

A FOUCAULDIAN RESPONSE TO THE PROBLEMS OF OVERPOPULATION AND
STARVATION

A thesis submitted to the faculty of
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In Partial Fulfillment of
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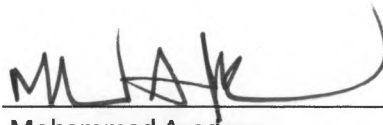
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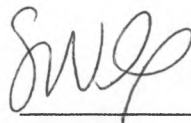
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May 2015

CERTIFICATION OF APPROVAL

I certify that I have read *A Foucauldian Response to the Problems of Overpopulation and Starvation* by Zeeshan Nadirshah Ladak, and that in my opinion this work meets the criteria for approving a thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree: Masters of Arts in Philosophy at San Francisco State University.



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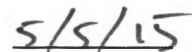
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This thesis project proposes an examination of the poverty and overpopulation debate through Foucault's later work (his ethics). My emphasis will be on Foucault's critique of the disciplinary bio-power of Western globalism and his advocacy of a cultivation of a self that is compassionate and firm in an attempt to address the problems of overpopulation and starvation. I will also analyze contemporary views put forward by Garrett Hardin and Amartya Sen and show that Foucault's approach which aligns more with Sen's solution offers us a more viable solution to the problems of poverty and overpopulation compared to Hardin's.

I certify that the Abstract is a correct representation of the content of this thesis



Chair, Thesis Committee



Date

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A Foucauldian Response to the Problems of Overpopulation and Starvation

General Introduction and Summary

Garett Hardin and Amartya Sen have put forward opposing views regarding the issues of overpopulation and starvation in the third world. Hardin claims that first world nations can and should control the population growth in the third world by using firm social and economic pressures. Sen on the other hand advocates a collaborative approach and claims that developed nations should act as collaborative allies who are willing to help and assist but not discipline the third world by using coercive practices. In this thesis, my aim is to spell out Foucault's ethics in a way which will lead us to a Foucauldian view on the overpopulation and starvation issues in the third world. I will argue that, *pace* Hardin and Sen a Foucauldian approach to the problems of overpopulation and starvation will lead to a solution which is compassionate.

Hardin's argument hinges on the idea that developed nations ought to come up with solutions to the overpopulation problem in under developed countries. Sending foreign aid in the form of food is not solving the problem but adding to it. By providing food we are simply allowing families in the third world to continue to grow exponentially because this is adding to the tragedy of the commons. Hardin's solution is to provide aid in the form of luxuries and contraceptives but not in the form of food. His

approach is firm and forceful since it relies on using social and economic pressures to control population growth. Sen on the other hand does some work to show us that overriding approaches are not always the most effective in terms of results. Such approaches are seen as intrusive by native populations and they also face a lot of skepticism and resistance. Sen thinks that using social and economic pressures to control population is unethical and ineffective.

Based on my analysis of Foucault's ethics I will argue that Foucault's view on these issues will employ an approach which is compassionate. This compassion will come from looking at the historical injustices that third world nations have faced in the form of European colonization. As citizens of affluent western nations we have benefitted from the colonization of non-western nations and upon recognizing such facts we will need to cultivate the virtue of compassion towards the problems of overpopulation and starvation in the third world.

More on Foucault's Ethics

Foucault's Ethics is a Virtue ethics: Traditionally virtue ethics has been defined as the area of ethics which focuses on the cultivation of virtues or positive character traits. The purpose of cultivating such virtues is to help the virtuous agent to adapt and understand the requirements of the situation and thereby act accordingly. Due to conditioning and habituation the virtuous agent becomes master of himself and acts based on the

requirements of the situation. Foucault's ethics of care of the self is a virtue ethics of this sort. Since it focuses on the self's relation to itself and cultivation of virtues by way of engaging in ascetic practices. Unlike utilitarian and deontological forms of ethics, virtue ethics in general tends to focus on the agent rather than the consequences of actions or any moral imperatives or duties. Also in virtue ethics there is an emphasis on the agent's mental attitudes towards a particular situation. For example someone might engage in a generous act of helping their friend financially, out of a sense of duty. To the deontologist it may not be an issue of significant concern whether this act of generosity was done grudgingly or not; as long as the act was done with a strong sense of duty. For the virtue ethicist on the other hand it would make a significant difference whether the act of generosity was done with the right mental attitude or not.

