

## ***A Symptomatology of Civilization: on Order and Suggestion***

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### **Abstract**

“À quoi sert la littérature?”. Deleuze opens his book on Leopold von Sacher-Masoch with a question that this paper will pose again, trying to propose an answer to it, and to put to test the methodological approach that can be obtained from that answer: what are the uses of literature and, more specifically, how could the philosopher use literature, what could be done with it? To this end, this paper will focus on Deleuze’s *symptomatology* conception of literature.

The second part of the paper will be dedicated to the reading of two novels, *1984* by George Orwell and *The Circle* by Dave Eggers. The novels will be put in a relation of resonance with two concepts sketched in Deleuze’s *Post-scriptum sur les sociétés de contrôle*: Foucauldian disciplinary societies and control societies. These novels will be considered as signaletic material, symptomatology of two conditions of society, from which this paper proposes to extract two types of signs: Signs of Order and Signs of Suggestion. These signs will be made react with the concepts of Foucault and Deleuze, in order to see if they can produce the ground for a therapeutic. The paper will therefore combine literary symptomatology and philosophical aetiology, in the attempt to make them react together, Foucault and Orwell, Eggers and Deleuze, to extract and describe signs from the literary material considered that may be brought to the fore only after the consideration of the causes of the most important symptoms of discipline and control.

### ***Symptomatology of worlds***

The fundamental idea behind every interdisciplinary experiment ran by Deleuze rests on a distinctive conception of philosophy. In a famous conference of 1987, giving a lecture on the relation between philosophy and cinema, the philosopher claimed in fact that «La philosophie n’est pas faite pour réfléchir sur n’importe quoi... L’idée que les mathématiciens auraient besoin de la philosophie pour réfléchir sur les mathématiques est une idée comique» (Deleuze 2003a: 291).

This conception informs Deleuze’s approach to literature as well. Indeed, as it is evident in numerous points of his production<sup>1</sup>, Deleuze’s interest is never simply related

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<sup>1</sup> Deleuze’s work contains an incredible number of references to literary works and writers: *Mille Plateaux* (Deleuze & Guattari 1980), for example, ranks references to more than 75 authors (Bogue 2003: 1). His lifelong engagement with literature produced also a number of works specifically dedicated to a number of authors, as *Proust et les Signes* (Deleuze 2003c), *Kafka. Pour une Littérature Mineure* (Deleuze & Guattari 1975), the work on Masoch (Deleuze 1967), *Logique du Sens* (1969), in which Lewis Carroll is

to the analysis of plots and subjects, of the style or the biographies of the authors addressed, and his method is not centred on the designation of the meaning of novels or of the elements of literature, nor aims at defining what literature is.

To understand his approach, one has to ask what literature does and what can be done with it, reiterating the fundamental question of *L'anti-Oedipe*: «une machine étant donnée, à quoi peut-elle servir?», and more specifically, «À quoi sert la littérature?» (Deleuze & Guattari 1972: 8; Deleuze 1967: 13). This kind of approach fosters the production of new concepts, and the condition of possibility of this production resides in the problematic field in which different disciplines meet: «La rencontre de deux disciplines ne se fait pas lorsque l'une se met à réfléchir sur l'autre, mais lorsque l'une s'aperçoit qu'elle doit résoudre pour son compte et avec ses moyens propres un problème semblable à celui qui se pose aussi dans une autre» (Deleuze 2003: 265).

*Présentation de Sacher-Masoch* (1967), is probably the most helpful example to understand how literature poses problems: this in fact, is a book on a “sick” author, whose name ended up designating a clinical disorder. The fact that Masoch’s oeuvre designates a condition is, for Deleuze, the main point of interest in his work, and in literature in general. This condition, in fact, doesn’t have to be considered as private: Masoch’s work is important not because of its autobiographical character, but because it is powerful enough to depict a non-personal condition, the state of something in which the subject finds himself or is trapped.

Deleuze’s perspective on this matter has been clearly exposed in – and through – *Mille Plateaux*, about which, together with Felix Guattari, the philosopher says that «Un livre n’a pas d’objet ni de sujet, il est fait de matières diversement formées, de dates et de vitesses très différentes. Dès qu’on attribue le livre à un sujet, on néglige ce travail des matières et l’exteriorité de leurs relations» (Deleuze and Guattari 1980: 9). In this sense, Masoch’s condition has to be considered valuable as non-personal, because it defines the state of something in relation to the circumstances in which it is found. Crucially, Deleuze highlights that «Souvent, ce sont les médecins qui donnent leur nom [aux maladies]» (Deleuze 1967: 13), instead of the patients, and through the detection and categorisation of symptoms.

The book on Masoch designates a condition, and depicts it through signs specific to literature. Through these signs it establishes a typology, and achieves a non-personal perspective. It is in this sense, that literature can be said to be symptomatological. As Bogue rightly puts it then, for Deleuze «The writer is a Nietzschean physician of culture... a symptomatologist who reads culture’s signs of sickness» (Bogue 2003: 2).

An author is a clinician, and a novel is symptomatological because literature designates a relation of forces in which the author or his characters are caught. Literature

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one of the major literary figures treated, and in the collection *Critique et Clinique* (1993), which is devoted to the art of writing in general, its effects on language, and the relation between literature and life.

captures arrangements of forces, designates their state and, in doing so, it depicts conditions. Each work acts as a «symptomatologie des mondes» (Deleuze 2003b: 195), of past, presents and future conditions, or configurations of forces, around which writers «create a double of the world... [through which they] diagnose civilization's illnesses by clarifying and emphasizing their structures» (Bogue 2003: 21). This is what literature *does* for Deleuze.

To understand instead *what can be done* with literature, one has to consider that the configuration of these complexes of forces is determined by specific machines, be them geographical, social or technological. As Deleuze and Guattari suggest in the first pages of *Mille Plateaux*, in fact, «la seule question quand on écrit, c'est de savoir avec quelle autre machine la machine littéraire peut être branchée, et doit être branchée pour fonctionner. Kleist et une folle machine de guerre, Kafka et une machine bureaucratique inouïe... La littérature est un agencement» (Deleuze & Guattari 1980: 10).

