

**SCHIZOPHRENIA POLITICIZED:**

**CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY STARRING IN AMC'S *THE PRISONER***

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Figure I. #6

“I am not a number, I am a free man.”

#6, *The Prisoner*

#### Introduction

In the Preface of Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus*, Foucault mentions *fascism*<sup>2</sup> not as a mere historical phenomenon, but also as something subsisting “in us all, in our heads and in our everyday behavior, the fascism that causes us to love power, to desire the very thing that dominates us and exploits us”<sup>3</sup>. Inspired by this everyday fascism based on Foucault's

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<sup>1</sup> *The Prisoner* (6 episodes - 2009) is considered as a remake of the original British television series with the same name (17 episodes – 1967-1968), created by Patrick McGoohan. However, the new version is more than a remake; it's quite a recreation, as Jim Caviezel puts it at a panel during Comic-Con 2009 in San Diego. I preferred to work on the recent version as it offers contemporary elements regarding TV aesthetics and its political implications today. In this sense, with all due respect for the authenticity and pioneering character of McGoohan's creation, this paper makes no reference to the original show.

<sup>2</sup> For the sense of the meaning I intend to give here, one should refer to the Latin origin of the word, *fascis*, “a bundle or birch rods (usually containing an ax) used as a symbol of penal authority in ancient Rome”, as defined by Britannica Online [Retrieved on February 1, 2013 from <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/202210/fascism>]. In other words, the concept of fascism mentioned in this paper evolves around the totalizing, uniformizing features of authority, with respect to punishment in particular, as the act of punishing requires the supposition of one absolute truth to be taken as the reference for penal treatment.

<sup>3</sup> Foucault, M. (1977). Preface. *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Gilles Deleuze & Felix Guattari (1972/1983). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, p. xii.

reading of Deleuze and Guattari's discourses on capitalism and schizophrenia, this paper argues that the "dividualization"<sup>4</sup> of contemporary society, which brings about a version of fascism resulting in the becoming of a mass political schizophrenia, can be signified in terms of the mind-body dichotomy reflected in AMC's TV series, *The Prisoner*. Political schizophrenia, in this context, refers to an ambiguous state of citizenship in the age of neoliberalism as identity formation is "linked to the urge to consume, and therefore the acceleration of capitalism necessitates an increase in the rate at which individuals assume and shed identities."<sup>5</sup> This ambiguous state of citizenship, or individuality in an indiscernible way as neoliberalism promotes not social but individual existence, is created by the contradictory nature of the neoliberal argument, which offers "greater freedoms" but mostly "resulted from or accompanied the accession of power of repressive and socially reactionary political forces" such as Reaganism, Thatcherism, and Latin American dictatorships.<sup>6</sup>

Michael (Jim Caviezel), one of the two protagonists of the series, #6 as he is introduced to the viewers in the first place, is a former surveillance agent who used to work for the company called "Summakor". This company is pictured as one of the business premises at Wallstreet with many offices, glass doors, card entrance system and the like, and where our aforementioned protagonist was responsible for monitoring the "troubled" people of today's world we reside in. Behind the scenes, Summakor serves as a treatment center where all those troubled people got cured and were set free of their troubles, of the facts they cannot handle regarding their lives – say it be a childhood trauma, a shattered family, or any

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<sup>4</sup> I am using this term as a reproduction of Deleuze's "dividual - a physically embodied human subject that is endlessly divisible and reducible to data representations via the modern technologies of control, like computer-based systems", Williams, R. W. (2005). Politics and Self in the Age of Digital Re(produ)ducibility. *Fast Capitalism*, Issue 1.1. Retrieved on February 8, 2013 from [http://www.uta.edu/huma/agger/fastcapitalism/1\\_1/williams.html](http://www.uta.edu/huma/agger/fastcapitalism/1_1/williams.html). Also see Deleuze, G. (1992). Postscript on the Societies of Control. *October*, Vol. 59, pp. 3-7.

<sup>5</sup> Peretti, J. (1996). Capitalism and Schizophrenia: Contemporary Visual Culture and the Acceleration of Identity Formation/Dissolution. *Negations*, Premier Issue. Retrieved on February 20, 2013 from [http://www.datawranglers.com/negations/issues/96w/96w\\_peretti.html](http://www.datawranglers.com/negations/issues/96w/96w_peretti.html).

