Perverting the Panopticon

Feminism, Peace, and the prospect of a 'new Totalitarianism'

How does the critical approach of Feminism change how we explain and understand Peace?

'We men are wretched things' laments Achilles to King Priam as he considers the futile nature of violence in the final book of The Iliad.1 'There has been nothing but battle and slaughter round your city' he cries '[and yet] you must endure'.2 Here, Homer concedes in fiction to what is generally considered to be a universal truth; namely that war, brought to earth by 'the gods who have no cares themselves', is a fundamental and unavoidable human reality.3 But is the anguish that causes Achilles' soul so much suffering actually based in truth, or does our ubiquitous acceptance of the supposed inevitability of violence paradoxically ensure its eventuality? A paradox, it should be noted, is an argument that concludes with a contradiction derived from seemingly legitimate assumptions. Without proper attention to where such inconsistencies may arise, then, and how our presuppositions about reality may be flawed, we end up like the runner of Zeno's famous locomotion conundrum: always moving forward but never reaching the desired destination.4 Indeed, and alarmingly for us, it is not far-fetched to suggest that Zeno himself would have recognized that the more modern but nevertheless related problems of achieving gender equality and Peacefulness are also reminiscent of this absurd process. For, in order to reach an objective, one must first travel halfway there, then cover half the remaining distance, and then half that distance again.5 Forever approaching but seemingly never arriving: it is not hard to see why grievances such as that of Achilles continue to strike pathos into the hearts of contemporary readers and remain persistently unquestionable even after more than three millennia. Since the sacking of Troy and onward through recorded history, war has continued, systems of oppression have functioned unabated, and the palpable suffering of millions continues to cast

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1 Homer, The Iliad, Book XXIV (New York, Penguin Classics, 2003) 432
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
humanity in the position of Zeno’s runner: always exhausted, never triumphant, and cursed to remain in stasis forever.

In contradiction with these colossi of Greek antiquity however, this essay proposes an accumulative route towards the finish line that has seemingly always been just out of reach. I argue that the critical approach of Feminism not only augments how we explain and understand Peace, but also provides society with the nostrum to effect what I will call ‘a Totalitarianism of Peace’ - or relations which are both gender equal and free from violent conflict. The paper is set out in four parts that critically engage with and relate concepts of Feminism and Peacefulness together to form a cohesive resolution. Firstly, I consider the nature of Peace in relation to the propositions put forward by the Norwegian theorist Johan Galtung, and explain how a Feminist critique of his work expands its potential. Secondly, I elucidate upon the philosophy of Michel Foucault - particularly with regard to the 'Genealogy of power' - and discuss its important role in enriching both feminist theory and notions of Peace more generally. Thirdly, I consider Judith Butler’s Foucauldian inspired conclusions regarding the nature of gender ‘performativity’, and also her notions of ‘responsiveness’ that integrate both Galtungian and Foucauldian theory with Feminism and provide compelling arguments for the attainment of Peacefulness. Finally, I conclude with my own proposition, informed by the theorists above that I call a 'Totalitarianism of Peace' - proving that when integrated, Feminism does more than just expand our understanding of Peace, but is actually key to helping us attain it also.

*Prevention is the best cure - Johan Galtung's theory of Peace:*

Subjective, nebulous, and seemingly arcadian, the term 'Peace' presents the same challenges to definitivity that the American Supreme Court Justice Stewart famously failed to overcome when asked to provide a definition of 'obscenity' in 1964. 'I know it when I see it' he answered, and in so doing highlighted only the redundancy of abductive reasoning. Although we may dismiss the story of Stewart’s remarks as little more than an amusing anecdote, efforts to explain and understand Peace have in fact faced similar challenges of apprehension. Nevertheless, and felicitously for our purposes, the latter half of the 20th century saw great

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strides in the development of comprehensive theories of Peace, the conceptual vanguard having been led by the Norwegian mathematician and social theorist Johan Galtung whose scholarship is crucial not only for its provision of the most comprehensive account of the notion to date, but also because it advances the most fruitful theoretical ground from which to intersperse a complementary Feminist perspective.

