideological libertarians like Ayn Rand even ground their advocacy on the better future of 'humanity' (Rand 1967). Not as grandiose as all that, others negate social spending and planning concerning the disincentives for individuals to work hard and develop themselves may result in political or socio-economic degeneration. This is one of the powerful claims that shored up neoliberalism and the continuous power of its theoretical forebears, who were against state planning and spending.

For Reagan, governmental spending on "horse and buggy programs" of social security "waste tax dollars and squander human potential. Instead, families have sufficient ability to be the "most basic support system" for individual lives (Reagan in Weintraub 1986). Or, for the promotor of lifelong learning, in the post-industrial capitalist society where individuals should be "flexible, adaptable, ready and willing to engage in continual (self) improvement/learning" to be working subjects, and contribute to "the benefit of the nation" (Butler* 1997, 73). Likewise, a good many neoliberals, at least apparently, ground their claims on their vision of an ideal society.

However, the relationship between self and society is being articulated in a highly functionalistic way, as reflected in David Cameron's vision for the Big Society—against the big government. The agenda, devised to move beyond Thatcherism's 'there's no such thing as society,' partly aimed to 'reinvigorate' it.[45] It mainly aimed to address social problems like poverty and unequal healthcare induced by austerity through mobilizing volunteerism and civil solidarity, empowering or responsibilizing individuals as the 'autonomous and freely choosing' service providers whose works were formerly performed by the public institutions.

Importantly, it is grounded on the image of a society where, nodes of which are reduced to and connected as the roles to retain the minimum equilibrium needed for the market to operate without noise. Notably, this 'image' is where the ideal of rationality—in terms of efficiency—is actualized, in which people could make free choice and enjoy the benefit without

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[45] On the motivations of the agenda concerning the need to reinvigorate society conceptualized against the state power, see Sage (2012).

incongruent burdens of externalities. In this sense, it was the product of projecting neoliberal anthropology—that created the new 'self'—toward the collectivity of individuals, the society which should enlarge its competitiveness.[46]

Denouncing all of their claims as simply rhetorical or deceptive will be flawed, considering how the vision is imbued in the arrangements of social reality, the sphere we find ourselves, and thus, the experience and practice of ourselves. A concise example is the privatized healthcare, especially in the United States and the United Kingdom context. The primary columns of the conclusion in the long-ranging debate on privatization were the notion that social goals, including the distribution, might be better achieved through the market and the objective of 'preventing' social waste and bankruptcy coming from people's 'moral hazard.' Concerning this, it became that health care should be left to the hands of consumers' free choice and private providers' competition for the general social good, including efficiency, profitability, and individuals' responsibility.

However, what buttressed the transformation were experiments like the Rand health insurance experiment on the availability of free and universal health care. Yet, they were highly selective at the outset since the normative commitment—the orientation of which will defeat the contentions against privatization—is preestablished and presumed in the design. Indebted to this,

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[46] The following remarks of Cameron are notable in this respect: "No more of a government treating everyone like children who are incapable of taking their own decisions. Instead, let's treat adults like adults and give them more responsibility over their lives. [⋯] It's about giving you the initiative to take control of your life and work with those around you to improve things. It has the power to transform our country." (Cameron 2011)

the federal government, severing the federal subsidies for health maintenance organizations, incentivized their turning into the corporate investment structure during the 1980s, leaving millions of 'autonomous and free consumers' left uninsured (Gaffney 2015). As Keshavjee (2014) shows, the privatizations of healthcare in various developing countries, which were partly enforced to induce structural adjustments by the IMF and World Bank, kept on a similar groove.

In consolidating political initiatives, the iteration of the paradigm of 'choice,' a potent derivative of the neoclassical economy as explicated earlier, played a significant role in the mobilizing the anthropological myth of neoliberalism and desires (Glynos et al. 2014). Moreover, this variable not only underpins the institutional changes but also operates to apport social responsibility and structural inequality for the moral pathology of individuals, intensifying the imagination that the capitalistic economy has been imposing.[47] Transposing the discourses of risk management to the community of market-placed individuals, the moralized framework, on the one hand, 'securitizes' the community and, on the other hand, is mobilized to condemn and thus 'otherize' the underprivileged as the non-deserving or free-riding individuals/consumers which threaten the community.

From the psychoanalytic perspective, this mechanism draws the powerful fantasy on the 'theft' of enjoyment: The deprivation of our *jouissance*—the security drifting apart—is because of "the Other who stole it

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[47] According to Kroll-Smith and Kelley (2008), the capitalist economy from the late nineteenth century introduced the images of health as a matter of 'self-regulation', diverting the gaze away from the increasing structural problem and promoting working class 'policing' (Kroll-Smith & Kelley 2008, 308-10). See also Lupton (2005)

from us."[48] The hate speeches against refugees we mentioned in the introduction, which provided a similar narrative structure in the 'chivalry' lynching, crimmigration profiling are, on the one hand, the definitive extroversions of the fantasy as well as the conception of society as relations of (numerically limited) function. On the other hand, they are themselves in the performative process of material and symbolical constitution and dispossession of others. This aspect gets more conspicuous in the moralized "War on Crime" projects exhibited around the world, which involve the hoarding of racialized and ethnicized figures while positing self-identity as the deservingness to get profit, well-being, moral and cultural prestige which cannot be secured nowadays through the system.[49]

In addition, although each assumed moral ideal differs, they share the perspective that inequalities produced as a result of the market competition are unsought for but collateral and have low priority to be the primary consideration: it cannot be the reason for sacrificing functions provided by the operational principles of the market and the free competition. Hence, under the neoliberal regime of truth, the idea that income disparity and inequality are the signal for the flawed socioeconomic policy has been curved (Balibar 2014, 159; Akizhanov 2023, 4). Likewise, as in Becker's logic, promoted freedom of choice of individuals as a market actor is built on the high insensitivity toward the end-state inequalities.

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[48] According to the perspective, this fantasy operates as the affective identificatory mechanism, playing as the ideological driver for neoliberalism. On this fantasy, see Žižek (2008 [1997]), pp. 43-44.

[49] On the prevalent operation of the mechanism globally, see Dollar (2019), Gordon (2006), Gönen (2016), Lafer (2004), and Soss., et al. (2011).

The "myth" of the neutrality of the market as a balanced system of rational expectations and rational investments (Berardi 2009 [2007], 208) cooperating with the formalistic notion of legal equality and normalizing anthropology buttresses imputing "costly" responsibilities to individuals. Notably, labels of entitlements such as franchises, rights, and freedom are, at least formally, no longer restricted to the freely born white male owning property. Hence it is announced, "Black Americans have been CEOs [⋯] served as secretary of state and White House national security adviser [⋯] elected to offices around the country," and "Senator Barack Obama may be selected as the Democratic Party's first biracial, black American candidate for president." (Johnson 2008).

The image of "ladder of opportunity" prevalent in the how-to-succeed books and (auto)biographies of the prosperous who often proclaim themselves as the member of a historically oppressed group, alike motivates people toward the hyper-activity or toward the market competition who want to be recognized as livable. The cultural idealization of "work-family-balancing women" (Rottenberg 2018) is its inverted exhibition, which implies the idea that "women engage in workplaces these days as men do, so now they can do greater job—in fact, doing more labors by the second shift—than simply working!" Seemingly promoting and empowering individuals, they repeatedly invoke the imperative for becoming a competitive individual rather than a person in charge of society in general.

The core assumption in these beliefs, thoughts, or cultures is often bulwarked with the claim that the market automatically alleviates traditional social injustices by its default blindness: everyone is basically "equal before

the *use-value* of objects and goods" (Baudrillard 1998 [1970] 50); all are equal before the need—there is no proletarian, or the privileged in this level; because of this, individuals equally participate in market although how much one will invest in oneself and struggle for one's future depends on choice; individual value and success is determined by one's output and profitability, so the 'prejudice' cannot intervene in the course; henceforth, whereas there are disparities in end-state, they reflect one's talent as the accumulated result of past endeavors and performances; individuals deserve it.

As one can see, though 'meritocracy' is not the preserve of neoliberalism nor novel, the resulting notion of 'deservingness' is essentially related to it.[50] Even if the meritocracy itself is not problematic in itself, conjoined with the market rationality—especially since the 1980s—it is becoming a powerful ideological force of neoliberal societies (Varriale 2023, 18). With the implicit moralistic tone resonating with basic tenets of neoliberal anthropology, beliefs on meritocracy are lending their hands to neoliberal subject-formation. In this sense, one can say that they together consist of a neoliberal 'melodrama' which draws its effect by iterating monopathic moralistic conclusion from situations played in variation: "loyalty (to the logic of market) and self-sacrifice gets rewarded, and sloth gets punished" (Brooks 1995 [1976])

Breezing off at the structural inequalities, they justify the end-state disparities and use it to evaluate one's entitlements and hierarchize individuals. Publicized success stories of "heroines" filled with cruel optimism with the assortment of "an essentialized notion of 'talent', competitive individualism

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[50] For instance, the "American Dream," which existed even before the world war, is founded on the meritocratic belief that one's effort and talent should be appreciated to guarantee upward mobility.

and belief in social mobility" (Littler 2018, 8)—often in a highly commercialized mode to celebrate a self-development program or an entrepreneur—is co-parenting the self- and other- formation.

Within the contemporary regime of truth and its normative anthropology, it became a mechanism of foreclosing those who could not prosper from the status of livable, degrading them as a fungible capital. According to Savage (2021), the whipping is especially hard in the places where the wealth and income inequalities are surging on. Prevalent cultural antipathy and social apathy toward the 'social free riders,' the "villains" in the melodrama, are this sensibility expressed in reverse. In this sense, the meritocracy complex is operating on various levels: ideologically backing up the system via subject formation, exacerbating the already lop-sided distribution of personhood, and strengthening some bodies' moral and social dispossession that is justified.

Some critical commentators on neoliberalism also put that neoliberal standards of decency and evaluation of bodies have leveling effects on categorized disparities. Wendy Brown does so, saying that it thus makes traditionally privileged "white males" feel that their dominance is ebbing, and as a result, make them express *ressentiment* against others, like immigrants (Brown 2019, 175-80). Admittedly, precarity is becoming a generalized condition—stretching to the most privileged subjects of society—with the breaking down of its props into market products and the market's becoming of the place of infinite competition rather than that of exchange.

To a certain extent, this may explain why the hatreds against the undeserving and threatening to society are emerging recently. Yet, the note on

economic rationality's 'leveling' impact circumvents systematic inequalities among class, gender, and race, and the mutual dependency between the new state of decency and discrimination are more direct than collateral. In fact, the label of 'the worthless' based on capitalistic human evaluation is more likely to be attached to the bodies who were historically otherized and dispossessed materially and symbolically from multiple deprivations.[51] It is, in the one sense, because the human assessment stretches to one's educational-cultural background, refinements, or appearances, not solely in the labor force one possesses or could express.

In addition, within the individualized moral logic, the exposure to moral blame for irresponsibility or dispossession of entitlement became more path-dependent (Vargas 2022). The "identity-blind" evaluations aggravate, at a time and as a ramification of the dissolution of social spending and change in the keynote of social welfare into "work-fare" programs (Lazzarato 2009, 120).[52] Under these circumstances, bodies deemed as lacking present and future competitiveness as capital is left beyond the border of protection, but on an extremely positive side in the continuum of insecurity, often put into the state of 'unlivability.' Hence, the conduct of conduct and relation to self is likely to be imposed in a more exploitative mode, involving the abjection through self-denial, creating another Fanonian zone of nonbeing (Fanon 1982 [1952], 10).

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[51] In the case of black people, the recurring mechanism of subjugation operates as such: "The black population stands at the intersection of all these forces: an alienated sector of the civil population, now also a significant sector of the growing army of the unwaged, and one vulnerable to accelerating social pauperisation." (Hall et al. 2017 [1978], 338)

[52] On the lopsided construction and application of the notion of 'deservingness' and 'un-deservingness,' see Assouline & Gilad (2022).

Moreover, the history of oppression and repression that had been repressing particular bodies based on sexism, racism, ableism, and colonialism is actively interacting with neoliberal present and currently are being coded in the social structure. To be more specific, those enduring configurations of the distribution of sensible supply the 'order' and justification for labor and socio-political control based on the neoliberal value system—quintessentially in the case of border and immigration control technologies, as explicated earlier. Algorithms of bordering technologies which operate as a method for labor market control are relying on the hierarchical categories of people distinguished by bodily differences and "capital-ability: (Yuval-Davis et al. 2019). Through this, it legitimizes somebody's citizenship or longer stays—almost making borders invisible for them—but walls off and delegitimizes the entering of bodies deemed as ineligible.

In this sense, understanding why the hatred is particularly projected toward racialized figures, such as the "welfare queens," "black youth gangbangers," "narcos," or "black muggers" becomes possible (Hall et al. 2017 [1978], 327;395). The simple fact that those labels are created in the specific space where racism and slavery previously prevailed corroborates. As Tilly notes in *Durable Inequality*, asymmetrical social interactions based on categorical differentiation of bodies in company with presumptive individualism are becoming ever-more pervasive today (Tilly 2009 [1998], 100). Moreover, the market and various historically constructed hierarchical sensibilities that are grounding the vision and division mutually relies on themselves, meeting at the point of justifying human differentials and normative subjectivity. Thus, they, together, are rendering the very

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consequences of categorical organization as the results of variation in individual attributes, talents, or efforts.

