THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE UNDERSTANDING OF SELF IN THE METAVERSE REALITY AS A HETEROTOPIA PLACE*

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Abstract

This paper conceptually discusses how Metaverse world exists as a space through Michael Foucault's concept of heterotopia and how within this space the understanding of self is reshaped with the concepts of sociality, partnership, immortality, being a part of a whole and the disappearance of free will. Foucault's heterotopian mirror example defines theater and cinema as a "surreal, virtual place" and sees it as an illusion. Metaverse can be added to these examples. Metaverse has the potential of bringing people with different thoughts and lifestyles together at the same time and same place. This potential is relevant to heterogeneous spaces which will not come together normally coming together in this medium. In addition to that, a single space can contain multiple spaces and times and this heterochronicity allows the abstraction of spaces while being lived at a certain time and allows travel to other times different from the time lived. But this potential is bound to some rules as stated in the fifth rule of heterotopias and these rules are preset. Considering all the similarities, the Metaverse world was assumed as a heterotopia and the paper tries to understand the embodiment of perception of self from general to specific, from public to individual, from a part of a society to an autonomous entity with free will within this world. This study uses hermeneutic method to discover the framework of how the concept of self and the perception of human will be transformed and changed in Metaverse world.

Keywords: Metaverse, heterotopia, subject self, self.

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BİR HETEROTOPYA MEKÂNI OLARAK METAVERSE GERÇEKLİĞİNDE KENDİLİK ANLAYIŞININ DÖNÜŞÜMÜ*

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Öz

Bu çalışmada Metaverse dünyasının Michel Foucault'nun heterotopya kavramı üzerinden bir mekân olarak nasıl var olduğu ve bu varoluşta kendiliğe ilişkin anlayışın, toplumsallık, ortaklık, ölümsüzlük, bütünün bir parçası olma ve özgür iradenin yitimi temelinde yeniden nasıl kurgulanabileceği kavramsal olarak tartışılmaktadır. Foucault'nun, heterotopyaların ayna örneğinde "gerçek dışı, sanal bir alan" olarak tiyatroyu ve sinema üzerinden tanımladığı yanılsamaya, "Metaverse" örneği de eklenebilir. Metaverse de farklı düşüncelere, farklı yaşamlara sahip kişileri aynı anda ve zamanda buluşturma potansiyeline sahiptir. Bu potansiyel birbirleriyle ilişkisi olmayan ve normal durumlarda bir araya gelemeyecek birçok mekânın tek bir mekânda bir araya gelmesi ile ilgilidir. Ayrıca tek bir mekânın içinde birçok zaman ve mekânı barındırabildiği gibi yaratılan heterokroni ile hem mekân içinde yaşayabilmeyi hem de kendisinden soyutlanabilmeye imkân tanır, yaşanılan zamandan başka bir zamana gitmeyi de sağlar. Fakat bu imkân, tıpkı heterotopyaların beşinci ilkesinde olduğu gibi, belirli kurallara tabidir ve bu kurallar önceden belirlenmiştir. Tüm bu benzeşimler üzerinden Metaverse dünyasının bir heterotopya olduğu kabulü ile bu mekânda kendilik deneyiminin şekillenmesinin, sunumunun, kendilik ile ilgili algının genellikten özelliğe, kamusallıktan bireyselliğe, toplumun herhangi bir parçası olmaktan, kendi özgür iradesi olan otonom bir varlığa, doğru bir hareketi olup olmadığı anlaşılmaya çalışılmıştır. Anlam keşfi yapılan bu çalışmada, Metaverse dünyasında kendilik kavramının ve insana dair algının nasıl dönüşüp değişeceğine ilişkin çerçeve hermeneutik yöntemle çizilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Metaverse, heterotopya, kendilik, özne.

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Introduction

> "The present epoch will perhaps be above all the epoch of space.
> We are in the epoch of simultaneity: we are in the epoch of juxtaposition,
> the epoch of the near and far, of the side-by-side, of the dispersed.
> We are at a moment, I believe,
> when our experience of the world is less that
> of a long life developing through time than that of a network that
> connects points and intersects with its own skein".[1]

Humans realize their own being when they encounter with others. Humans need a name because of the other's presence. Therefore, to create a human self, to realize the presentation of self, s/he needs to interact and relate with others. Individuality exists as a result of one's own mind processes, the data s/he gathered from the outside world and the properties s/he has mentally and physically. Humans connect to the real world by the sense organs, in other words by their bodies. We perceive and evaluate others with our body as well. Body is the only field where the self manifests tangibly. The more sense data a human has, its perception of reality will be as close to the real world and it will configure the presentation of self, bound to this reality.

When we look at the matter in a historical context, we can see the evolution of the perception of self from common to private, from public sphere to individual understanding – from being a part of society to an autonomous being with a free will. At this point it is helpful to ask this question: Considering our sense of self evolved in such a way, how will it evolve in the future? Some theoreticians state that with virtual realities, souls will be liberated from the body and have endless freedom (Pesce, 1995). William Gibson's novel, *Neuromancer*, discussed the concept of virtual reality first in the literature field and it defined body as a meat prison where the soul is incarcerated (Gibson, 2016).

