SOCIAL VISCOSITY – A MEASURE OF FREEDOM,
POWER, AND RESISTANCE

A Thesis
Presented
To the Faculty of
California State University, Chico

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Masters of Arts
In
Interdisciplinary Studies

by
Thomas Rider III
Spring 2014
SOCIAL VISCOSITY – A MEASURE OF FREEDOM, POWER, AND RESISTANCE

A Thesis

By

Thomas Rider III

Spring 2014

APPROVED BY THE DEAN OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND VICE PROVOST FOR RESEARCH:

_________________________________
Eun K. Park, Ph.D.

APPROVED BY THE GRADUATE ADVISORY COMMITTEE:

______________________________  ________________________________
Sharon Barrios, Ph.D.                 Adrian Mirvish, Ph.D., Chair
Graduate Coordinator

______________________________
Sherrow Pinder, Ph.D.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acknowledgments</th>
<th>iv</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Sartrean Freedom – A Social Reading</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absolute and Constrained?</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Sociality of Sartre’s Existentialism</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ‘Look’ of the ‘Looker’ and the ‘Looked at’ as Reciprocal Objectification</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facticity in Situation</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Orientation and the Constraints of the Practico-Inert</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serial Normativity</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Foucauldian Power</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Situation of Freedom</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power, Resistance, Freedom</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Docile Subject of Power</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Social Matrix of Power</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panopticism and The Look</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Viscosity</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. Conclusion</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Works Cited</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would first like to thank my wife Sunshine, my most important and cherished supporter and critic, as well as my children Lily, Roland, Gwendolynn, Atticus, and Dashiel for all of their love and encouragement throughout this project. You six are the joy and hope in my life. Also, thanks to my mother and father for their unwavering support of me throughout this long process of discovery, failure, and success.

Academically, I would like to thank Dr. Adrian Mirvish for re-inspiring my passion for philosophical inquiry as well as for all of the trust and personal attention that he has offered me during the years that I have spent at CSU Chico. I would also like to personally thank Dr. Sherrow Pinder for all of the hours of intense cerebral conversation during my independent studies courses. Her passion for knowledge and unending intellect has been both refreshing and inspirational. It goes without saying that I have appreciated the attention and consideration of both of these two professors beyond what I can properly express in this short statement.

Additionally, my time spent at CSU Chico has included interactions with numerous professors, my graduate coordinator Sharon Barrios, administrators, graduate admissions staff, evaluators, faculty, and staff members that have all contributed to my success and enjoyment of this project. Thank you to all.
ABSTRACT

SOCIAL VISCOSITY – A MEASURE OF FREEDOM, POWER, AND RESISTANCE

By

Thomas Rider III

Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies

California State University, Chico

Spring 2014

This paper is an investigation of freedom by means of its constraints as discussed in the major works of Jean-Paul Sartre and Michel Foucault. The topic includes an investigation into the role that freedom plays in the practical actions of a socially limited subject. The conceptions of freedom of both authors are discussed in adequate detail to allow a general discussion of freedom constraining social forces. The paper endeavors to show that Sartre and Foucault’s conceptions of freedom, though commonly thought to be antithetical, are similar in some explicit ways. The analysis will show the relationship between both thinkers’ use of the look as a social mechanism of subjugation for both the subject and the Other, the constraining effects of normalizing mechanisms on the ontological freedom of the subject, and the means by which freedom can be applied either as a force of power
or as a force of resistance. The concept of social viscosity arises at the end of the paper as Sartre presents an example that appropriately demonstrates Foucault’s concept of freedom that operates amongst a relationship with power and resistance. The viscosity example that is developed is further shown to be able to demonstrate numerous concepts that both Sartre and Foucault present as mechanisms of constraint to one’s freedom.
CHAPTER I

Introduction

The broad topic of this paper is freedom though the specific content of this investigation will largely be focused on the forces of constraint that limit and shape the practical realizations of freedom. To this end we will focus on Jean-Paul Sartre’s conception of freedom and Michel Foucault’s analytic of power in order to provide us context from which to discuss the ways that freedom operates on and through the socialized subject. We will discuss Sartre and Foucault’s complimentary yet dissimilar concepts of freedom that vacillate around similar functions of action and constraint though they arise in their philosophies under dissimilar circumstances. We will situate and define freedom in both of their works in order to discuss the relationship that they share on the subject and the inducement to knowledge that is gained by the understanding of both of their conceptions of freedom.

The intellectual relationship between these two thinkers, is not to be established without some doubt from critics though, for as Thomas Flynn remarks:

... it is commonly believed that Foucault left Sartrean existentialism far behind during most of his (later) career. His theoretical difficulties with Hegelianism, Marxism, and philosophies of consciousness over the years seemed to converge on Sartrean thought. (Flynn, 2005, p. 47)

James Marshall says that Foucault “alluded to Sartre as the last great 19th century thinker,” a man of times past (Marshall, 2010, p. 4). And Brian Seitz notes that Foucault’s attention towards Sartre was mostly aimed towards “critical
repudiation” of his work. And even though “collaboration” between Sartre and Foucault is, according to Mathew Eshleman, “generally taken to be antithetical,” it is not, he maintains, “prima facie impossible” (Eshleman, 2004, p. 59). For as Brian Seitz further suggests, “even before turning to the linkages between their divergent philosophies,” Foucault’s “relatively numerous references to Sartre” makes it “clear that Sartre is quite literally in the corpus of Foucault” (Seitz, 2004, p. 92). For one, in regards to freedom, both thinkers seem to be asking similar types of questions, that is, how does one situate freedom in a constraining system of social forces? How do those forces work to constrain freedom? What is the nature of these social forces? What does it mean to be free and constrained? How does the subject exercise freedom? All of these questions are engaged in one way or another by both Sartre and Foucault and will also act to frame the discussion of freedom in this paper.

We are thus to compare two commonly regarded antithetical views of freedom. We could, as is commonly done, pick one and show through a comparative analysis its superiority and shortcomings in regards to the other, or we could disregard both of them in terms of each other, but instead we will labor to show both of their respective strengths and weaknesses in regards to understanding the concept of freedom itself. The concluding section of Chapter III, Social Viscosity, will suggest a means of utilizing Sartrean terms of freedom and mechanisms of constraint along with the Foucauldian terms of power and resistance to describe a measure of freedom of the subject. That is, a measure of relative constraint produced by the intersectionality of social forces acting upon and by means of the
freedom of the subject. In order to be able to situate our subject in both Sartrean and Foucauldian terms we will necessarily have to discuss each in part.

Chapter II, Sartrean Freedom- A Social Reading, is an account of Sartrean freedom as found in both *Being and Nothingness* (1943) and *Critique of Dialectical Reason* (1960). An account, or a reading of Sartrean freedom is provocative since historically disputes and misunderstanding of Sartre’s concept of freedom has permeated secondary scholarship on the subject. The first section of Chapter II addresses many of the objections regarding the cogency and coherence of Sartre’s concept of freedom. As we will see, many objections are defeated simply by reading the Sartrean text in its entirety before passing judgment on its content and conclusions.

The social analysis of Sartrean freedom herein is mostly informed by primary sources provided by Sartre himself in his works *Being and Nothingness* and *Critique of Dialectical Reason*. Contemporary secondary scholarship by Kevin Boileau, Joseph Catalano, David Detmer, Mathew Eshleman, Thomas Flynn, and Brian Seitz, have all likewise contributed to my understanding of a socially constrained form of freedom found in Sartre’s works. To position this for the reader in historical terms, Sartre’s first major work, *Being and Nothingness*, is inappropriately, but nonetheless commonly thought to have been Sartre’s most radical and existentially subjective form of freedom. The common thought is that in this work Sartre gives the subject absolute freedom do whatever is willed. Then, seventeen years later, Sartre released *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, and according to critics, refuted all of his
previous radical assertions to instead locate the subject in practical constraints of materiality and scarcity. This change in freedom formulates much popular criticism that contends that Sartre’s major works on freedom are incoherent and/or radically opposed to one another. We will see in Chapter II how this objection becomes moot when we in fact discover the foundation and explicit pronouncement of socially constrained freedom in *Being and Nothingness*.

The next sections of Chapter II describe the socially constraining concepts and mechanisms of facticity, the coefficient of adversity, the look, the practico-inert, and seriality and how each of these relate to the situation of freedom for the Sartrean subject. The subject for Sartre, we find is unrestrained internally, that is there is no practical constraint to the items of one’s conscious desires and aims. Sartre says that the subject is not bound by any temporal restrictions or motives, and is free, ontologically free, to act, resist against, or facilitate projects.

At the same time, the Sartrean subject we find is immersed in a situation that is filled with information and significations that are provided independent of the will of the subject. The subject in fact finds that the world is filled with Others and the world is full of meanings of things that Others provide. The ontological freedom of the Sartrean subject is thus constrained by the fact that it is immersed into a field of social existence with Others. Sartre contends that as subjects work together they naturally develop into social collectivities. These interactions consequently produce ‘practico-inert’ forces that bind the subject to social and material constraints. One’s job, the economy, the family structure, rules, customs, and social preferences all act
upon the free nature of the subject. The forces themselves are what Sartre calls practico-inert forces that act to promote serial conformism and normativity throughout the social body. For example, employers desire obedient, prompt, conscientious employees, and therefore good employees act obediently, are prompt, and are conscientious to the wants of the employer. The serializing nature of the practico-inert processes that constrain all of our freedom acts on us as mechanisms of normalization that concomitantly produces normalized relationships between all of its subjects. Seriality works in this way to culturally define what is good, normal, preferred, and true.

Each member of the social field helps to define and limit the Other by means of adopting the cultural truths of the local serial significations. Sartre famously describes the situation of being discovered as an object by ‘the look’ in which an Other objectifies the subject into an object without his/her consent. The look is an important aspect of Sartre’s work as well as for the content of this investigation that finds that the look operates in a number of ways to constrain and situate the subject into the order of normativity and preference found in the prevailing social forces.

Chapter III, in contrast, formulates the framework for a discussion of Foucauldian freedom as found in the dyadic relationship of power and resistance. For Foucault, we find in the primary sources, that he does not discuss freedom explicitly in much detail, instead his works are imbued with discussions of power. One finds that his works in fact have largely been devoted to archaeological and genealogical investigations of power and its mechanisms. In his discussions of these
topics, Foucault claims that power operates co-extensively and in concert with resistance. We thus find that the Foucauldian subject is not the isolated ontologically free subject as it was for Sartre, but instead is constrained both from within and from without in a dyadic interplay between power and resistance. Freedom for Foucault is either and both an act of power and an act of resistance.

Our investigation will show the relationship between the Sartrean concept of an ontologically free subject acted upon by practico-inert processes and the Foucauldian subject acted upon and articulating power. This investigation will find similarities in the operations of both freedom and constraint for both thinkers exemplified not only in Chapter III, Social Viscosity, but also in the mechanism of the look that acts to articulate power of the subjects of a social field.

In regards to the use of the look as a mechanism for social normalization, Foucault discusses Jeremy Bentham’s conception of the panopticon as an architectural example of the modern form of power. We will discuss the means by which panoptic mechanisms work to promote docility in its subjects as well as the ramifications that such a mechanism has on the look in our everyday experiences with Others.

Our investigation will further discuss how Foucault’s modern form of ‘bio-power’ came into fruition. In this regard, Foucault discusses how the archaic, ‘repressive,’ form of power acted to keep populations dependent on the sovereign authority through violence and explicit visual punishment. The modern form of power, on the contrary he says, is largely unseen and unremarked. Power acts on
everyone without it being explicitly clear in its actions. Power pervades our discourse, our meanings, our preferences, and normative standards of cultural acceptability. Foucault contends that technologies such as Bentham’s panopticon has allowed power to permeate throughout the social field in its actions to maintain disciplinary controls over the population in a subtle and self-producing manner. This operates through technologies of power as found in the architecture of the panopticon, which utilize the gaze (the look) to impart self-judgment by those being gazed upon. Foucault’s modern form of power, we will find, promotes self-discipline while also passing judgment regarding normality onto Others by means of the look.

Foucault’s conception of power operates, I will argue, in much the same manner as Sartre’s ontologically free subject acting within the constraints of practico-inert processes. The works of Sartre and Foucault offer explicit examples of these similarities in regards to freedom and constraint. Brian Seitz asks: “can we understand either of them better by contemplating the possible linkages between them?” (Seitz, 2004, p. 92) The answer, as we will come to argue herein, is affirmative. Sartre and Foucault will each provide components to our analysis that the other lacks in his own perspective. Sartre, the existentialist offers us a perspective on the relationship that we all have with ontological freedom, while Foucault, the post-structuralist, offers us perspective on the role that freedom has in overcoming structural determinism. These two perspectives, we will come to see, are important when the objectification of and by the look is shown to have
constraining effects on our freedom do to external and internal forces of serial normativity.

We will thus begin with an analysis of Sartrean freedom exclusively then move on to a Foucauldian account that we will refer to in Sartre’s terms, allowing us a vocabulary from which to operate.
CHAPTER II

SARTREAN FREEDOM – A SOCIAL READING

Absolute and Constrained?

