



Identity and Subjectivity in Post-Fordism: For an analysis of resistance in the contemporary workplace^{*}

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abstract

From the second half of the nineties the question of subjectivity has become a crucial subject in the dispute between the Foucauldian and Marxist theorists of Labour Process Theory (LPT). This paper intends to address some of the problematic elements that sprung from this debate and introduce some reference points that can help define the field of analysis of subjectivity. The hypothesis is that there exists neither a methodological nor a logical opposition between Marx and Foucault. I suggest that the convergence of Marx and Foucault allows a more generative theorising of subjectivity by looking at the constituent dimension of resistance. Resistance operates as a process of deconstructing identities; therefore the struggle for subjectivity can be assumed as the field in which the antagonism of social forces is played out, expressed and experimented. Empirically, I provide an illustration of the ways in which individuals respond to the process of production of identity in the social and productive order of post-Fordism. Focusing on the lean factory, I draw from texts generated in interviews with workers to explore the processes of subjectivation and to offer an understanding of resistances. The research was carried out at the Integrated Factory of Fiat in Melfi (Italy) and the Nissan Factory in Sunderland (United Kingdom). The interpretive work unfolds through fragments of diverse narrations by an extensive text analysis based on discourse analytical tools. I use a 'symptomatic reading' to search and recognize the presence of more than one discourse in a text, and to explore the absent conjunctions that divide it into a multiplicity of meanings. In my opinion, this methodology opens up the possibility of thinking new universes of reference for subjectivation.

Introduction

From the second half of the nineties the question of subjectivity has become of increasing relevance to the Labour Process Debate and, above all, a crucial subject in the dispute between the Foucauldian and Marxist theorists of Labour Process Theory (LPT). On one hand, post-structuralist theorists, referring to the theories of Foucault, claim that the tradition of LPT has developed a concept of subjectivity that oscillates between pure 'voluntarism' and 'humanist essentialism', and tends to separate collective resistances dictated by class-consciousness from the daily and individual

* The first version of this paper was translated by Taina Rajanti.

forms of resistance that are undervalued (Jermier *et al.*, 1994: 9). Therefore, LPT is incapable of understanding the dynamics through which the dialectic of power and the subject unfurls in the context of contemporary production processes. They see in the organization of the contemporary labour process and in the management of the workforce the emergence of sophisticated mechanisms of control, which are aimed at producing an alignment of the interests of workers with those of the corporation, and are strengthened by the individual preoccupation of the workers to check and reduce the uncertainty of their own identity; in social isolation, the individual becomes even more vulnerable to external threats (Knights, 1990). According to them, this technology of power, intervening directly on the processes of constitution of subjectivity, places in crisis the Marxist conception of the antagonism between the interests of the workers and those of management, on the basis of which the binary of control and resistance has historically been developed in LPT.

On the other hand, Critical Materialists and Marxists claim that in the Foucauldian approach there is no space for the conceptualisation of worker resistance and misbehaviours (Thompson and Akroyd, 1995; 1999; Thompson, 2001), and that there exists an evident contradiction in the reconstruction of collective identities of the actors (managers and workers) involved in the production process (Stewart and Lucio-Martinez, 1997). According to them, when control is placed outside the context of the relations of production, it loses its specific connotation of exploitation becoming one of the many forms of disciplinary power. Therefore, the attempt of Foucauldians to define subjectivity remains trapped within an individualistic mentality, as their analysis focuses on the individual employee's identity instead of the contradictions connected to the collective worker (Stewart, 2001).

This paper intends to engage in the contemporary debate between Marxists and Foucauldians in LPT analysing the relationship between identity and subjectivity in contemporary capitalist production processes. My hypothesis is that there exists no methodological or logical opposition between Marx and Foucault that should necessarily pose as obstacle when adopting both analytical points of view. It is not so much a question of confronting the two bodies of theory, but rather of going back to the basic issue that generated them, not only in their writings, but in a real context. I suggest that the convergence of Marx and Foucault allows the production of a conceptual space in which to individualize the relations of production, the social forces of production and the dynamic of subjectivity, in order to get out of a fragmented and broken vision of society in which power relationships and resistances are lost in a thousand rivulets of daily micro-relationships.

Theoretically, I propose a more generative theorising of subjectivity by looking at the constituent dimension of resistance which Foucault identifies as a sort of 'chemical catalyser' that brings power relations to light. Resistance operates as a process of destructuring of identities (social and personal, individual and collective), modifying their constitutive presuppositions. The production of subjectivity is not a process closed in on itself (given once and for all), but always open and problematic precisely because of resistance. Therefore the struggle for subjectivity can be assumed as the field in which the antagonism of social forces is played out, expressed and experimented.

Empirically, I provide an illustration of the ways in which individuals respond to the process of the production of identity in the social and productive order of post-Fordism. Focusing on the 'lean factory', I draw on texts generated from interviews with workers to explore the processes of subjectivation and to offer an understanding of resistances, both as antagonistic practices and reflections on what Deleuze calls the realm of 'common sense' that defines the main sphere of our everyday experience.

The paper is structured in two parts. In the first part I address some relevant concepts of Foucault and Deleuze in order to elaborate suitable conceptual tools for understanding the mechanisms of production of subjectivity. Beginning with the problematic elements that spring from the debate between Marxists and Foucauldians, I focus my analysis on two questions: the production of identity through the processes of individualisation and the action of resistance in the process of subjectivation. The second part brings out the results of a research that was carried out at the Integrated Factory of Fiat in Melfi (Italy) and the Nissan Factory in Sunderland (United Kingdom). The workers' stories, their way of representing themselves and their daily life both inside and outside the factory make up the core of the analysis, whose interpretation derive from the earlier theoretical hypotheses.

The Identity/Subjectivity Relationship in the Labour Process Debate

According to the post-modernist/ post-structuralist perspective, Marxist analyses of the power relations in the capitalist labour process are essentialist, totalising and make dualistic distinctions. In their view, the Marxist analysis is essentialist because, focusing on exploitation in the production process, it ignores other equally relevant discourses of domination such as gender, race, etc.; and it is deterministic because it conceptualises power relations in terms of an imperative of control (Braverman) that is based on the need to pump value and surplus value out of labour in the production process; finally, Marxist analysis is fraught with untenable dualisms such as the arbitrary distinctions between structure/agency, subject/object, control/resistance and therefore ignores the existential dimension of worker subjectivity.

Beginning from the crucial necessity to overcome the agency-structure dichotomy or voluntarism/determinism in the construction of a theory of subjectivity, the Foucauldian theorists maintain that power and subjectivity do not represent two dialectical polarities but are mutually constitutive. "Power is exercised in and through specific knowledge of bodies and minds; its effect is to infiltrate the mind or soul so as to constitute us as 'subjects' who discipline ourselves. This is to say, the sense of what we are (that is, social identity) is confirmed and sustained through a positioning of ourselves in practices that reflects and reproduce prevailing power-knowledge relations" (Knights, 1990: 320). Therefore, "subjectivity is understood as a product of disciplinary mechanisms, techniques of surveillance and power-knowledge strategies: human freedom is constituted through their mediation of subjectivity" (Knights and Willmott, 1989: 554).

In the discourses of the post-structuralist stream of the labour process debate the term subject assumes two meanings: subject to someone else through control and dependence (subject to); and subject tied to one's own identity, through conscience and self-knowledge (subject of). The first meaning (subject to) refers directly to the question of control and panoptical surveillance; the second (subject of) indicates the way in which the exercise of power forms individuals through their own identity. Both meanings suggest a form of power that simultaneously causes subjection and moulds 'self-disciplined subjectivities'.

With regard to this interpretation it is possible to identify diverse positions in the Foucauldian stream. At one extreme the concept of Panopticon constitutes the pivot around which the analysis rotates, and the attention is on the reproduction and proliferation of the disciplinary mechanisms and of surveillance devices in all contemporary society (Sewell and Wilkinson, 1992; Townley, 1993; Sewell, 1998; 1999; Deetz, 1998). At the other extreme the power/subject relationship is centred on the existential dimension of the individual in post-modernity (Knights and Willmott, 1990; Willmott, 1990; Collinson, 1994; Jermier *et al.*, 1994; Casey, 1995; Du Gay, 1996; O'Doherty and Willmott, 2001).

The analyses that are inspired by the concept of 'panopticon' regard subjectivation as a direct result of panoptic surveillance, placing the ontology of the 'subject' in the same operation as disciplinary and surveillance mechanisms. The limitation of these studies is that power is so completely taken for granted as to preclude space for resistance. As Knights and McCabe have recently underlined, "those authors who follow an overly deterministic and omnipotent conception of power effectively rule out the active subject and provide much grist to the anti-Foucauldian mill that we are anxious to remedy" (Knights and McCabe, 2000: 427). Power becomes the key-stone of all categories and consequently subjectivation is reduced to subjection. The question of resistance remains untouched, either as escape from control and rejection of a fixed identity, or as an affirmation of difference and singularity. The analysis of power relations is reduced, against the sense of Foucault, into a metaphysics of Power with capital P. The technologies of power-knowledge become a sort of monism consisting of the Power and deaf and mute resistances that are never mentioned.