Neoliberalism, from the outset, was imbued with the deep suspicion of 'equality' and its implicit/explicit connotation for it that buttressed capitalism. As MacLean (2017) showed, nascent American neoliberal doctrines around the 1950s were based on the "property-supremacist vision of liberty," which was the inheritance of modern European self as Locke's vision on it. Importantly, in the American context, the development and promotion of neoliberal agendas were partly indebted to the property-owned proponent's resistance against the demands for racial equality in the Civil Rights and Black Power movements (MacLean 2017, 181; also see Duggan 2004). The implication should be more generalized since the tendency is not restricted to the American context, as we've seen previously.

In this sense, the situation where the current ordering of society fails to address systemic issues despite the assumed basic equality of individuals is not a fleeting one. However, new and equal opportunities for all—regardless of which body—are being drummed for, the sensical, material, and symbolic location of underdogs persisting in a seemingly 'staid' mode. It does not concern oneself in reforming the complex "system" of hierarchy, perpetuating substantial discrimination and explicit repression against certain bodies based on racialized and gendered categories (Butler in Butler & Yancy 2015). Meritocratic frames with the standard of decency assumed in neoliberal anthropology are operating as an outlet or adding combustibles to radicalized, class-based, gendered, and sexualized ways of knowing and methods of meaning-making, paradoxically but phantasmatically evading its origin.

It is especially in this context where the conventional 'recognition' frame based on the language of rights loses its plausibility. Taking 'justice' as its subject matter, it at first seems pertinent to the problem of dealing with the structural inequality. Nevertheless, following the contours of the configuration of the distribution of the sensible, it fails to criticize the regime of the truth by sidestepping the work of revealing the contingency of the current regime or providing an alternative mode of sensibility, social organization, and institutionalization. This incompetence or sidestepping can easily be blurred with "progressive neoliberalism," the alliance between the new social movements for equal recognition—including anti-racism, feminism, etc.—and the powerful or prominent business sectors—including the Hollywood, Wall Street, and Silicon Valley—since the 1990s (see Fraser 2019). Without fundamental restructuring of self and society that reproduces inequality, they only 'superficially' proclaim equality, getting promoted and profiting from those pretenses. In addition, the performative role that the unjustifiable distributions of the sensible play in the subject's everyday life also needs to be addressed rather than clinging to the moral imperative for "the recognition for all."

However, even if the explanation is crucial in explaining the force as well as the democratic limits of neoliberalism, exclusive focus on the recent phenomena—such as the rise and fall of progressive neoliberalism—may reduce the scope of investigation by overemphasizing the rupture induced recently. The "neo" in neoliberalism only concerns revisioning market economy, not classical liberalism's fundamental antinomy between order and equality. This is another reason why the neo-liberal government cannot be

seen as a completely severed regime of truth from the one that focused on self-reflective reasonable subjectivity—which has violent implications for bodily beings.

Under these circumstances, some market proponents are searching the 'detour' for complete social degeneration by appealing to the individualized 'virtues' that the orientation of the current regime may induce, often citing the original *doux commerce* thesis. McCloskey (2006)'s plea and celebration of "bourgeois virtues" that must be revived with a marketized society is an example. In a schizophrenic way, she also notes that postmodern market feminism, or becoming a postmodernist, procapitalist, and feminist simultaneously, is not only possible but also desirable (McCloskey 2000, 28). It is because the marketplace, the "Forum," opens up space for cultural developments as well as "gigantic enrichment" that emanates from market capitalism itself. Hence, despite the "black-board possibility" of capitalism—like slavery and commercialization of female sexuality—as problematized by many critics, the commonly misrepresented marketization of society is, in fact, ethical and virtuous project if manifested in a good way. As a matter of fact, there are some versions of the more suspicious marriage of virtue ethics with the market than McCloskey's. For instance, while Bruni and Sugden (2013) mention "virtue ethics," it sets itself for the protection of the market and the mutual "gain" of self-interested market participants that exceeds and substitutes individuals themselves.

Yet, almost every strand of this adornment and glorification of market or market society tends to stop at the point of insensitivity toward finding the human agency in dimensions other than individual's market rationality

regardless of their references to the implications for society in general. Even the personalized deontology provided in bourgeois—nowadays capitalists and corporations—ethics, the "accountability toward others" does not refine the locus and mode of the agency itself. The virtue or duty of individuals proclaimed is no other than the individualized ethic to live and act as the proficient manager of one's own life.

This testifies that the affirmation of the market is possible via a magnifying glass attached to the Self—connected to 'rationality'—and the market—as a locus of maximizing rationality, including utility and efficiency. Especially, the lingering effect of 'otherization' produced by disembodied modernity—including the black history—is denied; The insecurity that the bodies had to bear on evades from the sight or, even if captured in the selective eyes' roving moments, is deemed as the condition for profit opportunity, development, and a virtuous society.

In this sense, those market-virtue positions often set themselves against the encroachment of political, moral, or epistemological 'nihilism' as the impact of popular democracy, perspectivism, or postmodern indeterminacy in defending the goodness of the market (see, for instance, Levet 2017).[53] For sure, the spirit of "every worldview can be valid" was pointed out commonly as the signifier of nihilism. However, criticisms and political movements against hierarchical epistemology and practices that they denominate as 'relativism' or fear as 'nihilism' are not guilty of the labeled condemnation. Rather, many of them—even including the communitarian strands and

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[53] Admittedly, clearly defining nihilism is a daunting task. For the definition and categorization in a relative manner, see Carr (1992) especially, pp. 17–18.

Rawlsian parenthesis—are exposing and confronting the arbitrariness in the basis or practices of inequality, projecting 'equality of/between bodies' as the criterion or a locus of value.

Paradoxically, what they defend rests on it in a two-fold sense. On the one hand, the invocation of self-help and responsibilization utilized for austerity rest on the "ignoble paradox of modernity" (West 1999), the contradiction between purported egalitarian universal and its practice of otherization and oppression. In this sense, the regime of truth is sustained through the discursive and actual production of nihilism in the zone of non-being, where the "life of horrifying meaninglessness, hopelessness, and (most important) lovelessness" pervades (West 2001[1993], 14).

On the other hand, what the proponents of "alternative facts" posit is a specific combination of lopsided rationalism and moralism, feeding on what Simon Critchley (2008[2007]), referring to Nietzsche, put as the 'negative nihilism' in a political sense that is prevailing in liberal democracy. Especially the widespread imagination of 'happiness' defined by the constant surrender and resignation spirit is a sign of it (Nietzsche 2006 [1883]). Negative nihilists, not imagining that one stand beside oneself or can do something for the world, take the first route. Forgoing the efforts to act in the world and transform it, they simply focus "on himself and his particular pleasure and projects for perfecting himself" (Critchley 2008[2007], 4). Yet, this way of being is more of a structural enforcement than a matter of individual preference or choice, as the doctrines of neoliberalism insist.

The melodramatic imagination bounded in the securitizing mechanism, and the constantly-sought-for happiness and goodness equalized as the

absence of the body, the future suffering, the other is symptomatic. As the proclaimed-to-be virtue and structure of the market rest on competition and moralizing invocation of individual competitiveness, it imposes to view and constitutes others as "a rival, a competitor and/or a debtor" (Lazzarato 2012 [2011], 57). The idealized self-reliance for a concrete individual designates nothing other than being nonfungible or always employable to be available and flexible in the market (ibid. [2011], 135). The props of one's life are being substituted by the stamina and quickness of self-body, inducing hyperactivity and hyper-reaction to fluctuating market signals. It imposes the incessant discipline, control, and sacrifice of one's body in the absence of security, not those toward others.

On the contrary, the room for dependence, heteronomy, and forgoing the desire to control one's environment and situation—including the encounter with others, which becomes the condition for responsiveness of the self to others shrinks. The self-alienation for future self—but in fact only incurs one's subjugation to the norms—from other existences and domains of life are slated in the counter-factually supposed notion of autonomy. One's tightened vigilance is exhausted on the obsessive calculation of future profits and risks, armament against all tentative dangers, fastening the door of the border of self, thus (un)consciously ordering oneself as a securitized cogwheel of capital. With the conceptual abstraction of finance and non-human capital gain, our sensibilities are more likely to be insulated from the costs that vulnerable bodies should bear through. As with the spread of the photograph of the lynched, for the 'rationally behaved and rewarded,' the fact that 'the irrational or/and irresponsible' is suffering becomes the means to show off the

superiority of self, or no business of own—including of the community one belongs to—while indulging in potentially-wasteful passionate affection toward the world and differences are becoming harder. Thus, left in front of the seemingly self-chosen race for one's economic, bodily, and social fates, the relational boundary increasingly becomes limited to the 'normal' reproductive function of the primary and intimate bonds like the family that supports one's hyperactivity.

Also, performing anthropology stresses conformity toward the existing structure and orientation of the world, which ab-normalizes the search for new relations with self and others, what bodies can do otherwise, as well as the other possibilities in life than self-indulgence. As Daniel Bell (1978 [1976]) noted, the unique functional rationality reifies societies as a structure of roles—rather than being human beings—in which the relationship between human beings is put in the organizational charts that specifics hierarchies and functions (Bell 1978 [1976], 11). Hence, the motivational deficit, the internal disengagement with the democratic life of citizens of liberal democracy shared, only aggravates, actively reproducing the consensualism. The economically rational arrangement of the current regime of truth is where the imaginative force for performances is systemically annulled. The existence and appearance of 'surplus subjects' are nullified in the calculation, and people are reduced to "the some of the social body and of the political community to the relations between the interests and aspiration of these different parts." (Rancière 2010 [2001], 42-43)

For Nietzsche, the foremost source of modernistic nihilism was the breakdown of monotheistic morality, which provided men with a belief in

absolute value and meanings and reifying scientific reason (Nietzsche 1968 [1888], 103). Today, it could be attributed to the fact that the unique rationality closes down the viability of creating new meanings through exhibiting the surplus-ness, identifying everything with its economic function—which Marcuse denotes as "one-dimensional" (Marcuse 2006 [1964], 97-100). Neoliberal rationality, as an extension of the progressing rationality of advanced industrial society, attempts to convert all the irrational rests and the rationalities contained in them through the unilateral rationale of effectiveness and productivity. It leads the various visions on the morality of a person and her existence to be subsumed under the standard of capital-ability that increasingly rests on the fluctuating market.

Furthermore, the 'solid' social objects to attach oneself with and provide with meaning, other than the illusory and fluctuating market value, are symbolically delegitimized and materially breaking down—or proclaimed that they've never provided self with any sort of security. The transition to post-Fordism, along with the shrinking welfare, entailed the deformation of social ties where people traditionally felt solidarity being made unviable. As Bauman puts it, "[t]he ground on which our life prospects are presumed to rest is admittedly shaky—as are our jobs and the companies that offer them […] the standing we enjoy in wider society and the self-esteem and self-confidence that come with it" (Bauman 2005, 69). Importantly, this situation tends to crank down or efface various anchorages of meaning other than what is imposed. As we've seen, the fetishization of market rationality, the absolutization of the market on our life and imagination productively reinforces it through constituting ourselves.

Happiness, which appears as the locus for salvation for individuals amidst the increasing existential and moralistic threats, plays a deceptive role; the continuing assumption that individuals are 'rational subjects of self-interests' emphatically neglects the common situation they are in. The belief that "anybody can be whatever one wants to be" through detachment, the cruel optimism, as Laurent Berlant (2011) puts it, is the product of it and what shapes and sustains passive attitudes. Barack Obama's redemptive chant for "Hope" and "(Hope to) Change" at the same time is thus deluding.[54] The reductive meaning of life—integrated into the world of 'success'—creates motivational deficits for individuals in questioning and changing the norms themselves (Critchley 2008[2007], 7). In this sense, what we are with is the strange cohabitation of what might be called a world-ordering market "theology" (Kotsko 2018) and passive nihilism.

Neglecting the impact of social injustices and equalizing all destinies retained the presupposition that individuals are equally self-sufficient and ideally self-reliant. This is where the absence of democratic imagination and the principle of equality of voice—the *isēgoria*—evades, turning the attention to the "equality before the Object and other manifest signs of social success and happiness," which Baudrillard pejoratively called the democracy of "the car and the stereo" (Baudrillard 1998 [1970], 50).

