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## **Whose Body, What Choice?**

### **Exploring Formations of Body Commodification through a Foucauldian Framework**

Nobody is the same, yet every body is similar. Bodies, particularly those of humans, fit into communities which regulate their social conduct. There have always been many ways to utilise bodies within power structures. However, these methods have changed over time. Where older forms of body commodification aim to control bodies for their external benefits, newer forms aim to make the recipient internalise the intended methods of control as natural. In this essay I situate my argument within a historical context to compare older versions of social control of bodies to newer, more elaborate methods. For this, I will be analysing different works which portray various examples of controlling bodies so I can prove how body commodification has changed over time, alongside alterations within Western power structures. The results of my findings exhibit a shift of how bodies can most subtly be controlled within a community. The focus moves from external control to internal persuasion: newer forms of body regulation attempt to have their ideologies internalised. Individual perspectives are replaced with systematic beliefs to reproduce popular ideologies without consistent interference from power structures. I argue that perspective indicates how bodies are displayed by showing a reflective representation of its user. This exhibits the level of internalisation that an individual holds towards their system of social control. The internalisation of outside perspectives is not reflective of an individual's personal needs but rather the demands of the exterior community. In turn, this shift towards internalised control has changed the methods of body commodification within communities.

Internalised body commodification serves as a newer method of social control which combines a productive physical body with a compliant belief system; it does not merely constitute control of the body, but it also affects one's own perspective. Therefore, showing individual perspectives is a direct representation of someone's interior and their understanding of the social conduct of their body. Moreover, it acts as a reflection as to how social regulations impede them as individuals. Newer methods of social control aim to remove the agencies of individuals by persuading them to internalise a perspective which benefits the power structure. However, the results of these persuasions vary. The works that I have chosen for my analysis provide various examples of how old and new forms of social control differ in their perspectives. I centre my argument around three different works: John Cleland's *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* (1749), Jonathan Swift's *A Modest Proposal* (1729), and Harriet Jacobs' *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861). These works embody differing uses of perspective that structure the control of the characters in various ways. The formations of body commodification differ between works depending on the compliance of perspective – I am analysing the relationship between the power structures and how they intend to commodify bodies. For this, I will be looking at how these works target the individual perspectives of the characters as subjects for change. The objective of this paper is to examine older and newer formations of body commodification and display their methods of control. It is the identity of being seen as an individual with a unique perspective around which I compose my paper. I differentiate *Memoirs* and *A Modest Proposal* as utilising newer methods of body commodification, and *Incidents* as persisting with an older form.

I will be establishing my argument around a theoretical framework which incorporates various works by Michel Foucault. His theories will strengthen my argument by providing foundational explanations of how perspective is integral to body commodification within my analyses. Although Foucault has published many works over his career, I will be

focusing my study on his theories which most closely examine the relationship of the body politic; or, as he describes it: biopolitics. This term was coined in his essay “Right of Death and Power Over Life” from his book *The History of Sexuality* (vol. 1, 1978). Foucault situates this term within a historical context beginning in the eighteenth century, where “there was an explosion of numerous and diverse techniques for achieving the subjugation of bodies and the control of populations” (*History* 140). Foucault’s theories are foundational to my argument because they describe how bodies can be commodified in the convergence of interior and exterior methods of control. Although bodies have always been integral to a functioning power structure, Foucault links the perception of bodies within societies to larger regulations of social control. Much as power structures have changed over time, so have the commodification of bodies. He examines the productivity of the physical alongside the persuasive shifts of perspectives. Throughout the 17th and 18th centuries, the focus of power shifted. It was no longer anchored in the threat of death, but rather in the gift of life: “a power bent on generating forces, making them grow, and ordering them, rather than one dedicated to impeding them, making them submit, or destroying them” (Foucault, *History* 136). Biopolitics does not function as a weapon of destruction, but rather as the opposite: it thrives on life and its ability to reproduce popular ideologies. Therefore, biopolitics ‘gives’ life by anchoring power within the reproductions of the human body, so there must be a transition in how they can be commodified for this new role of bodies within power structures. Body commodification serves as a key example of how biopolitics transforms the role of human bodies within a power structure.