The understanding of self is one of the important topics in philosophy since Descartes. When we take a short look at history, we see that in the past this understanding was general, societal and deterministic. In the modern era and our current times, the self, broke free of its societal and general chains and understood the concepts of individuality, interiority and uniqueness. As a result, "I" refers to a "subject" which is unique, different and with the ability to make free choices.[2]

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[1] This quotation, entitled "Des Espace Autres," and published by the French journal *Architecture/Mouvement/Continuité* in October, 1984, was the basis of a lecture given by Michel Foucault in March 1967. Although not reviewed for publication by the author and thus not part of the official corpus of his work, the manuscript was released into the public domain for an exhibition in Berlin shortly before Michel Foucault's death. Translated from the French by Jay Miskowiec.

[2] In this article, self is used synonymously with "I" in the sense that it refers to the self-aware individual being, that is, to the first person. The subject, on the other hand, generally means the being or agent who perceives, observes and has self-awareness. The self is a reference that the subject makes to himself.

The concept of "subject" is a central problem within the history of philosophy but within modern philosophy the honor of discussing "subject" and identifying it with "consciousness" is given to Immanuel Kant (Balibar, 1996: 6). However, it should be stated that Kant only renamed what Descartes, founder of modern philosophy, identified with "self" and "consciousness". Descartes is the first philosopher who put the subject with a consciousness to the center of the philosophical thought (Mark, 2013: 510-525). Although Foucault is sometimes referred to as an "anti-subjectivist" who is claimed to refuse to acknowledge the subject, this generalization is wrong. Foucault never dismissed the existence of the subject. Contrary to this generalization, closer to his death he himself expressed that his work is all about the problem of subject and when we look at his works from the first to last, we see that he is talking about subjectivity often (Foucault, 1984: 352). The core of Foucault's work can be summed as thus: First is the historical ontology of our self, constructed with the facts produced by science and as self as a subject of knowledge. Second is the historical ontology of self in the relation to the spheres of power that we construct ourselves as subjects acting on others, or as objects of sets of actions acting on our actions. Third is the historical ontology of self in relation to ethics when we construct ourselves as moral agents.

According to Foucault, an experience is included in a field that is reflected upon by being problematized for economical or political reasons at a given moment in history. Scientific knowledge is produced based on experience and as a result, experience is transformed to an identity with boundaries. The boundaries of normal and abnormal in relation to this experience and the normativity is detected with various apparatuses (Alcoff, 2013: 207-225). By this activity, human existence is defined by the hegemon and thus becomes subjectified. For Foucault, subjectification works by adding impulse-pleasure-desire trifecta in practice. His recommendation for resisting these subjectification methods is the technologies of self and cultivation of self which he took from Ancient Greece.

Foucault thinks investigating the practices of self is important for the resolution of the thing we identify as a subject. He studied the relations a person creates with himself and methods of these relations to see how a person creates and accepts himself as a subject (Foucault, 2007: 124). This effort to explain is not only to make a historical ontology of the self, but also to examine the truth games' relationship with the self and the constitution of the subject in the context of a subjective experience. In Foucault's work, we can see four dimensions of the relationship with the self which makes it possible for a person to construct himself as the moral agent of his own actions. The first dimension of this relationship with the self is the attitude of the self-regarding moral behavior, which Foucault uses the term ethical substance, which is referred to as intentions by Kant. Second dimension is the recognition of moral obligations imposed on humans are created by other people (Foucault,

2014a: 206). This is the mode of subjection in Foucault's words. Third dimension is about the tools people use to transform themselves to become normal subjects. Fourth and final dimension is the aims people discern when they are making a moral act. Clearly, different aims will require different techniques of self (Foucault, 2014a: 207).

To understand Foucault's term of subjectivity, his analysis of techniques of domination should be balanced with his analysis of the techniques of the self (McNay, 1994: 134). Therefore, in Foucault's work, we should put technologies of subjectivity and the technologies of the self in balance and the techniques of self should be seen as a resistance against the technologies of subjectivity, as a possibility of freedom. Foucault made the idea of "design your life as an artwork" central in his later works. For Foucault, "a subject is not a static reality; it is a historical, cultural and linguistic construct or fiction created by speaking, acting and thinking" (Foucault, 2007: 16).

Foucault's construction of subjective experience process is a model of process creating the subject, its formula, therefore modern subject and postmodern subject are created in this way. Before modernity, subject was constructed by the hegemon with stricter rules, with discipline and punishment. Foucault's model of subject creation shows us a model created with the coming of modernity. Thus, to create a different truth game or to design ourselves in a different truth game, we may need to position ourselves in a different truth game that is given to us. In addition to that, to realize this goal a person may need to decontaminate himself from each device the given truth game offers and cleans his normal life from the effects of these devices. This is only possible by what Foucault calls "limit-attitude". For him "limit-attitude" is "the difficult interaction" between what is given as 'truth' as of now in history, or the boundaries set by our identity and the effort to change these boundaries (Keskin, 2002: 15). In other words, it is the attempt to understand and investigate every kind of reality that is imposed upon us as a universal rule as a historical construct. For Foucault, the attempt itself is a philosophical act. Therefore, designing yourself as an artwork begins with this attempt.

