“Visibility is a Trap”

*Revealing the Metaphor of the Simian in Naked Lunch.*

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Thus far, the novel *Naked Lunch* has not been discussed from the aspect of critical animal studies, nor has it been connected to the theories of Michel Foucault. This essay however, argues that these diverse fields could be connected through the use of the simians that are frequently employed in *Naked Lunch*. By analyzing the metaphorical role of the simian, the structure of the normalization process can be revealed. Therefore the simian’s metaphorical role becomes to reveal the different stages character goes through in that process and ultimately revealing its negative effects. They also prove to employ the role of abnormality which normalization wants to subtract from the human in order to render her docile. By applying the power mechanisms such as signals, the concept of panopticism and the theory of the docile body to specific passages where simians are highly prominent, the claim of this paper can be demonstrated. Besides Foucault, the theories of Robin Lydenberg are also used consistently throughout the essay due to her valuable observations such as the struggle between body and mind.
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Introduction

Sadomasochism, metamorphoses and satire: this is the world of *Naked Lunch*. A world built by author William S. Burroughs and who in this non-linear narrative novel that consists of loosely tied vignettes crosses the border into the junky’s consciousness. With its repellent structure, brutal language and refusal to obey the norms by exploring drug abuse and homosexuality it has had its readers respond in disgust (Herbert Gold) and revulsion (Stefan Beck). On the surface this reaction might seem as a valid one but there is more to *Naked Lunch* than vulgar language and terrifying imagery.

Upon closer examination, one will find the recurring simian. There are multiple instances in which simians are used as character descriptions “’Fats’… a translucent-grey, foetal monkey” (103), as behavioral description “imitate the passers-by with monkey-like obscenity (23)” and is also as a symptom in the disorder: “[S]imopath … is a citizen convinced he is an ape or other simian” (23). These instances are different from one another but in connection to normalization as developed by Michel Foucault, they become connected. The simians reveal the disciplinary mechanisms that are utilized by power in order to normalize and suppress the abnormal. The character Fats reveals signals and the concept of Panopticism, the young street-boy is being normalized by the disposal of power mechanisms around him and the golden baboon reveals the concept of the docile body. These are just some of the connections that can be made to the work of Foucault. In addition, the simians never prove the outcome to be good for the individual affected by it.

Therefore, this essay claims that the simians function as a metaphor for the different levels that the human goes through in the normalization process. They reveal the various stages but also take on the role as the inner uninhibited human that normalization sees as abnormal. As a result, their appearance in the novel discloses that normalization has negative effects on humans. Thereby, they expose the mechanisms of the power/knowledge
nexus as developed by Foucault: putting the invisible disciplinary mechanisms in the visible spectra. This essay will mainly use Foucault’s book *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, this due to its highly valuable theoretical framework in contrast to *Naked Lunch*. By applying the theories of disciplinary mechanisms that the normalization process uses such as the panopticon, the docile body and correction signals to the instances when simians are found, it becomes apparent that the process of normalization does very much exist in *Naked Lunch*.

Since there are several power mechanisms and multiple instances where simians appear, this essay will analyze each episode by itself and apply the power mechanisms that become apparent in order to see different levels and reactions. In doing so, the power mechanisms such as surveillance, the creation of a homogeneity and signals will unfold and show in what way they affect the character, how the case is connected to the theories of Foucault and what the different outcomes of the normalization process are in regards to the characters in *Naked Lunch*.

Placing the work of Foucault in the genre of critical animal studies is not a rare occurrence. In his article “Apparatuses of Animality: Foucault Goes to a Slaughterhouse” Stephen Thierman explores how the theories of Foucault can be applicable to human interactions/relations with non-human animals. For Thierman, the slaughterhouses are “a site of disciplinary power (and domination) where a multitude of bodies are rendered docile” (103). Chloë Taylor’s essay “Foucault and Critical Animal Studies: Genealogies of Agricultural” connects the theories of Foucault with animals in agriculture. Taylor criticizes Foucault for not addressing the institutions such as industrial slaughterhouses and factory farms in his work, as they share similarities with psychiatric wards and prisons (539). She uses Foucault’s writings in order to consider how the human and non-human relations in

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agriculture “might be conceptualized as instances of sovereign power, bio power, disciplinary power, and pastoral power” (539). Taylor also conducts a discussion as to why humans do not think of these relations at all (539). Even if these works are not used beyond this point, it is still important to establish that Foucault’s theories in connection to critical animal studies is not a new concept.

Besides Foucault, Robin Lydenberg’s article "Notes from the Orifice: Language and the Body in William Burroughs" will be used consistently throughout this paper. Her observations on duality, the struggle between body and mind, and her ability to detect the loss of the self are all useful when interwoven with Naked Lunch and Discipline and Punish. The struggle between body and mind is highly applicable when discussed from the aspect of the docile body and its connection to the different character in Naked Lunch. Lydenberg’s discussion of the loss of self is arguably connectable to the homogeneity that Foucault argues to be imposed by the power of normalization (184). Lydenberg’s article will receive a proper discussion in the section of this paper called Lydenberg: Duality of Body and Mind.

The next section of this paper will give a brief account on how and why the simians have been used throughout history and how this essay perceives them. Several different works will be applied in the following section amongst which one finds works by philosopher Barbara Noske, author and librarian Jess Nevins, and author Matomah Alesha: all of which introduce important points that will help establish the fundamental aspects of how this paper perceives the simian.
1.0 The Simian

Simian is the collective term for an ape or monkey but is not only restricted to the species but also refers to the behavior of these animals. Due to the different ways monkeys and apes manifest themselves in *Naked Lunch* this essay adopts the term simian due to its collective value. This section will provide an understanding of how this paper perceives the simian as a metaphor with the use of historical and modern perspective of the metaphorical and symbolical role of the simian.