Moreover, biopolitics is an expansive theory which can be applied to a variety of power systems. Foucault continues to assert its existence as a technique of power which is: present at every level of the social body and utilized by very diverse institutions ... They also acted as factors of segregation and social hierarchization, exerting their

influence on the respective forces of both these movements, guaranteeing relations of domination and effects of hegemony (*History* 141).

This is not a narrow theoretical framework. Foucault's theories outwardly embrace the vast levels of the relationship between bodies and power. This will suitably apply to the analysis of my chosen works: a work of fiction, a satirical proposal, and an autobiography. These works do not seem to be very alike at first glance, but they all display various examples of body commodification and different levels of its internalisation. These examples in turn provide a larger representation of the power systems in effect which display older or newer methods of control. In my analysis, they all prove to show similarities within their power structures' attempts to commodify bodies. However, they also display differences through the varied uses of internalised body commodification. Foucault's theories will serve as a guide to explain how they relate to one another through their perspectives. These theories will also help differentiate between older and newer formations of power structures based on the methods used to control bodies. This, in turn, will strengthen my comparisons of body commodification between my works.

I begin my analysis with Cleland's *Memoirs*. I argue that the novel's protagonist, Fanny Hill, is the most prominent example of a successful integration of identity into a biopolitical mindset. Throughout the course of the novel she internalises the public demands of her society as her own. This is seen through the commodification of her mind and body – Fanny's attention to the physical experiences of her body is also representative of her state of mind. I will be looking at the relationship between Fanny's identity and her physical body through Foucault's theories on the inextricable link of power and pleasure. This shows how Fanny's personal desires change as she climbs the class structure and how her almost exclusive attention to the physical state of her body affects her commodification as beneficial

to the biopolitical power structure. Fanny's internalisation of her power structure's demands serves as a perfect example of how biopolitics affects identity within body commodification.

I extend my biopolitical framework with Swift's *A Modest Proposal*. Although it is the oldest of my chosen works, it displays many examples of modern social subjugation through biopolitics. This is seen through the Speaker's use of perspective and how this targets the optimisation of life. The targeted subjects, which are the poor Irish bodies affected by famine, are not given a perspective nor voice in the matter of their commodification: they have no agency. The Speaker separates these people from the rest of the public in an attempt to display their criminalization of death. In this way, the demands of the public fully outweigh the needs of the poor Irish bodies as their objectification becomes the priority in their existence.

I conclude my analysis with an examination of Jacobs' *Incidents*. This memoir shifts from the biopolitics which I will be discussing in my first two chosen works by closely examining its older power structure. For this, I will be situating Jacobs' perspective as actively opposing the power structure which attempts to commodify her body against her will. Jacobs' reflection upon the forces which confine her serve as a persuasive recognition of the problems within the power structure. Even though the methods of control within her enslavement are not as subtle when compared to my other two chosen works, Jacobs still reveals the layers of concealed power within her community. Her perspective is influential as an example of resistance through reflection with considerate commentary to realistically apply for future change.

The protagonist of *Memoirs*, Fanny Hill, shows a broad level of physical freedom with her body through the choices she makes throughout her career in prostitution. Throughout the novel Fanny displays an attentive and personal relationship with her body.

These observations are often distinguished in relation to pleasurable sensations. Where Fanny can describe her body as “being so deliciously plugged and choak’d [sic] up” (Cleland 124), it can also be described as “all so red, raw, and in fine, terribly clawed off; but so far from feeling any pleasure in it” (Cleland 150). Fanny relates the physical senses of her body to the pleasure which she feels inside to create a direct correlation between her mind and body; any aspect of reader identification or voyeurism must associate itself with how Fanny is feeling. The state of her body and the monetary physical advantages of Fanny’s career are represented at her discretion. In this first-person perspective, she has the agency to decide how her body is represented. However, Fanny misconstrues her power as extending from the pleasure she is able to evoke in herself and others, as if commodifying her body primarily benefits herself. Tim Dean notes that “to intensify pleasure to the point where it overwhelms the self” (478) is actually antithetical to self-empowerment because it makes you lose your own identity. Fanny believes she is empowering her body through its commodification but she is actually losing sight of who she is as an individual. She is seeing the world in terms of physical pleasure rather than individual perspective.