By extracting signs of conditions then, the symptomatological approach is also able to expose these machines, revealing the «rapports de domination dans lesquels [elles] s'insèrent, qu'[elles] servent et contribuent souvent à renforcer» (Sauvagnargues 2005: 55). Clearly, this implies the idea that art always offers socio-political perspectives, exposing mechanisms of domination and potentially offering glimpses on the ways in which these relations can be modified. Medicine, in fact, aims to cure, to solve a condition, to unplug nefarious machines and plug in positive ones. For this reason, one can distinguish «trois actes médicaux très différents: la symptomatologie ou étude des signes; l'étiologie ou recherche des causes; la thérapeutique ou recherche et application d'un traitement» (Deleuze 2002: 183).

With this paper, we would like to propose a symptomatological experiment, plugging together two literary works, *1984* by George Orwell (2008) and *The Circle* by Dave Eggers (2014), and two concepts sketched in Deleuze's *Post-scriptum sur les sociétés de contrôle*, Foucauldian disciplinary societies and control societies. The two literary symptomatologies and the two philosophical theories will then be read together, in order to see what these two novels can say that can be said only through Deleuze and Foucault, and what Deleuze and Foucault do not say, that can be said only through the assemblage of their theories with these two novels and the signs that they produce. Attempting a new «thinking-alongside literary work[s], an engagement of philosophical issues generated from and developed through encounters with literary texts» (Bogue 2003: 1), we will try to check if this reaction between philosophy and literature can produce the ground for a therapeutic, for a positive solution of the conditions depicted.

### **Signs of Order: surveillance by design**

The next pages will combine literary symptomatology and philosophical aetiology, in

the attempt to make react together Foucault and Orwell, and the goal of this section is to extract the signs proper to the literary material considered. To begin, we will ask which are Orwell's most original contributions as a symptomatologist, and try to find the ground on which *1984* and Foucault's ideas can be put into a productive communication.

*Surveiller et Punir* and Orwell's novel address the same problem: both consider how power employs surveillance and coercion, and both reflect on the relation between sight, space and power. The starting point to read both works together, and to see what Foucault can say through *1984* and what Orwell can say through *Surveiller et Punir*, is represented by the notion of Panopticon.

The inventive house of correction designed by Jeremy Bentham in 1791 employs a spatial configuration to allow the potentially uninterrupted surveillance of a great number of inmates, while keeping the latter from circulating freely. These three variables, proportion, distribution and circulation, will be the elements of the three spatial paradigms that we will identify in this paper. In the case of Bentham, the spatial paradigm of the Panopticon declines the three variables as follows: the proportion observers-observed is one to many, their distribution is "opposite" or "in front of" each other, and the circulation of both is extremely limited. This architecture is designed on the basis of the idea that «believing in being watched is enough to reform behaviour» (Strub 1989: 40), and should have succeeded in making many inmates believe to be watched by possibly only one guard, sitting in a "all-seeing" tower opposite to the cells, out of which the inmates have a very short margin of circulation.

The London of *1984* has been already defined as a sort of panopticon *en plein air* (Lea 1984: 88) and, since no panopticon has ever been realised, Orwell can be said to have actually created the "double of the world" that describes the condition of panoptical surveillance. Obviously the two models diverge in numerous points, but the structure of panoptical surveillance and of *1984*'s London are modelled on the same feedback loop. This loop comprises three elements: the observer, information, and the observed. Here, the sense in which information has to be intended is double, and does not point only at the result of observation: it is "in-forming" just as much as being informed.

From Deleuze's perspective,

une information est un ensemble de mots d'ordre. Quand on vous informe, on vous dit ce que vous êtes censé devoir croire. En d'autres termes, informer, c'est faire circuler un mot d'ordre. Les déclarations de police sont appelées à juste titre des communiqués. On nous communique de l'information, on nous dit ce que nous sommes censés être en état ou devoir ou être tenus de croire. Même pas de croire mais de faire comme si l'on croyait. (Deleuze 2003a: 298-299)

The idea that the feedback loop of panopticism is constituted also by order-words is fundamental for both Orwell and Foucault: the efficiency sought by disciplinary societies is in fact generated through the circulation of these *mots d'ordre*, that impose a spatial

and temporal order on society. In *1984*, this order is imposed through the dissemination of party's communiqués that work as moulds, and through the manipulation of the means that individuals possess to order events autonomously: memory and its supports. As described in Deleuze's *Post-scriptum*, in fact, «Les enforcements sont des moules, des moulages distincts» (Deleuze 2003a: 242), and moulding is the general process that Deleuze uses to describe the activities of disciplinary societies, in which power is «massifiant et individuant» (Deleuze 2003c: 243). In Foucault, this process equals the imposition of a program on the body, to the codification of its movements as a form of *surdétermination*.

In a panoptical system of surveillance the observer captures information from the observed while at the same time in-forming him, distributing order-words to mould his behaviour in the case of Orwell, or imposing a spatial form of coercion in the case of Bentham, and partially in that of Foucault. It is on the basis of this idea, that we can say that the signs that Orwell's novel displays are Signs of Order. These signs can be distinguished in three types: spatial, temporal and linguistic. We will briefly identify these signs and show how *1984* groups them to constitute a symptomatology of discipline, the aetiology of which have been pointed out by Foucault, and on which we will focus later.

The inscription «Big Brother is watching you» (Orwell 2008: 3), the most famous sign of order of *1984*, can be found under every poster of Big Brother's face, imposing the awareness of being constantly under surveillance. The protagonist of the novel knows that it is an impossible thing to realise, but he acts in any case as if he could be constantly observed: as Deleuze suggested, in fact, one has to act at least as if he believes, when put in front of an order-word.

The dichotomy between believing and acting as if one believes has to be connected to the attention that, according to Foucault, discipline reserves for the body, focusing on the “moving surfaces” of individuals as the key to their administration. The perfect example of this is an unwilling manifestation of dissent portrayed by Orwell:

There I was, working away, trying to do my bit—never knew I had any bad stuff in my mind at all. And then I started talking in my sleep. Do you know what they heard me saying? ... “Down with Big Brother!” Yes, I said that! Said it over and over again, it seems ... I'm glad they got me before it went any further. (Orwell 2008: 245)

The disciplinary machine of *1984* is not concerned with true beliefs: it is enough for it if individuals act as if they believe, as the perfect functioning bearings in a complex mechanism.