If then, is nihilism a dead end? It is likely to be so, but according to Nietzsche, it could not be. For Nietzsche, what is left of the men confronting nihilism would be two contrasting responses: either passively saturated by the

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[54] One of the crucial criticisms against this in view of racial equality was raised by Rho'Dess (2011).

existential vacuity and suffering in self; or transcending the chaos by the active realization of the desire to create new values and forms (Nietzsche 1968 [1887], 17-18). The latter clause implies that not all dimensions of nihilism are problematic: it can lead to creative destruction that subverts the stale ground that one had to stand in and invigorates a new field of life. It is notable that Fanon's 'zone of non-being was not projected as the sphere of total death of subjectivity but as a sphere where a new collective subjectivity against extreme violence could be searched for.[55]

4.　Politics, Performative

4.1　How do Bodies Perform?

4.1.1　Between Apocalypse and Autonomy

Likewise, the permeation of neoliberal rationality is operating as a giant pushing button for negative nihilism, leaving almost everything touched by it. What is omitted or erased is the significance of the fact that we exist as bodies with others since somatic experiences also become individualized, while

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[55] This is to go against Brown (2019)'s notion of neoliberal nihilism that connects it with the loss of white man supremacy, which rests on the still-de-decolonized view on the impact of neoliberalism. For her, nihilism is reduced to one possible expression or response to nihilism, namely, the popular "resentment" of the previously privileged toward Others.

individual bodies are bounded ever more harshly than before. With this, our imagination of what we share as bodily beings and what we can do with our bodies together to create meaning tend to evade dominant political discourses. What is to be fought against here through this commonality in the name of equality is not the 'relativism' often represented as epistemological or hermeneutic nihilism that may decenter the locus of truth, as proponents of neoliberal virtues assert. Rather, it is the unitarization of the locus and standard of truth that dissolves our foundations and materially and sensually root us out from it in trying to colonize our body and soul without any empty space for alternative imagination.

Yet, if this is the world we are living in, and our states are so, aren't performative views on politics still too optimistic about political possibilities and their power? Aren't thoughts—including our theoretical sources—on becoming and acting as subjects too idealistic to drive transformations today?

This may be so, following the problematic of some critics. For instance, recall when the author of *Capitalist Realism* says, "all that is left is the consumer-spectator," resonating the Jean Baudrillard's voice (Fisher 2009, 4).[56] His position goes further than just saying that capitalism powerfully grasps the horizon of the thinkable. According to him, current capitalism rendered the "old" dialectic—mostly before the 1970s—between the resistant,

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[56] Rancière had famously criticized Baudrillard's thesis on consumer society in the reason that, based on the implicit hierarchy between what is right and wrong, it diagnoses contemporary society and subjects as altogether pathologic, in the end denigrating visions of democracy as a whole (Rancière 2009[2008], 46). Although I only partly agree with this criticism, it seems certain that Fisher and Baudrillard similarly diagnose everything in our current society as absurd and argue that something completely "new" politico-economically should be introduced.

subversive movements and capitalism's incorporation—or recuperation—as dysfunctional. For sure, capitalism and neoliberalism constantly seek their territory, trying to digest resistant modes of being and radical thinking for their sustenance. Nevertheless, according to him, since all are mentally and institutionally saturated in consumerist culture, every gestural anti-capitalism, in fact, comes to reinforce it (Fisher 2009).

Even though he affirms that this is the very time for politico-economic alternatives to have "disproportionately great effect" (ibid. 80-81), his identification of today's circumstances with the quandaries of formerly innovative artists or the scenes in dystopian films—conceiving them only as the unmediated *mimesis* of reality—reveals the all-or-nothing vision. What he yearns for in the end is the return of backward-looking ideas of historical progress, strategies, and unilateral agents for change. Problematically, this all-or-nothing vision pretermits contextual struggles of plural gents in various sites of oppression as well as the political possibilities of performative disengagement.

Theorists who are taking a more sophisticated approach in analyzing subjectivity in terms of recent technological changes also tend to present either-or. For Micheal Thompson (2022), the radical process of commodification colligates with the widespread cybernetics that surrounds people at all times, inculcates routinized value systems of capitalism to individuals, and shapes their normative orientations toward the world. On the other hand, social relations are solidified and authorized toward that orientation, socializing the sense of self, which is the ground of the individual personality as *homo economicus* (Thompson 2022, 185-86).

Even if this analysis is trenchant, the problem occurs when one asserts the exhaustiveness and definite universality of this process. It says all human desires have been preempted by capitalism in that way, and without the subjects like the past—explicitly which existed in the 1960s and 70s—that was critical, reflexive, and hence autonomous, radical change and the reaching out to democratic ideal is impossible. In the spirit of decolonial thought, even though the decades of social movements were based on the highly critical culture in various fields, still, what we need to ask is, "who's autonomy and reasonableness were taken to be revolutionary and politically significant?" and who were not in those discourses. Theorists like Walter Mignolo may contend that the period that this 'nostalgia' is ready to applaud was still wallowed in the constant epistemic en/foreclosure of the colonized—in a broad sense—in a sense the fundamental 'coloniality of power' was still out of focus of the contentions (Mignolo 2000). This also denotes that nostalgia is similar to introducing another partial-universal standard for being rational that had been excluding some people and their voices from the site of presence and existence.

Wendy Brown's view on the 'de-democratization of democracy' as the effect of neoliberalism seems more nuanced with regard to the political impact of capitalism but as well draws something like a vicious circle in an attenuated tone. Going further than our analysis, she views neoliberalism not as an extended or reformulated version of capitalism or liberalism but as a "fundamental remaking" of political institutions and subjects (Brown 2017, 92). Through its own unprecedentedly devastating rationality, in addition to the degeneration of liberal-democratic institutions, subjects are in every

aspect imbued with the power that surrounds us from all directions, made into the very agents of undemocratic power.

For her, "we are only and everywhere *homo oeconomicus*" (Brown 2017, 95). Since *homo politicus*—the essence of democracy—democratic political life and democratic imaginaries have failed, democracy is not simply undone, but the escape from the vicious circle of impotency became hardly foreseeable (Brown 2015, 179; 2017, 93). All that is left in a society is the despairing objective signs of degeneration and the subjective state of people—like the spread of *ressentiment* against Others. By the end of the analysis of the de-democratization of neoliberalism, she says,

> "In letting markets decide our present and future, neoliberalism wholly abandons the project of individual or collective mastery of existence. [⋯] Anything but collaborative and contestatory human decision making, control over the conditions of existence, planning for the future; anything but deliberate constructions of existence through democratic discussion, law, policy. Anything but the human knowledge, deliberation, judgment, and action classically associated with homo politicus." (Brown 2015, 221-222)

Here, neoliberal rationality is presented as a real substance that subsumes everything under its grip, which has its *raison d'etat*, not just logic or norms. For her, it is the all-encompassing orders of normative reason, all-encompassing not only in their extent but also in their depth. Thus, it is said that our subjectivities, movement, and future possibilities are not only shaped but also 'determined' by it. In this "totalizing picture" (Honig 2017), only one side of performativity—the normative conditioning of subjects—exists, without the other—the possibility of subjects playing a variation. Hence, it becomes nearly equivalent to the diagnosis of a "posthistory" and "postpolitics" (Cornelissen 2018; Balibar 2014, 23).

These critics, to some extent, agree with Brown's frame that

neoliberalism introduced profound transformations in our conditions and subjectivities with economic rationale. The real problem is the explanation's substantializing of the current crisis as something like an omnipotent vacuum cleaner bought from the newly built shop that absorbs all other things except it. In this picture, where crisis is defined as the demolition of the 'past normalcy,' theoretical, imaginative, and practical efforts that attempt to move beyond the cynical performance test of it become unviable.

Even though Brown's conceptualization of neoliberal rationality lingers on Foucault's analysis in *The Birth of Biopolitics*, she seems to be elucidating a 'Weberian voice' on the rationalization that assumes there is one general form or plane of it. Yet, this tends to subsume all other human relations unitarily in the concept, unintentionally simplifying the complexity of power that operates and subjugates us today. As we've seen, human being relates to each other not in *ex nihilo* but with and through one's own being, which is already entangled in the web of meaning. Hence, each of the relations entails some sort of rationalizing process in a variety of forms depending on the truth assumed. (Foucault 2001[1978b], 228–30). Various forms intersect, especially earnestly with the market rationality's dominance, but constitute a distinctive axis that cannot be reduced to one another.

Take 'racialization', the codification of differences initiated with the naturalization of the colonial relationships between Europeans and non-Europeans in a biological manner (Quijano 2000). Although this, from the outset, was linked to capitalism and today entangled with dominant social, juridical, political, economic, and symbolic arrangements like in the division of labor, the truth it assumes and how it makes particular bodies unlivable, at

least conceptually, should be articulated distinctively from the ruins of neoliberalism, where things are arranged and reduced to quantifiable variables affiliated with the market.

The problem is, when converged with the implicit assumption of active-passive dichotomy, this all-subsumption thesis, when diagnosing the state of subjectivity, relatively ignores various resistance from different border points as well as other nodes of power. Yet, isn't the dichotomy grounded in the equalization of subject position and subjectivity or the implicit dream of unconditioned and self-generated action? Can living bodies ever be in a non-subjugated state? Doesn't the 'antimony' of democracy denote the ideal state was non-existent in democratic societies?

On a different note, it then tends to restrict its lens to the Anglo-American context, ironically repeating the scheme of intelligibility on political subjects and actions forged in narcissistic contexts. On the other hand, one may think of the constant Indigenous movements in Latin America against forced displacement of communities induced by the economic rationalization of nature or the large-scale movements in Aganaktismenoi of Greece against the post-political consensus on neoliberal policies.[57] Concerning this, we could contend the eschatology by asking, "are those collective challenges of bodies and critical subjectivities obsolete in terms of politics? Or, is the 'political human' really dead?"

If it is assumed that we could not help but repeat or reproduce the

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[57] On the problematic neglect or reduction of those movements due to the de-decolonized viewpoint of intellectuals, see Rivera (2021). On the radical politicalness of Aganaktismenoi, see Roussos (2019). Also, see the marginalization of the politicalness of Greek citizens by structured moralistic framing, see Herzfeld (2016).

powerful force that subjugates us, drawing political implications and possibilities for an alternative—radical equality—or the potential of political subjectivities would simply be unviable. In terms of critical theory, it maybe is to throw away the imaginal articulations as part of it simply because of the assumed "un-decolonized" conception of politics and subjects in delineating and problematizing the challenges that should be dealt with. However, articulating the conjuncture between concrete reality and dispersed emancipatory forces against the existing geography of episteme is what current situations ever-urgently call for.

Likewise, not all the tensions appearing in the liberal democratic institutions are attributable to the unexampled wrecker. As West (1999) pointed out, what produced the current situation is not just neoliberal transformations but also the persistent antilogy in liberal democratic ideals which existed from its modern initiation. It is what the author of *The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture* (1999 [1975]) has pointed out, namely, the continual structural antinomy of modern democracy, or what Mignolo (2018) put as the historical foundation of modernity. The entanglement of racism, colonialism, capitalism, patriarchy, and hetero-normativism that grounded the positive 'self' of progress, civilization, and democracy is still haunting the modes of self-constitution (Mignolo 2018, 142).

Especially, neoliberalism grounds itself in this liberal antinomy, and with its focus on the market as the locus of truth, actively bandwagons without the desire to resolve the paradox. However, and in this very sense, the privatization of democratic infrastructures cannot denote the demise or superficialization of democracy itself, including citizens' inclination toward it

and their actualities and potentialities of action. Moreover, if not with the presupposed bordering on what "democratic political life" *per se* is and ought to be, playing the regulatory visions of liberal democracy on citizenship in variation, this buck-passing would be played in a less disempowering mode.

If we compare Brown's vision with Étienne Balibar's observation on the current capitalism's relationship with democratic citizenship, it becomes obvious that affirming the politico-social impact of neoliberalism while not losing sight of the capacity to act politically against liberal democracy's contradiction is possible (Balibar 2014). Adopting a performative perspective in this thesis is to align with the point. Though currently dominant epistemology, practices, social structure, and subject's state are constituting us, considering the unexpected performances against the projected course of things and schemes of intelligibility, this cannot be the 'lost' of democratic politics. The notion that politics need the Brownian figure of *homo politicus*—a sovereign and independent individual, hopeful illusion—is the implicit narrative here, which other critical theorists also repeat. However, if viewed through a performative view, politics is not the inheritance of established subjects but what needs to be created and invisibilized performatively, though often becoming unintelligible due to the dominating formalistic view on liberal-democratic politics.

If the regime of truth and consensualism are constituting our political subjectivity, the neoliberal regime of sensibility is itself 'political' rather than simply depoliticizing. It mobilizes and reformulates existing sensibilities, social logic, and structure, as well as introduces new ones. In reverse, it also denotes that the set of epistemological-cultural norms is specific, historical, and thus,

contingent though pretending to be natural, necessary, or universal.

The existing socio-political configuration of the sensible is not something unassailable, though the task is not simple. Concerning the interwovenness of various forms of domination under the current regime of truth, the emancipation of the subjugated bodies would be impossible under neoliberal capitalism (see Laclau & Mouffe 2001 [1985]). However, contending and resisting the naturality of certain ways of seeing, ways of being, and ways of saying, and what makes them visible and others not, the performative action, is still an option. People don't have to be self-powered and autonomous to be democratic citizens like in Jean-Jacques Rousseau's republic. In addition, human beings have ever been completely self-sufficient beings. To put it in another way, what needs to be problematized and contended against is the rationality and the dominant interpretations and meanings it produces and imposes, not the fundamentally deteriorated capacity of citizens.

On the other side, there is an array of literature investigating the current status possibility of subjectivities in a way quite distinct from Brown's. For Hardt and Negri, the core or neoliberal situation is the reign of a new global form of sovereignty "composed of a series of national and supranational organisms united under a single logic of rule" (Hardt & Negri 2000, xii). Yet, they are adamant about affirming the democratic capacities of people through the 'commoning' contentions against the subsumption of life under a capitalist empire that is latent and waiting to be exploded as the condition is changing (Hardt & Negri 2009, 353). Especially the form of production has also been changed into the production of services, and the form of labor has become

immaterial and biopolitical, which entails cooperative relationships among producers (ibid. 336).

