

Foucault Studies

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EDITORIAL

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We are very pleased to introduce *Foucault Studies* 7, which is a non-themed issue with five original articles, two review essays and twelve book reviews. Before introducing the articles in the issue, we would like to give you an update of the Editorial plans for the journal's future.

The journal is steadily consolidating its position. This is manifested by a rising number of submissions and visits to the journal's homepage www.foucault-studies.com, as well as the journal's inclusion in Ebsco's *Humanities International Complete* worldwide database. It is also apparent from the endorsements we have received from leading Foucault scholars Colin Gordon, James Bernauer, David Konstan and Margaret McLaren. See <http://rauli.cbs.dk/index.php/foucault-studies/about/editorialPolicies#custom0>). The administrative stability as well as the good teamwork of the Editorial Group and with our reviewers secures that submissions can count on a quick turn-around of reviews, as a rule within 4-8 weeks.

The Editorial Team intends to maintain and develop this position, stability and solidity in the future while continuing to develop the Journal in collaboration with our readers. We encourage our readers to become involved with the journal, to offer feedback and suggestions for improvement and to comment on articles and reviews through "letters to the editors." We also invite our readers to suggest suitable topics for future themed issues along with suitable Guest Editors for such issues. In addition suggestions for books the journal should review, including older publications that have been passed over, are very welcome.

Whereas the current issue is a non-themed issue, we have decided that future issues of *Foucault Studies* will be themed issues, and we have already planned for several themed issues in the near future. Starting with the first issue in 2010 on Foucault and Norbert Elias guest edited by Stefanie Ernst (University of Hamburg, Germany), we will continue with a special issue on Foucault and Agamben guest edited by Jeffrey

Bussolini (College of Staten Island, CUNY, USA) for which a CFP has already been distributed and a special issue on Foucault and Pragmatism guest edited by Colin Koopman (University of Oregon, USA).

In addition we have a number of special issues under preparation by experts in their fields. This includes a special issue on Foucault and Accounting to be guest edited by Peter Miller and Andrea Mennicken (both of London School of Economics, UK) a special issue on Foucault and Race to be guest edited by Ladelle McWhorter (University of Richmond, USA) and an issue on Foucault and Queer Theory by Jana Sawicki (Williams College, USA).

Foucault Studies will however continue to publish articles outside the themed section of the future issues, allowing for a diversity of good quality and diverse Foucault studies to be published. We therefore continue to encourage Foucault scholars within all areas of research to submit articles to *Foucault Studies* for publication.

On the occasion of the publication of this issue we would like to welcome Chloë Taylor as a member of the Editorial Team of *Foucault Studies*. Chloë Taylor is an Associate Professor at the University of Alberta, Canada, and also author of one of this issue's original articles. Because of this contribution to the journal and other published works, including her new book *The Culture of Confession from Augustine to Foucault. A Genealogy of the 'Confessing Animal'* (Routledge, 2008), the journal invited her to become Co-Editor and she kindly agreed. From this issue onwards, she will take on the role of Co-Editor.

The current issue of *Foucault Studies* opens with Mark Kingston's article "Subversive Friendships: Foucault on Homosexuality and Social Experimentation." Claiming that Foucault's contribution remains under-appreciated in widely diffused comprehensions of friendship in terms of similarity, shared values and social norms, the author discusses Foucault's concept of friendship in detail, showing its fit with wider schemes in Foucault's work. Foucault's work on homosexuality and social experimentation towards the end of his life describes a novel form of friendship. Since homosexual relationships cannot be derived from existing norms, they are inherently underdetermined and provide a space for new types of relationships, based on practices of experimentation. These forms of friendship are founded neither on similarity nor a shared body of norms, but involve a collaborative creation of new subjectivities and relations as participants struggle to come to terms with one another.

Foucault's concept of friendship has political implications and entails social activism in two distinct ways. First, it entails a project of localized resistance to social norma-

lization. Second, experimental friendship challenges excessive normalization of relationships on a societal scale. Foucault's practical account of friendship stresses its potential to create and sustain the social at both levels. His account of friendship in gay culture towards the end of his life deserves more attention, it is argued, since it parallels not only his interpretation of the Enlightenment as an opportunity to transform society and create a new and better way of life, but also his notion of an aesthetics of existence. However, Foucault's concept of friendship represents a move from a solitary aesthetics of existence toward a more collaborative aesthetics of existence.

