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Towards a Philosophy of Containment: Reading Goffman in the 21st Century

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Abstract On the occasion of the re-publication of Erving Goffman's *Relations in Public: Microstudies of the Public Order*, including the remarkable appendix, "Insanity of Place," the authors propose new ways of reading Goffman's work in order to highlight his attention to havoc and containment. Goffman's "Insanity of Place," explores the phenomenon of mental illness by asserting that it is an instance of havoc, a symbolic and practical condition that disrupts the social order of life, and one that must be contained. By situating this essay at the center of Goffman's oeuvre they examine Goffman's "philosophy of containment," and trace its trajectory from *Asylums*, *Stigma* and "The Insanity of Place" to its full crystallization in *Frame Analysis*. The authors offer a generative reading of havoc and containment in order to understand the incoherence, irrationality, unreason, incomprehensibility and unbearableness of social life and the imperative to preserve social order from collapsing, dissolving or imploding. This reading enables us to see the cracks in the social order and understand containment as the constant effort exerted to recuperate transgressions and deviations back into that order. Goffman's analysis becomes an opening into engagements with the work of Judith Butler and Michel Foucault around the notion of the normative order and the issues of containment and transgression. Thinking through Goffman's philosophy of containment as the framework for an analysis of socialization, normalization, and social ordering affords an approach to thinking macro-micro linkages of order and instability that confront both our contemporary society and the discipline of sociology.

Keywords Goffman · Containment · Havoc · Normative order · Foucault · Butler

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"The guardians of positivist dogmatism assigned Goffman to the "lunatic fringe" of sociology, among the eccentrics who shunned the rigors of science and preferred the soft opinion of philosophical meditation or literary description; but he has now become one of the fundamental references for sociologists…" (Pierre Bourdieu 1983).

In the spring of 2010, Erving Goffman's *Relations in Public: Microstudies of the Social Order* was republished after well over two decades of being out of print.[1] This occasion offers an opportunity to revisit the seminal essay "Insanity of Place" that serves as the appendix to that book and to reassess its role in Goffman's thinking and its contribution to contemporary sociology.[2] Goffman's "Insanity of Place," explores the phenomenon of mental illness by asserting that it is an instance of havoc, a symbolic and practical condition that disrupts the social order of life, and one that must be contained. The authors offer a generative reading of havoc and containment; although Goffman illustrates the concepts with commonly recurring micro-problems (a mentally ill relative, a boisterous funeral, a rowdy wedding) he is offering an implicit macro-analysis closely linked to an existential perspective on the human condition. Making explicit this implicit potential of Goffman's *philosophy of containment* enables us to understand the incoherence, irrationality, unreason, incomprehensibility and unbearableness of social life and the imperative to preserve social order from collapsing, dissolving or imploding. This reading enables us to see the cracks in the social order and understand containment as the constant effort exerted to recuperate transgressions and deviations back into that order. Goffman's analysis presents us with the paradoxical observation that "society" can dissolve at any moment and yet it almost always continues to exist in more or less its present form. The authors explore how Goffman conceptualizes this curious tension whose problematic is expressed in the question: How is the normative order as a whole held together when the possibility for havoc, incongruity, and breakdown is present at every turn of interaction?

The authors read "Insanity of Place" as integral to Goffman's theoretical framework and position its contribution in relation to *Asylums*, *Stigma*, and *Frame Analysis*. "Insanity of Place" becomes an opening into engagements with the work of Judith Butler and Michel Foucault on the notion of the normative order and the issues of containment and transgression. Thinking through Goffman's philosophy of containment as the framework for an analysis of socialization, normalization, and social ordering affords an approach to thinking macro-micro

[1] A publishing trail of *Relations in Public: Microstudies of the Social Order* shows that it was originally published in 1971, with a paperback edition in 1972. Penguin continued to reprint it in England, and then Harper Collins continued to reprint the book in the U.S. until at least 1980. As a result, *Relations in Public* has not been readily available since the 1980s. For further publishing details see *Books in Print*.

[2] The original article 'Insanity of Place' appeared in Psychiatry. 1969 Nov, 32(4):357–88. In *Relations in Public*, in the Author's Note, Goffman writes, "The first six chapters deal with a single domain of activity and were written to be published together…The paper placed in the appendix was published separately and is meant to stand on its own. It considerably repeats some of the arguments developed in the text and can be read as an application of them." While the reason behind why Goffman wanted to include a paper that was previously published is beyond the scope of this paper, it is interesting both to note that this journal was probably not familiar reading to his sociological audience, and that the paper was published years before the essays in *Relations in Public*.

linkages of order and instability that confront both our contemporary society and the discipline of sociology.

The Many Faces of Erving Goffman

Before turning to our analysis of Goffman's work, it is necessary to consider some of the many ways that Goffman has been interpreted over the decades. Erving Goffman has been successively read as a crafter of charming vignettes, as a symbolic interactionist (his persistent image in a large slice of pedagogical texts, as documented by Brown (2003) and Carrothers and Benson (2003)), as a neo-Durkheimian (Cahill 1994; Cheal 1988; Collins 1975, 1981a, b, 1988, b; Miller 1982; Rawls 1987), a micro-functionalist (Brown 1977), a structuralist (Gonos 1977; Lanigan 1990), and even as an existentialist (Hacking 2004). Others have interpreted his work as being a precursor to postmodernist theory (Battershill 1990; Langman 1991; MacCannell 1990; Vester 1989) and have seen him as a deconstructionist (Clough 1990), dramaturgist (Brown 2003), and theorist of power (Rogers 1977, 1979; Jenkins 2008a, b, c). Alongside the work of Ditton (1980) and Drew and Wooton (1988), the detailed monographs of Burns (1992) and Manning (1993) in the early 1990s, Chriss (1993, 1995) offered a generous overview of the scholarship and interpretive trajectories that Goffman's work drew to itself until the mid 1990s. Thereafter several volumes appeared that take Goffman's work in still new directions. Smith (1999) collected essays that explore Goffman's sociological legacy, Riggins (1990) compiled essays in a volume that details Goffman's relation to issues in communication, Scheff (2006) developed Goffman's insights into the sociology of emotions, and Lemert and Brananman (1997) offered their own overviews in their respective introductions to *The Goffman Reader*. The four volume *Erving Goffman*, a collection by Gary Alan Fine and Gregory Smith (2000), judiciously and exactingly culls selections from all areas of Goffman scholarship; in both depth and breadth it will remain the definitive commentary collection for decades to come. Most recently Jacobsen (2010) has compiled essays that seek to carry Goffman's ideas into the present in his edited volume *The Contemporary Goffman*. It goes without saying that Goffman's place and the labels by which he is defined in the discipline continue to be a matter of ongoing exegesis and debate.

