

Compulsive Work and Neoliberal 'governmentality': Benda Hofmeyr's *Foucault and Governmentality* – A Critical Review Essay

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Abstract

Why do so-called 'knowledge workers' work compulsively, even when circumstances are such that they have to pay attention to other activities, such as child-minding? This is the question that Benda Hofmeyr addresses in this fascinating and to many readers probably startling book. She lists three reasons, namely the expectation on the part of employers that they be optimally productive (in exchange for working conditions that promote such productivity, including highly flexible working hours); the advanced technological means to work virtually anywhere (primarily constant access to the internet by means of various technical devices); and most importantly, the fact that they *desire* to work constantly. Situating her inquiry in the (neoliberal) 'Age of Control' – problematising this curious phenomenon, where knowledge workers (including researchers and academics) voluntarily supererogate to the point of exhausting themselves, sometimes to the point of 'burnout' – Hofmeyr deftly pursues her inquiry, first through Michel Foucault's suggestive reflections on Neoliberal Governmentality (the ingenious way in which neoliberal societies combine 'governing' with a certain, cultivated, 'mentality', which produces a certain kind of paradoxical subject marked by both 'subjection' and 'subjectivation'). Secondly, she embarks on a systematic investigation into the manifestation of knowledge work in a society hell-bent on controlling everyone, followed by scrutiny of the curious link between what the ancient Greeks called '*thumos*' (spiritedness), motivation and compulsive work, and of the question of connecting compulsive work and neoliberal governmentality. Finally, she addresses the crucial question of the viability of

resistance on the part of (knowledge) workers, with ambiguous results. In addition to intermittent critical remarks on what is written in her text, the review-essay concludes with, first, internal-textual, and then extrinsic-contextual critical perspectives on Hofmeyr's argument – that is, on what is *not* written there, which corresponds with the notion of the unconscious in psychoanalysis, and with the current, ongoing attempt at a global *coup d'état* on the part of the so-called New World Order.

Keywords: Foucault, governmentality, neoliberalism, knowledge workers, compulsion, subjection, *thumos*, resistance, psychoanalysis, New World Order

... what is morality, if not the practice of liberty, the deliberate practice of liberty? (Michel Foucault).

Introduction: The Phenomenon, that 'knowledge workers' Want to Work All the Time

Who would work all the time, if they have the opportunity to relax, or to spend time pleasantly and constructively with their families or friends? Most people would probably shake their heads in disbelief when confronted with evidence that there is a group of individuals who actually do this ostensibly irrational thing. This distinct human assemblage comprises so-called 'knowledge workers', who demonstrably work constantly, and compulsively, even under circumstances that are not conducive to the kind of work that requires high levels of attention. Why? How do we make sense of something that seems to border on masochism? This is the question that Benda Hofmeyr addresses. She lists three reasons, namely the expectation that they be optimally productive (they *have* to), the technological means to work virtually anywhere and at any time (they *can*), and most importantly, the fact that they *desire* to work constantly (they *want* to).

Hofmeyr pays sustained attention to the work of Michel Foucault, reading his published lectures as 'problematizations' – a critical practice he developed in his history of ancient Greek sexuality – and which Hofmeyr understands transcendentally insofar as they are said to reveal the 'conditions of possibility' of the discursive justifications of cratological practices. What particularly interests her is Foucault's problematisation of 'neoliberal

governmentality’ – which the French thinker regarded as being potentially inimical to human freedom – and proposes to scrutinise the phenomenon of the knowledge worker through this lens. In passing, one could also understand problematisation as the discursive self-positioning of the subject *vis-à-vis* the dominant discourses of his or her social context, which would unilaterally ‘construct’ their selves *unless* problematised or resisted. Put differently, for Foucault (1992: 10-11) ‘problematisation’ appears to mean the critical, ‘sifting’ thinking that grows out of, and refers back to, certain ‘practices’ of the self, or ‘arts of existence’, such as those he discusses under the rubric of the eponymous ‘care of the self’ (Foucault 1988). In *The Use of Pleasure* he says (Foucault 1992: 11):

It was a matter of analyzing, not behaviours or ideas, nor societies and their ‘ideologies,’ but the *problematizations* through which being offers itself to be, necessarily, thought – and the *practices* on the basis of which these *problematizations* are formed.

If one thinks of it this way, the question arises: what enables one to problematise something? I would say that problematisation – and the curious fact of knowledge workers wanting to work constantly – is ‘dialectically’ related to autonomy, because no matter how much institutional authorities may exploit, and benefit from, the sustained, productive intellectual work of knowledge workers, the fact remains that, the more productive one is in this domain, the more it contributes to the experience of autonomy, on condition, of course, that one’s work is recognised by peers and others in the public domain. Inversely, one has to be able to act with a modicum of autonomy (giving oneself the rule, or law) to begin with, otherwise the act of acquiring, and generating knowledge in a manner that accords with one’s own unique abilities would not make sense. Accordingly, it is not surprising that Hofmeyr (2022: 10, 70, 95, 99, 145) situates the activity of knowledge workers in relation to autonomy, although I would argue that it should be given even more weight than she allows it insofar as autonomy may be seen as the motivational presupposition of the desire to work constantly or continually on the part of someone who knows that she or he *can* do so – in the dual sense of having the requisite intellectual capacity as well as technical means.

Hofmeyr’s sustained focus on the knowledge worker in relation to the fact that ‘knowledge work’ is the economic driver of the present era – something that Jean-Francois Lyotard already noted in the late 1970s under the

rubric of *The Postmodern Condition* (1984) – exposes the link between what these workers do and the neoliberal imperative of the ‘greatest return’, which requires the greatest efficiency on the part of workers. Knowledge workers are no exception, with the result that activities that may seem extraneous to their work, but actually contribute to their ability to work efficiently – such as sport and modes of relaxation – are justified as promoting productivity. Hofmeyr finds plenty of evidence, however, that what really motivates individuals who create and promote knowledge is their sense of achievement and recognition, together with the awareness of the quality of their work. It is interesting that one of Hofmeyr’s sources confirming this dates back to 1959 (Drucker), and together with the fact that Maslow put personal achievement that promotes self-actualisation at the zenith of his famous motivational ‘hierarchy of needs’ already in the early 1940s, this confirms my suspicion, that neoliberal governmentality did not invent the phenomenon of the incessantly productive, achievement-motivated knowledge worker, but merely tapped into a motivational root that has been a part of human psychology, if not always, then for a long time.

True to the philosophical reflex of *zurückfragen*, and drawing on the arch-apologist for neoliberalism, Francis Fukuyama, Hofmeyr unearths what may be regarded as the *Urquell* of knowledge workers’ desire to work continually, compulsively, namely *thumos*, which derives from ancient Greek insights into the nature of the human psyche (*psuche*). The most important of these is probably Plato’s notion of *thumos* as one of the three characteristics of the soul, the other two being reason and desire. Importantly, Plato identifies ‘spiritedness’ as belonging to *thumos*, and being at the basis of the capacity to get angry in the face of injustice (something I shall return to, given its apparent scarcity on the part of individuals in the face of contemporary injustice). Hofmeyr pursues the motif of *thumos* in contemporary society, particularly regarding knowledge workers, who are ultimately seen by her – partly following Fukuyama, who regards this force as irrational – as exemplars of *thumos*-driven individuals in the context of neoliberal harnessing of *thumos* for its own productivity-optimising aims.

