

Foucault and Chomsky on Human Nature, Power and Anarchism

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ABSTRACT

This thesis discusses the question of human nature as essential in shaping politics. In order to situate the debate between Noam Chomsky and Michel Foucault, two lines of claims regarding human nature within the framework of modern political philosophy are presented. In one line which stresses the existence of human nature the focus is on contractualism such as Thomas Hobbes and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, non-contractualism such as Carl Schmitt, and finally, Peter Kropotkin's anarchism; in this line Noam Chomsky is situated. In the second line, which argues against the existence of human nature, attention is given to Sartre's existentialism and Marxism, and in this tradition Foucault is situated. After outlining the debate, questions raised in the debate are analysed in much wider scope of Foucault's and Chomsky's works in order to detect possible points of convergences. Power and its *modus operandi* with the critique of a socio-political system which claims to be democratic but is based on hierarchy; class domination and violence; analysis of population regulation by rules and media; the notion of resistance; critique of theoretical knowledge represented as neutral and truthful; together with the critique of elitist intellectualism, are possible points of convergence in the work of Chomsky and Foucault within the Left political framework.

Key words: human nature, anarchism, power, resistance.

1. INTRODUCTION

I find the question of human nature to be essential in shaping politics. In every political theory there is an implicit or explicit stand regarding human nature. The topic of my thesis is “The Chomsky-Foucault Debate” which took place in 1971, in which two great intellectuals debated upon the existence of human nature. Both of them belong to the Left realm of the political, however to two different traditions. Chomsky agrees with the anarchist tradition which argues for the existence of universal human nature and a society founded on freedom and justice, while Foucault has a constructivist approach regarding human nature claiming that it is just a concept created within our civilization, the same as “justice”, and he is restrained from ideas concerning the future of society.

Although they are usually seen as divergent in their thinking, in my work I attempt to detect the points of convergences between Michel Foucault and Noam Chomsky. I found them to be very similar in their political motivation, although they are divergent in their characterization of the intellectual means for implementing it. Their “Debate” reflects a particular historical moment and I shall try to inquire whether it is possible to see “The Debate” from an alternative perspective: that what was seen as divergence of the Left in the 1970s is possible to see through a different lens today. Let me introduce the idea that motivates me. Leftist, critical movements have been suffering through the whole century because of fragmentation and factional struggles, in practice, as well as in theory. The moral of the story is that there have been enough divergences and that it is convergence that should be sought instead. Although Chomsky and Foucault belong to different traditions within the Left, my question is - are they really so different or is it possible to find some convergences in their work?

In order to better understand and situate “The Debate” I will begin my thesis with a tentative overview of ideas concerning human nature within the context of modern political philosophy; in order to detect what implications the notion of the existence or non-existence of human nature has in politics and what it implies. I differentiate two lines of thought regarding the existence of human nature. In the first tradition which stresses the existence of human nature I will focus on modern philosophy and contractualism such as Thomas Hobbes and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, non-contractualism such as Carl Schmitt, and finally, anarchism, present in the work of Peter Kropotkin. In this tradition I will situate Chomsky and his work. I will explore the second tradition of thought which argues against the existence of universal human by focusing on Jean Paul Sartre’s “Existentialism” as well as inquiring into Marxist notions on human nature. In this tradition I will situate Foucault who opposes the idea of human nature.

After delineating these two lines of thought within modern political philosophy in regards to the question of human nature, in the second chapter I will focus on the debate itself. I see Foucault and Chomsky to be both Left-oriented intellectuals deeply involved in politics; they are public intellectuals who offer profound critique of social order based on liberal capitalism. In the first part of the debate, the philosophical element, they debate upon the existence of human nature and notions regarding knowledge and science. While “human nature” for Chomsky stands for innate structures of the human mind which guides social and intellectual behaviour, to Foucault it is a mere concept created within our civilization. “Knowledge” to Chomsky represents human’s cognitive precognitions or innate structures for creating knowledge and shaping scientific theories, while for Foucault “knowledge” stands for organization of a particular body of claims in a particular historical moment; he addresses the cultural conditions surrounding a particular body of claims in a particular historical

period. What is interesting to me is that in the debate they are not opposed one another but simply observing particular concept from different perspectives.

Regarding the second, political element of the debate, Chomsky is focused on the creation of an alternative society based on human nature which will ensure human freedom. However, in this part of the debate Foucault is restrained and maintains the position of the present historical moment and focuses on disclosure of political power which controls and shapes the social body. Regarding the question of resistance present in an act of civil disobedience, these two intellectuals disagree in theory. For Chomsky civil disobedience is necessary in order to put pressure on the government, whilst to Foucault it is just an act within the state framework, so it is not so meaningful. In the question of “justice” they also disagree inasmuch as, “justice” for Chomsky is an essential characteristic of human nature and future society which should be built on it, while for Foucault it is also just an concept created within our civilization; although in his critique of power which creates inequalities, it seems that he has a strong sense of justice.

After outlining the debate, in the final chapter I will analyse the constitutive concepts of the debate, such as power, knowledge and anarcho-syndicalism in greater depth and within the wider scope of Foucault’s and Chomsky’s work in order to detect the convergences in their work. I will try to establish convergence in their work in regards to power. Both of them are offering a profound critique of a system which claims to be democratic but is based on hierarchy, class dominance and violence. Also, it seems to me that they share similar ideas concerning the regulation of population; for Foucault control of the social body is accomplished by different rules, while Chomsky is concerned with media which he sees as a method of population control. Both of them share the idea of resistance to power structures and I will also try to detect the similarities regarding that question. Furthermore, both of them are critical towards the theoretical knowledge verified from formal institutions which is

represented as neutral and truthful and both criticize intellectual elitism, present also in the Left. I will finish this chapter with Chomsky's ideas about a future, better society. While Foucault is really careful regarding his vision of future society, Chomsky is optimistic towards a creation of better society in which human freedom will be imperative; better world humans should aspire to.

Concerning method, I will combine on the one hand the big picture of convergences between two authors, and on the other hand, close reading of their texts.

2. SITUATING THE CHOMSKY-FOUCAULT DEBATE

In order to better understand and situate the “Chomsky-Foucault debate” on human nature, in this chapter I will offer a tentative overview of ideas concerning human nature within the context of modern political philosophy. With the understanding of the idea that “every political idea in one way or another takes a position on the ‘nature’ of Man and presupposes that he is either ‘by nature’ good or ‘by nature evil’ ” (Schmitt 1985:56), the question at hand is what implications in politics does the notion of the existence or non-existence of human nature release? Therefore, my aim in this chapter is to differentiate two lines of thought regarding the existence of human nature within political philosophy. Within the first tradition which stresses the existence of universal human nature within political philosophy, I will focus in contractualism such as Thomas Hobbes and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and non-contractualism such as Carl Schmitt and Kropotkin’s anarchism, and here I will situate Noam Chomsky with his idea of anarcho-syndicalism. Within the second tradition which argues against the existence of universal human nature I will present Jean-Paul Sartre’s notions on existentialism, as well as the Marxist stance on human nature. Within the latter tradition I will also situate Michel Foucault’s ideas on the non-existence of human nature.

2.1. Hobbes’s “Hostile Man”

I would like to start with contractual political philosophy, specifically with Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) as he is seen as one of the founders of the social contract theory which shaped modern society by placing the authority of the state over the individual and

population.¹ Also, Hobbes is seen as one of the founders of liberalism, the socio-economic order in which we are living today; founded on the concepts of human liberty and private property.² What is Hobbes' stand on the question of human nature?

In his most famous book "Leviathan", Hobbes is focused on the state of nature in which people live as equals:

Nature hath made men so equal in the faculties of body and mind as that, though there be found one man sometimes manifestly stronger in body or of quicker mind than another, yet when all is reckoned together the difference between man and man is not so considerable as that one man can thereupon claim to himself any benefit to which another may not pretend as well as he. For as to the strength of the body, the weakest has strength enough to kill the strongest, either by secret machination or by confederacy with others that are in the same danger with himself (1999: 76).

As men are equal mentally and physically, they are also equal in desiring the same thing and inevitably, they become enemies (1999: 76); and here a problem arises. Therefore, without a power to keep men in fear, as Hobbes calls it, this natural condition of men is war "of every man against every man" (1999: 77). So, one can conclude that Hobbes sees people as by nature violent and hostile, and every man represents an enemy to one another. Therefore, in

¹ According to Anne Cudd, "contractarianism' names both a political theory of the legitimacy of political authority and a moral theory about the origin or legitimate content of moral norms. The political theory of authority claims that legitimate authority of government must derive from the consent of the governed, where the form and content of this consent derives from the idea of contract or mutual agreement" (Cudd 2008).

² According to Allan Ryan, liberalism can be seen as politico-social arrangement based on constitutional government established on principles of liberty and private property (Ryan 2007: 362).

Hobbes' case there is human nature and it is rather pessimistic. This natural state or "state of war" is characterized by continual fear and the threat of a violent death.

In this natural "state of war", there is no justice or injustice; no right or wrong because there is no law, claims Hobbes. In this state, force and fraud are "cardinal virtues" (1999: 79). In his negation of justice and moral, Hobbes is considered to be a realist. The way out of this miserable state of nature provides "laws of nature" which can be summed in the maxim "whatsoever you require that others should do to you, that do ye to them" (1999: 83). Hobbes' "natural laws" ensure human rational and they can be seen as practical imperatives which put both human egoism and wicked human nature on a leash; ensuring that humans live in a state of peace when the peril of war is over. Except human reason, unwillingness to die and aspiration for more comfortable life can affect man's eagerness for peace. So, to conclude with Hobbes and his notions of human nature, all men are equal in the state of nature where they have to face the nasty characteristics of human nature which causes and maintains a state of war. Thanks to human reason and the abovementioned passions, optimistically Hobbes argues that humans have the possibility to exit the harsh "state of nature", and he sees that in the act of a contract which he describes as "mutual translation, or change of right" through which he founded the grounds for social contract theory (1999: 83). So, Hobbes' position on human nature is that it exists, and it is violent and hostile.

2.2. Rousseau's "Savage Man"

Following Hobbes who laid down foundations for contractualist theory and who perceives human nature as something violent and hostile, I will stay within the framework of social contract theory, focusing on the philosophy which presents human nature in a positive

manner. It is the opposite understanding of human nature than the one attributed by Hobbes, but in the same framework – the one of social contractualist theory.

Hereafter I will focus on the works of Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778), a philosopher who claimed that the modern world is coercive of human freedom and destructive upon individual authenticity. In his work he explored the best way to achieve and protect human freedom: through the establishment of political institutions which can ensure the communal life of citizens who will be in a position to decide for themselves and through education which facilitates child's autonomy and protects the child from the negative development of self-interest (Bertram 2011).

Rousseau in his "Discourse on the Arts and Sciences", known as "The First Discourse", explains how arts and sciences have a bad influence on humans. Rousseau believes this because of the luxury of these pursuits and because a man is no longer estimated by his integrity, but by his talent, once virtuous and innocent people will inevitably become amoral and unequal among themselves (Rousseau [1750] 2002: 60, 63). In Rousseau's "Discourse on the Origin and Basis of Inequality among Men", known as "The Discourse on Inequality", or "The Second Discourse", he elaborates upon the origin of human inequality. Usually "The Second Discourse" is read as an introduction to his later work "The Social Contract" in which he writes about the co-existence of individuals and the authority of the state. "The Second Discourse" can be read as an anarchistic text, as for example Chomsky does, which I will focus on later in my thesis. It is an important text here because in that text Rousseau delineates his idea about human nature.

Rousseau glorifies a "savage man", that is, a man in a state of nature. "Man in a savage condition" by transforming into the "man in a domestic condition" became social and "a slave to others, he becomes weak, fearful, mean-spirited, and his soft and effeminate way

of living at one completes the enervation of his strength and of his courage” (Rousseau 2002: 93). In the state of nature, which Rousseau idealizes, savage man or a “human machine” is alone and always threatened by danger, and in those circumstances, self-preservation is his only concern, which means that a savage man has a fit and strong body (2002: 94, 95). Mentally, the savage man also has a natural impulse, though, as opposed to an animal which is determinate by its instinct, man is a free agent, that is he has a possibility to act freely, that is to resist or to obey the natural impulse (Rousseau 2002: 95). Man has a possibility of improvement, as individual and as a species; beasts are fated to their instincts, but man has the possibility of “perfectibility”, which draws him out of his original condition of peace and innocence (Rousseau 2002: 96). This implies that there is a trajectory of development of humans which has led towards the civilization in which we live today.

By idealizing this savage man, who uncorrupted is a strong and virtuous man, Rousseau basically argues for the existence of human nature, and in his case, this human nature in its original state is represented as positive, in a sense that humans are benevolent and virtuous; that is before they collide with the evils of civilization. In Rousseau’s writings, there is a clear duality “positive nature/negative civilization” according to which things are quite radically juxtaposed. To the state of nature Rousseau opposes civilization or the state of reason where the reason encourages self-love, isolates man and alienates him from the others. According to Rousseau these are, evils which threaten a whole community; savage man lacks reason and wisdom, and because of that he will answer to the “first whispers of humanity” (2002: 107). Civil state is characterized by the existence of industry, language, fixed residence, war, alienation, desire to hurt a fellow man, passions and social inequality, while in a natural state simplicity and uniformity prevail (Rousseau 2002: 111, 112).

For Rousseau, life in the state of nature was marked by a sufficiency, while in the state of society; man has barely what is necessary for living (2002: 104). It seems that for

Rousseau life in a state of nature was a sufficient life because man wanted what he needed and he could find that in nature, while the life in the state of society is marked by surviving and continual omnipresent scarcity. His antagonism towards the idea of private property moves him away from Hobbes and liberalism.

The first man, who after enclosing a piece of ground, took it into his head to say, 'this is mine', and found people simple enough to believe him, was the real founder of the civil society. How many crimes, how many wars, how many murders, how many misfortunes and horrors, would that man have saved the human species, who pulling up the stakes or filling up the ditches should have cried to his fellows: aware of listening to this impostor; you are lost, if you forget that the fruits of the earth belong equally to us all, and the earth itself to nobody! (Rousseau 2002: 113).

