



## Article

# Sovereign Surfing in the Society of Control: The Parkour Chase in *Casino Royale* as a Staging of Social Change

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**Abstract:** In “Postscript on Societies of Control”, French philosopher Gilles Deleuze proclaimed that “Everywhere surfing has replaced the older sports”. By this, he alluded to Foucault’s thoughts on older societal regimes and power diagrams of sovereignty and discipline, and that now such models have been supplemented with governance through control and allegations of increased freedom. This article has as its point of departure the potential of sports to reflect social change. Contemporaneously to the coining of Deleuze’s surfing sentence, a new sport emerges: parkour, in which practitioners “surf” the urban realm. This practice gained attention globally when it was featured in the 2006 James Bond film *Casino Royale*. The analysis in this article revolves around the different ways of moving in and through the environment in the renowned parkour chase in the beginning of the movie. How do different kinds of displacement in the parkour chase of *Casino Royale* relate to the transition between the societies described by Deleuze, and what new adaptations emerge and what old logics and models return? It is concluded that the older forms of power prevail and that the ideal of the society of control cannot be realised.

**Keywords:** James Bond; parkour; surfing; Gilles Deleuze; Michel Foucault; control; discipline; sovereignty; movement; social change



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## 1. Introduction

“Partout le *surf* a déjà remplacé les vieux *sports*.”

—Gilles Deleuze

In a late, brief text which updates Foucault’s ([1975] 2002) account of the transition from a society of sovereignty to a society of discipline by presenting “the societies of control”, Deleuze ([1990] 2003) cryptically claimed that “Everywhere surfing has already replaced the older sports”. By this, Deleuze obviously did not mean that the older sports—called modern sport by some (cf. Guttmann 2004)—are no longer practised, but rather that in post-war times they have ceased to act as a model for power, governance, production, and competition, in both culture and economy. The increasingly connected societies of “control” demand individuals and institutions of a transgressive variety. Perhaps emblematic of continental philosophy, ostentatious sentences such as Deleuze’s are primarily to be conceived as pedagogical and rhetorical, i.e., meant to suggest where and how to look at larger chains of events, and not to be empirically tested. (However, it is noteworthy that ever since Deleuze made his claim, surfing (the internet) is precisely what happens exactly everywhere on a scale arguably unfathomable even by him at the time; the very phrase “surfing the Internet” was coined in 1992, two years posterior to Deleuze’s quip.)

Cultural studies scholars (cf. Wheaton 2004, 2013; Kusz 2007) have highlighted how extreme sports are conspicuous practices in which cultural and social values are contested and negotiated, often reinforcing hegemony of masculinity and whiteness through media such as television and film. Actually, Deleuze’s (1982) first mention of surfing is found in a lecture on movement in film, based on the philosophies of Henri Bergson and Charles Sanders

Peirce. Movies such as *Point Break* (1991; for all citations of film titles, see Appendix A), starring Keanu Reeves and Patrick Swayze, is a canon of a Californian catching-the-wave kind of gospel, which have elicited elaborate cultural commentary on Deleuze and surfing as a model of knowledge that stays clear of both spiritualism and hedonism (Palmås 2009). In this article, we will turn to another intriguing example in films of how surfing replaced the older sports: the British secret service agent James Bond, whose phenomenal somatic splendour always seems to follow, and perhaps drive, any given zeitgeist he happens to figure in.

In line with the cultural studies rendition of extreme sports, Pegram (2018) pinpoints the heroic masculinity on display in Bond's extreme athleticism. Judging from Pegram's demonstrations, there is no lacuna of traces of surfing culture in Bond films, and likewise, in them, there are certainly lagoons traversed by boards. Pierce Brosnan's mounting of waves in *Die Another Day* (2002), in particular, takes us from the clandestine night operation on North Korean waters to the full-out global warming-inflicted arctic tsunami surfing in the North Atlantic Ocean. Roger Moore's descent in the alps in *A View to a Kill* (1985)—arguably the first ever snowboarding instance on the silver screen—is aurally augmented by surfer culture anthem "California Girls" by the 1960s pop group The Beach Boys.

So far, the affinity between extreme sports such as surfing and James Bond is evident, but what about regular sport? Curiously, as Eriksson and Jonasson (2020) remark, James Bond, while showcasing many spectacular stunts of the extreme variety throughout the films, aside from a game of golf in *Goldfinger* (1964) "seems to avoid traditional sports tout court". Instead, Eriksson and Jonasson (2020) contend that *glissade*, i.e., the sliding motion typical for surfing, has left traces throughout the Bond films leading up to Brosnan's final outing. The franchise, apparently, already attests to Deleuze's claim that "everywhere surfing has already replaced the older sports".

As for Pegram's (2018) account of extreme sport in Bond, the latest of actors impersonating the spy, Daniel Craig, is not part of the analysis (save for a remark on his swimming trunks and a judgement of an elite footballer, Steven Gerrard, whom Craig saw suitable to succeed him as Bond). Not that Craig lacks any of the necessary grit and decisiveness for extreme sport acumen, as Bond, he just does not mount boards, only motorised vehicles. Notwithstanding, there is one extravagant expression of extreme sport in his inaugural Bond movie *Casino Royale* (2006): the epitomising chase in the beginning of the movie, starring alongside (or rather ahead of) Craig, Sébastien Foucan—one of parkour's founding fathers. The connection between extreme sport development, its practitioners, and the James Bond action scene bravado has always been intricate (Pegram 2018); the parkour scene, though, presents special challenges as a trial for the recast, rebooted, distinctly new Bond (cf. Lindner 2009).

Parkour is a sport that emerged in a time and place where, according to Deleuze's dictum, surfing has replaced the older sports, and indeed its ideals are close to the transgressive imperative of the informational, late modernity (Angel 2011, 2016; Raymen 2018). However, there is something lacking in parkour that characterises surfing and its ilk, and which is significant for Deleuze: the inserting of your body into an existing force such as wave and wind (Deleuze 1982, [1990] 2003; cf. Rinehart and Sydnor 2003; Žižek 2004; Palmås 2009). Instead, the traceurs—the parkour practitioners, with their smooth wave-like movement pattern in cityscapes, who could be taken for exemplary, "undulatory" (Deleuze [1990] 2003) individuals in the so-called societies of control—are actually themselves the origin of the exerted power. The problem raised by parkour marks a shift in the logic of extreme sport: it takes place in a built environment as if it were a natural environment, exerting internal force as if it were an external force. Deleuze actualises a similar paradox when he points out surfing as the typical model for, and corporation (Fr. *entreprise*) as the typical space in societies of control. This opposition appears to have been conflated in the practice of parkour.