At the other extreme the analysis of power relations is centred on the process of individualisation which simultaneously causes subjection and moulds 'self-disciplined subjectivities'. Subjectivity is seen as the product of the mechanisms of individualization that transform complex wholes of people in determined categories of individuals (worker, consumer, criminals, citizen, immigrant, experts, the mentally ill, and so on) that are divided off from one another. According to O'Doherty and Willmott, "Identity refers to the socially organized ascription of a status (for example, gender, occupation, etc.) to subjectivity" (2001: 114); and as Knights also notes:

The individuals come to recognise themselves as subjects, with definite identities, through the social practices in which they (we) engage, which are both the medium and the outcome of the exercise of power invested with specific strategies, knowledges and techniques. (1990: 328)

The studies that are concerned with the construction of identity – more exactly, with the competing claims made on the 'self' by society and organizations, on one hand, and the

individuals who occupy these selves, on the other (Kondo, 1990; Kunda, 1992; Casey, 1995; Du Gay, 1996; Knights and McCabe, 2000; O'Doherty and Willmott, 2001) – use a discursive approach in analysing the new strategies of organizational governance and their effects on the processes of creating new identities in the world of work.

The control of the self is seen as the highest form of organizational control. The introduction of mechanisms of personal self-monitoring to reach productive targets, along with the emphasis on individualism that results from the competition to obtain material and symbolic recognition, represent forms of discipline (self-discipline) that end up affecting every aspect of the workers' subjective existence, while intensifying problems connected to self-esteem and self-realization.

In the context of a capitalist mode of production, this self-defeating search for security in a coherent identity is routinely sponsored through such individualising institutions as 'career' as others (for example, the employers or his agent) seek a reproduction of their power and identity through us (the employee or the consumer). (Willmott, 1990: 369-70)

Kunda, for instance, following Etzioni, suggests that

normative control is the attempt to elicit and direct the required efforts of members by controlling the underlying experiences, thoughts and feelings that guide their actions [...] Under normative control membership is founded not only on the behavioural or economic transaction traditionally associated with work organizations, but more crucially, on the experiential transaction on which symbolic rewards are exchanged for a moral orientation to the organization [...] In short, under normative control it is the employee' self – the ineffable source of subjective experience – that is claimed in the name of corporate interest. (Kunda, 1992: 11)

In a similar vein, du Gay (1996) underlines that 'culture' has become an organizing principle with which the worker is redefined as both entrepreneur and consumer. New images and new languages have been created around these themes by managers in an effort to have workers take on more responsibility for their work while binding them closer to objectives of the work organization. The lines of tension and the dispersed sites of struggles within the contemporary organization of work induces these theorists to maintain that "it is becoming more difficult to identify simple lines of division based on capital and labour, or in terms of the perennial opposition cast between 'us' and 'them'. As a consequence it seems to behoove theoretical analysis to knowledge and explore, rather than marginalize or deny, those machinations of 'identity politics' found on the shopfloor and in the office" (O'Doherty and Willmott, 2001).

Some Foucauldian authors point out an ulterior element of complexity in the process of individualisation, that consists in the serial formation of an apparently free and self-determined individual 'identity'. According to them, individualisation has the contradictory effect of producing individuals that apparently are capable of autonomous actions, and, at the same time, deeply vulnerable, since they are made to engage in individually responsible behaviour. The critical state of this condition is strengthened by the fact that 'the subjects of modernity' are carriers of multiple memberships and contradictory identities and this condition provokes a state of anxiety and the consequent desire to reach a single and coherent personal identity. The normative practice of attributing social identity to human beings tends to promote both the desire to confirm these identities and the experience of the tension, when competitive and

contradictory social positions are occupied (Willmott, 1990). Knights and Willmott contend that individuals seek to overcome this ambiguity through attempts to secure a stable identity, either as separate subjects (domination or indifference) or dependant objects (subordination).

Although over recent years some Foucaudian-influenced studies (Kondo, 1990; Knights and McCabe, 2000; Casey, 1995; Du Gay, 1996), that draw attention to the role of identity in the process of subjectivation, have illustrated how workers' understandings of their self-identity often give rise to informal and subtle forms of everyday resistance and of misbehaviour, there are two limitations to these analyses.

Firstly, the production of subjectivity is defined as the constitutive 'process' specific to a 'relation to the self' with respect to the forms of production particular to knowledge and power, but these analyses don't explain sufficiently how the production of subjectivity intersects with the forms of capitalist valorisation. My aim here is to propose an interpretation of Foucault's theory that, rather than refusing or negating a Marxist critique, radicalizes it through expansion and intensification, where it doubts the 'orthodox Marxism' which assumes labour as our 'concrete essence' which is transformed by capitalist relations into surplus value.

Secondly, the dynamic of subjectivity is located in the panorama of the continuous tension which individuals experience during their search for a secure identity, also caused by the discursive power of management. The search for security, faced with individualization, is founded on the 'fetishism of identity'. The more individuals become preoccupied with the search for a stable solid sense of identity, the more subjectivity become a sort of 'psychic prison'. The problem I want to point out is that such a conception belongs to the traditional logics of 'representation', that in their quest for static identity, are constantly threaten by negativity, and therefore dependent on a transcendental principle. Therefore, the analysis of subjectivity risks falling into the domain of the common sense, where we recognise and order objects in relation to ourselves according to the requirements of habits and of an established order of things. In this domain, resistance falls, almost inevitably, into a reactive role as block or friction and therefore seems to lose its generative and creative effectiveness.¹ Thus, we should still heed Deleuze's three questions: "What are the new modes of subjectivation, which tend to have no identity? What powers must we confront and what is our capacity for resistance, today when we can no longer be content to say that the old struggles are no longer worth anything? How can we conceive a 'power of truth' that would release transversal lines of resistance and not integral lines of power?" (Deleuze, 1988: 115). In the next two sections I will focus my analysis on these questions and, more specifically, on the dynamic of the subjectivity in the contemporary capitalist production process, and on the role of resistance in the subjectivation process.

1 A quite similar criticism has been raised by Thomas and Davies in their work on the micro-politics of resistance in the UK public service, where they point out that: "Although, in recent years, there has been sophisticated analysis of shopfloor resistance, appreciating the role of identities as well as more overt actions and behaviours, such studies do not fully illustrate the processes of resistance that draw on a more generative theorising of power and subject" (2005: 686-687).

Subjectivity Field of Analysis in the Era of Bio-power. Marx through Foucault

Analyzing the specific form that the labour force assumes in the panorama of post-Fordist production means understanding the material, political and existential class composition of the general picture of social reproduction of the capitalist mode of production. On the one hand, this means overcoming formal separation between material production and social reproduction, and understanding the Marxian concept of real subsumption of labour under capital as a process that unfolds itself in biological, corporeal and subjective terms and that tends to invest not only the economic or cultural dimension of society, but envelops within itself every element of social life. The capitalist accumulation of value in the era of globalization implicates all social forces and tends to exploit living labour in all the elements that define the social – the form of life – such as relations, affects, intellectual and communicative capabilities. In these new conditions, power reaches down to the guts of social structure and becomes entirely bio-political, investing the production and reproduction of life itself. On the other hand, it means overcoming the traditional distinction between economic and political struggles and bringing back the bio-political field of power to the material ontology of production, thus getting out of a fragmented and broken vision of society in which power relations and resistances are lost in a thousand rivulets of daily micro-relationships.

Foucault's contribution is, in my opinion, especially useful when looking at the connection between production and the social conditions of production, because otherwise any analysis remains imprisoned by the apparent dialectic of how the cycle of capital rebuilds itself. What determines normalization processes in contemporary capitalism is still the reproduction of the labour force, but it is not enough to know that the relation between capital and labour is one of structural antagonism between two 'determinate abstractions'² (Edwards, 1990; Thompson, 1990; Stewart, 2001). What is necessary, instead, is a comprehension, on the one hand, of "the abstraction which seeks the real in the concrete (determinate abstraction) and, on the other hand, *the concrete which seeks in abstraction its determination* (the process of tendency)" (Negri, 1991: 48). It means that the 'determinate abstraction' is a dynamism animated by the historical subjectivity, an historical movement of class relations in the practical arenas where they become 'true'.

The exercise of power that tends towards normalization is a type of power that is embedded in the very heart of capitalist production, whose functioning principle is based on reducing life to the dimension of the work force. "Since life and time for man are not naturally based on work, but rather are: pleasure, irregularity, holiday, rest, needs, instability, appetites, violence, plundering etc. capital must transform all this explosive, instant and discontinuous energy in a continuous work force that can be constantly placed on the market" (Foucault, 1979: 108). Thus, even though capital's

2 In the *Grundrisse* Marx deals with the relationship between the method of presentation and the real movement. He says that "the method of raising from the abstract to the concrete is only the way in which thought appropriates the concrete, reproduces it as the concrete in the mind. But this is by no means the process by which the concrete itself comes into being" (1973: 101).

only interest is time as quantity, it cannot avoid the quality of time as a plurality of subjective practices.

Given that with ‘mode of production’ here it is meant “not only one particular economic configuration, but also a composite unit of forms of life, a social, anthropological, and ethical cluster” (Virno, 2004: 49), it is important, even before defining the ‘subject’, to put it in the historical plot in which it is immersed. As Foucault states in the *Will to Knowledge*,

The adjustment of the accumulation of men to that of capital the joining of the growth of human groups to the expansion of productive forces and the differential allocation of profit, were made possible in part by the exercise of bio-power in its many forms and modes of application. The investment of the body, its valorisation, and the management of its forces were at the time indispensable. (Foucault, 1998: 141)

The anatomo-politics of the human body and the regulatory controls of the population constitute, for Foucault, the two poles around which the organization of power over life has been organized. Bio-power is, therefore, “a bipolar technology – anatomic and biological, individualizing and specifying, directed toward the performances of the body, with attention to the processes of life – (it) characterized a power whose highest function was perhaps no longer to kill, but invest life through and through” (Foucault, 1991: 139).