The general model proposed by panopticism then is that the inmates don't know if they are actually constantly surveilled, but have to act as if the eyes of the warden are always pointed on them. On this note, the analysis of Strub adds a significant dimension to the sign of order employed by Orwell, and explains why the model of panopticism is effective:

Despite the extensive surveillance and police resources of the State, arrests appeared to occur capriciously, with an unpredictable delay following real or imagined transgressions, thereby generating some uncertainty about the completeness of surveillance at any specific instant. (Strub 1989: 44)

The reason why panopticism if effective is therefore the fear of the punishment and «the induced paranoia of not knowing when one is being watched» (Tyner 2004: 137). This paranoia is, literally, a condition of disciplinary societies. Its symptoms, portrayed by Orwell through the description of the signs of order diffused by the Big Brother, succeed in transforming the writer in a cultural physician, which «diagnoses the diabolical powers of the future» or «the forces and attitudes that shape the world» (Bogue 2003: 5; 2). One of these forces passes through an intervention on language, to assess which Orwell assembles a certain number of signs of literal order.

The famous refrain on which the Big Brother bases its doctrine, «War is peace; Freedom is Slavery; Ignorance is Strength» (Orwell 2008: 6) represents precisely the kind of communication that we have seen described by Deleuze. These sentences act as *mots d'ordre*, because they reconfigure the order of language through equivalences and substitutions, meant to narrow the vocabulary and therefore individuals' thoughts. This technique, that has been given the name of *Newspeak* produces an inevitable thought-numbing effect: «Every year fewer and fewer words, and the range of consciousness always a little smaller» (55).

Big Brother's *mots d'ordre* act then as moulds, imposing a new structure on thought because of this possibility, vocabularies reveal themselves as environments that can get more and more narrow, just like the cell of a prison, the smallest cells being always the ones of solitary confinement, in which the circulation of ideas are made impossible. The Big Brother is not interested in creating new words, but in destroying the old ones, in narrowing cells and preventing the spread of rumours, social coagulations and the autonomous organisation of individuals. In Orwell's account, this practice allows disciplinary societies to impose a new thought order, and to maintain it through homologation and impoverishment.

Despite the mental and behavioural homologation promoted by the Big Brother however, the disciplinary order of 1984 is differential: the system needs adversaries, enemies, targets, even if the enemy of the state changes constantly, and the re-writing of the records makes it impossible for the population to remember that they have been at war with a different country in the past (36). The disciplinary power of 1984 is grounded then on the binary logic of interior/exterior, accepted/ unaccepted, old/new, workers/members of the party, and so on: another technique aimed at imposing an order.

The whole logic of Big Brother is differential: it operates through curfews, parties, barricades, ministries and social classes, each constituting a different sign of order. London, for example, is divided in three main areas: the different ministries, workplaces

and “private” accommodations, all functional and defined by order-words shaped on the Newspeak, as for

The Ministry of Truth, which concerned itself with news, entertainment, education, and the fine arts. The Ministry of Peace, which concerned itself with war. The Ministry of Love, which maintained law and order. And the Ministry of Plenty, which was responsible for economic affairs. (6)

The differential logic adopted by these mechanisms of power serves also as a “relief valve” for the accumulation of stress in the population, that comes to be directed towards the enemy of the state, the traitor Goldstein (15), in programmed public events. As this kind of public events take place periodically, audio and video messages of propaganda are broadcasted multiple times per day. *1984*'s London, in fact, is described also by signs of temporal order. History, for example, is constantly re-written by the party, and the protagonist of the novel works in one of the offices in which old newspapers are meticulously rephrased, erasing and changing history. In this way, the discipline imposed by the Big Brother lays down a new temporal order: «He tried to remember in what year he had first heard mention of Big Brother... His exploits had been gradually pushed backwards in time... Winston could not even remember at what date the Party itself had come into existence» (38).

The use of timetables is one of the elements that Foucault pinpointed as a way to administer the body and its movements; in this case the temporal order is imposed not only on the present, to program the future, but also on the past, to prevent individuals to recall facts and ground on them critiques on the conduct of the party. Individuals' memory is therefore manipulated by acting on its external supports like records and newspapers: «He, Winston Smith, knew that Oceania had been in alliance with Eurasia as short a time as four years ago. But where did that knowledge exists? Only in his own consciousness, which in any case must soon be annihilated... Everything melted into mist... you could prove nothing» (37-39). Considering these signs of temporal order, it is interesting to notice that Winston starts his rebellion by writing a diary, that represents a way to disrupt the order imposed by discipline on the past despite the fear of the punishment.

Directly related to the temporal order and to the mutability of the past, is then the punishment for unorthodoxy, or *thoughtcrime*: if one is suspected to be guilty, he simply disappears. This happens in uncountable authoritarian regimes, but in *1984*, if one disappears, the order is rearranged around him: he disappears from records, memories and history, erased like a line from a diary: «Everything faded into mist. The past was erased, the erasure was forgotten, the lie became truth... Syme had vanished... Syme had ceased to exist: he had never existed» (78-154).

The vast majority of these signs are diffused through a significantly important technical object: the telescreen. This receiver-emitter machine is at same time a big

screen, a camera, a speaker and a microphone that can be found everywhere in the London of 1984. It captures every movement and sound and emits orders and propaganda.

It is interesting to note how, as highlighted by Strub (1989: 41), also the architecture envisaged by Bentham was originally thought to be equipped by rudimentary audio devices. This idea, abandoned because the tube would have allowed also the inmate to eavesdrop on the wardens, has been improved by Orwell, who envisaged a machine built with the technology available at his time. This element is essential, because the telescreen itself is enough to change the spatial paradigm of Bentham and Foucault into another, all Orwellian, and more modern. The telescreen (and so the network of spies of the Big Brother) allows in fact a different mode of circulation: if in Bentham's architecture the degree of circulation of individuals was approaching the zero, and the attention of Foucault is focused on the circulation taking place *among* the *lieux d'enfermement*, in the case of Orwell, the citizens-inmates are relatively "free" to go whenever they want. This new mode of circulation is made available by the distribution of all these little panoptical towers, the telescreens, that change the collocation of the subjects from "in front of" the warden to "between" the screens.

Orwell shows how discipline can exit the walls of schools, factories and prisons through the techniques of surveillance, and how technology starts to colonise free time and the private, starting to change moulding into modulation. This couple of concepts are central in Deleuze's *Post-scriptum sur les sociétés de contrôle*, that is already starting to be enriched by the confrontation with literature.