Throughout history, ape and monkey metaphors have been prominently negative. From the ancient Greeks to Christian writings and art they have been subjects that connect with the raw emotions of man. In *The Apes of Wrath*, an anthology that deals with the cultural fascinations and dread of humanity’s simian cousins, one of the contributors, Jess Nevins discusses the ape’s role in literature and writes that apes have been used as metaphors for various sins and as an intermediary for humanity and animals for centuries (73). The ancient Greeks and Romans thought of apes as ugly, malicious and angry (73). Nevins discusses the various ways apes are used. Early Christian writers and artists have depicted apes as a symbol of greed, lechery, and as a symbol of uninhibited, unrestrained humanity (73): the latter of which is highly valuable in relation to *Naked Lunch*. Since the simians manifests themselves in the connection of restraint. However, apes have taken on even darker roles such as seen in John Donne’s *Progresse of the Soule* where the beginning of the “rape ape” motif manifested itself (Nevins 74). What is primarily seen in the article provided by Nevins is that apes symbolize evil and sexual aggression.

Apes and monkeys seem to push the boundaries of what is non-human and what is not. Philosopher Barbara Noske reinforces Donna Haraway’s observation in her book

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1 In *A Dictionary of Literary Symbols* by Ferber he also notes that the Greeks and Romans “considered apes ridiculous, strange, ugly and somewhat dangerous” (n.p).
2 By “rape ape” Nevins means: “the motif of a crazed ape dragging away a woman in order to violate her” (74).
Beyond Boundaries: Humans and Animals by stating:

[T]hat among the animals themselves the primates are preeminently the boundary animals, and the discipline of primatology is really about the simultaneous and repetitive constitution and breakdown of the boundary between the human and the animals: that it [primatology] can be viewed as an exercise in boundary transgression. (80)

Matomah Alesha who wrote the book called Sako Ma: A Look at the Sacred Monkey Totem states that in the period of the Renaissance apes became the symbol of artists and artistic sensibilities (119). Due to the imitative and creative skill which was connected to apes due to their ability to mimic, they were sometimes called the Devil and Ape of God. This is a phrase that “was coined by Augustine, remarking on an ape’s “blasphemous” ability to imitate God’s highest creation, which is man” (119). What is evidently seen is that at least within Christianity, the simian has had the task of revealing the negative within man or what Christianity constitutes as negative. The comparison of humans and animals causes people to try and obliterate that part of them, making them move further away from what we now know are our distant cousins.

In addition to mentioned views of simians, the aspect of mimicking is of high value in the analysis section. Oxford English Dictionary defines the verb ape as “to play the ape, mimic the reality” (“Ape”). Simians are acting, as a result, as the not expected rejection of structure, constant surveillance and body alterations. In connection to Naked Lunch, Burroughs applies the concept of the mimicking ape as a characteristic in the creature called Latah. In a specific passage in which a Latah’s owner is trying to hang the Latah who mimics the action, satire is highly prominent:

The citizen put one rope on and the Latah, going along the way Latahs will, put on the other. When the traps are down the citizen hang for real and the
Latah stand with the carny-rubber stretch rope. Well, the Latah imitate every twitch and spasm. (43)

The citizen has in his attempt to hang the Latah, hung himself. The metaphor of the Latah, this simian-like creature, satirizes the normalization process as being a process whose product is measurable and docile humans. Here it is being ridiculed and mocked. The Latah in the example reveals the flaws in that process when the individual has become the most normalized: he has become the mimicking ape, someone who adapts to whoever is above him. As shown in this example, the desire power has for normalizing man into the mimicking ape does not necessarily mean that only good things will come of it. Power could just as easily end up being tied up itself.

In regards to the mentioned works and the different roles that simians have played throughout history, this essay will not view the simian in a negative light, but rather as a positive reaction against the power mechanisms that are out to order man into categories, to alter him and to create a docile shell that has moved away from its natural state. By viewing simians in this light, the importance of critical animal studies in connection to the modern man reveals just how far man has strayed from his heritage, revealing the cost of efficiency, the so called knowledge and the desire to be civilized.
1.1 Foucault: Normalization, and the Body

In order to gain a proper understanding of the concepts that will be used in this paper, amongst which one will find docile body, normalization, and signals, one must first gain a proper understanding of Foucault’s work *Discipline and Punish*. For it is in his work the essential keys lie that will function as the theory to which one can provide sufficient evidence to demonstrate the simian’s role according to this essay.

In a sense, one might say that the first ten pages of Foucault’s book *Discipline and Punish* demonstrates the entire piece. It is within those pages one finds stark contrast between a public execution and numbing prison yard routine: a contrast that reveals the structure of his work. The mechanical and numbing prison yard routine is suggested to be read as a metaphor for our modern day society.² Foucault looks closely at the architectural construction of the panopticon through which he reveals a controlling structure wherein there is no neutral ground: one is always being watched. Foucault describes this structure as follows:

A supervisor in a central tower and to shut up in each cell a madman, a patient, a condemned man, a worker or a schoolboy. By the effect of backlighting, one can observe from the tower, standing out precisely against the light, the small captive shadows in the cells of the periphery. They are like so many cages, so many small theatres, in which each actor is alone, perfectly individualized and constantly visible … Visibility is a trap. (200)

The panopticon functions as a symbol that reflects the inner function of our modern day society. It shows that by applying a structure that creates a sense of constant surveillance, making the people, the subjects act as if they were always being watched there is no need for

² Michel Foucault discusses developments mainly within the period of 1660 to the 19th century, the classical era. When referring to the modern day society, this essay is implying our current time.
regulation. Since the subjects themselves will act as if under constant surveillance (201).

Foucault states that “[i]n discipline, it is the subjects who have to be seen … It is the fact of being constantly seen, of being able always to be seen, that maintains the disciplined individual in his subjection” (187). This phenomenon of constant surveillance and self-correction that comes with it is what Foucault calls Panopticism.\(^5\)

However, the disciplinary power moved further when disciplinary writing had started to take a hold of the subject. Thanks to disciplinary writing “[t]he constitution of a comparative system that made possible the measurement of overall phenomena, the description of groups, the characterization of collective facts, the calculation of the gaps between individuals, their distribution in a given 'population’” (190) gave rise to a analyzable and measurable individual.