To answer the question, whether neoliberal theory has discovered a way to hitch *thumos* to the profit motive, Hofmeyr turns to Foucault’s understanding of economist Gary Becker’s belief, on the one hand, that greater profits require a combination of workers’ self-optimisation and employers’ willingness to invest in employees to enhance their optimal efficiency and productivity, and neoliberal ‘privatisation guru’, Milton Friedman’s view of

economic activity, including labour, as voluntary investment or entrepreneurial activity predicated on future gain or return. The organisational logic corresponding to this entails the *imperceptible control* of knowledge workers' lives in their entirety – overt control has to be avoided at all costs, lest it undermine the experience of workers, that they are *voluntarily* engaged in optimising their work performance. Needless to point out, there is a subtle form of deception operating in this situation, despite which – if we add the element of *thumos*, which is connected with the experience of self-actualisation – knowledge workers are likely to live up to neoliberal expectations. Applying Becker's theories to knowledge workers, Hofmeyr summarises matters in this way (2022: 123):

... the working subject appears to be an enterprise unit, which is a stabilised 'form of life' comprised of the cycle of labour and consumption in equilibrium. Understandably, this cycle of production of utilities or satisfactions and its consumption *has to* reach an equilibrium to be sustainable. What the 'form of life' reveals are the worker's preferences. Compulsively working workers' preference, then, is work as opposed to competing satisfactions or utilities such as leisure or family time. If these workers persevere in this preference for compulsive work, it is because they are indeed making a profit that may be invisible to others, namely the thumotic satisfaction produced and consumed by way of creative, problem-solving knowledge work. It should be remembered that this 'form of life' of the worker is situated in the context of neoliberal control that pre-organises the free choices at the disposal of workers, conducting the conduct of the enterprise unit according to a cost-benefit calculus that serves the objective of a pervasive neoliberal political-economic programme or governmentality. This implies that this form of control actively harnesses not mere productive output, but the very thumotic satisfaction that propels it.

In short, neoliberal capitalism has devised a way to get the most out of these workers, and, judging by the sources adduced by Hofmeyr, it has been assisted in this by researchers who have conveniently shown the best, or most effective, way to achieve the optimal performance of workers – such as finding avenues of incentivisation that create the impression of spontaneity and initiative on the part of workers themselves, while in truth subtle forms of 'management' are the source of such pseudo-spontaneity. One thing that neoliberalism cannot

change, however, is the fact – elaborated on by Hofmeyr – that knowledge workers are generally their line managers' epistemic superiors in their respective research fields, which explains why they can afford to 'shop around' for organisations which are compatible with their own sense of values, which includes respect for them and their work.

While Hofmeyr understandably references such writers as George Huber regarding the prognostication, that information would become crucial for post-industrial societies, it is strange that she does not mention Jean-Francois Lyotard – whose *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* appeared in French five years before Huber's comparable work – in this regard. Admittedly, Lyotard did not, like Huber, focus on the requisite management styles for post-industrial societies, but he did foreground the epochal transition that was taking place in terms of the novel value that would be attached to information in epistemic terms, and without which the neoliberal interest in 'soft' management techniques regarding 'gold collar' knowledge workers would be unthinkable. At any rate, it is significant that Hofmeyr acknowledges that, instead of the 'soft', humane mode of managing knowledge workers, what has emerged is a technological web of 'complex control' – something that Shoshana Zuboff (2019) has uncovered in startling ways.

It is appropriate that Hofmeyr gives sustained attention to *the* thinker of the 'network society', Manuel Castells (2010), who – perhaps more than any other – has painstakingly enumerated the characteristics of the era of the 'space of flows' and 'timeless time'. In the light of Castells's findings no one can doubt where power resides today, namely in networks, and it stands to reason that those who can negotiate these networks in a creatively productive manner – and this includes knowledge workers – would be empowered far more than those who do not, or cannot because they lack the skills to do so. But Castells (as well as other researchers) is not blind to the fact that real power does not lie here, but with 'the rules of the (network) game' and those agencies (like multinationals and financial markets) whose complex interactions generate these rules – for example, in determining in an open-ended manner which areas of knowledge work are prioritised over others. One can easily imagine that a critical discipline like philosophy could be downgraded in relation to other, less critical ones that confirm the *status quo*, and philosophers who are not 'bread-thinkers' (to use a term that Schopenhauer employed to label 'philosophers' who serve those in power) would therefore be less in demand than individuals in other disciplines.

Hofmeyr deftly disabuses one of the notion that the digital platforms

comprising the work environment of knowledge workers are ‘disinter-mediated’; despite claims to the contrary, they are not really, insofar as they are *technically* mediated by means of mechanisms such as algorithms, which manipulate the behaviour of internet users in subtle ways, as Shoshana Zuboff (2019) has demonstrated at length. This resonates with Foucault’s contention – highlighted by Hofmeyr – that the neoliberal ‘free market’ is not at all free, given the way in which it is constructed. In other words, the *cognoscenti*-denizens of the web are not ‘equal’, or equally treated; depending on one’s volitional behaviour on epistemically relevant platforms, you are either rewarded by means of rankings or awards, or penalised, based on one’s choices. It turns out that behind the façade of equality the old scourge of social (and economic) hierarchy lurks. Hence the question, raised by Hofmeyr in the face of this unmasking of the covert workings of ‘complex power’: to what degree is *resistance* to this cryptic functioning of asymmetrical power-relations in the age of putatively spontaneous, voluntary, self-organising work possible? She comes to the unsettling conclusion, that today (Hofmeyr 2022: 153 - 154),

Self-creation [of knowledge workers; BO] has been co-opted by the neoliberal power/knowledge configurations in which it is inscribed, stripped of its critical, liberating potential, and normalised...Along the same line as Foucault’s contention that power is not bad, but dangerous, I conclude that resistance in this context is not impossible, but improbable. In a context of constantly changing, flexible flows of complex control, the odds seem to be stacked against the working subject’s ability to keep track of the governmentally imposed limits that have become increasingly imperceptible and elusive.

As Foucault points out, what should be questioned is the politics of truth that underlie these flows of control. The possibility thereof calls for a pessimistic activism, a renewed and constant critical vigilance and awareness of just how dangerous power relations have become in our present information age in which the neoliberal theory of human capital has co-opted the supposedly free zone of resistance as self-creation (as the only space in which to practise liberty) with its injunction to (self-) invest in the entrepreneurial subject as a ‘project-in-the-making’ Control, no matter how pervasive, is never complete. What is called for, however, is a critical consciousness of the operationalisation of truth/complex control that conditions the possibilities of our being, acting, and thinking in the present.