Panopticism works according to a feedback loop supported by a spatial configuration, and disciplinary societies will display different signs of order, according to the type of technology employed for surveillance. These signs can be spatial, temporal, and linguistic. The spatial paradigms of surveillance are various, and so far we have identified two: in the first one, Benthamian, the proportion between the observers and the observed is "one-many", their distribution is "opposite" or "in front of" each other, and their circulation is minimal; in the second paradigm, Orwellian, the proportion is "many-one", because to follow the movements of a citizen many cameras and spies have to be employed, causing the distribution of the observed to be of the type "in the middle" or "between" the watchers, and allowing a higher degree of relative freedom of circulation.

Foucault's account of disciplinary societies falls in the middle, and a rapid scan of the ideas of *Surveiller et Punir*, now that we've been through Orwell's ones, will disclose more interesting elements.

## **Aetiology of discipline**

Disciplinary societies are grounded on the constitution and management of sites of

confinement, whose goal is to administer life. These are spatial structures that impose different sets of rules and perform a segmentation of space and time. The circulation of individuals among these spaces is related to a temporal variable, so that the mechanism of discipline works through three main actions, «concentrer: répartir dans l'espace; ordonner dans le temps» (Deleuze 2003a: 240). Classic examples of the closed environments in which disciplinary societies are articulated are families, schools, barracks and factories: «Tout cela, ce sont des formes locales, régionales de pouvoir, qui ont leur propre mode de fonctionnement, leur procédure et leur technique» (Foucault 1994: 186-187). Under specific conditions, individuals can be confined also in hospitals and prisons. As we have seen, the latter is the most iconic structure, the *milieu d'enfermement par excellence*. Reducing the condition of individuals in disciplinary societies to the conditions of the inmates, however, and conceiving the prison as the milieu of prohibition, would in fact equal to reduce Foucault's idea of power to the "ethological" perspective that he criticized.

This critique is clearly exposed by Foucault in the essay *Les mailles du pouvoir* (Foucault 1994: 182-201), and based on the fact that the notion of power is usually considered in the form of the juridical prohibition "you must not". According to this conception, «le pouvoir est essentiellement la règle, la loi, la prohibition, ce qui marque la limite entre ce qui est permis et ce qui est interdit» (183). This negative notion derives from the imposition of monarchic power on feudal structures in the middle ages, performed by imposing laws to oppose «les institutions, les mœurs, les règlements, les formes de lien et d'appartenance caractéristiques de la société féodale» (185), and is also adopted by ethnologists, that analyse different societies in order to reduce their structures to systems of norms.

The same criticism can in a certain sense be moved also to Orwell: *1984* can be read as a long list of proscriptions. Linguistic regulations, curfews and the prohibition of unorthodox behaviours define in fact the life of the citizen of London, constantly menaced by the detection of *facecrimes* or *thoughtcrimes*. The way in which these prohibitions are managed contributes to Orwell's warning about the horrors of totalitarian regimes and to the definition of how discipline establishes regimes of visibility. As rightly highlighted by Tyner, in fact, besides of the fact of being watched or not, of the exact moment of the punishment and of the fate of who "disappears", in *1984*'s world

existed an even greater uncertainty as to what constituted inappropriate behaviour. This property of surveillance thus augments Foucault's theorization of discipline, in that: "Disciplinary power ... is exercised through its invisibility; at the same time it imposes on those whom it subjects a principle of compulsory visibility. In discipline, it is the subjects who have to be seen". (Tyner 2004: 137)

Modelling its fictional double of the world on a different spatial paradigm, Orwell realizes a regime of visibility essentially designed on the same lines of the one proposed

by Foucault, and close to Bentham's panopticism.

However, to understand how power really works, and to avoid flattening discipline on prohibition, Foucault suggests that one has to develop a more positive notion, a "technology of power"<sup>2</sup>. The latter is grounded on mechanisms that, instead of aiming to simple prohibition, are primarily «producteurs d'une efficence, d'une aptitude, des producteurs d'un produit» (Foucault 1994: 187).

Notoriously, Foucault highlights that one of the most important "invention of political technology" is Discipline, that comes to be defined as

Techniques de l'individualisation du pouvoir. Comment surveiller quelqu'un, comment contrôler sa conduite, son comportement, ses aptitudes, comment intensifier sa performance, multiplier ses capacités, comment le mettre à la place où il sera plus utile (191).

Foucault's *Surveiller et Punir* (2003) adds that the target of power in disciplinary societies is the body, «[le] corps qu'on manipule, qu'on façonne, qu'on dresse, qui obéit, qui répond, qui devient habile ou dont les forces se multiplient» (138).

This technology of power represents the means for the physical realisation of the equivalence between man and machine posited by Descartes: in Disciplinary societies, in fact, «Le corps se constitue comme pièce d'une machine multisegmentaire» (167), actualising the equivalence originally conceived from an "anatomico-metaphysical register" through the "technico-political" sphere. Disciplinary societies are arranged as complex machines that can function only if there is no friction between their parts, if each part is always ready and prepared to carry on its task. To this extent, they actuate a series of strategies to make the bodies "docile", that is, able to be «soumis, qui peut être utilisé, qui peut être transformé et perfectionné» (138). Working towards the moulding of individual bodies as perfect components of a bigger machine, discipline aims to the production of a higher degree of efficiency: it works as a performance enhancer.

As stressed by Tyner however, «Unlike Foucault... Winston was not satisfied with simply identifying the techniques of discipline, but instead questioned the "why" of discipline» (Tyner 2004: 140). Moreover,

In the case of Orwell, the goal of constant surveillance is "power in itself": "The statement that 'the object of power is power' is clearly discordant with Foucault's conception of power. For Foucault, power is not something to be possessed but instead to be exercised. O'Brien, conversely, argues that 'power is not a means; it is an end'". (140)

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<sup>2</sup> Moving from the juridical conception of power to its technological constitution means also to realise that the transformations of these techniques are linked to the modifications in the technological sphere, that function as triggers: «ces mécanismes de pouvoir, ces procédés de pouvoir, il faut les considérer comme des techniques, c'est-à-dire comme des procédés qui ont été inventés, perfectionnés, qui se développent sans cesse» (189).