Meanwhile, in our modern day society “[t]hese small techniques of notation, of registration, of constituting files, of arranging facts in columns and tables that are so familiar to us now, were of decisive importance in the epistemological 'thaw' of the sciences of the individual” (190-91). What developed through this is the possibility not only to measure groups of subjects, but also to measure the individual by himself since he is now constituted as a “case” (191). Since the “modality of power in which each individual receives as his status his own individuality, and in which he is linked by his status to the features, the measurements the gaps, the 'marks' that characterize him” (192) renders him as such. In the modern era there exists “a whole set of techniques and institutions for measuring, supervising and correcting the abnormal” (199). Being able to measure people in different ways brings up the subject of normalization. Foucault suggests that:

In a sense, the power of normalization imposes homogeneity; but it individualizes by making it possible to measure gaps, to determine levels, to fix

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specialities and to render the differences useful by fining them one to another. It is easy to understand how the power of the norm functions within a system of formal equality, since within a homogeneity that is the rule, the norm introduces, as a useful imperative and as a result of measurement, all the shading of individual differences. (184)

What Foucault is suggesting is that what certainly looks like progress is, in fact, an increase in the power of normalization. Normalization is trying to produce a mass, a homogeneity, and as a result of the ability to measure, the norm is due to its attempt to standardize people and practices, shading individual differences. In connection to *Naked Lunch*, the shading of individuality is highly evident. R.G Peterson, who has written the article “A Picture Is a Fact: Wittgenstein and The Naked Lunch” states: “There is nothing to suggest a single, clearly definable personality for the speaker-narrator; there is no point-of-view and no persona” (81). This non-existing persona agrees with the homogeneity that Foucault suggests.

Moreover, Foucault uses the soldier to demonstrate the docile body, which also functions as a metaphor for the creation of mass. Prior to the end of the eighteenth-century one was born to be a soldier, but a shift occurred that introduced the idea of the creating of a soldier (135). The classical era “discovered the body as object and target of power. It is easy enough to find signs of the attention then paid to the body - to the body that is manipulated, shaped, trained, which obeys, responds, becomes skilful and increases its forces” (136).

Instead of waiting for the right type of subjects to appear, one instead utilizes the subjects that exist. By measuring them, they are being standardized so that they can be put in their right place in the hierarchy. Once in place they can be shaped and trained to increase their force. In *Naked Lunch*, the shaping of the body is apparent in many cases, one of which is found in the characters called Latah. Lydenberg describes the Latah as “a strange creature addicted to

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6 Latah is a syndrome that is culture-bound. It was first observed by O’Brein in 1882 and has mostly been found in Malaysia. Patients suffering from Latah are commonly called Latahs. The illness usually begin after sudden
compulsive servility and imitation” (58) this is based on the fact that they “compulsively imitate every motion once their attention is attracted by snapping the fingers or calling sharply. A form of compulsive involuntary hypnosis” (Burroughs 20). The snapping of the fingers connects well with Foucault’s notion of the function of signals that are included in the mechanisms of discipline which will be discussed in the following paragraph.

Furthermore, Foucault suggest there are several mechanisms through which discipline functions: time (149), what Foucault calls “[t]he temporal elaboration of the act” (151-52), positioning of the body (152), the relationship between the body and the object of manipulation (152-53), and “Exhaustive use” (154-55). All these techniques create a docile body (155) and later on more techniques have been added with even more specific details such as signals. On pages, 166-67 Foucault describes the function of signals in both the military and in schools. “All the activity of the disciplined individual must be punctuated and sustained by injunctions whose efficacity rests on brevity and clarity; the order does not need to be explained or formulated; it must trigger off the required behaviour and that is enough” (166). The trigger can be bells, clapping of hands, gestures or a mere glance from the teacher (166).

Finally, power for Foucault is a relationship that exists between people and in which each person affects another’s action. Power is subtle therefore it is not easily detected since it exists as a deeply rooted system within human relationships and throughout society. It is in this aspect where the simians will be of utter importance. The simian can be connected to Foucault's description of the transformation of a criminal into an abnormal individual, “bearing within him as it were, a wild fragment of nature; he [the criminal] appears as a villain, a monster, a madman, perhaps, a sick and, before long, 'abnormal' individual” (101).

frightening experience, the patient then shows echolalia, echopraxia, automatic obedience and increased startle response. See Bayer, R. S. “Latah Syndrome.” Bahrain Medical Bulletin 19.2 (1997): 52-53 for specific case study.
The wild fragment of nature connects to the claim that simians can be viewed as the abnormal that normalization wants to exclude from the civilized man. This argument is reconnected with what has been observed by Nevins.

Neither *Discipline and Punish* nor *Naked Lunch* are books that provide solutions to a broken society, but rather raise questions so that one’s mind might start to become aware of the systems that normalize the people. In this awakening, the simians will move from what is regularly seen as negative to something quite different.
1.2 Lydenberg: Duality of Body and Mind

In her work “Notes from the Orifice: Language and the Body in William Burroughs”, Robin Lydenberg suggests that *Naked Lunch* is a “history of voice and body, of language and materiality” (56). She discusses the use of language in which she looks closer at binaries, metonymy, and metaphors. The focus on her paper is on the relationships that exist between binary oppositions and between Burroughs’ use of literary devices. In her analysis she reveals concepts of dehumanization and dismemberment.

