FOUCAULT, NEOLIBERALISM, AND BEYOND

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Introduction

Stephen W. Sawyer and Daniel Steinmetz-Jenkins

A conversation took place in 2012 at the University of Chicago between the Nobel prize winner Gary Becker and two prominent scholars and specialists of Foucault, François Ewald and Bernard Harcourt. Their dialogue concerned Foucault's writings on American neoliberalism and Gary Becker's economics in particular.[1] Becker opened the discussion with an observation on Foucault: "I like most of it, and I do not disagree with much," he said, before concluding, "I also cannot tell whether Foucault is disagreeing with me." Ewald then raised the importance of contextualizing Foucault's work from the late 1970s in order to understand: "How was it possible that an intellectual, a French philosopher—someone perhaps known as a Left French philosopher, a radical—would deliver, at the end of the 1970s, a lecture at the Collège de France where he would make the apology of neoliberalism." To which Harcourt responded that he hoped to introduce a set of issues that would "turn it from an apology to a critique" of neoliberalism. These statements captured three central themes in Foucault's work and the intellectual politics around liberalism in the late 1970s: an interpretive ambiguity, a necessity for contextualization and an opportunity for critique. In so doing, they also highlighted some of the key legacies of Foucault's work for thinking about the history of liberalism in the 1970s and its relationship to our current neoliberal condition.[2]

The title of this volume and its emphasis on moving *beyond* the question of a supposed Foucauldian neoliberalism is designed to do precisely that: to explore Foucault's treatment of neoliberalism as a particularly fertile and complex moment in the history of the set of ideas and interpretations associated with liberalism and neoliberalism. Such a perspective, therefore, also seeks to historicize the very debate around Foucault's relationship to neoliberalism since the late 2000s, suggesting that a critical interpretation of this

discussion may inform the legacy of the intellectual politics of the late 1970s and contemporary neoliberalism.[3]

In 2009, historian Michael Behrent's "Liberalism without Humanism: Michel Foucault and the Free Market Creed, 1976–1979" gave new consistency to the debate by providing a historically grounded and sobering account of the ways that Foucault's interest in economic liberalism in the second half of the 1970s had combined with his earlier anti-humanism.[4] The consequence, Behrent argued, was not a rejection of neoliberalism in the late 1970s, on the part of Foucault, but rather its endorsement. Behrent's article set the stage for a reconsideration of Foucault's relationship to neoliberalism that raised the stakes for the 2012 conversation between Becker, Ewald, and Harcourt. It is perhaps not surprising then that the debate did not stop with their conversation. Instead it drew new attention and took a further turn in 2014 and 2015 when sociologist Daniel Zamora published an article in *Jacobin Magazine*, claiming that Foucault harbored a clear sympathy for neoliberal ideas. Foucault's endorsement of neoliberalism, he polemically argued, could be found throughout Foucault's later lectures, interviews and articles. Here, Zamora insisted, Foucault "imagine[d] a neoliberalism that wouldn't project its anthropological models on the individual, that would offer individuals greater autonomy vis-à-vis the state."[5]

These arguments received an unusual amount of attention for an academic debate, as evidenced by the reception of his argument in the pages of the *Washington Post*.[6] The debate seemed to feed off a sudden sense of urgency: Could neoliberalism be such a pernicious and overwhelming force that even those many thought to be an important source of resistance against it had actually contributed to neoliberalism's rise? Was Foucault not only unhelpful in combatting neoliberalism, but actually seduced by it and complicit in its twenty-first-century hegemony?

Zamora was certainly not alone in responding yes. José Luis Moreno Pestaña and Geoffroy de Lagasnerie both argued that Foucault was either convinced by the neoliberal discourse or tacitly accepted it.[7] A series of academic journals, blog forums featuring leading Foucault scholars, and a hefty tome devoted to the subject by the French philosopher Serge Audier appeared soon after. Audier's more balanced and nuanced treatment of Foucault's relationship to neoliberalism seemed to feed the flames of debate.[8] Complementing Zamora's opening salvo, he and Michael Behrent also returned to the question with a co-edited volume that explored the question in greater depth largely confirming, while also qualifying and nuancing, some of the earlier more polemical claims of Foucault's relationship to neoliberalism.[9]

These at times sensationalist, but also increasingly sophisticated, attempts to investigate Foucault's relationship to neoliberalism hardly settled the

question. Some scholars insisted that Foucault's interest in neoliberalism had long been known. "Is this news?" Stuart Elden asked pointedly. "Foucault's 1979 lectures on neoliberalism—the misnamed *The Birth of Biopolitics*—have been widely available for a decade. They were first published in French in 2004 and translated into English in 2008. Some people—Thomas Lemke being the standout example—were discussing them before then on the basis of the archived tape recordings. Others have made the suggestion that Foucault had some sympathy to neoliberalism as well—Paul Patton, for example." He then concluded, "As far as I can tell, the 'revelations' are not based on any new material."[10] And by the fall of 2015, the question remained poignant and unsettled enough that the intellectual historian Matthew Specter could open his forum on "Foucault and Neoliberalism" in *History and Theory* by referring to Marcel Gauchet's claim that "Even the most zealous disciples of Foucault have been forced to recognize, not without embarrassment, that he felt an affinity with the neoliberal turn then underway." To which Specter juxtaposed Mitchell Dean's claim that "the vast bulk of Foucauldian commentary and analysis would reject the idea of an affirmative relationship between Foucault and neoliberalism."[11]

To be clear, what follows does not seek to take a stand in these debates. Rather, we interpret their intensity as a sign of the urgency of reckoning with the legacy of the intellectual politics of and around liberalism and neoliberalism in the last third of the twentieth century. This volume, therefore, explores Foucault's engagement with key neoliberal texts with some historical distance while embracing the increasing political necessity of developing a sophisticated *historical* understanding of the period. It may therefore be helpful to begin by establishing a few relatively objective assessments of Foucault's engagement with neoliberalism.

First, no doubt because of his tremendous influence across the social sciences and humanities, the ambiguity of Foucault's relationship to neoliberalism has found a particularly fertile terrain in our contemporary political and intellectual climate. But, if Foucault has once again played a starring role in critical investigations of our recent intellectual past, he has certainly not been alone. These studies have been part of a growing cottage industry devoted to histories of a perceived present crisis, penned by scholars on all sides of the political spectrum, seeking to locate where things went off the rails.[12] Intellectual historians, in particular, have played an important role in these debates, looking toward the 1970s and early 1980s to explain how we have arrived at the present moment.[13] Perhaps it then comes as little surprise that as many of the chapters in this volume suggest, intellectual historians and those inspired by this discipline have attempted to pinpoint the ideas and political contexts that may explain the twentieth-century origins of our neoliberal era.[14]

Second, Foucault's specific interest and treatment of neoliberal texts themselves was relatively short-lived and quite precise. The actual discussion of the variety of forms of neoliberalism as such was almost entirely restricted to the year or two surrounding the lectures on biopolitics at the Collège de France in 1978–1979. This fact poses a specific challenge for elaborating a sophisticated intellectual history. In response, the authors in this collection have employed a range of interpretive strategies. Some of the chapters have established connections between his discussion of neoliberalism and other parts of his work, even reaching back to the 1950s. Others have reached into the context within which Foucault was writing, such as the rise of the "second left" in France and beyond or the global perspective of the Iranian Revolution. And still others have explored the political legacy of these concepts and how they developed in the work of other social theorists such as Pierre Bourdieu.

Finally, whether or not Foucault actually embraced, was optimistic toward, apologized or critiqued neoliberalism, he never offered anything approaching an obvious endorsement of neoliberal ideas in his interviews or other writings. At the same time, as opposed to his more explicit refutations of certain social scientific schools or categories—such as some specific Marxist categories or schools of psychoanalysis—Foucault never explicitly stated his disagreement with some of the key neoliberal texts and approaches that he discussed during this brief period. Whether or not either was necessary to demonstrate his sympathy or rejection of neoliberal ideas—especially considering the brevity of his treatment of this question, as opposed to his long-term dialogue with Marxism and psychoanalysis, for example—it would seem the result has been that any complex treatment of his relationship to neoliberalism requires an unusually high degree of interpretation and contextualization. Once again, both of these features make this subject particularly rich for developing a better understanding of the intellectual heritage of the last third of the twentieth century around questions of liberalism and neoliberalism.

What follows suggests then that beyond the particular question of our neoliberal present—which Foucault may or may not be particularly helpful for understanding, as Revel concludes—such interpretive ambiguity provides a rich standpoint from which to examine important themes in the history of thinking about the intellectual politics of the late twentieth century. Hence, consciously pushing *beyond* the question of whether or not Foucault was a neoliberal, this volume has two key ambitions: to provide a more nuanced perspective on this key moment in the history of ideas and in so doing, uncover new interpretations, analyses, or applications of Foucault's work.

Through this approach, these chapters bring forward three central historical themes for understanding the legacy of political and social thought from this period. First, how did Foucault's and others' interpretations of liberalism and neoliberalism relate to the general trend toward a decline in Marxism

and Marxist thought during this period.[15] The general decline of Marxism as a dominant approach in social and human sciences across the 1970s and early 1980s has become a truism of twentieth-century intellectual history.[16] Beyond condemnation or celebration however, a more thorough understanding of how and why this shift took shape requires a careful investigation of specific trajectories. Étienne Balibar has offered a convincing, schematic interpretation of Foucault's engagement with Marxism in the years following his entry into the Collège de France.[17] Balibar suggests that Foucault engaged in nothing short of a systematic reckoning with the foundational categories of Marxist thought beginning with his refutation of the Althusserian conception of the "state apparatus" in the 1971–1972 lectures. Foucault then, he proposes, set out to provide an alternative to the Marxist conception of the conditions of capitalist reproduction (and specifically the proletariat) in his 1972–1973 lectures. And finally, Balibar evokes the idea that in his 1975–1976 lectures Foucault challenged the notion of class struggle in favor of his genealogical method and a new notion of the political. Some of the following chapters suggest that *The Birth of Biopolitics* lectures in 1978–1979 may have been yet another perhaps, final, moment in Foucault's long-term critical engagement with Marxism.

This moment of dialogue with Marxism was perhaps less systematic than previous ones—in that it did not focus on some specific foundational dimension of the Marxian conception, as Balibar suggests Foucault was pursuing earlier. Nonetheless, Foucault's dialogue with Marxism clearly continued in these years. Michael Behrent, for example, questions both the coherency and the politics of Foucault's claim that he was a Marxist of "the *Capital*-vol-II type," while Aner Barzilay and Duncan Kelly both explore how Foucault's exploration of neoliberalism in *The Birth of Biopolitics* lectures was part of his explicit rejection of a Marxian "anthropology" in favor of Foucault's Nietzchean post-humanism. Together, what these chapters suggest is that Foucault's brief investigation of liberal and neoliberal thought participated in yet another attempt to confront a Marxism that he had been challenging for a decade. Indeed, Foucault's relationship to Marxism may not be understood as a blanket rejection or endorsement of some specific element of the Marxian canon, but must grasped as a history.

Second, Foucault's relationship to neoliberalism contributes to a more elaborate understanding of the political and intellectual influence of the "second left" in France in the intellectual history of the late 1970s. Foucault's exploration of neoliberal texts took place against the broader backdrop of a refusal, among key members of the socialist party and some left intellectuals, of a traditional socialism and its attachment to a state-centered society. This broader rejection of classical conceptions of the state-society relationship, as Daniel Zamora highlights in his chapter, has played an important role in

critiques of the intellectual politics of this period, interpretations of Foucault's interest in liberal and neoliberal ideas first among them. Did Foucault's turn against Marxism and then traditional socialism and his equally ambiguous relationship to the "second left" pave the way for a potential embrace, or at least collusion, with neoliberalism? Was this the fatal step?

Here, too, a specific focus on Foucault provides a more complex understanding of the interest in liberalism in the late 1970s. In particular, it must be noted that Foucault's engagement with figures of the "second left," and Rosanvallon in particular, was multifaceted. As Rosanvallon has suggested, it was around the period of the Biopolitics courses that he and Foucault were in the most regular contact.[18] Furthermore, even as they both pursued an interest in eighteenth-century liberalism during this period—Rosanvallon was completing and published his *Le capitalisme utopique*[19]—their explorations of these liberal themes took very different directions as a result of their dialogue. Rosanvallon argued that the discovery of the socioeconomic sphere as an autonomous realm of human activity, especially within the Scottish Enlightenment, had a radical depoliticizing effect, giving birth to what he called a "utopian capitalism." He further suggested that Marx was, from this perspective, one of the great students of eighteenth-century laissez-faire thinkers because he evacuated politics in favor of a social solution to modern injustice. While Foucault examined some of the same authors, he profoundly disagreed with Rosanvallon on at least one key point. For Foucault, the fundamental innovation of this period was not a depoliticization of the social, but the very ability to make the distinction between the political and the socioeconomic in the first place. From his perspective, hiving off the political from the socioeconomic was a mode of governance, not an evacuation of the political.[20]

This particular debate suggests two important elements in Foucault's relationship to the "second left" and the broader relationship between critiques of traditional socialism and neoliberalism during this period. First, while a whole set of intellectuals on the left and right were dissatisfied with what they considered traditional conceptions of a state-centered society in the late 1970s, they did not engage in this critique in a monochromatic or one-dimensional way. It is simply too reductive to draw a straight line from some supposedly coherent "second left" political critique of Marxism and traditional socialism in the late twentieth century to the rise of twenty-first century neoliberalism. The critical motivations and intellectual conclusions to be drawn from such investigations were necessarily multiple and sometimes even contradictory. Second, a thicker description of the context within which these explorations of the "second left" took place reveals that figures like Foucault have come to overshadow a much larger set of discussions taking place on these issues. As Serge Audier highlights, the broad range of discussions around the reform of the left generated a great variety of competing positions. Foucault's attempt

within the biopolitics lectures to ground his own exploration of ordoliberalism and Gary Becker in a discussion of early modern political economy was also a means of unsettling some of the very categories the "second left" was using to frame the political debates of the period, such as the potentially depoliticizing effects of an autonomous civil society.

This leads to a third important theme in Foucault's treatment of neoliberalism: the question of the state. A supposed ambient anti-statism of the 1970s—perhaps best captured by the work of Pierre Clastres's *Society Against the State*—has also contributed to the idea that this period may have opened a back door to neoliberalism. Without a doubt, as Zamora's article in this volume suggests, Foucault's perspectives on the state significantly contributed to the idea that he may have found some validity in neoliberal critiques of state power. Contemporary neo-Marxists[21]—and more recently, those who have rekindled key Marxist critiques of Foucault—have established a parallel between Foucault's turn away from a critique of traditional political institutions and what has become the central critiques of our neoliberal age.[22] Here too however, the points made above regarding the historical shifts within Foucault's relationship to Marxism also apply. Indeed, the place of the state shifted widely within Foucault's work. For example, he primarily took aim at the "state apparatus" in his early Collège de France lectures, targeting one of the central elements of Althusser's critique of political institutional power.[23] Then after 1976, the critique of the Marxist state slowly gave way to a more ambivalent—though still critical—approach to state power in the same years he became interested in neoliberalism.[24]

At the same time, the reception of Foucault's treatment of the state has also changed radically since the late 1970s. A first generation of Foucault scholars, many of whom were writing in the context of Thatcher's and Reagan's neoliberal surge, used his critique of the traditional conception of the state to open up a study of power "beyond the state."[25] Here, the ambition was to show that critiques of power needed to change in a neoliberal context because the attempts to dismantle the state, they argued, hardly marked the end of power relations as such. In recent years, however, a new set of works has begun to more explicitly focus on a Foucauldian conception of the state.[26] There is little doubt that Foucault was attempting to unsettle two of the dominant interpretations of both liberal and Marxist conceptions of bureaucracy and the power of state institutions.[27] In so doing, he clearly pushed the state out of the center of the history of power and politics. The question, however, remains whether he was therefore interested in setting the state aside entirely or, as Duncan Kelly shows in his chapter in this volume, if Foucault steadily pursued a set of novel interrogations about how one might more effectively understand the state as one specific and historical set of power relations among many.

This volume brings together these perspectives—Foucault's relationship to Marxism, to the "second left," and to the State—to offer a deeper understanding of his work and the intellectual politics and history of liberalism and neoliberalism in the late twentieth century. It is precisely in this spirit that we open the volume with three of the leading voices on this subject. By asking Behrent, Audier, and Zamora to revisit a question that they have played an essential role in posing—from a variety of angles—our aim is to more effectively anchor this historical moment in its multiplicity. Insisting on the diversity of positions and methods employed by those who have thought seriously about Foucault's relationship to neoliberalism more effectively opens up, we hope, the historical, philosophical, and sociological stakes of our neoliberal moment. While these three papers speak to one another, they are also written from three overlapping, and yet distinct, methodological perspectives: intellectual history, philosophy, and sociology. These three positions, and their different conceptions of Foucault's relationship to the political context of the period as well as liberal and neoliberal ideas, suggest that there is no clear consensus as to how convinced, tacitly accepting, apologetic, critical, or hostile Foucault was toward neoliberalism. Indeed, they are gathered here precisely to suggest that whether or not Foucault *was* a neoliberal is not the most interesting, important, or lasting contribution of this debate. Instead, each of these chapters provides a novel perspective on Foucault's work and the broad set of interlocutors on these questions during this period, thereby contributing to an intellectual history of this critical moment in modern history.

The volume, therefore, opens with a chapter by Michael Behrent, which provides an overview of the positions taken on Foucault's relationship to neoliberalism and attempts to historicize them. According to him, there are four basic views concerning Foucault's relationship to neoliberalism: scholars who see him as promoting a type of liberalism analogous to Richard Rorty's idea of a non-foundationalist liberalism and find this attractive; those, like José Luis Moreno Pestaña and Daniel Zamora, who agree that Foucault's later thought turned in the direction of neoliberalism, and find this objectionable, specifically due to its implication for Leftist politics; the perspectives of Pierre Dardot, Christian Laval, and to some extent Wendy Brown that interprets him as an anti-liberal and therefore a resource for critiquing neoliberalism; and finally those, such as Mark Lilla and Michael Walzer, who view his anti-liberalism as being politically incoherent and dangerous. Behrent spends the rest of his chapter showing that there are limitations to all of these positions. In doing so, he explains why Foucault described himself as being a Marxist insofar as he was influenced by the second volume of *Capital*, why he thought of contemporary liberalism as not being fascist, and explains his assertion that under neoliberalism, state power would likely decrease.

The following chapter by philosopher Serge Audier presents a strong critique of a commonly held view that Foucault's biopolitics lectures sought, in part, to show the connection between the authoritarian and antidemocratic views of the German ordoliberals and fascist views of the state. This reading, he observes, asks if Foucault condemned German social democracy "by deploring its conversion to 'social market economy' as a turn towards a competitive and authoritarian ordoliberalism?" Audier challenges this view through an attempt to further contextualize the set of questions Foucault was posing. Most importantly, Audier argues, such an interpretation fails to understand Foucault's principal aim in his studies of German neoliberalism, and also misses the socioeconomic, political, and cultural singularity of the late 1970s in Germany and France. Ultimately, Audier insists that accusations of intellectual complicity with Nazism and ordoliberalism are to be found nowhere in Foucault's Biopolitics lectures.

In his chapter, "Finding a 'Left Governmentality': Foucault's Last Decade," Daniel Zamora continues to refine his own thinking on Foucault's proximity to neoliberalism. Through a contextual reconstruction of his last decade, Zamora argues that Foucault came to see neoliberalism as a tool to invent a left governmentality in the hope of rethinking the left's conceptual foundations. This leads to Zamora's thesis that neoliberalism provided Foucault with a framework for a new kind of politics. The last political decade of Foucault's work, Zamora affirms, was an attempt to participate in a growing opposition to the postwar left, and at the same time promote in the intellectual and political field a "new political culture." This engagement with key themes of the "second left" participated in a broader program of social transformation by incorporating some key ideas of neoliberal thought. On this reading, far from being foreign to Foucault, neoliberalism offered him a way to rethink resistance, or a way to be "less governed."

The necessity of contextualizing Foucault's engagement with neoliberalism within his own work is pursued in the essays that follow. The intellectual historian Aner Barzilay's chapter provides rebuttal to attempts to read *The Birth of Biopolitics* lectures in the politicized historicist manner championed by Daniel Zamora and Michael Behrent by highlighting its connections to a deep thread in Foucault's oeuvre. Although he grants that a significant methodological shift occurred in Foucault's thought after the publication of the first volume of *The History of Sexuality*, Barzilay nonetheless stresses its philosophical continuity with his earlier works. The Biopolitics lectures, he argues are no exception, as evidenced by several allusions to the argument of *The Order of Things* (1966). Uncovering these links are all the more important in that the short horizon of the "political" reading of Foucault obscures, he claims, an abiding interest in the use of Nietzsche's philosophy for thinking beyond the anthropological limits of the modern episteme.

Dotan Leshem's "Foucault, Genealogy, Critique" similarly places the question of neoliberalism within Foucault's oeuvre by focusing on the context of the Collège de France lecture series starting in 1970. This allows Leshem to reverse the question Zamora (and others) have posed: instead of asking whether or not Foucault was a neoliberal, he explores the role the neoliberalism courses played in Foucault's lectures at the Collège de France. Read in this light, the neoliberal lectures, claims Leshem, ended a decade-long genealogical inquiry into the histories of specific forms of truth and power. Leshem grants that what Foucault discovered in neoliberalism was indeed a novel form of government. However, he shows that this form of government did not free the individual from the grip of power but rather reinforced it.

Chapter 6 offers a third perspective on placing Foucault's lectures on biopolitics within the larger context of Foucault's thinking on the history of political thought from the nineteenth century to his own times. The lesson to be drawn from this, argues Duncan Kelly, is that Foucault's thinking about neoliberalism aligns with his historical investigations into the dethroning of the idea of a singular sovereign state, a state that "has no interior" and therefore must be critically examined from the outside. Neoliberalism, affirms Kelly, forced Foucault to explore the state anew by reintroducing the global economy as a point from which new discursive and political games of uncertainty would be played out. If Foucault remains relevant for understanding neoliberalism today, Kelly concludes, it is surely in his challenge to take up that task from the outside in reconsidering the relationship between the nation-state and global economic policy. These three essays show that when one investigates a specific intellectual's relationship to liberalism and neoliberalism during this period, a complex and wide-ranging intellectual engagement may emerge that in some cases reaches back far beyond the immediate context of a supposed "liberal turn" in the mid-1970s–1980s.

At the same time however, the immediate global context does matter. Hence, beyond the broader themes of Foucault's oeuvre, it is also important to highlight what was taking place globally beyond the narrow confines of France as Foucault engaged with neoliberal texts. Claudia Castiglioni's contribution follows this line of argument in chapter 7 by teasing out the relationship between Foucault's engagement with the Iranian Revolution and *The Birth of Biopolitics* lectures. Noting that Foucault delivered the first of his lectures shortly upon his return from Iran, in early January 1979, Castiglioni seeks to pinpoint the link between his engagement with the revolution and the redefinition of his approach to issues such as power, resistance, and population, and his thinking on liberalism broadly conceived. Most importantly, what emerges in this analysis is that far from later readings that privileged the global context of the rise of neoliberalism, especially in Britain and the

United States, Foucault's eyes during this period were turned toward revolutionary moments taking place in an entirely different part of the world.

To the extent that these chapters provide an investigation of Foucault's oeuvre and the historical and intellectual moment within which he was writing, they also raise a historical question on how his work in this period—specifically on liberalism and neoliberalism—relates to the rise of neoliberalism in the twenty-first century. There is of course the issue that Foucault may have opened a door to some of the key neoliberal practices of our contemporary politics. But there is also another issue as the full weight of a mature neoliberal order has descended upon us: no matter how apologetic or critical he was of neoliberalism as it was understood in the late 1970s, how helpful does Foucault's reading of neoliberalism remain today? Here, it is not so much a matter of the predictive power of Foucault, or of his contemporaries, as it is of recognizing, once again, that neoliberalism itself has a history and situating Foucault's relatively short interest in this question into the history of neoliberal orders.

In chapter 8, Luca Paltrinieri takes up this question by considering to what extent Foucault's analysis from the late 1970s provides the best means for understanding our present. He highlights the ways that Foucault's understanding of one of the key neoliberal themes, human capital, has fundamentally changed, opening up a powerful alternative intellectual history of this notion. Far from being an invention of the Chicago School of Economics, Paltrinieri demonstrates that human capital has deep roots in nineteenth-century European social thought. He then explains how Foucault and Pierre Bourdieu understood the notion in complementary ways, the latter having the advantage of witnessing the extraordinary expansion of the concept after Foucault's death.

Finally, the philosopher Judith Revel concludes asking if Foucault's thinking on neoliberalism provides insight into how European countries have dealt with the current refugee crisis since the mid-2010s. Revel argues that Foucault's pithy formulation "make live and let die" from 1976 does not seem to fit the paradigm of how migrants are governed today. Instead we are witnessing a shift in governmentality that breaks with Foucault's analysis of human capital and toward a model of "not making live, and letting die."

Together these essays provide a perspective on a key moment of transition in the intellectual politics of our contemporary age. As the neoliberal order shifts, along with our interpretations of its genealogy, a critical history of the present becomes increasingly meaningful and urgent. At the heart of these analyses is the idea that Foucault's courses and the reception of neoliberalism provide a privileged window into this history. By drawing out deep connections to his work, as well as some of the highly contingent events surrounding his courses, we are reminded that one of the most dangerous paths

we could follow is to reify and dehistoricize the variety of engagements with neoliberalism and therefore tacitly see neoliberalism as an ahistoric, stable, and ineluctable force resulting from a limited set of intellectual choices. In contrast, this volume explores how neoliberalism emerged as a theme within Foucault's work and the contours and stakes of how and why this engagement unsettled and provoked debate decades later. In so doing, it seeks to offer a better foundation for thinking about the present, neoliberal or otherwise, through the past.

NOTES

1. See Gary S. Becker, François Ewald, and Bernard Harcourt, "Becker on Ewald on Foucault on Becker: American Neoliberalism and Michel Foucault's 1979 'Birth of Biopolitics' lectures." *Coase-Sandor Working Paper Series in Law and Economics* 614 (2012).

2. As such, this volume continues the exploration of a set of questions raised in a previous collection of essays, which included both of the editors of this book and some of the authors of the chapters, Stephen W. Sawyer and Iain Stewart, eds., *In Search of the Liberal Moment: Democracy, Anti-totalitarianism and Intellectual Politics in France, 1950 to Present* (New York: Palgrave, 2016). This larger collective enterprise investigates the prospects, interrogations, and impasses that have arisen out of a range of French political and social theorists—especially those of the supposed "liberal moment" in the 1970s—from a historical perspective. See also *Pierre Rosanvallon's Interdisciplinary Political Thought*, Oliver Flügel-Martinsen, Franziska Martinsen, Stephen Sawyer, and Daniel Schulz, eds. (Bielefeld, Germany: University of Bielefeld Press, forthcoming).

3. In this book we have specifically chosen not to offer a single definition of neoliberalism, but rather to approach it as a historical phenomenon. As each chapter reveals, we consider the wide variety of interpretations of neoliberalism to be a key part of the history of neoliberalism and its study.

4. Michael Behrent, "Liberalism without Humanism: Michel Foucault and the Free-Market Creed, 1976–1979," *Modern Intellectual History* 6(3) (November 2009): 539–68. Aner Barzilay's chapter in this volume is partially a response to this article in that it offers a different interpretation of Foucault's critique of humanism.

5. Daniel Zamora, "Can we Criticize Foucault," *Jacobin Magazine*, December 10, 2014: https://www.jacobinmag.com/2014/12/foucault-interview/. One might readily note that the debate exploded in the pages of *Jacobin Magazine*, the publisher of Zamora's much-read essay and interview devoted to the subject, which has been one of the central publications behind a growing interest in Marxist thought.

6. Daniel Zamora, "Foucault's Responsibility," *Jacobin Magazine*, December 15, 2014: https://www.jacobinmag.com/2014/12/michel-foucault-responsibility-socialist/; Daniel Drezner, "Why Michel Foucault Is the Libertarian's Best Friend," *Washington Post*, December 11, 2014: https://www.washingtonpost.com/postevery

thing/wp/2014/12/11/why-michel-foucault-is-the-libertarians-best-friend/?utm_term=.55f0a7deb5a3.

7. José Luis Moreno Pestaña, *Foucault, la gauche, et la politique* (Paris: Textuel, 2011); Geoffroy de Lagasnerie, *La dernière leçon de Michel Foucault. Sur le néo-libéralisme, la théorie et la politique* (Paris: Fayard, 2012).

8. For a blog discussion of the Zamora debate in which a number of leading Foucault scholars commented, such as Stuart Elden, Stephen Shapiro, Michael Behrent and others see Stuart Elden, "Foucault and Neoliberalism—a few thoughts in response to the Zamora piece in Jacobin," December 17, 2014: https://progressivegeographies.co/2014/12/17/foucault-and-neoliberalism-a-few-thoughts-in-response-to-the-zamora-piece-in-jacobin/. The ongoing history of the debate can be found here at the *Foucault News* blog: https://michel-foucault.com/category/neoliberalism/; Serge Audier, *Penser le néolibéralisme : Le moment néolibéral, Foucault et la crise du socialism* (Lormont: Editions Le Bord de l'eau, 2015).

9. Daniel Zamora and Michael Behrent, eds., *Foucault and Neoliberalism* (New York: Polity Press, 2015).

10. Stuard Elden, "Foucault and Neoliberalism." Coase-Sandor Institute for Law and Economics, Working Paper No. 614 (Chicago: University of Chicago Law School, 2012), 4.

11. See Mathew Specter's introduction to *History and Theory*'s special forum devoted to the topic which includes contributions by Michael Behrent, Serge Audier, Matthew Specter, and Mitchell Dean: "Forum: Foucault and Neoliberalism," *History and Theory* 54(3) (2015): 367–418.

12. From this point of view, the argument over Foucault's supposed neoliberalism might also be productively understood as a kind of proxy debate on a set of much larger questions such as: Did the left take a fatal turn in the 1970s when it began to advocate more for those on the margins of society than for the traditional working class? On this reading, during the last forty years the left has fragmented and lost its way. Having once identified itself as a major force fighting against economic exploitation, much of the left in the 1970s abandoned its faith in the possibility of radical socioeconomic change and took a more comfortable, and conservative, seat at the political center. There is also a neoconservative reading of this history, which, in trying to make sense of this same period, blames the New Left for undermining the postwar welfare state, and for ushering in the neoliberal era that prioritizes the politics of identity. For an example of the former reading, see Perry Anderson, *The New Old World* (London: Verso, 2011); Michael Scott Christofferson, *French Intellectuals Against the Left: The Antitotalitarian Moment of the 1970s* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2004); Daniel Rodgers, *Age of Fracture* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2012). For the latter, the list is very long but for the most notable recent example see Mark Lilla, *The Once and Future Liberal: After Identity Politics* (New York: Harper, 2017) and Francis Fukuyama, *Identity: The Demand for Dignity and the Politics of Resentment* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2018). The best scholarly example that presumes something like these narratives concerning Foucault's relationship to neoliberalism can be found throughout the various contributions to Zamora and Behrent's edited volume, *Foucault and Neoliberalism*. It should not be overlooked that this

debate erupted on the eve of Brexit and Trump's presidency, and thus prefigured an explosive discussion on the liberal-left of the political promises and perils of so-called "identarian politics."

13. The pressure has risen to the point that a number of scholars of this period have sought to understand the shifts in their own intellectual trajectories across the last third of the twentieth century. One of the best examples is Pierre Rosanvallon's *Notre histoire intellectuelle et politique* (Paris: Seuil, 2018).

14. See, for instance, Angus Burgin, *The Great Persuasion: Reinventing Free Markets Since the Great Depression* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015); Quinn Slobodian, *Globalists: The End of Empire and the Birth of Neoliberalism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2018); Wendy Brown, *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution* (Cambridge: Zone Books, 2015); Melinda Cooper, *Family Values: Between Neoliberalism and the New Social Conservatism* (Cambridge: Zone Books, 2017).

15. On Foucault and Marx, see C. Laval, L. Paltrinieri, and F. Taylan, eds., *Marx & Foucault: Lectures, Usages, Confrontations* (Paris: Découverte, 2015).

16. Perry Anderson, *The New Old World* (London: Verso, 2009), 137–213; Mark Lilla, "The Legitimacy of the Liberal Age," in Mark Lilla, ed., *New French Thought* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), 3–34; Tony Judt, *Thinking the Twentieth Century* (London: Penguin, 2013).

17. Étienne Balibar, "Lettre d'Étienne Balibar à l'éditeur du cours," in Michel Foucault, *Théories et institutions pénales. Cours au Collège de France, 1971–1972* (Paris: EHESS/Seuil/Gallimard, 2015), 285–89. See also, Étienne Balibar, "L'anti-Marx de Michel Foucault," in Laval, Paltrinieri, and Taylan, *Marx & Foucault*, 84–104.

18. On Rosanvallon's account of his relationship with Foucault at this time, see his 2016–2017 Collège de France lectures: https://www.college-de-france.fr/site/pierre-rosanvallon/course-2016-2017.htm. Foucault also makes a number of references to Rosanvallon's work in the *Birth of Biopolitics* lectures, stating, for example: "The market as reality and political economy as theory both certainly played an important role in the liberal critique." However, as Pierre Rosanvallon's important book has confirmed, "liberalism is neither their consequence nor their development." (Michel Foucault, *Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978–1979*, trans. Graham Burchel [New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008], 320).

19. Pierre Rosanvallon, *Le capitalisme utopique* (Paris: Le Seuil, 1979).

20. This disagreement went deep enough that Foucault apparently stated in the context of a seminar at the Collège de France that if Rosanvallon was correct, then he was necessarily wrong. (Personal interview with Pierre Rosanvallon by Stephen Sawyer.)

21. Nicos Poulantzas suggested, for example, that "Foucault's indisputable merits are therefore to be found in another region. What is truly remarkable is the fact that such discourse, which tends to blot out power by dispersing it among tiny molecular vessels, is enjoying great success at a time when the expansion and weight of the State are assuming proportions never seen before" (*State, Power, Socialism* [London: Verso, 1980].)

22. See for example, Daniel Zamora, "Foucault, the Excluded, and the Neoliberal Erosion of the State," in Zamora and Behrent, *Foucault and Neoliberalism*, 79–80.

23. Foucault wrote in his 1971–1972 lectures: "Tout cet ensemble de transformations est lié à la naissance d'un État" (*Théories et Institutions Pénales*), 232.

24. Foucault claims, for example, in the *Birth of Biopolitics* lectures: "The problem of bringing under state control, of (*étatisation*) is at the heart of the questions I have tried to address." (*Birth of Biopolitics*, 77). As Michel Senellart notes in his comments on the *Security, Territory, Population* lectures, "it is neither a question of denying the state nor of installing it in an overarching position." (Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 494). On this, see Stephen W. Sawyer, "4ème Session : Autour De Michel Foucault, 'La Société Punitive (1972–1973)'" EHESS, https://www.canal-u.tv/video/ehess/4eme_session_autour_de_michel_foucault_la_societe_punitive_1972_1973.13921; S. Sawyer, "The State that Wasn't Brought Back In: Foucault and the Neo-Weberian Episteme," Center for Contemporary Critical Thought, Columbia University, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6u2JG40_y4I; S. Sawyer, "Foucault's Notion of the State," Journée d'étude autours de M. Foucault, Théories et institutions pénales Cours au Collège de France 1972–1973 (June 2, 2015), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bHOSv16moLM.

25. See, for example, Nikolas Rose and Peter Miller, "Political Power Beyond the State: Problematics of Government," *The British Journal of Sociology* 43(2) (1992): 173–205.

26. A number of recent works have highlighted the place of the state in Foucault's work and scholarship on Foucault. See, for example, Mitchell Dean and Kaspar Villadsen, *State Phobia and Civil Society: The Political Legacy of Michel Foucault* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2016); Philip Gorski, *The Disciplinary Revolution: Calvinism and the Rise of the State in Early Modern Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003); Thomas Lemke, "An Indigestible Meal? Foucault, Governmentality and State Theory," *Distinktion: Scandinavian Journal of Social Theory* 8(2) (2011): 43–64; Timothy Mitchell's "Society, Economy, and the State Effect" in George Steinmetz, ed., *State/Culture: State-formation After the Cultural Turn* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999); Stephen W. Sawyer, "Foucault and the State," *The Tocqueville Review/La Revue Tocqueville* 36(1) (2015): 135–64; Arnault Skornicki, *La grande soif de l'État. Michel Foucault avec les sciences sociales* (Paris: Les Prairies Ordinaires, 2015).

27. Arnold Davidson notes, for example, that Foucault's critique of the state takes aim at both liberal and Marxist conceptions of state power: "Michel Foucault's central contribution to political philosophy was his progressive development and refinement of a new conception of power, one that put into question the two reigning conceptions of power, the juridical conception found in classical liberal theories and the Marxist conception organized around the notions of State apparatus, dominant class, mechanisms of conservation and juridical superstructure" (*Psychiatric Power*, Collège de France lectures, introduction).

Chapter 1

A Liberal Despite Himself

Reflections on a Debate, Reappraisals of a Question

Michael Behrent

The debate over Foucault's position on liberalism and neoliberalism—and specifically over the implications of these positions for understanding Foucault's politics, as well as politics inspired by his thinking—boils down to two questions: First, is Foucault's thought, particularly in his lectures from the late 1970s, liberal or anti-liberal? Second, is Foucault's position on liberalism[1] (whatever one holds it to be) appealing or unappealing?

The debate on Foucault and liberalism has, one might say, yielded four basic positions, reflecting the spectrum of possible answers to these two questions. Among those who see Foucault's thinking as liberal in its basic thrust, some find his stance attractive, while others view it as objectionable. Similarly, those who see Foucault as constitutively allergic to liberalism can be divided, in turn, into a current that maintains that it is precisely in his alleged anti-liberalism that Foucault's political importance resides, and a constituency that contends that it is this aversion to liberalism that makes his politics incoherent, and perhaps even dangerous. For purely heuristic purposes, the four positions can thus be represented in the following table:

Table 1.1 Positions on Foucault

	Foucault as liberal	*Foucault as anti-liberal*
Normatively appealing	Position 1	Position 3
Normatively objectionable	Position 2	Position 4

Source: Author's own.

Position 1—"Foucault is a liberal, and good for him"—is unique in being purely notional. It occupies a logical space in the debate that has yet to be seriously defended. No one has really tried to make a sustained case that Foucault both embraces a form of liberalism that would be politically positive or fruitful. Some have, however, at least brushed up against this position. The philosopher Richard Rorty once described a position that he dubbed "postmodernist bourgeois liberalism," which involved defending liberal freedoms while largely dispensing with the need to root them in some deeper philosophical or ethical system of justification. It would not be difficult to find elements of Rorty's idea of a non-foundationalist liberalism in Foucault's late-1970s lectures, in which he plumbed the emancipatory possibilities of a historically distinct form of governmentality that, he believed, shunned the sorts of foundational gestures that anchor freedom in ethical principles and legal rights—the kind that Rorty, in his essay, had associated with a more traditional and Kantian form of liberalism.[2] Position 1's insight—were anyone to take the trouble to flesh it out, though perhaps some have intuited it—is that Foucault's critique of institutions and of state-centered habits of mind and practices could inform a liberalism that (in keeping with Foucault's skepticism of metaphysics) renounces many of liberalism's customary trappings, such as a first-order commitment to human rights and the legal principles underpinning them. This Foucault, in other words, severs the bonds connecting liberalism and the need for foundations.

The position that has elicited the most controversy in recent years is position 2: the view that Foucault more or less eagerly welcomed the advent of neoliberal policies in the late 1970s and, consequently, that he provided respectable intellectual cover for the "neoliberal thought collective,"[3] and helped to dilute the left's traditionally critical attitude toward capitalist society. These charges, it is worth recalling, build on often forgotten antecedents. The communist philosopher Michel Clouscard included Foucault in his tirades against the "libertarian liberalism" spawned by May '68,[4] while the socialist politician Jean-Pierre Chevènement, in the 1970s, derided Foucault as an ideologist of an anti-Marxist, anti-social, and politically quiescent "American left."[5] But the publication of Foucault's lectures from the late 1970s, particularly *The Birth of Biopolitics*, triggered a new wave of attacks aimed at Foucault's alleged sympathy for neoliberalism. The sociologist José Luis Moreno Pestaña cites the 1979 course as evidence that Foucault was "totally convinced by neoliberal discourse," lamenting the fact that "at no moment does Foucault question neoliberalism's effects on social inequality."[6] Even more potently and persuasively, Daniel Zamora has argued that "Foucault's thinly veiled sympathy for, and minimal criticism of, the emerging neoliberal paradigm" and his championing of neoliberalism "in the name of greater autonomy and the subject's rebellion against major institutional structures and entrenched discourse" participated in a post-'68 leftist politics that ultimately

provided intellectual cover for neoliberalism's economic and ideological consecration.[7] In this instance, the insight is that the elective affinities Foucault identified between neoliberal political practices and his own critique of modern institutions and their disciplinary and normalizing effects represent a decisive (if hardly unanticipated) break with the traditional categories of leftwing social criticism (focusing on class hierarchies, economic exploitation, and social inequality) and a suspiciously uncritical attitude toward the new economic order emerging in the 1970s.

These views are striking and bold precisely because they challenge an older and quite well-established assumption—position 3—that the inherent anti-liberalism of Foucault's core philosophical outlook renders his politics problematic. Particularly in the English-speaking world, this view colored Foucault's early reception. Thus in 1983, the political philosopher Michael Walzer asserted that Foucault's inability to offer "an account . . . of the liberal state and the rule of law" resulted in "the catastrophic weakness of his political theory."[8] The insight of this position is Foucault's radical critique of the concepts upon which liberalism is premised, such as individuality, autonomy, and rationality. Having knocked aside liberalism's theoretical foundations, Foucault, so the argument goes, could only be hostile to liberalism as a coherent political outlook. Indeed, proponents of this view have even, at times, seen Foucault's purported anti-liberalism as culminating in positions that liberals regard as liberalism's very antithesis. Thus, Mark Lilla has suggested that the antinomianism hardwired into Foucault's thought ultimately explains why he succumbed to the tyrannophilia so endemic to twentieth-century French thought.[9] On the basis of similar assumptions, others have expressed puzzlement with Foucault's late-career adoption of rights talk, which seems to chafe theoretically against what they see as the withering critique he had leveled against liberalism's theoretical underpinnings in his earlier work.[10]

Yet in recent years, with rising anxieties about globalization and an emerging consciousness about its roots in neoliberal ideology, a new generation of activist-scholars—embracing position 4, in our scheme—have found in Foucault's thought a conceptual toolkit that they deem of great theoretical value in critiquing contemporary capitalism (which they equate with a kind of liberalism). Thus while position 4 agrees with position 3 in regarding Foucault as a critic of liberalism, the former differs from the latter in seeing this anti-liberalism as one of Foucault's most valuable political assets (though these two positions disagree, presumably, over the meaning of liberalism and perhaps over even what Foucault had to say about it). One of the most thorough and sophisticated expositions of this standpoint is *La nouvelle raison du monde* (roughly, "*The World's New Rationality*"), an essay by the philosopher Pierre Dardot and the sociologist Christian Laval. They start from the insight that the key to understanding neoliberalism—the basic

political logic of the contemporary world—is grasping Foucault's insight that it is, more than an ideology or economic model, a form of "governmental reason"[11]—i.e., a political rationality. Dardot and Laval meticulously show how, once it had become clear that nineteenth-century liberalism had proved itself politically bankrupt by the interwar years, a "neo" form of "liberalism" reinvented itself in the postwar years and particularly in the final decades of the twentieth century, based on a fundamentally new framework for governing present-day society. This framework remodeled society on the principle that human beings are fundamentally entrepreneurial, that giving priority to the market as a nexus for adjudicating private interests requires a strong state (even as the state retreats from the commanding heights occupied under the Keynesian model), the divorce of private rights and democratic governance, and, perhaps most importantly, the nurturing of a "neoliberal subject," which sees the self as a kind of startup, structured around the coordinates of performance, assessment, and risk. The insight here is that it is possible to expurgate from Foucault's analysis of neoliberalism the language and value judgments that other readers have seen as evidence of sympathy (or at least critical neutrality) and can rejigger it in such a way that it does for free-market ideology what, say, *Discipline and Punish* did for prisons. Had Foucault lived long enough to ponder twenty-first-century politics, his analyses may indeed have looked something like *La nouvelle raison du monde*. But he did not. This does not, as such, undermine the value of Dardot and Laval's book, but it raises the question of how exactly it relates to Foucault's own work, and particularly the positions he adopted in the 1970s.

It goes almost without saying that most readers will remain skeptical that any of these boldly traced positions gets Foucault right—even if they do allow us to map out the topography of a debate. Many will want to find truth in the interstices of these positions—to see Foucault as occupying an area between endorsement and condemnation of neoliberalism. For instance, the legal scholar Ben Golder has, in a provocative and persuasive book, argued that Foucault's late-career espousal of liberal-sounding rights talk was not so much a disavowal of earlier positions as a tactical deployment of the liberal language of rights. Without acquiescing to liberalism's philosophical underpinnings (such as autonomous subjectivity), Foucault, Golder maintains, nonetheless found it politically efficacious to invoke rights as a way of placing limits on state (and other forms of) power and shining the floodlights on liberal governmentality's illiberal recesses.[12] In an important and exhaustive study published in France, Serge Audier has also tried to extract Foucault from the reductive alternative between anti-neoliberal prophet and unrepentant free-marketer. Foucault's *intellectual* contribution to the study of neoliberalism is significant, Audier maintains, but his contribution to the question "is not situated where one might think it to be." What matters is less

which side Foucault was on than the explanation he offered of neoliberalism's emergence—specifically, how it arose at the intersection of a crisis of disciplinary society (that is, of the institutions and the power relations that Foucault had analyzed in his work since *Discipline and Punish*) and a disillusionment with Marxism. Yet as Audier's research suggests, Foucault's conceptualization of neoliberalism loaded the dice in favor of a number of values he implicitly embraced.[13] Despite their nuanced accounts of Foucault's views, neither Golder nor Audier can refrain from normative assessments: Golder, who is intrigued by the political fruits to be reaped from the tactical use of rights talk, lies somewhere between position 1 and 3; Audier, who fears that Foucault may have inflicted unnecessary damage on the socialist tradition, can be found between position 2 and 4 (though leaning toward the former).

The wide variety of positions on Foucault's relationship to neoliberalism is, no doubt, revealing of the stakes of this debate: What did one of the most influential thinkers of recent decades think about the dominant sociopolitical paradigm of our time? Yet for all the insights they have generated, each position has foundered on a reef of unresolved questions.

Those who see Foucault as embracing neoliberalism face one basic problem: the fact that Foucault never described himself as a neoliberal—or a liberal, for that matter. Defenders of this position are forced to argue that the underlying logic of Foucault's views on a range of topics was liberal, despite his refusal to align himself overtly with this political outlook. Foucault, at times, cultivated this ambiguity. In a 1983 interview at Berkeley, an unidentified interlocutor remarked to Foucault: "I think there is a general impression that your work doesn't just view bourgeois liberalism as utopian but also as theoretically unsound, and I think that you're saying no, that isn't the implication, because from what you've just said it would seem that the ordinary John Stuart Mill kind of notion of liberal politics makes perfectly good sense, it's a way of describing certain power relations from the inside, and viewed from the inside, it's as good a way as a community might find." Foucault did not take the bait—even as he went on to say that he believed that "in the historical-political analyses made in the twentieth century, the problems posed by liberal thought, in the strict sense of the English and French eighteenth century and nineteenth century… has perhaps been too much forgotten." He added that "this kind of liberalism was constituted through a critical opposition with the administrative states of the eighteenth century" and that, given that the twentieth century witnessed a significant expansion of the administrative state under Marxist as well as social democratic regimes, there was clearly much to be gained in "reactivating these problems" and "tak[ing] up anew the questions of Benjamin Constant [and] of Tocqueville."[14] This exchange perfectly encapsulates Foucault's puzzling relationship with liberalism: While emphasizing the need to reactivate the questions liberals posed

to the administrative state, he refused to subscribe to "the ordinary John Stuart Mill kind of notion of liberal politics."

There are at least two ways this problem can be mitigated. First, one could argue that Foucault's refusal to self-identify as a liberal is no great problem, because his very silence—this refusal to merge his view with a public and collective position—is consistent with liberalism itself. Second, it could be pointed out that Foucault vehemently resisted being identified with broader intellectual movements in general. He never considered himself a structuralist even when, in the 1960s, his work was closely identified with that school of thought, and he eschewed any association with "postmodernism" or "post-structuralism," despite the eagerness of some commentators (particularly in the English-speaking world) to pin those labels on him. Foucault, one might say, rejected *all* efforts to categorize his thinking. Still, the fact that Foucault expressed sympathy for liberal ideas while refusing to identify himself as a liberal remains a problem.

Those who reject any affiliation between Foucault and liberalism and who maintain that he provides crucial resources for critiquing neoliberal thinking and modes of governance face, however, a problem of their own: namely, the description and theoretical account Foucault provides of neoliberalism itself. Indeed, far more important than Foucault's *attitude* toward neoliberalism (i.e., whether he "liked" it) are the *characteristics* he attributes to it and their implications for a critical appraisal of neoliberal society. Thus Foucault does not, in a Marxist vein, see neoliberalism as a way of restoring profits or disempowering labor movements in a time of economic crisis, nor does he reflect on its impact on social equality. Of course, those who are eager to see Foucault as an anti-neoliberal welcome these aspects of his thought, arguing that his focus on neoliberalism as a form of "governmentality," which creates a distinct kind of subjectivity, is precisely what makes his insight into the phenomenon original and trenchant. Yet Foucault himself believed that neoliberal governmentality meant a financially strapped state with a more restricted capacity for action, an erosion of disciplinary institutions, and a disinclination to monitor morals and social norms. Even scholars who draw on Foucault to understand contemporary neoliberalism rarely share these assessments: They tend to see the free market and privatization as resulting (however paradoxically) in an expansion of certain forms of state power (a fact that Foucault recognized in the case of German ordoliberalism, but not in that of American neoliberalism), and, in some instances, to see neoliberalism as entailing an intensification of the disciplinary power that Foucault believed it could dispense with.[15] The partisans of an "anti-neoliberal Foucault" must, in short, contend with the question of whether a theoretical framework that begins with such assumptions can ever provide an adequate understanding of really existing neoliberalism—whether, that is, the most critical elements in

some Foucauldian analyses of neoliberalism are those that owe the least to Foucault, or, in any case, to his late-seventies lectures.

In making sense of Foucault's assessment of neoliberalism, we must, I think, be willing to acknowledge both of these problems. We must take seriously Foucault's refusal to identify himself as a liberal. Nor can it be denied that Foucault always understood his project to be driven by the idea of critique—though liberalism was, in his eyes, as much a *form* of critique (a critique of governmental reason) as a thing to be critiqued.[16] At the same time, going beyond the question of Foucault's personal views about liberalism, it is important to consider the assumptions that are hardwired into Foucault's understanding of these phenomenon, and to ask what critical avenues are opened and closed by these conceptual starting points.

To show how Foucault's assessment of liberalism and related matters was constantly shaped by these two problems, this essay, rather than attempting a systematic reconstruction of his views on liberalism, will consider three specific moments in his thinking about this issue that, in their very idiosyncrasy, are highly revealing: Foucault's claim, which he made on several occasions during the period when his interest was turning toward liberalism, that he was a Marxist insofar as he was influenced by the second volume of *Capital*; his preoccupation with explaining why contemporary liberalism was not fascistic; and, finally, his assertions that, under neoliberalism, state power seemed likely to decrease. These episodes bring into focus a thinker who was neither a champion of neoliberalism, nor a prescient critic of its earliest manifestations, but one who is, rather, a liberal despite himself—a mind that, for all its commitment to critique and aversion to categorization, was drawn into the orbit of liberal thinking by the force of his own assumptions and commitments.

A *CAPITAL*-VOLUME-II-MARXIST?

The status of Foucault's liberalism is closely intertwined with his views on Marxism and socialism. In the 1979 lectures, Foucault examined such notions as the market, self-interest, and entrepreneurialism—issues on which Marxism, needless to say, offers its own distinctive perspective. Moreover, in France in the 1970s, a positive reassessment of things liberal was an attitude adopted by a number of intellectuals who had grown disillusioned with the Marxist politics they had pursued in the radical 1960s, some of whom received Foucault's public support.[17] In the 1983 exchange mentioned above, the interviewer asked Foucault if he found Tocqueville's and Constant's questions "more pertinent than socialist analyses." He replied, "I think in any case that it this kind of question that must be posed to any socialist

regime."[18] Foucault's critical assessment of Marxism is, in many ways, the flipside of the coin of his engagement with liberalism.

While much has been said about Foucault's disparagement of Marxism, socialism, and leftist politics at this time, one interesting claim he made during this period has been generally overlooked: that he sympathized with the analysis of contemporary society Marx offered not in his work as a whole, but specifically in *Capital*'s second volume. The stakes of this claim are difficult to decipher. It would seem to throw a lifejacket to those who cling to the fantasy that Foucault is some kind of unrecognized Marxist. But it is just as plausible to read it as an circuitous critique of Marx: If one of the more obscure and arduous texts in the Marxism canon—the "arid table-lands and plateaus," as Louis Althusser once put it, in the long march of *Capital*[19]—is deemed its most instructive, what does this say about Marx's oeuvre as a whole?

Let us first consider Foucault's statements themselves. In April 3, 1978, just as he was wrapping up the first lecture series at the Collège de France addressing the question of liberal governmentality (i.e., *Security, Territory, Population*), Foucault was interviewed by Colin Gordon and Paul Patton. They were particularly eager for Foucault to explain how his thought related to Marxism, a theme that the *nouveaux philosophes* had made newly relevant. Foucault replied: "You want to ask me what relationship I establish between my work and Marxism? I would tell you that I establish none."[20] The reason, he explained, is that "Marxism is a reality that is so complex, so muddled, that consists of so many successive historical layers, that is also caught up within so many political strategies, not to mention all the small-group tactics … that, ultimately, it doesn't interest me. I do not work by asking myself the question of knowing where things stand with Marxism and where my relationship with Marxism stands."

Yet having summarily dismissed the relevance of *Marxism* in a way that was typical of his late-1970s pronouncements on the topic, Foucault proceeded to argue that his intellectual relationship to *Marx* himself was an entirely different matter. During his student days, Foucault had carefully read Marx, notably under the guidance of the great Hegelian philosopher Jean Hyppolite. Foucault integrated his understanding of Marx's significance into some of his early essays, notably his significant (and often forgotten) paper from 1964, "Nietzsche, Freud, Marx"[21] and, most importantly, *The Order of Things* (1966). When it came to Marx, Foucault knew whereof he spoke. This is why it is so striking that, in the Gordon-Patton interview, Foucault stated: "I would say, if you will, very crudely, to put things in a caricatural way: my lineage [is] to *Capital*'s second volume [*second livre du* Capital]."