At a first level of analysis, it is possible to gather the exercise of bio-power in terms of the anatomic-political discipline of the human body, of the deliberate manipulation of the elements of its gestures and of its behaviour. The body enters a power mechanism that looks through it, disarticulates and recomposes it. If economic exploitation separates labour power from the product of labour, the disciplinary coercion establishes a bond of constraint between a matured attitude and an increased domination of the body.

The disciplines are techniques that intervene on the body to assure the regulation of human multiplicities. On one hand, they transform and check unstable human multiplicity into homogeneous populations – children, workers, the sick, criminals, ‘clandestine’, ‘illegal workers’, etc. – and, on the other, they fix the rank, the place and the behavioural norms of the individuals inside the institutions in which they operate – family, school, factory, the state, hospital, psychiatric hospital, asylums, prisons, detention centres for immigrants etc. The interconnections of this bundle of micro-powers form the ‘body politic’ (Foucault, 1991) as a set of material elements and techniques that serve as weapons, relays, communication routes and supports for the power and knowledge relations that invest human bodies. ‘Seriation’ is the product of tactics of division, of mutual adaptation of the bodies, of gestures and of rhythms, of differentiation of abilities, of mutual coordination in relation to apparatuses, to assignments and to roles. It “gives the possibility of characterizing, and therefore, using individuals according to the level in the series that they are moving through; the possibility of accumulating time and activity, of rediscovering them, totalised and usable in a final result, which is the ultimate capacity of an individual” (Foucault, 1991: 160). Seriation operates, therefore, in the same fabric of the multiplicity, aimed at introducing asymmetry and excluding reciprocity, creating a bond of otherness between

the individuals. It is a mode of government of individualisation, that is, a form of power that categorises the individual, that marks him/her in his/her individuality, that fixes people in their identity, that imposes to each individual a law of truth that he/she must recognise in him/herself and that the others must recognize in him/her.

The (ultimate) goal of anatomo-politics is that of distributing what is living under the dominance of value and utility, through the operation of continuous, regulatory and corrective mechanisms with which it qualifies, measures, appreciates and places the individuals and work distributions in hierarchies according to the norm. Its effect is that of causing an existential context in which each individual (individualised body, maximised force) internalizes behavioural codes and rules, considers them as 'normal' and 'natural' values to safeguard and transmit.

At a second level, it is possible to understand the exercise of bio-power in terms of bio-politics of the population, through a series of controls and of regulatory interventions on it: proliferation, birth and mortality, the level of health and so on. Here we have to do with scientific categories of human beings such as species, population, race, gender, sexual practices, etc. and a concern with the biological well-being of the population including disease control and prevention, adequate food and water supply, sanitary shelter, and education.

The birth of bio-politics is the moment in which life and its mechanisms tend to be integrated within a net of techniques and procedures that dominate and manage them. This strategic order of powers and knowledge over life is not a given once for all; on the contrary, it is the product of manifold struggles and clashes. When power has life as its object or aim, resistance to power turns life against power. Resistance becomes the power of life and life itself becomes a set of forces that resist the strategies of bio-power. The reproduction of social relations, where capital is 'the monster that dominates everything' (Marx), is thus assumed to be the battlefield where subjectivity is produced.

The passage from Fordism to post-Fordism is entirely realised as a process of restructuring-reorganization, not simply of the manufacturing process, but of the whole mode of production. In this new order, the bio-powers invest the body in its totality; they intervene on the living body of the worker, not only as a bearer of nerves and muscles, but also of more general social attitudes, intellectual abilities and powers, eg: thought, language, ability of reflection, learning ability. Self-activation, problem solving, continuous formation, flexibility, mobility are the new *mots de pass* of the post-Fordist labour force. No longer nerves and muscles, the meat and the blood of living labour, but the whole life. As Paolo Virno has observed, referring to the words of Marx:

Capitalists are interested in the life of the worker, in the body of the worker, only for an indirect reason: this life, this body, are what contains the faculty, the potential, the *dynamis*. The living body becomes an object to be governed not for its intrinsic value, but because it is the substratum of what really matters: labour-power as the aggregate of the most diverse human faculties (the potential for speaking, for thinking, for remembering, for acting, etc.). (Virno, 2004: 82-83)

Life lies at the centre of politics when labour-power has to be won, and for this reason it is legitimate to talk about bio-politics.

It is in the discrepancy between the power of life in general (the *dynamis* that creates, modifies and forces the power to new battlegrounds) and the need to measure the utility (the transformation of potential in labour in action, the reduction of life to work) that it is possible to see the production of an excess (of knowledge, of subjectivity, of power, of men) that forces capital to structure new mechanisms of government and control of the population.

The Fordist disciplinary matrix that saw in salary and in access to the means to consume the original statute of the citizenship, ceases to expand its own effects. In the ontological mutation of the labour statute that is inherent in post-Fordism, the dynamics for which access to a salary is an indissoluble element of social inclusion ceases to work. In its place, the precariousness of employment, flexibility of performance, capacity of productive performances configure themselves as a new statute. It is at this stage that they produce the effects of bio-powers as practices governing what individuals possess in general and in abstract – the *dynamis*, the life.

In this regard, Knights and Willmott's (1990) criticism of Marx for having reduced individuals to mere personifications of economic categories results only in a sort of paradoxical semantic reversal: for Marx labour, as determined abstraction, is subjectivity only in the measure in which it is *dynamis* (*δυνάμει*). All the effort of power is to reduce 'labour as subjectivity' to a governable object that is quantifiable, measurable and sanctionable. The processes of subjectivation can be considered the core of the critical condition (or inherent contradiction, if one prefers to define it in Althusserian terms) that is at the base of capitalist restructuring processes. To the extent that power tends to unify and enclose in itself all the elements of social life, it nonetheless reveals, despite itself, new environments of constitution of plurality and irreducible singularity.

The tension between identity and subjectivity should be therefore situated in the bio-political field of power. Bio-powers are, as Foucault teaches, the principles of 'governmentality' of multitudes that passing through the disciplined living body directly invest the whole social life. To understand the processes of subjectivity does not mean interrogating resistance to understand the effects of power, but, to the contrary, beginning from the effects of truth of power has, investigating resistance as a "force that enriches itself by seizing hold of other forces and joining itself to them in a new assemblage: a becoming" (Deleuze, 1997: 132).

Subjectivation Process and Resistance

The theme of subjectivity constitutes the problematic base of the theoretical-political pathway of Foucault, and not the hypostatization of a conceptual category from which to move to build a philosophy of history or a 'discourse of truth' on the subject. The subject is not preliminarily and definitely given, but is constituted and changes in the plot of history, in the immanence of power relationships. Due to this, subjectivity is a

permanently problematic and open question, never once and for all given. Subjectivation, according to Foucault, concerns the “way a human being turns him or herself into a subject” (Foucault, 1982: 208); therefore it is a process of self-formation in which the person is active and comes into being through a variety of “operations on own bodies, on their own souls, on their thoughts, on their own conducts” (Foucault, 1980)

The struggle for subjectivity is always open and problematic. It is metamorphosis. Deleuze interpreting Foucault says: “The struggle for a modern subjectivity passes through a resistance to the two present forms of subjection, the one consisting of individualizing ourselves on the basis of constraints of power, the other of attracting each individual to a known and recognized identity, fixed once and for all. The struggle for subjectivity presents itself, therefore, as the right to difference, variation and metamorphosis” (Deleuze, 1988: 106). Foucault interrogates power, its devices and practices not beginning from a theory of obedience and of forms of legitimation but beginning from a theory of ‘liberty’ and of the ability of transformation that each power play implies. “Two elements are essential for having a true relationship of power: that ‘the other’ (that on which it is practiced) is well recognized and maintained until the end of the action; and that there opens, in front of the power relationship, a whole field of answers, reactions, effects, possible inventions” (Foucault, 1982: 206). Liberty is set therefore as a preliminary condition of the exercise of power, “its permanent support, from the moment that without the possibility of resistance, power would be equivalent to a physical determination” (*ibid.*: 208).

‘Power’ is nothing more than the overall effect that emerges from all the clashes, manifold struggles and confrontations that develop within the social body. These are in continuous transformation, and the concatenation that reacts on each of them seeks in turn to arrest their movement. Resistance is not simply a target for power, but it is creation, every possible invention. Foucault suggests we engage the forms of resistance as the point of departure and use them as a chemical catalyst to bring out the power relations, localising the position, identifying the application point and the adopted methods. Instead of analysing power from the point of view of its internal rationality, this means analysing power relationships through the antagonisms of the strategy.

Resistances can be understood as a multiplicity of real practices that are inscribed in the field of power relations, forcing the control devices to an endless struggle trying to recover what, each time, presents itself as extraneous to it, as a break-up of the ‘normal’ practices, as a constituent difference. It is in this clash, in this field of forces, that both the processes of subjectivation and those that aim at constituting serial, fixed and controllable identities, are produced. The daily forms of resistance, struggle, refusal, desire and sociability denounce the concrete subtraction of the individuals to the processes of abstraction, of homogenisation, seriation and of strategic codification operated by the power-knowledge devices. From the point of view of the production of subjectivity, these de-structuring practices can be thought of in terms of a constituent ‘difference’ that cannot be reduced to identity, or be composed through homology, equivalences or fictitious universality.