This false view of empowerment leads Fanny to internalise a fixation with the class structure. This obsession builds throughout the story once she realises her career can change her public image. Fanny’s belief that she is “not at all out of figure to pass for a modest girl. I had neither the feathers, nor the fumet of a taudry town-miss” (Cleland 127) shows how she values others’ perceptions of her: she wants to look rich. However, at the end of *Memoirs*, when Fanny retires from prostitution and marries her husband, Charles, she reflects upon prostitution as a vice, even though it is what made her rich: “[i]f I have painted Vice in all its gayest colours, if I have decked it with flowers, it has been solely in order to make the worthier, the solemn sacrifice of it to Virtue” (Cleland 187-188). Fanny retells her stories of prostitution with colourful and elaborate language, yet condemns its practices once she

retires. The aforementioned “Vice” and “Virtue” she speaks of are in accordance with the standards of the larger community. Fanny’s “tail-piece of morality” (Cleland 187) reflects a desire to move on from her body commodification, as if she has not already sold her identity to the class structure. Within this, she attempts to separate power and pleasure from each other, as if they are not inextricably linked together. Foucault states that “power anchored the pleasure it uncovered” (*History* 45). Where Fanny could have used the power she receives in her pleasure to identify her individual aspirations, she instead uses it to commodify her body in a way that benefits the larger power structure.

Power within *Memoirs* is misinterpreted by Fanny as a state of being noticeably virtuous to the public. However, this is power which is more beneficial to the class system than to Fanny herself. Fanny does not “escape” body commodification by the end of the story. Rather, she becomes more entangled with it. Foucault argues that:

the body is conceived not as a property, but as a strategy; ... this power is exercised rather than possessed; it is not the ‘privilege’, acquired or preserved, of the dominant class, but the overall effect of its strategic positions – an effect that is manifested and sometimes extended by the position of those who are dominated (*Discipline* 26-27).

Biopolitics does not exempt bodies from the social order. They will continuously be used in one transactional way or another. Fanny’s tail-piece reflection acts as the ultimate subservience into biopolitics because she has been persuaded to believe that she has escaped the cruel power structure which she looks down upon.

Fanny internalises the external values of the class structure as her own through this transformation of subordination. An escape from the physical commodification of prostitution does not necessarily equate to a natural gain of power. Dean notes that “[p]leasure’s opacity represents both a problem and, from a different vantage, a tactical solution” (480). Fanny has ignored the ways in which her perspective has been influenced to

believe she is no longer subjected by focusing solely on the physical, pleasurable effects of her body. In actuality, her position within the class structure has been internalised as natural: she is buying into her commodification. Her reflection shows a false deviation from the system when in actuality she is still serving the same power structure. Fanny has more freedom at the beginning of her story than at the end, because she cannot perceive her body beyond its physical state of being. Fanny loses her agency and free-will through ignoring her individual desires and instead succumbing to the demands of her power structure. At the end her values do not reflect her personal needs, but rather those of her larger community. Fanny is subjecting herself to a different form of body commodification – one where she unknowingly serves the values of the power structure rather than her own. Subjection is not dependent on class levels, but rather the strategic position of how you perceive yourself within it.

*A Modest Proposal* similarly utilises a newer method of social subjection. The proposal, which suggests a cannibalistic solution to the 18th century Irish famines, directly targets the bodies of the lower-class. Since *A Modest Proposal* is a work of satire, I will be focusing on the logical arguments that the speaker makes about commodification rather than its moral complications. Although it is a work of satire, it reflects very prominent ideas about the state of colonised, Irish bodies and how they fit into the power structure. The sole perspective of *A Modest Proposal*'s Speaker diminishes the agency of poor Irish bodies by classifying them as expendable and separating them from the richer groups of people. The objective of making these bodies “beneficial to the publick [sic]” (Swift 3) suggests that they are not members of the public and therefore do not fit into the power structure. The Speaker is separated from the first-person sensory perception and attempts to exclude a connection between the demands of the poor Irish bodies and those of the rest of the public. Unlike in



*Memoirs*, these bodies are not given a voice and are granted little perspective within the proposal: their identities are removed. It is impossible to identify with the experiences of the poor people and their objectification because their individual perspectives are not considered.