Of the many issues that sociologists have explored in Goffman's work, the issue of power is the one to which we turn our attention because it is closest to our own focal concerns of havoc and containment. While others have discussed the concept of power in Goffman's work (Burns 1992; Dennis and Martin 2005; Hall 2004; Jenkins 2008a, b, c; Misztal 2001; Rogers 1977, 1979; Scheff 2005), it is in Richard Jenkins's recent article "Erving Goffman: A Major Theorist of Power?" (2008c) that we ground our point of departure. Jenkins emphasizes the concept of power in Goffman's work as one which operates on the means-ends decision making in everyday life. Jenkins defines power as "the capacity of individuals and groups to get things done, to achieve their own ends and/or to support or frustrate the ends of others."(Jenkins 2008c, p. 159). For Jenkins, the exercise of power depends on the availability of resources (which offer different ways and means to achieve ends and

are contextually defined) and the differential access to these resources enjoyed by groups and individuals. Jenkins then proceeds with a close reading of Goffman's essay "The Interaction Order" in order to flesh out the notion of power. In doing so, he considers the ways in which individuals problem-solve in their everyday lives by drawing on resources and the ways in which organizations operate as institutionalized forms of managing resources.

Although our conceptual interests are similar, we offer an alternative reading of power that supplements rather than replaces the way that power is theorized by Jenkins. We follow the work of Burns (1992) and Battershill (1990) who address the issue of power in Goffman's work, but define power in terms of normalization, rationalization and regulation, akin to the way Foucault defines power. Burns argues that:

> What Foucault and Goffman (for here Goffman's sociology is in step with Foucault's history) have attempted to construct is a framework within which it might be possible to identify, observe and record the exercise of power in terms of its third version as hegemony designed for "normalization." Both have done so by concentrating on dissidence and the way it is dealt with. (Burns 1992 p.163–164).

Battershill offers this comparison in his discussion of *Asylums*:

> Goffman's discussion of this reductionism in which persons are reduced to serviceable objects is entirely consistent with Foucault's uncovering of the perpetual operation of public, managerial-oriented knowledge to control the disorganizing forces of sexuality and inefficiency at work, learning or punishment. (Battershill p.178).

Burns and Batterhill agree that the social organization serves as a mode of normalization by which individuals are regulated or disciplined; this mode of normalization in its contemporary form is labeled *gouvernementalité* by Foucault (a term to which we shall return). This definition of power as normalization focuses on the ways in which individuals are pressured to conform to social norms and to adopt the proper interactive competencies required to maintain the social order. The normative order operates, through different techniques, on and in the social interaction among people and punishes or disciplines those who test its limits. By defining power as normalization or the operation of the normative order as a system of social regulation, we can read Goffman with an eye on the everyday interaction through which the social order is maintained. In "Insanity of Place" he makes this theory of power explicit in his discussion of a "philosophy of containment" and the eruption of havoc that it must control.

Drawing this parallel between Goffman and Foucault is not to read Goffman as a Foucaultian or as postmodern precursor, rather it is to put his work in dialogue with differing positions on the notion of the normative order and the issues of containment and transgression. Centralizing "Insanity of Place" in our reading allows us to present an integrative analysis of his thought on havoc and instability, containment and transgression, and stability and uncertainty. We argue that this central set of themes in Goffman's work contributes to understanding contemporary phenomena that sociologists (and human beings) now confront such as terrorism,

failed states, the crash of 2008 and its aftermath, and the set of circumstances sometimes referred to as "the risk society."[3]

The Uncertain Ground of Social Order: Compliance or Chaos

Following Lyotard's interpretation in *The Postmodern Condition*, we argue that Goffman's worldview is founded on *agonism (*Lyotard 1984, p.17). For Goffman, the normative order is not based on transcendental or absolute values. The normative order is sustained or undermined, abided by or transgressed through social interaction, and that very order is created as a product of the historical, bounded and secular world of human beings. Life is a flux of constantly shifting frames, a condition which amounts to a crisis of representation because all of social life is the fabrication of frames. Yet in order to prevent the breakdown of the normative order we must live our lives as if it were natural and taken-for-granted. In this agonistic predicament of life we desire the stability and comprehensibility of everyday life and yet recognize that full intelligibility is impossible. Our options are either to abide by the normative order and thus dissolve the self into the structure of society or to face chaos and havoc that render the world incoherent. Life is a constant agonistic pull between absolute stability and absolute instability.

Durkheim (like all classical sociologists) posits that society is an agonistic product of human beings that impinges on the individual's existence. Goffman emphasizes this Durkheimian agonism in his own theorization of society. In *Relations in Public*, Goffman writes:

> It is strange, and more Durkheimian than it should be, that today, at a time when the individual can get almost everything else off his back, there remains the cross of personal character-the one he bears, albeit lightly, when he is in the presence of others. (Goffman 1971, p.187).

For Goffman, our social lives are guided by the frames that determine social interaction. Character is encompassed in the framework of one's experience; our interactions are guided by the frames enforced upon us, and these frames stay intact through the regulation of character, a process whereby the self becomes less and less

[3] In recent years, a spate of books and articles has been published that draw attention to new forms of risk and uncertainty associated with markets—especially financial markets—terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, failed states, accidents in complex technological systems, mismanaged responses to natural disasters, and the general structure of individualistic modernity. This body of writing includes books by Anthony Giddens (1999) and Ulrich Beck (1992) as well as the popular work of Nassim Taleb (2007). Globalization, accelerated high-volume information flows, individualism, new technologies, neo-liberalism, and larger population sizes are among the causes that authors use to account for greater levels of risk and uncertainty. Not all situations of risk are necessarily situations of extreme uncertainty and havoc, as Taleb and Davidson (2010) point out. They both make a distinction between risk (with known probabilities of outcomes and generally a Gaussian or normal distribution of possibilities) and uncertainty (marked by much "wilder" and less predictable randomness). Higher levels of risk in societies, markets, and technologies may increase the likelihood of sudden and unpredictable swings into havoc. While a detailed discussion of the notion of the risk society and extreme uncertainty (i.e., the transition into havoc or chaos) is beyond the scope of this paper, we emphasize that a sociological understanding of these situations and insight into micro–macro linkages in societal breakdowns is enhanced by the use of Goffman's concept of havoc.

knowable. Character reminds us and others where we stand in relation to many social factors. This realization, in turn, causes us to live up to the character impressed upon us by the expectations of others. Living up to the idea of character regulates our behaviors directly, while individuals with whom we interact impose indirect forms of control through their frames. Consistent and normative action is produced as the individual tries to abide by the character that is expected of him or her by others. One cannot escape this condition, just as one cannot escape socialization, because one cannot escape interaction with other people.

Theorizing society as inherently agonistic leads to a particularly poignant irony: in the end, it is other people that create our agonistic existence; it is they who dictate our behavior. The burden and the responsibility of character come at every moment and every interaction, because we are constantly trapped and forced to socialize with other people. Society, when viewed through this lens, becomes an inescapable web of relations constantly pushing and pulling on one's character. Without self-control, without containment of our emotions, psychological states, and actions, "society" would no longer function. A society without containment is a society (or the multiplicity of situations that comprise a society) of havoc, one that has become unpredictable or unmanageable from the point of view of one or possibly even all participants. Containment is the necessary effort to restore predictability, i.e. order, to a situation and to ensure the stability of society by keeping all those involved in check. Goffman would agree with Sartre's existential conclusion of *No Exit*: Hell is other people. Not simply because they exist, rather because they need to be contained. It is this philosophy of containment which Goffman makes central to his essay "Insanity of Place." For Goffman, this is not an isolated concern, but rather a theme that runs through his corpus.

