

## DISCIPLINARY AND CONTROL SOCIETIES: BETWEEN MANTO'S 'TOBA TEK SINGH' AND 'NAKED VOICES'

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**Received: 23 Sep 2021**

**Accepted: 25 Sep 2021**

**Published: 25 Sep 2021**

### ABSTRACT

*According to Gilles Deleuze, we have moved far away from what Michel Foucault used to call disciplinary societies. The boundaries of those disciplinary enclosures have diminished and now there is no difference between a disciplinary enclosure like home, factory and prison. For Deleuze, Kafka's *The Trial* becomes an essential text that is set at the crossroads of this transitional dissolution of spaces. In the same vein, this paper argues that Saadat Hasan Manto's two stories – *Toba Tek Singh* and *Naked Voices* – can be read as each belonging to either societies.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Control Societies, Disciplinary Societies, Gilles Deleuze, Michel Foucault, Manto, Naked Voices, Toba Tek Singh.*

### INTRODUCTION

In his essay "Postscript on Control Societies", Gilles Deleuze (177-182) urges us to consider the changing times, conditions and scenarios. The critical point is Michel Foucault's analysis of discipline and disciplinary societies from which Deleuze takes a flight forward. According to Deleuze, Foucault's disciplinary societies with its enclosures like home, prison, and factory have all collapsed as new forces set in the world after World War II are giving way to new societies. These societies according to Deleuze should be called control societies. These control societies have their own dynamics that set them apart from the disciplinary societies. To explicate the difference between disciplinary societies and control societies, Deleuze mentions Franz Kafka's *The Trial* as a text that appears exactly at the forking path of the two societies. In the very first scene of the novel, Josef K., the protagonist is acquitted and the rest of the novel deals with the whole postponement of his punishment. According to Deleuze, the 'acquittal' belongs to the disciplinary society while the 'postponement' belongs to the control society. In the same way, Saadat Hasan Manto's two stories – 'Toba Tek Singh' and 'Naked Voices' – can be read as belonging to each society respectively.

While reviewing Gilles Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition*, and *Logic of Sense*, Michel Foucault declares, ". . . perhaps one day, this century will be known as Deleuzian." (343) Academically, Foucault proved himself wrong as he continues to be the most cited scholar in humanities effecting varied fields and disciplines.<sup>1</sup> But, philosophically he was right. The project that Deleuze undertook was far greater than that of Foucault. The philosophical divergent path Deleuze took in the later years of his friendship with Foucault further proves the point. After Foucault's death, Deleuze diverges away from Foucault or in other way extends Foucauldian analysis. "Postscript on the Societies of Control" is a documental

<sup>1</sup>Most cited authors of books in Humanities, 2009," *Times Higher Education*, accessed January 26, 2017, <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/most-cited-authors-of-books-in-the-humanities-2007/405956.article>

proof of Deleuze's divergent path as well as philosophic endeavor to extend Foucault's Kantian project of doing a "critical ontology of ourselves" (Foucault, *Ethics*, 315) or the "ontology of the present" (Foucault, *Domains*, 18). Whatever the case, Deleuze through this short, terse essay has moved far beyond Foucault and ahead in the philosophical understanding of the present scenario.

Deleuze starts with an appreciation of Foucault and his analysis. Foucault, Deleuze argues, brilliantly analyzes the environment of various disciplinary enclosures which were a part of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. These enclosures are family, school, barracks, factory, hospital and prison. Individual in disciplinary society moves from one enclosure to another. Foucault's analysis, Deleuze argues, is very erudite as he traces the development of disciplinary societies which succeeded the "old sovereign societies" (Deleuze 180). The defining feature of the societies of sovereignty was "condemning to death" while as that of disciplinary societies was "ordering life" (Deleuze 175). But, the problem that Deleuze recognizes is that this disciplinary society has ended and we have entered a new era, a new society which Deleuze calls "*Control societies*" (Deleuze 178).