The 'pessimistic activism' Hofmeyr calls for here takes into account the power of neoliberalism, but also of human subjects to resist its tendency, to totalise such control via various strategies. We are not simply, irresistibly, 'subject to' control, but simultaneously capable of subjectivation, of positioning ourselves vis-à-vis such strategies. In what follows, I shall draw on this Foucaultian insight on Hofmeyr's part by relating it to a far greater contemporary threat than that of neoliberalism, even if it was made possible by the exorbitant financial profits engendered by the latter. In addition to the preceding, intermittent critical remarks regarding Hofmeyr's argument, this review essay will engage in an internal, textual critique of her claims, followed by an extrinsic-contextual critical perspective on what is *not* written there, which corresponds with the notion of the (textual) unconscious in psychoanalysis.

How Adequate is Hofmeyr's Explanation of the 'irrational' Dedication of Knowledge Workers to their Work?

Hofmeyr's thesis concerning knowledge workers' veritably 'irrational' devotion to their work must be seen in a wider context. Near the beginning of her chapter on Foucault and governmentality she states programmatically that (2022: 17):

The quintessential Foucauldian question animating this book throughout is what we are today, in relation to our present, understood as a globalising neoliberal governmentality in which life is reduced to constant work under conditions of strict control.

That is to say that Hofmeyr's primary interest concerns the *subject* under neoliberal rule, and a better point of departure than Foucault is unlikely in light of his familiar, sustained investigation into the nature of the relationship between knowledge (or truth), power and his persistent attempt to understand the human subject (Hofmeyr 2022: 29-30; 32; 78-79). (Nevertheless, this does not mean that other, heuristically equally suitable points of departure cannot be employed to this end.) Her characterisation of neoliberalism as 'a global and globalising programme' (p. 19) is therefore of utmost importance insofar as it disabuses one of the common bias, that it merely instantiates an economic system by focussing unambiguously on its cratological-political and ideological features. As David Harvey points out (Hofmeyr 2022: 21),

neoliberalism has attained the status where it has become embedded in people's 'common sense' – something that testifies unambiguously to its dominant ideological status. After all, when a worldview exhibiting a programmatic structure has reached this point, it is no longer questionable; at least, not without risk to those who have the courage to do so. It is further significant that Hofmeyr emphasises the problematical implications of neoliberalism's insistent prioritisation of economic freedom, or the supposed 'freedom of the market' (p. 22). This pertains to the convenient myth, that society in its entirety benefits from an increase in overall wealth, and not only the capitalist classes, but perhaps more importantly, to the easily overlooked, negative consequences this has for *political* freedom. In a country like China, for example, with its signature 'state capitalism', one encounters a large degree of economic freedom, but no political freedom as such.

A more far-reaching matter is related to the above, to wit, the false, mercenary anthropology underpinning neoliberalism, which claims that human beings are essentially rational, competitive creatures who routinely make rational decisions as far as economic and financial matters are concerned (Hofmeyr 2022: 22). Needless to say, this is an extremely controversial assumption in the light of numerous contrary claims, particularly those of psychoanalysis, historically prepared for by Arthur Schopenhauer's preceding irrationalistic philosophy of the Will in the 19th century. According to the latter, the actions of human beings are driven, by and large, by unconscious wishes and motives, collectively termed the Will, rather than by rational decisions, regardless of the degree of rationalising justification that may follow a disastrous, albeit ostensibly 'rational' choice. A psychoanalytical theoretician and practising psychoanalyst such as Ian Parker (2011) has convincingly demonstrated the primacy of the unconscious in psychological manifestations of its causal efficacy on the part of workers in the neoliberal dispensation, insofar as these are displayed in quasi-pathological actions such as obsessive neurosis (see also Olivier 2013; 2015; 2018 in this regard, and 2022 for a thematisation of this in the context of the Covid-19 'pandemic').

Importantly, this consideration bears on Hofmeyr's thoroughgoing argument concerning the motivation of knowledge workers: instead of the threefold motivation she discerns (expectations of employers regarding workers' productivity; availability of technical means enabling them to work virtually all the time; the *will* to work continually, linked to *thumos*, and the concomitant desire for self-actualisation), one can argue that Parker offers an alternative explanation, namely the largely obsessive-neurotic character of

workers in the context of neoliberalism (see also Olivier 2015; 2018). Parker writes (2011: 42):

Those who suffer in obsessional mode under capitalism are subjects who buy into the separation of intellectual and manual labour, the separation of thinking from being, and live out the predicament of a puzzle about the nature of being as if false consciousness really did operate only at the level of the individual. Lacan argues that the question that haunts the obsessional neurotic concerns being, existence, their right to exist and whether they are alive or dead... The 'obsessions' are repetitive ideas manifested in a series of actions from which the subject seems unable to escape. Even though this eventually may result in suffering that is too much to bear, enough to bring someone to ask for help, it is still stubbornly tied to personal administrative strategies that contain an unbearable surplus of satisfaction – 'jouissance' is our name for this excess – within the domain of the 'pleasure principle ...'.

It may appear as if the repetitive symptoms of 'obsessions' which, according to Parker, are manifested in 'personal administrative strategies', are light years removed from the *thumos*-and desire-driven, self-fulfilling, creative and cognitive, while simultaneously affectively instrumental, knowledge work under scrutiny here. This impression notwithstanding, it is abundantly evident from what Hofmeyr (2022: 81) writes that knowledge workers are, indeed, *obsessively* dedicated to their work, and that this is accompanied by personal suffering, as noted by Parker. She observes that (Hofmeyr 2022: 100; my underlining; BO):

... the unquestioned wholesale conviction displayed by the ever-working subject, even in the face of the evident toll that constantly working takes, cannot be entirely accounted for by the clever charade of other-induced coercion, masquerading as self-motivated conviction. The inherent contradictions of a *de facto* irrational, obsessive, and self-destructive work-drivenness are bound, inevitably, to result in severely detrimental side effects for the working subject. And they do. At both the rational and the emotional levels, the working subject is bound eventually to become disenchanted by the clever ploy of 'smart power'. Nevertheless, despite the havoc it wreaks on the working

subject's mental and physical health, on collegial and familial relationships, the knowledge work addict displays an almost devotional commitment to the task at hand.

Is at all surprising, then, that Parker draws attention to the fundamentally irrational functioning of unconscious, obsessive psychic motives on the part of workers under neoliberal capitalism? To be sure, he does not single out knowledge workers, as Hofmeyr does, but 'workers' as encompassing group includes them, and if it can be persuasively demonstrated that workers in general are subject to such an obsessive drive, Hofmeyr's argument – with its implicit claim, that the question concerning the grounds of knowledge workers' irrational attachment to their work has been *conclusively* answered – would have to be broadened.