From *Asylums* to *Stigma*

The topics of compliance, order, transgression, and stigma emerged from Goffman's attention to the construction and deconstruction of the self, the central themes of *Asylums*. Goffman's concept of looping as a process for deconstructing the selves of "mental patients" is a forerunner of his concepts of stigma and containment because the self of the "mental patient" has to be attacked through looping in order to contain the threat to the order of the asylum that the restive patient poses. Goffman begins his description of the deconstruction of selves in *Asylums* by describing the obvious, largely physical mortification that the inmate experiences when he or she enters the total institution—shaving of the head, stripping, humiliation and beatings, degradation, and bodily markings and defilement. This round of mortification, in turn, sets the stage for a more subtle psychological destruction of the self, such as looping. Looping is a striking example of a process in which the selves of others are deconstructed by those with institutional power (the staff) with the goal of preventing the disruption of social order that is inherent in the inmate's effort to defend himself against the assault on his self. Goffman (1961) describes looping as the situation in which:

> An agency that creates a defensive response on the part of the inmate takes this very response as the target of its next attack. The individual finds that his protective response to an assault upon the self is collapsed into the situation; he

> cannot defend himself in the usual way by establishing distance between the mortifying situation and himself … In total institutions spheres of life are desegregated, so that an inmate's conduct in one scene of activity is thrown up to him by staff as a comment or check upon his conduct in another context. A mental patient's effort to present himself in a well-oriented, unantagonistic manner during a diagnostic or treatment conference may be directly embarrassed by evidence introduced concerning his apathy during recreation or bitter comments he made in a letter to a sibling—a letter which the recipient has forwarded to the hospital administrator, to be added to the patient's dossier and brought along to the conference. (Goffman 1961, p. 37)

Similarly, the face-saving reactive expressions that people use in ordinary interaction—sullenness, sotto voce profanity, signs of contempt, irony, and derision—are immediately used as grounds for further punishment. In looping everything the inmate does is held against him or her, including efforts to rescue the self from mortification, to complain about mistreatment, or to express any degree of distance or criticism of the self and the institution. Looping thus exemplifies many aspects of stigmatization that Goffman elaborated a few years later in *Stigma*. Looping is a line of defense in institutional regulation, applied in those instances in which an inmate (in the broadest sense) behaves disruptively in an effort to challenge or revise his/her labeling, degradation, and discrediting. In this way we can see looping in Goffman's framework as a mechanism of containment to discredit an inmate who is seen as making trouble by focusing on alleged abuses of authority or mistreatment.

The concept of stigma eventually merited its own book (*Stigma* 1963b) in Goffman's corpus. Stigma is a socially constructed category used for discrediting action and enforcing a normative order that includes and excludes accordingly. The presence and function of stigmatized categories persists in all societies, but the specific substantive categories of stigmatization change and so do the processes of assigning stigma and discrediting individuals who fall into the stigmatized categories. As it changes over time according to social norms and the collective actions that aim either to maintain the deviance of the stigmatized or to redefine their characteristics as normal or even desirable, stigma is never static. Stigma changes the interaction order as it creates a priori judgments and connotations about the stigmatized groups and these judgments are then brought to bear in face-to-face interaction. When incorporated into the normative order, stigma becomes part of the collective consciousness (what we will see are later to be understood to be collectively shared framing practices). Therefore we are often unknowingly complicit in perpetuating stigma by our participation in the normative order regardless of the intent to stigmatize specific groups or individuals.

In *Relations in Public*, specifically in "The Insanity of Place," Goffman returns to the question of how stigma is attached to behavior by examining how the circle of friends and family make and impose a determination that the ebullient, energetic, outgoing, enterprising, friendly, effervescent, and sociable behavior of an individual reveals him to be mentally ill—to be suffering from bipolar disorder, "acting out," and/or hyperactivity and attention-deficit disorder. Goffman introduces the term "gathering" to identify the interactive setting in which the contextually bound,

historically grounded, socially constructed frames that interpret our experiences become the regulatory mechanisms of society. "Gathering" is an extremely broad category that can encompass peer groups, families, organizations, and the "global village of media audiences"—any collective engaged in regulation—and as we shall see, shortly, in containment and framing.

"The Insanity of Place" and the Notion of Havoc

Institutional looping and the behavior of the gatherings that attempt to suppress deviation from the normative order appear in Goffman's work both as constructs based on empirical observation and as a priori concepts (the line is often deliberately blurry in Goffman's methodology). They are practices that establish order and are activated to contain disruptions of order. Goffman raises a series of questions about what had previously in the history of sociology been formulated as the system of social norms, normative regulation, or social control. What is the relationship of the individual to the system of norms? What forms do personal control, informal control, and formal control take? In *Frame Analysis*, Goffman responds accordingly:

> ….taken together, these means of control provide a very narrow picture of the relation between social norms and social deviations. …these can be as effective as they are not because of the offender's moral concern, but because of his expediential considerations. …what looks like automatic and dependable conformance is to be expected from the actor only over a strictly limited range of costs to him. Further, the norms may be upheld not because failure to comply leads to undesired, unintended complications which the offender was unaware of when first undertaking his offensive action. (Goffman 1971, p. 347–8).

Goffman argues that disruptions to the normative order create (organizational) havoc for everyone. Havoc, however, is a concept that sociology has yet to fully come to terms with and one that requires analysis beyond the concepts of labeling theory and social control. He states:

> It is this havoc that the philosophy of containment must deal with. It is this havoc that psychiatrists have dismally failed to examine and that sociologists ignore when they treat mental illness merely as a labeling process. It is this havoc that we must [explore]. (Goffman 1971, p. 357).

Havoc concerns sociologists because it describes the final breakdown of normative interactions and leads to the dissolution of a particular situation and ultimately the social order. Havoc is contained through removal of havoc-causing individuals from society (i.e. institutionalization of criminals and the mentally ill) but not only by physical removal—above all, by discrediting the havoc-causers and their challenge to existing frames. The containment of havoc is one of the regulatory processes that constitute "society"—it is not only a condition in which individuals are sanctioned for "deviant" behavior.

"Havoc" names the condition in which individuals are not able to be self-governing or self-sufficient in society. Havoc and its containment are potentially present in all social relationships and form the foundation of individuals'

relationships with each other and to organizations and larger gatherings. Thus the pair havoc/containment links micro and macro processes. The result of havoc is the state where there is no longer a code or framework to make sense of one's own experiences, or for making sense of others' or of social activity in general. Goffman writes:

> The self is a code that makes sense out of almost all the individual's activities and provides a basis for organizing them. …..The question as to what it is that is going on is not redundantly answered at every turn but must be constantly ferreted out anew. And life is said to become like a bad dream-for there is no place in possible realities for what is occurring. (Goffman 1971, p.366).

When havoc is generated, consistency and identity are lost by individuals and the gathering, and so is predictability in interaction. As a result, sense-making has to be constantly re-established at every turn because it is impossible for meaning to be stabilized. When this occurs, knowing character and being competent to judge (anything) can become threatened. In Durkheim's terms, havoc is the condition of anomie. Alternatively it can be seen as an existential crisis of the individual extended to the entire social order.

To put this extension to the social in perspective, an excellent contemporary example of extreme havoc and the responses to it would be the events of September 11th. Those events created a national havoc, which lead in turn to new "orders" and modes of social regulation such as the establishment of the Homeland Security Agency, the Patriot Act, the implementation of security procedures at airports, and the mediatized declaration of the war on terror. Another example of havoc and measures to contain it is the financial crisis of the autumn of 2008 in which the Federal Reserve's bank bailout (recently revealed to be international in scope) prevented a complete credit freeze and cascading bank default. Havoc and containment exist at both micro and macro levels, and strategies of containment at the macro-level have repercussions at the micro-level where they influence interaction among individuals, for example between TSA officials and passengers, or mortgage lenders and delinquent borrowers.