Foucault states that Western philosophical tradition is fed from the tension of knowledge of self (*gnothi seauton*) and the anxiety of self (*epimeleia heutou*) and the tradition started from the figure of Socrates and the injunction of "know thyself" formulated around his thought. This made the knowledge of self, primary amongst other knowledge (Foucault, 2015: xv). However, it is doubtful that this approach regarding us will stay the same in the future. Scientific and technological advances affect people and their worlds so radically that it is not possible to say that the understanding of self will stay the same. The possibilities of artificial intelligence, Metaverse and other concepts suggest us that the understanding of self will change a lot.

Framing and Understanding Metaverse

Although there is no agreed-upon definition for Metaverse as a fictional universe, there are many definitions made by individuals, companies and managers. It may seem unfortunate that Metaverse cannot be defined with a short paragraph, but this is also fascinating. This is like explaining the 1980s when we saw the internet for the first time. It was enough for people to imagine the future, but it was not enough for knowing what will happen. For this reason, the term Metaverse is "ambiguous, superfluous and different people still use and define it in different ways" (Christian, 2022).

The term Metaverse was used in Neal Stephenson's science fiction novel *Snow Crash* which was published in 1992. It became relevant and popular when *Facebook* changed its name to *Meta* in 2021. It is an amalgamation of "Meta", meaning beyond and universe; creating a meaning that it is a beyond universe. It is a 3D virtual reality where people exist via virtual reality tools and avatars. Metaverse initially made its debut with the release of "Second Life" but beyond the gaming world it exists as a new place of socialization for people as a virtual version of the physical world (Duan et al, 2021: 153, Ko et al, 2021: 331, Lee et al, 2021: 72, Seok, 2021: 13).

Within Metaverse, users can not only trade and do shopping with cryptocurrencies and non-fungible tokens (NFT) but also purchase houses and lands, go to movies, concerts and cafes, travel and see not just the places on our planet but in the galaxy, become social, go to school, go to work. In other words, it is an archipelago of 3D virtual worlds where they can experience what they are already experiencing in the real world with their avatars in a continuous fashion (Chiu, 2021). In the "Into the metaverse" report by Henri Calandra and Jiawei Chiu, which focuses on human interaction, Alexander Fernandez, CEO of Streamline Media Group, described the Metaverse as "the place where your physical personality and digital personality become a unified reality". (Calandra and Chiu, 2021: 17). For Grider, "Metaverse is an archipelago of interconnected and experiential 3D virtual worlds encompassing digital and physical worlds, permanent, allowing real time socialization of people to create a user-based internet economy" (2021: 2). Lee et al (2021: 5) state that Metaverse consists of two components: "Augmented Reality technologies and virtual economies, and Metaverse ecosystem created by social acceptance and trust". Duan et al (2021: 155) state that Metaverse has three layers consisting of "technological infrastructure, user experience, digital twinning, content creation interface intersecting with virtual worlds consisting of digital content, economy, artificial intelligence". For Bhatia (2021) "great ideas in technology always start seemingly as jargon". For him when abstraction disappears and construction begins, these concepts become universally available, like food, water and the internet. It can be said that the same thing will happen for the Metaverse. Bhatia suggests that "Metaverse can be understood as the next generation Internet". Metaverse will be built on the Internet and it will transform the internet over and over again. For Philip Rosedale who tried

to realize the Metaverse idea in 1999 with the game *Second Life*, virtual worlds do not necessarily result in dystopias. "Second life created a sensation with concepts like digital identities, virtual real estates, digital economies and a multiplayer online ecosystem in the beginning of 2000s" (Hatmaker, 2022). In October 2021, *Facebook* CEO, Mark Zuckerberg, who is seen as a social media mogul and data baron, announced that *Facebook* was rebranded as *Meta* and this accelerated the rebirth Metaverse idea for a lot of people. In his speech Zuckerberg stated that he saw Metaverse as the next level of social connection and he defined *Meta* which will help the creation of Metaverse as "a place where we can play and connect by 3D technologies" (Hatmaker, 2022). Neal Stephenson stated that he saw Metaverse as an intense world that is radically different from our physical world and will be closer to virtual reality rather than augmented reality in an interview he gave to *Vanity Fair*. Some of the definitions given "Into the metaverse" report by Henri Calandra and Jiawei Chiu in the report are as follows: For Phillippe Brown, Metaverse is "an archipelago of open source, connected worlds where you can travel with no restrictions between them" (Calandra and Chiu, 2021: 20). For Leon Ng, who sees human interactivity as a central idea, "Metaverse is a digital twin of our world". Because for him, "this is the main reason why we can have endless worlds". Because we exist digitally in this virtual world, all the limitations of time disappear, in other words, we can be immortal in a certain sense. The concept of death, which Heidegger stated as the only experience that differentiates us and an experience that is truly personal, means we are mortal and final may be meaningless in this world. In a virtual world whole identity becomes a digital data stack and this dissolves the perception of the unity of the self.[3] The interpersonal communication processes evolving from face-to-face interaction to computer-aided social media and with the debut of virtual reality via Metaverse transformed the presentation of self as well. The new hybrid platform giving a 3D sensation and stimulating more than one sense organ creates a physical sensation for people and it nearly creates a consumption for the presentation of self like communicating in the real world.