Instead, the Speaker attempts to influence the position of these bodies as burdening. The Speaker condemns begging because it is a displeasure for him to see, where “[i]t is a melancholly Object to those, who walk through this great Town or travel in the Country, when they see the *Streets*, the *Roads*, and *Cabbin-Doors*, crowded with Beggars” (Swift 5). These Beggars are abject to the Speaker, who attempts to objectify them to deny them their humanity so they can be treated as economic goods. The Speaker does not grant the poor people a perspective because he doesn’t want to treat them as human beings. Rather, they are a problem that must be fixed. This is an objectification of others’ bodies as a method of control. The design of the proposal effectively argues that the needs of the poor Irish bodies are unimportant because they do not serve the demands of the rest of the public. Therefore, the Speaker attempts to convince the audience that the internal desires of these bodies are not even worthy of mention. The sole focus is on how the bodies will benefit the power structure: “they shall, on the Contrary, contribute to the Feeding, and partly to the Cloathing [sic] of many Thousands” (Swift 7). For the Speaker, the only noteworthy perspective is one which serves the needs of the power structure. If the poor Irish bodies could be objectified into economic devices it would be more optimal for the power structure. This fully excludes the agency of the poor Irish bodies within the Speaker’s proposal. Both the bodies’ physical and mental states are property of the power structure because they must have a place within its optimisation.

*A Modest Proposal*’s Speaker justifies the commodification of poor Irish bodies by portraying them as criminals. They are ‘impractical’ in their current state and burden the higher-class Irish public by being a constant reminder of how the current political power

structure is not working. Foucault argues that the body's "constitution as labour power is possible only if it is caught up in a system of subjection ... the body becomes a useful force only if it is both a productive body and a subjected body" (*Discipline* 26). By positioning his argument with the poor bodies of Ireland as the central point of concern, the Speaker conceives a solution around their objectification: for the issue to be fixed, these bodies have to be punished. This causes these bodies to be both the issue and the solution; to be both productive and yet objectified. They are penalised for their crime of existing by functioning as a physical solution of nourishment. The Speaker identifies the poor Irish bodies as human beings because they are capable of committing crime. However, the objectification of this status would better optimise the community's demands. The Speaker attempts to naturalise this proposal by arguing that the bodies must be productive in their subjection. *A Modest Proposal* suggests a physical solution to the famines by targeting the judgements of how poor Irish bodies are perceived as substandard.

To look at the bigger picture, *A Modest Proposal* exemplifies a newer, biopolitical method of combining knowledge and power. The Speaker turns his abjection towards poor Irish bodies into a solution to profit from more life. The basis for his thinking this way is supplemented through dispersed knowledge. It shows a decline away from a single sovereign power and more towards a dispersion of power throughout the community. The Speaker is not acting as a reigning force over the masses, but rather as a singular person capable of sharing his ideas. Through this it can be seen that there is a shift from a traditional reigning sovereign into biopolitical power. Johanna Oksala summarises this shift:

Whereas classical sovereign power was essentially repressive and deductive, biopower has a fundamentally different rationality. Its purpose is to exert a positive and productive influence on life, to optimise and to multiply it. It is an important tool in Foucault's attempt to rethink power: to find ways in which to theorise it that are not

caught up in the narrow juridico-institutional framework of sovereignty that has dominated Western political thought” (32).

*A Modest Proposal* exemplifies a newer, biopolitical method of argumentation by attempting to disperse knowledge and power throughout the community. This proposal is not directed at a singular person, but rather established as a matter of public concern – excluding those of the poor Irish bodies. The Speaker centralises the demands of the power structure as wholly more important than the needs of the poor Irish bodies. This is achieved through the criminalisation of their abject state of living. In this way, the poor Irish bodies are separated from the rest of the public because they are unproductive in their current state. The Speaker shapes this argument in a biopolitical fashion by reinforcing the idea that Irish bodies must optimise life within the community rather than bring it down.