Chloë Taylor's article "Pornographic Confessions? Sex Work and *Scientia Sexualis* in Foucault and Linda Williams" discusses the way in which sex work, and pornography in particular, functions analogously to the sexual sciences in terms of the normalizing form of power that Foucault describes in *The History of Sexuality*. The article sets out with a critique of film scholar Linda Williams' influential study of pornography from 1989: *Hard Core: Power, Pleasure, and the 'Frenzy of the Visible.'* In this study, Williams drew on Foucault's thinking in arguing for pornography as a confessional science that participates in the will to know about sex, and she understood Foucault's situating of pornography within his discussion of the perverse implantation to mean that pornography results in a positive proliferation of fluid sexualities in individual lives.

Against William's reading of both Foucault and pornography, Chloë Taylor argues that if pornography and prostitution involve expertise, they are closer to the *ars erotica* than to the sexual sciences. Furthermore, she suggests that the mechanism by which pornography and prostitution participate in the perverse implantation is not confession but consumption. By focusing on the consumers rather than on what takes place on screen, she argues, we see the disciplinary function of pornography. As a result of this, she finally argues, pornography may result in a proliferation of sexualities at a society-wide level, whereas on an individual level it is constraining rather than liberating and contributes to the fixing of frozen rather than fluid sexual identities.

The third article is Dianna Taylor's article "Normativity and Normalization." The article takes a stand against the common view that Foucault's work is *not* normative and that the idea of normativity is absent from Foucault's oeuvre. First, Taylor explains how Foucault's view of norm and normalisation develops primarily through his Lectures at Collège de France from 1974 to 1978. Here, Foucault points out how the norm works as a mode of appearance upon which different forms of power, e.g. discipline and biopower, are founded and legitimized. The norm plays a fundamental role in the emergence, circulation and legitimization of modern power by establishing what is normal and thus naturalizing the exercise of power. The

norm makes it possible to distinguish normal and abnormal individuals and populations and serves as a point of orientation for a sanctioning intervention that ensures or brings about conformity.

Foucault's view of normativity and normalisation are then contrasted by Habermas's view of the norm. Whereas for Foucault the norm plays a key role in the workings of modern power, according to Habermas the norm belongs to a different realm and demarcates the limits of power, in so far as we are able to distinguish what is good and valid from what is not by taking recourse to reason. However, Habermas's conceptualization of norms and normativity are not, as he posits, Taylor argues, the necessary foundations for ethics and politics, but one approach among many. Accepting his conception of norms and normativity as an inevitable framework therefore produces normalizing effects and inhibits emancipatory thinking about ethics and politics. For Foucault, values and principles are not to be considered as grounds founded on reason but rather effects of a critical engagement with the present.

Anthony Alessandrini's article on "The Humanism Effect: Fanon, Foucault, and Ethics without Subjects" argues against a widespread tendency within postcolonial studies to oppose the work of Foucault and Fanon, in particular by stressing Foucault's critique of humanism and Fanon's proclamation of a new genuine humanism. What links Foucault and Fanon is more important than their differences. The most important of these links is their shared critique of the sovereign subject of humanism. Such a critique provides a way of opposing what both consider a dangerous nostalgic longing for a lost origin or an essential moment of emergence towards which history is progressively headed. Instead of regarding the sovereign and determining subject as a (hidden) homogeneous cause, both treat it and humanism as an effect. For both, this critique equally paves the way for a shared strategy of an ethics without subjects. In both cases an "effect of humanization" is of prime importance, an effect that marks an impossible space of responsibility between subjects that have not yet come into existence, and which requests an investigation of a present which is more than the product of an original and continuous past. This opens up a new ethical relationship between would-be subjects that have not yet come into being. For postcolonial criticism it implies a need to get rid of the nostalgia for a form of humanism that would allow for a re-enfranchisement of individuals subjected to colonial violence in order to give those who have suffered back their humanity. It even calls into question the very division between investigator and investigated since both should be considered as subject to colonialism and its aftermath.