<sup>6</sup> Gopalakrishnan, S. (2006). Defining, Constructing, and Policing a 'New India': Relationship between Neoliberalism and Hindutva. *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 41, No. 26, pp. 2803+2805-2813.

other of the kind. That being said, still we do not get to know #6 quite much almost until the end of the show, the reasons for which may simply seem to stem from the “curiosity” intended to be created in the spectators’ minds for sustaining a continued attention for the show by the makers of it. Yet, I would like to highlight another perspective inherent to such concealed screening in relation to the fascistic tendency of thought, the desire both to know and to be astonished by what is going to be shown to us, as in Foucault’s reference to the love of both dominating and being dominated, with respect to TV aesthetics.

As the first scene opens with the shooting of #6 at the top of a mountain, regaining consciousness, the viewers have no idea of who and where he is. However, the screen credits provide clues on the likelihoods of #6’s occupation and character. He is shown sitting in an office, running around in a business complex and, in the end, writing “RESIGN” on the window of the office with spray paint in red color with a rebel attitude. In this sense, from the very beginning of the series, we can sense an effort made in order to “resist the ‘psychic clichés’ and ‘figurative givens’” as mentioned in Shapiro’s quote from Deleuze, referring to the artist’s endeavor to “transform/deform what is always-already on the canvass”.<sup>7</sup> To put it more clearly, the show seems to be aiming at providing the viewers with a path offering many side roads through the complexity and at most of the time the seemingly irrelevancy reflected by the characters and episodes of the show. As in Shapiro’s reference to the Brechtian theater, “what is in front of the viewers, as it is acted out, is conveyed as something that might well be otherwise”<sup>8</sup>, leaving room for what Deleuze calls “the art of forming, inventing, and fabricating concepts”<sup>9</sup>. In the case of *The Prisoner*, the spectator is provided with some degree

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<sup>7</sup> Shapiro, M. J. (2012). *Studies in Trans-Disciplinary Method: After the Aesthetic Turn*. New York: Routledge, p. 106. Also see Deleuze, G. (2003) *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*. Trans. D. W. Smith. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, pp. 71-72.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 109.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26. Also see Deleuze, G. and Guattari, F. (1994) *What is Philosophy?*. Trans. H. Tomlinson and B. Habberjam, New York: Columbia University Press.

of expectation on what the show is about by screen credits; however, during the course of the show, numerous irrelevancies regarding the characters are encountered and confusion of the spectator is intentionally caused. The question is to what extent a TV show would be able to do what an art piece, say a painting or a theatrical play would? Can we ever escape from the “enslavement of mental automata”<sup>10</sup> before the TV as an aesthetic medium, or rather, would we be further enslaved by the fascist tendencies in perception and thinking imposed by the TV as *mass* media, orientating our contemporary minds in a *massive* way? In other words, is *The Prisoner* constructed within the scope of some kind of enclosing, fascist mode of thinking based on “stereotypes as standardized mental pictures”<sup>11</sup> and tend to reflect that mode of thinking with an intension to convey a message to the viewers or is it possible for the viewers to take an unbiased position and perceive the images of *The Prisoner* as art forms of non-connotative character?

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<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 106. Also see Deleuze, G. (1989). *Cinema 2: The Time Image*. Trans. H. Tomlinson and R. Galeta. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

<sup>11</sup> Mosse, G. L. (1996). Fascist Aesthetics and Society: Some Considerations. *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 31, No. 2, Special Issue: The Aesthetics of Fascism, pp. 245-252; p. 248.

## Fascism as Dichotomy: What does *The Prisoner* Imply?



Figure II. #2 and #6

As quoted by Rajagopal, Lerner states that “television stitches together a plurality of fields through a currency of images, instituting a system of representation that cuts across society”.<sup>12</sup> In other words, television provides a complex set of relations that are likely to be established between the spectators and the actual world in a concentrated form, similar to what the futuristic imagery of one small pill containing a nutrition complex does by ruling out the need to bother deliberating on what to eat to stay healthy or, at least, alive. In the case of *The Prisoner*, such reductionist attitude is provided by telling the story in terms of dichotomy, within two different realms simultaneously.