While Foucault addresses the relationship between power and its subjects, Lydenberg suggests that Burroughs illustrates the “dual structure of human life” (59). Foucault’s revealing of the invisible power mechanisms and how they function, and Lydenberg’s argument of the dual structure of human life connects the two due to the impact these relations and structures have on people’s lives. As previously discussed, Foucault implies that power seeks to improve the body and demonstrates this by utilizing inter alia soldiers as his example (136) and in connection to this Lydenberg argues that in *Naked Lunch* “a basic contempt for human life always initiates the impulse to improve on nature, on the body” (61). One can see that both of the theories refer to improvement of the body but the difference can be found in how power sees the improvement as a positive outcome whilst in the case of Lydenberg and the individual that is subjected to it, it has negative effects. Instead of illustrating the point of body improvement by addressing the surgical aspects of *Naked Lunch* as Lydenberg does (61), this paper rather explores the theory in connection to simians. The Simopath disorder that Burroughs describes is a condition that is peculiar to the army (23). A person suffering from Simopath disorder is convinced he is an ape or other simian and discharge cures it (23). In this instance both the theories of Foucault and Lydenberg intersect. While Foucault reveals the structure of a system, Lydenberg addresses the life that is affected by it. Lydenberg states that the “truncated creatures who grope blindly around *Naked Lunch*
are dismembered remnants of human life” (61) and that they have been “[d]ehumanized into insects, automatons, or body parts, they have been cut off from human evolution, from the”’independent spon-taneous action’ " (NL, p. 134) of individual will” (61). In the army, the creation of the docile body is highly prominent. There are rules, a hierarchy and other structures that keep the soldiers restricted and make them operate in a certain manner. The army is a place where independency and the human’s will is removed in order to create docility. According to the arguments of Lydenberg, what is left after the body has been improved is a dehumanized automaton that has no free will. In regards to this paper’s view of the simian’s metaphorical role as revealing the different levels and negative effects of the normalization process, and that they function as positive reaction against the power, the simopath disorder joins these aspects with the help of Lydenberg and Foucault. A human that comes to the army will lose his independency and his free will so that he becomes docile (Foucault 139), and the human will in a way become a dehumanized automaton (Lydenberg 61) that develops the simopath disorder which turns him into what he believes is an ape or other simian (Burroughs 23). The only way to cure the disease is by discharging the individual (Burroughs 23), hence removing them from the confinements of normalization.

Furthermore there are degenerate life forms in the novel whose only option in order to survive is to devour their host (Lydenberg 62). This becomes a discussion of the struggle that exists in Naked Lunch and Lydenberg suggests that: “[A]ll binary structures all relationships lead to dismemberment, amputation, [and] death of the organism” (62). In relation to the theories of Foucault and this essay’s argument about the role of the simian one could see this as follows. In the normalization process something abnormal is suppressed in order to create a human that fits within the norms of society. As the simians in Naked Lunch are revealing the process and the negative affects one can argue that what occurs in the normalization process is in a sense amputating the uninhibited human, the simian, from its
host, the human. In doing so, a symbolical death occurs which renders the human as a shell for power to function through. Whether the characters end up as a part of the system or as mimicking apes, the outcomes never prove to be positive for the character involved.

When regarding the human as a shell one can argue that she is only capable of mimicking the reality that is imposed by normalization, and therefore becomes dependent on that system. Lydenberg claims that “[p]erformance and imitation are never innocent in *Naked Lunch*” (67) and continues by arguing that performance eventually replaces itself, the imitation absorbs and devours the original being (67). The creatures in *Naked Lunch* called Latahs function in a satirical fashion as discussed in The Simian section of this paper. They can only imitate and do not seem to have a mind of their own. In the instance in which the character El Hassein turns himself into a Latah when trying to perfect the A.O.P (Automatic Obedience Process) (Burroughs 20), the claim made by Lydenberg and the theory of self regulation within the Panopticon (201) established by Foucault becomes highly applicable. A person suffering from Automatic Obedience is “[m]echanically following instruction, often due to the unresponsiveness to external stimuli” (Grinnell). Automatic Obedience would be of high value to power since it would create a docile body that is not a threat to norms and order. In this satirical scene, El Hassein becomes the mimicking ape when trying to perfect the system and loses his self in that process. The loss of self reconnects with the previous statements made by Lydenberg since his self is devoured by a system that wants to create imitating individuals.

Furthermore, on the subject of identity and Latahs, Lydenberg discussed the way in which Burroughs abuses the “is of identity” which according to Lydenberg is to obliterate humanity so that the individual is reduced to a hungry orifice (63). Normalization imposes a homogeny (Foucault 184) as discussed in the previous section of this paper, and in *Naked Lunch* that homogeny can be seen in inter alia, the Latahs. They mimic reality, they do not
seem to have a will of their own and they are seen in a homogenous manner since they do not have separate personalities. Their humanity is obliterated due to their monkey-like behaviour.

Finally Lydenberg argues that the reader’s overall experience of *Naked Lunch* is based on being “exposed to the binary oppositions” (72) and experience the restrictions of naming (72). In connection to the work of Foucault, they are similarly convening the same message, to expose systems that function as restrictions. Thus the claim can be made that by revealing the normalization process with the aid of the simian one can see the restrictions the process creates. Since normalization creates categories that can be seen as the naming Lydenberg suggests. The article by Lydenberg becomes important when combined with Foucault since it picks up at a point that Foucault did not address. Lydenberg addresses the individual’s reactions to the system of naming, which can arguably be equivalent to Foucault’s notion of measuring. She addresses the reactions to binary oppositions and dismemberment. When exposing the system that restricts or creates binaries such as human/nonhuman or civilized/primitive one could begin to question how these restrictions affect the human, which the simian will show, and also question whether the binaries such as those mentioned must exist as oppositions.
Revealing the Simian

As seen in The Simian section of this paper, the simian has been the subject that reveals humans’ evil ways throughout history and it has taken on the role of what normalization wants to eliminate in order to create a civilized society. But what normalization and the Christian view imply to be negative aspects of the human must not necessarily be just that. Could one not argue that staying in touch with the uninhibited side of one’s self is not only healthy but necessary in order to feel fulfilled? With disciplinary mechanisms constantly surrounding the human, how long will it take until one reaches the boiling point? And what happens then? Even if not specifically addressed in this manner, what follows in this section will deal with these types of issues. By separating each instance where simians occur from other passages, the simian can be analyzed closely and therefore reveal the mechanisms that surround it.

To begin with, this paper will examine the character called Fats. This character reveals multiple ways in which he is being normalized. In one scene “‘Fats’ siphoned himself into The Plaza, a translucent-grey, foetal monkey, suckers on his little soft, purple-grey hands, and a lamphrey disk mouth of cold grey gristle lined with hollow, black, erectile teeth, feeling for the scar patterns of junk” (103). In this scene the imagery is eerie, with addiction twisting Fats into a needy monkey that has gone from a primate to a lamphrey disked cross breed, scratching at the scars his addiction has created, in the hope to score. Fats is a character that has learned the “algebra of need” and thus learned how to survive (Burroughs 103). In order for Fats to survive he has to sedate himself, to give in to power to the point of him becoming a “translucent-grey, foetal monkey” (103). His monkey body is subjugated to the limit where there seem to be no monkey-like traits left, but is rather revealing the features of a lamphrey. This connecting to Lydenberg’s argument regarding the hungry orifice and her example of the carny man (57): Fats is struggling with his body and mind (57). His monkey form is
translucent and foetal, this can be seen as his mind but he is docile due to his lamphrey mouth that only wants to feed. Fats has through his normalization process become docile (Foucault 306) and is not a threat to the civilized society. Observed by Lydenberg, she states that among other characters “the junky has no self left; he has only the empty and artificial imitation of a self projected by his blind need” (67).