Power devices and stratifications of knowledge attribute identity, fixing and crystallizing social power to a point in such a way as to make it separate and hostile to the individuals themselves. Subjectivity emerges and is revealed as a right to difference, to variation and to metamorphosis. It operates as a process of destructuring of social and personal, individual and collective identities, modifying the constitutive presuppositions.

The subjectivation, as relation to oneself, continues to create itself, but by transforming itself and changing its nature [...]. Recuperated by power-relations and relations of knowledge, the relation to oneself is continually reborn, elsewhere and otherwise. (Deleuze, 1988: 104)

The place in which the thought of resistance resurfaces and is reaffirmed is language. But it is not the abstract and encoded language of science as a set of abstract signs and codes serving to point out how much of acknowledgement there is in each experience, removing to the unspoken all the details, the excesses, the non-acknowledgeable cast-offs. To the contrary, it is the political language of the body, the language of the constituent difference. The story of singular experiences, the personal discourse admits only one possible reduction, the language of the experience of the body, and that is where its intrinsic political nature resides. From the standpoint of the body, there is only relation and process. The body is living labour, creation, expression and cooperation – and therefore material construction of the world and of history. Implicit in this is the refusal of both methodological individualism that represents the individual as an isolated and autonomous actor (and value), an autonomous source of rights and property; and of the totalising and universalising schemes of modernity founded on the binary logic of the Self and of the Other, and of the static abstractions represented by the One in the form of the labour union, of the party, of the People or of the state.

The analysis of subjectivity cannot remain secluded in the language of therapy, in which the murmurs of subjectivity resolve in the entropy of internal conscience. It is necessary to think about subjectivation as the way in which a social need subjectively presents itself or, in other words, as the particular way in which a collective need is perceived and is articulated in a singular discourse. Also, where subjectivation is expressed as relation to oneself – as ‘government of others through self-government’ (Foucault) or as an ‘affect of self by self’ (Deleuze) – the subjectivation process is social because it is a struggle for the production of subjectivity against imposed social identity.

The production of subjectivity is affirmation of singularity against constraints and fictitious universalisms of capitalism, and contemporarily construction of a common sphere where production of subjectivity becomes constituent power (in the Spinozian sense of *potential* or in Deleuzian one of *puissance*) of the social forces of production. The constituent power enables at once the emergence and consolidation of the various forms of collective subjectivity and the ways in which these forms make possible the means for capitalism to fashion the kinds of subjectivity required for its functioning and reproduction. As Marx pointed out in his analysis of the commodity-form, since capitalist axiomatics can only base themselves on notions of common sense, identity and equivalency, they have always to contain difference within a predictable pattern of unity and identity, and to affirm that time unfolds in one direction only. In the domain of common sense, knowledge is reduced to recognition and each singularity (the difference-in-itself) is defined as ‘accidental’ or ‘contingent’ (in space and in time) and

it has always to be overcome, returned through the processes of abstract exchange, to what is always the same, the utterly fungible. The function of the concept of identity is essentially that of 'managing' the difference.

The ontology of constituent power conceptualises the *puissance* not just in regard to its role in creating and consolidating the capitalist regime of accumulation, but in activating an assembly of forces capable of breaking beyond the limits and divisions that it imposes. The expression of this power virtually permits an infinite number of connections, it opens transversal relations and creates new modes of desire and affect, and those connections cannot be made to conform to a centralized organization. Difference-in-itself express the power of a multiplicity of bodies and the movement of desire. This potential is not transcendental but it is immanent to structure (since structure cannot exist without the event of sense) and grounded in the existential and historical praxis of a real multiplicity of bodies.

In this sense, resistance is not simply merely a dialectic negation of power, but induces reflection that casts in doubt the effects of truth) that power has, such as discourses, *doxa* of representation, norms and values. Resistance as 'reflective practice' refers to real transformative events on the plane of being. It is an 'event' (Deleuze) that provokes the 'thought into action': it intervenes directly into the actions and passions that define the state of bodies, and creates a relay between sense, memory, imagination and thought. This being so, it also develops as a practical critique of the form of power operating in immediate everyday reality, classifying individuals in categories, fixing their identities. It is not just a question of struggles, individual or collective, but strategies of dis-subjection, relational and transversal, modifying life-styles and forms, rules of behaviour, relations with the body and existential choices. When these practices become the constituent power of multiple singularities, they transform the bio-political field of power from within, breaking the common sense, making visible new fields of possible and impose new regimes of truth.

Theoretical practice is, for Foucault, the art of 'voluntary disobedience', reasoned indocility, the dis-subjection from politics of truth. "The essential political problem for the intellectual is not to criticize the ideological contents supposedly linked to science, or to ensure that his own scientific practice is accompanied by a correct ideology, but that of ascertaining the possibility of constituting a new politics of truth. The problem is not changing the people's consciousness – or what's in their heads – but the political, economic, institutional regime of truth. It is not a matter of emancipating truth from every system of power (which would be a chimera, for truth is already power), but of detaching the power from the forms of hegemony, social, economic, and cultural, within which it operates at the present time" (Foucault, 1991: 74).

The criticism must necessarily pass through the work of deconstructing the totalising representation of reality, in such a way that the process of self-valorisation, of the emersion of needs, of the tending to desires, can be possible. But this de-structuring work cannot develop according to metaphysical schemes or through the language of therapy, as sometimes the de-constructionism of Knights (1997; 2001) would have it. Instead, it must proceed from the base of strategies, of schemes, plans, mode of existence and investments of the concrete individuals' bodies and real social forces.

What gives life and meaning to the theoretical practice is its remaining inside reality, the repetition inside of reality of that act of existence and of separation that belongs to all the subjects that move in history.

The archaeological and genealogical analysis of power serves in the measure in which it shows the constitutive dynamics of power and consequently unmask its image. Genealogical analysis is useful in deciphering the historical being of power. It does not analyze power from the point of view of its internal rationality but through the antagonism of the strategy, because reality is transformed by the complex of the strategies that invest it.

Subjectivation Processes in Post-Fordist Factories

The workers' stories, representations and their daily lives inside and outside of the lean factory – in this specific case of the Integrated Factory of Fiat in Melfi (Italy) and the Nissan Factory in Sunderland (United Kingdom) – have constituted the core of my research, and its theoretical basis derives from the preceding critical analysis.

The FIAT-Sata (*Società Automobilistica Tecnologia Avanzata*) factory at Melfi, in the southern Italian region of Basilicata, was built at the beginning of the 1990s. It started to function in September 1993 and currently employs 5,000 people, with 4,000 others working in subcontracting factories. It produces 1,200 cars per day. The FIAT management has devised work schedules and norms intended to guarantee maximum use of the machinery. Thus, the factory functions day and night without interruption, with the sole exception of Sundays, with a shift system based on three shifts each of seven hours and forty-five minutes. The shift workers follow a multi-weekly cycle with the following sequence: six days of work, Sunday rest, another six days of work, Sunday rest, three days of work, four days of compensatory rest including Sunday. The majority of workers had moreover to make long journeys to get to the factory, sometimes as much as 150 km. Recruitment was carried out throughout a 'green field' area which is heavily affected by unemployment. The trade-union organizations accepted the use of 'training contracts' which automatically excluded workers aged more than 32 and caused substantial retreats on wages workers (20% less than other FIAT employees) and precariousness of work. FIAT workers at Melfi were involved in a 21 day industrial struggle in April-May 2004.³

3 The struggle started from a specific event. A sub-contracting company was on strike, the parts did not arrive and the company appealed to the trade-union representatives to sign an agreement for the SATA workers to be sent home without pay. When the trade representative (delegates) left the management office to face the workers, they were told: "This time, it's enough. This time our heads will not be lowered! We will all block the doors!" They decided to block the factory and remain outside so as to avoid the blackmail and pressure the bosses would employ against an internal strike. The workers at Melfi demanded wage parity with other FIAT factories, the modification of the team system and the end to the regime of disciplinary sanctions. They've experienced thousands of disciplinary sanctions: 9,000 in the last three years.

The Nissan plant – best known as Nissan Motor Manufacturing (UK) or NMUK – is located in the Washington area of Sunderland, in the North-East of England. In the 1980s this region had undergone a period of industrial decline, with the closure of most of the shipyards on the Tyne and Wear and of many coal mines on the once prosperous Durham coalfield. The site is close to large ports and major trunk roads, within easy driving distance of the international Newcastle Airport. NMUK started to function in 1986 and it is one of the most productive car plants in Europe. There are 4,000 staff directly employed by NMUK, with 10,000 others working in subcontracting factories. Employees work a standard 39 hour week, alternating morning and evening shifts. Morning shifts run from approximately 7am to 3pm. Evening shifts run from approximately 4pm to midnight. Shift times can vary depending on requirements. When required, overtime is worked, although it balanced out during the year with planned downtime.

The field research was carried out from the Winter 2000 until the Spring 2002. I used semi-structured and narrative interviews that lasted on average 120 minutes and were tape-recorded. As a mode of inquiry, I directed attention to life-long personal experiences and I considered the interview as an ongoing process of construction, which was motivated by my immediate interest in self-exploration and self-presentation at the time of narration. My central methodological questions were focused on the way in which narrators went back into the events of their life: memories, times and places, plans, experiences, strategies and abilities. The interviews were corroborated by on-site observations of work relations and social interactions inside and outside the factory. In addition to these qualitative methods, companies documents have been examined.

