Foucault Studies

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EDITORIAL

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Shortly after the publication in April 2021 of the themed special issue *Foucault's History of Sexuality Vol. 4, Confessions of the Flesh*, the editors of *Foucault Studies* are inordinately pleased to present this non-themed issue containing three original articles.

The first of these articles, "Resistance: An Arendtian Reading of Solidarity and Friendship in Foucault," by Liesbeth Schoonheim (KU Leuven, Belgium) compares the accounts of resistance in Arendt and Foucault. While recent scholarship has firmly established the similarities between them, in particular with regard to the diagnosis of the dangers of late-modern social processes leading to atomization, totalitarianism and biological racism, there are also significant differences. Although Foucault has reflected more extensively and rigorously on the shapes and conditions of resistance, the paper argues that Foucault's comprehensive account of resistance omits the encounter with the other, whereas this encounter with the unique and unfathomable other has been put at the center of political praxis and of acts of resistance by Arendt. Developing the discussion of resistance in Arendt as she articulates it in response to the Shoah, the article claims that she provides a concept of solidarity and friendship that can be drawn upon to extend Foucault's analysis of the transnational solidarity among the governed in fighting for their rights vis-à-vis their governments, as well as to re-articulate and advance his understanding of friendship.

Whereas scholarly literature has widely drawn on concepts of governmentality and pastoral power to illuminate contemporary welfare processes, the second article, "Avowing Unemployment: Confessional Jobseeker Interviews and Professional CVs" by Tom Boland (University College Cork, Ireland), focuses more specifically on the role of confession or avowal within unemployment, job seeking and CV writing. Empirically, the article

focuses on the UK's JobCentrePlus and traces its governmentality as it appears in laws and regulations, street-level forms, websites and CV advice. From the requirement of avowals of unemployment as a personal fault in interviews to professions of faith in oneself and the labour market, an established confessional practice is evident wherein the welfare officer serves as 'pastor' and the market forms the ultimate 'test' of worth. The requirement to transform the self through 'telling the truth' about oneself exerts a normalising pressure extending from the institutions of welfare to the labour market as a whole. To counterbalance the all-encompassing dissemination of individualizing tests, the author suggests collective tests of solidarity and reciprocity.

In the third article, "The Carnival of the Mad: Foucault's Window into the Origin of Psychology", Hannah Lyn Venable (Texas State University, United States) uses Foucault's participation in the 1954 carnival of the mad at an asylum in the town of Münsterlingen in Switzerland as an entry to his critical reflections on the origins of psychology. Insofar as Foucault here encountered an asylum known for its progressive method and groundbreaking scientific research that was still exhibiting traces of a medieval conception of madness, the event revealed a paradox at the heart of psychology. Drawing on Foucault's earliest works in psychology, his 1954 *Mental Illness and Personality*, his 1954 "Dream, Existence and Imagination," his 1957 "Scientific Research and Psychology" and his 1961 *History of Madness*, Hannah Lyn Venable pinpoints the discrepancy between the theory of modern psychology, which finds its heritage in the methods of modern science, and the practice of modern psychology, which finds its heritage in the classical age. Consequently, psychology can be said to originate in a division between a theory that arises from modern science and a practice which still contains remnants of the past constructions of madness. The division between theory and practice found at the heart of psychology plays out in unexpected ways in both its general practices as well as in individual experiences of patients. In terms of general practices, activities remain that parallel events such as the carnival of the mad and counter a purely scientific narrative. A primary example of this is found in the strong emphasis on arts and expressive activities in communities of people experiencing mental disorders. In terms of the individual experience of patients, while psychology has, in theory, done away with ties to morality, patients and the families of the patients continue to express feelings of guilt in connection with mental disorder and resistance to mental disorder diagnosis that still bear witness to the prior constitution of an ethical experience of unreason. An awareness of this forgotten origin of psychology can help understand the full experience of both practitioners and patients in the modern world of psychology and, as a result, be able to offer more holistic support.

REVIEW SECTION

The present issue contains the following six book reviews:

- Nancy Luxon (ed.), *Archives of Infamy: Foucault on State Power in the Lives of Ordinary Citizens.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2019, reviewed by Julian Molina (UK).

- Thomas Lemke, *Foucault's Analysis of Modern Governmentality: A Critique of Political Reason.* Translation Erik Butler. London: Verso, 2019, reviewed by Paul Gorby (University of St. Andrews, UK).
- Patrick G. Stefan, *The Power of Resurrection: Foucault, Discipline, and Early Christian Resistance.* Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2020, reviewed by Bianca Maria Esposito (Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa, Italy).
- Stephen W. Sawyer and Daniel Steinmetz-Jenkins (ed.), *Foucault, Neoliberalism, and Beyond.* London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2019, reviewed by Rick Mitcham (Kindai University, Japan).
- Stuart Elden, *Canguilhem.* Cambridge: Polity Press, 2019; Samuel Talcott, *Georges Canguilhem and the Problem of Error.* Cham: Palgrave MacMillan, 2019. Reviewed by Codrin Tăut (Romanian National Commission for UNESCO, Romania).
- Michael Ure, *Nietzsche's The Gay Science: An Introduction. Cambridge Introductions to Key Philosophical Texts.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019, reviewed by Stéphanie Martens (Laurentian University/Université Laurentienne, Canada).

In addition to these reviews, the review section contains the review essay "Critique in Truth: Bernard Harcourt's Critique & Praxis". Authored by Colin Koopman (University of Oregon, United States), the essay examines the following book:

- Bernard Harcourt, *Critique & Praxis.* New York: Columbia University Press, 2020.

GUIDELINES FOR AUTHORS

As of Issue No. 22, *Foucault Studies* is using Digital Object Identifiers (DOI) for all articles. A DOI is a permanent identifier assigned to electronic documents. This ensures that the articles published in *Foucault Studies* can always be accessed even if the web-addresses for the articles change or the website is down for maintenance. Therefore, with the introduction of DOI, *Foucault Studies* can ensure access to the articles at all times.

This introduction of DOI-links requires extra steps in terms of the submission process for articles for *Foucault Studies*. The DOI system requires a list of references for all works cited in the submitted manuscript. Therefore, authors are kindly asked to provide a full list of references along with the previously required abstract, keywords and bio statement when submitting articles for *Foucault Studies*. This list of references for works cited should be in the same format and style as the main manuscript. Further, we kindly ask authors to include any DOI-link for cited articles in the manuscript after the standard citation (Example: Author, "Title," *Publication*, Vol (Year), Page. DOI link.). The DOI-links for articles are usually found on the front page of the article.

As of issue No. 25, *Foucault Studies* has updated and clarified guidelines for footnote references and bibliography. Most important to note in this respect is that the journal articles have all text references in running footnotes with most of the bibliographical information about the source, while the list of references ending each article provides all bibliographical information about the source as well as the DOI of the given piece (if there is one).

With the introduction of these changes, *Foucault Studies* has now significantly increased its service to its readers since they now have essential information ready to hand in both the article and on the page studied.

As a consequence, *Foucault Studies* kindly asks authors of future submissions to follow the updated guidelines before they submit articles. Complying with these guidelines will make the submission and review process, as well as copy editing, a lot easier and more expedient in the future. The details of the updated guidelines can be found on the home page here: https://rauli.cbs.dk/index.php/foucault-studies/about/submissions#author-Guidelines.

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ARTICLE

Resistance:
An Arendtian Reading of Solidarity
and Friendship in Foucault

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ABSTRACT. Recent scholarship has firmly established the similarities between Arendt and Foucault, in particular with regard to the dangers of late-modern social processes. Yet, few have compared their accounts of resistance. This paper argues that although Foucault offers the more comprehensive account, it omits the encounter with the other as unique and unfathomable, which is central to Arendt's. This omission is particularly striking given the authors' shared belief that the danger of 'the social' and 'governmentality' lies in atomizing individuals and barring the development of a singular style of being, and their allusion to friendship and solidarity as sites of resistance.

   Drawing on Arendt, I show how Foucault restricts his thematization of solidarity and friendship to a reflexive praxis of the subject on her own limits, and argue instead for the relational dimension of resistance. I start by reconstructing their converging analysis of biological racism. I then continue with a discussion of resistance in Arendt, which she develops in response to the Shoah. More specifically, she provides a concept of solidarity and friendship that I draw on to extend Foucault's analysis of the transnational solidarity among the governed in fighting for their rights vis-à-vis their governments; and of friendship in the context of his interrogation of the LGBT-movement.

Keywords: Resistance, Hannah Arendt (1906-1975), solidarity, friendship, philosophy.

INTRODUCTION

The growing literature on Arendt and Foucault has highlighted the striking similarities between the two thinkers.[1] In particular, they agree on the danger of late-modern social dynamics that lead, by violent coercion but also by non-violent forms of normalization, to uniform yet isolated individuals: totalitarianism (which expanded into the critique of the 'social') in Arendt, and biopolitics (which he quickly dismissed in favour of 'governmentality') in Foucault. An integral part of their modernity critique, their accounts of resistance — or supposed lack thereof — have been criticized for various and at times mutually excluding reasons: they have been criticized not only for providing a too totalizing account that denies agency to certain groups but also for denying the pervasiveness of power structures and hence overestimating the agency of oppressed groups, and they have been blamed for focusing too narrowly on political institutions (Arendt) or on social identity (Foucault).[2] However, of all political concepts, 'resistance' is perhaps among the most elusive —if only because, as Howard Caygill comments, it is so deeply rooted in political praxis.[3] Hence, if the danger of late-modernity lies in isolating and normalizing individuals, we might ask how resistance counteracts these dynamics by establishing new bonds and seeking out individual singularity.

For this question, it is especially interesting to offer an Arendtian reading of Foucault: although the latter has reflected more extensively and rigorously on the shapes and conditions of resistance, Arendt has put the encounter with the other at the center of political praxis and, *a fortiori*, of acts of resistance. Foucault's lack of concern with relationality, either in his ethics where he accords priority to the relationship to the self over those with others, or in his strategic concept of action, has been signalled before.[4] While I disagree with those criticizing Foucault's later work for a merely aestheticizing, individualist and a-political ethics,[5] the neglect of the other is conspicuous in his discussions of solidarity and friendship, to which he alludes — just like Arendt — when appraising concrete acts of resistance. In this paper, I will thus draw on Arendt's assessment of concrete human

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[1] Amy Allen, "Power, Subjectivity, and Agency," *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* 10:2 (2002), 131-149; Alexander Barder and François Debrix, "Agonal Sovereignty," *Philosophy & Social Criticism* 37:7 (2011), 775-793; Frederick Dolan, "The Paradoxical Liberty of Bio-Power," *Philosophy & Social Criticism* 31:3 (2005), 369-380; Kathrin Braun, "Biopolitics and Temporality in Arendt and Foucault," *Time & Society* 16:1 (2007), 5-23; Dianna Taylor, "Countering Modernity," *Telos* 2011:154 (2011), 119-140; Marcelo Hoffman, "Containments of the Unpredictable in Arendt and Foucault," *Telos* 2011:154 (2001), 141-162; Maria Tamboukou, "Truth Telling in Foucault and Arendt: Parrhesia, the Pariah and Academics in Dark Times," *Journal of Education Policy* 27:6 (2012), 849-865.

[2] Critical theorists have been particularly dismissive of the potential of their works to provide a social critique. See, for instance, Nancy Fraser, "Foucault's Body-Language," *Salmagundi* 61 (1983), 55-70; Seyla Benhabib, *The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt* (2003); For a convincing rebuttal of these interpretations, see Christian Volk, "Towards a Critical Theory of the Political," *Philosophy & Social Criticism* 42:6 (2016), 549-575; Amy Allen, *The End of Progress* (2016), 163-203..

[3] Howard Caygill, *On Resistance* (2013).

[4] Allen, "Power, Subjectivity, and Agency"; Johanna Oksala, *Foucault on Freedom* (2005).

[5] For an early overview of and response to these criticisms, see Jane Bennett, "How Is It, Then, That We Still Remain Barbarians?" *Political Theory* 24:4 (1996), 653-672.

relationships to push Foucault away from debates regarding structural constraints and the possibility of (subversive) agency and instead formulate a relational account of solidarity and friendship.

This paper pursues an Arendtian reading of Foucault, by which I mean a reading that uncovers the disavowal of our relationships to others as well as our throwness into a world furnished by political institutions. Arendt advances this critical reading practice to expose the bias inherent in the contemplative life of philosophers against politics as a collective, spontaneous and unpredictable practice. This bias marks traditional political theory and clouds the self-understanding by political agents. In particular, it substitutes an autarkic, solitary subject concerned with its own moral and intellectual integrity for an agent whose actions depend on the presence of others and are directed toward the conditions under which collective life takes place.[6] While Foucault is mindful that practices of resistance involve action-in-concert, he does not, due to his overly reflexive and theoretical notion of freedom, thematize this dimension. Juxtaposing his account of freedom with his practical involvement in political struggles, I show how he engages in acts of resistance but is unable to thematize these as actions in concert with others because his concept of freedom privileges a typically philosophical concern with the self.

I start (section 1) by reconstructing their converging analysis of the threats to freedom in late-modernity. I then continue (section 2) with a discussion of resistance in Arendt, which she develops in response to the Shoah to describe actions that both strategically aim to eliminate governmental practices of control and performatively enact the freedom endangered by governmental techniques. Furthermore, she provides a concept of solidarity and friendship that I draw on to extend Foucault's analysis of the right claimed by the governed vis-à-vis their governments (section 3) and of friendship in the context of his interrogation of the LGBT-movement (section 4).

SETTING UP A DIALOGUE BETWEEN ARENDT AND FOUCAULT

Despite their intellectual and political differences, Arendt and Foucault converge on their analysis of the risks inherent to late-modern society. Even their most historical works are motivated by the urgency to identify the biggest danger of the present moment: they underscore the volatile threats that follow from contingent dynamics that govern our societies.[7] Far from being anti-modern reactionaries, Arendt and Foucault warn us of the social and governmental practices that use the social and life sciences to exert control over the population, which happens first and foremost through the nexus of race and reproduction.

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[6] After the Eichmann trial, Arendt qualified her former rejection of the contemplative, among other reasons because the thinking-process and its concern for inner harmony (as manifest in Socrates) provides a post-metaphysical alternative for consciousness. Hannah Arendt, "Thinking and Moral Considerations" [1971], in *Responsibility and Judgment* (2003), 159-189.

[7] Michel Foucault, "On the Genealogy of Ethics: An Overview of Work in Progress" [1983], in *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth,* ed. Paul Rabinow (1997), 256.

The *loci classici* for the intersection of Foucault and Arendt are their analyses of Nazism in the conclusion of *The Will to Knowledge* and the final lecture of *Society Must Be Defended* (1976) on the one hand, and *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1966 [1951]) on the other.[8] In a striking resemblance, both authors remind us that the genocides of the twentieth century should not be understood as the classical right over life and death exerted by the sovereign but as the consequence of a state that aims to maintain and foster the life processes of the social body — a development in which some are bound to 'atrophy'.[9] Nazism in particular yields "a power to *foster* life or *disallow* it to the point of death."[10] It aims "not only to liberate the historical and natural forces, but to accelerate them to a speed they never would reach if left to themselves" by "execut[ing] on the spot the death sentences which Nature is supposed to have pronounced on races or individuals who are 'unfit to live.'"[11] The verdict supposedly follows from the demands of survival and optimalization of the population. It thus breaks with the older model of sovereign power that grounded it in the sovereign's right to punish those who stood up against him.[12] In that old model, the crime of the transgressor was mirrored by the punishment by the sovereign. In the new model, however, both the executed and executioner are "subjectively innocent"[13] for they intend neither to commit a crime nor to punish one.

Biological racism is crucial in drawing a distinction between those whose life is conducive to that of the population — and can stay alive — and those whose life is not — and must hence wither away. To control the life of the human species with the objective of its reinvigoration requires a break "within the biological continuum of the human race of races."[14] The very novelty of genocide does not consist in the scale or the number of victims but in its evolutionist justification. The paradox that people are left to die in the name of life can only be understood by a distinction within the human race. While race is the primal fracture within the human species, Arendt reminds us that it can and has been predicated on other naturalized differences too, such as health and age.[15] Importantly, their argument against biological racism does not proceed by showing how it is false or bad science but how it functions in the operations of a state trying to fully control its population. They refrain from an idealist position in which the idea of racial superiority culminated in the Shoah and the other atrocities committed by the Nazis; instead, they stress

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[8] Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (1998); Dolan, "The Paradoxical Liberty of Bio-Power"; Braun, "Biopolitics and Temporality in Arendt and Foucault"; Hoffman, "Containments of the Unpredictable in Arendt and Foucault"; Barder and Debrix, "Agonal Sovereignty"; Taylor, "Countering Modernity"; Kim Su Rasmussen, "Foucault's Genealogy of Racism," *Theory, Culture & Society* 25:8 (2011), 34-51; Jacob Maze, "Towards an Analytic of Violence," *Foucault Studies* 25 (2018), 120-145.

[9] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality Vol. 1: The Will to Knowledge* [1978] (1998), 136, 137.

[10] Ibid., 138.

[11] Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1966), 466.

[12] Foucault, *The Will to Knowledge,* 136–37; Michel Foucault, *'Society Must Be Defended': Lectures at the Collège de France 1975-76* (2018), 241.

[13] Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism*, 466.

[14] Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended*, 255.

[15] Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism*, 433; Agamben is mindful of this in his reading, arguably at the expense of the nexus of race and sex. Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, 150.

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how it dovetailed with the attempt for full domination. This also means that resistance against it does not consist in refuting biological racism but in obstructing the racist management of society.

It is fair to say that Arendt meticulously details the totalitarian reorganization of society while Foucault focuses on the scientific and policing practices that provide the wider context in which Nazism could emerge. His genealogy sketches the circumstantial power relations that upheld and enabled the emergence of Nazism, while she aims in the third and final volume of *The Origins of Totalitarianism* to lay bare its inner structure.[16] From her analysis, we learn how the control of the population was largely carried out by the police, whose systematic use of arbitrary arrests was instrumental in terrorizing the population. Their grip was nearly inescapable due to, firstly, the collaboration with police forces in other countries and, secondly, the ubiquitous distrust as everyone feared their betrayal by another.[17] On a personal level, this pervasive policing induces a sense of suffocating proximity to others: "by pressing men against each other, total terror destroys the space between them",[18] a condition Arendt likens to "a band of iron."[19] As a consequence, spontaneous action together with others was nearly impossible, and this predicament applies *a fortiori* to the concentration camps, which Arendt denounces as experiments in total domination. Completely cut off from those outside the camps, those imprisoned were subject to the perfected skills of the Nazis to pitch their victims against one another and to numb them through the use of torture.

Foucault refrains from a detailed analysis of Nazism, highlighting instead its historical emergence at the intersection of two technologies of control. The first concerns disciplinary techniques that are directed at the body and that take place in clearly demarcated institutions such as the prison.[20] The second concerns the totalizing techniques that are directed at the population as a whole and which gave rise to statistics and other social sciences. Importantly, the two intersect on the issue of procreative sex: it is situated at the overlap of the optimalization of docile bodies with the general concern with birth rates and population control.[21] The point is not to simply stimulate population growth but to guarantee the population has the size corresponding to its territory and, one might add, its demographic (and racial) composition.[22] In other words, Foucault's approach has the benefit of showing how Nazi Germany executed an extensive natalist policy that restricts birth among some and stimulates it among other groups. Beyond Nazism, he is concerned with sexuality as an object of study and intervention: not just procreative sex but also —

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[16] Arendt, "A Reply to Eric Voegelin," [1953], in *Essays in Understanding, 1930-1954: Formation, Exile, and Totalitarianism*, ed. Jerome Kohn (1994), 403; See also Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France 1977-1978* (2007), 276ff.

[17] Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism*, 419ff.

[18] Ibid., 466.

[19] Ibid., 465.

[20] *Will to Knowledge*, 1:139ff; *Society Must Be Defended*, 242; See also Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish. The Birth of the Prison* [1975] (1991).

[21] *Will to Knowledge*, 140, 144; Penelope Deutscher, *Foucault's Futures: A Critique of Reproductive Reason* (2018), 76ff.

[22] Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 323ff.

and arguably more importantly to him — the "lines of attack" that proceed through psychiatrization and produce the figures of the hysterical woman, the masturbating child, and the sexual pervert.[23]

Coming from a completely different angle, Arendt also remarks on the totalitarian concern with birth, but her approach overlooks what Foucault calls "the socialization of procreative behavior."[24] In her existentialist approach, natality indicates the capacity to begin anew, and this human spontaneity poses a hindrance to the social processes that totalitarian governments try to foster.[25] When she thus describes totalitarianism as the attempt to eliminate spontaneity and contain the novelty contained in birth, she accuses it of suppressing the very capacity that defines humans as political creatures. These observations are further developed in *The Human Condition,* describing birth as an unambiguously positive event that, in its promise of unpredictable and spontaneous action, eludes the predictability of statistical probability.[26] Even if we might suspect the formative influence of Martin Heidegger behind her admittedly crude rejection of the social sciences, the juxtaposition with natality points towards the latter as a condition for action.[27] While the rehabilitation of political praxis is the main stake in her criticism of the social sciences, for Foucault the detrimental effect of scientific normalization is particularly manifest in the management of sexuality.

Crucially, Arendt and Foucault both engage in a historical project of deconstructing philosophical concepts to open up a space of reflecting and contesting the historically contingent conditions of the present. Written in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* is marked by the shock at the Shoah and the desire to articulate a new political-theoretical vocabulary to grasp totalitarianism. Foucault, writing twenty-five years later, responds to the sexual liberation movement that fails to escape from the normalizing force of mainstream sexologist discourse — the same force that at some prior point had coalesced into Nazism. As we will see, this difference in focus also implies that Arendt situates resistance in the context of state-run persecution while Foucault focuses on the nods and operations of sexuality.

Both signal the devastating effect of late-modern processes on the relational fabric. This is particularly clear in Arendt's description of Nazism as "organized loneliness"[28] that breaks up even the most personal bonds of affection. More generally, loneliness prevails in mass society due to the erasure of the spaces for meaningful relationships.[29] This applies not only to the public sphere, where people convene for political action, but also `to the private realm and the bonds with family and friends.'[30] That diagnosis fits in with her

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[23] *Will to Knowledge*, 153.

[24] Ibid., 154.

[25] *Origins of Totalitarianism*, 465.

[26] Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* [1958] (1998), 178; Ibid., 42ff.

[27] Pierre Bourdieu, *The Political Ontology of Martin Heidegger* (1991), 21–23; Arendt, "Philosophy and Sociology" [1930], in *Essays in Understanding, 1930-1954: Formation, Exile, and Totalitarianism,* ed. Jerome Kohn (1994), 28-43.

[28] *Origins of Totalitarianism*, 478.

[29] *Human Condition*, 59.

[30] Ibid..

denouncement of what she calls 'the rise of the social.'[31] While this is not the place to discuss at length this hotly contested notion, it suffices to state here that it refers to the elevation of biological needs to the prime political concern in both theory (i.e., Marxism) and institutions (liberal democracy). It also involves a collective self-understanding as 'animal laborans', that is, a biological creature whose behaviour is dictated by their needs and oriented towards survival. Importantly, this mode of existence precludes an engagement with others except as a means to meet one's needs: it undermines the capacity to relate to others as political agents and also as a friend or lover. In both sets of relationships, the other displays a unicity that exceeds their utility. In this sense, the rise of the social also entails an impoverishment of social relationships as we relate to others merely in terms of usefulness.

Similarly, Foucault decries the uniformity of our modes of relating to others, albeit in a more circumferential way. It can be discerned in his description of the individualization of biopolitics, which includes the disciplinary techniques or "dividing practices"[32] that physically separates those subjected to these techniques, such as inmates and factory workers, and thus undermines any relationships between them. In his later work, individualization is linked to pastoral power, of which the paradigmatic relationship is that of confession. Even if confession, strictly speaking, is situated in a collective such as a monastic order or the parish, Foucault stresses that it establishes a binary relationship of obedience between pastor and confessant that forecloses other, more communal modes of existence.[33] In very general terms, individualization implies a range of techniques that hamper relationships with those placed in a similar position vis-à-vis those techniques.[34] This point is driven home when he comments

> We live in a relational world that institutions have considerably impoverished. Society and the institutions which frame it have limited the possibility of relationships because a rich relational world would be very complex to manage. We should fight against the impoverishment of the relational fabric.[35]

Late-modern governmentality sanctions a very small range of relationship due to the difficulty of controlling relational complexity. In a 1981 interview with a gay magazine, he suggests that the impoverishment impacts members of the gay community particularly hard, and the struggle against it can and should be part of the gay movement.[36] In a similar vein, he approvingly comments in 1982 on contemporary social struggles (such as the gay movement and the women's liberation movement) as attacks on "everything that

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[31] Ibid., chaps. 6, 43–45.

[32] Michel Foucault, "The Subject and Power" [1982], in *Power* (2000), 326.

[33] *Security, Territory, Population*, 210.

[34] I am glossing over the extensive debate on the transition by the later Foucault from biopolitics to governmentality, assuming that the latter widens the historical scope of the former and pays greater attention to the non-violent modes in which a population is controlled and its subjects atomized. Consequently, 'governmentality' grants more consideration as to how subjects conduct themselves in a given institutional setup.

[35] Michel Foucault, "The Social Triumph of the Sexual Will" [1982], in *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth* (1997), 158.

[36] Ibid., 159.

separates the individual, breaks his links with others, splits up community life, forces the individual back on himself, and ties him to his own identity in a constraining way."[37] While the secondary literature has focused extensively on the critique of identity, the comment on community has been largely ignored. Indeed, Foucault himself seems to have intimated but not thematized the establishment of new modes of coexistence. Why?