In order to begin our investigation, attention must be paid to the critics of Sartre’s use of the term freedom. David Detmer suggests that in many instances, a basic understanding of Sartre’s general position has been hindered by “widespread acceptance of certain erroneous criticisms,” and so any contemporary discussion of Sartre’s position on freedom must be prefaced with “demonstrating that these criticisms are unsound” (Detmer, 1986, p. 36). Sartre’s philosophy has often been misrepresented in the literature due to, among other reasons, both the complexity of his written style as well as the volume of work that he himself produced. Sartre, never unwilling to transcend himself, produced numerous opportunities for readers to discover contradictions over the scope of his philosophical oeuvre. One such example is when he writes that a “slave in chains is as free as his master” (Sartre, 1943, p. 550), and also, “man cannot be sometimes slave and sometimes free; he is wholly and forever free or not free at all” (Sartre, 1943, p. 441). Although Sartre’s penchant for the dramatic has been misunderstood by some critics who suggest that his work is purely subjective, upon closer reading of the text, we do in fact find the contrary.
Rather than the absolutely free, unrestrained, solipsistic subject assigned to the Sartrean subject by some critics, one finds, even in his early work *Being and Nothingness (BN)*, a socially constrained subject, immersed in the situation of the world that is inhabited by others. In fact, in opposition to the assertion that Sartre’s view of freedom is strictly of the pure, absolutely unrestrained type, Sartre describes “different senses of freedom” (Detmer, 1986, p. 62). Detmer notes “explicit” distinctions that Sartre makes between “‘freedom’ and ‘power,’ between ‘freedom of choice’ and ‘freedom of obtaining’; between the freedom we are and the freedom we can become; between ‘metaphysical,’ ‘artistic,’ and ‘political and social’ freedom; between ‘abstract freedom, and ‘concrete freedom,’ between ‘political and intellectual freedom’ and ‘economic and social freedom’; and between ‘ontological freedom’ and ‘conditioned and limited freedom’” (Detmer, 1986, p. 59). The assertion that Sartrean freedom is simple and absolute does not accurately describe the complexity of the situation that ‘being-in-the-world’ with others, presents to freedom.

The distinction between ontological freedom and practical freedom promotes much of the popular critical discussion of Sartre’s conception of freedom and thus requires a brief explanation. Sartre’s account of ontological freedom is absolute, and is described in the assertion that “a slave in chains is as free as his master” (Sartre, 1943, p. 550). Sartre says all situations allow for some aspect of freedom. That is, another cannot control one’s free choosing, nor can one’s will be usurped or totally extinguished no matter how dire the circumstances. Practical
freedom on the other hand is conditioned and limited, relating to those things that may be done or accomplished. Practical freedom is related to choices that are available to the ontologically free subject in a given situation. Practical freedom in this way limits the objections of “show me someone who can fly,” but ontological freedom suggests that someone may surely try if they so chose. The critical issues that arise from these two particular senses of freedom stems from Sartre’s general but not exclusive use of ontological freedom in BN and his predominant use of practical freedom in the Critique of Dialectical Reason (CDR). Critics of Sartre’s conception of freedom have, according to Detmer, typically objected to one of three categories that he has named “the omnipotence objection,” “the inconsistency objection,” and the “radical break objection” (Detmer, 1986).

Omnipotence objectors focus on particular provocative statements such as the aforementioned “man is wholly and forever free,” and generalize about the impracticalities of such a statement. Omnipotence objections focus exclusively on the ontological sense of freedom in BN and make statements such as “if a slave is as free as his master, then he/she should be able to leave their situation behind them,” or the aforementioned “if humans are free to do anything than show me one that can fly.” The omnipotence objectors mistakenly equate Sartre’s ontological descriptions of freedom with the phenomena of practical freedom and fallaciously misrepresent his philosophy this way in the secondary literature. Omnipotence objectors miss the “real problem” with Sartre’s concept of freedom, namely the reconciliation of the “absolute freedom’ strand” (ontological freedom) and the “restricted freedom’
strand” (practical freedom) (Detmer, 1986, p. 55). The omnipotence objectors, according to Detmer, are simply ignoring the “latter strand” (Detmer, 1986, p. 56).

The second typical type of objection to Sartre’s discussions of freedom is the “inconsistency objection.” Proponents of this objection suggest that the two prevailing “strands” of freedom (ontological and practical) are not reconcilable and in fact Sartre’s philosophy in this regard is inconsistent. Critics view the different types of freedom found in BN and the CDR respectively as evidence that Sartre’s work is logically inconsistent. Detmer suggests that proponents of this objection fail to notice the two strands as distinct and thus attack examples of ontological freedom as if they were meant to be assertions about practical freedoms (Detmer, 1986, p. 76). The arguments of inconsistency objectors he thus likens to a strawman fallacy in which a separate question than that which was first asked is presented and attacked. The inconsistency objection is made “due to the failure to investigate which sense of freedom is operative in any given statement” (Detmer, 1986, p. 77). The critic is thus comparing two different senses of freedom and acting as if they were both of the same sense, which results in a fallacious conclusion.

The third objection most often raised against Sartre’s theory of freedom is the “radical break objection.” Proponents of this type of objection suggest that the two strands of Sartre’s theory point to a “radical break” in his thinking between the writing of BN and CDR (Detmer, 1986, p. 93). The common criticism is that Sartre, in response to his critics, abandons the concept of “absolute freedom” of BN to
instead formulate a restricted version of freedom in *CDR*. Sartre is said by his critics to have recanted his earlier purely subjective version of freedom for a socially constrained version. So, for example, Neil Levy suggests that “although he never said as much, Sartre seems to have come to perceive the failure of his existentialist project, and . . . soon set off in a new direction” (Levy, 2002, p. 117). Levy then further claims that for “the new Sartre,” (the *CDR* version), “freedom will be essentially situated; our choices will exist within the framework of a world imbued with meanings we do not choose” (Levy, 2002, p. 118). As we will see in the next section, however this quote is in fact similar to what Sartre himself wrote in *BN*, a fact that contradicts Levy’s radical break objection.

**The Sociality of Sartre’s Existentialism**

The *CDR* is predominantly a social oriented text, introducing the freedom constraining concepts of the ‘practico-inert’ and ‘seriality.’ However, the social context from which the Sartrean subject operates is already present in *BN*. Sartre’s account of freedom in *BN* is constrained, according to Kevin Boileau, by “three categories of limits on freedom,” including: (a) The “material contours” of freedom described by what Sartre calls the coefficient of adversity, the situation, and the human condition; (b) By the interpersonal constraint of ‘the look’ where “human’s limit one’s individual freedom;” and (c) by the internal, self-limiting constraint that Sartre calls bad faith (Boileau, 2000, p. 78). Boileau suggests that Sartre “perpetually acknowledges that there were always limitations on freedom” (Boileau, 2000, p. 78). And furthermore, regarding the Levy-type objection, Sartre himself
has explicitly stated: “It would be quite wrong to interpret me as saying that man is free in all situations, as the Stoics claimed. I mean the exact opposite” (Sartre, 1960, p. 332).

As will be seen, critics of all three types of the aforementioned objections have simply failed to read Sartre’s work closely enough. For, as Matthew Eshleman points out, in parts I and II of BN, Sartre employs a “methodological solipsism” which he does not explain to the reader until “after abandoning it” “some three hundred pages into” the book (Eshleman, 2004, p. 66). Eshleman “argue(s) that Sartre’s early philosophy contains two views of freedom and subjectivity, one well-recognized but implausible, and the other undeveloped, unrecognized, but plausible” (Eshleman, 2004, p. 58). The transition in BN from the ontological account of freedom in Parts I and II, to the practical account of part III, is found when Sartre “abandons his non-egotological view” of consciousness (Eshleman, 2004, p. 66). Eshleman states, “in the first half of Being and Nothingness Sartre maintains that consciousness is non-egotological and that freedom is absolute” (Eshleman, 2004, p. 65). The ego, for Sartre, arises from an act of self-reflection that occurs prior to the ego being formed. The ego in Sartre’s account does not modify the subject, the subject in fact, constructs the ego. Thus, according to Eshleman, the ontological freedom found in Parts I and II of BN, concern the unconstrained, ego-less subject. In the first two sections of BN, Sartre gives an ontological account of the phenomenological separation of consciousness from the objects of one’s consciousness. Entitled “The Problem with Nothingness” and “Being For-Itself,”
these first two sections deal with the for-itself and nothingness in addition to the relation of the for-itself to being. We find that the for-itself is the ontologically free, Sartrean subject, engaged in the material world, the in-itself. The being of the in-itself is blunt and full of positivity, while the being of the for-itself comes into existence as a transcendence of the in-itself, a negation of its positivity. The in-itself is composed of those things that we as beings of consciousness perceive i.e. rocks, trees, cars, mountains, cold, heat, etc. The in-itself is defined and found to have meaning and value only as a function of the conscious action of the for-itself. The in-itself exists and lends itself, by means of profound apathy, to the project-oriented for-itself. The percepts become objects to use, to admire, to overcome, or to avoid (Detmer, 2008). The for-itself interprets the percepts of its consciousness consistent with the practicalities of its own projects and transcends the limitations found in the blunt existence of the in-itself.

The for-itself surges up from the in-itself and begins the process of “perpetually determining itself not to be the in-itself” (Sartre, 1943, p. 134). The for-itself in this way is not posited into or amongst the in-itself, but rather comes into existence through and apposed to the in-itself (Sartre, 1943, p. 134). By reflecting on that which it isn’t, the for-itself engages in a “nihilation of being... (which) represents the original connection between the being of the for-itself and the being of the in-itself” (Sartre, 1943, p. 134). In this way, the for-itself nihilates the in-itself as it determines that which it is not.

The structure of the being of the for-itself, including the situation that
conditions its freedom, is what Sartre calls the three ekstasis. These are nicely illuminated in the following quote by Simone de Beauvoir:

Between the past which no longer is and the future which is not yet, this moment when he exists is nothingness. This privilege, which he alone possesses, of being a sovereign and unique subject amidst a universe of objects, is what he shares with all his fellow-men. In turn an object for others, he is nothing more than an individual in the collectivity on which he depends. (Beauvoir, 1948, p. 7)

In the first lines above, de Beauvoir distinguishes between the self, temporality, and the nothingness that exists between them, Sartre’s first ekstasis. The consciousness of the for-itself is absolutely free from the in-itself and through the act of nihilation is functionally separated from it by means of nothingness. The distinction between the for-itself and the in-itself and the separation between these two types of being represents the “first ekstasis” and suggests that one’s past, present, and future do not determine the ontological freedom of the for-itself (Sartre, 1943, p. 298). Nothingness in this way, for Sartre, represents a space between one’s history, ego, promises and one’s current freedom to act.

Sartre describes a gambler, who having previously resolved to cease gambling, suddenly enters a party that has a gambling table. The gambler is not compelled, due any past promises or commitments, to not gamble. The gambler in fact feels the anguish of his addiction at the realization of having to make a free choice. He must choose anew each and every time since, in Sartre’s view, there are no existing constraints, no ontological entanglements that fundamentally restrict one's freedom of choice. Now, of course, many decisions by people are not made with the explicit knowledge of one’s freedom-to-act and so they often disregard the
opportunity, or rather they will suggest that their decision was made by some pre-existing motive or promise. Acting in this way for Sartre is an act of bad faith, a form of self-deception in which one disregards the ontological sense of one’s freedom. The gambler may say to himself, “my commitment I made six months ago to not gamble, has worked,” and for Sartre, be an act of bad faith since the gambler does not recognize the freedom existing in the choose to gamble or not to gamble. The gambler, in Sartre’s view, consistent with the first ekstasis, is not committed to any type of temporal motives that would necessitate or determine his choice of action.

The second ekstasis of reflection, describes reflection of the consciousness one has of oneself. De Beauvoir’s mention of the “sovereign and unique subject” is indicative of the second ekstasis that asserts that consciousness is separate, independent, and unique in relation to the items of consciousness. That is, there exists in the being of the for-itself a fundamental separation of oneself from the items of one’s consciousness as demonstrated by being able to reflect on one’s own act of reflecting i.e. thinking about having had a thought for example. Consciousness operating in terms of the second ekstasis is always conscious of the presence of itself. That is, when one is conscious of any particular item, the consciousness of the for-itself does not become absorbed or nihilated by the item. In fact the for-itself is always aware of itself engaging with any item of consciousness. Sartre calls this non-positional awareness and describes the type of being of the second ekstasis.

The third ekstasis, “being-for-others,” discussed in the third section of BN is the final mode of being found in the structure of the for-itself (Sartre, 1943, p. 301).
It is here that the second, “undeveloped, unrecognized, but plausible” view of freedom, for Eshleman, is described. The final line in de Beauvoir’s quote describes the third ekstasis relating the being of the for-itself as “an object for others.” Sartre states that “my selfness and that of the Other are structures of one and the same totality of being” (Sartre, 1943, p. 299). Ontologically, the existence of others renders the Sartrean subject an object. Pointed-out, seen, and defined, an individual in this way “experience(s) the subjectivity of Others directly-by becoming an object for the Others” (Detmer, 2008, p. 93).