A digital twin of the world is formed by users copying their routines, interests and obsessions, choosing their cars, having virtual relationships with intimacy, building houses and shopping malls on digital lands, meeting with friends in the virtual shopping centers, and hosting holographic meetings. Nowadays this universe exists with games and gamer avatars, but social media platforms are preparing themselves for augmented reality where all users can experience it (Calandra and Chiu, 2021). Users can befriend and socialize with augmented reality games in the secondary socialization level. The most important examples of cultural events started with "Second Life" by opening permanent digital museums and art galleries (Tasa, 2009: 30). Within the

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[3] Harari claims that the scientific theory called Dataism, which "claims that the universe consists of the flow of data", is gradually moving towards becoming a techno-religion as the supreme value of all is the "flow of information" (2016: 383, 397).

Covid-19 pandemic, museums created virtual reality simulations to show their exhibits (Bozkuş, 2021).

Individuals can experience the socialization processes with the perception of reality within Metaverse as well. Augmented reality visualizes imagination and fantasy and presents it to the user as an imitation of concrete reality. This results in individuals going beyond the universe and experiencing the relationship between objects and situations that are not accessible in the physical world with scientific inquiries, design and creativity skills (Rodrigues and Bidarra, 2014: 45).

With Metaverse, there will also be functional campuses where virtual surgeries are performed for medical students and war simulations are performed for military school students (Gronstedt and Ramos, 2014: 9). This campus illuminates how Metaverse's infrastructure, interactivity and ecosystem components can be used in education. The campus aims to create a hybrid environment where the acts in the virtual environment affect the physical environment and vice versa. When connected to the campus in the Metaverse, students can log in to the chat rooms closest to their real physical location.

With Metaverse users can experience the primary and secondary socialization processes together like in the real world. The religious institutions, which are one of the most important tools of socialization, already have a place in the augmented reality medium. VR Church was founded to make Christians visit the holy sites. Also, in 2022 January, Saudi Arabia announced that they created and put a simulation into service allowing the visit of Kaaba (Habertürk, 2022a).

As Ibn Khaldun (2009) stated, humans do not start socialization from nothing. Even without a government nobody reverts to their primal states. We see from the Metaverse example that people carry their accustomed socialization processes to new living spaces and virtual realities organically, and they try to continue their routines and habits as well as comforts in these new spaces. Their presentation of self, habits of conformity, processes of creating a social identity exist in parallel in this new world. Even though they construct a vastly different identity and life compared to their physical world counterparts, this process of construction follows the rules and stages of the real world. Users purchasing real estate, NFTs and cryptocurrencies from a virtual world that is not even completed are the most important examples of the processes working in parallel. Even though there are no laws for the Metaverse as of now, the rules prepared by the companies bind the users. If the users do not comply, it may result in warning or expulsion from the world.

It has been seen that users do not hesitate to pay exorbitant prices for NFT clothes, accessories, shoes, artworks and digital houses, cars and goods to create a world for their avatars (Calandra and Chiu, 2021). Ryan Mullins, *Fast Company* CEO, states that clothes are a way of expressing ourselves or a way of sig-

nifying status and they have the same purpose in the digital world therefore the act of buying is not different from the physical world (Calandra and Chiu, 2021: 25). Individuals show the same behavior of conformity and follow the same processes of socialization in the virtual world. Murphy thinks that the future of consumerism lies in virtual goods and sees an endless wardrobe of goods consisting of digital clothes because people see value in digital goods and choose to interact with them (Calandra and Chiu, 2021: 26). Users tend to copy their habits in the physical world (Türk, 2020). Keith Stuart, game editor of the *Guardian*, states that "For the generations Alpha and Z, personalization and creation is a complex part of the game experience. For them personalization and the game element cannot be divided: it means expressing yourself and discovery of self" in "Into the metaverse" report by Henri Calandra and Jiawei Chiu, (Calandra and Chiu, 2021: 32) and by this, he meant existing socialization processes are moved to the virtual world. Because a person perceives and interprets the external reality and the self with the knowledge and experience he had gathered so far. Therefore, he carries this emotional-spiritual baggage everywhere and brings the culture with himself. He also grounds interpersonal relations, modes of relations and the processes of socialization with the same repertoire. People formed relations with social media, created digital communities with single appreciation and a common way of doing things, differing from traditional communities and carried their socialization processes to the 2D world or even sometimes to the physical world and moved them to the first level. With Metaverse the relations are increased and facilitated with avatars using hybrid and virtual reality tools. Users can create profiles with their own photos, videos and identities or exist totally anonymously in social media platforms. Within Metaverse, users exist with avatars of their own design, and it varies from anthropomorphic images to fantastic ones based on the imagination of its user. Different from social media, the special clothes and gadgets allow the users to experience not only visual and aural feedback but also touch, heat, wetness/dryness and thus allowing the user to feel a sense perception as close to reality. This allows him to feel the illusion of togetherness on a deeper level and allows him to form stronger bonds. In "Second Life" users can marry and even have children (Uzun, 2021). This situation leads to discussing the judicial status of relations formed in Metaverse by the partners who are already married in the real world. A 43-year-old woman's avatar logged in to *Facebook Horizon Venues* Metaverse and was harassed by 3 male users and whether this act constitutes a crime was put into the fore and lawyers stressed that "whatever constitutes a crime in the real world, also constitutes a crime in the Metaverse" (Özyurt, 2022). Another example can be given to a 16-year-old player who destroyed a governmental building built by himself in *Minecraft VR* was sentenced to jail (Denli, 2022).