One answer can be found in his conception of freedom that he develops towards the end of his life and which attributes little importance to relationality. The similarities and differences with Arendt are instructive. They both develop a concept of freedom that starts from the unpredictable interaction with others, out of which a new field of possible actions emerge. Freedom consists in the bringing about of different conditions under which one lives, in a way that could not have been anticipated or even imagined beforehand, rather than a choice between given options. In these freedom practices, subjects also have a chance to develop their individuality, as their unique way of being in the world. Arendt articulates this individuality as the self-disclosure of one's unicity to others, realizing a potential for uniqueness that is indicated in the fact of natality, namely, that each one of us is born in a distinct body and capable of new, unpredictable actions. This self-disclosure requires the presence of others who ask, in a welcoming and curious gesture, "'who are you?'."[38] Importantly, freedom refers to a political experience of collectively determining the conditions of one's co-existence, of which revolutions are the typically modern manifestations.[39] While Arendt's oeuvre can convincingly be read as a long meditation on the modern conditions for freedom and its institutionalization, the concept is limited to Foucault's later work on ethics as a practice of self-constitution. Tellingly, and in clear contrast to Arendt, freedom primarily designates a relationship to the self. Freedom consists, negatively understood, in a reflection on the contingent, historical conditions of our subjectivity, which liberates us from the identities and habits that have been imposed on us.[40] This typically modern, critical attitude allows us to rethink who we are.[41] Importantly, the critical attitude has a reflexive dimension, which also pertains to the Greco-Roman care for the self.[42] This care, which is oriented towards moral perfection and which Foucault understands (following Pierre Hadot) as philosophy as a way of life, can, but does not have to, involve interaction with others; if it does, it is mostly strategic insofar as the other appears either as a guide or as someone to be guided. From an Arendtian point of view, he fails to account for the alterity of the other as well as the priority of the relationships with others over that with oneself.[43] Philosophy, even if understood

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[37] Foucault, "The Subject and Power," 330.

[38] Human Condition, 178.

[39] Hannah Arendt, "Totalitarian Imperialism: Reflections on the Hungarian Revolution," *The Journal of Politics* 20:1 (1958), 5–43; Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* [1963] (1984).

[40] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality Vol. 2: The Use of Pleasure* [1984] (1992), 8.

[41] Michel Foucault, "What Is Enlightenment?" [1984], in *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth* (1997), 303–19; Foucault, *Use of Pleasure*, 8–9.

[42] Michel Foucault, "The Ethics of the Concern for Self as a Practice of Freedom" [1984], in *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth* (1997), 284.

[43] For a convincing critique, Oksala, *Foucault on Freedom*, 204ff; Judith Butler, *Giving an Account of Oneself* (2005), 23.

as a spiritual practice rather than a mode of contemplation, might still display the neglect of plurality that Arendt accused it of.[44]

ARENDT'S PRINCIPLE OF RESISTANCE

Arendt's recuperation of praxis revolves on the relational dimension of human existence. Not surprisingly, this dimension takes on a normative role in her description of acts of resistance. While her discussion of resistance is fragmented in comparison to Foucault and restricted to the Second World War, it consistently shows how acts of resistance establish bonds that actively counteract the divisional practices of late-modern regimes.

As we have seen, Arendt's attack on Nazism does not envisage biological racism, because it does not require its accessories to believe in the racist ideology in order to function. The totalitarian society is organized along the racist categories of Nazi ideology in such an all-pervading manner that, regardless if one subscribes to the pseudo-scientific laws of racial degeneration, one's collaboration in reproducing the gap separating the non-Jewish from the Jewish population only requires participation in mundane social activities. In this sense, the state practices of persecution take priority over their theoretical 'justifications'.

The reversal of state practice and rationale implies that the activities of the state produce the very subjects that they posit in their ideology: treating some groups inhumanely, these groups are made into subhumans. Objections to the mistreatment should, as a consequence, not be restricted to a logical refutation of Nazi ideology by stating, for instance, that we are all humans, but in activities that actively counteract the production of oppressed groups.

One might object that these acts of resistance only refer liberation, which she, like Foucault, distinguishes from freedom: whereas the former consists in ending domination which may or may not involve the use of violence, the latter consists in a non-violent practice.[45] Given Arendt's strict division between poiesis and praxis, and violence and power (where the first term in both pairs corresponds to liberation), resistance would not illustrate the collective dimension of freedom which I hope to expound on here. Yet, I believe that Arendt would agree with Foucault when he positively answers the question of whether, in some situations, liberation can be "a mode or form of practice of the freedom".[46] Moreover, the suggestion that resistance merely resides in violent, goal-oriented activities presupposes that it is up against a force of domination which is primarily violent itself: while Nazism is undeniably a violent regime, its operation is irreducible to violence

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[44] Pierre Hadot, "Spiritual Exercises" [1987] and "Reflections on the Idea of the 'Cultivation of the Self'" [1987], both in *Philosophy as a Way of Life: Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault* (1995). The discovery of "the mystery and splendor of existence" (p. 212), which Arendt ascribes as the wonder at the origin of philosophy, is exactly what she considers no longer possible for it is displaced by the horror over human co-existence; Hannah Arendt, "Concern with Politics in Recent European Philosophical Thought" [1954], in *Essays in Understanding, 1930-1954: Formation, Exile, and Totalitarianism*, ed. Jerome Kohn (1994), 445.

[45] Arendt, *On Revolution*, 29; Foucault, "The Ethics of the Concern for Self as a Practice of Freedom," 282.

[46] Ibid., 284.

insofar as it relied on the support of the wider population. Refuting the common impression that power (the collective determination of the conditions under which we life) is normatively positive for Arendt,[47] Christian Volk rightly argues that "[w]herever power materialises in a way that burdens political action and therefore perpetuates political domination and oppression [such as totalitarianism], this power is always productive as well" in that "it generates political resistance."[48]

This coincidence of liberation and freedom is particularly clear in the defiance of one key strategy by the Nazis that Arendt describes at length: the deprivation of citizenship. Stateless refugees had to seek shelter elsewhere, only to realize that national membership is crucial to be able to settle down in an era when the whole surface of the earth is covered by nation-states. This step was preparatory in the sense that the dispersal of the stateless across European borders was followed by the Nazi's claiming back the stateless from the occupied countries to send them to concentration camps. The famous 'paradox of the Rights of Man' points us to the inability for philosophical concepts to grasp the political significance of the production of large groups of stateless people. This critique, which exposes the tense mutual implication of national sovereignty and universal rights, also informs Arendt's principle of resistance against the Nazi regime: "If one is attacked as a Jew, one must defend oneself as a Jew. Not as a German, not as a world-citizen, not as an upholder of the Rights of Man."[49] Instead of invoking an abstract, innate right to be included (or one's cultural and national belonging to the very social body from which one is expelled), the exclusion has to be fought in terms of the identity on the basis of which one is excluded. In other words, one has to fight the governmental control of the population, and this struggle should not be waged in the name of idealized universals but of the particular identities that are the product of the political reality one wants to change.[50]

What matters for the present discussion is not that the struggle against subjection reclaims the terms of that subjection, but that it relies on a joint effort. This is particularly clear in her discussion of the Danish defiance of the Nazis: they refused the deportation of the stateless refugees on their territory. As they no longer have citizenship rights, the Danish argument ran, Germany also cannot reclaim them. This is a story, she suggests, that should be "required reading in political science for all students who wish to learn something about the enormous power potential in non-violent action and in resistance to an opponent possessing vastly superior means of violence."[51] In spite of the German attempts to tear up the relational fabric of the societies subjugated to their rule, the Danish act in concert. Even more so, because they collectively uphold the rights of refugees, they

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[47] The normatively positive definition of power is often cited as a difference between Arendt and Foucault, for instance by Allen, "Power, Subjectivity, and Agency," 142.

[48] Volk, "Towards a Critical Theory of the Political," 564.

[49] Hannah Arendt, "'What Remains? The Language Remains.': A Conversation with Günter Gaus" [1964], in *Essays in Understanding, 1930-1954: Formation, Exile, and Totalitarianism*, ed. Jerome Kohn (1994), 12.

[50] Lisa Disch, "On Friendship in 'Dark Times,'" in *Feminist Interpretations of Hannah Arendt*, ed. Bonnie Honig (1995), 286.

[51] Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem* [1961] (2006), 171.

also retain the legal framework that was built up over centuries to make the modern world hospitable to human uniqueness, and that the Nazis were intent on destroying.

For Arendt, these concerns spring forth from a fundamental political-existential task, namely our collective responsibility: How are we responsible for the common world that conditions the existence of each of us? This responsibility requires some degree of power, for "responsibility for the world, which is primarily political, (…) always presupposes at least a minimum of political power."[52] Furthermore, it is mediated in the sense that it is not limited to the ethical encounter with the other but involves the historically contingent situation that can be changed by a common effort. In this act of solidarity, to put the issue more precisely, the bond between people arises from their common investment (which she calls 'interest') in changing the world: "it is out of solidarity that they establish deliberately and, as it were, dispassionately a community of interest with the oppressed and exploited." People unite for different reasons behind a shared project. But even if some are motivated by self-serving considerations, the concerted action that follows from these diverse motivations and the effect of these actions benefits all those with whom they share the world.

Moreover, solidarity as a shared responsibility towards the world transcends the narrow limits of the nation-state due to the historical-geographical condition we find ourselves in. Humanity, Arendt argues in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951), became a concrete experience not because it formed a regulative ideal, but under colonial imperialism. "The trouble is that our period has so strangely intertwined the good with the bad," she writes, "that without the imperialists' 'expansion for expansion's sake,' the world might never have become one."[53] Belying the lofty sentiments expressed in Enlightenment ideals of the united family of mankind, the idea of a human race has historically coincided with imperial subjugation of colonized peoples. While we have to acknowledge Arendt's anti-primitivist comments with regard to sub-Sahara Africa,[54] we can read her as arguing that positing a universal mankind radically excludes those who have their humanity denied; when mankind is conceived biologically as the human race, this exclusion takes the form of racialized dehumanization. Humanity in this sense of the word (we will turn to another meaning in a bit) is the result of and so-called justification for contingent historical processes that drove global imperialism. Furthermore, the spread of techniques of total domination does not depend on the totalitarian aspiration to infinitely extend one's territory but can also follow from their use by non-totalitarian states. The realization of the horrors to which man is capable, Arendt writes as early as 1945, are experienced on a personal level as an "elemental shame [of being human]", and politically as a "sense of

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[52] Hannah Arendt, "Personal Responsibility under Dictatorship" [1964], in *Responsibility and Judgment* (2003), 45.

[53] *Origins of Totalitarianism*, viii.

[54] On the debate with regard to Arendt's problematic comments on African colonisation, see Norton, "Heart of Darkness: Africa and African Americans in the Writings of Hannah Arendt," in *Feminist interpretations of Hannah Arendt*, ed. Bonnie Honig (1995), 247-261; Jimmy Klausen, "Hannah Arendt's Antiprimitivism," *Political Theory* 38:3 (2010), 394-423.

international solidarity."[55] If we are to resist the attempts at domination, we have to take stock of their global nature: if not as a consequence of totalitarian occupation, then by the adaptation of these techniques by other countries. Resistance, in other words, is an action in solidarity that at once enacts and aims for a desired state of co-existence, and that acknowledges the shared, global predicament of being subjected to governmental techniques of domination.

Developing an alternative conception of humanity that counteracts the effects of global imperialism and totalitarian governmental techniques, Arendt turns to antiquity, and provides an account of friendship that presents a model of both political action and resistance. In this alternative conception, someone's humanity is not a universal brotherhood based on an innate capacity, either reason or empathy: instead, it is the frail, hard-won effect of engaging in concrete relationships with others. Friendship, rather than fraternity, exemplifies humanity, and basing herself on Aristotle she asserts that *philia* is not a private relationship in which one shares confidences but a public one that establishes equality between the friends. It does so through an ongoing dialogue between the friends of a world shared in common: given her phenomenology of plurality, it is only insofar as we can communicate our experiences with others that the objects of these experiences become real and meaningful.[56] To return to her analysis of totalitarian oppression: Nazism undermines personal relationships and organizes society in such a way that, regardless of individuals' stance on its racist propaganda, non-Jewish people dissociate from Jewish people out of prudential reasons. Hence, the rare cases in which friendship (or love, for that matter[57]) between a Jewish and a non-Jewish person persists, it is forced into seclusion, and there develops a subversive, albeit limited, potential:

> in the case of friendship between a German and a Jew under the conditions of the Third Reich it would scarcely have been a sign of humanness for the friends to have said: Are we not both human beings? It would have been mere evasion of reality and of the world common to both at that time; they would not have been resisting the world as it was. A law that prohibited the intercourse of Jews and Germans could be evaded but not defied by people who denied the reality of the distinction. In keeping with a humanness that had not lost the solid ground of the reality of persecution, they would have had to say to each other: A German and a Jew, and friends.[58]

The friends act out of loyalty towards one another and out of truthfulness towards the world in which they live and which treats them differently; and although they do not necessarily intend to defy the Nazi regime, their friendship enacts in the intimacy of the private sphere the equality that is denied to them in the public world. This conception of the private sphere is a romanticized one: it provides a frail bulwark against the

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[55] Hannah Arendt, "Organized Guilt and Universal Responsibility" [1945], in *Essays in Understanding, 1930-1954: Formation, Exile, and Totalitarianism*, ed. Jerome Kohn (1994), 131.

[56] Hannah Arendt, "On Humanity in Dark Times: Thoughts about Lessing" [1959], in *Men in Dark Times* (1968), 25.

[57] Hannah Arendt, "Karl Jaspers: A Laudatio" [1958], in *Men in Dark Times* (1968), 71-80.

[58] Arendt, "On Humanity in Dark Times," 23.

normalizing and dividing practices of fascist society. This is "[where] we choose those with whom we wish to spend our lives, personal friends and those we love," and because this "choice is guided not by likeness or qualities shared by a group of people (…) but strikes, inexplicably and unerringly, at one person in his uniqueness, his unlikeliness to all other people we know," it defies the social dynamics of discrimination.[59] Arendt, whose marriage to a non-Jewish man in 1939 was illegal under the Nuremberg Laws then in force, would be careful in welcoming these personal relations as deliberate acts of resistance. Furthermore, her main concern is with the institutionalization of different modes of human existence: in the case of friendship and love, this refers to the constitutional protection of the private sphere. In contradistinction from Foucault, who stresses the restrictive dimension of civil law,[60] Arendt emphasizes its enabling dimension. The right to a private sphere safeguards our bonds with friends and loved ones: the near-total domination by totalitarianism violated this basic right, and in her otherwise problematic comments on Jim Crow laws, she fiercely objects to the criminalization of interracial marriage in the southern US for its denial of a private sphere.[61]

To summarize, Arendt provides us with two forms of resistance that give central stage to the (possibility for the) encounter with the other— the encounter, that is, with the unique yet equal other who exceeds the identity that is imposed on them. Even if it is true that Arendt's principle of resistance stresses the affirmation of a subjugated identity, it does so in a way that does not reify that identity. Instead, as Lisa Disch observes, this principle can be very useful to political struggles, as it shows "how to acknowledge an identity as a 'political fact' and, at the same time, to refute it." In this sense, stating one's identity in the terms used by the oppressor can be read as a preliminary to restructuring the field of possible actions: resistance always takes place within and against the rules as laid down by one's antagonist. The centrality of the other in renegotiating, defying, and subverting these rules can be usefully implemented in Foucault's concept of resistance to which I turn next.

FOUCAULT ON SOLIDARITY

'Biopolitics' was discarded by Foucault shortly after coining it.[62] If we are to find a concept of resistance, we have to look for it in the projects that spurred his initial interest in biopolitics and that he develops afterwards, namely the genealogical studies of governmentality and of the subject of desire. Whereas the first is the object of his courses of 1977-1978 and 1978-1979 on political reason, the second is published as the second, third and fourth volumes of *The History of Sexuality*. They are also closely tied to the political struggles

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[59] Arendt, "Reflections on Little Rock," [1959], in *Responsibility and Judgment*, ed. Jerome Kohn (2003), 208.

[60] Foucault, "Social Triumph of the Sexual Will," 158; Wendy Brown, "Suffering Rights as Paradoxes," *Constellations* 7:2 (2000), 208-229; Ben Golder, *Foucault and the Politics of Rights* (2015).

[61] Arendt, "Reflections on Little Rock," 202–203.

[62] Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France 1978–1979* (2010), 21–22; Stuart Elden, *Foucault's Last Decade* (2017), 93.

Foucault engages in,[63] and the question thus arises if and how his 'conceptual toolkit' enables him to reflect on these struggles and more specifically on their collective, world-oriented dimension.

Before we look at governmentality (this section) and the history of sexuality (next section), two points are important. Firstly, and in clear distinction from Arendt, he systematizes the link between resistance, power and contemporary struggles, such as these were waged by the anti-psychiatry movement, feminist groups, and the gay movement. Approvingly citing these struggles, he argues that their main objective "is to attack not so much such-or-such institution of power, or group, or elite, or class but, rather, a technique, a form of power."[64] They challenge, in other words, the governmental techniques and dividing practices that individualize the subject. Just as governmental techniques try to steer the conduct of individuals by isolating the individual and tying her to herself, contemporary struggles are predominantly directed "against that which ties the individual to himself and submits him to others in this way."[65] These fights share some characteristics, like their transversal, international character; their assertion of the right to be different as well as to form alternative communities; and the concern with the question of who we are, as well as the refusal of an answer that ignores individuality or that relies on "scientific or administrative inquisition."[66] Analytically, they differ from other struggles such as those against exploitation, while historically they are the main (but not exclusive) conflict of our time. Furthermore, Foucault understands resistance as a minimum requirement for power relations. Power relations do not indicate a limit to free action but the attempt to structure the field of possible behaviour; "resistance is a part of this strategic relationship of which power consists. Resistance really always relies upon the situation against which it struggles."[67] The mutual implication of resistance and power distinguishes these relationships from those of coercion, in which the control of one agent by another is so absolute (for instance through the use of violence) that no possibility is left to negotiate or subvert that control. These programmatic comments on resistance underscore the political stakes in Foucault's later work, and it also refers to a form of power that is crucial to his study of governmentality and of the subject of desire: pastoral power.[68]

This brings me to my second point, the contestation of pastoral power. This form of power revolves on issues of wellbeing, which is initially understood as the salvation of the soul, on the basis of which the pastor claims complete obedience by the members of

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[63] Marcelo Hoffman, *Foucault and Power: The Influence of Political Engagement on Theories of Power* (2013); Patton, "From Resistance to Government. Foucault's Lectures 1976–1979," in *A Companion to Foucault,* ed. Christopher Falzon, Timothy O'Leary and Jana Sawicki (2013), 173–74.

[64] "The Subject and Power," 331; The comment also reads as a criticism on the war-model that he advanced in *Society Must Be Defended* and that underlies the Marxist analysis of class struggle.

[65] Ibid., 331.

[66] Ibid., 329–31.

[67] Michel Foucault, "Sex, Power and the Politics of Identity" [1982], in *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth* (1997), 168.

[68] "The Subject and Power," 333.

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his flock.[69] The assertion of this power in the late middle-ages, by making confession obligatory for the laity, elicits a strong response. Spiritual movements such as the Flemish mystics engage in what Foucault calls 'contre-conduite': refusing to have their conduct governed, they engage in practices of self-transformation that enable them to receive revealed truth, which short-circuits the pastor and his claim to a privileged, mediating role in the process of salvation.[70] This form of resistance deploys a counter-discourse but also alternative ethical practices (to use the term in a sense that Foucault develops later): the mystics develop an alternative lifestyle that subverts, exploits, and defies the rules for conduct imposed by the Church. Their struggle is an attempt to be governed differently.[71] This form of resistance contests the way in which one is conducted by others, and also demarcates "an area in which each individual can conduct himself, the domain of one's own conduct or behavior."[72] This latter dimension – the government of the self by the self – is subsequently developed in Foucault's writings on ethics, both regarding ancient practices of care of the self and the critical attitude that he discerns in Kant.

Although Foucault's later work scarcely deploys the notion of counter-conduct, he invites us to look for instances directed against political institutions:

> I think that inasmuch as many pastoral functions were taken up in the exercise of governmentality, and inasmuch as government also begins to want to take responsibility for people's conduct (…), then we see revolts of conduct arising less from the religious institution and much more from political institutions.[73]

To take up this invitation, we need to grasp more precisely how Foucault understands political institutions. When he embarks on the 'history of governmentality', he understands the latter as "the exercise of this very specific, albeit very complex, power that has the population as its target, political economy as its major form of knowledge, and apparatuses of security as its essential technique."[74] Very generally, he argues that the art of government was central to the seventeenth century literature on the *raison d'état* (in which the strength of the state relied on the population), while the question of how to conduct the population was problematized from the eighteenth century onwards in liberal theory. Jumping to the end of his lecture series *Security, Territory, Population*, we read that, in the nineteenth century, good government was taken to find its limit and its justification in enabling the undisrupted economic processes of exchange and trade, using the police as the security apparatus while managing the population.[75] The theoretical doctrine that emerges out of this governmental practice is of course liberalism, and its British, utilitarian

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[69] Michel Foucault, "'Omnes et Singulatim': Toward a Critique of Political Reason" [1979], in *Power* (2000), 302; *Security, Territory, Population*, 208.

[70] *Security, Territory, Population*, 196ff.

[71] Daniele Lorenzini, "From Counter-Conduct to Critical Attitude: Michel Foucault and the Art of Not Being Governed Quite So Much," *Foucault Studies* 21 (2016), 7–21.

[72] Arnold I. Davidson, "In Praise of Counter-Conduct," *History of the Human Sciences* 24:4 (2011), 27.

[73] *Security, Territory, Population*, 197–98.

[74] Ibid., 108.

[75] Ibid., 353ff.

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strand is central to the first lectures of Foucault's next course, *The Birth of Biopolitics.* "Utilitarianism," he argues, "is a technology of government," and insofar it contains references to rights and laws, these juridical elements should not lead us to mistake it for a form of juridical power aiming to delimit sovereign force but rather as the result of a critical interrogation of the utility of governmental practices.[76] Writing during the raising prominence of human rights advocacy groups such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, Foucault suggests that the invocation of human rights at times raises the juridical claim of the rights of man — originating in the revolutionary proclamation of the man and the citizen in public law — but at other times the "claim of the independence of the governed vis-à-vis governmentality."[77]

If we should look for a form of counter-conduct to neoliberal governmentality, we might thus look at the claims that utilize, re-orient, and subvert the vocabulary of governmentality that the governed struggle against, as well as the assemblage of organizations that oppose and operate in reaction to the apparatuses of the late-modern state. 'The right of the governed,' implied in the above quotation and first used in Foucault's intervention on behalf of Klaus Croissant (1977), offers one such creative subversion. This right is not grounded on an innate human capacity but is "plus précis, plus historiquement déterminé que les droits de l'homme" insofar as it is grounded in the opposition to a state that dangerously tends to tighten its management of our daily lives.[78] The 'right of the governed' sporadically recurs throughout the last seven years of his life, especially in response to contemporary events such as the repression of the Polish Solidarity movement and the violence levelled by the newly established, theocratic regime of Iran. [79] More specifically, his engagement in a 'counter-conduct of rights' (to use the felicitous phrase by Ben Golder[80]) consists in a tactical invocation of rights-discourse to claim the freedom to be governed differently. Furthermore, this form of resistance has a collective dimension that is hinted at by a short statement that Foucault delivered in 1984, 'Face aux gouvernements, les droits de l'homme' (1984). In this short statement that was drafted only shortly before delivering it on the occasion of a committee against piracy,[81] he invokes a specific right on the contingent condition of our shared exposure to governing techniques and appeals to an alternative collective that opposes these techniques:

> There exists an international citizenship that has its rights and its duties, and that obliges one to speak out against every abuse of power, whoever its author, whoever its victims.

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[76] Foucault, *Birth of Biopolitics*, 41.

[77] Ibid., 42.

[78] Michel Foucault, "Va-t-on extrader Klaus Croissant?" [1977] , in *Dits et Ecrits* 2: 1976-1988, ed. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (1977)

[79] Michel Foucault, "Open Letter to Mehdi Bazargan" [1979], in *Power* (2000), 439-442; Michel Foucault, "The Moral and Social Experience of the Poles Can No Longer Be Obliterated," [1982], in *Power* (2000), 465-473; Ghamari-Tabrizi, *Foucault in Iran* (2016); Hoffman, *Foucault and Power*.

[80] Golder, *Foucault and the Politics of Rights*.

[81] Didier Eribon, *Michel Foucault* (1991).

> After all, we are all members of the community of the governed, and thereby obliged to show mutual solidarity.[82]

Notice how Foucault refrains from a universal concept of mankind and instead invokes a 'we' that emerges from a shared contemporary condition. It is through the governing techniques that one is constituted as a subject in the first place; and it is this always-already fabricated subject that claims a right vis-à-vis the state apparatuses that form her. In a move that is at once reflexive and tactical, Foucault uses the very terminology with which he describes utilitarian thought to critically interrogate governmental techniques on a non-utilitarian ground. Moreover, even though these techniques play out differently for various groups in society, they form a danger to all individuals, and this shared risk forms the historically contingent ground for acts of solidarity.

Foucault's call for solidarity among the governed is interesting because it posits a political, collective agent that emerges out of a shared condition. His invocation of a 'we' puts into perspective Amy Allen's claim that Foucault is unable to develop an account of political alliances due to his strategic concept of action, which leads her to conclude that Foucauldian politics should be supplemented with an Arendtian, associative praxis.[83] As we saw above, Arendt defines solidarity as action in concert, where participants convene to change the 'world', that is, the social and political conditions under which they live. While they might do so for a variety of reasons, they share, in Arendt's reading, a presence of mind regarding the historical moment that they find themselves in. When Foucault invokes the solidarity among the governed, he has in mind something similar to Arendt's acknowledgement of the present; yet, while he might perform and participate in acts of solidarity, he fails to thematize them.

It is worth reminding that the collective agent – the 'we' invoked in his op-ed – does not originate in a pre-existing social critique (e.g., Marxism) but in a genealogical interrogation of the present. Relating methodological to political concerns, he states in a 1984 interview:

> the problem is (…) to decide if it is actually suitable to place oneself within a 'we' in order to assert the principles one recognizes and the values one accepts; or if it is not, rather, necessary to make the future formation of a 'we' possible by elaborating the question. Because it seems to me that the 'we' must not be previous to the question; it can only be the result – and the necessarily temporary result – of the question as it is posed in the new terms in which one formulates it.[84]

The 'we' that Foucault alludes to emerges out of a process of interrogating the present by highlighting how it could have been different – and how we, as subjects shaped in this present, could have been different too. The historical study of problematizations thus opens up a space for "work on our limits" and requires a critical attitude that Foucault, in

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[82] Michel Foucault, "Confronting Governments: Human Rights" [1984], in *Power* (2000), 474.

[83] "Power, Subjectivity, and Agency," 143.