The factory setup of disciplinary societies, Deleuze argues, has been replaced by corporation in control societies. While factories retain their enclosures, corporations act like gas, like spirit. Also, the factory constitutes individuals as a single body and they act as mass, as unions (for their bosses, for example), the corporations on the other hand divide each individual from within. In the disciplinary society people had a signature that designated them as individuals as well as their place and position within a mass. Disciplinary societies saw these two factors as one because the disciplinary power individualizes and masses people together so as to constitute them as a body so that their individuality is molded accordingly. In control societies signatures, place and position within a society is of no importance. What regulates these societies is the code which is a form of password and designates access to information only. Control societies do not consider a person as an individual or a group as mass. This mass/individual pair is obsolete in such societies because individuals are divided within each other and become "dividuals" (Deleuze 180) and at the same time masses become a mere data, sample, markets or banks.

The difference between the two societies and the preference of password over signature has arisen because of the changes in the system of exchange. Disciplinary societies had a fixed standard like gold, whereas in the control societies exchange rates keep floating. According to Deleuze, the old monetary mole represented disciplinary societies while as serpent represents control societies. In disciplinary societies one could at least distinguish or maintain a difference between different enclosures, but in control societies one is always surfing or flowing through various enclosures in such a way that a family enclosure becomes a school and school becomes prison and all are engaged in producing more and more capital. Deleuze argues that this is happening because of the changes and mutations that are happening in the capitalism itself. These changes and mutations are mutating the whole relations of power and control. Deleuze offers a brilliant summary of this shift which echoes Baudrillard's apprehensions that he had already registered in his criticism of Foucault and Deleuze. Deleuze says:

This technological development is more deeply rooted in a mutation of capitalism. The mutation has been widely recognized and can be summarized as follows: "Nineteenth-century capitalism was concentrative, directed toward production, and proprietorial. Thus it made the factory into a site of confinement, with the capitalist owning the means of production and perhaps owning other similarly organized sites (worker's homes, schools). As for markets, they were won

either through specialization, through colonization, or through reducing the costs of production. But capitalism in its present form is no longer directed toward production, which is often transferred to remote parts of the Third World, even in the case of complex operations like textile plants, steelworks, and oil refineries. It's directed toward metaproduction. It no longer buys raw materials and no longer sells finished products: it buys finished products or assembles them from parts. What it seeks to sell is services, and what it seeks to buy, activities. It's a capitalism no longer directed toward production but toward products, that is, toward sales or markets." (180-181)

The obvious importance of this document is that it actually paved a new way in surveillance studies and most importantly the post-panoptic vision of surveillance. Its importance is central while discussing the dimensions of surveillance, security and threats in modern technocratic world. A major focus on the interpretations pertaining to the functionality of "third generation of machines" (Deleuze 180) often marginalizes Deleuze's important reference to literature. Deleuze takes the word 'control' from William Burroughs and he mentions Franz Kafka's *The Trial*. The usage of the term by Burroughs is often neglected which can help us to understand the notion of control better. For Burroughs "Control needs time in which to exercise control . . . control also needs opposition or acquiescence; otherwise it will cease to be control . . . When there is no more opposition, control becomes a meaningless proposition." (Burroughs 339) It has to be understood in the same way as we understand Foucault's post-humanist notion of power which is positive, relational and non-subjective. In Foucault's notion of power absolute power is no power as "slavery is not a power relationship." (Foucault, Power 342) In the same way Deleuzeian use of 'control' and 'corporates' should not be analyzed as someone exerting control as there is no absolute control in Deleuze also. Deleuze already warns us that it is "not a question of amazing pharmaceutical products, nuclear technology, and genetic engineering" (Deleuze 178) because absolute control means nullification of that control.