Sophie Fuggle's article "Excavating Government: Giorgio Agamben's Archaeological Dig" looks at Agamben's engagement with certain Foucauldian concepts and

themes. While Agamben's early critique of biopower and sovereignty in *Homo Sacer* is well-known, a more thorough examination is needed of his nuanced engagement with Foucault in his more recent publications, both in terms of his subject matter, governmentality and economy, and his critical methodology, especially his reaffirmation of the value of Foucault's archaeological method. The article explores Agamben's reading of Foucault's archaeological method through the novel concept of the signature. Here, Agamben argues, reading and writing enter into a zone of undecidability, where reading becomes writing and writing only fully comes to terms with itself in reading. The article then considers how, according to Agamben and Carl Schmitt, secularization should be considered the process by which religion and the theological remain present in modern society by leaving their mark on the political, while avoiding a direct correlation between political and theological identities. In contradistinction to Schmitt, however, Agamben identifies economy, and not the political, as the founding principle of modern forms of government. Using his theory of signature and developing his term in relation and contrast to Foucault, he traces the use of *oikonomia* back to first century Graeco-Roman society and the notion of a commission in the messianic communities of early Christianity. Agamben further elucidates his idea of economy and of a power that does not dominate but rather manages and administers with reference to Foucault's notion of the dispositive (*apparatus*) and security. According to Agamben, the way to fight against the apparatuses which govern us seems to be by profanation, by restoring these practices to common use. Finally, the author considers the benefits and the limitations of Agamben's engagement with Foucault.

Following these articles, the issue includes two review essays. On the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of the English publication of Foucault's 1979 Lectures at the Collège de France with the title *The Birth of Biopolitics*, Issue 7 of *Foucault Studies* includes a comprehensive review essay entitled "Liberal Biopolitics Reborn" by Marius Gudmand-Høyer and Thomas Lopdrup Hjorth, both doctoral fellows at the Copenhagen Business School. While presenting an outline of the development of the lectures in which Foucault is occupied with the emergence of biopolitics and neo-liberalism, the review essay discusses Foucault's engagement with these phenomena, as well as with political economy and the dispositives of security. While situating "Foucault's most comprehensive analysis of modern biopolitics" in his 1979-lectures "within the framework of what he in 1978 called the 'history of governmentality,'" the authors also show how this historical encounter holds further implications than are normally articulated by the well-known "governmentality perspective." The essay lays bare the way in which Foucault's analyses are still highly relevant in as much as contemporary neo-liberal biopolitics cannot be reduced to an external opponent that can be criticized and distanced, as is often the case in the existing literature. What Foucault in the 1979-lectures describes as an

imminent future has since almost uncannily exerted itself as an indecipherable experience that we today constantly have to relate to.

The second review essay discusses two consecutive English translations of an interview of Foucault in 1978 by the Italian Marxist Duccio Trombadori: an English translation of the Italian translation of the French/Italian interview published in 1991 as a book entitled *Remarks on Marx: Conversations with Duccio Trombadori*, and a translation into English from the French version in *Dits et écrits* included in *Power: Essential Works of Michel Foucault 1954-1984* under the title “An Interview with Michel Foucault,” appearing in 2000. There are many striking variations between the two English translations purportedly of “the same” interview, with regard to the overall contextualization and framing of the conversation, and with regard to the positioning of Foucault and his interlocutor, but also with regard to the translation of crucial passages. The comparison and the differences raise various issues not only concerning how to edit and contextualize Foucault, but also concerning the quest for a more “original” Foucault and for Foucault as an author.

In addition to these articles and review essays, this issue includes twelve reviews of recent books variously dealing with the work of Michel Foucault.

Finally, we want to share a few comments with regards to this issue’s cover-photo. Sadly, the graffitied wall on the cover image no longer exists, as it was torn down this summer, though it stood for many years in front of the Humanities Faculty at the University of Copenhagen. The graffiti originally read (translated from Danish) “Foucault is gay” but this was edited over the years to read “Foucault was gay” and with the addition – written below, and probably by a third party: “but his big thing lives on.” The Danish word “Diller” translates literally as “willy”, i.e., grade-school slang for “penis,” but it also suggests a pun on “dille,” which means fad or trend. We have used “big thing” to capture the double entendre. To the Editorial Group the graffiti is a reminder of the multiple ways in which Foucault’s work has “caught on,” inspiring and prompting response in diverse contexts. They certainly set the agenda for this Editorial Group (whether intended or not). This continuing effect is also apparent from the many proposals we have received for cover art for *Foucault Studies*. We hope to continue to inspire proposals from various artists and designers for future journal covers.

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