During all the six episodes of the series, we are moving back and forth between two distinct realms shown in sequential scenes from time to time; one of those called the Village – a traditional looking village with houses of identical architectural design and unimproved roads - and the other one is New York City as we know it – with skyscrapers, people running around in constant flux etc. So, from the beginning, a dichotomy of places is presented before

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<sup>12</sup> Rajagopal, A. (2001). *Politics after Television: Hindu Nationalism and the Reshaping of the Public in India*. United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press. Also see Lerner, D. (1958). *The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle East*. New York: Free Press.

the eyes of the spectators. This dichotomy of places, which are the two main space-wise subjects of the show, in a way, reflects the perception that conditions and is imposed upon us by underlining the differences between those two places and accordingly between the residents of those places, some of whom are indeed the same people in distinguishably different appearance and behavior, including Michael or #6. That fascistic perception is what draws the distinctions based on such dichotomy between the elements of those two realms, such as the way landscape looks, people act and look like in terms of outfit, including the realms themselves. By showing these differences in sequential scenes, a ground for comparison is provided to the viewers and on that ground, the fascist thinking that conditions the viewers to think in terms of pre-determined clichés rendering comparison possible comes into being. In that sense, no room is left for what Deleuze calls “the anti-fascist” body, “a turbulent assemblage of different rates of being that co-inhabit a body, whose becoming involves radical contingency”.<sup>13</sup> In other words, as my reading of Deleuze’s anti-fascist body and the aforementioned definition of fascism would suggest, *The Prisoner* reduces the element of contingency to a ready-made set of interpretations, in the form of dichotomies – the first of which has been explained above - provided by what is displayed on TV screen.

In parallel to this dichotomy of spaces in the show, the dividualization I mentioned elsewhere is modeled by Michael’s inhabitation in both realms – as Michael the ex-surveillance agent in the metropolis and as #6 the rebel and thus the schizoid (since the shopkeeper of the village advises: “You do not want to be different” – if you revolt to claim your difference, you will be sent for treatment) in the Village. In other words, the protagonist is reduced to sub-existences symbolized in terms of his deprivation of power in both realms. This pictures Michael as rebel in the sense that he has some kind of discontent with his existence in both realms, which is reflected in the form of resistance; as schizoid in the sense

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<sup>13</sup> Shapiro (2012), p. 106.

that as the smallest unit of the society, the individual, Michael's condition represents the bilateral lives of today's peoples within the democratic governance, the triumph of which against fascism has become disputable. The reason for the dispute, I would say, is the emergence of a new form of fascism, present both in the daily activities of and within the individuals as well, out of the over-emphasized notion of freedom falsely promoted under the name of so-called democratic order, which does not even imply any freedom but rather domination by the illusory majority created under this order. In compliance with this quantitative rather than qualitative manner engrained in this type of governance and thus everyday life, television and the entire media serves to a similar promotion of such illusory majority by measuring its own success in terms of ratings.

To have a closer look at this new type of transformed fascism, concealing itself under the discourses of liberal democracy, and its byproduct bilateralism in parallel to Michael's discontent with his profession in the metropolis and accordingly, his desire to escape as expressed in another realm - the Village, which made him the target of his own ex-profession, we can refer to *A Scanner Darkly's* protagonist Bob Arctor leading a double life as well, indicated by Shapiro as follows:

At the level of its plot, *A Scanner Darkly* resonates well with the micro-fascism problematic that Deleuze articulates. The main character/protagonist, Bob Arctor, leads a double life. In one, he belongs to a household of drug users; in another he is Fred, an undercover police agent assigned to collect damaging evidence on the household's drug culture. The Dick scenario is as follows: the war on drugs has not gone well because a highly addictive, illegal drug – Substance D, which is made from a small blue flower – has spread all over the country. Bob Arctor is the undercover agent assigned to infiltrate the drug culture. In his undercover role, he moves in with drug-using housemates in a poor Anaheim, California neighborhood. When at his police station, he is co-named Fred, and he hides his identity from fellow officers by wearing a “scramble suit” that produces rapid



changes in visible identity (in effect a visual realization of the Deleuzian turbulence as different ways and rates of being co-inhabit a single body).<sup>14</sup>