Regardless of Deleuze, theorists of parkour sometimes slip into his discourse. Aside from camaraderie and dignity, Thibault (2020, pp. 29–31) identifies force and control

as common ideals for “the art of displacement” (his preferred term for parkour), which he defines as a “culture of attention”—being attentive to your surroundings, textures, movements, etc.—through the practice of which one transforms brute force to control and mastery. Accordingly, Thibault’s very first philosophical lesson is drawn from Epictetus, the Stoic: there are some things that are in our control and others that are not (Thibault 2020, p. 37); parkour has to do with affirming one’s capacity to overcome obstacles, in effect exercising one’s control (of your attitudes and habits) upon that which one does not in fact control (the material world). It is no surprise, then, that Thibault frames this ethics of control with an optimistic attitude of growth and self-improvement: you can always perform better; you can learn to overcome all obstacles. Raymen (2018) connects the individualised ethos of parkour to contemporary capitalism, one that takes place in both off-limit cityscapes and the gig economy, the latter of which is relevant to discuss in relation to the dispersal of parkour as a considerable cultural expression in social media through moving images, and even in cinema (Angel 2011). All this seems to indicate that parkour represents a paradox in the development of sport which reflects complex circumstances of contemporary social change; the wholesale exchange of a disciplinary model for one of “control”, as older sports give way to hegemonic surfing, is not the full picture. If transitions are taking place, they appear more complex and more conflictual.

We aim to investigate what happens in the struggle over what form society takes and how this can be reflected and prefigured by sports, specifically in their cultural representations. We will do this by analysing a scene in a film where a parkour/freerun is staged as part of the plot: the chase scene set in Madagascar in the James Bond film *Casino Royale*, where Bond is pitted against a traceur antagonist. For this purpose, we ask the following questions: *How do different kinds of displacement in the parkour chase of Casino Royale relate to the transition between the disciplinary society and that of control? And: What other kinds of social change can be traced from looking at those transitory displacements, especially with regards to what new adaptations emerge and what old logics and models return?*

The rest of the text is disposed as follows: First, we delve into the forms of social change that we address and on what scale they operate. This is achieved through an explication of Foucault’s historicising of power through sovereign rule and disciplinary regimes, as well as Deleuze’s supplementing notion of societies of control, and by presenting the concept of diagrams as a tool of analysis. Further, the term diachronicity is suggested as a theoretical asset capable of harbouring the hybrid sports and social logic reigning today. Given the cultural prominence of narrative film, this medium is deemed an apt object of study for attaining a diachronic view of the diagrams at play in a dramatic context. The main part of the text thus consists of a close analysis of the scene in question—the parkour chase in the beginning of *Casino Royale*. The movement of the combatants is related to the different surroundings and discussed in relation to the diagrams of power as furnished by Foucault and Deleuze. We conclude by discussing what this kind of analysis of sport and high-performance movement in film can reveal about the temporality, historicity, and future of power distribution and social change.

## 2. Diagrams and the Emergence of Societies

Michel Foucault, in *Surveiller et punir* (1975), famously presents a general argument about changes in the penal system which reflects changes in societal models. In the classical age, crimes were perceived as an attack on the sovereign. Punishment therefore meant that the sovereign would avenge himself on the criminal, conceived as his enemy; the idea would hold that punishment is a war by other means and that the sovereign must show his force by means of violence. Consequently, it mainly consisted in physical punishment as public spectacle, in which the sovereign reasserts his power by inflicting sensational forms and levels of pain and violence upon the convict, up to the infinitesimal destruction of the criminal’s body. In the modern age, as more “humanitarian” forms of punishment begin to be propagated, crimes are instead perceived as an attack on society, a break with the social contract. This means that society must deal with a traitor in their midst and

that it must correct the anomaly in the system. Typical for the change in attitude is that punishment is directed at the soul, not the body, so it aims to avoid or minimise pain and introduces new methods of punishment, mainly incarceration and the establishment of correction facilities. The opposite of a spectacle, punishment is ideally invisible but deals in strategies of visibility, the chief of which is surveillance in enclosed spaces. These are disciplining techniques that can be dispersed as a model for social organisation, as with Jeremy Bentham's famous panopticon: a piece of architecture that functions as a monitoring and disciplining machine in schools, hospitals, factories, etc. For Foucault, this means that power instead of being destructive is now productive: it produces utility.

The disciplinary society already operated with control as one of its main functions, as Foucault often points out. One theoretical line follows from Foucault to an idea of how political practice, under the influence of economic and technological development, and driven by conservative reactions to the welfare state in late modernity, creates a policing form of "culture of control" in contemporary society, which all but repeats events of the early 19th century (Garland 2001). Deleuze, too, insists that Foucault already saw the importance of control, but he views late modernity not as a reactionary reinforcement of the disciplinary society; rather, there are new forces at work that produce a different kind of society. These associations with technological development and new controlling techniques in surveillance, crime prevention, etc., have been taken up with influence from Deleuze in a context close to Foucault's original theme (Jones 2000; Haggerty and Ericson 2003; Wise 2004; Muir 2012; Nail 2016; Robinson 2016).

Taking hold of Foucault's off-hand use of the term "diagram" to describe how the military camp and the panopticon are formal models for the disciplinary society (Foucault [1975] 2002, pp. 202, 239), Deleuze develops a theoretical framework to describe social change in the virtual dimension of "diagrams", distinct from the actual dimension of social and historical "strata" (cf. Dupuis 2012; Zdebik 2012). Societies can then be understood not only as historically and geographically located concrete formations, but also as a map of how a society could take shape, a sort of tracing of its state of becoming (Deleuze 2003, pp. 226–38; Deleuze [1986] 2004, pp. 55–99). Therefore, Deleuze speaks of the sovereign and the disciplinary diagrams, alongside many others that could be discerned through the course of history. We can identify particular societies as actualities in the time and place where relations of power have been determined (assemblages), but also as actualisations of an idea of what society could or should be at the level of relations between forces in internal struggle (an abstract machine) (cf. Deleuze and Guattari 1980, pp. 174–84). A diagrammatic thinking of social change would seek to reach this more abstract level of what precedes a specific society, and since the virtual diagram is a "becoming" of the actual social form, it has to do with understanding how new forms come into being. This allows for thinking in terms of "transhistorical becomings" rather than imagining utopias (Mengue 2009).

In *Foucault*, Deleuze does not speculate on any specific future societal diagram to supersede those of sovereignty and discipline, though he remarks that a diagram is "profoundly unstable and fluid", always giving rise to mutations and intermediary forms; for example, a "Napoleonic diagram" combines the sovereign and disciplinary functions (Deleuze [1986] 2004, p. 43). He also notes in parentheses that "the disciplinary diagram is surely not the last word" (Deleuze [1986] 2004, p. 91). However, he suggests no further word. Yet, the book closes with speculation on a future development of another kind of diagram: changes in mankind's relation to external forces pertaining to the "folds" of being and the human form. Here, the classical age (the era of sovereignty) is characterised by the idea that everything can be elevated to infinity, that things can unfold infinitely, for which reason it is represented by the God-form. The modern age (the era of discipline) is instead marked by the idea of finitude and the Man-form, an era of setting limits, making dispersions, divergences, and all manner of organisations: "Everywhere the comparative replaces the general" (Deleuze [1986] 2004, p. 136; "Partout le comparé remplace le général"). The next step (without a proper term) is that of the Superman-form (in the Nietzschean

sense, not that of comic books, Deleuze wryly clarifies). In this future world, everything is superfolded, folded over onto the outside: finitude gives way to the finite-unlimited, the endless possible combinations of a limited set of bits, as in the genetic code or the codes of cybernetics and informatics. Here, mankind enters into new relations with forces and matter (with silicon rather than carbon); humans are “charged” with the animal and mineral world.