The brief distinction I mentioned above was between act-centered theories of ethics and agent-centered theories of ethics. However this idea of putting a strong emphasis on having the appropriate mental attitude is central to all forms of virtue ethics including Foucault's brand of virtue ethics. As mentioned before I will be focusing on Foucault's virtue ethics because I think it would be most beneficial to my analysis of the overpopulation and starvation debates. Foucault's emphasis on bio-powers and ascetic practices that an agent has to put himself through in order to adapt to the requirements of the situation can tie in well with such a contemporary issue in applied ethics. Also the mental attitudes and character traits which need to be developed in

order to understand and address these issues in a modern globalized economy. In order to use Foucault's ethics for my project I will attempt to spell out Foucault's ethical fourfold.

Foucault's Ethical Fourfold

1. Ethical Substance
2. Mode of Subjection
3. Self-Forming activity
- 4 The Ideal

1. The Ethical Substance: According to Foucault this is the first aspect of relation to oneself. It is interested in answering the question: Which is the aspect or part of myself or part of my behavior which is concerned with moral conduct? In the *Use of Pleasure* Foucault elaborates on this subject, he states,

"They concern what might be called the determination of the ethical substance; that is the way in which the individual has to constitute this or that part of himself as the prime material of his moral conduct". (*Use of Pleasure*, page 26). This 'prime material' is the ethical substance. This idea of ethical substance is also stated by Foucault in some of his interviews.

In his *Genealogy of Ethics* for example,

"Question: The ethical substance is like that material which will be worked over by ethics?

Foucault: Yes that's it" (Foucault, *Genealogy of Ethics*, page 238) ³

By affirming the interviewer's view of the ethical substance we get an insight into what Foucault means by the ethical substance. It is the raw material, the input which will be processed and refined into something that is a solid finished product. I would sum it up simply by saying that the ethical substance which is to be worked on is the 'self' or what the ancients would refer to as 'soul'.

2. Mode of Subjection: The mode of subjection is the way in which an individual establishes his relations to moral obligations and rules. Foucault describes this in *The Use of Pleasure* by analyzing the attitudes of the ancient Greeks towards sexual practices. Foucault writes, "the differences can also have to do with the way in which the individual establishes his relation to the rule and recognizes himself as obliged to put it into practice" (Use of Pleasure, page 27). For example one may accept a particular behavior towards ones sexual partner because his culture or society thinks that particular attitude is socially and morally acceptable. This is the second aspect of relation to oneself. Again this may be relative to the individual and the culture in which he exists but Foucault describes it as "The way in which people are invited or incited to recognize their moral obligations" (Foucault, Pg 239) ³. Foucault then uses the example of divine law which is revealed in religious scriptures and plays the role of a mode of subjection. The Bible for example mentions the Ten Commandments and a Christian who reads the Bible regularly and accepts it as the word of God may accept the Ten

Commandments because they are mentioned in the Bible. In this case we can say that a religious scripture such as the Bible may be a mode of subjection for many Christians for accepting certain beliefs.

3. Self-forming activity: In *The Use of Pleasure* Foucault writes, “There are also possible differences in the forms of elaboration, of ethical work that one performs on oneself, not only in order to bring one’s conduct into compliance with a given rule, but to attempt to transform oneself into the ethical subject of one’s behavior” (The Use of Pleasure, page 27). As mentioned that the Self-forming activity is the work that one performs on oneself in order to transform oneself into an ethical subject”. Here we are asking questions such as; what are we to do? Should we moderate our acts? Should we eliminate particular desires which have undesirable consequences? In a way this third aspect of relation to the self includes an element of working on the self, training the self, conditioning the self to act in a morally appropriate manner. Foucault uses the example of a married man and says “In order to be faithful to your wife you can do different things to yourself” (Foucault, Pg 239)³. Foucault refers to this self-forming activity as ‘ascetics’ in a broad sense. This aspect of relation to the self is one that I am most interested in for my project and I will be making detailed connections between ‘ascetics’ and its importance in the overpopulation and starvation debate.