[84] Michel Foucault, "Polemics, Politics and Problematizations: An Interview with Michel Foucault" [1984], in *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth* (1997), 114–15.

his reading of Kant's *What is Enlightenment?*, considers the modern practice of freedom.[85] Yet, there are some problems with this constitution of the 'we'. Firstly, compared to Arendt, Foucault's invocation of solidarity might be overly self-centred: it consists primarily in the appeal to engage in a similar ethical subjectification of a critical attitude (which is, of course, not the same as demanding that everyone forms themselves into a similar ethical subject) and only secondarily in a call for identifying with others. This sense of solidarity is restrictive in the sense that it is based in acts of self-transformation: the 'we' follows from the work on one's limits. Indeed, Foucault at times prioritizes this transformative, reflexive labour over participation in action. With Arendt, we could argue that solidarity should not be primarily defined by the *subjects* who join a struggle but by the *collective action* that constitutes the struggle. To think, as Arendt does, of acts of solidarity as those that bridge differences in interest and pay no heed to the character of its participants is not only more intuitive and less restrictive than Foucault's suggestion: it also prioritizes the relationships with others – namely those with whom we act in concert — over those to ourselves. In Arendt's view, when we act in solidary with others, we transcend the limitations that have been imposed on us on the basis of 'what' we are and that are used to govern, or even forcibly control, our conduct. The space of appearance that emerges out of collective acts such as struggles of solidarity forms a site of self-disclosure where we can become a unique person who is different from what society destined each of us to be because of our race, class or gender. In other words, while Foucault suggests (without ever stating it explicitly) that the work on ourselves precedes a collective awareness that can spur us into action, Arendt would stress that our participation in collective action enables us to interrogate and reconfigure the limits of ourselves.

The political implications of their respective notions of solidarity are particularly relevant for the 'right of the governed'. For Arendt, collective struggles are directed at changing the objective, institutional conditions under which people enter into and maintain relationships. As such, they are distinct from moral considerations that "hinge on interest in the self."[86] Reflecting primarily on moral conscience, she contends that it is a side-product of the thinking-process. This "soundless dialogue between me and myself" requires that I am friends with myself and hence that I refrain from doing anything which might keep me from liking myself. Thinking has a negative role: it interrupts our activity, which is clear in philosophy and ethics (in the Arendtian sense of the voice of conscience), and it resembles the effect that Foucault ascribes to his genealogical studies.[87] To use Arendt's vocabulary, his study of ethical-critical practices remains within the limits of the late-modern tradition that centers on questions of self-alienation (which he, in contradistinction from Marx, celebrates through his appraisal of 'limit-experiences'), and he foregoes the pressing problem of world-alienation, a term that Arendt critically uses for the lack of attention for enduring, stable institutions that facilitate human initiative and plurality.

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[85] Foucault, "What Is Enlightenment?"

[86] Hannah Arendt, "Civil Disobedience," in *Crises of the Republic* (1972), 64.

[87] Arendt, "Thinking and Moral Considerations," 164–65; Michel Foucault, "Interview with Michel Foucault" [1978], in *Power* (2000), 245.

Solidarity, in other words, should not just be understood as an act of interrogating and redesigning who we are at this very moment but primarily as a shared attempt to change the institutions that we will bequeath to the next generations: not, in other words, an inward directed care for the self but an outward oriented care for the world.

FOUCAULT ON FRIENDSHIP

The above discussion shows how Foucault's later writings on ethics and politics "highlight the strategic role played by the relationship of oneself to oneself within the framework of the government of human beings as well as, *a fortiori*, in the possibility to resist it."[88] The emphasis on practices of self-transformation also delimits another site of resistance: friendship.[89] Very generally, Foucault studies male bonds in antiquity as part of his genealogy of the subject of desire — a project that includes but is not restricted to sexuality. In a more explicitly contemporaneous and political approach, he also discusses the theme towards the end of his life in a number of interviews with gay magazines.[90] Without suggesting a transhistorical equivalence of these male bonds, Foucault underscores in each of these cases the ethical work on oneself. The Arendtian challenge to his account concerns the status of the friend, and more specifically the encounter with the other in their unfathomable difference.

How does his discussion of friendship relate to his critique of pastoral power? The latter operates through the injunction to speak the truth of one's desire. Like Arendt, who articulates a similar point to criticize the accusations of hypocrisy in politics,[91] Foucault is critical of the normalizing effect of confessional practices: desires and intentions do not consist in a subjectivity that precede their articulation but are constituted in confessions and subsequently used to categorize and exclude individuals. A problem with the gay movement is that it reproduces this form of power when it strives for sexual liberation. Liberation wrongly suggests that once we defy sexual prohibitions, we are free to be who we are, that is, follow freely our desires that had hitherto been repressed. Arguing against this idea, Foucault first argues in *The Will to Knowledge* that it is not just theoretically flawed in its assessment of power relations but also historically-politically problematic: it suggests a rupture between a Victorian, sexually repressive era and a 'liberated', post-68 era, whereas in fact both consist in an incitement to talk the truth about sexuality.

Already in this early critique of "the grandiloquence of a discourse purporting to speak the truth about sex,"[92] we can discern the intertwining of truth and power that Foucault develops over the subsequent years in a historically more comprehensive study of the

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[88] Lorenzini, "From Counter-Conduct to Critical Attitude," 9.

[89] On friendship in Foucault, see Steve Garlick, "The Beauty of Friendship: Foucault, masculinity and the work of art," *Philosophy & Social Criticism* 28:5 (2002), 558-577; Margaret McLaren, "From Practices of the Self to Politics: Foucault and Friendship," *Philosophy Today* 50 (2006), 195-201.

[90] Michel Foucault, "Friendship as a Way of Life" [1981], in *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth* (1997), 135-140; "Social Triumph of the Sexual Will"; Foucault, "Sex, Power and the Politics of Identity".

[91] *On Revolution*, 79.

[92] *The Will to Knowledge,* 8.

'hermeneutics of the subject'. Central to the medical and psychiatric constitution of 'the homosexual' in the nineteenth century were practices in which subjects at once confessed their desires to a person claiming medical authority while having their confession interpreted as ciphers about the subject's deepest desires, which were taken as their innermost essence. These 19th century practices can be traced to early Christian monastic regimes and the medieval obligation of confession: their many differences notwithstanding, Foucault understands them as modifications of pastoral power, which is defined by "knowledge of the conscience and an ability to direct it."[93] Now, sexual liberation goes awry when reduced to talking freely about desires: in that case, the normalizing demand to 'tell the truth about oneself' that defined 19th century medicine and psychiatry — the spheres where the subject of desire is constituted — is mistaken for an act of liberation. In other words, sexual liberation, if it is limited to uncensored acts of speaking of one's inner desires, presupposes and hence reproduces the very notion of a subject of desire, which is problematic because it was first constituted in pastoral power. This means that Foucault fosters a deep "distrust [of] the tendency to relate the question of homosexuality to the problem of 'Who am I' and 'What is the secret of my desire?'"[94] In other words, the claim of a group identity on the basis of one's desires relies on a problematic hermeneutics of the subject that is complicit in the normalization of sexuality.

This leads him to assert that the main challenge posed by gay culture is "the homosexual mode of life, much more than the sexual act itself."[95] Whereas the latter refers to the transgression of sexual norms, the former points at the more interesting question of the development of a gay culture, where culture (as Foucault defines the term in another context) consists in the "hierarchical organization of values [that] calls on the individual to engage in regular, costly, and sacrificial conduct that orientates his whole life" and does so "through regular and reflected techniques."[96] This culture is a collective endeavour, and the cultivation of a gay lifestyle cannot be bracketed from the practices, sexual and otherwise, that are regularised sites of interaction.[97]

Hence, the potential of the gay movement lies not in claiming an identity and liberating one's desire from social repression but in developing lifestyles that experiment with pleasure. Pleasure, in contradistinction from desire, is a limit experience that allows subject to transgress their own boundaries, and one that is, furthermore, not delimited by the object towards which it is directed (as in the case of desire) but open-ended because of the manifold bodily sensations of which we are capable. Foucault suggests that the experiment with these pleasures can also be the nucleus of a practice in which we develop new forms of coexistence:[98] new, affective bonds that are irreducible to the heteronormative conceptions of romantic (straight) relationships and platonic (same-sex) friendship. For these novel relationships, Foucault deploys the term friendship. Through sexual practices and

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[93] "The Subject and Power," 333.
[94] Foucault, "Friendship as a Way of Life," 135.
[95] Ibid., 136; Michel Foucault, "Sexual Choice, Sexual Act" [1982], in *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth* (1997), 153.
[96] Michel Foucault, *The Hermeneutics of the Subject: Lectures at the Collège de France 1981—1982* (2005), 179.
[97] David Halperin, *Saint Foucault: Towards a Gay Hagiography* (1997), 93ff.
[98] "Social Triumph of the Sexual Will," 160.

the pleasures and affection these engender, one can engage in relations that have not been institutionalized. What is more, these relationships can bring about bonds between individuals who otherwise belong to different social strata. "Homosexuality," he writes,

> "is a historic occasion to reopen affective and relational virtualities, not so much through the intrinsic qualities of the homosexual but because the 'slantwise' position of the latter, as it were, the diagonal lines he can lay out in the social fabric allow these virtualities to come to light."[99]

Starting from the body as a site of pleasure, friendship cuts across the social stratification of age, class and ethnicity, bringing about new, 'diagonal' communities. Like Arendt (her omission of bodily pleasure notwithstanding), Foucault discerns in affective relationships the potential to counteract the isolating and individualizing dynamics of late-modern society. The multiplication of relationships traversing society defies the differentiation and segregation of social groups brought about by governmental techniques of control. However, this account of friendship falls short in thematizing the encounter with the other. This deficit is brought up by Johanna Oksala in her otherwise approving reading of Foucault. Drawing on Levinas, she argues, "[the] other makes ethical subjectivity possible, but also breaks the totality of constituted experience by introducing a plurality in being that resists all efforts of totalization and normalization."[100] This rupture introduced by the other is precluded in Foucault's ethics as he asserts (in an enigmatically brief comment) that "The care of the self is ethically prior in that the relationship with oneself is ontologically prior."[101] Oksala makes her point by comparing Foucault to Levinas, but a comparison with Arendt would have likewise brought out this limitation. After all, like Levinas, Arendt suggests that the relation to the other precedes that with the self, and more importantly, the presence of others, with whom one acts in concert, is the condition for bringing about truly new modes of being that are irreducible to the objectives of ethical perfection by any one of the agents.[102] Thus, the question arises as to what extent friendship, as Foucault understands it, really opens up a space of self-formation by the unexpected encounter with the unfathomable other.

This impression is confirmed when we shift to his historical inquiry into pederasty.[103] This fairly institutionalized practice does not provide a blueprint for contemporary erotic friendships. Rather, he is interested in the way that the pederastic relationship poses an ethical problematic for those engaging in it, in that the attitude of *erastes* and *eromenos* was the object of intense scrutiny and concern. Foucault's interest in this practice has to do, firstly, with dislodging our contemporary conception of desire, which is marked (and thus marks the subject) by the gender and acts of what is desired. In the ancient Greek conception, one is not defined by whom or what one desires but the attitude one cultivates towards pleasures; of which, secondly, those connected to sexual acts form just one sphere

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[99] "Friendship as a Way of Life," 138.
[100] *Foucault on Freedom*, 207.
[101] "The Ethics of the Concern for Self as a Practice of Freedom," 287.
[102] Anya Topolski, *Arendt, Levinas and A Political of Relationality* (2015).
[103] Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure*, pt. 4.

of sensations among others (and by no means a privileged one). These observations are particularly helpful in forging a gay culture that tries to break away from the identity that is imposed on them and that is reproduced in the call for liberation. Furthermore, they are helpful for envisioning a lifestyle in which sexual acts are important but not the exclusive ethical substance.[104] The historical study of the subject of desire is instrumental, he believes, to the gay community's objective to open up the field of possible ways of being: it requires "[digging] deeply to show things have been historically contingent, for such and such a reason intelligible but not necessary"[105] – a specific instance, in other words, of the critical attitude of Enlightenment that revolves on "work on our limits, that is, a patient labor giving form to our impatience for liberty."[106]

To argue, as I did above, that friendship should be thematized to account for the encounter with the other is not to argue that all friendships should conform to that exclusive, Aristotelean ideal that Arendt proposes. Foucault should be praised for validating these 'friendships of pleasure,' which have been dismissed historically, and integrating them into a modern-day, aestheticized and highly singular notion of a good life. A future synthesis of his unfinished account of friendship with that of Arendt's would, for instance, stress the unexpected pleasures that are both bodily as well as, in a more platonic sense, emerge from 'the pleasure of their company'[107] – pleasures, that is, that defy any logic of self-mastery while allowing for the invention of one's unique mode of living.[108] Such a yet-to-be-written account would have the additional benefit of relieving his ethics from the confines of a reflexive praxis of self-government.

CONCLUSION

Arendt and Foucault are the vigilant observers of late-modernity, spurring us into action to change the present that is the product of historically contingent processes. What role does philosophy play in these acts of resistance? Arendt's response would be more dismissive than Foucault's, and that is no doubt due to her restrictive conception of philosophy. She would be mindful of the philosopher's bias in favour of the solitary, reflexive experience of thinking at the expense of the collective freedom to determine the conditions under which we life. This is not to say that philosophy and ethics — fields that are closely related for both Arendt and Foucault — do not have any political relevance, but rather that they are driven by and restricted to a concern for the self. Although Foucault attends to the collective dimension of resistance, he privileges the work on one's limits, which bars an acknowledgement of the irreducibly singular and unique other in such works of

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[104] Ibid., 26.

[105] "Friendship as a Way of Life," 140.

[106] "What Is Enlightenment?" 319.

[107] I am paraphrasing the title of Peg Birmingham, "The Pleasure of Your Company," *Research in Phenomenology* 33:1 (2003), 53-74.

[108] For reasons of length, I pass over Foucault's discussion of the parrhesiastic relationship, which might also provide a useful model for such friendships. See, for instance, Foucault, *The Courage of Truth: Lectures at the Collège de France 1983-1984* (2011); Tamboukou, "Truth Telling in Foucault and Arendt".

self-transformation. Yet, resistance, as both authors are well aware, provides an exhilarating moment of relating to others, thus defying the very individualizing effects of late-modern governmentality. The promise of this encounter and of the contestation of the status quo matches their fears for the many dangers awaiting us.

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Foucault Studies

ARTICLE

Avowing Unemployment:
Confessional Jobseeker Interviews and Professional CVs

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ABSTRACT. While contemporary welfare processes have widely been analysed through the concepts of governmentality and pastoral power, this article diagnoses the dimension of confession or avowal within unemployment, job seeking and CV writing. This argument draws together the threads of Foucault's work on confession within disciplinary institutions, around sexuality and genealogies of monasticism, adding the insights of writers in 'economic theology'. Empirically the focus is on UK JobCentrePlus, whose governmentality is traced from laws and regulations, street-level forms, websites and CV advice. From the requirement of avowals of unemployment as a personal fault in interviews to professions of faith in oneself and the labour market, a distinctly confessional practice emerges – with the welfare officer as 'pastor' but with the market as the ultimate 'test' of worth. Furthermore, the pressure to transform the self through 'telling the truth' about oneself is taken as a normalising pressure which extends from the institutions of welfare across the labour market as a whole. In conclusion, the demand for self-transformation and the insistence on tests within modernity is problematised.

Keywords: Avowal, confession, CV, jobseekers, welfare

INTRODUCTION

Unemployment benefits or entitlements must be claimed, usually through a declaration of being without, available for and actively seeking work – the tripartite definition of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) which is instituted in national welfare systems across the OECD. Losing a job, being fired or going out of business are events which happen to people, but moving from being without work to being unemployed simply cannot occur without some form of claim by the subject about themselves. Herein, this claim or declaration is interpreted as a form of 'avowal' – as required and monitored by

welfare offices, and culturally informed by the broad and diffuse influence of 'confession' in modernity identified and analysed by Michel Foucault.

Governmentality studies of welfare-offices, job seeking and the labour market abound in contemporary scholarship, with many contributors highlighting how the disciplining of the self reflects forms of 'pastoral power' as a genealogical influence in welfare.[1] These studies span the forms and processes of claiming welfare at the 'street-level' through to the coaching and 'psy-science' interventions in the lives of the unemployed through to the enticement towards practices of job seeking.[2] Focusing on the UK, this article identifies the confessional dimensions of welfare processes, particularly how interviews with jobseekers by welfare offices require 'avowals' of unemployment, creating regular 'confessions' of faults or the need for self-improvement and unsuccessful attempts to find work, but also how they require 'professions' of work-readiness – CVs and profiles required by the welfare office which express 'faith' in oneself and the labour market. Tentatively, I suggest that this disciplinary government of welfare claimants and the production of CVs under pressure has a normalising effect across the labour market, wherein the threat of falling into unemployment models the 'good' jobseeker or worker.

By focusing on confession, this article hopes to contribute to our understanding of how the unemployed are shaped as subjects; indeed the numbers who pass through welfare offices are increasing, both because of the spread of precarious work and short contracts, and due to economic shocks like the Great Financial Crisis and Covid-19 pandemic.[3] Particularly, how individuals come to 'transform themselves' through 'telling the truth about the self' is diagnosed by Foucault as a key element of subject-formation in the 'West'. The term 'confession' must be used with caution, as it denotes numerous distinctive practices from early Christianity, medieval Monasticism, Lay-confession, Protestant private confession and proliferates across modernity in distinctive and hybrid ways.[4] Indeed, the term 'confession' is sometimes interchangeable with 'avowal' or even 'penance', so the first task here is clarifying the crucial elements of the practice.

No genealogical tracing of 'confession' as a practice from medieval 'pastoral power' to modern governmentality is offered here; indeed, the presence of 'confession' is so widespread and endemic to Christianity up to the twentieth century that such an exercise would be superfluous. Nor is the adoption and adaptation of 'confession' by

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[1] For instance, Mitchell Dean, "Governing the unemployed self in an active society," *Economy and Society* 24:4 (1995), 559-583; Del Roy Fletcher, "Workfare - a Blast from the Past? Contemporary Work Conditional-ity for the Unemployed in Historical Perspective," *Social Policy and Society* 14:3 (2015), 329-339; or Imogen Tyler, *Stigma Machines* (2020).

[2] Lynne Friedli and Robert Stearn, "Positive affect as coercive strategy: conditionality, activation and the role of psychology in UK government workfare programmes," *Medical Humanities* 41:1 (2015), 40-47; or David Frayne, *The Work Cure: Critical Essays on Work and Wellness* (2019).

[3] Two key accounts of this are Guy Standing, *Precariat: The New Dangerous Class* (2011); or Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello, *The New Spirit of Capitalism* (2005).

[4] Chloe Taylor, *The Culture of Confession from Augustine to Foucault: A Genealogy of the 'Confessing Animal'* (2008).

various disciplinary institutions traced in detail. Both of these are beyond the limits of space. Instead, the analysis builds on Foucault's diagnosis of Western man as a 'confessing animal' as have others who have diagnosed the play of confession in areas as diffuse as therapy, coaching, life-long learning and health.[5] Amid the complex, policy-shaped and academically inspired modes of 'conducting the conduct' of welfare claimants, a confessional dimension emerges – among other things.

Finally, this analysis of confession also addresses the dimension of 'profession' – again these words are occasionally interchangeable – for instance, the 'confession of faith' is not an avowal of sins but a credo. Declarations of faith are acknowledged by Foucault as intrinsic to confession, but he was more concerned with 'avowal', the admittance of sin in thought or action, following his interest in madness, crime and sexuality. Herein the scope is expanded to incorporate expressions of 'belief', variously in a creed, an institution or the self, arenas of 'culture' or 'identity'. Tentatively, these 'professions' can be analysed as having a normalising effect, generating models of the good jobseeker or worker.

CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

Contemporary welfare states have turned towards 'activation' – offering training and education – but also making welfare payments 'conditional', that is, contingent on behavioural compliance – the 'conduct of conduct' – with the threat of sanctions of reduced or suspended payments intrinsic to the schemes.[6] This governmentality is particularly prominent in the UK, and the empirical examples here are drawn from UK welfare regulations, JobCentre Plus guides, which are used by staff in dealing with clients, materials such as the 'WorkPlan booklet' given to clients, informal advice on creating CVs and digital platforms, such as 'FindaJob.gov', for instance. More speculatively, this disciplinary confessional of jobseekers is replicated or reflected in CV-writing more generally, and the institutional pressure and sequestering of jobseekers into welfare offices has a normalising effect on the labour market generally.

Despite being posed as a problem of economics in the early twentieth century, unemployment is increasingly responsibilised, that is, seen as resulting from individual choices, psychological deficiency or moral failings.[7] Indeed, CVs are positioned as remedial – any career 'gaps' need to be explained with attractive narratives or represented as salutary lessons – while long-term unemployment is addressed by enrolment in training or internships. Advice is disciplinary and insistent, incorporating psy-science and behavioural nudges, to set the unemployed on the 'right path'.[8] Contemporary welfare

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[5] For instance, Andreas Fejes and Magnus Dahlstedt, *The Confessing Society: Foucault, Confession and Practices of Lifelong Learning* (2013); or Mads Peter Karlsen and Kaspar Villadsen, "Confession," in *The Routledge Handbook of Economic Theology*, ed. Stefan Schwarzkopf (2020), 36-46.

[6] Magnus Paulsen Hansen, *The Moral Economy of Activation: Ideas, Politics and Policies* (2019).

[7] Tyler, *Stigma Machines*.

[8] See Tom Boland and Ray Griffin, *The Reformation of Welfare: The New Faith of the Labour Market* (2021). Metaphors of paths and journeys recur frequently in activation texts.

states have followed an 'activation' turn across the OECD, so welfare benefits have become conditional provisions rather than entitlements and may be suspended if individuals do not demonstrate their efforts to find work and comply with all directives by case officers or work coaches.[9] The threat of sanctions pressurises claimants, installing a punitive or even a penitential mechanism within labour market institutions.[10]

While there is copious research on poverty, unemployment, welfare, careers and work, far fewer studies directly explore the actual experiences of job seeking. Much existing work interprets the institutions and discourses around job seeking as neo-liberal, for instance, rendering the individual as an enterprise, or re-defining the labourer as a 'business solution' or 'bundle of skills', or foisting blame on the unemployed individual for their lack of success.[11] Governmental dynamics of power and resistance are picked out by Foucauldian analyses of jobseeker subject-formation, and the persistence of religious thinking is also striking in that Christian models of penitence, persistence and self-overcoming are openly reproduced in some US jobs clubs.[12] These accounts offer a broad interpretation of welfare governmentality as pastoral power rather than attending to the specifically confessional practices involved.

GOVERNMENTALITY AND CONFESSION

Governmentality studies have blossomed as a paradigm which examines the 'how' of power, the discrete exercises of discipline which form conduct and the play of discourses which (re)constitute society by classifying and evaluating people and phenomena.[13] Turning towards analyses of bio-politics then governmentality in later work refocused Foucault's work beyond specific institutions – asylums, hospitals, prisons – to enable analyses which examine the state and the market. This work scrupulously avoids providing a meta-theory of the state, instead asserting: 'The state is nothing else but the mobile effect of a regime of multiple governmental actions'.[14] Indubitably, confession is an element of medieval pastoral power, which is adapted subsequently within modern disciplinary institutions, but only as one technique among others. Perhaps the genealogical links between Christian pastoral power and the emergence of governmentality in modernity, or between confession and disciplinary

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[9] Hansen, *The Moral Economy of Activation*.

[10] In *Punishing the Poor: The Neoliberal Government of Social Insecurity* (2009) Loic Wacquant describes this as liberal authoritarianism, yet these systems are not simply cruel but deliberately attempt to reshape individuals, following a penitential or purgative rationality.

[11] See Ilana Gershon, *Down and Out in the New Economy: How People Find (or Don't Find) Work Today* (2017); Ofer Sharone, "LinkedIn or LinkedOut? How Social Networking Sites are Reshaping the Labor Market," *Emerging Conceptions of Work, Management and the Labor Market* 30 (2017), 1-31; or Stephen Vallas & Angele Christin, "Work and Identity in an Era of Precarious Employment: How Workers Respond to 'Personal Branding' Discourse," *Work and Organisations* 45:1 (2018), 3-37.

[12] Gretchen Purser and Brian Hennigan, "Disciples and dreamers: job readiness and the making of the US working class," *Dialectical Anthropology* 42:2 (2018), 149–161.

[13] Mitchell Dean, *Governmentality: Power and Rule in Modern society* (2010).

[14] Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the College De France: 1977-1978* (2007), 77.

power, might need further genealogical elaboration elsewhere,[15] but this article is limited to analysing contemporary welfare processes.

Confession gradually becomes more prominent in Foucault's work; in regard to disciplinary power, it appears in prisons, asylums and beyond as part of a vast apparatus which demands 'truth-telling' from multiple subjects, approximating the '...colonisation of an entire society by means of disciplinary apparatuses'.[16] As a mode of 'conducting conduct', confession appears as a key dimension of pastoral power and precursor of governmentality. Furthermore, confession is an important part of Foucault's 'later work' on subjectivity, appearing in regard to sexuality, but also in discussions of ancient spiritual exercises and monasticism.[17] Indeed, confession is significant across Foucault's oeuvre, from sexuality to disciplinary institutions, from the ancient and modern worlds, providing a theoreticisation of 'confessional society'.[18]

The centrality of confession is articulated most strikingly in the *History of Sexuality:* 'Western man has become a confessing animal'.[19] Additionally, Foucault suggests in *Security, Territory and Population* that confession is central to pastoral power, which informs governmentality, and specifically how modern subjects are individuated or formed through their conduct.[20] This model of subject-formation informs this diagnosis of 'avowals of unemployment', with the caveat that Foucault tends to emphasise the 'avowal of faults' rather than the 'profession of faith', yet these are linked in situations which require the '…commitment of the speaking subject to what he or she is saying'.[21]

Before becoming a Catholic sacrament, confession has a longer genealogy found in early Christian rituals of baptism or canonical penance; dramatic public displays of conversion or demonstrations of guilt, visible and displayed to a whole community. Monastic confession altered these public demonstrations by combining 'spiritual exercises' with rites of purification, thereafter providing the model for lay-confession after 1215. The crucial elements of monastic confession are outlined briefly in *Security, Territory, Population* as being obedience, truth-telling and salvation; essentially a power-relationship within which a subject is transformed by 'telling the truth' about themselves to another, who judges and directs their conduct.[22] Yet how can talking

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[15] Mitchell Dean, *The Signature of Power* (2013).

[16] Michel Foucault, *Abnormal: Lectures at the College De France: 1974-1975* (2003), 68. Foucault's analyses of confession span at least a decade of his research and writing.

[17] See Michel Foucault, "About the Beginning of the Hermeneutics of the Self: Two Lectures at Dartmouth," *Political Theory* 21:2 (1993), 198-227; or Michel Foucault, *The Hermeneutics of the Subject: Lectures at the College De France: 1981-1982* (2005); or most extensively Michel Foucault, *On the Government of the Living: Lectures at the College De France, 1979-1980* (2014a).