One of the authors that Deleuze names to exemplify how this superfolded world affects language will actually provide him with the term for its corresponding societal diagram: it is from William S. Burroughs that Deleuze borrows the concept of a “control society”. While the prospect of a superhuman future had an explicitly hopeful ring to it at the end of *Foucault*, only four years later, in the “Postscript on the Societies of Control” which rounds up *Pourparlers* (Deleuze [1990] 2003, pp. 240–47), the tone is more ominous. The control function has mutated out of the disciplinary diagram to become a new diagram in itself, and it is forming a society which has more of “capitalist overproduction” of merchandise than an overcoming of human finitude. Still, it is clearly marked by the advent of computers and communication technology, contrary to the “energetic” machinery of the industrial age (and, in turn, the much simpler mechanics of pulleys and levers in classical society). This society is operated by codes: you move through it with passwords that give you access to information, but you are yourself transformed into a sort of code, a packet of information, a data “dividual”. While the disciplinary model functioned through enclosures, this is a new form of governance which exerts power through openness, which makes it simultaneously seem like freedom and be at work everywhere, always. The central distinction is that things no longer take form by being stamped in pre-existing moulds but are rather ceaselessly adapted and transformed by processes of modulation. Incessant control makes you never come to a close. You are never finished with school, because education has become life-long learning. Work has become like a game show, where competition and rivalry are staged to stimulate performance, career climbing, and pay rises. Everything is on the market, and marketing is “an instrument of social control”, as the manic buying of overproduced merchandise leaves people in debt rather than in jail. Everywhere, technology tracks you and potentially traps you, even (perhaps especially) out in the open.

Nevertheless, in all this there may well be a sense of being superhuman, as you are flowing along with information and capital, pursuing your dreams in a world of endless possibilities, free to move wherever you wish, driven to always better yourself and seek out enjoyment at every turn, jacked into a technological infrastructure that does the hard work for you. When Deleuze quips that everywhere surfing has replaced the old sports, it catches some of this sense: you enter into an external motion that takes you up and lets you ride along, so that you can surf the waves of information and capital with a minimum of effort, instead of toiling in the factories of old in rigid systems of hierarchy. In the disciplinary society, the individual is a producer of discontinuous energy, but in the society of control the energy is already there in the world—it is a continuous band of energy that sets you off. This is roughly equivalent to the notion in *Foucault* that mankind enters into new relations with external forces and is “charged” with the animal and the mineral world. In an earlier text in *Pourparlers*, Deleuze has laid the ground for the sport metaphor: what has changed is that earlier sports depended upon the human body as the source of movement, which meant effort and resistance, while the newer sports (surfing, windsurfing, hang-gliding are mentioned) relate to how you become “accepted” into the movement of a great wave or a column of rising air (Deleuze [1990] 2003, p. 165).

The society of control is yet emerging as Deleuze publishes this in 1990, with remnants of the disciplinary society still waiting to collapse, and he foresees that in order for it to install itself as a new model might include some methods borrowed from the older societies of sovereignty—that these “return on stage, but with the necessary adaptations” (Deleuze [1990] 2003, p. 246: “reviennent sur scène, mais avec les adaptations nécessaires”). It is up to the people, not least the young, to find means of resistance in a new reality taking form: not to hope or fear, he says, but to “look for new weapons”. We will take

up Deleuze's sport metaphor to continue the argument that changes in sports somehow prefigure changes in society, so that sports could help us sketch the diagram of power relations, their permutations, and what those new weapons are.

### 3. The Diachronicity of Sport, Parkour, and Bond

Parkour was a relatively new form of extreme sport when it was integrated into the narrative of *Casino Royale* in 2006, in a dramatic manner similar to the use of extreme sports in previous incarnations, but this time in a reboot that reintroduces Bond from scratch. It is both a continuation and a new beginning: this is already a curious case of the odd chronology which the Bond series provides. It is then doubly curious that there are no extreme sports in Craig's following Bond films. What is so pivotal, so critical, in Bond's foray into parkour, that extreme sports are abandoned? An analysis of how the diagrams of sovereignty, discipline, and control are evoked in the parkour chase of *Casino Royale* could reveal both what has happened since surfing replaced the older sports, and what the future holds. If the era of extreme sports is at an end in the "Bondiverse", that is a mark of change in the "societies of control", with which Deleuze associated surfing as a model of production and competition. Even if Deleuze did not explicitly address the history of sport with his poignant sentence, what if his statement could be reformed as a method? The generalised steps would then be to identify the state and logic of a society through its pastimes. At least, anthropologists claim this. However, if Geertz (1972) elaborated with cockfighting as a Rosetta stone for decoding the Balinese culture he studied, the kind of perspective sought here is closer to Caillois's (1958) temperature taking of a civilisation judged on its games. Connor (2011) identifies *sports de glissade* as contemporary physical cultural practices able to pull the brakes on the environmentally hostile civilisation in order to develop more sustainable ways of living in and alongside the natural world. The utopian ideal of surfing has, however, been contested (Eriksson and Jonasson 2020).

For Deleuze, "surfing" takes centre stage as the main exemplar of new sports and an emblem for the society of control; they all belong to the same diagram. However, we should remember that diagrams are historically scrambled, that they are unstable, and generate intermediary stages and internal conflict. This is exactly what has happened with "surfing": it has morphed into various hybrid forms, adapting to the conditions for going on living in the built environments of the remnants of a society of discipline, in the absence of the utopian great outdoors. Skateboarding was an early instance, managing to "surf" the empty swimming pools of California (cf. Borden 2001). Parkour is particularly significant since it demonstrates an incorporation or interiorisation of the external forces. The body itself being the means of sliding, partly by emulating the motions of animals, what once was an entering into the dynamics of the natural elements is now a manner of imitating nature in varying sets of strange transformations: leaping, grabbing, and hanging like a cat, climbing like a monkey, jumping like an ape, rolling like a wave. Historically speaking, parkour is inspired by *la méthode naturelle*, a French military regimen, which in turn was inspired by the "natural movement of savages" perceived by colonialists.

In summary, parkour's hybridity combines the before-mentioned diagrammatic models of discipline and control. It is a sport of "control" in that the ideal is an adaptation to the environment for "surfing" on matter, but it is in fact not dependent upon an external force as source of movement. Instead, movement in parkour has an internal, organic origin in a body which exerts itself, and it is developing an array of techniques for regulating performance; in this sense it is a sport of "discipline". However, it also connects to a primordial past before and outside the diagrams for Western classical, modern, and late modern societies. It is as if they link up: the primitive becomes disciplined in order to perform "control".