4. The Ideal: The ideal is described by Foucault describes as the 'Telos'. In *The Use of Pleasure*, he writes, "A moral action tends toward its own accomplishment; but it also aims beyond the latter, to the establishing of a moral conduct that commits an individual, not only to other actions always in conformity to values and rules, but to a certain mode of being characteristic of the ethical subject". (The Use of Pleasure, page 28)⁴. The mode of being that one aspires to reach is 'The Ideal' or the Telos. Davidson describes it as: "The mode of being at which one aims in behaving ethically" (Davidson, Pg 118)². This Telos is the improvisation artist or (if you wish to use Neo-Aristotelian terminology) the virtuous agent that one aspires to become. He is the ultimate goal, the one who is vigilant, well trained and conditioned in adapting himself to the situation and getting things right. This fourth aspect of relation to the self is in the business of asking the question: Which is the kind of moral being we aspire to become? For example shall we aim to become pure, free, immortal, or master of ourselves and so on.

My Argument

In the first premise of my argument I would like to state that in order to address the overpopulation and starvation problem in an ethical and efficient way we need to employ an approach which is compassionate. By compassionate I mainly mean addressing the situation with a certain amount of softness for the populations of underdeveloped nations. Compassion should be cultivated because of the historical

injustices that such nations have endured in the past. By historical injustices I am mainly referring to colonization by colonizing nations of the 17th and 18th centuries. The effects of such colonization are faced by these nations even today and this can be seen in their underdeveloped economies. Poor standards of living, lack of health care and lack of education are some of the side effects of having such underdeveloped economies.

Hardin's view and The Foucauldian Response to Hardin's view

In his paper Hardin explains the tragedy of the commons in the following way,

1. *If a herdsman were to increase the size of his herd by one, then the benefit of that increase would be shared by him alone. That's the positive component of the increase by one.*
2. *On the other hand, the burden of this increase will be shared by all herdsmen, because their cattle will now have a little less grass to graze on.*

In other words the profit is reaped by one individual but the liability is split among all members of the group. If we speak in terms of human population we can say that "we have one more mouth to feed", and in a world where space is finite and agricultural capacities are being stretched to the limit, feeding one more is becoming more and more difficult to do. Hence, providing aid in the form of food is doing nothing but adding fuel to the fire. Instead developed nations should be creative and effective in the form of aid that they send to third world countries. For example, luxuries are important because they can provide a form of motivation to poor people to strive for a better life and give them some hope and something to look forward to. Contraceptives, of course

will help control birth rates and knowledge of the contraceptives, such as their importance, usefulness etc., along with the increasing effects of overpopulation should be taught to poor people living in overpopulated countries. Hardin also advocates the use of incentives to young women for not getting pregnant at an early age. In other words, he thinks that the developed world should take charge of the situation and enforce such strategies because we should not hope to produce a society at the mercy of heavy breeders, since that does nothing but add to the tragedy of the commons. And hence, Hardin concludes that; we should send foreign aid to third world countries in the form of luxuries, contraceptives and knowledge and not in the form of food.

The point to keep in mind that when this idea of tragedy of the commons is extended into the poverty and overpopulation debate we see the importance that is given to one's own self-interest in this entire process. For instance if a poor farmer in a third world nation decides to have more than six children, one would say: "that far exceeds the average" but if you were to ask the farmer his reason for having six children the answer would be based on his own selfish need for survival. The more children he has the more financial support he will have when he gets old. His children will of course have children of their own but they will also be under the obligation to care for their aging parents. So reproduction to a farmer is a selfish need. It simply means that population growth in third world nations is a never ending cycle which leads to an exponential growth in the family size. The tragedy of the commons is also seen as a big

reason for concern because the reproducers in many cases are aware of the harm that they are causing to the environment collectively but it is in their selfish interest to do so.