Although both Hobbes and Rousseau are against the people's submission to an absolute sovereign, Rousseau's negative remarks towards the idea of private property move him away from liberalism, although he stays within the framework of contractualism because after all, as I have mentioned already, he calls for the constitution of political institutions which can ensure that in a communal life citizens can decide for themselves (Bertram 2011). So, in the framework of contractualists, he can be seen as a republican.³

Except for the critique of institutions and private property which can politically situate Rousseau near anarchism, there is also another element which situates him near anarchism;

³ According to Lowett, republicans highlight "the importance of civic virtue and political participation, the dangers of corruption, the benefits of a mixed constitution and the rule of law" (Lowett 2010). Maybe in this context the important distinction between liberalism and republicanism is that the former stresses the individualism and the market aspect, while the later is more focused on human virtue, which is, according to Rousseau lost in civilization.

namely, Rousseau's notions on pity can be read in an anarchistic tone. To him, pity among humans is an innate emotion thanks to which the human species is maintained (Rousseau 2002: 108). This force of natural pity is the source for all other social virtues: "what is generosity, what clemency, what humanity, but pity applied to the weak, to the guilty, or to the human species in general" (Rousseau 2002: 107). This pity in the natural state stands as law and implies justice: "Do to others as you would have others to do to you" – this is a maxim of natural goodness – claims Rousseau (2002: 108). Rousseau calls it a "natural sentiment", and basically Rousseau's concept of "pity" is analogous to Kropotkin's concept of "solidarity" which stands for social relations characterized with mutual aid, concern with the welfare of others; interaction among humans which is led by cooperation as opposed to competition.

2.3. Schmitt's "Open question"

After delineating two different tendencies towards human nature within the contractual political theory, I would like to trace one more major line in modern political philosophy: conservatism. Hereafter I will focus on the work of Carl Schmitt in order to delineate a conservative notion of human nature. As I have said, conservatism is one of the major philosophical directions within the realm of political philosophy and I am interested in which stance towards human nature conservatism takes.

Conservatism is a body of right-wing opinion which is characterized by the attachment to tradition, reluctance to change and preference for politically experienced rulers (Quinton, Northon 2007: 288). Carl Schmitt was a conservative philosopher, notorious for his support and active participation in German National Socialism. In a political sense, he is a

realist; like Hobbes, he also claims that “*autoritas, non veritas facit legem*“ i.e. “the authority and not the truth creates the law” (Schmitt 1985: 33). His political theory is based on the “concept of the political” which is grounded on the friend/enemy antithesis - a supra-antithesis so to say which derives its energy from all other entities such as religious, economic, moral or other. This antipode friend/enemy is so powerful that inevitably every non-political grouping becomes subordinated and finishes as political (1996: 38). The point of the political, according to Schmitt, is not just in the battle itself, but in the attitude defined by the political which can distinguish between friend and enemy (Schmitt 1996: 37). So, basically all society is based on friend/enemy antipode which represents the essence of political existence (Schmitt 1996: 49).

That Schmitt is realist is clear from his claim that “the justification of war does not reside in its being fought for ideals or norms of justice, but in its being fought against a real enemy” (Schmitt 1996: 49).⁴ To Schmitt, a world without war would be a completely pacified and apolitical world (1996: 32, 35). Interestingly, a world without the friend/enemy antipode; that is a world without politics and war, would be a place lacking that essential distinction “whereby men could be required to sacrifice life, authorized to shed blood, and kill other human beings” (Schmitt 1996:35). It seems to me that the sacrificing of life, shedding of blood and killing another human being is the highest values of one’s life, or maybe even the purpose of one’s life in Schmitt’s view. As though life without blood and killing would be empty, even boring.⁵ Furthermore, no order can exist without protection and obedience,

⁴ “*Jus belli*” (lat. “the law of war”) stands for the request to kill the one which is recognized as an enemy and readiness to die in the combat (Schmitt 1996: 46, 48, 49).

⁵ In Schmitt’s understanding of political, pacifism has no place because humanity is not a political concept. According to him, humanity derives from liberal ideology and it is an utopian idea of total depolitization (1996: 55). He finds the concept of humanity problematic because it excludes the concept of enemy, and he observes how when a particular state fights for humanity, it basically usurps a universal concept against its militant opponents (Schmitt 1996: 54). If we look at the “wars for democracy” (or rather for oil and political ego) in Iraq or Afghanistan, that took place in 20th century, then Schmitt has a clear point. “To confiscate the word humanity, to invoke and monopolize such a term probably has certain incalculable effects, such as denying the

claims Schmitt, and if in one moment people cannot maintain themselves in the sphere of politics due to the lack of will or enemy, the weak ones will disappear (1996: 53). What does this say about the humans? According to Schmitt, are people driven by the law of stronger? It appears to be an essentialist and “instinct-driven theory” in which people are reduced to their militant nature. Although he also claims that his definition of political does not glorifies combat and that the war is not the goal of politics, but is “the leading presupposition which determines in a characteristic way human action and thinking and thereby creates a specifically political behaviour” (Schmitt 1996: 33, 34). What does this tell us about human beings? To me it looks that humans share their militant nature and that conflict lies as a foundation of a human beings.

In his ideas about human nature, Schmitt refers to Helmuth Plessner who claims that man is “[primarily] a being capable of creating distance’ who in his essence is undermined, unfathomable, and remains an ‘open question’” (Plessner in Schmitt 1996: 60). He notices that “all genuine theories presuppose man to be evil, i.e., by no means as not unproblematic, but a dangerous and dynamic being. This can be easily documented in the works of every specific political thinker. Insofar as they reveal themselves as such they all agree on the idea of a problematic human nature, no matter how distinct they are in rank and prominent in history” (Schmitt 1996: 61). However, although Schmitt states that “other” theories claim that human nature is negative, and he is more optimistic in his notion that man is an open question, I find his idea of human nature to be extremely negative and militant.

Lars Vinx (2010) in his text about Carl Schmitt, claims that in Schmitt’s view, Man’s menacing behaviour is a result of wrong social arrangement. But, what for “better” do social organizations stands for? Knowing Schmitt’s writing about the need for political authority, I

enemy the quality of being human and declaring him to be an outlaw of humanity; and a war can thereby be driven to the most extreme inhumanity” (Schmitt 1996: 54).

am sceptical towards the ideal of “better” social order. Does it imply a political order where militant human nature will flourish?⁶ From Schmitt’s perspective, liberal de-politicization should be ignored because only God can relieve humans from political animosity (Vinx 2011) and here Schmitt’s religious element comes about.

Schmitt finds human beings to be an “open question” (Plessner in Schmitt 1996: 60). I read that for Schmitt human nature exists, but is not fixed and how it will turn out to be; it depends on social organization. Schmitt should be situated in the tradition which argues that there is universal human nature, though in his case I see human nature as rather negative because of its militant and warlike tendencies which seem to him to be a purpose of life.

2.4. Kropotkin and principle of “Solidarity”

One of the lines of political theory which claims that there is a positive human nature (meaning altruistic, cooperative and benevolent) is anarchism, and in the demonstration of the relationship between anarchism and human nature I will rely on Peter Kropotkin (1842-1921); one of the leading theorists of anarchism. The principle of anarchism can be understood as “opposition to authority in all forms and in its advocacy of complete social reorganization on the basis of the free cooperation of independent associations”, based on mutual aid, sympathy, solidarity and individual liberty (Baldwin in Kropotkin 2002: 2, 3). Given characteristics are essentially human characteristics which can be manifested in

⁶ In Schmitt's “Political Theology” he discusses the legal order, which according to him, contains of two distinct elements: norm and decision and the Sovereign has a power to decide and proclaim the state of exception (1985: 5-7).

anarchistic social organization which Kropotkin describes as “equality in all things, the synonym of equity, that is anarchism in very deed” (2002: 99).⁷

Kropotkin is well-known for his anarchist-communism, which means that he advocated a system without governments and authority (2002: 3). The anarchist holds that the private possession in society should be replaced by common possession (Kropotkin 2002: 46).⁸ As Baldwin notes, anarchism for Kropotkin was “essentially applied ethics” (2002: 2), and in Kropotkin’s writings about morality, what is evident are his notions on human nature. He claims that human action is guided with longing for satisfaction and prevention of pain (Kropotkin 2002: 88). Kropotkin was also a zoologist and in his work he often makes parallels between animals and humans. In his relentless study of animals, he claims that people, like animals, have developed conceptions of good and evil.⁹ Namely, animals live by the rule which commands the imperative of species maintenance and according to that imperative the ideas of “good” and “evil” are created. In the human context, Kropotkin claims that what is useful for society is that which is good, and what is bad is that what is hurtful for society. Furthermore, the concepts of “good” and “bad” depend on intelligence and knowledge (Kropotkin 2002: 90-92). This conception of good and evil varies according to the degree of intelligence or of knowledge acquired, claims Kropotkin (2002: 92).

⁷ A question which can be raised here: If human nature is positive, why we do not live in anarchist society? Kropotkin explains that the history of human thought exists both in periods of slumber and in period of awakening, and in order to be awoken, “the thought frees herself from the chains with which those interested – rulers, lawyers, clerics – have carefully enwound her” (Kropotkin 2002: 80). According to him, the history of human thought is shaped by “the emptiness of the religious political, legal and social prejudices”, and furthermore, “the inveterate enemies of thought – the government, the lawgiver, and the priest – soon recover from their defeat” and they re-adapt (Kropotkin 2002: 80). So, these mentioned state structures are responsible for enslavement of human thought, and anarchism stands for social organization based on voluntary associations, not on political authority.

⁸ The characteristic of anarchism is the destruction of state as we know it. It is a no-government system in Kropotkin's words, and due to this characteristic, Kropotkin's anarcho-communism can be also described as “libertarian socialism”. Further in thesis I will explain more about different tendencies in Left-oriented political views, that is, differences between “libertarian” and “authoritarian” socialism.

⁹ It is well-known in his example with ants. A well fed ant has to give honey to his hungry mates so everybody can be well fed up. Selfish ants which disobey this rule will bear the worse treatment than other species which are considered to be enemies (Kropotkin 2002: 90).

As among animals, equals among people exists the principle of solidarity, claims Kropotkin and mutual confidence is prerequisite for struggle, courage, initiative and solidarity:

When we study the animal world and try to explain to ourselves that struggle for existence maintained by each living being against adverse circumstances and against its enemies, we realize that the more the principles of solidarity and equality are developed in an animal society and have become habitual to it, the more chance has it of surviving and coming triumphantly out of the struggle against hardship and foes. The more thoroughly each member of the society feels his solidarity with each other member of the society, the more completely are developed in all of them those two qualities which are the main factors of all progress: courage on one hand, and on the other, free individual initiative (Kropotkin 2002: 95-96).

The maxim regarding the morality, which is evident also in the animal world, according to Kropotkin is: “Do to others what you would have them to do to you in the same circumstances” (Kropotkin 2002: 92).

I find that anarchism can be situated within the Western philosophical tradition according to which there is a universal human nature and in the case of anarchism, it is positive (humans are benevolent, altruistic) and relies on mutual human cooperation. Noam Chomsky, who is declared anarcho-syndicalist, also agrees with this line of philosophy by claiming that anarcho-syndicalism is an ideal social organization where people organize

themselves in small-scale voluntary organizations and in that kind of social order they live freely. And freedom is, according to an anarchists understanding of human nature, fundamental human need. Namely, Chomsky sees human reason as an argument for human freedom – to him language is a strong criterion that another being has a human mind and that legitimizes human demand for freedom.¹⁰

2.5. Sartre and “Existential humanism”

Hereafter, in this chapter, I will focus on the tradition which negates the existence of human nature. I am interested in seeing who follows the tradition of negating the existence of human nature in modern political philosophy.

One of the most familiar stands against human nature is taken by existentialists. Jean-Paul Sartre (1905–1980) was an existentialist who denies “human nature” and describes existentialism as an “optimistic doctrine of action” (Sartre 1948: 56). Existential atheists, how Sartre refers to himself, believe that existence comes before essence (1948: 26). Namely, Man is a being which firstly meets the world and later shapes himself. He starts as nothing: “man is free, man *is* freedom” and furthermore, from the moment he encounters the world he bears a responsibility for his acts (Sartre 1948: 34). In this world man is in anguish (he has to make his own choices, and this anguish is a condition of action itself), he is abandoned (he is free, without universal nature or God), and feels despair (he can do what is within his power, not beyond that) (Sartre 1948: 30, 32, 39).

Hence, Man has a responsibility for his entire life on his shoulders, but not just for himself, but for all men, and choosing for himself, he chooses for everybody: “...existence

¹⁰ This relation between language and freedom I will address in details later in the third chapter.

precedes essence and we will to exist at the same time as we fashion our image, that image is valid for all and for the entire epoch in which we found ourselves” (Sartre 1948: 29), which means that the responsibility of an individual is thus much greater because it concerns mankind as a whole. This kind of relationship between humans implies “intersubjectivity”; namely, Sartre’s Man in the process of the discovery of himself also discovers others as the condition of his own existence. Here it becomes clear how existentialism is deeply socially embedded theory.

In making choices for him, Sartre’s Man also makes “choices of his morality”, but this morality cannot be chosen and it depends upon circumstances, so Man can be defined only in relation to his circumstances (Sartre 1948: 50). Man is characterized by his freedom, but also has the commitment towards others:

... thus, in the name of that will to freedom which is implied in freedom itself, I can form judgements upon those who seek to hide from themselves the wholly voluntary nature of their existence and its complete freedom. Those who hide from this total freedom, in a guise of solemnity or with deterministic excuses, I shall call cowards. Others, who try to show that their existence is necessary, when it is merely an accident of the appearance of the human race on earth – I shall call scum. But neither cowards nor scum can be identified except upon the plane of strict authenticity. Thus, although the content of morality is variable, a certain form of this morality is universal (Sartre 1948: 52).

Sartre argues for “human universality” which is being constantly created because of the fact that man defines himself again and again (Sartre 1948: 47). There is also something

transcendental in this story of existentialism. According to Sartre, Man is abandoned and free, and in this world Man is always projecting and losing himself in the world and in this process he is also pursuing transcendental aims. He is self-surpassing and free; always seeking how to actualize himself and this is what Sartre calls “existential humanism” (Sartre 1948: 55).