[18] Fejes and Dahlstedt, *Confessing Society*, 1-8.

[19] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction Vol. 1* (1978).

[20] Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population* (2008), 182-4,

[21] The relationship between the 'confession of sins' and the 'confession of truth' is explored in Philippe Büttgen, "Foucault's Concept of Confession," *Foucault Studies* 29 (2021), 17.

[22] This 'government of souls' was described as the techne technes – the 'art of arts' by Greg of Nazianzus. Michel Foucault, *Wrong-Doing, Truth-Telling: The Function of Avowal in Justice* (2014b), 176-177.

about oneself be so powerful in shaping the self, and what is so distinctive about this Western discourse about the self?

Whether lay or monastic, confession requires submission, perhaps to an abbot, a priest or another figure, but hierarchical distinction matters less than the requirement for obedience. Following directions and orders without question is the apogee of self-renunciation here, but also crucial is the requirement to 'tell the truth' about oneself, one's thoughts and actions: 'All, or almost all, of an individual's life thought and actions must pass through the filter of confessions'.[23] Past conduct and desires had to be revealed for inspection and evaluation, to be judged, with purgative penances for sin. By speaking about the self, by avowing faults, the penitent also was transformed, 'shriven' of their sins; salvation was attained not just by believing in religious precepts but by purifying the self.

By contrast to Gnostics and others, Christianity since Augustine rejected the idea of perfectibility – the soul had to be constantly cleansed by confession[24]. Thus, confession involved a continuous process of self-examination, self-representation and transformation; a repeated testing of the self; 'This conversion, this establishing a relationship of subjectivity to truth requires probation, the test, bringing the truth of oneself into play'.[25] Salvation through confession is not a single and decisive transformation which establishes subjectivity decisively but a continuous process: 'This movement by which one turns around must be maintained'.[26] Thus, a constant ethic of self-examination, revelation to an authority and reformation of the self emerges.

This transformation of the self is complex, dividing between elements of the self – the self which confesses is implicitly distinct from past misdeeds, wherein the distinction between these 'parts' of the self is constituted through the discursive practices of confession: '...the revelation of the truth about oneself cannot be dissociated from the obligation to renounce oneself'.[27] By contrast to communal purification rituals, this process occurs through private, purgative verbalisations, 'putting the self into discourse', a continuous self-narrative, characterised by the injunction; 'To obey in everything and to hide nothing'.[28] Visible obedience was taken to guarantee the truth of discourse about the self, thus authenticating the purported transformation or purification. Parallels to contemporary therapeutic discourses, penal interrogations and discourses about sexuality emerge clearly here. Implicitly, sins were difficult to confess, as they were devilishly inspired and took hold of the will, and the more suffering

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[23] Foucault, *Abnormal*, 177: The discussion below follows *The Government of the Living* and *Wrong-Doing, Truth-Telling*, both of which discuss confession directly and extensively.

[24] In *Les aveux de la chair*, Foucault focuses extensively on Augustine, yet for Taylor (2008), the key auditor or judge of Augustine's Confession is not his bishop, friends or mother, but a virtual auditor, the deity.

[25] Foucault, *The Government of the Living*, 160.

[26] Ibid., 177.

[27] Foucault, "About the Beginning of the Hermeneutics of the Self," 221.

[28] *Government of the Living*, 266.

involved in avowal, the deeper the sin.[29] Furthermore, all elements of thought had to be inspected suspiciously, evoking criminological or psycho-analytical interrogations, or the purportedly secret character of sexuality. Thus, rather than a singular conversion or a seasonal ritual, confession becomes 'a permanent court'.[30] Telling the truth about the self, transforming the self becomes chronic in modernity, combining and exceeding the juridical interrogation of the self and a medical diagnosis which prescribes remedies, confession involves moralised 'veridiction' – as do processes of governing the unemployed, as we shall see.

For Foucault, confession is a crucial mode of self-formation because among many other practices it most precisely generates the 'truth of self', both by evaluating and defining the self:

> It involves establishing a relationship of obedience to the other's will and at the same time establishing, in correlation with, as condition of this obedience, what I would call not a jurisdiction but a veridiction; this obligation constantly to tell the truth about oneself with regard to oneself in the form of confession.[31]

Within confession, avowal is crucial for Foucault, the verbalisation of past thoughts and action, effectively linking subjectivity and truth. Significantly, while Christian confession involved the shriving of sins – whether committed or merely contemplated – modern disciplinary institutions generate an 'identity', linking the individual to past misdemeanours or impulses – deviance, delusions, perversions – even while excising or rejecting these as pathological or erroneous. The confessional self is constituted by the perpetual rejection of past or chronic misdeeds and thoughts from the speaking subject, a 'disavowal'.[32] Paradoxically, to confess involves avowing faults or sins, but also disavowing the self which authored them, thereby transforming the self.

While Foucault generally focuses on 'wrong-doing and truth-telling', another element involved is profession; 'avowal had to begin with an act of faith'.[33] Religiously a credo is affirmed or in secular situations shared values are endorsed: '…"belief" in oneself — or more specifically "belief" in oneself as "belief" in the market — has taken on dispropor-tionate relevance today'.[34] Such normative standards inscribe an ideal subjectivity against which actual conduct or thoughts can be judged and indicate a horizon of

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[29] *Wrong-Doing, Truth-Telling*, 163-171. Drawing a parallel to Descartes' idea of delusion sent by a demi-urge; by extension, this veridiction of faults by the difficulty of confession illuminates contemporary prac-tices of self-purification from prejudices.

[30] Foucault, *History of Sexuality Vol. 1*, 20.

[31] *Government of the Living*, 308.

[32] Judith Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection* (1997). Draws on Foucauldian accounts of subject formation but emphasizes less 'avowal' of wrong-doing than 'disavowal' of prior identifications through normalisation.

[33] *Wrong-Doing, Truth-Telling*, 188.

[34] Elettra Stimilli, "Debt Economy and Faith: Philosophy in the Age of Terror," *Diacritics* 47:2 (2019), 8. Economic theology builds on Foucault's identification of pastoral power and confession to interrogate spe-cific elements of contemporary governmentality, see Giorgio Agamben, *The Kingdom and the Glory: For a Theological Genealogy of Economy and Government* (2011).

salvation. Within Christianity this is a perpetual process of self-purification – no self-mastery can be decisively attained, as envisaged by Greek Stoicism, for instance – each subject is involved in chronic confession unto mortality. Within modernity, pastoral power is much more diffuse, and thus obedience is less structured, but the activity of telling the truth about the self and transforming the self, re-articulating identity and self-narrative is persistent and diffuse. Within the sphere of unemployment, self-examination is continuous, and CVs constantly updated, with most applications hopefully signed 'yours sincerely' or 'looking forward to hearing from you'.

Evidently, confessions are embedded in power-relations and involve forms of obedience to pastoral or disciplinary powers; priests or welfare officers. However, these institutions are not monasteries or prisons, with occasional meetings, monthly or weekly at churches or welfare offices – places which are historically entangled with charitable or social provision. Yet, confession is flexible and diverse:

> a ritual that unfolds within a power relationship, for one does not confess without the presence (or *virtual* presence) of a partner who is not simply the interlocutor but the authority who requires the confession, prescribes and appreciates it, and intervenes in order to judge, punish, forgive, console and reconcile.[35] (italics added)

Implicitly, the virtual presence of pastoral power was the deity, all-seeing and all-knowing, judging individuals; the actual authority for obedience and source of salvation. By contrast, contemporary economic confessions, in the form of a public profile or CV, are continuously offered for the virtual authority of the market, which judges worth.[36] Parallel to Foucault's diagnosis of the normalising effect of prisons, asylums and so forth on the population at large, welfare offices implicitly threaten all workers with the possibility of coercive welfare processes and sanctions which induce poverty. Moreover, the form of the CV implies the internalisation of the perspective of employers by the labour market as a whole, re-constituting life as a career and society as a network.

Welfare activation services aim to facilitate transitions from unemployment to work, but frequently involve circular processes, shuttling jobseekers between the labour market and the welfare office. Indefinite periods without finding work are implicitly cast as personal failures, as each review assesses how the individual might improve themselves and thereby succeed: '…encouraging the worker to view themselves as per-petually in job seeking mode.[37] Partially, this evokes Weber's 'Protestant Ethic' thesis, not just through consistent hard-work but seeking signs of salvation, both deciphering the market and interrogating the self. More importantly, it recapitulates confession, wherein faults are assumed and anticipated, but an unlimited number of second-chances for salvation are offered. As outlined earlier, critics of welfare activation have

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[35] *History of Sexuality Vol. 1,* 62. Italics added – the possibility of virtual auditors is central to my argument.
[36] Stimilli, "Debt Economy and Faith".
[37] Ilana Gershon, "Hailing the US job-seeker: origins and neoliberal uses of job applications," *Culture, Theory and Critique* 60:1 (2019), 87.

highlighted the suffering of jobseekers, under pressure, threatened with sanctions, stigmatised and impoverished. Yet such suffering obliquely reflects underlying cultural models:

> the transformation into good takes place at the heart of the very suffering caused, inso-far as this suffering is actually a test that is recognised, lived and practiced as such by the subject'.[38]

Obedience, telling the truth about the self, seeking self-transformation; these elements of confession are adapted by modern disciplinary power and form part of governmentality but also reflect an interpretation of life as a trial. Experiences are taken as tests of character, choices as expressions of 'inner' desire or will, and economic outcomes as indications of the worth of the self. And this extends far beyond welfare: '…every Christian will be called upon to regard life as nothing but a test',[39] an interpretation of experience and conduct which informs contemporary economic ethics, for instance, in conceptions of life as a career or taking meaning or worth from market outcomes.[40]

CONFESSIONAL INTERVIEWS AND PROFESSIONAL CVS

Many researchers have associated the turn towards 'active labour market policies' with the intensifying of disciplinary or governmental power-relations with social welfare systems across the OECD.[41] Within Europe, the UK is a harsh liberal-authoritarian welfare regime, but our concern is not the relative cruelty of the outcomes but the 'governmental rationality' involved.[42] Indeed, between the time of writing and publication, elements of these regulations may have changed, especially in response to the pandemic emergency. Therefore, the materials examined herein are composite legal regulations and advice to welfare offices drawn from the UK context – specifically *DMG [Decision Makers Guidance] Chapter 21: Jobseeker's Allowance - Labour market questions, special conditions for JSA(Cont) and jobseeking periods* and chapter 5 of *JobCentrePlus Guidance* for welfare officers, with associated 'Claimant contract' and 'My Work Plan Booklet', and careers advice from state-run websites.[43] These are articulations and updates of

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[38] Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the Subject*, 443.

[39] Ibid., 446.

[40] Stefan Schwarzkopf, "Markets and Marketization," in *The Routledge Handbook of Economic Theology*, ed. Stefan Schwarzkopf (2020), 163-171

[41] Boland and Griffin, *Reformation of Welfare,* 45-60.

[42] A taxonomy of welfare states is proposed by Gosta Esping-Andersen, *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism* (1990), but a more cultural history of policy is offered by Sigrun Kahl, "The religious roots of modern poverty policy: Catholic, Lutheran and Reformed Protestant traditions compared," *European Journal of Sociology* 46:1 (2005), 91–126.

[43] DMG Chapter 21 compiles regulations around conditionality for Jobseekers, derived from laws and acts of parliaments, from between 2011 and 2018, and is reproduced in more instructional and streamlined format as official guidance for welfare officers:
Department of Work and Pensions, "DMG Chapter 21 - Jobseeker's Allowance – Labour market questions, special conditions for JSA(Cont) and jobseeking periods" (2020a), gov.uk.

long-standing laws and regulations, independent from headline social policy initiatives such as the 'Work Programme' or 'Get Britain Working', since replaced by 'Universal Credit', which will eventually be superannuated. Some studies evaluate specific policy initiatives as emerging from political contingencies while tracing their results and how they diffuse across states.[44] By contrast, herein the aim is to diagnose how persistent elements of confession are articulated through contemporary regulations of welfare claims.

The materials examined do not have a single author but are composite scripts drawing from different laws on multiple dates by changing governments. They re-capitulate concerns around social welfare with a longer history, referring at least back as far as the early 20th century ILO definition of unemployment, or even the workhouse test. This is not to suggest continuity or stability; these texts are hybrid adaptations of past discourses, entangled with contemporary concerns. These are interpreted much as Foucault approached confessional manuals as instituting disciplinary regimes, or, following Bacchi, analysed as to how they 'pose the problem' of unemployment and activation. Koopman argues that forms serve to 'fasten' individuals to categories by classifying their conduct and thoughts, thereby 'formatting' subjectivity.[45] This 'formatting' spans a range of texts, and, incrementally, some extra elements are added in the movement from regulation documents to guidance to actual documents distributed to the unemployed in welfare offices. For instance, advice on how to manage and motivate the unemployed are added and integrated into 'guidance' chapters for welfare officers, and motivating metaphors such as the 'journey' towards finding work are added to documents given to jobseekers.[46] Despite these additions, the stipulations and definitions articulated in law are never omitted but continuously restated and never contradicted, forming a reference point for 'street-level' governmentality. Thus, the state 'governs at a distance', exerting pastoral power through laws which format regulations which then govern individual lives.[47]

The rules governing institutions of social welfare are outlined at extraordinary length by UK law, repeatedly, in an accretion of acts and amendments. There is both meticulous attention to detail, from the minutiae of determining initial eligibility for welfare entitlements, to a plethora of definitions, from operational terms like 'availability' or 'training' to simple words like 'week'.[48] What matters here are sections outlining the conditions which must be fulfilled for jobseekers to retain their welfare entitlement.[49] These involve 'microphysics of power', for instance, requiring individuals

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https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/893675/dmgch21.pdf (accessed, March 07, 2020) [DMG Chapter 21 hereafter, no pagination, reference by item].

[44] Jamie Peck and Nik Theodore, *Fast Policy: Experimental Statecraft at the Thresholds of Neoliberalism* (2016).

[45] Colin Koopman, *How We Became Our Data: A Genealogy of the Informational Person* (2019).

[46] *Reformation of Welfare,* 117-136.

[47] Peter Miller and Nicholas Rose, "Governing Economic Life," in *Foucault's New Domains*, ed. Mike Gane and Terry Johnson (2013).

[48] Department of Work and Pensions, "DMG Chapter 21" (2020a), op. cit. 21122-21173.

[49] Ibid., 21600–21687.

to take 'steps' to find employment, with a list of ten possible steps, from approaching employers to writing a CV. Concurrently, they invoke evaluative but ill-defined criteria; for instance, requiring that claimants 'make all reasonable efforts' to find work, with the criterion of 'reasonable' left to the judgement of Employment Officers or Work Coaches.

Effectively, these regulations set out a juridical apparatus; claimants must be available for work and must be Actively Seeking Employment (ASE), and they must provide evidence of this to the satisfaction of officials. Effectively, the jobseeker must not simply seek work but also match governmental expectations which are both formal but also open to the caprice of street-level bureaucrats.[50] The Claimant Commitment Contract or Jobseekers Agreement sets out the number and sort of steps required, and Employment Officers or 'Work Coaches' are instructed that these steps should be 'SMART'; an acronym for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound.[51] This combines both diagnosis and prescription on the part of welfare officers; they must assess a claimant's capabilities, their likelihood of gaining employment, but also how much effort at job seeking they should undertake, and set expectations of levels of evidence of these efforts for claimants.

Job seeking activities are reviewed in regular 'Work Search Reviews' – interviews at weekly or fortnightly intervals. What constitutes 'reasonable efforts' is decided by officials: Guidance manuals state 'The claimant must do all that is reasonable to look for work each week'[52] in bold, with requirements for evidence and processes for documentation and review. If there is any dispute as to the 'reasonableness' of the required steps, or doubts as to their being carried out – with the requirement for evidence firmly placed on claimants – cases can be referred to a Labour Market Decision Maker (LMDM), who may impose a sanction of reduced or suspended welfare payments. These range in length from 3 to 12 to 52 weeks for non-compliance, to more severe measures up to 156 weeks for deliberately leaving work or being fired for misbehaviour, or conduct deemed unacceptable by JobCentre Plus ('JobCentre' hereafter). The harshness of these sanctions attracts academic, media and artistic commentary, but the processes which they govern is what concerns us here.

The 'steps' required are agreed via an Initial Work Search Interview, wherein the claimant is assessed by a Work Coach; guidance suggests this interview 'must include a full diagnosis of the claimant's capability and circumstances',[53] and sets out

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[50] Evelyn Brodkin and Gregory Marston, *Work and the Welfare State: Street Level Organizations and Workfare Politics* (2013).

[51] Department of Work and Pensions, "The Jobseeker's Agreement" (2020b), WhatDoTheyKnow.com. https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/263193/response/641952/attach/4/JSAg%20guidance.pdf?cooki e_passthrough=1 (accessed March 02, 2020). Information here and below is gathered from whatdotheyknow.com, which is the official Freedom of Information Request site for the UK Government, specifically handling queries to the Department of Work and Pensions.

[52] Department of Work and Pensions, "Work Search Reviews" (2015), WhatDoTheyKnow.com. https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/301001/response/742479/attach/html/3/Work%20Search%20Re views.pdf.html (accessed March 04, 2020).

[53] Department of Work and Pensions, "Diagnosis of claimant capacity and circumstances" (2018), Na-tionalCareersservice.gov.uk.

requirements regarding job seeking, the need for evidence and the threat of sanctions. These interviews are repeated either weekly or fortnightly – at the discretion of JobCentre officials – in Work Search Reviews (WSR). These oral interviews assess efforts, demand evidence and prescribe further efforts, and are supplemented by a 'My Work Plan' booklet, which is not entirely mandatory but strongly encouraged, where claimants can fill in plans and keep evidence of actions, or by activity on the 'Find A Job' official website – previously 'Universal JobMatch' – both of which serve to record efforts and results.[54] At these initial and regular interviews, individuals must sign 'Labour Market Declarations' that they are Available for and Actively Seeking Employment; any prior occasions of fraud or previous sanctions are flagged to the officers at each subsequent session by a computerised system.

Significantly, guidelines suggest that job seeking efforts should be 'challenging' and ensure the individual is prescribed an 'active, effective and persistent work-search'.[55] Individuals who are likely to find work may need fewer 'steps' than those who are less likely, who in turn may be prescribed more extensive or onerous job seeking activity; more frequent WSRs are prescribed to those 'further from the labour market'. Claimants have their skills assessed formally and 'barriers to employment' are identified, and claimants are directed to take actions to overcome such hurdles. Yet the interview is also presented as dialogical – claimants are supposed to be drawn into a 'two-way discussion' to foster their commitment to job seeking.

> To help claimants recognise and understand how much they can reasonably be expected to do each week, they should be advised to think about whether they could have actually done more than they actually did.[56]

Strikingly here, psy-science or 'nudges' are re-shaping street-level bureaucracy, as 'work-coaches' are advised to 'conduct the conduct' of claimants. Another series of steps is prescribed before leaving the interview, and will be checked on return, with evidence required. Guidance states these steps should be 'ABCDE': Ambitious, Behavioural, Challenging, Detailed, Evidence Embedded; that is, a precise series of actions, individualised to the claimant, with specific conduct and difficulty involved. If the

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https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/454971/response/1105291/attach/html/7/Diagnosis%20of%20claimant%20capability%20and%20circumstances.pdf.html (accessed March 04, 2020).

[54] Department of Work and Pensions, "Find a job" (2020c), gov.uk. https://www.gov.uk/find-a-job (accessed March 03, 2020). Claimants accounts cannot be accessed by JobCentre staff, but they must prove they have them to prove they have followed prescribed 'steps' in order to retain their benefit:
Department of Work and Pensions, "Jobcentre wants Universal Credit claimant's cv" (2017), WhatDoTheyKnow.com
https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/420642/response/1014843/attach/html/4/Annex%201.pdf.html (accessed March 04, 2020).

[55] Department of Work and Pensions, "The Initial Work Search Review" (2016), WhatDoTheyKnow.com https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/324722/response/802576/attach/html/4/Initial%20Work%20Search%20interview.pdf.html (accessed March 03, 2020).

[56] Department of Work and Pensions, "Work Search Reviews" (2020d), WhatDoTheyKnow.com https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/205952/response/514191/attach/5/Annex%201a.pdf (accessed March 02, 2020).

claimant finds work, the cycle ends, but the very layout of the 'My WorkPlan' booklet implies a relatively long duration; 38 pages to record plans and evidence, with spaces to record half-a-dozen appointments for Work Search Reviews.[57] This booklet formats job seeking into a succession of plans carried out and reported to JobCentres, with tick-boxes for a variety of 'steps' – from having an email address to creating a digital profile – and proffers advice: 'Remember, Jobcentre Plus may be able to help you to establish a work search routine and create a CV.'[58] Furthermore, it reminds claimants of the possibility of sanctions and lists circumstances which must be reported, even being 'away' for a single day.

Thus, job seeking is governed as a circular process of interviews that assesses the claimant, reviews their actions, asks for evidence of efforts, and suggests ways of improving themselves by making future plans, which will be assessed in turn, until employment is found. Both actions and attitudes must be represented, avowed even, exposed to scrutiny and doubt, and future efforts of self-improvement are prescribed. In Bacchi's sense,[59] unemployment is implicitly problematised as a personal failing of character, with returning to work positioned as its solution. A whole plethora of training, re-education and workshops can be mandated by JobCentres, implicitly tutelary, remedial measures.[60] Yet, while surveillance, pressure and coercion are clear here, these interviews also cajole jobseekers into describing themselves as wanting work, inciting them to desire certain futures, enticing them to imagine career trajectories. Rather than taking the welfare office as solely a place of 'discipline and punishment', the Foucauldian analysis of the production of desire is also relevant; each jobseeker is directed to self-reflection to discover their talents and ambitions, their hopes and potential, implicitly hidden within themselves.[61]

Such power-relations are easily recognisable as disciplinary, involving categorising, monitoring, assessing and probing the individual, prescribing specific behavioural remedies and conduct, and involving a range of disciplinary discourses, from psy-science to behavioural economics.[62] Moreover, the processes described above closely follow those of confession: JobCentres and Welfare Offices require certain forms of behavioural compliance and obedience, under the threat of judgement and penance, exposing individuals to poverty and even destitution. The Initial Work Search Interview and frequent Work-Search Reviews require claimants to 'tell the truth about themselves' and undergo scrutiny by auditors, who assess and diagnose them, and press them to

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[57] Department of Work and Pensions, "My Work Plan: What will I do to search for and get work" (2014), WhatDoTheyKnow.com
https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/184115/response/454532/attach/4/WS1%201013.pdf?cookie_passthrough=1 (accessed March 01, 2020).

[58] Ibid., 2.

[59] Carol Bacchi, "The Turn to Problematization: Political Implications of Contrasting Interpretive and Post-structural Adaptations," *Open Journal of Political Science* 5:1 (2015), 1-12.

[60] Del Roy Fletcher & John Flint, "Welfare conditionality and social marginality: The folly of the tutelary state?" *Critical Social Policy* 38:4 (2018), 771–791.

[61] As essential, if not as 'secret' as sexuality perhaps: *History of Sexuality Vol. 1*, 33-35

[62] Friedli and Stearn, "Positive affect as coercive strategy".

reflect more upon themselves to uncover their own faults and identify ways to improve. Contemporary critics of welfare activation point out how individuals are 'responsibilised'[63] for the structural problem of unemployment, but drawing on Foucault, they could equally said to be 'culpabalized', as though not finding work were a sin. Notably, those *less* likely to find employment are subject to more surveillance and prescribed more remedial 'steps', a sort of penitential abacus. Such interventions are not simply intended to 'punish the poor' but attempt to transform them; after each interview, jobseekers are dispatched again into the labour market, hoping for 'salvation' in the form of finding work – yet, in the contemporary economy of short-term contracts and precarity, this penitential process is likely to recur.

The (re)formation of the unemployed into jobseekers, willing workers for any situation whatsoever, has been criticised as state-based 'commodification of labour'.[64] Beyond this, Foucauldian interpretations have highlighted how jobseekers become self-disciplining, absorbing the difficulties of unemployment and presenting themselves as ideal workers.[65] Recognising the adaptation of confessional processes within welfare offices allows us to identify how subjects are 'transformed' through the constant application of subtle pressures, which may be resisted, but the enticement to 'verbalisation' – to speak about the self, to declare oneself a 'good' worker, a genuine 'jobseeker' and not one of the 'real unemployed',[66] adds another dimension. Here we see how the labour market is construed as a test or trial; a 'mode of veridiction' which reveals the worth of each individual. Indeed, this process also involves 'juridiction' – evidence and judgement, and something close to 'medicalisation' or pathologisation and a curative process of transformation, so together deploying the major axes of producing truth in modernity.

The genealogical links between Christian confession and contemporary practices of disciplinary interviews are too complex and numerous to trace, and it is equally important to note the adaptations and hybridisations of confession. Indeed, Foucault notes that while Christian confession meant 'to tell everything in order to efface everything', in modernity these avowals are now 'deposited in an enormous documentary mass'.[67] There are many other salient differences; Jobseeking interviews are indefinite, but not usually interminable, as finding work completes the 'salvation'. More importantly perhaps, this judgement occurs outside the penitential institution through the labour market. Another key element is that JobCentres and other welfare offices require claimants to 'put themselves into discourse', not just by telling the truth about

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[63] Sharon Wright, "Conceptualising the active welfare subject: Welfare reform in discourse, policy and lived experience," *Policy and Politics* 44:2 (2016), 235-252.

[64] See Ian Greer, "Welfare reform, precarity and the re-commodification of labour," *Work, Employment and Society 30*:1 (2016), 162–173; or Chris Grover, "Violent proletarianisation: Social murder, the reserve army of labour and social security 'austerity' in Britain," *Critical Social Policy* 39:3 (2019), 335–355.

[65] Steven Vallas and Emily Cummins, "Personal Branding and Identity Norms in the Popular Business Press: Enterprise Culture in an Age of Precarity," *Organization Studies* 36:3 (2015), 293–319.

[66] Ruth Rogers, "Ethical techniques of the self and the 'good jobseeker,'" in *The Ethics of Welfare: Human Rights, Dependency and Responsibility*, ed. Hartley Dean (2004), 155-172.