The interpretive work unfolds through fragments of diverse narrations by an extensive text analysis based on discourse analytical tools. I used a ‘symptomatic reading’ in order to grasp not only what each respondent said, but what he/she did not and he/she couldn’t say at the moment of the narration. Louis Althusser coined the term ‘symptomatic reading,’ an interpretive strategy that searches not only for the structural dominants in a text but, most importantly, for absences and omissions that are an indication of what the dominant ideology seeks to repress, contain or marginalize. Althusser’s reading is ‘symptomatic’ in the sense that “it divulges the undivulged event in the text it reads, and in the same moment relates it to a different text, present as the necessary absence in the first” (Althusser and Balibar, 1970: 28).

The symptomatic reading makes visible the suppressed discourses, the naturalized power relations, the systems of exclusion which allow the text to make sense in particular ways. Having recognized a symptom, readers should not read it literally, but rather as a sign of something else that is going on. This helps me to search and to recognize the presence of more than one discourse in a text, and to explore the absent conjunctions that divide it into a multiplicity of meanings, if these complement, suppress or displace each other thereby truncating each other’s development. The symptomatic reading will be effective in so far as it divulges the undervalued event in the text it reads. Here, my aim is not to present the substrate of a ‘worker identity’, but using the rhetorical activities and narrative strategies of the informants in order to open up the possibility of thinking the pragmatic application of singularities toward the

construction of new universes of reference for subjectivation. The reader is also an active participant in the meaning of the text in a potentially endless process.

The Irreducibility of Bodies to the Anatomic-political Devices

The disciplining and exploitation of the body (making it worth something) constitute the necessary condition of capitalist exploitation. The space of capitalist production is, today as in the past, the space of disciplining of bodies, a privileged field of the exercise of power, and therefore also the field where resistance is generated. Paraphrasing Marx, we could say that the 'animal spirits', the sexual instincts, the feelings and the creativeness of the workers, the fundamental human ability of collaboration and cooperation must be mobilized and folded up to 'forge' the production processes 'in the fire'. The body is the *topos* of the strategy of capitalist accumulation, the privileged field for the exercise of power, and therefore at the same time, the field where resistance is generated.

The form of capitalist co-operation in post-Fordism, intervening directly on the living body of the worker, has rendered the appearances contained in the concept of work force forever explicit. The living body is not only carrier of nerves and muscles but also of more general social attitudes. An understanding of resistance must necessarily begin from this 'living body'. The first constitutive moment of resistance has its origins in and develops from the training on the body (its dressage, to use a Foucauldian expression): its rhythms, its needs, its necessities constitute the target of power but also its limit: the basis of constitution of every resistance to disciplining and exploitation. The testimonies of line workers furnish the solid image of the operation of power relationships, the instant profile of the battle between power and resistance beginning from the body:

When you do a job, the same job for years, years and years you run like clockwork. Your body becomes like a self-winding watch. In Nissan you are like a precision clock, but, you know, one day this clock cannot go more... One day your body says to you: hello I'm here, I need to sit down, I need to sleep, I need to have a rest, so...When your body clock cannot be fitted, Nissan throws this rubbish out to put a new one on. (Nissan Worker)

We were at the beginning and I was doing my job (...), we didn't really know what our job was; after a while we discovered that the lines had to go at a certain speed (...). We worked on that line that kept going and were not able to keep up, but we thought that that was our job... and nothing else... up to one day... all sweaty... we really couldn't put up with it any more, the people were in pieces, you just couldn't keep that rhythm and then... Bit by bit, I realized that each day a different boss came by and told you to do something extra in more, each day one of them came by and told you: 'lift up the boot too, do that there too'... Then one day the anger slipped from me, the rebellion slipped from me... ... and so one day I just got mad, all of a sudden I got rebellious and so I refused to do other things right in front of the Ute head.⁴ (Fiat Worker)

4 The Unità tecnologica Elementare (Ute; Elementary Technology Unit) is a productive unit (cell) whose job is to manage a single segment of the assembly line in all its aspects. It makes use of heterogeneous skills and roles which are all interconnected in the manufacturing process. The official Ute roles are: the Ute leader, the line technologist, the supplier, the automated machine worker (CIA), the integrated process worker (CPI) and the line workers. During the year 2004, the Utes,

In these narrations it is possible to trace the manifold aspects of the relationship: the dismay of the body-segments in the multi-segmentary machine that is explicit as slavery of the body to the rhythms imposed by the flow, the pressure of the disciplinary power worked by the bosses, the slow evolution of a process of knowledge of the context. But the elements that emerge with stronger words from the narrations belong to the language of the bodies and their rebellion: 'one day your body says you: hello, I'm here' or 'all sweaty, we couldn't put up with it any more, people were in pieces'. From the language of the bodies and their rebellion, the first and most immediate, springs the first reaction against the discipline (the visible one of the assembly line, the invisible one of the inside overseer): 'anger slipped from me, rebellion slipped from me'. The instinctive immediateness of the verb (slipped from me) translates the language of the body in immediate opposing praxis, in refusal. It is the first, elementary moment of transgression uprising in the body that imposes itself as a first and decisive form of resistance. Foucault writes in *Dits et écrits*: "Saying no constitutes the minimal form of resistance. But naturally, in some moments, it is very important. One needs to say no and make of this no a decisive form of resistance" (1994: 741).

Other times, instead, this type of refusal becomes an acknowledgement of a limit that has already been surpassed and thus is the projection of a deep desire to rebel.

Some day the SATA will definitely blow up, yeah, because the people are too, everyone's totally exasperated, both with the shifts and with the work, with everything, the job conditions, everything ... Yeah, yeah, just like that volcano, you know, that volcano that goes uh! Uh! and then it blows. Like Etna, and then it's a massacre. Just like Mirafiori blew up a long time ago. We're not ready yet, that's our problem. If one day I won the lottery, I wouldn't just quit, no, I'd go there and wreck everything: yeah, the first thing I'd do would be to go slap up my UTE boss, the manager, then ... I wouldn't quit, no way! Would I thank them for my job?!? no! no way I'd thank anyone! look, that would be so great! ... so, look, the situation is really too much. (Fiat worker)

Bodies are also desiring bodies. This desire is often realised in a choice that could appear as an escape (exit). Self dismissal (quitting), really, constitutes a concrete episode of escape through which one realises the reaffirmation of one's own difference, the sense of one's own being as an entity distinguishable from all the others: For example, a Fiat worker who resigned said:

I had foreseen, I had always dreamed of my dismissal, how it would be and then at the end it was something different from what I thought... I dreamed of the moment in which I could have said everything just as it was, instead I went there and I resigned, I didn't give any explanation, it seemed still more beautiful. When they asked me why I was going away, I answered that I had found a 'dignified' job. I have seen so many people that have resigned so, even only for a row, because maybe behind that they had accumulated so much anger that at the end they erupted and they resigned...

If it is true that resistance originates in the transitory explosion of needs, it is likewise true that from this there comes the recognition of the context that triggers processes of subjectivation and that can lead to other forms and strategies of resistance. Interpretation of body language requires reflection on one's self and on the context. In other words, if a refusal to do something is a sort of immediate transgression, over time it creates the opening through which a process of reflection on

usually made up of forty workers, were reorganized and subdivided in *domini*, mini teams of ten people managed by a CPI (integrated process worker).

one's sense of self, on one's relation to others and to one's way of being begins taking shape. The breach opened by the refusal constitutes a decisive moment for the recognition of the context, for the appearance of a process of learning that does not have as an object 'the how to work' or 'the how you do this operation', but rather 'the sense of doing', the effects that every doing produces on oneself and the sense of one's own position in the space-time of the production...

You know, they have taught you to work our arses off... you have the little tie, [you are a boss] I will rebel... if not, there you are dead, if you don't rebel, there you are really dead. If you don't have a little bit of character, you are quite dead. There are those unfortunately who are constrained or that have a family, or that are without a signed contract, you don't rebel. Then there is that person that is weaker when faced with blackmail, and doesn't rebel, therefore that one has died there, look there. (Fiat worker)

The expression used more than once in the passage of the preceding interview ('if you don't rebel, you are dead there') becomes the metaphor of a refusal that affirms that it makes the liberty of the subject in the constitution of the relationship with oneself and in the constitution of the relationship with the others worth something. The need to affirm one's own subjective existence through a praxis of rebellion reveals the biopolitical character of the struggle, where at stake is one's own life, understood as an indivisible unity of 'bios' and 'ethos'.

Now, I've learnt to take care for myself! Some lads want to show to be able, to be leaders ...what do I do it for? What for? I haven't lost my dignity, I haven't sold my soul. You are who has to take care for yourself. Cars are more important than men? They don't care if you are tired or disappointed. (Nissan worker)

Proceeding from the body's counterattack, this praxis develops as 'care of oneself'. By making one's own rules of behaviour and by developing personal techniques to manage one's relations with others and also one's relation with oneself, it becomes possible to minimize the domination inherent in power relations.

