

WHAT DOES FOUCAULT THINK IS NEW ABOUT NEO-LIBERALISM?

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Final draft: 28 June 2009.

Forthcoming in *Pli: Warwick Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 21.

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Among Foucault's few forays into analyzing contemporary political rationality is his analysis of neoliberalism.¹ By examining two recently published lecture courses of his at the Collège de France—*Sécurité, territoire, population* (delivered in 1977-78; hereafter STP)² and *Naissance de la biopolitique* (1978-79; hereafter NB)³—we will be able to expose the Deleuzean nature of Foucault's differential historical methodology, as well as what he thinks is new about neoliberalism.

FOUCAULT'S REALISM AND INTERACTIVE REALISM

Foucault offers a non-progressivist and non-hylomorphic reading of history. These two qualifications are linked. First, although Foucault's genealogy does not provide a progressivist narrative, he does wish to provide tools by which the governed can understand the rationality that informs the way they are governed and thereby better resist intolerable governance. To the (in)famous demand that Foucault provide a normative "standard," we can reply that he does; it's just that he trusts the governed to know when intolerable governance needs resisting without having to wait for a philosopher to bless their resistance by having it match some universal standard. In other words, Foucault is suspicious of philosophy's predilection for speaking in place of others (rather than beside them in solidarity). Second, Foucault's reading is non-

hylomorphic in the sense that he does not think, as does Kant for example, that the "raw material" of history is senseless, "just one damn thing after another" as the saying goes, and thus, in order to ward off a nihilistic disgust, in need of the imposition of an progressivist narrative grounded in a putative natural purpose (that is, a purpose transcendent to historical events). Kant writes about human history: "It would appear no law-governed history of mankind is possible ... We can scarcely help feeling a certain distaste on observing their activities as enacted in the great world-drama ... everything as a whole is made up of folly and childish vanity, and often of childish malice and destructiveness.... The only way out for the philosopher ... is for him to attempt to discover a *purpose in nature* behind this senseless course of human events."⁴ In this regard, Kant's position on history parallels his view on cognition, in which we feel the need for the understanding to impose order on the chaotic sensory manifold in order to ward off skepticism.

Foucault, on the other hand, holds that there are orders immanent in historical events with no need of being grounded in or constituted by a transcendent natural or subjective ordering. Rather, Foucault adopts a quite straightforward historical realism. His work consists in proposing a "grid of intelligibility" that *reveals* these immanent historical orders by showing how they were "possible" (NB 35F / 34E). Now it is true that these historical orders are only revealed by certain grids of intelligibility, and that these are chosen in order to help us with a "history of the present," one relevant to our concerns as people governed by neoliberalism. Nonetheless, these historical orders are revealed rather than constituted. These immanent orders are power-knowledge *dispositifs* informed by modes of political rationality inherent in real historical practice; these *dispositifs* function as "regimes of truth" which constitute objects able to be

judged as true or false. The reason these immanent orders require a "grid of intelligibility" for their discovery—and cannot be seen via a simplistic "historicism" that tracks changes in the accidental properties of an underlying substance—is that Foucault sees them as multiplicities in the Deleuzean sense, that is, dynamic differential systems of "incessant transactions" among multiple and ever-changing practices (NB 79F / 77E).

It's important not to confuse this historical realism with Foucault's celebrated genealogical analysis of the constitution of the objects of the human sciences, to which he compares his analysis of the constitution of the objects of the liberal and neoliberal power-knowledge *dispositifs* and their regimes of truth (e.g., various forms of *homo economicus*). I qualify the ontological status of these objects as "interactively realist" in the sense that they are not dependent on a human subject or intersubjective community, but are, in Foucault's terms, "marked out in reality" as a result of the *dispositif* of practices that constitute them (NB 21-22F / 19E). "Interactive realism" is basically the same as what Ian Hacking calls, in an update to his important essay "Making Up People," the "looping effect" of a "dynamic nominalism."⁵ That is to say, the interaction of the constituting practices and the constituted objects is extended in time and is structured by feedback loops, so that the expectation of an action increases the probability of that action. We also know this phenomenon by two other terms: "self-fulfilling prophecy" and "methodology becomes metaphysics," as when a policy based on an assumption creates the conditions that produce behavior conforming to that assumption.⁶

So to repeat: Foucault does not *constitute* a regime of truth or *dispositif* as the object of his historical knowledge by hylomorphically shaping a senseless historical raw material but *reveals*

it as an immanent, differential, and non-substantial historical reality by means of a grid of intelligibility. It's just that his historical realism reveals the power-knowledge *dispositifs* informed by modes of political rationality and forming regimes of truth *as* interactively realist, that is, as capable of constituting objects marked out in reality (and not just in discourse, that is, not just objects of knowledge).

FOUCAULT'S DIFFERENTIAL METHODOLOGY

Foucault sees neoliberalism as a novel mode of the art of governing, that is, a new mode of social power. We will track the way in which Foucault shifts from war as the grid of intelligibility for social relations to "governmentality," which concerns the "conduct of conduct," the shaping of the way people live their lives in quotidian detail. In STP and NB Foucault will concentrate on governmentality as an exercise of political rationality (as opposed to the conducting of conduct in families, religious groups, etc.). We can note some preliminary distinctions with regard to changes in political rationality in order to orient ourselves: the juridical sovereign rules men as subjects of right, while liberal government supplements juridical sovereignty with the management of people qua *homo economicus* as natural exchanger in natural markets; neoliberal government manages people qua *homo economicus* as self-entrepreneur in artificial competitive markets.⁷ To understand the novelty of neoliberalism, then, we need to understand the previous modes or strategies of the "art of governing" as a political art, that is, as a state practice reflected

in a political rationality: 17th and 18th century *raison d'Etat*, the 18th century physiocratic challenge, 18th and 19th century classical liberalism, and 20th century neoliberalism.