Furthermore, in the same scene Fats has an episode of intense fear when a rich passerby stares at him which makes Fats roll “pissing and shitting in terror” (103) whilst eating his feces (103). An act such as this could be seen as an animalistic- or even simian-like behavior. By acting in this manner Fats displays his submissiveness, since it is a reaction to a signal as Foucault calls it (166). Signals are according to Foucault a type of command that in its brevity corrects or triggers certain behavior (154). According to this paper, the stare can viewed as a signal. The act of releasing his bowls and eating his excrement might not introduce the thought of the civilized behavior that normalization wishes to produce, but this instance illustrates an extreme form of docility since Fats demonstrates that he is no longer in control of one of the most basic human traits. He has given up his self-control to the degree of him not even controlling his bodily fluids.

Not only does this scene demonstrate the function of signals but it also demonstrates the duality of punishment and reward. The rich passerby that stares at the monster which is Fats is moved by “this tribute to his potent gaze and clicked a coin” (103). This paper argues that the gaze and reward strongly suggest a connection to the work of Foucault. Foucault argues that in “discipline, punishment is only one element of a double

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7 Coprophagic behavior has been found in chimpanzees (Hladik) and gorillas (Oxnard).
system: gratification-punishment” (180). Hence, in order for discipline to function so that normalization can be reached, one must reward more often than punish (Foucault 180). Fats evidently reveals the aftermath of normalization, a state wherein power is in no need to punish the subject, but only has to convey a particular look in order for the subject to understand the sign. In this, a subject is forced to always look for orders to come, who lives with the pressure of trying to act in a way he is supposed to, which in turn reveals the aftermath: the translucent simian. The imagery of Fats as a foetal monkey, eating his own feces creates a sense of hopelessness. He has completely given in to power that is symbolized by the rich passerby and shows his submissiveness by his actions on the ground. One knows that Fats has been disciplined to perfection since the passerby only has to impart an intense look in order for him to fumble on the ground, which is rewarded with a coin.

However, in the case of Fats’, the simian is also overrun by the need, and if you cannot beat them, join them.

So "Fats" learned to serve The Black Meat and grew a fat aquarium of body…. And his blank, periscope eyes swept the world's surface.... In his wake of addicts, translucent-grey monkeys flashed like fish spears to the junk Mark, and hung there sucking and it all drained back into "Fats" so his substance grew and grew filling plazas, restaurants and waiting rooms of the world with grey junk ooze.⁸ (103)

Fats becomes completely normalized and ends up serving and morphing into the system, here the system manifests itself as Black Meat (103). According to Naked Lunch, Black Meat is “like a tainted cheese, overpoweringly delicious and nauseating so that the eaters eat and vomit and eat again until they fall exhausted” (31). Black Meat has an addictive force that could be claimed to symbolize the need to fit in the normal society. The act of eating until one

⁸ William Burroughs uses ellipsis in various ways, in some instances they consists of three punctuation marks and four in others.
is vomiting shows how exhausting and painful it is to try to satisfy one’s need to fit in where parts of you has to be suppressed. Fats becomes so absorb by the idea of servitude that he morphs into a controlling mechanisms: he becomes the idea of constant surveillance (Foucault 201). This claim can be argued as such due to the shape he morphs into. Large periscope eyes (103) stand as a symbol of the central tower in the panopticon (Foucault 200) and his search for monkeys show how power is always in search for the abnormal. The more abnormality Fats’ periscope eyes find, the more the system has to expand. This manifesting itself in the growth of Fats who progressively starts filling “plazas, restaurants and waiting rooms” (103), the panopticon is soon existing everywhere.

Giving in to power and the discipline mechanisms manifests itself throughout the entire novel that is *Naked Lunch*. In the “Coke Bugs” chapter a young street-boy has through his “black scars of junk, retained a wild, broken innocence: shy animals peering out through grey arabesques of terror” (99). The junky named The Sailor who is a reappearing character, seduces the street-boy by appealing to his inner desire. At first he reveals a hypodermic needle (99) after which he says, “[s]it down and have a blueberry crumb pie on the expense account. Your monkey loves it… Make his coat glossy” (99). The Sailor is not referring to the pie itself but with his subtle revelation of his needle (99), he rather alludes to drugs. This is confirmed in the following chapter of the novel called “The Exterminator Does a Good Job”.

After the invitation to eat pie the boy “felt a touch on his arm across eight feet of the morning lunch room. He was suddenly siphoned into the booth, landing with an inaudible shlup” (99). The boy is acting as if an invisible force is pushing him towards which can be suggested to be the invisible force of power. In this case, the needle stands as a metaphor for the disciplinary mechanism: the force that draws him towards the needle is the need to in some way give in to the mechanism in order to not be considered abnormal. Whilst his
intoxication is final step that normalizes him, the boy’s eyes are still retaining a wild and animal-like gaze (99), a gaze that can be seen as threatening to a system that wants docile and measurable people. Foucault argues that mechanisms of power “are disposed around the abnormal individual, to brand him and to alter him” (199). In viewing the boy’s look one can argue that he is considered abnormal. Here, The Sailor can take on two roles. Firstly, he can be seen as the personification of power, since he distributes a mechanism close to the abnormal street-boy. Secondly, he can be viewed as the way modern power functions. By the latter statement, one can argue that power is embedded in the modern lives to such an extent that they correct themselves since in their measurable state they measure themselves to one another, letting power function automatically. The boy’s monkey, in this case, has not become the foetal one that has been seen in the previous case of Fats.

