

**Miloje Grbin**  
Bauhaus University  
Weimar, Germany

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## FOUCAULT AND SPACE

*Summary: This work presents summarized analyses of Foucault's understanding of space, noted by West-Pavlov and Zieleniec, and provides further elaboration. The subject of analysis is Foucault's identification of the role of space in generation of scientific knowledge and articulation and implementation of power/knowledge, as well as his concept of heterotopia. This work calls on West-Pavlov and Zieleniec's fundamental positions and provides overview of Foucault's positions regarding space and society, and contributes with further analysis and elaboration.*

*Keywords: Michel Foucault, Space, Heterotopia, Society, Social Practice.*

### Introduction

Michel Foucault's work is very difficult to put in a certain school of thought. He is mostly recognized as poststructuralist (although he did not accept this *etiquette* himself) and postmodernist (although he was indifferent to the term postmodernism). In 1968, he was involved in „*Theorie de ensemble*“, a manifesto of a radical turn away from structuralism and existentialism and his work in sociology, philosophy and psychology represents a deep reassessment of modernism. Foucault is best understood as *sui generis*, a social theorist with multiple interests who made various contributions to social theory (Ritzer, 2005: 284).

Foucault had no systematic elaborations on the theme of space and architecture, but both of these are inseparable element of his enquiries. His sideway considerations of space were strong enough to gradually through time influence the emergence of spatial turn in various scientific and humanistic disciplines and he is recognized today as equally important author as Henri Lefebvre for its emergence (Soja, 2009:18). He is also recognized as the founder of geo-epistemology (Marinković, Ristić, 2014).

This paper illustrates Foucault's view on space through quotations and interpretations from his *Birth of the Clinic*, *Discipline and Punish* and *Heterotopia*. The paper presents Foucault's writings that treat knowledge of space, spatialized knowledge and production of space which influence several important institutions of moder-

nity – clinics, prisons, factories, classrooms, as well as modern science and urbanism. The text provides overview and analysis of Foucault writings on space and these institutions in the following three aspects:

- a) Generation of new knowledge through spatial analysis and spatialization
- b) Articulation and implementation of power/knowledge
- c) Heterotopia

These aspects are already recognized by West-Pavlov and Zieleniec. This work calls on their basic positions and provides overview of Foucault positions regarding space, as well as some further analysis and elaboration.

### **The role of space: from generation of knowledge towards power/knowledge**

One of the most important Foucault's positions on space that is emphasized by West-Pavlov is the role of spatialization in achieving systematic observing and gaining of new knowledge. Foucault notes an XVII century epistemic turn which happened when space started being used for acquiring new knowledge through use of spatial parameters in which knowledge has been bordered in order to be translated into the scientific knowledge (West-Pavlov, 2009: 115). In biology, for example, the spatialization of the objects (plants) has been *exercised to the point that the classificatory principles become elements of the structure of the plant: numbers, proportions, relations, weight or height*. In this aspect, scientific discourse is producing knowledge by the means of a spatial *technique (ibidem)*. Spatialization is used to partition the space/object so that it can be analyzed more easily, analyzed in a variety of aspects and perspectives and exposed to cognition in a more detailed manner, much more detailed than a superficial view on it can show. Spatialization has a constitutive role in empiric relation to reality and space thus, has a role in the realization of the scientific observation and production of scientific knowledge.

The production of knowledge via spatialized observation, according to Foucault, constitutes much of the medicinal practice and its discourse. In *Birth of the Clinic*, Foucault points out spatialization and spatial techniques as a central point in medicinal discourse: „The appearance of the clinic [...] must be identified [...] by the minute but decisive change, whereby the question ‘What is the matter with you?’, with which the eighteenth century dialogue between doctor and patient began (a dialogue possessing its own grammar and style), was replaced by that other question: ‘Where does it hurt?’, in which we recognize the principle of the clinic and the operation of its entire discourse” (Foucault, 2003: xviii).

The question “*Where does it hurt?*” reveals a stage of discourse which already has appropriated spatialized, localized conceivment of the illness, which is needed

for the conclusions about the symptoms and illness in question. Spatialized conceivment and scientific knowledge intervene in the constitution of medical treatment of the illness, more precisely, its manifestation in the body. Yet, the body as space is also localized and immobilized in the specialized unit of the clinic. Partitioning the space of the hospital to serve the needs of the medicinal discourse and its (social) practices has another different function where the role of space is fundamental. Space here appears as the medium of articulation and implementation of the power/knowledge of the discourse. Using space in generation of knowledge is conducted not only by *spatialization of internal mental imagination* (in terms of classification and bordering of knowledge) but also through the *production of external spatial configurations*.