To establish the context for the discussion of the art of governing men, we need to go back to "*Il faut défendre la société*" (delivered 1975-76; hereafter DS).⁸ Here Foucault conducts a genealogy of the war model for social relations. At this period of his work, Foucault held to what we can call a Nietzschean-Deleuzean concept for analyzing social relations. To understand social power we have to see macro-level social relations (those between "experts and subjects" or "men and women" or "bourgeoisie and proletariat") as emerging from a "micro-physics of power" by means of an integration of a multiplicity of force relations.⁹

We have two questions here: (1) what is the ontological status of the social field as a multiplicity of force relations? (2) Is "war" is a good model, a good "grid of intelligibility," for seeing social relations as emergent from such a multiplicity?¹⁰

Foucault proceeds in "*Il faut défendre la société*" by inverting the Clausewitzian saying that "war is politics by other means," or better, by showing that Clausewitz had himself inverted an older discourse whose formula "politics is war by other means" had put war as the model or "grid of intelligibility" (DS 145F / 163E) for social relations. In fact, Foucault finds that war as a grid of intelligibility has been "posited" for our historical discourse [*c'est cette grille d'intelligibilité qui a été posée pour notre discours historique*] (145F / 164E). In other words, while a statement from an earlier discourse about, say, the Trojan origins of the Franks, would be neither true nor false for us, statements in the discourse in which the grid of intelligibility for social power is war

would have a truth value for us: they could be demonstrated to be either true or false (145F / 164E). Indeed, Foucault himself had used the war model rather straightforwardly in *Surveiller et punir*, published in 1975 (SP 35F / 26E: "the study of this micro-physics presupposes ... that one should take as its model a perpetual battle rather than a contract").¹¹

As a result of conducting his genealogy of the war model in "*Il faut défendre la société*," Foucault comes to question it tentatively in *Histoire de la sexualité I: La volonté de savoir*, published in 1976, that is, during the year in which the "Society" lectures were delivered.¹²

There, war is no longer seen as a grid of intelligibility which reveals a regime of truth governing a particular historical discourse. Rather, it is seen as an option for "coding" the multiplicity of force relations, that is, an optional and precarious "strategy" for integrating them: "Should we turn the expression around, then, and say that politics is war pursued by other means? If we still wish to maintain a separation between war and politics, perhaps we should postulate that this multiplicity of force relations can be coded—in part but never totally—either in the form of 'war,' or in the form of 'politics'; this would imply two different strategies (but the one always liable to switch into the other) for integrating these unbalanced, heterogeneous, unstable, and tense force relations" (HS1 123F / 93E).

The context for this remark, we should recall, is subtle and ambiguous. It comes in the "Method" section of Part IV of HS1, "Le dispositif de sexualité." The ambiguity of Foucault's position is set up by his remark a moment earlier when he discusses power as de-centered: "power's condition of possibility, or in any case the viewpoint which permits one to understand its exercise ... and which also makes it possible to use its mechanisms as a grid of intelligibility of

the social order, must not be sought in the primary existence of a central point" (122F / 93E). Here we see Foucault's famous ambivalence toward Kant: no sooner does he say "condition of possibility" than he has to nuance it.¹³ Thus at this point Foucault has "power" as the grid of intelligibility and "war" as an active strategy of political practice; looking at the social field in terms of power lets us see war as a possible strategy for integrating a multiplicity of force relations, whereas power "itself" can only be seen if we look at it *as* such a multiplicity: "It seems to me that power must be understood in the first instance as the multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organization" (121-22F / 92E).

So to sum up, the "multiplicity of force relations" is the grid of intelligibility for power, which is in turn the grid of intelligibility of the social field. This grid of intelligibility reveals a dynamic social ontology, an interactive realism, in which war is a strategy for action in the social field, a way of integrating the multiplicity of force relations that constitute that field and thereby constituting the protagonists of political history as engaged in a "war by other means." The looping effect or self-fulfilling prophecy here should be clear: it's almost a cliché to say that naming yourself and others as warriors tends to create the reality in which others treat you as such and you respond in kind since they have just proved your point!

Perhaps dismayed at the results of his genealogy of the war schema, which shows one of the main origins of it in the "race war" theory of Boulainvilliers and the 17th and 18th century French reactionary petty nobility, as well as the final imbrications of it in contemporary state racism and biopower (DS 229-233F / 258-261E), Foucault moves in the fourth lecture of *Sécurité* to

"governmentality" as the model for social relations, as its grid of intelligibility. Rather than social relations being seen as war, we are asked to see social relations as the "conduct of conduct," as the leading of men's lives in quotidian detail. There is still the Nietzschean-Deleuzean concept of integration of a multiplicity of differential elements and relations as embedded in the interplay of power and resistance in practices, but the grid of intelligibility is no longer war, but governmentality. It's not that this standpoint is more clearly interactively realist—if anything, it's harder to see the looping effect here—but it does enable us to see more subtle relations. And, along with the change in the grid of intelligibility comes a change in the nature of the relata; it is no longer "force" relations, but relations of "actions," as we read in "The Subject and Power": power is the "action on the action of others." Thus with governmentality, we still find a differential field, but one of actions rather than forces: "to govern ... is to structure the possible field of action of others."¹⁴ With the advent of governmentality as the grid of intelligibility for power, "forces" are no longer the object of the study of power *tout court*, but are now that which *raison d'Etat* posits as the object of analysis for the state: a state's "forces" consist in its wealth, its army, its population (as sheer number of subjects) (STP 321F / 313E).

In governmentality, then, the other has to be a subject, a free person: "power is exercised only over free subjects, and only insofar as they are free" ("Subject and Power" 221). Now we must avoid reading Foucault as if a concern with subjectivity comes to replace a concern with power. Rather, subjectivity is the mode in which power operates in governmentality; the conducting of the conduct of our lives is done by inducing us to subjectify ourselves in various ways, as sexual subjects, or indeed, as self-entrepreneurs.¹⁵

In any case, we should note that the use of governmentality as a grid of intelligibility for social power necessitates a complementary inversion: in order to understand governmentality in its specificity we have to see it as a mode of power. Thus the "point of view of power" itself allows us to see in pastoral practices "intelligible relations between elements that are external to each other" (STP 219F / 215E). With this strategic logic that preserves the heterogeneity of the relata, we avoid both a Hegelian dialectical logic that would resolve the contradictory relata at the price of rendering them homogeneous (NB 44F / 42E), and we also avoid the framework of "ideology" in which the political is a mere "translation" of the economic. For Foucault, if we don't take the "problem of the pastorate, of the structures of pastoral power, as the hinge or pivot of these different elements external to each other—the economic crises on one side and religious themes on the other—if we do not take it as a field of intelligibility ... we are forced to return to the old conceptions of ideology," conceptions which do not enable us to grasp the specificity of governmentality as a site for the concrete "strategies and tactics" of practices (STP 219F / 215-216E).

