

The Sociospatial Mechanics of Domination: Transcending the ‘Exclusion/Inclusion’ Dualism

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Abstract This article takes issue with Zygmunt Bauman’s thesis that physical exclusion depends on the hindrance of cognitive associations, emotional quandaries, and moral inhibitions, hence victims and their lot remain out of sight. It is counter-argued that conscious engagement in directly physical forms of exclusionary behaviour is possible insofar as victims are known in ways that provoke emotional disdain and moralise violence. Such knowledge consists in the relegation of others to the status of morally lesser human beings, and is produced via prior symbolic mediations. To the extent that mediations operate according to the power differentials they both reflect and help to sustain, there is a need to shift analytical attention from exclusion to the ‘meta-category’ of domination.

Keywords Domination · Exclusion · Inclusion · Mediation · Space · Visibility

Men—men and women, that is—are prone to contenting themselves with the notion that history has always been on a steady course of progress. It is no accident that the Greeks coined the term *anthropos*, deriving from *ano throsko* and literally meaning ‘looking upwards’, to define humankind. *Anthropos* is said to be developing towards some preordained noble future, symbolised by the ethereal heights to which he or she gazes from below. This is presumably because, unlike other animals, *anthropos* has the natural capacity for rational understanding and moral judgement—the

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capacity to ‘look up’ at what is in sight in the surrounding world¹. A careful look at the course of history, however, quickly dispels the notion. Historical development, as Mill (1843/1891) noted well, is not necessarily tantamount to progress. And progress, such as in matters of economy, technology, or health, does not necessarily affect all individuals or social groups in a uniform manner. Indeed, advancement for some may come at the exclusion of others. Whilst, for example, economic growth in the post-war era has most benefited the wealthiest nations, inequalities within and across states have risen dramatically (see, for example, Bata and Bergesen 2002). The very persistence of exclusion goes to show that humans have not invariably exercised their inherent capacity for pure reason and accurate moral evaluation.

The failure to exploit the capacity for reflection is at its most acute when upholding or boosting physical forms of exclusion. Against the background of continuing physical exclusion around the globe, from annihilation and expulsion to imprisonment and urban segregation (see, for example, Hobsbawm 1994; Judt 2008), questions about the constitutive content and overarching causes of insufficient reflectivity have acquired urgent significance. An emerging minority of scholars prominent in their respective disciplines—for example, Bauman (1989, 2000) in sociology, Agamben (1998) in philosophy, and Coker (2001) in international relations—have in recent years sought to trace the answers in the role of material space and optical (in)visibility. To perpetrate acts of physical exclusion, they suggest, requires that cognitive associations, emotional quandaries, and moral inhibitions be hindered, hence victims and their lot must remain out of sight. Owing to the spatial arrangements that comprise or at least attend it, physical exclusion is thus reduced to an impersonal, dispassionate, and amoral process. What follows from this account is that spatial inclusion and the ensuing state of concrete interpersonal visibility carry an intrinsic resolutive potential, precisely because they animate cognitive appreciation of the harmful effects caused by one’s own action or inaction, compassionate identification with the predicament of others, and a sense of moral obligation to intervene remedially.

This article singles out for scrutiny Bauman’s sociology of space—arguably the best-known of recent approaches to spatial distance and optical invisibility as preconditions of physical exclusion. The starting premise is that Bauman commits the analytical error of conflating the *explanandum* with the *explanans*, and that this results from his inadequate attention to empirical reality, including the reality implied by logical necessity in the very theory he constructs. If nothing else, to conclude that the roots of physical exclusion ultimately lie within physical exclusion itself is to preclude the questions thereby raised: how is it that victims find themselves separated from victimisers in the first instance? Does not prior separation occur under conditions of spatial proximity and optical interpersonal visibility? At any rate, there is not enough evidence of a sequence where physical exclusion begins by assuming direct and conscious forms, but then proceeds to become distant and unconscious; a process devoid of obvious outcomes. Bauman

¹ The etymological origin of the term *anthropos* has been debated of late, yet the point remains. Whether *anthropos* actually derives from *ano throsko* or, as critics argue, *ano throsko* is the origin of *anthropos* according to folk etymology alone, humans have long taken comfort from the underlying belief that they are uniquely predisposed towards higher things.

appears to have suppressed the embarrassing truth that, whether as a single act or as a continuum, physical exclusion tends to involve full-fledged interpersonal encounters between victimisers and victims (not to mention mass-mediated encounters that confront spectators with their responsibility for the suffering of faraway others; see further Chouliaraki 2006).

