

The Prayers and Tears of Foucault: Panopticism and the Politics of Dissent in *An Enemy of the People and Look Back in Anger*

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Abstract

Drawing on the thought of Foucault, this article argues that the anarchistic protagonists of Henrik Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People* (1882) and John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger* (1956) are engaged in a hegemonic battle which puts their identities at stake and ultimately exiles them to isolation. It points out that the very success of both in renouncing authority's sovereignty is what actually hastens their failure in the end. The identification of this failure with panopticism, which for Foucault characterizes the modern economy of power, is the primary concern of this article. It is argued that through the subtle process of normalizing subjects the panopticon establishes a disciplinary society where citizens are stripped of their subjective voices. The central characters of both plays are thus easily exposed to panoptic surveillance when they decide to take on the strategies of power. Further, using Foucault's concept of exclusion, the article proceeds to illustrate how in filtering out these delinquent individuals the hands of power urge them to refine their ways and how, upon failure, they exert the policy of exclusion.

Keywords: Foucault, Panopticon, Exclusion, Dr. Stockmann, Jimmy Porter

A prison wall was round us both,

Two outcast men we were:

The world had thrust us from its heart,

And God from out His care:

And the iron gin that waits for Sin

Had caught us in its snare.

— Oscar Wilde, *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*

1. Introduction

In his most influential essay "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatus" (1969) Althusser writes that ideology addresses individuals as if they were free subjects, capable of original emotions and thoughts, while in reality they are the products of capitalist practices. The concept of the free subject is thus an ideological construct. The individual is interpellated as subject in a system of exploitation; an obedient, unresisting agent who acts for the interests of the ruling class. In Althusser's view, interpellation engenders individuals who, carrying the burden of social structures, are channeled through the interpellatory procedure into subjects. These people believe themselves to be autonomous settlers of their own lives when they only perpetuate the ruling ideologies of the bourgeoisie.

In an echo of the Althusserian viewpoint, Foucault shrinks from equating the subjection of individuals with autonomy, calling attention to the fact that this is solely conformity to the status quo rather than an expression of the self. However, at the same time, Foucault does not remain adamant on the claim and goes on to argue in Volume I of *The History of Sexuality* that "where there is power there is resistance" (1978, 95). Taken thus, the power relation is not one of oppressor-victim establishment, and the defining element in the face of power becomes resistance in order to give the whole operation legitimacy. The neutrality of the subject invalidates the power relation in the first place. In Foucault's canon, power does not imply negativity and oppression; it reveals itself in giving birth to active agents rather than passive objects. For Mills this is Foucault's point of departure from Marxists: "Foucault, unlike many earlier Marxist theorists, is less concerned with focusing on oppression, but rather in foregrounding resistance to power" (2003, 34).

Foucault discusses panopticism at length in *Discipline and Punish* (1977) and in an interview called ‘The Eye of Power’ (1980). He breathes a fresh estimation on the Benthamite conception of disciplinary practice in prison by inferring that the phenomenon is everywhere to be seen without its being actually seen.¹ Bodies themselves are trained to survey themselves without external control, the major aftermath of which is that one “inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles: he becomes the principle of his own subjection” (Foucault 1977, 202-203). Foucault intends to lay bare the self-custodial essence of modern world where, to make for the uncontrollability of populations, bio-power is implemented. This power functions as a piece of machinery: an integrated, anonymous, multiple, and automatic system. The knowledge is, then, internalized by bodies that surveillance cannot be toppled but, by taking due measures, to be coped with.

In Ibsen’s *An Enemy of the People* and Osborne’s *Look Back in Anger* two techniques of domination are exerted over bodies to ensure their conformity. Firstly, the dominant discursive structures sketch sets of norms and overarching principles upon which subjects discipline their behaviors and regulate their actions without needing direct enforcement from the side of government. They come to be “normalized.” But Ibsen’s Dr. Stockmann and Osborne’s Jimmy Porter critically interrogate the currencies. This negation makes way for a tension between the rebel individuals and the totalitarian government. Secondly, then, the established power separates the normal and homogenous from the abnormal and heterogeneous, the latter being labeled as social lepers or “social monsters” in what Foucault calls the game of exclusion. In what follows, we claim that it is extremely difficult—close to impossible—for Ibsen’s and Osborne’s heroes to call the ascendancy of power into question without being banished from the absolutist social order.

2. The Great Eye and the Clash of Voices

Dr. Stockmann is vigorously anarchic, unconstrained by the impulse of silence and passivity. Throughout his quest, he possesses enough power and vitality to spare, the power which emanates from his earnestness, and which, even on the observer/reader’s second thoughts, could by no means diminish. He is on the forefront of the Ibsenite camp in battle against mediocrity, hypocrisy, and cupidity without Ibsen’s former and later reserved revolt. As a matter of fact, in *An Enemy of the People* Ibsen loses his grip on *Ghosts*’ objective tone, and the play becomes, in Robert Brustein’s terms, “the most straightforwardly polemical work Ibsen ever wrote” (1991, 71).² What Ibsen loses in theatrical sensation, imposing on the whole play a strongly subjective and humorous form, gives it its essential radicalism as a revolutionary work of art. Dr. Stockmann is the ideal mouthpiece of Ibsen in exposing the untarnished truth to resistant ears. He embodies both absolute devotion to social honesty and absolute antipathy to hypocritical subordination. Yet, if he fails to open new horizons for his citizens, he can at least boast that virtue is its own reward.