AVOIDING A CIRCULAR ONTOLOGY OF THE STATE

By deploying his differential historical methodology and thereby establishing governmentality as a grid of intelligibility, Foucault is able to avoid a "circular ontology of the state" (STP 362F / 354E). This avoidance is related to the controversy over Foucault's alleged lack of a normative standard. If one has a state-centered politics, one needs a normative standard by which to judge state actions. Although Foucault does not have a state-centered politics, that does not mean we cannot deal with the state; in fact, we can deal all the more effectively with it by avoiding an

exclusive focus on it. There are thus two benefits to Foucault's differential historical methodology here: (1) it enables him to analyze a much greater slice of the multiplicity of concrete instances of power by moving outside the horizon of the state to the field of governmentality; (2) moving outside the horizon of the state to the differential field of governmentality practices allows us to de-substantialize the state, to see it as emergent from that differential field, as an "episode," *une péripétie* or turning point, in the history of governmentality. We thus see that the normative standard has to be respect for the resistance of the governed to intolerable governance, rather than a means for philosophers to judge state action.

Foucault always wants to avoid positing a transhistorical constant, a "universal" that is simply treated differently in different epochs (NB 4F / 2-3E; 64F / 63E). To take a famous example, in *Surveiller et punir*, it's never the case that he wants to examine how the prison changes from absolutism to liberalism. That would be a closet substantialist metaphysics in which the prison is a substance that receives different properties. We recall that Aristotle demonstrated the parallel between the grammatical subject receiving different predicates and the ontological substance receiving different properties. For Aristotle and a large part of the tradition, the substance is the identity underlying the change, providing an ontological continuity, preventing a lapse into nothingness during change and / or preventing a needless proliferation of entities. Foucault analyzes this substantialist model as "historicism" (NB 5F / 3E). Foucault instead proposes a genealogy of constitutive practices; we are accustomed to calling this his "nominalism."¹⁶ From this perspective, the absolutist monarch didn't have prisons at his disposal. He had a mechanism, enclosure, which was put to a certain function: enclosure for protection to await later

punishment. If we had to give a name to the place, the building, where the enclosure happened, it would be better to call it a "jail." You only get prisons with a new *dispositif*, where the mechanism of enclosure is put to a different function, punishment (and penitence, and rehabilitation, etc.)

Let us return, again briefly, to the Foucault – Deleuze relation as seen in Foucault's invocation of historical novelty as a shift in the way a multiplicity gets integrated. As we recall, in STP and NB the grid of intelligibility is governmentality, which prevents us from hypostasizing the state as a substance, and lets us avoid what Foucault will call "state phobia." In an important passage in *Naissance* Foucault concentrates on the "statification" of governmental practices. But this does not mean starting by analyzing the "essence" of the state and then trying to deduce current practices of state governmentality as accidents accruing to the substance defined by that essence. For Foucault, flatly stated, "the state does not have an essence"; it is not "an autonomous source of power" (NB 79F / 77E). Rather it is only the "effect, the profile, the mobile shape [*découpe mobile*] of a perpetual statification [*étatatisation*] or perpetual statifications [*étatisations*] in the sense of incessant transactions which modify, or move, or drastically change, or insidiously shift" multiple practices such as finance, investment, decision-making, control, and relations of local / central authorities (NB 79F / 77E). The state has no essence; it is not a substance with changing properties, but what Deleuze would call an Idea, a multiplicity, a system of differential elements and relations involved in "incessant transactions."¹⁷ Foucault continues with his nominalist anti-essentialism: "The state has ... no interior. The state is nothing else but the mobile effect of a regime of multiple governmentalities" (NB 79F / 77E).

To repeat, then, Foucault's move to governmentality as the horizon for examining the state enables a nominalist anti-essentialism that, in seeing the State as a multiplicity, outflanks the "state phobia" against which he rails in both its left and right wing manifestations. We can see Foucault delight in demonstrating that left wing attacks on neoliberalism as a growth of the state are only repeating what the neoliberals had advanced in their "inflationary" critique (NB 195F / 189E). In discussing his move outside the state to governmentality as a horizon for historical intelligibility, Foucault recalls that in previous work he had moved outside institutions, functions, and objects (STP 122F / 118E). For instance, going outside institutions enables a genealogy of relations of power. A genealogy is the integration of a multiplicity of heterogeneous elements, as opposed to a causal and substantialist narrative, which Foucault will call a "genetic analysis." By focusing on multiplicity and integration we can replace a "genetic analysis through filiation with a genealogical analysis ... which reconstructs a whole network of alliances, communications, and points of support" (123F / 117E). Similarly, we move outside [alleged] functions to a general economy of power of strategies and tactics, manifest even in failures of the prison's supposed function (121F / 117-18E). And in moving outside objects we reach a field of constitution of objects rather than contenting ourselves with the historical modifications of the putatively same object (121-22F / 118E).

Foucault proposes a similar displacement for the state: can we go outside the state? There is an immediate problem: is not the state the totalizing field for all these "outsides" of institutions, functions, and objects? Can we ever get outside such a horizon for social being (123F / 119E)? In notes that were not read out at the time the lectures were delivered, Foucault writes that it is not a method he wants to defend from this objection; it is more like a change in point of view

producing positive effects (this is an example of what one could call Foucault's pragmatism). Again, the focus in a genealogy is on the different means of integrating a multiplicity of socio-economic processes and governmentality practices. Foucault suggests that studying military discipline is not a matter of studying state control of its military institution, for this would be a substantialism entailing the study of different accidental properties surrounding the unchanging essence of the state and its army. Rather, a genealogy of military discipline connects it to a series of problems – floating populations, commercial networks, technical innovations, models of community management – problems which are the very ones out of which the state emerges as a solution. Thus we see military discipline is an integrator of a differential field, being composed of "techniques with operative value in multiple processes"; the state does not provide the horizon for understanding this multiplicity, for it is itself immanent to it (123 F / 119E).