Galtung’s theory is said to have sprouted from his observation that conflict resolution had traditionally been treated as a zero-sum game, where the utility and loss of actors was exclusive and only four outcomes were ever possible:

1. A wins, B loses;
2. B wins, A loses;
3. A and B continue to fight, or;
4. Neither A nor B gain from compromise.7

This, it seemed, was much like stating medical care was responsible only for ensuring the eradication of disease, rather than attempting to support the cultivation of healthy lifestyles that would help people withstand illness in the first place.8 There had, in effect, to be a ‘fifth way’ - or a conception of conflict that was inclusive not only of freedom from certain terrors, but liberty to act in certain constructive and communitarian ways. Thus, the Galtungian account argues that Peace is not only the absence of physical violence, but also a description of the behaviours, inclinations, and institutionalized practices of society that encourage constructive and non-violent conflict resolution.9 Essentially, Peace can be both negative (in the case of the absence of conflict) and positive (wherein steps are undertaken to increase cohesion and dialogue in society).10 This revolutionary binary account of Peacefulness precipitated another separate but nevertheless extremely relevant Galtungian concept: that of the interrelation between what he terms 'structural violence' (which describes the harm inflicted on individuals as a result of institutionalized socio-economic biases), 'cultural violence' (epistemic knowledge claims cloaked in cultural practice that support the performance of structural violence), and 'direct violence' (physical expressions of cultural and

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8 Baljit Singh Grewal ‘Johan Galtung: Positive and Negative Peace’ (Auckland, Auckland University of Technology School of Social Science, 2003) 2
10 Ibid.
structural ferocity).\textsuperscript{11} In developing these ideas, Galtung not only implies that a proper hold on the notion of violence is central to the understanding and explanation of Peace, but also that violence is primarily structural rather than actor-driven, suggesting that institutional reform would translate to greater Peacefulness (see figure. 1).\textsuperscript{12}

\begin{figure}[h]
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\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{galtung_diagram.png}
\caption{Galtung's interrelated violences.}
\end{figure}

Galtung's notions of Peace and violence are important to Feminism because all three partake in problematizing the same basic concept: namely that of coercive power and privilege that forms the Marxian 'superstructure' of social relations.\textsuperscript{13} Feminism provides an intricate account of one such system of domination: patriarchy, or what Karren Warren terms 'the structure of argumentation which presumes that [male] superiority justifies [female] subordination', and indeed argues convincingly that because patriarchy is actually implicated in all forms of violence, any movement to forge Peace must necessarily also be a crusade to guarantee gender equality.\textsuperscript{14} Galtung's admittedly orthodox failure to adequately treat gender as an important dimension of power-relations has limited the extent to which his theory has been successfully validated and enacted: drawing criticism from theorists as disparate as Joshua Goldstein, and Catia Confortini.\textsuperscript{15,16}

\begin{thebibliography}{16}
\bibitem{galtung2} Op. cit. Grewhal 'Johan Galtung: Positive and Negative Peace' 3
\bibitem{goldstein} Joshua S. Goldstein, \textit{War and Gender: How Gender Shapes the War System and Vice Versa} (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002)
\bibitem{confortini} Catia C. Confortini 'Galtung, Violence, and Gender: The Case for a Peace Studies/Feminism Alliance' \textit{Peace and Change}, vol.31, no.3 (2006) 336-367
\end{thebibliography}
What these Feminist critiques of Galtung remind us is that gender has always played an integral and animating role in violence and war - and certainly not always to the detriment of women alone. While the biologically determinant conception of women as 'Peaceful beings' is both essentialist and implicated in their historical subordination, it is important to remember that formulations of masculinity and their equation with violence and 'strength' are also responsible for the production and reproduction of conflict dynamics.\textsuperscript{17,18} Patriarchal society therefore, socializes men for militant action and indoctrinates women into certain psychic notions of dependency, creating real and observable differences in how the two genders experience and respond to war on the basis of flawed epistemistemology.\textsuperscript{19,20} This is not to say that the notion of binary gender should be completely banished from the Galtungian concepts of negative and positive Peace, but rather that it should be approached in such a way that does not act to simply invert or replicate existing hierarchies of power.\textsuperscript{21} In fact, gender equality has been quantitatively proven to enhance Peacefulness: Boyer and Caprioli found that societies with higher levels of gender equality were less prone to resort to violence in conflict, while analysis from the Institute of Economics and Peace has shown that good gender equality scores (as measured by the Gender Inequality Index) correlate highly with favorable levels of both negative and positive Peace.\textsuperscript{22,23}

Evidently then, a Feminist standpoint not only enriches and complicates Galtung’s theory of Peace, and its related notions of structural and cultural violence, but shows also how fundamentally important the gendered dimension is to any discussion of Peace attainment. By critically rendering the familiar foreign, the combination of Galtungian theory and Feminism takes us one step closer towards the proper understanding, explanation, and indeed, attainment of Peace.