The Foucauldian approach would be to argue that there is a way out, but we need to put in an effort to find that way. Using force and being a part of the socio-political bio power which has constantly abandoned and abused third world nations is not a solution to the problem. Many nations (not all) which currently face the problems of overpopulation and starvation were once colonized and ruled by European Colonial nations. This colonization caused the collection and transfer of various types of taxes from the colonized nation to the colonizing nation in the 17th and 18th centuries. Consider the British rule over India which lasted for almost 200 years from the year 1757 to 1947. For example agricultural taxes and income taxes of peasants and farmers who grew rice, wheat and barley on their land would be sent to the Queen of England. As this money was taken out of circulation from the Indian economy, it (the Indian economy) grew weaker as the English economy grew stronger during the 1800's. Besides money itself the English colonizers had taken advantage of their rule over India to gain access to various spices, crops and jewels which were in abundantly found in India. As a result, after the British rule ended in 1947 India had no strong form of organized government and it had a weak economy.

In order to show this Laxmi Iyer in her paper *Long-Term Impact of Colonial Rule: Evidence from India*, does comparative research to show the differential impact of British colonialism on areas which were directly ruled by the British versus areas (princely states) which were indirectly controlled by the British. The question she attempts to answer is stated by her as follows:

“The precise question I answer is: given that the British established a colonial state in India, did it have a differential long-term effect on areas they directly controlled compared to the areas which they did not directly control?” (Iyer)⁵

Her question is a sociological one and not necessarily a philosophical one but I think it can illustrate the point that I am trying to make in this paper, that a colonized nation such as India continues to experience the negative effects of colonization even today. Her research shows that, the British did not directly rule all of India but chose to rule most parts of India which received heavy rainfall, had fertile soil which would allow for growing crops which were in demand. Also as a result of that the British invested a lot in agriculture because selling crops grown on Indian soil to other countries was a major source of revenue for the British (besides the taxes collected from the Indian farmers and landowners). These types of crops are often referred to as cash crops. On the other hand the British did not invest in public goods such as hospitals, schools, universities, libraries and so on. This is mainly because investments in public goods were not seen as profit-making ventures by the British Empire. As a result of this post-colonial India (especially during the 1960's and 1970's) has faced severe poverty, illiteracy and

rapid population growth in parts of India which were directly controlled by the British Empire.

Once these historical injustices are taken into account; what would a Foucauldian approach to the overpopulation and starvation problems be? I think based on my analysis of Foucault's view on ascetics the solution would be based on teaching and not on coercion. I say this because many westerners such as Hardin think that populations of the third world are uncivilized and do not understand the true meaning of life. According to them the third world populations think of life as mere biological survival and have an animal-like existence. This is a detached way of looking at these issues faced by the third world. A Foucauldian perspective would be inclined to argue that we (westerners) have played a significant part in taking away their humanity and putting them in this circle of animal-like existence. It is because we continue to benefit from the historical injustices that such nations have faced in the past and that is why Hardin's approach is problematic because it seems to look at the situation in its present state and fails to consider historical injustices. It makes Hardin's approach one-dimensional and short sighted but the Foucauldian approach would encourage us to look at the situation as a whole in its entirety. This will cause us to see ourselves as a big part of the problem and will cause us to see ourselves in the suffering of third world nations. Such vigilance and awareness will lead us to cultivate a compassionate approach to such problems.

I think a Foucauldian virtue ethicist who has assessed this situation and understood the historical injustices that third world nations have faced would transform himself. He would do that by first engaging in a rational dialogue with himself and would accept that the benefits of colonization in the 17th and 18th centuries have benefitted him in many ways even today and how poverty and illiteracy in the third world as a result of colonization is effecting someone in a third world country even today.

Sen's View

Sen's view which advocates a compassionate approach is seen as compassionate and not firm. This is because in Sen's view the first world nations seem to have no control in the process of change in the third world. In his view the process of change is entirely controlled by the men and women of third world nations. The role of the first world nations is to assist and engage in rational discussions with nations of the third world and by way of collaboration help in alleviating (O & S) issues. Engaging in a dialogue with these populations causes reasoned human action to take its course and change takes place voluntarily without resistance. When the native population is on board and truly understands the effects of overpopulation on the environment, there will be less resistance and skepticism and they will be truly invested in the project. In other words we ought to be more Socratic in our approach and less authoritarian. That is why Sen thinks the collaborative approaches are not only effective but are ethical

since they respect the spirit of humanity. According to Sen the process of change should have a very high regard for the voluntarism of young men and women who live in underdeveloped nations. Overriding their rights to reproduce and their voluntarism using social and economic pressures is unethical and will be ineffective in Sen's view.

