

**READING GENDER AS EXPRESSION OF DOCILE BODIES  
THROUGH FOUCAULT’S GENEALOGY OF POWER  
- HISTORICAL PRACTICES OF NORMALISING INDIVIDUALS  
THROUGH BIO- AND DISCIPLINARY POWER<sup>1</sup>**

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**Abstract:** This article aims to define gender as a social discourse correspondent to two forms of power, the bio- and the disciplinary one, following Foucault’s critique on the normalization of the individuals’ behaviors and mentalities under the auspices of these constructs of authority and surveillance. Applying Foucault’s genealogical method of explaining power, in a specter of social, political and cultural acceptances, I will propose the hypothesis according to which gender represents the expression of the so-called “docile bodies”, meaning educated, controlled and surveilled individuals that adopt masculine or feminine discourses, attitudes and stereotypes considered *normal* and, implicitly, accepted by modern societies. Gender will be addressed in the current research as a paradigm of power. The main outcome of this paper consists in the possibility of developing, from these arguments, the analysis of different forms of subjectivity depending on gender’s main characteristics, as a composite of three elements – *power, knowledge and body*.

**Keywords:** biopower, disciplinary power, knowledge, feminism, docile body, normalization, surveillance, control, subjectivity, genealogy, individuals, education.

## **1. Introduction**

The main aim of this paper is to examine the possibility of constituting a social critique of the feminism by applying a genealogical method of interpreting the history of gender. The working-hypothesis is that genders represent the social discourses of two paradigms of power, a *bio* and a *disciplinary* one, and they become cultural discourses only in terms of a process of *normalization*, in a Foucauldian sense. The advantage of this hermeneutical path is that a certain approach clarifies not only feminist receptions of Foucault’s theories, but also the context in which practices of historical constitution of genders were created following the interaction between three main concepts: body, subjectivity and power.

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<sup>1</sup> Acknowledgement: This article represents the extended version of a lecture, with the same title, held in 2016, 18-22 July, in Trieste, Italy, during the *IX Annual Conference of the International Society for Cultural History*, “Gender and Generations: Spaces, times and relationships in cultural-historical perspective”.

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