The Transition from Breakdowns to Havoc

In "The Insanity of Place" Goffman moves away from "breakdowns," "transgressions," "mistakes" etc.… to consideration of events at the far end of the spectrum of disruption. In the evolution of Goffman's thought, the establishment and maintenance of the normative order is increasingly seen as desperate and precarious. Whereas previously Goffman argued that breakdowns and mistakes were situations in which people would correct behavior through supportive or remedial interchanges, because people are able to control or excuse their behavior, in his later work, havoc is seen as those actions that threaten to bring about the dissolution of the social life itself. The difference between breakdown and havoc is seen in one of Goffman's many examples:

> Thus, at wedding it is not proper for any cluster of individuals to become too serious or to quarrel in any way; obviously this would be out of keeping.

> Should a quarrel start, it must be quickly checked lest it carry the encounter past the range of variation permitted. Similarly, in the case of funeral visits, knots of people not containing any of the immediately bereaved may begin a quiet chat, but find themselves getting gayer and gayer until their interaction becomes out of place and must be brought back to the sober tone of the surroundings. (Goffman 1963a, p.174–175).

A *breakdown* begins as the crowd amplifies the volume of their voices, but they can easily change their behavior and adjust it back to the protocol of the normative order. In *havoc*, individuals have no control over their behavior and openly resist control by others. With havoc, social breakdowns escalate because the individuals causing havoc are no longer in control of themselves and are no longer able to continue their normal relationships. Havoc disrupts the entire normative and social order in the situation and threatens to expand into linked situations and interactions.

From Havoc and Containment to Framing

In "The Insanity of Place" Goffman defines several terms which anticipate his theory of frames in *Frame Analysis* and are important for understanding what takes place during containment. The "virtual self" is constituted by a community's (or gathering's) understanding of the individual. The "acted self" becomes apparent when the defined virtual self is acted out and reinforced by the individual's conduct. The "self" that belongs to any one individual is the combination of the virtual and the acted self as a set of assumptions encoded in the actions of the subject himself. The "person" then is the definition of the individual that is encoded in the action of others. "Personality" or "character" is the patterning and habitual behavior based on all of these assumptions; it is the predictability and reputation of that individual grounded in consistent behavior which allows us to believe that we can assess what that individual is really like (Goffman 1971, p.340).

For Goffman then, the self is ultimately not the inner motivation of the performer, but the interpretation of a performed outward persona. Goffman writes:

> Universal human nature is not a very human thing. By acquiring it, the person becomes a kind of construct, built up not from inner psychic propensities but from moral rules that are impressed upon him from without. (Goffman 1967, p.45).

These terms express the disjuncture between individuals' perceptions of self and others and the others' perceptions of the individuals. All of these terms depend on the vantage point of someone, and each of them is perspectival in terms of who is "framing" whom in a particular way. These terms preview the perspectivalism of *Frame Analysis* and create parallel terms for describing the interaction order as perceived by the different parties involved. They form a micro and macro theory of perception and action to account for the normative order. The breakdown of the normative order occurs when these notions of self, person, and personality are not congruent or shared with all involved in those interactions.

Here we can see how postmodern terms such as fragmentation, disorientation, and relativism can be understood as referring to concrete, empirical facts of social

relations, not abstractions. Without clear consensus and hierarchies defining objective conditions, subjective interpretations of the world without foundational or essential guarantees are potentially causes of havoc. Despite these possibilities, the power of gatherings usually leads to a re-establishment of the status quo that existed prior to its volitional or inadvertent disruption by individuals. In this sense, where there is transgression, there is usually recuperation back into the normative order.

Rethinking Frame Analysis

Frame analysis and the concept of framing offer a decisive turn towards the discursive and mark a new direction in Goffman's work, although they were foreshadowed in his writing on self construction, looping, stigmatization, and havoc. Ultimately the concept of frames enables us to revisit the Durkheimian analysis of objective structures or "social facts"; these facts are revealed to be grounded in frames. The frame—the particular wording of statements or composition of visual images—forces us to think in a particular way and keeps us from thinking in other ways and thus contributes to containment. The frame is a box in which we must think our thoughts. Frames define and organize, and they exclude that which does not make sense:

> Their telling demonstrates the power of our conventional understandings to cope with the bizarre potentials of social life, the furthest reaches of experience. What appears, then, to be a threat to our way of making sense of the world turns out to be an ingeniously selected defense of it. We press these stories to the wind; they keep the world from unsettling us. Goffman 1974 p.14–15.

Goffman in *Frame Analysis* probes the underlying assumptions about everyday life, the assumptions that hold social life together. These assumptions provide the parameters that make the world intelligible. Individuals hold overlapping frames, and their experience of a shared, objective reality is composed through these overlaps that form a pastiche. We piece the fragments of reality, as it is constructed and construed through our framing efforts, into a semi-coherent whole, a collage that functions temporarily and provisionally as a unity, but is always potentially subject to breakdowns and at the limit, to havoc.

Jameson on Frame Analysis: From Individual Experience to the Social Order

In order to understand the significance of "Insanity of Place" in Goffman's framework, and the contribution it makes implicitly and explicitly to sociological theory, we need to read *Frame Analysis* as an elaboration of the earlier work that takes several new turns as it substitutes social organization for individual agency. In this context it may be useful to examine Fredric Jameson's review as our point of departure.

Jameson argues that in *Frame Analysis* Goffman turns from the analysis of specific concrete meanings to the ways in which meanings are established and

ultimately to the nature of social meaning in general. The meanings of everyday life are projections of the structure of the form of experiences in which they are embodied. Jameson argues a semiotic analogy underlies this assertion. Goffman strives to identify the objective structures themselves. These structures are categories that generate larger cultural phenomena, just as grammar provides the template for producing an infinite number of utterances. By identifying the objective structures, Goffman attacks the role and very existence of the subject. Social reality is socially constructed according to the underlying structures, and not created by acts of agents (Jameson 1976, p.119; 120). For Jameson, "this is a sense of anomie quite unlike, but intimately related to, that diagnosed by Durkheim." Jameson argues that a shift has taken place from real space, that of Asylums, to that of signifying space, the space of Frame Analysis. This notion of signifying space can best be seen in "Insanity of Place." As he argues:

> …The semiotic effects, the meaning-construction, of the various "frames" of experience are anchored in the coercive realities of society itself as a concrete historical phenomenon, and the admirable passion breathed by this essay is comparable to that with which Michel Foucault has denounced the various forms of confinement (even though Goffman's indignation, like that of Foucault, ultimately expresses an ethical judgment on the social order rather than a political analysis of it. (Jameson 1976, p.129)

For Jameson *Frame Analysis* constitutes a break from Goffman's other work as it abandons the analysis of potential breakdowns of every interaction construed from the point of view of agentic individuals (the perspective of *Presentation of Self*, *Asylums*, and *Stigma*, but already shifting to gathering and the social order in "The Insanity of Place"); in *Frame Analysis* the focus is on the ways that everyday life is socially organized. According to Jameson, frames are attempts to create abstractions that can account for all social situations:

> This said, there is yet another fundamental contradiction at work in *Frame Analysis*, this time in the very development of its central figure: yet that contradiction may perhaps best be arrived at through a brief characterization of what is strongest, both in Goffman's own semiotic turn and also in the structuralist ideology itself to which it thereby becomes related. This is the polemic joined on the status of the "subject" or of individual consciousness: a debate whose more notorious monuments are Foucault's celebration of the 'end of man' and Althusser's anti-humanism, but which can more soberly be characterized as an inquiry into the degree to which individual consciousness or individual existence may be considered an intelligible field of study in its own right. (Jameson 1976, p.130).