According to Tyner, the efficiency achieved by moulded bodies in Foucauldian disciplinary societies is aimed at something, to «a material gain» of some sort (140), ultimately related to the preservation of the politico-economic *status quo*. From this perspective, however, Foucault and Orwell do not really disagree, and the formula “power for its own sake” is not antithetical to the necessity of the preservation of the status quo. Orwell’s representation of the goals of power can then be enriched by the Foucauldian awareness that the moulded body is a productive body, the employment of which guarantees the conservation of privileged positions of the leadership, in turn grounded on exploitative economic models.

The technologies of power described by Orwell, Foucault and Bentham are then linked to the needs of industrial capitalism and to their evolution. In the next section we will move to the consideration of another form of surveillance, achieved through technological advancements, and serving the needs of post-industrial capitalism: control. The signs proper to this condition of society have been portrayed by another literary symptomatology, *The Circle* by Dave Eggers, that will be made react with Deleuze’s *Post-scriptum* in order to formulate a definition of its spatial paradigms.

### **Aetiology of Control**

Deleuze’s 1990’s *Post-scriptum sur les sociétés de contrôle* sketches a new technology of power. In the following pages, we will extract the signs utilized by Eggers to constitute the symptomatology of control of *The Circle* and, through them, we’ll describe the transition between Foucault’s disciplinary societies and control societies, trying to fill the gaps of Deleuze’s short essay.

The *Post-scriptum* describes «une société qu'on peut appeler une société de contrôle» (Deleuze 2003a: 298), a *nouveau monstre* (241), a new condition of society engendered by a digital mechanism and entailing a new form of subjection.

The notion of control adopted by Deleuze has been first advanced by Burroughs in the essay *The limits of control* (1978). Rightly considering control as a technique, in this essay Burroughs claims that its most important element are words, be them direct orders or suggestions (38). Although this definition of the basic tools of control could seem quite restrictive, the alternative between order and suggestion will reveal itself incredibly precious to differentiate discipline and control, and the signs displayed by *1984* and *The Circle*. Burroughs’ idea, in fact, sets the ground for a description of the link between the two societies, because control spreads in the environment of disciplined societies, shaped and kept together by the constant diffusion of order-words.

Very interestingly, the essay leaves also room to an update of its ideas in the light of digital technology: since in fact «les sociétés de contrôle opèrent par machines...

informatiques et ordinateurs» (Deleuze 2003b: 244), claiming that «no control machine so far devised can operate without words» (Burroughs 1978: 38) doesn't exclude that control can be based on a binary language, incomprehensible to the controlled and spread through images and signs as much as through words, accesses granted or denied and personalisation. On this note, the idea that «the technocratic apparatus of the United State has at its fingertips new techniques which if fully exploited could make Orwell's 1984 seem like a benevolent utopia» (38), makes Burroughs' essay seem quite prophetic, in the light of Silicon Valley.

Still, the cause of the switch between disciplinary societies and control societies is not simply related to technological advancements. Indeed, as Deleuze claims, «Il est facile de faire correspondre à chaque société des types de machines, non pas que les machines soient déterminantes, mais parce qu'elles expriment les formes sociales capables de leur donner naissance et de s'en servir» (Deleuze 2003b: 244). A society is the product of a specific machine just as a particular machine is the product of a specific society: the machines that characterise control societies are the product of a mutation of the same social system that developed the technology of discipline, which «n'est pas une évolution technologique sans être plus profondément une mutation du capitalisme» (244).

During the 20<sup>th</sup> century in fact, the focus of capitalism changed from production to products, causing the substitutions of the models of the factory with the ones of businesses. Post-industrial capitalism is not grounded anymore on the process of buying raw material, transforming them in products and selling goods: it now sells services and buys activities<sup>3</sup>. Considering this new model, the notion of activity appears to be crucial: digital capitalism buys activities, it feeds on them capturing, tracing and monetizing them. Paying attention is an activity, and attention is the new currency of digital capitalism.

Because of this change in the model of capitalism, Deleuze argues that the switch from factories to businesses, as the typical units of composition of the current economic system, is one of the reasons of the general crisis of disciplinary sites of enclosure. An analogous case, he claims, can be found in the disciplinary model of the school, which is in the process to be replaced by continuous education, fostered also by the constant availability of information on online platforms.

This passage from the segmentation of time operated through the spaces of confinement to a more fluid architecture of phases, can be modelled as follows:

Dans les sociétés de discipline, on n'arrêtait pas de recommencer (de l'école à la caserne, de la caserne à l'usine), tandis que dans les sociétés de contrôle on n'en finit jamais avec rien, l'entreprise, la formation, le service étant les états métastables et coexistant d'une même modulation, comme d'un déformateur universel. (243)

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<sup>3</sup> Digital technologies make the economy of services to appear in all its strength: a great percentage of the income related to digital economy is in fact connected to online services more than to the circulation of material devices. The entire economy of social networks and of big companies like Google is built around the sale of services, sustained for example by the sale of smart ads spaces.

These are then the basic causes of the transition between disciplinary and control societies: a change in capitalism has entailed the diffusion of digital technologies that came in turn to be used as instruments of control. This new technology of surveillance, whose operation is modulation, is then applied to individuals whose movements are not circumscribed anymore by the imposition of an order on space and on the bodies, but constantly tracked and assessed in their activities, which are monetised and exchanged.

For Deleuze, an interesting writer is one that is able to produce «a machine that turns readers into “readers of themselves”» (Bogue 2003: 58). What Eggers succeeds in with his novel is to point at the symptoms of control through which we can understand also the transition between discipline and the new technology of power conceived by Burroughs and Deleuze.

### **The Circle: Signs of Suggestion**

Dave Eggers' *The Circle* is a dystopian novel set in a not too distant future, and tells the story of Mae, a young woman that starts working for the IT company that has created the most important and spread social network of all times. The very protagonist of the novel is clearly the platform, comparable to a mix between Google, Facebook and Twitter, and its systems, developed on an ideal of total transparency:

Imagine yourself a frictionless life... fully participatory democracy, like Facebook... governments as accountable to you as celebrities of Twitter... a world where knowledge is pure, crowd-sourced, and easily rectified... knowledge accessible to all; each human being transparent to any other. (Luthi 2013)

The initial innovation that granted the success of *The Circle* is a standard called *TruYou*, an account that ties people's real identities to their online activities, economic movements and sanitary records:

TruYou—one account, one identity, one password, one payment system, per person. There were no more passwords, no multiple identities. Your devices knew who you were, and your one identity—the TruYou, unbendable and unmaskable—was the person paying, signing up, responding, viewing and reviewing, seeing and being seen. You had to use your real name, and this was tied to your credit cards, your bank, and thus paying for anything was simple. One button for the rest of your life online. (Eggers 2014: 21)

The success of the business model of *The Circle* is based on the development of the perfect sorting/tracking system. This issue sends back to Foucault, for whom the

distribution of individuals in space is the first instance through which discipline is imposed, and says something about the continuity and overlapping of the two technologies of power.