Insofar as people engage in direct and conscious acts of physical exclusion, the onus of explanation rests with Bauman's critics. To this end, the present article shifts the focus of analysis to forms of familiarity with victims that provoke emotional disdain and lend legitimacy to open violence against them. It is elaborated that such familiarity consists in subhumanising others in the sense of excluding them from the moral category of humanhood. Cognitive subhumanisation itself is only made possible through prior symbolic mediations which transgress the boundaries of space and dilute the ways of comprehending, feeling about, evaluating, and reacting to, the world external to the self. To the extent, however, that mediations operate in line with the power differentials they both reflect and help to sustain, there is an analytical need to replace exclusion with the 'meta-category' of domination. In the last account, if mediated cognitive relegation of others to the status of morally lesser humans paves the way to their physical exclusion, then it also constitutes a powerful means by which to effectuate, spread, and perpetuate states of domination. The prior process of mediated subhumanisation is the reason why spatial inclusion and forthright visibility are not just insufficient conditions of non-violence, but may also serve to disguise 'softer' forms of domination.

A note on method is due before proceeding. The approach advanced in this article is a Platonic-idealist one in that multiple real examples, from the extermination of Jews during the Second World War to infant mortality in present-day Northeast Brazil, 'indicate the transcendent wealth of the Idea they exemplify, the Idea being the fixed point of reference of the floating examples' (Žižek 1992/2008: xi). The analytical and moral risk of reducing or even trivialising the exceptionalism that inheres to given forms is counterbalanced by the ability to draw connections and unveil practices of domination hidden within the daily normative conduct of ordinary people (Scheper-Hughes 2002). Such mode of theorising also encompasses greater material efficacy from the point of view of intervention. As scholars of Marxist persuasion argue, just as we cannot appreciate the dynamics of domination without decoding what or who is dominated, so too we cannot fully appreciate, let alone help enhance, the dynamics of resistance unless we first define the powers resistance needs to overcome (see, amongst others, Bratsis 2002; Scraton 2002; Žižek 1994).

Bauman on Spatial Distance, Invisibility, and Physical Exclusion

Exclusion is generally taken to refer to processes of collective marginalisation from, and disaffiliation with, the various social, economic, political, and cultural systems that, together, serve to integrate humans into a society. More than simply denoting poverty or disadvantage, then, exclusion may involve lack of access to such diverse, if interrelated, areas as the wage-labour market, housing, health care, education, and

justice (see Young 1999). At its most acute, it also assumes physical forms, the prime examples being segregation and killing.

Bauman (1989, 2000) is quick to relate physical exclusion to the intermeshing realms of perception and ethics. In my reading, there is a three-pronged presumption implicit in his thought. First, it is presumed that all actions follow moral judgement. Action, that is, may only be undertaken so long as it is deemed accordant with the principles of morality or—and this interests Bauman most—not discordant with such principles. Second, it is presumed that the object of moral judgement is not merely that which produces a reaction in the subject from the outside, but equally the reaction and the subject. Attitudes towards others, for example, cannot but reflect back on the self. And third, it is presumed that the exercise of moral judgement is always preceded by the employment of perception, the latter entailing both cognitive and emotional faculties. As Vetlesen summarises the point, ‘having gained a first “take” of the situation at hand through emotion, we try to elaborate, question, modify, deepen this “gut” take of it; and, in so doing, we engage in it simultaneously through the use of our cognitive powers. In this way, emotional and cognitive capacities join company and assist each other in a joint preoccupation with the situation we have tuned in to’ (Vetlesen 1994, p. 175).

Naturally, the passing of a valid moral judgement and the undertaking of truly moral action at that cannot come about when perception is barred from being active in the process. Hence Bauman argues that, in banning communication, practices of spatial exclusion serve to stifle the cognitive and emotional preconditions of valid moral judgement, thereby also laying the foundations for their own reproduction. In his geopolitical account of the prison institution, Bauman explicates that the prohibition of daily intercourse between prisoners and the public strips the former of any idiosyncratic qualities and circumstances, information that might well render their inclusion morally requisite in the eyes of the latter. The prisoner, in Bauman’s own words, ‘turns into an Alien and is permanently locked and sealed in that condition’ (Bauman 2000, p. 28). Morality is thus upheld in a negative sense, by virtue of not being breached. (To anticipate later discussion and be fair to Bauman, he does not brush away the role of stereotypes in the emergence of physical exclusion, yet he grossly undermines their durability against spatial proximity and optical interpersonal visibility, which demonstrates the overwhelming causal primacy he attributes to rigid spatial separation; see further Vetlesen 2005, pp. 21–23.)