Furthermore, the monkey in this instance shows a mimicking aspect, the wish to imitate normality. By luring the monkey with what can be seen as the abnormal for power, one can argue that in this instance power has the view of monkeys or apes as Christianity has had as discussed in The Simian part of this essay. By luring out the monkey, by appealing to something it might find enchanting, power can point to what is abnormal and when pointed out it will be corrected, either by the use of signals or by the distribution of power mechanisms. Hence, the street boy will in his later act of consuming the drug sedate that part of himself: the part that to Christianity and here, power is the uninhibited and unrestrained humanity (Nevins 73). There are many similarities between the case of the street boy and Fats. The street boy reveals the process from the point of still retaining some animal-like and innocent gaze. Fats illustrates what can happen further down the line in the normalization process. The case of The Sailor and the street boy continues even further in the revealing the normalization process: it reveals the beginning of the creation of the docile body.

In the chapter that follows the scene just discussed the boy follows The Sailor to
an apartment where The Sailor offers him drugs in exchange for time, “’I have something you want’ … ‘You have something I want… five minutes here… an hour someplace else…
two…four…eight’” (101) this reflecting the use of time as a disciplinary mechanism
(Foucault 149). The boy displays just how unaware of power humans truly are, since he does not understand what The Sailor means by time.

"Mister, I don't know what you're talking about."

"You will, baby ... in time."

...

"Yeah, like . . ." He glanced at the package. "Whatever ... I accept" (101).

After injecting the boy with a drug, The Sailor tells him that “[j]unk is a one-way street. No U-turn. You can’t go back no more” (102), the boy learns that making his monkey’s coat glossy never comes for free.

Equally important is the fact that addiction or need, is evidently replacing the self in Naked Lunch. Lydenberg states that:

The junky is for Burroughs the archetypal "performer" trying to "maintain a human form" (NL, p. xxxviii) despite the monkey on his back. The human form he maintains, however, is a sham, an empty cellophane skin subject to collapse in a vacuum. The junky is’ “without body and without feeling’ " (NL, p. 24); he reports’ “absence of cerebral event”' (NL, p. 231). (67)

Even if Lydenberg views the monkey on the junkie’s back as a metaphor for drug addiction, this passage is still relevant for this paper. The performance that she writes of connects with the normalized human: he mimics reality, and he is disciplined to live without body or feeling in order to be a sufficient server. When discussing the aspect ‘without body’ this paper suggests that the subject has given in to the discipline mechanisms and thus let them shape him and not retaining the body in its original form, such as in the case of the losing of the
fangs (Burroughs 14) and therefore giving the impression of the mimicking ape.

In regards to the mimicking ape and the aspect ‘without body’ the creatures called Latahs are in their behavior very similar to simians in the mimicking ape convention since they “compulsively imitate every motion once their attention is attracted by snapping the fingers or calling sharply. A form of compulsive involuntary hypnosis” (20) and at instances they “imitate the passers-by with monkey-like obscenity” (23). Lydenberg describes the Latah as “a strange creature addicted to compulsive servility and imitation” (58). As in the Fats paragraph, one can see the power of signals (Foucault 166). With these characteristics in mind, it is evident that Latahs has reached the most satisfying state in their normalization since their attention is easily received with the help of subtle signals and that they are addicted to servility. Dr. Benway speaks of “El Hassein’ [who] turned himself into a Latah trying to perfect A.O.P., Automatic Obedience Processing” (20). As discussed in the Lydenberg section of this paper, a person that suffers from Automatic Obedience is described as “[m]echanically following instruction, often due to the unresponsiveness to external stimuli caused by catatonia” (Grinnell). El Hassein shows through his process of becoming a Latah, that when normalized, the human in question has been disciplined to the extent of a non-existing self. Foucault writes about the disciplined soldiers who “obey whatever he is ordered to do; his obedience is prompt and blind” (166). The non-existing self is a valuable attribute that connects the docile soldier and the monkey-like creatures.

In addition, the case of the Latahs shows how the monkey manifests itself in a satirical fashion. They stand as a metaphor for desired individual and satirizes the whole normalization process. This is not only a point to be made in Naked Lunch but is a general point when using simians in context of civilized society: they always seem to disrupt the rules. Power wants the person to behave in a manner that is modeled after what is considered normal and the most efficient. What is then more efficient than a creature mimicking one’s
every move in order to learn how to behave? However, what was discussed in the case of the Latah who hung his owner (43) in The Simian section shows that the outcome is not always necessarily in favor of power. It can become a satire in which the monkey-like creature reveals the flawed system. For it is a system that wants a docile body that can be altered and used, in doing so power pushes the individual to the edge of only mimicking reality and not living it. This reconnects with the words of Lydenberg: “[A]n empty cellophane skin subject to collapse in a vacuum”. It also connects with the words of the critic Herbert Gold who stated that *Naked Lunch* reveals the dark side of nature and that: “Civilization fails many; many fail civilization” (n.p). The simian aspect in the Latah has failed the normalization process, and the normalization process has failed the simian, or what can be seen as the human.

However, not all of *Naked Lunch*’s inhabitants are victims of the controlling mechanisms but seem to function as the personification of that system. A.J is a character that does not appear to behave in a consistent way. In his work “Intersection Points: Teaching William Burroughs’s *Naked Lunch*” Timothy Murphy describes the A.J. as “the most important example in *Naked Lunch* of the ubiquitous double agent, whose allegiance … cannot be determined with certainty” (91). On page 77 of *Naked Lunch*, the character A.J and his entourage visits a night club, here several events occur between A.J. and his pet baboon. At first, A.J. is trying to convince the manager of the club that the baboon he has linked on a gold chain is, in fact, an “Illyrian poodle”. After being denied entrance with his baboon A.J and his entourage go to another night club which they enter. Suddenly A.J screams at the baboon for defecating on the floor and uses his whip and “cuts the baboon across the ass”. The baboon goes mad and A.J. pardons to a dead lady saying “Sorry, lady. Discipline you

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9 “Illyrian poodle” (77). An Illyrian Poodle could be seen as a mixed breed dog, this due to fact that Illyrian Sheepdog is a breed that derives from ancient Illyria (*Simon & Schuster's Guide to Dogs* 67). Its personality is “bold, attentive” and is only obedient to one master. It is used to protect sheep and can “fight as an equal with wolves” (67). The poodle on the other hand is known for its intelligence, sensitivity and trainability (263). One might find that a crossbreed of these two would become useful in the eyes of power.
know”. The baboon screams and defecates in terror because A.J. continues to hit him. The mysterious character Stooge says to the baboon that “[y]ou ought to be ashamed of yourself upsettin’ A.J after all he’s done for you”.