The Affirmation of Singularity Against the Government of Identity

The question of identity is one of the most recurrent arguments in the analysis of the restructuring process of capitalist enterprises in the post-Fordist regime of production. Both the critical and apologetic arguments about involvement and commitment recognise in identity one of the crucial elements of the new production paradigm. The key terms of the post-Fordist discursive order are: workers as members of the corporate culture, identification of the single worker with the team and the firm. In the post-Fordist mode co-operation, the quality demanded of the labour force is no longer measurable only in terms of compensation of physical effort but consists also of cognitive and relational abilities. Given the intrinsic critical stance to the subsumption of these abilities for productive ends, it therefore becomes necessary to have an investment of direct power to a specific disciplining of minds. This implicates a mutation of the representation of social context within the workplace, so that participation and commitment to the corporate goals appear in the eyes of the workers as the fruit of a free choice. Therefore the team assumes a specific identity connotation, moulded on the criterions of the rationality of production flow. Thus, the general

identity connotation of the worker is defined in terms of the active, involved collaborator who co-operates in the team for a common end.

Teamwork is the point where mechanisms of ‘government of individualisation’ work through a continuous praxis of division and hierarchisation, and also of classification of the behaviour and of the abilities of each worker on the base of standards set as normal: industrious/lazy; willing/slacker; participative/conflictual; sociable/solitary. At this level, workers’ resistances develop as practices of the ‘difference’, as an affirmation of a singular and not serial individuality, as a refusal of the norm that identifies and classifies. Resistance, assumes the character of an ‘event’ (*l'événement*, of Foucault). It is an event because, affirming the right to singularity, resistance disarticulates the series and breaks the obviousness of the sense of daily practices. It is an event also because, causing that discontinuity, resistance allows the constitution of a horizontal connection, the making of a meeting, of a rediscovered point for mutual support.

The group is something different from the team as they say. There is cooperation, that is our work... Just to give you an example: I must put the door on, no? However, I am here and the other person is ten meters further down and therefore we work alone. What they mean by team is that if I forget to put the door on the person further down must do it for me, that is there must not be recovery, everyone should try to do what the other has not done. The group instead is another thing. It has happened to me in the past to be part of a beautiful group that began to be aware. However, there as soon as they notice the group, the group is separated, we are separated... and therefore this thing has happened to me so many times that you get to a point in which you don't even have the strength to start again. (Fiat Worker)

It's not like a group. Everybody has his own individual job to do. As long as your job is ok, did not matter what your mate was doing as long as yours was all right. (Nissan Worker)

In the following interview we can see how a group originates, how it grows, how it acts and what the effects these actions have on the disciplinary diagram:

Actually, we didn't know we were doing the work of three people, we didn't know it then. But I held my own when the bosses started threatening me, because I am very proud, even though inside I was also a bit sorry about what I had started, I was probably more scared than anything, but I didn't give up and I refused to do other work. After that the Ute leader came over and told me: ‘so you can't handle it, you're a little bit weaker than the other ones, we'll see if we can put you in another position’. The other position was a lighter one, so I should have been thankful for that, I should have been thankful for the rest of my life ... But at that point some girls stood up and said: ‘no, it's not just her problem, we have the same problem’. They supported me and so we decided to keep going and we put together this group, because then other things came up, we found out that we were supposed to have punch cards for each position ... we asked for information about this, I kind of became the leader in a certain sense. So I became the one to start doing these things. I started looking for stuff and asking questions, I went to the trade union, I got some information and so ... well, I tried to get information and since that day a real battle started, every day it was really ... the thought of going to work was ... I started getting cramps in my stomach ... there was constant conflict. The Repo, who is responsible for personnel, for a certain time tried to stay out of it, as long as he could, but he knew about what was going on. Then after we organized our first strike in Ute, a really successful strike, the Repo always came for every problem, he tried to fix things up a bit, he gave out little bonuses: a longer break, this and that, until one day he finally separated us. They separated the whole group, they left me by myself, they didn't move me but they moved the others. They sent some to the plate section, they changed shifts for others ... and a whole group of new people came into my Ute, people being trained so they were more easily controllable. As soon as they see a group has formed they separate it, we are separated ... they try to take away our strength to start up again and sometimes they manage to do it. (Fiat worker)

Resistance originates within the intensification of the rhythms in the production's time structure in this case as well. However, resistance also creates immediate solidarity among the other workers when the individual rebels. This type of socialization based on suffering is developed and reinforced through the type of body contact that is part of production: their common body language immediately forces the workers to reflect on context and on the power relations in that particular segment of the diagram.

On a first level, we can see how the pressure to become self-activated and to continually improve one's skills is essentially ineffective. The Ute leader's response to the worker's refusal to do other work immediately interprets the refusal, the subjective and conscious rebellion, as a technical malfunctioning due to individual incapability: 'you can't handle this, I'll move you to another position'. The formation of the group produces a strategic opposition to this solution: 'it's not just her problem, we can't handle it'. The affirmation of 'us' and the power of the collective opposition negates the technical and individual nature of the malfunction and renders this first attempt at team re-composition vain. The intervention of a hierarchical figure that is not part of the team (the Repo, *Responsabile Personale Operativo* – Operative Personnel Manager) represents a last attempt at reproducing the productive harmony of the team, by recognizing the partial legitimacy of the needs that emerged and the partial ineffectiveness of the 'leadership' capacities of the Ute leader. But this attempt at re-composition fails as well: the formation of a group and the production of a collective action is obviously not just a transitory explosion of resistance, but rather unveils a process of awareness acquisition, where the worker becomes the subject of an action aimed at protesting against imposed limitations. This is the first, elementary moment of truth that subjectivity produces in reaction to the power techniques found in team management logic.

A second moment of truth regards the logic behind what in literature is commonly referred to as *peer pressure*. 'Undisciplined' behaviour is stigmatized in the team by the social pressure exercised by one's peers. Peer pressure should create a strict form of informal surveillance that produces horizontal control of individual and group behaviour. In this manner the rules for correct behaviour seem to derive from the group itself as a practice of self-management. However, the *team* can be seen as an elective group only as long as it remains a group. This is only apparently paradoxical. Peer pressure must continuously be encouraged by management, along with the representation of the team as a group. The formation of an elective group within the team is, in itself, a way of denouncing a sham, while it reveals what the disciplinary strategy is behind the team. At the same time, it means that a new subject has been created. In other words, peer pressure represents an analytical process within the disciplinary diagram that precedes all the others and is a symptom of how the diagram works. What is challenged is not so much the partial effectiveness of a particular technique, or the fact that the single mechanical applications of a specific technique no longer work. It is the total effect of the attempt at discipline that is irreparably revealed and compromised. When power fails in this sense, it goes back to being explicitly repressive and punishing: it divides, isolates, separates and breaks the 'grouping' and the horizontal conjunctions, and brings the 'irreducible regions' of subjectivity back to the dimension of the control of the individual.

The subjugating process that is inserted in the weave of power opposing itself to it, gives rise to a fan of practices that do not emerge transforming themselves in open conflict. In the same way they express a potential antagonistic collective that is realised in the unfurling of a force against the imposed constraints. It is the case of the practices of sabotage, that in the context of the Integrated Factory do not manifest a destructive potentiality without further addition, but are reasoned, measured and calibrated to the technical logic of operation flow and to the general logic of discipline:

At times the workers stop the line, this happens most in the areas where the line is stop and go, such as in the paint shop; where you agree that one time I will stop it, one time you, another time another and one stops it a while, just to slow it down, to recover some energy. Above all when the workloads increase. You begin to not be able to do it any more, then things grow from that... It also depends on the shift, people travel and are tired, then as time passes it becomes spontaneous to act in this way. It is also a solidarity thing. They are small things to alleviate the excessive loads.

The practices of new forms of sabotage and the constitution of voluntary groups in the factory constitute examples of a kind of resistance to the government of individualisation. At Melfi, for instance, the practices of sabotage are played out on the horizontal communication and on the joint division of risk: the flow is stopped, the loads are loosened and all this is, as one of the workers said, 'also a thing of solidarity'. Solidarity is the element that also distributes the risk of the practises. The insurgence of voluntary groups within the team is not only a denunciation of the pretence of the team as a group, a revealing of a discipline that erects horizontal separations between individuals, it is also the invention of a new form of sociability that demolishes the walls of horizontal invisibility and is also propagated beyond the experience of the work in the factory.

Sociability and Governmentality

Lean factories, as well as net firms, whose performances are based on information technology, outsourcing and subcontracting, seem to be indissolubly tied with their 'green' character. They do not encumber the urban space itself; they create so little visual impact on the territory that often their presence is removed. At this level, the discontinuity with regard to Fordism is immediately perceivable. There is no longer the urban geography of the city-dormitory, of the city-barracks, in which compact masses and uniform individuals move according to predefined runs, rhythms and times regulated by the time of the factory around which everything swarmed. The new factory designs a different architecture, a different human geography. The compact mass of the Fordist city is replaced by an unstable aggregate of bodies. The spatial separation of the factory from the city determines a kind of 'immaterialisation' of the labour force, here meant in the sense of the social invisibility of the worker's job. For the workers, this means destructuring/restructuring of the daily routines. The work experience, the daily condition of the workers' existence is translated into a condition of continuous subtraction of their bodies from the social context in which they live.