The undeniable existence of Others shapes, allows, and constrains one’s freedom by means of being objectified by their actions, intentions, and prejudices. One comes to see oneself as an individual, an Other for Others in this mode of being. The freedom found in the ontological structure of the first and second ekstasis of being, is the for-itself separated and bound by nothing, including Others. If Sartre’s conception of the subject had not included the third ekstasis, we would have been left with a form of subjectivism that the omnipotence objection describes, in which the absolutely free subject is not constrained. Though in fact the subjective objection that omnipotence objectors make is undermined with the inclusion of the third ekstasis. Such that, the for-itself is not a purely subjective mode of being since intrinsic in its own existence is the relationships that it has with Others. The first and second ekstasis only provides knowledge of ourselves and the type of being that we are, but they do not grant us any knowledge of Others. In contrast, Sartre’s third ekstasis allows him to say that “the Other’s existence is necessary in order for me to
be an object for myself” (Sartre, 1943, p. 248). He states further:

I cannot escape myself, I re-apprehend myself from behind. Even if I could attempt to make myself an object, I would already be myself at the heart of that object which I am; and at the very center of that object I should have to be the subject who is looking at it. (Sartre, 1943, p. 248)

One cannot objectify oneself in the same way that the Other is able to. The Other constructs a world filled with the products of his own freedom and constraint. I as an object am included or excluded relative to the freedom of his projects e.g. If he is off to the store, am I an obstacle, a resource, or simply discounted in relation to the immediate project? I am objectified and positioned in this way into the context of the Other’s situation of which I have no privilege of understanding.

Sartre’s third ekstasis thus shows that instead of freedom being absolute, freedom is a “relation to the given,” practical freedom (Sartre, 1943, p. 624). Freedom for the for-itself does not exist in a subjective vacuum but rather it functions in a social context with Others. This is why Sartre suggests: “the Other’s existence brings a factual limit to my freedom” (Sartre, 1943, p. 671). The consequence of the existence of others thus undercuts the notion of absolute freedom leaving the views of the omnipotence objectors in question.

Eshleman proposes that Sartre’s discussion of the socio-ontological entanglement that results from the free for-itself in fact being in the world with others modifies the existentialist tenant from “existence precedes essence” to “sociality precedes existence” and asserts that “social forces constitute who I am, and in a way that frames, conditions, and constrains freedom” (Eshleman, 2004, p. 59). Sartre, later in the CDR, says in regards to this very point that “Existentialism denied
the *a priori* existence of essences; must we not now admit that they do exist" (Sartre, 1960, p. 231)? The social forces that constitute and constrain freedom will be the subject of much of the remaining body of this paper. One such constraint functions by means of ‘the look.’ For Sartre, the Other comes to be known by us while also providing us knowledge of ourselves through the mechanism of the look. To this we now turn our attention.

The ‘Look’ of the ‘Looker’ and the ‘Looked-at’ as Reciprocal Objectification

Sartre’s work is full of famously illustrative examples and none more so than his discussion of the look. The look not only provides ontological evidence of the Others’ existence in the world, it likewise objectifies the subject by way of the Other’s look. The look thus provides the means by which the subject becomes an object against his own choosing i.e. a limit to one’s freedom. Regarding this relationship between subject and object Sartre writes:

The Other-as-object . . . (is) defined in connection with the world, as the object which *sees* what I see . . . the Other-as-subject must be able to be referred back to my permanent possibility of *being seen* by the Other. It is in and through the revelation of my being-as-object for the Other that I must be able to apprehend the presence of his being-as-subject. (Sartre, 1943, p. 256)

He famously suggests that if you have “just . . . looked through a keyhole,” and you are alone, immersed in observing the situation happening behind the door, and then “all of a sudden (you) hear footsteps in the hall,” you ontologically experience the objectification by the other, you are being looked at (Sartre, 1943, p. 260). One’s ontological experience, as Sartre notes, may elicit shame, but other experiences of
fear or anger are just as likely.

The objectification of the look is an important aspect of our being for others. It enables us to see and be seen. Eshleman interprets the look to mean that “the Other’s objectifying gaze partially constitutes my social identity, confers meanings upon me, conditions how I interpret situations, and limits how I act in the world” (Eshleman, 2010, p. 125). The look of the other thus fixes objective distinctions upon me that includes their expectations of me, what they believe I am capable of, what they think my likely motives are, and how my being makes sense within the context of their world. These of course are only objective in the sense that the looker organizes the distinctions found in his/her look into his/her situation. A number of ontological possibilities and reactions may arise depending on the relation that the looker has with the context of the situation, the looker’s particular history, and/or any information (visual, social, contextual) that I, the looked-at, provide to the situation. Suppose the looker is a servant in a house, circa 1787, and is caught looking-at something in the bedroom of the aristocratic homeowner’s wife. The reaction will not likely be shame, but fear. The homeowner’s young toddler on the other hand, as the looker, will not likely be fearful but possibly giddy and playful for being caught by her father.

What ought to be noted is that the look, according to Sartre “comes to search for me at the heart of my situation” (Sartre, 1943, p. 263). The look confers judgment upon me where I am found. If I am found to be dressed like a doctor complete with clipboard and name badge while in a medical facility I am
pronounced a doctor by what the look finds in its analysis. The situation provides a context from which social judgments are passed on me while being seen by the look. If therefore, in a racist society, I am a black man found to be in a predominantly white neighborhood at night, the look will likely judge me to be acting suspiciously or with criminal intent. Likewise, the reciprocal look originating from me confers judgment on the Other, looking at me in a reciprocal objectification. That is, each For-itself objectifies the Other in terms of both itself and the situation, while also judging itself in relation to its own perception of how it is being seen by the other in the situation. Each perspective in this way confers a self-objectification, a self-judging position in relation to the other and the situation. That is, the phenomenological experiences of shame, fear, and happiness when looked-at come from the perception of oneself in the process of being seen. The for-itself judges the Other and at the same time is judgmental about herself in the process of being looked at by the Other. The reciprocity of the looker-being-looked-at relationship confers judgment on each member of the relationship in relation to each other in-situation.

In regards to this and freedom Sartre states: “I am a slave to the degree that my being is dependent at the very center of a freedom which is not mine and which is the very condition of my being,” namely the third ekstasis of the for-itself (Sartre, 1943, p. 267). The existence of others is indeed fundamental to the exercise and value of freedom and he says that it would theoretically “not be impossible to conceive of a For-itself which would be wholly free from all For-others and which
would exist without even suspecting the possibility of being an object” (Sartre, 1943, p. 376). Sartre is describing here a pure For-itself with no limitations to her decisions and course of action. One who is unrestrained by social normativity as well as by shame and modesty. One who has not been impeded or cut off from a project or goal by the freedom of the Other. However, under these circumstances, Sartre says “that this For-itself simply would not be ‘man’” (Sartre, 1943, p. 376).

**Facticity in Situation**

In fact, the world we find is contrary to the phenomenon of a pure, unentangled, absolute For-itself. Instead the world is, according to Sartre, “haunted by my fellowman,” wherein “I find myself engaged in an *already meaningful* world which reflects to me meanings which I have not put into it” (Sartre, 1943, p. 655). Regarding the freedom of the for-itself, the world in BN is already an entangled social milieu of possibilities and constraints.

Sartre writes: “the for-itself *is* in so far as it is thrown into the world and abandoned in a ‘situation’” (Sartre, 1943, p. 127). The Sartrean ‘situation’ is a relationship between the ontologically free for-itself and the practical constraints imposed on its freedom by both the in-itself and Others. De Beauvoir eloquently writes that man “asserts himself as a pure internality against which no external power can take hold, and he also experiences himself as a thing crushed by the dark weight of other things” (Beauvoir, 1948, p. 7). This ambiguity in our existence that she describes in *The Ethics of Ambiguity* is further addressed by Sartre when he states: “There can be a free for itself only as engaged in a resisting world,” and “the
for-itself discovers itself as engaged in being, hemmed in by being, threatened by being” (Sartre, 1943, pp. 621, 487).

For Sartre, one’s consciousness always refers to itself in relation to that which it isn’t. This includes material things, Others, and one’s own ‘facticity.’ Facticity refers to the “set of facts” that the for-itself encounters in every situation (Detmer, 1986, p. 40). The facts themselves are already present as the “context out of which” the freedom of the for-itself operates (Detmer, 1986, p. 40). Detmer states that one’s facticity includes facts relating to time and place of your birth, socio-economic status of your family, your sex, color of (your) skin, current height and weight, as well as all of your past acts, the attitudes that others have towards you, and the locations of current and previous residences (Detmer, 1986, p. 40). Sartre’s concept of facticity limits and constrains freedom in such a way that both exist as distinct parts of an interdependent relationship. That is, freedom is expressed out of the context of one’s facticity.

Facticity also defines the details of one’s own set of social signifiers such as race, sex, gender, education level, economic class, and relative physical and psychological health. Facticity is in this way a set of personal facts whose relevance and importance is both idiosyncratic and socially derived. We should notice that these facts are judged in relation to social constructs of normativity against which one may confer judgments of either good or bad, beautiful or ugly, preferred or not. One’s resistance to these socially construed facts is an act of freedom, as Sartre would agree.
In regards to the practicality of actually achieving a course of action, Sartre adopts the term “coefficient of adversity” to describe the relative ease or difficulty of performing an act in a situation. One’s coefficient of adversity relates one’s facticity to the material requirements for a proposed project. Take the example of one who is running a marathon whose personal level of physical fitness required to finish the race necessitates a certain personal facticity. One’s facticity in relation to the material constraints of the race can be described as a coefficient of adversity. A low coefficient of adversity suggests the potential for accomplishing the project as being likely or relatively easy. A high coefficient of adversity suggests that accomplishing the proposed project will be a relatively difficult proposal.

More specifically, Sartre describes a crag such that the for-itself decides whether it is an un-scalable obstacle or an opportunity. Either choice is made in relation to whether one’s projects are cut-off by the crag or include it as something to be overcome. The free choice of the approach to the crag in relation to the project of the individual determines the nature of the crag as a coefficient of adversity. For the individual trying to get around to the other side of the crag the coefficient of adversity is much higher than someone who simple wishes to explore the aesthetics of the crag or one who wishes to scale it for sport. In the case of one wishing to cross over the crag, able bodies have a lower coefficient of adversity than less able bodies. The wealthy, able to afford adequate and even state-of-the-art safety equipment have a lower coefficient of adversity than someone without proper climbing equipment. The wealthy have other possible options to cross to the other
side of the crag by means of chartering a helicopter or an airplane, which may effectively be an impossibility for someone who is poor. The point is that each subject-in-situation, while choosing within the world of their facticity, is constrained severely, negligibly or somewhere in between these two poles via his/her realization of a freely chosen project.

Social Orientation and the Constraints of the Practico-Inert

Continuing with our analysis, we have found that facticity orients the subject in relation to Others. The individual exists in-situation and is objectified both in terms of the meanings found in the world as well as through the look of Others. Practically, any social configuration allows or constrains individual freedoms through means of material and social objectification. Every culture or social field comes resplendent with its own signifiers that vary from system to system depending on racial prejudices, normative sexual practices, linguistic, social, and political preferences. These socially derived preferences limit individuals in the social field by means of various disciplinary and normalizing mechanisms. Sartre says: “the coefficient of adversity in things is revealed to me before being experienced by me. Hosts of notices put me on guard: ‘Reduce speed. Dangerous curve,’ ‘slow. School.’ ‘Danger,’ ‘Narrow bridge 100 feet ahead,’ etc” (Sartre, 1943, p. 511). Here, the potential spontaneity of the free-for-itself-in-situation is constrained by a “state which is imposed upon (it)” (Sartre, 1943, p. 656).
Sartre continues to write that the existence of Others “results in the fact of the collective ownership of techniques,” and “these techniques are going to determine my belonging to collectivities: to the human race, to the national collectivity, to the professional and family group” (Sartre, 1943, p. 657). The collective techniques that determine one’s admission or rejection into delineated collectivities and groups foreshadows the development of the “practico inert” which Sartre elaborates on in the CDR. The practico-inert is the means by which human activities (praxis) produce an inertial force that propagates throughout the practical (material) social field. Boileau calls it an “equivalence between alienated praxis and worked inertia” (Boileau, 2000, p. 79). Boileau explains: “praxis becomes alienated when the matter we have worked over for some purpose begins to absorb our past actions toward it and to reflect back to us the meanings we have inscribed in it” (Boileau, 2000, p. 80). The effect is that “material and social structures begin to resist our freedom to assign new meanings to them” (Boileau, 2000, p. 80).

The crag in our prior example may be modified by our actions in such a way that opportunities to use it in different ways becomes limited. Suppose the middle portion of the crag is excavated in order to construct a road to drive through it. Opportunities for scaling and aesthetic appreciation thus become severely constrained. Eventually the crag is reduced to scenery on either side of the road as you pass through it and the adversity associated with crossing over it is negligible. The resulting material inertia is thus multi-directional in its means of dispersion and effects and becomes both a constraint to those looking to scale the crag and/or a
provider of opportunities for those simply wishing to get to the other side. The “inertia that impedes our ability to see other interpretations is the practico-inert. Thus, once our freedom has become appropriated from us by our own doing it can come back to us as resistance” (Boileau, 2000, p. 80). The material project of excavating the crag is thus shown to limit one’s freedom to view the crag in other ways.