In naming his differential historical methodology, Foucault insists upon the difference between a genealogy and a "genetic" analysis, which proceeds by identifying a unitary source that splits into two.¹⁸ To establish intelligibility, he asks, "could we not ... start not from unity, and not even from ... duality, but from the *multiplicity* of extraordinarily diverse processes" (STP 244F / 238E; emphasis added). It's important to emphasize that this multiplicity is ontological, as is its integration. Foucault continues that establishing the intelligibility of these processes would entail "showing [*montrant*] phenomena of coagulation, support, reciprocal reinforcement, cohesion and *integration*" (STP 244F / 238-239E; emphasis added). Again, not to belabor the point, but the key word here that betrays Foucault's realism is "showing"; the phenomena are not constituted by Foucault the subject of knowledge, but shown in their reality. And, again to repeat, their reality is differential; in the classic Deleuzean manner, the integration of a multiplicity produces an

emergent effect: "in short it would involve showing the bundle [*faisceau*] of processes and the network [*réseau*] of relations that ultimately induced as a cumulative, overall effect, the great duality" (STP 244F / 239E). Foucault's emergentism is clear as he concludes this very important passage: "At bottom, maybe intelligibility in history does not lie in assigning a cause that is always more or less a metaphor for the source. Intelligibility in history would perhaps lie in something that we could call the constitution or composition of effects. How are overall, cumulative effects composed? How is nature constituted as an overall effect? How is the state effect constituted on the basis of a thousand diverse processes ...? [*Comment se composent des effets globaux, comment se composent des effets de masse? Comment s'est constitué l'effet Etat à partir de mille processus divers ...?*]" (244F / 239E). It's the processes that constitute the state as their effect, not Foucault as subject of knowledge; Foucault's contribution is to provide the grid of intelligibility that reveals this differential emergence at work in historical reality.

In *Sécurité*, Foucault's differential emergentism thus provides us with a genealogy of the modern state on the basis of the history of governmental reason. In the 19th century we see the breakup of the administrative state's police apparatus into different institutions: economic practice; population management; law and respect for freedom; and the police (in the contemporary sense of a state apparatus that intervenes to stop disorder). These are added to the diplomatic-military apparatus (STP 362F / 354E). But it's crucial to see that the administrative state's police apparatus that is here broken up was itself differential; it was not a unitary source. It arose with *raison d'Etat* which is itself "something completely different [which] emerges in the seventeenth century" (STP 346F / 338E). The administrative state emerges from a "cluster [*faisceau*] of intelligible and analyzable relations that allow a number of fundamental elements to be linked

together [*lier*] like the faces of a single polyhedron" (STP 346F / 338E). We note the by now familiar Deleuzean language of the linking together of differential elements and relations.¹⁹

Foucault here lists four elements: the art of government thought as *raison d'Etat*; competition of states while maintaining European equilibrium; police; and the emergence of the market town and its problems of cohabitation and circulation (themselves being, quite obviously, a differential field of multiple processes and practices). So police is part of a larger *dispositif*, and is itself is concerned with a multiplicity of all the factors going into providing for the being and well-being of men, that well-being which, in a fascinating phrase, Foucault qualifies as a "well-being beyond being [*ce bien-être au-delà de l'être*]" (STP 335F / 328E).²⁰ More precisely, police integrates relations between the increase of those forces and the good order of the state (321F / 313E). Police does not deal with things but with "forces" that arise from adjusting the relations among the rates of increase of multiple processes. As noted before, here we see forces as elements of the state as analyzed by *raison d'Etat*.

With *Naissance*, Foucault enriches his discussion of novelty in history with a more explicit focus on the notion of "regimes of truth." Identifying the novelty of liberalism and neoliberalism entails using as a grid of intelligibility the institution of "regimes of truth," which are defined in terms reminiscent of those for "episteme" in earlier works: "the set of rules enabling one to establish which statements in a given discourse can be described as true or false" (NB 37F / 35E; SD 145F / 163-64E). For instance, the question of liberalism is that of a new "regime of truth as the principle of the self-limitation of government" (NB 21F / 19E). Compared to *raison d'Etat*, classical liberalism constitutes a new question, the self-limitation of the government to allow the natural mechanisms of exchange markets to operate, just as *raison d'Etat* asked about the

"intensity, depth, and attention to detail" of governing for the sake of the maximum growth of power of the state (NB 21F / 19E).

EXISTENCE AND POSSIBILITY

Let us conclude our discussion of Foucault's methodology with a look at two fascinating passages which display his nuanced position in which a grid of intelligibility reveals the interactive realist constitution of objects of a *dispositif*. The first concerns the claim that posing the question of the regime of truth of liberalism amounts to the "same problem" Foucault dealt with concerning madness, disease, delinquency, and sexuality (NB 21F / 19E). Foucault's investigation of the historical constitution of these objects is not a matter of showing them to be "wicked illusions or ideological products to be dispelled in the light of reason." However, although they are not illusions, Foucault will not want to say that they "exist," although he will claim that they are "something" which is "marked out in reality." Foucault writes regarding his previous investigations, "it was a matter of showing [*montrer*] by what conjunctions [*interférences*] a whole set of practices—from the moment they became coordinated with a regime of truth—was able to make what does not exist (madness, disease, delinquency, sexuality, etcetera), nonetheless become something [*devienne cependant quelque chose*], something however that continues not to exist" (21F / 19E). In other words, the grid of intelligibility is historical realist, in that it *shows* how practices constitute objects as "something," even as the reality of that something is not simple or brute "existence" but is interactively real. The question of the constitution of such objects as established by the relation of objectifying

practices and a regime of truth necessitates that we distinguish between "existence" and being "marked out in reality." Studying the constitution of such an object is not the demonstration of an "error" or an "illusion" but entails asking ourselves "how a particular regime of truth, and therefore not an error, makes something that does not exist able to become something. It is not an illusion since it is precisely a set of practices, real practices, which established it and thus imperiously marks it out in reality [*le marque ainsi impérieusement dans le réel*]" (21-22F / 19E).