In disciplinary societies, the techniques adopted to operate this distribution are various: one regards the constitution of forms of enclosure, functionally organized spaces that serve specific purposes; another follows instead the principle of partitioning, through which the space is subdivided in a more flexible way: «A chaque individu, sa place; et en chaque emplacement, un individu» (144).

Discipline is a technology that performs multiple brakes: it avoids coagulations and communication, breaking autonomous distributive flows and allowing time to know of the precise collocation of individuals. This practice is aided by the use of timetables, that regulate rhythms and prescribe repetitions: the refinement of time units makes not only the tasks more precisely arranged, but acted so that the orders can be more readily obeyed. A tendency to the achievement of immediacy, towards the minimization of the gap between an order and its execution, underlies in fact all the techniques of distribution put in place by discipline: all these techniques compose what Foucault calls a program, a codification of the body (152) essential for the social machine to be efficient. Discipline is grounded on the constitution of classification tools, that Foucault names *tableaux vivants* (148-149), moulds imposed at different levels. This practice has much in common with The Circle's *TruYou* technology, with which Eggers shows that when the classification tools conceived by discipline become totalizing and unambiguous, control starts to take place on top of discipline.

Indeed, control societies do not come to substitute the disappeared disciplinary societies, but represent their evolution, their technologically enhanced paroxysm, engendered by an evolution in capitalism as much as by the technological supports of its perpetration. The fact that discipline and control overlap is one of the senses in which dividuality, as Deleuze calls one of the conditions of the age of control, has to be interpreted: we are doubly trapped (Savat 2009).

As a clinician then, a “symptomologist of civilization”, Eggers has produced a diagnosis of «the forces and attitudes that [today] shape the world» (2), and the digitalisation of the Foucauldian “tableaux vivants” is undoubtedly one of these, a tracking-sorting technology embedded in every digital device we possess. Physical technology, however, is not as powerful as ideology: being aware of this, Eggers produces the signs that exemplify this issue describing of the slogans of The Circle.

The latter might recall, in their formulation, the fundamental equations on which Orwell's Big Brother grounds his discipline: if in 1984 we have found «War is peace; Freedom is Slavery; Ignorance is Strength» (Orwell 2008: 6), the mantra of The Circle is «Secrets are Lies; Sharing is Caring; Privacy is Theft» (Eggers 2014: 303). If the two worlds do not differ radically, it is because the two societies superimpose, and some of the symptoms of the two novels are similar because «The great clinicians are

symptomatologists who regroup signs, undoing previous concatenations of symptoms and establishing new associations of hitherto unrelated symptoms in a “profoundly original clinical picture”<sup>4</sup> (Bogue 2003: 15-16). Although Deleuze says that «Nous sommes dans une crise généralisée de tous les milieu d’enfermement» (Deleuze 2003a: 241) then, there are zones of transition between the two societies, that are not separated by a distinct cut.

The campus of The Circle, for example, is impressively modern and always full of interesting and exclusive activities, from concerts to exposition, besides of being equipped with all the amenities of luxurious hotels or resorts: «The easiest comparison of the Circle is to Google — whose Mountain View campus keeps its employees fed, fit, massaged, and, well, kept» (Luthi 2013). These campuses, both the real one and the fictional one, are the embodiment of the superposition of control over discipline, luxurious lieux d'enfermement. Another, less glamorous and luxurious example of the way in which the architectures of sites of confinement are mixing with the age of control, is the prison-factory of the Foxconn campus:

If you know of Foxconn, there’s a good chance it’s because you’ve heard of the suicides. In 2010, Longhua assembly-line workers began killing themselves. Worker after worker threw themselves off the towering dorm buildings, sometimes in broad daylight, in tragic displays of desperation – and in protest at the work conditions inside. (Merchant 2017)

But it’s in the posters hanged through the campus of The Circle, that the true nature of the signs displayed by the novel is revealed: «“Dream,” one said.. “Participate,” said another. There were dozens: “Find Community.” “Innovate.” “Imagine”» (Eggers 2014: 1-2). These kinds of messages, that Eggers articulates in different ways, are important for two reasons: firstly because they represent *shared beliefs*, and secondly because these beliefs are not imposed, but *suggested*.

The use of the notion of suggestion, in characterizing the signs collected in this symptomatology of control, has a double benefit: on one hand, it points at the form of communication through which a belief or thought is induced in an individual without the latter perceiving any imposition or order, that is therefore accepted without awareness or rational evaluation of its content. It is according to this logic that «“control” comes to be so subtle that it may well present itself in the form of “choice”» (Savat 2009: 57). On the other hand, speaking about suggestion to characterise the signs of control allows us to consider the practices of personalisation, almost omnipresent on the web, that activate

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<sup>4</sup> The way in which the symptoms are clustered changes in time also in medicine, making the typologies built out of them never definitive. For example, as highlighted by Deleuze, after the second world war a lot of symptoms initially divided and clustered as indicating different types of diseases have been grouped under the new condition of “stress”: «Après la guerre, les revues de médecin étaient remplies de discussions sur le stress des sociétés modernes et la nouvelle répartition de maladies qu’on pouvait en tirer» (Deleuze 2003a: 181).

manipulation mechanisms based on the capture of data, which in turn contribute to the modulation of desire, a painless form of seduction opposed to the traumatic imposition of orders. On this note, Deleuze's *Post-scriptum* already pointed the finger against marketing, the digital version of which becomes, more than ever, «l'instrument du contrôle social, et forme la race impudente de nos maîtres» (Deleuze 2003b: 245-246).

By the employment of suggestions, algorithmic modulation controls the bodies through the seduction of the minds, making obsolete the practice of disciplining of the mind through the imposition of orders on the bodies. As in *1984*, the imposition of the same mental environment, of the same space for thought for every subject, is the complement of the specific way in which physical spaces are constructed, and the signs of suggestion articulate space in a specific way also in *The Circle* and in control societies.