The crag example shows us that objectification of the material field limits our free interpretation and use of the crag, and also further implies that changing the crag may produce such effects as socio-economic inertia in the form of taxation and road-use fees to both pay for construction and future maintenance on the road. Furthermore effects in the form of ecological and geological disruptions that the excavation and road construction may have produced can further limit and constrain freedom in the future. Sartre says, “the practico-inert field is the field of our servitude” (Sartre, 1960, p. 332). Sartre here says that servitude is to be understood as “subservience” to “natural,” “mechanical,” and “anti-social” forces (Sartre, 1960, p. 332). These forces of inertia we have seen relate to constraints in the form of a higher or lower coefficient of adversity in regards to one’s freedom and vary in intensity depending on one’s position in relation to their affectivity. Our servitude is found to be due to an entanglement of these forces that unfold as practico-inert processes. Material and social forces act upon the subject in the context of his freedom and relate as either conducive to or a constraint to freedom.
For Sartre, the practico-processes which underlie the freedom and constraint relationship is the condition of scarcity.

Sartre dramatically claims: “all men are slaves in so far as their life unfolds in the practico-inert field and in so far as this field is always conditioned by scarcity” (Sartre, 1960, p. 332). Scarcity holds a prominent place in the CDR, which was written to position Marxism within an Existentialist framework. For Sartre, scarcity underlies the fundamental condition of dialectical competition between individuals.

(Human) praxis is work in the context of scarcity, work that we do to satisfy our needs. It is the unifying and reorganizing transcendence of the existing situation toward the practical field, which involves negation, conservation, and forward movement. This originative and purposive activity is dialectical because it constantly totalizes its past and present in relation to an objective . . . in the future. (Boileau, 2000, p. 103)

The dialectic is both restrictive of our ontological freedom, and at the same time, constitutes our practical freedom. Our practical freedom is the product of the dialectical synthesis between ontological freedom and material and social constraints. We totalize the past and present by bringing our facticity along with us, we identify ourselves with particular significations, we constrain ourselves with the content of our egos, our perceived limitations and strengths. We participate in this dialectical process, according to Boileau by “standing back from it, by thinking about it, by acting within it, by processing the practico-inert” (Boileau, 2000, p. 104). We act within the practico-inert field and it encompasses our lives by shaping and defining available practical freedoms in relation to our situation.

Sartre in CDR suggests that scarcity is the primary relation between individuals in a common situation who then act with organizational and political
responses to the prevailing field of scarcity. Human beings are “born and developed within the permanent framework of a field of tension produced by scarcity,” (Sartre, 1960, p. 125). Surviving in a field of scarcity requires material praxis (work) in order to overcome the material requirements of living (needs). Sartre writes: “There is always less than there should be, less food than there should be to meet human needs, and not even enough people engaged in producing that food. In short, we are surrounded by scarcity, which is a real fact. We always lack something” (Sartre, 1996, p. 91). Human, material praxis, as we have seen for Sartre, produces an inertial force that acts to bind its members together into a collective. The bond between the individuals is found to originate in the milieu of work and action for the sake of confronting conditions of scarcity. This milieu is “the collective ownership of techniques” that makes up the local socio-material culture, the practico-inert (Sartre, 1943, p. 657).

One example of the collective ownership of techniques to overcome scarcity is the local cooperation of “early humans working together to bring down a mammoth.” Other less obvious examples such as a lack of art museums in a city that precipitates the formation of a citizens group to elicit support for a new museum are also relevant to the condition of scarcity. In this way a material lack or even a perceived social lack may produce impetus for action. Sartre says that “every praxis is primarily an instrumentalisation of material reality . . . a passive reflection . . . of a human enterprise undertaken in particular circumstances” (Sartre, 1960, p. 161). The collective actions of individuals in a material field produce bonds of material
inertia that constitute the basis for a field of practical freedom out of which the for-itself operates. Bound by the practico-inert field, individuals form into collectives, the "being of sociality itself at the level of the practico-inert" (Sartre, 1960, p. 204). Sartre says that all “social objects (by which I mean any objects which have a collective structure and which, as such, must be the subject matter of sociology) are, ... beings of the practico-inert field” (Sartre, 1960, p. 253). The practico-inert field which constitutes these social objects is thus the collection of social processes that are present in a collectivity of individuals. Catalano says that the practico-inert “is rooted in a history of collective human practices; for example, the practico-inert is the ensemble of rules, laws, codes of behavior as well as in the entire social complex that tends to keep us on the social level in which we were born” (Catalano, 2007, p. 51). Catalano seems pessimistic about the inevitability of one’s situation as defined and limited within the practico-inert field which in fact brings us to the heart of the investigation of this paper.

Catalano asks: “if the practico-inert reacts on us in negative ways—for example, to retain class distinctions—why do we seem impotent to alter it for the better? (Catalano, 2007, p. 252). There are two important points to be made in regards to this question. The first being that the practico-inert is not strictly an \textit{a priori} negating constraint. After all, its very existence provides opportunities to traverse the field. Second, Sartre discusses the idea of “class viscosity” which suggests that class being is restrictive but not exclusive. The notion of viscosity will become clearer later, but regardless, to alter it (the practico-inert) for the better, is
much more complicated than simply changing rules, laws, and codes of behavior, since the impotency that constrains the change is a function of power and thus not strictly due to material inertia (Catalano, 2007, p. 51).

The practico-inert cannot be regarded as strictly a constraint since, if for example, someone has a personal quest to become a jet fighter pilot, she is dependent on both the possibility of materially being able to actually become a pilot, as well as the social-level of organization that entails having a force of fighter jets in the first place and thus in need of pilots. To become a fighter pilot requires an array of education, training, specialized equipment, and instructors. A practical material field that provides for the training of fighter pilots is thus required in order to become one. Furthermore, the time requirements and self-discipline needed to complete pilot training require certain self-imposed constraints to the pilot’s practical freedoms. The self-discipline of the fighter pilot hopeful is an example of freely choosing to integrate and acquiesce to the practical field by allowing oneself to become constrained by the material demands of one’s project i.e. a positive use of practico-inert being.

For Sartre, the issue of freedom in this regard is the danger that acquiescence to the practico-field becomes one’s only mode of being. Hypostatizing one’s being this way as a fighter pilot is self-limiting, self-defeating and is representative of again what Sartre calls bad-faith. The material demands of the practico-inert produce the opportunity for what Sartre defines as seriality, in which one immerses
oneself totally into practico-inert being. For Sartre, freedom in this way constitutes a form of resistance to serial being.

Serial Normativity

One negative aspect (in relation to freedom) of the practico-inert includes the freedom limiting aspect of seriality. The practico-inert is the collection of social and material forces that constitute, among other things, the facts of the local forms of dominance, prejudice, linguistic discourse, politics, and gender relations in the experiential field of a particular individual. The mode of being of the practico-inert is serial i.e. preferring homogenous categorizations of its objects. Practico-inert being thus requires a lack of autonomy, and by means of this, through the adoption of a serial mode of being, one may be assimilated into the practico-process. One’s social facticity will influence how one is assimilated as a practico-inert being into the field. Normativity and/or deviations in this assimilation process is reflected as one’s relative coefficient of adversity.

The serial field works best with cooperation so the subject wakes up early, eats breakfast, dresses appropriately, arrives to work on time, and conforms to company policies and procedures. Sartre states that “the machine defines and produces the reality of its servant, that is to say, it makes of him a practico-inert Being” (Sartre, 1960, p. 207). In another example, Sartre describes a queue of people waiting for a bus. The number of seats that the bus will have when it arrives determines how many people in line will be able to get on the bus. As a member of the queue you do not have any other relation to Others in line with you except for
the serial relation of acting as a placeholder in the line for one of the future seats. The practico-process of waiting for the bus requires a lack of individuality and autonomy that produces you in this way as a practico-inert object. One’s social class, occupation, gender, and race do not provide any advantage to one’s possibility of getting a seat, only the serial nature of confining oneself to your place in line. Stanley Milgram’s work in *Obedience to Authority*, gives an account of the “agentic state” which is an appropriate example of the phenomena that serial acquiescence entails.

The agentic state is characterized when first “the entire set of activities carried out by the subject comes to be pervaded by his relationship to the authority” and “the subject self-constrains his/her freedom in relation to the demands of the authority” (Milgram, 1974, p. 143). In the agentic state, the “subject typically wishes to perform completely and to make a good appearance before this central” authority (Milgram, 1974, p. 143). That is, the subject adopts a mode of conduct that the serial demands of discipline and cooperation favor and expect. The serial nature of practico-inert being prefers cooperative, collective, non-individualized behaviors and actions. The agentic state is the phenomenon of consigning oneself to a serial mode of being. Sartre’s signs and notices that “put me on guard,” that are found to have meaning in the practico-inert provide “indications for a conduct to be adopted” (Sartre, 1943, p. 511). So we are told:

In particular we have observed that directions, instructions, orders, prohibitions, billboards are addressed to me in so far as I am just anybody; to the extent that I obey them, that I fall into line, I submit to the goals of a
human reality which is just anybody and I realize them by just any techniques. (Sartre, 1960, p. 511)

The practico-inert in this way establishes normative, practical constraints relating to those things that a particular subject ought to do based on the requirements of seriality.

Sartre does not elaborate on the normative function of the practico-inert, but we can speculate that the production of social normative customs comes from the generated practico-inert field in which normativity is rewarded while deviance is corrected or punished. A whole array of preference is constituted out of this relationship of normativity and deviance where normative characteristics are preferred to deviant characteristics. The field of inertia arising out of this milieu of preference and restriction develops into dyadic pairs of preferred/non-preferred, good/bad, pass/fail, right/wrong. In this way we have identified a mechanism that prescribes conformity as well as a standard that determines if its subjects are conforming to its preferences. Those with preferred characteristics are afforded access to the resources and training necessary to become a jet fighter pilot for example. In this way we can see that some social characteristics will produce constraints (non-normative) to practical freedoms while others (normative) facilitate practical freedoms. In a practico-inert field that is racist, sexist, or homophobic, subjects are positioned in relation to possibilities constrained by these practico-inert normalizing mechanisms. The sexist practico-inert field will present practical restrictions to the freedom of female fighter pilot hopefuls, for example. Racist practico-inert effects may include disparaging access to education, political
representation, legal equality, and general economic potential directed towards the marginalized race. These effects will normalize the dominant race as preferred, the marginalized race as not preferred, and thus provide preference for opportunities of the dominant group. Sexist and homophobic effects include social preference towards men and the sexualization of women. The objectification of women into sexual objects is reinforced through homophobia. This occurs because homophobia acts to further masculinize heterosexual men and thus less aggressive men are stereotyped as homosexuals. The hetero-masculinization of men in opposition to homophobia thus acts to further masculinize heterosexuals and further reinforces the hetero-sexualization of women.

In the case of the U.S. military, which strives for normative homogeneity, homosexuality was historically normalized out of the very definition of an American Soldier by being a subject worthy of disciplinary action or expulsion. The result was a normative statement about the particular morality and general value of homosexuals to the U.S. military. The practico-inert structure of serial normativity is thus seen to be related to cultural truths, modes of behavior, and their example of deviation from preference. The modern gender integrated military is exemplified by an outrageous number of sexual assaults committed upon both civilian and service women annually as exemplified in the infamous Tailhook scandal in which hundreds of sexual assaults were documented during an annual Naval and Marine Aviators convention (O’neill, 1998). How do 3,374 women (those who reported in 2012) come to be sexually assaulted within an ultra-disciplined practico-inert field
like that of the U.S. military if the environment for sexualization and ultra-masculine normativity is not present (U.S. Department of Defense, 2012, p. 24)? Again, normativity is established within the field by both the active members of the field and also the facticity of the prevailing practical inertia. The practical field of male dominance in the military interacts with female soldiers in the practical field and produces real constraints to the freedom of these female soldiers by means of their objectification through hyper-masculine sexualization.

Policy changes have limited immediate effect due to the material/social inertia that the previous policy (that which is being changed) instituted. The social inertia produced from racist or sexist policies therefore continue to exist long after they are officially corrected. Charles Mills, in relation to racial inertia says:

So even if whites are reluctant to concede the continuing existence of white supremacy, the concession that it once existed provides at least some theoretical foothold, since one can then make an argument (if no more than this) that it would have to have left some legacy” (Mills, 2004, p. 32).

The legacy is found to reside in the cultural prejudices and linguistic discourse of the social field. The social legitimization of racist policies, acts, and sentiments, normalizes discursive significations of ‘inhuman,’ ‘less-than,’ ‘Other,’ ‘insignificant,’ ‘savage,’ ‘ugly,’ ‘wrong,’ and ‘abnormal’ that are associated with a master signifier, race. A subject who is signified as the marginalized race in a racist system, concomitantly signifies a complexity of traits, characteristics, and social norms and practices in relation to the dominant discourse (Zizek, 1989, p. 113). The subject becomes not only racially pointed out, but signified due to his/her race as ‘Other,’ ‘not-normal,’ ‘ugly,’ ‘uneducated,’ etc. Again the relation between what is
being signified and normativity is judgmental and culturally true, and in the case of race, which is epidermic and visual, is functional within the mechanism of the look.