There's much more to be said here than the essay format permits. We might be able though to propose that "to exist" here means "to have the status of an object of natural science," whereas "being something" that is "marked out in reality" means "to have the status of an object of the human sciences in their full status as power-knowledge complexes in a dense and concrete *dispositif*."²¹ Joseph Rouse's standard treatment of the point highlights Foucault's extreme caution in avoiding the term "existence," which Rouse uses willingly. Rouse notes that even before his researches into power-knowledge, Foucault is "committed to a strong nominalism in the human sciences: the types of objects in their domains were not already demarcated, but came into existence only contemporaneous with the discursive formations that made it possible to talk about them."²²

A clue to Foucault's late caution regarding the term "existence" appears in his perennial opposition to phenomenology. In explaining another instance of his avoidance of the term "existence" in discussing his previous work on the constitution of the objects of the human sciences, Foucault cites his desire to oppose himself to phenomenology: "All in all, it was a

matter of doing the opposite of what phenomenology has taught us to say and think, that phenomenology that said, roughly: Madness exists, which does not mean that it is something [*ce qui ne veut pas dire que ce soit quelque chose*]" (STP 122F / 118E; translation modified).

Foucault refers here to the "irreality" of the noema as intentional object; the noema exists, but it does not exist in the mode of things. Foucault must, of course, avoid phenomenology, as it is caught in the empirico-transcendental couplet diagnosed in the analytic of finitude of *Les mots et les choses*; his attempts at a non-subjective constitution of objects are precisely what we know by the names of archaeology and genealogy.

Foucault's own non-phenomenological formulation in STP of the ontological status of objects constituted by a particular regime of truth is, if anything, even more cautious and nuanced than it is in NB, where at least he says that such an object "becomes something." But in the context of opposing himself to phenomenology in STP Foucault can only say that his denial of "existence" to the objects of a regime of truth is not a complete denial of being: "We can certainly say that madness 'does not exist,' but this does not mean that it is nothing [*mais ça ne veut pas dire qu'elle ne soit rien*]" (STP 122F / 118E).²³

In all these formulations, we can note here a remarkable difference from *L'archéologie du savoir*.²⁴ There, Foucault for the most part writes of the "appearance" of objects "formed" by a discursive practice. But in at least one passage we read that objects "exist.": "Il [l'objet] ne se préexiste pas à lui-même, retenu par quelque obstacle aux bords premiers de la lumière. Il existe sous les conditions positives d'un faisceau complexe de rapports" (A 61F). Here we see a

differential field ("complex cluster of relations"), but the objects of that field are worthy of the term "existence."

We cannot continue with these most delicate issues, which have occupied a good number of the best scholars. So, having discussed Foucault's use of Deleuzian concepts in the epistemological register, and his struggles to nuance his ontological commitments, we will conclude our discussion of his differential methodology with a second problematic text. Concerning the establishment of the market as the site of veridiction for liberalism as a governmental practice, Foucault insists that we not look for "the cause" of this novel constitution. Instead, if we are to understand this historical novelty we have to understand the "polygonal or polyhedral relationship" between multiple elements which are themselves changing rates of change of heterogeneous processes: "a new influx of gold ... a continuous economic and demographic growth ... an intensification of agricultural production" (35F / 33E). This is a clear example of a Deleuzian multiplicity: a system of differentially linked processes exhibiting changing rates of change. Foucault follows up by claiming that in order to "establish the intelligibility [*effectuer ... la mise en intelligibilité*]" of the process by which the market became a site of veridiction one must "put into relation the different phenomena [of economic growth, etc.] [*la mise en relation de ces différents phénomènes*]" (35F / 33E; translation modified). So far so good; rendering something intelligible comes from the integration of a multiplicity that preserves the heterogeneity of the processual elements. Foucault continues on with an odd bit of quasi-ontological modal analysis that is the key for our understanding of the realist ontological status of the regime of truth as that which is revealed by a grid of intelligibility (as opposed to the interactively real status of the objects of a regime of truth). Establishing the intelligibility of the

process by which the market became a site of veridiction is a matter of "showing how it was possible [*Montrer en quoi il a été possible*]." We do not have to show that the establishment of such a site of veridiction "would have been necessary [*qu'il aurait été nécessaire*]"; this would be a "futile task." Here is the key: neither do we have to show of the process that "it is a possibility [*un possible*], one possibility in a determinate field of possibilities [*un des possibles dans un champ déterminé des possibles*]." Rather, to establish the intelligibility of a historical novelty consists in "simply showing it to be possible [*Que le réel soit possible, c'est ça sa mise en intelligibilité*]" (35F / 34E; translation modified at several points).

This is difficult to reconcile with Deleuze, given his well-known adoption of the Bergsonian critique of the possible-real relation as opposed to the virtual-actual relation (*Bergsonisme* 99-101F / 96-98E; DR 272-74F / 211-212E).²⁵ Nonetheless, we might be able to salvage something by focusing on Foucault's denial that the establishment of the intelligibility of a historical novelty consists in showing it is one possibility in a determinate field of possibilities. For that's Deleuze's main target in adopting Bergson. The virtual as differential field gives rise to individuated entities, but is not itself composed of individuated entities; at most it consists in potentials for individuation processes. This seems to resonate with Foucault's denial of a "determinate field of possibilities" in which the novelty under consideration was an individuated member. So as long as Foucault insists that intelligibility entails the putting into relation of multiple processes we can see the phrase "showing it was possible" in terms of establishing the differential field of processes (influx of gold, economic and demographic growth, etc.) out of which the market as site of veridiction was actualized. What we can say is that Foucault's showing a regime of truth as an immanent historical reality meets Deleuze's requirement that one show the conditions of

possibility of "real experience" (DR 200F / 154E) in the integration, resolution or actualization of a differential field.

NEOLIBERALISM AND THE ART OF GOVERNING

In conducting his genealogy of governmentality as a mode of social power, Foucault begins with an analysis of "pastoral power" in Christian history as a concern with both the individual and the whole. After distinguishing the Christian pastorate from the theme of the shepherd of men in Hebrew and Greek thought, Foucault dwells on the famous paradoxes of the good shepherd: he must care for the whole flock, but he must also leave the whole flock to tend to the lost sheep, whose individual salvation is his task. Foucault thus established pastoral power as one of the historically first individualizing practices, the grid by which he had previously analyzed the human sciences, which come into being with 19th century disciplinary society (STP 132F / 128E).