Overall, we, as the spectators, are made to perceive this dividualization, pictured as forms of segmentation of personalities and places in the show, as reduced to one major dichotomy through the progress of each episode – which is that of mind and body. Throughout the show, this dichotomy operates to indicate the Village as existing in the mind of a scientist, “an ex-worker of Summakor who experimented on *human consciousness and behavior*”<sup>15</sup> and wife of the leader of the Village, M2/Helen (Rachael Blake) and as a place where she and #2/Mr. Curtis, the leader of the Village (Ian McKellen) – the other protagonist of the series – have the son they had been longing for but were never able to have in the other realm, shown as New York City. So, the Village is pictured as the counter-place to the actual place, the metropolis, where we, the viewers as well, dwell in together with the schizoid “dividuals” of the show, divided between those two realms. Such an approach may lead us to realize the fascist aesthetics reflected on TV, as it involves “The Counter-Type” in contrast to the ideals, such as “the Jews in Nazi Press or the blacks in Italian papers before and after the Abyssinian War”.<sup>16</sup> This contrast implied by the show conditions the viewers at an outsider perspective with regard to their own existence compared to those of the villagers, living an organized life controlled by a governing authority - #2; while, on the other hand creates a feeling of empathy with regard to Michael’s case of resignation due to the discontent he feels for his job. In this sense, we can talk about two main points of reference, or stereotypes, proposed by the fascist mode of thinking, which I would call the genuine type and the counter-type, or the normal and the schizoid – as reflected in the show by a fascistic way of nomenclature - which always co-

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<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 107.

<sup>15</sup> *The Prisoner* Official Webpage. Retrieved on February 10, 2013 from <http://www.amctv.com/shows/the-prisoner/cast/m2>.

<sup>16</sup> Mosse (1996), p. 249.

exist. Therefore, The Prisoner implies such fascistic tendency by the creation of an alternative, mental “village” in contrast to the contemporary “metropolis” and positioning the target viewers as already existing in the metropolis, taking the already-established ways of perception associated with the metropolis for granted as the reference point of the viewers’ line of thought.

Therefore, we can see how “dividualization” takes place in terms of both spatial and individual existence, in the form of bilaterality through such divided and reduced existence and therefore creating the schizoid becoming of the subject, constantly evolving into forms of powerlessness reflected as the desire of freedom. The form of such schizoid existence is given by distorting the nature of what Deleuze and Guattari calls *desiring-production*<sup>17</sup>, the never-ending process of becoming. This hampering is caused by the bilaterality mentioned above and spoils the “autonomous, self-constituting, and creative”<sup>18</sup> nature of desiring-production. In the end, this distortion is what causes the alienation of the individual from his/her profession, the meaning of man’s existence, the way it has come to be defined today as in the case of Michael of the metropolis, and what requires #6 of the Village to be sent for treatment, to cure the reason of his existence in the Village, his desire to revolt - to resign. As further explained by Smith and Protevi,

[t]he schizophrenic (...) is the result of the interruption or the blocking of the process of desiring-production, its having been taken out of nature and society and restricted to the body of an individual where it spins in the void rather than make the connections that constitute reality. Desiring-production does not connect “with” reality, as in escaping a

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<sup>17</sup> See Deleuze, G. and Guattari, F. (1983). *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Trans. R. Hurley, M. Seem, and H. R. Lane. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

<sup>18</sup> Smith, D. and Protevi, J. (2013). "Gilles Deleuze", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2013 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.). Retrieved on February 8, 2013 from <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2013/entries/deleuze/>.

subjective prison to touch the objective, but it makes reality, it is the Real; (...) for Deleuze and Guattari, the Real is reality itself in its process of self-making.<sup>19</sup>

In line with the quote above, the Prisoner indicates the schizophrenic impact of the segmentation of this reality, the segmentation of the becoming or self-making of the individual and the reduction of it to mere bodily activity. This makes profession merely about being present at the workplace and carrying out ‘expected’ functions related to the profession, expected in a way that conditions the individual within a fascistic framework of predetermined action, depriving the individual of the power required to take active part in his becoming. This predetermination implies what Deleuze and Guattari calls the “territorialization of material flows”<sup>20</sup>, which are continuously deterritorialized and reterritorialized throughout history as parts of a vicious circle entrapping the society – pictured in two different forms in the show as the people of the Village and the people of the metropolis.