It is acknowledged that making an architectural/urbanistic setting for desired social relations and practices does not produce them automatically. But it is also true that certain kinds of social *praxis* and social *relations* require a certain architectural/urbanistic setting do they can be conducted. Architectural arrangement of the hospital provides isolation and individualization of the patient and makes possible the practice of control, care, surveillance and the study of the patient and his illness. “The hospital is a space of observation where knowledge of disease is produced in ways unknown before. The hospital is a discourse-generator, a place where the “truth” about disease is engendered – and not revealed, or found, as common sense would suggest. The relationship between the institution, the architectural space, the discourses which circulate around that institution and the knowledge produced there and taking effect upon the inmates is a complex and multi-directional one” (West-Pavlov, 2009: 155). The clinic as the locus of medicinal discourse and praxis has a specific architectural arrangement which makes the discourse and the praxis possible themselves.

The similar relation between an institution and its spatial configuration can also be seen in Foucault’s analysis of prison model of Panoptikon, in *Discipline and Punish*. As hospitals, Panoptikon operates also on the principle of spatial isolation of the body, but moves even further. Panoptikon is a special sort of prison: „at the periphery, an annular building; at the center, a tower; this tower is pierced with wide windows that open onto the inner side of the ring; the peripheric building is divided into cells, each of which extends the whole width of the building; they have two windows, one on the inside, corresponding to the windows of the tower; the other on the outside, allows the light to cross from the one end to the other. All that is needed, then, is to place a supervisor in the central tower and to shut up in each cell a madman, a patient, a condemned man, a worker or a schoolboy... He is seen but he does not see; He is the object of information, never a subject in communication“ (Foucault, 1995: 200). Being in the transparent cell, prisoner has a constant consciousness that he is being watched, no matter if he is or not, at any particular time. The means

end of Panoptikon is the achievement of self-internalization of implied norms. Under implied rules and orders and awaiting punishment, prisoner of Panoptikon is overwhelmed by impersonal power and starts to control himself. Internalization of norms is thus achieved by prisoner's own efforts and by himself, throughout diffusion of the outer power and self-control. Foucault's analysis of the prison model of *Panoptikon*, shows how architectural arrangement is organized to boost a social practice and achieve more than only a social practice of prison keeping can do itself. The Panoptikon itself represents an active role of architectural arrangement which can operate almost independently from social actors.

Foucault's analysis of clinic and prison, and their analogies to classrooms and factories, reveal the common characteristic of these institutions, and the power/knowledge they operate by. It can be identified in their manifestations in space, as they all exist in and constitute disciplinary spaces: „Disciplinary space tends to be divided into as many sections as there are bodies or elements to be distributed. One must eliminate the effects of imprecise distributions, the uncontrolled disappearance of individuals, their diffuse circulation, their unusable and dangerous coagulation; it was a tactic of anti-desertion, anti-vagabondage, anti-concentration. Its aim was to establish presences and absences, to know where and how to locate individuals, to set up useful communications, to interrupt others, to be able at each moment to supervise the conduct of each individual, to assess it, to judge it, to calculate its qualities or merits. It was a procedure, therefore, aimed at knowing, mastering and using. Discipline organizes an analytical space“ (Foucault in: West-Pavlov, 2009: 132).

Zieleniec emphasizes that analogically to prisons and clinics, architecture and urbanism become spatial dimensions of *exercises of power*. Experience of consequences of industrialization and urbanization had created the need to develop the new ways of understanding, control and organization of space, hence, individuals and groups that inhabit them. „Architecture begins, at the end of the [eighteenth] century, to become involved in problems of population, health and the urban question . . . [it] becomes a question of using the disposition of space for economic-political ends“ (Foucault in: Zieleniec, 2007: 129). „Architecture and design were employed in an attempt to install a sense of self-discipline, the internalisation of ‘normalising values’ not only in miscreants and deviants (the criminal, the undeserving poor, the delinquent, etc.), but also in the general population, and in particular the working classes. Knowledge of space, and command over it, was a primary and fundamental means by which it was analyzed, designed and used for the purposes of maximum functional efficiency to ensure the regulated movement and accumulation of wealth, in the burgeoning urban and industrial economy of nineteenth-century capitalist society“ (Zieleniec, 2007: 143).

Production of space, in Foucault's term, either in clinics, prisons or factories, or even the city at large, is not a neutral social praxis, but one that is appropriated to for the specific goals of implementation of power, which makes the art of space craft a power/knowledge in its essence. As such, we may not see space as "normal" and neutral category, independent of social and political epithets. As such, space is not constituted entirely by the sole material reality it has. Space includes its socio-functional properties and goals and has cultural-symbolic and representative layers. These aspects of spatial configurations, relational characteristics of spaces and their cultural determinants can be read from Foucault's identification and analysis of heterotopias.