What did this mean? Much philosophical reflection on *Capital*, Foucault explained, was focused on the celebrated first volume, and thus on such questions as "commodities, markets, the abstraction of commodities, and the

resulting abstraction of human existence." Both Herbert Marcuse and Henri Lefebvre belonged to this tradition. Carefully distinguishing himself from this reading of Marx, Foucault said that "what interested [him] in Marx, what inspired [him] . . . is *Capital*'s second volume, that is to say, . . . analyses that are in the first place historically concrete on the genesis of *capitalism*, and not capital, and, secondly, analyses of the historical conditions of capitalism's development, especially from the standpoint of the establishment [and] development of power structures and power institutions." His own work, notably *Discipline and Punish*, had drawn not on volume I's analysis of "the genesis of capital," but on volume II's "genealogy of capitalism."[22]

Foucault concluded his answer to Patton and Gordon's question by reflecting on the intellectual politics informing his decision to refrain from citing Marx in the very texts that (he claimed) bore the German thinker's influence. "I refrained from making all the references I might have to Marx, because references to Marx in the intellectual and political climate in today's France function not as indicators of origin but as markers of belonging. It is a way of saying: don't touch me, clearly you see that I'm a genuine man of the left, that I'm a Marxist—the proof being that I cite Marx." This is why, he added, he preferred to make "secret quotes from Marx, which Marxists themselves are unable to recognize, than do what many people unfortunately do—that is, to make statements that have nothing to do with Marxism, but adding a little footnote referring to Marx, and then—there you go—the text acquires a political meaning." He concluded: "I detest signs of belonging," saying that he would rather quote Marx more and cite him less.[23] Foucault's refusal to footnote the second volume of *Capital* was, in this way, consistent with one of his most basic and unwavering character traits: his aversion to being pigeonholed or classified, his fantasy that ideas might circulate without being tethered to a name.[24] In this sense, those who claim Foucault for the Marxist legacy face the same basic problem as those who would see him as sympathetic to liberalism: Foucault's deep aversion for "signs of belonging" made it virtually impossible for him to ever align himself with a political ideology or movement (as opposed to taking a position within a particular struggle or strategic configuration). The question—the significance of which transcends polemical subtlety or subterfuge—is whether an aversion to "signs of belonging" is compatible with Marxism and averse to liberalism.

The ideas upon which he based his affiliation with *Capital*'s second volume were developed more thoroughly in a lecture delivered to the philosophy faculty at the Federal University of Bahia in Brazil two years earlier. This address is a landmark in Foucault's emerging ideas about power, which he had first discussed, in print, in *Discipline and Punish* (1975) and which he would soon expand upon in the first volume of *The History of Sexuality* (1976). The basic problem with the analysis of power, Foucault explains, is

that it is primarily defined as prohibition; the roots for this definition can be traced, in turn, as Foucault argued in *The History of Sexuality*'s first installment, to the legal arguments whereby European monarchs defined their power as sovereign, particularly vis-à-vis the nobility. It is to this idea of sovereignty that we owe the modern idea of the state. The notion of a centralized state presiding over all social relations and using the legal apparatus to prohibit certain forms of conduct became, in short, central to Western "representations of power," but in a way that, Foucault believed, had resulted in theoretical blindness to the "real functioning of power."[25]

To whom, then, was one to turn if one sought insight into power's "positive mechanisms"? One guide was Jeremy Bentham, "the great theorist of bourgeois power." The other, Foucault noted, could be found in Marx—but "essentially in volume II of *Capital*."[26] The lesson of this text, Foucault suggested, had little to do with capital, or even with economics, for that matter. It was, more than anything, a study of power. First, Marx showed that there was not just one form of power. Power is not some homogeneous energy projected across social space from a single, centralized point; rather, power bursts forth in multiple and heterogeneous forms, many of which are not—at least originally—plugged into the circuitry of state power. Marx had placed particular emphasis on the "simultaneously specific and relatively autonomous character—impermeable, as it were—of the power wielded by the boss in the workshop, in relation to the juridical kind of power that exists in the rest of society."[27] Second, Marx showed that power did not occupy a central position in society, along the lines of the primordial position that Rousseau and other social contract theorists had attributed to the sovereign state that brings society out of the state of nature. Marx "did not recognize this schema." In volume II, he shows how "from the initial and primitive existence of these little power regions—such as property, slavery, the workshop, as well as the army—the great state apparatuses could, little by little, be formed." "State unity" was, in this way, "secondary in relation to these regional and specific powers."[28] Marx, in volume II, does not think of power as a prohibition, but instead as "an efficiency" or an "aptitude." Foucault notes that Marx, in the second volume, offers "superb analyses of the problem of discipline in the military and workshops"—even if Foucault failed to find, in Marx, an analysis of military discipline comparable to his own in *Discipline and Punish*.[29] Finally, Marx understood that power had to be grasped, for the reasons mentioned previously, as a "technology." Along these lines, "one can easily find between the lines of volume II of *Capital* an analysis, or at least the sketch of an analysis, of what would be the history of a technology of power, as it was exercised in workshops and factories."[30]

While characteristically unconventional, Foucault's suggestion that he was a *Capital*-volume-II-Marxist would seem to suggest a plausible compromise

between those who see him as a staunch critic of capitalism and those who view him as an enabler of the neoliberal order. The critique of power, Foucault suggests, was always already embedded in the Marxian project; consequently, no daylight need exist—in principle, anyway—between a genealogy of modern power forms and a critical theory of capitalism. If anything, one might imagine that the latter is enriched by the former. Before celebrating the reconciliation of these estranged theoretical traditions, however, a slightly plodding but nonetheless necessary question is in order: Does the second volume of *Capital* really say what Foucault claimed it did?

The evidence is ambiguous at best. It is worth briefly reminding ourselves of the basic facts surrounding this book. *Capital*, volume II, was published in 1885, two years after Marx's death. Though Marx had largely completed the manuscript, Friedrich Engels prepared it for publication using his friend's notes. The volume's title—which Foucault never seems to mention—is *The Process of Circulation of Capital.* As such, it reflects Marx's specific goals for the book: to explain how the theoretical analysis of the origin of capital—namely, through capitalist exploitation of working-class labor through the generation of surplus-value—that had been the theme of *Capital*'s first volume played out within the broader context of the modern capitalist market. As David Harvey notes, the first volume took the existence of the modern market for granted, focusing on the conditions under which surplus value was generated in the otherwise undisturbed process of capitalist production. The second volume, however, takes the opposite approach: it assumes the production of surplus-value proceeds without interference in order to consider how surplus-value circulates (specifically through market forces: i.e., the buying of raw materials and bringing commodities to market) and how the capitalist system is able to reproduce itself. Its focus is, according to Harvey, on the dialectic between capitalist *production* (creating surplus-value) and *realization* (trading surplus value on the market in a way that it can be reproduced).[31]

How accurate, then, was, Foucault's description of the second volume? His claim that it focused on "historically concrete" analyses of "the genesis of *capitalism*" rather than "capital" is broadly correct, if we take him to be referring to what Harvey calls the "realization" of capitalism—the way capitalists had to find markets on which to purchase raw materials and sell completed commodities, an issue that Marx could bracket when analyzing the generation of surplus-value. But it is harder to pin down what parts of the text Foucault had in mind when he claimed that the second volume explores the role of "power structures and power institutions" in capitalism's development. This is hardly the book's focus: Its concern is with the circuits that capitalist production creates (successive phases in which the capitalist acts as a buyer, producer, and seller), the temporal sequences associated with capitalist circulation (the period over which money is transformed into surplus-value and

the never-ending process of subdividing capital into its fixed and circulating forms), and the way these circuits reproduce the capitalist production process. As Marx dwells on the rather technical issues of circulation, turnover, and reproduction, one is hard-pressed to find anything more than passing references to the problem of power. It is possible, perhaps, to find some support for Foucault's claim that Marx, in the second volume, was concerned with the microphysics of power—"these little power regions" from which "the great state apparatuses could . . . be formed." Evidence in support of Foucault's claim could, perhaps, be found in the way Marx breaks capitalist production into three "circuits": the money-capital circuit (the capitalist as a buyer on the labor and raw materials market), the production-capital circuit (the capitalist as a producer—i.e., a factory owner or the equivalent), and the commodity-capital circuit (the capitalist as a salesperson). Yet even aside from the fact that Marx strongly emphasizes the economic (rather than power-related) motives shaping these circuits, he in no way suggests that any of these circuits are analytically autonomous—that they constitute "little power regions." Thus, Marx writes:

> As a whole, then, the capital is simultaneously present, and spatially coexistent, in its various phases. But each part is constantly passing from one phase or functional form to another, and thus functions in all of them in turn. . . . It is only in the unity of the three circuits that the continuity of the overall process is realized.[32]

In Marx's analysis, no analytical priority is given to local, "bottom-up" processes (to the extent that these circuits are even what Foucault had in mind). The way they literally flow into and become another, the way they are inconceivable without being part of a larger system, is fundamental to Marx's analysis. Finally, the specific institutions Foucault said that Marx had discussed in the second volume—namely, "property, slavery, the workshop, as well as the army"—are mentioned only in passing, if at all. The term "discipline" appears neither in the French nor in the English translation of volume II.

Even so, I think it is possible to redeem, at least partially, Foucault's claims about Marx's influence on him—provided that one concedes that Foucault *incorrectly identified* the volume that allegedly influenced him. The passages dealing with the history and "genealogy" of capitalism and with the use of discipline in the workplace (and other capitalist institutions) would seem not to be located in volume II, but in the later chapters of volume I. After his famous discussion of the commodity form and its relationship to surplus-value in the opening sections, Marx turns, in the final chapters of volume I, to an examination of primitive capitalist accumulation, which corresponds

closely to what Foucault described as "historically concrete" analyses of "the genesis of *capitalism*" (as opposed to capital). For instance, Marx addresses such topics as the "Expropriation of the Agricultural Population from the Land" (vol. I, ch. 27) and "Bloody Legislation against the Expropriated since the End of the Fifteenth Century. The Forcing Down of Wages by Act of Parliament" (ch. 28). Moreover, the terms Foucault uses to describe the intellectual project of volume II—to provide a "genesis of capitalism" (which he also, giving the term a Nietzschean twist, terms a "genealogy of capitalism") is practically a direct reference to several chapters in volume I: chapter 29—"The Genesis of the Capitalist Farmer"—and 31—"The Genesis of the Industrial Capitalist." Moreover, the later chapters of volume I do, in fact, consider "power structures and power institutions," as well as the history of a "technology of power, as it was exercised in workshops and factories." Specifically, chapters 14 ("The Division of Labor and Manufacture") and 15 ("Machinery and Large-Scale Industry") consider the structure of power as it developed in industrial workshops and factories, dwelling on such issues as division of labor as a system for controlling workers, "The Struggle between Worker and Machine" (ch. 15, sec. 5), the "Repulsion and Attraction" the factory system exercises on working people (ch. 15, sec. 7), and the impact of the British Parliament's Factory Acts—in other words, the very kind of issues that Foucault believed exemplified problems of power rather than of economic exploitation. In chapter 15, Marx specifically refers to the problem of factory discipline, comparing it to military discipline, which Foucault, with his example of the Prussian drill sergeant, had made the centerpiece of his analysis of discipline as a new power form in *Discipline and Punish.* As Marx writes:

> The technical subordination of the worker to the uniform motion of the instruments of labour, and the peculiar composition of the body of the working group, consisting as it does of individuals of both sexes and all ages, gives rise to a *barrack-like discipline*, which is elaborated into a complete system in the factory . . . thereby dividing the workers into manual labourers and overseers, into the private soldiers and the NCOs of an industrial army.[33]

Thus if we assume, as the evidence overwhelmingly suggests, that Foucault had in mind the latter chapters of *Capital*, volume I, when he claimed that his lineage was with *Capital,* volume II, the substance of his claim remains relatively intact: that there is a significant strand in Marx that focuses on issues of power as analytically distinct from economic exploitation, that is concerned with "technologies" of power, and that places greater emphasis on the historical emergence of capitalism as a system rather than capital's quasi-metaphysical procession from the surplus-value generated by the capitalist

system of labor. Foucault only ever made these comments, after all, in lectures and interviews; how much importance can we attach to remarks made in passing, which he never committed to print?

Yet while there is no reason to use this minor oversight to challenge Foucault's intellectual honesty or rigor, this episode does tell us something about his views of Marx at the time when he was turning to the question of liberal governmentality as the theme of his Collège de France lectures. First, it is significant that as meticulous a reader as Foucault would make the mistake of confusing the first and second volumes. Foucault's knowledge was extensive and his scholarship scrupulous (even if historians have quibbled with his interpretations). Can it be regarded as merely an accident that the one thinker that Foucault made an erroneous reference to—on at least two occasions—was Karl Marx? At the very least, this would suggest that Foucault was not, as he pursued his analysis of modern power structures, revisiting the insights of *Capital* with compulsive regularity. Indeed, it is tempting to conclude that the reason he claimed to be a *Capital*-volume-II Marxist was, precisely, in order to say: "Don't touch me, clearly you see that I'm a genuine man of the left . . . the proof being that I cite Marx" (albeit secretly)—in other words, the very reason he gave for his aversion to citing Marx. Claiming that his lineage was with *Capital*, volume II, was, in a sense, a way of asserting his leftist bona fides, yet while citing a text that was sufficiently obscure that it allowed him to suggest less that he, Michel Foucault, was a latter-day Marxist than that Marx himself was already a genealogist of power.

At a more fundamental level, the entire premise of Foucault's claim about Marx is debatable. Is there any point in *Capital* in which Marx really considers, as Foucault puts it, "the genesis of *capitalism*, and not capital"—as if, in Marx's mind, "capitalism" could ever be distinguished from "capital"? Consider the chapter in *Capital*, volume I, on "Machinery and Modern Industry," which is central to what Marx says about discipline in the capitalist factory. He does, in what might be considered a proto-Foucauldian vein, talk about how factories "transform the worker, from his very childhood, into a part of a specialized machine"; he observes that whereas in manufacturing, "the worker makes use of a tool; in the factory, the machine makes use of him"; and he asks, in a particularly Foucauldian twist, "Is Fourier wrong when he calls factories 'mitigated jails?"[34] Yet for Marx, factory discipline can only be understood as contributing to and as shaped by the need to generate surplus labor that is inherent in the analysis of capital that he proposed in his magnum opus's opening pages. The machinery that imposes barracks-like discipline on the factory worker is not just a power tool—it is, in Marx's analysis, an instrument of capital itself, and evidence of the fact that it is the imperatives of capital itself that make shop-floor discipline necessary: "Owing to its conversion into an automaton," Marx writes, "the instrument of labour confronts

the labourer during the labour-process in the shape of capital, of dead labour, which dominates and soaks up living labour-power."[35] This discipline only makes sense in a production system that "is not only a labour-process, but also capital's process of valorization."[36] Its root cause is capital itself, and not some notion of capitalism from which it can be cut off. Finally, when one reads these pages, it seems highly dubious to present Marx, as Foucault attempts to, as embracing a "positive" conception of power, and as asserting that factory discipline is an "efficiency" or an "aptitude" rather than a prohibition. If anything, Marx suggests that such techniques could only be seen as efficiencies to capitalists; to workers they are clearly prohibitions. Thus Marx writes, once again in chapter 15: "All punishments [in the factory] naturally resolve themselves into fines and deductions from wages, and the law-giving talent of the factory Lycurgus so arranges matters that a violation of his laws is, if possible, more profitable to him than the keeping of them." A little further, he adds:

> The economical use of the social means of production, matured and forced as in a hothouse by the factory system, is turned in the hands of capital into systematic robbery of what is necessary for the life of the workman while he is at work, i.e., space, light, air, and protection against the dangerous or the unhealthy concomitants of the productive process, not to mention the robbery of appliances for the comfort of the worker.

Few workers, Marx implies, could imagine the power wielded in factories as anything other than a very onerous prohibition. Very sternly, factory discipline indeed says "no."

In affiliating himself with *Capital*'s second volume, Foucault was, of course, doing anything but identifying himself as a Marxist. The statements he made in this vein were strategic—a way of calling attention to the neglected problem of power as an autonomous problem in Marx's thought. It resembles, in this sense, Foucault's reflection on the strategic value of liberal ideas for challenging state power. The difficulty lies in Foucault's arguments: even if one overlooks the errors that make the claim seem somewhat off-the-cuff, the fact remains that Foucault tried—not especially persuasively—to claim that an analytic of power can be found in Marx, which can be distinguished from the dynamics of capital formation that the latter places at the heart of his analysis. Foucault's subtle strategies of self-identification in this instance did not, in short, alter the flow of his main arguments, which sought to dissolve the state analytically into a kaleidoscope of "little power regions" and to make power relations rather than class relations and social inequality the main vector of social critique. Foucault's odd pledge of allegiance to Marx serves only to highlight the anti-Marxism of his core concepts and arguments.

FOUCAULT VERSUS "FASCIZATION"

On two occasions separated by less than three weeks—both in March 1979—Foucault made what at first glance would seem to be a peculiar observation. It would be a mistake, he said, to see the contemporary—i.e., liberal—state as "fascist" or prone to "fascization." What is, of course, striking about this statement is precisely that it had to be said. Relatively few theories of liberalism have seriously entertained the idea that it bears any resemblance to fascism; if anything, liberalism's very essence is usually assumed to involve a radical rejection of fascist-style politics (and vice versa). Why, then, did Foucault feel the need to distinguish liberalism from fascism? What were the stakes of this claim?

The first occasion was on Foucault's March 7, 1979, lecture at the Collège de France, which has since been published as part of *The Birth of Biopolitics*. In what has become one of the lectures' better-known passages, Foucault explained that part of the reason for his decision to refocus the course on the study of liberalism was the need to diagnose and refute the "state phobia" afflicting the French left. One of the features of this state phobia was the belief that the contemporary state was prone to fascism: it denounces "the states and the seeds of fascism that it harbors"[37]; it posits a fundamental similarity between "the administrative state, the welfare state, the bureaucratic state, the fascist state, [and] the totalitarian state"[38]; and it created a tendency to condemn all state actions by associating them with the worst form of the state, such that there are always people who will denounce the punishment a court imposes on a common vandal as "a sign of the fascization of the state, as if, before the fascist state, there were no sentences of this kind."[39] One of the goals of studying liberal governmentality was precisely to challenge the—simplistic, in Foucault's eyes—view that "state" and "fascism" are essentially synonymous, not least by rather mischievously showing that the equation of the expansion of state power with fascism had been a rhetorical ploy that had been initially used by *liberals* to denounce the postwar welfare state.

On March 23, 1979, Foucault addressed a plenary session of a conference on the theme "The New Internal Order" (*Le nouvel ordre intérieur*) at the University of Paris-8 in Vincennes. In remarks that have never been published (but for which audio and video archives are available), Foucault explained, in general terms, his view of the nature of the contemporary state and the trends shaping it. Foucault stated that Western societies were clearly entering a new historical moment. Intriguingly, the factor he cited as the primary reason of this change was the energy crisis. Western economic growth had been built on what he described as the "energy plundering" (*pillage énergétique*) of the rest of the world.[40] Referring presumably (without specifically naming them) to the oil crises of the 1970s, he observed that the cheap energy upon which

the West had depended would henceforth be far more expensive. If this causal argument is one that Foucault rarely made, his conclusion is more familiar: the energy crisis, he maintained, went hand in hand with a crisis of governance, specifically a crisis of the welfare state. Foucault explained:

> So I believe that in any case one thing is certain, which is that the state as it has functioned until now is a state that is no longer in a position and does not feel capable of managing, mastering, controlling, an entire series of problems, conflicts, struggles that will most likely be of an economic or social nature that this situation of expensive energy risks creating. In other words, the state has until now functioned as a welfare state: it can no longer, in the current economic situation, be a welfare state.

In these circumstances, Foucault went on, one of two possibilities was likely. The first (the second will be considered in this essay's next section) is what he called "roughly speaking, . . . the 'fascist possibility.'" Foucault noticeably—possibly uncomfortably—hesitated before continuing: "I do not think, if one takes the term 'fascist' in its strict sense, that it is exactly this possibility that threatens us." He explained: "I call . . . [the fascist possibility] what happens in a country in which the state apparatus can no longer carry out its functions except under one condition, which is that of doubling itself up with a party [*se doubler d'un parti*], an all-powerful party, an omnipresent party, a party that is above the law and beyond right [*au-dessus des lois et hors du droit*], which imposes—alongside the state, in the meshes of the state, within the state's very apparatus—a reign of terror." Foucault referenced this possibility, however, only to reject it categorically: "I do not think, for the moment, that in a country such as France it is this possibility of doubling up of the state's impotence with that of an omnipotent party [*la possibilité du doublage de l'impuissance de l'État par la toute puissance du parti*] that threatens us."[41]

The seeming peculiarity of Foucault's claim that liberalism is not a form of fascism can be mitigated if one considers the context in which he made these remarks: specifically, the Vincennes conference on the "new internal order" of March 1978, and what it tells us about the outlook of certain sectors of the French left at the time. For the conference was organized by intellectuals who took seriously the notion that fascism was the best analytical grid for understanding liberalism's reemergence in the late 1970s. The conference's main organizers straddled two highly specific niches of the academic far left: the English Department (later known as the department of Anglophone Studies) of the University of Paris-8 at Vincennes, the experimental campus created in the wake of May 1968; and the newspaper *Le Monde Diplomatique*, which had been founded as a kind of foreign-policy supplement of the daily *Le*

Monde in 1973, but which had grown increasingly independent as it hewed to a strongly *tiers-mondiste* editorial line. The conference's two primary organizers, Bernard Cassen and Pierre Dommergues, both taught in Vincennes' English Department, in addition to being regular contributors to *"Le diplo"* (Cassen would later become its editor).

In organizing the Vincennes conference, their goal was to try to understand the forces that were reshaping the industrialized world in the wake of the economic crisis of the 1970s. They wondered in particular about the political consequences of both economic instability and the social and cultural upheaval of the late 1960s. These concerns led them to compare the present situation to the period that had produced fascism. In a series of articles for *Le Monde diplomatique*, Dommergues argued that the rise of conservatism and neoconservatism in the United States during the 1970s represented a "soft fascism," in which a tide of apparent social and cultural liberalization cast a veil over the reassertion of social and economic hierarchies. Dommergues concluded: "In the America of the seventies, one … finds traces of proto-fascism," evident in "the insidious development of fundamentally anti-democratic tendencies."[42] Like many at this time, Dommergues mentioned, in this regard, the Trilateral Commission's notorious 1975 report, *The Crisis of Democracy*,[43] which, among other proposals, called for a restoration of authority based on social hierarchies, expertise, and wealth. Dommergues's argument was influenced by the work of American political scientist Bertram Gross, the author of *Friendly Fascism: Logic of a More Perfect Capitalism.*[44] In 1976, Claude Julien, the editor of *Le Monde diplomatique* and another conference participant, rejected the specific claim that the emerging order was fascistic, while fully accepting the broader terms of this discussion. In "desperate situations—Nazi Germany, Vichy France," he noted, ruling classes had "decided against democracy, and … never regretted this decision too bitterly." He concluded: "Obviously, we are not there yet. But already people are openly dreaming of a more muscular democracy, ensuring order by 'means of social control' that are sufficiently sophisticated for more barbarous measures to be 'needed.'"[45] The premise that the political reconfigurations occurring in the context of the economic crisis of the 1970s could be compared to the interwar years was widely discussed at the 1979 conference and was, indeed, one of its underlying assumptions.

Foucault's remarks about the contemporary prospects of fascism and the relationship between fascism and the liberal state were at many levels a response to the concerns expressed by this segment of the French left. The remarks at the Vincennes conference (March 23) clarify the briefer remarks in the Collège de France lecture (March 7)—the claims he addressed at the later date having already been aired in public in the months preceding the conference. Foucault was not only denouncing a general tendency whereby

the left equated the state and all forms of political authority with fascism, thus succumbing to the danger of "inflationary" rhetoric. He was specifically addressing the question of whether the economic crisis and the problems of stability and legitimacy it spawned would require an authoritarian solution: Was 1973, in other words, the new 1929? The Vincennes remarks make it clear that his entertainment of the fascist possibility (which may have been purely notional) arose as a response to a crisis in the state resulting from a broader economic downturn (as his emphasis on the problem of energy attests). Yet to fully grasp his remarks, we need to unpack a very specific claim embedded in them: that the defining feature of fascism (and totalitarianism) is party rule.

Though he never addressed it at any length in his major writings, the question of the nature of fascism and totalitarianism was on Foucault's mind in 1978–1979, no doubt because of the polemical splash made by the *nouveaux philosophes* and the standpoint from which they proposed to view contemporary French politics. On the few occasions in which he broached the topic during these years, he returned to the same claim: that the distinguishing feature of fascism specifically, and totalitarianism generally, lay in the political role they assigned to the party. This idea, which Foucault briefly summarized in his remarks at Vincennes on March 23, 1979, was fleshed out more fully in the conversation he had in Japan a little less than a year earlier, on April 25, 1978, with the philosopher Takaaki Yoshimoto. It is worth mentioning, incidentally, that the career of Foucault's interlocutor in this dialogue overlapped with his own in a number of intriguing ways. Though politically active and involved in the student contestation movement of 1968, Yoshimoto (who was born in 1924, two years before Foucault) belonged to the Japanese "New Left" and was a critic of the Japanese Communist Party, the forms of totalitarian mobilization he had witnessed during the Second World War, and postwar Japanese society's rhetoric of self-sacrifice to the community, which he saw as the unacknowledged legacy of militarism. Yoshimoto, moreover, defended the rights of "private self-interest" against communal pressures, worried about the state more than capitalism, and favored the "autonomy" of the masses from intellectuals and their conceits. Though a leftist, he eventually came to believe that capitalism, in the form it assumed in postwar society, could even have emancipatory effects. One scholar writes:

> In [Yoshimoto's] view, the criticism of consumer society by many intellectuals is still another instance of their grudging and disparaging view of the masses who have now finally achieved a level of living where they can afford a materially affluent life. Another reason for Yoshimoto's defense of super-capitalism is its corrosive effects on his old bêtes noirs, the state and its "public sphere" or civil society. As capital undermines the idea of a homogeneous society,

> individuals and families are liberated from the grip of communal fantasy. Rather than placing hope in "socialism"—which in Yoshimoto's view has always easily reverted to Stalinism or (through *tenko*) fascism—he hopes that the hierarchies and the exploitation characteristic of the earlier stage of capitalism diagnosed by Marx will be undermined by the movement of capital itself through development towards an affluent middle-class society.[46]

The dialogue between Foucault and Yoshimoto was thus clearly an exchange between two thinkers who, in their political instincts and analysis of contemporary society, shared much in common.

In this discussion, both thinkers reflected on Marxism's limitations as an intellectual paradigm. The French translation of the Japanese title under which it was originally published was "*Comment se débarasser du Marxisme?*" or "How to Get Rid of Marxism?" Foucault, at one point, emphasized the need to reflect upon "the existence of an organization that is known as the Communist Party," an "unprecedented organization" that "can be compared to nothing" (and certainly not conventional liberal democratic political parties), yet which proved "decisive in the history of Western Marxism."[47] Foucault's reflections on the nature of the party in the Communist tradition, I believe, were part of the same train of thought that informed his views about the place of the party in fascism, thus shedding light on what he meant when, in 1979, he asserted that fascism seemed an unlikely option in an age of liberal government.

It is important to note the issue that, in this dialogue, triggers Foucault's analysis of the nature of communist parties: the seemingly abstract and arcane philosophical question of the "will" (*la volonté*). After Yoshimoto explained his views about the different levels at which the question of the will can be understood, Foucault responded by saying that "French Marxism has ignored the analysis of the different levels of the will" and that, more broadly, this question "remained completely unexplored in the West."[48] For Foucault, the significance of the idea of the party—which culminated with Lenin, though it drew on earlier antecedents—lies, at least in part, in the way it led to the "total abandon[ment]" of the "question of will." First, because it is based on the idea that only through the party does the proletariat acquire class consciousness, the party-concept assumes that "individual and subjective wills" can be subsumed into a "collective will."[49] Second, through its hierarchical structure, the party sought to exclude "heretical elements." Hierarchy had a similar effect as the party's monopolistic claim on proletarian consciousness: it sought to "concentrate the individual wills of militants into a kind of monolithic will," which amounted in practice to the "bureaucratic will of its leaders."[50] Thus one of the most significant historical effects of the concept of the party was to conceal particular wills beneath the hegemonic

will of the party—and, ultimately, to obscure the very idea of the will itself through the subordination of practice to theory. This perspective could only ignore the existence of "different levels of will." At present, however, these "multiple wills are starting to burst forth from the breach in the hegemony of the traditional left."[51] The theoretical and practical lid that the party-concept had placed on the manifestation of wills in what Foucault seems to have viewed as their inherent multiplicity was losing its weight in contemporary society—a reference, apparently, to the new forms of activism and the new social movements that had arisen since the 1960s; it seemed unlikely that the impoverished conception of the will implicit in the idea of the party would be in a position to reassert itself anytime soon.

The idea of "will" that Foucault made central to his analysis of the concept of party was not simply a polite concession to his Japanese interlocutor's interest in the topic. It was a notion that had deeper roots in Foucault's own thought, particularly in the years preceding this remark. Foucault had, after all, published *La volonté de savoir*—the "will to know"—as the first volume of *The History of Sexuality* in 1977, and had used the same title (for very different for material) for his first lecture course at the Collège de France in 1970–1971. In the latter—one of the most explicit engagements with Nietzsche in his oeuvre—Foucault shows how the Western philosophical tradition, beginning with Plato and particularly Aristotle, is founded on an occlusion of the role played by the will in generating knowledge: Aristotle's claim in the *Metaphysics* that "All men by nature desire to know," Foucault argues, seeks to make "desire" and "knowledge" so synonymous as to make the claim a kind of tautology. What Nietzsche shows is that the history of knowledge is driven not by an internal necessity but by the *règle de volonté*—a "rule of the will"—that is asceticism.[52] In a lecture from 1971, Foucault claimed that Foucault's significance was to have "placed the root and the raison d'être of truth in the will."[53] The philosophical tradition has generally conceived the relationship between truth and will in terms of freedom: the nature of truth is to be free in relation to (i.e., undetermined by) the will, while the will can encounter truth only insofar as it is endowed with freedom. Nietzsche, however, asserts that the "articulation" between will and truth is one of "violence." The specific way in which Foucault develops this claim in this lecture is obscure, but the basic idea is fairly straightforward: the revelation that an act of will lurks beneath every claim to truth shows how little truth there is in the truth, and that it might be possible to live outside of the story that truth tells about itself (in, say, the Western philosophical tradition, as reflected in such statements as "all men by nature desire to know"), to accept the "truth without truth"[54] that is implicit in any insight into a world founded on willing—Nietzsche's will to power—rather than truth.

This detour through Foucault's notion of the will is necessary, I think, because it ultimately clarifies his views about the idea of the party, totalitarianism, fascism, and its (non)relationship with liberalism. The party, in Foucault's analysis, is one of those figures of Western thought that, like the slave morality or asceticism, instantiates the violence implicit in a will to truth that professes the utter purity of its intentions. It is presumably not a coincidence that Foucault noted that the Leninist party had often been described as a "monastic order."[55] Furthermore, like Aristotle, Foucault seeks to embed the desire for knowledge in the idea of knowledge itself, so the justification of the Leninist party's praxis (subjugating individual wills into a collective will) ultimately lies in the validity of its theory: "The will of the Party disappears beneath the mask of a rational calculation consistent with a theory that passes for truth."[56] Just as in the 1970–1971 lectures, Foucault imagines freeing discourse from the strictures of the (unacknowledged) "will to know," so, in the 1978 conversation in Japan, he says: "The normative words of philosophy must not resonate alone" and "[o]ther kinds of experience must be made to speak."[57] The will to truth that the Party embodies has thus served as an obstacle to the expression of particular wills and the multiple forms of truth or alternatives to truth the will embodies.

The declining appeal of this conception of the party at a time when the struggles of the 1960s had liberated these numerous and variegated wills explains, I think, what Foucault meant when he said that fascism was not, in 1979, a possibility that "threatens us." Granted, fascism and communism are not the same thing. Indeed, in the March 7 Collège de France lecture, shortly after he spoke critically of the leftist tendency to equate the contemporary state with its worst, i.e., "fascist" incarnation, he once again invoked his claim that the distinguishing character of "totalitarian" governments was the rule of a party—and not limitless state power. Looking back to the Yoshomito conversation the year before and anticipating his remarks at Vincennes several weeks later, Foucault suggested that his analysis of the nature of the Communist party, as he had previously described it, applied to all "totalitarian" governments, including fascist ones, and that this type of government had little to do with the contemporary state. One of the mistakes of the "inflationary critique of the state," Foucault argued, was to associate the modern welfare state with a "totalitarian state." The error in this claim lies in the fact that "the so-called totalitarian state is not at all an exaltation of the state, but, to the contrary, a limitation, a diminishment, a subordination of the state's autonomy, of its specificity and its distinctive functioning—in relation . . . to something else, which is the party."[58] The totalitarian state is not the *Polizeistaat* of the eighteenth- or nineteenth-century administrative state: it represents a form of "non-statist governmentality," and specifically a "governmentality of the party."[59] It is the party, this "very extraordinary, very

curious, very new organization" that is the "historical origin" of "totalitarian regimes," "Nazism," "fascism," and "Stalinism."[60]

Foucault cared enough about this question of "governmentality of the party" that he suggested, in the same March 7 lecture, that it might be the theme of the 1979–1980 lecture course—if, as he put it, "these ideas are still on my mind."[61] They would not be: what promised to be Foucault's head-on engagement with the great French totalitarian debate never occurred. An explicit intervention on Foucault's part into the 1970s debate on totalitarianism may have provided considerable insight into Foucault's position on liberalism. Yet the grounds upon which he refuted the fascization thesis advanced by leftist intellectuals at the Vincennes conference does imply a conception of liberalism in which far from neutral preferences were embedded. Fascism, Foucault contended, was founded on a monolithic view of the party that aspired to subsume particular wills into a collective will. Yet the overwhelming trend in contemporary society since the late 1960s was toward a kind of profusion of particular wills in a motley array of struggles. The emerging neoliberal state, he seems to have concluded, was far more likely to accommodate these particular wills than to try to shoehorn them into a single, hierarchical will.

The reasons for Foucault's analysis are not entirely consistent. In the Vincennes remarks, he suggests the fascist option is implausible in part because of the state's economic weakness in the wake of the energy crisis; in the Collège de France lectures, he suggests that fascism is an unlikely possibility because, ultimately, totalitarian government is actually *weaker* than the welfare state (since the latter is not reined in by the rule of a party). Foucault's reasons for dismissing the fascism prospect dovetailed, to a significant degree, with his rejection of communism as a broader political option. Foucault was, in this way, a genuine anti-totalitarian, in that he believed that fascist and communist regimes were comparable phenomenon while opposing them both. One can, of course, oppose neoliberalism on other grounds that it creates the kind of authoritarian regime or manufactured consent that many at Vincennes believed it was in the process of establishing. It is significant, however, that Foucault explicitly rejected *this* characterization of neoliberalism. He believed neoliberalism allowed particular wills to manifest themselves, in a non-totalitarian, non-fascistic way. This may not amount to an endorsement. But this view did, unquestionably, place certain critical positions out-of-bounds.

THE LIBERAL STATE'S DECREASING POWER

The third passage from Foucault I would like to consider concerns his assessment of the emergence in Western societies of a kind of "soft power,"

a power that would have to do "more with less." Though Foucault attributed these qualities to liberalism in general in the 1978 lectures (*Security, Territory, Population*), as well as the 1979 lectures, it is to Foucault's intervention at the Vincennes Conference on March 23, 1979 that we shall once again turn. Immediately after dismissing the likelihood of a fascist solution to the state's current crisis, Foucault laid out what he saw as a far more likely option:

> The second solution … the more sophisticated solution, and which presents itself, at first glance, as a sort of disinvestment of the state, as if the state lost interest [*se désintéressait*] in a certain number of things, details, minor problems, to which until now it had granted particular and watchful attention. Put differently, I think that the state now finds itself in a situation in which, politically and economically, it can no longer afford the luxury of exercising power that is omnipresent, finicky, and costly.[62]

Foucault proceeded to sketch out some of the dominant traits of this emerging power form. It would identify "vulnerable zones" that were particularly exposed to danger, such as terrorist activities. It would allow "margins of toleration": detailed police enforcement would be abandoned, as it became apparent that a state could render itself more effective by allowing activities it had previously prohibited. This new power form would, moreover, abandon the aspiration for panoptic surveillance in favor of mass data collection—a "permanent mobilization of the state's knowledge of individuals." Like other conference participants, Foucault no doubt had in mind the 1977 report, which was originally addressed to the French president, entitled *L'informatisation de la société* (The Computerization of Society) written by two top civil servants, Alain Minc and Simon Nora,[63] which played an important role in raising French consciousness of the imminent "computer revolution." Finally, this new power form would use the media to construct a consensus, thus relying on society's capacity for "self-regulation" rather than disciplinary techniques. The common denominator of these characteristics was that of an "apparent retreat of power." This new system would, in these ways, be "very different" from the order that had existed when the state was not, as it currently was, strapped for resources.

Foucault was not alone in sharing these views. Indeed, much of what he said harmonized with the insights of another speaker on the same panel at Vincennes, a judge named Hubert Dalle. In his remarks, Dalle contrasted two conceptions of social control. An older, "archaic" model was founded on the "doctrine of security." This model responded to perceived threats to the social order, through repressive measures and the judicial system. It is less concerned with guaranteeing individual liberties than with protecting the social order. It relies in particular on the "judicial apparatus," notably the

prison system. In certain instances, it entails a dramatic increase in prison populations. While it may seek popular support, the overall goal of this approach is to identify and suppress behavior that renders society unsafe. In this way, the security doctrine differs considerably from what Dalle called the "more sophisticated" alternative, which corresponded to the "soft way" that was the broader theme of the Vincennes conference. Anticipating a point that Foucault would make, Dalle described that this newer approach was (perhaps necessarily) less costly than the lavish expenses required by a model based on the systematic repression of disorder. But this cheaper approach was also based on a different conception of how power was to be exercised: rather than focusing on repression, it sought to manage populations and to anticipate threats before they occurred. This newer model was thus based on "generalized prevention" (*prévention généralisée*). It was made possible by the advent of computers, which made population management and prevention technologically possible to a degree that had hitherto been unimaginable. Where repression depended primarily on the judicial apparatus, the system of "generalized prevention" relied more on specialized administrators. Yet while this more recent power form seemed, in general, to tread more lightly than the repressive alternative, it was far more exhaustive in its scope; as if the tradeoff for abandoning the desire to eliminate all social disorder was a more comprehensive enlistment of society as a whole into the web of power. Dalle, in this way, made an argument—seemingly on his own terms, drawing on his own experience as a magistrate—that was very similar to the one Foucault had developed since around 1976: namely, that an older, disciplinary form of power was being absorbed and superseded by a form of liberal governmentality, founded on population management rather than repression and skeptical of the cost-effectiveness of sprawling judicial apparatuses.

Foucault's March 23 remarks at Vincennes about states that would have to learn to do "more with less" as they "disinvested" themselves from the realm of power were presaged in the same March 7 Collège de France lecture discussed above. On both occasions, Foucault critiqued overblown claims about the "fascization" of the state by arguing that the deeper trend in contemporary society is toward a shrinking of the state. Before his Collège de France audience, Foucault stated: "That which is currently at issue in our reality, is not so much the increase [*croissance*] of the state and of reason of state, but, to a much greater extent, its decrease [*décroissance*]."[64] "Liberal governmentality" is precisely one of the forms this decrease in state power has taken (the other, Foucault quixotically asserted, being totalitarianism, or "party governmentality"). Foucault was quick to assert that, in describing liberalism as a form of diminishing state power, he was making no "value judgment," nor was he trying to "sacralize or valorize this kind of governmentality from the outset." He was, rather, simply stating what struck him as an undeniable

fact. Moreover, Foucault maintained, the prophets of a delusional left fail to realize, when they pronounce their jeremiads against a newly emergent fascism, that they are actively *participating* in this trend toward diminishing state power. In their critique of state power, Foucault suggested, leftists were the objective allies of liberals. The proponents of state phobia, according to Foucault, "*vont dans le sens du vent*"—that is, they are "going in the direction of the wind."[65]

Foucault's claim that Western societies were experiencing an historic "decrease" in state power thus suggested a second reason for refuting the "fascization" thesis. The first, as we saw earlier, claims that fascism (or totalitarianism) should not be understood as an expansion of state power, but rather as a subordination of the authority of the state to that of a party. The second argument is, quite simply, that, insofar as the "fascization" raises the fear of an increasingly omnipotent state, it is empirically unfounded: the capacity of post-1973 states to exercise power has been diminished significantly. In condemning current states as fascist or totalitarian, leftists were, unknowingly, participating in a process that is precisely the reverse of the very phenomenon they believed they were denouncing. No one is more liberal, Foucault impishly implied, than the leftist who denounces the liberal state as fascist. The critics of the "new internal order" are the unrecognized children of Hayek.

In claiming that state power was on the decrease, Foucault once again made it clear that he was not trying to endorse liberalism: he was making no "value judgment," nor attempting to "sacralize or valorize" a particular model of the state. Yet one of the undeniable uses that Foucault made of this claim was to delegitimize the arguments of those who feared that the crisis of the 1970s would strengthen the state, even if its configuration differed from earlier forms. Critiquing state power, in such a context, was like pushing at an open door. It is in this sense, I think, that we must understand the "state phobia" passages in *The Birth of Biopolitics.* Foucault was not making a social-democratic argument. He was not saying that because it can serve progressive purposes, we need not worry about the state the way neoliberals and some leftists do. Rather, his point was that there is no reason to fear a state that has become a shadow of its former self. If the state lies drowned in the bathtub, it no longer makes sense to worry about it. Far from qualifying Foucault's anti-statism, his comments about "state phobia" took the liberal program of shrinking the state for a reality.

CONCLUSION

Walter Kaufmann once described Hegel's conception of tragedy as a "conflict . . . between one-sided positions, each of which embodies some good."[66]

Something similar might be said about the debate over Foucault's assessment of liberalism (though it hardly deserves to be called tragic). Those who see Foucault as challenging liberalism grasp the fundamentally critical nature of his project, as well as his reluctance to align himself with any established order. Those who see Foucault as a sympathizer or at least as an enabler of liberalism recognize the liberal assumptions upon which many of his key arguments and concepts rest. In addition to revealing the complexity of Foucault's views of liberalism, the three episodes considered in this essay illustrate the elusiveness that characterizes his position. First, by asserting (somewhat dubiously, from an empirical standpoint) that he had been influenced by *Capital*, volume II, Foucault sought to read into Marx's writings some of the themes that overdetermined his own interest in liberalism, such as the critique of the state and the concept of sovereignty, and to downplay inequalities based on economics in favor of those based on power. Second, without praising liberalism, Foucault vigorously rejected the argument that the return of liberalism in European politics in the late 1970s was a kind of soft fascism. Specifically, he contended that the modern liberal state tolerated a multiplicity of particular wills in a way that the party concept that is so central to fascism (as well as communism) sought to stamp out. This seemingly objective comparison rests on an account of liberalism that emphasizes liberalism's emancipatory potentialities and minimizes concerns about economic inequalities or the disciplinary practices associated with it. Finally, in arguing that state power was on the decline, Foucault took a specifically neoliberal aspiration for a reality, even as he insisted he was not playing favorites with liberalism.

If Foucault was a liberal, it was despite himself: his liberalism was not one of self-identification or political affiliation; it was, rather, an élan implicit in his concepts and arguments—in the assumptions he made, for instance, about which social problems matter, what the state is, and where the state is headed. Can Foucault's ideas be retooled to serve critical purposes that run against the grain of their defining assumptions? Or does the logic of Foucault's thought ultimately commit those who employ it to the principles that underwrite it? As liberalism and its neoliberal avatars continue to define our present, the answers to these questions may serve as a kind of prolegomenon to any future use of Foucault.

NOTES

1. In the interest of lightening my prose, I will speak of Foucault's "liberalism" when I am, in fact, referring to his liberalism *and/or* neoliberalism. Though space does not permit to substantiate this claim in detail, it seems clear that Foucault's

reflections on neoliberalism in 1979's *The Birth of Biopolitics* are in direct continuity with the considerations on liberalism found in 1978's *Security, Territory, Population* (and the earlier lectures of *The Birth of Biopolitics*). This is not to say that Foucault made no distinction whatsoever between liberalism and neoliberalism, but simply that he saw them as reflecting a same problematic and being variations on one and the same form of governmentality.

2. Richard Rorty, "Postmodernist Bourgeois Liberalism," *Journal of Philosophy* 80(10) (1983): 583–89.

3. Philip Mirowski, *Never Let a Serious Crisis Go to Waste: How Neoliberalism Survived the Financial Meltdown* (London and New York: Verso, 2013).

4. Michel Clouscard, *Néo-fascisme et idéologie du désir: Mai 68, la contre-révolution libérale libertaire* (Paris: Editions Delga, 2008 [1973]).

5. Jean-Pierre Chevènement, "Les nouveaux penseurs de la gauche américaine," *Témoignage chrétien,* September 21, 1978, 6–7.

6. José Luis Moreno Pestaña, *Foucault, la gauche, et la politique* (Paris: Textuel, 2011), 120, 122.

7. Daniel Zamora, "Foucault, the Excluded, and the Neoliberal Erosion of the State," in Daniel Zamora and Michael C. Behrent, eds., *Foucault and Neoliberalism* (Cambridge, UK, and Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2016), 79–80.

8. Michael Walzer, "The Politics of Michel Foucault," *Dissent* 30 (1983): 490.

9. Mark Lilla, *The Reckless Mind. Intellectuals in Politics* (New York: New York Review Books, 2001), 139–58.

10. Richard Wolin, for instance, observes: "At the time of Foucault's death in 1984, prominent observers noted the irony that the ex-structuralist and 'death-of-man' prophet had played a pivotal role in the French acceptance of political liberalism." Wolin, "From the 'Death of Man' to Human Rights: The Paradigm Change in French Intellectual Life, 1968–1986," in *The Frankfurt School Revisited, and Other Essays on Politics and Society* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 180.

11. Pierre Dardot and Christian Laval, *La nouvelle raison du monde. Essai sur la société néolibérale* (Paris: La Découverte, 2009).

12. Ben Golder, *Foucault and the Politics of Rights* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2015).

13. Serge Audier, *Penser le 'néolibéralisme.' Le moment néolibéral, Foucault et la crise du socialisme* (Lormont: Le Bord de l'Eau, 2009).

14. Foucault, "Politics and Ethics" (edited typescript) (1983), 29–31. Papers from the UC Berkeley French Studies Program, pertaining to Michel Foucault's visits at Berkeley and Stanford University, 1975–1984, Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley, BANC MSS 90/136z. Though the questioner is not identified, it is worth noting that one of Foucault's interlocutors in this exchange was Richard Rorty (along with Charles Taylor, Paul Rabinow, Martin Jay, and Leo Lowenthal), who, the very same year, published his own idiosyncratic take on "bourgeois liberalism," discussed above.

15. See, for example, Loïc Wacquant, "Bourdieu, Foucault, and the Penal State in the Neoliberal Era" in Zamora and Behrent, eds., *Foucault and Neoliberalism,* 114–34, and Bernard Harcourt, *The Illusion of Free Markets: Punishment and the Myth of Natural Order* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2011).

16. See, on this point, Audier, "Neoliberalism through Foucault's Eyes," *History and Theory* 54 (2015): 404–18, especially 407–11.

17. See Michael Scott Christofferson, "Foucault and the New Philosophy: Why Foucault Endorsed *André Glucksmann's The Master Thinkers*," in Zamora and Behrent, *Foucault and Neoliberalism*, 6–23.

18. Foucault, "Politics and Ethics," (31).

19. Louis Althusser, "Part I: From *Capital* to Marx's Philosophy," in Althusser and Étienne Balibar, *Reading Capital*, trans. Ben Brewster (London and Brooklyn: Verso, 2009 [1968; trans., 1970]), 13.

20. "Entretien enregistré le 3 avril 1978: Michel Foucault, Colin Gordon, Paul Patton," Papers from the UC Berkeley French Studies Program, pertaining to Michel Foucault's visits at Berkeley and Stanford University, 1975–1984"), BANC MSS 90/136z, Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley, Berkeley, California, [n.p.]. Though I have drawn on my own notes from the interview in French found at the Bancroft Library, an English translation of this interview was published as Foucault, Gordon, and Patton, "Considerations on Marxism, Phenomenology and Power. Interview with Michel Foucault; Recorded on April 3, 1978," *Foucault Studies* 14 (2012): 98–114.

21. Foucault, "Nietzsche, Freud, Marx," (delivered at the Colloque de Royaumont in July 1964) in *Dits et écrits,* vol. 1, *1954–1969*, Daniel Defert, François Ewald, and Jacques Lagrange, eds. (Paris: Gallimard, 1994), 564–79.

22. "Entretien enregistré le 3 avril 1978," n.p.

23. Ibid.

24. See the famous lines from the opening pages of *The Archaeology of Knowledge,* "Do not ask who I am, and do not ask me to remain the same: leave it to our bureaucrats and our police to see that our papers are in order." (New York: Harper Colophon, 1976, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith), 17. See, too, "Qu'est-ce qu'un auteur?" (1969), in *Dits et écrits*, vol. 1, *1954–1969*, 789–821, and "Le philosophe masqué" (1980), in *Dits et écrits*, vol. 4, *1980–1988,* 104–10. In the latter, Foucault says: "I would propose a game: that of the 'year without names.' For a year, books would be published without authors' names. Critics would have to manage with an entirely anonymous production. But when I think about it, maybe they would have nothing to say: all the authors would wait until the following year to publish their books." (104–05).

25. Foucault, "Les Mailles du pouvoir" (1981[1976]), in *Dits et écrits*, vol. 4, *1980–1988*, 186.

26. Ibid.

27. Ibid., 187.

28. Ibid.

29. Ibid.

30. Ibid., 189.

31. David Harvey, *A Companion to Marx's Capital*, vol. 2 (New York and London: Verso, 2013), 1–2.

32. Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, vol. II, trans. David Fernbach (London: Penguin, 1992), 184.

33. Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy,* vol. I, trans. Ben Fowkes (London: Penguin, 1990), 549. Emphasis added.
34. Ibid., 547, 548, 553.
35. Ibid., 548.
36. Ibid.
37. Foucault, *Naissance de la Biopolitique. Cours au Collège de France, 1978–1979* (Paris: Seuil/Gallimard, 2004), 192.
38. Ibid., 193.
39. Ibid., 194.
40. This and subsequent quotes from the Vincennes conference come from Foucault, "Colloque 'Le nouvel ordre intérieur,' Partie 3: 'Le nouveau contrôle social,' avec les interventions de Hubert Dalle, Louis Casamayor, Louis Joinet, et Michel Foucault" [March 23, 1979], Archives vidéo. Films et bandes annonces. Université de Paris VIII, Vincennes-St.-Denis. http://www.archives-video.univ-paris8.fr/video.php?recordID=111, accessed August 11, 2013.
41. Foucault, "Colloque 'Le nouvel ordre intérieur,' Partie 3: 'Le nouveau contrôle social,' avec les interventions de Hubert Dalle, Louis Casamayor, Louis Joinet, et Michel Foucault" (March 23, 1979), Archives vidéo. Films et bandes annonces. Université de Paris VIII, Vincennes-St.-Denis. http://www.archives-video.univ-paris8.fr/video.php?recordID=111, accessed August 11, 2013.
42. Pierre Dommergues, "L'essor du conservatisme américain," *Le monde diplomatique,* May 1978: 9.
43. Michel Crozier, Samuel P. Huntington, and Joji Watanuki, *The Crisis of Democracy: Report on the Governability of Democracies to the Trilateral Commission* (New York: New York University Press, 1975).
44. Bertram Gross, *Friendly Fascism: Logic of a More Perfect Capitalism* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1985 [1980]), 161. The original publication date for Gross's book is listed as 1980, yet Dommergues clearly refers to it in his article from May 1978 ("L'essor du conservatisme américain"). The reasons for this discrepancy are unclear.
45. Claude Julien, "La nouvelle idéologie," in *Le devoir d'irrespect* (Paris: Alain Moreau, 1979), 131.
46. Carl Cassegard, "From Withdrawal to Resistance: The Rhetoric of Exit in Yoshimoto Takaaki and Karatani Kojin," in *Asia-Pacific Journal* 6(30) (2008), http://apjjf.org/-Carl-Cassegard/2684/article.html, accessed August 19, 2017.
47. Michel Foucault and Takaaki. Yoshimoto, "Méthodologie pour la connaissance du monde: comment se débarasser du marxisme," trans. R. Nakamura, in *Dits et écrits,* vol. 3, *1976–1979,* 595–618, at 613.
48. Ibid.
49. Ibid., 614.
50. Ibid.
51. Ibid., 615.
52. Foucault, *Leçons sur la volonté de savoir. Cours au Collège de France (1970-1971)* (Paris: Gallimard/Seuil, 2011), 26.

53. Foucault, "Leçon sur Nietzsche: Comment penser l'histoire de la vérité avec Nietzsche sans s'appuyer sur la vérité" (lecture delivered at McGill University in April 1971), 206.

54. Ibid., 210.

55. Foucault and Yoshimoto, "Méthodologie pour la connaissance du monde," 613. An extensive and highly critical discussion of Lenin's conception of the party can be found in a book published shortly before this exchange: Alain Besançon's *Les origines intellectuelles du léninisme* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1977). Besançon does consider Leninism as a quasi-religious movement, but he emphasizes its "gnostic" rather than "monastic" qualities.

56. Ibid., 615.

57. Ibid., 416.

58. Foucault, *Naissance de la biopolitique,* 196.

59. Ibid.

60. Ibid., 197.

61. Ibid.

62. Michel Foucault, "Colloque 'Le nouvel ordre intérieur,' Partie 3: 'Le nouveau contrôle social,' avec les interventions de Hubert Dalle, Louis Casamayor, Louis Joinet, et Michel Foucault" (March 23, 1979).

63. Simon Nora and Alain Minc, *L'informatisation de la société* (Paris: La Documentation française, 1978). On this report, see Andrée Walliser, "Le rapport 'Nora-Minc.' Histoire d'un best-seller," *Vingtième Siècle* 23 (1989): 35–48.

64. Foucault, *Naissance de la biopolitique*, 197.

65. Ibid., 197.

66. Walter Kaufmann, *Tragedy and Philosophy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979), 201–02.

Chapter 2

A Grand Misunderstanding

Foucault and German Neoliberalism, Then and Now[*]

Serge Audier

As with events, so with ideas: the often contradictory succession of interpretations of a given work is profoundly linked to the historical context of its reception. And the misreadings of a work—which nonetheless often prove revealing in a theoretical sense—tend to accumulate as the passage of time renders this original context unintelligible. One needs look no further than Machiavelli: the citizen of Florence transformed by some interpreters in the 1930s, against all good sense, into the father of totalitarianism. Even when this temporal distance is much narrower, when the historical context is only minimally different from our own, it can become difficult to grasp what an author was aiming at. A remarkable case of these difficulties is the reception of Michel Foucault's 1979 lectures at the Collège de France on liberalism and neoliberalism. An immense and growing body of work has found in these lectures a central contribution to a radical critique of late twentieth- and early twenty-first-century neoliberalism. Given Foucault's reputation as a radical thinker with ties to the far left, few have even imagined until recently that his position on neoliberalism could be anything but one of vehement hostility. For many years, one of the few exceptions was Alessandro Fontana, a philosopher who attended Foucault's courses regularly and worked alongside him. As documented in Foucault's *Dits et Ecrits*, Fontana was the only person to question Foucault on his neoliberalism lectures, however passingly. A close disciple of Foucault, he later wondered whether or not his master had been converted during those years to liberal or neoliberal ideas.[1] If Fontana's interpretation was marginal in its time, it has become even more so today. While some interpreters have not hesitated to cast Foucault as an explicit adversary of neoliberalism, others have been more prudent, suggesting merely that his

[*] This chapter was translated from the French by Jacob Hamburger.

work provides crucial ammunition for further critique. In recent years, Foucault has been particularly lauded for his analysis of "ordoliberalism," or German neoliberalism. For many of Foucault's European readers, this critique has been essential for the denunciation of the German socioeconomic and political model, increasingly seen as the basis for the project of European construction.