Despite the show’s assumption and screening of the Village – and the dwellers of the place - as some kind of Neverland before the eyes of the spectators, thus who are assumed to be ignorant of the two distinct society models mentioned by Foucault and Deleuze and comprising parts of a historical societal development, the show is built upon these two models - disciplinary societies and societies of control. In the *Postscript on the Societies of Control*, with reference to Foucault’s notion of disciplinary societies, Deleuze writes:

. . . [D]isciplinary societies (...) initiate the organization of vast spaces of enclosure. The individual never ceases passing from one closed environment to another, each having its own laws: first the family, then the school (“you are no longer in your family”); then the

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<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

barracks (“you are no longer at school”); then the factory; from time to time the hospital; possibly the prison, the preeminent instance of the enclosed environment.<sup>21</sup>

In the Village, we see this model of society as implied by the name of the series explicitly – *The Prisoner*. Imprisonment is reflected as a form of punishment in the form of rehabilitation as in the case of Michael, in return for his resignation in the metropolis. So, the Village, where people live as territorialized subjects, limited in their action and thought by enclosure, is pictured as a prison. The Village, then, is the “punitive city”, “the enclosed space of the ‘reformatory’”.<sup>22</sup>

The people of the Village do believe, or forced to believe, that there is no other place or realm outside the village, and they are made to believe in that by being prevented from dreaming. At some point, it is implied that some people can dream and have images of the other realm, of the metropolis, and as soon as these people, the dreamers as they are called in the show in a negative way, are detected by surveillance methods governed by the administrator of the Village, #2, they are sent for treatment; in other words, institutionalized. Ironically, it is revealed in the last episode that the Village would continue to exist as long as the wife of #2 keeps dreaming in her paralyzed condition by the help of three small pills that keep her dreaming. Thus, what is implied in another dichotomy is the opposition between the capability of the subjects and the authorities of governance. So, the act of dreaming signifies both power and powerlessness, depending on the (in)dividual’s relation to his/her own desiring-production, implying dependence on the distinction between mind and body. To put it more clearly, the villagers exist as mere quasi-physical bodies within the enclosure of M2’s mind, within her power to dream and the detachment of them from their own minds is the reflection of the fascist tension Michael struggles with in the metropolis, which causes him to

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<sup>21</sup> Deleuze, G. (1992), p. 3.

<sup>22</sup> Foucault, M. (1977). *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Trans. Alan Sheridan. NY: Vintage Books; p. 130.

revolt and resign in order to claim his desiring-production rather than being a physical individual reduced to the data functioning for mere production regarding his involvement with and position in Summakor. This disciplinary form of society is screened as an imaginary group of people in the show in the first instance, however that form of society is what there used to be before the transformation of it into the society of control, as claims Deleuze. Nevertheless, I think the show implies that the disciplinary society was never replaced completely in a way that would cease to exist, but instead it continues to exist within the society of control, its enclosing character being strengthened with the new technologies of control and surveillance perfectly concealing the intention to create enclosure and to discipline. When #6 reproaches #2 and yells: “Why are you keeping me here”, #2 subtly answers: “I see no locked doors” – so, the Village is indeed a very realistic and down to earth representation of contemporary enclosure today’s control society faces, in the form of not concrete but cyber walls.