As a social outcast, Dr. Stockmann is quickly informed that without conformity to the norm of silence and submission his future will be at risk. He is accordingly embroiled in the dynamics of modern power which encroaches upon his self-esteem and responsibility. Living in a city where under the yoke of deception and fraud truth is crushed down, he can no longer place confidence in the naïve optimism that sparkled his motivations at the early stages of his adventure. But this lack of confidence does not signify utter dejection, nor does it grant the oppressors the upper hand for the long run. He can thus retain his inward happiness and remain aloof from political designs. At the basis of this strength lies the belief that those prescriptions that rely on social totalization are open to question and that proper citizenship requires exploration of new horizons of thought, even if they will be ultimately irreconcilable with the logic of domination.

The gaze of power as represented by Peter Stockmann, Hovstad, Aslaksen and to some extent Billing exerts an almost insurmountable influence on the public. This implies that the task of overthrowing the self-interested authorities could only prove perilous and quixotic. Dr. Stockmann is not, however, swayed by the impulse of despair and does not even allow his self-denial to thwart his development as an individualistic hero. His regret is that people do not assume accountability for their subjectivity, allowing themselves to be teleologically shaped as meaningful subjects or disciplined bodies. In contrast, Dr. Stockmann himself attains a singular form of self-expression and subjectivity in the face of norms that are anything but liberating. In spite of the occasional breaches in his patience, the apparatuses of power only, and ironically enough, allow him to discover his true self, which bears the least resemblance to the so-called ideal subjectivity hailed by the government. Stockmann’s eradication of surfaces results in the replacement of appearances with reality, something made more impalpable to the eyes of the government by his provocative resistance. As a result, the clash of the intellectual Stockmann and the totalitarian regime leads to the persecution of he and his family, the goal behind which is that he may inevitably adapt himself to the conventions of his community. Plagued by the waves of disagreement, Dr. Stockmann has to come up face to face with his isolation:

Peter Stockmann. You will not find any public body in the town that will give you the use of their hall for such a purpose.

Aslaksen. Not a single one, I am certain.

¹ For a detailed discussion of Jeremy Bentham’s design of the panopticon, see Foucault’s chapter on “Panopticism” in *Discipline and Punish*, pp. 195-231.

² In a letter to an acquaintance on 6 January 1882, he tried to ward off the criticism pointed to *Ghosts* (1881) on account of the authorial interventions: “In none of my plays is the author so extrinsic, so completely absent, as in this last one” (qtd. in Hemmer 2004, 72). But, as Ibsen himself admits, *Ghosts* stands alone in this regard. Because before it with such Romantic plays as *Brand* (1866), *Peer Gynt* (1867), and *Emperor and Galilean* (1873) Ibsen’s identification with his rebel heroes is rarely disguised, and in his last plays *The Master Builder* (1892), *Little Eyolf* (1894), *John Gabriel Borkman* (1896) and *When We Dead Awaken* (1899) the personae are openly autobiographical.

Billing. No, I'm damned if you will find one.

Mrs. Stockmann. But this is too shameful! Why should every one turn against you like that?

Dr. Stockmann (angrily). I will tell you why. It is because all the men in this town are old women—like you; they all think of nothing but their families, and never of the community. (Ibsen 2014, 63)

While for Tomas Stockmann the clash is still ongoing even if the battle is lost, in the case of Jimmy Porter engagement with politics only exposes his weakness both as a man and as an intellectual. Jimmy is, at his best, the vestige of an old heroism stripped of the courage to act. He cannot even live up to his own expectations in a society that has unfalteringly deprived him and the working class of their subjective voices. Yet, in spite of this, he possesses an ardent concern for social infections that are rampant in the body of a retrospective, breathless community. He is, for all his weakness, resistant to the pitch of impossibility, insofar that he courageously defies restraint and docility disregarding the consequences that spring from his rebellion. Osborne's *Look Back in Anger* is indeed the death blow to the prophetic optimism of Shavian drama which anticipates Nietzsche's Superman. Far from believing in Shaw's notion of Creative Evolution (as expounded in *Man and Superman* (1903) and *Back to Methuselah* (1922)), Osborne goes on to undermine even the possibility of normality in an artificial era. The Edwardian glimpse of light is invisible to both Osborne and Jimmy, and both fail of their objects to visualize the final and untranscendable social cohesion in the twilight world of deception.

It is the idea of resistance that captivates Osborne, and, contrary to previous playwrights, he feels a nude antagonism to the imminent demise of the English hegemony. For Osborne, it is necessary to "deal with an England whose decline should not be sadly recognized and nobly accepted but be angrily resisted with a range and intensity of response commensurate with the impending loss" (Quigley 2011, 40). To achieve this, Osborne sides with the oppressed unconscious of a generation, producing an archetypal hero who suffers from a shortage of support. Responsibility to oneself, as well as to others, is the simple illustration of this quest, the one thing that in Jimmy Porter's eyes justifies his exigent task in awakening the souls of the exploited to aspire a better community. Jimmy is at odds with the prevalent norm of quietism—a refusal to participate in the campaign against social and political processes—and distorts the social harmony when the opportunity is offered, which is all the time. Osborne consistently goes on to project the amplified theme of counter-hegemonism in his later plays. In *West of Suez* (1971) and *Watch it Come Down* (1975) Osborne takes arms against the uncomprehending society which hunts down meritocracy with the aim of preserving social order in the face of bohemianism. In *Look Back in Anger* he intends to dismantle the ostentatious empire of deceit that in his view England is founded upon. Jimmy Porter looks askance at the fading vitality of the English society. His mindset tends toward believing that his country refrains from confronting its troubles because it is either unwilling to or unable to. Because of the divided will of the authorities and the individual, Jimmy is driven to isolation for affirming his unconventional position against the untoward forces that are alert to transgressive motives. The outraged Jimmy nonetheless grapples with his responsibility to his wife and his liberal standards without leaving either out of his meager account.