Anyway, it would be a lenient and misleading diagnosis to attach temporal priority to personal uniqueness as the object of invisibilisation, were one to overlook that common humanity comes under profound challenge in the first place. True as it may be that, in and of itself, the negation of individuality is tantamount to the negation of a dimension intrinsic to humanity, spatial segregation and invisibilisation pursue the *anterior* (because *superior*) aim of disinheritting the invisible of membership to the human kind, a kind of which individuality is a corollary quality. Bauman acknowledges this point in his earlier work, when discussing the social conditions which paved the way to the Holocaust. There he speaks of the natural invisibility of the humanity of victims as one of the ‘moral sleeping pills’ necessary for ‘transforming individuals who are not “moral degenerates” in any of the

“normal” senses, into murderers or conscious collaborators in the murdering process’ (Bauman 1989, pp. 26, 24). Optical distanciation from victims and their reduction to soulless entities quashes any possibility of identification, whence the obsolescence of all moral inhibitions against the affliction of pain onto other humans. There is nothing humanly immoral, nor, consequently, anything threatening to the morale of perpetrators and bystanders, in treating non-humans inhumanely.

But, as Bauman also notes, hand in hand with the invisibilisation of victims and their natural humanity goes the invisibilisation of their otherwise shocking lot. This, in its turn, expropriates the capacity for compassion or what Arendt describes as ‘the animal pity by which all normal men are affected in the presence of physical suffering’ (Arendt 1964, p. 106, cited by Bauman 1989), and makes any self-search for causal responsibility and moral wrongs utterly meaningless, not to say masochistic. Bauman’s account deserves to be given in some length:

With killing ‘at a distance’, the link between the carnage and totally innocent acts—like pulling a trigger, or switching on the electric current, or pressing a button on a computer keyboard—is likely to remain a purely theoretical notion (the tendency enormously helped by the mere discrepancy of scale between the result and its immediate cause—an incommensurability that easily defies comprehension grounded in commonsensical experience). It is, therefore, possible to be a pilot delivering the bomb to Hiroshima or to Dresden, to excel in the duties assigned at a guided missile base, to design ever more devastating specimens of nuclear warheads—and all this without detracting from one’s moral integrity and coming anywhere near moral collapse. ... [In a similar vein, the stationary gas chambers] ... reduced the role of the killer to that of the ‘sanitation officer’ asked to empty a sackful of ‘disinfecting chemicals’ through an aperture in the roof of a building, the interior of which he was not prompted to visit (Bauman 1989, pp. 25–26).

To sum up, Bauman argues that spatial and sensory distance ensures moral distance, not by putting perception and questions about right and wrong to sleep, but by subtly downgrading cognitive associations, emotional quagmires, and moral wrongness into non-options. In the remainder of this article, I refute Bauman’s argument by exploring it in reverse.

***Contra* Bauman: Spatial Proximity, Visibility, and Physical Exclusion**

Granted, spatial proximity allows for identification by bringing into plain view the basic essentiality of common humanity, namely, the fact that all human individuals belong to a single general species. But this does not mean that compassion or pity is axiomatically triggered at the sight of the physical suffering of another human. Nor, consequently, does it mean that physical human suffering ceases to exist as a result of being made visible. (As will be shown briefly later, it does not even hold that compassion inevitably saps the possibility of suffering.) Experience teaches us that, whether by commission or by omission, the imposition of suffering on another does

not preclude the visibility of the sufferer or the consciousness of the act and its consequences as such. In fact, neither interpersonal familiarity nor even kinship can be treated as sufficient safeguards against the visible suffering of others. Ready cases in point include the domestic abuse of women and the condemnation of the 'oldest old' to undignified death in impoverished nursing homes, victims not only of institutional cynicism and professional indifference, but also of the 'lethal passivity' of their very offspring (Scheper-Hughes 2002, pp. 40–44). Blok (2001) goes so far as to invert the argument, suggesting that geographical propinquity is a strong precursor to physical violence. In his review of the ethnographic literature on intertribal warfare, ranging from the civil wars in former Yugoslavia and Rwanda to the persecution of the Burakumin in Japan and the lynchings in the American South following the abolition of slavery, Blok demonstrates that the fiercest confrontations usually occur between the nearest neighbours.