\textsuperscript{17} David Cortright, \textit{Peace: A History of Movements and Ideas}, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 256
\textsuperscript{19} Moolakkattu Stephen John 'Feminism and Peace Studies: Taking Stock of a Quarter Century of Efforts' \textit{Indian Journal of Gender Studies}, vol.13, no.2 (2006) 150
\textsuperscript{21} Judith Butler, \textit{Gender Trouble}, (New York, Routledge, 2008) 42
\textsuperscript{22} Cited in, Monty G. Marshall and Donna Ramsey Marshall, "Gender Empowerment and the Willingness of States to Use Force" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Studies Association, Washington, DC, 19 February 1999), 22.
Why supervision needs subversion - Michel Foucault, relations of power, and Feminism:

The pragmatic theory of Johan Galtung, while enriched by a broad feminist critique, can be rendered even more sophisticated when considered in conjunction with the theory of the late French philosopher Michel Foucault. Much in the way that Galtungian theory necessitates a working definition of violence to understand Peace, Foucault requires a multifaceted examination of power to illuminate what effect reformed relations could have on both gender equality and societal accord more generally. Although it is important to acknowledge that Foucault made few direct references to women in his work, his suggestion that both sexuality and the corporeal experience are constructs of culture alone tie his epistemology nicely into the synchronous remit of Feminism; and render it indispensable for understanding, explaining, and attaining Peace.24

The Foucauldian theory of power consists of a number of interdependent aspects that, when united, come together to form an illuminating whole. The first of these is perhaps Foucault's most recognisable concept: 'Disciplinary Power', which describes the idea that the distinguishing feature of contemporary power structures is that they exercise their control in primarily physical ways.25 This perpetual surveillance or 'panopticism' ensures that citizens both enhance their physical productivity (primarily in the realms of labour and reproduction) and come to surveil themselves, saving effort on the part of the state or hegemonic group and ensuring 'docile bodies' who have internalised the dogma of the reigning power structure(s).26,27 Foucault refers to the ways this power is expressed on the body as 'technologies' of the self forging a clear link with Feminist theory, such as that of Bartky who notes that the habits of controlled eating, cosmetic application, and even body language commonly seen in women are all expressions of ostensibly 'voluntary' modes of self-subjection tied up in the need to accord with certain principles of identity.28,29

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24 Margaret A. McLaren, Feminism, Foucault, and Embodied Subjectivity, (New York, State University of New York Press, 2002) 92
28 Ibid. 27
29 Sandra Bartky, 'Foucault, femininity and the modernization of patriarchal power' in Irene Diamond & Lee Quinby (eds), Feminism and Foucault: Reflections on Resistance, (Boston, Northeastern University Press, 1988) 88.
Power according to Foucault is thus symbiotic, contingent on animated and kinetic relations rather than simply being exercised by one actor upon another (as theorists like Weber and Arendt would have it).\textsuperscript{30,31,32} This is important because it implicates relations in the creation of the epistemic knowledge claims that contextualise the credos of the reigning superstructure. Institutions of power can thus arbitrarily regulate what 'truths' come to define societal consensus, and create discourses that work to reproduce their own validities.\textsuperscript{33} This occurs much in the same way that Freud was known for taking both the affirmations and denials of patients as proof of their latent Electra complexes: or in other words, discourses delimited by power structures set their own conditions for practice, and then have those provisions re-affirmed in their phenomenological execution.\textsuperscript{34,35} This kind of Nietzschean ellipsis thus also reinforces the 'subjectifying' technologies of self that produce and sustain discourses of authority, trapping the docile subject in a seemingly endless loop of existential imprisonment.

In light of this relational theory of Power, it follows that history can be nothing but a series of epistemic relationships of domination and subordination fortified by disciplinary technologies of the self.\textsuperscript{36} Foucault referred to this as 'anthropology', or the presumption that history is a process of 'continuity...[a teleological] unfolding of the essential attributes of man'.\textsuperscript{37,38} Here 'man' or 'sovereign' becomes the object of history precisely as a result of his formal subjectivity, and vice versa.\textsuperscript{39} Thucydides would likely have called this process the will of the strong: Feminists call it patriarchy.\textsuperscript{40,41} The correspondence between Foucault's revolutionary power concept and Feminist understandings of male control can thus not be clearer: the narrative of societal development is necessarily one of female subordination, cloaked only in different iterations of arbitrary epistemic knowledge claims.