From this, the dispersion of power throughout the community excludes the poor Irish bodies in its sovereignty. The Speaker attempts to convince the audience that they are not worthy of power within the community because they are not optimising their livelihoods to their full extent. Oksala uses the metaphor “[i]n relation to the sovereign we are all ants” (35) to describe typical subjugation within a power structure. This is later followed by a biopolitical twist: “We become ants precisely at the moment when we are no longer able to pose questions concerning our biological life in political terms” (Oksala 43). In this scenario, the ants are the poor Irish bodies who are not acknowledged as members of the public. They are not included in the dispersal of this knowledge and therefore do not have any voice within the power structure. Rather, their capabilities should only reflect the demands of those in power. The death of poor Irish bodies will bring life to many more and optimise the circumstances of the community. The Speaker sees the solution in the objectification of these bodies because they will better serve the community as economic devices. These bodies, according to the Speaker, cannot become productive members of society until they prove

their willingness to bring life through death and change their unsatisfactory subjugation for their communities. For the only plausible solution to the famine is to feed into the power structure which already subjugates them to their death.

As Foucault notes, power is not solely wielded by those who dominate. It is a complicated system which is capable of utilisation in many different forms. To exemplify this I look at the conflict between degradation and agency as examples of tense and fluctuating power within communities. I will be using Harriet Jacobs' *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* as an example of how power can be subverted and employed by dominated classes in addition to those who typically maintain control over communities. As the title suggests, this autobiography follows the fluctuating struggles of a woman, Harriet Jacobs, trying to escape slavery in the 19th century. Because of her race, gender, and class, Jacobs is treated by many as a bought commodity rather than a human being. She is abject to many people within the community and therefore degraded. Jacobs begins *Incidents* with a quote from Angelina Emily Grimké's "Appeal to the Christian Women of the South," which states:

Northerners know nothing at all about Slavery. They think it is perpetual bondage only. They have no conception of the depth of *degradation* involved in that word, Slavery; if they had, they would never cease their efforts until so horrible a system was overthrown (1).

Although slavery is one of the oldest forms of body commodification, Jacobs is showing how it is more than a purely physical form of control. Grimké's use of the word "degradation" implies a subjugation that affects both the mind and body in its assault. It degrades the subject in front of the public eye, which explains the distinctions between the perspectives of slaves versus the rest of the public sphere. With no agency, the slaves are subjected to degradation within their communities with very limited methods of retaliation. Jacobs is

setting the boundary between the agency of slaves and how they prove to be dissimilar from those in different circumstances. Through Jacobs' journey she displays how the possession of agency changes her degradation due to a transition of power. Her agency is gained through her resistance to her degradation and the consistent fight for her freedom.

A key theme throughout *Incidents* is Jacobs' resistance towards her power structure's demands. Michelle Burnham highlights the chapter "The Loophole of Retreat" as the most prominent example of this resistance. In this chapter, Jacobs describes the conditions of the long period of time she had to hide inside of a small shed's garret. Within this time period, Jacobs goes undiscovered by her abusive master, Dr. Flint, without having to run away.

Burnham notes:

This spatial loophole becomes for Jacobs a means for escape from slavery, and her manipulation of textual loopholes in dominant discourse allows her narrative to escape, as well, from the constraints which her culture necessarily imposes on it (53).

This method gives Jacobs freedom from her commodification while also allowing her to commentate on her community's reactions to her resistance. Burnham continues on to recognize how this "double movement structures both her strategy of a quite literal resistance to the oppressions of slavery and patriarchy, as well as a literary strategy of narration that resists a dominant abolitionist discourse" (56). Jacobs has the distinct opportunity to view either side of the issue. The power dynamics from her previous commodification have shifted. Within her resistance she gains a form of the power that once fully degraded her, as "[n]ot only is Jacobs free from Flint's gaze, but she has appropriated the power of surveillance for herself" (Burnham 58). Jacobs uses this new agency over her body to disclose the inner-workings of the power structure which once fully dominated her. She perceives her body both in terms of her autonomy and in how others desire to commodify it.

From this, she can distinctly separate the public's demands for her body from her own internal desires.