Chance has worked in the historian's favor. By sheer coincidence, Foucault's lessons on neoliberalism were published in 2004, one year before the debate over the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe (TCE) began to divide France, and in particular the French left. The successful partisans of the "No" campaign in the 2005 referendum insisted that the Treaty would "carve into stone" the rules of "free and fair trade." The TCE was in this sense faithful to German "neoliberalism" and its project of short-circuiting the democratic will by constitutionalizing the rules of market competition. For the intellectual opponents of the TCE, one needed merely to open Foucault's lectures on biopolitics to understand that "neoliberalism" was far from a doctrine of *laisser-faire*. Rather, it was a competitive constructivism, in which the mission of both state authority and the law was to bring to life a competitive-entrepreneurial model of society and economy. Was this not precisely the project of European construction starting with the 1957 Rome Treaty?[2] Was it not in the name of this ordoliberal Europe that "the humanities" were being destroyed in the universities?[3] The fact that certain German "neoliberals," such as Wilhelm Röpke, had, in fact, been committed defenders of "the humanities" was apparently not seen as worth noting.

Thus, Foucault became a posthumous protagonist in the French debate over neoliberalism and the future of the European project. The critique of German ordoliberalism and of Europe did not always mention Foucault by name, but its emergence was nonetheless a major event in the reception of his lectures on neoliberalism. Since then, each development in the European Union's difficult history—particularly after the financial crisis of 2007–2008 and the drastic austerity plans imposed on Greece and other countries of Southern Europe—has been scrutinized in Foucauldian terms. Many scholars no longer hesitate to claim that the German neoliberalism forged in the 1930s, which explicitly highlights the role of public authority in establishing a competitive order, constitutes an ultra-authoritarian form of liberalism. In historical complicity with Nazism and fascism, it is suggested, this liberalism has always been motivated by a contempt for democracy and popular sovereignty. Once again, we find Foucault invoked as the thinker who saw first and most clearly the structural affinities between Nazism and these economists who supported it much more than had been thought.[4] In any case, ordoliberalism appears as the breeding ground for the radically antidemocratic view that the only viable conception of liberty is that of the capitalistic entrepreneur. Foucault is also often credited with having understood that German

social democracy was converted to ordoliberalism, starting in 1959 with the adoption of the Bad Godesberg Program, whose notion of the "social market economy" is often taken as the framework for the European project. According to his presumed heirs, Foucault allows us to understand that the moment the German and European social democrats supported the TCE and its "social market economy," they in fact gave their consent to the competitive order that has destroyed the welfare state, and indeed democracy itself. Having aligned themselves behind this market model since the 1950s, they thereby sacrificed not only Marxism, but all content of the idea of socialism.[5]

My aim in this article is not to take a direct position on the nature of German neoliberalism, nor on post–Bad Godesberg social democracy, European construction, or the history of neoliberalism. I will have little to say about the increasingly common thesis, which I find overly simplistic, that casts the famous 1938 Colloque Walter Lippmann—in which the German liberals Röpke and Alexander Rüstow were participants—as the key moment in constructing a radical offensive against democracy.[6] I intend solely to comment on the invocation of Foucault's authority in these types of debates. Can we legitimately claim that in 1979, Foucault conceptualized German neoliberalism as an authoritarian and antidemocratic liberalism with profound affinities with fascism and Nazism? Did he condemn German social democracy by deploring its conversion to "social market economy" as a turn towards a competitive and authoritarian ordoliberalism? Reading his lectures in the proper context, I hope to show that this interpretation stems from a monumental misinterpretation. This misinterpretation not only fails to understand what Foucault was aiming at in his studies of German neoliberalism, but also misses the socioeconomic, political, and cultural singularity of the late 1970s in Germany and France.

A GERMAN APPROACH TO "NEOLIBERALISM"?

An economist who has sustained an interest in Foucault writes, "as Michel Foucault has shown in *Naissance de la biopolitique*, ordoliberal thought accompanied the rise of Nazism in a complex sort of complicity," worshiping the same "strong state" loved by fascists and Nazis.[7] Did Foucault really find collaborators with the Third Reich among the ordoliberals, as some have highlighted since? Did he conclude that these German "neoliberals" who went into exile for their anti-Hitlerian views were in fact "in continuity with Nazism"? Did he believe that ordoliberalism was derived from what Alessandro Somma called an "anti-democratic biopower"?[8]

Such a claim certainly does not appear in Foucault's lectures. Where he does level accusations of intellectual complicity with Nazism, he does so

against Werner Sombart, a radical critic of capitalism and liberalism and a partisan of fascist corporatism. Sombart actually did align himself with Hitler for a brief time—something Foucault was aware of—as well as the Third Reich's Minister of Economics Hjalmar Schacht, whom Foucault described as a "Keynesian" economist. Foucault knew that the German ordoliberals' had a very different conception from that of Sombart, whom Rüstow criticized on numerous occasions during the 1930s. There are perhaps paradoxical affinities to be found between the ordoliberals and Sombart or the Nazis, but this was not Foucault's interpretation. Radical adversaries of Keynes's economic solutions, they were also—as Foucault highlighted—adversaries of Schacht and National Socialism. As for the affinities often suggested today between the ordoliberals and the totalitarianism of Carl Schmitt—owing to their supposed shared defense of a "strong state"—Foucault never suspected this for an instant. On the contrary, as we will see, his view was that the "rule of law [*État de droit*]" championed by the ordoliberals had strictly nothing to do with the "fascist state [*État fasciste*]." For Foucault, it is totally wrong to "Nazify" the German liberal model. Finally, there is hardly a trace in Foucault's work of an explicit critique of German neoliberalism, let alone a radical hostility. In contrast, his courses at the Collège de France contain virulent critiques of the Soviet Union, as well as the essential "racism" and "anti-Semitism" of socialism since the nineteenth century.

My approach will be to focus on Foucault's course summary, in which he aims to understand liberalism and neoliberalism as forms of "critical practical rationality."[9] Curiously, few commentators have noted the fundamental importance of the word "critical" for the courses in general, and for the course summary in particular. What is important is less Foucault's own critique of liberalism and neoliberalism—though far be it from me to suggest that there he did not offer one—than his position that liberalism and neoliberalism themselves contain a strong critical reflexivity. Take Foucault's general presentation of the courses. Hostile to the classical approach to the history of ideas, Foucault intends to study "liberalism" solely as a "practice," that is, as "a 'way of doing things' oriented towards certain objectives, regulating itself by continuous reflection."[10] Liberalism is both a practice and a critical reflexivity, not an ideology or a representation. It should therefore be understood as a method for the "rationalization of the exercise of government." The singular characteristic of this rationalization is that it obeys the "internal rule of maximum economy." For Foucault, therein lies the novelty of liberalism:

> While any rationalization of the exercise of government aims to maximize its effects whilst reducing its costs as much as possible (in the political as well as economic sense of costs), liberal rationalization starts from the premise that government (not "government" as an institution, obviously, but as the activity

> that consists in governing people's conduct within the framework of, and using the instruments of, a state) cannot be its own end. Its *raison d'être* is not found in itself, and even under the best possible conditions the maximization of government should not be its regulative principle.[11]

In this sense, liberalism's novelty is that it "breaks with the '*raison d'État*' that, from the end of the sixteenth century, sought in the existence and strengthening of the state the end which could justify an expanding governmentality and regulate its development."[12]

Foucault is actually somewhat more nuanced in his courses themselves. There, he tends to characterize liberalism as a mutation internal to the notion of *raison d'État* rather than its replacement. But in either case, the novelty of liberalism is real, and Foucault attempts to prove it with an example that is highly significant for our discussion: the notion of *Polizeiwissenschaft* developed in Germany in the seventeenth century. He states the principle of *Polizeiwissenschaft* as the following: "Not enough attention is being given to things, too much escapes control, too many domains lack rules and regulation, order and administration are lacking. In short, there is too little government."[13] To the extent that *Polizeiwissenschaft* is a form of governmental technology that obeys *raison d'État*, it is almost natural that it attempts to address the problem of maintaining the largest and most active population possible for the benefit of state power. In this sense, the major elements of biopolitics—health, birthrates, hygiene, etc.—can easily find their place within it.

For Foucault, however, things are manifestly more complex with liberalism as he defines it in this period. There is a fundamental principle that underlies and guides liberalism, which Foucault articulates as follows: "'One always governs too much'—or at least, one should always suspect that one governs too much."[14] Here, we see the reintroduction of the concept of "critique," which plays an essential role in Foucault's thinking during this period; however, neither what Foucault means by "critique," nor why it is important is immediately obvious. Its meaning is philosophical. All throughout the course lectures, Foucault evokes the critical project of Immanuel Kant in both a theoretical and political sense. He claims "Perpetual Peace" and Kantian cosmopolitanism as his own, and interprets the "invisible hand" of Adam Smith in a Kantian vein. It should not be forgotten that only several months before the start of his lectures, Foucault gave a major speech to the *Société française de philosophie* devoted to the notion of "critique."[15] Foucault spends much of his speech on Kant, but also on Edmund Husserl's *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*. Not only does he place this text in the Kantian tradition, but he also spends much of his lectures on neoliberalism highlighting its direct influence on the "formal"

theoretical principles of ordoliberalism. In the lectures, Foucault also draws a parallel between the ordoliberals and Frankfurt School, both of which share a critique of capitalist "giantism." Foucault insists that the utilitarian or calculatory horizon of liberalism, which observers have long stressed, does not exhaust its critical perspective:

> Governmentality should not be exercised without a 'critique' far more radical than a test of optimization. It should not only question itself about the best (or least costly) means for achieving its effects, but also about the possibility and even legitimacy of its project for achieving effects. The question behind the suspicion that there is always the risk of governing too much is: Why, after all, is it necessary to govern?[16]

This is the constant background for Foucault's lessons on liberalism and neoliberalism, though he does not recall it at every instant. On this basis, he establishes a profound connection, or at least a strong correlation, between the development of "liberal critique" and the emergence of a totally new approach not only to the state, but also to "society."

Within this somewhat idiosyncratic perspective, Foucault justifies his choice to study thinkers he designates as "contemporary examples," namely German liberalism from 1948 to 1962, and American Chicago School liberalism. It is noteworthy that the distinction between "liberalism" and "neoliberalism," which many of Foucault's disciples and admirers have made much of, does not immediately appear in his general summary of the course lectures, as if it was of little consequence for him. If in the lectures the German liberals are described as representatives of "neoliberalism"—Foucault takes care to make clear that their competitive constructivism is not the classical *laissez-faire*—they are at the same time included within the older and more general category of "liberalism." It appears as if for Foucault their intervention consists primarily in bringing about a renaissance of older liberal ideas and practices. Foucault mentions "neoliberalism" again in the summary in his presentation of the Chicago School, but this time only in order to clarify that the label is not his own. Rather, he treats it as a mere convention ("what is called American neoliberalism"), and therefore not as a definitive category. Though Foucault does indeed establish some real distinctions in the courses themselves, the separation is not always as clear as later interpreters have often imagined.

Finally, but no less significantly, in the course summary Foucault tends to stress the similarities between German and American liberalisms. He observes that both emerged in a particular historical context, each presenting itself as "a critique of the irrationality peculiar to excessive government, and as a return to a technology of frugal government, as Franklin would have said."[17] The reference to Franklin as a foundational figure would seem not

only to erase the differences between the national contexts of the two liberalisms, but also to diminish the supposedly absolute novelty of neoliberalism that Foucault is said to have discovered. In reality, Foucault finds in these two liberalisms that came of age beginning in the 1930s and 1940s a rediscovery of the fundamentals of eighteenth-century American liberalism, ideas that were already quite old at the time.

One word appears often throughout Foucault's lectures that is easy to miss at first glance, but that is in reality one of the most essential concepts of his work in this period. This word, "excess," is inseparable from the notion of "critique." For Foucault, liberalism's exercise of critique is inextricable from the practice of reacting to the excesses of power. A recurring theme in his writings of the late 1970s is the danger of an unreflexive and therefore uncritical "hypertrophy" of power. In a 1978 article, for example, he describes "excessive forms of power" and "malignancies [*excroissances*] of power," notably in reference to the totalitarian power of the Soviet Union.[18]

The targets of the German and American liberals' critiques of power were concretely different from Foucault's. In the German case, the aim was to criticize not only the wartime regime of the National-Socialist government, but also in a deeper sense "a type of directed and planned economy that was the outcome of the 1914–1918 period and the general mobilization of resources and men," which one might also call "state socialism."[19] Here, Foucault specifies more precisely the corpus he means to study. By "German liberalism," he refers to what he also calls the "Freiburg School." According to Foucault, this school began in the late 1920s, and one of its main focal points was the journal *Ordo*. In reality, here and elsewhere Foucault uses the label of the "Freiburg School" as a sort of catch-all for a list of authors including Walter Eucken, Franz Böhm, Wilhelm Röpke, and Alexander Rüstow (curiously written as "von Rustow," perhaps an unconscious reference to "von Hayek"). Many of these thinkers, like Röpke and Rüstow, did not belong to this school in a strict sense, though they did maintain ties to it. By conflating these distinctly diverse German liberals throughout his courses, Foucault commits a non-negligible factual error.

Like many of Foucault's other questionable amalgamations, this one is instructive in what it reveals about his interpretive biases. Short of outright misreadings, but no less disputable, these biases are of singular use in understanding the logic underlying Foucault's discourse on liberalism. They are apparent once again when Foucault attempts to articulate the philosophical and conceptual background of German ordoliberalism by situating it "at the point of intersection of neo-Kantian philosophy, Husserl's phenomenology, and Max Weber's sociology."[20] The inclusion of neo-Kantianism is an obvious allusion to the German critical tradition, and indirectly, once again, to the Kantian notion of "critique." Foucault's allusions to Husserl and even Weber

follow a similar logic: both are mentioned in Foucault's 1978 conference as the heirs of the German Kantian tradition of critique. In the course lectures, Foucault describes at length the affinities between Eucken and Kant—the former was the son of the Kantian philosopher Rudolf Eucken—and highlights the fact that Röpke's book *The Social Crisis of Our Time* is a direct reference to Husserl's *The Crisis of European Sciences.*[21] This latter rapprochement is perhaps a strange one, since the conservative discourse animating Röpke's thought was leagues away from Husserlian phenomenology.

Foucault also puts the German liberals alongside the "Viennese economists," notably Hayek. For Foucault, the Austrian and Freiburg schools appear close, particularly in light of their shared concern for the historical correlation between "economic processes" and "legal structures." There is certainly a rapprochement between these Austrians and Germans here that could have been better developed. What is most important, however, is to observe how Foucault makes the attempt to isolate what the German critique of the excesses of power is aiming against: namely, "Soviet socialism, National Socialism, and Keynesian interventionist policies." All three of these are rejected as stemming from a "type of economic government that systematically ignores the market mechanisms that alone can ensure regulation of the formation of prices."[22] Following Foucault's interpretative angle, German liberalism as a "liberal technology of government" tries "to define what a market economy could be, organized (but not planned or directed) within an institutional and legal framework, which, on the one hand, would offer the guarantees and limitations of the law, and, on the other, would ensure that the freedom of economic processes did not produce any social distortion."[23]

After enumerating the major features of the German liberalism, Foucault proceeds in the course summary to the second section of his study, devoted to "American neoliberalism." Foucault does not present the neoliberalism of the Chicago School as an apology for capitalism as such, and even less so as an offensive on behalf of the dominant classes; rather, in Foucault's point of view—a highly significant one—the neoliberalism of the Chicago School appears as a form of "critique." And as in the case of German liberalism, this critique deals with an identical theme: "too much government." In his lectures, Foucault meticulously examines the "Public Choice" school's fixation on the excesses of state bureaucracy as a form of "critique," a word he employs constantly in reference to the approach of Gordon Tullock and James Buchanan. The main difference in America is that the target has shifted: Starting with Henry Simons, one of the founders of the Chicago School, "too much government" was meant to attack the policies of the New Deal, wartime economic planning, and the vast economic and social programs of the postwar era, primarily under Democratic presidential administrations.

Foucault believes to have identified as a common point between the two liberalisms a shared rejection of wartime economies.[24] More broadly speaking, just like in the case of the German "ordoliberals," the aim of the "critique" of the Chicago School's economic liberalism is to call attention to a dangerous machinery that leads from economic interventionism to bureaucracy and the "rigidification of all the power mechanisms." This latter element is crucial for Foucault's interpretation, given the constant presence of the question of power in his investigations. Both liberalisms take aim at "new economic distortions," which themselves go on to generate new interventions in the economy. In short, they seek to eliminate not only the "excess" of power, but also, according to Foucault, a "hyper-excess" of power created by blind cumulative mechanisms.

But after having insisted on the convergences between the German liberalism and the Chicago school, Foucault explains that he also intended in his lectures to identify an opposition between them. Under the banner of the "social market economy," the former contends that while "regulation of prices by the market [is] the only basis for a rational economy," in reality this regulation is so fragile left on its own that it must be "ordered" and sustained by a policy of social intervention, including in matters of unemployment or health care. American neoliberalism, on the other hand, takes as its goal "to extend the rationality of the market, the schemes of analysis it offers and the decision-making criteria it suggests, to domains which are not exclusively or not primarily economic," such as the family or the penal system.[25] While the two liberalisms share similar preoccupations, they seem to disagree as to the means that ought to be employed in order to address them. And this disagreement seems to stem from strong variations in their confidence in the mechanisms of the market, and therefore the possibility of extending it. In his lectures, Foucault suggests that compared to the purer and more coherent American neoliberalism, German neoliberalism is riddled with ambiguities most likely linked to the Bismarckian past that it was unable to overcome.

FOUCAULT, GERMAN LIBERALISM, AND CONTEMPORARY EUROPE

To avoid the shortcomings of a purely "internalist" reading, let us consider what Foucault was aiming to accomplish by attaching such importance to the renaissance of liberalism in Germany. Foucault himself answers this question on several occasions: his aim is to better understand our time, what he has already taken to calling our "*actualité*." He repeatedly states his ambition to become, by understanding what is happening in the present, a sort of philosopher-journalist in the footsteps of not only Kant—the author

of famous pamphlets on the *Aufklärung* and "perpetual peace"—but also Nietzsche. For Foucault, if the *actualité* of his time was American, it was also to a large extent German. Curiously, or perhaps logically, it does not occur to Foucault to include England, even as Thatcher was preparing her rise to power; even further from Foucault is the experience of the "Chicago Boys" in Chile under the Pinochet dictatorship. This is for several reasons that are intimately linked to one another. First, the 1979 courses took place during a period marked by debates in left circles concerning the terrorist group *Rote Armee Fraktion* (RAF) and its vigorous repression by the German government. The French left and far left were quick to condemn German "fascism," or at least the authoritarian traces within the German state. Not so much Foucault, who made an effort to distance himself from the terrorist group as well as the "demonization" of liberal, social-democratic Germany.

At the head of this German government—and here is the second reason for Foucault's focus on Germany—was Chancellor Helmut Schmidt. Starting in 1974, Schmidt led a coalition between the social democrats and the liberals, supported both by the SPD and the liberal FDP. Hans-Dietrich Genscher, the liberal vice chancellor and minister of foreign affairs, became known for having contributed substantially to the 1975 Helsinki Accords, whose emphasis on human rights would earn it the support of the anti-totalitarian dissidence movement. Foucault followed this dissidence movement closely, and probably did not fail to notice the German role in bringing about its rise. The ideological framework of the Schmidt coalition was therefore both socialist and liberal, remaining largely that of Willy Brandt, and retaining the slogan of the Bad Godesberg Program: "As much competition as possible, as much planning as necessary." The conclusions of the Bad Godesberg conference lend themselves to a variety of interpretations besides the common claim that they merely represent an alignment of the social democrats with ordoliberalism. In reality, Schmidt's socioeconomic policy had little in common either with "neoliberalism" in the contemporary sense of the term, or even with the ordoliberal doctrine of the 1930s and 1940s.

Schmidt was, however, of a notoriously liberal sensibility, and his considerable international prestige loomed in the background of the relaunch of the project of European construction (a project that was no doubt connected, for Foucault, to the Kantian cosmopolitism and liberalism discussed in his courses on neoliberalism). As for Schmidt, together with his friend Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, elected president of France also in 1974, he helped develop the plan for the European Monetary System (EMS). The year 1979 was also the first year in which the European Parliament was elected by a direct vote. This marks another decisive dimension of Foucault's interest in contemporary events: in this period when France appeared to be turning away from Gaulist *dirigisme*, it also appeared to be going through a sort of liberal

moment, which was also a German moment. First, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing was elected on the promise of bringing about an "advanced liberalism," echoing the liberatory aspirations of the post-1968 era. But on economic matters, he remained prudent, adopting a policy that was more or less a return to Keynesianism. After his party's surprise parliamentary victory in 1978 and his choice of Raymond Barre as prime minister, his presidency underwent a marked liberal inflection when it came to economics. His government abolished price controls—even those on the price of baguettes, causing many French to begin to worry—and all evidence suggests that he found in Germany a source of inspiration for such reforms.

As a final point, if the legislative elections of 1978 were a victory for the liberal right, they were a humiliating defeat for the left, whom the polls had long predicted to win. Liberal intellectuals such as Raymond Aron had feared the left's program as a possible radical turn in socioeconomic policy.[26] Even though the common program signed in 1972 by the Communist Party and the Socialist Party was broken in 1977, when the Communists demanded increases in the number of proposed nationalizations, the left's aim remained, achieving radical *dirigiste* transformations of the economy. This shared perspective collapsed on the night of the 1978 elections, when Michel Rocard—François Mitterand's main socialist adversary—became a major popular figure. The main representative of what later became known as the *deuxième gauche*, Rocard frequently urged his fellow socialists, and public opinion in general, not to demonize the idea of the market economy as such. This became one of the major ideological debates of the Metz Congress of the Socialist Party, which took place April 6–8, 1979, right in the middle of Foucault's course lectures. It was, however, Mitterrand who won out at Metz, supported by Jean-Pierre Chevènement, a fervent partisan of rapprochement with the Communists, and a fierce adversary of Rocard's "liberal" tendencies. In February 1979, also during Foucault's lectures, Chevènement published a book castigating the Socialist Party for these liberal tendencies within its midst. Chevènement also denounced the German Social Democratic Party and the Bad Godesberg conference for having destroyed socialism, and worried that what he had on numerous occasions identified as "neoliberalism" was also present in the French *deuxième gauche*.[27] There are numerous signs that appear to show that though Foucault stayed largely out of these debates, his sympathies were with the *deuxième gauche* (though he did not explicitly adhere to it) rather than with the Communist Party, whose program he detested.

My claim is that without understanding this French political context—which few, even in France, have been aware of—one cannot understand Foucault's lectures on neoliberalism, and especially his positions on German neoliberalism. As early as 1978, the French specialist of the liberal and

German social democratic model, Joseph Rovan, denounced a "radical left that decries the premises of a new fascism through the alliance of social-democracy and liberal capitalism." The title of the book, published by the influential editor Le Seuil, was entitled *L'Allemagne n'est pas ce que vous croyez.*[28] These polemics were also part of the context surrounding Foucault's lectures, which sought to challenge the characterizations of Germany, ordo-liberalism, and social democracy by the French left and anti-German far left. Foucault himself makes this clear on several occasions. First, his conviction is that capitalism, in Europe and particularly in France, has been transformed under the influence of German ordoliberalism and its critique of gigantism (whether capitalist or communist). As a result, those in 1979 who still denounced mass society, mass consumerism, or the gigantism of the manipulative apparatuses of capitalism completely misunderstood the era they were living in. Worse than that, they were repeating the politically troubling German anti-capitalism of Werner Sombart:

> In Sombart, and in fact already from around 1900, we find that well-known critique which has now become one of the commonplaces of a thought whose articulation and framework we do not know very well: the critique of mass society, of the society of one-dimensional man, of authority, of consumption, of the spectacle, and so forth. That is what Sombart said. What's more, it is what the Nazis took up in their own way.[29]

He goes on to claim that critics of "consumption society"—in a charge clearly directed at Jean Baudrillard, Guy Debord, and Herbert Marcuse—have been totally misled in that they miss how the ordoliberals had long before radically transformed society and capitalist modes of production.

By condemning the adversaries of "consumption society," Foucault condemned by extension much of the far-left circles that he was breaking with at the time. In a similar vein, he insisted that German ordoliberals helped set the foundation for the rule of law in Germany, radically undoing the Hitlerian state. For Foucault, the issue is a fundamental one. As he attempts to persuade his undoubtedly dismayed audience, his reason for "dwelling on these problems of neoliberalism" is one of "critical morality."[30] It is worth recalling that Foucault once again advances the concept of "critique" during this period in which he undertakes his work on Kant's "critique," as well as on liberalism as a critical attitude and practice. Concretely speaking, Foucault believes that the will to adopt a "critical morality" makes it necessary to break with a certain number of stereotypes on the left and the far left concerning the meaning of the contemporary state—whether in the West in general or in Germany in particular. And so, Foucault attempts, perhaps surprisingly, to escape the charges against a certain anti-statist mode of thinking that he

himself had contributed to developing. "Going by the recurrence of certain themes," he observes, "we could say that what is currently challenged, and from a great many perspectives, is almost always the state."[31] In his view, this anti-statist vogue is the vehicle for a stereotypical vision of the state, not only intellectually false, but also politically dangerous: "The unlimited growth of the state, its omnipotence, its bureaucratic development, the state with the seeds of fascism it contains, the state's inherent violence beneath its social welfare paternalism."[32]

From the beginning of his lectures on German neoliberalism in 1979, Foucault makes clear that he understands them as a way of facing the challenges of contemporary socialism:

> It may become clearer what is at stake in this—for, after all, what interest is there in talking about liberalism, the physiocrats, d'Argenson, Adam Smith, Bentham, and the English utilitarians, if not because the problem of liberalism arises for us in our immediate and concrete actuality? What does it mean when we speak of liberalism when we apply a liberal politics to ourselves, today, and what relationship may there be between this and those questions of right that we call freedom or liberties?[33]

The allusion to this liberal policy—and let us observe that Foucault refers to liberalism rather than neoliberalism—that we "apply to ourselves," refers primarily to the policies put in place by the Barre government under Giscard. On top of this, Foucault immediately appears to refer to something else: "What is going on in all this, in today's debate in which Helmut Schmidt's economic principles bizarrely echo the voice of dissidents in the East, in this problem of liberty, of liberalism?"[34] Here, he clearly evokes the problems of socialism—as he does throughout the course—in two distinct modalities. First, there are the policies of Schmidt, a social democrat in a West Germany sometimes referred to as "socialist," but in a way that has nothing to do with the socialism of East Germany, the French Communist-influenced common program, or with most of historical socialism. Schmidt's "socialism," in other words, seems in many respects to be "liberal." But second, there is Foucault's crucial evocation of the "dissidents," whom he had already mentioned frequently in his lectures at the Collège de France in 1978: the resistance against Communist power, or "real socialism." Putting the struggle of these "dissidents" alongside the supposedly "liberal" economic policy of the social democrats—and with "liberalism" more generally—would have likely aroused his commentators' and readers' attention. This came at the same moment when Foucault, like many intellectuals coming out of the Maoist left, had for some time been passionately interested in the question of the "dissidents" of the East and supported their cause openly and with fervor. One might notice that

Foucault on two occasions associates the concepts of "liberalism" and "liberty" in order to justify his interest in liberalism and neoliberalism, which is at the same time an interest for contemporary *actualité*:

> Fine, it is a problem of our times. So, if you like, after having situated the historical point of origin of all this by bringing out what, according to me, is the new governmental reason from the eighteenth century, I will jump ahead and talk about contemporary German liberalism since. However paradoxical it may seem, liberty in the second half of the twentieth century, well let's say more accurately, liberalism, is a word that comes to us from Germany.[35]

Foucault's extreme fixation on the French situation, and specifically on the governmental experience of Raymond Barre, is palpable here. After all, in 1979, it would have been easy to claim that the word "liberalism" comes from elsewhere: the United States, obviously, but also perhaps Great Britain, or even the Chilean dictatorship. If Foucault adopts such a German-centric point of view, it's because he is chiefly concerned with the future of France and of socialism circa 1979: if the "liberal" policies of Barre and Giscard seem to imitate in part the social-democratic policies of Schmidt, what does socialism mean today? Similarly, if the "dissidents" are calling for "liberty"—and thus, as Foucault suggests, for liberalism—in the face of their Communist oppressors, what does that tell us about the future of socialism?

This context helps to explain Foucault's interest in the Bad Godesberg conference, which for him not only marks a strict break with Marxism, but also represents the conversion of the German socialists, generally speaking, to the ordoliberal idea of the "social market economy." It is important to highlight Foucault's sources. He had learned the history of ordoliberalism thanks to the only book available at the time: the remarkable panoramic work published fifteen years earlier by the liberal economist François Bilger. We can surmise that Foucault was fascinated by several aspects of Bilger's synthesis: first, the emphasis on the ordoliberals' anti-Nazism; second, their fidelity to Kant's philosophy; and finally, their influence on social democracy. Examining in detail the evolution of the German SPD, particularly since the Bad Godesberg conference that took place only five years before, Bilger underscored the fact that German socialism gradually abandoned its "Marxist fundament" in favor of a "liberal fundament." There was a real convergence—though a partial one, the welfare state remaining a point of contention—between "social liberalism and liberal socialism, [in which] there is no difference of nature, but only of degree."[36] Bilger even went so far as to compare German ordoliberalism to Yugoslavian *autogestion*, a much-discussed topic in the late 1970s; Foucault himself suggested to Pierre Rosanvallon, a theorist of the second *autogestionnaire* left, to devote a report to the subject. We should also note that Foucault

had read the Giscardian liberal theorist Christian Stoffaës, whose ideas seemed to him close to the German liberal and social-democratic model. The author of *La grande menace industrielle*, then in vogue, himself referred to the German social market economy, and saw convergences between the "Giscardian liberals" and socialist reformist liberals of the French *deuxième gauche* concerning the benefits of the German model.[37]

My suggestion is that if Foucault did not show enthusiasm for the Bad Godesberg Program, neither did he reject it outright. His position was a subtle one. Concerning the Bad Godesberg conference, he believed that it was possible to say that "German social democracy [came] over, albeit somewhat late, but fairly easily, to these theses, practices, and programs of neoliberalism."[38] Some historians of the Bad Godesberg conference have judged that Foucault went too far in this analysis.[39] Returning to the contemporary debates of Foucault's time on the "true nature" of socialism—i.e., was it to be found in the Communist GDR, or in the liberal FRG?—Foucault questioned whether this issue might be poorly formulated, even if there is some meaning to it:

> Should we not say instead that socialism is no truer here than there for the simple reason that socialism does not have to be true. What I mean is that socialism is anyway connected up to a type of governmentality: here it is connected up to this governmentality and there it is connected up to another, yielding very dissimilar fruit in both cases and, in the event of course of a more or less normal or aberrant branch, the same deadly fruit.[40]

However one interprets Foucault here, it is clear that he is warning his audience that he will not be following the Marxist approach. This approach could have no other response to the Bad Godesberg Program than to condemn it in the most radical terms, finding in it nothing but treason and hypocrisy. Foucault chooses not to plant himself on the sterile terrain of strict exegesis that the Marxist scholars find so pleasing, a manner of approaching these questions that is to his mind an evasion.

So he takes steps to establish his distance: "Whether or not there is a theory of the state in Marx," he declares, "is for Marxists to decide."[41] For Foucault, however, the fundamental question lies elsewhere:

> As for myself, I would say that what socialism lacks is not so much a theory of the state as a governmental reason, the definition of what a governmental rationality would be in socialism, that is to say, a reasonable and calculable measure of the extent, modes, and objectives of governmental action.[42]

There is ultimately no "autonomous socialist governmentality." In other words, concretely speaking, socialism has never been and is not able to be put into place except to the extent that it is "connected up [*branché*] to diverse

types of governmentality." One of these forms of governmentality has been "liberal governmentality," and in this case socialism has been able to serve "as a corrective," or a "palliative" to some of its "internal dangers."[43] Foucault also adds immediately that liberals might consider socialism itself to be a danger, even if it operated along these lines nonetheless. Here, one can surmise in passing that this "connection [*branchement*]" to liberal rationality has not necessarily been—as many of Foucault's readers have claimed—an absolute catastrophe for the later development of socialism. In any case, one can join the liberals in criticizing the dangers of socialism itself, though as Foucault explains, this is not the most essential point.

Socialism has at times had the opportunity to turn toward other "connections." It has functioned, for example, within the governmentality of the "police state," otherwise known as the "hyper-administrative state in which there is, so to speak, a fusion, a continuity, the constitution of a sort of massive bloc between governmentality and administration."[44] If Foucault does not provide an explicit judgment here, we can guess that this sort of connection has produced something other than positive effects, to say the least. And as Foucault concludes, there are possibly alternative forms of these socialist "connections." But these two principal types attest to the fact that there is no "autonomous governmentality of socialism": we have yet to see one emerge, and we do not see it on the horizon. We can therefore ask whether neoliberalism, following this reasoning, might not have the possible virtue of serving paradoxically as a sort of stimulant for the left, or even a source of inspiration. By activating the left's political imagination, it may ultimately assist, however indirectly, the invention of a socialist governmentality.

THE LESSONS OF GERMAN NEOLIBERALISM

After having applauded certain decisions of the socialist government elected in France in May 1981—notably on the death penalty and immigration, all the while remaining silent on the economy—Foucault later became very critical of the socialists' manner of governing. Foucault's friend and colleague at the Collège de France Paul Veyne attests to this, while asserting (though there is no possible way to prove it) that Foucault had not voted for Mitterand, and was even shocked to learn that Veyne had done so.[45] Preferring Rocard to Mitterand, Foucault planned as late as 1983 to edit a white paper devoted to the socialist policy on the following question: "Do the socialists have a problematic of government, or do they only have a problematic of the state?"[46] Toward this aim, he had even begun to put together a reading list—including Jaurès, Blum, and Mitterand—and had gathered a collection of press clippings, but the project ultimately did not go very far.

Foucault never returned directly to the topic of German liberalism, though one does find some of Röpke's language in his reflections on the necessity of decentralizing the French welfare state and social security system, judged too bureaucratic and uniform.[47] Another extremely valuable allusion, however, appears in an unpublished dialogue from a conference at Berkeley on "Ethics and Politics" in April 1983.[48] In these remarks, Foucault clarifies his relationship to liberalism:

> I would respond that I believe that in the historical-political analyses conducted during the twentieth century, we have perhaps too often forgotten the problems posed by liberal thought, in the strict sense of the term, in eighteenth-century England and nineteenth-century France . . . in favor of [reflections on] themes such as consensuality and democracy, which I do not believe have produced very positive results. I think that there is a re-evaluation to be done on these problems—I won't say problems of liberal thought; I don't believe much in these stories . . . there is a certain thought that exists at a given moment, and one has to return to it. But there are a certain number of problems that have generally been posed within a dynasty, or a family of thought, problems that are strictly of liberalism, and I think it would be interesting if we could understand them. We can't forget that this liberalism was constituted in critical opposition to the administrative states of the eighteenth century, with what we call the *Polizei*, which you all know was not the police, but the administration, the regimented administration.
>
> Now it is certain that beginning in a period of the twentieth century—and in very different regimes: whether Marxist or dictatorial regimes, or in democratic regimes, and particularly those whose economic policy is inspired by Keynesianism—an administrative power was developed against which there is now manifestly a reaction. I believe that reactivating some of these problems—not simply taking them up in the same terms, returning to John Stuart Mill—but taking up these questions that were those of Benjamin Constant, of Tocqueville . . .

Here, Foucault is asked, "And you think these are more pertinent than socialist analyses?" Foucault responds, "What I think in any case is that in any socialist regime one must pose these sorts of questions."[49]

Posing the question; This is the formula that Foucault had used in the 1979 course summary to describe the liberal attitude toward addressing the problem: "Why, after all, is it necessary to govern?"[50] Is this attitude not also for Foucault that of neoliberalism, notably German neoliberalism? One might think, wrongly, that by evoking the necessity of posing the relevant questions of "strict liberalism," Foucault wants to distinguish this notion from that of neoliberalism as he had studied it in 1979. But nothing seems less certain. The liberalism that has become obsolete, at least in his judgment, is the liberalism of Keynes and Beveridge: the social liberalism that had produced the welfare state of the twentieth century itself, in Foucault's eyes, fundamentally

bureaucratic and thus partially obsolete. In 1979, Foucault never ceased to highlight that this Keynesian liberalism was also the direct foundation for the financial and economic policy of the Third Reich, under the direction of the very Keynesian Hjalmar Schacht, a policy that the ordoliberals ceaselessly fought against. The true heirs of the questions of "pure liberalism," for Foucault, are on the side of the Kantian adversaries of National Socialism—those ordoliberals who, thanks to Konrad Adenauer and Ludwig Erhard, made it possible to rebuild Germany on an entirely de-Nazified foundation after 1945.[51] Also obsolete, more than ever, as Foucault sees it, is socialism in its historical configuration. It is hard not to see in Foucault's late confidence in the great virtues of liberalism, at least in a heuristic sense, the echoes of his 1979 lectures, and specifically his close reading of chapter 13 of Hayek's *The Constitution of Liberty*. Hayek, whom Foucault sees as the junction between the German and American neoliberalisms, was, like his ordoliberal friends, haunted by the catastrophe of Nazi Germany. He defended German "rule of law," singularly formulated by Kant, against the dangers of the "police state," but also as an alternative model to the revolutionary French tradition of all-powerful sovereignty.

That Foucault's reading of German neoliberalism is problematic and debatable in historical terms; that it underestimates the conservative, reactionary, or even authoritarian dimensions of neoliberalism—that is a separate question. At the very least, we can start to ask our contemporary radical critics of German ordoliberalism and of the project of European construction that they no longer appeal to Foucault as a source of authority.

NOTES

1. See Alessandro Fontana, *Une éducation intellectuelle (Mémoire d'habilitation à diriger des recherches)*, in *Id.*, *L'exercice de la pensée. Machiavel, Leopardi, Foucault* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2015), 93. This text published in 2015 had, in fact, been written in the 1990s. Its suggestion that Foucault had been converted outright to neoliberalism is, in my view, an excessive and partial conclusion.

2. Éric Mollet, "Le projet de constitution européenne à la lumière de Foucault," *Labyrinthe* (3) (2005): 111–17; Pierre Dardot and Christian Laval, "La nature du néolibéralisme: un enjeu théorique et politique pour la gauche," *Mouvements* (50) (2007): 108–17.

3. Isabelle Bruno, Pierre Clément, and Christian Laval, *La grande mutation. Néolibéralisme et éducation en Europe* (Les Lilas-Paris: Institut de recherches de la FSU-Syllepse, 2010).

4. Alessandro Somma, *La dittatura dello spread. Germania, Europa e crisi del debito* (Rome: Derive Approdi, 2014).

5. Pierre Dardot and Christian Laval, *La nouvelle raison du monde. Essai sur la société néolibérale* (Paris: La Découverte, 2009).

6. This is the position of Dardot and Laval's *La nouvelle raison du monde*. For a different take on the Colloque Lippmann, see *Néo-libéralisme(s). Une archéologie intellectuelles* (Paris: La Découverte, 2012); Serge Audier and Jürgen Reinhoudt, eds., *The Walter Lippmann Colloquium: The Birth of Neoliberalism* (New York: Palgrave, 2018). On French neoliberals, see Serge Audier, "'Néo-libéralisme' et démocratie dans les années 1930: Louis Rougier et Louis Marlio," *Revue de philosophie économique* 17(1): 57–101.

7. Andera Fumagalli, "La libertà negata in nome della proprietà," review of Somma, *La dittatura dello spred*, in *Il Manifesto*, October 24, 2014, 11. (*Translator's note*: the English translation here is original, based off of Audier's translation from the Italian.) An economist noted among the theoreticians of "cognitive capitalism," and close to the ideas of Antonio Negri, Andrea Fumagalli also cites in this article the work of Pierre Dardot and Christian Laval, published in Italy by the same editor that published Somma's book, Derive Approdi, one of Italy's major publishers of the radical and neo-communist left.

8. Somma, *La dittatura dello spread*, 56.

9. Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978–1979*, ed. Michel Senellart (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 317–24.

10. Ibid., 318.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid., 319.

15. Michel Foucault, "Qu'est-ce que la critique? Critique et *Aufklärung*" ("Address to the *Société française de philosophie*," 27 May 1978), *Bulletin de la Société française de philosophie* 84(2) (1978): 35–63.

16. Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, 319.

17. Ibid., 319. We will see that this quasi-definition is essential in order to understand Foucault's thinking on liberalism and neoliberalism as a whole.

18. Michel Foucault, "Gendai no Kenryoku wo tou" ("The Analytic Philosophy of Politics"), in Foucault, *Dits et écrits*, vol. 2, no. 232, eds. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 536–39.

19. Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, 322.

20. Ibid.

21. Wilhelm Röpke, *The Social Crisis of Our Time* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1950); Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology: An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy*, David Carr, trans. (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970).

22. Ibid.

23. Ibid., 322–23.

24. It is worth noting that the critique of war also comes up in Foucault's lectures on Kant's liberalism and the project of "perpetual peace," the foundation for a peaceful and liberal Europe.

25. Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, 323.

26. Raymond Aron, *Les élections de mars et la V^e^ République* (Paris: Julliard, 1978).

27. Jean-Pierre Chevènement, *Être socialiste aujourd'hui* (Paris: Cana, 1979).
28. Joseph Rovan, *L'Allemagne n'est pas ce que vous croyez* (Paris: Seuil, 1978).
29. Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, 113–14.
30. Ibid., 186.
31. Ibid.
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid., 22.
34. Ibid.
35. Ibid.
36. François Bilger, *La Pensée économique libérale dans l'Allemagne contemporaine* (Paris: Librairie générale de droit et de jurisprudence, 1964), 263.
37. Christian Stoffaës, *La nouvelle menace industrielle* (Paris: Pluriel, 1978), 447.
38. Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, 89–90.
39. Cf. Karim Fertikh, "Bad Godesberg dans le langage social-démocrate en 1959," *Cahiers d'histoire. Revue d'histoire critique* 114 (2011): 137–51.
40. Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, 93.
41. Ibid., 91.
42. Ibid., 91–92.
43. Ibid., 92.
44. Ibid., 92–93.
45. Paul Veyne, *Et dans l'éternité je ne m'ennuierai pas. Souvenirs* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2014), 209.
46. Daniel Defert, "Chronologie," in *Dits et écrits*, vol. 1, 87.
47. Michel Foucault, "Un système fini face à une demande infinie," in *Sécurité sociale. L'enjeu* (Paris: Syros, 1983), 39–63, reprinted in Foucault, *Dits et écrits*, vol. 2, 1190.
48. This discussion is now available thanks to the research of Michael Behrent.
49. Papers from the UC Berkeley French Studies Program pertaining to Michel Foucault's visits at Berkeley and Stanford University, 1975–1984, BANC MSS 90/136z 1:4 "Ethics and Politics," April 1983. My sincere thanks to Michael Behrent for having provided me these documents.
50. Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, 319.
51. Even if it is true that the "ordoliberals" went far beyond the old liberal metaphysics of "laissez-faire" as Foucault justly notes.

Chapter 3

Finding a "Left Governmentality"

Foucault's Last Decade

Daniel Zamora

> We live perhaps at the end of politics. Because, if it is true that politics is a field which has been opened by the existence of the revolution, and if the question of the revolution cannot arise in these terms anymore, then politics risk to disappear.[1]
>
> —Michel Foucault, 1977

In his 1977 movie, *A Grin Without a Cat*, the famous French filmmaker Chris Marker gives his own account of the struggles that took place between 1967 and 1977 and, more generally, of the hopes of an entire generation in the aftermath of May 1968. Marker's movie was an attempt to understand the birth of a French "new left" and how it reshaped conceptions of politics and contestation. Rather than reproducing the classic oppositions of postwar politics, Marker suggested that May 1968 transformed the terms through which one could think about politics. "A new kind of problematic emerged," he wrote, delivering "staggering blows in every field of orthodoxy, right or left." As the movie puts it: "There was the police blockade—this was an order—and there were unions' security services—that was another order. In between there was a space to be taken. This meant a new kind of struggle." The first order obviously represented the Gaullist power and its repressive state and culture. But another kind of order was also increasingly seen as an obstacle to real social transformation: the postwar left and its state-centered understanding of politics and social transformation. From this perspective, for many intellectuals after 1968, the communist opposition, the unions, and later, the union of the left (the coalition of the French Communist Party, the Radical Party, and the Socialist party under the "common program") was no less problematic than the Gaullist power. To a certain extent, both were seen as functioning within

the same logic and replacing certain masters with others (what do we win by replacing "the employers' arbitrary will with a bureaucratic arbitrary will?"[2] asked the famous Marxist and ecological thinker André Gorz). This centrality of the state in political parties of the left and right was what Pierre Rosanvallon and Patrick Viveret referred to as the dominant "political culture." Such a culture—either "from the left or the right […] and for which the central element is the state, considered at the same time as the object of the struggle and the space of social transformation"[3]—had become, since the war, the underlying paradigm for all political discussion. For Rosanvallon and Viveret, May 1968 marked the birth of a "new political culture" that sought to transform not only the left, but also a general understanding of what politics could be about.

It was precisely this task—reshaping the understanding of politics and the left—that became central in Foucault's last decade, a task he thought his generation had failed to achieve. As his friend Claude Mauriac explained in 1978, "Foucault condemned his generation who had proved unable to bring a new hope to humanity, after Marxism, either to continue or replace it."[4] And it is from this precise perspective that he will be interested in neoliberalism as a stimulating kind of governmentality that could offer alternatives to a socialist left, which he rejected for either its intellectual framework, or its strategy and program. To understand his last political decade, it is thus essential to inscribe his work both within a general opposition to the postwar left and within the promotion, in the intellectual and political field, of a "new political culture," whose aim was to get rid of a certain conception of the left and of social transformation. For this new "culture," neoliberalism was less an enemy than it was a true "utopian focus" that opened new perspectives for a left that should have been delivered from the socialist project, as it was formulated in the nineteenth century. These two evolutions, far from being foreign to Foucault, constitute one of its core elements after the mid-1970s. Neoliberalism offered him a means to rethink resistance, to imagine an intellectual framework that could create a space for minority practices, and to fulfill a key ambition of his last decade, finding a way to be "less governed."

FOUCAULT AGAINST THE POSTWAR LEFT

Foucault's last decade was marked by an increasing hostility to the postwar left and its ideas. Marxism, and what it represented in intellectual life (a strong state, universal social rights, control of the economy, the idea of revolution, etc.), became a target of Foucault and many other intellectuals. It is therefore not surprising that, in an unpublished interview in 1977 between Foucault and militants of the French Communist Revolutionary League (LCR), he had "no problem" with the idea that his thought could be described

as a "war machine against Marxism."[5] In a 1978 interview for a Japanese journal entitled "How to Get Rid of Marxism," he openly described Marxism as nothing more than "a modality of power in an elementary sense." He then explained that "there is one clear determining factor: the fact that Marxism has contributed to and still contributes to the impoverishment of the political imaginary, this is our starting point."[6] In that prespective, Colin Gordon is right when he suggests that Foucault was obviously not a Marxist or a supporter of any existing model of revolutionary socialism.[7] But it is important to acknowledge that Foucault was not only opposed to Marxism, but also to the "political imaginary" that could be derived from it. It was therefore not merely about Marxism as a political doctrine, but, more generally, as a symbol of the political project of the postwar left. What Foucault and many intellectuals at that time were struggling against was not only socialism abroad, but also a certain kind of socialism and its legacy in France. In this regard, Foucault's politics in his last decade were particularly hostile to: (1) the socialist program of the union of the left; (2) an idea of politics as a way to conquer state power through parties, unions, and mass movements of class struggle; and (3) the idea of revolution itself.

Against the union of the left

The period in which Foucault's attacks against Marxism were the most violent—between 1975 and 1978—was, in general, also a moment of increasing debate on totalitarianism and the French left. During this period, the possibility of a union of the left to win elections after its impressive results in 1974—and the possibility for communists to return to government for the first time since 1947—worried many post-1968 left intellectuals.

Founded in 1972, the "union of the left" united under the "common program" the PCF (French Communist Party), the PS (Socialist Party), and the MRG (movement of the radicals of the left). This ambitious program proposed the nationalization of the bank system, increases in wages, the reduction of work time, the expansion of social security, the "democratization" of the workplace, and even the dissolution of NATO and the Warsaw Pact. This alliance, as Marc Lazar writes, "marked . . . the victory of those who defended a strong interventionism of the state"[8] on the left. The program, and the strategy to take state power, were therefore seen by the coalition as a first step toward socialism. At the same time, however, the alliance deepened tensions within the left. Indeed, since May 1968, an important wing of the union saw the state, as Pierre Grémion noted, "as an obstacle rather than a useful tool"[9] for social transformation. This division was particularly strong within the Socialist Party, where the minority current, called the "second left," led by Michel Rocard and figures such as Patrick Viveret or Pierre Rosanvallon, defended an

anti-statist left that advocated for a project "of social transformation that does not carry the germ of totalitarianism."[10]

From this perspective, these critics played an important role in crafting the more general argument that the triumph of the project of the common program could lead to a totalitarian "temptation"[11] in France. This idea of a risk for liberty in the case of a socialist victory in France was also mentioned in an interview Foucault gave in 1976, where he discussed the problems of socialism and argued that it was necessary "to invent an exercise of power that is not scary."[12] What is interesting here is not only that he thought that the socialist project was potentially "scary," but that what socialism needed was not "another freedom convention or another bill of rights: that is easy and so useless," but a change in the conception of "power and its exercise."[13] The danger was not so much the supposedly "hidden totalitarian intentions" of the common program, but the socialist project. Socialism and revolution itself became a risk for liberty. This helps explain Foucault's strong misgivings about the common program (what he called the "common imposture"[14]) and of the whole project of the left since the war: an interventionist state, social rights based on universal policies, public service, etc. This was the main reason why Foucault, as Claude Mauriac wrote, if he voted for Mitterrand in 1974, he did not wish the left to win in the elections of 1978,[15] and, as his close friend and historian Paul Veyne recounts, he did not vote for Mitterrand in 1981.[16] This strong refusal was therefore not only against the individual parties, but against institutional politics per se.

Against institutional politics

Foucault's opposition to the union of the left was also, more generally, an opposition to a certain postwar understanding of politics. As mentioned, the idea of social transformation through state power seemed to him at the very least irrelevant and, at worse, dangerous. All his work in his last decade was therefore opposed to this tendency, which was shared by all "institutions, parties, and to a whole current of thought and revolutionary action that see power in the form of a state apparatus."[17] But his disregard for the statism of the left draws upon his larger historical views that it remained wedded to an understanding of political economy from the nineteenth century that he viewed as obsolete. Indeed, as he explained in many interviews and papers in the second half of the 1970s, political parties or unions were certainly adapted and useful for the issues of the industrial society but became for him an obstacle to the emergence of new problematizations. Questions of the "mad," "delinquency," medicine, or sexuality "could be heard only, and only if, they were conceptualized radically outside these organizations, and I would even say, against them."[18] Moreover, his opposition to the party-form

remained strong. As he stated on many occasions, he did not think that parties had "produced, within the problematization of the social existence, anything interesting," adding that "we might ask ourselves if political parties have not been the most sterilizing political invention since the nineteenth century."[19]

This view fits perfectly with Foucault's analysis of the origins of May 1968 and its aftermath. In the eyes of Foucault, it created "an outside to the major political parties, an outside to the normal or regular program," which constituted a "certain form of political innovation." This innovation, he added, would not transform institutions immediately, but rather our everyday life, "attitudes," and "mentality."[20] Therefore, as he observed at the Forum "vivre à gauche" in 1977, organized by members of the second left like Pierre Rosanvallon, "innovation does not happen through parties, trade unions, bureaucracy and politics anymore. It emerges from an individual, moral concern. We no longer ask political theory to tell us what to do, we do not need tutors anymore. This change is ideological and profound."[21] As he argued, we know very well that all those political programs "even if they are inspired by the best of intentions, become a tool, an instrument of oppression."[22]

Revolution as a totalitarian project

The strong opposition to both the union of the left, as well as a certain kind of institutional politics, should also be understood as part of a more general opposition to the idea of socialist revolution itself. These statements must be placed within the context of the huge campaign around Eastern European dissidents and against "totalitarianism" (amplified by the diffusion of Alexander Solzhenitsyn's *The Gulag Archipelago* under the aegis of the "new philosophers") that took place between 1975 and 1978, which was not only about repression in communist countries but also the project of French socialism. In so doing, they openly associated their critique of totalitarianism with the entire project of the postwar left, suggesting that the "French Left's roots in this revolutionary tradition (especially Jacobinism) made it particularly susceptible to totalitarianism."[23] As the historian Hervé Chauvin argues, within the anti-totalitarian left, "a certain amalgamation was cultivated between the situation in Eastern Europe and the potential risks related to the arrival of a socialist government in France."[24] The French writer Claude Mauriac, in an article in *Le Monde*, strongly criticized this new "antitotalitarian left" arguing that "this insidious, pernicious logic" will infer "abusively the Gulag to Marxism, Marxism to communism, communism to the common program and the common program to the Gulag."[25]

Foucault's views on this movement are well known and pretty clear in his writings of that period. Even if his own position was more careful, he still endorsed some of the most important interventions within that debate. There

was, of course, his known admiration for the work of the French historian François Furet about the French Revolution (especially *La revolution française* and *Penser la revolution française*, published in 1965 and 1977),[26] a book that, far from just revisiting the history of the French Revolution, also attacked the very relevance of the idea of revolutionary politics itself. The publication of *Penser la revolution française* in 1977 was therefore seen by many as a critique of the French left's fascination for Jacobinism and revolutionary ideas. In that sense, as Christofferson has convincingly shown, Furet's fears that the French "passion for equality" was a threat to liberty also participated in the debate among French intellectuals on the legitimacy of the union of the left.[27]

Beneath his endorsement of Furet's work, Foucault supported such strong attacks on the ideas of revolution and egalitarianism. In a 1977 interview with the "new philosopher" and author of *La barbarie à visage humain*, Bernard-Henri Lévy, Foucault directly addressed the question of revolution. For him, "the return of the revolution, that's our problem. . . . There is no doubt that, without it, the question of Stalinism would be no more than a textbook case—a simple problem of the organization of the societies, or of the validity of the Marxist theory. But, with Stalinism, it's about something else. You know as well as I: it's the desire for revolution itself that is a problem."[28] What is interesting about Foucault's answer is not only that he notably dismisses the idea of revolution, but also that he makes a subtle reference to its "return" in the context of the union of the left and its expected victory in the legislative elections of 1978. Finally, in a 1977 interview (moderately) titled "Torture Is Reason," Foucault was asked if he could think of an alternative to the "police state" that he associated with socialism. His answer was as clear as it was radical: "In one word this important tradition of socialism may be called fundamentally into question because everything this socialist tradition has produced historically may be condemned."[29] Considering that he made this statement in a context where almost half of the French population was ready to vote for a socialist candidate and project, Foucault's radical critique of the socialist legacy may reasonably be interpreted as a strong dismissal of a socialist alternative. In the early 1980s it was not man, but Marxism and its political project that was to be erased, "like a face drawn in sand on the edge of the sea."[30]

NEOLIBERALISM BEYOND LEFT AND RIGHT

In this context of hostility against the postwar left, Foucault and many others set out in search of what could be called a "left governmentality." As he consistently stated, in his view the French left did not have a "problematic of government" but only "a problematic of the State."[31] This idea was explicit in

his lessons on *The Birth of Biopolitics* given at the Collège de France, where he famously argued that there was no "autonomous socialist governmentality"[32] and that, therefore, "in actual fact, and history has shown this, socialism may only be implemented, connected up to diverse types of governmentality."[33] A socialist governmentality was thus, for Foucault, still left to "invent."