[67] Michel Foucault, "Lives of Infamous Men," in *Power Vol 3*, ed. James Faubion (2001), 76-92.

the self – conduct and thoughts – but in terms of future hopes and belief in oneself expressed through job applications and CVs. These are required and monitored by JobCentres but also implore anonymous employers or HR departments, and effectively constitute expressions of faith in the 'virtual auditor' of the labour market.[68]

PROFESSIONAL CVS

Minimally, jobseekers must sign a 'quasi-oath' that they are 'available for and actively seeking work'. More extensively, jobseekers must express their capacity and desire for work via CVs, a profession of faith in themselves and the labour market. Creating a CV is typically required by JobCentres as a 'step' towards finding work, as is uploading them onto digital databases, particularly the state's own 'Find a Job.co.uk' platform. While data-protection laws prevent JobCentre officials from examining these digital records, claimants can be asked to provide evidence that they have created and uploaded CVs.[69]

Alongside its digital hiring-platform, the state also provides CV writing advice via the 'National Career Service website' – to which the JobCentre refers its 'clients'. Although very concise, this advice is broadly consistent with generally circulating 'expertise' on job seeking through popular websites or advice books.[70] Jobseekers are advised to examine themselves, to assess their skills and worth, internalising the anticipated gaze of the labour market, subjecting themselves to the surveillance of a virtual or imagined other. Self-presentation through CVs is partially a matter of self-commodification, representing oneself as the 'right person for the job' while tailoring each application to the specifics of different roles; a dramaturgical task of self-transformation. Additionally, 'gaps in the CV' are to be explained away, preferably through referring to skills or experiences gained during this time:

> If you have gaps in your employment history, you could talk about the skills you gained while you were out of work. When you have a gap in your work history you should give a brief explanation and say what you did during that time.[71]

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[68] *Reformation of Welfare*, 141-166.

[69] Department of Work and Pensions, "Using claimants' own digital device or print-out to provide a CV or work search records" (2019), WhatDoTheyKnow.com.
https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/577867/response/1373732/attach/html/2/FOI2019%2019337%20Reply.pdf.html (accessed, March 03, 2020).

[70] Analysing the circuits of influence here; where ideas about CVs are derived from and how they are adopted and made mainstream is beyond this article, but, probably, the state-level site represents the most normative discourse – regarding digital platforms, see Ifoema Ajunwa and Daniel Greene, "Platforms at Work: Automated Hiring Platforms and Other New Intermediaries in the Organization of Work," in *Work and Labor in the Digital Age*, ed. Steven Vallas & Anne Kovalainen (2019), 61-91.

[71] National Careers Service, "How to fill out an Application form" (2020a), NationalCareersservice.gov.uk. https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/careers-advice/application-forms (accessed March 10, 2020). This is the official government advice portal, there are many equivalents, see below.

However, if the jobseeker has been made redundant or fired due to misconduct, they are instructed to avow this as a personal failing, explain the circumstances at the time, and indicate how they have spent their time since – with the implication that 'gaining skills' would be a productive activity. Thus, unemployment is represented as a fault which must be confessed to the JobCentre, but either glossed-over or explained away on a CV.

However, where individuals have been dismissed, they are instructed to explain the circumstances, acknowledge their own fault – for instance, if dismissed for poor performance, jobseekers are advised to explain why their 'standards dropped'.[72] Whatever the case, a cover letter should explain 'what you have learned from the situation [and] how you have improved since'.[73] Such experiences are considered faults to be avowed, through scrutinising and interpreting one's own conduct, representing or verbalising it, and professing some sort of personal transformation since the event: Disavowing the past self is warrant of future good conduct, and that in turn is guaranteed by the applicant 'telling the truth' about themselves. By narrating their employment history in application letters thusly, the jobseeker acknowledges past wrong-doing but claims to have been transformed – perhaps by the JobCentre – and expresses their hope to work again, to be redeemed.

While the repetition of Work Search Reviews most closely resembles penance, there is more to confession than putting the self into discourse by revealing sin. Interestingly, sin is etymologically related to debt, and welfare activation implies a continuous indebtedness – receiving benefits is conditional on certain behaviour. Rather than a welfare 'entitlement', the conditional and quasi-contractual support given to the unemployed is closer to a 'debt' – implicitly a sin – to be expiated through job-seeking efforts and finding work. Rather than a 'market-exchange' between equals, welfare-payments appear as investments which create power-relations with requirements for indefinite efforts – 'all that can reasonably done' – an unlimited duty of obedience and efforts to transform the self.

Furthermore, the thread of Christian thinking within contemporary economic life links debt and credit, doubt and self-belief: '…the experience of a debt that, through the gift of grace, does not need to be repaid but that, as such, need be administered in the form of an investment'.[74] Thus, alongside the penitential avowal of unemployment, the jobseeker must repeatedly declare their faith in themselves and in the labour market via the form of CVs and job applications. Even the plans recursively recorded in the My Work Plan booklet express hope – the faith required by capitalism. Participation in the

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[72] National Careers Service, "How to answer common interview questions" (2020b), NationalCareersservice.gov.uk.
https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/careers-advice/top-10-interview-questions (accessed, March 10, 2020).
[73] Ibid.
[74] "Debt Economy and Faith," 13.

economy requires actions and choices which exhibit hope that labour markets will reward 'investments' in the self, acquiring human capital or job seeking activity.[75]

Of course, this is a considerably secularised, modernised and hybridised incarnation of confession, and just one element within the general assemblage of the governmentality of welfare. Nevertheless, confession provides a crucial model of 'transforming the self by telling the truth about the self'. Perhaps initially, these seem to be limited to the quasi-panoptic arena of JobCentres, but just as Foucault argued that prisons and asylums constitute and sequester criminality and insanity, so, too, JobCentres and the treatment of the unemployed as a 'residuum' of failed labourers serve to normalise job-seekers across the labour market – even job-changers or school-leavers who never actually claim welfare entitlements.[76] Historically, workhouse discipline was deliberately harsh to ensure it was a last resort, and similarly the strictures of the JobCentre may motivate people to avoid it. However, as a 'transitional institution' through which increasing numbers of jobseekers pass, the normalising discipline within it may shape very many subjects, the labour market and society as a whole.

To illustrate this, it is worth examining the broader spectrum of advice; the 'National Careers Service' cited above condenses generalised popular CV advice.[77] Through extensive examination of advice books and on-line content analysis, what clearly emerges is the idea that unemployment must be overcome through personal improvement:

> Many jobseekers send out dozens of application without getting a single interview. They complain bitterly about their lack of success but the fault often lies in their own hands.[78]

Suggested strategies to gain work include better self-presentation, to be developed through more thorough self-reflection, discerning skills and aptitudes which will be worthwhile to employers – internalising the perspective of the employer. Various tactics of networking or retraining are suggested, with any gaps to be effaced:

> If you have long gaps in your employment history or you are re-entering the job market or changing the focus of your career, a cover letter can explain these circumstances in a positive way.[79]

Such guides often recognise job-seeking and CV writing as intrinsically difficult activities:

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[75] Rowena Pecchenino, "Have we cause for despair?" *Journal of Behavioural and Experimental Economics* 58:3 (2015), 56-62.

[76] *Security, Territory, Population*, 61-63.

[77] Both on-line and off-line job seeking advice is analysed at length by Gershon, *Down and Out in the New Economy*.

[78] Jennifer Johnson, *The Job Application Handbook* (1993), 6.

[79] Katherine Hansen and Randall Hansen, *Dynamic Cover Letters* (1990), 2.

No-one wants to write a CV. On the list of things we 'want' to do, it comes just above hitting yourself on the head with a hammer, and in part that is because of the self-analysis involved.[80]

The poverty, anxiety and pressure from welfare offices upon the unemployed are not mentioned; instead the difficulty is 'self-analysis', the hard work of subjectification or soul-searching.

While, outside the welfare system, CVs are not produced through the disciplinary power of Work Search Reviews or with the threat of sanctions, there are elements of the confessional nonetheless: Jobseekers are instructed to gather all necessary details about themselves, which may be legal or factual, but this inescapably becomes a matter of self-scrutiny. Education and employment are central here, but correct information must be supplemented with an encoding of how the 'self' has acquired skills and achieved various goals – formatting the self as Koopman suggested. Thus, the accretion of experiences over time is translated into a 'career trajectory', and actual labour is rendered into a series of 'accomplishments'. Perhaps every second word here deserves scare quotes to indicate that these classifications and categorisations are discursively produced by these texts rather than neutral descriptions of reality. Most guides suggest that readers are too modest or brief in describing themselves, that they need to scrutinise themselves to identify their skills and qualities, or even their 'unique selling point'. Furthermore, these efforts are implicitly limitless: 'Your CV is a living, breathing document and the primary CV you so carefully developed is never really finished'.[81] Like confession, CV-writing is recursive and implicitly interminable.

Insofar as jobseekers are transformed through disciplinary practices and incited to self-verbalisation via a CV, life itself is transformed into a career, an 'enterprise of the self'. By writing about oneself as a set of skills, an accumulation of 'human capital' or as a 'business solution', something like commodification of human life as labour occurs. However, the form of confession here also draws our attention to how unemployment is avowed as a personal failing to be overcome through introspection and judgement; the 'internalisation of the gaze' of the market. The peculiar passive voice of CVs, 'works well in a team' or 'shows initiative', may express the adoption of the evaluation of the self in terms of market criteria.[82] Yet this is not simply a strategic theatrical display of whatever characteristics are supposedly valued by employers – from project-work to being a 'business solution'.[83] Such 'pristine' documents conceal the efforts of self-discipline as a jobseeker, never mention numerous failed applications and omit the struggle of forming life into a career. Discourse is never neutrally pragmatic, and the technique of putting the self into discourse is not straightforward and simple – presenting oneself via a CV involves either obedience to the JobCentre or becoming an abbot or spiritual director to

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[80] Martin Yates, *Ultimate CV: Over 100 Winning CVs to Help You Get the Interview and the Job* (2015), 1.

[81] Ibid., 78.

[82] Randall Popken, "The Pedagogical Dissemination of a Genre: The Resume in American Business Discourse Textbooks, 1914–1939," *Journal of Composition Theory* 19:1 (1999), 91–116.

[83] See Boltanski and Chiapello, *The New Spirit of Capitalism* or Gershon, "Hailing the US jobseeker".

oneself, internalising a relentless scrutiny of the self; 'For the price of pardon is as infinite as the pardon itself'.[84] Repeated confessions, relentless CV work, limitless dedication to career and ambitions are required, even of the successful.

Moreover, these documents are expressions of desire for work and faith in oneself as a valuable worker, which are professed to the broad labour market. While job seeking and even crafting CVs occurs under pressure in WorkSearch Reviews, the ultimate auditor and judge of the worth of the individual is effectively the market, the invisible hand of providence.[85] Yet this is not passive faith but requires active job search, with 'self-belief' and engagement with difficulties; another theological inflection to the economy: 'Rather, every Christian will be called upon to regard life as nothing but a test'.[86] For those who have undergone redundancy or unemployment and had their CV re-written in the 'workshops' of the welfare office, the CV is also a form of confession, an admission of past suffering, but also an account of 'conversion'; how the individual has transformed themselves and renewed their faith in the labour market.[87] Tellingly, every job-application is sent 'in good faith' with 'hopes of success' in an indefinite process of self-testing, continuously submitting oneself to the judgement of the labour market as the only real veridiction of personal worth; a trial of truth-telling and self-transformation. While doubts assail those who are frequently turned down, every new CV is composed in hope, and jobseekers are required to persist indefinitely; actively and genuinely seeking work, exactly the ILO definition of unemployment.

CONCLUSION

Understanding contemporary governmentality can augment a recognition of how older practices – confession, involving avowal, profession and even penance – inflect more recent and supposedly secular processes; welfare activation, job seeking and CV writing.[88] Perhaps welfare activation reflects 'evidence-based' policy, yet its governmental model is at least partially inspired by pastoral power and assumes the possibility of transforming individuals by putting them to the test. While CVs may seem trivial or strategic, they approximate what Foucault describes as a spiritual exercise: 'It postulates that for the subject to have the right of access to the truth he must be changed, transformed, shifted, and become to some extent and up to a certain point, other than himself'.[89] The Jobseeker knows themselves through avowing their unemployment to welfare officers, writing about themselves, having that truth verified by employers via the labour market – often interminably.

Insofar as a job application or CV is more than just an advertisement for the self, especially where produced through interviews which avow unemployment, it contrib-

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[84] *Government of the Living*, 133.
[85] Agamben, *Kingdom and the Glory*, 277-285.
[86] *Hermeneutics of the Subject,* 464.
[87] Purser and Hennigan, "Disciples and Dreamers".
[88] See Schwarzkopf, *The Routledge Handbook of Economic Theology*.
[89] *Hermeneutics of the Subject,* 15.

utes to governmentality 'understood in the larger sense as a means of forming, transforming and directing the conduct of individuals'.[90] Within this perspective, the subject is malleable and transformable, not just once, but constantly, interminably, and as market circumstances require. While scholars since Nietzsche have critiqued the idea of the essential self, the conception of the malleable self as conceived by governmentalizing and pastoral powers might equally be considered as discursively produced and entangled in power-relations. Shifting from the personalised CV to a mere list of skills and human capital[91] could help reduce this internalisation of protean selfhood in an effort to be 'governed less'.

Beyond diagnosis, what counter-conducts work against the governmentalising power of CVs? Abstention from the labour market? Informal networks? Resisting careerism through caring? Perhaps the idea of the world as a test might be problematised and resisted; rather than taking labour market outcomes as verifying truth or worth, they could be taken as random or socially structured. Yet, with what alternatives? And how could we know our worth or indeed ourselves without tests? Should social life be interpreted as the 'scene of a trial' in everlasting tests?[92] Even the capacity to critique and problematise is now a test of worth. The modern idea of tests and truth-telling as a mode of transforming individual lives could be approached through Foucault's suggestion that we should not discover but 'resist' who we are and the technologies which create us – like welfare interviews and CVs. Rather than evaluating ourselves through individualising tests, there might be social, collective tests of solidarity and reciprocity. One simple place to begin is by not putting jobseekers to the test but accepting unemployment as socially generated, reproduced by growth which is ecologically unsustainable, and therefore requiring generous support – unconditional welfare entitlements.

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[90] *Wrong-Doing, Truth Telling*, 23.

[91] Ofer Sharone, *Flawed System/Flawed Self: Job Searching and Unemployment Experiences* (2013).

[92] Luc Boltanski, *On Critique: Towards a Sociology of Emancipation* (2011), 25.

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ARTICLE

The Carnival of the Mad: Foucault's Window into the Origin of Psychology

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ABSTRACT. Foucault's participation in the 1954 carnival of the mad at an asylum in Switzerland marked the beginning of his critical reflections on the origins of psychology. The event revealed a paradox at the heart of psychology to Foucault, for here was an asylum known for its progressive method and groundbreaking scientific research that was somehow still exhibiting traces of a medieval conception of madness. Using the cultural expression of this carnival as a starting place, this paper goes beyond carnival costumes to uncover the historical structures underneath the discipline of modern psychology. Drawing on Foucault's earliest works in psychology, his 1954 *Mental Illness and Personality*, his 1954 "Dream, Existence and Imagination," his 1957 "Scientific Research and Psychology" and briefly his 1961 *History of Madness*, I will describe the discrepancy between the *theory* of modern psychology, which finds its heritage in the methods of modern science, and the *practice* of modern psychology, which finds its heritage in the classical age. I will argue that this division helps make sense of unexplained psychological phenomena, as seen in general practices related to artistic expression, and individual experiences, as seen in the presence of guilt and the resistance to medical diagnosis in patients.

Keywords: Foucault, madness, psychology, mental illness, carnival

INTRODUCTION

On March 2, 1954, Michel Foucault, at the age of twenty-seven, situated himself on the side of a street in a small town in Switzerland to view an unusual parade. Here, he found a grand assortment of people marching by and sporting all sorts of costumes and masks. Some had large full-headed masks complete with enormous ears and long, pointy noses.

Others had carefully painted smaller masks with cone shaped hats or crowns on their heads.

FIGURE 1: CARNIVAL PROCESSION. PHOTO COURTESY OF ÉDITIONS EHESS.

One man in the crowd strode by wearing a massive elephant head with a protruding trunk. Foucault might have done a double take at another man who appeared to be walking backwards; in fact, the man had placed his clothes and mask on backwards to produce this illusion!

FIGURE 2: BACKWARDS MAN. PHOTO COURTESY OF ÉDITIONS EHESS.

There were even children joining in the event: one young boy was riding a small wooden wagon being pulled by an adult wearing a long dress and a large mask while carrying an umbrella and a basket. Foucault certainly noted the signature piece of the parade: the giant straw mannequin representing the king of the carnival, which was loaded onto a cart by at least four people and pulled along with the procession. At the end of the day, Foucault found a large fire used to sacrifice the figure of the carnival king and to allow the participants to toss in their own masks to burn along with it.[1]

FIGURE 3: KING OF THE CARNIVAL. PHOTO COURTESY OF ÉDITIONS EHESS.

FIGURE 4: KING OF THE CARNIVAL IN CART. PHOTO COURTESY OF ÉDITIONS EHESS.

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[1] Didier Eribon, *Michel Foucault* [1989] (1992), 46.

This was no ordinary carnival-parade (*Fasnachts-Umzug*) but was composed of the patients from the local psychiatric asylum in the town of Münsterlingen. The patients were allowed to leave the asylum for this one day in order to parade down the streets of the city. Before the event, the patients had carefully "made their own costumes and masks," as Elisabetta Basso reports, and now they had the opportunity to show them off to others.[2] Extending to over thirty buildings in length, the parade included not only the patients but also the caregivers and townspeople from the city and nearby areas who wanted to participate as spectators or parade marchers.[3]
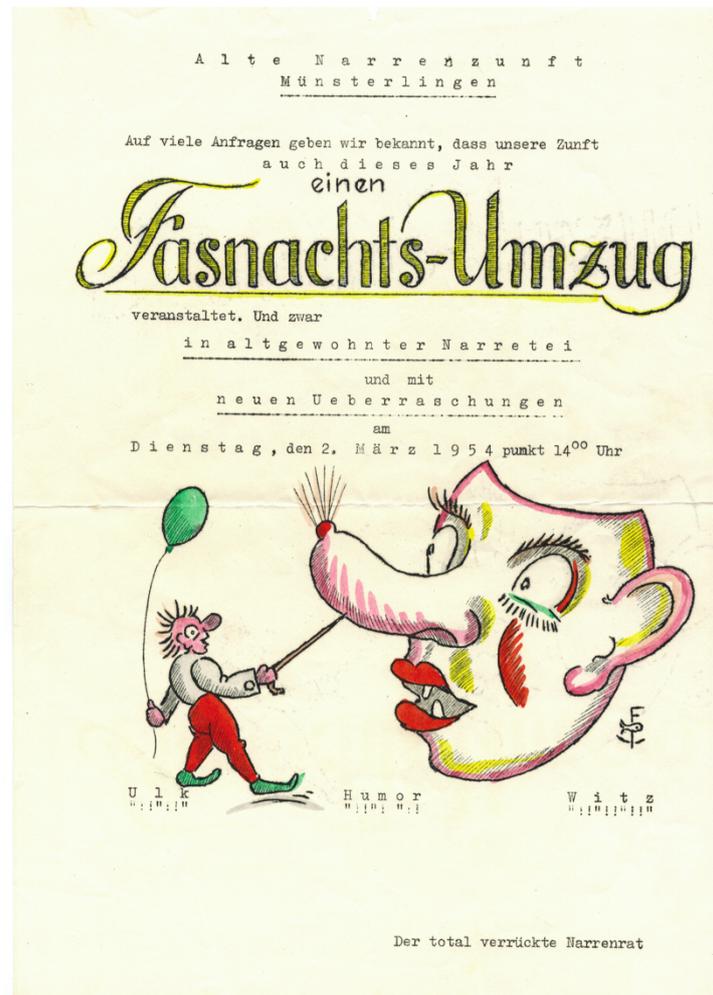
FIGURE 5: CARNIVAL FLYER. PHOTO COURTESY OF ÉDITIONS EHESS.

There was also the famous psychiatrist, Roland Kuhn, who joined in the procession with a crown on his head. The distinctions between the patients and the caregivers were broken down or even "abolished for a time," as Jean-François Bert writes, because costumes took

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[2] Elisabetta Basso, "Complicités et ambivalences de la psychiatrie: Münsterlingen et la carnaval des fous de 1954," *Medecine sciences* 33:1 (2017), 102: "Le cortège carnavalesque … le 2 mars 1954 est constitué par les malades qui ont fabriqué eux-mêmes les costumes et leurs propres masques." Unless noted otherwise, all translations in this article are mine.

[3] Jean-François Bert, "Retour à Münsterlingen," in *Foucault à Münsterlingen. À l'origine de l'Histoire de la folie*, ed. Jean-François Bert and Elisabetta Basso (2015), 21.

the place of the usual clothes that set them apart.[4] It was a day where the lines were blurred between the mad and the not mad, the abnormal and the normal, the sick and the healthy.

Foucault attended the carnival with his friends, including Jacqueline Verdeaux, who took forty-five photographs of the event. Recently, these photos have been published in France in a collection of articles on the carnival and related subjects entitled *Foucault at Münsterlingen: At the Origin of the* History of Madness (*Foucault à Münsterlingen. À l'origine de l'*Histoire de la folie). In his review, Sverre Raffnsøe calls this volume "compulsory reading" and praises the impressive amount of "historical illustrations and documents" that it contains.[5] Despite this laudatory review, the findings of this book are still widely unknown in English scholarship.

This paper hopes to bring awareness to this important collection by pairing its insights with Foucault's earliest works in psychology: his 1954 *Mental Illness and Personality* (*Maladie mentale et personnalité*), his 1954 "Dream, Existence and Imagination" (An Introduction to Ludwig Binswanger's *Dream and Existence*), his 1957 "Scientific Research and Psychology" ("La recherche scientifique et la psychologie") and briefly his 1961 *History of Madness*. Through this study, we will see that Foucault's participation in the 1954 carnival of the mad marked the beginning of his critical reflections on the origin of psychology. Using the cultural expression of this carnival as a starting place, this paper goes beyond carnival costumes to uncover some of the historical structures underneath the discipline of modern psychology. To begin, I will articulate how the carnival can serve as a window into the origin of psychology. Next, I will explore what hidden structures are revealed and how they point to a deep division in psychology. Lastly, I will show how this division makes sense of unexplained psychological phenomena, as seen in general practices related to artistic expression, and individual experiences, as seen in the presence of guilt and the resistance to medical diagnosis in patients.

Due to his change in methods over the years, some scholars argue that Foucault's early works in psychology should be disregarded as a "false start."[6] However, by tracing the themes from these early works, including his unpublished notes, to his later works, it becomes clear that the questions raised here remain central issues for Foucault in all of his writings.[7] In particular, Foucault refers to the carnival event throughout his life, as I will

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[4] Bert, "Retour à Münsterlingen," 22: "Les différences vestimentaires entre soignants et soignés sont pour un temps abolies."

[5] Sverre Raffnsøe, "A page of unpublished history; A Review of: Jean-Francois Bert and Elisabetta Basso (eds.), *Foucault à Münsterlingen; À l'origine de l'Histoire de la folie, Avec des photographies de Jacqueline Verdeaux," Foucault Studies* 21 (2016), 260.

[6] Alan Sheridan, *Michel Foucault: The Will to Truth* (1990), 195.

[7] See, for example, the arguments in: Elisabetta Basso, "À propos d'un cours inédit de Michel Foucault sur l'analyse existentielle de Ludwig Binswanger (Lille 1953-54)," *Revue de synthèse* 137:6 (2016), 35-59; Elisabetta Basso, "Foucault's Critique of the Human Sciences in the 1950s: Between Psychology and Philosophy," *Theory, Culture & Society* (2020), 1-20; Béatrice Han-Pile, "Phenomenology and Anthropology in Foucault's 'Introduction to Binswanger's Dream and Existence': A Mirror Image of The Order of Things?," *History and Theory* 54 (2016), 7-22.

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show in the next section, and, while the application of these reflections changes with the phases of his thought, it is evident that the experience continued to have a profound effect on him. Furthermore, scholars have also criticized Foucault as being too antagonistic toward psychology, making him not "a particularly helpful guide" for psychiatric practitioners.[8] But, as I will demonstrate, by exposing the roots of psychology, Foucault's work becomes a necessary and relevant perspective for contemporary concerns in mental health.

With regard to terms, throughout this paper, my use of "modern" refers to various psychological approaches which originated in the nineteenth century and have continued up to the present time. Although psychological practices have undergone changes, Foucault finds that there is a kind of unity to them which he places under one particular "consciousness of madness" which characterizes the modern times.[9] Secondly, while I claim that this study reveals key "structures at the origin of psychology," this is not an exhaustive account; in other words, there are many other factors which have contributed to the construction of the modern discipline of psychology. However, the structures discussed here fill in a gap, often overlooked, that need to be addressed in mental healthcare. And third, I will be primarily using the term, "psychology," meaning the general study and care for the mental capacities and affected behaviors of the human, because Foucault tends to see "psychology" as the broader discipline which encompasses "psychiatry," with its focus on specific medical treatments, and "psychopathology," with its focus on the abnormal effects of the disorders.

A. THE CARNIVAL AS A WINDOW

Foucault's attendance at the carnival came after several years of study and work in psychology. He obtained his *licence* in psychology in 1949 while also teaching psychology classes and working at the Hôpital Sainte-Anne around this same time. In 1952, while working at the *Université de Lille*, he received a *Diplôme de psycho-pathologie* from the *Institut de psychologie*.[10] During this time of psychological work and training, he was personally invited, along with Jacqueline Verdeaux, by the psychiatrist Roland Kuhn to Münsterlingen to attend the carnival in 1954.[11] And it appears that it was here, building on thoughts already brewing, that he began to question the traditional narrative given about the origin of psychology.

The traditional narrative describes how modern psychology has progressed beyond the use of any kind of mystical or spiritual explanation for madness and, instead, has discovered that madness is simply a health condition, labelled as a mental illness, which can

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[8] Peter Barham, "Foucault and the Psychiatric Practitioner," in *Rewriting the History of Madness: Studies in Foucault's 'Histoire de la folie'*, ed. Arthur Still and Irving Velody (1992), 49.

[9] Michel Foucault, *History of Madness* [1961] (2006), 169-170.

[10] Eribon, *Michel Foucault*, 42, 48.