In their view, this direct linkage between economic production and social relations makes the condition where an equivalence chain based on the consciousness of the 'common enemy'—the global capitalists—and the shared situations between various subjugated people is being constructed. Hence, for them, now is the time when the global working-class struggles, inheriting the 1970s autonomist movement that proves that the assorted movements are possible are foremost viable (Hardt & Negri 2004, 81). The point is that the 'loosely assembled' multitude, the subject performing the exodus from the capital empire, is ready to be constituted, and the subversion of biopower through global 'biopolitical' movements of this autonomous assembly is possible and viable.

A point where Hardt and Negri differ from Brown, and which resonates with this thesis, is their account of the relationships between norms and subjectivities. As they see it, the current production of subjugated subject position necessitates our investment in the current and potential capacities of collective bodies or bodies-collective. Instead of assuming that our capacity for democracy is dead or irreversibly dissolved, the current situation indicates a slackening of political imagination, constrained by the truth-demonstrative and calculative rationality of neoliberalism. Despite the contention that the solution cannot merely be an 'exodus'-a severance from present subjectivities to develop something entirely, new-we must engage with the possibilities of what human capacities 'could be,' what they can do, and also recognize their conundrums.

In this sense, the assertion that everyday life can become the primary locus for the creation and appearance of political struggles against subjugation becomes trenchant. By reversing the analysis that neoliberalism is moving to colonize almost every aspect and sphere of our lives and by adopting the political meaning of common bodily situatedness, as we will see shortly, the circumstances may call for contemplating the 'tiny' modifications and movements of bodies against disciplining and precaritization.

However, a point of difference from this thesis lies in their putative and implicit idealization of an 'uncontaminated' state where things aren't ruined. Even if they have now turned themselves against the notion of pure autonomy and self-organization (see Hardt & Negri 2019), the view still bears the danger of degenerating into revolutionary romanticism. While the optimism could be interpreted as a forecast aiming for self-realization and the germination of politics rather than an irresponsible projection, the problem lies in the fact that the "agents of change, levels of effectiveness in the field of the social, and privileged points and moments of rupture" are designated *a priori* (Laclau & Mouffe 2014 [1985], 179). In doing so, subjects' concrete situations and the divergence of oppressive schemes are generalized and reduced, as if the subversion of the current global regime would bring emancipation for all. The lesson of Mignolo fades from sight within this celebration of the authentic agent of revolution.

This perspective emanates from their way of conceptualizing neoliberalism as some substance that has its 'core' which can be attacked by unitary resistance aligning with the second approach we state above. Also, this leads to the vision that the political alternative is the hegemonization and

reign of the autonomous multitude, or there will be nothing. On these points, we may ask, has there ever been a time when repression did not come from the regime of truth in democratic political communities, and what will be the state when democracy is realized in a full-swing universalizing mode?

4.1.2 The Basis of Problematization

> The point is not to counter-pose reality to it appearances. It is to construct different realities, different forms of common sense—that is to say, different spatiotemporal systems, different communities of words and things, forms, and meanings (Rancière 2009 [2008], 102)

Despite the unresolved antinomy, democracy had acquired an 'honorific label,' becoming the criteria for judging all systems, sometimes in a civilizing-moralizing tone. However, there seems to be some 'consensualism' on the point that it reached a state of emergency or even a "mortal danger" (Lakoff 2009 [2008], 11), the problematization of which this thesis criticized in preceding section.

Yet, how can we go beyond those putatively critical imaginaries that sometimes tumble down to the "bogus controversy over images" of critical theories (Rancière 2009 [2008], 97) to construct different forms of commonsense and realities? If we assume that the alternatives "have been excluded by the dominant hegemony and that can be actualized" (Mouffe 2013, 132), what can it be? What role may democracy play in the imagining of alternatives? Since our objective is not to throw out the incisive part of those criticisms, the question could be put more specifically as: on what

ground do the subjugated bodies move while not repeating the norms and the circling of self-projection?

For George Lakoff, one of the best-selling cognitive philosophers, the neoliberal mode of thought that grounds itself in self-centered and disembodied rationalism is the powerful force that constitutes the danger. Problematically, because of this, neoliberals cannot acknowledge that what they take to be the fact—the goodness of the market, the primacy of interests or optimization, etc.—are 'framed,' only activating and reinforcing the self-projection (Lakoff 2009 [2008], 55-56). In fact, even if they are currently dominating and distorting the policy arena, self-ignorance is not only the problem of neoliberals but of all democratic citizens. Regarding this, if people are not guided by the 'real reason' in their political lives, it would be hard to move forward to moral and progressive democratic states.

Concerning that he is a renowned contender against neoliberal-neoconservative associates, one may feel the urge to open up the box of guiding sources. Yet, inside the box are the insights of science on human beings and developing technology—especially those driven by the cognitive science collective—which will provide people with knowledge on "what it means to be a human being; of what morality is and where it comes from; of economics, religion, politics, and nature itself," what reality really is, and so on. The spread of knowledge will help expand "the great ideas" of democracy—that is, "freedom, equality, fairness, progress, even happiness" (ibid., 14-15). This ideal is universal: Scientific knowledge on the role of the human brain in politics, by helping people discipline their minds, will actualize the 'real freedom' for human beings. Here, we could see how Lakoff is

appropriating somehow Kantian voice on the freedom to repudiate what he conceives as the nonscientific and outmoded ideas—that of the "Old Enlightenment"—on which the neoliberal mode of thought is based on.

Lakoff's problematization, or problem-setting, could be read as acute, at least at first sight, regarding the need to view social matters as something that are always presented to us in a mediated form—through the embodied brain—and the need to question the foundation and condition of thought, rather than narrowing our focus by lingering to already biased statistical or empirical methods. On the other hand, what he projects against this is the real understanding coming from a more enlightened reason that will contribute to the society more of a just place. In one sense, the assertion may be interpreted as providing another scope of imagination that is marginalized or under-recognized within the current regime of truth and hegemonic modes of thinking. The reason this alternative vision may attract us will lie in its giving of a bearing point that is employable, as well as intuitive, certifiable, and subsistent, thus, the hope of escaping from the left melancholy, an anarchic uncertainty amidst the flood of deceptions or gibberish.

However, the enthusiastic universalizing impulse that focuses on the creation of another locus of subsumption—objectivity and computability—also is based on the excessive self-conviction based on Western-modern narcissism, the emphatic identification with the self-image magnified in the reflected surface. The structure of developmental reading exactly resembles what he refutes: neoliberal thinking on human rationality and the social benefits that competition of self-centered rationality—in the market—will bring. Even though he is fully aware of the fact that the radical abstraction—

the disembodiment—and exclusion of eyes on contingency and particularity of method, which grounded modern science's being a sole rescuer of society, were problematic, he didn't sever his argumentation from the rationalist framing. Lakoff's call for the true reason proceeds as if its own assumptions and presuppositions are self-evident, regardless of the historical or cultural ground of this "selfhood" and how the 'other' side—not just what he views as his foes—of the narcissistic ideal and methods to reach it. Although the position attempts to dissect what makes our decision and actions, it never asks "what was something that has historically and culturally disregarded or oppressed in the representation of 'our' ideas and selfhood as universal," let alone the fact that the surgical blade does not reach out to the ideas themselves.

This widely read and popular position that sets itself as a critical voice is just another subset of the bogus contention that desires order and arrangements in the end, trying to substitute the seemingly wrong or anarchic situation with the demonstrative truth. What he definitely imagines as a better world is that of "new Enlightenment," where the agents of underrealized ideals of freedom and equality get chosen—the Progressive party—through neuro-scientifical analysis of phenomena and technologically planned strategies. Conspicuously, in this presentation, politics are left to current representative democratic institutions and liberal constitutions. It is no coincidence that Barack Obama is pointed out as the pivotal figure in the new politics of unity by him (Lakoff 2008). In the same sense, although he puts himself against current techno-meritocracy, the knife of constructivist contextualizing eyes stops short in front of the assertion of edification through the soft voice of scientific truth that evades any truth-event or imagination.

In this sense, this alike tends to reach toward consensualism, which tries to marginalize dissensual and insurgent politics. Though proclaiming itself as guidance of guidance, the knowledge that human cognition is embodied and could be distorted does not give any guidance to how "part of those who have no part" would be formed and stage politics (Rancière 1999 [1995], 11).

Rather, the politics of "part of those who have no part" is itself not enticing since it is 'unimaginable' and nonintuitive. To face contemporary quandaries of subjectivity as well as subject positions without promoting the self-expansion of the regime of truth and without falling into the circle of narcissus—emerging between fantasies of extreme self-dissolution and fantasies of self-sufficiency—that lethargically stay in what is deductible, the first will be to present a transindividual questioning of "who and what we are."

Although there is no single subject position produced by the neoliberal regime of truth, multiple discourses and divergent practices that bound self in them, if, as we've seen, the constitution of neoliberal subjectivity starts from involving bodies in the mechanism, the problematization might also start from the very scene that we dissected as individuals, are being subjugated. Hence, not only to fill up the epistemological gap and impasse but also in a more practical sense, the nodal point for the previously unknown possibilities and agentic subjectivity is likely to be the body, the first involved.

The most basic condition that people share with each other that can be affirmed without introducing a transcendental phenomenology or substantive ontology is that we live through and with vulnerable bodies—whether or not it is queerly, colored, physically unchallenged, or well-fed. Performative

politics starts from this, disengaging normative constitutions of individual selves, detaching oneself from the identity, and problematizing the given make-visible by bodily excess. Thus, very complicity coming from the subject's boundedness is also "the basis of political agency" (Butler 1997, 30).

Yet, it shouldn't be read as Hobbes' substantial ontology that man is naturally equal in his bodily capacities. Rather than being the arena for self-preservation, interest, or sheer desire for one's own glory, assumed in the structure of the market, this manifests the minimalist ontological condition that establishes political subjectivity. It is, even in the midst of the forces that subjugate and differentially distribute bodies, the condition is the very commonality between those who were capacitated and those who were not.

Throughout her political works, Butler have been stressing the point that we are, first and foremost, incarnate beings. For her, life is inherently attached to the body, the carrier and vessel of life, being the object of norms but also being the core of the subject. Thus, being a body has special political connotations: because it is constituted as a social phenomenon in the public sphere, it invariably has a "public dimension" (Butler 2004a, 24). This indicates that to be a body is "to be exposed to social crafting and form, and that is what makes the ontology of the body a social ontology." (Butler 2009, 3) However, conceptualizing as such becomes the start of disengagement since it refutes the myth of 'mastery' imbued in the relations of oppression and reveals that involvement in the relations is our common condition.

To put it in another way, it is precariousness, the condition of social existence as bodily beings always within and dependent on the social norms and relations, that conditions our being rather than contained self-sufficiency

(Butler 2009, 25). It is the existentially shared condition of human beings' life—and sometimes including non-human beings, which is relational and socio-ontological. As we've seen, the body contains double valence: the social norms and relations make us vulnerable but also enable our bodily life: In her terms, we are exposed to "socially and politically articulated forces" and various expressions of social elements such as language, work, and desire that enables the body's persisting and flourishing." (Butler 2009, 3) For instance, it's not easy for us to sustain our lives without legal protection. However, 'being the subject of the protection' depends on the definition of citizen, or more fundamentally, 'human' presumed and working in the law and legal system, and the normative production of the human.

In addition, the subject is fundamentally dependent on others to sustain one's life and humanity. It doesn't simply denote that there needs to be material or affective support from others. Rather, it means that one's life and activity as a 'subject' relies on others. For instance, one should be constantly perceived and recognized as a human being or a legitimate resident of the area by others—in other words, formed as such—to sustain and lead one's life stable. It also incorporates fewer material dimensions: According to Butler, "one's persistence as an "I" through time, depends fundamentally on a social norm that exceeds that "I," that positions that "I" ec-statically, outside of itself in a world of complex and historically changing norms." (Butler 2004b, 32) Others, too, are. Here, we see we are living in a world with a plurality of subjects, those who make one exists as 'I.' Thus, "one's life is always in some sense in the hands of the other." Note that 'others' here not only include those we know but also those who we barely know or do not know at all. (Butler

2009, 14) In this way, the general 'interdependency' of the subjects and their lives becomes the shared conditions of those living on earth, the basis of re-problematizing the representation by the given regime of truth.

Likewise, the term precariousness itself does not have negative connotations, although neoliberal anthropology invokes the un-autonomy or dependency as a fault. Posting precariousness as the basic ontological assumption directly refutes this and asserts that it is the very conditions that enable the lives in the social world. Against 'possessive individualism,' it denotes that beings are always in the state of dispossessed. Seen as such, neoliberal governmentality rests on at least two untenable arguments: one, the ideal human being is an individual that is autonomous and self-sufficient, regardless of the relationship one is in, even under the conditions where life has become increasingly unlivable; In addition, individuals cannot find (possessive) 'agency' in co-habitation and feeling, thinking, and acting collectively, asserting that there is no common situation of every individual living in the society except the line of market competition.