Sartre denies the existence of human nature: “it is impossible to find in each and every man a universal essence that can be called human nature” (1948: 45, 46). Nevertheless, he claims that there is a “human universality of *condition*”, indicating the *a priori* constraints which Man faces: i.e. to be born as a slave, feudal baron or a proletarian; and those historical situations can vary, as opposed to demands which accompany the fact of existing in the world (i.e. death) which are fixed. Those limitations he sees both as objective because people meet with them everywhere, and subjective as they are lived and with respect to them one defines himself, claims Sartre. So, to him, the human purpose is an attempt to surpass those limitations; discredit them or accept them. And in the process of facing those limitations a human universality is being perpetually made. In this universality lies the core of existentialism – a concept of “free commitment”, meaning that “every man realises himself in realising a type of humanity” – ergo free being (self-committal; existence chooses essence) equals absolute being, and absolute temporarily localized equals universally intelligible being (Sartre 1948: 46, 47).

Although Sartre negates the existence of human nature, I see his ideas to be very close to anarchistic ideas, which are usually fond of human nature.¹¹ Namely, Sartre stresses the

¹¹ Is anarchism always committed to the existence of human nature? I am eager to think that no; anarchism is not always committed to the existence of human nature because one can have an anti-statist stand without a concrete theory on human nature. But it seems to me that Kropotkin and theoretical anarchistic mainstream are fond of human nature, I think for a simple reason: the anarchistic theory has to answer the questions about competitiveness, tendency to free-ride or to dominate. The statist tries to solve it by proposing strong state. Anti-statist needs a different tack. And a simple and elegant one is to say that all these bad tendencies are not part of what humans really are. And this lands him/her in assumptions concerning human nature.

importance of human involvement, intersubjectivity, and the idea of human universality and universal morality. He is focused on a Man who is as self-surpassing and concerned with the wellbeing of others. Sartre's "better society" is not based on religion, but on something which is intrinsically good in human beings – he calls it "free commitment" – or a possibility of acting which affects the whole of humanity. How is that really different from the anarchistic idea about the positive human nature (meaning that humans are altruistic and benevolent) and individual which acts led by the principle of solidarity on the behalf of whole society?

2.6. Marxism and "Anti-humanism"

Marxism is the last theory which I will present in this chapter and, the most problematic so to say, because Marxism covers an extensive body of literature, and in the following lines I would like just to indicate in which direction notions of human nature in Marxism go. To comprehend Marxism as a coherent body of thought is difficult because there are many divergences within it (Hindess 2007: 384). Marxism, with its focus on the class as an actor of social force, is characterised by its attempt to integrate the class conflict into a general theory of history in which "the development of economic relations play the most important role" (Hindess 2007: 384). For Marxism, the ideal society is communism: a society based on co-operative forms of economic organization without class divisions (Hindess 2007: 386).

Marx's material conception of history consists of a process of development by which one stage in history gives rise to another, and laws which manage this process are economic (Stevenson and Haberman 1988: 131, 135). Marx's concept of humanity has a social nature:

“the real nature of man is the totality of social relations” (Marx in Stevenson and Haberman 1988: 140). And because “all history is nothing but a continuous transformation of social nature” (Marx in Stevenson and Haberman 1988: 140), we basically can’t talk about universal human nature. In other words - Man has no fixed human nature because he depends on the economic circumstances which surround him. One general notion about human nature present in Marx is that humans are active, productive beings. This is the characteristic which differentiates human from animals; people produce their means of subsistence, meaning that people make plans for their lives and for that living they perform labour (Marx in Stevenson and Haberman 1988: 140).

One important direction in Marxism is known as “Marxist anti-humanism” which was shaped by Louis Althusser and his associates in France during the 1960s. They developed a concept which rests on an idea that individuals should be seen as “embodiments of the economic and other relations in which they are embedded” (Hindess 2007: 393). Basically, Althusser is decentring or displacing the human being as the subject of history (Resch 1989: 533) and stresses the importance of the historical conditions which shape the individual. Althusser argues against the idea of universal human nature: “by putting social relations (modes of production, exploitation of labour power, the circuits of capital) rather than an abstract notion of Man at the centre of his theoretical system, Marx displaced two key proportions of modern philosophy: ‘(1) that there is a universal essence of man; (2) that this essence is the attribute of ‘each single individual’ who is its real subject” (Hall 1992: 606).

Foucault with his claims about episteme also agrees with this Marxist anti-humanist tradition against the notion of a universal essence of Man, that is, human nature. Namely, Foucault’s “episteme” or discursive formations governed by rules determine the knowledge or body of thought in a particular historical moment. His three big episteme are the Renaissance, the classical period, and the nineteenth century: those structures or formations

replace each other, but are separately internally fixed and they are in the centre because they determine the individual with rules, decisions and limitations.¹² It seems to me that Foucault's Man is a product of structures established at a time in history; he is subjected to them. So, Man is not determined with some universal human nature but with particular discursive structures.

By his rejection of claim about the essence of man and emphasizing the importance of episteme which shapes the individual, it is obvious that Foucault and Chomsky agree with different traditions regarding the question of human nature. While Chomsky's agrees with the tradition which stresses the existence of human nature which is in his case, positive, Foucault agrees with the second line of political philosophy which is opposed to the idea of universal human nature.

In this chapter my aim was to try to delineate the political debate on human nature within the framework of modern political philosophy in order to better understand and situate the Chomsky-Foucault debate. In the line of first tradition which implies the existence of human nature I mentioned contractalists such as Hobbes and Rousseau, conservatives as Schmitt, and anarchists such as Kropotkin. Within this tradition I have situated Chomsky because of his stand on human nature. The second tradition which is opposed to the idea of human nature is represented in modern political theory by Sartre's "Existentialism" and Marxism. I situated Foucault in this tradition which negates universal human nature. After giving this tentative overview of political ideas concerning human nature, in the next chapter I will focus on the particular debate between Chomsky and Foucault on the same subject matter.

¹² In my thesis I will not address the differences between Foucault and Althusser. See Resch, Robert Paul. *Modernism, Postmodernism, and Social Theory: A Comparison of Althusser and Foucault. Poetics Today*. 10(3): 511-549.

3. THE CHOMSKY-FOUCAULT DEBATE ON HUMAN NATURE

“The Chomsky-Foucault Debate on Human Nature” was the book which triggered my interest in politics and in the work of both Chomsky and Foucault because in it these two influential leftist thinkers bring up many questions such as the existence of human nature, knowledge, the possibility of creating a scientific theory, the question of justice, civil disobedience, and the idea of alternative future society. Both of them belong to the left realm of the political; however they can be seen as belonging to two different traditions within the left. Chomsky agrees with the anarchist tradition which argues for the existence of universal human nature and society which can be built upon it. Foucault argues against the existence of human nature and views ideas concerning justice or human nature as constructivist, claiming that they are just cultural constructs that can be deconstructed. Within this debate of such intellectual depth, they show in which different directions Left can go in political thinking. The debate itself was set up in a tense political moment during the seventies; a moment characterized by a pronounced reaction against the establishment. The questions raised in the debate are prominent again in today’s historical moment which is also high-strung and characterized by a strong economic neo-liberal crisis.¹³

Going a few decades back to the 1960s/70s, both Chomsky and Foucault were well known left-orientated intellectuals deeply involved in politics; they are so to say “public intellectuals”. Their work in academia was intertwined with their analysis of public discourse, activism and the critique of contemporary political system, and both of them argued for social change which was seen as a necessary move at that particular moment. Namely, the debate

¹³ To Wendy Brown “neo-liberal” stands for the arrangement characterized by free market which imposes the imperative of production and profit to the political and social life, as well as the state (Brown 2006: 694).

took place in 1971, which was a period of crisis and the critique of existing order was articulated through the politics of the “New Left”. The “New Left” was a Marxist movement spreading within Europe as well the United States, advocating social change, with Herbert Marcuse, associated with Frankfurt school of critical theory, as a leading figure.¹⁴ The New Left was a cultural protest, as well as political: “the newly awakened sensibility of the rebels is a political factor; the real fight was a political fight...” (Ehrmann 1970: 383). The New Left was a reaction against the establishment: “For the New Left in America and elsewhere, not only the Vietnam war, but also the ‘transparency of the state’s Orwellian language, and its total imperviousness to dissent, have served to remove all sanctity and legitimacy from the established institutions’” (Breines in Ehrmann 1970: 381).

Foucault was politically active in this story of the revolt against the existing social order. He was an activist who marched, signed petitions, gave provocative interviews, and participated in demonstrations (Miller 1993a: 35). In the sixties he supported the Gauche Proletarienne or Proletarian Left, also known as the “Maoists”; a movement which consisted of Marxists and anarchists that advocated politically ultra-left ideas (Miller 1993a). He also supported the protest of Marxist students in Tunisia against the existing regime while he was teaching there (Eribon 1992: 192). He supported the student movements in France which were part of a larger student movement that took place in a number of European countries as well as in the US where the middle class youth rebelled against their own class values; students believed that precisely the intelligentsia had a central significance in this struggle (Ehrmann 1970: 384). Specifically, in 1968 in France, a series of student protests against the existing establishment, emphasised class inequalities, as well as against the state authority

¹⁴ The “New Left” as opposed to earlier leftist movements associated with the Marxist-Leninist ideology carried out in the Soviet Union. At the time, Peter Kropotkin was warning on “red bureaucracy” referring to Bolsheviks and Lenin who in October revolution in 1917 overthrow the Czar and existing regime and established the Soviet Union and after the death of Lenin in 1924, Stalin started building his authoritarian rule which was notorious by its coercive bureaucracy and strong police. From that kind of Stalinism the “New Left” was distancing.

which regulated the University's funding took place. Students called solidarity with mass working class strikes against unemployment, for better wages, and better conditions of work. By the end of the sixties, Foucault "began to embody the very figure of the militant intellectual" who was criticizing and engaging in demonstrations and manifestos (Eribon 1992: 210). From the beginning of seventies, he was also a supporter of the Iranian Revolution, which resulted in 1979 in the overthrowing of Iran's monarchy, turning it into an Islamic republic.

The Sixties and seventies in the US were also characterized by student revolts against the establishment. In that period Chomsky was an acclaimed intellectual because of his ground-breaking work in linguistics, as well as his political stands. Chiefly, he is well known for his constant critique of the capitalist economic system in which the means of production are in private hands which enables the welfare for the rich. He argues that workers should own and control their own work and working place (Edgey 2009). During the sixties and seventies he was already a well-known critic of American foreign policy which was (and apparently still is) focused on the control of the population in different countries in the name of business and capital. He was a strong critic of Vietnam War in that time. The critique of media which produces the representation of that kind of policy as democratic and progressive is also one of the central areas of Chomsky's work (Edgey 2009).

Beside the struggle for political change in which Foucault and Chomsky both took part, as I have described above, it is important to understand the wider framework of social movements in order to grasp the dynamic spirit of that time. It is inevitable to mention the American Civil Rights Movement for the political affirmation of black people, the (second-wave) feminist movement against patriarchal oppression, and the romantic views about the revolutionary leadership and anti-bureaucratic stance in the Far East, i.e. Maoism. Also, in the socialist states of Europe there was a movement for the liberalization of socialism and

against Soviets authority (i.e. the “Prague Spring”). Therefore, taking all these movements into consideration, it is evident that the sixties and seventies was a dynamic era characterized by both a fight and a hope for different political and social order than that which existed.

After giving an account to the specific historical context of the debate, hereafter I will delineate the debate between Noam Chomsky and Michel Foucault and I will point out the key points of the television debate which took place in 1971 in Netherlands. Foucault’s and Chomsky’s approach towards social sciences in the debate is different. Chomsky looks at humans from a cognitive perspective and gives a positive stand on human nature which for him represents the cornerstone for the vision of a future society based on justice. On the other hand, Foucault is sceptical towards the idea of human nature which is, along with justice, just a concept created within our civilization. However, both Foucault and Chomsky have a common political agenda: both are leftists who give a profound critique of contemporary social order based on liberal capitalism, not contradicting one another, simply observing the particular concepts like human nature or knowledge from different perspectives within leftist framework. Maybe the best description for this debate comes from the introduction of Fons Elders, a Dutch philosopher, who introduces these two great intellectuals with the following words:

Perhaps the best way to compare both philosophers would be to see them as tunnellers through a mountain working at opposite sides of the same mountain with different tools, without even knowing if they are working in each other's direction
(Chomsky, Foucault 2005: 1).

To start with the basic concept of “human nature” which can be seen as a set of the characteristics common in all human beings; those characteristics are considered to be natural

or intrinsic to humans and independent of culture, that is, from the external surroundings. Firstly, the philosophical aspect of the debate, begins with the fundamental question “are we the product of all kind of external factors, or if, in spite of our differences, we have something we could call a common human nature, by which we can recognize each other as human beings” (Elders in Chomsky, Foucault 2005: 2) Chomsky argues that humans beings are creative, and “creativity” for him means that a human being has the possibility to say what they mean and to understand what people say to them and this collection of abilities is called “knowing a language” (Chomsky, Foucault 2005: 2). So, “knowledge” for Chomsky indicates mastering language in an unconscious way. In order to explain his view, he begins with the creativity which exists in a child’s ability to understand new sentences that they have never heard before. What the issue is here is the gap between a child who has small quantity of data which somehow results in a complex and sophisticated knowledge (Chomsky, Foucault 2005: 3). Furthermore, there is the phenomena that individuals who have varied experience in language (they have different stimuli; let’s say that one is exposed to more richer language stimuli than another) inevitably reach the congruent levels of knowledge; i.e. two English speakers, although they have different experience with the language, can have the same knowledge of the English language, that is, they will be able to understand each other. Thirdly, people have different experience which result in different limitations is the wide range of languages, and yet, a child can operate within the system of language (Chomsky, Foucault 2005: 3). On the basis of three above mentioned arguments, Chomsky concludes that there is instinctive and innate knowledge; it stands for a schematism according to which from small amount of data it is possible to acquire a sophisticated knowledge; and moreover, this instinctive knowledge is a fundamental constituent of human nature (Chomsky, Foucault 2005: 4). “...this mass of schematisms, innate organizing principles, which guide our social and intellectual and individual behaviour, that’s what I mean to refer

to by the concept of human nature”, claims Chomsky (Chomsky, Foucault 2005: 4). It is clear here that Chomsky talks about the cognitive aspect of human beings; basically how humans are capable of creating language and that is a universal human characteristic which represents the basis for his claim that there is such a thing as universal human nature.