\textsuperscript{32} Anthony T. Kronman, \textit{Max Weber}, (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1983) 38
\textsuperscript{33} Op. cit. Foucault, \textit{Discipline and Punish}, 28, 34, 100
\textsuperscript{34} Jill Scott, \textit{Electra After Freud, Myth and Culture}, (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2005) 8
\textsuperscript{36} Isaac D. Balbus 'Disciplining Women' in After Foucault: Humanistic Knowledge, Postmodern Challenges, ed. Jonathan Arac (New Brunswick, Rutgers University Press, 1988) 145
\textsuperscript{38} Op. cit. Isaac D. Balbus 'Disciplining Women' 145
\textsuperscript{39} \textit{Ibid.} 151
\textsuperscript{40} Thucydides, \textit{The History of the Peloponnesian War}, (London, Penguin Classics, 200) Book V, Chapter XVII, lines 84-116
\textsuperscript{41} Op. cit. Balbus \textit{Disciplining Women}, 144
Consequently, and crucially for this exploration of Feminism and Peace, Foucault’s rationale suggests that there exists room for a procedure that might objectively validate or reject such ‘truths’ in favor of delimiting areas in which power structures can and must be resisted. ‘Genealogy’ is the term Foucault ascribed to this theoretical process, a practice he envisaged as a tool that would ‘emancipate historical knowledge from the hierarchical order of power’ so as to affect social change and the ‘ethical transformation of ourselves’. Resistance via social critique is thus constantly kinetic like the power structures it wishes to pervert, and implicitly available to those willing to turn the disciplinary technologies of the panopticon back towards the supervisory centre. It is on this compelling basis of a gateway to resistance, and an understanding of power as relational that Foucauldian theory proves itself to be an indispensable constituent in the understanding and explanation of Peace with regard to Feminist theory. Ultimately then, the Genealogy of power it is a tool that, once combined with further Feminist critique, will prove itself invaluable not only to the realisation of gender equality, but the apprehension of Peace, and its objective attainment also.

**Gender bending - Judith Butler, 'performativity', and 'responsiveness':**

If power is productive rather than repressive, it would suggest that identities are metaphysically meaningless outside of the significations produced for them by the cardinal superstructures of hierarchical control. In other words, Foucault’s work has actually gone some way towards breaking down the distinction between biological sex and culturally constructed gender that has long concerned feminists as a vehicle of oppression. While present in his writings, this implicit theoretical direction is nonetheless more constructively informed by the subsequent critique of the American theorist Judith Butler, who - by enriching both the conclusions of Galtungian and Foucauldian theory - provides us with the last piece of the theoretical puzzle with which we might come to understand, explain, and attain Peace.

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42 Evangelia Sembou, *Hegel’s Phenomenology and Foucault’s Genealogy*, (Surrey, Ashgate, 2015) 33
There are two notions that stem directly from Butler that work to inform our critical exploration of Peace. The first is the concept of "performativity", according to which what we might term the 'lexicon' of power is both constitutive and reflective of reality. Gender, or at least our flawed understanding of the concept is produced by a process of cyclical 'acting' or mimicry that over time renders binary gender a 'natural' element of our phenomenological experience. These 'gender acts' that all humans engage in may produce the impression of a 'prediscursive' identity (for one compares oneself to the ideological 'norm'), when in fact, to engage with 'performativity' is to paradoxically deny oneself of a 'claim to intelligibility'. For, in appealing to binary gender as a basis for self recognition, we replicate existing structures of domination: or the very relations feminist wish to reform. This 'preemptive' and 'violent' conscription of reality is thus very much related to a Foucauldian notion of disciplinary power: for in the process of 'performativity' humans become the unwitting oppressors of their own experience.