It's leaning toward securitization mobilizes from the assumption. However, conceiving of ourselves as incarnate being introduces a different conception that the self is not an entity that needs to be securitized against others but itself, a relation formed, supported, and formed by social forces and histories that exceeds oneself (Butler 2017, 179). This porosity to norms, forces, history, and human plurality is what disrupts the subjects' sovereignty and actions (Butler 2012, 173-174). This is why we are never self-sufficient or self-motoring, and our actions cannot be enacted by our own strength and

power alone (ibid., 181). In this sense, this alternative acknowledgment of interconnectedness and condition builds the bridge of political imagination.

In more generalized words, this way of viewing ironically shakes up existing boundaries of political practice and possibilities and also assists us in looking for and formulating another mode of questions based on different assumptions. As Butler's term 'precarity' denotes—not precariousness—the political logic, by arbitrary hierarchical order, render differential conditions of subjects, making some people's life even more vulnerable and unstable than others. However, seeing our existence as precarious makes the disidentification from the given distribution of sensible materials covered by the name of truth but, in fact, unjustly possible. Since one's body and, thus, self is constructed within the certain distribution of sensibilities yet unfinished, it becomes possible to engage with others.

To be more specific, precariousness as social and political embeddedness becomes a place to think and organize from. Contrary to Agamben's notion of bare life (Agamben 1998 [1995]), the status is far from enabling or revolving into new productivity. On the contrary, precariousness as the possibility for precarity establishes a principle of equality and inherent connectedness. (Butler in Butler & Athanasiou 2013, 107). It is this very corporeal porosity that we depart from the norm and expands the purview of subjectivity to the politico-ethical connection with the other, thus becoming a constitutive feature of human action, collective agencies, and dissensus.

Although there are criticisms that the view introduces a comprehensive ontology of human beings involving dangerous reductionism of subject position (Boucher 2006), this bodily ontology is neither phenomenology of

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presence nor the 'normal' structure of isolated being. Instead, it is a perspective that reveals the inevitability of "precariousness, vulnerability, injurability, interdependency, exposure, bodily persistence, desire, work and the claims of language and social belonging" (Butler 2009, 2), not an immunized state of the entity. In addition, this further enables the fact that the recognition of one's being and, basically, one's relations with others are arbitrarily governed by a normalizing frame of whose life is livable and significant (Butler & Athanasiou 2013, 4). In this sense, the ontology deconstructs established ontologies that base their claim on the assumption of essential substance in human beings. Revealing the condition of subjectivation is not equivalent to supposing the essence and telos of the person or anchoring each of the bodies by the name of identity or given place in the police order. There is no fixed center or pre-existing individual subjects wired to have specific capacities or properties indifferent to norms in the scheme.

However, this shared ontological feature of human flesh is not something simply given. To not subsume differences between each person in vulnerability to risks and suffering—which are socially constructed, unlike the 'natural' differences in capability and power—it should be viewed as something actualized by concrete actions, thus, contingently formed. What we share as an incarnate being is not the inherent empathy toward fellows— which presupposes the scope of the effect and its recipients, thus the form of the subject. Instead, by speaking politically on the unjustifiable state of vulnerability and its distribution that one's body is exposed to and has experienced, people come to constitute, speak, and hence, share their commonalities and become political subjects. In other words, it is to pose the

question anew about "who will be a subject here, and what will count as a life" (Butler 2002 [2001], 226). Nonetheless, politics here cannot be a series of games over hegemony or appeal to the institutions. It is instead the matter of how we were, is now, and could be, which runs through the whole sphere of our lives: perceiving, thinking, understanding, acting, and imaging. Yet, how exactly could the problematization against the neoliberal representation of what is 'viable' be?

4.2   Politics and Imagination

4.2.1 Performative Politics of Bodies

[P]recarity might well have us teetering, it might even do so evocatively, for better and often worse, praying for guarantees and, at times, shields that often turn out to be fortresses. But it is yet to dispense with, for all its normative expressions, a relationship to the adjective: to movement, however uncertain. (Mitropoulous 2006)

In the preceding chapter, this thesis argued that the basis of problematization, or re-problematization of problematizations that set the borders of intelligibility in terms of the body. However, even if there are commonalities between subjects that could be the basis for expanding "I," why are political performances rare? Doesn't the precarious exposure to the normative imputations, rather than prompting, prevent us from thinking and acting otherwise? As we have seen, performative politics could be formulated as the acting out of reconfiguring the distribution of sensible, initiated by taking a distance from given norms. Yet, if bodies ultimately rely on complex

socio-political field that subjugates them, wouldn't it be hard for the invisibilized to raise voice against established scheme of visibility publicly?

This point incisively poses a great difficulty in affirming the performative claims on equality. As Butler herself notes, deviation from the norms could put one's stability and survival at risk: "gender norms [..] function as an interpellation that one refuse only by agreeing to pay the consequences: losing one's job, home, the prospects for desire, or for life." (Butler 2004b, 214). Likewise, the risk of political staging of resisting bodies in public is often transferred to the individual. For example, the refugees who contended against unilateral and discriminatory refugee documentation in public were subject to background investigations by the Department of Justice, Immigration Bureau, threatened to be deported, and targeted for hate crimes (Shin 2021 [2020], 71-73). If so, on what ground could we affirm the importance of performative politics of bodies?

For me, it is the point where we could concern the intersections of the police order and politics. In *Whigs and Hunters*, a Marxist historian asserts that although law, based on class domination, is often appropriated for the ruling class's own advantage, its appeal to 'universality'—the underlying idea that it should be applied to the rulers and the ruled alike—serves as the medium for social contestations (Thompson 1990 [1975]). It is that, even though the liberal or neoliberal police order ideologically drives injustices in name of equality, rights and equality claims could draw its effect through it. In a similar vein, Rancière asserts that codified equality in police order—such as the promulgation of 1830 Charter that all French people are equal before the law—provides a counterpoint to the reality that contradict the premise of

equality (Rancière 1995 [1990], 45–47). We may see soon after in the collective lawsuit against *Abercrombie and Fitch*, that the proclaimed equality for all is "not *nothing*," especially in initiating the 'impossible' movements of the nonexistent subjects against the oppression.

As Laclau and Mouffe (2014 [1985]) noted in a different context, the dissenting articulatory practices or interpellation utilize the unfixity of liberal-democratic discourses on individual rights to create meaning (Laclau & Mouffe 2014 [1985], 176–77). Even if contradictions between words and reality sprout and the orientation of articulation cannot be decided before, the evocation of equality becomes the point of dislocation of self from the whole field of norms that regulated one's identity—"if I am one of the equal beings, why am I being imposed to act this way?".

Moreover, even if existing institutionalized collectivities tends toward conservatism or parochialism, they also are 'not nothing' when they become the props for transindividual engagement with the otherized. Facing the recurring industrial accident deaths of migrant and undocumented workers, workers in the Federation of Korean Trade Unions, demanded the ban of the legalized violence toward the precarious bodies through their bargaining leverage. Likewise, even if politics become the act of staging by subjects newly created, the staging of the imperative of equality between bodies is at many times made possible, or more viable through the existing measures.

However, these creation of voices does not rely on the "qualities" of the body, namely, whether or not a body has certain capacities and endowments. The workers in the Trade Union were speaking in name of "workers," but not exactly speaking as a "qualified" identified body. Instead, the name was re-

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created for the contestation. If we consider how could the trade unions can be explicitly antagonistic toward foreign bodies like in the Europe and the United States (Lucio & Perrett 2009), it becomes evident that the claim-making involved performative re-identification, not that of already identified group specificity. As such, whether or not one is already been supported by politico-social institutions, performative politics starts with the dis-identification and subjectivation—the severing of oneself from the identificatory mechanism of norm and ordering and cognizing one's agency for claiming radical equality.

Rather than in *ex nihilo*, political subjects are created through "transforming identities defined in the natural order of the allocation of functions and places into instances of experience of a dispute" (Rancière 1999 [1995], 36). Even if one is holding the identities like "workers" or "women," whose definition, role, and expected capacity is settled in the web of meaning in a regime of truth, politics starts when one "force[s] them out of such obviousness by questioning the relationship between a who and a what in the apparent redundancy of the positing of an existence". Here, the capacity to present another plane for watchers to rethink living with others does not suppose a special capacity or talent other than the fact that subjects live and act bodily.

It signifies that politics starts from the counter-interpellation, the "refusing what we are," (Foucault 1997 [1982], 216) starting from the "tiny modification in the posture of a body" (Rancière 2009b, 275). However, it is not a call for a 'detached' self which will end up denying the fact of suffering as the one had been identified as such. It is neither the need to become "ironist"

of Rorty (1989), valuing the idea of core self while struggling to remain opened to the different selves following cosmopolitan mode of living ascending today. Instead, with the performative ontology that a being can never be determined completely, it denotes the estranging of norms from us, facing of the unnaturalness, partiality, or arbitrariness of their operation on us, to start a sort of negative dialectic between the alienating norm and self. As Jaeggi (2014) notes, performative politics grounds itself on the assumption that "[w]hat we are must be expressed and externalized in order to acquire reality. There is no self apart from its realization; it becomes determinate only as something realized." (Jaeggi 2014, 46)

Notably, as Butler in *What's Wrong With 'All Lives Matter'?* (2015) points out, simply forgoing claims based on identity, in other words, vaulting over all the identity categories as a new ground would not help changing current distribution of sensibilities (Butler in Butler & Yancy 2015). It is because it was the black Americans that have been put outside the purview of "decency" who must have livable material and symbolic lives through the distribution of sensible stretching from slavery and current racism. And how can one deny some bodies' *Négritude*—subjectivity of people sharing the experience of and self-consciousness on subordination to the European colonizers and the slavery (Aimé Césair 2001[1939])? More directly, who were and are left unprotected under legal universalisms, being preemptively profiled, treated violently, and often get killed by the police? What exact an event had sparked up the very movements?

Concerning these, disregarding or alleviating the particularity of what the "regimes of race" (Robinson 2007) did and doing with neoliberalism to a

specific subject is not what a disidentification should do. One may appeal to the notion of "(all) lives," "human being," but problem happens when those notions themselves are provided with a premium of universality. In so doing, one could easily reduce or even deny the impact of that very distinctive discriminatory scheme on people having been oppressed.

And yet, the status of "biology," or biological reductivism among who are to be protected—or in some of the identity-based rights movements—needs to be contested, since it reincorporates the very logic that wrongly subjugated our sensibilities and certain bodies. Or, as Baldwin warned about the representation of race and formalistic equality in protest novels (Baldwin 1994[1955]), this could do nothing other than incorporating differences in restrictive terms and 'benevolent' liberal, or 'color-blind,' 'neutral' neoliberal orders, building up another consensus.[58]

In shouting "Black Lives Matter" in public places, numerous people that are not black Americans participated. Although many of them were not the very oppressed, or are subjects that have been differently oppressed, they showed the unnaturalness and unjustifiableness by their collective actions. In this action, people were not actualizing the inherited 'self' that is identified by biologically, or through any other external police mechanisms. As Rancière puts it, politics is "always enacted in the name of a category denied either the principle or the consequences of that equality," the "equality of any speaking being with any other speaking being" (Rancière 2023, 36). Starting from the

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[58] What Baldwin says at the end of his essay "Everybody's Protest Novel" is crucial: "The failure of the protest novel lies in its rejection of life, the human being, the denial of his beauty, dread, power, in its insistence that it is his categorization alone which is real and which cannot be transcended." (Baldwin 1994[1955], 155)

physical force committed on particular bodies, people talk on the structural violence that long been foreclosed their subjectivity. To extend, what they were doing is the disengagement of the historical link—the match of sense with capacity—between race, subjectivity, and livability by staging the capacity of speaking bodies in front of those who denied it.

The 1968's chant "*We are all German Jews*" by non-German-Jew protesters that appears repetitively in Rancière's writings alike. It is also a disidentified, or a 'wrongly' identified claim (Rancière 1992, 61). It involved an act of political re-identification that has nothing to do with the neglect of some bodies'—the German Jews'—state of extreme precarity and being under the scheme of (un)recognizability.

This goes beyond "humanism," or "responsibility toward others" in a narrow sense, which often ends up denying that there are nonidentical ways of being that cannot be explained by the abstract notion of inclusivity. Rather than dwelling on how to be included, or how to include more people within the boundary of existing community or norms, it sought, what new norms for the equal livability are possible, and how are they wrought? (Butler 2009, 6). Hence, this wrong identification constructed a tentative community of performers, consisting of solidarity between bodies which resists the very abstract notion of inclusivity that foreclosed certain population's speaking capacity. The claim is the pillar constituting the assembly of bodies and the stage that this assembly could perform. This newly constituted collective "identity" is a provisional reality generated by the action of resistance against the subsumption of the particulars under the sensibility and logic of police. Hence, what comes to fore in this community is not one's possession or

ownership of body or self, but the conditions that socially situated bodies share in common (Butler in Butler & Zaharijević 2016, 110).