In this context, Foucault—and some of his contemporaries—saw neoliberalism as an interesting framework to rethink the left rather than as a political program, as a "governmentality" rather than a "simple economic logic."[34] As has already been argued by the French sociologist Geoffroy de Lagasnerie, Foucault did not see it as "something that would function as a political alternative to which a well-defined program or plan could be attached."[35] In a sense, what was important here, was that Foucault did not really study neoliberalism as a problem of the "left" or "right." Instead, he was interested in it as a form of governmentality or what we could call its political ontology, the framework under which it conceives politics and society. As he wrote in his biopolitics lectures:

> Liberalism in America is a whole way of being and thinking. It is a type of relation between the governors and the governed much more than a technique of governors with regard to the governed. . . . I think this is why American liberalism currently appears not just, or not so much as a political alternative, but let's say as a sort of many-sided, ambiguous, global claim with a foothold in both the right and the left. It is also a sort of utopian focus which is always being revived. It is also a method of thought, a grid of economic and sociological analysis.[36]

This specific use of neoliberalism was also fueled by the French political context. The election of 1974 in France of Valéry Giscard D'Estaing against François Mitterrand in one of the tightest elections in French history (50.81—49.19 percent) played a key role here. His presidency, though often underestimated, marked an important transition in French society. Rather than pushing forward the Gaullist legacy, Giscard incarnated a more neoliberal right in French politics. His "liberal" program not only took into account the claims of May 1968 on "societal" issues, but also applied more neoliberal economic doctrines.[37] In this perspective, the rising neoliberal governmentality within French politics and the transformations within French politics were essential for Foucault for at least two reasons: (1) a certain rejection of statism and (2) a framework for pluralism and tolerance for minority practices.

Anti-statism as desubjectification

Foucault's thinking about anti-statism is complex. As noted by Mitchell Dean, we need to able to understand a perspective that mixes "a theoretical and analytical anti-statism with a critique of state phobia."[38] To grasp

this ambivalent relationship, it is necessary to understand his relationship to the state within the more general evolution of his work and his rising interest in the techniques of subjection. Indeed, during the late 1970s, Foucault defined the idea of the critic as the "art of not being governed so much."[39] This art attempted to disarticulate the "bundle of relationships that ties . . . power, truth and the subject" and had as its essential function "the desubjectification of what one might call, the politics of truth."[40] This fundamental attitude against institutions of subjectification guided his understanding of politics in the last years of his life. His relation to anti-statism must therefore be understood through his work on subjectivity across the 1970s. The new framework Foucault built around the relations between "games of truth," "systems of power," and "techniques of the self" helped him to interpret the "new social movements" of the 1970s as movements against subjectification (*assujetissement*). In his words, struggles were no longer "attacks on a particular institution of power, or group, or class, or elite, but rather a particular technique, a form of power."[41] This form of power influenced everyday life, as it "classifies individuals into categories and defines their own individuality, attaches them to their identity." It is not a power that represses or exploits, but rather that subjectifies. The problem of "exploitation and wealth would be replaced by one of excessive power,"[42] of control of conduits and modern forms of pastoral power. He called this "specific frame of resistance to forms of power" "revolts of conduct."[43] Those revolts were erupting, in the eyes of Foucault, when the "proposed institutions are unsatisfactory" and "when we seek to organize, to construct, to define our relation to ourselves."[44]

Such revolts obviously opposed a certain kind of state power, but not as it was conceived by many organizations on the left during that period. Foucault did not believe in seizing state power. The question was more about the state as "a matrix of individualization or a new form of pastoral power" and not only as an institution to control nor abolish. For Foucault, "the problem we are facing today, which is at once political, ethical, social and philosophical, is not to try to free the individual from the state and its institutions, but to free it from the State and the type of individualization associated with it."[45] In the same way that we should not seek to "liberate" our sexuality, the question is not about getting rid of the state (nor taking control of it), but of refusing the forms of normalization it imposes on our lives and the way it shapes our relation to truth and therefore to ourselves. The main task of the struggles of the 1970s and 1980s was therefore to "promote new forms of subjectivity by refusing the kind of individuality that has been imposed on us for several centuries."[46] His understanding of power and liberty therefore put the "invention of the self" at the center of his politics. The logic of resistance was profoundly changed under those terms. As Judith Revel has pointed out, Foucault's critique "consisted of displacing the place of thought and politics"[47] just like the Greek cynics who made of their own existence a public scandal. Foucault

referred to it as "activism through life itself," in which he saw the conditions of a "revolutionary life."[48]

This critique of the state and of social institutions as techniques of subjectification deeply resonated with his understanding of neoliberalism and the evolution of French politics. It seems, therefore, interesting to note that for Foucault, parallels could be drawn between Greek antiquity, the rising neoliberal governmentality in France, and his understanding of what a critical attitude is. The 1970s in France seems, therefore, to manifest the slow disintegration of what happened under the Christianization of the culture of the self. Foucault appears then to establish a historical parallel between the transition from antiquity to Christianity and the transition from the old statist France to the rise of neoliberalism after 1968. Indeed it is important to understand that the autonomy he sees in the Greco-Roman culture is precisely what he tried to achieve through his critique as an intellectual. As he explained at UC Berkeley in 1983, what is "the most striking thing about Greco-Roman culture is the fact that people have what seems to be a real autonomous culture of the self."[49] This autonomy does not imply that one's self is freed of any relation with power structures, but that the relationship to ourselves "was not at all a matter of authority-based obligation, they were not obliged to do so, but it was proposed to them as something important, something of great value, and something which could give them the ability to achieve a better life, a more beautiful life, a new type of existence, etc., etc. So you see that it was a matter of personal choice."[50] In this specific configuration, the techniques of the self were not integrated within institutions but rather diffused as books, treaties, or advice that Foucault studied in his *History of Sexuality*: "These practices of the self were independent of pedagogical, religious, social institutions. . . . This is what I meant by 'autonomous.'"[51]

Christianity marked a transition from a "morality [that] was essentially looking for a personal ethics to morality as obedience to a system of rules." More specifically, beginning in the fifteenth century, a "great process of governmentalization of society" occurred that made this "autonomous self-culture 'disappear' after the development of Christianity, because the formation of the self and the way in which people should take care of themselves was integrated into religious, social and educational institutions."[52] This institutionalization and integration of the culture of the self within pastoral power (through practices like confession or penitence that have the care of the soul as their object) obviously did not erase the culture of the self, but forced it to "lose much of its autonomy."[53] Today, he argued, this lack of autonomy persists and the practices of the self "have been integrated into structures of authority and discipline" or into the "penal system" that "responds, in a way, to the same objective. One of its aspects, of course, is to constitute a certain type of self, since, through the penal system, the criminal must recognize himself as a criminal." But, with the 1970s and the rise of neoliberal

governmentality, Foucault observed something that captivated him. The ethic, that was slowly incorporated into the "juridical organization," which took the form of a "juridical structure" was now collapsing and opening a new path toward the creation of a more autonomous ethic:

> [The] three great references of our ethics to religion, law and science are now, if I may say so, worn out. And we know very well that we need ethics, and that we cannot ask religion, law, or science to give us that ethic. We have the example of a Greco-Roman society, where an ethic, and an ethic of great importance, existed without these three references. [...] The problem is not at all to return to this Greco-Roman ethic, since part of ours is coming from it. But we know that it is possible to carry out an ethical research, to build a new ethic, to make room for what I should call the ethical imagination, without any reference to religion, law and science. And it is for this reason that, I believe, this analysis of Greco-Roman ethics may be of interest.[54]

We could therefore witness the fact that in the French society of the early 1970s "the idea of morality as obedience to a code of rules is now disappearing, has already disappeared." This decline must be understood in relation to the rise of neoliberal policies in France after the election of Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, which led to an important transformation in the relation between the state and institutions. Giscard's concern for increasing individual freedoms in the aftermath of May 1968 was accompanied by a warier relation to state power. In this context, Giscard defended the vision of a state that was neither "invasive nor arbitrary,"[55] including the "suppression of phone listening, the refusal of any foreclosures of the press even in case of attacks against the president, reaffirmation of the right of asylum,"[56] and the end of the censorship of cultural production (especially movies that had to be politically evaluated by the censorship commission until 1974). As noted by Mathias Bernard, "the crisis of May 1968 transformed [Giscard's] conception of society—insofar as it appeared possible to respond to anti-authoritarian aspirations of the baby boom generation without jeopardizing an economic organization which, for him, carried the evidence of its effectiveness."[57] In an attempt to "modernize" French society and to attack "social prejudices," he also created three new departments: one on the condition of prisoners, one for immigrant workers, and one concerning the condition of women. This led to such important reforms as the legalization of abortion, the liberalization of contraception, the decriminalization of adultery, the recognition of divorce by mutual consent, important measures to promote the integration of immigrant workers, and the improvement of conditions in prisons. He was also the first president to actually go into a prison to visit inmates[58] and to invite immigrant garbage men to the Elysée presidential palace[59] in 1974. He was also open to reducing the voting age to eighteen years old. In an interview, Foucault even joked about Giscard, saying that he would soon define his project as an "anti-repressive society."[60]

The key point here is that he understood neoliberalism not as the retreat of the state but as the retreat of its techniques of subjugation and as a decline of the jurisdiction of the moral. From that standpoint, it is interesting to note that there was a deep connection between the rise of neoliberalism as a form of governmentality and Foucault's plea for inventing new subjectivities. Indeed, rather than being an obstacle to these new forms of resistance, neoliberalism seemed to open new spaces for the experimentation of ways of life, to offer a framework more open to invent a more autonomous ethic. The effects of a certain configuration between state power and the forms of subjugation seem to be very different under neoliberalism than under the old Gaullist and statist France. It was a very seductive framework for rethinking the political struggles of the time. It opened a space of freedom within the enterprise of creating new "subjectivities" and spaces for experimentation.

Foucault was particularly struck by this evolution within the realm of sexuality. In a rare paper of 1978[61] discussed by Serge Audier, Foucault explored the reception of his proposition to depenalize sexual relations between adults and teenagers. In his view, France should move the legal age toward thirteen to fifteen years old. In the article, he explained how surprised he was that the reaction of the government (in 1977) was positive and the discussion interesting. The main reason he gave for this reaction was precisely the decline of a disciplinary/pastoral model of exercising power under neoliberalism. He then mobilized the analysis of Gary Becker on crime and interestingly noted that "in the development that we are seeing now, what we are now discovering, is the extraordinary cost of what represents the exercise of repressive power."[62] He continued: "Why alienate intellectuals? What is the benefit of a society that would hunt homosexuals? The birth rate? In the age of the contraceptive pill? The fight against syphilis?"[63] In this age of neoliberalism, we understand that "whenever one commits an act that is exercising power, it costs, and not just economically."[64]

A Framework for Pluralism

In terms of spaces for minority practices, the neoliberal government of Giscard could also be seen to be of significant interest for the post-1968 left. Foucault saw neoliberalism as an interesting framework for new forms of politics that were open to minority practices. As has been argued by Lagasnerie, Foucault "argued that the central concept of the neoliberal approach is not freedom, but plurality. [...] The specificity of this paradigm is to force us to ask ourselves what it means to live in a society made up of individuals or groups experiencing different modes of existence."[65] This framework was essential to Foucault precisely because his understanding of politics as a form of resistance to normalization and subjection implied a certain commitment

to *difference* in terms of our relationship to ourselves. Foucault did not plea for identity, but rather for a certain form of pluralism in society and within ourselves. As he writes, "the relationships we have to have with ourselves are not ones of identity, rather, they must be relationships of differentiation, of creation, of innovation."[66] In this view, we do not need to "discover" our "true identity" (a form of essentialism Foucault always repudiated) but rather "refuse what we are"[67] within a given configuration of power and knowledge ("*la 'vraie vie' ne peut se manifester que comme 'vie autre*'"). In this regard, the struggles of the 1970s were fundamentally struggles for "a right to difference," or to differ from oneself.

In an indirect critique to the situationists and Guy Debord, Foucault openly defined neoliberalism not as a society of consumption or as a force of uniformization, but rather as a "game of differentiations."[68] As he wrote in his lectures on biopolitics, neoliberalism, as it was conceived by the ordoliberals, "and which has now become the program of most governments in capitalist countries, absolutely does not seek the constitution of [a] standardizing market society" but, "on the contrary, obtaining a society that is not orientated towards the commodity and the uniformity of the commodity, but towards the multiplicity and differentiation of enterprises."[69] For him, the key aim of the neoliberal agenda was not "so much the exchange of commodities as the mechanisms of competition"[70] and thus of "differenciation." The logic of neoliberalism was therefore an interesting framework in the eyes of Foucault for creating a space to protect and even stimulate the proliferation of discourse and subjectivities. Indeed, as he argued in *The Birth of Biopolitics*, neoliberalism shaped the idea of a society "in which there is an optimization of systems of difference, in which the field is left open to fluctuating processes, in which minority individuals and practices are tolerated, in which action is brought to bear on the rules of the game rather than on the players, and finally in which there is an environmental type of intervention instead of the internal subjugation of individuals."[71]

In Foucault's view, this action of an "environmental" type was distinct from the former one. As he wrote, what "you can see appears on the horizon of this kind of analysis is not at all the idea of a project of an exhaustively disciplinary society in which the legal network hemming in individuals is taken over and extended internally by, let's say, normative mechanisms. Nor is it a society in which the mechanisms of general normalization and the exclusion of those who cannot be normalized is needed."[72] Therefore, as argued by Mitchell Dean, Foucault draws an important contrast between "external" forms of subjugation and internal forms of subjugation "as the fabrication of subjectivity through relations of power and knowledge."[73] Neoliberalism is therefore a form of governmentality that breaks with past forms of regulation and power relying on the production of the subject through a set

of techniques and laws. The rules of the game in opposition to the forms of disciplinary power "are not decisions which someone takes for others" but a general framework where neoliberalism does not tell you how to behave in your everyday life: "It is a rule of the economic game and not a purposeful economic-social control."[74] The rules are indeed imposed on players but the players "remain free in their game."[75] Thus, neoliberalism finally makes, as Luis Moreno notes, individuals that "are responsible for their lives without imposing a defined anthropological model. [...] Individuals must not submit to any rule concerning how to live, to love or to have fun; they simply have to ensure subjective and objective means to get there."[76] Indeed, as argued by Isabelle Garo:

> Behind what may seem at first sight to be the most frightening commercial cynicism . . . lies a real critical power, which Foucault does not miss: criticism of any essentialization of feelings and behaviors, from the maternal nature to the Eternal feminine, critical of any eternity of norms at the same time. No other approach to human behavior offers such an a-moralistic, Nietzschean, or de-anthropologizing perspective of genuine explosive power.[77]

In the eyes of Foucault, neoliberalism proceeds to an "anthropologic erasing" (*gommage anthropologique*) in its understanding of human actions.[78]

From this perspective, it was quite clear to Foucault that neoliberalism was a new form of governmentality that, as Serge Audier points out, was certainly in many ways not better than the former but nonetheless, "offered margins of freedom, especially for minority practices—drugs, sex, refusal to work, etc." Therefore, "this apparent ambiguity of Foucault's relation to neoliberalism offers a landmark in the way he tried to reinvent subjectivity, sexuality and even welfare."[79]

FOUCAULT AND THE FRENCH "SECOND LEFT"

This important shift in the way Foucault conceived resistance outside the sphere of the state, and saw an interesting framework in neoliberalism, strongly echoed the transformations of the French intellectual field and, specifically that of the left. To understand how profound this transformation was, it is interesting to read how important French intellectuals at this time read Giscard's reforms. Andre Gorz's intervention is in this regard particularly interesting. An important Marxist thinker of ecology, but also an advocate of the end of postwar class politics[80] (and close to the "second left"), Gorz also saw in the rise of French neoliberalism an occasion to rethink the left.

As he put it in a text of 1976, "it is clear: Giscard comes from the right. But it does not follow from that, that the liberalization of society is necessarily a

right-wing project and that we should abandon that to the giscardians."[81] He then stated that "everywhere in Europe there is now, between neoliberals and neosocialists, exchanges and partial osmosis."[82] The core of these exchanges between this new left and this new right was not so much about increasing corporate power, but about struggling against a common enemy: the state. As Gorz argued, "if Giscard arrives at disengaging the central power and freeing new spaces where we can exercise collective initiative, why not profit from it?" The retreat of the state, provoked by neoliberal policies, would then become a good occasion for an anti-statist left to "occupy the field left vacant by power."[83] He then naturally concluded with a very straightforward question: "Does the left want a society where everyone relies on the state for everything: the pollution of our shores, food additives, architecture, abusive layoffs, work accidents, etc.? In that case we will only replace a private carelessness by an administrative carelessness, an employer's arbitrary will with a bureaucratic arbitrary will."[84] As Serge Audier has pointed out, for Gorz, neoliberalism was obviously not a solution, but "it could offer significant opportunities for another economic, political and social agenda."[85]

The relations between Foucault and neoliberalism may be understood from a similar perspective. He obviously never advocated for "any kind of wild liberalism,"[86] but he did see neoliberalism as an interesting framework to create a "left governmentality" that could stand as an alternative to the old socialist left and a space for experimentation. This project was most clearly defended by the intellectuals around the French "second left" and the CFDT union. As Michel Chapuis, socialist minister under Michel Rocard and an important figure of the "second left," wrote: "Facing the new liberal right incarnated by Giscard, it would have been important to give a chance to a new socialist left."[87] This Rocardian left, rather than being completely opposed to the Giscardian power, saw this transformation within the right as a model for its own ambitions on the left.

This French "second left" acquired its name from a famous speech of the socialist leader (and prime minister in 1988) Michel Rocard in the 1977 congress of the socialist party, where he made a distinction between two lefts: one "that was long-dominant, Jacobin, centralized, statist, nationalist and protectionist" and the other, the "second left," which is "decentralized" and "refuses arbitrary domination, that of the bosses as well as of the state." This left was to be "liberating for dependent majorities like women or badly integrated minorities in society: youth, immigrants, and the disabled."[88] In an obvious opposition to the program of the union of the left and to François Mitterrand, Rocard formulated the idea of a strong division between these two "cultures" within the left. In this struggle, it was clear for him that beyond their differences, both communists and the Mitterrandist majority within the party had in common the idea that "the essential element within their strategy of change is centered on the conquest of state."[89]

The most clearly articulated theorization of these "two cultures" of the left could be found in a book by Patrick Viveret (who wrote Rocard's 1977 speech) and Pierre Rosanvallon, which was published in 1977 under the title *For a New Political Culture*.[90] Foucault was enthusiastic about this book, explaining that it gave "a remarkable understanding of our present" and "an accurate diagnosis," and it was "a breakthrough."[91] Viveret and Rosanvallon defended the idea that, since the war, France had lived under a political culture where "the central element is the state, considered at the same time as the object of the struggle and the space of social transformation and the motor for the future transition to socialism."[92] The problem for them was not so much what you could do with the state as the state itself, which was the main tool for social transformation. As they argued, "the dominant political discourse, from the left or right, puts the difficulty of social transformation, not in its aim, but in the means."[93] From this perspective, the second left was a reaction against a certain conception of social transformation and a certain relation to the state that was, in their view, shared by both the left and the Gaullist right. Against these two figures of "statism," the "second left" defended the virtues of "civil society," of human rights, of minority rights, and rehabilitated within the left the idea of entrepreneurship. For them, as Jacques Julliard pointed out in an interview with Michel Rocard, "socialism is not the suppression of private entrepreneurship, but to the contrary, the possibility for each individual to recover a function of entrepreneur."[94] Thus, in their attempt to refuse a "statist society" and to "rehabilitate the concept of entrepreneurship," neoliberalism could be seen as an interesting intellectual tool to invent a new left, a left that was no longer opposed to the market. This necessary evolution was for them a condition to be able to "elaborate a plan [that was] able to break with any economistic, bureaucratic or totalitarian temptation."[95]

In this context, it comes as little surprise that Foucault shared their concerns and ambition to find an alternative to the postwar left. This is the reason Foucault was attracted by the "second left."[96] As noted by Isabelle Garo, "following the highly curved political trajectory of a part of his generation," Foucault "intended to contribute in his own way to the liberalizing "modernization" of the institutional left, beginning with the Socialist Party."[97]

CONCLUSION: WHAT DOES LEFT MEAN?

In a conversation organized at the University of Chicago in 2013, Gary Becker asked if Foucault was a socialist. In his response, François Ewald made an interesting distinction: "Socialist, no! On the Left." Troubled, Becker then asked, "But well, what does Left mean?"[98] This question, regarding the definition of the left itself, would actually be the one that was at stake

in the mid-1970s in France. What should the left be? What was at stake in the strong political debates of that period was not only the program of the left, but its definition. Though the so-called statist left won in the ballot boxes in 1981, it would not be an exaggeration to say that the "second left's" ideas later had a central importance in the evolution of the socialist party.

It is essential to understand that Foucault and many other post-1968 intellectuals took part in the process of thinking about a left that was not socialist, a left that would wipe out the legacy of postwar socialism. Described as "crypto-totalitarian," they finally abandoned the socialist project. Since the revolution was not desirable anymore, Foucault thought that we should invent a kind of politics that could open the path toward a left that would no longer reject the market and therefore create a space freed from the state and freed from the normativity of the "social-statist" governmentality (shared by both socialists and Gaullists). In this sense, as Michael Foessel argues:

> In defending civil society, the second left took for inspiration the libertarian and social thought of 1968. From the thought of Michel Foucault to the activism of the CFDT there was an anti-statist consensus. Not "reform" instead of "revolution," but "microresistances" and local experiences against the vertical exercise of power.[99]

By rejecting, as Paul Veyne notes, any "abstract" or "general" analysis in his political commitments, Foucault discovered an interesting idea in neoliberalism for his "militancy on the margins"[100] and his "everyday" struggles for the excluded, prisoners, immigrants, or people with mental illness. From this perspective, neoliberalism provides an interesting framework for thinking about how, in accordance with Foucault's understanding of social critique, "not to be governed too much."[101] This is precisely why the historian Julian Bourg saw in these evolutions a turn toward ethics among the French left, a turn that not only transformed the main subject of social change, but also "revolutionized what was the very notion of revolution itself."[102] In the long term, this change, to a certain extent, led to the substitution of "class struggle" with the "care of the self," a struggle that was, in many ways, perfectly compatible with neoliberalism. Therefore, if Foucault was never a neoliberal in the strict sense of the term, his understanding of power and resistance in his last decade resonates profoundly with neoliberal political ontology and its transformation of politics into ethics.

NOTES

1. "Non au sexe roi" (Foucault interview with Bernard-Henri Lévy), *Le nouvel observateur*, no. 644 (March 1977): 92–130.

2. Michel Bosquet, "Occupons le terrain," *Le nouvel observateur*, no. 116, (August 1976): 23.

3. Pierre Rosanvallon and Patrick Viveret, *Pour une nouvelle culture politique* (Paris: Seuil, 1977), ebook.

4. Claude Mauriac, *Le Temps immobile VII. Signes, rencontres et rendez-vous* (Paris: Grasset, 1983).

5. Unpublished interview of Michel Foucault and four militants of the LCR, July 1977, http://1libertaire.free.fr/MFoucault117.html.

6. Michel Foucault, "La méthodologie pour la connaissance du monde: comment se débarrasser du marxisme," interview with R. Yoshimoto, April 25, 1978, 302–28, http://1libertaire.free.fr/MFoucault332.html.

7. Colin Gordon, "Foucault, neoliberalism, etc.," *Foucault News*, 2015.

8. Marc Lazar, "La gauche et l'État:le 'moment programme commun,' 1974–1978," in Danielle Tartakowsky and Alain Bergounioux, eds., *L'union sans unité. Le programme commun de la gauche, 1963–1978* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2012), 109.

9. Pierre Grémion, *Modernisation et progressisme. Fin d'une époque 1968–1981* (Paris: Esprit, 2005), 8.

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11. This theme was very popular at the time. See, especially, Claude Lefort, *Un Homme en trop: Réflexions sur 'L'Archipel du goulag'* (Paris: Le Seuil, 1975); Jean-François Revel, *La Tentation totalitaire* (Paris: Laffont, 1976); André Glucksmann, *Les maitres penseurs* (Paris: Grasset, 1977).

12. Michel Foucault, "Crimes et châtiments en U.R.S.S. et ailleurs." (interview with K. S., Karol) *Le nouvel observateur*, no. 158 (1976): 34–37, http://1libertaire.free.fr/MFoucault438.html.

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14. Quoted in Mauriac, *Le Temps immobile VII*.

15. Mauriac wrote: "Michel Foucault reconnaît ne même plus souhaiter pour la gauche une victoire dont elle ne saurait que faire dans ces conditions" (Mauriac, *Le Temps immobile VII*.).

16. Paul Veyne, *Et dans l'éternité je ne m'ennuierai pas: Souvenirs* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2014), 209.

17. Michel Foucault, "Non au sexe roi," interview with B.- H. Lévy, *Le nouvel observateur*, no. 644 (March 1977), 92–130, *Dits et écrits*, vol. 3, no. 200.

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28. Foucault, "Non au sexe roi."

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Chapter 4

Foucault's Early Reading of Marx and the Two Meanings of Humanism

Aner Barzilay

This chapter challenges recent interpretations of Michel Foucault's 1978–1979 *Collège de France* lectures, *The Birth of Biopolitics*.[1] According to a certain "political reading," the Biopolitics lectures offer a rare glimpse into Foucault's views on contemporary events. What is supposedly revealed by this interpretation of Foucault's analysis of economic liberalism in the twentieth century is, first, a nefarious political liaison with neoliberalism that is unexpected from a member of the French left. A second component of this line of critique is the underlying assumption that Foucault experienced a serious intellectual crisis after 1976, which caused a fundamental departure from his earlier work and led to the pursuit of a new philosophical orientation during his "last decade."

Such a reading, however, risks obfuscating the philosophical complexity of Foucault's critique of his contemporary political horizon. Indeed, although a significant methodological shift did occur in Foucault's thought after the publication of the first volume of the *History of Sexuality*, there was nonetheless a clear philosophical continuity with his earlier works. The Biopolitics lectures are no exception, as evidenced by several allusions to the argument of *The Order of Things* (1966). The short horizon of the "political" reading of Foucault therefore obscures an abiding interest in the use of Nietzsche's philosophy for thinking beyond the anthropological limits of the modern *episteme*. As newly available documents within the Foucault archive make clear, this effort to historicize the problem of man in modern philosophy goes back to the early 1950s, when he was a young psychology lecturer at the University of Lille. Of particular importance is a course Foucault taught there on the origins of philosophical anthropology, the arguments of which reemerged in later strategic junctions of his career.

One of the main philosophical debates that stirred French philosophy after the Second World War was the humanism debate that ensued between Martin Heidegger and Jean-Paul Sartre. Foucault responded to this debate and tried to blaze a new philosophical trail away from the "anthropological slumber" that haunted post-Kantian philosophy. "Anthropology," for Foucault, was not the social science discipline we now know (which was in France widely known as *ethnologie* at the time). Instead for Foucault it referred in the 1950s to the emergence of philosophical anthropology as a response to Kant's philosophy in the nineteenth century, which posed the risk of stripping philosophy from its transcendental premises and reducing it to human science. This problem troubled many philosophers in the beginning of the twentieth century and inspired the philosophical projects of eminent thinkers such as Husserl, Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty. Their bugbear was the problem of "psychologism." The young Foucault, who himself was educated within this phenomenological tradition, widened this critique to the entire matrix of nineteenth-century "anthropologisms."

This argument for a philosophical continuity in Foucault's thought draws on unpublished archival material from the early 1950s, and specifically on Foucault's first documented critique of Marx.[2] Whereas most of the recent contributions on this topic have tended to focus on the immediate political and historical context that surrounded the Biopolitics lectures, and consequently have ignored the possible connections between Foucault's neoliberal interpretation and his earlier works from the 1960s, Michael Behrent's account has the merit of attempting to tie the political dimension to Foucault's general philosophical project. The rejection of *political* humanism, so Behrent argues, derived from a deeper, *philosophical* anti-humanism that Foucault addressed in the controversial final lines of *The Order of Things,* where he anticipated the coming "death of man." This, Behrent suggests further was precisely the philosophical problem of anthropology Foucault had explored since the early 1950s.

A lot hangs on this single premise, however, as Behrent uses the so-called synonymy between the political and the philosophical instantiations of humanism to traverse between these two levels and to draw political conclusions from what, as I argue, are essentially philosophical arguments. For this purpose, I return to Foucault's first documented critique of Marx in the manuscript of the 1952–1953 course (henceforth: the Lille Course) on the origins of anthropology in modern philosophy and compare it with Foucault's analysis of Marx in the Biopolitics lectures, some twenty-five years later.[3] It becomes clear that Foucault's rejection of Marx and his supposed endorsement of the Chicago School occurred in relation to the problem of anthropology that, to use Etienne Balibar's term, concerns the "meta-structure" of Foucault's thought—that is, his philosophy of history.

In so doing, I suggest that framing Foucault's position in the Biopolitics lectures solely in political terms, i.e., as "anti-humanist," ignores the complexity of Foucault's argument and the force of his historical analysis. I further offer a possible explanation for this confusion between two anti-humanisms that stems from the terminology used by one of Foucault's mentors, Louis Althusser. It was in critical dialogue with Althusser that Foucault's early reading of Marx in the Lille Course was first formulated. Rather than denying the possibility of a historicized and political reading of Foucault's Biopolitics lectures, my intention then is to argue that any such reading must start from the primacy of Foucault's philosophical project. In the last section, I return to the argument of *The Order of Things* and conclude by suggesting an alternative political reading. The upshot of this analysis is to situate the Biopolitics lectures in the larger arc of Foucault's thought, rather than isolating the "governmentality" period within his intellectual biography.

HUMANISM AND ANTHROPOLOGY: READING MARX IN THE LILLE COURSE

One of the central issues that dominated the philosophical and the political discourse in France during the postwar decade was the question of humanism.[4] This debate was not only limited to existential circles and the famous philosophical dispute between Heidegger and Sartre about the relation, or lack thereof, between existentialism and humanism. The philosophical debate was also inherently tied to postwar Marxian politics. Nevertheless, even among the Marxists there were those who strove to drive a wedge between the philosophical and the political. The main force behind the attempt to purge humanism from Marx's philosophy was Foucault's young mentor and instructor at the École Normale Supérieure (ENS), Louis Althusser, whose later interpretation of Marx was grounded in a selective reading of Marx's oeuvre in order to point to the "scientific" value of Marx's later writings and primarily *Das Kapital* in contrast to his early humanist writings. This interpretation was mostly aimed against the humanist Marxist faction of the French Communist Party (PCF) and their mouthpiece, Roger Garaudy. In his memoir, Althusser admitted that Heidegger's interpretation of Marx in the 1947 *Letter on Humanism* "influenced [his] arguments concerning *theoretical* antihumanism in Marx."[5]

The "theoretical" stakes of Althusser's interpretation transcended the politics of the PCF. It was an argument staking the claim for the significance of Marxism within the history of Western philosophy, a claim that Althusser couched in terms of "scientific validity." As the philosophy instructor—the *caïman*—at the ENS, Althusser's justification for his "scientific" binary

division of Marx's oeuvre hinged on an explicit philosophical motivation, one for which Spinoza's metaphysics provided the main model.[6] According to Althusser, Marx's novelty could be understood only against the backdrop of the history of philosophy and science, and not only in relation to a political ideology such as humanism.

We can recognize something very similar in the early writings of Foucault, who joined the PCF at Althusser's behest in 1951 before leaving the party in 1952. That same year Foucault received his first teaching position at the University of Lille. A course he taught there during his first year illustrates that his distinctive philosophical agenda was beginning to diverge from Althusser's. Foucault was mostly concerned with the phenomenological problem of the division of labor between philosophy and the human sciences. The course he taught at Lille, entitled "Knowledge of Man and Transcendental Reflection," set out to uncover the hidden link that was forged in modern philosophy between the human subject and truth. He thus provided an original and capacious rereading of the context for the "Humanism debate."

The Lille Course was composed at a crucial moment in Foucault's intellectual biography when he had severed his ties with the PCF and was distancing himself from phenomenology. In the course, Foucault attempted to redefine the relationship between phenomenology and science by delving into the "ontological conditions" of the contemporary philosophical predicament. The manuscript provides a glimpse into Foucault's reading of Marx at this moment of transition.[7]

In the course, we find Foucault's first documented reading of Marx set in the context of post-Kantian philosophical anthropology. Specifically, Foucault responded to Husserl's *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology* (1936), which provided a historical analysis of the philosophical origins of modern science. In the book, Husserl justified the pivotal role of transcendental phenomenology in the history of the West and warned against the perils of reducing philosophy to positivist science. According to Foucault in the Lille Course, the reason Husserl was forced to introduce history in his defense of the transcendental status of phenomenology vis-à-vis psychology and philosophical anthropology was related to Husserl's failure to properly reckon with Kant. Foucault adopted this key insight from Heidegger's interpretation of Kant, which pointed to the constitutive role of human finitude in Kant's first Critique.[8] If, as Husserl had argued, the founding philosophical figure of the subjectivist transcendental theme in philosophy was Descartes and not Kant, Heidegger (and later Foucault) pointed out that with Descartes the divine was still present and could serve as an alibi for the idea of infinitude. For Foucault, following Heidegger, it was with Kant's grounding of transcendental subjectivity in human finitude as the constitutive basis for knowledge that an "anthropological shadow"

was introduced into the center of philosophy. This shadow continued to lurk behind the transcendental project. And thus, from this perspective, Husserl's phenomenology became its unwitting victim.

The importance of the argument of the Lille Course cannot be overstated, as it was Foucault's first attempt to embark on an archaeological excavation of the tacit foundations of modern philosophy. Foucault later presented a similar argument in both his complementary PhD dissertation on Kant's *Anthropology* and as late as 1966, in the penultimate chapter of *The Order of Things*, "Man and His Doubles."[9] In effect, the Lille Course was Foucault's first attempt to define what he would later term "episteme," as a historical configuration on which knowledge hinges in a given period. Modernity, which for Foucault begins with Kant's critical project, was to be understood through a new *historical ontology*, in which a new entity had arisen that served as both the subject and object of knowledge, its bedrock and boundary, that is, man. Humanism, while in part a corollary of this epistemological transformation, is by no means identical to it. We can easily conceive of humanism before the age of anthropology (Renaissance humanism), but also of an anthropology that is not humanist. An anthropology that is not humanist was Althusser's position. One might similarly describe the early Heidegger's focus on *Dasein*. Hence, there is no reason to assume any identity between the two terms, although the Lille Course makes clear that Foucault, like Heidegger in his *Letter on Humanism*, treated contemporary humanism as a symptom of the modern anthropological episteme.

The Lille Course manuscript illustrates not only the initial philosophical motive behind Foucault's archaeological project. It also reveals the way in which the young Foucault honed his method in contradistinction to Althusser's reading of Marx. Étienne Balibar has recently suggested that the development of Foucault's thought can be interpreted as an ongoing attempt to reject Marx's philosophy.[10] Balibar locates three pivotal moments of confrontation with Marxism, the first of which coincides with Foucault's departure from the PCF in 1952—the same moment he was working on his Lille course. Indeed, it would not be too much to say that Foucault's analysis of Marx in the course manuscript shaped his philosophical development.

The manuscript begins with a long analysis of Kant, who was forced—Foucault tells us—to complement his philosophical critique with a parallel anthropological study (hence the status of the human subject as an empirico-transcendental doublet). Foucault then embarks on an account of the way in which post-Kantian philosophy tilted more and more toward anthropology. If in Kant the balance between the transcendental and the anthropological was maintained, after Hegel, Foucault argues, nineteenth-century philosophy forsook its transcendental underpinnings and replaced them with anthropological ones. The philosophical question—"What is truth?"—was replaced by the

anthropological question: "What is the truth of man?" Foucault had already offered this formulation, which was so central to *The Order of Things*, in 1952. It was in the course of this transition from Kant to Hegel and beyond that history became a central component in the discourse of philosophy, and that the notion of alienation became a key concept in the attempt to restore the true, lost essence of man.

However, in distinction to Marx's later usage of the term, in Hegel and Feuerbach, alienation still played a bona fide metaphysical role. In Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, alienation was stipulated as a precondition for history itself, as it enabled and propelled the master-slave dialectic, on the way to the objectification and completion of the spirit. Similarly, in Feuerbach alienation was presented in theological terms as the forgetting of human essence, which philosophical reflection would restore. Foucault's analysis of Feuerbach refers to the opening sentence of the latter's *Principles for Future Philosophy* (1843), according to which "the [philosophical] task of the modern era was the realization and humanization of God—the transformation and dissolution of theology into anthropology."[11] In both cases, alienation was not thought of as concrete historical alienation, but as a philosophical symptom that philosophy was able to restore.

It is precisely within this reading of the anthropologization of philosophy that Marx makes his first cameo appearance in Foucault's manuscript alongside Hegel and Feuerbach in a section entitled "Real Man and Alienated Man." In this section, Foucault argues that the concept of alienation, which had been originally understood as an internal philosophical symptom to be overcome by philosophical means, became for Marx "the real and immediate condition of human life." Thereafter, the substitute for the loss of the divine origin was to be located in human history. History thus entered the discourse of philosophical anthropology in order to validate the truth of man by returning to its forgotten historical origin. In so doing, the human subject was called to account for her own condition of possibility. In other words, this involved explaining how the historical reflection on Man could have arisen in the first place: "Anthropology as a dis-alienation (*désalienation*) of human essence; [The] critical task is constitutive of history: founding the historical reality which becomes a repetition of anthropology. In other words, anthropology is the repetition of history."[12]

The concept of alienation that originated in Hegel and was adopted and developed by Feuerbach was fundamentally transformed by Marx, who stripped it from its original philosophical significance. If Kant highlighted the transcendental primacy of the human subject against the anthropological, empirical "doublet," in Marx all the metaphysical aspirations of philosophy were reduced to empirical anthropology. The constitutive transcendental grounding of truth in Man that necessitated the turn to human history was

carelessly reversed. Marx turned to history in order to account for alienation, which was no longer seen as a philosophical concern but a historical phenomenon. In Marx, historical reflection would become the starting point from which his transcendental historical critique emerged. From then on alienation became the experience of "real man" (*homme réel*) pegged to a given society and to a specific period:

> Hegel and Feuerbach could present philosophy as the way back from alienation, and try to surpass it in reality. […] Alienation could be overcome by the reflexive path [*la voie reflexive*] of philosophy. […] But Marxist alienation, as a real and immediate condition of human life could only be surpassed by a path of extraction [*arrachement*], by detachment, not by ideal interiorization but by actual exteriorization.[13]

What had only been a shadow in Kant became a reductive move in Marx. Alienation was now "in man instead of being in God, nature or the Object."[14]

Foucault's brief analysis of Marx concludes with a passage that unmistakably echoes Althusser's terminology and that would later appear in the latter's critique of the early Marx.[15] It is precisely in this context that Foucault now turns to the concept of labor, which in Hegel still bore a metaphysical importance as a "divine task," but which in Marx mirrored the labor conditions in the nineteenth century as "the demise and death of man" and that "man is the cause for alienation." The issue is not that Marx lacked an emancipatory view of labor, which Foucault was fully aware of, but that he reduced the problem of alienation exclusively to history without reflecting on its prior philosophical significance.

This exegesis takes place in a subsection of the manuscript entitled "Alienation and the end of philosophy," and throughout this section Foucault argues dramatically that Marx has done far more than simply reverse the Hegelian and Feuerbachian concept of alienation. Marx's critique of labor had ushered in the "end of philosophy" as we know it, which is not necessarily a bad thing from an Althusserian standpoint. Foucault explicitly ponders: "But is not the end of alienation therefore the end of philosophy? [Isn't] the revolution the reverse of philosophy?"

It is at this moment that Foucault concludes his analysis of Marx by tying it to his critique of humanism:

> A Marxist philosophy, or a Marxist humanism could only take root within a concept of alienation which Marxism has disassociated and challenged. A Marxism that wants to think of itself as a philosophy cannot be taken seriously: Marxism is the end of its proper philosophical concepts; the seriousness of Marxism is the tomb of Marxist philosophy. But Marxism does not have a lesser philosophical sense because of it, for it liquidates bourgeois philosophy—at

> once humanism and anthropology—that believes that man and truth belong together. Marxism is the end of all the philosophies of man; it is philosophically the end to all humanisms.

This unmistakably Althusserian reading hints at a possible route out of the anthropological deadlock and the eventual "death of man," as Foucault announced it at the end of *The Order of Things*. The substitution of history for philosophy is not necessarily a negative consequence; however, Foucault is explicit that the end of humanism is not the end of anthropology, but rather a pressing reminder to find a philosophical alternative:

> Giving Marxism its proper weight is not to make it the heir to the blandness of humanism, to all the anthropological platitudes in which man and truth are found to be bound to one another […] Marxism should be taken as the first of these experiments that man has carried out for over a century, which is the end of philosophy, the end of an art, the end of truth […] it is the discovery that man and truth only belong to one another in the form of freedom. Marxism is neither a philosophy nor the end of philosophy; it is [a reminder for] the most urgent task: to philosophize differently.

Note the passage's seeming ambiguity concerning Foucault's reading of Marx. Foucault read Marx, with Althusser, as ushering in the end of Western metaphysics and heralding "the end of all humanisms." But the passage's allusion to the non-humanist reading of Marx à la Althusser still raises the question as to whether the Althusserian route could indeed potentially lead beyond the anthropological constraints of post-Kantian philosophy and explain how philosophical inquiry posited history as a philosophical problem. Will Althusser's Marx become the model to philosophize differently?

The answer, for Foucault, is no. The ambiguity in Foucault's concluding remarks on Marx is later resolved by the fact that something substantial immediately follows in the course's argument. This crucial twist in the course's narrative involves the discovery of Nietzsche's critique of Western philosophy as offering an alternative post-anthropological model for philosophy. Foucault's engagement with Nietzsche forms a separate section of the manuscript, and was presumably written at a later stage from the rest of the course, which takes up almost half of the entire manuscript. It constitutes Foucault's first systematic reading of Nietzsche. Whereas Marx appeared under the heading "the End of Philosophy" (which we can understand in Heidegger's terms as the end of metaphysics), the Nietzsche part of the course begins with the section "The End of Anthropology." Nietzsche, with his idea of the "super-man" (*Übermensch*), will thus become Foucault's model for post-anthropological critique and the inspiration for his own attempt to "philosophize differently."

Foucault made no secret of this. He repeatedly acknowledged the impact of discovering Nietzsche's thought in the early 1950s and frequently claimed to have modeled his own historical critique after him.[16] However, the Lille course manuscript allows us to appreciate why Nietzsche was such a revelation for the young Foucault, who was still under the spell of Althusser. Nietzsche, like Marx, offered a non-metaphysical model for a historical critique, yet unlike Marx he pointed to an escape from the problem of anthropology. Althusser may have succeeded in giving Marx his "proper weight" by shedding all humanist traces, but he still stayed within the constraints of anthropology.

The fact that Nietzsche became the exclusive model for post-anthropological critique is further reaffirmed by the fact that when Foucault redelivered the Lille course at the ENS two years later, he simply removed the analysis of Marx from course! In 1964, at a conference dedicated to Nietzsche, Foucault presented a paper titled "Nietzsche, Freud, Marx" in which only Nietzsche offered a model of critique that can lead beyond the hermeneutical horizon of the nineteenth century and be used for contemporary purposes. Marx and Freud, by contrast, appear as mere representatives of a new mode of hermeneutics that arose in the nineteenth century. By 1966, in *The Order of Things*, Foucault's ambiguity on Marx had entirely disappeared: "Marxism exists in nineteenth-century thought like a fish in water: that is, it is unable to breathe anywhere else."[17]

To sum up, in the Lille course Foucault still took Marx in positive terms, as the "first of these experiments" to perform a post-metaphysical critique in which Althusserian anti-humanist critique was still held as a viable strategy. After the discovery and full digestion of Nietzsche, Foucault became convinced that Marx could not lead us beyond the anthropological horizon. Marx subsequently became fodder for Foucault's radical historicization. The move to Nietzsche as the *philosophical* antidote to Kantian anthropologism provides the intellectual frame within which the various points of *political* interaction with Marxism should be located.

BACK TO HEIDEGGER'S *LETTER ON HUMANISM*

Foucault's early reading of Marx in the Lille course reveals three important arguments. First, when Foucault rejected humanism as an ideology that grounded moral value in an ahistorical universal view of the human subject, he did so not on merely political or moral grounds. Rather, he saw it as a symptom of the modern *episteme*, which at the time of the Lille course was strictly defined in philosophical terms—as the post-Kantian age of anthropology. Second, the Lille course demonstrated that Foucault's interpretation of Marx

had been far more charitable and ambiguous than later in *The Order of Things*. Third, this shift may be explained through Foucault's adoption of Nietzsche as the escape route from the anthropological episteme, from which the problem of humanism derived. By opting for Nietzsche, Foucault could finally complete his break from Marxism, including Althusser's anti-humanist Marx. Foucault justified his rejection of Althusser's Marxian avatar in terms of a historical critique of western philosophy. This leads us back to the postwar humanism debate in France and specifically to Heidegger's 1947 *Letter on Humanism.*

Althusser and Foucault exemplify two philosophical strategies for coping with Martin Heidegger's 1947 *Letter*, which stirred up the humanism controversy in postwar France. Heidegger's essay framed the problem of humanism as a central philosophical problem in the history of Western metaphysics and, similar to Foucault in the Lille course, Heidegger presented Marx and Nietzsche as the two final, unwitting victims of the metaphysical tradition they hoped to undo: "Absolute metaphysics, with its Marxian and Nietzschean inversions," wrote Heidegger, "belongs to the history of the truth of Being."[18] In other words, unlike Foucault's interpretation of Nietzsche in the Lille course, Heidegger did not recognize in Nietzsche a true alternative to metaphysics. Heidegger had a different philosophical role model in mind—his own philosophy.

Heidegger's *Letter* responded to Sartre's essay "Existentialism is a humanism," in which Sartre drew a direct line from philosophy to politics, a connection Heidegger vehemently opposed. For Heidegger, humanism, in its modern guise, was above all a philosophical problem that stemmed from Marx's invocation of the term. In the *Letter*, Heidegger therefore dismissed Sartre for having failed to account for the fundamental historicity that supported Marx's project and Sartre's consequent failure to situate Marx in the broader "History of Being."

Foucault's relation to Heidegger's philosophy is a complex affair, to say the least, and it necessarily falls beyond the scope of this chapter. Still, it is worth mentioning that after the Lille course, from 1954 onward, Foucault delved deeper and deeper into his reading of Nietzsche, relying regularly on Heidegger's interpretation of the German philosopher. Heidegger's interpretation of Nietzsche is known for marking the turn (*Kehre*) in his thought from *Dasein* to the History of Being. Heidegger was pivotal in showing that Nietzsche was not merely a literary phenomenon or a cultural critic, but a true philosopher, indeed the culmination of Western metaphysics—a tradition that only Heidegger himself could surpass through his return to the ontological "origin" of Western philosophy.

Despite his initial reliance on Heidegger's interpretation of Nietzsche, Foucault never accepted Heidegger's dismissal of Nietzsche as the last metaphysician. Instead, Foucault developed a critique of the notion of "origin" that was so central to Husserl's later philosophy, but also to Heidegger's later project.[19]

In the Lille Course, Foucault already taxed Marx for not being able to account for the emergence of modern historicity as a philosophical problem and a historical phenomenon. The development of Foucault's Nietzschean philosophical model to confront history did not occur overnight, however. After his initial discovery of Nietzsche's philosophy, Foucault left France for three years. During his stay at Uppsala, Foucault continued to grapple with Nietzsche, focusing on the early writings that formed the basis for *The Birth of the Tragedy.*

In his only published article on Nietzsche from 1973, Foucault described the phenomenological/Heideggerian "origin" (*Ursprung*) as denoting an idealized moment of the eruption of truth that implies a metaphysical, supernatural beginning (*Wunderursprung*).[20] Against it, Foucault posited the Nietzschean philological idea of "birth" that pointed to the actual emergence (*Entstehung*) of a singularity in history that concealed its normative premises. Unlike the phenomenological "origin," "birth" is constituted not by an original act of forgetting, but rather by artifice (*Kunststück*) and deceit. It is an error that has later become truth; an invention (*Erfindung*) that arose in response to a preexisting field of contesting power relations that was later taken for granted. For Nietzsche, history did not have an origin, but a birthing moment that had long-lasting normative consequences. The unique modern awareness of history as temporal consciousness (*Zeitbewusstsein*) was itself connected to the problem of Kantian anthropologism and the "death of God" in metaphysics. Accordingly, it did not call for an account of the extraction of value in history, as Marx did, or the positing of an ideal origin that denied history. Rather, it necessitated a historical critique of the value of value, i.e., Nietzsche's genealogy. Thus, even at this later stage of his career, as Foucault allegedly forsook any transcendental pretenses, he continued to posit Nietzsche as the preliminary philosophical model with which he could confront history.

Foucault returned to Nietzsche in key moments throughout his career when his historical methodology—the meta-structure of his thought—was on the line.[21] Indeed, the move to genealogy I just described occurred in a later stage, in a confrontation with Marx that occurred after 1968. But for now, let us focus on the fact that both Heidegger in his *Letter* as well as Foucault in the Lille Course highlighted a fundamental incongruence between the philosophical and the political iterations of humanism. This aspect has tended to be misunderstood in recent interpretations of Foucault's Biopolitics lectures.

THE HUMANIST DOUBLE

From the Lille Course onward, Foucault divided the problem of humanism into two distinct parts: the philosophical question of humanism, better posed

as a question of anthropology; and the political moral doctrine of humanism. Althusser's Marx exemplified the need to maintain this distinction since, according to Foucault, Althusser evaded the latter but not the former. Although the word "humanism" does not appear once in the Biopolitics lectures, some have argued that they are motivated by Foucault's political anti-humanism.[22] Such renderings thus interpret Foucault's post-anthropological utterances in the lectures as indicative of political anti-humanism. It is this supposed synonymy that enables these readers to traverse from the philosophical to the political and back. However, when we look closely at the passages that such a reading relies on, we see that such synonymy does not exist. Rather, as should be clear by now, the conflation of the anthropological "problem of man" and political humanism is unwarranted and relies on a false assumption. The result is to confound two different levels in Foucault's thought.[23]

The slippage between the political and philosophical usages of "humanism" can be traced back to two confusing responses Foucault gave in two separate interviews after the publication of *The Order of Things*. Upon closer examination, we see that even in the interviews, Foucault remained consistent about his distinction between the two registers. In the first interview, Foucault was asked by the interviewer to clarify what he meant by "humanism," to which Foucault provided an explicitly political, moral definition, again using Marx as an example: "Humanism was a manner of solving, in terms of morality, of values, of reconciliation, problems that could not be solved at all. Do you know the phrase of Marx? Humanity only poses for itself problems that it cannot solve."[24] And just in case it was not already clear that he was referring to political humanism, Foucault immediately clarified that his critique of Marxian humanism did not apply to "Althusser and his courageous companions" who fought against humanist "chardino-marxism."[25] Again, this was a reminder that there was a far better, non-humanist reading of Marx that was available. Foucault's reply was clearly not addressed to philosophical humanism, since, as we have seen, as far as he was concerned even Althusser's Marx was part of the anthropological predicament.

Now, consider the difference when, in another interview, Foucault refers to humanism as a philosophical problem of anthropology in response to Sartre's harsh critique of *The Order of Things*:

> This disappearance of man at the very moment when one searched for his roots does not mean that the human sciences will soon disappear. I have never said so, but only that the human sciences will be deployed against a horizon that is no longer constrained or defined by this humanism. Man disappears in philosophy, not as an object of knowledge but as a subject of freedom and existence. Now the subject man, the subject of his own consciousness and of his own freedom, is at bottom a sort of correlative image of God.[26]

This instantiation, in which Foucault refers to humanism in terms of the anthropological substitute for God within knowledge, pertains to the level of philosophical humanism.

Relying on these two instances in order to demonstrate that humanism and the death of man are synonymous, therefore replicates the Sartrean position that Foucault clearly negated in this last passage. Though this mix-up is understandable and might even appear marginal, it is problematic. In the end, one cannot rely on the idea of synonymy to crisscross from the philosophical to the political level of humanism and interpret Foucault's pejorative references to "anthropology" in the Biopolitics lectures as an indication of his possible *political* endorsement (on *philosophical* grounds) of economic neoliberalism. The primacy of the economic over the political that exists in neoliberalism is, in this case, being projected onto Foucault's thought.[27] Such a perspective, in turn, leads to the sweeping conclusion that Foucault found no fault in the economic variety of liberalism once classical liberal thought was purged of its political humanist core:

> Foucault's brief, strategic, and contingent endorsement of liberalism was possible precisely because he saw no incompatibility between anti-humanism and liberalism—but only liberalism of the economic variety. Economic liberalism alone, and not its political iteration, was compatible with the philosophical anti-humanism that is the hallmark of Foucault's thought.[28]

But concluding that Foucault endorsed economical liberalism is unwarranted given his clear distinction between the philosophical and the political. In fact, the analysis of neoliberalism in the Biopolitics lectures occurs on a philosophical level that we also encounter in his response to Sartre, in which the "disappearance of man in philosophy" is indicative of the historical transformation of the human sciences that was declared in the final chapter of *The Order of Things*. At this point, we need to revisit the argument Foucault presented in that chapter in order to comprehend his reprisal of the argument in the 1979 lectures.

A TALE OF THREE QUASI-TRANSCENDENTALS

In a 1969 conference dedicated to his analysis of Georges Cuvier's biology in *The Order of Things*, Foucault argued that biology was already on the right path toward surpassing the quasi-transcendental "life" and its grounding in man's being. Invoking molecular biology's discontinuous genetic vision, Foucault observed that we could already imagine "a biology without life."

The age of DNA in which man appears on the same footing as bacteria, and biology is reduced to chemistry, was a sign of the disappearance of "life," and with it the dependence of the life sciences on "man."