These limited and prescriptive narratives of gender are also problematic because they compound humans together into token groupings that often render individual members 'bogus representations,...of some fictitious unity'. Both individual members and groups as a whole are thus dehumanised on the basis of power-determinant epistemic claims, depriving society of the opportunity for harmonious connections to be forged between different or 'opposing' syndicates. This second notion of Butler's is popularly referred to as 'grievability', but together with her more recent work I will invoke this notion in concert with something she terms 'responsiveness'. In effect, 'grievability' refers to the attribution of affinity or resemblance by one individual or group toward another. When an actor is grievable, they are necessarily human (as this is how we reflexively recognise ourselves) and thus undeserving of violent suffering. Problematically and somewhat unintuitively, however, this identification legitimates not only public

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48 Christina Masters 'Judith Butler' in *Critical Theorists and International Relations* (eds.) Jenny Edkins and Nick Vaughan-Williams (New York, Routledge, 2009) 114
50 *Ibid*. 11
51 *Ibid*. 76
52 *Ibid*. 42
53 *Ibid*. 74, 155
54 Jill Stauffer and Judith Butler, 'Peace is resistance to the terrible satisfactions of war: An interview with Judith Butler' *Qui Parle*, vol.14, no.1 (2003) 111
55 *Ibid*.
displays of bereavement, but also revenge and violent retaliation on the part of 'grievable victims'.\textsuperscript{58} Retaliation is what Butler describes as an 'anesthetisation' of our own pain and sense of vulnerability that renders us existentially threatened: and it is this cycle of retribution that continually places the attainment of gender equality and Peace outside our grasp.\textsuperscript{59} What is required for us to move forward then is 'responsiveness', or the acceptance of what Butler terms 'our own permeability to other people'.\textsuperscript{60} In effect, 'humanisation' as we know it is not sufficient to prevent war and subversive power politics - rather it is only an active attribution of 'equivalent fragility' that will allow societies to reach states of non-violent accord and Peaceful conflict resolution.\textsuperscript{61} On this account, a susceptibility to being vulnerable is the only non-institutionalised knowledge claim with any objective validity (proven by the fact that practitioners of politics often attempts to circumvent discussions of amenability) highlighting the notion that just like gender, sex, identity, and even possibility: all are created via the grammatics of discourse determined by power relations.\textsuperscript{62}

By means of these related processes, then, Butler manages to prove the connection between sex and gender to be nothing more than a fabrication of power.\textsuperscript{63} This is achieved by actively denying the notion of biological sex as prediscursive, and therefore establishing that performative gender and the 'norms' to which it ascribes are the product of regulated disciplinary power.\textsuperscript{64} Crucially for the purposes of understanding and explaining Peace, such conclusions indicate that the liberation of identity creation entails that a transition from the flawed practice of ascribing 'grievability' to the constructive act of being 'responsive'(much like a Galtungian transition from negative to positive Peace) becomes possible purely as a result of subverting dominant discursive mimicry and 'performing' in new and challenging ways.\textsuperscript{65} As such, we see how Butler not only manages to break down prediscursive constructs of identity, but enrich Foucauldian theories of power in such a way that resistance becomes accessible, gender equality possible, and Peace attainable.

\textsuperscript{58} \textit{Ibid.} 24, 94
\textsuperscript{59} Op. cit. Stauffer and Butler, \textit{Peace is Resistance Against the Terrible Satisfactions of War}, 102
\textsuperscript{60} \textit{Ibid.} 104
\textsuperscript{61} \textit{Ibid.} 110
\textsuperscript{62} \textit{Ibid.} 102
\textsuperscript{64} \textit{Ibid.} 11-12, 158
\textsuperscript{65} \textit{Ibid.} 171, 196
All the King's horses and all the King's men - a 'Totalitarianism of Peace'?

Although Zeno would be loath to admit it, we have in fact come a long way in our exploration of critical Feminism and Peace. In order to cross the proverbial distance toward the elusive finish line, however, it is necessary to combine all that the Feminist critique of Galtung, Foucault, and Butler has rendered visible to create a cohesive approach which not only allows us to understand and explain Peace, but may actually help us attain it also.

A close reading of Foucault reveals that the relational nature of power renders liberation from domination utterly impossible. Power is nourished by resistance, and resistance by power in such a way that the concepts are both necessarily symbiotic and foundational to human relations: in effect, they delineate our metaphysical reality in such a way that we would cease to exist without them. Indeed, there is no breaking this cycle: according to Foucault, states of domination will always reconstitute themselves, true freedom only ever existing in the fleeting moment where one system of relation metamorphosises into another.