What this thesis present as the "performative politics" denotes this intrusion into the distribution of bodies". As we can see, in those bodily engagements, there is no instance other than 'equality' that is proclaimed. In this sense, we could engage with Rancière's stubborn and repetitive insistence that equality is the only presupposition that is universal in politics with our view on politics—presenting and conceiving politics in this performative terms. It enables us to, first, secede from the seemingly forked road between universality and particularity, resist the doctrine that there is a fixed and prior locus of subject—namely, the identity—in advance, and to hold fast to the doctrine that the deservingness does not emanates from one's preexisting self-sufficiency and possessions. Instead, the deservingness of one's voice is staged and thus actualized in this performance. Hence, the principle of equality "is a universal that must be supposed, verified, and demonstrated in each case," (Rancière 2023, 36) where people unitedly engage in the disengagement of the configuration of sensibilities that grabs us by presenting the fact that there are no essential differences among the bodies. The actions themselves renders the prior conception of some bodies as incompetent, morally irresponsible, or criminal-like too unnatural and wrong. It also delegitimizes the logic that excluding some from the deserving subject of lawful treatment.

Yet, are these modifications really 'tiny'? Note that both Rancière and Butler calls the movement to subversion as politics, or political, but do not present rigid and stable boundary of what is politics and what is not. Rancière's rejection to reduce politics into the functioning of existing

institutions and orders is resolute, but this does not imply that "politics only exists as an insurrection against the existing order." In other words, there admittedly are multiple forms of political subversions.

Even so, what could be this 'multiple forms' of action that are political?[59] A familiar instance could be seen in the array of collective litigations against the palmy clothing retailer *Abercrombie & Fitch*. As the brand grew exponentially in the late 1990s and 2000s through promoting its icon, "*Cool Kids*," it come to represent "what it means to be an American youth". The establishment of the icon was enabled by the marketing strategy that focused more on displaying toned male bodies with bulging muscles wearing almost nothing other than American Eagle jeans than on the company's apparel.

The icon was the embodiment of heterosexual beauty defined by bodies that are good-looking, white, slender, and without visible physical challenges. Moreover, behind the motto that "Cool Kids wear *Abercrombie & Fitch*" lied the message, "*A & F* sell products 'only for' Cool Kids."[60] Exciting the youths' desire to be popular, they were symbolically and actually shouting out the

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[59] Dwelling on this problem would be crucial for the Rancière readers. It is because that, due to the reduplicative pattern of his interpretation of political scenes: appropriating the name of certain subject — such as German Jews—to which one is not, presenting oneself, or themselves as the very subject—for example, promulgating "We are all German Jews", and staging this scene to those who don't perceive the speaking and acting of the subject as viable or legitimate. Hence, we are simultaneously asking here, does this makes the actions and stages that he presents as politics, or political be reduced to some kind of model, or not?

[60] The former CEO Mike Jeffries said, "In every school there are the cool and popular kids, and then there are the not-so-cool kids. Candidly, we go after the cool kids. We go after the attractive all-American kid with a great attitude and a lot of friends. A lot of people don't belong [in our clothes], and they can't belong." (Jefferies in Denizet-Lewis 2006)

message, "*Get undressed—but be slim, good-looking and tanned!*" (Foucault 1980, 57). In a documentary film featuring this case, *White Hot: The Rise & Fall of Abercrombie & Fitch* (2022), we could see so many former-teenagers confessing that they admired to be the Cool Kid and compulsorily tried to join the rank, often by harming oneself.[61]

The collective indictment against the brand started from another moment when a youth, who was an ardent consumer of the brand, contested against the prints on one of the A & F t-shirts. It wrote, "*Wong Brothers Laundry Service-Two Wongs Can Make It White*," with the illustration of two Asian men with ridiculous mustache and slanted eyes. The typical orientalist image deriding Asians was mobilized in or for praising and promoting the normalized 'coolness'. What it reveals is the persistence of hierarchical sensibility that was lurking in western modernity, in that it was presumed to be a shared code of 'humor' *ex parte*.

It performs normalization of what is assumed to be 'common' in a several sense. First, it normalizes whiteness—often assumed to be or represented as unmarked, raceless, and thus ontologically neutral in a white-dominated society (Bonilla-Silva 2006; Pinder 2010, 29)—by constructing all the deviances as abnormal. Second, it normalizes a cultural code imbued with a particular populations' experiences—that of white males—and frees itself from the historical burden it has to bear, thus making light of and sublimating ongoing otherizations and historical discriminations into the phrase "cool". Here, the 'cool,' as a highly commercialized figure, sets the new boundary

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[61] See Thomas (2003) on how this kind of neoliberal cultural consumerism affects people's using of various methods to develop their bodies as valuable asset.

between normal and abnormal. It says, "why can't you laugh at this (mere) 'joke' (in our already multi-culturalized society)? It's cool, and you may be not," implying, one has to ongoingly adapt to this cultural code of capital in order to be recognized as a deserving person. Moreover, what the figure demands is not a mere conformity to the usage of the words. It imposes one to 'embody' the figure herself, making a good-looking body in order to get part in the culture one desires—and to not be a 'un-cool'—through various forms of self-negation—like a drastic diet—and subjugation of self and life to the bodily code.

In a sense, A & F may be enacting the very "commodification of Otherness" (hooks 2015[1992], 61) in their own profit-motive. It reiterated the commodified spectacle and instrumental amusements staged in the series of lynching, but without direct and explicit violence, to consolidate their brand identity as well as their 'cool' icon. If it is, the t-shirts will be the representative exhibition of how neoliberalism, in spite of its purported neutrality or blindness, is entwined with and is reproducing the various discriminatory schemes by normalization. On this, critics focusing on the structure and impact of commodification and commercialization will slap one's lap and contend that this is the very sign that our contemporaries are running into the sand, or, already in a doomed stage (for example, see, Thompson 2022). Many consumers, absorbed into the ever-expanding machinery of capital, their selves completely submerged and liquidated in it, lost their critical reflexivity and political agency in front of deceiving spectacles and thus, can merely act as the cog wheel.

Nevertheless, it was the ex-fans, whose desires have been invoked by

the code that A & F was engaged in, who started the contention against the company. As this shows, becoming a consumer in a capitalist society does not mean that one became an ignorant or a missing child, losing one's own viewpoint and getting lost in the flow of spectacles without capacity to think and act. Instead, it shows that disidentification is possible, which led some to problematize the hidden historic-cultural image and idea that "Asians are yellow and that yellow people cannot think," (Mignolo 2011, 48), disrupting the code even when the capitalism and its normalizing strategy is at its zenith.

Confronting the litigation, the company did not even blink at first, since the enterprise value has not been hurt seriously. Yet, when another youth who had long been suffered from eating disorder to fit one's body into the bodily normalcy created a petition page against the company, things became different. People who shared his experience—many of whom lived, or were living as the victims of the demand for self- 'management'—gathered and media joined the forces. Soon, the former employees and staff applicants who shared the experience of rejection or discrimination by the company due to their appearances gathered around to build up the 'detrimental' lawsuit.[62]

Soon, more and more people found that the celebration of whiteness and thinness was not neutral, but was grounded on the exclusionary idealization of white, heterosexual, able-bodied normality; that the identity of 'cool' was built up through the long historical scheme of racism, sexism, and colonialism; that the ionization of good-looking bodies and their normalization were representative part of the neoliberal promotion of 'self-

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[62] On people's dissensus, see Gregory, S. (2009, August 25), Liptak (2015), Lynn (2022), O'Keefe (2013), Strasburg (2002, April 18).

care' that is deemed as needed to be recognized as the deserving, reinforced by the devaluation and abnormalization of colored, overweighted, unhealthy, or religious bodies.

If the popularity of the brand testified the address of the society's popular sensibility in a specific age, the collective dissent against the discriminatory criteria and exclusionary practices could be read as the staging of dissensus against consensus. They presented the wrong, by problematizing the discordance between 'Americanness' processed as the 'melting pot' or 'equal opportunity for all', and that of which crystalized in consumerist culture as 'Cool Kids'. Utilizing the inscribed equality, the subjects introduced another horizon of radical equality. Though the experience of being sorted out, discriminated against, self-controlled as living and feeling bodies in the cool-normalized culture, people could act in concert to break down the 'kingdom' of Cool Kids.

Another scene of politics could be in the picture that we sketched in the Introduction. The band *StopCrackDown* was organized in 2003 in reaction to the extensive governmental crackdowns of the undocumented before the implementation of EPS in South Korea. The members were immigrants working at factories, including papermill, parts factory, sewing factory. In front of the legislation the ramification of which was expected as putting migrant workers in more precarious state, they chose to sing and write in their day off, sometimes in the street with various demonstrators, sometimes on the stage of local music festival, and sometimes in the MWTV (Migrant World TV). During the time allocated for 'repose' to work for manual laborers, they released two albums including 21 songs (see Rancière 1989 [1981], viii). In

one of their songs named *We Make Korea*, they sing,

> "No Matter What Anyone Says, We are Laborers / Though in Dungarees, We are Beautiful Workers / Living Confidently, in Blood and Sweat / We are Laborers, Changing the World, Making Korea / We make Korea We make Korea We make Korea We love Korea" (translations are mine)

The lyric is paradoxical: It is simultaneously counter-factual and true. In real, more than one million migrant workers are filling the necessary 'Fordist' low wage jobs in Korea, produce necessary goods, and constitutes vital part of Korean economy. However, not many people, even the government, deemed them as equal citizen who have the right to be legally protected, to claim their opinion, and more basically, to wash, sleep, and eat in livable, non-precarious state. Intermingled with ethno-racism, and also mainly because their bodies as the labor force were expendable in neoliberal perspective, they were in the state of extreme insecurity, who could be left to die or deported quite lawfully (Jeong and Lee 2022). Actually, Minoo had been deported to Nepal in 2009 after eighteen years of life in South Korea, signified as "illegal overstayer". In the cover of one of their albums, which was released after he was deported wrote "Nobody has the right to oppress others! (Translations are mine)."

In this view, their singing of "we" is not the expression of given identity, nor the movement to be incorporated as 'Koreans'. Instead, it is disidentification of their bodies from the signification of inferiority, that which, is justified to be treated badly, tortured, confined, and deported legally. Juxtaposition with the recent demonstration of migrant workers will produce further narrative. Prior to 2022 International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, migrant workers gathered at Gwanghwamoon and demanded

for the enactment of the Anti-discrimination law. [63] By exposing and demonstrating their bodies in public, occupying spaces, and acting in concert just as legal citizens, though without equal citizenship, the migrant workers performatively disbanded their bodies from the identification of them which could only work, but do not have voices.

In these instances, it was not the aim for autonomy from neoliberal, or economic external forces per se, but the precariousness of the bodies that worked as the basis for the movement. Presenting, and thus, claiming of equality of bodies, is what the indexical force of the body arrived with other bodies in a visible zone performed (Butler 2015, 10). Conceiving of these local and sporadic activities as politics, only if we connect politics with the distribution of the sensible.

Would we call this performative politics as "politics of recognition", or any subset of this? Yes, and no, since the meaning of politics of recognition became more or less evasive, due to the emergence of various versions of 'politics of recognition' (Honneth 1996; 2012; Rancière & Honneth 2016; Taylor 1992; Young 1990). [64] In a sense, if we could define to be recognized as 'to contest dominant social and cultural norms and patterns of representation' (Busbridge 2018, 47), the answer could be yet. Nevertheless, if we define it in the consistently midwifery sense following Honneth, performative politics, at least of the version that this thesis promulgated, are

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[63] On the event, see Yun and Lee (2022)

[64] It is notable that Rancière's conception of politics, which seems to be always in conflict with the notion, does not ostracize the political validity of recognition. Strikingly, he even presents his project in the essay as reconstructing a kind of "Rancierian" conception of the theory of recognition (Rancière in Rancière & Honneth 2016, 95).

likely to set against the notion. Basically, the orientation toward justice in politics of recognition is the belief in modernity's moral achievements involving their key institutions and forms of social relations, which grounds individual's autonomy. However, even though performative politics, actively or passively embraces or appropriates the democratic institutions as the notion of abstract equality and universal law, it does not aim to actualizing what are 'inherent' to them. In other words, politics does not emerge from the belief in the inherent morality of social grounds and arrangements, if not from the questioning of their legitimacy which are based on the 'thick description' of human being.

Especially, performative politics does not follow the configuration of politics as 'dialogue between' two interlocuters but aims to deconstruct the existing boundary of intelligibility and redraw it according to the radical equality between bodies that was unseen. Yet, the word re-cognition itself, to "know again or recall to mind", implies and relies on the presupposition that the 'common world' already exists. In contrast, the multiple forms of performance I presented here have nothing to do with the original configuration of the common world, in that they consist of bodies that didn't stay in, but come out to undermine the existing order of the sensual, or the existing fixation of the sensual. It is rather the construction of a new landscape where the places, the identities, and the parts are redistributed (Rancière 2016 [2012], 90). They are performative in that they interrupted the logics of commonality which grounds meaning-making, and constitutes a new sphere of meaning by staging what couldn't be signified before the bodies come out to dissent. In this sense, as Rancière says, politics would rather be an act of

"creating a stage around any specific conflict on which the equality or inequality as speaking being of the partner in the conflict can be played out." (Rancière 1999 [1995], 51).