We should recall that the move to governmentality is a move "outside" the state. In this way, Foucault can show the great turning point (*péripétie*) that is the "statification" (*étatisation*) of governmentality (STP 253F / 248E). The first great episode here is the administrative / absolute state and its political rationality of *raison d'Etat*, analyzed in *Sécurité, territoire, population*. This is only a nascent form of the political art of governing men, as it is still caught in the paradigm of sovereignty (STP 105F / 102E). As reflected in *raison d'Etat*, the art of government is directed not to the well-being of each individual, but to the growth of the State to its full

potential in strength and wealth, justifying controlling interventions by means of discipline, mercantilist regulation, and police. Although still caught up with sovereignty, *raison d'Etat* as promulgated by the *politiques* can be contrasted with the medieval / juridical notion of sovereignty with its concerns with legitimate origins (precisely what was contested by race war theory) and with salvation of men in the afterworld by the action of the wise prince who acts in accordance with natural, cosmic, and divine law, what Foucault will call a "cosmological-theological continuum" (STP 239F / 232-34E) or "cosmological-theological framework [*cadre*]" (STP 356-57F / 349E)

Nascent liberalism as seen in the 18th century physiocratic critiques of the regulatory and administrative police state is still within the ambit of *raison d'Etat*, though modified in important ways. First, by the naturalness of social processes and by the way civil society is brought forth as the correlate of the state wishing precisely to provide the freedom for operation needed by those processes (STP 357F / 349E). Second, by the birth of political economy as a science which is independent of the state's knowledge of itself and yet needing to be taken into account by the state (3528-58F / 350-51E). Third, by the way population emerges as new problematic object so that the natural population and natural economic processes entail limits on state governmental intervention as control.²⁶ The physiocratic state's art of government must now manage and no longer control through rules and regulation; this management aims to remove artificial impediments and to let natural processes work (359-60F / 351-52E). Finally, we see that for the physiocrats, the problematic of freedom is not simply that of the rights of individuals over against sovereign power, but also the freedom of economic activity, the circulation of goods and people in urban space, and the action of markets (361F / 353E). The key, as we can see, is that

with the development of political economy in its first, physiocratic, phase, we find the establishment of population as a correlative reality with its own natural thickness and mechanisms; population is thus the "operator" in the transformation (78-81F / 76-79E). A final note is important: the physiocratic art of government has a complete knowledge of the economy (NB 288F / 285E), and it is directed to releasing natural economic mechanisms via apparatuses of "security," which Foucault examines in terms of treatment of *disette* or "dearth," contrasting them with mercantilist regulation (STP 50F / 47E).

Classical liberalism then challenges physiocracy by showing the inability of the sovereign to have full knowledge of the economy. Foucault demonstrates this with a wonderful reading of the metaphor of the invisible hand in Adam Smith's work (NB 283-86F / 278-81E). The culmination of Foucault's analysis gives us the astonishing prospect of a Deleuzean liberalism, as seen in the "atheistic" character of its demonstration of "the impossibility of a sovereign point of view over the totality of the state." We can do no more than note the following as deserving of much further study: "Liberalism acquired its modern shape precisely with the formulation of this essential incompatibility between the non-totalizable multiplicity of economic subjects of interest and the totalizing unity of the juridical sovereign" (NB 286F / 282E).²⁷ Postponing the vast work this sentence imposes on us, we see the upshot of this cleavage between irreducible economic multiplicity and totalizing sovereignty in government's self-limitation and the creation of a zone of non-intervention, the famous *laissez-faire*, which is designed to allow natural market mechanisms to function as based on the natural inclinations of *homo economicus* to exchange with others.

Neoliberalism, however, Foucault insists, is something other than liberalism (NB 136F / 130-131E); neoliberals "break" [*rompent*] with classical liberalism (NB 123F / 119E); we must "avoid at all costs" seeing neoliberalism as a mere "repetition" of classical liberalism after a Keynesian interlude (NB 136F / 131E). So for Foucault neoliberalism is a modification of the art of governing as an exercise of political sovereignty; it is another turning point in the history of the state seen through the grid of governmentality. Its novelty consists in an interventionist state which creates conditions for the artificial or purely competitive market in which *homo economicus* makes choices as rational self-entrepreneur.²⁸

For Foucault, neoliberal macroeconomics is not so much a shift from the Keynesian objective of full employment to the monetarist control of inflation (although it does of course entail that as well), as it is a change in government's relation to market structure. For classical liberals, the market was a natural mechanism for the exchange of commodities. For the neoliberals, the market is an ideal structure of competition, fragile and in need of construction and support. Thus neoliberalism is not laissez-faire, but interventionist, though neoliberal intervention into society occurs at the level of the conditions of market, and its intervention must take the form of the "rule of law" (176-179F / 171-174E).

Let us repeat the key contrast. Classical liberals want the market to be a free natural zone where government can't interfere, precisely to let the invisible hand provide for social benefits from individual self-interest. There's a whole anthropology here of the natural *homo economicus* as only an abstraction from concrete man living in civil society, of which the juridical subject is another abstraction. But the important thing for classical liberals, ignored by the neoliberals, is

the Smithian analysis of moral sentiments and the need for government to provide the moral framework that the market erodes.²⁹ So the classical liberal formula is "protect the market from government in order to allow social benefits from natural exchange."³⁰ The neoliberals say we must proceed on two paths: (1) we must have government intervention at the level of the conditions of the market in order (2) to spread the enterprise form throughout the social fabric. So the neoliberal formula here is "use government to change society to constitute an artificial and fragile market."