Comparing *Jouissance* and *Thumos*

To be able to judge the validity of my psychoanalytically oriented argument (as derived from Parker, and implicitly from Freud and Lacan) one has to understand the meaning of the Lacanian concept of *jouissance*, described by Parker (above) as 'unbearable surplus of satisfaction'. Add to this that, given Hofmeyr's acknowledgement of knowledge workers' irrationality, as well as their *unconscious* motives concerning their work obsession (Hofmeyr 2022: 70, 77), my own alternative psychoanalytical approach to the riddle of knowledge workers' ostensibly conscious and voluntary, excessive work-performance (known as 'supererogation') – that is, their 'obsessive work mania' – could perhaps simply be a comparable account of this phenomenon in a different register. Or is it the case that Hofmeyr's version differs fundamentally from a psychoanalytical account, when considering the precise meaning of *jouissance*? Hence, what distinguishes *thumos* from *jouissance*?

It will be recalled that Hofmeyr (2022: 75-102) elucidates the meaning of *thumos* largely with reference to Plato's thought, but she nevertheless also draws on other sources, including Homeric epic poetry as well as ancient Greek tragedians (such as Sophocles and Euripedes), Hegel, Fukuyama and MacIntyre. She highlights the various emphases encountered in each respective case and takes pains to explain her own interpretive preferences every time. Compared to Plato, for instance – who characterises *thumos* (the noble white horse) as spiritedness which can be tempered through education by reason (represented by the charioteer) – the emphasis shifts in Homer's works and the

tragedies of Sophocles and Euripedes to the 'excessive' in *thumos*, as expressed in uncontrollable fury and impetuosity. Hofmeyr delivers an insightful analysis of Hegel's contribution on the topic of work or labour by arguing that, while the German philosopher does not explicitly reference *thumos*, it is implicit to the indispensable role that he attributes to work in the development of society, as long as one reads Hegel 'through a Platonic lens'. Moreover, she detects in Hegel's notion of the self-actualising function of work an important clue to arrive at a thorough understanding of *thumos*. As far as Fukuyama is concerned, Hofmeyr observes astutely that his causal linking of *thumos* (as the driving force behind work) with work ethics as cultural phenomenon is not cogent or consistent, precisely because work ethics only made its appearance relatively recently in cultural history; there has to be a deeper, innate 'cause' for the virtually irrational work-attachment on the part of knowledge workers. In Hofmeyr's opinion *thumos* is the right candidate for such a causal role, given its recognisable manifestation in different historical periods. She therefore arrives at the following finding (2022: 102):

We may conclude, then, that read through a Platonic lens, it is *thumos* – not primarily reason or desire – that fuels the worker to work. Knowledge work in particular – as challenging, entrepreneurial, creative, and problem-solving – ignites the thumotic dimension of the soul. It is what spurs the worker to rise to the occasion and persevere until the job is done. It is then not so surprising that the neoliberal knowledge worker's work-drivenness is irrational from a utilitarian point of view, in other words, that the surplus gains for the workaholic are not necessarily evident in conspicuous consumption or increased health or well-being. Work, it would seem, appeases not the dark horse of desire, but the white stallion of *thumos*, what Empedocles called the 'seat of life' ... – that part of the soul that seeks recognition, and which, when appeased, generates an immense and addictive form of gratification or well-being.

Several aspects of Hofmeyr's wide-ranging discussion concerning *thumos* deserve attention, all of which cannot be elaborated upon here, although I shall return to others. What has to be noted briefly here, is her conception of certain historical events, such as the two World Wars, as violent expressions of *thumos* (2022: 99), but which are difficult to reconcile with 'spiritedness', or even 'impetuous fury' (although it is clear on what grounds she does this, namely

the interpretation of *thumos* by, for example Homer, whose heroes, like Achilles, are driven by this force in a self-annihilating manner). To be sure, one could establish a connection between spiritedness and destruction, but regarding the latter I would argue that Freud's death drive, or *Thanatos*, comprises a better category for comprehending such phenomena, in the light of Freud's (1974: 4510) distinction between two ways in which it is manifested: on the one hand, *conservatively*, in so far as one always returns to a previous, familiar place, and on the other hand, *aggressively*, among other ways collectively as war. In passing one should note that Freud's conceptual pair, *Eros* (the life drive) and *Thanatos* (the death drive), correspond with the ancient Greek thinker, Empedocles's countervailing couple, *Philotes* (love) and *Neikos* (hatred/strife), with which Freud was familiar. The allusion to Freud returns one to the issue of the relevance of psychoanalysis, of which he was the 'father', while Jacques Lacan may legitimately be regarded as his (radical) French heir.

What place does *jouissance* occupy in Lacan's work? As witnessed earlier on the part of Parker, it denotes excessive, virtually unbearable *enjoyment*, rather than 'pleasure'. (It is telling that, irrespective of Lacan's specific psychoanalytical application of the term, in French it also means 'orgasm'.) For Lacan *jouissance* instantiates a moment of transgression of the Freudian 'pleasure principle' which, in contrast to the latter, comprises the experience of intense, almost painfully intolerable enjoyment. This explains why it is fundamentally irreconcilable with the limitations imposed on the subject by the pleasure principle (Lacan 1997: 176-177, 191-197; 2007: 18; Evans 2006: 93-94). After all, contrary to the first impression it creates, the pleasure principle promotes and maintains an economy of homeostasis, which limits the subject's *enjoyment* to the minimum. Although initially it may strike one as being counter-intuitive, as governed by the pleasure principle, *pleasure* is *conservative*, whereas *jouissance* (*enjoyment* in the psychoanalytical sense) is *excessive*, disproportionately extreme (Parker 2011: 52-55). It bears on the question concerning the grounds of knowledge workers' disproportionate dedication to their work that, according to Lacan, the human subject continually inclines towards such extreme enjoyment in relation to the restrictions placed upon it by the pleasure principle. This explains why Freud initially labelled the latter the '*unpleasure* principle'. It is therefore instructive that Kaja Silverman makes the following observation, which simultaneously illuminates the difference between the pleasure principle and *jouissance* (1983: 54):

For Freud, pleasure represents the absence of unpleasure; it is a state of relaxation much more intimately connected with death than with life. Indeed, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920) at one point refers to the pleasure principle as 'Nirvana principle'

As already noted, *jouissance* contrasts glaringly with this in so far as it is marked by transgressive, unendurable enjoyment, which hardly represents 'a state of relaxation'; on the contrary. Furthermore, it is significant that Lacan (1997: 176) explicitly establishes a connection between *jouissance* and 'prohibition' by means of Freud's myth (in *Totem and Taboo*) involving the parricide of the 'primal father'. Here he remarks meaningfully that (Lacan 1997: 177):

... without a transgression there is no access to *jouissance*, and ... that is precisely the function of the [moral] Law. Transgression in the direction of *jouissance* only takes place if it is supported by the oppositional principle, by the forms of the Law ... what we see here is the tight bond between desire and the Law.