On the other side, Foucault does not see the concept of human nature as scientific. In his explanation he does not refer to cognitive aspects and in that understanding opposes Chomsky’s claim. He talks about human nature as a concept within a particular science, and basically they are talking about human nature from completely different points and not contradicting one to another. Foucault states that “In the history of knowledge, the notion of human nature seems to me mainly to have played the role of epistemological indicator to designate certain types of discourse in relation to or in opposition to theology or biology or history” (Chomsky, Foucault 2005: 7). In his elaboration, he compares two concepts – “life” and “human nature”. The concept of “life” which in the seventeenth and eighteenth century was used in studies of nature: the concept of “life” was used only in order to fix the positions within the classification of human beings. “Life” was used just to delineate biology as a science and to describe its object of study, rather than to describe the living beings. At the end of eighteenth century, transformations of biological knowledge demonstrated new concepts in the science and also, propagated particular notions which were used in order to delimit a certain type of scientific discourse (i.e. “life”) (Chomsky, Foucault 2005: 6). So, for Foucault, the notion of life is a meta-concept which is used in order to describe other biological notions (i.e. reproduction, assimilation of food; any notion which concerns the living beings); it is not used in the discourse of living beings *per se*; it is a concept defined by science, an indicator for that what biology will define as living being (i.e. something which reproduces, eats, dies, etc). Since “life” in itself is not a scientific concept but a concept defined by science in order to indicate something else, and “human nature” is analogue to the

concept of “life” in biology, what follows is that “human nature” also is not a scientific concept for Foucault.

I find Foucault’s answer to be exceptional, though I do not find it to be a contra argument for Chomsky’s notions of human nature. Foucault and Chomsky are opposed to the question of the mere existence of human nature; however, in their argumentation they are not contrary because they simply argue from different positions. Foucault talks about the constitution of science which defines its concepts, in this case science defines “life” and also, science defines “human nature”. Chomsky does not talk about the constitution of science and organizing concepts which are used in the process of constitution; Chomsky himself says that he talks about neural networks which are the property of human cognitive system thanks to which a child can obtain a sophisticated system of language, and that is something biologically given and unchangeable and, according to Chomsky, it is a constituent element of human nature (Chomsky, Foucault 2005: 7). Furthermore, Chomsky agrees with Foucault in Foucault’s claim that “life” is a concept within the biological sciences which can be used as an instrument in the process of systematization of knowledge and he poses the following question in a pacifist tone, so to speak: if the concept of life has taken biologists to the scientific understanding of life; could the concept of human nature lead to the scientific understanding of humans? In Chomsky’s words:

It seems to me that one might speculate a bit further [...] and ask whether the concept of human nature or of innate organizing mechanisms, or of intrinsic mental schematisms or whatever we want to call it, I don’t see much difference between them, but let’s call it human nature for shorthand, might not provide for biology the next peak to try to scale, after having – at least in the minds of the biologists, through one might perhaps question this - already

answered to the satisfaction of some the question of what life is
(Chomsky, Foucault 2005: 7).

To conclude with the concept of human nature, Chomsky and Foucault can be seen as “climbing the same mountain from the opposite side” in the way that they are not juxtaposed to one another, they are simply making different claims. Chomsky talks about a universal human’s ability to acquire a system of language which can be called “human nature”, while Foucault talks about concepts around which a particular science is shaped, in which the claims are classified in a particular way in a particular historical period. Essentially, Chomsky who is in his work principally concerned with language, talks more about the biological and psychological precognitions of human beings: how do they create knowledge, and shape scientific theory. Foucault, on the other hand, studied the history of ideas or systems of thoughts, the history of science, and he is focused on the cultural treatment or the organization of a particular body of claims. He talks about “ideological” interpretation and readings of what human beings are and what they succeed in knowing, and he is more focused on the critique of political power which controls and shapes the whole social body.

The debate proceeds from Chomsky’s and Foucault’s claims on the existence of human nature towards knowledge. When talking about knowledge, Foucault and Chomsky start with the subject and the question of creativity. Foucault admits how he has given little thought to the creativity of individuals and he continues with the notion that he and Chomsky were in different positions apropos knowledge (Chomsky, Foucault 2005: 15). In this context of knowledge and creativity, the linguists before Chomsky were focused on the process of the language formation and rules present in that process rather than on the innovation present in the language. Chomsky, a major critic of behaviourists, is focused on creativity in a cognitive

sense, or creativity at a “lower level” as a normal human act, as he explains it (Chomsky, Foucault 2005: 19-20), which I have mentioned above.¹⁵ In Foucault’s words:

Mr. Chomsky has been fighting against linguistic behaviourism, which attributed almost nothing to the creativity of the speaking subject; the speaking subject was a kind of surface on which information came together little by little, which he afterwards combined. In the field of history of science, or, more generally, the history of thought, the problem was completely different (Chomsky, Foucault 2005: 15).

In other words, in the history of thought, which was Foucault’s area of interest, more emphasis was placed on individual creation, while the rules of creation were left in the shadows (Chomsky, Foucault 2005: 22, 23). Essentially, Foucault is impatient towards creativity because it was too emphasized in the process of “discovery” within his area of interest. He describes how the history of knowledge had to obey two claims. The first is that of “attribution”, which imposed that each discovery had to be situated and dated, and had to have an inventor responsible for it; Foucault calls it “the principle of the sovereignty of the subject” (Chomsky, Foucault 2005: 16). The second claim does not refer to the subject but to the truth which is not constituted in the history, a truth that is hidden and waits to be unveiled

¹⁵ Chomsky claims how behaviourism is only concerned with behaviour and the control of behaviour (Chomsky 2005: 32). George Graham explains behaviourism as a doctrine according to which “behaviour can be described and explained without making ultimate reference to mental events or to internal psychological processes” (Graham 2010). According to Graham, behaviourism sees human behaviour to be constituted in relation to external elements not internal ones. He distinguishes three types of behaviourism; methodological behaviourism focused on psychology whose object is the behaviour of humans and animals (not on the mental conditions). Secondly, psychological behaviourism which is a branch of psychology eager to analyse behaviour in relation to different exterior physical stimuli. Thirdly, analytical or logical behaviourism which attempts to decode human reactions in different situations (Graham 2010). Chomsky was one of the most harsh critiques of behaviourism because behaviourism denied the creativity of the subject claiming that human reaction is conditioned by the external stimulus which creates reflex (but why then people have different reactions to same stimulus?) Chomsky in his generative grammar argues for the universals of human linguistic structure, unlearned but known, which permit and assist children to acquire human languages.

(Chomsky, Foucault 2005: 16). Taken into account these two elements in the history of knowledge, Foucault concludes that knowledge in his area of interest (the history of science/thought) is always negative in relation to truth, or in Foucault's words:

It isn't difficult to see how these two claims were adjusted, one to the other: the phenomena of collective order, the "common thought", the "prejudices" of the "myths" of a period, constituted the obstacles which the subject of knowledge had to surmount or to outlive in order to have access finally to the truth; he had to be in an "eccentric" position in order to "discover" (Foucault, Chomsky, 2005: 16).

Regarding these two above mentioned imperatives, Foucault asks the question, "what if understanding were a complex, multiple, non-individual formation, not 'subjected to the subject' which produced effects of truth?" (Chomsky, Foucault 2005: 17). Foucault proposes a different perspective on knowledge according to which generation of knowledge could be seen as collective, not individual practice. It is obvious that when Foucault talks about "understanding as a collective totality of rules allowing such and such a knowledge to be produced in a certain period" (Chomsky, Foucault 2005: 17), he speaks about "episteme"; three big structures – Renaissance, the classical period, and nineteenth century – which replace each other, but are separately internally fixed, which he introduced in his work "The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences". He demonstrates his point in the example of medicine which in the period from the 1770-1830 was completely transformed, which means that a completely new grid with new rules, decisions and limitations has occurred. That is to say, a new inner logic of medical understanding has occurred, or an entirely new "grille" (Chomsky, Foucault 2005: 18). In the history of knowledge, according to Foucault, there are two lines of inquiry: "according to one, one has to show how, under what conditions, and for what reasons the understanding modifies itself in its formative rules,

without passing through an original ‘inventor’ discovering the ‘truth’; and according to the other, one has to show how the working of the rules of an understanding can produce in an individual new and unpublished knowledge” (Chomsky, Foucault 2005: 18).

It seems that creativity is connected with rules in both the cases of Chomsky and Foucault, and that they are talking about the rules from different perspectives, which again is not contradictive. Foucault talks about them from the social point of view: episteme, or rules are in a juxtaposed position towards the creativity of the subject, that is, a certain understanding is always bounded within certain rules of a particular period. Meanwhile, for Chomsky, who speaks from the linguistic point of view, the rules are the condition of the creativity of the subject, meaning that a person who has mastered the system of rules knows how to use a language. Again, interestingly, they are not directly opposed, just speaking from different aspects. For example, if I was moderating this debate, I would ask Foucault what does he think about the human ability of acquiring a language and is that not a universal human ability that can be seen as human nature, and if not, how should that be described?

The debate shifts from creativity and knowledge towards the possibility of creating a scientific theory from a small amount of data. To Chomsky that kind of achievement resembles the process in which a child reveals its own language. He claims the following:

If we really want to develop a theory of scientific creation, or for that matter artistic creation, I think we have to focus attention precisely on that set of conditions that, on one hand, delimits and restricts the scope of our possible knowledge, while at the same time permitting the inductive leap to complicated systems of knowledge on the basis of a small amount of data. That, it seems to me, would be the way to progress towards a theory of scientific

creativity, or in fact towards any question of epistemology
(Chomsky, Foucault 2005: 25).

Chomsky's idea that, in order to develop a scientific theory, one has to focus on the limits of our possible knowledge and then to make an inductive leap drives Foucault to make a critique of the idea of "progress" and "growth": a European understanding which, according to Foucault, turned out to be a universal understanding. He points out the principle of convergence which allows many different ways of making several types of knowledge simultaneously, not just one direction of "progress" (Chomsky, Foucault 2005: 26, 27). Chomsky agrees with Foucault because he was not implying the idea of scientific progress as a matter of accumulated knowledge:

I didn't think that scientific progress is simply a matter of the accumulated addition of new knowledge and the absorption of new theories and so on. [...] But it is precisely because of this property of our minds, which in detail we don't understand, but which, I think, in a general way we can begin to perceive, which presents us with certain possible intelligible structures, and which in the course of history and insight and experience begins to come into focus or fall out of focus and so on; it is precisely because of this property of our minds that the progress of science, I think, has this erratic and jagged character that you [Foucault] describe (Chomsky, Foucault 2005: 27, 38).

Chomsky is approaching Foucault's claims about the rules which determine a particular knowledge when he describes behaviourism, which is, according to him

a negation of the possibility of developing a scientific theory. That is, what defies behaviourism is the very curious and self-destructive assumption that you are not permitted to create and interesting theory. [...] behaviourism is the arbitrary insistence that one must not create a scientific theory of human behaviour; rather one must deal directly with phenomena and their interrelation... (Chomsky, Foucault 2005: 34).

Chomsky looks at behaviourism not as a science, but as a set of limitations on the construction of a scientific theory, and it looks to me that this characterization of behaviourism sees its requirements as a grid (in Foucauldian terms) imposed. Here in this point finally they address an issue from the same aspect, namely questioning the rules of science which determine the particular subject-matter, in this case behaviourism which deprived the creativity of the subject focusing just on their behaviour which is entirely conditioned from external conditions, has nothing to do with the internal matter of the subject.

One can conclude that, in the context of science, Chomsky talks about the cognitive aspects of human beings present in the process of creating a particular collection of knowledge, and Foucault is sceptical towards it:

Where perhaps I don't completely agree with Mr. Chomsky is when he places the principles of these regularities, in a way, in the interior of the mind of human nature. [...] But to say that these regularities are connected, as conditions of existence, to the human mind or its nature is difficult for me to accept. [...] Perhaps the point of difference between Mr. Chomsky and myself is that when

he speaks of science he probably thinks of the formal organization of knowledge, whereas I am speaking of knowledge itself, that is to say; I think of the content of various knowledges which is dispersed into a particular society, permeates through society, and asserts itself as the foundation for education, for theories, for practices (Chomsky, Foucault 1005: 29, 30).

So, while Chomsky is talking about the intrinsic aspect of the human mind, Foucault is talking about a “second phase” which follows from Chomsky’s cognitive one. Again, they are not opposed in their claims, or in Chomsky’s words:

I think that illustrates very nicely the way in which we’re digging into the mountain from opposite directions, to use your [Elders’] original image. That is, I think that an act of scientific creation depends on two facts: one, some intrinsic property of the mind, another, some set of social and intellectual conditions that exist. And it is not a question, as I see it, of which of these we should study; rather we will understand scientific discovery and similarly any other kind of discovery, when we know what these factors are can therefore explain how they interact in a particular fashion, my particular interest, in this connection at least, is with the intrinsic capacities of the mind; yours [Foucault’s], as you say, is in the particular arrangement of social and economic and other conditions (Chomsky, Foucault 2005: 32).

With the notions regarding the constitution of science, the philosophical aspect which focused principally on the question of human nature is finished. The debate turns toward the political part which begins with Foucault's explanation of the importance of politics:

probably the most crucial subject to our existence, that is to say the society in which we live, the economic production within which it functions, and the system of power which defines the regular forms and the regular permissions and prohibitions of our conduct. The essence of our life consists, after all, of the political functioning of the society in which we find ourselves. [...] Not to be interested in politics, that's what constitutes a problem.”
(Chomsky, Foucault 2005: 37).