When I come back home, all I want to do is put my feet up. I feel shattered, really depressed. I need to sleep all the day. The changing of shift does sicken me off, especially when I stand down

on Friday. Well, at the moment, I'm on nightshift ... the night shift starts on Monday and finishes on Friday at the eighteen to three in the morning. It often happens that I have to stand up on Saturday from seven o' clock in the morning to twenty-five to one in the afternoon. The overtime is compulsory. We have no choices you know. It is not for us to decide. (Nissan worker)

I don't find free time, because free time is what, for example, if one liked fishing, one day from the morning to the evening one would go fishing, that is a free day...Here you can't speak of free hours,... to see where to put these hours, two hours in the country, once, it's not as if you can go in the country all day long, because it also happens that you must do the shopping, or go to get the children from school, to accompany them, go and collect them from football. Whatever, to go one Sunday to see the football match. Let's say that according to me there really isn't any free time' (Fiat worker)

My social life has changed (...) I say [to myself] you're a vegetable, work and sleep, work and sleep, that's all. (Nissan worker)

At night then, because we have to do two weeks of night shifts ... we become like vampires, when I do the night shift during the winter I never see the sun, because unfortunately I like to sleep, I go to bed at six twenty in the morning, the sun isn't up yet, I get up at four thirty, in the afternoon, and the sun has already set and so I don't even see the sun for two weeks straight. Then the hours of rest during the night, look, I end up just like a vampire, Dracula: I wake up at two in the morning, I walk around the house thinking, 'well, what can I do'. (Fiat worker)

As can be seen, the time/space of work surpasses the borders of the factory, it directly penetrates the time/space of daily existence, reorganizing workers' lives and experience in function of the logic of valorisation and breaking up earlier social rhythms. Work ends up meaning also disappearing, or rather it means inflicting on one's flesh a hard process of cancellation so as to be able to adhere as much as possible to the imposed logic. The vampire allegory is a signal of the growing perception of one's estrangement. It means that one is on the edge, is on the verge of reaching a limit, where personal relationships, existential roots and changes in life conditions are at war with each other. The cancellation of the body from its social fabric is the most disquieting aspect found in this new context.

The fact that it is impossible to decide how to use one's time when not in the factory becomes, in reality, an impossibility to determine one's time in social activities, one's physical and symbolic presence within the context one belongs to. When one feels like a stranger in one's own land, a sort of collapse seems to come about: language crumbles, roots break, identities reveal their fictitious nature. The following story shows how forceful the sensations of invisibility and renunciation really are:

Somebody asks me: 'do you still live here'? At the beginning I am surprised and then I answer: 'perhaps, yes!' Because, rightly, they don't see you, you don't have the material time. At the end it's you who gives up, you too give up... You often realize that the others cannot understand, to not make it seem that you are always looking for an excuse, in the end you give up. You feel like an obstacle. Maybe one evening that they want to do something, some activities, then you put yourself aside, because you understand that it is not worth it, otherwise the others should conform to you. When the family is involved, then it is not a problem, but when... (Fiat worker)

We could say that the more the factory withdraws from the social space the more the workers' daily social relationships 'dematerialise', in the sense of the subtraction of the bodies from their affective and relational nets of reference, and in the sense of the absence of a place in which those bodies could recognize themselves and interact. From

the moment the existence and the reproduction of the knowledge and the cognitive relational abilities of individuals is inseparable from being part of a net of social relationships, the post-Fordist exploitation imposes its logic not only on the way of work, but also on the way of life, on the horizon of existence of the bodies and of knowledge. It also calls for intervention in the environment to deal with the contrasting needs of social relations between those in the factory and those outside it:

... they [friends and acquaintances] hear 'Fiat', they think that you don't work, but instead here you work, here you really work. (Fiat worker)

That is, my uncle, when he sees us, me and my girlfriend, 'ah, double wages, eh, how wonderful' ... but then he never sees me when on Sunday he goes out with his wife and I take the bus like an idiot with my overalls at eight o'clock in the evening, he never sees me. (Fiat worker)

The sense of membership is founded upon more uncertain bases: the more the social fabric of reference becomes evanescent, so much more 'common sense' tends to function as reassurance, setting itself as an ideological base to fill and cure the lacerations caused by the withdrawal. It is beginning from this condition of material and existential uncertainty that it is possible to understand the specificity of the new power-knowledge diagram. This intervenes, with its physical-political techniques, to 'manufacture cellular individuality' and neo-identity attitudes according to a new combining logic. In other words, it produces a material and symbolic 'place' that, acting as a point of identity recognition and a space for communicative action, tries to impose new normative codes of behaviour: thus, the team is set in the form of group, the factory in the form of community, the living context in the form of the local community and so on to ethnic make-up, to the nation, to the West.

This structuring of time and social space constitutes the other emergence front of the workers' resistance. Recovering or creating spaces of autonomy in their own daily life implicates negating the content of those discourses and reaffirming ones own social being: another time and another space to build ones own sociability.

We are a group of friends. We met by accident, one year ago. At that time, we were working together at the same station. Now, we often see each other, we like to spend our days off together. If one of us has problem with money, the others help him, you know. I'm very happy to feel that... that they take care of me. We are very good friends. (Nissan worker)

I had a good friend that I shared a lift with. He still is a very good friend. He was married with four kids like and he went to the tribunal for me – he put his neck out really because if you step out of line at Nissan your cards are marked... yes there were a lot of good lads. I did not know him before I went to Nissan like. (Nissan worker)

Oh yeah, we always help each other. How? For example, when I have my day off I go to the office for him or I go to take his child to school, if his wife is busy. Sometimes, our wives do shopping together. While we are working, they, me wife and his wife, organize the outings. (Nissan worker)

The constitution of voluntary groups and the practise of absenteeism, starting from an individual need of symbolic and material re-appropriation of one's own social time, concretely structured in the terms of a 'releasing' of individuals from the destinies of the enterprise and of the constitution of a new relation to oneself and to others, founded on solidarity and co-operation rather than on functional synergy. These practices have

effects on two different levels: on the outside, in the living context, they re-group the affective and relational bonds and defend a vital dimension and a singular biography, separate from that of the company. On the inside, in the factory, they affirm the right to difference and the separation from a relational context – that of the team – that is perceived as temporary. In the living context, they intervene by de-structuring the common sense that tends to identify a complex multiplicity of people in a homogeneous population (the firm workers, the local community), and doing so vindicates the right to singularity and to difference.

The practices of absenteeism are the recovery of a sociability from which one is materially and violently subtracted. Because of the widespread manner in which absenteeism imposes itself, it forces a reorganization of times and of tasks, this time on the base of the subjective needs of the workers:

In these situations Fiat fails to organize the changes and has to have general breaks., that is has to suffer a loss of production, stop the line for twenty minutes and miss production during that time; formally the break remains within the run of things, but Fiat does not have the personnel to replace. What happened next? At this stage Fiat did this, but that was not enough, they still failed to... because anyway in June absenteeism will increase.. they failed with the persons they took away and said they needed for the changes, to do without general breaks. They had to have general breaks just the same. (Trade Union Representative from SATA)

Identity and Memory

One of the mechanisms of discursive power for producing identity is the production of a space-time discontinuity that opposes the past of struggles and conflicts to a present of participation: the 'brownfield' as a space of industrial conflict to the 'greenfield' as a space of workers' participation and commitment. The greenfield is often metaphorically associated with a '*tabula rasa*', social space free from every form of industrial regulations (routines, habits, traditions) and fundamentally defined by a 'green' work force, which attributes a strategic importance to these sites: in the setting of plants embodying the new production paradigm, it is assumed that the company has no restrictions of previous work routines nor, consequently, of consolidated culture of conflict. All these elements have constituted an integral and fundamental part of the company's formation, producing a discourse that represents the memory of the young 'lean' workers as a fertile field for the production of sense, a malleable and mouldable space, because it is deprived of the coating of the past. The space-time discontinuity of power operates on memory.

I will look at the effects of this process through the account of a female Fiat worker (all quotes in this section are from her, unless otherwise stated). The pieces of the interview that follow are the main points of a story that we have attempted to deconstruct:

They [personnel trainers] were always emphasizing that we were a team and that we should do everything possible for the company because, as they said, we ourselves were the company ... If we had done everything possible for the company, the company would repay us for it ... technical training, however, was inexistent. They tried to plagiarize us, they tried to get people to think like ... to think like them [...]. All the talk about the team in the beginning really affected me, before I realized what it was really all about. In the beginning, yes, it affected me, because this job seemed

like the dream of a lifetime come true, for me and for a lot of people, because in any case there were no alternatives. So we were really enthusiastic, we were full of energy, full of...

This account is obviously the re-elaboration of the recent past and thus the experience clearly comes forth in expressions such as 'before I understood what was really happening'. The practical experience of production, the real life of factory work reveals a present that is very different than the one that was hoped for and promised:

No one in the factory believes anymore that the work they do can somehow elevate them. Outside the factory the Sata workers are considered to be privileged only because they get a steady paycheck, just because they have no matter what a paycheck they can count on, with the high level of unemployment there is they're seen as being privileged. In the beginning we would even go around with our uniform, now no one does that anymore. Maybe because in the beginning we were proud to be a part of the company, with all that brain washing they did to us in the beginning! But then slowly but surely this stopped happening.

This account forcefully underlines how training efforts disintegrate when its symbols are abandoned: 'in the beginning we would even go around with our uniform, now no one does that anymore. Maybe because in the beginning we were proud to be a part of the company...' That 'feeling part of the company' ends up becoming 'brain washing'. The fracture and discontinuity between past and present is recomposed when this discovery is made:

Here we never really had the mentality of the factory, we never really knew ... I don't know, but I imagined that it was more ... I thought the people were stronger, more united. I had an idea of workers that I had seen on the television, of the strikes ... I had an idea more ... when I started working here and I did my training I saw it was all different ..., but then on the job I immediately realized that that training was false!