Furthermore, conscious engagement in physical violence against another, including passive bystanding conduct, does not necessarily stand in opposition to subjective principles of morality, and may even serve to uphold them. Following secondary analysis of data on individuals who did and did not rescue Jews during the Nazi occupation in Europe, Varese and Yaish (2000) found that a direct request for help substantially increased the likelihood of being rescued, particularly when made by a known person (for example, friends and family members). Varese and Yaish, however, are reluctant to endow direct requests for help with the capacity to engender the empathic emotions necessary to 'induce a bystander to act' morally (Varese and Yaish 2000, p. 328), rather privileging the strictly cognitive benefits such requests may have for moral judgement and action. 'The importance of being asked', they conclude, lies in its practical, situational potential to match *extant* empathic dispositions to concrete cases of people in need. Hence the role of shame following the conscious decision not to act should not be 'exaggerated by an *ex post* rationalisation, based on the widely accepted view (after the war) that helping Jews in need was a good act. ... Only those individuals who believed they should help—without actually wanting to help—would have felt ashamed' (Varese and Yaish 2000, p. 322). It follows that the moral content and significance of interpersonal conduct extend beyond its spatial dimension. Conduct depends on perception, what the other person means to us. In perception, the spatial variable is overridden by prior, extra-individual variables and stereotypes in particular (Vetlesen 1994; see also Mackenzie 2006). The villain of the story is the distortion of familiarity, namely, the emotionally charged variable of knowing the other, only in ways that lend moral support to our immoralities against her.

Whether manifesting itself as hatred or in some other affective form, distorted familiarity consists in the 'subhumanisation' of others, construed as their cognitive exclusion from the *moral order* of belonging to the human species. Not spatial exclusion, then, but the never-fully-realised process of inclusion in the category of human personhood is at issue—what Durkheim envisaged in terms of the 'sacralisation' of the person (Joas 2008). Our conceptualisation of the politics of space needs to be refined thus: there is nothing humanly immoral, nor, consequently, anything threatening to the morale of perpetrators and bystanders, in treating *sub*-humans inhumanely. The alleged possession of subhuman traits may operate as a

‘master status’ in the sense of knowledge that either colours all other information about the individual or the group concerned (Becker 1963), or even dampens our desire to obtain any further information about them (Schur 1971). This is why, as Vetlesen argues in his later work, the context in which the Holocaust was performed should be understood as one ‘where the victim is not lost from view, but instead remains a focus—a focus whose significance is nothing else than that of *lending the evil to take place its quality as something legitimate (required, necessary) to do*’ (Vetlesen 2005, p. 27, original emphasis). The prior subhumanisation of victims does not simply render unnecessary the employment of denial techniques (for example, appealing to accident or undermining the harm; see further Cohen 2001). To engage in denial is, in this case, to appear discordant with the moral strictures of the day.

If, then, natural proximity and the arduous cycle of first-hand, micro-level communication this animates in turn do not, in and of themselves, suffice to operate as buffers against physical violence, it is only apropos that we broaden the focus of our attention to include the influence exerted by the suprapersonal environment upon immediately experiential interpersonal realities—the ways in which ‘the fingertips of society have reached bluntly into the contact, even here putting us in place’ (Goffman 1963/1990, p. 71).² The point here is more complex than what has come to be known as ‘the Thomas theorem’: ‘if men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences’ (Thomas and Thomas 1928, p. 572). As Merton warns us, ‘total subjectivism’, that is, the view that social reality consists only in definitions, perceptions, labels, beliefs, assumptions, desires and so on, ‘in effect manages to transform the Thomas Theorem into this fallacious maxim: if men do *not* define situations as real, they are not real in their consequences’ (Merton 1976, p. 175, original emphasis). Merton’s advice is, instead, never to lose sight of the objective forces (demographic, economic, ecological, etcetera) which shape human action and its various consequences. ‘[I]n the pithy phrase by the sociologist Arthur Stinchcombe, which tempers the subjective emphasis of W.I. Thomas with the objective emphasis of Karl Marx, “People define situations, but do not define them as they please”’ (Merton 1976, p. 175; Stinchcombe 1975; pp. 15–16). That socially induced situations may still give pleasure to the acting self should not lead one astray; the experience of individual pleasure, much like the infliction of pain it so often presupposes for others, is not always real in its definition. ‘[W]e plainly need this counterpart to the Thomas Theorem: And if men do *not* define real situations as real, they are nevertheless real in their consequences. ... In society, as in other