Jimmy Porter turns the existing social order on its head to offer a fresh microcosm not conceived under the oppressive measures of the ruling class. Foucault ennobles such subjectivity to ultimately justify the need for a purifying pilgrimage. What he calls the "care of the self" (*souci de soi*) thus constitutes two important implications: our ready-made personalities do not correspond with our own conceptualizations of the self, and our lives as the referent objects of power are in dire need of reconceptualizations.³ For these reasons, his program is to bring people up to the knowledge that "they are much freer than they feel, that people accept as truth, as evidence, some themes which have been built up at a certain moment during history, and that this so-called evidence can be criticized and destroyed" (Foucault 1988a, 10). Jimmy Porter recognizes his subjectification and, by applying techniques of the self, progressively seeks balance between his inner struggles and outside reality. He admires the impulse of liberation regretting that his generation lives in an abyss, the abyss of complacency and fragility: "Nobody can be bothered. No one can raise themselves out of their delicious sloth" (Osborne 2002, 59). Jimmy suggests that the spreading web of power has robbed people of their identities, turning them into objectified subjects who are exceedingly pleased with their present selves to venture a change.

In disciplinary societies, argues Foucault, bodies are viewed as objects to be analyzed and consequently to be subjugated. Human beings are objects to be shaped not subjects to be heeded. In *Discipline and Punish* he pinpoints the operation of discipline as a combination of hierarchal observation, normalizing judgment, and examination. Within the architectural networks of society, bodies are visible by the gaze that stands at the top of the pyramid of power, and this eye implements systems of network among groups of individuals within various social architectures to make up for its lack of precision. But Foucault specifies that observation is not enough. The behaviors must be judged. Punishment and reward are the means to classify good and bad subjects. Ultimately, what emerges as the dominant discourse is the discourse of norm. In the ritual of examination, subjects are objectified through constant observation, and the

³ For Foucault, power does not pose a limit to one's liberty; it molds him to become a particular individual. This is carried out on two levels. First, bodies are trained to tend toward specific forms of behavior. Second, and conceivably of greater significance, bodies are made to regard themselves in certain ways. Hence it is a disciplinary power and operates at the level of individuals. Foucault believes this operation of self-surveillance is accomplished by the "micro-physics of power" (1977, 26) whose aim is disciplinary.

disciplinary power now forms disciplinary knowledge. This constitutes the reality of an “individual as a describable, analyzable object [...] in order to maintain him in his individual features, in his particular evolution, in his own aptitudes or abilities, under the gaze of a permanent corpus of knowledge” (Foucault 1977, 190).

O’Farrell argues that panopticon “is about preventing people from doing wrong and indeed taking away their very will to do wrong” (2005, 104). In both plays, subjects are under the ‘gaze’ of a harnessing system of manipulation that curbs their will to do the supposedly wrong. As rebellious antagonists in opposition with the *a priori* institutionalized norms, Dr. Stockmann and Jimmy Porter, however, unmask the lack of correlation between social constraints and individual freedom. Thus, to tackle the increasing threat of this desubjugation their activities are monitored. They are quickly distinguished from others by their anomalies. A simple logic of binary distinction is enforced, whereby they are classified as ‘them’ and the rest as ‘us’. This technique of othering or partitioning by the gaze of power though meant for their reformation actually causes their insubordination in the end and both mercilessly wage war on the institution of politics. Stockmann’s and Jimmy’s weapon of choice is verbal revolt when they make their stand. At this point, we see their departure from optimism to contemptuous irritation. The awareness of both is followed by rebellious remarks to substantiate their heterodox views. Dr. Stockmann resolves to fight back the static political set-up in defense of which Peter Stockmann and other authorities have recourse to the policy of secrecy: “I want to lay bare the defects that sooner or later must come to the light of day. I will show whether I love my native town” (Ibsen 40). Jimmy also tired of political propagandism escapes from the panoptic clutches of coercion by his verbal virtuosity: “Nobody thinks, nobody cares. No beliefs, no convictions and no enthusiasm” (Osborne 61). All attempts of both, if via direct political action (for Dr. Stockmann) or if grounded on ceaseless complaints (for Jimmy), target the body of society. The sudden fits of hysteria in both are responses to the escalating threats of a corrupt society, and they grow as the threats grow.