In the Cuvier conference—just as he had done in the Lille Course and *The Order of Things*—Foucault pledged his allegiance to Nietzsche and argued against "humanist philosophy" in a statement that anticipated his later work on sexuality:

> I term 'humanist philosophy'—any philosophy that pretends that death is the final and ultimate sense of life.
>
> 'Humanist philosophy', [is] any philosophy that thinks that sexuality is made for the sake of love and procreation.
>
> 'Humanist philosophy', [is] any philosophy that believes that history is tied to the continuity of consciousness.[29]

Ten years later Foucault would reprise this movement, but he would do so with regard to economics instead of biology. Whereas in the conference on Cuvier, Foucault celebrated the progress of biology beyond the anthropological horizon that hinged on the quasi-transcendental "life," in the Biopolitics lectures at the Collège de France, Foucault pointed to a corollary development in the field of economics and quasi-transcendental "labor."[30]

Let us turn to the key passages in those lectures in which Foucault analyzed the "post-anthropological" economics of the Chicago School. The motivation behind Foucault's engagement with the notion of "human capital" in the March 14, 1979, lecture is clearly the familiar trajectory of the critique of anthropology from the *The Order of Things*, and it is pitched against Marx and quasi-transcendental "labor."

Not only does Foucault harp on the fact that the Chicago School was the first to question the quasi-transcendental status of labor and tie it to the problem of anthropology in modern economics, but he reprises the history of how Marx's notion of labor stemmed from the archaeological soil of anthropology:

> Abstraction is not the result of the real mechanics of economic processes; it derives from the way in which these processes have been reflected in classical economics. And it is precisely because classical economics was not able to take on this analysis of labor in its concrete specification and qualitative modulations, it is because it left this blank page, gap or vacuum in its theory, that a whole philosophy, anthropology, and politics, of which Marx is precisely the representative, rushed in.[31]

To read the *Biopolitics* lectures exclusively in the terms of anthropology may seem puzzling. After all, in the same lecture series Foucault often mentions the growing importance of the *homo œconomicus.* But as Foucault duly

stresses in the text, even this concept is taken to be post-anthropological.[32] To relate this to the Cuvier colloquium ten years earlier, it is telling that shortly after introducing the term, Foucault qualifies it by connecting it to his post-anthropological interpretation of biology and raises the possibility of treating our genetic makeup as human capital. He then adds that: "The problems of inheritance, transmission, education, training and inequality are refocused no longer around an anthropology or an ethics or a politics of labor, but around an economics of capital."[33] "Labor," as a quasi-transcendental of the anthropological episteme, was thus subsumed by a redefinition of the concept "capital."

Another key moment comes in the following lecture in the context of Foucault's references to *Discipline and Punish*, and the connection between modern disciplinary power and the problem of anthropology. After describing how Beccaria had "anthropologized crime," Foucault examines Gary Becker's approach to criminality. Foucault seems to be aware that his approving tone might raise some eyebrows, and he immediately clarifies this by putting it in context: "What conclusion can be drawn from this? First of all, there is an anthropological erasure of the criminal."[34] As we can see, the few instances in which the Chicago School is mentioned occur in the context of their supra-anthropological or sub-anthropological position, as effectively surpassing the quasi-transcendental anthropological framework within which modern economics operates. Foucault's treatment of the neoliberalism of the Chicago School is therefore indicative of a historical transformation and is given a philosophical significance rather than any tangible political one. Like molecular biology, human capital theory provides an economical exit from the anthropological stasis that Foucault's work had pointed to since the Lille Course in 1952.

What all these instances clearly share is an attempt to break from the unconscious anthropological constraints that contemporary knowledge presupposes. Moreover, they may not be read solely in terms of anti-humanism, from which one could infer Foucault's political allegiance to neoliberalism. For such a reading reduces the complexity of Foucault's understanding of anthropology as a historical ontological category, which characterizes modern thought, to a narrow political vision.

To those familiar with the argument of the final chapter of *The Order of Things* something will immediately appear strange in Foucault's post-anthropological examples of labor and life. What has happened to language? After all, Foucault explicitly stated that the one quasi-transcendental capable of leading us beyond the limits of the anthropological horizon is language. And this surpassing will happen, Foucault predicted, not by the modern science of language—linguistics—but by the reconstitution of the relationship between subject and knowledge in modern literature and the transformation of the traditional boundaries of philosophical inquiry. Though a full

demonstration of this important claim is beyond the scope of this article, I would nonetheless suggest that Foucault's singling-out of language in the end of *The Order of Things*, and the significance he attributed to modern literature, was his way of redefining the task of philosophy after the end of metaphysics by providing a critical totalizing view of the present. Nietzsche, who exemplified this character of the philosopher, who operated on the fringes of the discipline, between philosophy and literature, was thus Foucault's model for the totalizing reflection on the present. The question Foucault posed in 1970—"What Is an Author?"—and the genealogical approach that he adopted during the same period, which understood the truth as an invention and strived to uncover the "chimeras of the origin" that continued to haunt the present, were intimately related.[35] Accordingly, we need to address what was the illusion, the invention hiding behind the birth of Biopolitics that Foucault tried to dispel. In the next section I will suggest that what was at stake was the liberal idea of right (*droit*) that even neoliberalism continued to maintain. Indeed, Foucault's analysis of neoliberalism was meant to flesh out and diagnose the present historical moment, which for Foucault precisely meant cutting through accepted political distinctions.

CONCLUSION: THE "BIRTH" OF BIOPOLITICS

This essay began by acknowledging a crucial rupture at the heart of Foucault's thought after the publication of the first volume of the *History of Sexuality* in 1976. And there is no doubt that his *Collège de France* lectures after this point were a direct response to a methodological problem that arose in that book. How was subjectivity to be conceived in light of the rejection of the "repressive hypothesis," if power not only limits but also incites, articulates, and produces resistance?[36] Hence I would like to suggest that Foucault's methodological reorientation in this period has much more to do with his philosophical concerns than the immediate historical and political context. This does not prevent the possibility of such political contextualization, but it does make the philosophical angle indispensable. By ignoring the philosophical bedrock from which Foucault's political engagement stemmed, we are left with a very partial picture.

The Biopolitics lectures are sandwiched, as it were, between two significant modifications in Foucault's method during this period. The first occurred in relation to the question of actuality and critique in relation to Kant's essay "*What Is Enlightenment?*" (a theme Foucault first addressed in the spring of 1978); the second is Foucault's return to antiquity in order to trace the emergence of Western subjectivity as an interplay of power and truth (Foucault

pursued this in the following lecture series, *The Government of the Living*). Common to both projects is precisely the question of governmentality—the interlocking of power, self, and truth. But what exactly was the relationship between biopolitics and the role of the intellectual as a critical diagnostician of the present? I believe that the term Foucault chose for the title of his lectures—"birth"—was deliberate in that it encapsulated an essential element in Foucault's philosophy of history and represented his central debt to Nietzsche.[37] Starting from this Nietzschean impulse holds out the possibility of a critique of the present, providing a historical totalizing view that neither economics nor biology could provide. If biopolitics was precisely the domain in which the quasi-transcendentals "life" and "labor" were fused together, then Foucault, the contemporary bearer of Nietzsche's critical torch, was now trying to uncover the contingent invention (*Erfindung*), the genealogical mistake that "birthed" contemporary political discourse, the lie that had become a truth. By "birth" Foucault was referring to a fundamental error that undergirded the present discourse, which Foucault addressed in the first volume of the *History of Sexuality—The Will to Know*.[38]

The term "Biopolitics" first appears in *The History of Sexuality* in the context of the abolition of the death penalty, which Foucault understood as a corollary of the transformation of the eighteenth-century idea of civil right (*droit civil*). If eighteenth-century sovereign power relied on the right to administer death, then in the nineteenth century life became the main concern for disciplinary power. The growing preoccupation with sexuality exemplified this transformation of power from the administration of death to the administration of life. Foucault's characterization of this transformation in terms of rights is important. For his earlier work on the prison and criminality demonstrated the fundamental incongruity between the correctional facility—the prison—and the act of delinquency as an infringement of penal right (*droit penal*).

It was in his 1972–1973 lecture series *The Punitive Society* that Foucault first suggested that the *birth* of the modern prison was founded on such an invention: The origins of the prison were not located in juridical discourse, but rather in the history of capitalism and post-Reformation religious movements.[39] The modern prison was therefore a recent invention of concealed origins. Crucial to Foucault's reading was the emergence of a new historical entity—"society"—against whom the criminal offense was committed and in whose name punishment should be administered.[40] What was then the original error hiding behind the *birth* of biopolitics, and how did it relate to the history of liberalism? The answer was that the political discourse after 1968, both on the right and the left, falsely clung to the idea of right (*droit*) as essential for classical liberalism.

In the first volume of the *History of Sexuality*, in a chapter dedicated to the abolition of the death penalty, Foucault tackled the disappearance of rights

from the realm of politics and their replacement by life as the motor behind the sexual revolution:

> It was life more than the law (*droit*) that became the issue of political struggles, even if the latter were formulated through affirmations concerning rights (*droits*). The "right" to life, to one's body, to health, to happiness, to the satisfaction of needs, and beyond all the oppressions or "alienations," the "right" to rediscover what one is and all that one can be, this "right"—which the classical juridical system was utterly incapable of comprehending was the political response to all these new procedures of power which did not derive, either, from the traditional right of sovereignty.[41]

The sexual revolution of the twentieth century and the new rights it brought about did not arise from some emancipatory liberal history of rights but from the discourse of sexuality. The battles of the sexual revolution were not waged thanks to a liberal juridical discourse but precisely because of its failure to respond to the emergence of this new dimension of power. Foucault's reading of neoliberal economic theory against the backdrop of the contemporary political shifts in the 1978–1979 lectures similarly highlighted that classical liberalism was an anachronism. Undoubtedly, Foucault emphasized that this twentieth-century offshoot of liberalism was fundamentally different from classical liberalism, since there was nothing liberal in American neoliberalism insofar as the latter was not grounded in the idea of rights.

Foucault's challenge was exactly the reverse. His point was not to recommend neoliberalism because it denied the concept of natural right. Instead, the challenge was to formulate a new demand for political rights independently of a universalist discourse of humanism and the conceptual grounds of anthropologized philosophy. The discussion of the neoliberal policy of Negative Income Tax in the March 7 lecture was perhaps one of the best examples of such an approach, but it hardly offered a philosophical justification underlying Foucault's *supposed* endorsement of this policy. Attempting to read Foucault's politics based on his analysis seems even more puzzling given his claim that he finds American neoliberalism interesting since it currently has a "global claim and foothold in both the right and the left" and because it raises the "problem of freedoms" as a "type of relation between governors and the governed," which is foreign to the French political tradition.[42] Furthermore, neoliberals were actually much closer to contemporary supporters of the welfare state than they realized, he suggested, since the former understood labor as human capital while the latter understood life in those same terms.[43]

This is where the term "birth" regains its significance. By invoking the idea of birth, Foucault not only signified the anachronism of rights that haunted

contemporary political discourse; he also restated the Nietzschean imperative to direct his critique to rattle the present so as to uncover its tacit value judgments. The concept of "governmentality" was one such attempt, as Foucault used the term to force his audience to rethink the very foundations of modern subjectivity as the arena for resistance to power, of which the modern intellectual was one example. Similarly, the return to antiquity to explain how Western subjectivity could have developed into a domain of resistance from ancient "technologies of the self" was connected to his earlier philosophical motivation:

> What I have studied are the three traditional problems: (1) What are the relations we have to truth through scientific knowledge, to those "truth games" which are so important in civilization and in which we are both subject and object? (2) What are the relationships we have to others through those strange strategies and power relationships? And (3) what are the relationships between truth, power, and self?[44]

To uncover Foucault's "true" politics in isolation from the philosophical core of his thought is therefore bound to mislead. While Foucault's philosophy and his rejection of humanism could not be further away from Sartre's, the latter nevertheless did serve as a model for his own political engagement as a public intellectual.[45] Foucault cultivated a public persona that flowed from his philosophy; it entailed a performative political activism in which his political critique was aimed against the entire political spectrum and as a self-proclaimed man of the left he was particularly sensitive to anachronisms afflicting the left. The investigation of governmentality in an age of biopolitics exemplified that both the left and the right were unable to grasp the present moment. There was nothing inherently wrong in political humanism, but it was philosophically invalid since it relied on an ahistorical universal monolithic premise that Foucault found unacceptable:

> What I am afraid of about humanism is that it presents a certain form of our ethics as a universal model for any kind of freedom. I think that there are more secrets, more possible freedoms, and more inventions in our future than we can imagine in humanism as it is dogmatically represented on every side of the political rainbow: the Left, the Center, the Right.[46]

To those concerned with what was left of Foucault's *gauchiste* politics, we can reply that two things remained in place in his thought from 1952; the first was the idea that truth and freedom were fundamentally bound to one another, as Foucault first mentioned in his analysis of Marx; the second was the idea of historical plurality. Just as truth had a history of its own, and appeared

and reappeared throughout history in multiple guises, so there were multiple forms in which freedom could appear. Neither humanism nor liberalism had a monopoly over it. The secrets of the future were, and are, waiting to be discovered, as long as we manage to reckon with the historical foundations of our present.

NOTES

1. In particular, I seek to challenge what I consider to be a reductively politicized and historicist interpretation most clearly present in Daniel Zamora and Michael Behrent's *Foucault and Neoliberalism* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2016).

2. My purpose is to engage in part with Michel Behrent's thought-provoking analysis of Foucault's alleged endorsement of the Chicago School's economic liberalism in the Biopolitics lectures. See Michael Behrent, "Liberalism without Humanism: Michel Foucault and the Free-Market Creed, 1976–1979" in *Modern Intellectual History*, 6, 3, (2009), 539–68.

3. Lille Cours 1952–1953. *Connaissance de l'homme et réflexion transcendentale*, Fonds Michel Foucault, Bibliothèque nationale de France, cote NAF 28730. Henceforth: Lille Course.

4. Stefanos Geroulanos*, An Atheism That Is Not Humanist Emerges in French Thought* (Berk Stanford University Press, 2009).

5. "I had read Heidegger's *Letter to Jean Beaufret on Humanism*, which influenced my arguments concerning *theoretical* anti-humanism in Marx" (italics in original) in Louis Althusser, *The Future Lasts Forever: A Memoir*, trans. by Richard Veasy (New York: The New Press, 1992), 176.

6. Knox Peden, *Spinoza contra Phenomenology* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2014).

7. As a lecturer of theoretical psychology, Foucault was especially interested in the writings of Ludwig Binswanger whose *Daseinsanalyse* (as the term suggests, a method inspired by Heidegger's philosophy) offered an ontological approach to psychological pathologies. During his Lille period, Foucault worked on his elaborate introduction to Binswanger's article "Traum und Existenz," which was published in French in 1954, while working on another book, *Maladie mentale et personalité*, which was Foucault's Marxian swan song before attempting to articulate his own non-Marxian philosophy of history. This book, which was written at Althusser's suggestion, offered a Marxian interpretation to contemporary psychology and relied heavily on the works of George Pulitzer and Ivan Pavlov. Foucault later revoked this book and republished it in 1961 as a revised version under the title *Maladie mentale et psychologie*.

8. Martin Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, trans. by Richard Taft, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997).

9. Beatrice Han-Pile, "The Death of Man: Foucault's Anti-Humanism," in Timothy O'Leary and Christopher Falzon, eds., *Foucault and Philosophy* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2010), chapter 6. Han-Pile's argument begins with Foucault's

1961 complementary PhD thesis on Kant, as she did not have access to Foucault's early manuscripts. It is clear, though, that the Lille course served as the basis for the complementary dissertation.

10. Étienne Balibar, "L'anti-Marx de Michel Foucault" in Christian Laval et al., eds. *Marx & Foucault: Lectures, Usages, Confrontations* (Paris: La Découverte, 2015), 84–102.

11. Lille Course.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid. The term *arrachement* also appears in Althusser's analysis of the young Marx, see Pierre Macherey, "Althusser et le Jeune Marx" in *Actuel Marx*, 2002/1, 3, 175.

14. Ibid. In the reprisal of the course argument in chapter 9 of *The Order of Things*, Marx would be dubbed for this reason a positivist, i.e., for having ignored the necessity of a preliminary constitutive transcendental act before accessing history.

15. I do not mean to imply that Althusser responded to Foucault's Lille reading. Althusser's reading of Marx was well known to his ENS students since the 1950s, but it was only published much later, beginning with *Pour Marx* (1965).

16. See "Truth, Power, Self: An Interview with Rux Martin," in L. H. Martin et al., eds., *Technologies of the Self* (Amherst: UMass Press, 1988), 13.

17. Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 285.

18. Martin Heidegger, "The Letter on Humanism" in David Farrell Krell, ed., *Martin Heidegger's Basic Writings* (San-Francisco: Harper Collins, 1993), 239.

19. See Martin Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art," in David Farrel Krell, ed., *Martin Heidegger's Basic Writings* (San Francisco, CA: Harper Collins, 1993), 139–212.

20. Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," in Paul Rabinow, ed., *The Foucault Reader* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 77–81.

21. Ibid., 80.

22. The interpretation of Foucault as an anti-humanist goes back to the reception of the *Order of Things* in the 1960s. Behrent applies it to the 1978–1979 lectures.

23. Behrent, "Liberalism without Humanism…," 539.

24. "Entretien avec Madeleine Chapsal," in *Dits et écrits*, vol. 1, *1954–1969*, eds. D. Defert, F. Ewald, and J. Lagrange (Paris, 1994), 516.

25. Foucault uses this term to refer to the Marxist humanism espoused by Roger Garaudy (1913–2012) who attempted in his book *From Anathema to Dialogue: The Challenge of Marxist-Christian Cooperation* (1965) to tie Marxism to the humanistic Christian theology of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. Garaudy was an influential member of the PCF and a personal nemesis of Foucault when both taught at the philosophy department of the University of Clermont-Ferrand in the early 1960s. Foucault was instrumental in the dismissal of Garaudy from the university.

26. "Foucault répond à Sartre" (interview with J. P. Elkabbach), in *Dits et écrits*, vol. 1., 664.

27. Behrent distinguishes between *political* and *economical* liberalisms, and he is entirely justified in making this analytical distinction. Yet the assumption that Foucault could possibly adopt the neoliberal belief that the economical invariably secures

the political is unlikely given the fact that it is the cornerstone of Foucault's critique of ideology.

28. "The problem of 'man' (which [Foucault] held to be synonymous with 'humanism')." Behrent, "Liberalism without Humanism…," 542–43.

29. "La situation de Cuvier dans l'histoire de la Biologie," in *Dits et Écrits*, vol. 2, *1970–1975*, eds., D. Defert, F. Ewald, and J. Lagrange (Paris, 1994), 65.

30. Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the College de France, 1978–1979*, eds., Michel Senellart et al. (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008), 220–21.

31. Ibid., 221–22.

32. Ibid., 252–53.

33. Ibid., 223 (postscript).

34. Ibid., 258. In another article, Behrent relies on this specific passage to argue that Foucault politically endorsed the Chicago School. See Michael Behrent, "Foucault and France's Liberal Moment" in Stephen Sawyer and Iain Stewart, eds., *In Search of the Liberal Moment* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 160.

35. "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," 81: "The genealogist needs history to dispel the chimeras of the origin, somewhat in the manner of the pious philosopher who needs a doctor to exorcise the shadow of his soul."

36. On this point Gilles Deleuze's juxtaposition of Foucault's understanding of power in terms of "pleasure" with his own notion of "desire" is especially illuminating. Gilles Deleuze, "Desire and Pleasure," in Arnold Davidson, ed., *Foucault and His Interlocutors* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 184–94.

37. Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," in D. F. Bouchard, ed., *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977).

38. The "will to know" is a key Nietzschean term that Foucault used for his later critique of western philosophy. Foucault dealt extensively with the term in his first lecture series in the *Collège de France* in 1970–1971.

39. The clearest formulation of this point occurs in the postscript to the January 14 lecture in Michel Foucault, *The Punitive Society: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1972–1973*, eds., Bernard H. Harcourt et al. (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2015), 135.

40. Ibid., January 10 lecture, 33.

41. Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1: An Introduction* (New York: Pantheon books, 1978), 145.

42. Ibid., 218.

43. *The Birth of Biopolitics*, 218; Francois Ewald, who was Foucault's assistant in the Collège de France during this period, addressed precisely this issue in his book *L'État providence* (1986): "The problematic of social rights supposes a universal objectification of life (*vivant*) as wealth (*richesse*) that society should extract, develop, multiply for the benefit of everyone: the most important capital—life," 23–26.

44. "Truth, Power, Self, an Interview with Rux Martin," in L. H. Martin et al., eds., *Technologies of the Self* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988), 15.

45. In the 1970s, Foucault and Sartre were able to bury the philosophical hatchet and collaborate for various political causes. On the point of Sartre being Foucault's role model, see Deleuze's 1985–1986 course on Foucault: http://www2.univ-paris8.fr/deleuze/article.php3?id_article=438.

46. "Truth, Power, Self: An Interview with Rux Martin," 15.

Chapter 5

Foucault, Genealogy, Critique

Dotan Leshem

This chapter contextualizes Foucault's lectures on neoliberalism in the overall oeuvre of the Collège de France lecture series. Returning to Foucault's inaugural lectures from 1970–1971, I suggest they should be read as a series of *genealogical* inquiries into regimes of veridiction. They were intended to bring Nietzsche's project to completion by doing in history what Nietzsche had accomplished in philosophy: that is, writing the history of thought as a history of subjecting the will to know to the sovereignty of truth by showing how this knowledge forms a regime of veridiction when transcribed into power. This project was not only meant to free knowledge but, more importantly, to do so by surpassing the politics of truth. The project of writing the history of regimes of veridiction was to be completed by a series of lectures on the history of neoliberal *governmentality,* the prevailing prominent form of power. Foucault's lectures on neoliberalism suggest that this regime established in governmentality what he sought to do by writing its history: that is, by postulating a "conduct of conduct" that was not subjected to the sovereignty of any specific truth. In *The Birth of Biopolitics*, Foucault described how this was done, both theoretically and technically. In economic theory it was achieved by releasing the market from being a site of veridiction, and by the way human capital frees *homo economicus* from the truth value imposed on it by the value of her labor. The same aim was achieved, as Foucault showed, by a change in the technologies of government and self: (1) through negative income tax, as a way of releasing the government of the poor from the regime that distinguishes between the "good" and the "bad" poor; and (2) the "anthropological erasure of the criminal" that brought about a "massive withdrawal with regard to the normative-disciplinary system." Looking both at the change in theory and in the two localized apparatuses of a new regime of knowledge indicates that neoliberalism performs a massive overhaul of liberal governmentality. Like

Nietzsche in philosophy and Foucault in history, this is done by dissociating knowledge of government and truth, which goes hand in hand with disassociating the subject from its intrinsic truth. As I will suggest in the third section of this chapter, which deals with critique, Foucault's research into the neoliberal "post-truth" government led him, in the 1980s, to look for a critical ethos of parrhesiastic truth-telling as a way out[1] of all forms of pastoral power.

FOUCAULT: "THE OPENING UP OF FIELDS OF PROBLEMATIZATION"

The debate concerning Foucault's sympathies with neoliberalism, as reflected in his lectures at the Collège de France, has brought to the fore a fundamental question: How should one interpret these Collège de France lectures as a whole? One might embrace Bernard Harcourt's "cautious interpretive position" and read the lectures as a "first draft: What he [Foucault] did not feel that he needed to say or necessarily wanted to say."[2] Another option is to accept Colin Gordon's critique of Harcourt, and read each year's lectures as a complete work that was never meant to be published in book form.[3] Alternatively, the lectures might be read as if they enjoyed the status of a book, as implied by Daniel Defert in an interview he gave in 2010.[4] Or, finally, one might follow Francois Ewald, who pulled out the "joker" of oral tradition to settle debates about what Foucault "the author" really meant to say.[5]

This question is far from settled, partly at least because the study of the lectures as a unified object of research is obviously at its very beginning. Moreover, the sheer magnitude of the subjects, ages, and systems of thought Foucault covered in these lectures puts such an inquiry seemingly beyond the capacity of nearly any living scholar.

Here, I will read the lectures as a unified piece of work and abstain from dealing with the question of their significance for our understanding of the corpus of the published "author" Foucault. Although it would be futile to dismiss Defert by saying that each year's lectures were delivered as a tidily arranged narrative (rather like Foucault's books), I do not believe these narratives should be read as if they were published books. It is evident in those lectures, which are not transliterated from Foucault's recorded words, but rather based on his prepared texts, that these writings in no way resemble a book; they do, however, resemble lecture notes. Moreover, as Gordon states, the lectures that were taped demanded some "editing to avoid over-faithful reproduction of the accidental hesitations of oral delivery."[6] Thus, I will read the lectures for what they are: a series of lectures that comply with his obligation as a Collège de France professor to report regularly on his research. They represent "the exoteric version" of his research at that time[7] and, as Foucault himself attested, he struggled to find

a more fitting version of these lectures over the years.[8] Thus, I subscribe to a position aligned with that stated and repeated in the Foreword to each annual lecture series by the editors, Francois Ewald and Alessandro Fontana, that the lectures should be read "as the opening up of fields of problematization [that] were formulated as an invitation to possible future researchers."[9]

In his inaugural lectures from 1970–1971, Foucault outlined the research program he would pursue in his years at the Collège de France. This research agenda was repeated in *The Birth of Biopolitics* lectures, with a more nuanced terminology, in the form of genealogical inquiries into how certain regimes of veridiction are pegged to power in different apparatuses of conduct of conduct, whether these forms of power are psychiatric, disciplinary, sovereign, or pastoral. It was toward the end of that decade, following his research into these forms of power, that Foucault reached the conclusion that the form of power operating in neoliberal governmentality is the "techne technon, episteme epistemon" of the present. This also suggests a reading of Foucault's lectures on neoliberalism in this specific context: seeking a way out of that specific form of power. Indeed, we see a shift in the object and agenda of his lectures following those on neoliberalism. As well as a return to antiquity, and following Foucault's inquiry into the origins of pastoral power in early Christianity, this change constituted a shift in his attention from regimes of veridiction and technologies of government that was intended to make room for the subject and the relation of self to self.[10] This shift was not only meant to complete the missing third element in the knowledge-power-subject triad; it was also aimed at finding a way out of the modern constitution of this triad in which, according to Foucault, there was simply too much power at play.[11]

GENEALOGY: THE WILL TO KNOW

Foucault's inaugural lecture series at the Collège de France opened with four "methodological" lectures that outlined his research agenda for his subsequent years as Chair of History of Systems of Thought.[12] In these lectures, Foucault subscribed to a genealogical research agenda based on his reading of Nietzsche. According to his interpretation, genealogy can "bring to light the history of a certain will to the true or false, the history of a certain will to posit the interdependent system of truth and falsity."[13] Such a genealogy, which he excavated from Nietzsche, recounted the histories of the birth, working, and logic of what Foucault later called regimes of veridiction, stating:

> Obviously, a history of truth should . . . involve the genealogy of regimes of veridiction . . . truth relationship finding its privileged expression in discourse,

> the discourse in which . . . what can be true or false is formulated; the regime of veridiction, in fact, is . . . the set of rules enabling one to establish which statements in a given discourse can be described as true or false.[14]

These genealogical inquiries into the histories of the prevailing forms of power and their respective regimes of veridiction complement (and copy) in the field of history the same task performed by Nietzsche in philosophy. That is, setting the will to know free from the sovereignty of knowledge imposed on it ever since Aristotle[15] in a systematic way for the first time in the history of Western thought. In other words, to "write a history of the force of truth, a history of the power of the truth, a history, therefore, to take the same idea from a different angle, of the will to know."[16]

The remaining *On the Will to Know* lectures from 1970–1971 are dedicated to a demonstration of just such a genealogical inquiry into the will to know and its subordination to truth in pre-classical Greece.[17] When reading Foucault's lectures from the 1970s, one finds him conducting such genealogies, in which he demonstrates how specific regimes of veridiction participated in forming disciplinary, psychiatric, and sovereign forms of power.[18] Foucault would see these regimes of veridiction as only secondary to the governmentality that occupied him in the 1977–1979 lectures. Those, in turn, can be described as a genealogical inquiry into governmental regimes of veridiction that "throughout the West" have formed "the line of force" from its creation in the Christianity of late antiquity as pastoral power, up to its present neoliberal configuration that "has constantly led toward the pre-eminence over all other types of power—sovereignty, discipline, and so on."[19]

As Foucault describes rather schematically in the inaugural Collège de France lecture published as *The Order of Discourse*, genealogical research combines a "genealogical section" and a "critical section";[20] each is governed by different principles. The former, according to Foucault, engages in "happy positivism."[21] Too happy, perhaps, as suggested by Daniel Zamora's piece in *Jacobin*, which started the debate concerning Foucault's relation to neoliberalism.[22] Or, happy to the right degree, as implied by Francois Ewald, who called the neoliberal lectures an apology for neoliberalism in general, and for Becker "the most radical of American neoliberals" in particular.[23] The critical section of genealogy, according to Foucault, is assigned the task of exposing how this particular regime of veridiction excludes and inflicts violence on excluded subjects, just like the two other, less subtle, exclusionary forms of (1) prohibition and (2) "division and rejection."[24] Although not explicitly stated, it seems that the genealogical task that Foucault took upon himself was to insert a wedge not so much between the will to know and knowledge itself, that is, to disassociate philosophy from truth (as this had already been achieved by Nietzsche). Rather, Foucault's genealogical incursions into

the histories of the present were meant to problematize the need of specific regimes of truth to exercise power imposed by the workings of the different regimes of veridiction he explored in the 1970s. These explorations were meant, in turn, to bring about the possibility of a power formation in which truth does not play the exclusory role it played throughout the history of the West, and which obviates the accompanying violence inflicted on the excluded subjects.

In describing Foucault as "neoliberal," Zamora is supported by the apparent lack, or perhaps more accurately, the scarcity of critical analysis in the lectures. However, this scarcity doesn't necessarily indicate an embrace of neoliberalism by Foucault; or, more importantly, by those researchers who responded to the invitation to read the neoliberal lectures "as the opening up of fields of problematization" by completing what is clearly missing from the critical section.

It may be worth considering that Foucault demonstrated such an extremely happy positivism in the neoliberal lectures because he discovered that neoliberalism presented a Nietzschean governmentality; that is, an all-penetrating form of power that is not subjected to the sovereignty of any particular truth. This interpretation aligns with Ewald's reading of Foucault's apologia for neoliberalism in general, and for Becker in particular:

> [what] Foucault is searching for is a theory, a non-moral theory, and a non-juridical theory. The challenge is to be free from morality and from the law. . . . You [Gary Becker] propose a theory of man . . . that is non-moral and non-juridical. And that is, for him at this time . . . very important. Gary Becker for Foucault is a moment in the very long story of truth-telling—of a truth-telling free from a moral and juridical framework.[25]

One of the crucial points Foucault makes in his lectures is that neoliberalism is a novel form of government.[26] What is the nature of its newness? A careful positivist reading of the neoliberal lectures reveals that Foucault presented two grand theoretical maneuvers, and two technical ones, whereby neoliberalism released both governmentality and the subject from the sovereignty of truth still imposed on them by the classical liberals. This was done, according to Foucault, by introducing a market criticism of any truth revealed in political and governmental action.[27]

The first theoretical maneuver is found in Foucault's description of how the ordoliberals released the market from being a site of veridiction that, if left to its own devices, would supposedly reveal the true order of the cosmos. As presented by Foucault, the ordoliberals did this by reframing the market as a site of pure competition that is not at all a natural phenomenon.[28] Instead of manifesting the truth of a providential order, the market becomes a man-made

artifact, an artificial institution governed by formal principles. Such a disentanglement of truth from the market rules out the existence of a universal subject of economic knowledge, whether it be the state or any other actor, as by definition all are blind to the economic processes. Recalling that, according to Foucault, in liberalism the market as a site of veridiction was already thought of as the necessary by-product of the multiplicity of economic agents (and not of the sovereign), then denying that regime of veridiction its power over the market necessitates freeing *homo economicus* from the role assigned to him as bearer of that particular truth. Moreover, the logic of the market economy must infuse the whole of society[29] in a way that leaves no room for the appearance of a (moral) truth of non-economic subjects.[30] As can be seen, both state and society—the two truth-bearers in modern governmentality as well as its true effect—no longer express any non-economic truth. Such a maneuver, then, leaves no room for truth to appear anywhere but in the relation of self to self.

Becker's (and others') theoretical maneuver of turning the economic subject from a man of exchange (according to his true nature) into an entrepreneur of the self takes care to rid the subject of truth. So, human capital is the second apparatus to free power from truth. Its role is to transform the economic subject into the correlate of the post-truth political economy of the neoliberal market. It does so by applying the economic analysis to the unexplored domain of the relations of self to self that up until then had been thought to be non-economic.[31] Applying the economic analysis to this sphere, in turn, allows for the extension of the economic grid into other domains that were also previously considered non-economic. As a result, *homo economicus* is no longer seen as possessing any truth (divine, human, natural, etc.), but is reduced to a creature who accepts reality "as is." The domain of the relation of self to self is turned into an entrepreneur—capital relation (with a zone of distinction as they share the same body)—while the *askesis* of that new self-capital is geared toward the generation of income. At this point, one can see how the relation between neoliberal governmentality and the neoliberal subject has come full circle. This is achieved via the conceptual apparatus of "innovation" that is thought of as the product of investment in human capital. As described by Foucault, innovation as a product of investment in human capital is conceptualized as the sole engine of progress, which in turn is itself thought of as measurable economic growth. Moreover, as growth is the only goal of any economic policy, and the measure against each policy is evaluated, attaining and maintaining growth requires that no space in the self is left un-capitalized. However, there is more to this, as transforming the human self into capital becomes a target for governmental power. In the process of capitalizing the self, the economic subject is released from the truth value imposed by her labor, as envisaged by Marx and other classical

liberal political economists. It also frees the entrepreneur of the self from the sovereignty of the consumer and his truth imposed by the neo-classical economists. This is done, according to Foucault, by turning consumption into yet another form of the relation of the self to itself as human capital.

Foucault also demonstrated how this post-truth governmentality is put into action in two domains that correlate to the government-subject distinction he introduced between the German and American versions of neoliberalism. According to this somewhat schematic typology, the German ordoliberals focused on releasing government from the grip of the liberal regime of veridiction, while the more radical American anarcho-liberals focused on freeing the subject from her own truth. The technological apparatus of the first kind of neoliberalism discussed by Foucault deals with management of the poor population, while the second deals with the subjectivity of the criminal. Like the relation between the market and human capital, this distinction is somewhat artificial, as the two are intertwined.

The first domain covered by Foucault is, as stated, state management of the poor. This comprises an analysis of the discourse concerning the implementation of negative income tax by the French neoliberals, which he sees as the cornerstone of the neoliberal inverted social contract. As Foucault demonstrates, negative income tax relieved the management of the poor from the liberal regime of veridiction,[32] which distinguished between the "good" and deserving poor, who are included in society, and the "bad" poor, who are excluded. This was guided by a regime of veridiction that examined the causes of poverty. The neoliberals, as described by Foucault, did not care to investigate the causes of poverty, but focused instead on treating the effects of poverty, remaining indifferent to its causes.[33] It should be noted that Foucault's analysis of this inverted social contract sounds rather Marxist in its terminology. He opens up the field of problematization, that is, of the critical side of genealogy, by paving the way for researching how the erasure of the capital/labor dichotomy is removed and the poor/remainder of the population is reintroduced by transforming labor into human capital and thereby pacifying the effects of inequality in the social domain.

The second domain is Becker's "anthropological erasure of the criminal"[34] that boils down to a "massive withdrawal with regard to the normative-disciplinary system."[35] In this case, Foucault addresses the other side of the government-subject relation by looking at the change in the truth of the subject who breaks the law. As he sees it, the erasure of the truth of the *homo penalis* and *homo criminalis* engendered by governing both as a *homo economicus*[36] is a vehicle of expropriation of domains that were given to another form of power, namely that of discipline. This form of power is rendered useless by denying its regime of veridiction its counterpart in the figures of *homo penalis/homo criminalis* that by now possess no distinct abnormal truth

enabling the enforcement of disciplinary power, or any other power founded on the hidden truth of the one who breaks the law (or, for that matter, the abnormal in the psychiatric institution). Rendering the disciplinary useless, says Foucault, allows for the inclusion of those who had been excluded and violated by the veridiction regime pegged to the working of disciplinary power in the penal system and the psychiatric institution by the exclusionary apparatus of division and rejection.

Looking at these theoretical-technical doubles of government-subject-truth relations, it becomes clear that neoliberalism, as described by Foucault, offers a massive overhaul of liberalism. This is achieved mainly by dissociating a knowledge of government and truth on the one hand, and the subject and truth on the other. This seems to be the reason Foucault, who insists on speaking of capitalisms and liberalisms in the plural (much like the German ordo/neoliberals), says that unlike socialism there is a "form of liberalism [that] doesn't have to be true or false."[37] It is my contention that this form is neoliberalism.

CRITIQUE IN THE NEOLIBERAL LECTURES

Although Foucault's lectures on neoliberalism present plenty of happy positivism, a growing number of future researchers accepted the invitation to engage with neoliberalism critically. They have taken up the challenge, basing their work on his positivist analysis of this form of power, and are doing so in growing numbers due to the continuing crises of neoliberalism ever since it stopped generating solid growth a decade ago. However, it is also noteworthy that upon a careful reading of the neoliberal lectures, one can see that they open up fields of problematization in nearly every subject they address. There are ample examples: first, the growth of judicial demand that is a byproduct of the entrepreneur society;[38] the reserve army of employable people[39] that ensures the inverse social contract;[40] the embrace of inequality as an intended goal of neoliberal governmentality;[41] setting the question of the future prospects for neoliberalism as depending on whether it can model the exercise of both state and society by the principles of a market economy[42] on the one hand, and the problem of the applicability of *homo economicus* as the grid applied to every social action,[43] on the other. The former, as mentioned earlier, is tested by the completely formal and value-free element of economic growth.[44] And there is more. The inflationary critical tendency of state-phobia that fears the growth of state apparatuses;[45] the problematization of the intrusion of the human capital approach into human bodies,[46] as well as presenting neoliberalism as "do not laissez-faire" government—to name but a few.

However, it seems that the kernel of Foucault's critique of neoliberalism is found in his conclusion that the neoliberal subject is eminently governable.[47] In light of my reading of Foucault on neoliberalism offered above, it seems plausible that the reason why *homo economicus* is eminently governable and functions as a correlate of neoliberal government[48] is because, and not in spite, of freeing the subject's will to know from the sovereignty of truth that was still imposed on it by classical liberal governmentality. Put differently, introducing a wedge between truth and power does not free the truth-less subject from government. To the contrary, as Foucault would have it, this truth-less regime is "no less dense, frequent, active, and continuous than in any other system";[49] and regardless of the question of how reasoned neoliberal governmentality is, it is a system in which in any case we are surely facing too much power.[50] Lacking the freedom that is derived from the relative autonomy of the relation of self to self, as well as denying the individual the possibility of being subjected to different kinds of government with their competing veridiction regimes, only makes the subject more governable.[51]

It is true that Foucault lays the ground for the critical side of a genealogical inquiry into neoliberalism, a critique that presents neoliberal post-truth governmentality as just as intrusive and violently exclusive. This form of government intensifies control over the governed and therefore robs them of the relative freedom they enjoyed in classical liberalism (or, for that matter, in the mercantile system due to its inefficiency). But I believe that the answer to the question, "where is Foucault's critical engagement with neoliberalism?" lies elsewhere. It seems to me that such a critique is found in those lectures that follow the neoliberal series, and in which Foucault returns to premodernity and inquires into three distinct genealogies. The first of these is a genealogical enquiry into the point of formation of the pastoral regime of veridiction inherent in a governmentality that feeds on, and is the correlate of, a truth of a subject that was not pegged to any form of power up until then. In the second, Foucault inquires into the point of formation of a subject who is guided by truth prior to the Christian invention and institutionalization of its correlate in the form of a truth-telling that goes hand in hand with the new form of pastoral power. As Foucault concluded that the "way out" of this form of governmentality had to pass through the relation of the self to self, he turned to study the "golden age of the culture of the self,"[52] in which care of the self was relatively free from subordination to a regime of veridiction. As he describes in *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*, what makes this age golden is that the ethos was not subordinated in the service of the *polis* as in classical Greece, nor to the Christian economy of the souls. The third inquiry, which occupies the last two lecture series, is dedicated to a genealogy of the critical attitude in Western philosophy. This is done by returning to its crystallization

in pre-Christian antiquity while, again, focusing on the same age in which he examined the ethos of the care of the self in and for itself.

These genealogical inquiries into the history of the governmental regime of veridiction on the one hand, and into the ethos of truth-telling on the other, go together with what Foucault admitted was a "fetish" that he had developed for Kant's article "What is Enlightenment?" during these years. It seems fair to connect the two efforts (as Foucault himself did) and by doing so to read Foucault as seeking an ethos of modern philosophy as a permanent critique[53] that manifests the truth of an individual—one who is not a correlate of any form of pastoral power/governmentality. This form of power is identified as one in which the subject has to be governed and has to let himself be governed,[54] and it is in relation to this form of power that the classical liberal envisioned critique as the art of not being governed quite so much.[55] Put differently, I suggest reading Foucault the lecturer, following the neoliberal lectures, as someone on the lookout for a critical ethos of parrhesiastic truth-telling that the modern philosopher may pursue.

In this context, it seems plausible to read Foucault's lectures on the enlightened philosophy of critique as a "way out" of the secularized governmentalization of pastoral power, a version that the history of our societies over the last four hundred years has "proved to be really demonic since they happened to combine those two games—the city-citizen game and the shepherd-flock game—in what we call the modern states."[56]

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I answered the question of Foucault's relation to neoliberalism by situating it within the overall scheme of his Collège de France lectures. Thus, I reversed the question raised by Zamora: instead of asking whether Foucault was a neoliberal, I asked what role the lectures on neoliberalism play in Foucault's entire oeuvre of lectures at the Collège de France. As shown, the neoliberal lectures ended a decade-long genealogical inquiry into the histories of specific forms of power that were currently at play. These genealogical inquiries were meant to retrace how each is pegged to a regime of veridiction, and in the process to allow a thorough critique of these forms of power, including the exclusionary violence they inflict. On a more radical level, writing the histories of how truth and power are entangled was intended to admit the possibility of freeing the will to know from the sovereignty of truth. Read against this background, the neoliberal lectures were supposed to be the pinnacle of this decade-long effort since in them Foucault (at last!) inquires into the preeminent form of power in its present and rising form. (Indeed, it has risen to world domination since the late 1970s.)

However, contrary to expectations, Foucault's research agenda changed dramatically upon studying neoliberalism. Inquiring into neoliberal governmentality, Foucault realized that it is indeed a novel form of government; that by adapting the technologies and theories of secularized pastoral power alongside a radicalization of the liberal critique of the market, neoliberalism was able to establish the long-sought-after wedge between truth and knowledge of government. But—and this seems to me to be a crucial point—Foucault also discovered that this kind of government does not free the individual at all from the grip of too much power; it only reinforces it. Moreover, neoliberalism's future growth means there will be no place left in the subject's relation of self to self (or in the state or in society, for that matter) that is not always already manipulated and governed. It also threatens to render meaningless the subject's option of telling power "we don't want to be governed like that, or at that price."

This conclusion, I propose, accounts for Foucault's turn in the 1980s to inquire into the histories of the culture of the self and of truth-telling. In so doing he attended to "the urgent, fundamental and politically indispensable task" of a forming a critical ethos of truth-telling that could resist the present neoliberal formation of "political power, situating it in the more general question of governmentality." For, as he said, such a task cannot "avoid passing through, theoretically and practically, the element of a subject defined by the relationship of self to self" that will "once again connect together the question of politics and the question of ethics."[57] As shown here, following the "neoliberal lectures," Foucault looked for an ethos of truth-telling that would give birth to a politics with an innate "resistance to governmentality, the first uprising, the first confrontation to a society in a state in which nothing is political, but nevertheless everything can be politicized, everything may become political."[58]

NOTES

1. On enlightenment as a "way out," see Michel Foucault, "What Is Enlightenment?" in *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth,* ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: New Press, 1997), 305–06.

2. Bernard Harcourt in Gary S., Becker, Francois Ewald, and Bernard Harcourt, "Becker on Ewald on Foucault on Becker: American Neoliberalism and Michel Foucault's 1979 "Birth of Biopolitics' Lectures," *University of Chicago Public Law* Working Paper No. 401 (2012).

3. Colin Gordon. "A Note on 'Becker on Ewald on Foucault on Becker': American Neoliberalism and Michel Foucault's 1979 Birth of Biopolitics Lectures." A conversation with Gary Becker, François Ewald, and Bernard Harcourt (February 2013): https://foucaultnews.files.wordpress.com/2013/02/colin-gordon-2013.pdf.

4. Daniel Defert. "'I Believe in Time…' Daniel Defert Legatee of Michel Foucault's Manuscripts. Interview with Guillaume Bellon." Trans. by C. Roncato. *Revue Recto* 6 (2010): http://www.revuerectoverso.com/spip.php?article186.

5. Ewald, "Becker on Ewald."

6. Gordon, "A Note on Becker."

7. Michel Foucault, *The Courage of Truth: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1983–84* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 2.

8. Michel Foucault, *The Hermeneutics of the Subject: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1981–1982*. Trans. by Graham Burchell (New York: Picador, 2005), 1–2.

9. Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978–1979*. Trans. by Graham Burchell (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), XIV.

10. Foucault, *The Courage of Truth*, 8–9.

11. Michel Foucault. "What Is Critique?" in *The Politics of Truth*, ed. Sylvère Lotringer (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 1997), 54.

12. See Daniel Defert in Michel Foucault, *Lectures on the Will to Know: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1970–1971.* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 262–63.

13. Foucault, *Will to Know*, 4.

14. Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, 35.

15. Foucault, *Will to Know*, 5.

16. Michel Foucault, *On the Government of the Living: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1979–1980*. Trans. by Graham Burchell (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 101.

17. Incidentally, this proves that Foucault didn't turn from modernity to antiquity in the 1980s, but at best, returned to antiquity.

18. Most of these forms of power are mentioned in his inaugural lecture at the Collège de France (see Michel Foucault, "The Order of Discourse," in R. Young, ed., *Untying the Text: A Poststructuralist Reader* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971), 48–78.

19. Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977–1978.* Trans. by Graham Burchell (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 109.

20. Foucault, "The Order of Discourse," 70.

21. Ibid., 73.

22. On Zamora's piece in *Jacobin*, see the introduction to this volume.

23. Ewald, "Becker on Ewald."

24. Foucault, "The Order of Discourse," 53.

25. Ewald, "Becker on Ewald," 5.

26. See, for example, Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, 130–31.

27. Ibid., 246.

28. Ibid., 131.

29. Ibid., 201.

30. With the exception of appearing as the legal subject of arbitration between two or more human enterprises according to the arbitrary, formal (thus) truth-less rules of a game of the market.

31. Ibid., 219.
32. That is, of course, much older than the liberal adaptation of it and, as shown by Peter Brown, has its origins in late antique Christianity.
33. Ibid., 204–5.
34. Ibid., 258.
35. Ibid., 260.
36. Ibid., 249.
37. Ibid., 93.
38. Ibid., 149, 174–75.
39. Ibid., 144, 206.
40. Ibid., 202.
41. Ibid., 143.
42. Ibid., 131, 145.
43. Ibid., 268.
44. Ibid., 144.
45. Ibid., 187–89.
46. Ibid., 201.
47. Ibid., 269–70.
48. Ibid., 163.
49. Ibid., 145.
50. Foucault, "What Is Critique," 54.
51. Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, 259–61.
52. Foucault, *The Hermeneutics*, 30, 81.
53. Foucault, "What Is Enlightenment?" 312.
54. Foucault, "What Is Critique?" 43.
55. Ibid., 45.
56. Michel Foucault. "Pastoral Power and Political Reason," in Jeremy R. Carrette, ed. *Religion and Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 143.
57. Foucault, *The Hermeneutics*, 252.
58. See Foucault, *Security*, 390.

Chapter 6

Foucault on *Phobie d'État* and Neoliberalism*

Duncan Kelly

Michel Foucault's predominant approach to his various subjects of inquiry and their discourses seems in retrospect to have been heading toward a form of genealogy, well before he even adopted the terminology. Indeed, the "self-consciously" Nietzschean qualities of even his first book are highlighted by the editors of his newly assembled *Oeuvres*.[1] The idea of a dramatic shift, however, or obvious moment of transition toward this, or indeed to anything else in his work, overplays the extent to which his thought can itself be classified into various stages or moments of rupture. Though he often took himself to be writing about the challenge of moments of discontinuity in modern forms of economic knowledge, or the classificatory dynamics of modern liberal states, or the evolution from baroque theatrical punishment to modern techniques of incarceration, he knew that such transitions were never so clean and precise as our language would have us believe. As he suggested in 1979, when writing most explicitly of the relationship between biopolitics and neoliberalism, "the point of all these investigations concerning madness, disease, delinquency, sexuality, and what I am talking about now," that is, neoliberalism as forms or practices of power based on the idea of not governing too much while maximizing national prosperity, is "to show how the coupling of a set of practices and a regime of truth forms a *dispositif* of knowledge-power that effectively marks out in reality that which does not exist and legitimately submits it to the division between true and false."[2] How these particular couplings came to be elaborated into Foucault's contemporary analysis of neoliberalism and his worries about contemporary politics

* I am very grateful to the editors and organizers of the original conference where these themes were first discussed, and for comments on the draft itself to Michael Behrent and Greg Conti especially.

and political theory, alongside his rejection of contemporary Marxism, is the subject of my essay.

For Foucault's genealogies were intellectually bound up with an understanding of the competition between different *dispositifs* in public, as well as being shaped by a very personal sense of what philosophical approaches to the histories of these various forms of power-knowledge could conceivably achieve. His interest in this was therefore both exquisitely direct, because for Foucault the very fact that histories were put into written form by particular authors made all history-writing part of the wider history of self-writing and self-constitution, but also ornately distant. His sense of genealogy as self-writing meant more than simply autobiography in these terms, but it presumed an engagement with the "already known" and the "particularity of circumstances that determine its use." That is, he recognized that writing and publishing is always a politically potent mixture, combining the individual and intentional authority of an author amid the flux of competing meanings and contexts that are consistently deployed and redeployed in highly charged acts of direct communication, as well as contemporary or historical interpretation.[3]

Here is one way to align Foucault's fertile projects that developed during the 1970s. The combined plans for and eventually realized histories of sexuality, alongside the histories of various ways in which bodies and states were classified, disciplined, and punished, were all part of a related concern to construct overlapping genealogies of the Western self and its soul, and his own self and soul as a part of that general process or optic. As he had written in *Surveiller et punir*, the soul after all is both "an effect and an instrument of a political anatomy." It is "the prison of the body," and the object of his book was a "correlative history" of the "modern soul and a new power of judgement," underpinned by a juridical-scientific apparatus that would manage it.[4] This might help to pinpoint his own very particular engagement with the conceptual opposition, so central to postwar French thought, between the political (*le politique*) and the sphere of politics or government (*la politique*) where law intersects. There, he could focus on the construction of what he called the hermeneutics of the subject, which worked across both fields. This sort of interest, which Stuart Elden has recently discussed, requires us to recognize that although his canvas was vast and his corpus extensive, his work always and self-consciously remained partial.[5] It was continuously supplemented rather than replaced or rejected, because Foucault was neither a lumper nor a splitter, but a compulsive tinkerer. He well knew the impossibility of going beyond contexts or frames of reference to the writing of anything like pure history, untainted by prejudice, self-interest, or present-mindedness on one side, or of providing complete account of epistemologically self-contained practices on the other. There never was

any one pure moment of epistemological rupture [*coupure*] that could fully explain change, conceptual or otherwise, despite what Althusserian colleagues suggested.

Against this, he wanted to show that "the history of thought could not have the revelatory role of a transcendental moment" [*l'histoire de la pensée ne pourrait avoir ce rôle révélateur du moment transcendental*]. It was better seen, "in short, as a kind of historical phenomenology" of particular moments [*en bref comme une sorte de phénoménologie historique*].[6] This was not a new thought, and his work on the limitations and classifications of scientific and economic knowledge, for example, shows profound debts to French teachers and predecessors such as Georges Canguilhem and Louis Rougier who, alongside Jean Hyppolite and Georges Dumézil, were inspirations.[7] But these epistemological limits cohered in his work around an extraordinarily capacious sense of which particular traces remained both functional and fungible from the vast array of historically conditioned systems of thought and classification open to Foucault as an obsessive genealogist of the self. Parsing his quarry, it became clear that in order to pursue such historical phenomenology, there could only be particular "lines of attack" that might open up a "verbal performance" to historical analysis, and allow us to see its political remainders and take its measure.[8] It's hard not to hear the resonant frequency of Nietzsche and Marx behind these claims, valorizing both for recognizing the state of the debt that the past pays to the present, while simultaneously chastising both for their interpretations of historical change. The nature of his own debts to both figures combined anew during the period after 1968 most obviously, championing an original account of power that would put Marx and Marxism back in the nineteenth century where he thought they belonged. He recounted this in various contemporary interviews.[9]

He rejected the idea, that is to say, that these pioneers in his fields of study had been able to go beyond their boundaries. As he had already suggested by the mid-1960s, in the justly celebrated but headily baroque work *Les mots et les choses* (1966), Marxism was locked into a nineteenth-century paradigm that it could not transcend. The apparently radical options of Ricardian pessimism and Marxian revolutionism were, in his eyes, nothing more than two sides of the same coin: "At the deepest level of Western knowledge, Marx introduced no real discontinuity [*coupure*]: It found its place without difficulty." Why? According to Foucault, both Marxism and modern theories of political economy were simply two ways of examining the "relations of anthropology and History as they are established by economics through the notions of scarcity and labour."[10] For his purposes, nineteenth-century Marxism was like a "fish in water."[11] How the nineteenth century determined the relationship between wealth and poverty, how strategies of governmentality learned to navigate the so-called social question, and how liberalism

became something like the master discourse of this policy remained crucial to Foucault's interests in delineating genealogically the "philosophical states" [*états philosophiques*] and stakes of this century, the one he thought most fundamentally behind our own modernity.[12] But that concern had long been apparent since his first big book (simultaneously a doctoral thesis), *Histoire de la folie* (1961), and had already prefigured this intense focus on the problems of transitioning into the nineteenth century through the prisms of madness, sexuality, criminality, and the pathological draw of the nearby hospital at *Salpêtrière* whose archives would help cement his work, and where he would eventually die.[13] If we were to apply these threads and connections to Foucault's own attempt to write the history of modern neoliberalism in the latter half of the 1970s, might we both take the measure of his debt to his own past, as well as see his engagement as a local, polemical exercise in historical phenomenology?

To begin with, Foucault obviously built upon a deeper and more explicitly political rejection of Marxism. Nineteenth-century Marx and Marxism had not been able to transcend their own time and place by naysaying the sort of "communistologie" and state-phobia that went alongside contemporary French Marxism.[14] Foucault chose instead to cultivate what had developed after 1968 in ways that were "profoundly anti-Marxist" [*profondement antimarxiste*] and challenge binary ideas of sovereignty.[15] Radical socialists were, he thought, unable to recognize the extent of their indebtedness to an old paradigm that was no longer relevant, particularly given the expansive liberal practices of government that had, in his mind, become much more pervasive.[16] So, while his counter-conceptual and genealogical focus routinely took him back to questions and intuitions posed by Marx, as Étienne Balibar has clearly shown, Foucault's cycles of engagement stemmed not only from an interest in intramural critique, but were also filtered through generational cycles of breaking with, or breaking away from [*Abrechnung*] foundational claims about knowledge, revolution, and anthropology. As he did so, moreover, Foucault consistently pursued his rejection of Marx with recourse to Kant.[17] Kant's cultivation of a critical sensibility offered him a more appealing mask through which to curate his own alternative genealogy of modern liberalism, one similar to the sort of revisionist return to Kant of earlier radical critics like Eduard Bernstein.