While seemingly nihilistic, Foucault's 'limitations' may actually provide the key to attaining Peace and gender equality. My contention here is that rather than considering 'liberation' from power relations as the incumbent basis for the attainment of Peace, we can use resistance to reformulate a new structure of power relations that while qualitatively domineering, (as all such structures necessarily are) guarantees gender equality and harmony between peoples. To elucidate by example, Butler's 'destruction' of the distinction between sex and gender calls into question the performative aspect of 'normal' or 'heteronormative' relations. In abstaining from certain (heteronormative, patriarchal etc) modes of 'performativity' then, new channels of what we might consider to constitute the 'true' (or at least, non-institutionalised) identities of individuals are opened up, not only providing us with the opportunity to craft a more metaphysically accurate societal environment, but crucially expanding the notion of what we consider

66 Michel Foucault, Politics, Philosophy, Culture: Interviews and Other Writings, 1977-1984, (New York, Routledge, 1988) 122
68 Alec McHoul and Wendy Grace, A Foucault Primer, (Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1993) 84
70 Op. cit. Butler, Gender Trouble, 8
'grievable': or to whom we can be 'responsive'.71 In essence, by disentangling ourselves from mistaking the negative liberty from rather than a Galtungian freedom to as prerequisite for both gender equality and Peace, we award ourselves the capacity to create changes in society that could have far-reaching positive benefits: even though the only way to achieve them is to actively reconstitute relations of power in such a way that still requires some relation of supremacy, subordination, and indeed, subversion.

This is why I call my conclusion a 'Totalitarianism of Peace': for actively choosing relations that are just in terms of gender equality or Peacefulness does not prevent them from being monolithic or oppressive in some senses. The question is whether, in light of the fact that domination will always be characteristic of the power-relations that define human existence, we choose to submit to a system of domination forged specifically to empower the vulnerable, encourage us to be our most ethical selves, and institutionalise Peace: or one that does none of the above - and perhaps much worse. A feminist critique of Galtung, Foucault, and Butler suggests that such a reality is both ethically necessary and actually possible: but only if we let go of those flawed presuppositions - only if we deliberately free ourselves from this paradox of power we have created.

Winning the race by choice alone - some concluding remarks:

This essay has argued that the critical approach of Feminism is indispensable in both augmenting how the concept of Peace is understood and explained, but also in providing society with a panacea of sorts to effect what I have termed a 'Totalitarianism of Peace' or a constructed future that is both gender equal and non-violent. My paper was set out in four parts that elucidated and linked concepts of Peacefulness and Feminism together to arrive at a conclusive solution. Part one evaluated the theory of Peace put forward by Johan Galtung and developed its remit by virtue of feminist critique. Part two explored Foucault's conceptions of power relations and 'Genealogy of power' demonstrating the philosopher's applicability to feminist conceptions of Peace. This was followed by an assessment of Judith Butler's related concepts of "performativity" and 'responsiveness' that expanded the interrelationship between Feminism and the attainment of Peace. Finally I concluded with my own proposition that I termed a 'Totalitarianism of Peace',

71 Ibid. 26
demonstrating that when combined, the work of Galtung, Foucault, and Butler can come together not only to enrich our understanding and explanations of Peace, but help it become reality.

I should note that there in fact exists an important yet often ignored coda to the story of Zeno’s locomotion paradox. Reputedly, the philosopher first shared his conundrum of ever-lengthening distance at a dinner. Socrates, one of the guests, is not known to have been able to offer a response, but Diogenes the Cynic did. It is said that he proved Zeno wrong by doing nothing but simply standing up, walking across the room, and touching the far wall. This anecdote serves as a nice reminder that sometimes, in our preoccupation with the proverbial tree rather than the forest, we, like Zeno, fail to see the solutions to seemingly insurmountable problems that exist, as it were, right under our noses. Indeed, it is distressingly common for notions of impracticality and utopianism to delimit what we believe is achievable and therefore worthy of our concern: or, as Foucault and Butler might say, these doubts become constitutive of our reality.

Despite this, it is important to remember that it does not have to be pessimism alone that commands how we come to live and relate to one another. This paper - if at all - has demonstrated that people are capable of forming relations which are reflective of the ethical relations we often idealise: connections that are respectful, gender equal, and Peaceful. It has shown that we can resist falling for this paradoxical trap - and like Diogenes simply stand up, walk across the room, and touch the wall. But only if we choose to.  

4,118 words

73 Op. cit. Grunbaum, Science and Zeno’s Paradoxes of Motion, 200
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