In a racist social field, the marginalized group(s) for example may be disproportionately targeted and implicated for crimes, judicial sentencing may be consistently more severe when directed against the dominant racial group, marginalized groups are typically congregeted into neighborhoods and ghettos which do not receive proportional education funds, medical facilities, housing opportunities, local jobs, etc. This has of course been the case in the U.S. that has historically operated with a practico-inert field that is favorable to white, heterosexual, and masculine signifiers. But the situation is much more complex since the social field is imbued with normative signifiers and thus one’s class being, one’s race or gender does not define how you will ultimately be related within the practico-inert field, but rather one’s position is formed as an inter-sectionality of all of these signifiers. Sartre says:

*My birth* as it conditions the way in which objects are revealed to me (objects of luxury or of basic necessity are more or less accessible, certain social realities appear to me as forbidden, there are barriers and obstacles in my hodological space); *my race* as it is indicated by the Other’s attitude with regard to me (these attitudes are revealed as scornful or admiring, as trusting or distrusting; *my class* as it is disclosed by the revelation of the social community to which I belong inasmuch as the places which I frequent refer to it; *my nationality; my* physiological structure as instruments imply it by the very way in which they are revealed as resistant or docile and by their very coefficient of adversity; *my character; my* past, as everything which I have experienced is indicated as *my* point of view on the world by the world itself. (Sartre, 1943, p. 328)

The “world” “indicates” one’s position in relation to serial normativity. The means by which certain significations outweigh others, such as homosexuality
detracting from the power of the dominant signifier male, or being black detracting from being wealthy, is not a source of inquiry and focus of Sartre and we therefore turn to Foucault in the next chapter to further discuss the forces of dominance and power, the interplay of power and individual relations, and the mechanism of the look as a mediation of power.
CHAPTER III

FOUCAULDIAN POWER

The Situation of Freedom

As much as freedom permeates the works of Sartre, power pervades the works of Foucault. In regards to freedom, the form of power that Foucault describes acts in much the same way as the Sartrean situation by providing the context from which freedom is expressed for the subject. Foucault posits that power exists coextensively with resistance and the relation of resistance to power is where the possibility of freedom is constituted. Our discussion of power thus necessitates a discussion of resistance and here in this analysis the notion of freedom will become clear. Foucault’s works on power are all thus related in some way to freedom. Brian Seitz contends that an intellectual correlation can be drawn between Sartre and Foucault in regards to the prevailing theme of freedom in both of their works. Seitz says:

It turns out that . . . the topic of freedom is . . . a very complex one for Foucault. On the one hand . . . it might appear that Foucault is utterly skeptical regarding the prospects for freedom . . . But on the other hand, if there is a theme that quietly connects all phases of Foucault’s work, it is a consistent if also usually implicit philosophical attention to freedom, although Foucault seldom thematizes freedom as such, or at least not directly. (Seitz, 2004, p. 96)

Power and resistance are both constraints to freedom. Freedom is the negation of these constraints in either the form of power over resistance or
resistance to power. Thus we find that both Sartre and Foucault formulate constrained notions of a free subject resistant to an objective account of its being (Eshleman, 2004, p. 59). That is, the constraints of one’s freedom never entirely eliminate the ontological freedom of the individual i.e. one can always rebel or resign oneself to a given situation. Foucault, according to Seitz, is often thought to have conceived of a subject structurally defined by the relations of power. Seitz claims that Foucault has in this way “certainly been misrepresented” as a “situational determinist,” commonly thought to have eliminated “agency” and “responsibility” from the subject (Seitz, 2004, p. 96). But as we will discuss, power does not fix the subject in place, but rather it acts as the situation from which freedom arises.

In regards to the account of freedom for Sartre and Foucault, both philosophers have striven to delineate the freedom of the individual in the context of the milieu of his culture, politics, privileges, disciplinary structures, and other forms of serial subjectification (Boileau, 2000, p. 84). Both Sartre and Foucault have in this way “tried to understand the problem of how individuals are conditioned by their material and social environment yet constitute their lives as self-determining subjects” (Boileau, 2000, p. 84). Freedom according to Boileau is “sine qua non of both Fouacult’s power analytic and Sartres’s notions about our responses to the practico-inert” (Boileau, 2000, p. 84). Recall that the constraints of our social existence with others and the specifics of our facticity acting within the seriality of the practico-inert, for Sartre, are elements by which our practical freedom is a form
of resistance. Likewise, on Foucault’s account, where power creates the subject, the free subject acts against the constraints of the objectifications of the power structure in which he/she is immersed. Freedom is thus found to also be an act of resistance, but to power. In order to further understand freedom for Foucault in relation to Sartre’s account, we must pursue a discussion of power and resistance.

Power, Resistance, Freedom

As mentioned, one difference between Sartre and Foucault’s systems of freedom is found in relation to the formation of the subject. The Sartrean subject is ontologically free (the first and second ekstasis) and practically constrained (the third ekstasis, the formation of collectivities, and the practico-inert), while the Foucauldian subject is immersed in a field of power and exhibits its freedom by means of power and resistance. Foucault’s subject is not something independent and acted on by power. Instead, it is created by power. The subject is born into the field of power that produced even the occasion of his/her conception. Power, according to Foucault, constantly affects the subject at the level of class, race, gender, sex, health, and religion and has a “capillary form of existence, the point where power reaches into the very grain of individuals, touches their bodies and inserts itself into their actions and attitudes, their discourses, learning processes and everyday lives” (Foucault M., 1980, p. 39).

Power we will see, operates much like the practico-inert field, but where Sartre’s analysis describes structural necessities that he attributes to material scarcity and the collective activities of its free subjects, Foucault’s account is
pervaded by structures of power in such a way that they actively produce the subject through disciplinary and normalizing techniques. Power intersects with all social signifiers of the subject. Power, according to Seitz, “quite literally insinuates itself into us, as if our very bodies were grids of meridians available for occupation (Seitz, 2004, p. 97). Power operates in such a way that not only is the subject’s being in the material world shaped and created by its effects, but the power structure pervades all of its relations with others, with social institutions, and with itself. Foucault suggests that there is a:

... whole series of power networks that invest the body, sexuality, the family, kinship, knowledge, technology and so forth. True, these networks stand in a conditioning-conditioned relationship to a kind of 'meta-power' which is structured essentially round a certain number of great prohibition functions; but this meta-power with its prohibitions can only take hold and secure its footing where it is rooted in a whole series of multiple and indefinite power relations that supply the necessary basis for the great negative forms of power. (Foucault M., 1980, p. 122)

Power, Foucault says, acts on and creates the subject by means of meta-power techniques, which are rooted in prohibiting social mechanisms. The prohibiting mechanisms work to identify, organize, prioritize, and correct for deviation of preferred traits. The social techniques of the “negative forms of power” operate in this way to keep subjugated individuals within socially derived guidelines and preferences. Power and the practico-inert are again similar in this regard as both suggest that techniques to organize individuals may be applied by affecting the local field of social inertia, the dynamic milieu of forces. Though this type of action may theoretically be possible, power is elusive and transitive, Foucault says: “One doesn’t have here a power which is wholly in the hands of one person who can
exercise it alone and total over the others. It’s a machine in which everyone is caught, those who exercise power just as much as those over whom it is exercised” (Foucault M., 1980, p. 156). Power in this way produces what Sartre calls in the CDR, ‘counter finalities.’ A counter finality is what Sartre describes as unforeseen or uncalculated effects of practico-inert processes. When force is applied to a practico-inert field, unintended counter finalities may arise as a result. The inertia of the machine of power ensnares and constrains everyone to some degree. The rich, the poor, heterosexuals, homosexuals, Christians, and Muslims, are all produced and thus constrained by its entanglements. Foucault cautions that power is “not to be taken to be a phenomenon of one individual’s consolidated and homogeneous domination over others, or that of one group or class over others,” it does not operate this way i.e. in a top down direction (Foucault M., 1980, p. 98). He states that it should not be considered as “that which makes the difference between those who exclusively possess and retain it, and those who do not have it and submit to it” (Foucault M., 1980, p. 98). Power is thus not something that some possess at the exclusion of others, but rather something that all individuals in all social fields interact with and through.

Power must by analyzed as something which circulates, or rather as something which only functions in the form of a chain. It is never localized here or there, never in anybody’s hands, never appropriated as a commodity or piece of wealth. Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organization. And not only do individuals circulate between its threads; they are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power. They are not only its inert or consenting target; they are always also the elements of its articulation. In other words, individuals are the vehicles of power, not its points of application. (Foucault M., 1980, p. 98)
It must be noted here that power, though articulated by and through all, is not some thing that is found to be homogenous. Foucault says that we should also not conclude “that power is the best distributed thing in the world,” and that “we are not dealing with a sort of democratic or anarchic distribution of power through bodies” (Foucault M., 1980, p. 99). Power pervades social, institutional, and familial relations and intersects with the subject in a complex way to determine his/her relation to prevailing dominant social significations. Power is distributed in a field/net in such a way that some possess or facilitate it more readily and in more abundance than others. While operating within the “threads” of this net, power operates from the outside, upon you, as well as from the inside in terms of one’s desires and will. The relations of power in any social situation are thus produced by numerous forces of power and resistance acting in both concert and conflict.

For instance, take the case of a banker who is to determine the acceptance or denial of a loan. Imagine the banker lives in a modern hegemonic society and is an example of the normatively privileged and dominant social group. For our purposes suppose he is white, male, heterosexual, and in possession of greater than average wealth and resources. Suppose also that the banker wants to loan money to acceptable applicants in order to further his business and his own financial well-being. He arrives to the meeting with the applicant, willing perhaps even to decide in the applicant’s favor, and then begins to deliberate on the information that is presented. He looks to ascertain how closely does the applicant fit the model of an acceptable recipient of a loan? He collects normative social facts through questions
such as: Is he/she white? If not than what is their race and ethnicity? Is the applicant a man or a woman (only)? Is He/She married (heterosexually only)? What is the applicant’s occupation? A professional? Member of the working class? Retired? In fact the banker does not care, per se, about any one loan applicant at all, they are serially related for him. The event between the loan officer and the loan applicant is absolutely one-sided and utterly dependent on determinations made by the stronger and privileged bargaining position of the banker, a relation of their relative positions of power. The applicant can do nothing more, than to be as close to normatively acceptable as possible, a constraint to his/her power, a resistance for his/her exercise of freedom. The restraint shown by acting within socially accepted norms and legality is reinforced by the state power structure which will interfere if the applicant is found to have deviated, a further level of power.

The generation of social facts by the act of power during the loan application process creates the subject that may then be compared to both preferred and negating criteria in relation to approval for the loan. The distinctions made in the loan process included those related to sex, gender, economic class, race, age, and occupation. These categories all have a normative preference and in our example were: male, white, heterosexual, wealthy, and educated. One might imagine a system with different normative preferences that act as a promoting or limiting mechanism for freedom of its members, but in our case the loan officer is a member of the preferred social group and yields both a normalizing power which determines the explicit characteristics of a qualifying loan applicant as well as a personal level of
power to facilitate or hinder loan applications based on his own interpretation of who he should or should not approve.

The application process produces the individual in a way that is distinct from the being of the Sartrean subject. Foucault warns that “the individual is not to be conceived as a sort of elementary nucleus, a primitive atom, a multiple and inert material on which power comes to fasten or against which it happens to strike, and in so doing subdues or crushes individuals” (Foucault M., 1980, p. 98). The subject is instead articulated by “certain bodies, certain gestures, certain discourses, certain desires,” that “come to be identified and constituted as individuals” (Foucault M., 1980, p. 98). The subject for Foucault is a “fictive or constructed entity,” and in our example is at the moment of its articulation by the power constituted in the loan process and the loan officer (Foucault M., 1980, p. 239). The subject is created as an object of power at the intersection of facticity, opportunity, and constraint.

The articulation of power through the loan process determines the social normativity (or deviation) of the loan applicant. Denial of the loan is a forceful distinction of power, a negation of freedom, a determination made about the worthiness of the applicant and/or their proposal in light of the normative object that was determined by the application process. Power in this way characterizes truth about the normativity and value of the applicant. Foucault warns that “’truth’ is linked in a circular relation with systems of power which produce and sustain it, and to effects of power which it induces and which extend it. A ‘regime’ of truth” (Foucault M., 1980, p. 133). Power in this way is judgmental and prejudiced
towards social normativity. Normative, good, and true, become an “ensemble” of preferred social objectivity. Power thus produces cultural truths, relative declarations of normativity regarding social preferences. For the subjects within the field of power, these cultural truths are held as if they are objective facts. Here we find both the mechanisms of power as well as the serialization of Sartre’s practico-inert, acting to normalize preferred behaviors and characteristics; a socially generated force of normalizing inertia.

Approval of the loan on the other hand transfers power from the loan officer to the applicant in a way that for Sartre, freedom is facilitated. That is, the applicant’s project for which the loan was intended is financially secured and thus the associated coefficient of adversity relative to realizing the project is reduced. The case for Foucauldian freedom as a form of resistance to this one-sided expression of power would probably be better exemplified with an example in which the loan officer was by-passed altogether and funds for the project were raised without acquiescence to the dominant forces of power, but Boileau argues that resistance to power may be accomplished through resistance at the “micro, local level,” and as the Sartrean subject traverses the practico-inert when convenient, so does the Foucauldian subject (Boileau, 2000, p. 39). In this way we can see how freedom for Foucault in some ways is not always a resistance to power but can also be found in the use and application of one’s power. The power used by the subject as an act of freedom concomitantly produces resistance elsewhere.
within the field. But again, like Sartre, Foucault would advise against becoming that which power prefers i.e. a docile, and fully normalized subject.