Deleuze writes that societies of control operate with “free-floating control that replaced the old disciplines operating in the time frame of a closed system”<sup>23</sup>. However, the contemporary free-floating control he mentions is merely built upon the aforementioned concealment of the confinement imposed by those so-called old disciplines. Davis Ruffolo’s remark would be relevant at this point:

...[C]ontrol societies *dividualize* bodies through continuous mechanisms that produce mobile and fluid bodies. To put it another way, in disciplinary societies bodies are confined to specific spaces (i.e., institutions) whereas in control societies these spaces are deterritorialized where, for example, bodies are controlled through the flows of communication and information. The fixed *individuals* of disciplinary societies and the mobile *dividuals* of control societies are differentiated by the distinct

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<sup>23</sup> Deleuze, G. (1992), p. 4.

techniques/technologies of power. This is not to suggest that bodies are stable or stationary in control societies because there are, as can be imagined, still ways in which bodies are disciplined in the Foucauldian sense. This is precisely why we are involved in an ongoing shift from discipline to control: control mechanisms emerge out of, rather than being distinctively separate from, disciplinary practices.<sup>24</sup>

Ruffolo's claim renders power as the determinant regarding the difference between those two societies from Foucault's point of view, and he further explains:

Foucault's intense interest in the transition from bodies to subjects is largely facilitated through his examinations of power. Power, according to Foucault, is a productive force that circulates through the actions of bodies. In contrast to more traditional readings of power as repressive (a "top-down" approach), Foucault insightfully articulates how power functions through the relationships amongst bodies.<sup>25</sup>

If we consider power as a productive force in Foucauldian sense, despite the different ways of operation of power with regard to the relations between bodies in disciplinary societies and subjects in societies of control - or in the Village and in the metropolis respectively - it would make more sense to perceive the Village and the metropolis as counterparts. In other words, we should not think of the former as the precedent of the latter in contrast to Deleuze's argument that the societies of control have replaced the disciplinary societies. Rather, we realize that the Village and New York City are parts of a co-existence, thus "rhizomatic"<sup>26</sup> from a Deleuzian point of view, and no hierarchic understanding should be employed. So, Deleuze's understanding of some kind of transformation is agreeable, as well as the historical progress through which territories have vanished with the promotion of liberty, provided that

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<sup>24</sup> Ruffolo, D. V. (2008). Rhizomatic Bodies: Thinking through the Virtualities of Control Societies. *Rhizomes*, Issue 17. Retrieved on December 10, 2012 from [<http://www.rhizomes.net/issue17/ruffolo.html>].

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> In the form of a "de-centered network". See Smith & Protevi (2013). Deleuze and Guattari use this term to refer to an understanding of knowledge in terms of multiplicities rather than dichotomies or hierarchical structurings.

a new form of enclosure employed in that progress would not be ignored. In other words, yes, the shift in the ways of manifestation of power had deterritorialized the subjects; but has then reterritorialized those through the “disciplinary technologies of modernity”<sup>27</sup>.

In the metropolis, as Mark Poster points out as well, “the ability to monitor behavior has been extended with the mechanisms of information processing”, thus “panopticon monitoring extends not only to massed groups but to the individual as well with new technologies.”<sup>28</sup> In other words, the process of reterritorialization takes place at individual level in the societies of control via the advanced modes of technology as indicated in the scenes of the metropolis in the series. Primitive methods of surveillance in the Village, symbolized as placing little cameras in the walls of the houses, are replaced by hi-tech systems of surveillance networks, on which Summakor’s activities are grounded. Deleuze and Guattari describe this as the new order that emerged by the growth of capitalism, where “the flows of desire are liberated from territorialization but subordinated to a new social axiomatic characterized by money”,<sup>29</sup> implying reterritorialization. We can see the implication of this in the final scenes of the last episode of the Prisoner, when Michael takes control of the Village as the new governor – the new #2. This exact moment is screened simultaneously in the metropolis as well, showing Michael taking over the management of Summakor, with an expression on his face indicating absolute satisfaction.

In the end, surveillance and control pays in terms of sanity to the people of the Village who are broken in the metropolis, whereas in the metropolis the form of payment is money,

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<sup>27</sup> Best, S. & Kellner, D. (1991). *Post-modern Theory: Critical Interrogations*. Available online at [[http://www.uta.edu/huma/pomo\\_theory/index.html](http://www.uta.edu/huma/pomo_theory/index.html)].

<sup>28</sup> Poster, M. (1984). *Foucault, Marxism and History*. Oxford: Polity Press; p. 103. Available online at [<http://www.hnet.uci.edu/mposter/books/>].