Such revisionism, however, dramatizes something of the divisions within and between scholarship concerned variously with Foucault himself, with the consistency or otherwise of his ideas across time and space. These routinely come to the fore in attempts to explain the surface-level oddity of Foucault's move toward an accounting with neoliberalism in the later 1970s. As he finished work on *Discipline and Punish* around February 1975, Foucault developed a critique of his own work on power, and he seemed to begin to

think about the relevance of political thought and its history for contemporary politics in new ways. This combines the idea that he was both working toward a new theory of power and engaging with drastic local criticism in the form of his defense of the *nouveaux philosophes* on the one hand, and defending himself against both the social historians and the postmodern critics like Jean Baudrillard on the other. It also coheres well with his developing ambition to write a multivolume history of sexuality, at the same time that during the middle of the decade he was running through a period of increasingly pessimistic moods in the autumn of 1976.[18] And as James Miller famously suggests, Foucault at this point seemed to be living "in texts."[19]

This sense of withdrawal, however, is problematic, for it runs alongside myriad political interventions that have caused other biographers like Macey to configure Foucault once again as the "Professor Militant."[20] His long-standing involvement with the *Groupe d'information sur les prisons*, protesting against the war in Vietnam, working for *Goutte d'Or* in support of migrants and migration, his involvement with the Alain Jaubert affair (where he was beaten for offering to help someone ejected from a demonstration by the police), his work on the *Comité de Défense de la Presse et des Journalistes* where he represented *Le Figaro* as well as being involved with *Libération*, his continued connection to the *Gauche Proletarienne* and concerns with the question of popular violence, as well as his activities alongside the *Ligue des droits de l'homme* and the Trotskyist *Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire*. All of this implies something rather livelier than someone merely living in texts.[21] Yet both claims clearly hold some truth. Struggling to find a new intellectual direction at the same time as he was variously committed politically across the 1970s itself suggests an important continuity running through Foucault's last major decade.

Another line of argument comes from more recent reckonings with Foucault and the problem of neoliberalism. In his important and densely packed interpretation, Serge Audier has pointed out the radical differences between Foucault's militancy in the early 1970s and his politics later in the decade, tracking this move through a more general analysis of French liberalism.[22] The revisioning of liberalism under Valéry Giscard d'Estaing and Raymond Barre progressed through the 1970s, particularly following the extremely close 1974 result where Giscard defeated François Mitterand, and by the time of the 1978 election Foucault, like Raymond Aron, was being asked by *Politique Hebdo* for comment.[23] He turned to the ideas of ordoliberalism as a first response, trying to see whether or not the move to reconcile modern French liberalism with the demands of the international economy was simultaneously a rejection of socialism and planning, as well as a workable political-economic strategy. Yet as Foucault discerned it, Giscard's economic

policy was based on the idea that the modern liberal state was a rule-of-law state, or *Rechtsstaat*, wherein planning and welfare reforms were part and parcel of its mainstream agenda. It was not a "total" state of the kind that ordoliberals rejected, for in Foucault's contemporaneous reconstruction of that tradition, ordoliberals always think the political costs of economic plans are too much to bear and should therefore always be rejected.[24] Furthermore, those who attacked Giscard on principle were, from the point of view of contemporary Marxism or socialism, doing just what Foucault wanted to avoid, that is, hardly caring about what sort of grasp on reality one might have and exercising a form of knee-jerk state phobia. His own "*dénunciation*" of the state was filtered through an attack on Giscard's liberalism, while rejecting the criticisms of contemporary socialism.[25] Audier's argument is therefore that Foucault traveled far from his early 1970s Maoism during that decade, which explains his rather more sympathetic engagements with the political and economic reforms proposed by Giscard, Barre, and Rocard.[26]

Contrastingly, Peter Ghosh's view is that in the context of the 1970s, this makes Foucault's politics quite straightforward and rather predetermined, less contextually mutable than Audier's claim. With his adherence to a "litany of conventional radical causes" stemming from a Gallic adherence to intellectual universalism, in Ghosh's rendition Foucault's focus on power has almost made the nation-state into an irrelevance.[27] Here, three points locate Foucault in a distinctively French context. First, society or the social is primary, though Foucault's groups or *epistemes* remain close to Comte's hierarchies. Where the former does replace the latter, it gives rise to what Ghosh thinks of as a loose form of structuralism with an implicit teleology. Second, a connection between science and knowledge and his own sense of self as an intellectual, one that relates strongly to a concern with the fate of transparency in modern systems of knowledge and discourse.[28] Third, his continuous interest in the nature of surrealism and the question of individual autonomy. Together, this combination of structure, institution, and surrealism frames the otherwise contradictory poles of his work, with a move to Kant in order to discern limits to discourse and knowledge, but a surrealist utopianism in his defense of an "absolute power to change one's life."[29]

To substantiate that, between 1968, his election to the Collège de France in 1969, and the Iranian Revolution in 1978, Foucault's politics for Ghosh are absolutely typical in their rejection of all that is seemingly "intolerable."[30] The Klaus Croissant affair in 1977, when the Red Army Faction lawyer sought but was denied asylum with reference to constitutional law dating back to 1946, led to Foucault's engagement with the German question and contemporary terrorism that helped push him toward a consideration of economic liberalism and its German genealogies. More specifically, this meant tracing the roots of the German *Wirtschaftswunder* of the postwar years, as it

developed as a new social model under Helmut Schmidt. Giscard was close to Schmidt, and Foucault was interested in the ways in which Christian democracy was formed in a series of historical-phenomenological moments that could be traced back to ordoliberalism.[31] Allied with the anti-1789 as well as anti-Gulag politics of the 1970s and the partial renovations of the French left through journals like *Faire*, Foucault's German comparison took him back to Wilhelm Röpke, among others. Viewing the contemporary problems of European socialism through ordoliberal lenses allowed him to suggest that there is no "autonomous socialist governmentality."[32] Socialism remains too statist, beholden to ideological dogma, and therefore too utopian to be effective as a contemporary strategy. Socialism in effect has become a model of the total state for Foucault, unlike Nazism, in fact, and this makes its analysis of power problematic, because "power is not a substance."[33] Alongside revisionist accounts of modern socialism that had been repurposed since the 1959 Bad Godesberg decisions of the SPD, Foucault thought that such revisionism was no sort of betrayal, but a necessary update providing an entry point into the liberal game of modern politics. Willy Brandt, too, offered a new kind of German realism about modern politics and modern liberalism, and the French left needed to learn from it.

Foucault also entered the fray over German challenges to French politics in *Le Nouvel Obs* by defending Croissant at the level of a right to defense in court (liberal rights).[34] He wouldn't affiliate with the *RAF* position but he would defend the right to asylum.[35] On November 15, there was an illegal demonstration, moving from *République* to *Nation*, where Foucault took part and was beaten up. This led him to a flippant-sounding but appropriately angry diagnosis of police brutality as part of a "pleasure bonus" for doing that job.[36] Foucault and Daniel Defert then went to East Berlin, where they were stopped by guards and searched, but from their hotel in West Berlin they could hardly fail to note the irony that they were attacked in Germany for apparently supporting the *RAF*, while in France they were attacked by colleagues and friends precisely for not doing so.[37]

Theoretical connections remained just as complicated. This is most obvious in the practical politics of prison reform that lay behind his early *Collège de France* lectures in 1972 on the nature of civil war and the punitive society, but which itself also continued his prior critique of law as constitutive of juridical genealogies of statecraft. Both claims resurfaced in a more general analysis of civil war as the defining problem of modern politics a few years later in 1976, when the question posed was how "society" became the thing that practices of governmentality were designed to defend, and how the juridical model of sovereignty had to be overcome.[38] Foucault's critique of the contemporary liberal state noticeably changed as he engaged more directly with the history of modern political theory,

in ways that seem rather less "fragmentary" to my mind than some of his interpreters suggest.[39]

In this respect, three of Foucault's major lecture series of the last half of the 1970s offer three rival versions of the sort of reason of state associated with the modern welfare state. In *Society Must Be Defended*, a juridical genealogy of sovereignty and war, as well as of civil war, is outlined, with their counter-discursive contrasts drawn from what Foucault calls historico-critical arguments (such as the "ancient constitutionalism" mobilized by the Levellers and Diggers against juridical models of kingly sovereignty during the English Revolution). This naturalizing of history against legalism counters the predominance of the juridical narrative of sovereignty in modern politics that runs from Hobbes to Rousseau in his rendition, offering two sides of the same argument. Here, *raison d'état* is seen as effectively "conservative," but simultaneously, when updated, reason of state becomes the basic precondition for the idea of perpetual peace.[40] Juridical political theory on this analysis offered a "monarchical" response to epic-histories focused on conflict and struggle, and these competing genealogies ran up to the nineteenth century as histories of either the Norman Conquest and Anglo-Saxonism in England, or aristocratic anti-nobilism in France through figures such as Boulainvilliers.[41] At the level of political theory, this meant that seeking the emergence of "society" could not be found in Machiavelli's *Prince* or Hobbes' *Leviathan*, for the one is not the origin of reason of state theory, and the other is not a story of war.[42] Society emerged in the nineteenth century, bearing the traces of those racial conjectures and conflict-driven histories that were domesticated by liberalism as a sort of counter-project of governmentality, in contrast with neo-Roman models of sovereignty.[43] In his own genealogies, Foucault's account of historical-critical discourses suggests an alternative pre-history to Hobbesian notions of politics in ancient constitutionalism. These were updated in and through the French Revolution, where the analysis of social war out of ancient constitutionalism and anti-nobilism came to shape modern socialism after the revolution, while in England, it would buttress the rejection of oligarchy and political despotism made by radical constitutionalists and Whigs such as Bolingbroke.[44] Tracing the various languages of these forms of legitimation was crucial to Foucault's account of how society itself became a subject of legitimation and control. Trying to think beyond sovereignty or contract models of politics also suggested other forms of discourse, particularly those pertaining to pastoralism and cameralism in Europe.

In *Security, Territory, Population*, he continued the theme by exploring various strands of liberalism concerned with limited or regulated government, particularly the cameralist model of the well-ordered police state, for example. This allowed him to highlight the contrast between pastoral models of politics and juridical models of sovereignty. In turn, this became woven

into a broader history of liberal governmentality, understood as a series of concrete practices and policies of government, and which were distinct from, or perhaps better yet, counterposed to, traditional conceptions of sovereignty. Such liberal forms of governmentality, that is to say, had their own counter-histories to juridical political theory. These could be found in traditions of pastoralism and care, or welfare, whose roots extended deep into pre-Christian ideas of shepherding and care for a flock, which transitioned into Christianity and the cultivation of a certain sort of ascetic, well-regulated self-conduct, and which in turn lay behind the birth of a modern *Polizeistaat*, or modern welfare-state. Once again, though, the crucial figure whose work hinges together these double narratives in Foucault's history of political theory as a kind of discursive war between concepts of juridical sovereignty and modern liberal governmentality, remains Kant. It was Kant who proffered an answer to the question that when thinking about the connections between theory and practice as well as perpetual peace, the state must provide a juridical framework of regulation first, followed secondarily by the pursuit of public happiness and the care for population. Moreover, this required in Kant's work a strong sovereign whose "private" reason was the prerequisite of the development of a wider, cosmopolitan, and "public" reason. Justice first followed by happiness second was the synthetic offering, which prohibited revolution at the level of abstract right, but which simultaneously defended forms of revolutionary enthusiasm if properly motivated (often by appeal to radical Protestantism). Kant's synthesis remained an appealing model for Foucault, as the caring, pastoral side of state was routinely sidelined by purely juridical readings of the modern liberal state as *Rechtsstaat*. As Foucault also claimed, however, if one can only put the theory of politics into practice through the cultivation of experience and self-creation (or a sort of Kantian focus on autonomy), and understand that this is a necessarily historical claim, then it is perhaps less surprising than it might be to find Foucault suggesting that both pre-Christian Greek ideas of control as well as early Christian ideals of regulated conduct and asceticism, also provide crucial filters in the elaboration of liberal governmentality. Here, the "hermeneutics of the subject" are aligned with a particular *dispositif* based around a claim about how power/knowledge is constructed as a form of "truth" about liberalism, and whose practical predicate concerns the art of not being governed too much.[45]

This very broad and exceedingly complex arc of conceptual history behind the pastoral model of politics, from the archaic Greeks to early Christianity, or what will later be re-described as a move from barbarism and religion, toward the medieval period and culminating in the modern idea of the state, was ostensibly recognized first by Catholic anti-Machiavellians as the original "reason of state" theorists. Alongside their obvious religious justifications, they also set forth a crucial modern idea that the economy should

become a central ground upon which state-interest and state-care might be targeted. Here, conjoined ideas about human sociability, the necessity of prudential conduct by the statesman and regulated conduct by the individual, as well as the concept of an economy run principally according to the dictates of non-intervention, or laissez-faire, began to emerge with the transition from mercantilist to physiocratic analyses. In France, these focused heavily on the grain trade, while in our subsequent histories of modern political and economic thought, this secularizing narrative of an "invisible hand," which, through the mechanism of market exchange based on individual self-interest leads socially to collective prosperity, found its most fulsome elaboration in the work of Adam Smith and the emergence of a new science of political economy. It signaled what Albert Hirschmann would famously christen as the transition from the passions to the interests as the basis for this modern development, and Foucault had long been committed to the view that its emergence as a language of governmentality was crucial.[46]

Leaving the market "free" as the mechanism through which a strong, but limited, state for the purpose of national defense and public good provision (including welfare) constituted the beginning of a liberal political economy-based solution to Kant's problem. That is, how to reconcile welfare and happiness through a progress toward Enlightenment, orienting statecraft and subjectivity through commercial sociability, enlightened absolutism, and competitive emulation. Market distortions are still a danger in this construction, for if markets fail to function adequately on the one side, or if the state penetrates society and overcompensates for market failure on the other, the results can be monstrous, whether in terms of structural crises or militaristic forms of competition. Later, of course, Marxists would develop this line of inquiry, hoping that such moments of crisis or rupture might prove decisive, but Foucault rejected the catastrophism behind their challenge. Finally, then, in *The Birth of Biopolitics*, Foucault offers a counter-genealogy of liberal failures to stabilize the compound of a free economy with a strong state in the twentieth century, particularly in response to ideological challenges to liberalism through war, fascism, and Nazism, by seeking the roots of a different sort of reason of state, one that has been reconfigured in principle as a sort of *Wohlfahrtstaatsräson*, but in which the practices of liberal statecraft have been found wanting. Seeing something similar, Sheldon Wolin opposed *Staatsräson* to *Wohlfahrstaatsräson*, and thought of it as a style of neoliberal rhetoric that actually served the end of a corporate American state, even as it professed to reject its premises.[47] Foucault focused instead on the priority of utility as a new "technology of government," one that might instead seek to promote a form of liberty *after* liberalism.[48]

Neoliberal reformulations and revisions in response to early twentieth-century liberal failings were outlined in Foucault's account of two particular

strands of German *Ordoliberalismus* and Chicago School microeconomic theories of political economy.[49] Because of his interest in curating an anti-Marxist genealogy of the modern neoliberal state, after delineating both *raison d'état* and pastoralism as the two sides of the modern welfare state, and having consigned Marxism to its nineteenth-century history, Foucault now began to attack colleagues and contemporaries who sought either to update Marxist social theory in order to find in the modern liberal state something obviously to fear, or to defend as the lasting legacy of the French Revolution in contemporary France as a counterweight to the legacy of Stalinist bureaucratic politics. Contemporary Marxists often saw the modern welfare state as necessarily repressive, instinctively fascistic, structurally subservient to the interests of a ruling elite, and something straightforwardly to be overthrown or destroyed. These knee-jerk sorts of *phobie d'état* took shape in the attacks by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari on West Germany as "fascist" in the wake of the Croissant affair, in André Glucksmann's account of democracy as a "new form" of fascism, and in Nicos Poulantzas's attempt to navigate a path through the "relative autonomy" of the modern state whose ruling class ideology could easily slip over into forms of repressive intolerance and fascism.[50] But such views were, Foucault suggested, straightforwardly ridiculous ways to think about contemporary politics at the level of principle. Not only because political life was so obviously reliant upon the complex interaction between states and markets in a globalized world, but instantaneous *phobie d'état* promised little more than a new form of subjection. Parsing these claims is difficult. Poulantzas's contemporaneous attack on the "crisis of parties" was germane, for instance, to understanding new forms of state authoritarianism, about which he remained concerned to call out, but Foucault thought that Marxist approaches to politics were structurally problematic, offering generic and even genetic theories in place of the study of actual practices and policies.[51] So, while he remained ambivalent about politics that came through institutions, parties, and states in general, he rejected in principle the thought that one could somehow theorize in advance what was always going to be the problem or issue at hand. Such at least was the claim he repeated in an interview with Bernard Henri-Lévy in March 1977.[52]

In particular, Foucault's recourse to Kant for thinking about the relationship between the legal state and the nature of individual autonomy beyond it remained critical to the continuous evolution of his analysis.[53] Each time, by seeking a genealogy of the various prisms or refractions of the state, the nature of modern nation-state power, and the critique of the state offered by neoliberalism, he revisioned the ways in which the history of political and economic thought could inform contemporary politics. Indeed, because the purpose of genealogy is to unmask power relations hidden by juridical or state-centered models, constructing in their place forms of "antisciences," this

approach was something that could use what he called the "insurrection of knowledges" for the purposes of critique.[54] As applied to politics, he argued that "in no way have I wanted to undertake the genealogy of the state itself or the history of the state. I have simply wanted to show some sides or edges of what we could call the reflective prism."[55] Earlier, he had related this to his interest in the ways that geography constructs the contours of these prismatic visions of the state, explaining that territoriality was clearly foundational to "juridico-politique" conceptions of sovereignty that could be countered by both pastoralism and neoliberalism.[56] During this period, in and around 1978, he was also renewing his engagement with the history of science (evidenced in his introduction to the work of Georges Canguilhem), and thinking about the epistemological limits to generalized forms of critique and investigation. Politically, this led him to reconsider the possibility of non-Western models of revolution and political journalism, developed during visits to Japan, and his engagement with the Iranian Revolution.

As is well known, the Italian newspaper *Corriere della sera* commissioned a series entitled "Michel Foucault Investigates" alongside the wider team of Alain Finkielkraut, Thierry Voeltzel, and André Glucksmann. The thought here was that although "ideas do not rule the world," there are so many ideas and "the world is not passively ruled by its rulers," that "intellectuals will work together with journalists at the point where ideas and events meet."[57] Alberto Cavallari, head of the paper's Paris desk, approached Foucault and he agreed to work on the Iranian Revolution.[58] In terms of his support for Iran, Foucault was attacked both at home and abroad.[59] But what he proposed was a form of "anti-strategic morality," a claim designed to defend the singularity of the revolutionary sort of spiritualism and political imaginary being pursued in a novel form, at least in comparison with Western models of politics, in contemporary Iran. Against the "infamy" of modern sovereignty doctrine, a new claim about ceremonial and theatrical forms of power, and revolutionary ruptures without juridical foundations, could find practical contemporary form in Iran or Japan. Just as he had sought in his own academic productions ways of seeing the challenge to sovereignty through literature and art via critique and genealogy, now outside the confines of Western political theory and practice, he saw another world of political possibilities. His interest in the counter-genealogies of pastoralism and his defense of popular violence came together to appropriate the novelty of non-Western modern revolution for his own thinking about politics going forward, while allowing him to reject both the socialist critique of the state in Europe as well as the "monopoly" by Western political theory on the concept of revolution, looking backward. With no preconceived patterns of intention to political action like this, the role of the observer could only be that of the *intellectual engagé*, an appropriately journalistic and Aronian-inspired motif.[60] The one figure who still

continued to make sense of all these connections was Kant, whose centrality to modern liberalism, governmentality, and territory could also be reconfigured as what Foucault thought of as a form of "journalisme philosophique." Kant provided a method of posing questions genealogically and critically, a way of getting at content through form.[61]

As ever, Foucault was not interested in the idea that history was capable of offering anything like objective truth, but he constantly sought out ways in which orders that were described and instituted by historical developments and which were often, as it were, forms of a "forgotten past," nevertheless remained "profoundly inscribed" in the present.[62] He was sensitive, that is to say, to what sort of stylistic models, registers or Kantian forms of "taste" might best uncover these legacies. And it seems to me that one way in which Foucault's lectures on the history of political theory in general, and his reckoning with neoliberalism particularly, find their form is as a species of philosophical journalism, wherein his public rejection of contemporary forms of *phobie d'état* aligned with a wider discontent with the sorts of projects associated with Marxist interpretations of both the French and Russian Revolutions in the 1970s, indeed the category of revolution in conventional political theory at all. Here, his practical assessments seemed closest to the wider claims of Raymond Aron and François Furet especially, even if the route through which he got there seemed rather different.[63] He agreed with the thought that "the return of the revolution, that's our problem."[64]

But recent historiography has also tried to claim that Foucault might well have positively advocated a certain sort of neoliberal politics himself. How? Michael Behrent, alongside Daniel Zamora, connects Foucault's interest in neoliberalism to his long-standing anti-humanism as well as his engagements in 1970s political debates, wondering whether he admired its unit like assessment of individuals as utilitarian calculating machines, with interests separate from the state and whose subjectivity remained somewhat spectral to the authorship and authorization of their desires, but who were nonetheless "governmentalizable."[65] Under that construction, the subject, rather like the Foucauldian author, is not exactly dead but certainly not entirely self-aware. At the same time, his attack on both statism and anti-statism across the left pushed him to engage with neoliberalism as a more appropriate framework for cultivating tolerance to certain sorts of minority pursuits and practices.[66] Behrent's is a philosophical answer. Like the neoliberals and the ordoliberals, Foucault is presented as going "beyond man" as a subject of inquiry, marrying anti-humanism with an interest in the micro-dimensions of power. On this view, Foucault went back to the 1960s to reiterate his anti-humanism, and then redeployed it in a new world and for a new time.[67] This meant looking at the way liberalism began to focus on population as a new

political problem, because "man was to population what the subject of right was to the sovereign."[68] When Chicago economic neoliberalism spoke of the human "machine," therefore, there was an affinity, an anti-humanism, that reinvigorated the model of economic man, the "homo economicus" of the marginalists.[69] It did so, however, in order to defend the individual from the grip of the state. This was also another way of going back to Kant, just as the ordoliberals and the revisionist socialists had earlier done, for an austere sense of the limits of human autonomy within the juridical structures of the liberal state, but it also gave a sense of the way in which legal regulation and public happiness were discrete topics.

A secularized narrative of the "invisible" hand of historical progress and Enlightenment offered a structural connection between Kant's philosophical strictures and the practical problem of how to think about the possibilities of perpetual peace.[70] In Foucault's rereading, the prerequisite for Kantian peace is the necessity of planetary globalization, and this was entirely what he suggested lay behind the renovations liberalism and neoliberalism sought during the twentieth century. As he tried to navigate around economism, and the anthropological problem of how to consider "man" as a subject of analysis, as well as how to navigate around the juridical model of politics drawn from the trajectory running through Machiavelli, Hobbes, and Rousseau, he sought to return to the Kantian question of how to have a strong state without war, but in the absence of contract theory and under a form of neoliberal governmentality that valorized the opening up of commercial markets.[71] As he wrote, "the guarantee of perpetual peace is therefore actually commercial globalization,"[72] through a form of modern liberalism that had an "economy of power" combining "freedom and security."[73] Yet while Kant's politics fixed as a regulative ideal a republican constitutionalism that could run alongside global commercial sociability, his skeptical epistemology showed the impossibility of total knowledge about how this might actually work, suggesting that there could be no purely "economic" sovereign at all.[74] Audier, too, finds in Kant the pivotal figure in Foucault's engagement with neoliberalism in the wider political context of the 1970s, when he wrote essays on the nature of critique, on Kant specifically, and on the "analytical philosophy of politics."[75]

In 1978, Foucault continued this by furthering the withering attack upon Ernst Cassirer's interpretation of Kant that he had first written about in 1966. Then, he suggested that Cassirer's history of ideas was too old-fashioned. Now, it tied into his updated genealogies of pastoralism and counter-conduct, and to the 1978 lecture, "Qu'est-ce que la critique? Critique et *Aufklärung*." Here, we can see his sense of how these connections were being redrawn, with Kantian Enlightenment and Foucauldian "critique" aligning to consider forms of governmentality in an "historicophilosophical" perspective that has much in common with Max Weber's analysis of Western "rationalization" as

bound up with claims about the various arts of not being governed.[76] Ordoliberalism in Germany is presented as an economic discourse that emerged from an anti-statism formed in a rejection of the war economies of both the First World War, and then under National Socialism, as well as planned forms of rationalization, forms of what Foucault would term "*étatisation*" or "statification." These were nevertheless discourses, from within which cameralist ideas of the well-managed and well-governed welfare-state were redeployed. One idea here is that from an original moment of state-phobia, a new sense of political economy as a form of ordered and embedded liberalism emerged, focused around questions of calculation, probability, and uncertainty and the important but limited place of the state in engaging with mechanisms of exchange. This was, perhaps, a misreading of just how proximate many ordoliberal ideas were to the elaboration of National Socialist doctrines.[77] But by contrast, the criticisms of statification as economic and political mismanagement that Foucault targeted were, in effect, the guiding themes motivating the early work of Friedrich Hayek, whose place in the pantheon of modern neoliberalism is assured. Hayek himself had learned much from French critics (such as Henry Michel) of Kant's critique of the Enlightenment police state. In Germany, too, Walter Eucken updated Kantian criticism in his own reformulations of ordoliberalism. Foucault noted both versions of this renewed movement "back to Kant" in his own lectures.[78] And he claimed that these discourses were not a priori forms of *phobie d'état*, but they had developed out of certain interpretations of statification that were responses to the rise of totalitarianism and National Socialism on one side of the ledger, and the New Deal and the modern American state during the Cold War on another.[79]

Louis Rougier, a pioneering figure in French neoliberalism and another interpreter of Kant was, according to Foucault, a "rare good epistemologist."[80] He was someone clearly important in moving Foucault toward what he came to see as the "analytical philosophy of politics," played as a sort of "game" with language and meaning, and that presupposed that the philosopher's role is independent critique, arbitration, and explication.[81] By so doing, the critical philosopher could focus epistemologically on limit cases, or ways of seeing contemporary challenges and ruptures to Western political concepts and languages (whether from Cambodia and Chile, or Iran and Indonesia) in longer-term perspective.[82] As a model for thinking about the economic-juridical order, Rougier's analysis was limited to the *Rechtsstaat*.[83] With neoliberalism and the separation of sovereignty from government, or administration, Foucault saw the need to develop a new critique of what he thought of as "political reason." This he did in his Tanner Lectures.

Comparing the state as the centralized agency, and pastoralism as the individualized agency of governmental reason, Foucault compressed his

attempt to refract juridical sovereignty theory back through a pastoralist counter history, focusing on the idea of the shepherd and their flock, the Hebrew and Eastern roots of this tradition, how it came into conflict with Greek political thought, and then how it became central both to Christian statecraft in general, and its forms of individual self-regulation in particular.[84] In fact, the Tanner Lectures effectively synthesized his Collège de France arguments, as we can now see, in several interesting ways. In the contemporary welfare state, there is a combination, the result of a long and tangled history, of state authority as the management of political-juridical power over citizens, as well as pastoral care for subjects.[85] These were the two models of *raison d'état* and of *Polizei*, each with their positive and negative tasks to undertake, that formed the boundaries of morality and politics under the modern state.[86] In *The Birth of Biopolitics*, however, this transitions into a study of modern neoliberalism understood as an art of the economy, separate from the apparatuses of the state. Here, the internal social control of citizens is not undertaken by the juridically sovereign government, but through economic governmentality.[87] These form a series of tripartite relations between a critique of monopolistic tendencies within capitalism as outlined by Schumpeter, forms of what Foucault calls conformable economic action (which seems to amount to action that adheres to the rudiments of a general economic approach such as that outlined by Gary Becker), and a critique of contemporary social policy. Indeed, Becker's contemporaneous appreciation of the rising importance of economic theory in general was something that Foucault seems to have picked up on.[88] But together, this made up the prism through which his genealogy of market-based commercial society and commercial sociability was filtered, and how it was seen in and through various and overlapping discursive structures across several generations.[89]

Another part of the cultivation of a new direction for French politics in the 1970s that Foucault was interested in came through the figure of Robert Marjolin, crucial arbiter of French engagement with the European Community, and someone whose intellectual formation had been rooted in the work of Elie Halévy. Halévy in turn, through Marjolin but also through the powerfully public presence of Aron and Furet, was reanimated as a figure with something to say about the complex stability at the heart of any modern industrial democracy, just as he had been in the earlier part of the twentieth century.[90] Halévy had been crucial to those in the 1930s in France who were thinking about the problems of how to revive and renew liberalism and recast what Charles Maier referred to as the "stability" of bourgeois Europe. Other figures alongside Rougier, like Besançon, discoursed in Paris in 1938 at the famous *Colloque Walter Lippman*, and followed up a year later with the development of a new center concerned with the renovation of liberalism.[91] This was the

disciplinary and institutional origin story of modern neoliberalism as a sort of "thought collective."[92]

Foucault's sense of these pasts was filtered through his own Kantian lenses, as well as through his reading of other modern French political economists who had written on the rise of neoliberalism and historical ordoliberalism, figures like François Bilger, for example, whose lectures on liberal thought in contemporary Germany he read carefully.[93] The nineteenth-century "revolution" was about economic power, and hence about poverty and society. In turn, pastoral power offered a counter-genealogy that could be more broadly international than traditional and nationally focused European political theory.[94] But if historical reason of state had cultivated the sense that the government ruled over and limited the extent of the market, a new liberal doctrine was emerging in which market failures were to be explained both as administrative or managerial mistakes, foolhardy attempts to intervene in the economy. Alongside this, ordoliberalism and latterly modern American economic neoliberalism supplemented these criticisms of state planning with a new criterion of judgment, that the market should in fact become the metric for holding the state to account. This made neoliberal governmentality a new sort of reason of state, where the state is "under the supervision of a market."[95] Because of this, contemporary strategies of political economy and social policy had to change, and here, Foucault thought, French social policy was stuck in the past. Since 1929, he wrote, the French social model had been premised on full employment and financial devaluation, and had sought to bring about its ends effectively on the same model as the war economy, cultivating forms of "national solidarity" and administrative or *dirigiste* political economy that were no longer credible.[96] Such connections opened up the possibility of discerning a new neoliberal reason of state, one that might unite both European state traditions grounded in a liberal sense of the necessary limits to the state, and an American state tradition rooted in the idea of liberal strategies of legitimation through values and structures. Put together, they provided the genealogy of an economic style that was genuinely transatlantic, but which had some shared origins in the notion of a social crisis, a *Gesellschaftskrisis* reflected in the development of new styles of economic thinking.[97]

This kind of work was an appropriate path through which to contextualize Atlanticist versions of neoliberalism that were also beginning to be discussed in France through the work of Henri Lepage. His own study, *Demain le capitalisme* (1978), had begun to incorporate the work of Gary Becker on human capital into contemporary discourse, but primarily in ways designed to showcase the radical scientific ambition, as opposed to the merely ideological cast, of the neoliberal program at the same time as it would also show the "hegemony" of American over European neoliberalism.[98] The critique of the

state through the freedom of the market cut more than two ways, though. On the right, this was easily pressed into service as an attack upon the *dirigiste* policies of French socialists and the so-called common program of the left. Equally, on the so-called "second left," such criticisms bolstered the attempt to free society from the clutches of an overbearing state, allowing for the possibility of new forms of communal self-government or management, a pluralistically updated sense of populist *autogestion* inspired through the work of figures like Pierre Rosanvallon and journals like *Faire* or *Autrement*.[99] Others, such as Foucault's student Blandine Kriegel, would counteract this anti-statism of both left and right, by appealing to the need for a new, liberal sort of Francophone *État de droit*, or *Rechtsstaat*, all over again, in order to avoid the classical sort of Tocquevillian worry about a slide into the tyranny of the majority and social conformism.[100]

The need to develop a new standard of judgment, or a new metric, maps well onto Foucault's developing sense of the power/knowledge couplet as analogous to a form of discursive "play," within which a language of games, reciprocity, and attention to the mimetic quality of exchange and value to economic calculation would be important.[101] This was particularly the case when thinking about powers that are designed to be situated and specifically analyzed across micro-levels, and has remained crucial to much French economic sociology on the nature of convention, interpretation, and value in political economy.[102] At the time, however, Foucault's fascination with the micro-level and with various subcultures outside of the reach of the state coalesced with this interest in neoliberal strategies of segregating state and economy. Contrariwise to Rosanvallon and the *autogestion* movement, Foucault argued that modern neoliberalism offered a resolute challenge to conventional histories of political theory; it chimed, that is to say, with a more profound, cultural shift toward individual judgment and innovation as well as disruption: "We no longer ask a political theory to say what to do," he claimed.[103] Equally, in other interviews such as those with Jean Bitoux in *Gai Pied*, about San Francisco and homosexual subcultures, the crucial question of personal conduct away from the prying eyes of the state seem again to connect the personal and the political.[104] Here was both a renewed exploration of toleration toward practices routinely considered as forms of deviance, which could be defended given this sort of neoliberal critique of the state, as well as something else that became apparent to those viewing a bloated state amid the multiple crises of the "disciplinary society" in July 1978, of the "extraordinary costs" of wielding repressive power.[105]

If the obvious site through which the various crises of French politics and economics in the 1970s were experienced was the state, it too was obviously the principal site of left critique. Foucault, in rejecting the idea

of a straightforward critique of the state based on a particular form of state theory, therefore also engaged in a particular form of self-criticism, moving away from his concern with discipline and toward biopolitics, that is, his broad transition from a concern with the sovereign state (as a death-taking enterprise) to liberal governmentality (as a life-making association), which needs power over populations, but whose powers are limited. Updated as the "deal-making" strategies behind modern neoliberalism, utilitarianism as a sort of shorthand moral psychology returns anew here, to do away with the new juridical fictions of modern political languages and discourse in ways that Foucault was so keen to follow, finding in the absence of bio-power the presence of freedom.[106] What this also reiterates, of course, is that Foucault's work continued his search for those contexts that might matter in the otherwise labile world of ideas (*monde des idées*), and which could help to cultivate or curate a new "sense" or "taste" in the public sphere as a form of "positivity" (*positivité*).[107] Older, more traditional analysis of "disruptions" in the history of thought showed there were no singular moments of "*coupure*" that could provide obvious clarity out of crisis or uncertainty, either in the past or the present. Therefore, the role of the history of ideas in helping us to think about contemporary politics and economics is one of constructing lines of attack, or particular sorts of visions that might challenge contemporary nostrums.[108] It can do nothing more, or less.

As he had suggested, the history of ideas cannot have the "revelatory role of a transcendental moment" (*rôle révélateur du moment transcendental*), which mechanical forms of rationality had sought since Kant. By contrast, his own genealogical approach offered a sort of "historical phenomenology" that is not a science, but which focuses on "words or signs of attack that provide for the analysis of verbal performance or argument" (*signes d'attaque pour l'analyse des performances verbales*).[109] In this rendering, with reference to Lacan, the construction of belief is always a problem of psychology.[110] He would not make this into a defense of the possibility or indeed the desirability of forms of radical democracy, but other colleagues routinely did. It did, however, buttress his own antipathy to what other colleagues saw as potentially Stalinist undercurrents to large-scale modern bureaucratic politics, what François Châtelet termed a form of "egocratie."[111]

A new form of Enlightenment was needed to pursue this sort of strategy, which is why Foucault's return to Kant is so crucial in the 1970s in providing a way of signaling both the background to debates about the free economy and republican constitutionalism, as well as hinting at ways beyond them.[112] Contemporary neoliberalism in France was the "not laisser-faire" economy, and instead, the economy became a structuring guide to governmentality.[113] This then offered a route through the division among the socialist party position in France around 1976, which veered between what Michel Rocard

famously described as an "étatist and Jacobin" or a "decentralized and libertarian" left, the latter being the side of an argument that the so-called new economists appealed to.[114] Equally, of course, by going back to Kant in the French context, this language of neoliberalism could also more routinely be aligned with the idea of a renovation or renewal of one or other of the multiple strands of liberalism that had emerged out of the postwar period. Contextualized, this could be located variously with reference to the Algerian crisis, the *épuration* of the intellectuals after Vichy, or in the renewal of interest in early socialism and producerism as manifested in the organization of the *Fondation Saint Simon* in the later 1970s.[115] It could also, with reference to contemporary Anglo-American discourse, stand a related reconstruction of liberalism and justice filtered through the Kantian dimensions of John Rawls's *A Theory of Justice* (1971). As figures like Rosanvallon would suggest in *La crise de l'état providence*, seen in this way Rawls was part of the mainstream in terms of his development of what the French straightforwardly referred to as "neoliberal" theories of justice.[116] The sterner side of modern Kantianism from within these Francophone perspectives that emerged, however, could also be seen through his awareness of debates about the codification into the West German Criminal Code of an "Order against Radicals" in 1972, Para 129a, which Foucault was very well aware of.[117]

Whether Foucault was too optimistic about the freedom-enhancing possibilities of neoliberalism remains an important question. One of those who developed his critique was Francois Ewald, whose update of Foucault's critique of political reason for the contemporary world offers a sense of what might be at stake in thinking about "Omnes et Singulatim, after Risk." Ewald poses the problem of solidarity in a "big data" world of networks, hierarchies, and participants, combining privatization and open access, new digital platforms, and access to services with targeted forms of advertising, domination, and control.[118] This sort of open freedom seems to offer new mechanisms of entrapment that are even harder to resist than the old-fashioned bureaucratic interventions of the juridical and bureaucratic state.[119] The nineteenth-century transmission of liberalism offered a hope that one might "live dangerously," alongside a politics structured by a fear of degeneration and interference.[120] This is why, in part, the early ordoliberals and neoliberals looked back to these early liberal debates from the perspective of the 1930s and 1940s, as a way of shoring up a defense against the perils of both French and German socialism that sought to transcend such liberal freedoms.[121] For if the history of socialism in the nineteenth century was really one of "totalization," then "governmentality" under liberalism became the new ground upon which economic logics and political rationalities might align under a modern welfare state.[122] It was also where minimal government might maximize collective benefit.[123]

Neoliberalism further pursued the primacy of this economic logic into a critique of liberal governmentality itself, and suggested ways in which modern political economy could go beyond the state that differed from contemporary Marxist diagnoses of the structural or legitimation crises of the state by focusing upon the inflation of the "compensatory mechanisms of freedom."[124] It was, that is to say, a problem of "statification" (*étatisation*).[125] As a new problem, it was nonetheless couched in old language, namely Bentham's question of what makes it onto the political agenda (which is to say, what the state should do), and what constitutes a non-agenda item, which could be a form of non-decision but which routinely meant that which the state must not do.[126] What Foucault either refused, or consciously ignored, when writing of the moment was the idea that there was a "legitimation crisis," suggesting that the crisis of liberalism was neither automatically or necessarily a crisis of capitalism.[127] These struggles had historical roots, but were "signs of the crises of governmentality," not of state theory. Moreover, the sort of economic separation from the state implied by neoliberalism does, to Foucault's mind, offer something quite radically new, which the sort of analysis offered by Habermas and others failed to capture. As he suggested in a lecture of March 28, 1979:

> The problematic of the economy is by no means the logical completion of the great problematic of sovereignty through which eighteenth century juridical-political thought strove to show how, by starting from individual subjects of natural right, one could arrive at the constitution of a political unity defined by the existence of an individual or collective sovereign who is the holder of part of the totality of these individual rights and at the same time the principle of their limitation. The economic problematic, the problematic of economic interest, is governed by a completely different configuration, by a completely different logic, type of reasoning, and rationality.[128]

Homo economicus is not *homo juridicus*. While the latter claims rights, the former says, you cannot touch me, you are powerless. Through that move, political economy has become the language of a critique of governmental reason. Economic science is "lateral to the art of governing."[129] By the time he had arrived at neoliberalism in his lectures, then, it had come to mean not a case of government forming a "counterpoint" between state and society, but a body of practices that has to "intervene" on society, or see the "regulation of society by the market."[130] Already in Röpke's arguments, Foucault discerned this "shifting [of] the center of gravity of governmental action downwards," culminating in a sort of enterprise society, with zones of deregulation in the spaces of particular cities and units as new sites of freedom, much as we might now think of Hong Kong for example.[131] To grasp new ways of thinking about

this sort of predicament, however, Foucault suggests we turn to someone like Max Weber for a sense of how to think about social "relations" and economic argument, or to what pioneering social democratic radicals like Franz Neumann termed the "economic constitution" under the modern *Rechtsstaat*.[132]

The lesson of neoliberalism that aligns with Foucault's projects into the 1970s, therefore, seems to be its dethroning of the idea of a singular sovereign state. The very concept of the state has changed, for it is now "nothing else but the effect, the profile, the mobile shape of a perpetual statification or statifications in the sense of incessant transactions which modify or move, or drastically change, or insidiously shift sources of finance, modes of investment, decision-making letters, forms and types of control, relationships between local powers, the central authority, and so on." The state "has no interior," and one must undertake critical examination of it from the outside.[133] Neoliberalism offered one such opportunity to examine the state anew, both from the outside and from within. By conceptualizing the global economy as the space upon which new discursive uncertainties would be played out, in an apparent rejection of a domestic politics of statification, neoliberal forms of biopolitics and governmentality can nevertheless only work if the domestic political resources of modern nation state are appropriately harnessed toward its ends.[134] This means in turn that juridical and political tensions appear most openly at the margins of institutional connections, and traverse the border zones where statist politics and global economics meet.[135] Those borders and hinterlands are precisely where Foucault urged us to look, and if there is something that still lives from his historically rooted critique of the present from the later 1970s, then it is surely this challenge to take up that task from the outside, as it were, and with considerable urgency, to reconsider the relationship between the nation state and global economic policy once more.

NOTES

1. Michel Foucault, "En marge d'Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique," (1961) "Preface" to *Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique*, *Oeuvres*, 2 vols. (Paris: Gallimard, 2015), I, 664; cf. Serge Audier, *Penser le "néoliberalisme": Le moment néolibéral, Foucault et la crise du socialisme* (Lormont: Le bord de l'eau, 2015), 65.

2. Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, ed. M. Senellart, trans. G. Burchell (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2008), 22.

3. Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, la généalogie, l'histoire" (1971), *Oeuvres*, vol. 2, 1281–1304.

4. Michel Foucault, *Surveiller et punir: Naissance de la prison* (1975), *Oeuvres*, vol. 2, 291; cf. 283.

5. Stuart Elden, *Foucault's Last Decade* (Oxford: Polity, 2016), 208.

6. Michel Foucault, "L'archéologie du savoir" (1969), *Oeuvres*, vol. 2, 215, 216.

7. Michel Foucault, "L'ordre du discours," Leçon inaugurale au Collège de France prononcée le 2 décembre 1970, *Oeuvres*, vol. 2, 256.

8. Foucault, "L'archéologie," *Oeuvres*, vol. 2, 219, 222.

9. Michel Foucault, "Considérations sur le Marxisme, la phénoménologie et le pouvoir" (1978), *Cités* 4(52) (2012): 101–26.

10. Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things* (London: Vintage, 1970), 284f; *Les mots et les choses* (1966), *Oeuvres*, vol. 1, 1320; on Ricardo, 1311–58.

11. Ibid.

12. Michel Foucault, "La philosophie analytique de la politique" (1978), *Dits et écrits*, vol. 2, *1976–1988* (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 534–51, at 538.

13. Foucault, "Histoire de la folie," *Oeuvres*, vol. 1, 582, 585, 590f.

14. Michel Foucault et al., "Table ronde—réclusion et capitalisme" (1972), *Dits et écrits*, vol. 1, *1965–1975* (Paris: Gallimard, 2015), 1205; cf. Michel Foucault, "La mort du père" (interview with P. Daix et al), *Dits et écrits*, vol. 1, 1602–07, at 1605.

15. Michel Foucault, "Pouvoir et corps" (1975), *Dits et écrits*, vol. 1, 1622–28, at p. 1624 cf. Michel Foucault, "Les têtes de la politique," *Dits et écrits*, vol. 2, *1976–1988* (Paris: Gallimard, 2015), 9–13, at 9ff.

16. Unpublished interview between Michel Foucault and four militants of the LCR (July 1977): http://1libertaire.free.fr/MFoucault117.html.

17. Étienne Balibar, "L'anti-Marx de Michel Foucault," in C. Laval and L. Paltrinieri, F. Taylan, eds., *Marx & Foucault: Lectures, Usages, Confrontations* (Paris: Découverte, 2015), 84–104, esp. 85, 87f, 90f, 94f.

18. See Elden, *Foucault's Last Decade*; David Macey, *The Lives of Michel Foucault* (London: Vintage, 1995), 359ff.

19. James Miller, *The Passion of Michel Foucault* (London: Flamingo, 1993), 289.

20. Miller, *Passion*, 292–95.

21. Macey, *Lives*, 294f, 298.

22. Audier, *Penser le néolibéralisme*.

23. Michel Foucault, "La grille politique traditionnelle" (1978), *Dits et écrits*, vol. 2, 506f.

24. Foucault, *Biopolitics*, 178f, 191ff, 194ff.

25. Ibid., 188; cf. Audier, *Penser le néolibéralisme*, 53, 323.

26. Audier, *Penser*, 55, 351; cf. Raymond Aron "La politique Barre, ou quell autre," *La France*, 3–9 March 1979, repr. *De Giscard à Mitterand* (Paris: Fallois, 2005), 316ff.

27. Peter Ghosh, "Citizen or Subject? Michel Foucault in the History of Ideas," *History of European Ideas* 24(2) (1998): 113–59, at 115.

28. See Stefanos Geroulanos, *Transparency in Postwar France* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2017), esp. 300–14.

29. Ghosh, "Citizen or Subject?" 122.

30. Ibid., 125, 127.

31. Foucault, *Biopolitics*, 85, 88, 102ff; Macey, *Lives*, 392ff; Audier, *Penser*, 131.

32. Foucault, *Biopolitics*, 92.

33. Michel Foucault, "Omnes et singulatim: Towards a critique of political reason," *Tanner Lectures on Human Values* (Stanford University, October 10–16, 1979),

253, translated as "pouvoir n'est pas une substance," *Dits et écrits*, vol. 2, 979; cf. Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, 190ff.

34. Macey, *The Lives of Michel Foucault*, 393; Michel Foucault, "Va-t-on extruder Klaus Croissant?" *Le nouvel observateur* (November 1977), *Dits et écrits*, vol. 2, 361–65; cf. "Michel Foucault: la sécurité et l'État" (1977), *Dits et écrits* II, 383–88.

35. Macey, *The Lives of Michel Foucault*, 394.

36. Ibid., 395; Michel Foucault, "Désormais, la sécurité est au-dessus des lois," interview with Jean Paul Kauffmann, *Le Matin*, November 18, 1977, 15, in *Dits et écrits*, vol. 2, 366–68.

37. Macey, *The Lives of Michel Foucault*, 397.

38. Michel Foucault, *The Punitive Society: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1972–1973*, ed. B. Harcourt, trans. G. Burchell (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2015), 25–30. For his earlier genealogy of the punitive society and penal institutions, see Michael Behrent, "The Genealogy of Genealogy: Foucault's 1970–1971 Course," *Foucault Studies* 13 (2012): 157–78; also Bernard Harcourt, "Course Context," in Foucault, *Punitive Society*, 265–310.

39. Richard Groulx, *Michel Foucault, la politique comme guerre continué. De la guerre des races au racisme de l'état* (Paris: Harmattan, 2015), 18.

40. Michel Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975–1976*, ed., Alessandro Fontana, trans. David Macey (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2003), 258, 260.

41. Marianna Valverde, "Law versus History: Foucault's Genealogy of Modern Sovereignty," in M. Dillon and A. W. Neal, eds., *Foucault on Politics, Security and the State* (Basingtsoke: Macmillan, 2008), 135–50, at 142f; Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended*, 57.

42. Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended*, 60ff.

43. Ibid., 81.

44. Cf. Quentin Skinner, "The Principles and Practice of Opposition: The Case of Bolingbroke versus Walpole" in N. McKendrick, ed., *Historical Perspectives* (London: Europa, 1974), 93–128.

45. Cf. Michel Foucault, "Qu'est-ce que les lumières?" (1984) *Oeuvres*, vol. 2, 1380–97 and notes; "What Is Enlightenment," in P. Rabinow, ed., *The Foucault Reader* (London: Penguin, 1984), 32–50.

46. Albert Hirschmann, *The Passions and the Interests* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press,1985); Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, 247.

47. Sheldon S. Wolin, "Democracy and the State: The Political and Theoretical Connections between *Staatsräson* and *Wohlfahrtsstaatsräson*," *Political Theory* 15(4) (1987): 467–500, esp. 475, 480.

48. Foucault, *Biopolitics*, 39, 40.

49. See Jan-Otmar Hesse, "'Der Mensch des Unternehmens und der Produktion'. Foucaults Sicht auf den Ordoliberalismus und die 'Soziale Marktwirtschaft'," *Zeithistorische Forschungen/Studies in Contemporary History* 3 (2006): 291–96.

50. See Nicos Poulantzas, "A propos de l'impact populaire du fascisme," in *Elément pour une analyse du fascisme*, Seminar of Maria A. Macciocchi (Paris VIII: Vincennes, 1974–1975), 88–107; Audier, *Penser*, 133.

51. Audier, *Penser*, 76, 463f; cf. Bob Jessop, *Nicos Poulantzas: Marxist Theory and Political Strategy* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1985).

52. Michel Foucault, "Non au sexe-roi," *Le nouvel observateur*, 644, 12–21 March, 1977, in *Dits et écrits*, vol. 2, 256–69.

53. Foucault, "What Is Critique?".

54. Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended*, 9.

55. Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory and Population: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977–1978*, ed. M. Senellart, trans. G. Burchell (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2007), 276.

56. See Michel Foucault, "Questions à Michel Foucault sur la géographie" (1976), *Dits et écrits*, vol. 2, 32.

57. See 406. Michel Foucault, "I reportages di idee," *Corriere della sera*, 12 November 1978, in *Dits et écrits*, vol. 2, 706ff; cf. Alain Finkielkraut, "La diversa Destra che viene dal Pacifico," *Corriere della sera*, 12 November 1978, 1–2.

58. Focuault's sense of not being a predictor of the future is there in his "La Rivolta dell' Iran corre sui nastri delli minicassette" *Corriere della Sera*, 19 November 1978, 1, in *Dits et écrits*, vol. 2, 709–13, and discussion in Macey, *Lives*, 407.

59. Cf. Behrooz Ghamari-Tabrizi, *Foucault in Iran: Islamic Revolution after the Enlightenment* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2016).

60. Cf. Michel Foucault, "Inutile de se soulever?" *Le Monde*, 11 May 1979, in *Dits et écrits*, vol. 2, 790–94; Audier, *Penser*, 418).

61. Foucault, *L'archéologie*, *Oeuvres* I, 253f; Michel Foucault, "Introduction par Michel Foucault" to G. Canguilhem, *On the Normal and the Pathological* (1978), in *Dits et écrits* II, 429–42, at 431.

62. Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended*, 56.

63. Michael Scott Christofferson, *French Intellectuals against the Left: The Antitotalitarian Moment of the 1970s* (Oxford: Berghahn, 2004); "'The Best Help I Could Find to Understand Our Present': François Furet's Antirevolutionary Reading of Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*," in S. Sawyer and I. Stewart, eds., *In Search of the Liberal Moment: Democracy, Anti-Totalitarianism, and Intellectual Politics in France since 1950* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2016), 85–110.

64. Foucault, "Non au sexe roi"; this was reiterated in another interview devoted to outlining his thoughts about neoliberalism, in Michel Foucault, "La phobie d'État," *Libération*, 30 June/1 July 1984, 21.

65. Foucault, *Biopolitics*, 252f; Michael Behrent, "Liberalism without Humanism: Michel Foucault and the Free-Market Creed, 1976-1979," *Modern Intellectual History* 6(3) (2009): 539–68.

66. Daniel Zamora and Michael Behrent, eds., *Foucault and Neoliberalism* (Oxford: Polity, 2015); Daniel Zamora, "Finding a Left Governmentality: Foucault's Last Decade," in this volume.

67. Michael Behrent, "Can the Critique of Capitalism Be Anti-Humanist?," *History & Theory* 54 (2015), 372–88, at 373ff; Serge Audier, "Neoliberalism through Foucault's Eyes," *History & Theory* 54 (2015): 404–18, at 406–10; cf. Foucault, *Security, Territory, and Population*, 66–73, 78f (25 January 1978).

68. Behrent, 375f; Foucault, *Security, Territory, and Population*, 81.

69. Behrent, "Critique," 379, 381; Foucault, *Biopolitics*, 279.

70. Cf. Mitchell Dean and Kaspar Villadsen, *State Phobia and Civil Society* (Stanford, CA: California University Press, 2016), 140ff.

71. Foucault, *Biopolitics*, 55f.

72. Ibid., 58.

73. Ibid., 65.

74. Behrent, "Critique," 385.

75. Audier, "Neoliberalism," 406.

76. Michel Foucault, "Qu'est-ce que la critique? Critique et *Aufklärung*," *Bulletin de la Société française de philosophie* 84(2) (1990): 35–63 (original paper given at the *Société française de philosophie*, session of May 27, 1978), at 37; discussion in Audier, "Neoliberalism," 407f. Translation available as Michel Foucault, "What Is Critique?" trans. K. P. Geiman, in J. Schmidt, ed. *What Is Enlightenment?* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1996) 382–98, at 383f, 390ff.

77. Jan-Ottmar Hesse, *Die Große Depression: Die Weltwirtschaftskrise 1929–1939* (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 2014).

78. Audier, "Neoliberalism," 411; cf. Thomas Willey, *Back to Kant: The Revival of Kantianism in German Social and Historical Thought, 1860–1914* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1978).

79. Foucault, *Biopolitics*, 190, 217, 324, 327.

80. Audier, "Neoliberalism," 411.

81. Foucault, "La philosophie analytique," *Dits et écrits*, vol. 2, esp. 536–39; Audier, "Neoliberalism," 412; cf. Audier, *Penser*, 418.

82. Foucault, "Sexualité et pouvoir" (1978), *Dits et écrits*, vol. 2, 552–70, at 556f; cf. Foucault, "La philosophie analytique," 542, 545.

83. Foucault, *Biopolitics*, 161ff, 163f, 169.

84. Foucault, "Omnes et Singulatim," 227, 228, 229; cf. Philippe Steiner, "Foucault, Weber, and the History of the Economic Subject," *European Journal of the History of Economic Thought* 15(3) (2008): 503–27, here 512.

85. Foucault, "Omnes et Singulatim," 235.

86. Ibid., 252.

87. Foucault, *Biopolitics*, 246f.

88. Ibid., 173ff; more broadly and polemically, see Sonja Amadae, *Prisoners of Reason* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

89. Foucault, *Biopolitics*, 136f, 147f, 177.

90. K. Steven Vincent, "Elie Halévy and French socialist liberalism," *History of European Ideas* (2017). DOI: 10.1080/01916599.2016.1256588; Charles Maier, *Recasting Bourgeois Europe* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975); cf. Henri Loyrette, ed., *La famille Halévy 1760–1960: Entre théâtre et l'histoire* (Paris: Fayard, 1996).