The facilities and the activities organised at The Circle's campus are impressive and highly appealing: in front of its gyms, dorms, recreation areas, art exhibitions and parties, the protagonist of the novel has to stop for a moment to significantly recognise the campus being «a workplace, too» (Eggers 2003: 1). Control has not to be perceived as such, and surveillance has to be invisible, or better, transparent. Every wall of the building in which Mae works are made of Plexiglas, floors included, so that «The Circle's users condition one another» (Luthi 2013), constantly able to watch over one another's activities. This sign of suggestion leads to the issue of the regimes of visibility and of their relation to power: if in disciplinary societies the regime of visibility was panoptical, in the case of control societies it is more about general transparency, being seen and seeing at the same time, instead of being surveilled by a warden. Such regime of visibility is supported and enhanced by the digital technologies developed by the company: besides the *TruYou* system, for example, the *SeeChange* devices are portable cameras that broadcast real-time video and audio content from their wearer's everyday life. In the novel, the *SeeChange* cameras will start to be adopted also by politicians, representing the perfect implementation of the slogan "secrets are lies": «Where "1984" has the vigilant Police Patrol and Thought Police, "The Circle" has SeeChange and Clarification. Surveillance isn't a bad word; it's a gift, even a human right» (Morais 2013).

Seducing mobile devices equipped with instantaneous analytics and face recognition have improved Orwell's telescreens, and if Foucault allowed space for free time, at the end of the shift, of the sentence or of school, Eggers shows that control colonizes those zones as well. The ideology of "sharing is caring" makes freedom itself the new field of internment, and transforms the wardens into followers, in a state of surveillance less perceived but omnipresent.

This allows us to maintain that the passage from discipline to control is not really due to the end of the spaces of enclosure, but to their transformation in something else. If control societies «n'ont ou n'auront plus besoin de milieux d'enfermement» (Deleuze 2003a: 299), it is because digital technologies caused those spaces to unfold, setting people "free", and fold again to become their pockets.

All the innovations brought about by the digital are indeed nothing if considered without taking into account the question of portability: we already had computers, broadcasting systems and instant messaging, but without portable devices there is no control society – not really at least, not yet.

Without portability, the paradigm of circulation related to the web is still modelled on a “pilgrimage to the machine”, sitting harmless on a desk or placed at a street corner, but with the real control societies this movement is substituted by the “pilgrimage with the machine”, the constantly tracked, “free” movement with the machine in our pocket<sup>5</sup>.

It is now possible to start drafting the spatial paradigm of control: the transformation of the wardens in followers allows the proportion to be “many-many”, while portability allows a maximum degree of circulation, changing the distribution of the elements of the system from the “opposite” of panopticism and the “between” of 1984 and its telescreens, into the “with” of mobile devices and personalization. This paradigm changes significantly also the psychological condition of subjects from paranoia to exhibitionism: the “compulsory visibility” of discipline (Foucault 2003: 189) becoming the compulsive display of the age of social networks.

If the distinctive process of control is modulation though, it is also because its technologies of surveillance are able of penetrating everything, and of being remarkably sneaky. The issue with control becomes then not only how the digital striation of analogical space is operated, but also how this striation penetrates, how it pierces, hooks and drags the bodies.

Speaking of sneakiness and seduction, we have obtained an interesting key to interpret one of the most obscure passages in Deleuze’s Post-scriptum: «Les anneaux d’un serpent sont encore plus compliqués que les trous d’une taupinière» (Deleuze 2003c: 247). While the mole imposes a new order on the ground, structuring chambers and tunnels and represents the agent of discipline, the biblical snake seduces with the possibility to achieve knowledge: to be like a god, it *suggests* to bite the apple. Accepting these suggestions, individuals are constricted by swirls that get tighter and tighter with every movement.

Space and time are manipulated by the power of suggestions in such a way that controlled individuals don’t act anymore as if they believe, but actually believe. In the digital age order becomes suggestion, transforming the “compliant conformists” of disciplinary societies (Strub 1989: 52) into true believers:

Un contrôle n’est pas une discipline. Avec une autoroute, vous n’enfermez pas les gens mais en faisant des autoroutes, vous multipliez des moyens de contrôle. Je ne dis pas que ce soit cela le but unique de l’autoroute mais des gens peuvent tourner à l’infini et

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<sup>5</sup> The line that leads from panopticism to control is a line of miniaturization: with time, and through technology, the site of surveillance becomes the house, the city, the state, then the pocket, the retinal screen, the subcutaneous chip. This line of miniaturization allows circulation and the transformation of the paradigm of “enclosing” into the one of “following”.

“librement” sans être du tout enfermés tout en étant parfaitement contrôlés. C’est cela notre avenir. (Deleuze 2003a: 300)

Order becomes more gentle, it becomes seduction, and to be seduced, one has to feel free. This form of surveillance supports control through the capture of personal data, freely shared because the mechanisms of suggestion make individuals perceive the new tools as liberating: «Here ... there are no oppressors. No one’s forcing you to do this. You willingly tie yourself to these leashes» (Eggers 2014: 260). Control is a prison that can hardly be seen. In this context, in which peers pressure, fashion and marketing play the role of the major engines for the epidemic of control, the relation between surveillance and memory becomes crucial again.

In *1984*, where memory is constantly rewritten, Winston’s rebellion starts by autonomously ordering his own memories on a diary. In *The Circle* instead, the mechanism of digital control is grounded precisely on the suggested necessity to write and share a digital diary. The logic behind this suggestion is that the diary has to be shared so that one doesn’t feel isolated: «Suffering is only suffering if it’s done in silence, in solitude. Pain experienced in public, in view of loving millions, was no longer pain. It was communion» (441).

This new regime of visibility is intimately related to the nature of social networks, through which, «willingly, joyfully, under constant surveillance, watching each other always, commenting on each other, voting and liking and disliking each other» (367), everybody is connected 24/7, and participates in the realisation of total transparency on the basis of the ideal that «Knowledge is a basic human right» (301).

Moreover, whether in *1984* every action and emotion is related exclusively to the party and arranged by its disciplinary technology, in the control society of *The Circle* the most important link is horizontal: directly connected through social networks, everybody can say «I am with you» (Orwell 2008: 19). To allow this horizontality, the face of the Big Brother, a personification of an alterity that is constantly watching, is substituted with a logo, in which everybody can identify, something of which being part.