Foucauldian view on Overpopulation and Starvation

Based on my analysis of Foucault's ethics I will argue that Foucault's view on these issues will employ an approach which is compassionate and will be in line with Sen's view. This compassion will come from looking at the historical injustices that third world nations have faced in the form of colonization of third world nations. As citizens/residents of affluent western nations we have benefitted from the colonization of non-western nations and upon recognizing such facts we will need to cultivate the virtue of compassion towards the problems of overpopulation and starvation in the third world.

In his later work Foucault turns to the idea of government. What does it mean to govern oneself and moreover what does it mean to govern others? These questions become the central subjects of his ethics of 'Care of the self'. Foucault writes more about his views on government in his work titled *The Subject and the Truth*

"Basically power is less a confrontation between two adversaries or the linking of one to the other than a question of government. This word must be allowed the very broad meaning which it had in the sixteenth century. "Government" did not refer only to political structures or to the management of states; rather it

designated the way in which the conduct of individuals or of groups might be directed: the government of children, of souls, of communities, of families, of the sick. It did not only cover the legitimately constituted forms of political or economic subjection, but also modes of action, more or less considered and calculated, which were destined to act upon the possibilities of action of other people. To govern, in this sense, is to structure the possible field of action of others. The relationship proper to power would not therefore be sought on the side of violence or of struggle, nor on that of voluntary linking (all of which can, at best, only be the instruments of power), but rather in the area of the singular mode of action, neither warlike nor juridical, which is government”.

This way looking at the concept of power in the framework of government can lead to many interpretations of Foucault’s view. But one thing is made very clear in the quote mentioned above, that “government involves structuring and normalizing the fields of actions of others”. If the first world nations are to be seen as the dominant entities enforcing bio powers then what we are essentially saying is that they have the task of governing, that is of normalizing and structuring a particular way of being for the nations of the third world. This would involve setting up policies which would normalize the populations of the third world and cause their population growth to stabilize and not grow at an enormous rate. The question is whether those policies should be coercive or compassionate?

I claim that these policies will not be coercive based on historical injustices inflicted on third world nations and these historical injustices mainly revolve around European imperialism of the 17th & 18th centuries. Many alarmist views such as Hardin’s claim that populations of the third world are caught in a circle of animal-like existence and do not understand the true meaning of life. This is a detached way of looking at these issues faced by the third world. A Foucauldian perspective would be inclined to

argue that we (westerners) have played a significant part in taking away their humanity and putting them in this circle of animal-like existence. It is because we continue to benefit from the historical injustice that such nations have faced in the past and that is why Hardin's approach is problematic because it seems to look at the situation in its present state and fails to consider historical injustices.

The Foucauldian approach will not be an overly compassionate and collaborative approach. For Foucault there will be an emphasis on the idea of voluntarism (by voluntarism I mainly mean the idea that first world nations should not override the reproductive rights of the third world nations and let them voluntarily decide for themselves) in the process, however it will not involve giving up total control to the nations of the third world but it will center on striking a balance between a full blown voluntarism for third world populations and a full blown strategy to use coercive approaches by first world nations. The way to approach this situation is not as an overly compassionate ally and not as a firm disciplinarian, but as a teacher-philosopher who cares about the well-being of the misguided other.

The differences between Sen's approach (which I will explain further down) and Foucault's approach will arise when we factor in Foucault's emphasis on the concept of '*Parrhesia*'. '*Parrhesia*' is a Greek word which is often translated as truth-telling or frankness. This idea of truth telling stems from compassion and love for the other, its

main purpose is to give critical feedback in order to correct and guide the other. The central idea of being a '*Parrhesiastes*' is to be a teacher-philosopher who teaches out of a sense of compassion for the student.

Foucault's view on compassion and love for the other is explained in his analysis of the relationships between men and boys described in Ancient Platonic dialogues. Foucault is putting an emphasis on the importance of rational dialogues and these rational dialogues can be seen as an exercise in which the master is not only making an attempt to care for himself but he is helping the one who is under an illusion. The master does this out of love and out of an inclination to care for the other's soul.