For Foucault resistance consists not in our finding our true subjectivity behind ideological masks, but in *de* subjectifying ourselves, of purging the selves produced by the forces of conformism, in order to become different from the way we normally are. (Hoy, 2005, p. 103)

The nature of power, as an objectifying collection of social forces, acts to constrain our modes of being into serial existence. Freedom is thus found to be operative in the resistance to “the forces of conformism” (Hoy, 2005). Brian Seitz states: “in short, the theme of resistance is clearly central to both Sartre’s and Foucault’s mediations on the concept of situation and freedom” (Seitz, 2004, p. 98).

Seitz quotes Sartre as saying that “there is freedom only in *situation* and there is a situation only through freedom.” Then he himself states: “freedom is not the freedom of disembodied intentions but of conditioned possibilities; that is, the freedom of relations which express themselves in the form of resistance. That is the subject’s situation” (Seitz, 2004, p. 98). The situation conditions the Sartrean subject by means of facticity and the coefficient of adversity that are both related to material and social constraints; “Freedom is nothing other than sets of relations that constitute the subject’s situation, and this is true for Foucault as it is for Sartre” (Seitz, 2004, p. 98). This correlation found in their conceptions of freedom, will provide us a means by which to further our discussion of Sartre and Foucault later in this chapter, but for now our discussion will turn to the foundation and formulation of power and its normalizing, capillary mechanisms of discipline.
The Docile Subject of Power

The dynamic and multidimensional field of power that works to normalize, categorize, and correct for deviance has only rather recently evolved into its current form. In its modern form Foucault suggests we find “a genuinely new economy of power, one that must be able to simultaneously both . . . increase the subjected forces and to improve the force and efficacy of that which subjects them” (Foucault M., 1980, p. 104). Foucault traces the genealogy of the modern conception of power in his works *Discipline and Punish* (1975) and *The History of Sexuality* (1977), where he discusses how the concept of power has proceeded from that of a “repressive” form to the modern concept, “bio-power” (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1983, p. 126). This functional change of power coincided historically with numerous adjustments to economic, political, penal, scientific and judicial means of affecting the social body. All of these techniques of controlling, affecting, disciplining, and directing individuals within a particular social field to “improve the force and efficacy of that which subjects them,” fall under the realm of Foucauldian power (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1983, p. 128).

The historical concept of power as found in the ‘repressive hypothesis’ worked its actions of “constraint, negativity, and coercion” on the bodies of its subjects (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1983, p. 129). The techniques of power in this form operated to suppress knowledge in order to render discussions of truth and potential “transgressive voices of liberation,” impotent (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1983, p. 129). In this form, power is threatened by knowledge and inquiry. Sovereign power
is threatened by losing control of the people with this repressive form of power, for if the populous was allowed to question and inquire about the legitimacy of the source of power they may have also questioned the structure of power itself.

Sovereign powers acting in their own interests repressed their subjects by “suppressing desire, fostering false consciousness, promoting ignorance, and using a host of other dodges,” in order to suppress truth (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1983, p. 129).

The people were shown the truth of sovereign power during this period by displays of graphic and explicit punishment performed on transgressors of laws and customs. Legal infractions were considered to be actions against the sovereign power. Foucault remarks: “In a society like that of the seventeenth century, the King’s body wasn’t a metaphor, but a political reality” (Foucault M., Power/Knowledge, 1980, p. 55) He states that penalties of a “certain seriousness had to involve an element of torture, of supplice. What is supplice? ‘Corporal punishment, painful to a more or less horrible degree” (Foucault M., 1977, p. 33). He continues:

The very excess of the violence employed is one of the elements of its glory: the fact that the guilty man should moan and cry out under the blows is not a shameful side-effect, it is the very ceremonial of justice being expressed in all its force… Justice pursues the body beyond all possible pain. (Foucault M., 1977, p. 34)

Power in this way is shown by means of force against the body and demonstrated in public. Foucault remarks:

Capital punishment comprises many kinds of death: some prisoners may be-condemned to be hanged, others to having their hands cut off or their tongues cut out or pierced and then to be hanged; others, for more serious crimes, to be broken alive and to die on the wheel, after having their limbs broken; others to be broken
until they die a natural death, others to be strangled and then broken, others to be burnt alive, others to be burnt after first being strangled; others to be drawn by four horses, others to have their heads cut off, and others to have their heads broken. (Foucault M., 1977, p. 32)

The King’s body, having been injured or affronted in some way, takes its punishment out on the body of the Other. The peasantry in this way sees demonstrations of sovereign power in displays of wealth, opulence, and health as well as the manner and severity of his punishments and objectification of the bodies of Others. Such public displays were enacted to demonstrate both the superiority of the ruling class as well as the absolute control that the sovereignty held over the bodies of its subjects in order to suppress further transgressions. The visual nature of demonstrations on-the-body were thus designed to limit individual resistance to the local sovereign power. The demonstrations themselves represented the visual totality of power, the culmination of power to dictate life or death. Foucault remarks: “traditionally, power was what was seen, what was shown and what was manifested” (Foucault M., 1977, p. 177).

The change from the repressive hypothesis to the modern phenomenon of bio-power is marked in some ways by structural changes to the means by which bodies of subjects were acted upon by the forces of power. Power became generally focused on techniques “to improve the force and efficacy of that which subjects” (Foucault M., 1980, p. 104). Bio-power is marked, for example, by the rise of the modern liberal conception of the subject in which the individual is governed as a means in and of itself rather than as an end for the general good of the sovereign power of a King or privileged group. Foucault says since “medieval times onward”
we have been motivated to “fix the legitimacy of power” from being a force of bodies to be used for the good of the few, to being regarded instead as a force applied to unique individuals with their own free choices. Akhil Amar mentions one U.S. historical example in America’s Constitution. He says: “American legal theorists in the 1780s conceptually relocated sovereignty from Parliament to the people themselves” (Amar, 2005, p. 106). Republican technologies with the goal to de-throne traditional structures of authority arose during this time as exemplified in the shared powers of the U.S. branches of government in order to constrain the power of any one branch, restrictions on the ages of presidents and congress to eliminate the adoption of familial successions of power, and the obvious example of the promotion of personal liberty of the people who were given the ultimate power to change the structure of the constitution itself by amendment or by means of a constitutional convention (Amar, 2005, p. 63).

Amar says that one of the consequences of the prevailing political theory during the time of the production of the constitution was the idea that “sovereignty originated and remained with the people, who could parcel out and reclaim discrete chunks of power as they saw fit” (Amar, 2005, p. 106). Power, for Foucault, applied consciously “as a series of aims and objectives,” in this milieu of self- liberated subjects precipitated an evolution of techniques and political technologies by which to further organize the social body (Foucault M., 1978, p. 95). This “new mode of exercise of power in the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries,” rendered the sovereign “a fantastic personage, at once archaic and monstrous” (Foucault M.,
The inertia of the practical liberties and freedom gained in re-structuring the power structure at the time of the U.S. Revolution and subsequent Constitutional convention made the “mythology of the sovereign . . . no longer possible” (Foucault M., 1980, p. 39). Foucault says that the “small-scale modes of exercise of power,” the lateralization of power throughout the social field, was only “made possible by a fundamental structural change” (Foucault M., 1980, p. 39). The change from the Feudal structure to the U.S. form of the extended republic for example, produced fundamental and profound changes to the prevailing practico-inert by means of changes to the political structure.

Coupled with capitalism, the developing liberal republican mindset was aimed at self-government and opportunity, altogether a different mode of being than one of production for the benefit and will of the prevailing sovereign power. The free public, having recently believed themselves freed from the powers of the King, were immediately ensnared in a modified distribution of power that had the same alienating and disciplinary functions as the former, but instead of being made visible, were cleverly hidden. For as the era of bio-power came into fruition, Foucault tells us that political techniques of control, discipline, and normalization were employed in order to facilitate a healthy and productive social body that would not require demonstrations of violence to effectively make use of them.

Foucault says:

This type of power is in every aspect the antithesis of that mechanism of power which the theory of sovereignty described or sought to transcribe. The latter is linked to a form of power that is exercised over the Earth and its
products, much more than over human bodies and their operations. (Foucault M., 1980, p. 104)

For Foucault, power demanded that techniques to control, subvert, direct, and inspire a social body needed to be developed by the human sciences in order to create productive but docile bodies resigned to a compliant and productive social existence.

Sartre would respond to this perhaps by suggesting that the formation of the docile worker was an act of the dialectic expressing itself materially as serial demands on ontologically free subjects, but in this way he would fail to see the design of subjection and the aim of power behind the structural changes to the material environment. Foucault remarks that “power relations are both intentional and nonsubjective” (Foucault M., 1978, p. 94). Power relations “are imbued, through and through with calculation: there is no power that is exercised without a series of aims and objectives” (Foucault M., 1978, p. 95). Power is consigned to an “aim,” for Foucault, which “acts upon . . . actions,” “an action upon an action, on existing actions or on those which may arise in the present or the future” (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1983, p. 220). Foucault’s account of power is not a dialectical process deriving from a thesis-antithesis-synthesis formulation as found in the work of Hegel. Seitz even proposes that “Foucault doubtless viewed Sartre’s devotion to dialectics as philosophically fatal” (Seitz, 2004, p. 94). Foucault’s system of power instead, according to Boileau, “is describing two levels of power relations. At the local and tactical level of political activity there is conscious decision making, ‘Intentionality is present’” (Boileau, 2000, p. 30). By contrast, the second level of
power is the “structural level, which consists of the underlying matrix of power relations, the overall pattern of human behavior and their strategic connections” (Boileau, 2000, p. 30). We can see a similarity here with Sartre in that the first level accounts for ontological type freedom and the second level of power contains the functions of the forces of the practico-inert that act as a constraint to ontological freedom.

Power operates through both of these levels concurrently, not dialectically, in an exchange of power and resistance and thus in Sartrean terms, incorporates both primary functions of ontological freedom of the For-itself and the constraining forces of the practico-inert of Sartre’s account. That is, Sartre’s system allows for aims of power (in the Foucauldian sense) by the For-itself in order to coerce, affect, or steer his/herself towards one’s aims while being acted upon by the material and social forces of the practico-inert. Sartre’s account, in terms of power, thus seems to be exhibited as the first level of power found in the ontological freedom acting from within the consciousness of the for-itself and the second level of power operating as practico-inert processes constraining the for-itself from the outside. This at first seem as if the Sartrean account will only allow freedom of the for-itself to be constrained and affected from the outside, in opposition to its ontological freedom. Sartre’s atomic concept of the subject was ultimately discarded by Foucault, but the normalizing effects of seriality that act from the outside upon the For-itself are in fact examples of interior modifications of the For-itself. That is, we have shown that
practico-inert forces suggest conduct to be adopted that entails modifications made to one's interior orientation in light of one's chosen goals and projects.

The interior modifications to one's behavior in relation to serial modifications in one's environment further suggest that one's internal judgments about social normativity found in the inter-spective look during a look-being-looked-at relationship, can be modified in some degree by changes at the second level of power, the structural level. That is, practico-inert forces of serial normativity articulated on the For-itself from the outside can affect behavior at the level of intentionality by way of alterations to one's situation thus influencing one's coefficient of adversity. In Sartrean terms this means, for example, that workers can be modified by practico-inert forces in order to be better workers if they can be more fully serialized to a mode of productive practico-inert being. This is also suggestive of the notion that the Sartrean subject may not be as distinct and atomic from social forces acting upon it as is commonly thought by means of modifying the situation from which freedom is expressed.

The Social Matrix of Power

For Foucault, the worker, the factory, the mode of production, and the local culture, all arose from the same matrix of power interacting amongst and on its subjects. Power operates through the social body as opportunity and constraint against, and by the means, of all. Freedom for Foucault is not practical freedom produced by the dialectical result of an ontologically free subject acting within a milieu of constraint as one might imagine two opposing forces acting against each
other. Resistance and power for Foucault are dyadic and inseparably bound with each other. Foucault says, “where there is power there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power” (Foucault M., 1978, p. 95). For Foucault there is no difference between the interior and the exterior domains of power, no a priori struggle of scarcity that underlies all social relations. The freedom of the subject is found as a result of power and resistance, not from power versus resistance.

The economic, material, social, and political forces of a particular field of power shape and are shaped by the individuals acting on Boileau’s first level of power, with intentionality. Concomitantly, the subjects in the social field are produced within the matrix of forces existing at the second level of power. One example of this dynamic includes the production of serializing technologies along with serial subjects during the era of capitalist industrialization. The capitalist forces of power required a concentration of urban workers to accomplish their goals. Resources, money, time, and political will were all applied and articulated toward the common goals of the prevailing power relations. Power and resistance again can be seen here to be dyadic across the two levels of power where intentionality of individuals and collectivities can affect material, political, and social structures and these structures likewise affect the possibilities and types of practical freedoms exhibited throughout the subjects of the social body. The multiplicity of powers underlying the urban business will thus not produce viable agricultural workers, but instead factory workers due to the aims of power operating
throughout the social field. The human subjects of power during the rise of capitalist industrialization had to become working subjects or rather, objects of power.