Connor (2011) presents an interesting approach to the history of sports by an analysis of its shifting meanings since the coining of the term in Mediaeval France. While denoting pastime, sport's connotations have gone from evoking impersonal forces such as the whims of nature and the devil, via the blood sports (hunting and animal baiting) of early modernity,

to formalised ball games and Olympic sports. This latter representational definition now shares the space with more hybrid forms, such as extreme sports, motor sports, and electronic sports. Connor's (2011) loose fixating of the meaning of sport permits change, which is in line with what the present study sets out to do. Another one of Connor's fruitful approaches, that also admits change, is one that posits sport as an "anagram of society". Thus, he steers clear of the worn-out phrase of sport as a mirror of society. He also let the parts be rearranged in order to offer, if not a reflection, then a mirage of the laughing mirror variety. Even so, what if sport also, in its skewed *fata morgana*s, could predict the coming society? Instead of anagram, which implies merely rearranging existing parts (and is therefore too static for permuting sequences), and in line with Deleuze's elaboration of Foucault's legacy, we talk instead of sets of sports as "diagrams" of and for social change.

We could take this to mean that sport is more properly a diagram than the actual society, since a diagram for Deleuze is the map of a reality that is yet to come, not the representation of what actually is. The diagram, being virtual, provides a visualisation of how things can change. This lends a special significance to the word "diachronicity": you see things as crossing through the passage of time, not being out of step with the order of time. While the diagrams themselves seem like ideal types, static blocks of social forms in a structuralist conception, they are really shot through with dynamic forces of powers vying for dominance, resulting in a view of how the diagrams collide, cross each other, overlap, and mutate as they are being actualised. In short, diachronicity is the temporal view of the ontological hybridity of realised diagrams. In line with viewing Deleuze's sentence on surfing as a "diagram" of social change, we approach them "diachronically", highlighting shards, remnants, and debris of the past, recording the clamour of the contemporary, and by tracing the fickle flickering of the future. A change in sports prefigures social change, so what then when sports now have been changing further, mutating within the diagram of surfing—what figurations of social change are we seeing today? Note that in the original phrasing surfing has already replaced the older sports, while the transition into the society of control is still under way. This implies that sports not only "mirror" society but prefigure it.

Complementing Foucault and Deleuze with the understanding of the shifts of sport in Connor's ideational historicising of the term, Table A1 summarises the diagrams at play in the coming analysis.

Deleuze's referral to these diagrams as entering "stages" (Fr: *scènes*) directs the analysis below to discerning the different regimes of power enfolding throughout the cinematography of the parkour chase in *Casino Royale*. As for Deleuze, stage and scene can be both the actual part of the movie and the more ontological "staging" of the logic of an era. Thus, different *zeitgeists* surface through images of both material surroundings and movement patterns within, upon, and across them. This is how diagram and diachronicity connect, i.e., through both the drama of the developing story arc and the corresponding sets of logic they are theoretically associated with. The diachronic methodology gives access to the ideational level: to figures of thought rather than actual athletes. However, even this the model permits. Mollaka, played by Foucan, the antagonist in the clip to be analysed below, is indeed an example of an actual athlete, as one half of the original crew from the early 1990s parkour jams in suburban Paris. The other founder of parkour, and perhaps the foremost of them, David Belle, forged his art diachronically by combining martial arts, the hero imagery of Spiderman, and the military gymnastics taught to him by his father. Such miniscule details are passageways in the historicising taking place when approaching the moving images diachronically.

The ambiguous nature of parkour—making it doubly apt for the present discussion in relation to both diagram and diachronicity—is further underlined by what is sometimes referred to as its "paradox" (Angel 2011; Raymen 2018). While there is a social or political coding of parkour as transgression, resistance, deviance, etc., in reference to its subcultural connections with youths in multi-ethnic suburbs, it has developed into a marketable and highly mediatised enterprise, and its practitioners (and spectators) seem to have more

hedonistic than political motivations. This adds yet another dimension to its status as a sport for the society of control: not only is it symbolically a variant of the surfer model, it is also actually caught up in “the joy of marketing” (Deleuze [1990] 2003, p. 247). The very fact that the once alternative practice, whose rebellious connotations and utopian potentials are still thematised in a film like *Yamakasi* (2001), is taken up by mainstream media and appropriated for action spectacle in films like *Banlieu 13* (2004), its Hollywood remake *Brick Mansions* (2014), and of course *Casino Royale*, is testament to the history of this paradox. However, we might remind ourselves that in the process, parkour in some sense returns to its origins; its teenage pioneers in Lisses and Sarcelles were inspired by the exploits of Jackie Chan, Jean-Claude Van Damme, and the Japanese anim  series *Dragon Ball* (Angel 2016, p. 41).

It has been noted that Bond’s movements through space have wide-ranging political implications (Funnell and Dodds 2017), but they also imply temporal shifts depending upon how they simultaneously reflect a contemporary situation and prefigure something to come. As a character who is continuously rebooted, Bond keeps having to restart for a new tenure, setting the stage for what he is to be “this time”. Not least does this apply to the object of study in the present article: *Casino Royale*. Written by Ian Fleming, this story appeared in 1953 as the very first James Bond novel (Fleming 2012). Just a year later it was adapted to television, and a decade and a half later to a satirical movie in 1967, starring David Niven (amongst others) as James Bond. So, when Daniel Craig begins his Bond tenure with the title in 2006, it truly is a reboot, going back to the origins while still taking place in the ambiguous aftermath to 9/11, but prior to the financial crisis of the Lehman Brothers crash in 2008, and the start of a tenure that ended in 2021. It is thus contemporaneous with both the beginning of Deleuze’s historicising (“... new forces that were gradually instituted and which accelerated after World War II: a disciplinary society was what we already no longer were, what we had ceased to be.”), and the ending of it.

#### 4. The Parkour Chase in *Casino Royale*

Tracing their movements through the roughly nine-minutes-long scene, we can plot a course, so to speak, for the freerunning Mollaka and his ardent pursuer Bond through three spatial sets, each representing stages in the outlining of societal diagrams.

##### 4.1. *The Pool Pit, Jungle, and Fence*

Just as when skateboarding branched off from surfing in the 1960s, our scene begins in an emptied swimming pool, but here we find ourselves in a derelict shanty town in Madagascar. A raucous crowd of people are gathered in and around the pool, in which a mongoose and a cobra are pitted against each other in a game of animal baiting. The animals about to gut each other at the centre of the stage connects the scene with classic colonialist imagery, such as Rudyard Kipling’s short story “Rikki-Tikki-Tavi” from *The Jungle Book* (Kipling 2013), in which a brave young mongoose defeats a treacherous cobra. The fact that the final battle in that story is left undescribed by Kipling opens for a conclusion in *Casino Royale*; the coming clash between Bond and Mollaka will be laid out in detail.

Bond stands leaning nonchalantly up in the makeshift arena, while watching down; we quickly gather that he is spying on a bombmaker (Mollaka) hiding in the crowd below, as he is clandestinely communicating with a partner through an earpiece. The scene at the outset sets the stage for the essential clash between the principle of sovereignty, represented by the public blood sport of animal baiting, and the elements of control, represented by contemporary communications technology. These are two main power relations that will be examined throughout the scene. Initially, Bond and Mollaka are linked by this very clash as two apparent spectators of the sport while really both engaged in the use of technology: the earpiece for Bond, a mobile phone for Mollaka. On the screen of that phone, a message of a single word appears: “Ellipsis”. The message signifies something that is missing, a lack of information (it is a password needed for a terrorist assignment), which is exactly what Bond must retrieve. This is why he says to his partner about Mollaka: “I need him alive.”