[11] See the letter exchange here: Bert, "Retour à Münsterlingen," 46-47.

be scientifically identified and diagnosed. Foucault later summarizes this well in the opening to his new chapter that he adds to his 1962 *Mental Illness and Psychology*:

> And all histories of psychiatry up to the present day have set out to show that the madman of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance was simply an unrecognized mentally ill patient [*un malade ignoré*], trapped within a tight network of religious and magical significations. According to this view, it was only with the arrival of the calm, objective, scientific gaze of modern medicine that what had previously been regarded as supernatural perversion was seen as a deterioration of nature.[12]

Those that were labeled mad in the past were thought to be under the powers of strange religious and magical forces, but we now know that they were actually patients or sick people (*les malades*) who were suffering from undiagnosed medical conditions. The advance of science, with its objectivity and reliability, claims to provide biological accounts of disorders leaving behind the old spiritual explanations.

In fact, the asylum at Münsterlingen exemplified the latest scientific progress in mid-twentieth century psychiatry with the use of diagnostic tests according to inkblot patterns, developed by Hermann Rorschach, and the introduction of the first antidepressant medication, developed by Roland Kuhn.[13] And yet, each year, in plain sight, the asylum hosted this event drawing on non-scientific ideas from medieval carnival traditions. Perhaps while watching the parade go by, Foucault asked the following question, as Bert writes: "How can an asylum, where science and rationality reign and that is now on the forefront of experiential research, each year for the day of Mardi-Gras perpetuate a ritual which finds a large part of its origin in the depths of the Middle Ages?"[14] In other words, if madness is only a disorder to be medically controlled and fixed, why is there this fascination on the part of both the patients and the surrounding community with the strangeness and mysteriousness of madness? Does the carnival tell us something about a missing or hidden element of modern psychology?

Foucault answers, "Yes," to this last question and believes that the fascination with the mystical side of madness arises out of a part of history that is often covered up but not completely gone. Foucault links the carnivals at psychiatric hospitals to the medieval feast of fools (*fête des fous*) to demonstrate how these two events reveal deep historical truths.[15] In a series of radio interviews about ten years after Münsterlingen, Foucault clearly draws the connection: "And by a strange paradox, by a strange return, we organize for them [the patients], around them, with them, a whole parade, with dance and mask, a whole

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[12] Foucault, *Mental Illness and Psychology* [1962] (1987), 64; French: Foucault, *Maladie mentale et psychologie* [1962] (2015), 76.

[13] Basso, "Complicités et ambivalences de la psychiatrie," 99-100. I use the term "psychiatry" here because it refers specifically to the use of medical practices and treatments.

[14] Bert, "Retour à Münsterlingen," 20: "Comment un asile où règnant la science et la rationalité et qui est alors à la pointe de la recherche expérimentale peut-il, chaque année pour le jour de Mardi gras, perpétuer un rituel qui trouve une grande partie de son origine au plus profond du Moyen Âge?"

[15] The phrase "fête des fous" itself was probably not used at the carnival of Münsterlingen. See Yann Dahhaoui, "La fête des fous de Michel Foucault," in Bert and Basso, *Foucault à Münsterlingen*, 246n7.

carnival, which is in the strict sense of the term a new feast of fools."[16] The new feast of fools, for Foucault, represents a paradox at the heart of psychology, as we will discuss fully in the next section, and which can be traced back to the old medieval feast. The first observances of the feast of fools are found in the twelfth century, and, although there were variations in its practices, it generally included an exchange of positions where the higher ranked clergy would switch places with the lower ranked clergy and was celebrated during the few days after Christmas.[17] The festival was repeatedly condemned by the church due to inappropriate and blasphemous behavior that may have taken place, although some have argued that the rumors were worse than the actual events.[18]

Nevertheless, for Foucault, the stories of these medieval festivals, both the true and the fictional, are linked to the roots of the carnival of the mad. They represent a "strange return" to the past, as he remarks in his radio interview, that brings attention to something deep in the human experience; the dancing, the masks, and the changing of social positions are all characteristics of both events, shedding light on the human need for such expressions. Foucault writes in *History of Madness* that the "theatrical events" of the medieval feast of fools were one way which "brings everyone back to their own truth," i.e., to reveal something deep inside themselves.[19] In the same way, the carnival of the mad explains how our understanding of mental illness arises out of this same history, the history that we have created. Foucault concludes his radio talk with the following: "Maybe it is us who have invented entirely this feast of fools, this feast for the fools, this feast with the fools …"[20] We cannot ignore the carnival of the mad, because even in a partial reenactment of it, we discover the ways that we have invented it for the patients and for ourselves out of our own history.

In 1975, Foucault further reflects on these carnivals in an article entitled "Faire les fous" first published in *Le Monde*. After reviewing a recent film depicting life in a local mental asylum, he writes:

> … it makes me think particularly of these feasts of fools as it still existed only a few years ago in certain hospitals in Germany and Switzerland: on the day of the carnival, the mad put on costumes and had a masked parade down the streets, feeling some embarrassed curiosity and some fear of the spectators. This was the only day where we permitted the mad to leave [the hospitals], it was for laughing, for fooling around [*pour faire les fous*].[21]

[16] Michel Foucault, "La folie et la fête," first of five radio interviews under the title, "L'usage de la parole. Les languages de la folie," January 7, 1963, audio, 29:40: "Et par un étrange paradoxe, par un étrange retour, on organise pour eux, autour d'eux, avec eux, tout un défilé, avec danse et masque, tout un carnaval qui est au sens strict du terme une nouvelle fête des fous." This quote is also transcribed in Bert, "Retour à Münsterlingen," 12.

[17] Dahhaoui, "La fête des fous de Michel Foucault," 236-238.

[18] See Max Harris, *Sacred Folly: A New History of the Feast of Fools* (2014).

[19] Foucault, *History of Madness*, 13.

[20] Foucault, "La folie et la fête," 36:57: "Peut-être est-ce nous qui l'avons inventée entièrement cette fête des fous, cette fête pour les fous, cette fête avec les fous …"

[21] Michel Foucault, "Faire les fous" [1975], in *Dits et écrits I. 1954–1975* (2001), 1:1672–3: "Mais le film de René Féret, dans sa très grande beauté et rigueur, me fait penser surtout à ces fêtes de fous, comme il

As Foucault remarks here, this carnival was not just an annual tradition at the asylum of Münsterlingen but was something that took place in many hospitals in Germany and Switzerland.[22] The repeated incidents show that this singular day, where we allow the mad to leave the hospitals, must speak to us about our view of madness. Foucault is playing on the phrase *faire les fous*, which literally means the "making of the mad" but is usually an idiom for "fooling around" in order to have a good time. The carnival of the mad is both for having fun with the mad while at the same time creating their identity through the festive practices.

Foucault's experience at the carnival of the mad provoked questions about the history of psychology which he continued to pursue years after the event. Drawing the link between the feast of fools and the carnival of the mad, Foucault argues that the carnival of the mad proves a revelatory event in human history, particularly the history of madness. The carnival gives us a glimpse into the kind of "making of the mad" that is happening in our modern times, and it forces us to look to the historical structures that give rise to this creation of madness.

B. THE HIDDEN STRUCTURES BEHIND THE CARNIVAL

To discover the deep historical structures of psychology, we must begin by addressing some preliminary concerns right on the surface: first, the problem in the relationship between illness and mental illness, and second, the problem in the paradoxical experience of the individual patient. After investigating these two superficial issues, we will then be able to uncover the real theory and practice behind psychology and see the division between them.

Beginning with the first concern, we start by asking about the nature of the relationship between illness and mental illness and whether or not we can use the same language for all types of illness. These are the questions that plagued Foucault in the years leading up to the 1954 carnival, as seen in the opening to his book *Mental Illness and Personality* (*Maladie mentale et personnalité*) published that same year.[23] It is important to note that Foucault republished this book with significant revisions in 1962 under a new title, *Mental Illness and Psychology*.[24] We will be primarily looking at the 1954 version in the first part of this section, and I will make a note if there were any changes in the 1962 version.

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en existait encore, il y a peu d'années, dans certains hôpitaux d'Allemagne et de Suisse : le jour du carnaval, les fous se déguisaient et faisaient un défilé de masques dans les rues : curiosité gênée , un peu effrayée des spectateurs : le seul jour où on permettait aux fous de sortir, c'était pour rire, pour faire les fous." Thanks to Philipp Rosemann for discussion on this passage.

[22] There are various traces of other carnivals in the archives of the asylums. See Basso, "Complicités et ambivalences de la psychiatrie," 102.

[23] Foucault was working on the content of this book in the years 1952-1953 according to his list of writing projects that he made in May or June of 1953. This list also includes his introduction to Binswanger's *Dream and Existence* that we will discuss shortly. See Eribon, *Michel Foucault*, 63.

[24] For helpful lists of the some of the changes between these two versions, see James W. Bernauer, *Michel Foucault's Force of Flight: Toward an Ethics for Thought* (1992), 185-187; Stuart Elden, "The changes between Maladie mentale et personnalité (1954) and Maladie mentale et psychologie (1962)," Progressive

The opening to this early book asks the following two questions: "Under what conditions can one speak of illness in the psychological domain? What relations can one define between the facts of mental pathology and those of organic pathology?"[25] To answer these critical questions prior to his experience at the carnival, Foucault looks to specific methods, such as existential, phenomenological, psychoanalytic and Marxist methods, to try to understand the discrepancies between organic pathology and mental pathology. Although these methods may not have proved satisfactory in the end, at this point, he knows that something else is needed because conflating the notions of the organic and the mental was simply not working. He writes this in his opening chapter: "So one can accept at first sight neither an abstract parallel nor an extensive unity between the phenomena of mental pathology and this of organic pathology."[26] Rather than using an abstract parallelism, where unjustified lines of connection are drawn between the methods in general medicine with those in pathology, or an extensive unity, where we conflate the two and say that both the organic and mental are part of one and the same thing, we must see, as Foucault argues, that "mental pathology requires methods of analysis different from those of organic pathology."[27] When we try to use the same methods in both areas, we end up unable to offer a full account of mental illness; this recognition compels us to admit that the conventional account of psychology is incomplete.

Secondly, another surface-level problem in psychology is the paradoxical experience of the individual. Foucault sets up the paradoxical structure of the patient's experience toward the end of this early book on mental illness:

> The contemporary world makes schizophrenia possible, not because its *techniques* render it inhuman and abstract, but because *man makes such use of his techniques* that man can no longer recognize himself in it. Only the real conflict of the conditions of existence *can account for the paradoxical structure* of the schizophrenic world.[28]

Geographies. https://progressivegeographies.com/resources/foucault-resources/the-changes-between-maladie-mentale-et-personnalite-1954-and-maladie-mentale-et-psychologie-1962/ (Accessed June 1, 2021)

[25] Foucault, *Maladie mentale et personnalité* (1954), 1. Translation from Foucault, *Mental Illness and Psychology*, 1. These opening questions remain the same in the 1954 and 1962 versions.

[26] *Maladie mentale et personnalité*, 16. Translation from *Mental Illness and Psychology*, 13 (1962 French version: 16). This statement is the same in the 1954 and the 1962 versions.

[27] *Maladie mentale et personnalité*, 12; Translation: 10. Again, this is the same in the 1954 and the 1962 versions.

[28] *Maladie mentale et personnalité*, 89: "Le monde contemporain rend possible la schizophrénie, non parce que ses techniques le rendent inhumain et abstrait; mais parce que l'homme fait de ses techniques, un tel usage que l'homme lui-même ne peut plus s'y reconnaître. Seul le conflit réel des conditions d'existence peut rendre compte de la structure paradoxale du monde schizophrénique." My italics in the text represent the phrases that were later changed in the 1962 version. Here is the 1962 version: "The contemporary world makes schizophrenia possible, not because its *events* render it inhuman and abstract, but because *our culture reads the world in such a way* that man himself cannot recognize himself in it. Only the real conflict of the conditions of existence *may serve as a structural model for the paradoxes* of the schizophrenic world" (*Mental Illness and Psychology*, 84; French: 100-101). Foucault changes "techniques" to

The modern world places constraints around the real world and makes use of these constraints to shape the meaning of a mental illness, such as schizophrenia. These boundaries keep the schizophrenic world separate from the real world such that a "man [with schizophrenia] can no longer recognize himself" here and can no longer find his identity in society. Such a person has gone "beyond reality" and is "unable to feel at home in this world."[29] The modern way of redefining the world leaves no welcoming space or even space in general for someone who struggles with schizophrenia. And yet, the conditions of existence *of the world* are what define the mental illness as being *outside of the world*; the constraints themselves are part of this world showing that the mental illness must be part of it too. This creates the paradox where the man with schizophrenia becomes a "stranger in a real world" who feels both in the world and pushed outside of the world at the same time.[30]

With the problems in the relationship between medicine and mental illness and with the conflict between conditions of the redefined world and the patient's experience, Foucault had already placed his finger on something paradoxical in psychology before his experience at the carnival and was trying to find the paradox in the truth of the human. But after witnessing the mental patients as "strangers" erupting "in the real world" at the carnival, he moved beyond trying to use particular methods to explain the human on its own to a more historically situated analysis of psychology as a whole. Perhaps it was the intensity of this carnival that finally pushed him to question the actual discipline of psychology after seeing that none of these methods offered a full explanation for the event and, thus, for the phenomena of mental illness. He changes his opening thesis in his book on *Mental Illness* from saying that he will find the root of pathology "in a reflection on man himself" (1954) to stating that he will find it "in a certain relation, historically situated, of man to the madman [*l'homme fou*] and to the true man [*l'homme vrai*]" (1962).[31] It is a shift from searching for psychology's origin in the essence of the human to seeking it in the dynamic relationship between the madman (*l'homme fou*) and the true man (*l'homme vrai*), between madness and humanity. James Bernauer puts it well, "His earlier work called into question the relation between mental illness and psychology's abstract view of man, as implied in the employment of the category of 'personality.' His later work is not calling into question an element or a tendency of psychology but the very field itself."[32] Foucault broadens his scope here from looking at the paradoxical experience of the patient to the contradictory nature of the field of psychology itself.

"events" and "man makes use of techniques" to "culture reads the world" to show his later preference for a more historically situated approach to madness as we will discuss in a moment.

[29] *Maladie mentale et personnalité*, 88, 89. Translation: 84 (French: 100). These phrases are the same in the 1954 and the 1962 versions.

[30] *Maladie mentale et personnalité*, 89. Translation: 84 (French: 100). This phrase is the same in the 1954 and the 1962 versions.

[31] *Maladie mentale et personnalité*, 2: "dans une réflexion sur l'homme lui-même"; *Mental Illness and Psychology*, 2; French: *Maladie mentale et psychologie*, 2.

[32] Bernauer, *Michel Foucault's Force of Flight*, 42.

In this broader approach, we find that the paradoxical structure of a patient's experience arises out of the paradox found at the origin of psychology. This paradox lies in a division between the modern *practice* of psychology, which finds its heritage primarily in the classical age, and modern *theory* of psychology, which finds its heritage in the methods of modern science. The discipline of psychology cannot be understood solely by the theories of modern science, because its practices show that there is something else present. Thinking again of the example of the man experiencing schizophrenia, we can make the connection from the paradoxical experience of a patient to the paradox at the heart of psychology. Here is a person who has regular hallucinations where he feels and sees things that are not part of the material world. Because these experiences are placed outside of the world, he feels out of place in this world and relegated to another world. The modern theory cannot explain the presence of these phenomena as it can only say that these experiences do not fit into the real world. By placing the experiences outside of the real world, we cannot offer a theoretical explanation; and yet the needs of the patient demand for something to be done – some kind of practice to address the condition. Practices are used but they come for somewhere else, while the theory stays disconnected.

The disconnection between theory and practice pushes Foucault to search for other methods to better address mental illness. Like Roland Kuhn, who had invited Foucault to the carnival, Foucault was influenced by the work of a Swiss psychiatrist, Ludwig Binswanger, and he found Binswanger's method of existential analysis a possible way to avoid the paradox in psychology. In 1952-1953, Foucault and Jacqueline Verdeaux translated Binswanger's *Dream and Existence* from German to French, and Foucault decided to write an introduction for its publication.[33] The introduction, now titled "Dream, Imagination and Existence," ended up being longer than Binswanger's actual book and thus provides another helpful key into Foucault's thought around the time of the carnival as possibly "the best reflection of his intellectual orientation during this period," as Didier Eribon comments.[34] In "Dream, Imagination and Existence," Foucault explores how psychoanalysis, from Freud, and pure phenomenology, from Husserl, can help us avoid the problems in modern psychology by approaching mental illness according to lived experience. But he finds that these methods still fall short and suggests that perhaps Binswanger's existential analysis, while still drawing on psychoanalysis and phenomenology, offers a more comprehensive approach. In his unpublished book on Binswanger's existential analysis written around this same time, Foucault makes his concerns about these methods, including Binswanger's application of them, even clearer, such that he sees that "neither psychoanalysis nor phenomenology … is actually able to account for the phenomenon of disease," as Basso writes after examining the manuscript.[35] Although he

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[33] *Michel Foucault*, 42-43.

[34] Ibid., 47.

[35] Basso, "Foucault's Critique of the Human Sciences in the 1950s," 9. The manuscript for this unpublished book on Binswanger was recently found in Foucault's papers and will be published soon, according to Basso's video introduction: https://www.theoryculturesociety.org/blog/special-issue-foucault-before-the-college-de-france .

eventually finds these methods unsatisfactory, his study still shows the insufficiency of modern psychology to offer full explanations for unusual human experiences, especially the experience of dreams.[36]

Similar to the opening of *Mental Illness*, "Dreams, Imagination and Existence" begins by centering the discussion of dreams around a fuller understanding of the human. In the spirit of Binswanger, Foucault calls for "a form of analysis, finally, whose principle and method are determined from the start solely by the absolute privilege of their object: man, or rather, the being of man, *Menschsein*."[37] The German word, *Menschsein*, is used in contrast to both *homo natura*, as an empirical, natural being, and even to *Dasein*, as a subjective, transcendental being, as Han-Pile argues, in order to emphasize the importance of seeing the human as an "*instantiation* of the transcendental in the empirical," in other words, as a biological being that is placed in a meaningful relation to the world.[38] Because the methods of analysis used for organic pathology are inadequate, as we saw in *Mental Illness*, we need something like Binswanger's existential analysis, which does not rely on a theory that places the experiences of mental illness outside of the world but goes "straight to concrete existence, to its development and its historical content" to make sense of them.[39] Foucault writes, "If the dream is the bearer of the deepest human meanings, this is not insofar as it betrays their hidden mechanisms or shows their inhuman cogs and wheels, but on the contrary, insofar as it brings to light the freedom of man in its most original form."[40] The scientific theory tries to define dreams according to biological mechanisms and processes, but this truncated conception of dreams does not do justice to the presence of freedom in human experience.[41] If we rely only on modern psychology, we are left with no proper theory to account for the creativity in dreams.

In his 1957 article, "Scientific Research and Psychology" ("La recherche scientifique et la psychologie"), Foucault argues that this loss of theory behind psychology is because the proper origin of psychology "has been forgotten, or rather hidden;" in other words, the practice of psychology no longer has a theory by which to support it.[42] The ignorance of its origin creates a contradiction at its root, namely, the division between theory and practice that Foucault already uncovered in *Mental Illness*. He explains this division

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[36] Even with the change in methods, Han-Pile makes a compelling argument for how the questions and themes in "Dream, Existence, and Imagination" are reflected in Foucault's later book, *The Order of Things*. See Béatrice Han-Pile, "Phenomenology and Anthropology in Foucault's 'Introduction to Binswanger's Dream and Existence': A Mirror Image of *The Order of Things*?" *History and Theory* 54 (2016), 7-22.

[37] Michel Foucault, "Dream, Imagination and Existence: An Introduction to Ludwig Binswanger's *Dream and Existence*" [1954], in *Dream and Existence*, ed. Keith Hoeller (1993), 31.

[38] Han-Pile, "Phenomenology and Anthropology in Foucault's Introduction to Binswanger's Dream and Existence," 10-11, 12.

[39] Foucault, "Dream, Imagination and Existence," 32.

[40] "Dream, Imagination and Existence," 53.

[41] Foucault is also criticizing psychoanalysis in this quote because, in his opinion, it reduces dreams to deterministic processes.

[42] Michel Foucault, "La recherche scientifique et la psychologie" [1957], in *Dits et écrits I. 1954–1975* (2001), 1:173: "cette origine … a été oubliée, ou plutôt cachée."

further: "We find ourselves in a paradoxical situation: on one side, the real practice of psychology ... does not rest on any theoretical formation, and by way of consequence never succeeds in taking the meaning [*sens*] of the theory [*recherche*], nor even in defining the precise needs in relation to the scientific theory [*recherche*]."[43] Here, on this first side, we have the practice of psychology, which neither has a modern theory to justify it nor even tries to respond to the demands of the scientific field (because its practices are still pulling from the ones of the past created prior to the modern age). Not only are there problems justifying the practices, but there is also an absence of a foundation for the modern theory: "On the other side, the acquisition of the techniques, which can guarantee a practical security and a theoretical justification to concrete psychology, cannot give itself access to an exercise of psychology where practice and theory [*recherche*] would find themselves effectively linked."[44] The other side of the paradox is that the modern theory is unable to come up with a practice (or exercise) of psychology which would support both a practical application and a justifiable theory and allow the theory and practice to be tied together. Thus, there cannot be any "theory of psychology" which comes out of the "needs of the practice."[45]

To put it directly, Foucault finds that the modern practice of psychology does not have a foundation in theory and the modern theory of psychology cannot offer any practices nor make sense of the practices already there. He concludes: "*The non-existence* of an autonomous and effective *practice* of psychology has become paradoxically *the condition of existence* for a positive, scientific and 'effective' *theory* [*recherche*] in psychology."[46] There is in fact no such thing as a "modern" practice of psychology, and it is this absence of a practice which ironically forms the foundation for the modern theory of psychology. Because the practice is based on something else — the old ideas of the classical age which are "neither scientific nor psychological" — the theory is then based on nothing but an avoidance of the old forces at work.[47] Michael Behrent summarizes this well, "Applied psychology … has no theory, while psychological research has no practice (or concrete applications)."[48] The practices of psychology have a foundation that is hidden and the theories of psychology do not have any practices; each is left unsupported by the other.

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[43] Foucault, "Recherche scientifique et la psychologie," 175: "On se trouve dans une situation paradoxale : d'un côté, la pratique réelle de la psychologie … ne repose sur aucune formation théorique, et par voie de conséquence ne parvient jamais à prendre le sens de la recherche, ni même à définir ses exigences précises par rapport à la recherche scientifique."

[44] Ibid., 175: "D'un autre côté, l'acquisition des techniques qui peuvent garantir à la psychologie concrète une sécurité pratique et une justification théorique ne donne pas elle-même accès à un exercice de la psychologie où pratique et recherche se trouveraient effectivement liées."

[45] Ibid., 175: "La recherche en psychologie ne naît donc pas des exigences de la pratique."

[46] Ibid., 176, italics his: "La non-existence d'une pratique autonome et effective de la psychologie est devenue paradoxalement la condition d'existence d'une recherche positive, scientifique et "efficace" en psychologie."

[47] Ibid., 177: "ni scientifique ni psychologique."

[48] Michael C. Behrent, "Foucault and Technology," *History and Technology: An International Journal* 29:1 (2013), 70.

This narrative may seem over-simplified for some of us, as there are certain modern practices, such as the prescription of medication, that appear to be justified by modern theory. Let us take, for example, the introduction and use of antidepressants for major depressive disorder. During the testing of different medications, starting back even with Kuhn (with whom Foucault worked) in the 1950s, studies have shown that there are often positive results in patients who are given antidepressants.[49] The scientific hypothesis is that patients with depression have a decrease in concentrations of monoamine neurotransmitters in the brain, such as serotonin, norepinephrine and dopamine.[50] Thus, doctors and researchers believe that these medications must increase these levels in order to help treat the disorder.[51] Even though it is still unclear exactly how these medications improve these levels, it seems that we can at least draw a link between a scientific hypothesis about brain function and a scientific practice which offers medication to aid the brain function.

The Foucauldian response to this example is to first agree there are certain scientific theories which appear to back certain practices. But the point is that the *motivation* behind the practices does not arise out of contemporary modern theory. In other words, the medication for depression is given according to the scientific hypothesis that it will increase monoamine neurotransmitters in the brain, but the motivation is to alter the behavior of the person in order to conform to the standards of society. This motivation is often disguised by the genuine desire to help people "feel better" and to respond to the desperation that many feel to escape their depression. This is not to make light of the real suffering felt in depression but to acknowledge the cultural pressures that push us to "fix the problem" so that people can be normal contributors to society.[52] These pressures can be traced back to an old structure of the classical age which sought to hide any expressions of madness. Rather than hiding the expression by placing people in confinement, as in the classical age, we conceal it now by modifying emotions and behaviors with medication to fit with modern norms. Ignoring this motivation, we no longer have a justification for the practices of psychology, and, in the void, we attempt to give a scientific account of mental illness. This does not mean that modern practices, such as prescribing medicine for mental illness, are negative on their own, but rather that we need to take time to understand the reasons behind them and the motivations behind implementing them.

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[49] Kuhn writes of the positive results in 1958 stating, "The patients express themselves as feeling much better, fatigue disappears, the feeling of heaviness in the limbs vanish, and the sense of oppression in the chest gives way to a feeling of relief," as quoted in Todd M. Hillhouse and Joseph H. Porter, "A brief history of the development of antidepressant drugs: From monoamines to glutamate," *Experimental and Clinical Psychopharmacology* 23:1 (2015), 6.

[50] Hillhouse and Porter, "A brief history," 3.

[51] There is still uncertainty on whether the decrease in these levels is the accurate explanation for depression. The latest research shows that it may not be a decrease in certain levels but a lack of neural connectivity. See Katharina Helm, Kathrin Viol, Thomas M. Weigner, Peter A. Tass, Christian Grefkes, Damir del Monte and Günter Schiepek, "Neuronal connectivity in major depressive disorder: a systematic review," *Neuropsychiatric disease and treatment* (2018), 2715-2737.

[52] In fact, I believe that a more historical approach acknowledges the pain of mental illness in an even deeper way, as we will see in the last section of this paper.