One could say that Charles Taylor's assertion that the only solution to the struggle for recognition is to build "a regime of reciprocal recognition among equals" (Taylor 1992, 50) may resonate with the project. However, the seemingly un-political struggles and conflicts in our social and political life this thesis presented as political are which Taylor sees as detrimental to democratic society as performative politics. This is not to deny that the existence and importance of governmental, legal, representational, and more quotidian field of politics. Rather, it is to say that the very conflict between subjugation and subjectivation is what drives the dynamics in the political world, rather than peaceful government in an administrative mode.

The question may arise, could the conflicts ever be solved by reaching a stable equilibrium, not dissolving the society and existing achievements? (Honneth 1996; Taylor 1992) Some of the apostles of politics of recognition will agree, while it is not the view on politics this thesis presented. Strikingly, that not a few claimants of the frame "crisis of democracy" resorts to this view and holds the ideal (Brown 2015; Ziblatt 2017; Ziblatt & Levitsky 2018). Nevertheless, presumed in this very ideal of organized and peaceful political society is the symbolic and material inequality between bodies, the police order. The democratic political body is not something that could be organized, or immunized from the noise permanently because of its very promulgated principles, but constantly deconstructed, and reconstructed by dissent against and presentation of the plane of intelligibility. In short, it is the opening up

the different field of sensibilities, instead of being part of the ongoing process of mutual understanding based on the conservation of epistemological assumptions, that this thesis presented as performative.

4.2.2 Performative Politics and Political Imagination

> Now, without 'utopia', without the possibility of negating an order beyond the point that we are able to threaten it, there is no possibility at all of the constitution of a radical imaginary—whether democratic or of any other type. The presence of this imaginary as a set of symbolic meanings which totalize as negativity a certain social order is absolutely essential for the constitution of all left-wing thought. (Laclau & Mouffe 2014 [1985], 190)

Where does this argument bring us to? For some critics like Nancy Fraser, our emphasis on performative politics in the neoliberal age may seem quite unsatisfactory, at best, be partial. Although the performative view incorporates both sites or object of struggles—as she distinguishes between the politics of recognition and of redistribution as well as between cultural injustices and economic injustices—for Fraser, the resistance against "cultural constructions of entitlement and personhood" are not necessarily related to that of transforming capitalistic economic structure (Fraser 2013, 180).

To be sure, her assertion is not simplistic to deny that the culturally abjected are more likely to be exposed to a more precarious state, often becoming the victims of capitalist exploitation and inequality. Yet, claims for recognition, not considering the de-differentiating issue of abolishing current economic arrangements, focus on visualizing the group specificity, the agenda

of differentiation (Fraser 1997, 16). The contemporary scene where multinational giant corporations, the capitalists, are taking minority-friendly initiatives, the point of which we also copped before, is the "empirical" evidence (ibid., 183). In fact, as agendas of feminism got acceptability and popularity, it became nothing new to see how the social overdogs—in terms of the distribution of capital or social resources—publicly urged awareness toward the issues, furthering discussions. Recalling the self-identification of people like Ivanka Trump, it seems the performative politics, as Fraser will see it, may have nothing to do with criticizing neoliberalism itself.

Through her argument, criticized is Butler's contention against the unilateralization and disreputation of new social movements—on issues of sexuality, race, class, feminism, heterosexuality, etc.—under the label of being 'merely cultural' (Butler 1998). Surely, "performative politics" and performative view on politics do not aim to assert a plausible and viable alternative for the economic system. According to Fraser, the "remedy" for the latter should be "redistributing income, reorganizing the division of labor, subjecting investment to democratic decision-making, or transforming other basic economic structures" (Fraser 1997, 15). Without this, according to her, strands of cultural critical theory keep making us live "through a capitalist crisis of great severity without a critical theory" (Fraser 2017, 142). This imposes the thesis to ask, is the performative view obsolete?

As we've seen, capitalism, neoliberalism, and the regime of truth, in general, have been constructing subjectivities through regulating what our bodies could, should do, or more fundamentally, what bodies are. They have been making the bodies uniquely productive for their own rationality and the

perceptive and cognitive schemes of bodies, including norms and knowledge, sometimes introducing or reinforcing injustices against and foreclosures of certain bodies. Especially, the hierarchical sensibility and normative imperatives it imposes on the self are being radicalized with the entanglement with other discriminatory schemes and persisting symbolic and material inequalities. Concerning this, what is to be dealt with as a political matter from a critical perspective goes beyond the question of just or unjust distribution of material resources, equal or unequal rights, and horizontal or vertical relationships between employer and employee.

In this very sense, the performative view on the politics of bodies first sets itself against the ongoing bodily hierarchies in the modernist–liberal conception of democracy and the neoliberal "sham" of equality and entitlements. To put it in a more nuanced way, it concerns what kind of resistant power with and in the subjugated bodies is possible against this grain beyond the formalist theories that are being abstracted from actually existing subjects living in the relations of power that is politically constructivist.

Having an affinity with the governmentality approach, which is attentive to a relational network of forces and inquisitorial to universalizing claims and assumptions in what's given, the performative view tends to circumvent, invoking another substantive ontology that is universally right. Instead, it sets the "radical equality" between bodies that appears via the political enactments against the view that political things and agents are already set in order and equality is always present.

In this sense, against the nostalgic left criticisms that beseech for lost subjectivity, and on a different note from the proponents of material

redistribution by development (Sen 1999), the performative view on politics tries to deal with the replication of Western liberalism's own contradiction of grounding itself in the hierarchical sensibilities in the community of equals, the matter of configuration of the distribution of sensibility. The ongoing mechanism of subjugation of the body that is intrinsically related to political imagination is connected to the meaning, validity, and possibility of democracy and democratic rights to the community itself. The regime of truth today reproduces the lopsided truth through norms as well as material dispossession, but each cannot be done without the other. The division between 'redistribution' and 'recognition' is becoming more evasive, and because of their increasing entanglement, becoming impossible. In this sense, it is hard to conclude that the performative view is impotent in the socio-economic aspect.

In brief, the world we live in is imperfect. Unstable and unequal. It is where everybody is precaritized and precaritizing, the state of invaluableness that makes one precarity is attributed to one's irresponsibility, or some different bodies' snatch of 'our' seat—including jobs, opportunities, or stability, and report on hate crime is cascading (Fraser 2017; Balibar 2014). With the functioning truth regime, the difference between economic rewards and vulnerability to risks between people becomes the signifier of differences between capability and, thus, power. Hence, the way people have to lead their lives is to make their own bodies competitive and develop them incessantly. Like this, our societies where the promise of neoliberalism prevails, reinforcing discrimination against and abjection of others, and all the things are assigned to join in the 'normalcy'. It seems like everything is 'destined' to degenerate our

thinking of political alternatives, and any substantial but democratic alternative also seems inviable. Even if one acknowledged that the blame had to go for the unjust truth regime or the neoliberal system, how could one, in the midst of these circumstances, start acting differently or decide to do so?

However, this statement should not be taken as the declaration that our capacities for political subjectivation are degenerated and transformed into something that is not. Such analysis rather will be nothing other than "tools against any process or even any dream of emancipation" (Rancière 2009, 38). As that we've seen in the last section, those fragments of performative politics in our contemporaries that disrupt the consensual logic of society refute it directly but are often not conceived as properly political, ignored, and under-theorized under institutional, statistical, and also deliberative approach (Young 2001). Instead, what it paradoxically denotes is the very necessity of political imagination.

However, this thesis' presentation of those scenes is not to call for political action, to turn passive spectators or neoliberal statuary into active participants or activists, as much as Foucault's later work on the ethic of self does not prescribe people to act like ancient Greeks (Foucault 2016 [1980]). What I attempted to present in this thesis is a theoretical perspective to interpret contemporary political scenes without falling into pessimism or indifference, though not strictly formalized.

Also, the scenes I described are not 'the' moments of politics that a body has to idealize. Admittedly, people are most of the time in the position of spectators. However, as Jacques Rancière points out, to be a spectator is not to be "separated from both the capacity to know"—to be in the state of

ignorance—and "the power to act" as what the traditional theories on theater assume (Rancière 2009c, 3). Rather, there could be no strict distinction between spectators and performers in our notion of politics since what is at the beginning of politics is the questioning and translation of the world, not the decision to be an autonomous actor or author.

Since the performers of the scenes are bodily beings, they are not masters of themselves or invested with full agency, aloof from the mechanism police. Rather, bodily resistance is not something that could be held out but rather what emerges and fade away. Thus, though there could be bodies that appear in public with others, they themselves are bereft of the consequential capacity to create new modes of sense perceptions and induce novel forms of political subjectivity that persist. This political subject can never be the bearer of politics since "the subject only emerges by way of, through and after politics." (Chambers 2013, 20) The task also is completed not by their actions but by the spectators who translate and frame their own dramaturgy, activating political imagination.

In *Imaginal Politics* (2014), the author points out a tension from Cornelius Castoriadis' well-renowned thought on imagination based on the metaphysical composition of the human psyche and society (Bottici 2014, 5). It is the tension between imagination as the faculty of an individual and as the social context. For Bottici, this tension between individual and society, subjectivity and objectivity, the real and unreal, is the fundamental problem of social philosophy.

"[I]f one starts with imagination, conceived as an individual faculty, then the problem is how to account for the at times overwhelming influence of the

social context. If we begin with the concept of the social imaginary, then the problem is how to reconcile it with the free imagination of individuals. The problem seems unsolvable, and Castoriadis' impasse is the sign that there is no easy way out." (Bottici 2014, 5)

To resolve the impasse—in her words—between the two, Bottici additionally introduces the third clause, the 'imaginal.' However, should the tension be conceived as a thing to be mitigated or had to be mediated?

However, as Knöbl (2019) points out, Castoriadis might intentionally have left this impasse open (Knöbl 2019, 455). Especially, he may have left the status of collective imaginations undefined to evade the reductive thought based on causalities and closing down its potential. Rather, the gap between individual and social context, namely, the current configuration of sensible, the objective and the subjective, the real and the unreal, is the very condition for performative politics.

The issue here was not a comprehensive program nor an aspirational political alternative as what Wendy Brown claims we need. Instead, the tango of motivational deficit and narcissism, expressed as 'the end of history', would be our match (Fukuyama 1992). The doing and imagining of a 'tiny modification' of bodily position is no illusion opposed to the real. Instead, it promotes the redistribution of sensible by opening up what can be seen, felt, and thought. The presenting of litigation is no pure creation that erupts in the void but comes out of the conditions of the world we are living in.

Furthermore, it is the shared experience and condition of individual bodies that enable disidentification and also explicit or implicit— spectatorial—solidarity. Thus, the 'declaration of the wrong,' presenting

dissensus, is in itself a counterfactual activity, or to borrow Samuel Chamber's phrase, "a claim for, or of, the impossible" (Chambers 2013, 16). Regarding this, without introducing a third term to narrow the gap between them, as Bottici does, political imagination could be formulated as our capacity to associate and disassociate things and formations that are significantly different from the current state of affairs.

I am now closing this chapter by introducing a dance film produced and choreographed by Eunkyung Kim. The film Dance in a Warehouse (2021) was released when the COVID-19 pandemic made a massive portion of the population unemployed or work with extreme insecurity in precarious, non-regular jobs. A worker who seems exhausted before a repetitively moving machine daydreams. In the daydream, the movement of the three workers gradually gets into the rhythm of machinery noise. The movement continued in the warehouse, where they were expected to rest and recover. Back at work, they convey the box as if they were doing rhythmic gymnastics. Suddenly, each of their body becomes a package for a while. After clocking out, the three workers watch themselves become vinyl packing, dancing like beautiful birds in the warehouse from the third-person perspective. On the day off, being a packaging box, they barely move to get through the day. Back at work, they run away from the warehouse. The daydream ends after the worker opens her eye.

According to the interview, the film is inspired by the choreographer's own experience of taking several part-time jobs after theaters were closed off under the COVID-19 lockdown. According to her, the working title of the film was "Dance in a Coupang Warehouse" (Kim in Son et al. 2021). Coupang

is one of the largest E-commerce companies with large warehouses in South Korea. In June 2021, a big fire which took six days to extinguish, broke out in the Incheon warehouse. No workers in the warehouse were told to leave even after the fire alarm rang six times. It is reported that there was no preparation and plan for contingency in the place where more than two hundred workers were working. Since the managers take up the workers' cell phones when they commute and return them after the clock is off, there was no way to promptly report the fire and emergency. Moreover, a security officer arbitrarily turned off the sprinkler and ignored workers' reports of the fire. It is also striking that the ten workers died from the excessive overload from March 2020 to February 2022, in tandem with the company's non-compliance with the worker protection plan (Kim 2022).

The film does not elucidate or signify anything about this. The drama of deviating distraction of precarious workers is not a documentary or reality show on the neoliberal working place. Inequality or the precariousness of workers, their being exploited, or treated as a thing by the manager were not elucidated as a pedagogy of reality. Instead, it displays workers' daydreaming, synchronizing with the box, feeling the beat of machinery, perversely dancing like the very object they were producing, the movements of which are severed from the recurring fantasy of neoliberalism. Likewise, not in an enlightening manner, the film exhibits the scene of disidentification, disorganization of the equivalence between the body and the identity of the laborer allotted with the time and space just for efficient production.