### Heterotopia

Foucault is giving several examples of heterotopias, but not a precise definition. There are at least six principles which define a heterotopic "status": of a space/place. The first one is that *all cultures and societies have heterotopias*, although none of them is universal and present in every society and culture. Foucault is stating a *critical type* of heterotopia. In so called "primitive" communities these are the places reserved for rituals such as ones concerned with adolescence or going to solitude during pregnancy or menstrual cycles. In the so called developed countries Foucault is making institutions for old people as an example. Another interesting example of heterotopia is the *places which are very old and last for very long, yet they have different function(s) in different cultural-historical periods*. Like the cemetery, a place where the dead are and are not, which change its location and form in the Western culture of the Middle Ages and in the Modern Ages. Furthermore, heterotopias "*have the power*" to embed and contain several different spaces which are confronted to each other, which are mutually incompatible. The Cinema is the good example because with projection the two-dimensional canvas becomes a three-dimensional space. *Heterotopias are the spaces connected also with the heterochronias – other times*. Museums and libraries are a good example because they come out of tendencies to contain all passed times at one place, or as *the fairgrounds*, which cyclically revive and die when they are filled and left by the locals and the nomad circus people. *Other places are heterotopias which have a system of opening and closing – which makes them penetrable and isolated*. Spaces where the entrance presumes a ritual work or a permission, like hammams and Scandinavian saunas (Dehaebe, De Caeter, 2008: 18-21).

We understand from Foucault's writings that heterotopia is always a space/place which has special characteristics that do not come from their material essence or

sole architectural conceivment. Heterotopic status of the place is defined by the social and cultural praxis that is connected to it, or through the meanings and messages that heterotopic space emits. Realizing that every culture in history of mankind has its own various heterotopias, we should also realize universal need for *other* spaces, as spaces where a cultural praxis or social need is being conducted away from *this* space, *this* society/culture, at last *this* world, *this* life and *this* reality.

Heterotopias are spaces that require cognitive challenges to be worded and explained like the mirror or the cinema panel. In the spatial reality that we see, space that we see as our world, natural and social spaces molded in non-contradictory notions, the otherness of heterotopia represents perceptual meta-disruption. It represents the appearance of different reality which has distorting effects for our perception and understanding of everyday reality – heterotopias are spaces that connect us to the spaces of death, oldness, pain, suffer, heterotopias are spaces that open or close the spaces of other times and cultures.

### Conclusions

The flow of Foucault's thought starts in the significance of space in development, acquiring and production of knowledge and ends in analysis of concrete, material spaces that exist as the product of disciplinary discourses. In Foucault's concept of power/knowledge, space is denoted as the medium of - and the instrument for the practice of power, a power whose strength lies in applied knowledge of space craft. It is the practice of power/knowledge in, through and by space. Foucault insisted that the space is very important category of analysis because it reveals domains in which the power, or some other social category, becomes *visible* (West-Pavlov, 2009: 160).

Reading Foucault we learn about unified social praxis and architecture, unison with specific genesis, functions and goals, a unison that requires specific mode of thinking and analysis in order to be apportioned to its constitutive elements. His analysis of institutions like clinics and prisons reveals the *inseparable existence of social practices and their spatial context*. As Foucault claims: "architecture thus constitutes not only an element of space: I think of it as being inserted in a field of social relationships, into which it introduces a certain number of specific effects" (Foucault in: West-Pavlov, 2009: 154). West-Pavlov is adding that "the relationship between the institution, the architectural space, the discourses which circulate around that institution and the knowledge produced there...is a complex and multi-directional one" (West-Pavlov, 2009: 155).

As far as the *method* of spatialization is concerned, it confirms that generation of scientific knowledge rests on empirical data, and that empirical often means spa-

tial. Space is the spring of empirical knowledge. By defining the objects in their spatial existence, by observation and measuring it becomes possible to provide scientific explanations. The identification of the real, of the empirical is achieved when the cognition adopts inner, spatialized mental imagination which fully corresponds to the outer spatial constitution, to the empirical, spatial reality. In this adoption new knowledge is born. This is yet mainly the case with natural spaces and natural empiric phenomena. Social space, as reading Foucault can reveal, represents more than physical, material and thus empirical reality. We cannot make knowledge about social space through the mere positivist scientific observation and measuring because it includes socio-cultural, symbolic layers that are open to different readings. Heterotopias show that the spatial configurations represent and have immanent cultural, functional, political and symbolic meanings. Without scientific observation, we see space commonly, both social and natural, through these meanings – we see nice, we see shiny, we see dirty, see modern, kitschy or pastoral. Unless it is a heterotopia, we see normal. At the end, in social space we see reflection of our culture, values and society.

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**Милоје Грбин**  
Универзитет Баухаус  
Вајмар

*Сажетак*

## ФУКО И ПРОСТОР

*Аутор износи сумирано анализе Фукоовог разумевања простора које су урадили Веси-Павлов и Зилниц и њу даље елаборацију на даљу тему. Предмет анализе је Фукоова идентификација улоге простора у стварању научног знања, артикулацији и имплементацији моћи/знања и концепцији хетерогеније. Рад се позива на основне ставове Веси-Павлова и Зилница, њу даље иреџед Фукоовог размисања о односу простора и друштва, те доприноси даљим анализама и закључцима.*

Кључне речи: Мишел Фуко, простор, хетерогенија, друштво, друштвена пракса.