Amber Slooten who is the co-founder and creative director of the *Fabricator*, a virtual reality clothes company, stated that "today and in this age our digital identity becoming more important than our real one", this is impor-

tant when we think with Covid-19 pandemic humans spent more time in online platforms, and 70% of their work moved to the digital world. This is why 88% of users think their online identities should reflect their real-world presence instead of a fictional nickname (Calandra and Chiu, 2021: 86). 83% of global users believe that technology brings people together and they spend their secondary socialization processes and individual atomic fields in digital media to create new and meaningful relationships. Developmental and resocialization processes are mirroring the physical world in the Metaverse (Calandra and Chiu, 2021: 86).

As it can be seen, Metaverse presents the socialization forms and processes that users experience in the physical world in a format suitable for the 3D universe, but in parallel with the physical world. The progress of humans and technology also improves and changes society and socialization processes. As the Metaverse evolves, it will continue to transform socialization processes in ways that ease human experience.

Heterotopia and Its Six Essential Principles

Metaverse studies generate a lot of attention nowadays and therefore it is important to understand the Metaverse, draw its framework and evaluate its social effects from a specific conceptual point of view. Features such as presenting a different perception of time and space to its users, finding a place for deviant behaviors in the Metaverse and causing various illusions in users make it necessary to evaluate the Metaverse as a form of heterotopia.

For Foucault, unlike utopias, heterotopias are real and existing spaces that come to the fore with their otherness but are in relation with all other spaces despite this otherness. Heterotopias produce a space perception overlapping with the concept of Metaverse in terms of clustering deviant behaviors, differing the perception of time and space, and they are places allowing identification. In this sense, the Metaverse will be evaluated as a space but also a "space without a space", and its main features will be analyzed with descriptive analysis methods, starting from the perspective presented by the concept of "heterotopia". Before moving on to the "heterotopic" features of the Metaverse world, six basic principles that Foucault uses while describing heterotopias as a space will be mentioned.

Foucault's "Of Other Spaces" written in 1967 (2014b: 291-302), refers to other spaces as "heterotopias". Within this text, Foucault gives six essential descriptive features of heterotopias and presents various examples. Heterotopia is a concept directly relevant to the space in Foucault, however, the concept comes from medicine. It is used to describe an organ or a part of a body "which is not located or moved from its usual place" (Topinka, 2010: 56). Heterotopia, connected to existing space, as another space (which is the first feature of heterotopias) is constructed from Greek words "hetero" different

and "topia" places/spaces. In another connotation heterotopia can be defined as different places, which independently exist, existing side-by-side or up-side-down at the same time. In this sense, heterotopia stands out as a concept directly related to another place, location and space.

Foucault begins examining heterotopias by stressing the concept of space. Foucault defines the age "we are in as an age of space and he defines the space as a field where simultaneous, juxtaposed and disconnected intersect" (2014b: 292). He states that in medieval times, space was set up hierarchically and the differentiation of spaces were shaped with dichotomies. Holy and earthly places, urban and rural areas and so on. For Foucault, this is a space of location. However, this understanding of space ended with Galileo[4]. For Foucault, the anxiety of the lived age comes from the space, not from the time. Time is a game of division possible within the spaces we exist in. Although Foucault defines heterotopia, he stresses that it is not unique to the 20th century. In this sense, the conceptualization of "position" comes to the front as an important quality. For Foucault, position can be defined and described within a whole consisting of relations (2014b: 295). Therefore, positions only have meaning when they are understood as spaces where unique societal relations are developed. So, the concept of space cannot be evaluated independently from the practices of societal relations it presents. The relationship patterns that a space creates uniquely come to the fore as one of the basic conditions that should be considered in understanding, defining and describing that space as a position.

Another important topic is spaces, because of the produced relationship patterns, create the behaviors people inhabiting it. After saying this, Foucault stresses two important features of spaces: "But among all these positions, what interests me is the interesting feature of being in contact with all other positions; but they are sites that delay, neutralize, or reverse the ensemble of relations they designate, reflect, or represent. These spaces, which are in some sense related to all other sites, yet deny all others, fall into two main types" (2014b: 295).