In a scene with very few words, these constitute a statement of sovereignty on Bond's part—that he, who has newly acquired his thanatopolitical licence to kill, at this moment decides on life. The mere placing of the combatants is also informative of the sovereign setting, with Bond high above the pool surveying the spectacle below and Mollaka as the subject (in the scholastic meaning of “thrown under”) in the throng of people. When Bond's partner botches the surveillance by bringing attention to his earpiece, Mollaka starts running from the arena and Bond sets off in pursuit through a marketplace and beyond. This marks the failure of the surveillance operation and the beginning of the chase.

The scene thus shifts to stage two: a jungle. In a few brief shots, Mollaka runs through the foliage with Bond in tow; brought back to basics in a natural environment, they are on equal footing, playing out some primitive mode of predation, as if the blood sport they had witnessed was now enacted by them. However, this might also be the preparation for the coming parkour sequence, true to its origins in *la méthode naturelle*. At a point in the scene, they reach an obstacle, a wrecked car, which provides them both with a first test of how they overcome obstacles. What we immediately see here, as will follow throughout the scene, is that they make dissimilar decisions. While Bond follows Mollaka and to some extent mimics him—as if the whole scene was a game of “follow-the-leader”—he always improvises a variation on the theme set by Mollaka. In this case, we can perhaps even receive an intimation of a logical template for this difference: Mollaka neither stops nor swerves for the car but passes through it, leaping skilfully in through one missing backdoor and out the other side, while Bond changes his trajectory and runs around the car altogether. From this, we obtain a sense of Mollaka's agility, a first glimpse of his parkour prowess, but also that he stands for a principle of interiority: his method is to pass through things, looking for the passages to slip through, without disturbing matter around him. We also acquire a sense of Bond's shortcomings as to the parkour expertise, which he will have to compensate for by sheer force and determination, at the cost either of harming himself or damaging his material surroundings.

Next, they reach another obstacle, a fence, leading into a construction site. Leaving the jungle behind, they are at the threshold of modernity—an urban world emerging from the dust. The fence is yet another test for their methods of movement. Mollaka leaps up on the metal fence and sits for a second (a move known in parkour as a “cat leap”) before jumping down. Bond, on the other hand, labours to heave himself up and then rotate, flipping down in a heap of gravel. In this case, we glean another sense of their differences: Mollaka uses the natural method, imitating an animal, while Bond's displacement resembles a pendulum pivoting around the top bar of the fence, corresponding with the crude mechanics of a sovereign machinery. Mollaka's pace is sustained, while Bond's stops.

#### 4.2. The Construction Site

Once they are both over the fence, we are introduced to the main arena for the freerun to have its course: a construction site. That it is a construction site seems to symbolise a society in its emergent state; it is, almost precisely, a diagram—a mapping of the potentials of a reality to come. Considering the heavy machinery and the industrial trappings of the project of building a high-rise, everything would point to a disciplinary society at work, but it is not entirely certain what is taking form. What makes it more complicated is that it is also functioning as virtual space where Mollaka and Bond in their respective ways think “diagrammatically”, as it were, in their battle of physical wit. It is a question of moving through space by either getting away or catching up, of course, but they must each find their ways of understanding what kind of space it is and how to get through it. As they are moving, they are negotiating the material infrastructure of the society to come, thereby sketching their own diagrams of it as they go along. In spatial terms, the chase drives them upwards from the dusty, messy ground level, through the scaffolding and beams involved in the construction, up high on top of a giant crane, and then down through the interior of the building taking form, reaching ground level again. It is mostly in the ascent and the descent that we see demonstrations of Mollaka's use of parkour skills and Bond's attempts

to keep up with them, while the ground level shows more use of vehicles and weapons. This underscores the notion that the ground level represents a disciplinary level which Mollaka and Bond “escape” by moving up into the emerging structure, still a set of abstract lines and points to connect in a semi-virtual space, where their attempts to slide or “surf” appear as experiments in performing according to the model of control.

Throughout the scene, we see the variations of routes and methods of movement that we had begun to see in the jungle and at the fence. For instance, as Mollaka scrambles up the metal scaffold in a monkey-style climb, Bond runs diagonally up a crane to intersect him. Later, Mollaka leaps, with some difficulty, onto a load hanging on a cradle suspended from a crane and then begins climbing the hoist ropes up to the crane. Bond makes the decision that he needs a better approach run in order to reach the load, so he first shifts along the beam in the opposite direction to gain speed and consequently lands more steadily on the load. However, he only begins climbing, reaching a load leveller at midpoint, when he makes the assessment that he can use the machinery to his advantage: he kicks a lever, releasing the load of metal pipes and positions himself on the leveller, almost as if it was a surfboard, soaring upwards at quick pace.

Upon reaching the beam, Mollaka opts for the inside of it, crawling through it as if it were a burrow, while Bond stays on the outside, climbing along the metal bars. This gives Bond better speed and he starts catching up. Mollaka’s principle of looking for the opening in things and going through it has served him well thus far but, in this instance, the hole becomes a hindrance to his movement, relative to Bond’s principle of going round. As Mollaka looks back at his pursuer, he realises his mistake and enters the beam on the other side and climbs up on top of it. However, here he makes a second mistake: instead of running free on the new path, Mollaka turns again and awaits Bond as he reaches the top of the beam; he points his gun and pulls the trigger—but he is out of bullets (the methods of combat used on the ground do not work at the top). In frustration, he throws the gun at Bond, who simply catches it mid-air and promptly throws it back. Mollaka is hit and falls off the top of the beam. This demonstrates Mollaka’s failure to “do Bond”, in the midst of Bond’s attempt to “do Mollaka”; trying to imitate one another, they begin to realise their mutual differences. A physical struggle ensues where they are trading blows and kicks almost as if mirroring one another; at the highest point, they are again, as in the jungle, on equal footing. At this point, a cinematic remark may be in order: since their “surfing” now has been interrupted by going back to a primitive stage of violence, in a soaring helicopter shot, the camera movement replaces the smooth displacements of the combatants.