The hegemonic commonsense constitutes a sense of differentiation among people to recognize the collective will and reach a consensus about its finality and totality. Not surprisingly, within the uniform culture which hegemony idealizes—fulfilled by a continual modification of the diverse forms of power mechanisms—notions of toleration and democracy could not be easily disseminated and embedded, as the oppressed classes oscillate between the two poles of consent and dissent. In both plays, what is seen as deviation from hegemony is also a break of alliance between the intellectual elite and the subaltern class, which often passively, if not always actively, surrenders to its leaders.⁴ Dr. Stockmann does not wish to be grouped with his fellow-citizens. He has a mission and his mission is to expose the hollowness of superficial social integrity by holding an unfathomable contempt at philistinism. In this regard, not only is it hard for him to convince people that they are pitifully mistaken in their estimations of political justice, but that they have wrongly resorted to the irritating way of labeling him the public enemy and treating his theories accordingly. Hence his discovery that “all the sources of our moral life are poisoned and that the whole fabric of our civic community is founded on the pestiferous soil of falsehood” (Ibsen 69) can only be received with scorn. The loathsome realities which bulk so hugely before his red, critical eyes weigh dearly upon him. He gratifies his anger before long both against the conservative minority and the manipulated populace:

Dr. Stockmann. [...] It is the majority in our community that denies me my freedom and seeks to prevent my speaking the truth.

Hovstad. The majority always has right on its side.

Billing. And truth too, by God!

Dr. Stockmann. The majority never has right on its side. Never, I say! That is one of these social lies against which an independent, intelligent men must wage war. (Ibsen 71)

Just as powerful and even more blatant, perhaps, is Jimmy’s perpetuated and unmediated restlessness, which, as the completion of a failed object, boldly takes on the welfare state without avail. To Jimmy, Alison and her family deserve the bitterest of reproaches because of their aloofness. Unlike Alison and Cliff, he dares to think for himself, to distance himself from the lucrative games of politics, and to be alone for his outrageousness. Thus, Jimmy disdainfully questions Cliff’s conservatism adopted for the sake of complacent preservation. His anarchy is in this way the mirror of Foucauldian resistance: “Why *don’t* we brawl? It’s the only thing left I’m any good at” (Osborne 98). Jimmy, however, does not share Dr. Stockmann’s optimism when challenging the Establishment, and the latter seems to enjoy a versatility, expressiveness, and distinction after which Jimmy can only hanker. Yet, for all their differences and although hovering on the brink of ruin, both accept suffering with grandeur without ennobling passivity. Throughout the play, Jimmy fruitlessly gives other characters scope for a freer use of their critical faculty than they have hitherto employed. For this reason, Helena and Alison struggle with the implications of Jimmy’s ferocious tongue:

HELENA: You think the world’s treated you pretty badly, don’t you?

ALISON: (*Turning her face away L.*) Oh, don’t try and take his suffering away from him – he’d be lost without it. (Osborne 100)

⁴ Non-hegemonic groups or ruled classes are called by Antonio Gramsci “subaltern,” “subordinate,” or sometimes “instrumental”. See Gramsci (1971).

Helena and Alison are drawn to the ideology which interpellates them as subjects. In the Althusserian sense, they have submitted to the higher authority as unresisting agents within the frame of ISA. Althusser sums up the consequence of interpellation: “The individual is interpellated as a (free) subject in order that he shall submit freely to the commandments of the Subject, i.e. in order that he shall (freely) accept his subjection” (2012, 136). Needless to say, Jimmy absorbs his intellectual nourishment from a source other than that provided for Helenas and Alisons. His source is a reality ripped down of all its façades, and this nakedness of vision is the anchoring point of his anger. As Ronald Bryden points out: “Deeper than all the other grounds of Jimmy Porter’s anger with his country and his countrymen is his sense of having been lied to, of having being fobbed of with an inauthentic inheritance” (2011, 15). Not merely for the sake of iconoclasm or the limelight, his withdrawal from his community is a sign of his repudiating the political narratives that ceaselessly form the face of social justice. Naturally, his micronarrative is not on equal footing with these principles, and, to his great dismay, he is “denied political opportunities for changing the world around him” (Innes 2002, 86).

Repelled by the grotesque spectacle of British barrenness, Jimmy carries his life in his own hands, being aware that in his life fighting must hold the chief place even if that would mean entanglement with myriads of risks. Simply put, he cannot accept his fate without objection. We may also venture to affirm that the panoptic system of surveillance cannot accordingly attend to his requirements as a citizen, let alone, as an intellectual. This occurs when Jimmy and his friend Hugh are turned out of upper-class parties for their outrageousness, and Alison tells Helena after that “they both came to regard me as a sort of hostage from those sections of society they had declared war on” (Osborne 89). Afterwards, they find no proper opportunity for active employment. Hugh leaves England out of despair, and Jimmy finds his safe haven at home beside Alison and Cliff, who are passive recipients of his restlessness. Given the measures he takes to exculpate himself, Osborne’s Jimmy bears indirect resemblances to Bernard Shaw’s Joan in *Saint Joan* (1923) and Arthur Miller’s John Proctor in *The Crucible* (1953), and confession is elicited from the three by their superiors: Osborne’s by recognizing him a social deviant, Shaw’s by tagging her a Protestant heretic or passionate lunatic, and Miller’s by introducing him a devil-associate. Unlike the other two, however, Jimmy is not brought to justice in a formal court, and that contributes a lot to the issue of his persecution which goes on even as the play ends. To be sure, Jimmy is the lonely bear he proclaims himself to be, and, as the play advances, the ardent expression of rebellion is translated into utter abandonment until he and Alison are driven at the end of the play into irretrievable exile.