Foucault designates two spaces as "utopia" and "heterotopia". Utopia and heterotopia differ from each other because of their contradictory features. Utopias are "positions that maintain a direct or inverted general analogy relationship with the real space of society" (2014b: 295). The most distinctive feature of utopias is being an unreal space that is usually positioned opposite the society.

Heterotopias exist and they are real positions. In this sense heterotopias stand opposite to the concept of utopia. It is not utopias but heterotopias

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[4] This place of installation was shattered with Galileo; because Galileo discovered that the Earth revolves around the Sun and established an infinite and extremely open space; so much so that the medieval place has, in a sense, melted into this space, and the place of something has now become nothing more than a point in its movement (2014b: 292).

where Foucault digs into the reality of the age of convergence, of proximity and distance, of juxtaposition, disintegration and separation. In this context, according to Şentürk heterotopias are defined "as an opposite-topos, beyond-space" (2003: 13-14). For Foucault, these spaces are important not only for their differences but also for being points of resistance to authority and representation. Foucault defines heterotopia as "physical or mental spaces or moments that are not here or there, unplanned, in other words, spontaneous" (2014b: 298).

Foucault has another explanation, which is also important in terms of the subject discussed, based on the "mirror" metaphor on distinction between utopia and heterotopia (2014b: 295-296):

> In the final analysis, the mirror is a utopia because it is a place with no place. I see myself in the mirror where I am not, I see an unreal space that opens up beyond the surface, I am there, a kind of shadow that gives me my own visibility where I am not and allows me to look at myself where I am not: the mirror utopia. But to the extent that it exists and has a kind of reversal effect where I am, the mirror is also a heterotopia; Since I see myself there, I discover from the mirror that I am not where I am. (...) The mirror works like a heterotopia in the sense that it makes this place I occupy the moment I look in the mirror both absolutely real and absolutely unreal.

In this sense "mirror" is a utopia because it provides an unreal space but because it creates a virtual sense of place between real and unreal it is a heterotopia. "The mirror metaphor does not just express how important it is to perceive oneself as the other; it also points to how the forces constituting subject positions invent different spaces based on subject positions - here and there, real and virtual; like a space that belongs to us and a foreign space" (Nalçaoğlu 2002: 130). "Heterotopias determine what is in the real place standing opposite the mirror. When the one who is looking at himself gazes back and finds his place, he enters the field of heterotopias" (Akay 2016: 85).

After giving this distinctive definition, Foucault deepens his analysis on the concept of heterotopias. In this sense he discusses six essential principles for defining heterotopias (2014b: 296):

Crisis and deviation heterotopias

Foucault's first principle for defining heterotopias is built upon historicity. The "crisis heterotopias" in primitive cultures and "deviation heterotopias" in modern societies constitute the sub-items of this principle. Crisis heterotopias are the spaces dedicated to individuals experiencing a crisis situation within the society. They are distinctive, holy or forbidden spaces. Foucault gives examples of spaces dedicated to adolescents, menstruating women, pregnant women and old people. Foucault states that in our current times crisis heterotopias are disappearing and they are replaced by "deviation heteroto-

pias" (2014: 296-297). This states that individuals whose actions are abnormal or not conforming to the norm are put into deviation heterotopias. Jails, clinics, nursing homes etc. The basic quality of these heterotopias is that they have a practice of closure, and they isolate the individual from the society. In this way, the social visibility level of deviant behaviors is tried to be reduced. Heterotopias of deviation also contain a kind of punishment mechanism. It is aimed to push the deviation out of the society. In this context, heterotopias can be considered as spaces that are closely related to the body of phenomena and concepts such as power, control, confinement, panopticon, exclusion and discipline that Foucault deals with in his works.

Heterotopias changing to societies

The second principle that Foucault states when defining heterotopias is related to the necessity created by historicity. Every society assigns different values to spaces in their history, and societies' perspective and interpretation of space change over time. In addition, heterotopias can be loaded with different functions from society to society and culture to culture. Historical changes and transformations can also transform the functions of heterotopias. Foucault cites cemeteries as an example in this regard and states that in Western societies, cemeteries are loaded with different functions in relation to conditions of the period. Cemeteries were located within the city until the end of the 18th century, associated with immortality and ascribed holiness to them. However, with the change in the view of death in the next century, the cemeteries were moved outside the city, it was thought of as another city.

Heterotopias incompatible with each other

Foucault's third principle is related to heterotopias are subject to change. This principle is about the gathering of many spaces that are not related to each other and cannot come together in a single space normally and it is related to the spatial characteristics of heterotopias (2014: 298). Michel Foucault says that some heterotopias also create illusions, like the mirror example. He cites theater and cinema as examples. However, the example of "photo" can be added to this principle. According to Roland Barthes, photography is actually "a kind of primitive theater, a kind of Living Painting"; it is "a representation of the motionless and painted face under which we see the dead" (1996: 38). Defining photography as a "still image", Barthes emphasizes that it has similar characteristics with cinema. Foucault does not explicitly depict photography as heterotopia in his article "On Other Spaces". Instead, he considers the "mirror" as a heterotopia: "The mirror is a heterotopia in the sense that it makes this place I occupy the moment I look in the mirror both absolutely real-in relation to the whole surrounding space -and absolutely unreal- because it

has to pass through this virtual point there to be perceived-it is a heterotopia. works like this" (Foucault, 2014: 296).