The priority of social motivations over scientific theory can even be seen in how some of the psychiatric drugs have been developed. As Todd Hillhouse and Joseph Porter point out, there has been a certain "serendipity" in the discovery of drugs to treat schizophrenia and major depressive disorder.[53] In both cases, the drugs were stumbled upon accidentally through the testing of new drugs to treat other medical conditions.[54] As a result, the effectiveness of these medications is more clinically based, meaning its use is due to some positive clinical results as opposed to scientific research, and scientists are still working on exactly why these drugs often prove helpful. Because of the lack of scientific basis for the use of psychiatric drugs, some scholars have argued that the promotion of drugs is due to "extra-scientific interests," such as professionals wanting more respect for the discipline of psychiatry or pharmaceutical companies desiring an increase in revenue.[55] At least in the cases of schizophrenia and major depressive disorder, then, it appears that first there is a definition of a mental disorder, then there is a practice of prescribed medicine, and, finally, there is a search for a theory to make sense of it. We find again the division between theory and practice where the scientific theories are coming *after* the implementation of the practice.[56]

Critically analyzing the hidden structures behind the division in psychology brings to light the crucial aspect of human experience that is often overlooked in general psychology: the experience of the nonrational or unreason (*déraison*). Beginning with his participation in the carnival event to his questioning of the discipline of psychology itself, Foucault's quest eventually leads him to discover this critical force behind mental illness, unreason, and his book *History of Madness* brings to light this force in the historical structures of each age. In the classical age, through physical confinement and moral condemnation, society tried to hide and eradicate the idea of the nonrational. Displays of the nonrational in events, such as the old feast of fools, was condemned and suppressed during this time. After hundreds of years of concealment, modern psychology has now almost forgotten about the experience of the nonrational, but it is still something that pervades human society — not just in cases of madness, but in common human behavior, every day human relationships, and even encounters with the divine.

In *History of Madness*, Foucault finds that it is this this disavowal of the nonrational element of the human which ultimately marks the birth of modern psychology:

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[53] "A brief history," 4.

[54] In the case of major depressive disorder, scientists were trying out a new drug to treat tuberculosis and, in the process, found that the drug, iproniazid, had the side effect of making people feel happier. (See "A brief history," 4). In the case of schizophrenia, scientists were searching for drugs to help with allergies and discovered that chlorpromazine also had a strong calming effect. See Peter Haddad, Robert Kirk and Richard Green, "Chlorpromazine, the first antipsychotic medication: history, controversy and legacy," *British Association for Psychopharmacology* (2016).

[55] Joanna Moncrieff, "The Creation of the Concept of an Antidepressant: An Historical Analysis," *Social Science & Medicine* 66 (2008): 2352-2353.

[56] There are many others besides Foucault who have criticized modern psychology. Each come at the problems from different angles, for example: Joanna Moncrieff, *The Myth of the Chemical Cure: A Critique of Psychiatric Drug Treatment* (2008); Thomas Szasz, *The Myth of Mental Illness* (1974); R.D. Laing and Aaron Esterson, *Sanity, Madness, and the Family* [1964] (2016).

> That which was classified as sickness would be related to the domain of the organic, and all that was associated with unreason … would be relegated to the realm of the psychological. And it was precisely there that psychology was born, not as the truth of madness, but as a sign that madness was now detached from its truth, which was unreason, and that from now on it would be a rudderless phenomenon, *insignificant*, on the indefinite surface of nature. An enigma with no truth other than the one that could reduce it.[57]

Here Foucault returns to the original question that he asks back in the opening to his 1954 *Mental Illness* on the relationship between physical sickness (organic pathology) and psychological sickness (mental pathology) and offers a deeper response. When we place all sickness, physical and psychological, in the domain of the organic, anything that is psychological must be defined according to the terms of medicine. The "domain of the organic" and the "realm of the psychological" are now on one side and understood according to one classification. What used to be the source of the psychological, which was anything associated with the nonrational (unreason), was detached from it and pushed aside. This source used to be the "truth" of madness, the reason for its existence, but now madness is separate from this truth and understood only according to the medical. It is here between the medical and the nonrational that psychology is born: psychology comes into the picture not by the next step in a proper understanding of madness but by taking madness and cutting it off from its anchor. It now has no distinction except the one which reduces it to "nothing more than a sickness."[58]

To summarize this section, the ambiguous relationship between illness and mental illness and between patient experience and the conditions of the refined world act as red flags alerting us to a larger problem found in the structures of psychology itself. This problem comes from a division between the theory and practice where neither can justify the other, but both are used to address and explain the disorder. Overlooking the root of these practices is especially concerning because it ignores the unexplainable tragic elements of human life found in nonrational experience. Modern theory truncates the reach of madness because it is no longer a part of the larger nonrational, no longer connected to other mysterious and mythical human phenomena, but is placed under the classification of a medical illness to be treated. Rejecting magical and spiritual explanations in other areas of human life, modernity also does away with any mysterious link of madness to the nonrational, thereby creating the division at the core of psychology.

C. THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE DIVISION

The division between theory and practice found at the heart of psychology plays out in unexpected ways in both its general practices as well as in individual experiences of patients. In terms of general practices, while we may not see parades outside mental hospitals in our own towns, there are other activities which parallel events like the carnival of

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[57] *History of Madness*, 339.
[58] Ibid.

the mad and counter a purely scientific narrative. A primary example of this is found in the strong emphasis on visual and performing arts in communities of people experiencing mental disorders. This emphasis reveals both a need in those communities to express themselves through art and an interest in the others outside of those communities to view these expressions. At the Austin State Hospital, for example, the patients are encouraged to take painting classes and create works of art. Their artwork is then displayed throughout the facility, including the administration offices, and also sold to support the Volunteer Services Council at the hospital.[59] The name of the art program is "Insights" with the tagline: "unique art created by the patients of the Austin State Hospital."[60] The title "insights" shows that this visual art is more than therapeutic activity for the patients and can also be a way of communicating truths about the world. It prompts us to ask whether there may be insights, expressed in the art, that mental patients can teach us about human experience.

Not only are visual arts emphasized but performing arts are encouraged as well. A non-profit in Minnesota called The Interact Center encourages people with all types of accessibility to participate in visual arts and performing arts. Their performing arts program puts on a regular full production every year. Ironically, their production for 2017 was titled "Feast of Fools," where the actors, which included those with and without disorders, reenacted the medieval day on stage.[61] Just as Foucault noted the connections between the feast of fools and the carnival at the hospital, here too we should observe an underlying force behind the old costume and this modern program. The performance of the feast of fools, like the visual art above, pushes us to ask whether or not these productions are just for amusement or if there is an expression of a deeper side to disorders that is being exposed here. At the very least, these general expressions demonstrate that the modern theory of psychology is missing something insofar as it fails to account for the need of public artistic expression.

In an even stronger way than these general practices, the individual experience of patients illustrates the crack in the foundation of psychology; here, we will look at the experience of guilt and the resistance to medical diagnosis in patients. Beginning with the experience of guilt, we find that, while psychology has done away with any ties to morality, patients continue to express feelings of guilt in connection with their mental disorder. Foucault writes:

> Psychopathology might feign surprise at finding feelings of guilt mixed in with mental illness, but they had been placed there by the obscure groundwork of the classical age.

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[59] Austin State Hospital, personal tour and interview, August 24, 2017.

[60] Austin State Hospital, "Insights". https://www.austincoolart.com (accessed June 11, 2020).

[61] The Interact Center, "Feast of Fools". https://interactcenter.org/performing-arts/performances/feast-of-fools-2017/ (accessed June 11, 2020). See also the news article about the event: Andy Steiner, "In creating the new play 'Feast of Fools,' actors see disability as a creative advantage," *MinnPost* October 18, 2017, https://www.minnpost.com/mental-health-addiction/2017/10/creating-new-play-feast-fools-actors-see-disability-creative-advanta/ (accessed June 1, 2021).

It is still true today that our scientific and medical knowledge of madness rests implicitly on the prior constitution of an ethical experience of unreason.[62]

While there are many reasons for the experience of guilt in mental disorders, as further explored in psychoanalysis, one key reason is due to the hidden historical structures which undergird the practices of psychology. Certain practices that arose from the classical and early modern age were designed to manipulate guilt in their patients. Although psychology no longer subscribes to a *theory* which allows for a moral judgment to be placed on those with mental disorders, some of the *practices* continue to elicit guilt in the patients because they are coming out of an ethical understanding of the nonrational and madness.

For example, the system of rewards and punishments developed by the early modern reformer Samuel Tuke of England was designed to give patients a "moral consciousness."[63] If a patient made the wrong choice, he was made to see that the guilt was self-inflicted and that the "punishment [was] always offered to himself."[64] This emphasis on moral therapy has faded away, but we still implement certain behavior management treatments, such as "cognitive behavioral therapy" (CBT), to condition individual behavior. Cognitive behavioral therapy, for example, claims to no longer be influenced by concerns of morality, and yet some of the motivations behind the behavior are similar. CBT promotes "helpful" behaviors and thought patterns but discourages "unhelpful" ones by setting goals and providing incentives for reaching those goals; it "focuses on changing behavior through pairing positive and negative reinforcement, or rewards and punishments, with behaviors that the person wants to increase or decrease."[65] Due to the continued use of the "rewards and punishments" system, there will naturally be a propensity in patients to experience guilt when they do not meet the goals of the program and receive "negative reinforcements" for correction.

Notice also that the emphasis in the above definition of CBT is still on the individual person and what that person wants to change; just as the punishment was seen as self-inflicted in the past, there continues to be a burden of responsibility placed on the self for the resulting punishments and rewards. Psychiatrist Arthur Kleinman writes that this focus on the individual is part of the distortion in psychiatry: "[T]here is a bias in psychiatry in the very way knowledge is created, so that social causes and social remedies are minimized and even denied. Prevention … is configured as the choices and behaviors of individuals."[66] Feelings of individual guilt is further shown in how people describe their experience of mental disorders. A recent study on blogs written by people diagnosed with depression, conducted by Joanna Moncreiff, Maev Conneely, and Paul Higgs, found that

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[62] *History of Madness*, 91.

[63] Ibid., 487.

[64] Ibid., 485.

[65] Elizabeth Hartney, "Cognitive Behavioral Therapy For Addiction: An Evidence-Based Psychological Technique For Treating a Range of Addictions," Very Well Mind. https://www.verywellmind.com/cognitive-behavioral-therapy-for-addiction-21953 (accessed June 1, 2021).

[66] Arthur Kleinman, *Rethinking Psychiatry: From Cultural Category to Personal Experience* (1991), 75.

over and over again the bloggers "described their recovery in moral terms."[67] Discussion of mental disorders continues to use the vocabulary of morality, but rather than seeing how feelings of guilt may have social or historical factors, psychiatry places all the responsibility on the individual to make the right choices to prevent and treat the disorder.

Another example of the reward and punishment system is found in the practice of prescribing "cold showers" for the treatment of the mad. Although cold showers have been part of the history of madness since ancient times, the early modern reformer Philippe Pinel of France integrated cold showers into his methods as a form of punishment; it was a way of organizing things so that the "mad recognize themselves in the world of judgment."[68] In the mid-twentieth century, cold showers, called "hydrotherapy," continued to be used. Although no longer explicitly for punishment, they were employed for the calming effects on the patients, and, as a result, all nurses and caregivers were required to be trained in the proper techniques.[69] Today, hydrotherapy is no longer officially used, but the practice of cold showers is growing in popularity and is still recommended to help treat mental disorders.[70] A new scientific explanation is given for its benefits, but, again, it is important to note that it comes *after* the use of the practice. In other words, the same practice once justified by its ability to produce guilt is now validated by a scientific theory. It would then follow that practices, like this one, could still prompt guilt in the patients and, without a look at their history, there would be no way to explain this phenomenon.

In addition to guilt experienced by the individual patient, there can also be guilt expressed by the family of the patient. Families may wonder whether or not their behavior toward the person or the behavior of others around the person may have contributed to the disorder. For many, however, these kinds of speculations about social or familial influences often prove "too difficult" and preference is given to a scientific theory, as Kleinman relates:

> [T]he exploitive orientation of the media to the latest scientific breakthroughs assures that biological rather than social issues will receive attention. Even the families of the mentally ill find biological causes more acceptable, since they indicate that mental illness is like all other disorders and *they remove some of the burden of guilt*.[71]

Due to social pressures from the media, as Kleinman relates, and due to modern cultural structures, as Foucault tells us, the highlighted explanation for mental disorders is a scientific account of biological factors. If the family feels guilty for the condition, our modern theory tells them that their guilt can be alleviated by the notion that the condition has

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[67] Joanna Moncrieff, Maev Conneely and Paul Higgs, "Medicalising the Moral: The Case of Depression as Revealed in Internet Blogs," *Social Theory & Health* (2020).

[68] *History of Madness*, 501.

[69] Rebecca Bouterie Harmon, "Hydrotherapy in State Mental Hospitals in the Mid-Twentieth Century," *Issues in Mental Health Nursing* 30:8 (2009), 491-494.

[70] Peter Bongiorno, "A Cold Splash–Hydrotherapy for Depression and Anxiety," Psychology Today.https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/inner-source/201407/cold-splash-hydrotherapy-depression-and-anxiety (accessed June 1, 2021).

[71] Kleinman, *Rethinking Psychiatry*, 73, my italics.

nothing to do with their own actions toward the person but has been purely biologically caused. And yet, even though psychiatry cannot account for the presence of the guilt for the family, we cannot disregard that they continue to express guilty feelings and search for ways to dismiss them.

To be clear, it is not the point to say that these practices — in the past called "rewards and punishments" and "cold showers" and later called "cognitive behavioral therapy" and "hydrotherapy" — are poor or unhelpful in themselves. In fact, much of the evidence shows a certain amount of effectiveness in them. And I am certainly not denying that there are key biological factors in mental disorders as both biological and cultural influences need to be addressed; for it is, as Kleinman states, the "models of culture-biology interactions" that give the fullest picture of disorders.[72] But it is through analysis of these practices and these feelings of guilt that we become aware of the roots of these phenomena: because practices were used in the past to manipulate guilt in patients, guilt may still be present in the way these practices are carried out today. If we ignore the link between guilt and madness of the past, then we will not be aware of certain consequences found in the experiences of those struggling with mental disorders now.

To understand guilt in the experience of mental illness, we must realize that modernity has not completely severed the tie of madness to the dark nonrational, as we found in the previous section. Foucault explains how this link carried over from the classical age still seeps into psychiatry today leading to the continued feelings of guilt:

> Madness found itself side by side with sin and it is perhaps from there that stems the immemorial linking of unreason and guilt that the alienated [*l'aliéné*] today still feel to be their fate, and which doctors discover as a truth of nature. In this artificial space created out of nothing in the mid-seventeenth century, dark alliances were created, which more than 100 years of so-called 'positive psychiatry' have never managed to break.[73]

Because of the way madness was tied to immorality in the classical age, there remains an unspoken link between mental disorder and guilt which can still be felt. Outwardly, we claim that it is no fault of their own that people struggle with mental disorders and that they certainly do not deserve moral condemnation, but what do our practices actually demonstrate? What do the families who surround the patient actually feel? Foucault states that an alliance between madness and the tragic force of the nonrational has never been successfully broken. Rather than trying to get rid of the guilt, we can recognize its presence and its deep connection to our human experience. This alliance may never be able to be dissolved, but it is something that should be acknowledged as opposed to ignored.

In addition to the experience of guilt, another example of a consequence of psychology's division can be seen in the resistance to mental disorder diagnosis in patient experience. If having a mental disorder is just another physical illness needing to be cured,

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[72] Ibid., 27.

[73] *History of Madness*, 86. French: Foucault, *Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique* [1961] (1972), 120. The French term "l'aliéné" can be used as another name for the mad (*les fous*). The reference here is to that specific group of people as opposed to alienated people or outsiders in general.

such as allergies, asthma or even cancer, then why do patients diagnosed with mental disorders feel as though they are undergoing a change in their identity as a person? This shift in identity can be so strong that some will resist and claim that the given diagnosis is not accurate. Certainly, a diagnosis of a physical illness can change one's life as well, such as the devastating news of cancer, but there appears to be a difference in that those with mental disorders feel as if the diagnosis decreases their actual humanity.

Drew Ninnis explores this further by relating Foucault's approach specifically to the changes that were included in the 2013 Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders V (DSM-5), the national guide for all psychopathological diagnoses in the United States. Ninnis writes of a patient who, after being diagnosed with schizophrenia, remarked, "It's like a death sentence when somebody tells you that you have schizophrenia."[74] This statement illustrates how patients may feel as if their human identity has been reduced to something else — a being that can only be known as a schizophrenic. Patients may push back against a diagnosis of mental illness because they feel that the modern classification system has a dehumanizing effect and sense that there is something more behind the psychological analysis than scientific evidence. Ninnis concludes his article by stating: "Within our current episteme, psychiatry constitutes us as biological objects first, which is something less than human beings. It is no wonder then, that many diagnosed with mental illness find this dehumanizing and in denying the terms of their own biological finitude wish to repossess the terms of their own constitution."[75] The underlying crack in the foundation of psychology provokes questions about the validity and scope of the diagnoses and cures being offered, especially when it is coupled with a feeling of objectification.

In a study on the effects of diagnosis, one patient, who was diagnosed with major depressive disorder, writes this after his visit with his doctor: "I don't think he heard me. I wanted him to listen to me not for the diagnosis, but for the story … Depression may be the disease, but it is not the problem. The problem is my life."[76] For this patient, he felt that the doctor was too quick to give him a diagnosis, prescribe some medicine and assure him that this will fix the problem. While depression may be the correct diagnosis, the patient pushed back against this label knowing that it was more complicated than that; he felt that there were deep problems in his life that must be acknowledged as well. Kleinman interprets this experience: "The patient feels that in constructing the disease, [the doctor] has neither fully elucidated the anguish of his illness experience nor allowed him to express the range of depth of the problems that beset him."[77] Here anxiety and extensive suffering have been "detached from its truth," as Foucault states, separated from the reality of madness, and pushed aside.[78] In its place, we label the experience as the medical

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[74] Drew Ninnis, "Foucault and the Madness of Classifying Our Madness," *Foucault Studies* 21 (2016): 117.

[75] Ibid., 137.

[76] *Rethinking Psychiatry*, 87.

[77] Ibid., 90.

[78] *History of Madness*, 339.

condition of depression which can be fixed by medication, just as this particular doctor tells the patient: " … a few sessions of psychotherapy can really help, but meds are what will get you better."[79] Although a diagnosis may be part of the picture, some patients resist it because they feel that it does not do justice to their true experiences and depth of pain.

The general practice in mental health communities that emphasizes art expressions and the individual experiences of obscure guilt and contention against diagnosis are examples of consequences that arise out the historical structures behind psychology. While there are many other areas that we could explore, this gives us a taste for how the division between the scientific theory and the actual practice of psychology impacts the world of mental health today.

D. CONCLUSION

Spurred on by the unusual event of the carnival of the mad, this paper helps expose the facade that psychology rests only on the theories of modern science. This mask, so to speak, needs to be pulled off so that we can see how psychology originates in a division between a theory that arises from modern science and a practice which still contains remnants of the past constructions of madness. These past constructions, however, have needed elements of truth, even in the modern sense, and erupt in expressions found in carnivals, art and experiences of the patients. An awareness of this forgotten origin of psychology will help us to understand the full experience of both practitioners and patients in the modern world of psychology and, as a result, be able to offer more holistic support.

Uncovering the origin of psychology is not always a pleasant or popular activity. It means facing some of the tragic strands of the human condition, such as the force of the nonrational, found in our experience and in our history. Foucault writes in his updated chapter five of *Mental Illness*, "It is this relation [between reason and unreason] that, despite all the penury of psychology, is present and visible in the works of Hölderlin, Nerval, Roussel, and Artaud, and that holds out the promise to man that one day, perhaps, he will be able to be free of all psychology and be ready for the great tragic confrontation with madness."[80] For Foucault, the eruptions in the arts are a sign that the poverty of modern psychology will one day be realized and the deeper truths of the human experience will be confronted. This confrontation involves a descent into the darkest places of human experience, and it is only then that psychology can reach its fullness. Foucault provocatively ends his article "Scientific Research and Psychology" with: "Psychology can be saved only by a return to Hell."[81] If we truly desire to bring unity to the discipline of psychology, we must look at some of the darker aspects of patients' experiences and be aware of the historical structures of society which may be shaping these experiences; we must,

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[79] *Rethinking Psychiatry*, 85.

[80] Foucault, *Mental Illness and Psychology*, 75.

[81] Foucault, "Recherche scientifique et la psychologie," 186: "La psychologie ne se sauvera que par un retour aux Enfers."

in a way, descend into Hell in order to grasp the deep pain of madness so that we can find a way to ascend beyond it.

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Foucault Studies

REVIEW

Nancy Luxon (ed.), *Archives of Infamy: Foucault on State Power in the Lives of Ordinary Citizens*. **Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2019. Pp. 400. ISBN: 9781517901110 (paperback).**

Archives of Infamy: Foucault on State Power in the Lives of Ordinary Citizens, edited by Nancy Luxon, is a 'scholarly companion 'to Arlette Farge and Michel Foucault's 1982 publication, *Disorderly Families: Infamous Letters from the Bastille Archive*, which was recently translated into English and published by the University of Minnesota Press. The long overdue publication of their collaboration is now usefully accompanied by the publication of *Archives of Infamy*, introducing readers to the historical context and the intellectual stakes of Farge and Foucault's collaboration. Both books centre on the *lettres de cachet*, an institution in eighteenth century France through which ordinary citizens submitted written requests to the King to ask for justice. *Disorderly Families,* first published in English in 2016, and also edited by Nancy Luxon, presents ninety-four of these letters written by ordinary families to the king of France in the eighteenth century. *Archives of Infamy* offers a series of reprinted essays, reviews, a radio broadcast transcript, and new scholarship which examines the political and historical contexts of those letters, Farge and Foucault's collaboration, as well as various thematic, historiographic and theoretical perspectives on power, justice and politics.

As Nancy Luxon's introductory chapter, 'Policing and Criminality in *Disorderly Families*', shows readers, the Archives of the Bastille, stored in the Bibliothéque de l'Arsenal, holds hundreds of letters written by ordinary citizens in the eighteenth century. The *lettres de cachet*, or 'letters of arrest', written by the King of France, in response to ordinary citizens 'letter of complaints, or *placets*, offered source materials for Foucault and Farge's publication. These complaints were written about the 'disorderly 'conduct of loved ones - husbands, wives, children - and asked for their imprisonment. In these letters we find everyday matters of justice. Readers are led to understand that these letters, exchanged between ordinary citizens and the king of France, provide evidence of how mechanisms for exercising power were popularly called upon in the eighteenth century. The *Disorderly Families* collaboration between Foucault and the historian, Arlette Farge, began in the late 1970s. However, Foucault had previously been aware of the importance of this archive. While writing *The History of Madness* in the 1950s, Michel Foucault was already thinking

through the importance of these letters in his analysis of sovereignty, the state and power. By the late 1970s, Arlette Farge, a historian specialising in the eighteenth century, began working with Michel Foucault to curate a selection of these letters in a book originally published as *Le Désordre des familles: Lettres de cachet des Archives de la Bastille au XVIIIe siécle* (1982).

Archives of Infamy: Foucault on State Power in the Lives of Ordinary Citizens includes fourteen chapters, four of which were newly written for this volume. The other chapters are either reprinted or have been translated into English for the first time. The chapters are wide ranging in scope, topic and mode of analysis. Moving from chapter to chapter, the articles touch upon the motivations and considerations behind Farge and Foucault's collaboration, while also exploring the historical contexts of the letters through discussions of families and public order in the eighteenth century, gender, homosexuality, state and police power, sovereignty, urban space, epistolary practices, as well as punishment and justice. Nancy Luxon's introduction offers a detailed and well-considered analysis of Farge and Foucault's collaboration, as well as generously outlining relevant background details about the *lettres de cachet.* It makes the case for the contemporary relevance of this project as "Readers do not have to reach too far to find resonances between its letters and more recent events" (47). The introduction outlines today's conjunction of power, justice, policing, race, gender, economics, and state violence, whilst also setting out the contemporary reception of *Disorderly Families.*

The rest of the book is divided into two parts. The first part is titled 'Archival Materials: Audiences and Materials'. This part includes four texts from the late 1970s and early 1980s, and explores the relation between Foucault's 'anthologies of existence', Farge and Foucault's collaboration, the selection and curation of the letters as source materials, and the contemporary reception of their publication. Chapter 1 is a reprinting of Michel Foucault's 1977 essay, 'The Lives of Infamous Men'. Although Foucault scholars will be familiar with this essay, its inclusion in this companion usefully emphasises the importance of Foucault's notion of "poem-lives" and the relation between discourse, history and writing. Chapter 2 is a newly translated transcript of a 1983 radio discussion between Farge, Foucault, the historian André Béjin, sociologist Roger Chartier and historian Michelle Perrot. The roundtable discussion offers a fascinating series of indications and digressions about the authors 'approach to composing the *Disorderly Families* collection as well as emphasising the popular appeal of royal power that is made so evident in the letters.

Chapter 3 is a 1983 review of *Disorderly Families* by Jean-Philippe Guinle, published in *La Nouvelle Revue Française.* It offers a short commentary and a key observation about the collection of letters: "We no longer consider *lettres de cachet* to be nothing more than the symbol itself of royal arbitrariness" (127). According to this review, these letters were a means for "regulating family conflicts" (128). The last chapter in the first section is a book review, titled 'Denunciation, a Slow Poison', by Michel Heurteaux. Published in 1983 in *Le Monde,* Heurteaux compares the Bastille letters to other systems of denunciation, such as police informants, alerting tax inspectors to fraud, and anonymous messages to human

resource managers. As Heurteaux writes, "Informants and power, a pair that has often made good bedfellows—and sometimes still does" (132).

The second part of the book is titled 'Letters and Events: From Composition to Contestation 'and considerably extends the theoretical, political and historical axes of the *Disorderly Families* project. This part begins with a reprinting of Foucault's 'The Order of Discourse 'inaugural lecture to the Collège de France in 1970. This sets the theme for the rest of the book, helping readers to understand how Foucault traced the relations between speech, text and the event. This is followed by an essay by Roger Chartier (1990), titled 'The Public Sphere and Public Opinion'. This extends the discussion by describing the role that the large scale circulation of printed texts took in the emergence of the public sphere. Chartier sets out how political representation, secrecy and judicial procedures related to form 'publics'. The next two chapters offer reflections on historiography and the event. Chapter 7 is Pierre Nova's 1970 essay, 'The Return of the Event'. This newly translated essay examines Foucault's new direction in historiography, his departure from the Annales school, and the treatment of the event as a revolutionary force. Arlette Farge's essay, 'Thinking and Defining the Event in History '(2002), further examines the event in Foucault's historical project. In thinking the event, Farge touches upon its vision, construction, emotion, memory, and meaning. She writes:

> "The event, of course, is endlessly reconstructed, in multiple ways, varying according to the era in which it is being received. Elsewhere and at the same time, the memory of the event among those who lived it, even in the distant past, can assist the historian with her most difficult task: rediscovering the emotional, social, or political manner by which others reconstructed the event, or identified with, or rejected it inexorably" (225).