As Jameson points out, Goffman's "semiotic turn" resonated with the structuralist position that undermines the authority and privilege of the subject; Goffman began to emphasize the structure of the social that gives rise to any particular consciousness or individual experience. Extending Jameson's echoes of his later work (Jameson 1991) to Althusser (2001), Baudrillard (1995), and Foucault (1966) in this position, we can see how Goffman's theory of frames is congruent with those postmodern

discourses that construct the subject as the *object of society*, that is the effect of knowledge and discourse, rather than its *author* (also echoing here Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 2009). As object, the individual is defined by the place they occupy in the social organization, a social organization which always precedes them. Goffman eschews the term "social organization" and substitutes the less reifiable term "gatherings." In turn we can understand how discourses produce or rather are constitutive of one's understanding of reality. As Goffman argues:

> Organizational premises are involved, and these are something cognition somehow arrives at, not something cognition creates or generates. Given their understanding of what it is that is going on, individuals fit their actions to this understanding and ordinarily find that the ongoing world supports this fitting. These organizational premises—sustained both in the mind and in activity—I call the frame of the activity. (Goffman 1974, p.247).

Therefore extending this analysis enables us to get beyond a symbolic interactionist reading of Goffman because his focus is on the situation rather than the negotiation of the situation and on the way in which primacy of social meaning is established prior to the situation rather than the way in which individual consciousness is involved in assessing or constructing meaning in the interaction.[4]

Frames as Methods of Social Control and Containment

Frame analysis is closely related to Goffman's "philosophy of containment" and his conceptualization of power, normative order, and social control. A quotation from *Relations in Public* sums up Goffman's approach to social action and social orientation:

> To repeat: the individual does not go about merely going about his business. He goes about constrained to sustain a viable image of himself in the eyes of others. Since local circumstances always will reflect upon him, and since these circumstances will vary unexpectedly and constantly, footwork, or rather self work will be continuously necessary. (Goffman 1971, p.185).

For Goffman, frames are the socially constructed, contextually bound, historically grounded, categories or principles of organization. Frames interpret our experiences and become the regulatory mechanisms of society that are socialized into us—embodied—at the level below consciousness. (This is parallel to Bourdieu's definition of *habitus* as the scheme of perception and appreciation of the world). Frames become the intelligibility structure, in the Durkheiminan sense, through which we negotiate daily life and generate the required responses so that society and the social order may continue on in relatively structured fashion. Frames serve as the collective conscience or collective consciousness in that they are shared and taken for granted.

For Goffman frames are *enabling* in that we are not constantly faced with interpreting moment to moment interaction, as well as *constraining* in that they

[4] For an excellent exegesis of Goffman's epistemological premises, see Javier Trevino's introduction to his edited volume *Goffman's Legacy.*

define, shape, and determine the forms of social interaction and meaning. In this regard, the concept of frames parallels Foucault's notion of power as both productive and repressive. Goffman notes:

> We face the moment-to-moment possibility (warranted in particular cases or not) that our settled sense of what is going on beyond the current social situation or within it may have to begin to be questioned or changed. (Goffman 1981, p. 68).

Frames are social constructions and part and parcel of all social interaction. However, we are not free to frame experiences any way that we want to, since frames are collective social constructions. Frames are like language; we are free to use language to express ourselves, only the language we use is shared and social, not private, and serves as the basis for our collective understanding and communication. Framing is constituted by practices that can support or undermine the social structure; frames are semi-autonomous, not strict practices of social or behavioral reproduction. As Goffman argues

> Most of the social structure most of the time will be little affected by these fleeting contingencies, but how we manage our-selves and are managed during episodes of face-to-face interaction will. A snap-shot view is part of what informs my approach because indeed there is in part a snap-shot character to the way we are lodged in life. (Goffman 1981, p.68).

For Goffman, we utilize language to clarify those moments when frames may be broken or threatened in our shared understanding; in these moments of interaction situations have to be managed, but this does not imply for Goffman that adjustments to definitions in the local context of an immediate situation can be directly linked to macro patterns of social organization (Goffman 1981, p. 68).

Frames simultaneously serve as mechanisms of social regulation and social control, whether personally (self-monitoring), informally (normative social interaction keeping one in alignment), or formally (laws). Frames regulate the individual to undertake the required normative action, whether or not it is something the actor wishes or wants to do or not. Goffman argues:

> With accounts he shows that he himself did not commit the offense, or did it mindlessly, or was not himself at the time, or was under special pressure, or did what any reasonable man would have done under the circumstances. (Goffman 1971, p.350).

Frames prevent people from "letting loose," "being themselves" or acting in any way they choose. Frames regulate the presentation of self so that abiding by the dominant frames makes one less at risk to lose face or be seen as acting inappropriately. Presentation of self, saving face, and the normative order are all ways of defining the underlying situation of what makes frames constraining.

Frames and Symbolic Violence

When we examine frames in relation to Goffman's notion of the self, we see that self is a product of performances (the presentation of self), as well as the product of how

a person's performances of self are "framed" by the audience or people in public in front of whom they are acting. As a result we can see that frames are like Bourdieu's notion of *symbolic power* because frames are not neutral, nor are they applied arbitrarily. The ability to "frame" someone rightly or wrongly, truthfully or salaciously, comes with the ability to impose certain frames upon the world. By extension, people with little power cannot combat these dominant frames or acts of framing applied to them. Frame analysis thus extends Goffman's notion of Stigma by explicating the mechanism and material and symbolic consequences of categorization, especially for those categorized in negative/stigmatizing ways. Goffman refers to the process of framing someone or misrepresenting them as a "Frame Trap." Goffman argues:

> What I want to suggest here is that the world can be arranged (whether by intent or default) so that incorrect views, however induced, are confirmed by each new bit of new evidence or each effort to correct matters so that indeed, the individual finds that he is trapped and nothing can get through. (Goffman 1974, p.480).

For Goffman, a frame trap becomes a way that symbolic power turns into symbolic domination (Bourdieu 1991) and those to whom violence is done, those who are "framed," are unable to combat the dominant categorizations which form the values, hierarchies, and rankings of the social world. Once these frames are legitimated or accepted, they become commonsense and the taken-for-granted definition of social reality. This is not "labeling theory," the linguistic ability of the majority to negatively characterize a minority that is deviating from the dominant norms; rather it is a form of power with consequences for those framed. In this way, frames become the tools that establish and reproduce existing modes of social relations and types of social domination in terms of the ways that people comprehend and act accordingly in the world. As people accept these frames, they come to misrecognize or fail to see the arbitrary and socially constructed character of these classifications and meanings.