² That we need to make such a conceptual leap is corroborated by the fact that classificatory definitions may exist and persist, not only against, but also independently of the direct visibility of the stigma in question. Inner-city blacks in the US, for example, fail to qualify as ‘good’, middle-class-oriented employees by virtue of their place of residence alone, even as many shed the territorial taint by adept techniques of impression management (Wacquant 2008). Similarly, people who have served time in prison, commonly assume a despised collective status, although most tend to conceal this fold of their personal identity from strangers, acquaintances, and even intimates (see, for example, Murray 2007). Note that in either example the stigma itself has a strong spatial connotation.

domains, what you don't know (or don't notice) *can* hurt you [as well as others]' (Merton 1976, p. 177, original emphasis).

In the section that follows, I turn to the process by which objective forces come to exert their influence on human perception and render the conscious exercise of violence so normal that its immorality stays imperceptible.

The Power of Knowledge and the Knowledge of Power: Panopticon and Beyond

A useful point of departure is Foucault's work on the concepts of 'power', 'knowledge', and 'rationality', as these relate to the shape, culture, and practices of modern punishment and social control. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault (1979) borrows the eighteenth-century Benthamite ideal of the panopticon prison, with its all-seeing and omniscient inspector well hidden in the central tower and its exposed cells radiating around the perimeter, to describe what he conceives as a fundamental qualitative shift in the 'micro-physics of power'. From an archaic system of penal and social domination premised upon the spectacle of open violent subjugation of the body in its corporeal form, to a no less tyrannical apparatus aimed at disciplining the soul by means of rigidly prescribed institutional rules coupled with constant surveillance. The public torture rituals of the *ancien régime*, argues Foucault, gradually gave way to panoptic imprisonment, a more subtle mode of punishment whereby the prisoner, infallibly conscious of the almighty (because also unverifiable) gaze of the upper echelons, 'assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection' (Foucault 1979, pp. 202–203). Insofar as rendering bodies docile never ceased to be the ultimate aim of penal institutions (and of all other state institutions such as schools, hospitals, and the army, for that matter), then total surveillance and the attendant knowledge of the 'targets' in question developed into the most effective means to accomplish it.

Visibility, it follows, is a metaphor of knowledge and, as such, relates inextricably to the exercise of domination. To phrase the point in Foucauldian language, asymmetries in visibility serve ceaselessly to reproduce the very 'power/knowledge' asymmetries of which they are a product. Paradoxically, if such functional asymmetries in visibility are to be sustained, then power/knowledge asymmetries must remain in obscurity. Hence Brighenti speaks of the need to approach panoptic domination, not simply in terms of a *first-order asymmetry* of visibility between the watchers and the watched in a certain physical setting, where asymmetries are necessarily visible, but as a broader logical diagram consisting in a '*second-order asymmetry* of visibility, between those who are aware of the existence of the diagram and those who are unaware of it' (Brighenti 2007, p. 336, original emphasis). Brighenti's observation allows for freeing the guard-prisoner dialectic from the narrow confines of the prison, so to speak, rather locating it at the very heart of a general analytical model where the power/knowledge held by the invisible corresponds directly to that elicited from the visible themselves, be they

prisoners or guarded guards of any sort (see, for example, Newburn and Hayman 2002).³

I shall return in a moment to the specific ways in which second-order asymmetries of visibility may be manufactured. As a general preliminary to such consideration, however, we may probe Foucault's argument for the crucial role of strategic discursive formations in the production and reproduction of domination. In *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault (1972) distinguishes between the 'visible' and the 'articulable', the former being the visually aesthetic and the latter the semiotic which gives the aesthetic its shape and content. The articulable Foucault associates with the discursive, namely, with that particular set of linguistic statements already available to us for making sense of the external world at a given historical moment. Inasmuch as 'things' acquire meaning within discourse—and early Foucault goes so far as to suggest that 'nothing has any meaning outside of discourse'—it is no happenstance that power seeks to regulate, before anything else, the discursive cues through which we interpret whatever we are allowed or not allowed to observe.