The first thing to remember here is that 'desire' in the Lacanian sense is not synonymous with 'desire' in the sense of 'appetite' (closely linked to 'need'), as employed by Plato in relation to the black horse in the chariot-myth pertaining to the structure of the soul. As I shall demonstrate below, for Lacan (unconscious) 'desire' (*Wunsch*, for Freud) instantiates that which distinguishes subjects from one another in so far as it is unique, or singular, for every person. Add to this that any prohibition, which presupposes the moral Law, depends upon discourse in so far as it is a function of the ethical and axiological aspects of the symbolic order – that is, language considered as discourse, where meaning serves power. Against this backdrop, *jouissance* may be seen as being both pre-symbolic and trans-symbolic in specifiable ways. It is pre-symbolic in so far as entering the symbolic through language-acquisition requires of the subject to relinquish *jouissance*, which it strives to attain at the level of the imaginary – Lacan's second register of subjectivity, the 'real' being the third of these (Evans 2006: 134-135; Olivier 2004) – in its attempt to coincide with the 'fullness' (*plenum*) represented by the Mother in the unconscious (Parker 2011: 53, 95; Evans 2006: 93-94). This clarifies the meaning of 'symbolic castration': to be disempowered by language, which alienates the subject from enjoyment (*jouissance*) by means of the linguistic signifier.

The prohibitions faced by the subject are therefore paradoxical – that which is prohibited (*jouissance*) is unattainable on discursive-structural grounds, *except* on condition of *transgressing* the symbolic, which amounts to trans-symbolic action. This is where the intimate connection between *jouissance* and the death drive (*Thanatos*) comes into view, in the sense that both of these surpass the symbolic order at the boundary of what the ancient Greeks named *Até*, on the other side of which humans cannot exist (Lacan 1997: 189, 257-283; here Lacan provides an interpretation of Sophocles's *Antigone* by arguing that the tragic heroine's *jouissance* consists in the fact that she insisted on burying her slain brother, Polynices, despite her impending death sentence). Simultaneously it shows why *jouissance* is intolerable, yet no less desirable because of its unendurability. Lacan confirms its thoroughly paradoxical character by refusing to conceive of it as something mystical or instinctive, preferring to understand it as '... something constituted by the very human activity that keeps it at bay, constituted as a something beyond, something that drives the subject as they speak, and drives them beyond speech' (Parker 2011: 53).

These insights enable one to grasp the connection between *jouissance* and the puzzling work obsession on the part of knowledge workers: they are no exception to the rule of being subjects constituted by discourse, which simply means that, as humans, they are unable to step outside of language as symbolic register. Yet, at the same time (like all human subjects) they tend in the direction of *jouissance* by virtue of their structural-anthropological constitution as *desiring* beings. To phrase it succinctly, desire and the moral Law are mutually constitutive. How to understand this ostensibly opaque statement? It becomes psychoanalytically transparent when considering Freud's insight (1974a: 741; see also Olivier 2021a), that the unconscious is originally constituted on the part of the human subject by the repressive internalisation of the 'primordial prohibition' – whether the latter is comprehended in classical terms as the proscription of sexual access to the Mother, or as any other interdiction, for example when a toddler is forbidden to stick her or his finger into the chocolate cake on the coffee table. As humans we (mostly unconsciously) desire precisely what is forbidden by the moral Law; hence the phenomenon of experiencing *guilt*. Does it not stand to reason, then, that workers generally – including knowledge workers – would work obsessively under neoliberalism because, failing that, they would experience intense guilt? This does not only, or even decisively, concern work ethics, as Hofmeyr has persuasively demonstrated. In other words, *jouissance* has to be

enlisted to make sense of this state of affairs. How is this done?

What should be kept in mind is that *jouissance* consists in unbearable, language-surpassing enjoyment, which nevertheless exerts a forbidden attraction on the subject. Moreover, *jouissance* instantiates what is known as 'universal singularity': all human subjects are motivated by *jouissance* (universality), yet for each person it is different (singularity). The Christian martyr, Joan of Arc, was probably in the fiery embrace of *jouissance* where she died at the stake in the 15th century for defending France because of her religious convictions; clearly, Leonard Cohen understood this perfectly, judging by the lyrics of his song dedicated to this French saint, where he describes her as the fire's 'bride'. Similarly, the Scottish nationalist leader, William Wallace, probably experienced *jouissance* when he was cruelly executed by being drawn and quartered in 1305 for his political and military resistance to English rule. Equally, a woman who is caught in the extraordinary intensity of orgasm experiences *jouissance*, judging by the evidence gathered by neurologist Leonard Shlain (2003: 69-70), who designates the sublimity of the human female's orgasm as a unique phenomenon among living creatures. Knowledge workers are irresistibly driven by the promise of *jouissance* to exceed themselves continually. The flipside of this is that, when these perfectionists feel that they have not fully succeeded in their quest, or that they constantly *have to*, and *want to*, improve on their previous achievements, they ineluctably experience the *guilt* that is inseparable from the implicit expectation, that they do not fail.

The elusive Lacanian concept of the *objet petit a* ('little other object') is intimately related to the preceding account. Some of Lacan's central concepts went through several stages of development, and that of *objet petit a* is no exception. Whereas it initially signified the 'object of desire', the mature version of *objet petit a* denotes the 'object-cause' of desire (Evans 1996: 128-129). This could be any object, *from the perspective of which the singular desire* of the subject may be comprehended – that is, that represents *jouissance* for the subject. In contrast, a *fetish* is the perverted counterpart of the *objet petit a* in so far as it no longer functions as *cause* of desire, but has *itself* become the object of desire. In one of the Cowboy Junkies' songs the singer confesses to seeing her lover's shoes where he left them, and missing him; the shoes therefore comprise an *objet petit a* indexing her desire for him (where he, in turn, may be seen as an *objet petit a* for a more profound desire – that which marks her ultimate *jouissance*). If, perversely, the shoes themselves were to become her 'object of desire', they would be in the position of a fetish. Another

revealing instance of an *objet petit a*, encountered in Freud's clinical work, is discussed by Slavoj Žižek (1993: 206-207; see also Olivier 2005), where a self-inflicted wound on the ring finger of a married Viennese woman marks the site of her true, but repressed desire for a former lover, whom convention prevented her from marrying, although she would have preferred to do so. An *objet petit a* could be any object – not necessarily anything tangible – such as a poem, a wrist watch, a dancing woman, a symphony, an old jacket, or a blues song. Bob Dylan's 'One more cup of coffee for the road' is undoubtedly an *objet petit a* for me; why this is so I don't know, but it has something to do with the unfathomable nostalgia in its minor register. When it comes to knowledge workers, their *objets petit a* would no doubt include any object that functions for every distinct person by unmistakably uncovering their (unconscious) singular desire, such as an e-mail message from the editor of a scientific journal, informing them that an article penned by them has been awarded a prize for the best scientific article published in the journal that year. This desire is intimately bound up with their knowledge work, but for every person it is differently enmeshed.

It is my belief that this state of affairs, articulated in psychoanalytical terms, throws further light on what motivates knowledge workers, Hofmeyr's eloquent *thumos*-oriented explanation notwithstanding. The latter is indeed a valid, illuminating theoretical perspective on the question, what motivates knowledge workers at a conspicuously irrational and unconscious level, to work themselves into the ground for the sake of sustained, optimal work productivity, as may be seen in her neat summary statement (Hofmeyr 2022: 126):

Today the knowledge worker is unequivocally the definitive propellant of the economy. These workers are valuable for their expertise in a particular field, and their seemingly vocational devotion to their work. The overarching argument that I have pursued here is that the theory of human capital at the heart of the neoliberal governmentality of control actively engenders an irrational work-drivenness among knowledge workers by tapping – not primarily into their rational or desiring selves – but into their *thumotic* selves.