Heterotopias conserving time

The idea that heterotopias are related to the concept of time constitutes the fourth principle. The heterotopias in this principle are the spaces that started to exist as a result of the breaking of ties with the time lived. Heterotopias create an irregularity not only in space but also in time. Foucault calls these "heterochronies". These are spaces that allow one to go to another time from the time lived. Museums, libraries and cemeteries can be given as examples. Heterochronies divide the time and start to work only when people have broken ties from traditional time. Thus, the cemetery "begins with this strange heterochrony, which means the loss of life for an individual and that semi-eternity in which it continues to disappear and be erased from history" (Foucault, 2014: 99). While examining the concept of heterotopia in his article titled "On Other Spaces", Foucault mentioned the existence of heterotopic spaces that accumulate time and record time according to the fourth principle of the classification he made, and interpreted it as "contrary", "most insignificant", "most temporary", "most makeshift". He also talks about heterotopias.

Heterotopias with specific exit and entrance rules

Another principle is related to the isolated or open access conditions of heterotopias; it covers spaces with its own rules. The entrances and exits of these places are subject to certain rules and these rules are predetermined. According to Foucault, "One does not enter a heterotopic space as one enters a mill". In this context, the barracks and the prison are examples of this principle. In these spaces the stay is "forced" or "the rules and purifications must be obeyed" (Foucault, 2014: 300). These places can be entered only after certain permissions are obtained and certain behaviors are fulfilled.

Heterotopias creating the illusion of perfection

The sixth principle that Foucault emphasizes while describing heterotopias is on the effect of heterotopias on spaces that are not mentioned in other principles. This effect can be explained in two ways. First, it can be said that heterotopias create a kind of illusion space. The second effect is the opposite. The more complex the real space presents, the more orderly heterotopias appear. Therefore, heterotopias constitute a kind of "other" space. Foucault gives the example of "colony" for this situation (Foucault, 2014: 301). Colonies are places where "human perfection is factually realized", "extremely or-

dered", "wonderful" places.

It can be stated that the descriptive principles of Foucault and the basic features of the Metaverse world, becoming increasingly widespread today and producing a unique perception of space, time and reality, overlap with each other. In this context, the Metaverse will be considered as a form of heterotopia peculiar to the network society of our age, together with the above-mentioned principles.

Metaverse as a Heterotopia

Examination of the Metaverse world as a "space" will undoubtedly contribute to a better and deeper understanding of this world. In this context, the Metaverse, while producing a perception of space, should be considered as a position because of the relationship networks it offers. On the other hand, the term "non-spaces" expressed by Marc Auge contains a very descriptive definition for the Metaverse. According to Auge, if a space can be defined as identifying/identical, relational and historical, it is possible to characterize a space that cannot be defined as an identifying/identical, relationally or historically, as a non-place (1997: 85). For this reason, it is possible to define and make sense of a place as a social space or, in Foucault's words, a position, by revealing the network of relations it presents. In the case of the Metaverse and in this sense, a paradox emerges. The world of the Metaverse has no space, in other words, it has no definite/concrete space. However, on the other hand, it also produces a perception of space/location due to the network of relations it produces. Metaverse exhibits a complex structure in that it inherently contains this paradox: A space that has no space but produces a perception of space/location due to the network of relations it produces. A similar contradiction appears in Tomlinson's definition of non-spaces: "Spaces where solitude, silence, alienation and transience prevail even in the presence of others" (2004: 153). This contradiction is one of the paradoxes presented by the Metaverse world; a common experience in these networks is that one can live an incident with many people, but s/he can experience it alone as well.

Another paradox is related to reality as well. The relations and interactions produced within the Metaverse world are real, but they have different forms. The difference is caused by dislocation of time and space perception. Therefore, this reality is called "virtual reality" while keeping a safe distance. We experience it, but this experience never constitutes a certainty. We perceive an experience akin to the phenomenon which Foucault tried to explain with the mirror example. In the mirror (Metaverse world) we exist but this existence is presented in an abstracted/beyond (but also accepted) fashion. We are in a web of relationship in the mirror, but this web of relationship is not experienced as reality but as a referent/signifier via software. The relationship or

communication based on referents prepares a ground for "alienation" of an individual's societal relationships. Therefore, a space is opened for new types of socialization unique to itself.

One of the most important facets of defining Metaverse world as a heterotopia is the leaving aside of daily routines of everyday life. Another feature is related to understanding heterotopias as a kind of threshold. A person can carry multiple time, place and identity perceptions by existing in both Metaverse and the physical world at the same time (Bennet and Thornton, 2012: 496). Metaverse creates an unusual perception of "other space", "other time" and "other reality". Therefore, it is necessary to characterize it as "another place" which is in contact with our reality but produces a new space, time and reality with its own unique forms outside of this reality, hence heterotopia.