Foucault writes,

"Unlike the teacher he is not concerned with teaching aptitudes or abilities to the person he guides: he does not teach him how to speak or how to prevail over others, etcetera. The Master is the person who cares about the subject's care for himself, and who finds in his love for his disciple the possibility of caring for the disciple's care for himself". (HoS , pg 59).¹

This is how Foucault describes Platonic love and this is his description of the disinterested love that Socrates had for Alcibiades. The word disinterested simply means that Socrates did not care for Alcibiades's body and appearance but he cared for Alcibiades's soul. Foucault endorses this form of love and compassion in Plato's dialogues. Hence, based on Foucault's analysis of the relationship between Socrates and Alcibiades I am inclined to say that a Foucauldian approach will be compassionate and

will not endorse viewing the first world as being an ally but being a teacher-philosopher who seeks the well-being of the other.

The Foucauldian Solution

The Foucauldian View summarized: The Foucauldian view has two major elements,

1. Coercive techniques for controlling population growth are unacceptable. We need to approach the situation with compassion.
2. A certain amount of firmness and frankness is required in our approach. First world nations need to play a more active role if we wish to bring about change in the current situation. Our role should not only be of allies but of teacher/allies.

Besides these basic approaches the Foucauldian view would also take into account the way in which the self is viewed by third world and first world nations. I earlier mentioned that third world nations have been subjected to historical injustices by nations which we now call first world nations. And this has caused them to become a people who are concerned with life as being a 'game of selfish biological survival'. And I also mentioned that they have a mistaken view of the self. The Foucauldian approach would encourage the freeing of such populations. And it is freedom not only from their problems but a freedom from themselves and from their hegemonic and circular ways

of thinking which are almost entirely concerned with biological survival. With regard to this idea of freedom Foucault mentions in an interview titled “The Ethics of Freedom”,

“I am not trying to say that liberation as such, in this or that form does not exist: when a colonized people attempts to liberate itself from its colonizers, this is indeed a practice of liberation in the strict sense. But we know very well and moreover in this specific case that this practice of liberation is not in itself sufficient to define the practices of freedom that will still be needed, if this people, this society, and these individuals are to be able to define admissible and accessible forms of existence or political society”. (Foucault, The Ethics of Freedom).⁹

The most important point to keep in mind, in exegesis of this passage is simply this; liberating colonized nations by decolonizing them is one thing but liberating them from their ways of thinking is the essence of true freedom. This is why Foucault focuses on practices of freedom rather than liberation itself. Foucault thinks that the idea of ascetics or the idea of engaging in ascetic spiritual practices to free the self from itself is needed; transformation of the self is needed. In the process of this transformation one would be required to give a higher priority to the welfare of the nation as a whole and then care for his own biological and selfish needs. Humanizing and understanding that there is more to life than just biological survival is very important. This way of examining and understanding the meaning and purpose of life is extremely crucial to overcoming the hegemonic and never ending cycle of overpopulation and starvation because the aim is to become a people who are free not only from their colonizers but to transform back into their true self. The true self is rational, pure and free from selfish passions, prejudices and biases: that is the telos according to the Foucauldian view. With regard to liberation Foucault also states that, “Liberation also paves the way for new power

relationships, which must be controlled by practices of freedom” (Ethics of Freedom, 284). These practices of freedom begin after the reign of domination and colonization has ended. We can see the freedom from the colonizers as liberation but the question of how do we transform ourselves in light of the liberation? What type of practices do we need to engage in, in order to look past our base desires? These are all questions of ascetics which are asking us to embrace a paradigm shift in the way we view the self and the meaning of life. This is the transformation that citizens of the developing world need to engage in, in order to efficiently solve the problem of overpopulation.

In *The Care of the Self*, Foucault explains this idea of ascetics with regard to the art of governing. He writes, “The rationality of the government of others is the same as the rationality of the government of oneself. This is what Plutarch explains in *To an Uneducated Ruler*: one will not be able to rule if one is not oneself ruled”. (Care of the self, page 89).