Leaving the higher crane for a slightly lower one, and then by proceeding with a veritable leap of faith down to a sand-covered stairwell roof six metres below, and further down to the roof of the building, Mollaka again establishes an advantage and triumphantly gains momentum in a display of parkour bravado. Bond scarcely succeeds to copy the routine, crashing violently into the lower beam and toppling off the stairwell roof. Mollaka’s fluid moves become increasingly superior as they descend, while Bond takes physical punishment trying to emulate him. However, it also becomes increasingly apparent that while Mollaka moves incessantly and smoothly point by point in space, looking for the best way to slide ahead, Bond keeps stopping and starting, as if surveying the land and taking in the topography, and then analyses how a variant trajectory might take him across space in a quicker manner. Here, Bond scans the barren roof to decide how to shortcut Mollaka, who disappears with a set of jumps down a spiral staircase with a broad well, over which he leaps diagonally. Instead of taking the stairs, Bond kicks in a locked door near his landing place. Once inside, our runners encounter obstacles on their own before meeting up again. In Mollaka’s way, a working bench appears around which a couple of drone-like workers are positioned. They do not seem to pay attention to the fact that an intruder leaps like a panther over the whole table. First, with his arms in front and legs behind, Mollaka, when reaching the far side of the bench, again uses his arms as a stabilising pivot to not lose momentum. Receiving a glimpse of Bond in an adjacent room, Mollaka thrusts himself down an elevator shaft. Jumping in a zig-zag pattern from

side to side, he is able to swiftly descend. Bond finds another hole passage in the floor to which he slides lying down before dropping down through the ceiling of the storey beneath. Visual contact is made as they encounter a wall.

The wall is the last obstacle before exiting the building. It is made of plaster. A ventilation or window opening is placed above the wall, which lies in a dead-end corridor. In front of the wall, near the roof and the opening, hangs a horizontal metal pipe. Mollaka jumps up to grab the pipe and then leads his legs and body in an arc from the floor through the opening and down on the other side of the wall. The camera stays on the wall after Mollaka disappears out of the screen on the left. Just a second later, Bond enters the room—but not through the opening near the roof. Instead, he rushes right through the wall, dispersing paper and plaster all over, including the film of white powder that forms a top layer on his body. Mollaka again looks for a passage through the built environment by seeking an existing hole in the wall. Bond is confronted by a new choice in the same conditions: previously, he had gone around the car, on the outside of the crane beam, by a smoother slide through the hole in the floor; now, he forces himself through the wall, busting a man-sized hole in the plaster.

Out of the building, Mollaka travels down the building one storey for each jump. The only mobile object used for these hastily assembled stairs is the roof of a metal elevator hanging outside the building. Bond enters a precipice where the future building probably will be equipped with a window. Again, he decides where to go after establishing the position of Mollaka. Below him, there is a scissor lift to which he jumps. Mollaka is seen finally leaving the building while Bond grabs a monkey wrench lying on the floor of the lift and jams the steering mechanism with a stark blow. This allows for a quick folding together of the scissors holding the lift up, and Bond soon hits the ground as well.

To sum up thus far, it is evident that Mollaka dominates by using parkour moves; he performs a set of sliding and rolling motions, sometimes bouncing in a zig-zag pattern upon material support, going forward with a continuing force that seems to require much skill but not too much exertion. In short, it seems easy and smooth, even graceful. The ideal of these movements are that of “surfing” on the materiality of the built environment, using what would be obstacles as if they rather gave force to the movement; in other words, performing a modulating function that transforms the disciplinary society into a utopia of control. It is as if Mollaka is seizing upon the chance to sketch the prospect of a society of control as a kind of surfer’s paradise, indeed mapping out the potentials for freedom in the control diagram, while that society is still in the process of taking form. However, what allows him to do this is, in reality, his skill at parkour—namely, the support given him by the sport “disciplining” his capability to move. He is capable precisely because he is not a “pure” surfer, but that strange hybrid of control and discipline which is typical of parkour.

Bond, on the other hand, has very little in the way of discipline. True to his character, he is usually the best at everything, including all the sports that he has engaged in throughout all his incarnations. Why then does he not outperform Mollaka, as he does everyone else? It is because he refuses discipline that he cannot do parkour. Bond has previously been sliding on ice, water, and air in most of the sports mentioned by Deleuze as emblematic of the society of control, until he was finally able to surf properly in the film that preceded *Casino Royale: Die Another Day* (2002). Bond is already the true surfer, the true agent of control, its principle of reality. It is when he meets this contender to a utopian ideal that needs to build upon the disciplinary model that he refuses to engage on its terms, and so he needs to experiment with alternatives. This is why one might claim that Bond is critiquing or deconstructing the utopian ideal that “control” might hold, demonstrating that it is dependent upon methods of discipline that he is set on avoiding or, indeed, destroying. The physical violence with which he drives home his point, even in the use of simple machinery to manipulate space, is evidence that he is rather drawing from another source than discipline, namely the diagram of sovereignty.

#### 4.3. *The Streets and the Embassy*

As they exit the construction site, they enter the penultimate stage: the streets. Now, for the first time, they are in a fully formed society, and it is a bustling modern town representing discipline. Mollaka is still on foot, running down the sidewalk, but in opposition to his previous elegance and skill, he is exhausted and clumsy; this signals that the ease with which he practised parkour as he slipped and slid through the construction site is now gone. He has literally been brought down to the ground, back down to reality, and there his powers have left him. Instead, he seeks safety in the halls of discipline: he is running to hide in the embassy of the fictional country Nambutu. So, we see Mollaka running on foot among traffic towards the embassy; Bond is still in pursuit but hitches a ride on the back of a van and easily glides along, watching Mollaka pant and struggle to move forward. When they finally reach the embassy building, Mollaka heads in through security. Bond leaps off the roof of the van, over a wall, landing with a somersault into a classic “hero pose”. The camera dwells for a moment on his determined face.

By entering the embassy over a wall, it signals that he is breaching a closed environment, and we would assume that he is violating diplomatic rules and putting himself in enemy territory. The embassy is an institution representing a modern nation state with rules of diplomacy, framed by a very different form of “sovereignty”, namely that of the sovereign state. By all accounts, Mollaka should be safe from the British agent in such a place. However, that assumption is his fatal error, for Bond has sovereignty of an altogether different kind; he sets himself above all that jurisprudence in his determination to execute his task—to gain the code, that missing piece which gives control. His devotion to the task in hand is “absolute” in a sense fitting with the classical ideal of the sovereign monarch, and the bastions of discipline that would set limits on that infinite power really offers no resistance to his aim.

The shot turns to a surveillance camera on the wall, facing Bond, and pulls in on that camera to emphasise how it registers Bond and his encroachment. However, in a twist, the shot turns back to see Bond walking confidently (with a swaggering “gorilla gait”) through a loggia in the embassy, turning with ease into an office where he catches up with Mollaka. It is as if the surveillance camera turned from a threat to an admiring observer, half-identified with the film camera’s point of view. In a series of swift moves, Bond kicks Mollaka in the chest and with little effort, fights off a clerk trying to reach for a gun. Mollaka crawls on the floor, coughing in anguish. Bond grabs him by the shirt, lifts him up, and drags him out of the room. The clerk pushes an alarm button, the alarm sounds, followed by blinking lights and shots of a surveillance video. Guards in military uniform gear up and set off after Bond: now Bond is the one who is pursued. Amongst massive gunfire and collateral damage, Bond uses Mollaka as a human shield, leading him to be shot in the leg. Bond then tosses Mollaka into the body of one guard and engages in a *melee* fight with two guards. Bond again grabs Mollaka and now uses him as a battering ram to smash through a door into another office, only to throw Mollaka out through a window, his body bouncing down a roof onto the ground below. It is like a vengeful caricature of Mollaka’s earlier elegant descent. To add further insult to injury, Bond immediately jumps after him and lands on top of Mollaka’s body.