Unlike in *Memoirs*, the display of body autonomy in *Incidents* is much more confined, and is often used as a necessary tactic for freedom rather than for the pursuit of pleasure. Slavery presents an older form of subjugation but a newer form of agency. In the section "A Perilous Passage in the Slave's Girl's Life," Jacobs attempts to escape by being impregnated by a free, white man – in the hopes that he will buy her and her child from Dr. Flint. Jacobs reflects upon this endeavour for freedom:

Pity me, and pardon me, O virtuous reader! You never knew what it is to be a slave; to be entirely unprotected by law or custom; to have the laws reduce you to the condition of a chattel,\* entirely subject to the will of another ... Still, in looking back, calmly, on the events of my life, I feel that the slave woman ought not to be judged by the same standard as others. (55)

This specific reflection exhibits a prime example of how Jacobs is seen as abject within her community, and how she uses this to her advantage by literally reproducing the laws that commodify her to act in her favour. She is resisting the narrative which is being imposed on her and therefore refusing to be commodified by the intimidating power structure. This passage displays how power can also be wielded by those who are dominated, as the "resultant access to agency is a circumstance of which Jacobs, it seems, becomes only gradually aware, and which she begins only cautiously to exploit" (Burnham 59). Jacobs is choosing to commodify her body within a system which oppresses her. But her perspective shows that she recognizes this and holds individual feelings and opinions about this situation. Her decision to be impregnated by a free white man extends beyond the physical advantages of her circumstances, as it also carries the weight of her own misery.

Jacobs' autobiography acts as a confession of the decisions she has had to make throughout her life to obtain some freedom from the power structure which objectifies and restricts her. It is both a summary of her actions, alongside a reflection of how they made her feel. Foucault connects the process of confession within Christianity as a method of guidance for controlling one's body, where confession "will seek to transform your desire, your every desire, into discourse" (*History* 21). Jacobs is relating her circumstances to her desire for freedom by sharing the perspective of her past actions. This is situated within the capabilities of her body by turning her commodification into reflective discourse. The inclusion of Jacobs' perspective allows her to explore the ways in which power is used against her physical self, and how she subverts these expectations by using the power structure to her advantage. Jacobs' perspective is not a 'privilege,' but rather a deeper exploration into the political structure of her community. There is not a contrast of power between dominating and dominated classes, but rather a difference in how people perceive their own bodies.

Beyond the difficult hardships of Jacobs' personal life, *Incidents* exhibits a larger commentary about the power structure that confined her. Burnham notices a preoccupation with concealments within the power structure: "[f]or all its confessional rhetoric, this narrative seems finally far more concerned with that which is hidden, disguised, or kept secret." (55). *Incidents* is not meant to simply recollect the events of Jacobs' life, but moreover to persuade change through uncovering the larger issues within American slavery. This is seen through Jacobs' criticism of the Northern and Southern power structures and how they feed off of one another. This is achieved through the public sharing of her individual perspective, as "Jacobs' larger project is to lift the veil of deception that hangs between the North and the South, and it is therefore for her Northern listeners" (Burnham 54). Jacobs' frustration with the obliviousness of the Northern power structure's continued maintenance of slavery leads her to inspire change. Jacobs flips the degradation onto the public: *Incidents* is

not only a critique about past discrimination, but also a persuasion for future change. Jacobs uses her perspective to influence others because she has acquired the power which one dominated and degraded her. Her narrative subverts the commodification of slavery by insinuating a pathway for future change based on the perspectives which lie outside the public eye.

As my three chosen works show, body commodification is capable of influencing both the physical benefits and interior perceptions of oneself. However, older and newer methods of social control contrast in the subtlety of their effects. As Foucault has noted in his historical timeline of social regulation, “docile bodies” (*Discipline* 138) are created through the discipline of both interior and exterior features. Older methods of social control do not aim for this, because they focus less on the interior supervision of its dominated subjects and point their attention more towards their physical confinement. This creates a more transparent structure where power can shift depending on the agency of the individual. Newer methods of social control persuade both the interior and exterior elements of an individual to group people into commodified beings – or, “chattel” (55), as Jacobs puts it. This requires the internalisation of the public’s demands as the individual’s form of self-determination. With this false perception there will be no resistance to commodification.

Foucault’s theories surrounding biopolitics and newer methods of social control shape the environment of body commodification. Through separating methods of commodification between older and newer forms it becomes easier to understand the differences in their functions and how both achieve domination over their subjects. Furthermore, it defines the demands of the power structures through their functions of control. This can be seen through the analysis of dominated subjects, as the larger power structures are reflected through the methods in which they are commodified. As shown within my paper, the perspective of an



individual can outwardly indicate their system of power. Foucault understands perspective through the lens of repression, where the internalisation of the public indicates the reproduction of social control within personal desires. Looking towards Foucault's theories has helped organise my argument by providing classifications to the various elements of body commodification in each of my chosen works' power structures.