While it is true that the elements of both the unconscious and the irrational are invoked by her, this occurs minus their thorough exploration, however, which only the discipline of psychoanalysis enables one to do, as I have attempted to

demonstrate here by enlisting the Lacanian employment of *jouissance*, *objet petit a* and *guilt*. One should add that, in accordance with Hofmeyr's demonstration of the subtle control disingenuously exercised over knowledge workers by neoliberal organisations – by exhorting the latter group's thumotic selves to greater achievements for the sake of optimising profits – one could draw a psychoanalytic analogy to similar effect. That is, one could replace *thumos* with *jouissance*, which means that the strategies harnessing *thumos* may be understood as promoting conditions which harness knowledge workers' *desire* (in the psychoanalytic sense) for recognition and self-actualisation in such a manner that it fosters an unconscious striving for trans-symbolic *jouissance*. After all, no symbolic utterance could quite capture the 'extreme enjoyment' of the knowledge worker who has the experience of having reached the apogee of knowledge generation in her or his field.

Placing Hofmeyr's Text in an External, Social Context

Hitherto my criticism of Hofmeyr's argument in her book has addressed internal, textual criticism; here I want to concentrate on external, social-contextual criticism. Once again the psychoanalytical notion of the unconscious will be invoked here, in so far as certain matters and events *that do not feature explicitly in her text* may be shown to bear undeniable relevance for what she has written. Lacan (1977: 46 - 55) emphasises the indispensable role of discourse in the analytical situation, where the therapist assists the subject of the analysis, in the course of her or his 'free association', to arrive at an intelligible symbolic interpretation of their reconstructed life-narrative. After all, the free-associative discourse of the analysand is anything but coherent; this is the point of free association – in order to neutralise the natural inclination to speak coherently, which is a function of reason, enabling one to arrive at the 'truth' of the subject's unconscious.

To be able to make sense of the latter, ostensibly cryptic statement, one has to recall that, among those who do not bother to understand psychoanalysis, Lacan is notorious for his (initially confusing) reversal of Descartes's paradigmatically modern saying, *Cogito ergo sum* ('I think, therefore I am'), to read: 'I think where I am not, therefore I am where I do not think', or – in extended form – 'I am not wherever I am the plaything of my thought; I think of what I am where I do not think to think' (Lacan 1977a: 166). 'I am where I do not think' is evidently an allusion to the unconscious, of which the functioning here is crucial in so far as it manifests itself negatively in

instances of a *lapsus linguae* as well as hesitations, omissions, discursive gaps, signs of aggressive or insistent negations as well as confirmations. By nudging the conversation in a certain direction, the psychoanalyst harnesses such symptomatic indicators of the unconscious (which is constituted by the repression of unacceptable or unbearable material) to be able to come to a meaningful interpretation of the analysand's associative discourse.

Lest the impression be created that this process still displays too much 'rational coherence', one should keep in mind that Lacan's conception of the subject – or \$, denoting the 'split' or 'interrupted' subject – undermines such coherence in principle, in the sense that a coherent subject (as encountered in ego-psychology) negates the founding insight of psychoanalysis, namely, that human rationality constantly has to reckon with the destabilising workings of the unconscious. It should therefore be clear that an alliance with ego psychology is furthest from Lacan's thought. This much is evident in his remark, that (Lacan 1977: 49):

The unconscious is that part of the concrete discourse, in so far as it is transindividual, that is not at the disposal of the subject in re-establishing the continuity of his conscious discourse.

Accordingly, Lacan (1977: 50) designates the unconscious as that 'chapter' of the subject's life history that has been 'censored', and as such is 'marked by a blank', as witnessed by the unintended actions (including 'speech acts') on the part of the subject. This notwithstanding, the repressed 'chapter' of the subject's story can be rediscovered by means of the interpretive cooperation between the analyst and the discourse of the free-associating analysand, despite the characteristic *resistance* by the latter – one must remember that such resistance is the function of reason at the level of consciousness. The 'language' of the unconscious is legible in the subject's physical symptoms, childhood memories, discursive omissions, 'idiosyncratic' linguistic expressions and word-selection (Lacan 1977: 50).

If readers were to be puzzled by the psychoanalytical detour, above, the answer is simple: it is necessary as rationale and heuristic for my social-contextual criticism of Hofmeyr's text, which can be read against the backdrop it provides. As we have seen, the unconscious, repressed 'truth' of the psychoanalytical subject (or analysand) can only be reconstructed with the assistance of the knowledgeable analyst. Anyone familiar with psychoanalytical discourse analysis would know that it is hardly presumptuous

to read written texts in an analogous manner, given the comparable occurrence of gaps, omissions and lacunae in texts – what is known in hermeneutics as ‘the unsaid’ – and that these gaps may similarly be construed as a function of repression or exclusion, in so far as it indexes something intolerable or unacceptable to the writer. Recall, too, that repression is a function of prohibition, then it follows that the conspicuous omission or ‘blind spot’ in Hofmeyr’s argument may indeed be a symptom of her *unconscious* repression of world-shattering events (to be addressed below) – or at least the unacknowledged side of such events, given that she makes nominal reference to them – which have been unfolding in global space for some time now. Significantly, however, the open discussion of all aspects connected to these events has been censored, *prohibited*, by the mainstream, conventional discourse, as anyone ‘with eyes to see and ears to hear’ can ascertain in the mainstream media – but on condition that one is willing to actively search for and peruse alternative media, where the mainstream omissions are explicitly thematized (Mercola 2022b; Olivier 2022a).

The reason for my belief that Hofmeyr’s text evinces signs of significant omissions should be clear, at least to those people who have read this impressive text. Anyone who is capable of the level of penetrating, critical thinking that Benda Hofmeyr displays in her book would undoubtedly have perceived the resemblance between the object of her own transgressive, resistance-oriented, Foucaultian mode of thinking, namely neoliberal governmentality, on the one hand, and that which may, without fear of exaggeration, be described as irrefutable evidence of a prodigious attempt to execute a mondial *coup d’etat*, on the other. It is simply unthinkable that someone who is capable of making the following statement in relation to Foucault’s conception of power and resistance, would not adopt a comparably critical stance in the face of this still-unfolding global power grab, *on the assumption that she has consciously taken note of its various manifestations* (Hofmeyr 2022: 138):

The trajectory leading from resistance to liberation, from liberation to domination, and back again (via resistance) has to be inscribed *in* the very fabric of individual subject-formation as a constant practice or exercise of liberty.

Information about the true extent of the worldwide movement towards totalitarian control of humanity comprises part of what Lacan calls the

‘censored chapter’ of the subject’s life story – in this case that of Benda Hofmeyr; if this were not the case, I believe, one would almost certainly have encountered a resistance-oriented, critical *Auseinandersetzung* regarding its reprehensible actions and programme in her text (which was published in the course of these events occurring), even if, for lack of space, it could not be worked out systematically. Given her Foucaultian awareness of the ‘danger’ posed to human freedom by neoliberalism, it makes sense that Hofmeyr would have responded with thumotic outrage to this unprecedented danger facing humanity if she had taken conscious note of it at the time. After all: in the history of humankind, *when* has such resistance, as the exercise or praxis of freedom, ever been more urgently required than at *this moment*?