One of the critical points of the heterotopic of the Metaverse world appears in these identity debates. The representations of identity, developed with Web 2.0 are considered as a reflection of reality no matter if they are real or unreal. But the fact that individuals represent themselves through "another" space causes heterotopic identities to emerge. This otherness paves the way for the opening of a dual space in the lives of individuals.

The discussions on the Metaverse world primarily agree that it should be seen as a "cyberspace". It is a space, but as a space without a space, it is seen that this virtual space brings together many spaces and positions within itself. According to Foucault's descriptive analysis of heterotopias, heterotopias have the potential to juxtapose many seemingly incompatible spaces in one real place. In this sense, the Metaverse exhibits a rich heterotopic feature as a spatial unifier.

Foucault states that heterotopias cause people to experience temporal dislocations and sometimes temporal accumulations and he gives museums and libraries as examples. The fact that the Metaverse world produces a perception of space that represents life in almost every subject but we should bear in mind that it already includes defined heterotopias such as museums and libraries. Apart from this, it is seen that the Metaverse structurally feeds the perception of "timelessness" strongly. Castells refers to this as "timeless time". According to Castells, the time of the network society has no past or future. It does not even have a short-term history. It is the elimination of the sequence by compression or blurring (2016: 84). Most of the time, being in the Metaverse brings about existence in an endless flow of time, without interruption. Metaverse produces a unique parallel time perception. Construction that takes years in real time can be completed in a few minutes, or a baby that takes decades to grow can become an adult in a few days. The traditional division of time is based on various dichotomies. We can give examples of work-rest time, compulsory-leisure time, etc. Social behavior in the classical

sense has a specific time: a time to shop, a time to rest, a time to eat, a time to wander, etc. as. However, there is no such temporal partitioning for the Metaverse. Metaverse is always stable. It also invites people to itself. This invitation necessitates a break from traditional time. For this reason, with the break from traditional time, a new and different perception of time is produced in the Metaverse world with temporal accumulation and infinity. This perception of time; rather than a linear, flowing and disappearing time, it is an uninterrupted accumulation of time. Even the past, which is a memory of the present, can be experienced right now in the Metaverse.

The relationship between Foucault's heterotopias and real space emerges at this point. As a digital heterotopia, the Metaverse produces its own reality, but this also causes an illusory and moving consciousness. For example, an individual's identity is constructed differently in the Metaverse world and differently in everyday real life. But both constitutes a reality with regard to the spatial and temporal arrangements they are in, and the social interaction practice they are in. However, they are different from each other. This difference makes it necessary to consider either at least one or both altogether as an illusion. If we follow Foucault's footsteps; both inevitably turn into an illusion.

Conclusion

In his evaluation of heterotopias, Foucault gives examples of different spaces relative to each descriptive principle. However, it is noteworthy that digital heterotopias completely overlap with these principles and show themselves as a single heterotopic space. This situation can be associated with the Metaverse world simulating life in an inclusive way. The Metaverse as another perception of time-space, another reality, another socialization, another identification, another set of values, etc. seems to be an area where otherness, difference and heterogeneity come to the fore. In this context, it seems quite natural that the Metaverse can produce its own heterotopias.

The evaluation of the world of the Metaverse as a space, and as a heterotopic space especially, draws our attention to the founding and changing effects of social spaces on individuals. It is seen that the space design and time perception produced uniquely by a global production style with information and information density has taken its most concrete form in the Metaverse world. Globalization, in both economic and cultural terms, needs an intertwined, simultaneous perception of space and time. Considering that time and space have become much more dysfunctional today, it is inevitable to create a world suitable for this.

Space always exists before the subject; the subject does not exist independently of space. The fact that the space comes before the subject and that

it exists, shapes the field of action and discourse of the individual existing in the space. Therefore, the behavioral forms and discourse practices that emerge in the space are primarily determined by the space itself. This situation is important in terms of making sense of what is happening in the Metaverse world. In this sense, the spatial characteristics of the Metaverse world as a heterotopic space also directly affect the relationship practices produced in these areas. One of the results obtained from the discussion in this study is that the Metaverse world has a "space without distance" as a space. This feature plays an important role in reconstructing the patterns of social relations that emerge in the space in unique forms. In addition, this feature is one of the dominant features in the evaluation of the Metaverse world as "another" space form. Another otherness of this "other" space is hidden in its temporality. Metaverse, like every space, has its own unique temporality. However, this time is not linear and segmented as it is experienced in real life, but an "endless time". This endlessness causes a temporality that always continues and accumulates incessantly. As with non-distance, discontinuity turns into a form of social relationship. In this context, it is thought that the Metaverse world will reproduce/construct the forms of social relations through the perception of space and time it presents. However, it should not be overlooked that this relationship belongs to another place and another time. Everything is contextual, and this context often belongs to time and space. Just as an event that occurred in a certain period of history can be understood within its own periodical conditions, the Metaverse world can only be understood within its own structural features, functions and experience.

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