<sup>29</sup> Samuel, G. (1988). *The Other Side of Rationality: Desire in the Social System*. Paper presented at the Australian Anthropological Society Conference.

reflecting again the dichotomy of the mental and the physical. In both realms, the dwellers are contradictorily yearning to control and for being kept under control to exist, growing an unintentional but inevitable schizophrenic bondage to the fascism emerging out of the core dichotomy of the mind and body reflected by *The Prisoner*.

### **Concluding Remarks**



Figure III. #313 and #6

Ultimately, the viewers are shown how Michael's rebel status has been transformed into an ideal American man who saves the people of the Village from going back to their miseries in the metropolis by keeping the dreaming on in another Villager's, #313's (Ruth Wilson), mind - with whom he had a romantic interaction throughout the series - sacrificing her for the existence of the Village and in return awarding her with his love and affection as we see at the very final scene of the series. He looks contented and proud of himself, screened sitting at the top of the Village, looking at it together with #313, in the white suit #2 used to wear. This schizophrenic condition Michael has gone through signifies his individualization to be an ideal man, for whose existence people would be thankful. In other words, his existence has now come to be defined by and reduced to his capability to control and to be controlled. He is now imprisoned by what he had been trying to escape from, in a



blissful way. He is made to believe that the preservation of the established order, so the continuation of the existence of the Village is what will set his conscience free; however, as we see throughout the series, in suppressive and oppressive ways. This, as I mentioned earlier, is the reflection of “the fascism that causes us to love power, to desire the very thing that dominates us and exploits us”<sup>30</sup>. We are enclosed and reterritorialized by the fascistic desire created by the capitalist order, in parallel with Deleuze and Guattari’s reference to Oedipus, which is “the symbol of the countless varieties of ‘micro-fascism’ which we accept through uncritical participation in the structures of power in capitalist society”<sup>31</sup>. TV, as a medium, conditions the mind within a micro-fascist tendency to grasp what is being screened with reference to our own lives, and positions Michael as a hero who seems to have done the “right” thing by claiming his freedom by surrender to the order of the metropolis, and of the Village simultaneously. This implies a relief for our conscience as the viewers, an escape from the order that territorializes thus encloses us with the responsibilities of the day, the pressure to raise a family or to take care of our family, as the smallest unit of the “normal” society as part of a discipline society, which could never have entirely been replaced by the control society in the sense that in both forms of societies, discipline and control serve to the same end, enclosure, though by different media: the former does so through institutions and the latter through new technologies of surveillance. Hence, television-mediated fascist aesthetics is in a constant state of becoming through direct interaction with the viewers’ inner fascism caused by some form of concealed enclosure through the means of capitalist order. This results in the mass political schizophrenia of the contemporary society, which has internalized the contradictory stages of obedience and resistance under the alleged omnipresence of freedom.

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<sup>30</sup> Foucault, M. (1977), p. xii.

<sup>31</sup> Samuel, G. (1988).

In the end, Going back to the question of the extent to which TV, i.e. in the form of a show as *The Prisoner*, can set us free from our conditioned perception, from our mental tendency to be enslaved by what *is* there, in consideration of “TV as a cultural medium”<sup>32</sup>, serving to the “identification of central cultural items as fictional or imaginary, in a symbolic, culturally agreed upon imaginative space, (...) where real experience is re-presented, re-created, symbolically displayed”<sup>33</sup>, *The Prisoner* can said to be an indication of such way of cultural enclosure, creating “aesthetic features appearing in response to technical or ideological constraints”, and I would call those constrains as the byproducts of the Zeitgeist, only within the boundaries of which what is screened on TV would make sense – and this implies a predetermined, pre-accepted set of meanings, served on the digital tray we call TV, to be inferred by the spectators, which continuously leads us to the new fascism’s vicious cycle of desire to control and be controlled in the safe arms of status quo, listening to the digital lullabies it mumbles.

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<sup>32</sup> Thorburn, D. (2004). “Television Aesthetics”. *The TV Encyclopedia*, Ed. Horace Newcomb, Taylor & Francis (Second Edition). Retrieved on January 26, 2013 from [web.mit.edu/241I.432/www/readings/Thorburn\_TelevisionAesthetics.pdf].

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

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