Dreyfus and Rabinow remark that “disciplinary control and the creation of docile bodies is unquestionably connected to the rise of capitalism” (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1983, p. 135). They further contend:

Disciplinary technologies ...underlay the growth, spread, and triumph if capitalism as an economic venture. Without the insertion of disciplined, orderly individuals into the machinery of production, the new demands of capitalism would have been stymied. (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1983, p. 135)

The economic venture of the investors, the owner of the property, the share holders, and the consumers all have a relation with the fundamental economic project that involves the use of human labor to achieve the goals of liberal capitalism.

The relations between business owners, workers, and consumers are all acting within the tension between power and resistance. The Foucauldian subject engages in an exchange of power that relates his needs and desires to the situation that he finds himself in i.e. resistance as a Sartrean coefficient of adversity. The worker is materially and socially invested in the urban environment that has produced the need of his being there in the first place. He is constrained by the articulations of power due to the forces of intentional and non-intentional fields that have constructed him as an object within their intersection. Thus the freedom of the worker is not such that he can altogether resist the social forces that work to
restrain and produce him as docile and serialized by the demands of practico-inert processes within the field of power.

The field of power of the industrial worker fully encompasses and pervades his social situation. All of the relations of business are invested with power found in inter-personnel relations amongst management and workers, relations with governmental regulatory agencies, other businesses, as well as the public. All of these relations are constituted as assemblages of power and resistance. Every subject, or corporation for that matter, acting within the field of power brings forth its own resources to engage in their own free project while also encountering its own resistances to its goals and desires. Capitalist industrialization required human labor and businesses preferred skilled, honest, responsible, diligent, and docile workers. The uneducated, unhappy, and sickly worker was a form of resistance to the serial order demanded by efficiency and productivity of the business. The forces of power thus found reasons to invest in business education, the human sciences, economics, mechanical engineering . . . relevant “economies of truth” that worked to understand and elicit change in conjunction with the aim of power as well as to understand ways to overcome resistances. Industry thus sought the means to serialize their work force towards efficiency by identifying how they might influence productive processes so as to create desired serial behaviors.

Frederick Taylor’s *The Principles of Scientific Management*, for example, detailed the means and practices to inspect and measure the output of one’s workers in order to modify their actions for greater efficiency. The knowledge
gained helped to facilitate the evolution of scientifically derived disciplinary techniques to structure the daily activities of one’s workers towards maximizing efficiency and output. Time clocks, work output requirements, wages, ethnic and race divisions, all became normalized and accepted by the workers who needed to, in a very practical way, sustain themselves and their families. A healthy (for the business owner) level of unemployment which provided workers the threat of being replaced, as well as a lack of grievance recourse kept the pressure on the workers to acquiesce to the demands of management.

In this way under the influences of power and normativity, practico-inert processes of seriality were defined and established. For as discovered by the application of power, i.e. through the techniques of Taylorism, a worker ought to be able to perform x amount of work in a given amount of time. Material seriality was established in this way and practico-inert processes were adjusted to facilitate this new standard. So, in a job that requires shoveling as Taylor described, variables such as shovel size, shoveling technique, and shoveling pace were normalized in relation to demands of efficiency made by forces of power. Practico-inert forces such as how large the standard shovel is, the general physical stamina required of shoveling workers, and the standardized size of the daily pile of shoveled material all constrain the worker by means of material serialization i.e. by the material demands that the standards of efficiency dictate.

Workers were constantly compared and measured according to benchmark serial standards. The look as a means of surveillance was instrumental in both the
objectification of workers as well as also becoming an obvious institutional tool of measure for management striving to increase productivity. The look was important for the operations of Taylorism since when used as a form of serial surveillance, one could locate opportunities to improve efficiency and modify behavior. The look, used as a disciplinary technique, has been applied in numerous ways and has been a focus of power to promote docility in various contexts.

Panopticism and The Look

Disciplinary techniques of power functioning through the look have also been utilized in medical facilities, institutions of education, and correction techniques of the legal and prison systems. Utilitarian philosopher Jeremy Bentham in the late eighteenth century conceived of a disciplinary mechanism that he called the “panopticon,” that has been applied conceptually in a multi-disciplinarian way both before and since he explicitly conceived of its construction and function (Foucault M., 1977, p. 188). The gaze of the panopticon acts as the look in terms of being able to objectify, judge, and seek-out abnormalities or transgressions while at the same time producing a force of inertia that perpetuates its effects throughout the field of those being looked-at. Here we find a similarity in the look as a constraint to freedom found in both Sartre’s and Foucault’s works whereas the look found us and judged us in our situation, the panopticon seeks and passes social judgment upon us in our social situation.

The panopticon represented an architectural means of surveillance designed to elicit self-perpetuating obedience. It originally was conceived as a means of
imprisoning and monitoring incarcerated populations. Foucault recalls that the design calls for an outer ring of cells all facing towards an open center consisting of a single hub. The cells are all closed with a clear wall (or bars), and are well lit to provide an uninhibited view into each cell. The center hub contains the authority. The hub in contrast has opaque, tinted windows, (or in Bentham’s day was dimly lit compared to the outer cells) designed to obscure whether one is being watched or not, at any given time (Foucault M., 1977, p. 188). The constant threat of being watched coupled with swift and assured disciplinary action when perpetrators of infractions are caught produces a self-regulating system of correction. The prisoners learn to be docile bodies that consign themselves to being under the gaze of authority. Foucault says:

The major effect of the Panopticon: to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power. So to arrange things ...that the perfection of power should tend to render its actual exercise unnecessary; that this architectural apparatus should be a machine for creating and sustaining a power relation independent of the person who exercises it; in short that the inmates should be caught up in a power situation of which they are themselves the bearers. (Foucault M., 1977, p. 189)

The result is the creation of a force of disciplinary inertia; a material example of Sartre’s practico-inert which acts to constrain freedom. The interiorization of the panoptic look induces a self-judgment when the look finds us in our situation. With the Other’s look interiorized and passing judgment, one self-corrects for serial normativity, that is, normal in relation to the preferences of the field of power. The subject will act in accords with what Sartre called conduct to be adopted, that is, one adopts under the panoptic gaze the same serialized activities that we found
operational in Sartre's practico-inert being. The gaze of the panopticon operates through the look of all of us, and by means of its operative functions, promotes docility and obedience to the authority constituted in categories of social normativity.

Bentham's panoptic architecture has been adopted by numerous systems of gaze oriented observation now represented in the modern world as an array of opaque systems of institutionalized correction departments, strong local police forces, systematic surveillance operations, secret police, International spy rings, and numerous other systems of both explicit and secretive collection of panoptic data. We, as subjects are acted on by these panoptic technologies, and behave in a similar fashion to those in the criminal trials of Bentham’s system, in so far as we self-regulate our behavior in accords with the threat of being discovered (and then punished) by the all-seeing-eye of power.

The panoptic gaze was thought by Bentham to be “the great innovation needed for the easy and effective use of power,” (Foucault M., 1980, p. 148). In terms of disciplinary mechanisms and constraints to freedom, the panoptic gaze views the landscape of the social body under surveillance and locates and acts upon divergence from normative seriality. Deviation from the normative expectations of the local power structure is corrected by means of implicit and explicit disciplinary techniques. For example, one may find community pressures to execute water conservation measures, excitable children are prescribed medications to render them more docile, loud music is met with economic infractions by the local police
department, and still more disruptive as well as violent acts are met with overwhelming and organized institutional violence and correction. Deviation is corrected in schools, the media, in courts, hospitals, by law enforcement, the military as well as by individuals within the social field of power looking with a panoptic gaze.

Pan-optic mechanisms of disciplinary power thus watch us all while we ourselves watch Others who we judge in relation to ourselves, in order to keep everyone-in-line. The panopticon is a means by which the second level of power (structure) affects the first level (intention) through the process of self-judgment. The look of the Other contains within it the panoptic gaze of power that looks with all of its social customs, biases, serialized significations, normalized racism, sexism, social privileges and ideologies in tow. The Sartrean look, we previously noted, possesses an element of internal self-regulation, self-judgment, and self-serialization as the looker positions him/herself within the matrix of facticity and practico-inert processes. This self-correction is operative in relation to what is being seen. One’s self-perceived position in relation to socially normative signifiers along with any practical constraints that the power structure produces after having judged whether you are normal or not, composes a social coefficient of adversity to cultural normativity. This serial determination is not only related to one’s self-objectification but is also conferred on the subject by the normative constructs of the prevailing power structure. To this our attention now turns.
Social Viscosity

In the *CDR*, Sartre makes an interesting proposal about the nature of human relations that is relevant to our understanding of freedom for both Sartre and Foucault. He says that what “constitutes human relations” is a “jelly-like substance” (Sartre, 1960, p. 120). This is particularly interesting for our discussion because it is an example from Sartre illustrating the Foucauldian subject acting through a field of power. The example that we will thus invoke utilizes aspects of both Sartre’s and Foucault’s discussions of freedom and constraint.

The subject we have found for both Sartre and Foucault is both free in some ways and constrained. Though for the Sartrean subject, as he originally conceived, it may be argued that the free existence that precedes any social essence renders the subject more-free than the Foucauldian subject. The Sartrean subject is nonetheless far less free than absolutely free and if one considers Eshleman’s proposal than perhaps Sartre’s final formulation from *BN* to *CDR* is much closer to Foucault’s account than commonly held i.e. irreducibly constrained.

Foucault’s account of freedom differs in one important way from Sartre’s in that freedom from the interior of the subject (intentionality) and practical freedom constrained from the outside (Structural) is produced in the same way amongst the vicissitudes of power and resistance. That is, freedom acts both in accords with one’s intentional articulations of power as well as in the sense when one is resistant to articulations of power that are being acted upon you. This exchange between
using one’s freedom to act while being constrained by the forces exterior to your desires and will is exemplified in the jelly-like substance remark of Sartre.

The jelly-like substance inspires images of sticky, viscous material that is thick and restrictive. If we suppose the subject is moving through a viscous fluid in regards to their free projects and desires, we can imagine the restrictions of the outside forces of the viscosity of the fluid acting upon the subject’s free movement through space. For Foucault this tension produced in moving through the fluid is constituted in the interplay between power and resistance, exhibiting their forces concomitantly. For Sartre the tension is dialectical and is held in place between the free subject and the constraints to freedom produced by facticity, Others, and practico-inert processes. Sartre names this tension between a freely chosen project and the practicality of achieving it, we will remember, the coefficient of adversity. The coefficient of adversity provides us a means to imagine that the viscous fluid that our subject is in, is either thick and restrictive, or thin and non-restrictive. In relation to our subject moving through space, if we were to conceive of a high coefficient of adversity, we would imagine a thick and resistant fluid rather than a less viscous fluid. Freedom is found to be an act of power in this example of the subject moving through a viscous substance as the subject pushes against the resistance of the fluid towards his/her goal or desire.

On the other hand, imagine that the viscous fluid that our subject is immersed in is moving, flowing in a particular direction. If we imagine that the subject is atomic as in the Sartrean account, the inertia of the fluid acts against the
subject from the outside only. If on the other hand we suppose the Foucauldian subject as being permeable, the fluid moves with inertial force against and through the subject. Power can be seen as being articulated through the subject acting from both inside and outside of the subject.

As physics dictates, the more viscous the fluid, the more resistance must be applied by the subject against the force of the fluid’s inertia. Freedom here is an example of a force of resistance to the flow of power. The subject is constantly and incessantly compelled and directed towards the flow of the fluid and must either push back against it, or become ensnared in its determinations. This is also the form of freedom that we elucidated in the second chapter in which freedom for Sartre is found to be an act of resistance to practico-inert seriality. The subjects acting through the dynamic flows of power exert their freedom in both terms of articulating power on their own behalf, as well as in the force required to resist the inertia of power acting upon them.

We can determine from our analysis that freedom is inversely related to one’s coefficient of adversity. That is, the higher the coefficient of adversity, the more viscous the social forces are and greater are the constraints to one’s freedom. We can also see how one’s particular position in relation to social forces can be measured in this milieu of force, resistance, and viscosity. Preferred, dominant social signifiers will facilitate movement and power and thus also a lower coefficient of adversity and corresponding viscosity in relation to their freedom, while non-preferred characteristics will be found in a thicker more resistant milieu of forces.
Social signifiers that relate the subject-in-position to the practico-power matrix constitute the relative constraints and opportunities that a subject in a field of power experiences in relation to his/her freedom. In a racialized system of white supremacy for example, the dominant, normalized, racial signifier white is either epidermically recognized or negated in a subject that elicits a corresponding enhancement of social power or resistance. Likewise, men are preferred over women in a patriarchic system, as are heterosexuals preferred in a homophobic system and thus masculine characteristics of strength and heterosexual virility are dominant signifiers in both types of systems. Christians are preferred over Muslims in a typical Western system, the rich are preferred over poor, the able-bodied are preferred over the crippled, and all are presented in the social field by means of particular social signifiers. This dyadic, either-or tendency of one’s relation to normative power suggests that we are constantly reminded of our approximation to or delineation from preference. One’s relation to dominant social preferences therefore will also relate inversely to one’s coefficient of adversity in relation to freedom. That is, preferred subjects will find less resistance through the social field of power while the non-preferred will experience more resistance.