For Foucault, the American neoliberals are more radical than their German counterparts. They share the desire to intervene at the level of market conditions to support fragile competition. But for government / market relations they also want to refuse to shield government from market relations: they want to submit all government actions to cost-benefit analysis. But this is just macro-level reflection of the move to insert market relations throughout the social fabric. This is not simply the drive to privatize government services; it also entails making the surviving government agencies into enterprises, so that we must ask what is bottom line for, in the American system, agencies such as Amtrak, the Post Office, the National Parks, and so on). And this is not just the drive to make any multi-unit organization into a collection of enterprises (each department in a university has its own bottom line and its own contribution to the university bottom line: e.g., loss of subventions for university presses). It goes further than that: each individual becomes an enterprise, a self-entrepreneur.

CONCLUSION: NEOLIBERALISM AS MODE OF SUBJECTIFICATION

To conclude, we can mark the differences of Foucault's reading from the class struggle reading of neoliberalism in David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (Oxford University Press, 2005). Among the major differences between the two is Harvey's emphasis on macroeconomics, in which the turn from Keynesian full employment commitments to monetarist control of inflation serves to discipline the working class (*Brief History* 25). Although Foucault certainly notes this aspect of neoliberalism, it is not a major focus (NB 145F / 139E), no doubt partially because his lectures predate the savage hike in interest rates by US Federal Reserve chairman Paul Volcker in 1981 on which Harvey focuses.

Another key difference between Foucault and Harvey is the latter's claim that neoliberalism adhered to "free market principles of neo-classical economics" and hence was "deeply opposed to state interventionist theories, such as those of John Maynard Keynes" (*Brief History* 20). As we have seen, Foucault insists that the neoliberal state is intensely interventionist and not at all devoted to *laissez-faire*; the key is to distinguish between Keynesian interventions *into the market* and its price mechanism (by stimulating effective demand via state purchases of goods and services, for instance) and neoliberal interventions *into society* to set up the conditions for competitive markets.

But perhaps the most striking difference between the two is revealed by Harvey's claim that neoliberal states treat "labour and the environment as mere commodities" (*Brief History* 70). This classical political economy standpoint cannot be reconciled with Foucault's treatment of Gary Becker's human capital theory, which undercuts the (Marxist) treatment of commodified labor power and enables Foucault to inscribe neoliberal governmentality in his history of

subjectification practices. In other words, for Foucault, neoliberal governmentality conducts our conduct by inducing us to subjectify ourselves as self-entrepreneurs concerned with obtaining a return on our human capital (NB 227-232F / 221-226E).³¹

So for Foucault, we best see the radicality of American neoliberalism by concentrating on its mode of subjectification. And the most radical mode of *homo economicus* is reached when the self-entrepreneur takes up the challenge of managing its genetic capital.³² Although Foucault felt the need to apologize for introducing the "science fiction" aspects of genetic capital (NB 233-235F / 226-229E), we are now deep into an era in which "biocapital" is an unavoidable horizon for social-political-economic analysis; as we might expect, these analyses invariably take Foucault as one of their starting points.³³

NOTES

¹ I would like to acknowledge the very helpful comments of (in alphabetical order) Miguel de Beistegui, Chris Blakely, Lee Braver, Leonard Lawlor, Jeff Nealon, and Steven Shaviro.

² Michel Foucault, *Sécurité, territoire, population*. Edited by Michel Senellart (Paris: Gallimard / Seuil, 2004). Translated by Graham Burchell as *Security, Territory, Population* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

³ Michel Foucault, *Naissance de la biopolitique*. Edited by Michel Senellart (Paris: Gallimard / Seuil, 2004). Translated by Graham Burchell as *The Birth of Biopolitics* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

⁴ Immanuel Kant, "Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose," in *Kant's Political Writings*, ed. Hans Reiss. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991): 41-53. Cited passage at 41-42; emphasis in original.

⁵ Ian Hacking, "Making Up People," in *Reconstructing Individualism: Autonomy, Individuality, and the Self in Western Thought*, ed. by Weller, Sosna, and Wellberry, Stanford University Press, 1986. The updated version to which I refer was published in the *London Review of Books* 28.16 (17 August 2006); only this version contains the phrase "looping effect."

⁶ For an article examining just such a looping effect in contemporary practices based on the assumptions of Rational Choice Theory producing the neoliberal *homo economicus*, see Elinor Ostrom, "Policies that Crowd out Reciprocity and Collective Action." In Herbert Gintis, Samuel Bowles, Robert Boyd, and Ernst Fehr, *Moral Sentiments and Material Interests: The Foundations of Cooperation in Economic Life*. Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 2005: 253-275.

⁷ The term "supplement" alerts us to an important nuance. It is not the case that liberal or neoliberal government abjures the subject of right, for civil society as the concrete correlate of

liberal and neoliberal government has two abstract "aspects": humans as subjects of right and as *homo economicus* (NB 299-300F / 295-296E).

⁸ Michel Foucault, *"Il faut défendre la société."* Edited by Mauro Bertani and Alessandro Fontana. (Paris: Gallimard / Seuil, 1997. Translated by David Macey as *"Society Must Be Defended"* (New York: Picador, 2003).

⁹ Gilles Deleuze, *Différence et répétition* (Paris: PUF, 1968); translated by Paul Patton as *Difference and Repetition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994). "In this regard, four terms are synonymous: actualise, differentiate, integrate, and solve [*résoudre*]" (272F / 211E).

¹⁰ Interestingly enough, Foucault does not mention emergence via integration in "Theatrum Philosophicum," his review of *Difference and Repetition*, though he does discuss multiplicity. See *Dits et Ecrits I* (Paris: Gallimard Quarto edition, 2001): 958 and *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977): 185.

¹¹ Michel Foucault, *Surveiller et punir*. (Paris: Gallimard, 1975). Translated by Alan Sheridan as *Discipline and Punish* (New York: Vintage, 1979).

¹² Michel Foucault, *Histoire de la sexualité, tome 1: La volonté de savoir* (Paris: Gallimard, 1976). Translated by Robert Hurley as *The History of Sexuality, volume 1: An Introduction*. (New York: Random House, 1978).

¹³ An extended study of Foucault that takes the relation to Kant as a major theme is Béatrice Han, *Foucault's Critical Project: Between the Transcendental and the Historical* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002). The title of Han's French original is instructive in regard to our interrogation of the relation of Foucault's realism toward historical order and the interactive realism he discovers therein: *L'Ontologie manquée de Michel Foucault*.