91. Michael Behrent, "Justifying Capitalism in an Age of Uncertainty: *L'association pour la libérté économique et le progrès social*, 1969–1973," in E. Chabal (ed.), *France since the 1970s* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 176–94, esp. 178f.

92. Cf. Philip Mirowski and Dieter Plehwe, eds., *The Road from Mont Pèlerin: The Making of the Neoliberal Thought Collective* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009); Quinn Slobodian, *Globalists: The End of Empire and the Birth*

of Neoliberalism (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018); Angus Burgin, *The Great Persuasion: Reinventing Free Markets since the Great Depression* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015).

93. François Bilger, *La pensée économique libérale dans l'Allemagne contemporaine* (Paris: R. Pichon & R. Durand-Auzias, 1964); for discussion, Tribe, "Political Economy of Modernity," esp. 688ff; Audier, *Penser*, 305–09.

94. Foucault, "La philosophie analytique," *Dits et écrits*, vol. 2, 550f.

95. Foucault, *Biopolitics*, 116.

96. Ibid., 197f.

97. Ibid., 103f; cf. 125, 109, 106, 241f.

98. Serge Audier, "The French Reception of American Neo-Liberalism in the Late 1970s," *In Search of the Liberal Moment*, 167–91, esp. 168ff, 179ff; see also Keith Tribe, "The Political Economy of Modernity: Foucault's Collège de France lectures of 1978 and 1979," *Economy and Society* 38(4) (2009): 679–98, 690f; and for the original text, Henri Lepage, *Demain le capitalisme* (Paris: Livre de Poche, 1978).

99. Cf. Pierre Rosanvallon, *Le capitalisme utopiqe* (Paris: Seuil, 1979); *La crise de l'état providence* (Paris: Seuil, 1981); *Counter-Democracy*, trans. A. Goldhammer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

100. Cf. Blandine Barret-Kriegel, *L'état et les ésclaves* (Paris: Payot et Rivages, 1979).

101. Foucault, "La philosophie analytique," *Dits et écrits* II, 541.

102. Audier, "Neoliberalism," 412; André Orléan, "Mimetic Contagion and Speculative Bubbles," *Theory and Decision* 27 (1989): 63–92.

103. Michel Foucault, "Une mobilisation culturelle," *Le Nouvel Observateur* (670) (1977): 49: http://referentiel.nouvelobs.com/archives_pdf/OBS0670_19770912/OBS0670_19770912_049.pdf.

104. Audier, "Neoliberalism," 414; cf. Michel Foucault, "The Gay Science," trans. N. Morar and D. W. Smith, *Critical Inquiry* 37(3) (2011): 385–403.

105. Audier, "Neoliberalism," 414f; Michel Foucault, "La société disciplinaire en crise," May 12, 1978, *Dits et écrits*, vol. 2, 532ff.

106. Foucault, *Biopolitics*, 251; cf. Behrent, "Liberalism without Humanism," 559.

107. Foucault, *L'archéologie*, *Oeuvres* I, 175, 182; "What Is Critique," 394.

108. Ibid., 185, 186.

109. Ibid., 215f, 219, 222.

110. Ibid., 1452, n. 10.

111. François Châtelet, *Les conceptions politiques du XXe siècle* (Paris: PUF, 1981), 982f, 1023f, 1025; cf. Stephen Sawyer, "Epilogue: Neoliberalism and the Crisis of Democratic Theory," *Liberal Moment*, 191–215, at 194ff.

112. Behrent, "Liberalism without Humanism," 556f.

113. Foucault, *Biopolitics*, 247ff.

114. Michel Rocard, *Parler Vrai* (Paris: Seuil, 1979), 76-85, esp. 79f; see also Audier, "French Reception," in *Liberal Moment*, 173, 175, 179; Audier, *Penser*, 135.

115. Sawyer, "Epilogue," *Liberal Moment*, 198, 202f; on Sartre, Algeria and the epuration, see the interesting analysis by Patrick Baert, *The Existentialist Moment* (Oxford: Polity, 2016), 139, 151, 184.

116. Rosanvallon, *La crise*, 94f, 183f.

117. Discussion in Matthew G. Hannah, "Foucault's 'German Moment': Genealogy of a Disjuncture," *Foucault Studies* 13 (2012): 116–37, at 120, 133.

118. François Ewald, "Omnes et Singulatim, after Risk," *Carceral Notebooks* 7 (2011): 77–107, at 78, 86, 100.

119. Cf. Bernard Harcourt, *Exposed: Desire and Disobedience in the Digital Age* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015).

120. Foucault, *Biopolitics*, 66.

121. Audier, *Penser*, 306.

122. Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended* (March 17, 1976), 261.

123. Michel Foucault, "Resumé" of *Security, Territory, and Population*, *Dits et écrits*, vol. 2, 538.

124. Foucault, *Biopolitics,* 68f.

125. cf. Foucault, *Surveiller et punir*, *Oeuvres*, vol. 2, 495, 500f.

126. Foucault, *Biopolitics*, 67, 195; cf. Rosanvallon, *La crise*, 69f.

127. Ibid., 70–76.

128. Ibid., 282.

129. Ibid., 286.

130. Ibid. (February 14, 1979), 145.

131. Ibid., 148, 150.

132. Ibid., 163 (February 21, 1979), also 147f, where he says Weber, Sombart, and Schumpeter "support the neoliberal analysis or project," and 167. Cf. Keith Tribe, *Strategies of Economic Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Duncan Kelly, "Rethinking Franz Neumann's Route to *Behemoth*," *History of Political Thought* 23(3) (2002): 458–96.

133. Foucault, *Biopolitics*, 77f.

134. See here also Wendy Brown, *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution* (New York: Zone Books, 2015), esp. chaps. 2–3.

135. Foucault, *Biopolitics*, 169ff, 173–77.

Chapter 7

Foucault, Neoliberalism, and the Iranian Revolution

Claudia Castiglioni

Foucault delivered the first of his lectures at the Collège de France on "The Birth of Biopolitics" shortly upon his return from Iran in early January 1979, while the conclusive one, addressed in early April, preceded his last piece on the revolution by just a few weeks. His analyses of the Iranian events thus took place against the immediate background of his analysis of governmental rationality from pastoral power to American neoliberalism. However, a definitive connection between the philosopher's writing on Iran and his broader views on politics, religion, and power relations is still to be established.

Foucault's initial enthusiasm for the movement that led to the ousting of the Pahlavi regime has been at the center of a lively debate for more than a decade. Yet the general tendency among scholars has been that of considering his journalistic reporting of the revolution as an extravagant parenthesis that had little or no connection with the philosopher's theoretical itinerary, "a mistake to be forgotten," in the words of Alain Beaulieu.[1] As a result, most of those who have dealt with Foucault and his later works on spirituality, ethics, and governmentality have tended to pass over these articles "in a slightly embarrassed silence."[2] The reasons are twofold: first, the fact that many commentators found the philosopher's praising of the revolution rather problematic, especially in light of the later establishment of the Islamic Republic, and, therefore, find it difficult to address without openly criticizing Foucault's naïveté and his superficial knowledge of the revolt he so quickly seemed to endorse; and second, the tendency to look at Foucault's engagement with the Iranian Revolution as a brief digression that stemmed from the philosopher's attraction for political experiences that challenged the conventional myth of the "march of History" and its normative, progressive discourse. Those who followed this orientation have tended to refrain from value judgments,

preferring instead to view Foucault's reportage as valuable simply insofar as they reveal lesser-known aspects of his work.[3]

The most relevant exception is represented by those who have interpreted the Iran reports as a step in the philosopher's movement toward humanism, a reorientation of his political thought that originated from the disappointment for the outcome of the revolution and from the resulting desire to recant his earlier enthusiasm for the role of spirituality in politics. This, in turn, is considered to have paved the way for Foucault's turn toward liberalism in the later phase of his life. In the words of Ghamari-Tabrizi: "His writing on Iran remain controversial and largely ignored in relation to the development of his thought, except by those who want to baptise him posthumously as a born-again liberal who had learned the painful lesson of divesting himself from the universal referent of the Enlightenment in the reign of terror in Iran."[4] The allusion of Ghamari-Tabrizi is, first and foremost, to Eric Paras and Alain Beaulieu, who have argued that, when faced with the atrocities of the Islamic Republic established in Tehran, Foucault realized the advantages offered by liberalism, especially if compared to "theocratic regimes like the one led by Khomeini."[5] The other notable exception is that of those who are generally considered to be the harshest critics of Foucault's writing on Iran: Janet Afary and Kevin Anderson, the authors of the first book-length study on the philosopher's approach to the Iranian Revolution.[6] Their work triggered controversy in the field of Foucauldian studies as it presented Foucault's support for the Iranian Revolution as the first step of a wider phenomenon of rejecting the Enlightenment that eventually led to the success of radical Islam in challenging the Western political system.

The purpose of this chapter is neither to enter into this rather animated debate nor to provide a normative assessment of Foucault's engagement with Iranian events. It is rather to explore the possible connection between Foucault's engagement with the Iranian Revolution and his late works and, more specifically, with the issues of governmentality and liberalism. In order to do so, the essay analyzes Foucault's experience in Iran and the major features of his writing on the topic. Although the emphasis here is on the role played by the Iran reports in the evolution of the philosopher's views on liberalism, a brief account of his exposure to the revolution and of his assessment of it seems useful insofar as it highlights the prism through which Foucault approached the Iranian events and processed them in the framework of his intellectual development. The study then links his engagement with the revolution to the redefinition of his approach to issues such as power, resistance, and population, issues that figured prominently in his 1977–1979 lectures at the Collège de France. Finally, it explores the relation between the philosopher's conceptualization of the Iranian revolt and how his position on liberalism was broadly conceived. In addressing these topics, the essay

engages with the works of those authors who have viewed Foucault's interest in the revolution as seminal to his late works, stressing the differences in their interpretations, along with their limits. It tries to escape from both the simplistic logic put forward by Afary and Anderson and the overly sympathetic views recently expressed in some revisionist accounts.[7] Particular attention is therefore paid to two aspects: first, the historical and theoretical framework in which we can situate Foucault's remarks on Iran and the consequent caution in extrapolating universal features of his political thought from opinions articulated regarding a very specific and historically grounded event; second, the constant dialogue between Foucault's political engagement and the evolution of his views on power.[8]

FOUCAULT AND THE IRANIAN REPORTAGE

In autumn 1978 Foucault made two trips to Iran to report on the unfolding revolution. A few months earlier, Italian publisher Rizzoli, shareholder of the Italian daily *Corriere della Sera*, had suggested that Foucault collaborate with the newspaper and write a series of opinion pieces to appear in its columns under the title "Michel Foucault investigates." The philosopher accepted the proposition and put together a team of intellectuals-journalists who would prepare a series of reports he described as "reportage of ideas" (*les reportages des idées*). Their aim, in Foucault's words, was to describe "how ideas generated and how they get articulated, not only in the books that shape them, but also in the events in which they show all their strength, in the struggles they animate."[9] Foucault's report on Iran was the first of the series to appear. Eventually only three of these reportage pieces saw the light: Foucault's on the revolution, one by Alain Finkielkraut on Jimmy Carter's America, and one by André Glucksmann on the boat people in Vietnam. The Iranian reportage consisted of nine articles written between September and December 1978. The articles first appeared in the *Corriere della Sera* and then, in some cases, were translated into French and published in *Le Monde* and *Le nouvel observateur*. A few letters, opinion pieces, and interviews that dated from September 1978 to May 1979 completed Foucault's production on Iran. The last piece, entitled "Inutile de se soulever?" ("Is It Useless to Revolt?"), appeared in *Le Monde* on May 11–12, 1979.

Before traveling to Iran, Foucault had already shown interest in the mounting crisis there. Earlier in 1978 he had expressed his support to the opposition to the Shah, and had begun closely following the events as the crisis unfolded. Furthermore, the philosopher was in touch with French human right lawyers such as Thierry Mignon, with whom he had already worked with in the context of the *Groupe d'Information sur le Prisons* (GIP), and

his wife, Sylvie Mignon. Nonetheless, Foucault's familiarity with the country and its sociopolitical situation remained limited. In the weeks before his departure, Paris-based Iranian dissident and co-founder of the Committee for the Defence of Freedom and Human Rights, Ahmad Salamatian, provided the philosopher with reading material on Iran and relevant contacts of members of the opposition both in France and in Iran. The contacts he obtained through Salamatian, who was to become deputy minister of foreign affairs in the post-revolutionary government, allowed Foucault to meet with some of the most influential leaders of the forces that opposed the Shah's regime, such as the future president of the Islamic Republic, Abolhassan Banisadr. Foucault's readings on Iran included the works of French sociologist Paul Vieille, who had previously collaborated with Banisadr on some studies about Iranian social and economic development, of Orientalist Henry Corbin and of his mentor Louis Massignon. The works of Massignon and Corbin on Iranian Islamic philosophy and spirituality profoundly shaped Foucault's understanding of Shi'a Islam, especially of its ritualistic and spiritual dimensions. Some commentators have argued that Massignon and Corbin's works and the emphasis they put on the mystical aspects of Islam played a decisive role in shaping Foucault's views on Iran's religiosity[10] This, in turn, significantly contributed to the philosopher's conception of political spirituality as one of the distinctive features displayed by the Iranian Revolution. Their studies also increased his interest for one of the most influential figures of Iranian intellectual history: Ali Shariati, whose ideas on exploitation, justice, and martyrdom had a profound impact on Foucault's experience in Iran.

In his new role of philosopher-journalist, Foucault visited Iran in September and in November 1978. His first visit coincided with the intensification of the tensions between the population and the Shah's police that followed the massacre in Jaleh Square in Tehran, later known as Black Friday. While in Iran, he witnessed the mounting protests and interviewed some of the people who took part in them, as well as high-ranking members of the Iranian Army and former guerrilla fighters. He also traveled to some Iranian cities, most notably Qom, where he met influential Shi'a cleric Ayatollah Shariatmadari, who would later emerge as one of the major critics of Khomeini's ideas regarding the role of the clergy in the political sphere. Thanks to his Parisian network, he was also able to meet Iranian intellectuals, such as the writer Baqir Paham, and some prominent members of the revolutionary movement, including the future prime minister of the provisional government, Mehdi Bazargan. During his second stay in Iran in November, Foucault visited the city of Abadan, where he met and interviewed some oil workers. After his return to Paris, he also traveled with François Ewald and *Liberation* journalists Pierre Blanchet and Claire Brière to Neauphles-le-Château, a village

outside Paris where Khomeini was spending the last part of his exile, even though no meeting with the ayatollah took place.

Though spending little time in the country, Foucault showed keen interest in the unfolding revolution from afar. In his articles, he offered a rather sympathetic appraisal of the events he was witnessing. The philosopher's initial curiosity stemmed from various features he identified in the revolution. First, he considered its singularity, the open challenge it posed to the teleological reading of past and present put forward by scholars and intellectuals, especially of Marxist orientation. According to Foucault, the Iranian Revolution "belonged to history, but in a certain way escaped it."[11] As Ghamari-Tabrizi remarks concerning Foucault's views, "Iranians desired to make history and, at the same time to be free from it, to be historical subjects without being subjected to its deterministic logic, to be included in and exit from History."[12] The overthrow of the Pahlavi regime not only challenged the normative progressive narrative of past and present, but also put into question the very notion of revolution. The Iranian revolt did not fit into the Western paradigm of revolutionary change conceived as the means whereby a population rises up to depose a heteronomous (and largely religious) form of government and replace it with an autonomous, enlightened, and secular one: its outbreak and evolution openly defied such basic assumptions, challenging the dichotomies on which it was based, most notably those of religion and secularism, modernity and tradition.[13] It is in these paradoxes, in this ambiguity, and in the possibility of new patterns of relationship between religion and politics, where the philosopher's interest in the revolution resided. "Shi"ism"—Foucault argued in one of his articles—"breathes into them [the protesters] an ardor wherein the political and the religious lie side by side."[14] Second, Foucault was fascinated by the phenomenon of resistance, by the decision by the Iranian people to challenge the Pahlavi authority up to the point of sacrificing their life in the fight. Such display of ultimate courage contributed to the philosopher's reassessment of the relation between state and population. "If societies persist and survive,"—Foucault wrote in May 1979—"that is to say if power in these societies is not absolute, it is because […] there is the possibility of this moment where life cannot be exchanged, where power becomes powerless, and where, in front of the gallows and the machine guns, men rise up."[15] Thus defined, the notion of resistance seems to indicate a partial reassessment of the philosopher's earlier conception of power as articulated in *Discipline and Punish*.[16] This, in turn, opened the way for a new role of the subject in its relationship with the authority of the state. Third, Foucault attached particular relevance to the role played by Shi'a Islam in such processes of resistance to power. The importance of Shi'ism according to Foucault was threefold: as an element of cohesiveness for the revolutionary front; as provider of shared revolutionary language and symbolism; and as a crucial resource that allowed

the people who joined the fight to experience a transformation of the self. Religion afforded the revolution a vocabulary through which a people could redefine its existence.[17] It induced the protesters to forsake their individuality. It "transformed thousands of forms of discontent, hatred, misery, and despair into a force."[18] It "gave to its people infinite resources to resist state power."[19] "For Foucault Islam was neither a burden of the past nor a blueprint for the future—Ghamari-Tabrizi has commented—Shi'a Islam was the context for a creative reinvention of the self, without reference to an a priori, transcendental subject.[20] "It was through Islam"—Craig Keating has added—"that Iranians could gain access to the dormant forces within them that made revolution possible."[21] In the close connection Foucault drew between Shi'a Islam and the transformation of the subjectivity, one finds the influence of Iranian revolutionary thinker Ali Shariati. Fourth, Foucault's interest focused on the practice of political spirituality, seen by the philosopher as the distinctive feature of the revolution.[22] Foucault coined the expression in narrating the events taking place in Iran to describe the process whereby the protagonists of the revolution made history through the transformation of the self.[23] Yet, the aspect that probably attracted Foucault the most was the asymmetry of the struggle and, at the same time, its global impact. He saw the revolution as "the insurrection of men with bare hands" on whom bore down "the weight of the entire world."[24] In this sense, according to Foucault, the Iranian Revolution represented "the first, great insurrection against global systems, the form of revolt that is the most modern and the most insane."[25]

The significance Foucault attached to the Iranian events proved that the philosopher was not immune to the type of illusions that so many Western leftists had developed toward the Soviet Union, Maoist China, or Castro's Cuba. Yet a significant difference existed between Foucault's interest for the Iranian Revolution and his fellow intellectuals' fascination for the Chinese cultural revolution or the Cuban one: it was not the utopian ambitions that animated the political struggle that attracted the philosopher's curiosity, but rather the revolutionary experience per se, the (perceived) absence of any affirmative agenda in the Iranian protests, and the resulting creation of a greater space for political creativity and imagination. Furthermore, Foucault's praising of the religious dimension of the Iranian Revolution, especially for the pivotal and unifying role played by Shi'a Islam, stemmed not from the social empathy for the oppressed but rather from the type of spirituality it represented and for the new form of insurrection it inspired. In general, what distinguished Foucault's attitude toward the revolution was his defense of it not only *in spite of* but also *because of* its Islamic character.[26] To this extent, the philosopher showed more insight than many of his fellow commentators, especially those who hoped to see in the Iranian events the beginning of a socialist revolution.[27]

IRANIAN REVOLUTION AND LIBERALISM

Foucault's journeys to Iran and his reportage on the revolution coincided with his exploration of governmental rationality in the framework of his governmentality lectures at the Collège de France. In the context of his 1977–1979 courses, "Security, Territory, Population" and "The Birth of Biopolitics," Foucault undertook a critical analysis of a selected number of historical experiences, examined through the lens of power relations. His study included the scrutiny of postwar forms of neoliberal thought in Germany, the United States, and France, considered as ways of rethinking the conduct of government.[28] This latter aspect and, more specifically, the appreciation he seemed to show for some features of the neoliberal model, is at the core of this volume.

As stated before, the aim of this chapter is to participate in this discussion by exploring the role played by the Iranian experience in the intellectual development of Foucault's theories on governmental rationality and liberalism. The analysis proposed here starts from the assumption of the connection between Foucault's political and militant activities and his appraisal of power, as put forward by Marcelo Hoffman. According to Hoffman, such relation could be seen as a dialectic interplay, which provided a more refined and discriminate view of the various permutations of power throughout the development of Foucault's philosophy. "Foucault's political experiences and practices [including that in Iran]"—Hoffman argues—"invariably informed, stimulated, and structured his thinking about power and his reflections on power invariably carried over into his political practices, even if they were not 'applied' in any strict or rigid sense."[29] Far from suggesting the existence of a rigorous correlation between Foucault's exposure to the revolution and his views on liberalism, Hoffman's claim is important insofar as it stresses the relevance of the Iranian experience within the evolution of Foucault's broader theories of power. This, in turn, appears essential when questioning the widespread tendency mentioned in the introduction toward downplaying the role of the writings on Iran in the context of the philosopher's oeuvre.

As suggested throughout this volume, Foucault's relationship to liberalism is hardly unambiguous. This chapter explores this relationship in the context of the Iranian Revolution by building off of Michael Behrent's convincing argument that the subject "cannot be discussed in terms of adhesion or conversion; it is characterized, rather, by moments of distance and proximity, from which emerged occasional *terrains d'entente*."[30] Behrent therefore suggests exploring the "bridges" that opened up between Foucault's thought and liberalism. In our case, we confine the search for such "bridges" to three critical areas: Foucault and liberalism as an ideology that emphasizes rationality and individualism; Foucault and the search for alternative forms of

governmentality; and Foucault and the concept of resistance. An additional note of caution seems in order before approaching the topic: even though these bridges are important and indicate some encounters between Foucault's intellectual itinerary, his experience in Iran, and the theory of liberalism, such convergences should not be overestimated. They signal the importance of understanding and taking into account the cultural climate that served as a background of Foucault's later works. Such cultural background provided intellectual inspiration for the evolution of his views on power and politics. Some of its features echoed Foucault's critique on the dominant models of society as envisioned by European social democracy. Nonetheless, as it has been observed, the overlapping between Foucault and the liberal revival remained of partial and limited character.[31]

The first part of the analysis focuses on Foucault and political liberalism as ideology that claims the primacy of Reason, the centrality of individual freedoms, and the universal quest for modernity. Foucault's notorious hostility toward secular humanism has traditionally precluded any affinity between Foucault and liberalism. Nevertheless, some studies have challenged this assumption by suggesting the existence of a solid connection between the philosopher's views on the events taking place in Iran and his assessment of the Enlightenment and, along with it, his views on human rights and individual freedom. Alain Beaulieu has advanced the idea that the philosopher's experience in Iran and the disappointment for the revolt's outcome contributed to his late discovery of the positive potential of liberalism. While recognizing that "Foucault did not suddenly become an immoderate supporter of liberalism," Beaulieu has argued that the painful lesson of Iran showed the philosopher that collective action in the form of political spirituality was misguided or at least unnecessary and that "there is no radical Other who will save us, but we can find resources for a change within the western tradition."[32] This renewed interest for liberalism, combined with the realization that his praising of Shi'a spirituality was "hazardous and romantic," would explain, according to Beaulieu, Foucault's scrutiny of the Enlightenment and of Kant in his later publications.[33] In this sense Beaulieu belongs to those scholars who wish to see Foucault's later texts as a return to the liberal (or neoliberal) self. What distinguishes Beaulieu's work from the other studies that have advanced this theory is the role he attributes to the Iranian writing in Foucault's turn to liberalism. Far from looking at them as an embarrassing parenthesis to be neglected, Beaulieu sees them as a crucial step in the evolution of the philosopher's thought, an evolution that found full expression in his essay on the Enlightenment. The connection between the Iranian reportage and Foucault's interest in individualism and liberalism also emerges in Eric Paras's controversial volume *Foucault 2.0: Beyond Power and Knowledge*. Anticipating some elements later put forward by Beaulieu, Paras contended

that Foucault's writing on the Iranian Revolution could be ascribed to the philosopher's reassessment of the role of the subject in his later works. "Foucault created the twentieth century's most devastating critique of the free subject, Paras argued, and then, in a voice that by the end trembled from pain and debility, liquidated it."[34] The scholar contended that Foucault's experience in Iran and the disillusionment over the outcome of the revolution, together with his exposure to the *nouveau philosophes*, were at the origins of his increasing interest for ethics and reengagement with human subjectivity.[35]

The interpretations of Beaulieu and Paras have been harshly criticized by Ghamari-Tabrizi. According to him, both analyses are mistaken in their claims that the atrocities that occurred under the Islamic Republic forced the philosopher to reconsider the consequences of his radical anti-humanism or retreat to the bosom of the liberal or existential fold.[36] Ghamari-Tabrizi's remarks are not only directed against Beaulieu and Paras, but also to Afary and Anderson. In their highly critical work on Foucault's engagement with the Iranian Revolution, the two authors have argued that the exposure to the Iranian events induced the philosopher to adopt a position on the Enlightenment that was more nuanced than before. The two authors read Foucault's essay on the Enlightenment as an implicit reassessment of his earlier critique of the eighteenth century's rationality and a renunciation to the search of political spirituality.[37] Critical dismissal of these theories does not mean that he rejects any connection between Foucault's writing on Iran and his views on power. He has claimed that, despite the disappointment for the outcome of the revolution, Foucault remained critical of the Enlightenment and of the idea that Reason should be considered synonymous with truth. Yet the singularity of the Iranian Revolution and its distinctiveness from other revolutionary experiences, he has argued, are crucial insofar as they show, in Foucault's view, the possibility of revolt and political transformation outside the progressive discourse of history and the normative conventions of the Enlightenment.[38]

Ghamari-Tabrizi's interpretation brings us to the second level of our analysis: the connection between Foucault's assessment on the revolution and its search for alternative forms of governmentality. This aspect has been thoroughly discussed by Marcelo Hoffman in his study on Foucault and the Iranian Revolution. According to Hoffman the major contribution of the Iranian experience in the development of the philosopher's views on power and sovereignty lies in the introduction of the notion of people as distinct from population. The topic had been the object of Foucault's scrutiny since the mid-1970s and acquired further relevance with the 1977–1978 course, "Security, Territory, Population." In these lectures he admitted the possibility of another conception of population beyond that of a mere object of regulations. According to Hoffman, "this sudden reorientation in his approach to

population clearly derived from his newfound engagement with liberalism."[39] The role of the Iranian Revolution in this passage was, according to Hoffman, crucial: "The very fact that the Iranians were revolting signaled their transformation into a people opposed to population, a people that could not be reduced to the mere sum of the individuals with their economic and political interests."[40] The Iranian people, thus defined, were bound together by a collective will and were determined to put into question every form of political sovereignty and to open the space for alternative forms of governmentality. Foucault's reflections as interpreted by Hoffman provide the chance to escape from the idea of population as a mere object of regulations. In addition, they offer the possibility of identifying those who protested in the streets of Tehran as people who challenged the state's monopoly of power to advance an alternative pattern of power relations. This latter aspect is particularly important in light of Foucault's distinctive criticism for the centrality accorded to the state in the representations and theorizations of power.

Here lies another key feature of Foucault's approach to the revolution and, to some extent, of his relationship with neoliberalism. Foucault looked at the set of ideas put forward by the economists from the Chicago School as a provocative, refreshing, courageous alternative to European social democracy, as a series of arguments that shook the social, political, and economic foundations of the modern Western state. Similarly he found himself attracted by the Iranian experience as a phenomenon that proved the possibility of a new beginning, of innovative redefinition of the very notion of power, and of an alternative to the kind of political rationality that has been predominant since the Enlightenment.[41] He saw the revolution as an example of political creativity conceived as the ability of the people to look for new answers to traditional patterns of governmentality, for alternatives to the preconceived schema of power. Foucault expressed this connection between his curiosity for the Iranian events and his disappointment with the Enlightenment and with Marxism in his conversation with Iranian writer Baqir Parham in September 1978. "From the point of view of political thought"—Foucault argued—"we are, so to speak, at point zero. We have to construct another political thought, another political imagination, and teach anew the vision of a future. I am saying this so that you know that […] any Western intellectual with some integrity, cannot be indifferent to what she or he hears about Iran."[42] Shi'a Islam has a crucial role in creating the political space required by the Iranians' search of new forms of sovereignty. Far from being "the opium of the people," Shi'a Islam was instrumental in the process of political awakening and in that of inciting and fomenting political awareness.[43] This, in turn, facilitated the transformation of the self, provided a doctrinal platform for people to change their subjectivity, and promoted the critical passage from the population as objects of regulations to people as subjects-objects of power.

A third level, connected to the second one, in which we can identify some elements of affinity between Foucault's experience in Iran and his engagement with liberalism is the one that revolves around the concept of resistance. As suggested by Michael Behrent, Foucault's interest in the limitations of and resistance to power are among the elements of his political thought that seem to possess a liberal dimension.[44] In this framework, the choice of the Iranian people to confront the apparently invincible power of the Pahlavi regime with resistance constituted one of the major features that triggered Foucault's interest in the unfolding revolution. He identified in the experience of the revolt that of the reinvention of the subject through the transformative potential of political spirituality.[45] Ghamari-Tabrizi has elaborated on this point, observing that according to Foucault, the revolt should be considered as an ethical concern, in spite of the fact that it would result in giving rise to other institutions of disciplinary power. "What is more important from the point of view of the subject"—he has contended—"is not the level of success or failure of the revolutionary movement but the manner in which it was lived."[46] In this sense "the major distinction of Foucault's writing on the Iranian Revolution lies in the way he conceives the subject not as a product and producer of power but rather as the agent of resistance to it."[47] This conceptualization of resistance in Foucault's political thought requires the acknowledgment of the people, as opposed to population, as subjects who can enjoy some freedom, including that of defying the authority of the state.[48] The role of Islam in this transition is crucial. "At the dawn of history, Persia invented the state and conferred its models on Islam"—Foucault wrote in October 1978—"but from the same Islam, it derived a religion that gave to its people infinite resources to resist state power."[49] In this sense Foucault's fascination for the revolution as a moment of political creativity, his admiration for the Iranians' revolt against the power of the state, his admission of the possibility of people as subjects of power, and his belief that the Iranian events showed the possibility of transformation and reinvention of the self through Islam, all represent facets of the same phenomenon.

A recent and rather provocative contribution to the debate regarding Foucault and neoliberalism should be mentioned here. The sociologist Melinda Cooper, who had previously worked on the relationship between capitalist restructuring and bio-scientific innovation from a Marxist perspective, is the author of a recent analysis of Foucault and Iran that focuses on the so-called neoliberal biopolitics. According to Cooper, one of the aspects that attracted the philosopher's attention for the revolution was the contrast between "neoliberal economics that dissolve[d] the boundaries between private and public space" and "political Islam that [sought] to re-establish the foundational value of the household by submitting the transaction of pleasure and money to the dictates of divine law."[50] Foucault, in Cooper's

analysis, identified in some of the new norms introduced by the Islamic revolution a response to the transformation of the individual into the entrepreneur of his or her own body and sexuality, a trend that to some extent had marked Iranian economic and social development in the 1960s and 1970s. Foucault thus saw the restoration by Khomeini and his followers of divine law what Cooper calls "the law of the household" (*oikonomia*): a bulwark against neoliberalism, especially in its domestic dimension as elaborated by Chicago School economist Gary Becker. In other words, according to Cooper, Foucault was "so disturbed by the general diffusion of the *oikos* into the *polis* that defines neoliberalism […] that he found the Iranian Revolution interesting precisely because it focused on restoring some sort of classic *oikonomia*."[51] "In response to Becker's iconoclastic philosophy of household transactions"—Cooper has affirmed—"Foucault turns to the pre-modern tradition of Western philosophy to retrieve a deeply nostalgic ethics of the noble, patriarchal household."[52] This offered a point of contact with the criticism by the Iranian Shi'a clergy directed at the phenomenon of "Westoxication" (*Gharbzadegi*).

The interpretation provided by Cooper on Foucault's views of the Iranian Revolution presents significant elements of novelty compared to those provided by Paras and Beaulieu. It reverses the relationship between Foucault's attention for the revolution and the evolution of his position on liberalism. It argues that the philosopher looked at the events taking place in Iran not as an experiment of alternative mechanisms of power, but rather as an attempt to return to traditional family patterns. More importantly, it contends that Foucault's interest for the efforts carried out by the Islamic forces to reestablish classic *oikonomia* stemmed from his concern for the neoliberal understanding of family relations. Far from identifying in his Iranian reports the starting point for a late recanting of his anti-liberal positions, Cooper's work argues that Foucault's experience in Iran actually inspired the philosopher's negative stance of the transformations underway in family and other kinship structures as promoted by neoliberal thinkers such as Gary Becker. According to Foucault, such transformations deserved close attention for they were later exported to the governance of the state and reconfigured as management of population.

Cooper's analysis of Foucault has raised some criticism from Colin Gordon. One of Foucault's principal translators and commentators in the Anglo-Saxon world, Gordon has voiced his skepticism toward the general claim of Foucault's late endorsement or embrace of liberalism and neoliberalism. With regard to Cooper's analysis, he has stressed the tendency of recent scholarship to overemphasize Foucault's attention to biopolitics in his governmentality lectures and expressed his discomfort with its use as the key to understanding neoliberalism.[53]

CONCLUSIONS

The analysis so far presented has tried to answer an innovative, and yet already controversial, research question: what is the role of Foucault's writing on Iran in the philosopher's intellectual development and, more particularly, in his (re)assessment of (neo)liberalism?

An appraisal of the views expressed by Foucault on the revolution as well as of the context in which they were enunciated has allowed us to identify three critical connections between the philosopher's views on the Iranian events and the broader reorientation of his political thought in the late phase of his career. Probably the most important of these connections is constituted by Foucault's critique to the "monstrosity we call the state."[54] Foucault saw in the Iranian Revolution a manifestation of a new way of interpreting and conducting politics, far from the existing forms of governmentality. The victory of the protesters against the world's fifth strongest army was the triumph of a movement that succeeded in "remaining in touch with the old dreams that were once familiar to the West, when it too wanted to inscribe the figures of spirituality on the ground of politics."[55] It was a challenge to politics as emerged from the two painful experiences of the past centuries: Enlightenment and Marxism, "a strike in relation to politics."[56] The Iranian Revolution should serve, according to Foucault, as a memento that alternatives are possible, that the search for new governmental rationalities should animate any political initiative.

Here lies the parallel with the philosopher's interest in liberalism, especially in its 1970s configuration. The protesters who took the streets of Tehran to ask for the departure of the Shah and the establishment of an Islamic government and the proponents of a liberal alternative to statism as exemplified by the postwar France, as distant as they might appear, are brought together by the open challenge they both posed to modern European politics. Both the Iranian Revolution and the theories advanced by the Chicago School Economist represented for Foucault "critical tools" in the words of Serge Audier or "theoretical weapons" in those of Michael Behrent.[57] The philosopher's interest toward these phenomena should be considered in the framework of his anti-statism that, by the 1970s, had evolved into the argument that "the state should cease to be the primary focus of engaging in politics"[58] and that "it became essential to develop a way of thinking about that did not consider the meaning and nature of the state."[59] In this framework, not only the men who fought the Iranian army "with bare hands" but also the neoliberal economists who dared to challenge the old mechanism of the welfare state captured Foucault's attention. In this regard, Pierre Rosanvallon's program of *autogestion* (self-management) prompted the philosopher's curiosity as a political proposal that questioned the dogmatism of the left and the

conventional role of the state. Foucault shared little with these theories, the same way he shared little with Khomeini's message or the ideas voiced by the protesters in the streets of Tehran. Yet he saw in them the sources for "a critical activity," "a permanent critique of governmental policy."[60]

With regard to the Iranian experience, Foucault repeatedly stated his interest in the phenomenon as it unfolded and took shape, refusing intentions of seeing an explanation of the past or a premonition of the future in it. He never aimed at locating the emergence of political Islam into the path of history. Far from it, he thought he could use the singularity of the revolution to challenge such a path. Similarly, he never argued that (neo)liberalism would represent the key to the future of European economic recovery after the crisis of the 1970s. His intent was to raise attention to the theoretical hypotheses that challenged the paradigm of politics as conceived and conducted in his time, most notably in France. As persuasively argued by Serge Audier, Foucault's interest for the neoliberal theories and, we can add, for the revolution unfolding in Iran, does not at all mean that he modelled his position on that of the "new economists" or that he endorsed the program of Islamic government put forward by Khomeini and his followers. "He took from them what he needed to construct his analysis of power relations in partially post-disciplinary societies."[61] His exposure to these two, challenges to postwar European politics, contributed to the search of alternative forms of governmentality that animated the last phase of his career. Little did he know that the Islamic Republic would soon display the same statist and repressive features of the regime it replaced. As it has been observed:

> The encounter between Foucault and Islam was not the analysis by a *maître à penser* of an important phenomenon of his times . . . rather, on the contrary, an adventurous, strategic encounter between a political reflection [that of Foucault] that was changing and taking shape at vertiginous pace, and an opaque, bizarre event, that attracted him for its anomalous nature rather than for an objective identification [of the revolution] as a sign of the [changing] times.[62]

The recent flourishing of scholarship of Foucault's alleged support to (neo)liberalism seems to suggest that the relationship between the philosopher and the theory of Becker and Friedman is facing the same fate as that of his interest in the Iranian Revolution. Terms such as "fascination," "flirtation," "seduction," and "endorsement" have appeared with growing frequency, implying a connection between the philosopher and the theory much closer than the former would claim. Michel Foucault remains a controversial thinker, a philosopher who never hid his discomfort toward conventional answers and never ceased to search for alternative ones. He was an intellectual who adamantly refused labels and who changed his views as frequently as he saw fit. As one of his most famous quotes puts it, "Do not ask me who I am, and do not ask me to

remain the same."[63] More than ten years after the publication of the controversial study of Afary and Anderson, we are now finally entering into a new phase of the debate on Foucault's reports on the Iranian Revolution, characterized by a more nuanced and multifaceted approach to his appraisal of the events.

In keeping with the spirit of this moment and the ambitions of this volume, this chapter does not aim at providing a definitive answer on the relationship between Foucault and liberalism and on the role played by the Iranian Revolution in it. Its, more limited, goal is to suggest some affinities, some "bridges" between the philosopher's exposure to the Iranian event and his intellectual development in the late 1970s. In so doing, it also tries to advise some caution in pinning easy labels on a philosopher who was sensitive to ideas that emerged in the rapidly changing world in which he lived, who absorbed them without prejudice, and who constantly searched for new perspectives, sometimes adopting provocative stances, dialoguing with provocative ideas, or engaging with anti-conventional causes.

NOTES

1. Alain Beaulieu, "Toward a Liberal Utopia: The Connection Between Foucault's Reporting on the Iranian Revolution and the Ethical Turn," *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 36 (2010): 802.

2. Michiel Leezenberg, "Power and Political Spirituality: Michel Foucault on the Islamic Revolution in Iran," in John Neubauer, ed. *Cultural History After Foucault* (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1999), 63.

3. See, among others: Georg Stauth, "Revolutions in Spiritless Times: An Essay on Michel Foucault's Enquiries into the Iranian Revolution," *International Sociology* 6 (1991); Craig Keating, "Reflections on the Revolution in Iran: Foucault on resistance," *Journal of European Studies* 27 (1997); Jeremy Carrette, *Foucault and Religion* (New York: Routledge, 2000).

4. Behrooz Ghamari-Tabrizi, *Foucault in Iran: Islamic Revolution after the Enlightenment* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2016), 185.

5. Eric Paras, *Foucault 2.0: Beyond Power and Knowledge* (New York: Other Press, 2006); Beaulieu, "Toward a Liberal Utopia," 806.

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11. Michel Foucault, "Is It Useless to Revolt?" *Le Monde*, May 11–12, 1979, in Afary and Anderson, eds., *Foucault and the Iranian Revolution*, 263.

12. Ghamari-Tabrizi, *Foucault in Iran*, 188.

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14. Michel Foucault, "Tehran: Fight against the Shah," *Corriere della Sera*, October 8, 1978, in Afary and Anderson, *Foucault and the Iranian Revolution*, 201.

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18. Foucault, "Tehran," 202.

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20. Ghamari-Tabrizi, *Foucault in Iran*, 173.

21. Keating, "Reflections on the Revolution," 186.

22. Ibid., 209.

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24. Michel Foucault, "The Mythical Leader of the Iranian Revolt," *Corriere della Sera*, November 26, 1978, in Afary and Anderson, *Foucault and the Iranian Revolution*, 222.

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27. On this point see David Greason, "Embracing Death: The Western Left and the Iranian Revolution, 1978–83," *Economy and Society* (34) (2005).

28. Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, and Peter Miller, *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 3.

29. Hoffman, *Foucault and Power*, 149.

30. Ibid., 156.

31. Ibid., 161.

32. Beaulieu, "Toward a Liberal Utopia," 806.

33. Ibid., 815.

34. Paras, *Foucault 2.0*, 158.

35. In this regard, Paras quotes the letter Foucault wrote to Iranian Prime Minister Mehdi Bazargan in April 1979. The letter, which was published in *Le nouvel observateur*, calls Bazargan to increase his government's efforts to protect human rights in the new regime and the importance of the rule of law in the exercise of power. See Michel Foucault, "Open Letter to Prime Minister Mehdi Bazargan," *Le nouvel observateur*, April 14–20, 1979, in Afary and Anderson, *Foucault and the Iranian Revolution*, 260–62.

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38. Ibid., 189.
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43. Ibid., 186.
44. Behrent, "Foucault and France's Liberal Moment," 162.
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62. Andrea Cavazzini, "Foucault e l'Islam," in Andrea Cavazzini, ed. *Michael Foucault, L'Islam et la révolution iranienne – L'Islam e la rivoluzione iraniana* (Milano: Mimesis Edizioni, 2005), 13.
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Chapter 8

Neoliberal Selves

Human Capital between Bourdieu and Foucault[*]

Luca Paltrinieri

It is commonly argued that the expression "human capital" was first coined by the theorists of the Chicago School in the mid-1950s, following the discovery of the existence of a source of inexhaustible wealth production: the human.[1] From that classical definition of human capital as the knowledge and set of competences that individuals can make into objects of deliberate investment like education and training, the human has since grown to be understood as a miraculous resource, one able to regenerate itself continuously. Innovation—which Schumpeter argued saved capitalism from falling profit rates predicted by classical economics—in this sense has become the product of investment in the human, or in human capital. It is an almost trivial truth, to be found on the first pages of any handbook on human resources management, that this kind of investment enables an economy to rid itself of the zero-sum game between the scarce and conflict-bound resources described by classical economics and to reaffirm the virtuous circle of economic growth. Through investment in education and training, such growth is understood not only to lead to the accumulation of fixed capital and the growth of the workforce but also to a permanent workforce transformation.

The crucial point of human capital theory is its critique of a purely quantitative conception of labor that measures workforce in terms of hours—by claiming that economics, from Malthus and Ricardo onward, had forgotten the principle, however trivial, that an hour of qualified labor is more productive, and therefore of higher quality, than an hour of non-qualified labor. According to human capital theorists like Thomas Shultz and Jacob Mincer, it is precisely

[*] This text was translated from the French by Matteo Vagelli.

because the individual skills of the worker expanded during the postwar period that what they call the quality of the active population—or rather, its stock of competences and knowledge—has improved, productivity has increased and, as a consequence, the value of working time and of salaries have increased as well and in turn stimulated increased consumption.[2] For Shultz and Mincer, this virtuous circle was to usher in the society of knowledge or the era of cognitive capitalism, depending on the point of view adopted.[3]

EUGENICS AND FUTURE DISCOUNTING: A SHORT GENEALOGY OF HUMAN CAPITAL

This sort of mythical narrative, to which Foucault himself falls prey,[4] conceives of human capital as the genius discovery by Chicago economists of the qualitative aspect of labor, but it has the flaw of hiding this critique's origins in the discussions of the Saint-Simonian circles of mid-nineteenth-century France. Indeed, by 1857 Henri Baudrillart had criticized the classical Malthusian relation between the size of a population and its means of subsistence by pointing out how such a relation worked mainly for those countries with mediocre human capital—by which he meant countries where people's physical, intellectual, and moral capacities seemed atrophied. It did not hold, however, for countries with a high "quality of population."[5] A few years later, Charles Duveyrier explored the possibility of developing systems of education and professional accreditation to increase the human capital of children and, as a consequence, the technological productivity of society.[6] Then, in 1903, Alfred de Foville defined human capital as the value of the human machine from the point of view of production and generating income.[7]

The concept soon after began circulating on the other side of the Atlantic, where in 1909 Karl Pearson, one of the protagonists of the eugenicist movement, claimed that, from a strictly economic point of view, a child is a product and thus, like any other asset, responds to demand and is part of the calculation of the ratio between cost and productivity. He argued that this explained the inverse relation between quality and quantity in terms of number of offspring, suggesting that couples should lower their fecundity level to have "children of higher quality."[8] Assigning an economic value to a child that situates childbirth within a rational calculation is precisely the topic subsequently taken up by Gary Becker, the most well-known theorist of human capital, who grounded the notion in a microeconomic theory that takes into account opportunity costs—the income parents give up in order to educate their children and improve their quality.[9] Since opportunity cost increases in relation to parents' income, the child of well-off parents, according to Becker will inevitably be more expensive than that of working class ones; for Becker

this explained why the rising middle classes had less children than the working class but children of higher quality, endowed with more human capital.[10] In Becker's work, the idea of a differential investment depending on the quality of the individual is the same as the one found in eugenicist theories, but the decisional power gets transferred, at least in principle, to individuals themselves or to their families, who have incentives to enter the job market with strong human capital and to take every job or training opportunity as a chance to increase that capital. By reconstructing the genealogical lineage that ties Becker's work to the eugenicists, Paul-André Rosental has shown the structural link between theories of human capital and the eugenicist movement, which similarly aimed to improve the quality of the population based on the premise that there is a qualitative difference among human beings measurable by experts and susceptible to modification at the level of the population.[11] Far from disappearing after the Second World War, eugenicist theory, as a theory of the differential value of individuals and populations, informs the economic and moral justification underwriting theories of human capital.

This association with eugenics, however, does not and cannot fully explain the success of such an unorthodox economic theory. Indeed, Becker's originality lies in having applied to the human a notion of capital that belonged to Erving Fisher and, before him, Martin Faustmann—a theory that consisted in the evaluation of capital not on the basis of accumulation of value in the past (capitalization) but its possible uses and therefore revenue streams in the future (discounted rate). This evaluation enables one to choose the best possible use for that capital in relation to its valorization.[12] If capitalization shows the future value of an actual value by predicting the future value of actual capital to calculate return on investment, the "discounted cash flow" method expresses all future values in the present value of capital, which means the highest possible value is always today's—since today holds the highest number of possibilities for valorization, while this value decreases as one moves into the future. Already in the 1920s, Fisher had extended the concept of human capital to every source of income, human beings included. When Becker appropriates Fisher's formula, it is to indicate that the actual value of human capital is given by the income sources that certain skills can generate in the future: measuring human capital, or quantifying the quality of a child, means first of all putting into economic terms all of that child's possible futures. This argument can clearly be easily generalized to labor. For instance, salary should be thought of not as a compensation in return for the alienation of one's time but as the economic return on investment one gets from oneself in terms of time, education, and experience. The cognitive worker is thus a kind of "salaried rentier," continuously exploiting his or her own human capital, or rather, him or herself, in order to produce income.[13]

Thus, as Schultz claimed, every individual becomes a capitalist, chasing the best opportunities by building forms of political support to help raise the value of his or her own portfolio of skills.[14] Foucault, years later, would talk about this in terms of neoliberalism's generalization and "democratization" of the capitalistic attitude by evoking the figure of the entrepreneur of the self.[15] It should be noted that, precisely in this way, the theory of human capital pivots from the economic to the chiefly political: by describing society as involving a competition among capitalists-entrepreneurs-individuals who aim to valorize their own human capital and who above all have similar perceptions of it and equal opportunities for its valorization, it moves once and for all beyond the notion that obsessed and haunted economists from Marx onward: the notion of class. Human capital has no scale, and it can be applied as easily to an individual as to a group, to a company as to a state, to a nation as to the entire world.[16] Quantifying the quality of the population by measuring public investment in education or assessing individual competences is part of the same operation of "discounting" possible futures, just at different scales and by different actors. In this sense, the theory of human capital succeeds in that incredible task of reducing the economic game to the pursuit of purely individual and atomistic interests in a manner that excludes (nominally) any type of racial, sexual, gender, or class difference, to the extent that it attributes to every individual the same type of instrumental rationality.

Thus, to the extent that the notion of human capital connects to the question of the quality of the population, it implicitly extends the eugenicist question into political economy and into scientific measurement of human differences, contradicting the egalitarian claims allegedly embedded in our democratic societies. On the other hand, the distinction between the respective economic values of good or bad filiations, as the operations concerning the improvement of the self are delegated to individuals in the form of free and rational choice, and the general improvement of the quality of the population are henceforth entrusted to a kind of a private eugenics, one that Foucault interpreted in terms of a possible genetic intervention, a form of delegated biopolitics.[17] These elements led Rosental to claim the triumph of the notion of human capital in the increasingly similar domains of education and labor as evidence that a good part of the values of contemporary society rest upon eugenicist grounds.[18]

BOURDIEU: CULTURAL CAPITAL AND THE FUTURE OF "CLASS" AS A CRITIQUE OF HUMAN CAPITAL

In the introduction to *The Social Structures of the Economy*, Bourdieu writes that his notion of cultural capital, introduced in his 1964 *Héritiers*,[19] should be

considered antagonistic to the concept of human capital advanced by Becker, which Bourdieu defined as "vague and undetermined, burdened by unacceptable sociological underpinnings."[20] Bourdieu's project of widening the notion of human capital, which he later also repeated with the concepts of economic, social, and symbolic capital, can in fact be read as a double critique of the notion of "human capital": on the one hand, it counters the economic paradigm of the rational agent calculating costs-benefits in order to maximize his interest, and on the other, it refutes the eugenicist-naturalizing tradition, which links the notion of human capital to the interest of the national community rather than to the individual.

At the time Bourdieu was writing, this latter tradition underpinned a naturalistic explanation of the differential outcomes and inequalities of the French education system by appealing to the concepts of "gifts" and "natural aptitudes" of individuals. Alain Girard, at the forefront of this paradigm and pioneer of the study of the sociology of education, showed that differences in academic achievement among middle-class and lower-class students was not only due to the "will to success" of their parents but also to the transmission of "intellectual capital," or rather, to a set of psychosocial aptitudes developed over the course of generations, "but in which it is strictly impossible to discern the part of heredity, of the environment, and of personal effort."[21] This tangled pseudo-psychological explanation reveals the true aim of Girard's inquiry.[22] Rather than reconstructing the social factors informing educational inequality in order to democratize it, his objective was to enable a type of preliminarily differentiation among individuals on the basis of their "natural" gifts and psychophysical aptitudes. This would allow for development of a meritocratic system, in which the more "gifted" students of the lower classes would ideally be able to reach the higher levels of education.[23] Yet this approach affirms the social and economic biases of education, ignoring the structural inequalities informing its choice of academic content and methods and the ways it sanctions and reproduces those inequalities through the language of naturalism. Indeed, Girard's approach indirectly and discreetly sidelines those who cannot be expunged more overtly yet does so without contradicting the principle of formal equality that underwrites the education system's democratic ideals.[24]

From a Bourdieusian point of view, the ideology of the gift, of the "natural" predisposition, masks the way that cultural needs are created as well as the way in which they determine the reception of education culture—and hence obscures the fact that the reception of education as a cultural product always already requires a deciphering code. Bourdieu's breaking away from such a naturalistic and naturalizing paradigm is mediated by the concept of *disposition*—the tendency to act in accordance with past actions that have been incorporated into the *habitus.* In this case, greater or lesser propensity

to submit to the arbitrary culture conveyed by the school. As has been well noted, Bourdieu's research in the *Heritiers* showed that the global cultural level of the familial group has a straightforward relation to scholastic success, because every family indirectly transmits to its children a certain cultural capital and *ethos*, or system of implicit values that are deeply interiorized.[25] This body of information on curriculum, taste, and know-how, on language and knowing how and when to speak is distributed unequally within society and transmitted naturally, in an osmotic manner, without method or intention, and yet nonetheless does not cease to be the product of an investment in terms of time.[26] It is thus possible to understand how critique of the paradigm of natural aptitudes is at the same time a critique of the theory of "human capital," a notion that, notwithstanding its "humanistic" connotation, does not escape economicism. It, in fact, measures only the strategies of economic investment in education without taking into account the domestic transmission of the cultural capital or the contribution the education system makes to the reproduction of the social structure sanctioning the hereditary transmission of cultural capital.[27]

A fundamental moment in this twofold critique of the French paradigm of natural aptitudes and of the American theory of human capital occurred at the conference held on June 12–13, 1965, in Arras in Northern France, when sociologists and economists such as Paul Dubois, Renaud Sainselieu, and Alain Darbel gathered together with the aim of investigating the true relation between economic development, "mass welfare," and the reduction of inequalities.[28] The article "La fin d'un malthusianisme?" signed by Bourdieu and Darbel challenges economic theories on human capital by asking the classic question of the relation between the birth rate and economic development of a country. It is not by chance that the article presupposes the basic underpinnings of the theory of human capital, the idea that procreation is an act with economic stakes, and that the attitude of predicting and mastering the future is intimately connected to fecundity.[29] But the article soon proves to be more complex than Becker's, because it poses procreation as the domain within which rational intention is least explicit but also as one in which a number of factors intervene, such as the nation, the ethnic group, religious confession, knowledge of birth control techniques, etc. It maintains that the value intrinsically attached to a child remains the function of a system of collective values concerning the image of the woman, her role in society, the meaning attached to one's number of children, and the desire for distinction. The influence of these factors on procreative choices shows that natality is not uniformly the object of a rational calculation about the future—and therefore that the relation between passive and intentional fecundity varies according to social class. Every social group exerts a pressure (through moral reprobation or economic sanctions) on rational fecundity. Thus, the individual's choices

in relation to the future, represented by the child, are never purely individual but always assume the form of an attitude with respect to a collective future, the future of a rising or descending class, dominating or declining.