The same point is being mentioned in the quote above, but it pertains to the leaders of a free, decolonized nation. The leaders of the new decolonized nation will be free men but they may still be imprisoned in their ways of selfish thinking. This I must add may be the case but it is not due to any fault of their own, this may be the case because they have been conditioned to viewing the ways of the colonizers which were based on selfish desires as the only ways to govern. The colonizers way of governing is

all they have seen and it is all they have known about governing. This in turn leads to a corrupt and selfish approach to government. This mentality needs to change and by engaging in ascetics we can have a new breed of political leaders in third world nations who have mastered themselves. And being a master of oneself is an essential condition for governing others according to Foucault, for one who is not master of himself cannot be master of those he governs. So my point here is simply this: leaders of third world nations (which were colonized) need to go through a paradigm shift in their approach to governing. This paradigm shift is not one that will occur in a vacuum, the first world nations (which have benefitted greatly from colonization) ought to play an active role in this paradigm shift.

On one side there is an emphasis on the attitudes and the view of the self as explained from the perspective of the third world. But there are always two sides to a story. As people living in a wealthy western nation we ought to see how we have played an active role in taking away the humanity of these populations. We ought to see ourselves in their suffering. This is because we may not have been their colonizers but if the wealth and profits that we have earned as a nation were earned as a result of the labor of the ancestors of these populations then we in a way are guilty by association.

But my goal here is not just to point out the guilt but the idea is to show that in the process of taking away their humanity and putting them in an animal-like existence

we also have lost a part of our humanity. You can relate this to Hegel's master/slave dialectic and it is important to accept that when the master takes away the humanity of the slave by making him a slave, he also loses a part of his own moral sensitivity and humanity in the process of doing so. In order to understand the large scale impact of the suffering that the west has inflicted on the third world nations we first need to regain our humanity. To look past our fascination with large scale consumerism and realize that consumerism, owning a house and owning a nice car are the American dream but that this American dream was built on the backs of slaves. The point here is for us to recognize as westerners that just as overpopulation is a result of colonization so is the rampant consumerism in the west. If overpopulation is the source of their suffering and animal-like existence then excessive consumerism is the source of our suffering and animal-like existence. The question that Foucault would ask to us westerners is :“What have done to change yourself and overcome your animalistic desires”? This is a questions of ascetics and self-formation which is a part and arguable the most important part of Foucault's ethics of care of the self. Again there needs to be a drastic transformation in the way that the third world views the 'self' and more than that there needs to be a drastic transformation in the way that the west views the 'self'. After all if we are calling on the west to be a teacher then it is important for this teacher to first know itself and become master of itself. Although Foucault does not offer us a practical

solutions to address the problems of overpopulations and starvation we can generate or at least (if you will) speculate about what kinds of solutions would work.

Examples of Some Practical Solutions

Education is very essential in addressing these problems of overpopulation and starvation. Education entails not only knowledge of contraceptives but education in terms of a proper secondary and even college education. Amartya Sen points to research that shows that literacy rates often have a direct relationship with a drop in birth rates. He points to research in order to show that states such as Kerala in which men and especially women are educated have experienced a drop in birth rates. So it is very important that the value of education is emphasized in the developing world.

Educating the governments of developing nations on the importance of taxation policies and social security programs is one function. Having an appropriate tax rate such as the ones we have in the United States is very essential in solving the problems of overpopulation. The portion of the population which earns the highest annual income will pay the highest percentage in taxes while the people who bring in less income will be taxed at a lower tax rate. In this way farmers who previously were inclined to have five or six children to secure their future with regards to financial security will be inclined to have fewer children. This will be the case because money that they get from social security programs will be their support during their old age. As of today many

developing nations are not taxing in the way that they should be. So one of the functions that first world nations will play is to educate and emphasize the importance of such social security programs.

Next would be to provide basic health care for the lower income aging population. Traditionally in nations such as India healthcare expenses for the elderly were covered by their children as a result of the joint family system. In such collectivistic cultures the elderly are almost entirely dependent on close family for financial support and medical expenses. Offering health care to citizens over the age of 60 will help reduce the burden on the family. These are some possible solutions.

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