Even if being a spectator of contemporary scenes is the 'normal situation' of our being (Rancière 2009 [2008], 17), it does not mean that we are not

involved in producing and reproducing those scenes. However, acting like a dramaturg, we can dislocate, translate, and reiterate the scenes being staged with and in front of the Ministry of Justice's report, in the midst of normalization, in front of the singing migrants. Though we are not the sovereign of ourselves, performative politics of bodies start from the dramaturgy of our own, imagining and acting out a trans individual deviation from the ordinary course of things.

5.   Conclusion

This thesis went along a long way via the investigation of subjectivity, focusing on the body under the contemporary neoliberal regime of truth. In Chapter 2, building on critical literature, especially that of Jacques Rancière and Judith Butler, we theorized the dialectic between subjugation and subjectivation within the regime of truth. This relates to the antinomy of modern democracy, which has delegitimized bodily beings through particular self-projection of equality, which repeats itself in different circumstances, including contemporary situations. However, we also presented the possibility of physical movement, which resists the grammar of subjugation, and presented the movement as performative politics. In Chapter 3, we examined how neoliberalism as a form of governmentality is subjugating us, starting from the body and stretching to the problem of imagination. Here, we tried to reveal that the constitution of the world, the constitution of the self, and the constitution of others go hand in hand to

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construct or extend a regime of truth. In Chapter 4, we presented the conditions of politics against the complex and self-aggrandizing neoliberal regime of truth by reflecting on the borders of visibility and intelligibility. Wading into the scene where narcissus and nihilists are protagonists, this thesis attempted to show that increasing the scope and depth of subjugation doesn't mean that critical political subjectivity and collective imagination cannot be formed.

However, the limit of the thesis is also evident. Focusing on the analysis of social logic and the "strategy of the opposition," as Laclau and Mouffe put it, it relatively disregarded the work on the "strategy of construction of a new order" (Laclau & Mouffe 2014 [1984], 189). For some, this will lead one to contend that the thesis has not mentioned anything about politics *per se* by disregarding the logic of politics and the fact that the essence of politics struggles to attain 'hegemony' by mobilizing social logic through the introduction of political logic.

More than that, for some, this thesis would be read as saying nothing about society. It, in part, deserves the label since it did not discuss our political world's 'ideal truth'. All the investigations of this thesis do not have to do with prescribing any specific form of new socio-political order or stratagem for political resistance. In other words, there is nothing like a particular form of comprehensive counter-rationality that could substitute the current configuration of sensible, intelligible, being, and the political. The importance of political imagination as a spectator also does not have to do with enlightening others, precipitating subjectivation, or calling for certain forms of actions.

What this thesis tried to do is, on the one hand, consider what we can do in the world 'as such' and, on the other hand, interpret the dispersed and subtle movements of bodies as politics. In doing so, the performative view on politics, due to the transient and temporary characteristics of performances, hardly reached toward presenting the determined route or strategy to the future based

on the prognosticated relationship between performance and its aftermath,

However, it is important to note that the negativity does not necessarily contradicts the *raison d'être* and potency of performance. In this regard, seemingly conflicting lessons of Peggy Phelan and her critical commentator Richard Schneider, both of whom are contemporary performance theorists, could be digested together. For Phelan (2005 [1993]), the critical characteristic of performance comes from its ephemerality *per se*. It is because, through this, performance gets the privilege of refuting the smooth flow of accumulative capitalism by disrupting its logic and rhythm.[65] Certainly, staged politics is not representable when the subjectivity of the unilateral seeing "I" is assumed. When it does, it resists being incorporated into the cycle of representation—to be on the side of the one who looks (Phelan 2005[1993], 1; 26).

Schneider (2001), denying that the essence of performance lies in its immunization or being 'unmarked,' asserts that its quintessence lies in the subject's 'reenactments' of the marks, the sedimented sets of acts defined by the distribution of sensible. Inversing the feminist notion of "Your Body is a Battle Ground," she projects, "Your Battleground is a Body" (Schneider 2011, 9). In so doing, she foregrounds that performance enacts the very sedimentations of bodily practices imbued with norms sedimented in the regime of truth.

The recent subway demonstrations of Solidarity Against Disability Discrimination (SADD), the collective reenactment of the bodily sufferings that impaired people had to bear whenever they had to move via public transportation,

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[65] According to Phelan, this characteristic comes from the fact that performance, ontologically, "cannot be saved, recorded, documented, or otherwise participate in the circulation of representations of representation" in the sense that it cannot be repeated in the exactly same way as before. Hence, the 'being' of performance "becomes itself through disappearance" (Phelan 2005 [1993], 145).

exemplifies.[66] No small *homo economicus* who had to commute in time explicitly expressed their inconveniences from the delayed subway service due to protests against protestors. It, on the one hand, revealed the post of subjectivity, subjugated to the structure of capitalism and neoliberal imperatives, whose survival and proficiency of self became their own imperatives. Nevertheless, although the sufferings were not something present—that can be sensed—to the people as it was, the performance of reenactments made it experienced as it became (Schneider 2011, 25).

Neoliberal government illegalized the movement and suppressed the performance by sheer force, drawing out the relative ephemerality of performance. However, through the very transientness and ephemerality, they halted the smooth flow of neoliberal temporality. In addition, stages were not only the suffering but the ontological assumptions in the neoliberal austerity, the distribution of material according to the narrow calculation of present and future—reproductive—capital value (Phelan 2005[1993], 148). Disengaging the restricted space and time from the rhythm of capitalism, the participators present a community of radical equality of precarious bodies, not that of the individual "I" selves, and project an alternative imaginary of society that cannot be represented in the omnipotent cogito.

Hence, the performance disappears but, at the same time, remains, and it is in this very sense that performance 'matters' politically. Some may contend that this focus goes against times since we are now in the post−Fordist moments where "disembodied" themes like immaterial labors, digital assets, or algorithmic developments increasingly play pivotal roles in making our realities. Apparently, "the mind, language, and creativity" may seem to have become the primary tools

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[66] On the event and the responses of citizens and governments, see Ko (2023).

for the capitalist production of value (Berardi 2009, 21). However, as we have seen throughout this thesis, the body is first and foremost a site for self-constitution, crucially involved in the lives of the neoliberal regime of truth as well as ever-expanding capitalism itself. In this regard, against the regime's binding of bodies, selves, and imagination, it is the unimaginable acts of bodies that have the potential to initiate the disengagement of self from the norms.

At the same time, the performative view of politics is untimely. In presenting the present, it distances itself from the historicization of Western liberal democracy that follows the logic of reason and representation, which currently seems to be falling into despair or crisis. If one can view the timeliness of politics itself as constituted 'commonsense,' although not in a determined and unitary form, performative views on politics aim to articulate the possibility of "new 'common sense'" (Laclau & Mouffe 2014 [1985], 184) in an untimely and eventful manner, and in a way that has no content other than the radical equality of bodies.

Still, we are observing the ever-increasing uni-lateralization of social, cultural, and political spheres by the recodification of human potential through the demonstrative logic of efficiency, instrumentality, and surplus extraction. In addition, the melodrama of neoliberalism is replicating itself in the scene where the Hwaseong detention center filed suit against the victimized person for assaulting their staff and damaging property or where the Ministry of Law announced to introduce of a 'more humane' restraint chair as a substitute for box tapes and cable ties.[67]

As a matter of fact, what art does or can do differs from politics. Yet, if the art is "weaving together a new sensory fabric by wresting percepts and affects from the perceptions and affectations that make up the fabric of ordinary

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[67] See Jang (2022).

experience," politics, as a matter of realizing counter-factual political imaginary, rest on the "Transformation of the sensory fabric of 'being together'" (Rancière 2009 [2008], 56). In this sense, what is at stake becomes how to build up a political imaginary that disengages modern/colonial/capitalist form of imagination (Mignolo 2018) interwoven in the neoliberal regime of truth. While the current state of affairs is far from orientated toward emancipation, rather than a catch-22, it could be read as ever-urgent calls, not for the negative nihilism but for the building of ethical and political relationships. Scenes of subjectivation staged at the borders of intelligibility by the bordered bodies captured by performative views definitely show there are viable nodes to interrupt the objectionable distribution of the sensible.

Overall, this thesis presented a frame for interpreting the political subjectivities and the world we are in. Opening up possibilities starts from something other than asserting the correct form of, or the contents of, our thought and action as such. Instead, critical and intervening interpretation of the world insists on fabricating that very world performatively, and by giving eyes to the unseen scenes and naming them, it could give reason and voice to them. It tried to follow Brown (2005)'s lesson that "[t]heory's most important political offering is this opening of a breathing space between the world of common meanings and the world of alternative ones, a space of potential renewal for thought, desire, and action" (Brown 2005, 81).

Cynicism, although often rearticulated as the potentially productive force, is likely to be the conservative and ideological force in contemporary situations (see Fleming & Spicer 2003; Willmott 1993). Where people have to go on working and perform despite their detest of the capitalist relations of power, and where neoliberal 'progressivism' is selling, it is deceptively ensuring that one is not internalized. Nevertheless, to introduce another irony, this is not equivalent to

drawing optimism that neoliberalism can be 'toppled down' by performative movements. Irresponsible optimism for a better future plays the same melody of cynicism. Instead, it argued that politics lay "claims to one present against another and affirms that the visible, thinkable, and possible can be described in many ways" (Rancière 2010 [2005], x).

We are indeed going through times defined as the 'excess' of conflicts and dissensus everywhere, stretching beyond a limited national or cultural space. However, we need to ask two things before jumping to a decided conclusion. First, are all those purported conflicts legitimately called dissensus? In other words, aren't their problematization iterating what is anticipated in the make-visible of the neoliberal regime of truth? Second, aren't the diagnoses grounded on Narcissistic complaints about the ungovernability of democracy? In this aspect, Richard Wright's reiteration when asked his opinion toward the "Negro Problem" is cherishable: "There isn't any Negro problem; there is only a white problem." (Wright in Tardon 1993 [1946], 99)

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신자유주의 시대 예속된 몸들의 수행적 정치

- 랑시에르와 버틀러를 중심으로 -

이슬아

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신자유주의가 제도적 배열뿐만 아니라 우리의 행위 방식, 존재 방식, 그리고 말하는 방식을 심대하게 바꾸고 있다는 것은 익히 지적되어 왔다. 그러나 이것은 정확히 어떻게 일어날 수 있었을까? 신자유주의를 하나의 진리체제(regime of truth)로 조망하면서, 이 논문은 특히 몸(body)의 측면에서 주체성의 양식을 바꾸는 데에 그것이 가진 힘에 대해 검토한다.

몸을 진리체제가 상징적, 물질적 호명에 의해 효과를 이끌어내는 장소로 개념화하면서, 논문은 현재의 진리체계가 자기-형성에 관한 생산적인 힘과 함께, 근대적, 식민지적, 자본주의적인 몸의 위계적 질서에 기반하고 있다고 주장한다. 특히, 이 논문은 진리를 행하는 신자유주의적 주체의 형성이 취약한 몸을 비체화, 억압, 또는 동등한 주체의 범위에서 배제해 온 고집스러운, 그러나 보다 과학화되고 개인주의적으로 도덕화된 방식의 타자화와 함께 진행된다는 것을 입증하려 한다.

동시에, 이 논문은 수행성(performativity)의 개념에 내재한 존재론적 우연성의 관점을 통해 볼 때, 이와 같은 규범에의 예속(subjugation)을 그것에

대해 비판적이고 저항적인 주체성의 완전한 흡수나 소멸이 아닌 것으로 볼 수 있다고 주장한다. '몸 체계(bodily scheme)'의 폭력에 대항하는 탈식민지적 전망이 보여주듯, 주체화(subjectivation)는 근대의 문제적인 정치적 인식론이 가정해온 것처럼 잃어버린 지배성의 회복을 지칭하지는 않지만, 규범으로부터의 수행적 탈-정체화(dis-identification)라는 의미에서 여전히 가능하며, 특히 규범이 세운 가시성과 인지 가능성의 경계 지대(border)에서 일어나고 있다.

정치와 정치 주체성에 대한 자크 랑시에르와 주디스 버틀러의 견해를 재접합하면서 이 논문은 규범에 의해 비체화된(abjectified) 신체들이 신체의 급진적 평등에 기초해 권력을 조직하고 행사하는 초개인적(transindividual) 방식들이 나타난 동시대의 정치적 장면을 읽어낸다. 중요한 점은, 정치를 이와 같이 본다면 현재에 지배적인 것과는 다른 사회적, 집단적 정치적 상상이 열릴 수 있다는 것이다. 수행성이라는 개념을 통해 볼 때, 몸들은 규범의 예속화 작용에 개입되어 있지만, 다른 한편, 규범과 타자에 대한 공통의 취약함과 의존성이 경험되고 인식되는 장소로 이해될 수 있다. 민주주의를 존재하는 것에 기반해 자기애적으로 조망할 때 도출되는 부정적 니힐리즘 혹은 낙관주의 사이의 양자택일에서 벗어나, 정치에 대한 수행적 관점은 몸의 공통성에 기반한 대안적 감각에 기반해 동시대 상황들에 대한 비환원적인 이해와 해석을 제안한다.

본 논문은 최종적으로 이러한 분석을 통해 신자유주의 시대의 예속화된 몸들에 대한 함의를 고려하면서 보다 맥락화되고 탈식민적인 주체 위치, 주체성, 정치에 대한 이론적 이해에 관한 논쟁에 개입하는 것을 목표로 한다.

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