Differences among social classes firstly determine the marginal cost of the "quality of the son," which must be calculated not in absolute terms but as a function of attitudes with respect to the future and the system of values relative to each social class. For instance, the cost of a child is greater the more the child itself is interpreted as an instrument of social mobility: this is especially the case for the lower-middle class which, according to a famous definition by Bourdieu, "is a proletarian who shrinks himself," or ascetically reduces his offspring "in order to pass through the narrow door of the middle-class,"[30] whereas the marginal cost of the child is still low among the more disadvantaged classes, which do not invest in education with the same hope for a better future. This is also distinct from the upper classes for whom income grows proportionally with respect to the number of the children and whose investments in education are distinct in relation to lower-middle class Malthusianism.[31]

Furthermore, as was already noted by Becker, the newborn has a minimal cost in traditional societies that raises in those societies that are more developed from an economic point of view, but at any rate this cost is a function of the way each social class interprets the future and, above all, of the part it plays in the social fabric of the present. The feeling of security itself, a basic precondition for engaging in procreation, is socially differentiated, because it is a function of the conditions of existence and of class norms, which already entail stronger or weaker mastery of the future. In other words, individuals are more prone to rational anticipation if they consider their future able to be rationally calculated. Ambition to master the future is thus already proportional to the *effective power* we have on the future: "relation to the possible is already a relation to power"[32] in so far as the possession of economic and cultural capital allows for the exercise of power on the instruments of reproduction. For instance, the lower classes' fatalistic surrender to a generally high birth rate, often scornfully defined by demographers as "natural," does not derive from a stronger sense of security but from a feeling of distrust about the controllability of the future that manifests as a complete absence of economic calculation.[33] Economic rationality and the "spirit of calculation" aimed at the maximization of individual interest are neither universal dispositions available to all classes nor the sort of "universal utilitarian consciousness" that the anthropology of the *homo œconomicus* suggests.[34]

As a consequence, the very same state measures, such as tax exemption for large families, which are intended to influence the reproductive strategies of a population, do not have the same effects on the whole social spectrum. Their success instead depends on the disposition of the agent: in a general situation

of economic growth, their effect will be stronger on rising middle-class civil servants, who are already used to planning and limiting their progeny as a strategy for social progress, but their effect will be minimal on the classes for whom education is not even considered a strategy for social progress. Inversely, the same average income may correspond to different procreative strategies, dependent, for example, on a feeling of security that has been preserved from the past and projected onto the future. As Bourdieu would affirm some years later, "(*the habitus*) *adjusts itself to a probable future which it anticipates and helps to bring about because it reads it directly in the present of the presumed world, the only one it can ever know*."[35] For this reason, according to Bourdieu and Darbel, we need to substitute the notion of objective income with one of subjective income that includes collective production of the feeling of security. On the other hand, the notion of economic naturalization advanced by Becker implies that rational agents are interchangeable and tacitly argues that all economic agents have the same dispositions, in particular the propensity to control their own calculation practices, the conscious desire to appropriate the future through economic calculation, and the possibility of objectively measuring human capital through understanding the relation between investments in education and future incomes.[36]

Critique of the rational agent as the universal and timeless economic model is at the heart of Bourdieu's 1974 article, "Avenir de classe et causalité du probable," probably his most convincing and definitive published critique of the theory of human capital.[37] The article links the problem of Becker's economic theory and of its extension to all social behavior[38] not only to its description of all human action as rational action—transferring to the consciousness of the agents theories that economists developed in order to explain their own practices—but also to the oscillating meaning that Becker attributes to rationality itself.[39] On the one hand, rationality can be described as a sort of mechanic reaction to the variation of market prices, with economic agents considered as indiscernible particles subject to the laws of Walrasian equilibrium to which they adjust automatically. On the other hand, economic individuals can be described as "autonomous" authors of projects consciously pursued. In this sense, the theory of human capital can then claim to "give man center stage."[40] The substantial unrealism of the two alternatives had already been highlighted by the theorist of "limited rationality," Herbert Simon, for whom the model of the rational allocation of resources could be considered "real" only by admitting that agents were always conscious of the complete list of possible strategic choices, of the consequences of those different strategies, and of the objective criteria of evaluation relative to any explicit design.[41]

For Bourdieu, however, even if an economic agent were not a purely rational and conscious calculator, he or she would nevertheless pursue objective

strategies, behave reasonably, intelligibly and coherently, even without pursuing an explicit plan, and deliberate according to a sort of objective finality when organizing an action plan. Description of the practice in terms of *habitus* in this sense means pointing to a system of incorporated dispositions generated by past conditions of production and generating practices adequate to objective present conditions, and thus eschewing the ambivalence of economic rationality. On the one hand, the *habitus*, the "not chosen principle of all choices,"[42] does not simply appeal to the consciousness and express the freedom of the *homo œconomicus*; nor does it coincide with the mere mechanic reproduction of a *fatum*, a fate inscribed beforehand into the objective conditions of its formation. If nothing is "chosen" by the agent in his or her *habitus*, it is also true that the *habitus* itself is continuously transformed by the effect of the choices it generates.[43] It is not by chance that an immediate correspondence between the dispositions entailed by the *habitus* and the objective structure of what is possible only occur when the conditions of the production of the *habitus* (interiorized dispositions) are identical or homothetic to the conditions of their functioning. The constitutive dispositions of the *habitus* thus tend to generate expectations and practices that are objectively compatible with needs. But this is obviously just a particular case, more often practices are inadequate to existing conditions because they are objectively adjusted to the conditions of the formation of practices that themselves are no longer up to date.[44] In other words, rooting action in the *habitus*, rather than in the rational consciousness of economic agents, means contradicting the premises of the theory of the *homo œconomicus* underlying neoliberal theories of human capital: the presumption of the autonomy of an individual who interacts with his peers solely with the universal aim of maximizing utility, expressed as economic profit, and who thus exhibits instrumental behavior based on a means/ends dualism.[45] If the notions of rational calculation and preference, to the extent that they are part of the *habitus*, are not the features of an abstract individual, always identical to itself,[46] but are collectively and socially constituted, we need to understand the *habitus* as a sort of "individual collective." In this sense, the *habitus* is instinctive and spontaneous, but that spontaneity is also conditioned by a patrimony of social, economic, and cultural capital that affects the domain of what is possible and situates strategies as more or less safe and risky. If propensity to seize the occasions that present themselves to the agent is directly linked to the endowment of capital individually owned, an agent's practices are not coherent with respect to an ideal rationality but are consistent with the practices of all members of a class and owe their style to the fact that they are the product of continual transfers of capital from one field to another. The habitus is therefore also a form of collective capital, in the sense that it is a type of social heredity that preserves the acquisitions of predecessors and defends the way of existence of the group

more profoundly than familial traditions and conscious strategies.[47] This does not mean that every agent is doomed to reproduce the *habitus* of his class but that the *habitus* itself changes continuously, both in a preconscious way, following the ascending or descending strategies shaping the future of class, and in terms of individual conscious strategies of social development that depend on the structure of what is possible and on the agent's ways of investing in these possibilities in the world that is *presumed*, or *rationally imagined and predicted* by the agent himself.[48]

Against the idea of an identical relation to the future pertaining to the very structure of human capital, we can contrast the concept of a "causality of the probable" that affirms that "heredity, not only economic, is a set of rights of first refusal on the future, on social positions liable to be occupied, and hence of the possible ways to be man."[49] If the endowment of capital possessed by an individual always represent a way of mortgaging the future, our relation to the future is already a function of a class in the process of becoming and of the concrete possibilities that are actually available to that given class, in the sense of the relation between the objective structure of its possibilities and its distribution of different kinds of capital. The 1974 article ends up confirming Bourdieu's 1966 conclusions but widens them remarkably: the power exerted by a given class in a specific economic situation has a claim on the future because the predisposition to acquire dominating positions is a function of the power one already has within the institution.[50] More practically speaking, competence for rational choice is unevenly distributed, because the cognitive structure that allows one not only to be mechanically subject to market variations but also to seize opportunities and make the most of them is itself a social structure, a *rational habitus*.

The thesis, reclaimed by the theorists of human capital, that "every economic agent is a sort of entrepreneur trying to obtain the best possible profit from the capacity of rare resources"[51] should be understood precisely as a critique of the *fictio juris* of economy that posits the particular dispositions of the habitus as universal norms and thus implicitly legitimizes the general configuration of the monopoly of what is possible. Bourdieu's hypothesis of the *habitus* shows, to the contrary, that resources are not equally accessible for all agents and that imagination of the ways to make those resources bear fruit, tied up in a conception of the future and its connection to the feeling of security, itself changes according to the starting point. Whereas Becker's "barbarianism" consists in extending the *rational* logic of interest beyond the usual domain of classic economy to the totality of human behaviors, Bourdieu instead tries to reframe *rational* conduct within the larger domain of symbolic exchange and consumption, thus putting into play dispositions that can be found at the intersection of social conditions and class strategies.

In this sense, Bourdieu's sociological critique of economy works to unmask the economic and cultural *conditions* of the judgments of economic agents.[52]

FOUCAULT: A GENEALOGY OF INTEREST AS MORAL CONDUCT

The idea of an entrepreneur of the self producing its own capital and thus its own income was popularized by Foucault as part of his reading of neoliberalism as anti-naturalism that differentiates itself from classical liberalism by not interpreting the market as a free space opposed to state interventionism but the result of continuous regulation. What distinguishes neoliberalism from liberalism is precisely its artificiality—according to which competition, instead of being a natural condition of the *homo œconomicus* that must be respected by the government through principles of *laissez-faire*, is instead an objective to be continuously constructed through state intervention.[53] Foucault's analysis of the "policy of society" (*Gesellschaftspolitik*) of ordoliberalism shows that the "temporary choice" of the market consumer needs a juridical framework that bears on the regime of property, contracts, company policy, currency, banking, etc. Indeed, it bears on a whole series of contingent legislative interventions that expose the institutional and *instituted* character of the market as such.[54]

The idea of artificiality assumed by neoliberal policies is not a far cry from Bourdieu's reading of the economy, according to which the market is a social construction "which has nothing to do with the natural and spontaneous movement of competition of which neoliberal theory speaks"; here the state appears not only as a central actor in market regulation but also as a warrant of the moral order and of the trust necessary for the functioning of the economy.[55] However, as we have seen, for Bourdieu the artificiality of neoliberal policies is constantly denied by the precondition of the rationalization of individual interest, the fiction enabling the foundation of the neoliberal account of the economic game on naturalistic presuppositions that are shielded from sociological relativism, so to speak. For this reason, Bourdieu reads Becker and American and European neoliberalism more generally as a "coup in theory," or rather as a return to neoclassical ideas about complete information and perfect competition that had already been refuted by Simon.[56] As he would claim later, during the 1990s, the neoliberal "revolution" essentially consisted in the reestablishment of a "free trade faith" and in the systematic dismantling of all collective and social objections to it, in order "to bracket the economic and social conditions of natural dispositions" that actually allow for the functioning of the market.[57]

Foucault, to the contrary, insists on the novelty of neoliberal *rationality*.[58] As he explains in a passage of the manuscript for his 1979 lectures on neoliberalism, Foucault is interested in precisely the way in which Becker's theory problematized in a different way "all the domains of education, culture, and training that sociology has taken up."[59] These domains of anthropology, ethics, and labor policy, which Bourdieusian sociology had integrated in the form of cultural capital analysis and of the "reproduction of the relations of production," according to Foucault are "directly integrated in the economy and its growth in the form of a formation of productive capital."[60] For Foucault, the neoliberal question thus goes well beyond a mere battle between disciplines or simple return to neoclassicist doctrines. Indeed, his genealogical perspective aims to highlight the *historical* intertwinement of continuity/discontinuity between liberalism and neoliberalism. Foucault *already* defines liberal governmentality against a set of "freedom-consuming" practices: liberalism must *always* and continuously cause, produce, and construct the conditions for the freedom of choice through a set of duties and constraints, rules and evaluations that assure the neutrality of the market and the satisfaction of personal interest. It is not without reason that the disciplinary individual described in *Discipline and Punish* was already the hidden twin of the subject of liberal law.[61] In the interplay between security/freedom thus established, the counterpart of individual interest is the extraordinary extension of market control mechanisms and the problems of cost that they imply. In other words, the management of the conditions upon which we can be free implies an ambiguous game of production/distribution of freedom itself.[62]

These remarks, rather abstract, have been interpreted as a rejection of social security apparatuses that seem to confirm at least a certain amount of ambiguity in Foucault's account of neoliberalism.[63] But Foucault's aim is certainly not "apologetic";[64] rather, he aims to understand the new dialectic between security/freedom created by neoliberal politics. In this sense, his reading of the notion of "human capital" is strategic, because it locates itself at the threshold of the dialectic between freedom construction/consumption. The point of view of theories of human capital instead reveal a neoliberal subject who goes beyond the eternal opposition between freedom and control and for whom the "freedom" of neoliberalism is produced continuously in the form of the possibility of choice in a competitive market—but this is a freedom consumed through continuous valorization of one's self, that is, of one's human capital. This production of the self in terms of the accumulation and improvement of one's human capital is also a form of consumption of the assets offered by the market, children included: consuming is nothing other than producing one's own satisfaction.[65] This lack of distinction between production and consumption, affirmed first of all by labor itself, enables us to understand all human behavior in terms of investment in one's self through consumption of utility.

According to Foucault, the first break this figure of the "entrepreneur of the self" instantiates with regard to liberal governmentality is in fact rather superficial: the advancement of economic theory into previously unexplored domains, that gives rise to a definition of economy as a study of substitutable choices relative to rare resources and that marks the passage from macroeconomic study of the global processes of capital distribution to analysis of the internal rationality of the strategic planning of individual activity, considered as universal.[66] This means that neoliberal analysis for Foucault does not imply a simple return to neoclassicist analysis but a new way of conceiving individual choices against the background of the normative conceptions that agents develop about their own choices. If the individual naturally thinks of himself or herself as an investor in a portfolio of skills and competences (his or her human capital) whose value increases or diminishes according to the market value, his or her *project* will consist in investing in the values that are on the rise.[67] The subjectivity of the neoliberal individual, or rather, the way the individual thinks of himself or herself as a subject owning competence-capital that can be valorized through investment projects, situates the individual at a point of rupture with respect to the liberal paradigm of a subject in search of truth in the deepest parts of the "self."[68] Yet believing that this rupture automatically means "liberation" by making the neoliberal individual ungovernable is an illusion, precisely because, once this premise established, all society becomes a society of knowledge, and hence an educated society in which individuals are amenable to being guided by the stock market of their own competences.[69]

In a deeper sense, the theory of human capital taken to its extreme consequences can foster a kind of liberal governmentality that cancels itself out as an influencing or constraining power over individuals and becomes redefined as a sort of pure "descriptive" force of evaluation. On the basis of the maximization of individual interest, neoliberal governmentality puts into place a central inclination of modern power: since the emergence of the "population" as a subject/object is no longer exerted in the form of obedience but as encouraging and subsidizing strategies of subjectivation, it consists in differentiation within a competitive market.[70] Behind the apparent discontinuity of the new economic theory thus lies a deeper continuity concerning the field of action for individuals who regulate themselves and employ strategies of interest and the ways it has already been structured by liberalism.

However, the neoliberal revolution represented by theories of human capital can also be read more radically as a moral revolution, literally overturning the Kantian categorical imperative that rejects confounding the human with the means to an end. The idea itself of a "human resource," which turns man into a resource that is exploitable and capitalizable, entirely subverts these premises. That the family is the object not only of love but also of strategies

of reproduction is a very old idea, but that these strategies can be calculated and framed in utilitarian (and I would add hedonistic) rational terms—that the children can be treated as consumer goods—is a remarkable innovation not only in terms of governmentality but also in terms of morality. Investment in oneself and one's offspring becomes, in a certain sense, the moral background against which ethical strategies of neoliberal subjectivation are possible. The interpretation of all human behaviors on the basis of interest, investment in oneself, and subsequent profits is more than an economic theory; it was already a moral theory in the moment of its first expression in the eighteenth century.[71] It is not by chance that at the end of his 1979 lectures Foucault returns to the moment of the Scottish Enlightenment, which affirmed interest as fundamental first and foremost to the theory of sociability, even before economic theory.[72] Perhaps it is not mistaken to interpret all of Foucault's successive returns to antiquity, to the ancient forms of problematization of the self and of the relation to the self, as part of an effort to think the unconscious as the modern habitus: the pre-reflexive structure of interest. Already, in his opening to the 1980 lectures, speaking on "alethurgy" as a *non-utilitarian* manifestation of truth in the domain of government, Foucault testifies to this will to turn back to forms of government of one's self and of others that are quite independent from the neoliberal model of subjectivation based on the calculation of individual interest.[73]

What is certain is that, at the end of Foucault's lectures on neoliberalism, the latter appears as neither a radicalization of liberal governmentality nor a species of economic imperialism extending neoclassicist theories, but rather as a symptom and as an agent of a transformation that is at once economic, political and moral—a phenomenon that, due to its own complexity, requires the historical examination of its ambiguous relationships with liberalism.

THE TRIUMPH OF COMPETITION AND THE END OF THE FUTURE

If we insist on the ambiguity of the legacy of liberalism within neoliberalism, it is because that ambiguity enables us to see the difference as well as the complementarity of Bourdieu and Foucault's respective readings of the concept of human capital. The deconstruction of "human capital" performed by Bourdieu and Darbel allows us to better understand what Foucault means by the "production/destruction" of freedom in the neoliberal epoch: On the one hand, the individual acts according to his own interest—he "objectivizes" himself through free procreative choice—on the other hand, that choice is free and subjective only when agents have a differential perception of security and the future. This feeling of security is continuously created at the intersection

of governmental politics (e.g., taxation measures for large families) and class strategies determined by the structure of capital. Governmentality emphasizes the former, Bourdieu's point of view the latter, but both share the common target of denaturalizing the dialectic between construction/destruction of free choice at the heart of neoliberal societies.

Bourdieu and Foucault employ two different strategies of denaturalization. Foucault's is essentially historical-genealogical: it reconstructs the history of the notion of interest, comparing the governmental strategies of the eighteenth century with the economic theories of the twentieth, in order to retrace the continuities and differences between liberalism and neoliberalism. Bourdieu, at least until the end of the 1980s, instead insists on the narrowness and approximation shaping the economical reading of human capital. He tries to expand the notion of "capital" not only to economic but also to the cultural, symbolic, and social aspects and to relocate economic analysis within the larger framework of a sociology of dispositions and of the struggle for class affirmation in a given field. However, in the 1990s Bourdieu increasingly insisted on the historical conditions underwriting affirmation of the economic order and on the importance of such conditions being forgotten for the persistence of a discipline that presents itself as "fundamentally anti-historical and anti-genetic."[74] The economy "accepts as given some modes of action and some modes of thinking that are the product of an extremely complex historical construction."[75] Access to economic rational calculation, to saving and investment practices, implies a "series of inventions" that are collective and the creation of specific individual dispositions: "The *habitus* is history and every system of preferences is the product of the social history within which we live . . . and of our social trajectory within this universe."[76] In 2000, Bourdieu published *The Social Structures of Economy*, in which he defined "economicism" as a particular form of ethnocentrism, disguised as universalism, which consists in the attribution of an aptitude and capacity for calculation to every agent and that obscures the question of the economic and cultural conditions of the access to this aptitude. The cause of this naturalization is a kind of amnesia about the historical genesis of rational economic conduct—an amnesia that has to be corrected through the genealogical method, revealing the partiality and the contingency of the historical structures which present themselves as necessary givens.[77]

To put it otherwise, the critique of the de-socialized individual of the theory of human capital here becomes a critique of the de-historicized individual of neoclassical theories, which continually hide the genesis of economic structures and of dispositions, including preferences and tastes. The distinctions between Foucault's method and the genealogical method advanced by Bourdieu in his lectures on the state notwithstanding,[78] Bourdieu is close to a kind of Foucauldian analysis that reclaims the use of history

in order to show the non-necessity of the present using the specific case of rational conduct based on the pursuit of individual interest. From this point of view, Bourdieu's mention of the "historical transcendental" indicates a historical construction of perceptive categories and of forms of sensibility; as products of the internalization of objective structures,[79] they cannot but make one think of pages from the *Archaeology of Knowledge,*[80] to the point that we might wonder whether Bourdieu understood the implicit historical-genealogical critique of the idea of interest as universal. In a certain sense, Bourdieu applies to economy the same critique Foucault had addressed to philosophy, denouncing its dehistoricization and universalization and insisting on the historical conditions that have enabled the development of certain categories of a "pure" theory.[81] As could be expected, however, it is not the works of Foucault but those of Polanyi, Hirschmann, and Veblen that are cited by Bourdieu,[82] as if his general theory of genealogic structuralism would find its fundamental limit in the incapacity of "appropriating history."[83] "History," for Bourdieu, remains in this sense a "structural history," in which the genesis of moral dispositions means insistence on the "persistence" of categories whose historicity must be forgotten before they can be "rediscovered."[84] Bourdieu's theory of capital itself, while effectively renegotiating the homogeneity and neutrality of capital's initial conditions, cannot criticize universal interest (meant also in a noneconomic sense, for instance in terms of the framework of an economy of symbolic goods) with the same efficacy. Indeed, Bourdieu seems to address not the features of a particular habitus but a preconscious aspect more or less present in all strategies of reproduction.

Moreover, it is Bourdieu's interpretation of notions like capital and field that allows him to complete, if not to correct, the Foucauldian analysis of neoliberal market policies. As has been noted, for Foucault the neoliberal government, both in its "ordoliberal" and its American version, is grounded on the extension of the logic of the market to every aspect of reality, more than on the sensationalization of goods.[85] However, the essence of the market in neoliberal theories is based less on exchange than on the idea of "perfect competition"—logical and structural formalization of "the game among inequalities" that must always be made possible, "produced," by governmental politics.[86] As has been recently noticed,[87] Foucault does not seem to worry about the anti-egalitarian aspects of neoliberal policies aimed at competition in democratic societies. Focusing on the description and interpretation of neoliberal theories as a "new way of exerting power," he does not seem to be interested in how neoliberal policies destabilize the egalitarian project of Western democracies and constantly *construct* the inequality demanded by the economic game itself. It was certainly his will to eliminate the theme of class, something he pursues in his previous lectures on *Security, Territory, Population*,[88] that prevented Foucault from seriously analyzing the inequality

underwriting the production and reproduction mechanisms implicit in neoliberal competitive governmentality. Only much later does he seem to counter the competitive subjectivation of the entrepreneur of the self with the antidote of "agonistic" subjectivation, a notion that is nevertheless flawed in its unrealistic assumption of a parity of initial conditions.[89]

Similarly, for Bourdieu competition does not simply coincide with the market. On the market, agents' strategies consider not only the price or the client, but first and foremost competition within the same niche or same "field." One can therefore replace the abstract notion of the market with that of the "field of competition," in which producers fight for monopoly of the production of a certain kind of goods but also to affirm their distinction.[90] Bourdieu specifically distinguishes this competition from simple agonistic competition and from overt, conscious rivalry.[91] Here the agent's action is not fully comprised in the conscience or within the representation that he or she makes of his competitors but also in a "structural unconscious" determined by the *objective position* that everyone occupies in the field.[92] The fact that the constant search for distinction is experienced as rivalry is already the sign of a dominated position in the field, a "form of daily class struggle" that represents the lower-middle class's constant desire for social development:

> This competition is a particular case of all *competing* relations, through which the privileged class tries hard to humiliate the claims (to nobility, to education or other) of the class right below itself, treating its aspirations and desires as a sort of subjective delirium, founded upon a too big self-esteem, and trying to set them off as ambitious, disproportionate, excessive, arrogant, ridiculous or at least premature.[93]

Bourdieu's move, as we have seen, consists in rewriting class within the political agenda of neoliberalism, showing that the strategies of reproduction are never those of the isolated and rational individual but rather rational strategies elaborated more or less consciously within a group. Contradicting Marx, here "class" is no longer defined as a reified entity connected to a social position but is an unstable entity, continuously produced at the intersection between classification and individual strategies of distinction in the more general context of a struggle for what is possible.[94] In this sense, complication of the notion of capital as a way to indicate how social reproduction takes place in a wider economy that also comprises social and cultural dimensions allowed Bourdieu to describe the mechanisms of neoliberal competition more thoroughly than Foucault.

These two different strategies of denaturalizing "hard core" neoliberalism—the progressive correspondence between the economic and political spheres and their definitions of the relation between security and freedom—lead

to two *alternative critiques* of neoliberalism. Foucault's critique of neoliberalism is *cautious*.[95] More than looking for an explicit condemnation, he maintains that one has to comprehend the novelty neoliberalism entails, the "threatening coefficient" of its environmental governmental technology, and hence the blend of risks and possibilities connected to its policy of growth built upon investment on human capital.[96] Starting from diagnosis of a changing present, one would therefore need to imagine a "socialist governmentality" and to invent new forms of subjection that would set one free from the neoliberal "quantified self."[97] But Foucault's premature death and the recent evolutions of neoliberalism make it necessary to re-discuss the research lines Foucault delineated. For the theory of human capital has taken hold not only in the domain of economic theory. Indeed, during the 1980s, the notion gained supremacy in the business world, making possible a shift from the "human relations" model to one based on "human resources." "Competences" (*savoir faire*, *savoir être*, *savoir devenir*) have since became *assets*, measured from an early age and continuously developed through education and training. The "entrepreneurship of the self" has become, more than a semi-utopian economic hypothesis, a reality experienced by every worker for whom all that falls under the umbrella of the "self" becomes capital to be managed and invested: not only one's own education, but also one's relations (social capital), home, belongings (real estate capital).[98] From the moment in which the "self" becomes a portfolio of competences and goods that agents try to promote on a market, the already blurred boundaries between subjection and subjectivation disappear. Neo-managerial techniques try to obtain a permanent willingness to investment in one's self while at the same time neoliberal politics dismantle social security and fragment career paths: the result is a subject who cannot stop perfecting himself if he wants to remain competitive.[99] Foucault's remarks on "agonistic subjectivation" thus risk not only being inadequate but also counterproductive in a context in which the ancient practices of the self have already been intercepted by the theories of personal development. Parrhesiastic practice is trivialized by leadership training and business ethics, as managers are pushed to tell "all the truth" on brutal and anti-egalitarian power relationships in order to build a reflexive and critical authority grounded on acceptance of the status quo.[100]

Bourdieu, for his part, not only took up the issue of human capital before Foucault, he was also able to see the extraordinary expansion of the concept after Foucault's death, in a globalized economy in which knowledge is now first and foremost a resource. At the end of the 1990s, Bourdieu described neoliberal "utopia" as a paradoxical "subversion aimed at the conservation" of extant power relations. The destruction of the collective structures guaranteeing consistent social security to some strata of the population, the incessant search for short-run profit, and the generalization of the precarity informing

the "habitus of the temporary worker" have led to the creation of new forms of inequality.[101] According to Bourdieu, if it is impossible to avoid the game of investment in capital and the consequent struggle for domination of the field, we must increase the possibility of access to institutionalized instruments for social development for the disadvantaged classes. If the sociologist "is king" in this context, it is not so much because he has a monopoly on reflexivity but because the "tension towards freedom" implies the unveiling of the conventional and conditional stimuli to which individuals are subjected.[102] Undermining the epistemological bases of economic discourse means, once again, showing the political consequence implied by such a discourse and its fiction of a mythic initial state of equality that is contradicted by the differential patrimony of capital shaping the composition of the different classes.

The last ten years of neoliberal policies have been characterized by a furthering of these processes, to the point that one can say that the same security/freedom contract described, albeit with different points of view, by Bourdieu and Foucault, seems to refuse once and for all and to make room for the precarious existence of a whole generation, which has no reserves left for planning or thinking the future. If, as Becker prophesized, education and training increasingly become the privileged vehicles on which the "entrepreneur of the self" relies, the university itself seems to have abandoned its traditional mission of constituting and criticizing the political structures of civic life in favor of the formation of professional competences amenable to increasing human capital. OCDE economists now rule over school programs—which have become, without distinction, "professional schools"—and psychologists assess the competences of three-year-old children in order to understand which should be developed and which should not.[103] In this context, it is not enough to look for new models of subjectivation that by some miracle would be available for everyone, nor simply to underscore the role of inequality in shaping social conditions. It is instead necessary to question the neoliberal discourse of economic *rationality*, which enables our very articulation of the concepts of education, competition, governmentality, market, and neoliberal subjectivation.[104] Foucault's interest in, and Bourdieu's widening of, the notion of capital represent only the first steps in this analysis of neoliberalism—which needs to be reenergized if it is to meet the challenge of becoming both an ontology of the present and a new form of a critical sociology.

NOTES

1. For an intellectual history of the notion of human capital, which understands the term chiefly as a neoliberal answer to the Marxian theory of the crisis, see Luca Paltrinieri, "Biopolitics in the Twenty-First Century: The Malthus-Marx Debate and

Human Capital Issue," in Philippe Bonditti, Didier Bigo, and Frédéric Gros, *Foucault and the Modern International. Silences and Legacies for the Study of World Politics* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2017), 255–74.

2. Jacob Mincer, "Investment in human capital and personal income distribution," *Journal of Political Economy* 66 (1958): 281–302; Theodore W. Schultz, "Investment in Human Capital," *American Economic Review* 51 (1961): 1–17.

3. One of the first uses of the term "society of knowledge" is management guru Peter Drucker's *The Age of Discontinuity: Guidelines to Our Changing Society* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969). The term spread in the 1990s and became ubiquitous after a famous report published by UNESCO in 2005. On cognitive capitalism as a critical category, see Yann Moulier-Boutang, *Cognitive Capitalism* (London: Polity, 2012).

4. Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics* (London: Palgrave-MacMillan, 2008), 219.

5. Henri Joseph Léon de Baudrillart, *Manuel d'économie politique* (Paris: Guillemin, 1857), 426–27. Quoted by Paul-André Rosental, *Destins de l'eugénisme* (Paris: Seuil, 2016), 496–97.

6. Charles Duveyrier, *La Civilisation et la démocratie française: deux conférences suivie d'un projet de fondation d'institut de progrès social* (Paris: Aux bureaux de l'Encyclopédie, 1865).

7. Fernand Faure, "Alfred de Foville," *Journal de la société statistique de Paris*; 54, (1913): 551–81, 573.

8. Karl Pearson, *The Problem of Practical Eugenics* (London: Dulau, 1912), 22–23.

9. Gary S. Becker, *A Treatise on the Family*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981); *Human Capital. A Theoretical and Empirical Analysis with Special Reference to Education* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1975). On these themes, see Luca Paltrinieri "Quantifier la qualité. Les théories du Capital humain entre démographie, économie, education," *Raisons Politiques* (2013/4): 52, 89–107.

10. Gary S. Becker, "An Economic Analysis of Fertility," in Ansley J. Coale, ed., *Demo-graphic and Economic Changes in Developed Countries* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1960), 209–31.

11. Paul-André Rosental, *Destins de l'eugénisme*, 29.

12. Irving Fisher, *The Nature of Capital Income* (New York-London: MacMillan, 1906). Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, 224. On the genealogy of the notion, from Faustmann onwards, see Liliana Doganova, "Décompter le futur. La formule des flux actualisés et le manager-investisseur," *Sociétés contemporaines* 93 (2014): 67–87.

13. Antonella Corsani, "Rent and Subjectivity in Neoliberal Cognitive Capitalism," *Knowledge Cultures* 1(4) (2013): 67–83.

14. Theodore Schultz, *Investing in People*. *The Economics of Population Quality* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981).

15. Foucault, *Birth of Biopolitics*, 230.

16. Paltrinieri, "Biopolitics in the Twenty-First Century," 273–74.

17. Foucault, *Birth of Biopolitics*, 227–30.

18. Rosental, *Destins de l'eugénisme,* 29.

19. Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron, *Les héritiers* (Paris: Minuit, 1964), translated as *The Inheritors*: *French Students and Their Relation to Culture* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1979). The term "cultural capital" is not yet present in 1964, but the whole theory is already there.

20. Pierre Bourdieu, *Les structures sociales de l'économie* (Paris: Seuil, 2000). English translation: *The Social Structures of the Economy* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005). Pierre Bourdieu, *Sociologie Générale 2: la notion de "Capital"* (Paris: Seuil, 2016), 247–53.

21. Alain Girard, "L'écologie des hommes illustres. Une enquête sur les facteurs de la réussite," *Population* 12(2) (1957): 261–68.

22. Alain Girard, "Enquête nationale sur l'orientation et la sélection des enfants d'âge scolaire," *Population* 9(4) (1954): 597–634.

23. Philippe Masson, "La fabrication des héritiers," *Revue Française de sociologie* 42(3) (2001): 477–507; 482–83; 494–95.

24. Bourdieu and Passeron, *The Inheritors*, 67.

25. Pierre Bourdieu, "La transmission de l'héritage culturel," in *Le partage des bénéfices* (Paris: Minuit, 1966), 383–420.

26. The notion of "cultural capital" is itself actually built to enable thinking of this "hidden transmission "independently from any pedagogic intention: Bourdieu, *Sociologie générale vol. 2*, 249–50.

27. Pierre Bourdieu, *The State Nobility: Elite School in the Field of Power* (Oxford: Polity, 1996), 275–76; "Les trois états du capital culturel," in *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, vol. 30, (Novembre 1979), 3–6; Bourdieu, "L'institution scolaire", 3–6; Bourdieu, *Sociologie générale* vol*. 2*, 248–53.

28. Bourdieu, *Le partages de bénéfices*, 18.

29. Pierre Bourdieu and Alain Darbel, "La fin d'un malthusianisme?" in *Le partage des bénéfices*, 135–54.

30. Pierre Bourdieu, "Avenir de classe et causalité du probable," *Revue française de sociologie* 15(1) (1974): 3–42; P. Bourdieu, *Distinction. A Social Critique of the Jugement of Taste* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), 331–38.

31. Bourdieu and Darbel, "La fin d'un malthusianisme?", 147.

32. Ibid.

33. Ibid., 148.

34. Pierre Bourdieu, *Anthropologie économique. Cours au Collège de France 1992–1993* (Paris: Seuil, 2017), 61, 94–97.

35. Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice* (London: Polity, 1990), 64.

36. Bourdieu, *Sociologie générale vol. 2*, 294.

37. A much more complete critique of "economicism" and of the *Homo Oeconomicus*, as well as of the theory of the rational agent in neoclassical doctrines, can be found in the lectures of *Anthropologie économique*.

38. According to Becker, the economic approach can be extended to the explanation of all human behavior, cf. in particular the introduction to *The Economic Approach to Human Behavior* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1976).

39. Bourdieu, *Anthropologie économique*, 94; 130–31; 156; 235.

40. See Becker's arguments in Gary S. Becker, François Ewald & Bernard E. Harcourt, "Becker on Ewald on Foucault on Becker: American Neoliberalism ; and Michel Foucault's 1979 'Birth of Biopolitics' Lectures," Coase-Sandor Institute for Law & Economics, Working Paper, No. 614 (2012).

41. Allen Newell and Herbert A. Simon, *Human Problem Solving* (Englewoods Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1972); Pierre Bourdieu, *Sociologie générale,* vol. 2, 985; *Anthropologie économique*, 249–55.

42. Bourdieu, *Anthropologie économique*, 240.

43. Ibid.

44. Bourdieu, "Avenir de classe," 4–7.

45. Bourdieu, *Anthropologie économique*, 235–40.

46. As, on the contrary, George J. Stigler and Gary Becker themselves used to think: "De gustibus non est disputandum," *The American Economic Review* 67(2) (March 1977): 76–90.

47. Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, 52–66; *Anthropologie économique*, 240–45.

48. Bourdieu, "Avenir de classe et causalité du probable," 16–27.

49. Ibid., 15.

50. Bourdieu, *Anthropologie économique*, 188–89.

51. Bourdieu, "Avenir de classe et causalité du probable," 12.

52. Bourdieu, *Anthropologie économique*, 134. He also writes: "The plain and simple economic theory which aims to reduce the symbolic to the economic has something comical within a society where the symbolic lies in the fundaments themselves of the most fundamental economic mechanisms" (228).

53. Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, 119–21.

54. Ibid., 161–65.

55. Bourdieu, *Anthropologie économique*, 222; *The Social Structures of the Economy*, 89–125.

56. Bourdieu, *Anthropologie économique*, 249–55.

57. Bourdieu, "L'essence du néoliberalisme," *Le monde diplomatique* (March 1998), 3.

58. On the idea of "government rationality," see Pierre Dardot and Christian Laval, *The New Way of the World: On Neoliberal Society* (London: Verso, 2017).

59. Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics,* 233.

60. Ibid.

61. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish. The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage, 1977).

62. Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, 63–65.

63. Daniel Zamora and Michael Behrent, eds., *Foucault and Neoliberalism* (Polity: London, 2015).

64. See the comments by François Ewald in Mitchell Dean "Michel Foucault's 'Apology' for Neoliberalism," *Journal of Political Power* 7(3) (2014): 433–42.

65. Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, 226.

66. Ibid., 223.

67. Michel Feher, "Self-Appreciation, or the Aspirations of Human Capital," *Public Culture* 1(21) (2009): 21–41.

68. Massimiliano Nicoli and Luca Paltrinieri, "Du management de soi à l'investissement sur soi: remarques sur la subjectivation post-néo-libérale," *Terrains/ Théories* 6 (2017): https://teth.revues.org/929.

69. Ibid.

70. Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 78, 238, 292–93, but also Foucault, *History of Sexuality, Vol. 1: The Will to Knowledge* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), 85.

71. Emma Rothschild, *Economic Sentiments: Adam Smith, Condorcet and Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001).

72. Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, 267–314.

73. Michel Foucault, *On the Government of the Living, Lectures at the Collège de France 1979–1980* (London: Palgrave-MacMillan, 2014).

74. Bourdieu, *Anthropologie économique*, 150. See also 78–81.

75. Ibid., 89; 150–55.

76. Ibid., 248.

77. Bourdieu, *The Social Structures of the Economy*, 17–20.

78. Pierre Bourdieu, *Sur l'Etat. Cours au Collège de France 1989-1992* (Paris: Seuil, 2012), English translation: *On the State. Lectures at the Collège de France* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2014), 86–93; 114–116.

79. Available in the lectures at the Collège de France of 1992–1993, "Les fondements sociaux de l'action économique," *Anthropologie économique,* 243–44, but also see Pierre Bourdieu, *Manet. Une révolution symbolique (Cours au Collège de France 1998–2000* (Paris: Seuil-Raison d'Agir, 2013), 77–78.

80. Michel Foucault, *The Archeology of Knowledge* (New York: Pantheon Books), 126–31. But this point is, of course, also very strongly influenced by Canguilhem and the French epistemological tradition, which Bourdieu knew well.

81. Bourdieu, *Anthropologie économique*, 165. For a similar approval of Foucault, see Pierre Bourdieu, "La philosophie, la science, l'engagement," in D. Eribon, *L'infréquentable Michel Foucault* (Paris: EPEL, 2001), 189–94.

82. Bourdieu, *Anthropologie économique,* 166; 174; 91–93; 155–56.

83. Michel Foucault, "A propos des faiseurs d'histoire," in *Dits et écrits*, vol. 4 (Paris: Gallimard, 1994), 413.

84. See Christian Laval, "Foucault and Bourdieu: to Each his Own Neoliberalism?" *Sociologia & Antropologia* 7(1) (2017): http://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S2238-38752017000100063.

85. Foucault, *Birth of Biopolitics*, 119–21; 243–45. This is consistent with the critique of the Debordian idea of "the society of the spectacle" (ibid., 116) that Bourdieu raised against representatives of the idea that the market is now a kind of "imperialism," *Anthropologie économique*, 124–28.

86. See, on this point, Wendy Brown, *Undoing the Demos* (New York: Zones, 2017); William Davies, *The Limits of Neoliberalism: Authority, Sovereignty and the Logic of Competition* (London: Sage, 2014), 35–69.

87. Ibid., 73–110.

88. Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 107–8.

89. Michel Foucault, "The Subject and Power," *Critical Inquiry* 8(4) (1982): 777–95.

90. Bourdieu, *Anthropologie économique*, 204–5, 175–78.

91. Ibid., 206–9.

92. Ibid., 195, 216.

93. Bourdieu, "Avenir de classe et causalité du probable," 27.

94. Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 106–9; *Sociologie générale, vol. 2*, 1125.

95. David Newheiser, "Foucault, Gary Becker and the Critique of Neoliberalism," *Theory, Culture and Society* 5 (2016): 3–21.

96. Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, 232–33.

97. Luca Paltrinieri, "Managing Subjectivity. Neoliberalism, Human Capital and Empowerment," *Fudan Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences* 10(4) (2017): 459–71.

98. James S. Coleman, "Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital," *The American Journal of Sociology* 94 (1988): 95–120 ; Gerald F. Davis, *Managed by Markets. How Finance Re-Shaped America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 154–90; 236.

99. See Vincent De Gaujelac, *La Société malade de la gestion* (Paris: Seuil, 2005).

100. Wim Vandekerckhove and Suzan Langenberg, "Can we organize courage? Implications of Foucault's parrhesia," *EJBO. Electronic Journal of Business Ethics and Organization Studies* 17(2) (2012): 35–43; Erik de Haan, *Fearless consulting. Temptation, risk and limits of profession* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2006).

101. See Bourdieu, "Le néo-liberalisme, utopie."

102. Bourdieu, *Anthropologie économique*, 247.

103. Brown, *Undoing the Demos*, 151–74; Noonan, M. Coral, "The Tyranny of Work: Employability and the Neoliberal Assault on Education," *Alternate Routes* 26 (2015): 51–73.

104. Sonja M. Amadae, *Prisoners of Reason: Game Theory and Neoliberal Political Economy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

Chapter 9

Not Fostering Life, and Leaving to Die*

Judith Revel

What follows is a strange kind of text. It is on the one hand an attempt at philosophical reflection; my profession, after all, is teaching and research in contemporary philosophy. But it is on the other hand an expression of indignation that has little to do with my professional qualifications. My indignation has for some time come in response to the litany of horrors, churned out by the televised news every single day at dinnertime, that make up the situation of the refugees in Europe and at its gates: at the borders of Macedonia and Hungary; in the snows of the Serbian winter; in all of the fleeting encampments where human beings are cramped in mud and misery; across the now-familiar landscapes blocked by walls, fences, and wire; and, of course, along the terrible route that crosses the Strait of Sicily to arrive at the island of Lampedusa.

The question that arises from all this is the following: does the toolbox of concepts that Foucault employs in his 1978–1979 Collège de France lectures, *Naissance de la biopolitique*, help us understand the manner in which the European countries have nearly unanimously decided to administer, manage, and govern these men and women whom we call the migrants, for fear of giving them the status of refugees that they seek? Or is there, on the contrary, an emergence of a new paradigm of government, one that demands that we return to older formulations in Foucault's work? I have in mind here particularly the final pages of *The Will to Knowledge* entitled "The Right of Death and Power over Life," written in 1976, or the final lesson of *Society Must Be Defended*, given at the Collège de France on March 17 of the same year.

In both of these 1976 writings, Foucault points to a transformation, an inversion of his formulation of the sovereign right "to put to death or let

* This chapter was translated from the French by Jacob Hamburger.

live." Between the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century, the inverse formula, "to foster life or leave to die," became characteristic of a new system of political right. This system was reorganized both by the disciplinary governmentality of individuals put to work—that is, the anatomato-politics of bodies—and by a new level of government superimposed on the old, which Foucault calls a biopolitics of the human species, or a government of populations.

The question I would like to pose is extremely simple: Are we still faced with the governmental formula of "fostering life or leaving to die"? In order to answer this question, we will need to take into consideration the prolongation of these problems raised in 1976. We find this prolongation in Foucault's *Naissance de la biopolitique*, where he attempts to extend his reflections into the contemporary era through the double analysis of both German ordoliberalism and American neoliberalism (in the courses between March 14 and April 4, 1979). We also need to dwell on Foucault's attempt to create a model of the internal rationality of human behavior that he infers from certain theories of human capital. Finally, we take particularly serious Foucault's analysis of the emergent figure of *homo economicus.* A certain number of elements in these reflections permit us to speculate that Foucault does provide us with a functional framework for understanding the governmental rationality that is applied today to what we call the "influx of migrants" to the south and east of Europe. These are the elements that demand our attention.

Let us begin with a banality that is nonetheless indispensable if Foucault's undertakings are not to remain opaque: history never repeats itself. If it does indeed "advance," it does so following a regime of historicity that excludes all forms of linearity or teleology: It is filled with discontinuities and change, jumps and ruptures. But these ruptures do not simply appear as substitutions. Far more often, they consist of simultaneous permanence and transformation, making them difficult to grasp historically and analyze politically. At the end of *The Will to Knowledge*, Foucault writes that "the old power of death that symbolized sovereign power was now carefully covered up [*recouverte*] by the administration of bodies and the calculated management of life."[1] Note that Foucault writes "covered up," and not "replaced." What he's describing is both a stratification and an effect of reinvigoration, or reorganization, of the regime of government, starting with its final historical "stratum"—that is, what has emerged—and this represents a profound discontinuity. At the same time, this discontinuity is in no way a simple substitution. It opens up a general reconfiguration or redistribution of the economy of government beginning with what is new, and not just a logic of erasing what is old. In the same manner, this simultaneity between what is added and what is already there is

in the background of Foucault's course on March 17, 1976 at the Collège de France, three years before the biopolitics lectures:

> I believe that one of the most massive transformations in political right in the twentieth century has consisted in the substitution—though I don't mean substitution so much as completion—of this old right of sovereignty, "to put to death or let live," by another. This newer right does not erase the first, but rather penetrates it, traverses it, and modifies it. This is the right, the exactly inverse power, to "foster life" or to "leave to die."[2]

Returning to our original question, can we understand what still works and what no longer works in the double-management of biopower—both individualized (disciplinary anatomato-politics of productive bodies) and massified (biopolitical management of populations)—when trying to analyze the manner in which our governments are directing the movements of migrants? Or rather, is there something else to be added today as the tangible sign of a redefined and deeply transformed rationality?

Things become all the more complex in the pages Foucault devotes to American neoliberalism in the 1978–1979 lectures. Here, Foucault identifies a number of elements of the transformation of contemporary governmentality since the initial moment of its liberal birth. At least two elements seem important. The first consists not only in confirming the centrality of labor in the value of commodities (this we had already learned from Ricardo), but also in reformulating both what is meant by labor today, and the processes of economic valorization in which labor takes place. Based on the analyses of Gary Becker, Foucault hypothesizes that we have passed from a *commodity economy*, founded on the commodification of labor-power, to a *service economy*, where man himself becomes his own capital. The second shift is simultaneous with and linked to the first, and it consists of a translation to this first shift on the level of government. It is no longer a question of governing bodies, but rather of governing conduct. Here, we see the passage from the extraction of "productive services" from bodies literally "attached" to their labor—which Foucault analyzed in its classic form in certain pages of *Discipline and Punish*—to a new type of extractivism founded on the management, the maximization, the pillaging of the (social) conduct of the workers. The worker is no longer considered exclusively as an object of extraction, but rather as an active economic subject. It is this new conception that Foucault takes as the basis of what he calls *homo economicus*: the productive subject, at the same time producer and capital.

The problem of Gary Becker and the Chicago School in general is to formulate, to calculate by anticipation, the possible models of behavioral rationality given this notion of the subject: a subject that not only produces capital, but produces because it *is* capital.

Near the end of Foucault's lecture on March 14, 1979, there is a passage where after having enumerated the foundational elements of the notion of "human capital," Foucault inserts a strange paragraph:

> In the elements making up human capital we should also include mobility, that is to say, an individual's ability to move around, and migration in particular. Because migration obviously represents a material cost, since the individual will not be earning while he is moving, but there will also be a psychological cost for the individual establishing himself in his new milieu. There will also be at least a loss of earnings due to the fact that the period of adaptation will certainly prevent the individual from receiving his previous remunerations, or those he will have when he is settled. All these negative elements show that migration has a cost. What is the function of this cost? It is to obtain an improvement of status, of remuneration, and so on, that is to say, it is an investment. Migration is an investment; the migrant is an investor. He is an entrepreneur of himself who incurs expenses by investing to obtain some kind of improvement. The mobility of a population and its ability to make choices of mobility as investment choices for improving income enable the phenomena of migration to be brought back into economic analysis, not as pure and simple effects of economic mechanisms which extend beyond individuals and which, as it were, bind them to an immense machine which they do not control, but as behavior in terms individual enterprise, of enterprise of oneself with investments and incomes.[3]

And at the end of the lectures, Foucault adds that innovation, as a possible resolution of the problem of the falling rate of profit, is not (or is not only) linked to competition. As he explains:

> If there is innovation, that is to say, if we find new things, discover new forms of productivity, and make technological innovations, this is nothing other than the income of a certain capital, of human capital, that is to say, of the set of investments we have made at the level of man himself.[4]

Finally, he returns obliquely to the problem of migration (which he seemed in a sense to have decontextualized or rendered abstract, taking it out of any concrete determination):

> In the same way, the problems of the economy of the Third World can also be rethought on the basis of human capital. And you know that currently an attempt is being made to rethink the problem of the failure of Third World economies to get going, not in terms of the blockage of economic mechanisms, but in terms of insufficient investment in human capital.[5]

Nearly forty years after Foucault uttered them, I believe these three quotations are indispensable for reflecting on the urgency of our present. We are no

longer in 1979; our time is neither that of Gary Becker nor that of Foucault. Foucault is of course not Becker, but they nonetheless reflect (though in politically opposing ways) on the same historical situation, one that is fundamentally different from our own today. It is the gap between their world and ours that we must examine. Hence a series of questions that we cannot ignore. First, are we not, at the gates of Europe today, in the midst of leaving behind "fostering life or leaving to die," and adopting a contrary formula? That is, if not the old formula of sovereign right ("put to death or let live"), one that might indicate a transformation of today's governmental rationality: "not fostering life, and leaving to die."

Another novel element is that if this new rationality at times still retains the validity of "fostering life" in the management of migrants (precisely because a transformation is a recomposition, not a substitution or an erasure), it implies at the same time a shift in scale. The restriction of this "fostering life" to a regime of naturalizing life is no longer what Foucault describes when he speaks of biopolitics, because this naturalization seems to have become autonomous. Recall what Foucault had to say on the subject in 1976, in *The Will to Knowledge*:

> This transformation had considerable consequences. It would serve no purpose here to dwell on the rupture that occurred then in the pattern of scientific discourse and on the manner in which the twofold problematic of life and man disrupted and redistributed the order of the classical episteme. If the question of man was raised—insofar as he was a specific living being, and specifically related to other living beings—the reason for this is to be sought in the new mode of relation between history and life: in this dual position of life that placed it at the same time outside history, in its biological environment, and inside human historicity, penetrated by the latter's techniques of knowledge and power.[6]

It is precisely this naturalization that is literally "taking off" today, stripping the natural out of politics, and as a result, the natural becomes autonomized.

Let's take an example of particular concern for the question of migrants. In *Humanitarian Reason*, Didier Fassin observes that a sick body has more chances of obtaining the (political) status of refugee than a healthy body. Humanitarian reason has become that of biological life—biological life not (or no longer) understood as the instrument of political management of populations, nor as the condition of possibility of the productivity of bodies put to work—this is what for Foucault constitutes biopolitics. But now this has become an end in itself. The greater the coefficient of reduction of a man to the biological (e.g., through the exclusive consideration of the pathologization of the body), the greater the humanitarian response—in other words, the more the human is taken as a political and social subject. Fassin

provides as an example the French juridical architecture, the circular of June 24, 1997, which states that the irregular situation of certain foreigners can be reexamined precisely when "the foreigner residing permanently [*habituellement résident*] in France is afflicted by a serious pathology requiring medical treatment." Thus, legal regularization is founded not on the length of irregular residence in France, but rather on the presence of a grave pathology affecting the body of the claimant. One year later, the law of May 11, 1998 made this measure permanent by modifying Article 12 of the 1945 ordinance: "relative to the entry and stay of foreigners and the right of asylum." In short, the sick body merits permanent papers and work authorization. We have passed from the right to asylum based on a protocol of compassion to a biologization of the political and social body of the migrant. The legitimacy of requests for asylums now demands this as its price.

One is reminded of a remark by Levinas in *Totality and Infinity*, which Fassin takes as the epigraph of his book: "Everyone will readily agree that it is of the highest importance to know whether we are not duped by morality."[7] Though it might be worth updating for the present: "Everyone will readily agree that it is of the highest importance to know whether we are not duped by rationality."

I would like to conclude with a number of questions raised by the above discussion, before proposing a brief sketch of a hypothesis.

First question: How can we explain that "fostering life" is no longer recognized today as the general rule? In other words, the fact of assuring a qualitative and quantitative augmentation of human capital (once again, not only the possibility of putting bodies to work, but also of extracting economic value from life as a whole, whether social, relational, linguistic, affective, or cognitive), no longer holds even in the analysis of the neoliberals themselves.

Any responses to this question founded on the supposition of a shortage of labor fail to satisfy, because they only consider one specific (Fordist) type of labor, reduced in effect by increasing automation to a process of production. There is, however, a growing socialization of another type of labor. This decidedly post-Fordist labor, even from the perspective of capitalism itself, calls for the ever-growing integration of the "atoms" of human capital, of those who are investors in themselves, of the incarnations of *homo economicus* that Foucault not only describes, but also recognizes in the figure of migrants. Migrants are investors just like anyone else, even more than anyone else if one considers the radicality of the risk that goes into their self-investment.

Neither can we accept the vulgate of objections founded on the supposed costs of welcoming and directing the waves of migrants. These costs are often explained—in well-known formulations by economists, demographers, and sociologists—either as costs of the demographic catastrophe awaiting the

aging countries of the "first world," or as the price of that other catastrophe in which the demographic base works alongside mutations of the labor market, presaging the inevitable collapse of retirement systems. One never dares think of the actual cost of maintaining security and "defense" policies along Europe's borders, or the billions Europe has sent to Turkey to persuade it to serve as a retention center. Not to mention the exorbitant costs that would be imposed by the literal implosion of Europe on this question of migrants, if we allow the recent emergences of nationalism and neo-fascism to intensify.

Why, then, this inverse logic that is indefensible not only in terms of the indignation many of us feel in the name of our common humanity, but also in the terms of neoliberalism itself? And why, rather than manage the migrant influxes as one might have done in the past, have we simply decided to block them? Why have we accepted it as more rational to collect the corpses washed up on the beach rather than save living men and women? Why does death capture our attention more than intervention? Has biopolitics actually become a "thanato-politics"?

To this question, I have no complete response, but only a fragment of a hypothesis.

I believe that the moment that explains, at least partially, the move from "fostering life or leaving to die" to "not fostering life, and leaving to die" is a profound inflection in the relationship of politics to time. This transformation deserves our attention, to the extent that it is grounded in three radical changes: the exit from the temporality of economic cycles for a large part of the world, that is, crisis as a new economic and political temporality; the imposition of an extremely short temporality corresponding to an essentially electoral governmentality, at least in the short term; and finally, in a parallel manner, the installation of a governmentality "without limits" in the uncertain space of juridical exceptionality stretched to the extreme. This last element is undoubtedly all the more "without limits" the more we continue progressively constructing the conditions of its paradoxical constitutionalization. In summary, economically speaking, time has flown off its hinges; politically, it has split paradoxically into two opposed and contradictory paths. Political temporality has on the one hand been compressed, squeezed "just in time" into elections and polls, and on the other hand dilated into an unlimited state of emergency. So "not fostering life, and leaving to die" has become not only less onerous in the very short term (from the point of view of the real cost of foreseeable interventions), but outright profitable from an electoral point of view. But in the long term, the political, economic, and human costs quickly reveal themselves to be monstrous. No one can ignore them, but everyone makes certain to forget them. After all, confronting them involves another temporality from that of the immediate present. It's the next electoral cycle, so what does it matter? *Après nous le déluge*.

Time is off its hinges, or as Hamlet put it, "Time is out of joint." Our humanity is not far from slipping out of our grasp, but we have become too blind to understand that our being as men and women is at stake. The reinvention of hospitality, the construction of a community of men and women—these will arise only through a reappropriation of political time, and this reappropriation is infinitely urgent. What is needed is a time of living, a time of doing, a time of producing and dreaming, a time of constructing and inventing—a reclamation of the depths of history as a whole.

NOTES

1. Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1: An Introduction* (*La volonté de savoir*), trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon, 1978), 139–40. (*Translator's note*: To follow Revel's discussion, I have changed the word "supplanted" in Hurley's translation to "covered up.")
2. Michel Foucault, *Il faut défendre la société, Cours au Collège de France, 1975–1976* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1997), 214.
3. Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978–1979*, ed. Michel Senellart (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 230.
4. Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, 231.
5. Ibid.
6. Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 143.
7. Cited in Didier Fassin, *Humanitarian Reason: A Moral History of the Present* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 1.

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