Beginning with Chomsky who is well-known for his political position – anarcho-syndicalism, or libertarian socialism – when it comes to human nature he sees it as in connection with freedom, dignity and creativity, and following that understanding, in connection with a particular social organization in which those fundamental human characteristics could be achieved (Chomsky, Foucault 2005: 42). The connection between anarcho-syndicalism and above mentioned human nature is that, according to Chomsky, “a fundamental element of human nature is the need for creative work, for creative inquiry, for free creation without arbitrary limiting effects of coercive institution, then, of course, it will follow that a decent society should maximize the possibilities for this fundamental human characteristics to be realized” (Chomsky, Foucault 2005: 37). In short, for Chomsky, anarcho-syndicalism is an optimistic vision of future society: “a federated, decentralized system of free associations, incorporating economic as well as other social institutions” (Chomsky, Foucault 2005: 38). And thanks to the progress present in the technology, in this kind of system workers could form their independent assemblies and will no longer represent

just a wheel in the productive process (Chomsky, Foucault 2005: 39). Chomsky gives this vision of a future society because he sees it as a task. Essentially, he argues that there are two intellectual tasks. The first is focused on the creation of a just future society, while second which detects the nature of power, oppression, terror and destruction (Chomsky, Foucault 2005: 41).

On the other hand, in this story concerning human nature and future society, Foucault is much more careful: "...it is difficult to say exactly what human nature is. Isn't there a risk that we will be led into error?" (Chomsky, Foucault 2005: 44). He does not have a vision of a better society but he firmly maintains the position of the present historical moment, claiming that to him it seems that "the real political task in a society such as ours is to criticize the working of institutions, which appear to be both neutral and independent" (Chomsky, Foucault 2005: 41). He is concentrated on the disclosure of power which shapes the society. As a true Marxist, he argues that state and its institutions are managed by a ruling class (Chomsky, Foucault 2005: 40, 41).

In this political part the question of the disturbance of social order comes into focus; a concrete activity which threatens the social order. Foucault and Chomsky are both known as activists but they have different stances towards civil disobedience. To Chomsky civil disobedience threatens the social order, but with the possibility of bringing fascism, but likewise, passiveness is also a risky act (Chomsky, Foucault 2005: 44, 45). For Foucault, civil disobedience is not an act of resistance as it is for Chomsky. To him civil disobedience is "a legal, obligatory behaviour on violation of the commands of the state, which may not be legal commands" (Chomsky, Foucault 2005: 46). So, it appears that civil disobedience for Foucault is ineffective because doing so, one still exists in the framework of the commands of the state, while Chomsky sees the act of civil disobedience as a pressure directed towards the state.

Civil disobedience leads us to the question of justice. Chomsky opens up in this dialogue. He states very clearly that people are not in a position of creating a system of ideal justice and ideal society because people are too limited and too biased; however, what people are in position to do is imagine and organize more just society (Chomsky, Foucault 2005: 50). He separates the “legality” and “justice” and claims that people should act in accordance with law if the law includes justice but when juridical apparatus is not organized around justice, people should confront that kind of system (Chomsky, Foucault 2005: 51). Foucault has different ideas regarding justice; to him, “justice” as well as “human nature” are “notions and concepts which have been formed within our civilization, within our type of knowledge and our form of philosophy, and that as a result form part of our class system... (Chomsky, Foucault 2005: 58).

Foucault has a different and interesting view on justice; I would say a relativistic one. He claims that the proletariat does not go into the war contra ruling class because of justice, but because of power; he claims that “one makes war to win, not because it is just.” (Chomsky, Foucault 2005: 51). I find his notions on justice interesting because although he has relativistic notions of justice, it seems to me that Foucault nevertheless has a strong sense of justice which is evident in his critique of undemocratic political systems. Nevertheless, his relativistic notions are evident in his claim that in the war which the proletariat wages against the ruling class *spiritus movens* is not justice but a fight for power (Chomsky, Foucault 2005: 51). My first question was, generally speaking, what is the goal of the proletariat fight in the first place? I mean, if the geometry of power was fairly designed in the society, that is, if society was built on justice, the question is would the proletariat go to war for more power just in order to win more power? On a more grounded level, if we take into consideration the concrete example of the Soviet Union which constituted a socialist state where the proletariat did overthrow the ruling class, it established a centralized and authoritarian state greatly

based on violence and control, Foucault's caution makes sense. Foucault even goes a step further by claiming that "justice" "in itself is an idea which in effect has been invented and put to work in different types of societies as an instrument of a certain political and economic power or as a weapon against that power" (Chomsky, Foucault 2005: 54). Basically, "justice" is a concept shaped by the subordinated and functions as a justification for the oppression. Furthermore, in a classless society that kind of concept would be unnecessary (Chomsky, Foucault 2005: 54). Chomsky answers in a simple way by claiming that there is some basis which resides in the fundamental human qualities and there the "real" notion of justice is grounded; together with true humanly valuable concepts such as love, kindness, sympathy, solidarity and so on (Chomsky, Foucault 2005: 55). Chomsky says, the "social revolution that you're trying to achieve *is* in the ends of justice, *is* in the ends of realizing fundamental human needs, not merely in the ends of putting some other group into power, because they want to" (Chomsky, Foucault 2005: 57). Here it is evident that Chomsky talks from a universal perspective while Foucault is much more careful when talking about justice because it appears as though he takes into consideration the situation with socialism in Europe and Russia, which in one moment took a wrong turn.

To conclude, behind every political philosophy there is an implicit or explicit stand regarding human nature. Today's neo-liberal politics are based on the notion that human nature is negative and that everybody should be seen as an 'enemy' or, in today's terminology 'competition', in a world where private profit is imperative. The contemporary world is shaped with regard to profit; humans are subjected to renting themselves in markets and are subjected to a neo-liberal ethos which insists on individualism and competitiveness. Although anarchism present in the debate can be seen as utopian and naive because it presumes that humans have positive human nature meaning that they are benevolent, have a sense of justice and altruism, it should be seen as a tool for raising consciousness against neo-

liberal ideology, especially in this historical moment when we are witnessing an enormous worldwide economic crisis. In this kind of political situation, Chomsky's and Foucault's critique of social order, as well as Chomsky's alternative vision of a society, and Foucault's precaution on that issue should be seriously taken into consideration. In this chapter I outlined the debate, and in the following chapter I will analyze the concepts which are the constitutive parts of the debate, such as power, knowledge and anarcho-syndicalism in greater depth, within the wider scope of Foucault's and Chomsky's work in order to try to detect the convergences in their work.

4. Power and Anarcho-syndicalism

In this chapter I will focus on the most important concepts which Foucault and Chomsky mention in the “Debate”, which are at the same time constituent parts of their work in general: “power” and its *modus operandi*, In addition to collated concepts such as “knowledge”, which brings about the problem of “truth”, and critique of theoretical knowledge coming from formal institutions. Furthermore, the possibility of subjects’ resistance to power structures, and Chomsky’s “anarcho-syndicalism” as a possible alternative society. I find Chomsky and Foucault both to be Left-orientated political intellectuals deeply involved in politics. In the “Debate” they dispute the existence of human nature and all the concomitant concepts such as knowledge and justice; nevertheless, I find them to be very similar in their political views. They both operate in the Left-orientated realm of political thought. The question which I pose here is what are the similarities between them in a political context? Chomsky is an explicitly self-declared anarchist with a profound critique of liberal capitalism and a vision of a society based on voluntary associations and justice, known as anarcho-syndicalism. To situate Foucault is more complicated because according to his critique of power and democracy, coming from the class aspect, he is evidently a neo-Marxist thinker. Furthermore, if we take into consideration his anti-statist claims about the abolishment of the juridical apparatus which is to him nothing more than the residue of the bourgeois social order, he can be seen as going into the direction of anarchism.

4.1. Power

Since Foucault’s work is primarily associated with power, I will start my analysis with that concept. What does it signify in the work of Foucault and Chomsky, and what is the

importance of it? Foucault changed the common paradigm of power which was seen as running vertically from the level of authority towards the bottom, towards the people. In the 1960s/70s Foucault reshaped this kind of understanding by claiming that power does not employ just repression or prohibition as it is often seen, and power is not something that one holds. According to him, there is no binary between rulers and the ruled in a sense that power is something that exceeds from top down. To him, power comes from below; power is a force that runs through the whole social body; power is everywhere because it comes from everywhere (Foucault 1980: 102). So, contrary to an understanding in which power runs vertically, according to Foucault's understanding "power is not an institution, and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with; it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategically situation in a particular society" (Foucault 1980: 102). Therefore, we have an omnipresent power which runs through the social body and is exercised from innumerable points and the effects of this power are the divisions and inequalities (Foucault 1980: 94). Foucault's notions on power implicates two technologies of power present from the eighteenth century onwards: "anatomo-politics" of individual human body and "biopolitics" of the human race which regulated the rules on hygiene, child-care, education, sexuality, management of fertility of population, of birth rate, and mortality rate. The emergence of biopolitics points out that for the first time in history, biological existence was reflected in political existence (Foucault 2003: 242-243). As such, the discipline of the body and regulation of the population represented two axis of power which control life (Foucault 2003: 139). Power shapes every aspect of human life in a way that, when joined with something which is presented as "knowledge" meaning truthful and neutral, it constitutes different discourses or "tactical elements or blocks operating in the field of force relations" (Foucault 1980: 102). We can say that "power", "knowledge", and "discourses" are fundamental units in the process of the production of "truth": power needs discourses which are grounded in it and also this power

systematize particular truth through institutions: “the truth needs to be produced” (Foucault 2003: 24, 25). This is a point where his neo-Marxist analysis of class occurs; essentially, that we live in a society which is the successor of the bourgeois socio-economic order and is divided hierarchically and is above all undemocratic (Chomsky, Foucault 2005: 39).

If one understands by democracy the effective exercise of power by a population which is neither divided nor hierarchically ordered in classes, it is quite clear that we are very far from democracy. It is only too clear that we are living under a regime of a dictatorship of class, of a power of class which imposes itself by violence, even when the instruments of this violence are institutional and constitutional; and to that degree, there isn't any question of democracy for us (Chomsky, Foucault 2005: 39).

This dictatorship of class which Foucault mentions is not achieved just through governments or institutions like armies or administrations, or all sort of state apparatuses which have a political power, which is evident in their power to make and transmit the decisions. It will also be achieved through institutions such as family or various institutions of knowledge like medicine which appear to be neutral but are also made in order to “maintain a certain social class in power; and to exclude the instruments of power of another social class” (Chomsky, Foucault 2005: 40). And by doing so, they support the existing political order.

Except for his neo-Marxist critique of power, Foucault can be seen as going into the direction of anarchism. His ideas concerning the abolition of a juridical apparatus which is, according to him, a residue of the bourgeois social order, can be seen as anarchistic one. However, the problem is that Foucault is not offering a sufficient alternative to today's society based on the heritage of the bourgeois socio-economic class. Let me give an example; Foucault stated that the importance of the historical function of the court is to regulate and repress the popular justice (Foucault in Eribon 1992: 243). So, according to Foucault, the court is

represented as a neutral institution which stands between people and its enemies, capable of establishing the dividing rule between the true and the false. However, it should not be seen as a form of popular justice but its first deformation, and it firstly implies bourgeois ideology which is based on categories such as theft, fraud, and moral categories such as honesty and dishonesty. So, in today's society we have a complex juridical system build on bourgeois ideology and compound of courts/police/prisons. Foucault claims that necessary revolution in society can happen through the abolishment of the complete juridical apparatus and anything which could bring about its ideology and enable that ideology to come back into popular practice (Foucault in Eribon 1992: 246).

Foucault is against the present juridical system which is basically a bourgeois concept and “a state apparatus, representative of public authority, and instrument of class power” and he argues for a popular justice as an “act of justice by the people” (Foucault in Gordon 1980: 1, 6):

The masses will discover a way of dealing with the problem of their enemies, of those who individually or collectively have harmed them, methods of retribution which range from punishment to re-education, without involving the form of court which – in any case in our society, I don't know about China – is to be avoided (Foucault in Gordon 1980: 28).

I agree with Foucault's critique of the juridical system which is a state apparatus and serves a particular class. The question is however, after the deconstruction of the juridical system based on bourgeois ideology, on which grounds society should stand? This is not just a question directed just to anarchist Foucault, but also to anarchism in general: if society deconstructs the courts, which are parts of the juridical arrangement grounded on the bourgeois criterions, and

the police which is a repressive state apparatuses, how then should rapists and killers, to go to the extreme, be treated? If we dismiss the juridical system in the present moment, what will secure some kind of minimum decency of human existence? I certainly do not want to argue that the present juridical system ensures universal justice or human equality or freedom, but what is the concrete way of “dealing with enemies”? If we adopt popular justice, what will ensure some kind of consensus about minimal human rights? Let us say that inhabitants of some nationalistic Croatian place decide to kill a neighbour who is a Serb, if that is popular justice and a collective decision does it mean that is it acceptable? I understand Foucault’s critique of the present juridical system and agree with it; however, things could be even worse than they are if we dismiss the juridical system in the present moment which is not really characterized by peace and solidarity. Foucault is similar to Chomsky who also is not particularly detailed in his sketching out of an alternative society and I will address this later in the chapter. For now I will just say that hoping that somehow ideas about future will arrive on their own is problematic because it opens up the possibility that things could be even more undemocratic than they are today.

Besides the analysis of political power that shapes and controls the social body, Foucault is not interested in the delineating some kind of ideal society because as he said in the “Debate” in the context of the creation of alternative society based on justice and human nature, “...it is difficult to say exactly what human nature is. Isn’t there a risk that we will be led into error?” (Chomsky, Foucault 2005: 44). This implies a critique of socialist states in Europe which were relying on a communist ideology which in theory leads to fair and classless communism, however in the practice was far from it. In Foucault’s words: “The Gulag is not a question to be posed for any and every country. It has to be posed for every socialist country, insofar as none of these since 1917 has managed to function without a more-or-less developed Gulag system” (Foucault in Gordon 1980: 137).