The moral languor that has overwhelmed his morale emanates partly from the knowledge that he is a stray guest at the large party of a degenerate culture and partly from his own admission that, however erect he seems to stand in the conflict, he cannot make an impact. That he knows at the end of the play he is still “a lost cause” (Osborne 141) bears witness to this helplessness. Even the arrival of the energetic, responsive, and affectionate Helena who contrasts Alison to a large extent fails to impress him for long. Jimmy is aware, as Osborne is aware, the defiance of society does not attract steadfast supporters. Masses tend to altogether dispense with the ‘antisocial’ behavior which inevitably arises from an anarchic morality. Hence the dubious nature of rebellion causes the collective will to cut itself adrift from the notoriety that ensues to secure a future for itself. Alison and Helena, regardless of the seas of differences that separate them, are true to their beliefs that association with Jimmy is tiresome if not perilous. In act 2, scene 2 Helena makes a revelation on Jimmy which is traceable to his alien position in society:

HELENA: Do you know – I have discovered what is wrong with Jimmy? It’s very simple really. He was born out of his time.

ALISON: Yes. I know.

HELENA: There’s no place for people like that any longer – in sex, or politics, or anything. That’s why he’s so futile. Sometimes, when I listen to him, I feel he thinks he’s still in the middle of the French Revolution. And that’s where he ought to be, of course. He doesn’t know where he is, or where he’s going. He’ll never do anything, and he’ll never amount to anything. (Osborne 136)

In the eyes of Foucault, uncritical submission to the present order of things as natural or ineluctable is problematic. He says it allows bio-politics to operate in the form of domination, where only the presence of a limited range of discourses are accepted as valid, necessitating the eradication and sanctioning of many other modes of existence deemed deviant or invalid. Thus, Helena’s description of Jimmy as an outmoded individual negates the possibility of his subjectivity, because she is resolute in her opinion that he must, due to the constraints of his time, inculcate the idea of resiliency in himself, albeit it may not serve his own ends. Foucault posits that subjection is not simply exerted by an external force. People themselves take up subject identities their sociohistorical context provides for them: they are not only turned into subjects, they fashion themselves. In this way, everyone abides by the norms and values not moving a step further. That is why Foucault believes to gain ourselves we have to cut loose from the calculability imposed by the disciplinary power. “Maybe the target nowadays is not to discover what we are,” he maintains, “but to refuse what we are.” Concurrently, a new identity has to be born to contend with “this kind of political ‘double-blind,’ which is the simultaneous individualization and totalization of modern power structures” (Foucault 1982, 785). When Helena describes Jimmy as a relic, she not only shrinks away from the “refusal” of her disciplined self but nurtures the hope that Jimmy will take the same path. Nevertheless, Jimmy finds his truth discordant with the dictates put forth under the banner of propriety and decorum. The tyranny of conventionality is the object of his keenest invective. Acting in compliance with the veracity of his intent, he is an Olympian who wishes to overthrow the Titans of normalization and subjectification. The response he receives does not count much.

It is the permeation of the panoptic surveillance that bestows meaning on the lives of Alison, Helena, and Cliff. By becoming the cause of fear, the visibility leads to their self-reformation. What Simon (2005) conceives of panopticism is a reminder that we cannot escape from the social prison, because the purpose of the gaze is well beyond simple observation: “The Panopticon is not a vision machine so much as an ordering machine; a kind of sociomaterial assemblage for sorting and arranging social categories and individual persons so that they can be seen and understood” (Simon 4). Surprisingly, in *Look Back in Anger* the warders of the prison – as appointed by the warden – are his wife, friend, and mistress. They unknowingly take him to his limits by their occasional silence and utter indifference to elicit confession from him:

ALISON: (*Softly*) All I want is a little peace.

JIMMY: Peace! God! She wants peace! (*Hardly able to get his words out.*) My heart is so full, I feel ill – and she wants peace! ... I rage, and shout my head off, and everyone thinks ‘poor chap!’ or ‘what an objectionable young man!’ But that girl there can twist your arm off with her silence. I’ve sat in this chair in the dark for hours. And, although she knows I’m feeling as I feel now, she’s turned over, and gone to sleep. (Osborne 105)

As soon as power is efficiently wielded over Jimmy, home is easily equated with prison, regularity with surveillance. Under the confining gaze, it is little wonder that the rebellious Jimmy would try to escape from his domestic isolation. He resolutely refuses his subjection to comprehensive regulations, and his incorrigibility evokes the attention of society to apply techniques of exclusion in order to ensure organization. The means for its accomplishment, according to Foucault, is not to engage directly but to perpetuate a law that “operates more and more as a norm” (1978, 144), a law that exceeds the juridico-political measures of the society. This points to the immediate connection of panopticism and *Look Back in Anger*. Bodies integrate themselves into the society, confirming the continuation of demands indirectly coerced upon them and disqualifying the practices of liberals who pursue their solitary paths. Jimmy Porter is thus opposed by the capitalist discourse and kept under control by the panopticon.