The fragmentary, pastiche or collage-like construction of reality through framing practices is closely linked to the formation of a fragmentary, contingent, and continuously performed self. The entire conception of the self is contingent in the sense of being only probabilistic, a theater run of performances to audiences and critics whose responses are always in play, whose applause is never certain. For Goffman, the unfolding of the self is temporally grounded. This conception of the self is postmodern in that life becomes a series of moment to moment interactions with no guarantee that one will preserve face at any moment. The self is contingent and fragmentary:

> To repeat: the individual does not go about merely going about his business. He goes about constrained to sustain a viable image of himself in the eyes of others. Since local circumstances always will reflect upon him, and since these circumstances will vary unexpectedly and constantly, footwork, or rather self work, will be continuously necessary. (Goffman 1971, p. 185).
>
> He need not honor a rule of conduct that applies to him. He need not even provide virtual accounts, apologies, and excuses for his deviations. But at least

> he must be at pains to portray an advocable relationship to the negative judgment of him which results. (Goffman 1971, p. 186)

Accordingly, there is no permanent self on which to reflect because there is no continuous unbroken substratum or foundation of society apart from the flux of gathering, interaction, and framing which "most of the time" leads to fairly predictable and repetitive behaviors. As such, the self itself becomes yet another frame amongst frames without depth or substance beyond its social encounters.

Frames, Gatherings and Identities

Goffman goes so far as to argue in *Behavior in Public Places* that our traditional categories of identity (race, class, gender, age, sexuality) do not hold, as they are essentializing and constraining. We cannot assume that these categories will define us when we enter a situation. For our 21st century Goffman, we are beyond the essentializing categories, beyond fixity, certainty, reliability, the taken-for-granted, "nature" or any form of standpoint theory. Identity is what happens in whatever moment that occurs. We are primarily social:

> More than to family or club, more than to any class or sex, more than to any nation, the individual belongs to gatherings, and he had best show that he is a member in good standing. The ultimate penalty for breaking the rules is harsh. Just as we fill our jails with those who transgress the legal order, so we partly fill our asylums with those who act unsuitably-the first kind of institution being used to protect our lives and property; the second, to protect our gatherings and occasions. (Goffman 1963a, p.248).

Therefore the question is what or which things empirically arise at any particular gathering to shape identities. It is the factors of the gathering, the social interactional factors, not a priori individual factors that are the most important in determining meaning. Belonging to the gathering as foundational allows for the simultaneous notion of the self/identity as constantly in flux and constantly changing in moment-to-moment negotiation. The self and the social order are entirely contingent. (In an extreme reading, we could argue that there are social occasions, gatherings, and frames expressed in interactions or physical objects—and everything else is epiphenomenal to that).

Social Order, Disruption, and Containment: Goffman, Butler, and Foucault

Goffman's philosophy of containment becomes an opening into engagements with the work of Judith Butler and Michel Foucault around the notion of the normative order and the issues of containment and transgression. All three thinkers share an affinity for theorizing the social order and the threats, disruptions, or moments of havoc that may disrupt that order. Putting Goffman into dialogue with Butler and Foucault by examining the concepts of transgression/subversion and *governmentality* in relationship to havoc and containment offers an opportunity to see how his philosophy of containment is a counterpoint to their concerns.

Goffman and Butler: Body, Performance, and Transgression/Resistance

Goffman's interest in the notion of havoc as a form of resistance or transgression against the normative order overlaps with trends in feminist thought, most strongly exemplified in the work of Judith Butler. Key overlapping insights in the work of Goffman and Butler include attention to the body, performance, resistance, power, and a critique of societal practices as constructers and arbiters of the normal. Both Goffman and feminist theorists (as well as Foucault) gave increasing attention to schemas of categorization which discipline, normalize and regulate bodies. For Butler and other feminist theorists, as for Goffman and Foucault, interaction or the micro-physics of power regulate the movement of bodies. Power constructs and links the categories of sexuality and gender (Butler 1990, 1993). Framing (or discourse) brings into being an embodiment, an actual embodied, material state, as Goffman painstakingly documents with hundreds of images in *Gender Advertisements* (1979). These advertisements (and related images and frames) create "the feminine" and "women" as a category. From Butler's perspective, this construction of the sexual/gender categories as defining the very modes of identity and subjectivity makes them "real" in their effects. This materiality takes us beyond consideration of frames as categories of classification which make the world intelligible into the realm of frames as discursive producers of the very objects that they make intelligible. In this way we can see the interconnections between Goffman and Butler's thought about in the ways in which frames become regulatory in their containment, violent in their imposition of categories, and productive as discourses within which identities emerge.

Both Goffman and Butler place performance at the center of processes of identity construction. Butler sees gender as performance. It is "a stylized repetition of acts." One could say that gender is an act, and its performative quality is in keeping with Goffman's view of every aspect of the self in *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. On the one hand, gender is an embodied practice. We hold our bodies in a certain way, we have certain facial expressions, we gesture in one way and not another, and we dress our bodies "appropriately." Gender is "styles of the flesh" (Butler 1990, p. 139), stylized acts that are repetitively performed by bodies and inscribed on bodies. Like the violence that frames impose, Butler explores how these dispositions become internalized to the point where how a person feels, acts, and expresses him/herself sexually is the articulation of a coherent stable notion of gender linked to hegemonic heterosexuality. In this way we perform or act out gender according to rules that make a practice normative.

As in Goffman's dramaturgical model of the self, gender performance is judged as credible or non-credible. Non-credible performances include a large range of transgressive acts such as drag, tomboyish behavior, and stereotypical homosexual mannerisms. These acts are seen as unnatural, and they fail (or refuse) to seamlessly lock together sex, gender, and sexual orientation. Transgression involves rendering incredible that which is supposed to be credible; the ludicrous, unsettling, and mismatched acts put the entire understanding of gender as natural into question. Sometimes transgression may be recuperated by placing these acts into the category of the carnivalesque. For Halloween or Mardi Gras, it is ok for a man to wear a dress—in fact, his funny appearance reaffirms that this style is not appropriate for men. It is hard to draw the lines

that distinguish disruption that is merely carnivalesque from transgression and transgression from havoc. At what point does a disruption become really transgressive, going beyond play and carnival performance; and at what point does it become havoc that overwhelms and terminates the viability of the gathering?

Ultimately, gender performance is linked to macro power differences. The naturalization of gender—its correct performance and the way the correct performance conceals the performed and "unnatural" stylization—sustain masculine dominance and compulsory heterosexuality. Because convincing gender performance makes us feel that gender (and its link to sex category) is to be taken for granted, it "takes gender arrangements off the agenda" of reflection, discussion, contestation, and possible collective action. By showing how the dualism man/woman and its mapping to the pair dominant/subaltern is created in our speech, discourses, thoughts, practices, and performances, Butler seeks to undermine these structured oppositions. Butler views this as political in that the transgression of identity is a form of politicizing the very frames through which identity is articulated (2004 p.148). It should be noted that in Goffman's consideration of havoc and Butler's notion of transgression are both are the extreme case and not the normative orientation of either of their frameworks. Transgression, intentional or unintentional, like havoc disrupts the normative order, but it simultaneously reinscribes that normative order. Transgression is always met by containment. The extreme cases show us the normative order as (a) arbitrary in that it can be other than it is, and (b) as a social construction and non-natural. The transgression or subversion of identity shows us the normative order at work and how that order is always open to transgression.