The rhetorical question, above, notwithstanding, it is not difficult to comprehend the reasons why the majority of people worldwide are still blissfully unaware of these nefarious developments occurring right under their noses, as it were (even if such comprehension is accompanied by an irresistible chagrin at their blindness). The chief reason for their ignorance is the fact – evidently itself unknown to the masses – that the mainstream media (CNN, BBC, Sky News, Al Jazeera, the SABC, the New York Times, the Washington Post, The Times, and even The Guardian, etc.) are, according to reliable information, all compromised, and news outlets (including The Exposé, The Epoch Times, Children’s Health Defense and Dr Mercola) which disseminate ‘deviant’ information are summarily censored (Kennedy 2022; Nevradakis 2022; Mercola 2022; 2022a). Unless one perseveres in searching for alternative, as-yet uncensored sources, where alternative information concerning ongoing events is to be found, one is at the mercy of an ideologically monochrome array of news and discussion outlets, which can easily be identified (Olivier 2021; 2022a). Such alternative sources could be taken down or removed at any time by agents of the New World Order [NWO], as the power complex behind the global *coup d’etat* is known, among other similar designations. At the time of writing this article, I have published more than a dozen essays in various journals and online forums, including four full-length, peer-reviewed articles in national and international journals, on various, related aspects of this sustained attempt to attain complete global power through, among other things, sophisticated digital financial technology (Olivier 2021; 2022; 2022a; 2022b). The indispensable sources on which I have drawn include Robert Kennedy’s two recent books (Kennedy 2021 and 2022), of which particularly the first one is thoroughly documented, and whose most immediately important aspects I have summarized in a recent paper (Olivier

2022b). Three other indispensable books should also be mentioned here, given their fearless, extremely informative exposure of what can only be called the demonic activities of the NWO (which is mainly driven by the World Economic Forum [WEF] of Klaus Schwab): Naomi Wolf's *The Bodies of Others* (2022; see especially Chapter 19, titled 'Evil Beyond Human Imagination'), Joseph Mercola and Ronnie Cummins's *The Truth about COVID-19: Exposing The Great Reset, Lockdowns, Vaccine Passports, and the New Normal* (2021), and Peter and Ginger Breggin's *COVID-19 and the Global Predators – We Are the Prey* (2021). All of these books uncover the deceptive, sinister activities on the part of those who comprise or serve the NWO; not only that the COVID 'pandemic' was in fact a 'plandemic' (sometimes called a 'scamdemic'), and that this was only the first phase of their global programme for the appropriation of total power but also that the 'novel coronavirus' was *not* of natural, 'zoonotic' origin, as had initially been believed. Irresistible recent evidence indicate that the 'virus' was created by artificial technical means in a laboratory, and furthermore (much worse) that the so-called 'vaccines' are in fact no vaccines in the true sense – which prevent infection as well as transmission of a pathogen – but are in fact aimed at reducing the world population drastically. In other words, they are 'biological weapons', as several of the leading opponents of the NWO have termed them (while others, more pointedly, call them 'clot-shots'), in the light of accumulating evidence to this effect (Philipp 2022; The Exposé 2022; 2022a; 2022b).

By far the most shocking evidence concerning both the 'virus' and the 'vaccines' was recently brought forward by a bio-technical analyst, Karen Kingston (Wilson 2022), who demonstrated – with the aid of supporting documentation – that the 'virus' is no virus at all, but a technical-biotic creation, which means that it is partly technical and partly alive, and that it functions like a parasite of sorts. This explains why Ivermectin, an anti-parasitical medicine, is highly effective against the so-called 'virus', as well as for clearing one's blood of the 'vaccines', which are related to the 'virus'. As Wilson (2022) indicates, Kingston (2022) made this startling revelation in an interview with Mike Adams (the 'Health Ranger'):

Kingston is a biotech analyst with more than 20 years of experience. She has been reviewing research that has been conducted on Covid 'vaccines' over more than a decade. 'I really want the truth to be understood and the evidence to be seen and evaluated,' she told Adams. So, during the interview, she discussed some of the patents she

has found: in particular, quantum dots ‘because that’s the backbone technology and energy of this AI [artificial intelligence] bioweapon,’ she said. ‘It’s part biology and part technology ... that’s always been the intention of Covid-19.’

Wilson (2022) proceeds by summarising Kingston’s (2022) most significant findings, as set out in the interview with Mike Adams, and after listing the relevant ‘vaccine’-patents of pharmaceutical companies such as Moderna, she writes of Kingston:

Moving onto the purpose of Covid tests, Kingston explained the test swabs are to collect people’s genetic material and inoculate people with the nano weapon – the spike protein AI bioweapon which is part biology and part technology. It’s not only technology but it also has gene sequences, she said. ‘This technology is meant to spawn inside the body, it’s a parasite ... It has not [been fully activated in a lot of people.] The activation is very much contingent on the 5G [and] fibre optics networks ... also the quantum dots are activated using LED [light-emitting diode] so there’s light activation involved as well.’

She then discussed patents that reveal the shocking nature of the ‘spike protein’ structures in ‘vaccines.’ The hybrid inorganic-organic structures demonstrate ‘cognitive action’ capabilities. They are described in patents as ‘intelligent sensor platforms’ that carry out instructions. So-called ‘spike proteins’ seen in electronic microscopy are actually these nanotech platform structures that are small enough to enter nervous system cells and alter their behaviour.

It is redundant to emphasise that this information is more than shocking in ethical terms – given its unrepresentability, it belongs in the category of the ‘terrible sublime’ (Olivier 1998) – what kind of beings who call themselves human are capable of planning and executing such a programme with the goal of annihilating millions, if not billions of people? Keeping in mind that the decisive characteristic of a psychopath (or sociopath) consists in their lack of remorse and inability to experience guilt, the worst is that these psychopaths of the NWO – for that is what they are – have *abused and exploited the understandable confidence that people generally had in their countries’ medical authorities and governments*, to get them to accept what is now increasingly called ‘the clot-shot’. Apart from such misplaced confidence,

another reason why people generally repress awareness of the global power-grab underway is probably because subliminally they sense its mind-boggling enormity – the colossal power involved – and feel overwhelmed by it, powerless to stop it. The puzzling question is why *some* people who get to know about it are able to resist it and act against it – but that is a question for another paper.

This is no ‘conspiracy theory’; by cleverly branding information which exposes their plans as ‘conspiracy theories’, the NWO has managed to deflect most of what has turned out to be accurate, if damning information – something that alerts one to the fact that we are witnessing an information war at a global scale. This is evident from the fact that Facebook – one of the companies guilty of suppressing the true state of affairs mercilessly – recently admitted for the first time that the British investigative paper, *The Exposé*, was correct when it reported in August 2022 that a depopulation programme was in fact underway. According to Facebook, substantiating evidence has corroborated the following (*The Exposé* 2022):

Facebook has confirmed that official Government reports, confidential Pfizer documents, and the cost of living crisis proves your Government is trying to kill you and depopulate the planet.