“Truth” is the maxim of Dr. Stockmann’s life. His rule echoes that of Ibsen’s early hero Brand that ‘everything or nothing’, and this leads him to an adventure replete with heroic struggle and sublime loss. Miller argues *An Enemy of the People* carries “Ibsen’s belief that there is such a thing as a truth and that it bears something like holiness within it, regardless of the cost its discovery at any one moment entails” (2004, 229). No half-hearted service toward the community is acceptable to Dr. Stockmann, because the concept of self is, by and large, inconceivable to him. Peter Stockmann and others, however, act based on what may be called a “realist morality” that serves the public partly out of political shrewdness, partly out of boastful modesty and simultaneously recoils at the thought of transgression. Instead, the position offered by Dr. Stockmann is typically Viking-like and requires human sacrifices. This is an “idealist morality” in the sense that the vigilant citizen not only contributes to the welfare of the public without an eye to self-interests but goes on to encounter the fate of selflessness—foreshadowed by the growing counter-measures of the society. In Malone’s (2010) terms, the earlier goes by the name of public morality and the latter by individual morality. In short, if realist morality in *An Enemy of the People* is a social pose intending a simulation of the real, idealist morality is a Promethean act whose primary objects are to teach people simple lessons firstly of articulating their subjectivity and secondly of exploiting their intellectual capacity to avoid the pitfall of being again numbered with the compact majority.

In Act III Dr. Stockmann is pressurized to abide by his duty as a husband and father and leave aside his anti-political schemes. Notwithstanding the role played by the single official ideology of the town, Dr. Stockmann contends that the sole concern of his anarchism is to enlighten people and raise it to a level where it could abolish authoritarianism and divest the State of its monopoly. The heroic course, as suggested by Dr. Stockmann, is to usher in some principles upon which responsibility toward the public and the family could be established. He recognizes that in this course his revolutionary ideas are blindly stifled by the inertia of those whose interests lie in the maintenance of the old order. Fraternity between the ruling class and the intellectual elite thrown into disarray, the present arrangement of social justice is refuted and Dr. Stockmann’s actions are directed at the negation of governmentality or, rather, the regaining of the initiative by people. Dr. Stockmann explicitly shows society does not precede family nor does it exceed it; both collaborate with one another in the formation of an active structure. Dr. Stockmann is consistent in his idea that, given the proper commitment from the public, these two entities would thrive together. He thus rejects the normalized differentiation between family and society when addressing his wife: “Because a man has a wife and children, is he not to be allowed to proclaim the truth—is he not to be allowed to be an actively useful citizen—is he not to be allowed to do a service to his native town!” (Ibsen 59) His task is henceforth all the more urgent, because, not to speak of his own wife’s pragmatic determination to dispel the sense of wholeness and purpose he tries to produce in the public, he is made acutely aware that his salvation is not an act of fulfillment but of annihilation. Under the magnifying glass of the government, tomorrow is and must remain yesterday.

The tendency for dissolving the former language games, according to Lyotard, occasions the initiation of a new discourse.⁵ Thereby, Dr. Stockmann’s entanglement with power relations does not prove futile, because by providing a

⁵ Lyotard writes in *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* that different discourses – be they physics, chemistry, literature, customs – all conform to sets of established rules. Legitimate statements are those that fall within the scope of these rules, and others which defy subordination are left out of the game. The justification for this

sphere of self-articulation he challenges the monophony of authority. Foucault's point is that "power is exercised upon the dominant as well as on the dominated" (Dreyfus & Rainbow 1983, 186). No matter how much the panoptic practices involve a close surveillance of Dr. Stockmann, his reaction functions as a catalyst for a re-interpretation of domination as the birth right of the totalitarian government. Not surprisingly, Peter Stockmann harbors a perpetual fury against his brother's riotous behavior for creating the uproar in the town. It is only by accentuating the fury in other surveying eyes over the issue of Baths' improvement that he can accomplish the scheme of discrediting him: "It is simply and solely through the Baths that the town has before it any future worth mentioning" (Ibsen 34). While the majority takes this position much to its liking, it is—deliberately and directly—guided by Peter Stockmann to bombard Dr. Stockmann:

Peter Stockmann. In consideration of the close relationship in which, as you all know, I stand to the present Medical Officer of the Baths, I should have preferred not to speak this evening. But my official position with regard to the Baths and my solicitude for the vital interests of the town compel me to bring forward a motion. I venture to presume that there is not a single one of our citizens present who considers it desirable that unreliable and exaggerated accounts of the sanitary condition of the Baths and the town should be spread abroad. (Ibsen 66)

The harsh and unreal account of Dr. Stockmann's spirited expression of his concerns justifies Peter's task in introducing him as someone who intrudes in building the sinews of a prosperous town. The mayor's mind games promise an intimate and immediate connection with public sympathies. On the contrary, Doctor's leap of faith only demands an act of repentance and remorse, something which he does not gratify, keeping away from entrance into the Elysian peace guaranteed by hegemony's ultimate power. McConnell (2010) notes that Dr. Stockmann's crusade is a moral combat between him and the society. We might add that this combat is not only moral but mortal, because at the end of the play collision on its true scale is yet to begin.