In comparing these works, it can be seen that older and newer forms of body commodification influence different methods of control over their subjects. Although older forms of subjugation, such as the slavery within *Incidents*, commodify the body in fairly transparent methods, it produces newer forms of agency within its shifting power struggles. Jacobs' memoir uncovers the concealed weaknesses within her oppressive community which clearly displays how power is not wielded simply by those who dominate. Foucault poses the question: "[h]ow can the growth of capabilities be disconnected from the intensification of power relations?" (*Enlightenment* 48). Jacobs becomes increasingly involved within the power relations of her community as she gains more agency in her actions. The result of this reveals the unsteady nature of the power structure, as it is not about who has power but rather who is capable of obtaining it. Mark Poster notes that "Foucault insists that historical writing is a form of self-determination as well as a practice of social critique" (113). Jacobs determines her own self through her writing. Through this she clearly comprehends the power that she has obtained through her resistance and how she desires for it to be changed. The transparency of its power structure allows commodified subjects to find agency within reflective discourse and take power from those who dominate. Older forms of subjugation rely more on the physical restrictions of its subjects to maintain power. However, once these restrictions are resisted power structures are vulnerable to criticism as a reflection of those who were once knowingly commodified by dominating forces.

Newer forms of subjugation attempt to change this by attacking the interior judgements of its subjects. *Memoirs* and *A Modest Proposal* are biopolitical in their power structures because both works aim to make their intended subjects internalise their communities' demands as their own. Through this there is no resistance towards the domination of their power structures. Poster argues that "the ability to constitute oneself the subject of knowledge is related to one's intervention in the present as well as one's estimate of the relation of the present to the past" (110). The subjects in *Memoirs* and *A Modest Proposal* are unaware of their positions and are therefore unable to intervene in their domination. Unlike Jacobs, there is no room for reflection within these works. Rather, the internalisation of the power structures' demands prevents resistance from the dominated subjects.

Foucault's theories on the concept of "maturity" relate to the methods of control found within these newer power structures. Because *Memoirs* and *A Modest Proposal* operate under biopolitical structures, the dominated subjects within their communities are held back from realising their own individual needs. The result of this is a stiff rigidity within the systems of power because there are no large, apparent transitions of power, as is seen in older methods of control. All subjects are incapable of challenging the system. Foucault argues that "[h]umanity will reach maturity when it is no longer required to obey, but when men are told: 'Obey, and you will be able to reason as much as you like.'" (*Enlightenment* 36). In this case, all dominated subjects under biopolitical power structures remain immature to the true nature of their internalisation. There is less of a threat of resistance under biopolitics because the internalisation of the public takes away the agency of those subject to domination. Unlike in *Incidents* there is much less self-determination within *Memoirs* and *A Modest Proposal* for the commodified beings, and any that appears is a false deviation from the power structure. The biggest difference that lies between older and newer forms of body commodification within power structures is the internalisation of the power structures' demands. Although

both forms of commodification attempt to deny their subjects the ability of reason, older forms of subjugation are more transparent about their methods of control. In contrast, biopolitics hides behind life's optimisation as the requirement of obedience. Dominated subjects under biopolitical power remain immature to their circumstances due to the unrecognised requirement of obedience through their false self-determination.

Although power and bodies have always been interconnected within the web of social order, their functions and priorities regarding one another have been in constant motion. Power will always commodify bodies, and bodies will always observe power – the means by how this occurs vary and have changed over time. *Memoirs*, *A Modest Proposal*, and *Incidents* are three very different works that exhibit vastly different methods of social control. However, the analysis of all three works produce similar findings on the display of perspective within power structures. Whether the community's demands are internalised by their subjects or resisted, one's agency is determined through how they comprehend the self within their power structure. Body commodification cannot only be determined by obedience, but rather a deeper exploration of how it functions and regulates through both interior and exterior elements. All forms of social control require obedience to function, but the 'choice' to conform is bundled up in intricate layers of power – the formations of which vary.

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