Back in August 2022, *The Exposé* published an exclusive in-depth investigation and discovered that official Government data, confidential Pfizer documents, and real-world events such as the current cost of living crisis, the alleged impending climate change disaster, the Covid-19 pandemic, and the ongoing development of Artificial Intelligence, strongly suggest that there exists an agenda to depopulate the world, and your Government is, in essence, attempting to kill you.

That investigation was shared by a reader on Facebook on the same day that we published the article, and Facebook took it upon themselves to immediately remove the post and label it as ‘misinformation’.

However, the reader who shared our article disputed Facebook’s censorship and they finally responded in October to confirm that they were in fact wrong, the investigation was entirely correct, and that the reader’s Facebook post is now back on the highly censored social media platform.

This may seem surprising, to say the least, but there it is – notwithstanding the fact that this has not been reported anywhere in the mainstream media (to the

best of my knowledge), it has now been acknowledged in the public domain by one of the most prominent mainstream media (Facebook) serving the agenda of the New World Order (or the World Economic Forum), that this unscrupulous, unconscionable people-slaughtering process is occurring at present. Anyone who doubts this, can look up The Exposé, The Epoch Times and Children's Health Defense, among other news outlets, where they will find plenty of eye-opening information on topics such as the current burgeoning of 'excess deaths' – but should not be surprised if Google, another WEF-serving company's search engine, tries to dissuade them from consulting these news sources. (By contrast, Brave is a search engine with no such commitments.)

The fact that I refer to the NWO and WEF, as well as to people associated with them, as the force behind these heinous crimes, raises a *caveat*, though: is this not to fall into the trap, cautioned against by Foucault (1972: 121), that one must learn to 'cut off the King's head' – that is, that power does not reside in a person, or an organisation, for that matter? Instead, it is a function of power-relations within a network of diverse relations (Foucault 1972: 99, 119, 142, 186). But recall that, as Castells (2010) has demonstrated, contemporary power is a function of electronically networked informational and communicational exchanges located in the 'space of flows', which is compatible with Foucault's conception of power. And given the deftness with which the media agents of the WEF manipulate such informational exchanges to their own advantage, and to the disadvantage of the millions of people who are left in the dark about the purpose of these manipulations, this leaves one in no doubt that one is facing an *information war* on an unprecedented, worldwide scale.

Conclusion

One can therefore only hope that the kind of critical thinking practised in her book by Benda Hofmeyr will, in future, be applied by her to the current deception and lethal abuse of power, aimed at the total subjection of humanity on a global scale (and not only by her, but by an incrementally growing number of commentators). I believe that there is reason to believe that she is likely to do just that, judging by what she writes about *critique* in the conclusion to her book (2022: 154):

The utterance of critique, rather than premised on a solution, is presented as a resource, an instrument that serves to awaken consciousness,

the consciousness of those who (must) seek to resist and to refuse what is. Critique, then, is a challenge directed to what is, and hence imposes a responsibility on the subject to mobilise his/her resilient agency, however minimal it may seem, to recognise and contest subjection.

Moreover, given the role of *thumos* or spiritedness that Hofmeyr has uncovered, including the capacity for anger being conditional upon it, I believe it is no exaggeration to state that, unless people worldwide start *awakening consciously* and showing *thumos*-generated *anger* in the face of growing evidence of the unforgivable crimes on the part of the WEF and their cronies in the NWO (Annett 2022) – from medical organisations such as the World Health Organisation to governments (who, ironically, *should* be concerned about the well-being of citizens!) – *it is not impossible that the NWO could be successful in the realisation of their goal of creating a future where humanity would be enslaved by means of a technocratic system of total, central digital control* (which, by all accounts, already exists in China), as Melissa Cuimmei (Ryland-media 2021) has explicitly indicated (see also Olivier 2022b). To be able to retain our humanity and relative freedom, it is *imperative* that people should resist the global fascism which is taking root – in European countries such resistance has been growing for some time, even if the mainstream media purposely ignore it. As Hofmeyr argues in her book regarding the threat of neoliberalism, one may add that, in the absence of individual as well as collective resistance to the growing threat of mondial totalitarianism, there is no hope of safeguarding humanity's democratic liberties. In the final analysis one may gather courage from Hofmeyr's Foucault-oriented remark, that (2022: 138):

Foucault's conception of power therefore leads, as I have argued ..., to the conclusion, that 'the conditions of existence which are to be transformed are woven from the same cloth as the practice of transformation itself' ... – they are both of the order of 'an action upon an action' While the relations of power are indeed *constituent*, the more or less stabilised social norms, the norms of behaviour, are *constituted*. What this means is that liberty might just be within our grasp, but not attainable once and for all. Liberty is not a state, but entails continuous *practices* or exercises of freedom. While the ubiquity of power dissipates the fantasy of autonomous self-creation, it enables heteronomous practices of freedom – a hard-earned freedom that is not freedom *from* power, but freedom *through* power, despite power and because of power.

From what she stresses here it is clear that one faces the task of utilising the very ubiquitous strategies, aimed at gaining complete power over the human race, to be able to free humanity from this suffocating quest for global power. The first rule in this regard is: Do not comply! It is compliance that has led to millions of people suffering injury and death from the ‘clot-shots’ – and there are signs, ironically, that those who were instrumental in promoting such damaging practices as lockdowns and mandating ‘vaccines’ are beginning to ask for ‘amnesty’ (Setty 2022). Obedience and compliance with what the NWO prescribes would be the beginning of the end – especially when one is confronted with the looming ‘option’ of accepting a ‘digital (banking) identity’ (RylandMedia 2021), which would enable the WEF to control one’s life through programmed ‘money’. In the inspiring words of Margaret Atwood in *The Handmaid’s Tale* (1985: 153-154): ‘*Nolite te bastardes carborundorum*’ (‘Don’t let the bastards grind you down’).

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- [Part 5: Dismantling Covid-19 Deceptions: Why are Quantum Dots in the COVID-19 Injections?](#) Karen Kingston, 28 October 2022.
 - [Part 2: Dismantling Covid-19 Deceptions: Psychological and Biological Impact of False Positive PCR-Tests](#), Karen Kingston, 12 October 2022.
 - [Part 4: Dismantling Covid-19 Deceptions: Lies, Damn Lies, and Spike Proteins](#), Karen Kingston, 14 October 2022.
 - Video: [Biotech Analyst Karen Kingston Unveils the Covid Vaccine 5g Link + Biosynthetic Ai Nanotech](#), Health Ranger Report, 6 October 2022.
 - [Biotech analyst Karen Kingston unveils PATENTS and documents describing the covid vaccine 5G link, biosynthetic AI nanotech, 'soft actuators' and NEUROWEAPONS implanted with needles](#), Natural News, 6 October 2022.
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