An Enemy of the People incorporates the notion of pluralism into a vigorous design for an emancipated subjectivity. Ibsen does not settle for the affirmation of the inherited episteme; he rather puts it to the test of experiments and finds it wanting. With respect to the growth of new possibilities, Stockmann believes in the expansion of horizons and opposes the reduction of vitality to docility. He challenges the monotonous finalities by assuming that an identity not modeled over the sovereign lexicon is a decentering of institutional practices, and that such a view lays claim to new adventures which might in essence have nothing to do with former narratives. He finds that, as Foucault puts it, we are dynamic beings "always in the position of beginning again" (1984, 47). For him, the event of becoming is an interrogation of the existing event, the provision of a private and autonomous rationality for the conception of a singular identity.

The play underscores the idea of purgation, as the result of which the networks of domination do away with the unpredictable, the incalculable, and the uncontrollable when they still have the chance. The instruments of power manipulated by the hierarchy could be summed up as: normalization through perpetuation of unwritten laws, subjectification through fear of negative assessment, and objectification through deprivation of identity. Foucault believes: "A system of constraint becomes truly intolerable when the individuals who are affected by it don't have the means of modifying it" (1988b, 294). Hence Stockmann's failure in his crusade for public enlightenment in the vast scale is a testimony that he cannot contend with the all-encompassing gaze of the panopticon although he preserves his own liberated subjectivity.

3. Wrath of the Panopticon: The Policy of Exclusion

In his lecture 'The Order of Discourse' (1970) delivered at the Collège de France Foucault states that exclusion is readily approved by the subjects of power. The outcome is that – if seen through the normal distribution principle – the majority falls within the categorization devised by the ruling standards and the minority which diverges from the regimentation is considered abnormal. The production of discourses is naturally administered by a system: "In every society the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organized and redistributed by a certain number of procedures whose role is to ward off its powers and dangers, to gain mastery over its chance events" (Foucault 1981, 52). The enforcement of the utilitarian code divides the public into a polarity with the normal categorized as productive or useful and the abnormal as unproductive or risky. To illustrate the rationale of the strategy, Foucault refers to three modes of exclusion which constrain discourse: taboo, division between the mad and the sane, distinction between true and false.

Taboo is a form of social sanction that prohibits the discussion of subjects such as sexuality. Those who deviate from the norm are delinquents and are treated as such. The second operation of exclusion, discussed at length in *Madness and Civilization* (1967), demands from the public not to attend the speech of those labeled as insane, to measure it as if it were non-existent. The third practice involves an acceptance of the statements made by those in position of authority and a rejection of statements made by those not involved in the body of power. Only a finite number of discourses are thereby allowed free circulation in the society, and others which are characterized as false are excluded. For Foucault, the third form of exclusion is more important than the other two, because in the contemporary world their structures are

modernist totality, says Lyotard, is that "if there are no rules there is no game, that even an infinitesimal modification of one rule alters the nature of the game" (1984, 10).

on the verge of being modified and finally dissolved by the will to truth. Thus, they are “constantly becoming more fragile and more uncertain” (1981, 56).

Recognizing that modification met with stumbling blocks and its policies were faced with resistance, the panopticon brings to play the full potential of its capacities to minimize Dr. Stockmann’s and Jimmy Porter’s ventures for questioning its institutional dogmatism and single-mindedness. Their actions and statements are so revolutionary and unprecedented that they are construed for their exemplary rather than mimetic natures, ones that set the examples of state-contestation rather than the ones that correspond—like those of the masses—to the criterion of affirmation. In effect, to immunize the public and to protect the monopoly of power, the best recourse is to lay siege to the voices of dissidence. At the beginning of ‘The Order of Discourse’, Foucault lays stress on the institutional imperatives that precede and regulate discourse; the essence of their operations, Foucault argues, is to bring heterogeneous or irresponsible practices to justice. He ironically quotes the response of the institution of power toward one’s speech: “‘if discourse may sometimes have power, nevertheless it is from us and us alone that it gets it’ ” (1981, 52). If, according to Foucault, even freedom is intentionally granted by the hands of dictatorship, then democracy itself in both plays is only the shrouded policy of reductionism. On the one hand, Dr. Stockmann and Jimmy are allowed to be unsettled and spell out their indignation, while, on the other hand, they are detected as anarchists and made public spectacles. The pronouncement of Stockmann’s guilt occurs in a purely public sphere, the condemnation of Jimmy in a mystifyingly public privacy.

Therefore, the continuation of rebellion bodes ill for Dr. Stockmann. His exclusion comes after he is told by the Mayor that “as an officer under the Committee, you have no right to any individual opinion” (Ibsen 38). This formula does not give him any satisfaction whatsoever, as he seriously doubts that coming to terms with the government is actually the answer. The result is that his behavior displays a marked departure from point-to-point fidelity to the very basis of society. He sets his heart on the hope that people may break loose from their shackles of captivity and begin to live, for the first time, for the greater good. Furthermore, he only needs a slight provocation to affirm the Rousseauistic insight that might does not presuppose right and that, in fact, right is greater than might:

Mrs. Stockmann. But, dear Thomas, your brother has power on his side.

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, but I have right on mine, I tell you.