In all this, Bond’s moves have an incessant forward motion and an unphased smoothness which is equivalent to Mollaka’s parkour prowess at the construction site. This is how he has found his surfer mode. So, when Bond grabs Mollaka and uses him as a battering ram to smash through a door and throws him out through a window, this is a symbolic counterpart to grabbing the board and hitting the waves. With Mollaka’s body falling onto the ground below, and with Bond immediately jumping after, landing on top of him, we see the triumphant emergence of the image of the “sovereign surfer” using the subjugated pretender as his board.

Once they are out in the courtyard, the guards gather in a skirmishing formation in a new enclosed space for a final face-off with Bond. Still using Mollaka as a shield, Bond stares them down but makes a gesture of surrender and drops his gun, pushing

Mollaka free. Instantly, however, in a swift move, he draws out another, hidden, gun and unceremoniously shoots Mollaka dead, then turns his weapon on a set of gas containers so that they explode behind the guards, who are thereby decimated in the flames. The shot lingers, as if in *schadenfreude*, as the roof of the embassy falls down. In this last stand of the society of discipline, there is a seeming victory on its part, but Bond feigns defeat only to fulfil his domination, this time by destruction. The code retrieved, he no longer needs Mollaka alive; having taken possession of the elliptical message, life is insignificant. This is the synthesis whereby the sovereign comes into control. Deciding on death, he kills Mollaka. However, he goes one step further, taking his vengeance upon the very form of disciplinary power: by exploding the enclosed space, he orchestrates an excessive spectacle of violence to create a way out. The society of discipline crumbles, and sovereignty rules in the open.

## 5. Discussion and Conclusions

[Eriksson and Jonasson \(2020\)](#) point to *Casino Royale* and Daniel Craig's debut as the secret agent as the end of the extreme sporting Bond as displayed by, for instance, Pierce Brosnan. Indeed, Bond falls short regarding parkour in comparison with Mollaka, played by Sebastian Foucan; but only in selected places, though, such as when they enter the construction site. Mollaka's performance of parkour constitutes a discipline–control hybridity. On the one hand, Mollaka holds the code of information, as he seems to hold the code to surfing by mastering parkour. However, on the other hand, he puts into practice a set of moves that he masters; he expends energy and becomes tired; he looks for enclosures and their passageways, ultimately hideouts as he seeks security in institutions of discipline. Correspondingly, we have seen that Bond's performance constitutes a sovereignty–control hybridity: in not mastering parkour, Bond uses modulation to adapt to changing surroundings rather than adapting to moulds. However, he makes momentary decisions with radical solutions; he manoeuvres space and matter (simple machinery) rather than mastering moves; he shows force while taking physical punishment himself; he puts himself over institutions and explodes enclosed environments in vengeful spectacles of violence.

A detailed analysis of how hunter and prey move through the stages, actualising the corresponding logics and models of different societal regimes, puts Bond's extreme sport failure in perspective. Bond is not an extreme sport athlete, and yet he prevails during an era when surfing is the model. Craig, as Bond, incorporates this spirit rather than clinging to the extreme sport routines. He slides on the muddy concrete and surfs the back of his opponent. When compared to Brosnan as Bond and his excessive references to the practising of the actual extreme sport, it is noteworthy that [Kusz \(2007\)](#) tracks a return of white athleticism in extreme sport during the turn of the millennium—the same period that Brosnan was active as Bond. No wonder then that [Pegram \(2018\)](#) pays more attention to Brosnan's extreme sport display, while Craig receives attention for his wear.

According to Deleuze's theory, the society of discipline is governed by moulds, while that of control is governed by modulation. For Bond, control allows a modulation of sovereignty, while for Mollaka, a mould is beginning to take form which disciplines the element of control. Ultimately, he takes refuge in the enclosed space of discipline, which signals his downfall; almost literally, the retreat to discipline is a dead end. Sovereignty triumphs because it has learnt to break through obstacles and crack open the enclosed spaces. We could also gloss this as saying that these are utopian and critical approaches, respectively. Mollaka represents the utopia of the control society in his freerunning—heading forward, expressing freedom while leaving the material world intact. Bond, for his part, is at the heels of this ideal, producing clamour and debris (from collateral damage to conspicuous destruction), in a manifestation of the reality principle with regards to control: we need to understand that there is an external force to relate to in some way.

[Wheaton \(2013\)](#) is wary of the symbolical interpretation of extreme sports, or what she refers to as lifestyle sports. Because the matter concerns physical cultural expressions and the lifestyles they imply and foster, practitioners and their voices must be heard. Thus,

without a doubt, Deleuze's use of surfing as a model for the logic of post-war societies, those of control, falls under that umbrella. However, ultimately the present text is not about people; it is about the zeitgeist logic making certain movements possible. Notwithstanding, the movements of any given zeitgeist sooner or later is mediated by and materialised in people. Using sport as a diagram to study social change through the analysis of movement in film enables us to draw out both the historical features and the prefigurations of the future. We have elaborated this as an idea of diachronicity, by selecting examples with enduring and sometimes ambiguous features, such as Deleuze's surfing demonstrations, parkour, and James Bond, in order to see how diagrams of yore are actualised anew.

We should note regarding "the stage" that space is temporalized and that in neither case is society fixed and stable: it is either in ruins, being built, or being laid to waste. The scene shows us remnants of the old and an emergence of the new, leading up to the blowing apart of the claim to established order. These are the conditions of the instability of diagrams: always in a critical state. Further, we should note that as we traverse this stage through the course of the scene, we witness the intermingling of forms of societies by diagrammatisation. This means that while there may be an idea of a pure form of a society as its utopia, what we in reality have are hybrids of such ideas that push forward into a future to come, even while pulling back into a past to provide us with methods for going forward. In terms of sports, such hybrid forms of sport imply that something of a previous model remains. These hybrids in this case negate the ideal of pure surfing (sliding effortlessly, peacefully on an external source of movement) by retaining either *the effort and physical exertion of discipline* or *the violence and physical pain of sovereignty*. The hybrids now constitute reality whereas the ideal forms remain utopian. The model may still be surfing, but in reality—*partout parkour*.

Rather than being something totally new, parkour shows strategies of coping with the alleged freedom and constraints of contemporary corporate competitiveness in societies of control. We are still in the societies of control and this is what parkour testifies to. However, the society of control, with surfing as a diagram, has brought with it an increased hybridisation in all the dimensions discernible in the present analysis. Because societies of control are such that in them modulation, short-term thinking, and informational displacement are *legio*, an array of hybrid diagrams can emerge continuously. Mollaka moves forward point by point, reaching out into the open and tracing smooth lines of free movements (Mould 2009), it seems; but, in fact, this is short-term thinking, as if going ahead day by day or quarter by quarter assuming that the motion traces a line of endless progress. Raymen (2018) confirms precisely this image by deeming parkour hyper-conform in relation to its time and logic that it operates in. Parkour's space is perhaps another question, since it conspicuously transgresses the limits set by urban environments (Angel 2011, 2016).