¹⁴ Michel Foucault, "The Subject and Power," Afterword in Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983). Cited passages at 220 and 221.

¹⁵ For a strong argument on the inducing of subjectivity in contemporary governmentality as a mode of power, see Jeffrey Nealon, *Foucault Beyond Foucault: Power and its Intensifications since 1984* (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 2008).

¹⁶ Thomas R Flynn, *Sartre, Foucault and Historical Reason. Volume 2: A Poststructuralist Mapping of History*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

¹⁷ With "incessant transactions" we have a strong echo of the Deleuzean notion of a multiplicity as a structure of continuous variation. Relatively implicit in DR (e.g., 326F / 253E), continuous variation is a major concept throughout *Mille Plateaux*.

¹⁸ We see here a merely terminological difference with Deleuze. In DR, the conditions of real experience (not merely possible experience) form an "intrinsic genesis" (200F / 154E). But insofar as this genesis is the integration of a differential field, we see that "genesis" in DR is equivalent to "genealogy" for Foucault, albeit that Deleuze works in an ontological register and Foucault in an epistemological register.

¹⁹ The editor of *Naissance* notes the appearance of similar language defining a genealogy in terms of "singularity" and "multiple determining elements" in a roughly contemporaneous essay by Foucault (NB 50n8F / 49n8E).

²⁰ Is the mere "being" of men here just physical survival that forces men back onto themselves in desperate selfishness, while "well-being" allows for productive relations among men? So that free sociality is dependent on a guarantee of the necessities of life? In another context, we might

attempt to draw out the classic questions of the relations of *oikos* and *polis*, of necessity and freedom, from this small phrase of Foucault's.

²¹ On natural science versus human science, see Dreyfus and Rabinow 162-64 on SP 262-264F / 226-227E, where Foucault explains that the power/knowledge *dispositif* of the human sciences lies in the disciplines and examination. The mark of the human sciences is that they can't get free of examination the way the natural sciences did. For a full discussion of this and other points, see Gary Gutting, *Michel Foucault's Archaeology of Scientific Reason* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

²² Joseph Rouse, "Power/Knowledge," in Gary Gutting, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994): 92-114, at 93.

²³ The editor of STP provides two useful notes to similar expressions elsewhere in Foucault's writings. See STP 135n9 and 10F / 131n9 and 10E.

²⁴ Michel Foucault, *L'archéologie du savoir* (Paris: Gallimard, 1969).

²⁵ Gilles Deleuze, *Le Bergsonisme* (Paris: PUF, [1966] 1997). Translated by Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam as *Bergsonism* (New York: Zone Books, 1988).

²⁶ In the administrative / mercantilist / police state, population was still a negative term, the absence of de-population that would sap the state's power; it had no natural mechanisms (STP 283F / 277E).

²⁷ We would have to consider the relations of Foucault's notion of liberalism and Deleuze and Guattari's notions of deterritorializing and decoding, but axiomatizing, capitalism in *L'Anti-Œdipe* and *Mille Plateaux*. For a beginning on this task, see Eugene Holland, Holland, Eugene. 1999. Deleuze and Guattari's Anti-Oedipus: Introduction to Schizoanalysis. New York: Routledge.

²⁸ The secondary literature on Foucault and neoliberalism is already extensive. Among the major texts are Graham Burchell, "Peculiar interests: civil society and 'governing the system of natural liberty,'" in Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon and Peter Miller (eds), *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991): 119–50; Barbara Cruikshank, "Revolutions within: self-government and self-esteem," in Andrew Barry, Thomas Osborne and Nikolas Rose (eds), *Foucault and Political Reason: Liberalism, Neo-Liberalism and Rationalities of Government* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996): 231–51; Nikolas Rose, "Governing 'advanced' liberal democracies,'" in Andrew Barry, Thomas Osborne and Nikolas Rose (eds), *Foucault and Political Reason: Liberalism, Neo-liberalism and Rationalities of Government* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996): 37–64; Maria Bonnafous-Boucher, *Un libéralisme sans liberté* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2001); Thomas Lemke, "The Birth of Bio-Politics—Michel Foucault's Lecture at the Collège de France on Neo-Liberal Governmentality." *Economy & Society* 30.2 (2001): 190-207; Jacques Donzelot, "Michel Foucault and liberal intelligence." *Economy and Society* 37.1 (2008): 115-34.

²⁹ S. M. Amadae, *Rationalizing Capitalist Democracy: The Cold War Origins of Rational Choice Liberalism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

³⁰ Conversely, the Keynesians say: embed market in society, because the government must protect society from the bad social effects caused by laissez-faire as creating a zone of market freedom. The problem for the Keynesians is the anthropology of the classical liberals, which doesn't take into account animal spirits as they differ in the entrepreneur vs speculator. So we need government support for effective demand.

³¹ Jason Read, "A Genealogy of Homo-Economicus: Neoliberalism and the Production of Subjectivity." *Foucault Studies* 6 (February 2009): 25-36

³² Kevin Thompson, "The Spiritual Disciplines of Biopower." *Radical Philosophy Review* 7 (2004): 59-76.

³³ The field of "biocapital" studies is both important and expanding. Among others see Nikolas Rose, *The Politics of Life Itself: Biomedicine, Power, and Subjectivity in the Twenty-First Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007); Kaushik Sunder Rajan, *Biocapital: The Constitution of Postgenomic Life* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006); and Melinda Cooper, *Life as Surplus: Biotechnology & Capitalism in the Neoliberal Era* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008). Cooper reminds us that Chicago School neoliberals are still beholden to neoclassical concepts of market equilibrium and constrained utility maximization. We clearly see this as basis for Becker's human capital model, which assumes that households produce commodities by combining market goods and time "in quantities determined by maximizing a utility function of the commodity set subject to prices and a constraint on resources" (Gary S Becker, "A Theory of the Allocation of Time," *The Economic Journal* 75.299 [Sept 1965]: 493-517, at 516). Cooper points to the importance of non-equilibrium models within neoliberalism's biocapital and derivatives markets, which each involve bets on a multifactorial future. For a daring attempt to isolate a logic here that also includes Bush-Cheney era US imperialism, see Randy Martin, *An Empire of Indifference: American War and the Financial Logic of Risk Management* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007).