The difference between the two societies can be schematically illustrated as:

**Table 1**

<b>Disciplinary Societies</b>	<b>Control Societies</b>
Enclosures	Gas, Spirit
Factory	Corporation
Individual/Mass/Unions	Dividuals
Fixed Standard	Floating
Animal: Burrow	Animal: Snake

Deleuze refers to Kafka *The Trial* as an example that shows the movement of transition between the two societies in west. In South-East Asian context, the work of Saadat Hasan Manto shows the resemblance that Deleuze sees in Kafka. Manto not only saw the transition of Indian society from being a colonized nation to an independent one but also a country divided into two, rife with violence under governments ruling with an iron fist. His stories are concerned with the way people oriented their lives in and around the newly forged territories. Two of his stories that explicitly deal with madness can be seen as exemplary of the way Deleuze discusses Kafka. *Toba Tek Singh* is a defining story that deals with the people inside a disciplinary enclosure. It deals with the lives of inmates of Lahore Lunatic Asylum as they try to understand the recent decision of India and Pakistan to transfer the inmates to either country based on their religion. These individuals have an identity within this enclosure, that of being mad and now a new identity is being forced on them by the state based on their religious identity. In *Toba Tek Singh* then, we have a typical disciplinary enclosure, that is, an asylum that contains individuals like Bishen Singh and collectively all the madmen. Their identity is fixed – man – and also

regulated by a state. All these references point towards the fact that *Toba Tek Singh* can be located within what Deleuze calls 'disciplinary society'.

A significant shift occurs in the story *Naked Voices*. It is the story of two brothers, Bholu and Gama - both refugees. They reside in a large building which is inhabited by other refugees also and as such there is hardly any privacy. This kindles the desire of marriage in Bholu, who is a bachelor. He requests his brother and he marries him to a girl named Aisha. But, Bholu is not able to consummate the marriage as the space he resides in lacks privacy. This tortures him to a degree of madness and he begins to roam the streets naked.

The first thing to notice is the space they reside in – a building claimed by everyone. There are no rooms but an abstract division of personal spaces which is also public. In Deleuzian terms it is a place with no distinction of interior and outside as the dialectic between public and private is in crisis and this generates the main crisis of the story. Bholu communicates to his brother that he needs to marry or he "shall go mad." Bholu becomes mad not because of marriage but because of the dissolution of public/private space and the haunting of human voices. Bholu is unable to consummate the marriage as he is afraid that his words, his voices will exhibit his married life naked. The words haunt him and control him. "The voices began to echo in his ears – voices that wouldn't let him sleep and would make the strangest of thoughts race through his head . . . 'Will we also produce the same sounds? ... Will the people around us listen to our sounds? ... Will they also stay awake all night long because our voices will not let them sleep? ... What if someone were to peer?'" (Naked Voices, Ch. 8).

When he is able to find the privacy and invites his wife, the sound betrays him as the anklets tied to his wife speak and voices surround him. ". . . Her silver anklets spoke up with every shy step . . . The sound of muffled laughter reached his ears. His anxiety grew." Bholu is terrified by the sounds, the voices around him and each murmur is magnified inside his head. "Every time [the] glass knocked against the pot, it sounded like an explosion to Bholu's ears." Finally Bholu abandons all communications with his wife in fear "that the ears around him would swallow his words". Subsequently, Bholu is afraid of every voice and whisper that would make him naked. He feels that even "the whisperings and murmurings, the *chur-choo, chur-choo*, the coughing and clearing of throats, the knocking of the glass against the pot, the tossings and turnings on creaking beds, the stifled laughs." (Naked Voices, Ch. 8) The individuals in this particular story are not actually individuals with a fixed identity but are 'refugees'. Refugee is not an identity not even a non-identity, it is a floating one like gas or spirit. The enclosure or home is not anyone's home. It is a building owned by everyone, with no distinction of public and private. There emerges a strong notion of gaze within the story but this gaze is not regulated by any state as is the case in *Toba Tek Singh*. Here, the individuals are against one another and their communication or voice is codified as a sound that controls Bholu. They thus become, what Deleuze calls 'dividuals'. Towards the end Bholu finds his own identity liquidated as if "someone had put his very being, his identity in a pestle and mortar and ground[ed] it to smithereens" (Naked Voices, Ch. 8) and loses his mind. The story thus supplies all the markers that help us to situate it within a control society.

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