Paraphrasing Connor's (2011) suggestion that sport is an anagram of society, we played with the thought that smaller sets of sports analysed alongside and through each other (diachronically) then could be seen as diagrams of and for social change. So, if parkour does not symbolise that next paradigmatic societal shift, but rather a diagrammatic confrontation, what can be said of the epistemological model here laid out? We must always go to movement itself, not to the sport as an institution, if we are to understand the thoughts inherent in sports. Sport changes, as indicated by Connor, and the phase of modern sport—the human phase, as it were—has been supplemented by more hybrid forms, both technologically and norm-wise. The practice of sports shows us how bodies through movement develop processes or procedures of relating to the surrounding world. Rethinking sport as reflective of society and social change therefore means pinpointing motions rather than emotions, physical movement rather than social movement; at least, analytically. Hence, the analysis of high-performance movement in film (motion pictures) is suitable to these ends. Deleuze was right to point out the sliding motion of the surf as a paradigmatic motion for its time; what we have shown here are just nuances, factions, and new hybrids made possible by the age of surfing (the time when things slip and slide), the forms of which are still emerging.

Instead of subjectification in the disciplinary society, being moulded into normalcy for the purpose of utility, we see here a process of *sovereignisation*: procedures to potentially make oneself a “sovereign”, to stand outside of normal subjectivity. We can detect several examples of such sovereignisation in our time, for good or bad, in people who do not follow set rules, who seem to enter from the outside and draw their power from something that is not “interior” to the system. They transgress and disrupt the current order, take drastic measures, take a radical stand, appeal to urgency, and incite swift action. Therefore, to the extent that they operate in a society of control, they usually happen to “rule” through social media. All the infamous “strongmen” of our time perhaps do not fit the bill, but someone like Donald Trump has surely tried to surf the waves of discontent and slide through the system with a Twitter-happy finger.

Speaking of which, let us take another example in our time. Let us say that social media such as Twitter represents the ideal of surfing, in that it is a symbol of the potentials of free communication which lets us move across the globe, creating social networks, exchanging messages, spreading memes and what not—even while it functions as an ever-expanding archive of personal surveillance of our “dividual” data selves. We control and are controlled in equal measure. Now, at one point, reality takes hold and due to changing circumstances, the politicisation in free messaging causes a counter reaction of setting limits on free communication, wherefore the platform is monitored in order to control behaviour by regulating use and restricting certain messages. In short, the medium of control needs to be disciplined. Then in steps a somewhat idiosyncratic multi-billionaire declaring that he will buy the company in order to safeguard its commitment to free speech: this is the sovereign making a mediatised spectacle of how he will decide on the life or death of the company of control, with the intent of releasing its all-too-disciplined powers to surf/control and let them run free.

However, perhaps such a parable is a caricature. Maybe a more apt example of sovereignisation is Greta Thunberg, the radically anti-utopian climate activist. Thunberg is Bond in our time by virtue of being committed to a task that needs urgent action, and she pursues a way forward which considers the “machinery” (or the machinations) that will need to be “manipulated” rather than to be allowed to keep on working of its own accord. First, one must gauge the abstract machine, then one can work out the actual outcomes of a given assemblage. This is a kind of “hypercritical” approach, an intervening form of de(con)structive attitude to change, far removed from any hypocritical utopianism which looks forward without seeing the trajectory. Or we might call it a realism of the virtual, since it has to do with understanding the real conditions implied by a diagram even before the change in society has become actualised.

All this is certainly not without risks. Why is a return of sovereignty not a move to fascism? For some it is: it depends on what form is actualised from the relations of forces in the diagram. However, the sovereign model as such is precisely not fascist; it lacks the “discipline”. If the Napoleonic Empire was a transition between the sovereign and the disciplinary model, according to Deleuze, perhaps fascism is one of the expressions of a return of the sovereign model in a disciplinary society, operating within its machinery to destroy rather than correct anomalies. (This might be a way to diagrammatically formalise Agamben’s (1998) notion of sovereignty in the modern society.)

The other hybrid variant, as we saw represented by Mollaka, is the return to the disciplinary model in the society of control, where the free operation in an open space comes to draw from the regulatory moulds of discipline in order to improve performance. However, one is thereby being pulled back into the enclosing spaces of institutional interiority, where one is no longer in touch with external forces, and thus ends up retreating into passivity.

The third variant, represented by Bond, is the return of the sovereign model within the society of control. This implies a sidestepping of the disciplinary model altogether, a sign of refusing to be normalised by the fixed moulds of social order and instead drawing from the modulating schema of control in order to adapt as is necessary in the ever-changing surroundings. The sovereign principle exerts its power by acting upon the external relations

of force, “working them out” in order to “make them work”. This implies a method of opening up space in ways that break through barriers and break open enclosures by disrupting fixed structures. At the same time, there is a clash between the necessity of the material conditions and the need for action and movement, as two relations of force come into contact: the sovereign cannot exert his power or enact his measure of violence without taking a beating of his own.

Maybe it needs emphasising that it is not a case of *returning to* the society of sovereignty but a *return of* a diagram of sovereignty, modulated in the society of control and transformed into something new. It is always adapted to the changing external circumstances rather than fixed by a form interior to the system. It brings with it a logic of drastic decisions and finalising actions, facing a decision of life or death, rather than projecting utopias of endless growth and progress at the horizon of the smooth sailing of business as usual. In reality, “surfing” is about something else, a challenging confrontation with the elements, and surfers know full well that waves can be unpredictable, violent bodies. The sovereign surfer is the one who understands the reality of this external force and confronts it with a certain kind of recognition, because there is a form of correspondence between them. We might say that it is some form of forceful thought, tapped into the force of the outside, ultimately stemming from the oldest sports, the combat or the hunt—simply cutting to the chase.

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## Appendix A

*Banlieu 13*, Pierre Morel, 2004; *Brick Mansions*, Camille Delamarre, 2014; *Casino Royale*, Val Guest/Ken Hughes/John Huston, 1967; *Casino Royale*, Martin Campbell, 2006; *Die Another Day*, Lee Tamahori, 2002; *Goldfinger*, Guy Hamilton, 1964; *Point Break*, Kathryn Bigelow, 1991; *A View to a Kill*, John Glen, 1985; *Yamakasi*, Ariel Zeitoun, 2001.

## Appendix B

**Table A1.** The diachronicity of diagrams after Foucault and Deleuze.

Sovereignty	Discipline	Control
Physical punishment as public spectacle	Surveillance in enclosed spaces	Tracking in the open
Deciding on life or death	Managing life by imposing a normative form (moulding)	Continuing modulation to adapt to changing circumstances
Elevation to the infinite	Organisation of the finite	Recombinations of the finite-unlimited
Divine form	Human form	Superhuman form
Simple, dynamic machines	Complex, energetic machines	Cybernetics, computers, communication technology
Blood sports (hunting, animal baiting, combat sports)	Modern sports (regulated types of competitive sports)	New sports (adventure or extreme sports)

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