This is where memory returns and invests the subjectivation process. The recovery of memory, carried out over a period of time, produces another space and another way of thinking, while it opens up the perception of what is otherwise possible. It's only a brief opening because it closes up again, but it offers the possibility that others will open up after it. In this sense subjectivity manifests as a right to being different, to variation and to metamorphosis, that forces power to make its attack on other fronts:

Sometimes I feel as though I am about to fall apart too. You finally get to the point where you say to yourself: 'maybe I am the only one? Maybe it's me that just isn't right?' and is there really a wish to change things in the others? Do the others feel like making their lives complicated? I mean ... [she gets a reflective expression as though she were talking to herself, lowering her voice] Yeah, it's hard for me to do this, it makes me tense ... I have children, a family ... sometimes I think I'm making a mistake ... but I want to change things ... if I think of going to work just for the work itself I couldn't do it ... you think that sooner or later things in there could change, that you could build something ... if I'm really honest, I don't feel like totally giving up, I don't feel completely defeated. If I got to that point...no, no, I already told you, I could never go on like that. If I had completely given up I wouldn't go to work anymore, I wouldn't be able to do it.

The analysis of this personal process simply brings to light the sort of inherent difficulties that are part of every subjectivation process. It is a process that is never only individual or only collective, even though it is an inner process, so much so that Foucault defined it as a self relationship or as a moment in which the self is formed. At the same time, long term memory is never based on solely personal data: it does not begin and end within the subject's private time frame. Long term memory goes beyond

personal memory, by creating connections with history and with others. Long term memory brings one face to face with oblivion; it brings past and present together where they are compared on the basis of one's personal experience:

I'm convinced that the working class that in the 1970s made the trade union strong doesn't exist anymore, what I mean is that the whole attitude has changed, now workers in the factory don't see the union like something you should belong to and that could help us grow, they always think of it as something abstract, that everyone just minds their own business and so they have to just get something out of the union... what I mean is ... they just use it to get something out of it. (Fiat worker)

Management's discourse regarding the union and participation has produced obvious effects: it has given the union itself an identity that is useful for its own purposes. But at the same time it has given it an empty form that is indistinct and cannot be distinguished from the other types of firm government:

The union, especially here, is being run by the company... the union bend the rules to suit the company, not the workers ... I mean they're in their pockets'. (Nissan worker)

Our union is very progressive... and understands what is required... [he smiles] the Union agenda is the same as the company agenda. (Nissan worker)

The destructuralization of the union shows its effects only with regards to disciplinary actions and not on the process of subjectivity formation. If we consider the union a stratified structure of strategic knowledge that is thus known and understood by power, its present crisis (in terms of representation and adherence) means that in some ways there are new gaps opening up. These gaps themselves point out a growing metamorphosis that power is currently incapable of controlling.

Conclusions

In the first part of this paper I examined the contribution of post-structuralism to the 'labour process debate', in order to elaborate suitable conceptual tools for the conceptualization of the processes of subjectivation in the disciplinary diagram of the post-Fordist factory. The problem is that the critical thought handed down from Fordism set us in front of a conceptual picture that separated the operational plan of power and that of resistance by opposing them. This separation is due, on one part, to an original misunderstanding of the way in which Marx has conceptualized the relationship between capital and waged labour; on the other part, to an interpretation of the concept of subjectivity in Foucault that tends to reduce the perspective of analysis.

The first limitation emerges from the difficulties that Marxists and critical materialists, who maintain the continuity with the past, encounter when interpreting the dynamics of class struggle in a new social and productive order of globalisation. The dichotomy of factory and society makes it difficult to differentiate the specific level of immediate production from the general one of production as an organic unit of partial moments, while economic and salary issues tend to integrally absorb the political aspects of resistance. As Foucault suggests, "if we concentrate on the techniques of power and show the economic profit or political utility that can be derived from them, in a certain

context and for certain reasons, then we can understand how these mechanisms actually and eventually became part of the whole” (2004: 33).

The second limitation can be found in how Foucault’s concept of subjectivity has been interpreted within the Labour Process Debate. On one hand, Marxists do not realize that the issue of the subject represents the basic problem outlined in Foucault’s theoretical-political research, rather than a rigid formulation of a conceptual category that can be used to create an historical teleology. For Foucault, the subject is not a pre-determined given. Rather, it grows and is transformed throughout history, within the immanent reality of power relations. For this reason, subjectivity is a continually problematic and open issue that is never completely defined. On the other hand, post-structuralists, who instead see post-Fordism as an absolute innovation, lose sight of the fact that what determines normalization processes in contemporary capitalism is still the reproduction of the workforce, or rather that the production of subjectivity remains the central theme.

The conjugation of Marx and Foucault, I argued, allows the production of a new conceptual space in which to analyse the political dimension of subjectivity, assuming that this is an antagonistic experimentation of the social forces. This means bringing back the bio-political field of power to the material ontology of production and getting out of a fragmented vision of society in which power relationships and resistances are lost in daily micro-relationships.

The Foucauldian conceptual tools allow us to interpret the Marxian concept of real subsumption as a process that invests not only the economic or cultural dimension of society but tends to unfold itself in biological, bodily and subjective terms. This in a phase in which the development of capital has modified its own categories of operation according to a scheme and according to ‘social’ dimensions. In the measure in which the power tends to unify and englobe in itself all the elements of social life, despite itself, reveals new ambits of constitution of plurality and singularity.

Based on my reading of workers’ resistances, both as antagonistic practices and as reflections over the common sense of their everyday existence, I tried to look at the specificity of power relations in two factories through three intermingling levels of analysis, which can also be considered as different moments of the processes of production of subjectivity: the irreducibility of bodies to the anatomic-political devices; the affirmation of singularity against the social identity discursively produced; and, finally, the constitution of new forms of sociability against the mechanisms of governmentality that operates inside and outside the factory.

From my field research it emerged that the processes of subjectivation of workers presents an univocal tendency given by the fact that resistance induces people to re-elaborate the sense of their existence. In this reflexive practice every singularity forges a different meaning for his/her relation with others, with the world and with history, modifying him/herself. The processes of subjectivation, playing on the long-term memory, produce another space, a way of thinking differently, that opens the field of the possible to perception. I will try, in conclusion, to individualise the effects of the truth that resistance causes in the weave of power relations through three images: irreducibility of the body, horizontal conjunctions and memory.

The stories of the workers have represented a picture in which resistance originated and develops starting from the body, from the rising up of its needs and desires. The body is disobedient to the technology of individualisation. The body is other than the 'subject', the consciousness, domesticated, filtered, selected and settled memory. The body in its unrepeatable singularity lives before it is lived, it feels before it is felt. Due to the irreducibility that it expresses in respect to every acquaintance and abstraction, the body can not be the result, but it is the necessary matrix of any practice of conscience.

The language of the body is also the language of life, the place of all possible affections, it is social language. The body, in its symbolic dimension, despite the cancellations and the separation functional to the production of serial identities, is linked, without solutions of continuity to other bodies, implicated and involved in the whole life of humanity. Both in the experience of the separation, the cancellation from the social life, and in that of the organic interconnection to other bodies in the production process, the living body manifests its irreducibility and vindicates its singularity. It is possible that this singularity remains isolated, 'without affection', dumb, and that 'the fold' opened by resistance closes again without leaving trace. Resistance is produced as an 'event', as break of the evidence of the social practices and as support of possible strategies. It is an event if it forces the matrix of the control device to work endlessly; if it imposes new forms of recovery on it that, each time, present themselves as extraneous to it, as a break, as constituent difference. In this sense, resistance is not simply limited to the experience of the power but induces those processes of reflection that put the effects of truth of power in doubt.

Evoking its bond with other bodies, the body vindicates a bond with the past that evades the preset space-time coordinates. The process of subjectivation, operating through time, produces another space, an otherwise thinking, that opens the field of the possible to perception. It is here that the self, evoking its constitutive bond with the body, evokes a bond with the past that evades the serial position that makes the bodies interchangeable and reciprocally replaceable, and that allows the identification of each individual on the base of the series that it occupies and of the discard that separates it from the other. It is here that memory returns and that it invests the subjectivation process. The recovery of the memory, played on the long-term duration, discloses the irreducible difference between the processes of subjectivation and the subjection that the power-knowledge produces. "Memory is the real name of the relation to oneself", says Deleuze (1988: 107). Memory is the affect on self by self and makes up the essential structure of subjectivity: "Time as subject, or rather subjectivation, is called memory. Not that brief memory that comes afterwards and is the opposite of forgetting, but the 'absolute memory', which doubles the present and the outside and is one with forgetting, since it is itself endlessly forgotten and reconstituted" (Deleuze, 1988: 107).

The process of subjectivation is never either only individual or only collective, although it is the principle of internal regulation, so much so as to be defined by Foucault as relation to oneself or as constitutive moment of the self. Equally, the long-term memory is never a register memory: it does not start and finish in the private time of the subject. It surpasses it, reconstituting in space the bonds with history and with the other alone. The long-term memory game reconstitutes the comparison with forgetfulness, compares a past and a present and compares them on the base of one's own experience. The

processes of subjectivation, operating through time, produce another space, an otherwise thinking, that opens to perception the field of the possible. It is a fold because it re-closes, but gives the possibility for other folds to open. And here then it is that the subjectivity is revealed as the right to difference, to variation and to metamorphosis. When these reflexive practices impose themselves as shared sense, the processes of subjectivation become the expression of a common becoming.

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