The concept of resistance is another major area of overlap of Goffman's work and feminist theory. Where there is power there is resistance; where there is normality, deviance will always push back against it. Butler utilizes Foucault's notion of power/resistance to pinpoint specific aspects of gender and sexuality performances and their transgressions. Transgression is the extreme case, and like havoc for Goffman there are no remedial or supportive rituals to correct the infraction. But the play of power and resistance had already been revealed by Goffman's analysis of the underlife of the asylum. Goffman's concept of havoc, like Butler's concept of transgression shows us the arbitrary, not natural, and socially constructed aspect of social life. By engaging the concepts of transgression/subversion and havoc, we can see a picture of social life that can be broken, and that there are actors looking/capable of doing so whether intentional or not. However, this case of transgression/subversion cannot be normative itself; a world of constant transgression would be no world at all. Here Butler's philosophical concerns about the ontology of bodies, and her project of undermining the heterosexual hegemony of that ontology, runs into the sociological reality of Goffman's neo-Durkheimian perspective. As Goffman's vigilant sociological eye directs us to consider, the very notion of transgression presupposes a social world established on the emphasis of consensus of what makes social life possible through our interactions.

Goffman and Foucault: Containment, Power, and the Normative Order

Goffman's work on the containment of havoc and the embedding of normative regulation in interaction leads directly into an analysis of power that closely parallels

Foucault's conceptualization of power and resistance at the capillary level. Foucault was inclined to deny this convergence, perhaps finding Goffman's work to be too empirical. When asked about the similarities between their work, Foucault replied:

> This kind of problem I write about is not a new problem. It is not my own invention. One thing struck me in the American review of my books, particularly the review of my book on prisons. They say I am trying to do the same thing as Erving Goffman in his work on asylums—that I try to do the same thing but not as well. I am not a social scientist. I don't want to do the same thing. His problem is the way a certain type of institution works, the total institution-the asylum, the school, the prison. My problem is to show and analyze the way in which a set of power techniques is related to forms, political forms like states, or social forms. Goffman's problem is the institution itself. My problem is the rationalization of the management of the individual. My own work is not a history of institutions or a history of ideas, but the history of rationality as it works in institutions and in the behavior of people. (cited in Dillon 1980, p.4)

While Foucault may deny their mutual endeavors, on disciplinary or methodological grounds, his contention obscures rather than illuminates Goffman's project. A close reading of Goffman's work reveals how roles, practices, and rituals of interaction form a disciplinary matrix of both individuation and totalization of social relations that correspond to Foucault's concepts of power and knowledge, disciplinary power, and power exercised at the micro- or capillary level. For Goffman as for Foucault, the normative order is a process of subjugation, social control, and resistance, all in constant flux within everyday life.

Hacking (2004) has already identified the many obvious connections between Foucault and Goffman that include interest in discourses, looping, mental illness, asylums, and madness and its institutions, as well as parallel conceptualizations of the Panopticon effect. Goffman's frame analysis can be used to understand processes of ideological control that Foucault terms bio-power and discourse. Hacking assimilates Goffman's looping to the Panopticon effect; both processes involve multi-layered surveillance, in which responses to monitoring become themselves the target of a further layer of assessment, eventually producing intense self-monitoring. Hacking points out the similarity between the Panopticon effect and the presentation of self as well; the self-performance is calculated and constantly adjusted to signals from the audience or even from an imagined or presumed audience in order to make it more flawless and convincing. Role play, as Goffman views it, is the result of normative regulation, and thus it is akin to the death of the subject, that is the formation of a virtually empty self with limited agency. Both Goffman and Foucault reveal the micro-physics of power in which all specific local interactions take place within, are governed by and in turn constantly reproduce systems of domination (Foucault 1979, 1980a, b).

Extending Hacking's comparisons, we argue that the normative order for Goffman operates in the same way that bio-power does for Foucault. In each case, both are arguing for a model of "socialization" not as an end result, but rather as a constant, fluid, ongoing process. For both thinkers this process is active and dynamic, a matrix of constantly re-inscribing and regulating practices by which society operates and is held together. For a number of reasons, this approach is not

"totalizing" as the term is used by postmodern critics. Construction and regulation are on-going processes and they are never complete. Neither theorist posits evolution, progress, or *telos* in these processes. For both Foucault and Goffman, where there is power, there is always resistance. Just as Durkheim argued for the necessity of crime because lawfulness and transgression construct each other, both Foucault and Goffman, in so far as they are neo-Durkheimians, assert that there will always be transgression, deviance and violation. We can see the analysis of this ongoing power-resistance and order-transgression dynamic in Goffman's work in his notions of "secondary adjustments," above all in *Asylums* where he analyzes how inmates and patients conceal intentions and act subversively in order to regain a sense of self and resist being socialized into complete identification with the institution. Finally, the totalizing potential of the paradigm is held in check by attention to contingency and unpredictable disruption (which Goffman terms "havoc"), as well as resistance.

Goffman observed techniques of power in the construction and deconstruction of the self (in *Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* and *Asylums*, 1959), the effects of normative regulation and resistance to it in *Stigma*, the imposition of frames, and finally, in his later works on havoc, the possibilities for disintegration in normative regulation and social control. Power is always met by resistance, and the two are inseparably bonded into a never-ending game diffused into all interactions and institutions in which resistance constantly resurfaces as the "underlife" of the institution (Dawe 1973). Goffman moves from a focus on power and social control exercised on the body and resisted in the underlife of institutions to a more discursive conceptualization based on framing (in language games and the media) as a practice of symbolic power.

The combination of the micro-shift (to what Foucault called the capillary level of power), the discursive turn to framing, media, and language games, and attention to resistance mark Goffman's work as a decisive milestone on the road to postmodern theories. So does his early announcement of the death of the subject, or more accurately, its dissolution, expressed in the pairing that became so typical of postmodern writing: an apparently intense interest in self, agency and subjectivism that masks the death of the subject. Goffman provides a shift from the structural-functional to the micro-interactive level of analysis, thereby "unpacking" reified structural concepts that in the post-World War II period had formed the basis for understanding Durkheim's thought. These structural formulations, as well as Durkheim's concept of collective conscience/consciousness, are reconfigured by Goffman into a new set of terms such as interaction, framing, and practice. This rereading reconfigures Goffman's theoretical framework from one which emphasizes consensus forming, mutual meaning, and what makes social life possible through our interactions, to one which focuses instead on the fragility of the social order and the mechanisms through which the social order is secured.

Containment and *Governmentality*

The theme of security, as a mode of containment, is yet another intersection of interest between Goffman and Foucault. One aspect of Foucault's late work was to explore the different modes of *governmentality* or governmental rationality. The term

refers to the practices of government or governing, and not only to the formal institutions of the state. The neologism is a term that combines *government* and *mentality*, and refers to contemporary mechanisms of governing. Governing is now less likely to make use of the objectifying power that turns bodies into docile objects, but rather turns to subjectivitizing power that constructs individuals capable of choice and action. Governmentality is a process of turning individuals into active subjects. Governmentality is a form of rationality which seeks to align personal or individual choices with governmental goals. Through this new mode of conceptualizing and acting in the world, citizens take on an active role in their own subjectification by their own complicity. Governmental rationality therefore simultaneously totalizes and individuates. Foucault's analysis connects a particular mode of rationality to the specific modes of securing, observing, monitoring, shaping, and controlling individuals. Thus it is not focused on the state, but rather on all particular practices of governing locally in multiple and local sites, such as the family, school, places of worship, and all other points of socialization, as well as social regulation. For Foucault, *governmentality* as a set of practices has "population" as its target of scrutiny, political economy as its major form of knowledge, and apparatuses of security as the central instrument of social regulation.

