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# The Representation of Foucault's Concepts of Biopolitics and Governmentality in Michael Frayn's Copenhagen

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#### **Extended Abstract**

Michael Frayn (b. 1933) is a British playwright who wrote his works with political and social themes during the Thatcher era. Frayn's works depict the influence of ideology and political issues during this period. In Copenhagen, Frayn examines the conditions after the Second World War and the Cold War in the 20th century, as well as the emergence of new physics, such as quantum theory. Frayn also refers to the fathers of physics and the production of the bomb in the Nazi era. The Cold War and modern wars reflect the beginning of negative consequences that carried into the Thatcher period of modernity. At that time, the concepts of surveillance and observation took on new and complex definitions, producing discourses of knowledge and subjectivity. Indeed, knowledge came to dominate human beings in powerful ways.

This research considers the concept of biopolitics in the Thatcher Age. Post-Foucauldian concepts were later criticized and analyzed by thinkers influenced by Foucault, and they continue in the work of modern theorists such as Giddens, Arendt, and Harvey. The concepts of governmentality and biopolitics provide a critical lens through which to analyze the formation of neoliberalism in the play Copenhagen. When Bohr and Heisenberg discuss the nature and function of Hitler's governance during World War II, the Holocaust, and the development of nuclear weapons and chemical substances, Foucault's concepts of biopolitics and governmentality become particularly relevant.

The play highlights the ascendancy of knowledge and shows how the creation of the atomic bomb and its subsequent use threatened the natural lives of humans. It reveals the intertwining of human life and politics, where science and technology are employed by governments to monitor and control existence. This research demonstrates how science and technology have evolved into a discourse of knowledge and how rulers have utilized these tools as instruments of governance. This control and surveillance have penetrated even the most private aspects of human life, subjugating individuals and transforming them into docile bodies. All of these elements align with the concept of neoliberalism, which emerged during the Thatcher era and has since been implemented.

An examination of the above concepts in the play Copenhagen reveals how Thatcher-era propositions can be reinterpreted through a Foucauldian lens. Furthermore, the influence and role of science in shaping Foucauldian concepts, both in Copenhagen and in the Thatcher era, can be investigated. Ultimately, we can see how literature, when applied with these concepts, can serve as a window into the social and political realities of its time.

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