Mrs. Stockmann. Oh yes, right—right. What is the use of having right on your side if you have not got might? (Ibsen 41)

This resistance, at bottom a quest for pluralism, is challenged by a fierce reaction. At the public gathering held in Captain Horster’s house, the confrontation of might and right reaches its pinnacle. Aslaksen, with his emphasis on moderation, seeks to disarm the extremist Dr. Stockmann in the public: “I have learned in the school of life and experience that moderation is the most valuable virtue a citizen can possess” (Ibsen 65). This declaration fortifies Peter Stockmann’s defensive techniques against his brother: “I should like to propose that the meeting should not permit the Medical Officer either to read or to comment on his proposed lecture” (Ibsen 66). Dr. Stockmann’s exclusion from the center of public life, his being labeled the other or outsider, is justifiable proof that the third form of Foucauldian exclusion is enforced on him in cold blood. His discourse is divested of its truth value and that of the ruling class is invested with total authenticity.

During the same occasion, we are made acutely aware that the exchange of opinions is a mere pretext; what is pursued beneath the surface is to crown the infallible authority once again. Accordingly, to further obliterate the image of Dr. Stockmann as the public friend, the second operation of exclusion is carried out. In an attempt to vindicate its ways to the public and legitimize the status quo, the panopticon judges Dr. Stockmann to be mad. The following dialogue shows the efficiency of the policy:

3rd Citizen. I rather think he goes quite off his head sometimes.

1st Citizen. I wonder if there is any madness in his family? (Ibsen 78)

The individual who employs parrhesia, Foucault explains, is “someone who says everything he has in mind: he does not hide anything, but opens his heart and mind completely to other people through his discourse” (2001, 12). Viewed thus, Dr. Stockmann and Jimmy Porter are the parrhesiasts (the exploiters of parrhesia) who, for giving utterance to their criticism, jeopardize their lives because they recognize “truth-telling as a duty to improve or help other people” (19). More and more plagued by the forces allied against him, Jimmy Porter starts to admit, even more strongly, that escape is not a possibility. As the play wears on, he gradually reveals that he is a skeptical philosopher whose working-class consciousness pervades almost everything he says. Being unable to drag himself out of the self-consuming morass, he attends to an insatiable urge to revenge himself on the class that has showered disillusionment upon him and his class. His pain is expressed with razor-sharp insight; Jimmy, as Luc Gilleman notes, “philosophises as naturally as he breathes. His insights and opinions are well-informed and witty” (2012, 149). In other words, his sickening sense of the society’s futility is dragged through the slippery path of his faith, yet the poetry of his cynicism preserves its magnitude in spite of all.

Jimmy’s exclusion from the social scene owes much to his belief in puncturing the self-delusion of officeholders and the necessity of reform in a dispirited society. Unlike the older generation who evades responsibility by gazing upon the

past, Jimmy is focused on the present; for this reason, he knows Colonel Redfern to be the “poor old Daddy – just one of those old sturdy old plants left over from the Edwardian Wilderness that can’t understand why the sun isn’t shining anymore” (Osborne 113). The horrendous romance of Jimmy and the present, readily made known to others, is interpreted as an act of transgression by the overarching gaze, and what ensues is the truth/falsehood polarity. The lesson of Jimmy is that truth-telling is measured against the backdrop of what Foucault calls the regime of truth, which signifies that truth is respected as long as it respects the schemes of the Establishment. Foucault reveals the constraints imposed on the production of discourse take away our individuality, as “we know quite well that we do not have the right to say everything, that we cannot speak of just anything in any circumstances whatever, and that not everyone has the right to speak of anything whatever” (1981, 52). Retaining his attachment to his local self, Jimmy, however, distorts the harmony and speaks of “anything.” At the end of the play, he concedes that he and Alison are dismissed by the power which wishes to remain unsullied:

JIMMY: [...] We’ll be together in our bear’s cave, and our squirrel’s drey, and we’ll live on honey, and nuts – lots and lots of nuts. And we’ll sing songs about ourselves – about warm trees and snug caves, and lying in the sun. And you’ll keep those big eyes on my fur, and help me keep my claws in order, because I’m a bit of sappy, scruffy sort of a bear. And I’ll see that you keep that sleek, bushy tail glistening as it should, because you’re a very beautiful squirrel, but you’re none too bright either, so we’ve got to be careful. There are cruel steel traps lying about everywhere, just waiting for rather mad, slightly satanic, and very timid little animals. (Osborne 142-143)

Dr. Stockmann and Jimmy Porter realize the power relations that envelope them. The panoptic program operates as quicksand; once they find out its mechanism, they attempt to break loose only to sink deeper in it. Yet, paradoxically speaking, the very thing which reigns over them and deprives them of their emancipatory potential allows them to actively participate in their self-constitution. At this point, the critique of governmentality comes to the surface. Foucault believes the critique of governmentality is “the movement by which the subject gives himself the right to question truth on its effects of power and question power on its discourses of truth” (1997, 32). This critical attitude gives them both a chance to celebrate their individuality and a responsibility to defy the boundaries to make others celebrate theirs. The essence of their ethical awareness is an eventual self-effacement for the benefit of the political subjects in order to turn them, if possible, into free agents. Naturally enough, for these idiosyncratic heroes the epiphany is the same. Dr. Stockmann declares in the end that “the strongest man in the world is he who stands most alone” (Ibsen 100), and for Jimmy “the heaviest, strongest creatures in this world seem to be the loneliest” (Osborne 141). By denying their rights to social awakening, the panopticon builds upon a homogeneous domain of reference to ensure a codified, institutionalized freedom which does not tolerate plurality. In consequence, subcultures pull the roof down upon their own heads as soon as they voice their revolutionary screams. This is where the prayers and tears of Foucault come to nothing.

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