That power also strives to set the limits on the visible (who sees what and on whose terms) goes to prove the primacy of the articulable, for the latent aim here is to make the former fit and reinforce the latter (see further Hallsworth and Young 2008; compare Brighenti 2007). Ultimately, as Foucault himself recognises in his later, 'post-epistemological' *oeuvre*, the analytical task is to uncover the linkages between similar and disparate meanings, yet not as logocentric relations of meaning, but as meaningful relations of domination (Wacquant 1997). What allows for tracing the history of human relations is not their connection on the level of linguistics, but 'the intelligibility of struggles, of strategies and tactics' (Foucault 1980, p. 114). To borrow Wacquant's words, what one needs to dissect are the interlocking symbolic and material mechanisms that inscribe 'boundaries in the objectivity of social space and the subjectivity of mental space' (Wacquant 1997, p. 225).

If the struggle for domination is symbolic at its base, discourse is both the battlefield and the weaponry. A 'structuring' and 'structured' structure which provides the means for understanding the world as well as a medium by which worldviews are communicated and diffused (see further Bourdieu 1991, pp. 164–166). The process of producing, reproducing, or appropriating certain understandings of the social world allows people, not only to represent, but to constitute themselves as groups distinctly identifiable from others. What counts as distinctive of the classes thus formed is not the ownership or non-ownership of the means of production, nor even some form of common consciousness, at least not in the

³ This is not necessarily to imply conscious manipulation for private gain on the part of the powerful. Drawing on Erich Fromm's work, I have argued elsewhere, *first*, that inherent to the exercise of power is a normative conception of self-respect, combined with the stakes and consequences of losing it, and *second*, that the standards by which the powerful gauge their moral performance follow directly from their social character, that is, the sum total of unconscious psychic traits typical of individuals in a given social class. Inasmuch, then, as the powerful attempt to instigate particular public perceptions to suit their own class interests, they first assure themselves that 'they are right, that their aims are justified and, in fact, beyond doubt', precisely because they occupy a dominant position within social space (Fromm 1962/1990, p. 83; see further Cheliotis, under review).

traditional Marxist sense. Classes, as Bourdieu contends, are sets of agents who share a ‘class unconscious’, that is, similar perceptive dispositions towards their position within social space, precisely because they occupy similar or neighbouring positions within this space (Bourdieu 1991, p. 235). Small wonder dispositions serve to consolidate the very positions they express.

To the extent that authority comes to language ‘from the outside’, the power to inculcate and spread particular understandings of social divisions is directly analogous to symbolic capital, namely, the power of those who have obtained sufficient recognition to be able to impose recognition (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992). In the end, the analytical task is to uncover the processes by which sole ownership of the means of *cultural* production comes into effect, the ever-lasting symbolic struggle for the production of common sense or, more precisely, ‘for the monopoly of legitimate *naming* as the official—that is, explicit and public—imposition of the legitimate vision of the social world’ (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, p. 239, original emphasis; see also O’Neill 1989). And ‘to account for this action-at-a-distance, this real transformation effected without physical contact’, one must grasp ‘the totality of the social space in which the dispositions and beliefs that make the efficacy of the magic of language possible, are engendered’ (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, p. 148).

Scheper-Hughes, amongst others, extends the observation made by the ‘gloved-hands-of-the-state theorists’ that injustice is misrecognised because of its very familiarity, to include explicitly crude and violent forms of domination.⁴ Scheper-Hughes describes a ‘genocidal continuum, made up of a multitude of “small wars and invisible genocides” conducted in the normative, ordinary social spaces of public schools, clinics, emergency rooms, hospital charity wards, nursing homes, city halls, jails, and public morgues’ (Scheper-Hughes 2002, p. 32).⁵ The normalisation of genocidal violence, Scheper-Hughes explains, is due to prior discursive processes of subhumanisation of victims, and to the various emotional and moral dispositions so formed, from mere indifference towards the ‘bystander effect’ to fervent righteous hatred. In her account of ‘(m)othering’ in Northeast Brazil, for instance, hungry and sickly infants were casually let by their desperate

⁴ When stressing the generative role of discourse and formalised bodies of knowledge laying claims to absolute truth, however, Bourdieu, unlike Foucault, does not go so far as to refer to subaltern categories such as the criminal and the mentally ill, only more generally to the state apparatus, its agencies, functionaries, and missions (Wacquant 2005). Nor, at any rate, does he pay sufficient attention to instances of direct physical violence, rather treating such instances as uneconomical, unnecessary, less efficient, and surely less legitimisable modes of domination, this time joining company with Foucault (see further Cheliotis 2011, forthcoming).