Articulating power or resistance through one’s social field of inertia does not operate entirely from the outside. Not only are there acts of freedom emanating from the subject, there is also an internal component that self-regulates the position of the subject in relation to the field of power. We have already discussed some of these mechanisms in this regard when we found the look to include the gaze of pan-
optic technologies as well as the serially normative judgments of the Others, but also intrinsic in the look in regards to power and resistance are the freedom limiting aspects of bad faith. We have mentioned bad faith in previous sections of this paper, but further elaboration here will be found useful.

For Sartre, bad faith first of all, “is faith” (Sartre, 1943, p. 112). In one of its forms, that which we are concerned with, it is belief in one’s own objectivity or essence, while another form is bad faith about one’s ultimate transcendence. Recall from our discussion of Sartre that we are separated from objectivity and any essence by nothingness. When operating with bad faith, Detmer says “one can lie to oneself by denying one’s transcendence” (Detmer, 2008, p. 78). In denying your transcendence you are in bad faith about your relation to freedom, the construction of the ego, and the nothingness that is found in the first and second ekstasis. Denial of one’s transcendence is therefore bad faith in terms of having faith in one’s imminence, one’s essence, or objectivity. If someone living in a racist and sexist practico-inert system is a not of the dominant race and sex, and internalizes the dyadic determinations of less-than, not good enough, not smart enough, or not worthy that is found in conjunction with serial normativity, belief in these self-defeating constructs of imminence is bad faith i.e. “denying one’s transcendence.” Detmer suggests that there are other ways that we deceive ourselves into propagating stereotypes and culturally divisive behaviors and discourse that include telling ourselves “half truths” supported with “weak evidence,” which when related to self-objectification by the look, will surely affect one’s coefficient of
adversity (Detmer, 2008, p. 84). For if someone self-constrains their own freedom do to self-objectifications made in bad faith, their free choices will be practically constrained by these self-limiting cultural truths generated by the field of power. In convincing yourself that you are not as good as, or likely to fail, or that you are somehow less than because you are black, a woman, gay, or physically handicapped, you self-constrains the field of free possibilities do to bad faith of one's essence. One's bad faith about truth relating cultural signifiers then in this way also relates to the viscosity of one's field of power/resistance.

The looker and the looked-at, we have previously remarked, are engaged in a dual objectification that relates both parties to each other. The prevailing economies of truth then, during this exchange, relate the social signifiers of each party in relation to the other in terms of which significations are preferred. The exchange of objectification by each other through the look that reflects normative preferences, has a panoptic disciplinary effect that is also appropriately exemplified in the example of our subject in a viscous fluid. The social constraints of power for each are promoted and articulated within the exchange of the look, rendering resistance (viscosity) to non-preferred and power to preferred characteristics.

If the exchange is made under the pretenses of bad faith, we find the promotion of socially signified objectifications i.e. dominant, less-than, preferred, not preferred, beautiful, ugly, etc. But also within the exchange of the look opposing the resistance produced by serial significations is found the possibility of an act of freedom in which the economies of truth are questioned, and in which each other's
imminence is transcended. The look, which is found by Sartre to define us as both an object and a subject, also allows us to resist the assignments and determinations about the nature of the object and thus also the subject.

The application of freedom in this case is found in the reflective mode of consciousness of the for-itself in which imminence is overcome due to an application of force in the form of resistance to the cultural truths produced within the field of power. The more difficult force of inertia to overcome is that of the pre-reflective mode of consciousness in which the reactions such as fear, disgust, or indifference are acted out before internal reflection occurs, i.e. automatically. Imagine an elderly white woman clutching her purse when a young black man approaches from the other direction on the street, or suppose the physical reaction that a homophobic person responds with when she is briefly touched on the shoulder by a gay man on the bus. The reactions of this type are constituted within the pre-reflective mode as the subject reacts before reflecting on the appropriateness of his/her reaction. The fact that pre-reflective actions such as these occur is another example of the sociality that does in fact permeate the Sartrean subject in opposition to the atomic model surrounded by nothingness. The mechanisms to alter one’s pre-reflective tendencies towards promoting stereotypes and essences in bad faith is beyond the scope of this paper, though numerous examples exist that would help to elucidate this such as, black youth being disproportionately targeted by police, women being overlooked for traditional male
jobs in the workplace, the relentless suspicion of Muslims, and the social marginalization of homosexuals.

The forces of power constitute the viscosity of Sartre’s jelly-like substance.

The social viscosity of any one subject is produced by a multiplicity of factors of power including the serial processes of the practico-inert (the state, racism, sexism, ageism, economic, political, social policies, and preferences), the personal constraints of facticity, normalized behavior produced by disciplinary technologies, constraints by Others in a situation, and personal constraints made in bad faith. All of these factors, at least, and in some way, contribute to the viscosity of one’s social milieu of forces.

The jelly itself has an intrinsic character that includes its predilections and preferences formed by processes of power. We can further use our analysis to show that changing the fluid, it’s character, and viscosity is analogous to the role that revolution plays in the restructuring of social processes. In that, unless the milieu of forces are indeed redefined, any act of change or influence to the prevailing milieu of power is not in itself a revolutionary act. That is, without changing the fluid itself, modifications to the practico-inert via forces applied externally to the fluid will only change the experience of the subject within the parameters that the character of the fluid will allow. In order to change the subjective experience inside the field of power in any profound and fundamental way our example thus suggests that you must change the fluid that acts as a functional limit to the types of experiences that any member of the field may have. Revolutionary change thus must come from both
the inside of the subject as well from the outside in the very character of the fluid itself. Revolution, in terms of power, is in this way both an act of freedom of the subject as well as a liberation from prevailing practico-inert constraints.

Not including the theoretical revolutionary opportunity to redefine the terms of power, we are confined and bound by practical and conceived constraints. A measure of social viscosity is a practical means of interpreting the relationship between freedom, power, and resistance that Sartre and Foucault have both written about and alluded to. A measurement of constraint and freedom may thus be applied to identify abuses and concentrations of power, inequalities, and inequities. Understanding our role in the formation and propagation of social forces that have lasting repercussions of inertia on Others is best suited within an ethical investigation. Ultimately, social viscosity as a measure of freedom and constraint operating through structure and intentionality describes a context for the development of an ethical analysis to further find ways that power and thus truth subverts our freedoms and liberties.
CHAPTER IV

Conclusion

The goal of this paper has been to investigate freedom using the works and ideas of Sartre and Foucault. To this end I believe that we have come to see that choosing one perspective or the other from which to defend and attack from would have been far less conducive to gaining an understanding of freedom and social forces of inertia than the strategy to investigate freedom in terms of each other. The look for example is a complicated mechanism because of its judgmental and objectifying nature (as discussed by Sartre), while also being an internalized mechanism of self-discipline and normativity (as discussed by Foucault). That is, the look originates in the subject while the gaze is found in mechanisms of power operating through the look that in turn act to constrain the subject. Our understanding of the look is enriched in this way by reading both Sartre and Foucault.

We have seen that this is not the only subject that they have both taken an interest in. Such similarities in their interests include the general theme of freedom, resistance, and the mechanisms of freedom constraining social forces. Ultimately choosing one system over the other does little to address the questions surrounding these topics as well as in any case where their two systems are complimentary. Foucault may have been resistant to giving Sartre credit for inspiration of his ideas,
but it hardly seems likely that he was not influenced by Sartre’s work, and the topics of his inquiry. The social reading of Sartrean freedom that is explored in this paper may be discarded by omnipotence or radical break objectors, but my own understanding of freedom has been greatly enriched with the effort to position Sartre’s account in terms of power and resistance. Likewise it is also hoped that the effort herein will contribute in some way to the continuing contemporary scholarship of Sartre and Foucault.

This analysis has intended to show that freedom, power, and resistance exist within the terms of each other. That is, freedom can be found expressed in terms of both power and resistance. The exhibition of freedom in any situation, as one or the other form occurs within the ontological intentionality of the subject. For the subject, one’s intentionality is always constrained to a certain degree by numerous forces. Sartre, we will recall named the degree by which the constraint of these forces act on the freedom of the subject, the coefficient of adversity. What we have thus gained from this inquiry of Sartre and Foucault is the knowledge that freedom and agency do indeed exist in the subject, but not in equal terms. Thus, a heterogeneous distribution of power likewise creates a heterogeneous distribution of resistance. The goal of our understanding of social viscosity is to demonstrate the multiplicity of constraints and/or opportunities that make up the relative freedom of any subject within this uneven distribution of power.

The model of viscosity proposed herein does admittedly lack an account of any substantial changes to the viscosity of a subject in situation. Take the example
of the relatively high coefficient of adversity met by a Chinese immigrant traversing the signs and notifications of a neighborhood in English speaking, white, middle-class America versus the abrupt change to her viscosity when she returns home to her ethnically Chinese neighborhood where signs and local information is printed in a legible language and where social customs are better understood. The problem in the viscous fluid example lies in not being able to describe the social constraint that allows the fluid to both keep a constant viscosity based on the subject’s relative position to cultural normativity, as well as be flexible enough to adjust its viscosity in regards to the particular situation and exchange of power that the subject finds him/herself in. Perhaps there is a foundation of understanding this question in terms of the flow rate of the liquid in motion or perhaps we will find that power draws power like a gravitational field draws matter.

Either way it appears that we have two measures of viscosity operating in our analysis. (a) There is an ontological coefficient of adversity that relates the intentionality of the subject to its existing situation. That is, the subject pushes against a resistance measured as adversity relative to its goal. And (b) we have a social coefficient of adversity relating to the subject’s position as a social object i.e. as a practico-inert being. This adversity is inherent in all social exchanges. It is composed of the preferences and restrictions of the field of power that are related to social signifiers. One example is a viscosity in relation to one’s force of power and the other relates one’s viscosity to a force of resistance. In both cases and in most circumstances the measure is the same, though in the next example we see how
one’s perceived ontological viscosity may become misaligned with the social
viscosity of the field of power.

The example of Oprah Winfrey on her recent trip to Switzerland makes a
poignant example of this. Both Oprah’s social and ontological coefficients of
adversity in the U.S. are usually low due to her tremendous wealth and notoriety.
Her vast wealth, famous name, and face provide her access to articulate great power
with respect to her ontological freedom i.e. she can do what she likes. Her
ontological coefficient of adversity is thus relatively low. Likewise her wealth, name,
and famous face allow her certain preferences within the social field. That is, no one
questions Oprah when she suggests that each member of her audience should
receive a new car during a day of filming her show. Even though she is both black
and a woman, two underprivileged social signifiers, her social coefficient of
adversity is also relatively low due to the fact that she is Oprah, the famous
billionaire.

When she encounters a store clerk in Switzerland that refuses to show her a
$38,000.00 purse saying “No, it’s too expensive,” and “you won’t be able to afford
that one,” her coefficient of adversity relating to her being a black woman exceeds
the inducements of her fame and wealth. In this case her ontological coefficient of
adversity, the one that usually finds little resistance in being able to purchase a
purse, is constructed on a different level than her socially constructed coefficient in
which her race is found to outweigh her fame and wealth. If we are to assume, as
Oprah indeed had, that her race was the signification that prompted the response
from the store clerk, and we are also to assume that Oprah’s fame is not as well pronounced in Switzerland as it is in the U.S., we can see how her social coefficient of adversity was altered by the meanings that the store clerk brought to the situation. The clerk’s social coefficient of adversity that he/she was pronouncing on Oprah was in opposition to Oprah’s usually experienced ontological coefficient of adversity. The store clerk prescribed a form of resistance onto Oprah, by means of the look, that found and judged her relative to social normativity. Normative in this case suggested that black women are not able to afford expensive purses. The clerk, along with the store in Switzerland, renders Oprah’s American situated socio-ontological coefficient of adversity nullified since she is now operating under different practico-inert processes within a new field of power.

Oprah’s ontological project to view and possibly purchase the purse was in this way practically constrained due to the change in the gaze of the local power structure. In Switzerland, Oprah was not recognized as being an exception to the normativity of the racial signification of being black. Oprah could have of course asserted her power and asked to speak with a manager or to have purchased the purse with a credit card on the spot thereby rescuing herself from distinctions made on her by the Swiss field of power, but what is important to our discussion is the abrupt change to her constraint and freedom. That is, the relative viscosity of the fluid in our example changes as Oprah enters a new social field. Freedom in this way is shown to be fluid along a scale of power and resistance as Oprah discovered when her ontological adversity became suddenly much more resistant. If Oprah had
acted in defiance to the clerk’s remarks, her actions would have been a force of freedom operating as a form of resistance against a constraining social force.

The relationship amongst freedom, power, and resistance is always found to exist at the site of the subject acting within a milieu of social forces. Sartre and Foucault offer us rich examples and discussions concerning the subject in relation to freedom within and against these forces. Far from being antithetical and contradictory, the subject of Sartre and Foucault’s intellectual correlations are accessible and still relevant today. Sartre and Foucault both clearly offer accounts of the social forces of constraint that act on our freedom. Likewise, both thinkers leave an element of agency in the formulation of the subject that forces of constraint can not totally usurp. I hope to have demonstrated through our examination that future work on these topics may be further explored for the sake of contributing to the field of literature of both authors.
WORKS CITED