This specific case demonstrates the older notions of punishment in connection to Foucault’s chapter called “The Spectacle of the Scaffold” where physical punishment, torture and executions are discussed. It is a physical punishment and not the subtle one we see today. The baboon is functions as the symbol of uninhibited, unrestrained humanity (Nevins 73). He is kept on a gold chain that reveals the restriction which could be seen as Panopticism (Foucault 200). The simian is continuously visible and manageable, acting in the way the guard wants him to. However, the simian goes mad, his restraint, his physical beatings do not make him obey but rather revolt against the leader. To A.J this could be an unnatural reaction but as McCarthy stated in her review of Naked Lunch called “Dejeuner Sur L’Herbe” “self-control … is an internalized system of authority, a subjection of the impulse to the will, the least “natural” part of the personality” (n.p.). The least natural part of our personality, which in this case, is manifested in both A.J and the gold chain who offers the simian a chance to show self-control but instead the baboon does what comes more naturally: he felt the need to defecate, and so he did. This upsets the disciplinary power, who is trying to create “useful individuals” (Foucault 211) and thus results in an act of violence, trying to train the baboon in the manners of self-control. As discussed in the theory section regarding Foucault, power is abstract and the difficulty to place A.J, the disciplinary, shows the abstract way in which power functions. One might argue that Fats’ act of defecating is equal to the instance found here. This is however not true due to the fact that in Fats’ case he received a signal that triggered that behavior. In the case of A.J. and his baboon, this behaviour was not provoked by the leader and therefore it is seen as disobedience.

However, Leif the Unlucky (89) a character that has not given in to the
submissive nature, is a character that has consistently tried to succeed in life, but failed in all respects. He has tried his hand at raising frogs, Siamese fighting fish and chinchillas (89), among other things he tried to promote a “Love Bird Two-in-a-coffin Cemetery, to corner the condom market during the rubber shortage” and “to issue penicillin as a patent medicine” (89) but all of it failed. Leif’s unfortunate attempts to succeed in business are only outmatched by his mischances in his personal life. Vultures have picked out an eye, his teeth have been stomped out and a Greek surgeon goofed and sewed up a live monkey in him (89).

Leif is the human that represents a technological utopia, a utopia where power has no concern for the human subject. Lydenberg states that “all surgery is a power play, an oppressive regulation of the body or mind, and its purpose is clearly to control rather than to liberate the individual” (61). The fact that the surgeon made a mistake when sewing up a live monkey into Leif reveals engaging points of analysis. Leif has been through the most horrendous things one can and cannot imagine. He has been “gangfucked by the Arab attendants ... a self-righteous English doctor cured him [of clap] with an enema of hot, sulphuric acid … and the German practitioner of technological Medicine … removed his appendix with a rusty can opener” (89). The German practitioner did not stop there, but decided to remove other parts of Leif which he considered to be unnecessary (89). Leif’s misfortune can be seen as a metaphor for the development that has taken place and that has been described by Foucault throughout his chapter “The Body of the Condemned”. In this chapter Foucault discusses the aspect of moving from executions and further on to punishments. However, what happens when the system fails? When it is not sufficient enough to control and normalize all the people, and in some cases forces the suppressed characteristics of the uninhibited human to revolt against the restriction? On one hand the simian metaphors that have been discussed reveal that to the normalization process, the mimicking ability of the simian seems desired, but it has also proven to bring consequences
with it as seen in the example of the Latah who mimicked every move of his owner, ultimately leading to the hanging of the mentioned owner (Burroughs 43).

Moreover, the misfortunes in the life of Leif are not only functioning as a metaphor for the development from physical punishment to self-regulation but he is also receiving actual punishment. It has been a reappearing argument that the simian from the beginning is seen as abnormal according to power. Leif’s choices in life have, on a metaphorical level, challenged control systems. He has tried to gain control over different markets and this upsets power which wants him to be docile. In order to create a docile body Leif is being punished by power and his punishment is in the form of torture. Fiona Paton states “Burroughs's preoccupation with physical disease is the source of some of the novel's most sickening imagery. As with his tropes of monstrosity, the targets of such imagery are often those who abuse power, or control systems more generally” (53). Leif is therefore brutally exposed to heinous events as a punishment. The simian in this connection shows how he is being placed as an abnormal. By giving him a monkey, he is categorized as the abnormal and can later on be altered by disciplinary mechanisms. Leif’s physical subjection to power touches upon the subject of the docile bodies (Foucault 135) and how they are shaped and altered. However, Leif’s subjection to torture is not the only case in the novel that shows Foucault’s notion of the docile body.

Lydenberg observes:” The common goal of all political parties in Naked Lunch, whether by proliferation or reduction, is to replace all individuality with total uniformity” (62). Uniformity is a condition that is particularly evident in certain areas of society, one of which is in the military. As mentioned in the Lydenberg section of this paper, Burroughs describes a disorder that reads as follows: “A simopath -- the technical name for this disorder escapes me – is a citizen convinced he is an ape or other simian. It is a disorder peculiar to the army, and discharge cures it” (23). Linking the docile body of Foucault and the statement
made by Lydenberg to Burroughs’ simopath reveals a process of alteration of the body to produce a disciplined mass. In the chapter “Docile Bodies” Foucault discusses that prior to the classical ages, soldiers were born soldiers, but by the eighteenth century the realization that soldiers could be made became apparent (135). In the other cases in this paper, it has been shown that the simians do indeed stand as a metaphor for the normalized human and this case is not any different. All types of humans are taken into the military, shaped to the most efficient form, placed in their proper position and normalized, what happens then is the occurrence of the disorder that is only cured by discharge. Hence, the only way to effectively remove the disorder from oneself is to be discharged from the whole normalization system.