From Foucault who is focused on the critique of power which shapes the social body and enables the dominance of the ruling class by institutional and constitutional means, I will now move over to Chomsky and his notions on power. Chomsky is clear and concise in his understanding of power which differs from Foucault's inasmuch that Chomsky, in a true Marxist way, sees power as running vertically. For him the problem is that in a society the effective power is in private hands, and that has effects throughout the social body. Namely, the rich and the powerful have all the control in their hands and the power flows from them, that is from the top to bottom, to those who are governed (Chomsky 2005: 158). Chomsky makes the distinctions between the elites and the common people who are governed by the elites in a way that "elites have long been well aware that when obedience cannot be secured by the bludgeon, democracy must be subverted by other means" (Chomsky 2005: 158). In his work he is greatly focused on the critique of capitalism, which he presents as an arrangement based on free market where private corporations perform their power joined with governments and are in command over all aspects of life: economics, politics, culture – they determine the social life in general (Chomsky, 2005: 188). He is critical towards a society in which people are forced to rent themselves as ancillary tools and where the elements of coercion and repression are present (Chomsky 2005: 134).

I think it only makes sense to seek out and identify structures of authority, hierarchy, and domination in every aspect of life, and to challenge them; unless a justification for them can be given, they are illegitimate, and should be dismantled, to increase the scope of human freedom. That includes political power, ownership and management, relations among men and women, parents and children, our control of the fate of future generations... [...]

Naturally, this means a challenge to the huge institutions of coercion and control: the state, the unaccountable private tyrannies that control most of the domestic and international economy and so on (Chomsky 2005: 178).

The importance of class is also a fundamental issue in Chomsky's work; namely, he claims that the problem is that workers have to:

subordinate themselves and their interests to the overriding need to serve the interests of the owners and managers of the society, who, furthermore, with their control over resources, are easily able to shape the ideological system (the media, schools, universities and so on) in their interests, to determine the basic conditions within which the political process will function, its parameters and basic agenda, and to call upon the resources of state violence when need be, to suppress any challenge to entrenched power (Chomsky 2005: 149).

Concerning justice, Chomsky has a different understanding than Foucault. Chomsky argues that justice is grounded as one of the fundamental human qualities and he believes that people should aspire towards a society based on justice and freedom (Chomsky, Foucault 2005: 55). To him justice is a universal notion which transcendent class values, while with Foucault, in his understanding, justice is associated in a negative way with class, and with a particular class: a bourgeois class that is unfair towards the working class. After the debate Chomsky remarked of Foucault the following: "He struck me as a completely amoral. I'd never met anyone who was so totally amoral." (Chomsky in Miller 1993b: 201). This

comment points to a deep tension within Foucault's stance (way beyond a merely personal matter of taste). On the one hand, Foucault is adamant about justice, on the other, sometimes ready to dismiss moral/ethical considerations.

Chomsky and Foucault both operate within the Leftist framework based on class and converge in their critique of a system which claims to be democratic, but is based on hierarchy, class dominance and violence. While for Foucault democratic society should be free from class distinction and hierarchy (Foucault, Chomsky 2005: 4), for Chomsky “societies are considered free and democratic insofar as the power of the state to coerce is limited” (Chomsky 2005: 157), which is not the case in a society which has governments whose *raison d'être* is to overrule population and work for the rich and powerful (Chomsky 2005: 237). I have said earlier, Foucault and Chomsky are both critical towards power which runs through the social body which results in geometry of power which is based on a privilege that ensures the domination of a particular class. Furthermore, the domination of a particular class is not just the consequence of a usurpation of power by that particular class, but also can be seen as a consequence of internalization of the existing order by the people in general. I find that Foucault and Chomsky can be seen as sharing similar ideas about that issue.

Namely, Foucault stresses the existence of the regulatory technology of power coming from the state which controls the complete social body with different rules on i.e. child-care, education, management of fertility of population, of birth rate and mortality rate, hygiene, sexuality which are justified with different assemblies of claims represented as truthful and objective “knowledge”(Foucault 2003: 239-265). Similar ideas of the control of society can be seen in Chomsky's thinking about the “manufacture of consent” in which the state cannot control population just by force, but has to secure by other means that the masses of people, or the public is marginalized and removed from the public arena in decision-making (Chomsky 2005: 171). This process is based on a “necessary illusion that permits society to function in

the interests of concentrated power and privilege” (Chomsky 2005: 171), that is on the internalization of notions which ensure the perpetuation of the existing system. The process of “manufacturing the consent” is, according to Chomsky, mostly achieved through the media system which is in hands of governments and those who wield power, and there is also the role of the specialized class of “public men” who have access to information which common people do not have, and due to the accessibility of information, the “public men” offer understandings of certain issues which deal with the whole community of people and shape common thinking. The problem is that the “public man” is usually in the service of those with real power. However, in this process unfortunately, “public men” shape the “common opinion” while the public is just a spectator, and this kind system of indoctrination shapes stupid and ignorant masses (Chomsky 2005: 171). Therefore, to a certain degree, Foucault and Chomsky can be seen as having similar ideas about the management of the masses or the population.

By setting out Foucault’s and Chomsky’s ideas about power I wanted to show the similarities between them which are evident in the unfolding of the power which controls the social body and creates a hierarchical order of class wherein the dominant class ensures its dominance by violence, which is, as Foucault stated, institutional and constitutional. Both of them think about the social through the lens of class and both of them give a profound critique of government and democracy. I would say that they dissent in the ideas regarding the flow of power. While Foucault claims that power runs horizontally and is not contained in any institution (but he is focused in his work on the critique of *loci* of power or institutions which are misrepresented as neutral), Chomsky is more loyal to the idea of power which functions vertically and in one way, from the instances of power such as governments, towards the one which are governed by them, ergo common people or masses. In their notions of the control of the population or masses I also see convergences between them; both of them explore how the population or the masses are being control in a more subtle way than by pure force. Both ways

of thinking of power are similar. Chomsky is focused on a political geometry of power, running from the elite through the structure of society and governments towards ordinary people who are being ruled upon and he is strong in his argument that contemporary society is not a democratic society adjusted to human nature and human characteristics. Foucault grasps how the power functions in a broader sense meaning that power stands for a complex interplay of elements in society and institutions which seem to be neutral like family or university are far from that and he highlights that power is everywhere and nothing should be taken for granted. These two lines of understanding power can also be seen as two ways of thinking of power within the Left milieu. They converge in their work inasmuch as they criticize a society which is represented as democratic but really lays the basis on class hierarchy, violence and the control of the population.

4.1.1. The subject and resistance

Foucault and Chomsky both understand the individual as part of the social; therefore, my question is how the individual becomes embedded in the social in the first place? That is, how one becomes a subject and how one who responds to the power structures does; are their ideas about that issue similar in any way?

To begin with Foucault who criticized the French intellectual Left for taking the active phenomenological subject and presented it as passive object of history. This kind of constitution of subject Foucault rejects and this is an explicit critique of Marxism. For Foucault the subject is constituted within the historical framework of the period. This kind of constitution regards the particular historical framework which Foucault calls “genealogy” (Foucault 2006: 150). According to him, the individual becomes a subject by being subjugated to the power which “applies itself to immediate everyday life categorizes the individual, marks

him by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity and imposes a law of truth on him that he must recognize and Other have to recognize in him” and inevitably turns him into the subject (Foucault 2000: 331).

It is inevitable that the individual will become a subject, that is, that they will be subjugated to power, and following that a question results: what are the possibilities of a subject for resistance? Foucault claims that this omnipresent power which runs through the society is inseparable from resistance because power “depends on a multiplicity of points of resistance” which can be found everywhere in the power structure (Foucault 1980: 95). Basically, if we have power, we have a resistance, though he does not go into detail about his ideas concerning resistance; he just states that resistance exists. I have a following question: which kind of methodology is appropriate for investigating various forms of resistance? Furthermore, if we understand resistance as a mirror image of power as it is implied in Foucault’s understanding of power, should the methodology follow that logic?

Foucault states four rules of power. According to the first one, knowledge is immanent to power, not distanced from it (“the rule of immanence”).¹⁶ It is rather clear how Foucault claims that the power is inherent in the mere process of the constitution of particular “knowledge”. Secondly, the relations of power-knowledge are “matrices of transformation” in constant modifications (“the rule of continual variations”); for instance, groupings made of father, mother, educator, doctors are in continuous shifts (Foucault 1980: 99). Can we apply this rule to the notion of resistance? If the relationship of power and knowledge are in constant shift, can we also understand resistance in that way? That is, can we understand resistance as a transformative process which occurs in different situations and in different ways, and following that we cannot differentiate “right resistance” from “bad” one in some general way

¹⁶ In more details I will address this further in the chapter; for now I would like to stress that for Foucault the problem is in the conditions in which scientific verifications or falsifications are dictated by the power, so basically knowledge is inseparable from power in the mere process of constitution.

because resistance is, according to his rule, completely contextual and we have only different variations or strategies of resistance? It seems to me that Foucault's general notions on resistance may lead to relativism, in a sense that is difficult to accept. For example, the resistance of fascists in order to preserve the "purity" of Aryan race is a kind of resistance that could be seen as generally "bad"? I see resistance for the Left to be an important concept because the notion of resistance seems to be defined in terms of the resisters' unwillingness to comply with whatever power is demanding. On the other hand, it is normally only used in leftist rhetoric for "good" resistance. And then, we, the Left, must be careful to distinguish the two. And we, theorists, must offer some criteria.

Furthermore, the elements of the power situation are not isomorphic. For instance the state and the family are heteromorphous to each other. Because family organization is insular and heteromorphous with regard to other power mechanisms allows it to be a target of the particular action coming from the state (the third rule of "double conditioning"). The last one is the rule of the tactical polyvalence of discourse in which Foucault states that discourses should be understood as tactical elements which operate within the power arena and simultaneously there can coexist different and contradictory discourses (Foucault 1980: 101). According to this fourth rule, discourses should be questioned in regards to two points: tactical productivity and strategical integration (Foucault 1980: 101). Does this apply to the resistance? Should resistance be seen through the lenses of productivity and strategical integration? Furthermore, are the goals of resistance imperative? The affirmative answer leads us to consequentialism, meaning that acceptable is that what brings about a good result.

While for Foucault the mere power implies the existence of resistance he does not go into details in his notions of resistance, he just argues that resistance exists and that leaves a number of unanswered questions. For Chomsky, ideas about resistance are based on the notion of active participation in politics, that is, civil disobedience against the social order imposed by

governments. For him, resistance is when “a person has to choose for himself the point at which he will simply refuse to take part any longer. Reaching that point, he will be drawn into resistance” (Chomsky 1967). He continues by stating that resistance is a political tactic, and I might add, a tactic in de Certeau’s point of view, implying that the tactic is “an art of the weak” determinate by the absence of power, as opposed to strategy which is organized by the postulation of power and is an action coming from the established place of power (de Certeau 1984: 29-42). He argues that those who believe in the humans will “try to determinate the intrinsic human characteristics that provide the framework for intellectual development, the growth of moral consciousness, cultural achievement, and participation in a free community” (Chomsky 2005: 114). Basically, in this sentence he gives his notions of resistance. In regards to the constitution of a subject in the Chomsky’s case, he speaks about the creative “speaking subject” who has a human mind and has acquired a system of rules which enables them to use language, and analogously, we should live in a society where rules would guarantee freedom and expression of human beings (Chomsky 2005: 115- 116).¹⁷

Chomsky states that “rights are not established by words, but won and sustained by struggle” (Chomsky 2005: 167). Following that logic, the first step towards resistance is gaining consciousness about the oppression because in today’s society, oppression is internalised: “a consciousness of subordination” is created according to which people are not controlled by force anymore, but by the modification of their consciousness (Chomsky, 2005: 223); as mentioned earlier in the context in the context of “the manufacture of consent”. After the consciousness-raising, a possible way to get people to realise that things can be changed is, according to Chomsky, make pressure on the current system (Chomsky, 2005: 237). For Chomsky, law represents certain human values, and according to him, it is important to undertake an action against a particular segment of law which enables power (Chomsky,

¹⁷ I will address Chomsky's views regarding the connection between freedom and language later in the chapter in the part concerning “anarcho-syndicalism”.

Foucault 2006: 47). He talks about civil disobedience as a “direct defiance of what is alleged (incorrectly) by the state to be law” (Chomsky, Foucault 2006: 45). Violence as a tactic of resistance is absurd to him because no one can compete with the governments in violence, and as a result it may discourage some people from undertaking actions and also, it will support the further oppression and ideology coming from the government. He looks at the major achievements of the civil rights movement in US and optimistically hopes that nonviolent resistance could have a similar trajectory of success. Both, Foucault and Chomsky share the idea that resistance exists. Foucault has a more abstract approach to resistance which he does not elaborate upon. In his writings he is concerned with the idea that resistance is inevitable from power. Although he claimed that civil disobedience is not really disobedience because one still remains within the liberal framework, the act of civil disobedience is “a legal, obligatory behaviour on violation of the commands of the state, which may not be legal commands” (Chomsky, Foucault 2005: 46). However, taking into consideration that he was a passionate activist, he is not contradictive to Chomsky who calls for civil disobedience in order to challenge the existing social order formed by liberal politics. Talking about resistance, I support Chomsky’s idea of civil disobedience for pressuring governments and articulating publicly the demand for structural change. Hopefully, when a critical mass will gather, bigger changes in socio-economic context will occur. Nevertheless, except for activism, which is usually seen in the act of civil disobedience, to me resistance and activism are also present in a way of living in everyday life. Namely, people have influences upon one on another and are all connected. However much this may seem like ‘new age’ talk, I think that the choices that we make in everyday life do make a difference; this is in a way direct action in everyday life. I think that resistance and the will to change towards something better has to appear on two levels: personal and structural; Hardt and Negri in a loud Leftist tone claim that in order to

overthrow the Empire, the Anti-Empire has to be based on a “global vision of a new way of living in the world” (Hardt, Negri 2000: 184).