At the heart of Foucault's argument of *governmentality* is the development of governing authorities to promote security and prosperity. Rather than secure complete control, the authorities whose mechanism of rule is *governmentality* govern the population by promoting the well being of the subjects in both political and economic life. Foucault argues that the governmentalized state is one which emerges alongside new objects of governance, such as the population, the economy, and new knowledges and modes of understanding them, specifically the social sciences. This governmental rationality is individualizing and totalizing as it seeks to govern both individuals and populations of a society.

The main technique in this regulation is security, which Foucault sees as a form of governmental rationality based on calculations of the possible and the probable—and here we can see its convergence with containment, that is, with practices designed to eliminate unpredictability in interactions and by extension, in any situation. The logic of security is not purely functional in stabilizing all aspects of society and maintaining stasis: rather, security structures government as an active practice of problematization. Through problematizing the population, new techniques of management emerge to calculate the strength of the state in order to promote the wealth and efficiency of its internal organization.

By engaging the work of Foucault, we can see how Goffman's philosophy of containment offers an empirical response to Foucault's more abstract logic of social regulation. By opening up Goffman's philosophy of containment we can see how an empirically grounded notion of havoc, as unpredictability and uncertainty, is a possibility at every turn. Where Foucault's notion of security seems to hold as a mode of theorizing how the state should run, Goffman's philosophy of containment provides a way of grasping how the social is lived. Social life is always unpredictable, from unintentional behaviors to strategic attempts to subvert the normative order. While Foucault's theorizing helps us grasp the trajectory of social development through new modes of knowledge and the ability to problematize the population as such, Goffman's sociological framing provides us with the ability to

problematize everyday social life as a constant and unending threat to social stability. Engaging the two figures offers us complementary rather than cancelling visions of society. Foucault (as he claims) analyzes power techniques related to social or political forms, showing the rationalization of the management of the individual within society. He focuses on the normalization of power that embeds itself in all aspects of society, providing the very logic upon which society rests. Goffman, on the other hand, theorizes the possibilities of breaches in the social order and the constant effort necessary to contain those violations. Through Goffman's framework we can begin not from the logic of regulation, but from the need for regulation, not from the logic of security, but from the need for security because the normative order always has the possibility for havoc and breakdown at every turn of interaction.

Conclusion

Goffman's main body of work was written when existentialism was a vital part of the intellectual landscape. His analysis of havoc as an omnipresent possibility resonated with the edgy appeals of existentialism and the icon of the hipster, who welcomes the unpredictable. Gary Marx perceptively notes this affinity between Goffman's thought and existentialism (".. his was a hip, existential, cool…style…" 1984: 653), and Hacking develops the point in greater detail (2004). In our day, we are more inclined to link Goffman's insights into the fragility of the social order to deconstructionist and postmodern thought as well as to popular concepts such as the "risk society" and "transition into chaos."

By rethinking Goffman's essay "Insanity of Place" in light of his body of work and that of contemporary theorists we can recognize the value of Goffman's philosophy of containment, not only in his own work, but for sociology more generally. Goffman's insights into the fragility of our taken-for-granted social order and our ongoing need to recognize that fragility and prevent its fracturing offer up a theoretical framework rich with future sociological applications.

Goffman's framework allows us to address macro concerns engaged by postmodernist thinkers that resist any totalizing social system, by accounting for the ways that society is neither a functional whole nor a fragmented assortment of experiences. By rereading his position in *Frame Analysis* in relation to havoc and containment, we can see how frames for Goffman serve as overlapping networks of meaning and shared references that allow for a pluralistic perspective of empirical observations of gatherings and interactions. Goffman provides us with a way to explore how the social order is a normalizing, regulating, rationalizing matrix of processes that serves to organize human interaction. In doing so, he simultaneously allows for breaches and disruptions to that matrix by introducing havoc as the unpredictability of social transgressions. This tension, at the heart of Goffman's philosophy of containment, can be seen across society, and in the constant necessity of society, as normalizing order, as institutions, as collections of actors, to manage, predict, problematize and account for social stability. Thinking through Goffman's philosophy of containment as socialization, normalization, and social ordering affords an approach to thinking macro-micro linkages, in terms of their reciprocal

relations as order/instability that confront the discipline of Sociology as we move into the next decade.

Goffman's philosophy of containment, while sharing much in common with the work of Foucault's concepts of power and *gouvernementalité*, departs in its sociological applicability. In a post-9/11 world, Goffman's thinking becomes ever more relevant as we move forward as a discipline. Notions of security, in terms of our geographical territory as a nation, to the people that populate that land, and the constant set of threats that challenge our national identity and well being are now at the forefront of our new world order. To think of these threats as havoc, and their containment in the social order offers us a way to think the macro notion of social order, while making empirically specific assessments in our management of them. New modes of calculation and predictability have emerged in order to confront these uncertainties and manifest themselves in institutions such as Homeland Security, and in the everyday practices of transportation and travel. What can be broadly conceptualized as "risk" to society as a macro problem, becomes a micro-concern for example, in the application to individual bodies in airports (what objects you can travel with, how your person is searched in security lines, how your identity information is shared with government agencies as you are "checked" through, the management of your information in a database that tracks your point of departure and arrival). Applying Goffman's philosophy of containment to issues of security and terrorism, and the modes of normalizing and regulating bodies within that territory, forces us to rethink how our social order in a post 9–11 era is much less certain than we previously believed.

Goffman's philosophy of containment can reach across other broad areas of our discipline, such as economics, politics, and the environment. The collapse of financial institutions in the crisis of 2008 and the intervention of the Federal Reserve to "contain" the chaos in credit markets offer an example, as do countries' efforts to prevent illegal immigration, conflict with and within failed states in which territory is held by warlords and religious armies, and government response to the social effects of natural and human-made disasters including Katrina, the BP leak, the flooding in Pakistan, and earthquakes in Haiti, Chile, China, and Pakistan. The gatherings are national and global, and the disruptions are considerably larger than boisterous behavior at a wedding or an outburst from a mentally disordered relative, but the concepts of havoc and containment apply to the macro as well as the micro. The possibility that stability and order can collapse into disorder gives an edge to existence, a condition that is partially captured by the term "risk society"—but only partially so, because the notion of risk includes calculable probabilities and constrained scatter whereas havoc includes the unforeseen and unforeseeable (Davidson 2010; Taleb 2007; Beck 1992).

Goffman's philosophy of containment allows us to think simultaneously about the occurrence of havoc, macro problems, meso level practices of institutions and the state, and micro practices of control that are all linked to each other in all societies and in particularly striking new forms in postmodern societies. As sociologists we should re-read and re-think "Insanity of Place" in order to understand his philosophy of containment as the normalizing and regulating of the social order and to recognize that havoc may disrupt that order at any moment. These twin insights challenge us as sociologists and human beings to confront and understand a constantly changing social world and a social order that is always escaping complete control.

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