Furthermore, in regards to the docile body that has been shaped and altered in order to be the most effective and useful, Foucault writes that “[t]he human body was entering a machinery of power that explores it, breaks it down and rearranges it” (138). With this in mind, viewing the instance in Naked Lunch where the so-called Huntsmen are gathering to eat breakfast at The Swarm Bar (68) suggests the shaping of a body that Foucault argues. They are drinking Victory Punch which is served from a “great, hollow, gold baboon, crouched in snarling terror, snapping at a spear in his side” (68). If one “twist the baboon’s balls” punch runs out of his phallus, and once in a while hot hors-d’oeuvres “pop out the baboon’s ass with a loud farting noise” (68): This pleases the Huntsmen since they “roar with bestial laughter” (68). This particular baboon’s body has indeed been broken down and reshaped as suggested by Foucault. The name of the punch creates irony that further pushes the baboon into a docile state where its body serves as a bowl for victory. Just like the soldiers mentioned previously, this baboon has been altered so that he can fit the needs that are required from him and make the most use of his body.

However, there is one character in the novel that seems to suggest that even by the altering and the shaping by the norms that exist: our inner simian can never truly be
Dr. Benway is the recurring character who seems to have no conscience and is more interested in surgical performance rather than the well-being of his patients. He recalls an incident when he is in a scalpel fight with his colleague in the operating room and his “baboon assistant leaped on the patient and tore him to pieces. Baboons always attack the weakest party in an altercation. Quite right too. We must never forget our glorious simian heritage” (20). Rather than attacking the one who is trying to injure or maybe even kill Dr. Benway, the baboon chooses to attack the weakest one. This could be occurring due to the fact that the baboon is in a position where it does not know how to react. In the normalization process, the individual is affected by several different controlling mechanisms (Foucault 149) in the incident recalled by Dr. Benway it is his colleague he is in an altercation with. The baboon has indeed been subjected to discipline by the colleague and does not feel that an attack against him would be justifiable due to its submissive position. In other instances, the baboons offer themselves for passive intercourse in order to resolve conflict (Burroughs 46).

According to Hipkins and Plain, who wrote *War-torn Tales: Literature, Film and Gender in the Aftermath of World War II*, the baboon’s behavior in *Naked Lunch* is a conceit that shows the most rudimentary and determinative possibilities for responding to the power operations (233). The reaction can be seen as the subject knowing that something has been done in the wrong way and willingly accepts his punishment. The behavior also replies to the automatic obedience that has been discussed in this paper, which in its turn relates back to Foucault’s notion of power functioning automatically in the Panopticon (201) due to its power to convey a sense of constant surveillance.

Furthermore, the statement: “We must never forget our glorious simian heritage” (20) is in an ironical fashion. What can then be understood here is that even if humans might think that its species is glorious in ways such as intelligence and civilized manner, it is not. Since this essay has until this point only found negative effects of the
normalization process, Dr. Benway’s statement could therefore suggest that it does not matter how much one tries to eliminate the raw and uninhibited human, he will still remain wild and dark.

Finally, the described episodes from *Naked Lunch* do, on the surface, not appear as elaborate and sophisticated as the power mechanisms to which Foucault dedicated an entire book. However, as Foucault has stated “[v]isibility is a trap” (200), the human’s visibility and the invisibility of power bring negative results with it. The simians in *Naked Lunch* demonstrate this quite well. What certainly looks as insane characters is in fact only a reacting against what is perceived as sane in the aspect of the modern society. This reaction, demonstrated by the simians, is arguable a good one. Disciplinary mechanisms function in many ways which has been confirmed by viewing the different cases in the novel, but regardless of the levels they exist on, regardless of the methods they are exposed to, they all share a similar result. They are no longer the humans that they were, or might have been, prior to the exposure to the system. The simians have taken on several different types of roles in *Naked Lunch*: they are all on different levels of the normalization process. Hence, the simians reveal the different stages that humans go through in the process and therefore make us question what types of mechanisms are hindering us from being unrestrained humans. As stated by Paton, *Naked Lunch* “asks readers to scan themselves for signs of the crippling passivity” (65).
Conclusion

The simians that have received attention in this paper have proven to be highly significant in the connection to the theories established by Foucault. The creature has truly shown its metaphorical role, it stands in for the entire emotional life, the unrestrained human’s reaction to the mechanisms imposed on him. The simian has been placed, in the eyes of power, as a symbol of the abnormal that resonates with the Christian view of simians as a symbol of the evil characteristics humans should learn to control. However, what has been evident is that in the controlling of these aspects the person is pushed to a limit where he loses his self.

One might at first see the distant world of Naked Lunch as a window into the mind of the abnormal human. But with the use of the simian, the formerly distant world has become a world that shares resemblance with our own. Light has been shed on what has been perceived as abnormal and thus questioned what abnormality truly is. By viewing the simian as a metaphor for the levels humans go through in the normalization process what has thus far laid hidden is now in the visible spectra. The normalization process is a system of mechanisms that are disposed around the abnormal in order to render him docile. The characters have been proven to exist within different levels of that process: Fats unveiled the signal system to that of Foucault and also demonstrated what happens when the individual is eventually joining the system. Other characters such as the Latahs have satirized the entire process in order to show the negative impact the system has on humans and how the normalization process can fool itself.

Furthermore, no matter how much humans are measured and put into their specific place in the hierarchy, the mechanisms are not diverse enough to make this a successful process. This paper does not however point to the direction of a lawless society, but rather to serve as an eye opener that reveals the everyday disciplinary mechanisms that we do not see. What should be done in order to change society into a place where living
uninhibited and yet within some form of confinement is a question that is far too large for this paper.

Finally, *Naked Lunch* questions binaries, society and what is perceived as normal. In connection to the simian one learns that the denial of our heritage, of our uninhibited human, the result is never good. It leads to dismemberment and a symbolical death of one’s self. Humans derive from nature and in the light of the different outcomes of the normalization process one could question why man feels such a need to separate himself from it. Therefore, man’s simian heritage should not be forgotten nor pushed aside, but rather function as a reminder of the cost of what being a civilized man is.
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