When we talk about resistance, it is important to mention the proletariat who is in the Leftist political framework and seen as the bearer of social change. What does the concept of proletariat stand for in today’s society, which can be seen as highly developed technological society (Foucault, Chomsky 2005: 59)? For Chomsky, the notion of proletariat is loaded with meanings and historical weight, and has to be given a new meaning applicable to today’s context. To him, the concepts stand for the “people who do the productive work of the society, manual and intellectual work” (Chomsky, Foucault 2005: 59). And proletariat should have, according to him, power over their work. To Chomsky, the revolution should be undertaken in the “name of all beings” but carried on by particular groups of people. And to him, those will be the people included in a productive work – a range of people consisted of workers, engineers, scientists, professionals, students etc. (Chomsky, Foucault 2005: 62). Chomsky stresses the importance of technology which can be liberating, but is converted, like the system of justice and many other things, into tool of repression because the power is inadequately divided. Precisely in technology Chomsky sees the tool for decentralization of power (Chomsky, Foucault 2005: 64). When mentioning proletariat, I find Hardt’s and Negri’s idea of proletariat useful. To them it is a general term which denotes everybody who is exploited by the capitalism, the industrial working class stood as a proletariat in that particular historical moment (Hardt, Negri 2000: 332). Also, they stress the importance of “Third World” workers; the potential for the global revolution is in them because of the capitalist system which is grounded on the exploitation of the workers from the “Third World” (Hardt, Negri 2000: 224). So, basically every person who feels exploited by capitalism can recognize itself as a part of proletariat – a bearer of necessary social change.

4.1.2. Truth and Knowledge

One possible intersection of Foucault's and Chomsky's ideas can be seen in their notions about knowledge. Both of them are critical towards theoretical knowledge verified from formal institutions as truthful and neutral, but really constructed for the purpose of control of the population or masses and the maintenance of the existing social order.

In order to realize Foucault's ideas concerning "knowledge", one has to mention "truth" which is a constituent of a particular "knowledge". Essentially, Foucault argues that, one cannot speak about truth, but rather about the " 'general politics' of truth – that is, the types of discourse it accepts and makes function as true" (Foucault 2006: 168). So, when speaking about truth, one really speaks about "the rules of formation of statements which are accepted as scientifically true" (Foucault 2006: 144). So, basically the "political economy of truth" is localized within scientific discourse as a result of political and economic structures (Foucault 2006: 169). When talking about the relationship between truth and knowledge, for Foucault the question is what manages particular assertions and how they are constituted as a body of notions which is scientifically approved and can be verified or falsified by science (Foucault 2006: 145). Therefore, the problem is the mere constitution of the internal regime of power, or the conditions in which scientific verifications or falsifications are dictated by the power. As such, power is within scientific statements and its effects the creation of an internal regime of power among scientific statements which are, so to say, "infected" with the power. With this notion of power, Foucault discredits power and knowledge is represented in a rather negative way. Let me give a concrete example. Foucault in his work "The History of Sexuality: Volume 1" explains how the bourgeoisie, capitalist or industrial society that arise in nineteenth century, set in motion complex apparatus for generating "true" discourses on sexuality which had to formulate the uniform "truth" of sexuality in order to gain control of both the life of the

individual and the life of the species in general (Foucault 1980). Basically, “knowledge”, which is represented as “scientific”, ergo neutral and truthful, is the part of the machinery which perpetuates the existing socio-economic order and should be approached critically.

Nevertheless, Foucault also has a positive approach towards knowledge when he mentions the “insurrection of subjugated knowledge” by which he refers to historical contents camouflaged or kept unseen by the established structure (Foucault 2003: 7). So, the critique of formal discourses, institutions and practices has to reveal this buried knowledge and that this kind of knowledge is truthful. He argues that that this kind of subjugated knowledge or “knowledge from below” and singular local knowledges of the people “what people know” together make “genealogy” which is “a way of playing local, discontinuous, disqualified, or nonlegitimized knowledges off against unitary theological instance that claims to be able to filter them, organize them into hierarchies, organize them in the name of a true body of knowledge...” (Foucault 2003: 9). Therefore, genealogy is an antiscience; it “has to fight the power-effects characteristics of any discourse that is regarded as scientific” (Foucault 2003: 7).

Both, Foucault and Chomsky, give a profound critique of formal knowledge shaped and approved by the existing regime. As I have shown, Foucault is concerned with the critique of centralized theoretical production of knowledge and its possible subversion with anti-science of genealogy. Chomsky’s critique of formal knowledge is very similar to Foucault’s understanding. Namely, where Chomsky coincides with Foucault is when he worries about the access to power, shared ideology, and professionalization; factors, which according to Chomsky, pose a serious threat to the integrity of scholarship (Chomsky 2005: 12). Chomsky, like Foucault, is also preoccupied with formal theoretical production of knowledge. He begins with the following presumption: if the ideology is used for selfish goals, intellectuals who interpret events and participate in creation of policies will embrace the elitist position in which they argue against popular movements which fight for mass participation in decision making

and will stand for the guidance of those who have the “necessary knowledge” (Chomsky 2005: 41). He claims that the animosity towards mass movements and to social change is a powerful tool used by present liberal ideology (Chomsky 2005: 42).

Chomsky continues his argument taking on the example of Spanish Civil War which began in 1936 when a spontaneous social revolution took place in which the masses of urban and rural industrial and agricultural anarchist and socialist workers were involved in radical transformation of social and economic conditions (Chomsky 2005: 43). In the revolution, assemblies dominated by the anarchist were in charge, and the process of collectivization of the industry and commerce spread through the rural and urban parts of Spain. The collectivization of industry and commerce was surprisingly successful, claims Chomsky (Chomsky 2005: 44-45). 1936 was a period of “dual power that is power which was divided between anarchists and social workers on the one hand, and Communist Republican forces” (Chomsky 2005: 44). The Communists were opposing rural and industrial collectives; they were for the abolition of the local assemblies; for the authority of the militia, and for reinstalment of pre-revolutionary structure - and that was precisely opposite of demands of the masses (Borkenau in Chomsky 2005: 46-49).¹⁸ The Communist dictatorship came to power by force, restored former apparatus and police authority of the former regime (Borkenau in Chomsky 2005: 49). The liberal-Communist association disapproved the revolutionary transformation of Spain; to them it was necessary to re-establish the old order, by force if necessary, and then to focus on the anti-Franco struggle (Chomsky 2005: 66).

The view that prevails among the historians of the Spanish Civil War is one according to which the Communist policy was the correct one and that for the interest of the Republic, it was essential to stop and turn around the course of social revolution (Chomsky 2005: 64). To

¹⁸ Chomsky points out that the Communist-led counterrevolutionary struggle should be understood in the broader context in which Soviet Union wanted to build a strong anti-fascist association with democratic West, (Chomsky 2005: 46).

Chomsky, the representation of social revolution in Spain is an excellent example of liberal scholarship where the deep bias against social revolution and devotion to the values and social order of liberal bourgeois democracy leads authors to misrepresentation of crucial events and to overlook major historical currents; this commitment leads to striking failure of objectivity and provides an example of “counterrevolutionary subordination” (Chomsky 2005: 74). Using the example of Spanish Civil War, Chomsky tries to expose the “elitist bias that dominates the liberal-Communist interpretation of the Civil War” (Chomsky 2005: 58). He claims that liberal historians often have aversion for popular movements, and furthermore, liberal historians fail to comprehend the “political factor” (Chomsky 2005: 58). I see the resemblance between Chomsky and Foucault in their approach towards knowledge; both of them stress that the process of the formal theoretical production of knowledge is not neutral process but a process also influenced by power.

The next point of convergence in the work of Foucault and Chomsky is in the realm of academia and is evident in their critique of intellectualism. Foucault gives a sharp critique of the Left intellectuals who took the role of universal spokesmen and represented themselves as the masters of truth and justice, while the proletariat the role of the bearers of the universal class conscious, as such (Foucault 2006: 161). So, the proletariat and the Marxist intellectuals had class consciousness and obtained clear knowledge that enabled them to “act correctly” towards the realization of communism. Foucault proposed a new schema of knowledge based on genealogy where subjugated and singular local knowledge could be articulated and it diverges from the Marxist scheme inasmuch as the intellectual in this new schema is not “the master of truth and justice”:

An intellectual for me, is a guy hooked into the system of information rather than into the system of production. He is able to make himself heard. He can write in papers, give his point of the

view. He is also hooked into a former system of information. He has the knowledge, obtained from reading a certain number of books, that other people do not have directly available to them. His role, consequently, is not to form the workers' consciousness, since that already exists, but to allow this consciousness, this workers' knowledge, to enter the information system and to be circulated. This will help other workers, and other people who are not workers, to be aware of what is happening. [...] we can say this: the intellectual's knowledge is always partial in relation to the workers' knowledge (Foucault in Eribon 1992: 253).

Chomsky shares with Foucault the critique of intellectual elitism. Namely, Chomsky accuses intellectuals, including those on Left, of making things look complicated and using sophisticated language difficult to understand, in order to subordinate the common people, to appear to be important, and finally to create power and great careers for themselves (Chomsky, 2005: 216). According to Chomsky, this technique employed by intellectuals is a "technique of marginalization and control and self-interest" and he argues well when he states the following: "And I think that you must ask yourselves very carefully what great leap in evolution has taken place that enables people to have these fantastic insights that they can't convey to ordinary people about topics that no one understands very much about. One should be very sceptical about that, that's another technique by which intellectuals dominate people in my opinion" (Chomsky, 2005: 217). I find Foucault and Chomsky to be similar in their critique of "knowledge" which functions as a means to control the population. Chomsky's critique of liberal scholarship, devoted to maintenance of existing social order coincides with Foucault's critique of "knowledge infected with power" which is presented as scientifically valid, ergo truthful and also serves as tool in perpetuation of existing social order. They also share the

critique of intellectual elitism which also has a significant role in the maintenance of existing social order based on authority and hierarchy.

4.2. Anarcho-syndicalism

After the overview of convergences and divergences in the works of Chomsky and Foucault, inspired by their debate on human nature, hereafter I would like to focus on the concept of anarcho-syndicalism. I would say that this is the most important concept in Chomsky's political work because it grasps all his positive beliefs regarding human beings and analogous social order which could be founded on freedom, justice and abundance. This concept is based on an idea of a better society and stands as an alternative to today's neo-liberal capitalism. Although in this section I will not be dealing with similarities and differences between Foucault and Chomsky, as Foucault was cautious in questions concerning future, I find that it is important to sketch the characteristics of anarcho-syndicalism because I find that in order to change the political and social reality, except the critique of the reality, it is equally important to have an satisfactory alternative towards which one can aspire to.

To Chomsky, a vision of a future society should be grounded on a concept of human nature which implies the "need for creative work, for creative inquiry, for free creation without arbitrary limiting effects of coercive institution, then, of course, it will follow that a decent society should maximize the possibilities for this fundamental human characteristics to be realized" (Chomsky, Foucault 2005: 37). Therefore, in human nature one has a right to freedom, and according to Chomsky, from human nature we have to derive a conception of social order which will be acceptable for this kind of understanding of human nature based on freedom. Furthermore, human needs should be articulated solely in collective terms, as

opposed to contemporary society, i.e. capitalism in which one has the concept of a competitive man who turns himself to market, exploitation, and authority in order to maximize money and power. This characteristics of capitalism Chomsky finds to be antihuman and intolerable (Chomsky 2005: 114). He claims that the most important characteristic of a human being is freedom; accordingly, there is no room for authority:

If in fact man is an indefinitely malleable, completely plastic being, with no innate structures of mind and no intrinsic needs of a cultural or social character, then he is a fit subject for the ‘shaping of behaviour’ by the state authority, the corporate manager, the technocrat, or the central committee. Those with some confidence in human species will hope this is not so and will try to determinate the intrinsic human characteristics that provide the framework for intellectual development, the growth of moral consciousness, cultural achievement, and participation in a free community (Chomsky 2005: 114).

As an introduction to anarcho-syndicalism, let me start with anarchism which is a political philosophy based on an anti-statist understanding of society. The etymology of the word comes from old Greek “an archos”, or “no order”, however, contrary to the common understanding that anarchism is a state of chaos without rules, anarchism is really a highly organized social order; as Chomsky would say, it is a “life without [a] ruler” (Chomsky 2005: 236). If we take into consideration that “Socialism” is an umbrella term for Left-orientated political views, we can differentiate “libertarian” and “authoritarian” socialists, claims Chomsky. According to his understanding, the question of the destruction of state power is the basic distinction between socialists like Marx or Engels, which Chomsky describes as “authoritarian socialist”/”State socialists” and Bakunin, on the other hand, which Chomsky

describes as “libertarian socialists”/”anarchists” or “Left-Marxists” (Chomsky 2005: 121); of course, in regards to the question of State or republic.¹⁹

Anarchists can be seen as one Left tradition which focuses on small scale and localized organization and is grounded on workers’ assemblies in which the informed and educated working class is the one who decides (Chomsky 2005: 147). This kind of understanding of left-orientated politics differs from the State socialist line in regards to the questions of the taking part in decision making process and control over them. In the case of anarchists (left-Marxists) the decisions are carried out by the working class which is well-acquainted with the particular subject-matter, while in the instances of State socialists, there is a need for a national plan made by a national bureaucracy (Chomsky 2005: 146). Chomsky is situated in the former Left orientated group and he advocates that there is no need for an administration which realizes political decisions (Chomsky 2005: 146). He situates “anarchism” in the libertarian Left and he conceives it as a highly organized form of society organized on the grounds of assemblies - two basic assemblies are workplace and the neighbourhood. And on that ground it is possible to create an organization on the national or even international level (Chomsky 2005: 133). The fundamental anarchist principles are self-management and control of workers over their own work (Chomsky 2005: 134). The core of anarchism is seen in the solidaric collaboration of the workers who will take over the management of the process of productions in their own hands and organize themselves into assemblies which are based on solidarity, and mutual decision making; that is “the power from bellow”, or democratic decision making (Rocker in Chomsky 2005: 120).

¹⁹ In the context of terminology, it is important to mention the distinction within the concept of “anarchism”, which is, according to Chomsky, characteristic of the US, where one has to distinguish between libertarian ultra-right or “individualistic anarchism”, present in the libertarian parties, and which is anti-statists, but in the name of free market capitalism, which means strengthening the private sectors and minimizing the power of the state, creating “the worst totalitarian monster that the world have ever seen” (Chomsky, 2005: 215). This movement has nothing to do with the rest of anarchistic movement .i.e. left-anarchistic working class movement (Chomsky, 2005: 235).