⁵ Contrary to what Foucault tells us, the birth of the prison did not result in the abandonment of corporeal punishment as such (indeed, imprisonment itself entails physical pain), or even in the disappearance of corporeal punishment from public sight. This, as I elaborate elsewhere with particular reference to mass-mediated representations of the prison, is because those subject to corporeal punishment are previously deemed to have defied social morality, and are therefore classified as less than fully human (see further Cheliotis 2010, forthcoming). Not unlike Bauman more recently, Foucault points to the emergence of a criminal class in terms of a social construction, as well as to the role of the prison in maintaining and enhancing such constructions. Ironically, however, he fails to acknowledge that socio-moral taints make it possible for corporeal punishment to take place in the open; in fact, they necessitate that corporeal punishment be open in order for public illusions of restoring morality to be validated (*ibid.*).

mothers die prematurely ‘of neglect’, for, although ‘sent by God’, they ‘had to’, indeed, ‘themselves wished’ to be ‘returned’ to heaven and the saints in subordination to the well-being of the household, as this was unconsciously construed as a supramundane, divine will—hence their bicephalous compellation as both ‘doomed’ and ‘angel-babies’. Two of the women in the study said:

God takes [babies] to save us from suffering. ... God knows the future better than you or me. It could be that if the baby were to live, he would cause much suffering in the mother. He could turn out a thief, or a murderer, or a *cabo safado*, a good-for-nothing. And so they die as babies to *save* us from pain and suffering, not to give us pain (Scheper-Hughes 1992, p. 394; original emphasis).

The echo of the hegemonic discourse employed by the Roman Catholic Church is audible here, whether in the old, conventional form of advocating ‘patience and resignation to child death and other domestic tragedies, which were said to reveal the imponderable workings of God’s will’, or, under the new guise of liberation theology, by remaining mute to its very own historical contribution to infant death, ‘which exists only as a bloody breech, a rupture with, and a glaring contradiction to, the hierarchy’s prolife and pronatalist teachings’ (Scheper-Hughes 1992, p. 419). The sad irony does not so much consist in the protean role attributed to God as both a benevolent creator and a cynical claimant of life, nor even in the theodicean scapegoating and sacrifice of given-up babies, whose birth is read as a sign of otherworldly grace, yet whose dreadful survival might even contravene His lofty will. Whilst giving moral meaning to women’s apparent stoicism, the conflation of the holy with the profanely horrific also helps reproduce ‘the social and political indifference to the survival and well-being of shantytown mothers and infants in Brazil’ (Scheper-Hughes 1992, p. 412), leaving such indifference essentially unchallenged.

Not that the sick-poor of Palo Alto are invariably duped by those religious values which justify subordination and misery—a situation which Scott (1990, p. 72) would term a ‘thick’ form of false consciousness. In the final analysis, however, they ‘remain sceptical of radical and revolutionary proposals, and do their best to survive in the cracks and crevices of daily life ... through the charade of “learned helplessness”’ (Scheper-Hughes 1992, p. 508). Insofar as their goal is merely existence, rather than resistance, the people of the Alto may be said to suffer from a ‘thin’ form of false consciousness, whereby ‘the dominant ideology achieves compliance by convincing subordinate groups that the social order in which they live is natural and inevitable’ (Scott 1990, p. 72). But again, the prior instilment of fatalism in the masses may allow elites further power to invest in the development of dominant images or legitimations about their power through control of the institutions of socialisation (Gaventa 1980).⁶ This, perhaps, is the reason why such maternal practices of stoic ‘mortal neglect’ as reducing food to ‘doomed’ feeble infants with the aim to expedite their death ‘does not preclude a great deal of

⁶ On the important issue of susceptibility to hegemonic manipulation, see further Cheliotis 2011, forthcoming.

physical contact or the expression of a pitying affection for the “poor little critter” (Scheper-Hughes 1992, p. 410).