To promote the identification with a brand is a standard marketing move, and in this case it reveals the progressive removal of the differential logic displayed by *1984*. Control is not differential, in fact, and *The Circle* is a totalising, multi-ethnic and inclusive community. Because of this, while the responsibility of the problems of Oceania are always attributed to the enemy, in *The Circle* they are only dependant on opaqueness, reinforcing the idea that everything has to be transparent: «We can cure any disease, end hunger, everything, because we won’t be dragged down by all our weaknesses, our petty secrets, our hoarding of information and knowledge. We will finally realize our potential» (291-292).

The description of the symptoms of a society of control proposed by Eggers gathers therefore signs of suggestion that are displayed in an environment of totalising transparency: «If you are not transparent, what are you hiding? ... If you weren’t

operating in the light of day, what were you doing in the shadows?» (240). The grip of this (digital) technology of power is not the body anymore, but something smaller than a movement, not more complex than a tic or a click. These elements correspond to manifestations of interest, are shared according to the ruling logic of transparency and later recomposed in a «matrix of preferences presented as your essence, as the whole you» (Eggers 2014: 125), that is used as the real target of control. This “matrix” is another sense in which the concept of the *dividual* can be interpreted, i.e. as a coagulation of personal data of different nature.

To the line that goes from a «*pouvoir lacunaire, global, à un pouvoir continu, atomique et individualisant*» (Foucault 2994: 190), Deleuze adds then a technology of power that is instead “*dividualising*”. Control is therefore not “superficial” as discipline is, not simply about bodies, and not only about movements, not anatomical, but *vivisectional*.

### **Therapeutic: to invent and to resist**

Doubly trapped between discipline and control, we suffer from two conditions at the same time. The consideration of the symptoms of these conditions, and of their operatory schemes have revealed the spatial paradigms of the nets in which we are caught: we believe that these schemes can disclose the ways to install therapeutic initiatives.

Winston’s disobedience to the orders of the Big Brother starts because he begins to keep a diary, to put order in what Stiegler would call his tertiary retentions, subtracting them to the thought-numbing rewriting of *Newspeak*, and to the moulding power of the regime. This act of rebellion was allowed by the spatial configuration of a niche in the wall, that is, by the architecture of the panoptical London itself: in a spatial paradigm that places the individual between the organs of surveillance, and allows the individual a relative margin of circulation, the space for resistance is found right in the middle of discipline’s meshes.

For control, the situation is slightly different: the unlucky Mercer, a critical and slightly technophobic character portrayed by Eggers resists to the pervasive power of digital control by keeping himself away from the cyberspace. However, as the story goes, the cyberspace will close around him, not leaving him any other escape than a tragic death broadcasted in real time to millions of “Circlers”.

The characteristic of digital control, however, still allow for lines of flight from the apparatuses of capture of the cyberspace. Masking one’s own identity and analogical position, while still allowing circulation on the web, technologies like the TOR network, VPNs and privacy-centred search engines can function as the digital equivalent of Winston’s niche in the wall, allowing at the same time the access to useful resources and spaces of aggregation.

This set of techniques and tools represents an useful weapon to organise resistance,

and has already proven itself useful in occasions in which oppressive regimes jammed communications and censored online forums blocking the diffusion of news and of free speech. However, it represents only one side of the coin, and in non-emergency situations can reveal itself also as a rather isolating, dispersive and highly chaotic device.

The keyword in the considerations of therapeutics for the condition of society depicted by Eggers becomes then *pharmacology* (Stiegler 2013b). As we have showed, digital control accumulates profit by manufacturing true believers instead of controlling bodies. The *nouveau monstre* described by Deleuze achieves this by combining a digitally enhanced compulsory visibility to the compulsive display induced by social networking and developing

une esthétique faisant appel en particulier aux médias audiovisuels, qui, en refonctionnalisation la dimension esthétique de l'individu selon les intérêts du développement industriel, lui font adopter des comportements de consommation.  
(Stiegler 2013a: 19)

Big Brother becoming the title of reality TV and *The Circle* a flop movie is the emblematic example of how deleterious and contagious this colonization of the aesthetical is.

Since digital control is not just administrated by the state or locally managed by institutions, but by private companies, practicing a therapeutic to solve the condition of control societies should consist in forging and employing «nouvelles armes» (Deleuze 2003a: 242), and in directing them against the cursory use of digital technologies and the ignorance of their mechanisms.

Control, in fact, «n'est pas une tare de la technologie: c'est une tare de sa mise en oeuvre pilotée exclusivement par un marché désenestré» (Stiegler 2013a: 17), and we agree with Tyner, when he claims that «Resistance is most effective when it is directed at a “technique” of power rather than a “power” in general; resistance, in short consists of countering these techniques» (Tyner 2004: 142).

The ways of countering them emerges from the considerations of the signs displayed by the literary symptomatology we have considered: the first, especially valid in totalitarian regimes is to exploit the spatial paradigm of digital control to carve out aggregation niches in the architecture of the cyberspace itself; while the second represents a long-term therapeutics meant to counter the digitally induced short-circuiting of the noetic soul by «the extremely high speeds at which [the digital's] automated analytical faculty of understanding is capable of operating» (Stiegler 2016: 481). This therapeutic cultivates the need to «Stay human within a de-humanizing environment» (Tyner 2004: 142), and focuses on the restoration of the ability to order one's own tertiary retentions, to write reality on one's own diary, «to develop an art of control that would be a kind of new form of resistance» (Deleuze 1995: 75).

To recover from the «mechanical liquidation of discernment» (Stiegler 2016: 480)

imposed by digital control and post-industrial capitalism, then, Stiegler suggests that

art should again become an *ars* (the Latin for technique and also knowledge or know-how)... this would be possible only if this *ars* were also and immediately an invention in the fields of jurisprudence (which is also to say, politics), philosophy, science and economics... The question of such an art is that of a therapeutic, for which art would be a primary, obviously inaugurating... a new idea of disautomatization that would arise out of today's disintegrating automatization. (482-483).

To remain critical, to remain imperceptible, to hijack, to hack ourselves and the means employed by the society of control, to change what we've become and what the future generations could be, art has then a fundamental role, and maybe literature, with his great value of symptomatology of societies can be one of the places to start resisting, *and* inventing.

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