Chomsky does not neglect the issue of today's neo-liberal society which is characterized by technology; he argues that modern science and technology can save man from the "necessity for specialized, imbecile labour" and can stand as a foundation for social arrangement based on voluntary alliances and democracy (Chomsky 2005: 114). He sees technology as a "pretty neutral instrument", and emphasizes how there is a choice as to how to use it. Technology could be used as a tool in eliminating managerial roles and putting the decision-making process into the hands of workers (Chomsky 2005: 226). The working class or the proletariat in the highly developed technological society refers to "the people who do the productive work of the society, manual and intellectual work" (Foucault, Chomsky 2005: 60).

Chomsky argues that the language is a basic criterion for determining that another organism has a mind and an ability for free thought, self-expression and finally, for freedom. So, to him the right for human freedom is inscribed in the language that is the cornerstone of what he calls human nature. By proposing anarcho-syndicalism, he proposes an arrangement based on intrinsic human characteristics; a social organization which is based on and which encourages the fundamental need for creative work, solidarity and justice (Chomsky 2005: 115). Chomsky claims how language is a mirror of mind (Chomsky 2005: 115). Taking into consideration his vision of a future society, it is evident that he proposes a society which is a mirror of the mind and functions accordingly to the characteristics of human nature that are evident in the human mind. Basically, Chomsky argues that if language is a mirror of mind which is again based on an collection of rules which are the condition of the creativity of a subject (an individual who "knows a language" mastered the arrangement of rules which makes it possible to use particular language), we should create a society based on rules which guarantee freedom and self-expression of human beings. Like the language guarantee the freedom of a subject who has acquired the rules of a particular language, we should live in a society where rules would guarantee freedom of humans.

In order to show the connection between language and freedom, Chomsky goes into the reconstruction of the left-libertarian tradition, where he refers to Rousseau and his “Second Discourse”, which I have already mentioned in the first chapter of my thesis. Chomsky reads Rousseau’s “Second Discourse” through an anarchistic lens as a critique of authoritarian institutions which restrict human freedom and therefore they should be rejected; also, he refers to Rousseau who claims that the human reason is the most important argument for human freedom (Chomsky 2005: 104). He also refers to Kant who claims that “one must be free to learn how to make use of one’s powers freely and usefully”, and an individual can acquire reason only as a result of experience and to realize experience an individual must be free (Kant in Chomsky 2005: 105). The third figure that Chomsky refers to is Descartes and the Cartesians who developed the model of “mechanical principle” according to which the animal is a clever “machine” guided by instincts, while Man is free and has consciousness which distinguishes him from animals – that is known as “creative principle”(Chomsky 2005: 108). Furthermore, according to Chomsky’s interpretation of Descartes, the only reliable sign that another organism has a mind is the use of language. According to Chomsky, to Cartesians it is clear that Man has a mind, and by using language he performs his freedom of thought (Chomsky 2005: 106). So, to conclude, Chomsky argues that Cartesian linguistics is parallel to Rousseau’s theory of freedom, and according to that understanding, Rousseau can be seen as a developer of Cartesian linguistics. In Chomsky’s words:

Where we combine these speculations [Rousseau and Cartesians], we might develop an interesting connection between language and freedom. Language in its essential properties and the manner of its use provides the basic criterion for determining that another organism is being with a human mind and the human capacity for free thought and self-expression, and with the essential human

need for freedom from the external constraints of repressive authority (Chomsky 2005: 106).

In his reconstruction of left-libertarian thought, in order to show the connection between language and human freedom, Chomsky refers to one more author, William Humboldt. Chomsky claims that his work, “The Limits of State Action”, written in 1792 and seen as a classic of liberal thought, in its essence is an anti-capitalist work (Chomsky 2005: 122). According to Chomsky, Humboldt criticizes the authoritarian state by claiming that freedom is an essential criterion for Man’s development: “The incapacity for freedom can only arise from a want of moral and intellectual power... but of no man in the earth – however neglected by nature, and however degraded by circumstances – is this true of all the bonds which oppress him. Let us undo them one by one, as the feeling of freedom awakens in men’s hearth, and we shall hasten progress in every step” (Humboldt in Chomsky, 2005: 109). Interestingly, Chomsky sees Humboldt, who is regarded to be a classic promoter of liberal ideals, as a presenter of “an anarchist vision that is appropriate, perhaps, to the next state of industrial society” (Chomsky 2005: 113).

By invoking Rousseau, Kant, Descartes and Humboldt – who are usually seen as the representatives of classical liberal doctrine, that is socio-economic order known as capitalism – one can conclude that according to Chomsky, there is a common ground which is build upon the notion of freedom and liberty, standing as the basic concept in all three cases: the left-libertarianism or anarchism, liberalism, and right-libertarianism. Therefore, all three political directions have the same sources which are postulated by Rousseau, Kant and Humboldt. Following that, Chomsky argues that liberalism in the beginning was not negative as it may be seen today may; it is evident that today we have free economic market which results in an abundant elite of exploiters, while the majority of people are in the chains of modern slavery known as capitalist economy. For Chomsky, things got nasty somewhere along the way. He

argues that the ideas of classical liberalism were swept away by the state capitalist autocracy which perverted those ideas into an ideology to uphold the social arrangement which was arising at that time (Chomsky 2005: 122, 192). Capitalism as a system based on market, wage labour, and competition which shapes the “ideology of possessive individualism”, according to Chomsky, should be regarded as fundamentally antihuman, and as I see it, it is a deviation from classical liberal ideas.

Until this point it is clear that Chomsky sees capitalism as a rotten system based on inequality, but what with about the transformation to a different system or, in other words when is the appropriate time for revolution? Chomsky is as realistic as always and he claims that opposing the state sector today means placing power into the hands of private totalitarian organizations; abolishing the state in this moment would result in private dictatorship (Chomsky 2005: 213). So, protecting the state factor today is really a step towards abolishing the state in long terms because state today means a public arena in which people can participate, organize and affect policy, although in limited way. So, strengthening the state against private powers could be seen as a tactic in de Certeau’s way in a long term goal of the abolition of the state.

Evidently, the time for anarchism has not arrived, according to Chomsky. I would like to point out another interesting statement regarding his notions on the planning of a future vision of society. According to him, the question for detailed planning for the future is not “can we do it?”, because to him, it is obvious that humans can do it, but the question for him is the following:

Sure we can do it, but it’s whether we know enough about human beings, about society, institutions, the effects of introducing institutional structures into human life. Do we know enough about

that to be able to plan in any detail what a society should look like?
Or should it be experimental, guided by certain general ideas about liberty, equality, authority and domination and let people explore different ways of working through this maze and see what comes natural to them? (Chomsky, 2005: 221).

By saying this he advocates that humans have to be careful in sketching out the future society. This is not just problematic in Chomsky's work, this is a problematic issue of anarchism in general, as an anti-statist political theory which is based on a notion that instead of the state people will gather in small scale organizations and will live in a free society without state and its nasty apparatuses. This is an inadequate plan inasmuch as it does not go into details and explain the logistics of that kind of social order. Furthermore, who can guarantee that this new type of society would not be even worse for particular groups of people? Who can guarantee that the consensus on freedom that exists in today's world would not collapse? One would be forgiven for being sceptical towards this aspect of anarchism regarding the spontaneous self-building of society's infrastructure. What stands as a guarantee that the situation would not be more undemocratic than it is now?

I find that both Foucault and Chomsky share similar ideas concerning class dominance in the undemocratic socio-economic order known as liberalism. Their ideas concerning power resemble one another inasmuch as Foucault sees power as an omnipotent force going in all directions, while Chomsky looks at power as a force going from the governments and elites towards the masses which are governed. Both of them also mention resistance which for Foucault is inseparable from the power, while Chomsky stresses the importance of resistance as a possible threat to political order and a tool for social change. Both of them are critical towards formal knowledge presented as neutral, but really with an agenda of maintaining the existing social order and power geometry. As well, both of them are critical towards

intellectual elitism. So, it looks to me that these two Left-orientated intellectuals are convergent on a number of points. However, one point in which they depart is in their visions of a future. While Chomsky is optimistic in his vision of future society, Foucault prefers to stay in the present day and he does not go into any speculations of future society. In today's situation characterised with mass rebellion against the establishment, similar to the seventies, and reinforced with a deep economic crisis, questions raised in this debate should be revisited.

5. Conclusion

In this work my aim was to detect the possible convergences in the work of Michel Foucault and Noam Chomsky. Although in “The Debate” they are opposed concerning the notion and existence of human nature, I find these two public intellectuals, deeply involved in politics, to be sharing points of convergence in their works.

In order to detect these convergences I began my work with a tentative overview of ideas regarding human nature within political philosophy by delineating two traditions regarding this question. One argues for the existence of universal human nature while the second is opposed to it. In order to better understand and situate Chomsky-Foucault’s debate, I have offered a tentative overview of ideas regarding human nature within the framework of modern political philosophy. Contractualist Thomas Hobbes, one of the founders of liberalism, saw human nature as something dangerous and violent, which can be held on a leash by entering into contract with others. On the other side of contractualism there is Jean-Jacques Rousseau who idealised the state of nature and the “Savage Man” and in order to ensure the co-existence of free persons in this state of civilization (which has a negative effect on humans), he also advocated the social contract. Furthermore, in the realm of modern political theory I mentioned a conservative Carl Schmitt who argued that Man is an “open question” depending on an adequate social organization; nevertheless, I find his notions on human nature to be negative due to his reduction of life to friend/enemy distinction, and glorification of conflict as if it were the purpose of human life. Finally, Peter Kropotkin in his notions on anarchism claims that there is also human nature and, in his way of thinking, humans are by nature interdependent social beings which exist by the principle of mutual solidarity and in a non-government society, based on voluntary associations of peoples, will finally be free. In this tradition of political philosophy I have situated Chomsky.

On the other hand, the tradition which argues against universal human nature is presented with Satre's "Existentialism" where he negated the existence of human nature and advocated Man's responsibility for his own acts and also for his fellow humans. Marxism, as a coherent body of thought stressed the importance of social conditions which shape the human being who is undistinguishable from his social conditions, so it is impossible to talk about "human nature". And in this tradition I situated Foucault.

Concerning the "The Chomsky-Foucault Debate" on human nature, both of them belong to the realm of the political Left, though apparently in different traditions. In the debate itself I do not find them to contradict one another, but simply observing the concepts from different perspective. Chomsky argues from the cognitive aspect of human beings focusing on innate structures which create knowledge, while Foucault is more focused on cultural conditions determining a particular body of claims in a certain period which is formed as "knowledge". Nevertheless, in the political context of the debate they differ regarding their future vision of society. While Chomsky proposes an idea of society based on rules which will guarantee freedom for humans, Foucault does not want to enter into speculations about the future; he remains in the present historical moment. Concerning justice, they differ inasmuch that Foucault has a relativist notion regarding justice, though a strong sense of it in his analysis of power, while to Chomsky the idea of justice is the basis of human nature and future society.

In further in-depth analysis of the constitutive concepts of the debate within the greater scope of their work, they converge on a number of points. In the analysis of power and its *modus operandi*, Foucault argues that power runs through the whole social body and in that flow it creates inequalities; basically the society in which we live today is a successor of the bourgeois socio-economic order which is divided hierarchically and is undemocratic. Chomsky shares criticism towards power which for him is in the hands of governments and

elites who control the rest of the society; essentially in this critique of society they can be seen as converging. To Foucault the technology of power regulates the complete social body using different rules, while to Chomsky the masses are being regulated primarily through media which is possessed by those in power. This is also one of the points of convergences. Furthermore, both of them were (and Chomsky still is) passionate activists who shared the idea of resistance to power structures. To Chomsky civil disobedience is a way of rebellion against the existing socio-political order, and although Foucault claimed that this kind of resistance is not really meaningful because it is an act within the state's framework (however, in his work he was not really clear what resistance is; he just claimed that it is undistinguishable from power), in practice he was a vigorous activist. The critique of knowledge, which is represented as neutral and truthful, coming from a formal institution is also a point of convergence in their work. Namely, Foucault argues for genealogy as a possible anti-science towards verified knowledge from formal institutions. Similar to that, in his study of counterrevolutionary subordination, Chomsky is critical towards the liberal scholarship which is devoted to the maintenance of values and social order of liberal bourgeois democracy. In addition, both of them are critical towards intellectual elitism, as well as those on the Left.

The point in which they do split up on is in the question regarding the future. While Foucault is cautious and does not want to speculate about the future but is focused on the disclosure of political power which shapes the social body, Chomsky gives a vision of a future society; a better society based on justice.

To conclude, I see both of those great intellectuals as acting within Leftist political framework, and although both of them can be seen as belonging to different traditions within the Left in regards to human nature, in the end it appears that they share a number of points in the convergence of their work. The questions raised in the debate are present again in today's

historical moment which is characterised by a strong worldwide economic crisis and the rise of radical Right which are taking an ever greater part in forming the governments of number of European states. Take the European Union, a supra-national confederation which counts twenty seven European countries, most of them facing serious crisis. In the EU the national autonomy of states has seriously declined because autonomy is mostly in the hands of EU leaders, commissions, and councils who are enforcing in most of the countries strict policies of savings and structural reforms; welfare support is dangerously decreasing, and the privatization of state ownership increases the hands of private companies. Meanwhile, the political Right in a number of states is rising, which means that a number of governments are wheeling towards the political Right; the number of unemployed is increasing, and people are generally getting poorer. Analogously to that kind of pessimistic politico-economic situation, the crisis is accompanied by numerous social movements against social and economic inequality; the resistance is present in the form of student strikes, trade union and workers strikes, and in a number of movements who share the common agenda of fighting against the institutions of neo-liberal system.

Taking into consideration this pessimistic socio-political context, the differences within the Left, in this case between Chomsky and Foucault, become evanescent. This means that not so much energy should be spent in finding the theoretical divergences in their work and pushing them further, both perspectives should be taken into consideration in order to finally achieve Left hegemony in a political context. Their brilliant critique of power and its *modus operandi*, critique of institutions and knowledge (which are far from objective and neutral as usually represented), ideas regarding resistance to power structures and the importance of it, Chomsky's idea of a better society and Foucault's incisive caution regarding that issue; all should be taken into consideration in thinking about a more democratic society.

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