Concluding Remarks: Beyond ‘Exclusion/Inclusion’

It is not the aim of this article to suggest that exclusion and inclusion are morally equivalent. As shown previously *contra* Bauman, however, physical exclusion may well coincide with the sequence of spatial proximity, direct visibility, face-to-face contact, and interpersonal familiarity. This is because the roots of exclusion usually lie in judgements based on ‘facts’ other and stronger in their effect than the pure familiarity of concrete, physical contact. Even when not coinciding with physical forms of exclusion, spatial inclusion does not always imply just social arrangements. As Hayward demonstrates in his account of urban civic space, for example, if surveillance is to ensure conformity of conduct, its subjects must be inside the perimeter, not outside (Hayward 2004, p. 139). Or, as Young reminds us in his critique of the ‘dual city’ thesis, the reason why the working poor (for example, maids, nurses, taxi drivers, and doormen) are permitted to ply their way regularly across the invisible ghetto borders of Washington DC, is to facilitate the lives of the working rich. ‘[I]t is only the availability of such cheap “help” that enables the dual career families to continue’ (Young 1999, p. 472). From such perspectives, and not unlike exclusion, spatial inclusion operates as an instrument of domination.

Two closely linked conclusions follow, each of which underscores the importance of deconstructing *and* reconstructing rationality in the form of ‘common sense’, ‘natural’ emotions, and guiding ethical principles. First, the emerging task is to bring an end to domination, not simply to exclusion. The discourse of exclusion reaffirms the desirability of ‘the inside’, and so forecloses critical analysis of the political order, which goes a long way towards explaining its currency in policy circles (Allen 2005a). Second, the reverse transition from exclusion to inclusion, the horizontal move from ‘outside’ to ‘inside’, cannot be taken at face value as a remedy to domination (which is, after all, a problem of vertical, top-down social relations (Allen 2005b; see also Philippopoulos-Mihalopoulos 2008; Philippopoulos-Mihalopoulos and FitzGerald 2008)). Ex-prisoners allowed to live and work in mainstream society, for instance, are recognised *qua* human beings, yet still not necessarily *qua* fully autonomous individuals. What is required of them is not to decide for themselves what best serves their chosen goals and interests, but the presentation of some conventional image favourable to those already included (see, for example, Ericson 1977; Maruna and LeBel 2002). That failure to demonstrate one’s potential for ‘normalcy’ so commonly results from the unjust structures of inclusion itself (Mackenzie 2006) does not suffice to prevent the reproduction of stereotypes that moralise overt exclusion afresh (Cohen 1985).

At any rate, the possibilities for moral conduct are not exhausted with the prevention of affliction of further physical pain onto the sufferers in sight, nor with recognising to present others the right to think and act as autonomous beings. Bauman (1997) himself issues a call to transcend the narrow confines of territoriality, the microspace where direct interpersonal encounters develop and

particular demands for help and justice come to the fore. Instead of contenting ourselves with acting on the present other, Bauman claims, we ought to recognise our responsibility for all possible cases of human suffering and injustice, whether proximal and visible or not (see also Žižek 2005). We can raise our aspirations even higher and combine the spatial generalisation of ethics with a temporal shift: from practical expressions of empathy, after an act in need of empathic response has occurred, to the prevention of such acts from occurring in the first instance. The realisation of either or both mandates, however, is bound to remain a programmatic ideal so long as it is tied tightly to the variable powers of individuals for abstraction and imagination. Unless, that is, the socio-political processes that determine who is represented in the public domain and under what terms—the very processes that place constraints upon the generalised feasibility of abstraction and imagination (Vetlesen 1997)—are exposed and redirected towards macro-ethical concerns on a large, societal scale.

As Bourdieu forewarns, formal recognition of personal responsibility for all humankind needs to be coupled with persevering critical reflection on social structures in their entirety, or else one swiftly drifts into ‘moralism as egoistic universalism’ (Bourdieu 2000/2008, p. 65)—a sensationalised discourse that leaves conscience intact and obscures the need for political intervention (see also Chouliaraki 2006, pp. 211–212). Critical reflection, however, presupposes ideal-typical yardsticks against which to compare (and after which to model) extant social arrangements. The immediate question does not simply concern the constitutive content of the yardsticks to be chosen, but rather extends to the implications such choices carry for the objects to be evaluated. In particular, is it possible to favour given anthropological laws without engaging in normative authoritarianism? Space does not allow an elaborate response here, only to note that reality may well be assessed by reference to the principles of universalism it itself purports to nourish so long as sufficient light is shed upon their essential meaning (Bourdieu 1998). It is in this spirit, for instance, that Fromm (1964) locates the bases of human solidarity within structures of equality, and the bases of equality within structures that promote difference, as opposed to uniformity.

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