Stuart Elden's essay, 'Home, Street, City: Farge, Foucault, and the Spaces of the *Lettres de Cachet*', newly written for this volume, offers an overview of the *Disorderly Families* project by mapping spaces and urban landscapes. Elden reflects on the compositional forces that instantiate homes-streets-cities, while offering an account of the 'spatial concerns 'of the lives behind the letters. Michel Rey's 1985 essay, 'Parisian Homosexuals Create a Lifestyle, 1700-1750', extends this urban focus by examining practices of homosexuality through the reports written by agent provocateurs about intimate matters. Chapter 11, 'Sovereign Address 'by Elizabeth Wingrave, foregrounds an understanding of the *Disorderly Families* project through the relation between sovereignty and epistolary practices. Nancy Luxon's second written contribution to the volume, 'Gender, Agency, and the Circulations of Power, 'asks about the role that gender plays in a political order during a historical era which recomposed *households* into *families*. Luxon describes the emergent relation of the family as a "field of exchange", an intermediary between "state and society, between literature and oral cultures, between commercialising economy of producers and consumers" (295). The final chapter, 'Foucault's Rhythmic Hand 'by Lynne Huffer, brings queer thought to bear on the letters, allowing for a reading of the letters as scars and poems. In doing so, Huffer proposes a form of "poetic genealogy". She writes, "Poetic genealogy can only signal queerly, through its own fragmenting cuts, without pretending to

redeem the violences of history or even to directly expose the masking of violence that is history writing" (354).

Thinking through the volume, readers will find a series of vantage point to search and identify the stakes at play in the *lettres de cachet*, as well as Farge and Foucault's *Disorderly Families* project. The book should be of interest to Foucault scholars, political scientists, historians of eighteenth century France, as well as general readers. Each of the chapters shifts the terms of discussion from state power to spatial composition, agent provocateurs to epistolary practices, poetic genealogy to editorial decisions, and each contribution multiples the perspectives, intensities and histories that can be brought to bear on the letters. The quality of the individual chapters, and the exceptionally informative commentary found in Nancy Luxon's introduction, firmly establishes the overarching historical and political importance of the letters and provides richly rewarding scholarship about both Foucault and Farge's collaboration and the letters. Readers unfamiliar with *Disorderly Families* will undoubtedly want to then turn to the original source materials. Readers familiar with *Disorderly Families* will undoubtedly want to return.

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Foucault Studies

REVIEW

Thomas Lemke, *Foucault's Analysis of Modern Governmentality: A Critique of Political Reason*. **Translation Erik Butler. London: Verso, 2019. Pp. 445. ISBN: 9781786636454 (paperback).**

There is something deeply untimely about the writings of Michel Foucault: his historical analyses of madness in the classical age, of the birth of the prison, and of ancient practices of the self all speak in their own way to Foucault's time and ours. This is perhaps a legacy of Foucault's debt to Nietzsche, whose own *Untimely Meditations* constituted a turning point in Foucault's early intellectual biography.[1] It is this same paradoxical feature of untimely contemporaneity that grants so much strength to Thomas Lemke's book *Foucault's Analysis of Modern Governmentality: A Critique of Political Reason*, originally published in German in 1997 and finally translated into English by Verso Books in 2019.

Despite being more than 20 years old, Lemke chose to make no changes to the book's content or argument for the English edition, a decision that in some ways adds to the book's relevance to contemporary research on Foucault and governmentality. The book's introduction takes us through many of the critiques and (mis)interpretations of Foucault that were widespread in German- and English-speaking scholarship in the 1990s. This includes critiques from major thinkers such as Nancy Fraser, Michael Walzer, and, most famously, Jurgen Habermas. The fact that many of these critiques – accusations that Foucault's work lacks any normative framework, that he cannot distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable forms of resistance, and that his critique of reason leaves him trapped in 'irrationalism' – are still levelled against Foucault to this day should not be taken as a failure on Lemke's part to fully defend Foucault from his critics. Rather, this fact speaks to the urgency of Lemke's book, signalling that a wider audience needs to read his work in order to better understand (and, indeed, to critique more effectively) Foucault's thought.

The body of the book is composed of three sections, each made up of between four and five chapters. A reader would be forgiven for assuming, based on this structure, that Lemke's analysis will follow the traditional tripartite division of Foucault's intellectual trajectory: first grappling with archaeology/knowledge, next genealogy/power, and finally subjectivity/ethics. However, it is precisely such a structure that Lemke wishes to

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[1] Didier Eribon, *Michel Foucault* (1991), 52.

avoid, arguing that it "requires just as much explanation as it affords" (19) and often gives rise to the interpretation that Foucault's later works on ethics constitute a break with his critical project and an embracing of a liberal, humanist perspective. Lemke's central contention (similar to, yet distinct from, that of Deleuze's book on Foucault[2]) is that there is a clear continuity between Foucault's critique of power and his work on ethics. The material which Lemke uses to bridge the gap between these two apparently incompatible projects is the analysis of governmentality – the material for which was not widely available at the time of the book's original publication. It is the concept of government – the government of the self and others, as Foucault's penultimate course at the Collège de France is titled – that explains how Foucault moved from the first volume of *History of Sexuality* to the second, third, and fourth volumes.

Lemke's first section is titled 'The Microphysics of Power' and deals briefly with Foucault's early works up to his inaugural lecture at the Collège de France ('The Order of Discourse') before grappling with the questions that preoccupied Foucault from 1970 to 1976. This section includes extended reflections on Foucault's work on genealogy and power, on discipline, and on 'Nietzsche's hypothesis' (also known as the politico-military model or strategic conception of power, which Foucault elaborates in *"Society Must Be Defended"*). Lemke's analysis of this material is exceptionally strong, drawing from a remarkably wide range of sources, considering so much of this material would not have been readily available to him at the time of the book's writing.

However, the analysis does more than just stand the test of time, it also makes a valuable contribution to the contemporary field of Foucault studies. Where many contemporary scholars will admit (usually in quite vague terms) that Foucault saw limitations to his work in this period, Lemke provides a truly and deeply critical reflection on what those limits were and why they prompted Foucault to take up the concept of governmentality. Lemke's refusal to pull his punches with regard to the failures and inadequacies of Foucault's work from this period (of which Foucault himself was well aware; in reference to the work of previous years, Foucault begins his 1976 course, the final course before his turn to governmentality, by saying: "We are making no progress, and it's all leading nowhere. It's all repetitive, and it doesn't add up."[3]) is genuinely refreshing to read and no doubt stems from the 'untimeliness' of this work. While Foucault has become a highly respected figure in the academic mainstream of our day, he was more roundly criticised in the context in which Lemke was writing this book. While many of the criticisms of that time are unfair or represent misunderstandings of Foucault's work, the lack of deference in the wider academic atmosphere allowed Lemke to engage in a sustained and brilliant critique of Foucault's writings from this period, while still acknowledging their conceptual innovativeness and importance for understanding contemporary society.

Lemke then turns to Foucault's proposed resolution of the problems that he perceived in his own work, which Lemke has demonstrated so vigorously. The most significant problems of Foucault's works preceding the analysis of governmentality, as Lemke describes them, are the failures to sufficiently elaborate the relation between the workings of power at the macro and micro scales, as well as the too-narrow conception of the

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[2] Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault* (2006).

[3] Michel Foucault, *"Society Must Be Defended": Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975-1976* (2003), 4.

relation between subjectivity and power. Foucault introduced the concept of governmentality in order to better deal with these problems, and Lemke divides Foucault's work on government into two parts: the genealogy of the modern state and the genealogy of the modern subject.

The book's second section, titled simply 'Governmentality', deals with the genealogy of the modern state, focussing largely on Foucault's *Security, Territory, Population* and *Birth of Biopolitics* lectures and supplementary material surrounding them (interviews, shorter texts, etc.). It also contains a chapter detailing work by Foucault's contemporaries – figures such as Giovanna Procacci, Jacques Donzelot, François Ewald, and Pasquale Pasquino, many of whose works remain untranslated into English – which Lemke uses to fill in certain historical gaps in Foucault's genealogy. Lemke traces the genealogy of the modern state to its roots in the Christian pastoral and on through 'raison d'état' and the 'police state' up to liberal governmentality. Lemke turns to Foucault's colleagues in order to describe the transformations of liberal governmentality before returning to Foucault to discuss the development of the neoliberal governmental rationality.

As in the previous section, Lemke's analysis here is exceptionally astute and well thought out. By virtue of the fact that they are lectures, Foucault's reflections on governmentality are often quite disorganised, the discussions developing in a less systematised way than would be the case with books. They are also, Lemke is correct to point out, incomplete, with a significant historical period in which liberal rationality evolved left out of Foucault's lectures. Given all of this, and in particular taking into account that Lemke would have been working mostly with archival material rather than the published editions of the lectures we have today, the reconstruction of Foucault's (and others') genealogy of the modern state is a remarkable feat that has yet to be surpassed in terms of analytical clarity and rigour.

The final section is titled 'Politics and Ethics' and concerns itself with the genealogy of the modern subject, as well as reflections on a variety of concepts important to the entirety of Foucault's thought which are given greater clarity in later works. These concepts include subjectivity, power, truth, and critique. In discussing the genealogy of the modern subject, Lemke attempts to show how this project was, for Foucault, simply the other side of the coin in the analysis of governmentality. Governmentality is composed of two processes: state-formation and subject-formation. Thus, Foucault's later works on ethics do not constitute a break but rather a continuation of his critical project. Lemke places special emphasis on the notion of 'experience' in Foucault's work on ethics, a decision which arguably possesses greater significance today than it did in the late 1990s, owing to the recent posthumous publication of *Confessions of the Flesh*, one third of which is concerned with the question of experience in early Christian thought.[4]

However, there are also certain limitations to this section. Lemke focusses primarily on the already published second and third volumes of *History of Sexuality* for his argument on the continuity of Foucault's work, and while this was no doubt a reasonable choice in his own context, it leaves something to be desired in our own. The third section largely avoids grappling with the later lecture courses, thus missing out on significant material which has since been used to great effect in a variety of studies, both directly concerning

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[4] Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality, Volume 4: Confessions of the Flesh* (2021).

the development of Foucault's thought and in a range of other contexts. The concept of *parrhesia*, for example, is relegated to a footnote, despite the fact that it would have served as an excellent tool for analysing the question of truth in Foucault's thought, which is the central goal of the book's penultimate chapter. This is not to say that Lemke's work in the third section is any less convincing or valuable; Lemke continues to offer compelling accounts of Foucault's work, explaining potential points of confusion and allowing the continuity of Foucault's intentions to come through clearly. Nonetheless, Lemke's decision to avoid dealing with the lectures of later years is arguably the one part of the book which makes it feel less relevant to contemporary discussions in the field of Foucault studies.

It is hard to overstate the importance of Foucault's writings in the academic world today; in particular, the concept of governmentality has become a vital touchstone in a huge range of academic disciplines. In this light, Lemke's work serves as an utterly invaluable text for its explication and clarification of the meaning of this elusive and challenging concept as it is outlined in Foucault's work. The English translation of this book is long overdue, but the lateness of its arrival has in no way diminished its impact. If anything, this text has only become a resource of greater value in the years since its original publication.

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REVIEW

Patrick G. Stefan, *The Power of Resurrection: Foucault, Discipline, and Early Christian Resistance.* **Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2020. Pp. 277. ISBN: 9781978704626 (hardback), ISBN: 9781978704633 (electronic).**

The (Counter)Power of Resurrection

The Power of Resurrection: Foucault, Discipline, and Early Christian Resistance (2020) is the title of a recent book written by Patrick G. Stefan that seeks to analyze the rise of a radical idea: namely, that of the material resurrection of the body, both Jesus's and his believers' bodies, in the early Christian movement. Stefan's thesis relies on historical evidence that the belief of resurrection introduced a politically subversive idea in human history. This idea is said to have given birth to a world-changing movement that resists in our culture up to the present day. The belief that a man, condemned to death by the Roman imperial government, rose from the dead, was indeed a radical belief. But how did it gain so much traction in the Roman world? The power of the early Christian movement – Stefan claims – consisted in what he calls the "rhetorical strategy of resurrection"; a strategy that led to the subversion of the Roman imperial power by challenging its sovereign right to death. Taking the cue from Foucault's studies on sovereignty, disciplinary and pastoral power, Stefan tries to answer one of the most compelling and difficult historical questions: how is it possible that the early Christian movement grew so quickly? And did the idea and the hope in resurrection play a crucial role in it?

The answer brought up by Stefan's conclusions is that the rhetorical force of resurrection, as well as the deployment of new forms of disciplinary mechanisms of power, contributed to the rise of Christianity and the subversion of the Roman Empire. Stefan's methodology is very clear. He tries to overcome the theological as well as the social-scientific and postcolonial approach to early Christian history by using Foucault's analysis of micro-level force relations as a tool to combine the inquiry into the early Christian message and its social effectiveness. If theology concentrated its efforts on proving the superiority of the Christian revelation in order to explain the quick expansion of the Christian movement, the sociological approach de-emphasized what Christians were saying and tried to give a social and "realistic" picture of what happened. Moreover, the postcolonial or literary approach tried to describe Christian texts by reading a counter-

imperial political content in them, focusing mostly on the hidden transcripts that testify to an internal Christian resistance to the empire. Proposing a mediate approach, Stefan's interpretation overcomes the limits of all three methods. Bringing the Christian message (*knowledge-truth*) and disciplinary mechanisms (*power*) together in an organic relationship (*knowledge/power*), the work of Stefan presents a Foucauldian genealogy of the early Christian "counter-power", showing how its discourse on resurrection contributed to the expansion of the Christian movement.[1]

The three main goals of Stefan's work are in fact to demonstrate *that* resurrection is a politically subversive idea based on the Pauline corpus, *why* it was so subversive and *how* it actually changed things in lived reality. Using Foucault for his historical purposes, Stefan dates the formation of the mechanisms of disciplinary power back to the very beginning of Christianity. As we know from *Security, Territory, Population*, Foucault described the beginning of disciplinary practices by connecting them to the appearance of the monastic life in the fourth century. These mechanisms lived for centuries in the religious sphere and turned into disciplinary power in late modernity with the historical appearance of institutions such as psychiatry, medicine or education. Stefan's historical thesis states that disciplinary mechanisms of power have a longer history behind them. During the early stages of Christian expansion, Stefan describes how the message of resurrection gave birth to some techniques of disciplinary power that contributed to the expansion of Christianity by challenging the sovereign power of Rome. The idea of resurrection was, at its core, a politically subversive message – Stefan claims. It was instrumental in forming the early material and textual history of a Christian disciplinary identity. This formation – a formation that influenced the calendar and the perception of time, the liturgy and its rituals, the architecture and the use of space, the hierarchical division of communities and their obedience, and even the perception of a dualistic self (*body/soul*) – formed a new "disciplined" subject that was able to envision *life* outside the sovereign power of Caesar.

At the time in which the Christian movement appeared, sovereignty was the dominant form of power. Centered on Caesar's person and enforced through corporal punishment, the sovereign power of Rome was challenged and subverted by the appearance of "disciplined" Christians that were unafraid of his sword. Taking as its point of departure Paul's soteriological theology of the cross, Stefan's book is based on the assumption that the Roman persecution of Christians only made them grow stronger. Through the appearance of the idea of resurrection, martyrdom and Christian burial practices, the punishment of the *body*– the Roman's sovereign right to death – was no longer effective. Serving a "new King" that defeated death and watched over their *souls*, Christians undermined Caesar's coercive power and formed new disciplinary mechanisms that addressed the new Christian subjects to the obedience to God. These new practices of power subverted the sovereignty of Rome and contributed to shaping a new ritual behavior that led to the formation of communities that lived in the cult and admiration of a crucified criminal. In Foucault's terms, we could say that Stefan explains the historical

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[1] "It relies upon the counter-imperial message of resurrection in early Christian texts but also recognizes the need to identify how that message produced social and material mechanisms to explain this phenomenon" (Patrick G. Stefan, *The Power of Resurrection: Foucault, Discipline, and Early Christian Resistance* (2020), 10).

growth of the early Christian movement with a sort of "cult of Damiens" that finds its strength in the subversive idea of his resurrection. Reading Stefan's book, one gets the impression that he tried to explain the passage from Rome's imperial power (*sovereign power*) to Christianity (*disciplinary power*)in the same way as Foucault explained the passage from the Ancient Régime to the disciplinary mechanisms of prison, medicine, and education. Building on Jacob Taubes's lessons, Stefan gives a political theological interpretation of Paul's epistolary, proposing a Nietzschean approach to early Christian history and its historical power; a power that relies on the subversion of the imperial values of Rome and that turned a weakness – Jesus's death on the cross – into the most powerful weapon.

The main thesis of the book is summarized by Stefan's words: "The Roman Imperial government, which maintained control through sovereign power, was challenged and subverted by the Christian deployment of disciplinary mechanisms of power activated by the discourse of resurrection" (52). After this first period of "disciplinary" rupture against the sovereign power of Rome, when the counter-imperial apocalyptic message inherent to the resurrection of Jesus lost its strength and after the Christianization of the Empire through Constantine the Great, Christianity returned to a model of power that deployed the strategies of ancient sovereign power. But disciplinary practices survived and found new space in the introspective monastic *self* of the fourth century, the main object of Foucault's inquiry into Christianity. This is why we could say, in conclusion, that Stefan's investigations form not only a very interesting contribution for scholars of early Christianity but also for Foucault scholars who want to understand the "sudden" rise of monastic practices in the fourth century.

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Foucault Studies

REVIEW

Stephen W. Sawyer and Daniel Steinmetz-Jenkins (ed.), *Foucault, Neoliberalism, and Beyond.* **London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2019. Pp. 227. ISBN: 9781786603760 (hardback).**

Stephen Sawyer and Daniel Steinmetz-Jenkin's edited volume *Foucault, Neoliberalism and Beyond* is a remarkable work not simply in terms of its irrefutable quality but also in terms of the breadth and depth of the erudition therein. The outcome of a conference convened at the American University of Paris in March 2016, the volume is composed of an introduction, which ably sets the following nine chapters in the context of a heated debate that turned on Foucault's opinion of neoliberalism, initiated in the wake of the global financial crisis of 2008 and ushering in a new, more insidious, form of neoliberalism. Michael Behrent's article in *Modern Intellectual History* "Liberalism without Humanism: Michel Foucault and the Free Market Creed, 1976-1979" conjectured that Foucault, despite being associated with the political left, paradoxically signaled, at least from the perspective of our present, endorsing the emergence, in his present, of an apparently novel form of liberal capitalism dubbed neoliberalism. This was followed by numerous, increasingly sophisticated and nuanced interventions in the debate featuring important contributions by the authors of chapters two and three of the volume: Serge Audier's 'hefty tome' (p. viii) *Penser le néolibéralisme: Le moment néolibéral, Foucault et al crise du socialism* and Daniel Zamora's pieces in *Jacobin Magazine*, "Can we criticize Foucault?" and "Foucault's Responsibility", as well as a co-edited volume by Behrent and Zamora titled *Foucault and Neoliberalism.* The editors make clear, however, that they are not concerned with the question of whether and to what extent Foucault was in alignment with neoliberalism - a task, which I argue below, they leave to the reader - but rather to consider "how neoliberialism emerged as a theme within Foucault's work" to understand "how and why this engagement unsettled and provoked debate decades later"; and, finally, to "offer a better foundation for thinking about the present […] through the past" (p. xviii).

The central focus of the volume is Foucault's lecture series *The Birth of Biopolitics*. Delivered at the Collège de France in 1978 and 1979, Foucault turns to the topic of neoliberalism or, to be more precise, to the topic of neoliberalisms, especially that of the American brand associated with the Chicago School and the writings of Gary Becker on *homo*

oeconomicus and criminality, and its German counterpart known as ordoliberalism. In their introduction, Sawyer and Steinmetz-Jenkins point out that in spite of Foucault's brief interest in the subject, and the fact that he does not clearly articulate a position that was emphatically for or against his object of interest, he opens the door to a multiplicity of interpretations. As the co-editors write: "In response [to Foucault's lectures on biopolitics], the authors [...] have employed a range of interpretative strategies. Some 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 others still have explored the political legacy of these concepts and how they developed in the work of other social theorists such as Pierre Bourdieu" (p. x). The co-editors, however, do not intend for the volume to "take a stand" (p. ix) on Foucault's relationship to neoliberalism, hence the absence of a conclusion; instead, by allowing the authors to speak for themselves, the essays simultaneously clarify, contextualise, reinforce and undermine one or more of the others, offering readers the freedom to form their own judgement, disciplined, albeit, within the parameters of their own intellectual biographies.

Were one inclined to read the entire volume, the co-editors provide limited guidance to the reader as to the most effective route through it. However, implicit within their explanation of its content lies the hint of a roadmap, and the rationale guiding the way in which the chapters were arranged. Anchoring the volume, they argue, are the first three chapters by Behrent, Audier and Zamora – who are among leading voices in the debate that began with Behrent's original contribution in 2009. It opens, fittingly, with a chapter by Behrent in which he outlines the four major positions that scholars in the debate have taken, the limitations of each, and a restatement of his position interpreted through the lens of an intellectual historian. This is followed by a translation of Serge Audier's reading of Foucault's biopolitics lectures, focusing on the German variant of neoliberalism from his perspective as a French philosopher. Completing the set is a chapter by sociologist Daniel Zamora in which he outlines his position. All three of these chapters focus on the historical period in which Foucault gave his biopolitics lectures; lectures which, as the co-editors assert, represent a contribution "to the intellectual history of this critical moment in modern history" (p. xiv). While the six chapters that follow these contributions do not explicitly refer to the first three, all cite these authors' original statements. In reading the first three chapters, the reader is provided with a clear picture of the content of those original statements. Unless one is already acquainted with the nature and complexity of the debate, I would strongly advise reading these chapters before the others. If, like the authors of the six proceeding chapters, the reader is familiar with the debate, then they can be read in any order – especially seeing as these authors are in dialogue with the original works of one or more of the first three authors and do not address each other explicitly.

But this does not help us to understand the logic underpinning the ordering of chapters four to nine. Knowing this, I contend, is useful because in briefly summarising the

chapters in consecutive order rather than, say, the order I would recommend, or any other apparently logical basis, we are, in a sense, seeing the chapters in the volume through the eyes of its editors. In their introduction, the co-editors group the second set of three chapters together not to signal to the reader that they should necessarily be read next but to highlight the commonalities between them. All three chapters, written by Barzilay, Lesham and Kelly respectively, consider Foucault's biopolitics lectures in the context of his oeuvre. Barzilay, taking issue with Behrent's position that Foucault was sympathetic towards neoliberalism, identifies a philosophical strand in Foucault's thought that reaches back to his early academic career and a course "on the origins of anthropology in modern philosophy" (p. 74) as a young psychology lecturer that he delivered at the University of Lille in 1952 and 1953. For Barzilay, it is Behrent's treatment of the philosophical and the political as synonymous that leads him to the false conclusion that Foucault sympathized with neoliberalism.

Lesham's contribution situates Foucault's biopolitics lectures in the context of Foucault's Collège de France lecture series, starting with his inaugural lectures in 1970-71. In his interpretation of the lectures as a whole, which, as he points out, is "at its very beginning" (p. 98), he writes, "I subscribe to a position aligned with that stated and repeated in the Foreword to each annual lecture series by the editors, François 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 researchers'" (p. 99). Concern around an apparent lack of criticality in the lectures on neoliberalism, for Lesham, fails to account for the fact that Foucault was engaging in what he termed "a happy positivism" and, in doing so, was simply laying the ground for more critical work (p. 100). Lesham proposes that it was not until after *The Birth of Biopolitics* lectures, and his telling of "the histories of the culture of the self and of truth-telling", that Foucault attempts his own solution to the problem that neoliberalism posed and in which he attended to "the urgent, fundamental and politically indispensable task of forming a critical ethos of truth-telling that would give rise to a politics with innate resistance to governmentality" (p. 107).

In the chapter of what completes the second triad of chapters treating Foucault's oeuvre as a single project is Kelly's superb essay "Foucault on *Phobie d'État* and Neoliberalism", which not only contextualises the two chapters that precede it, if not the three before those, but anticipates the chapters that follow – especially the discussion of Foucault's interest in the Iranian Revolution and his involvement with *Goutte d'Or* and its advocacy work for migrants and migration. Kelly, like the authors of the previous two chapters, sees continuity in Foucault's work where others see discontinuity. Refusing to subdivide Foucault's work into "various stages or moments of rupture" (p. 111), Kelly argues that Foucault "continuously supplemented rather than replaced or rejected, because [he] was neither a lumper nor a splitter, but a compulsive tinkerer" (p. 112). Kelly's contention is reinforced by Foucault himself, who, at the end of his biopolitics lectures, remarked, "the point of all [my] investigations concerning madness, disease, delinquency, sexuality, and what I am talking about now is to show how the coupling of

a set of practices and a regime of truth forms a *dispostif* 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" (p.111). In his chapter, Kelly's primary concern is to consider the relationship between these couplings and the part that they played in Foucault's analysis of neoliberalism.

The remaining chapters of the volume by Castiglioni, Paltrinieri and Revel represent a going 'beyond' in three main senses: geographically, intellectually and chronologically. Castiglioni, in her piece, shifts the focus to Iran and the Iranian Revolution of 1978-9. As she states in the opening line of her chapter, "Foucault delivered the first of his [biopolitics lectures] shortly upon his return from Iran in early January 1979, while the conclusive one, addressed in early April, preceding his last piece [for the Italian newspaper *Corriere della Sera*], on the revolution by just a few weeks" (p. 139). Castiglioni considers Foucault's interest in the revolution and its probable impact on his thinking, caveating her argument with the point that Foucault "was an intellectual who adamantly refused labels and who changed his views as frequently as he saw fit" (p.153).

Paltrinieri's chapter, which compares the ideas of sociologist Pierre Bourdieu and Foucault around neoliberalism in the 1970s to the present day, runs against the grain of the introduction and all the preceding chapters, which venerate Foucault, by presenting Bourdieu as the intellectual whose work is best placed to deal with the challenges posed by our contemporary neoliberal predicament. While acknowledging Foucault's influence on Bourdieu's thinking, she draws out the fundamental flaw in Foucault's work, which stems from his rejection of Marxism and consequent failure to take account of social class within his analysis of neoliberal governmentality. Rather than rejecting Marxism, Bourdieu, on the other hand, elaborated a more sophisticated concept of class, which, from Paltrinieri's view, offers a better foundation for a critical analysis of contemporary society.

In the final chapter, Revel follows Paltrinieri in questioning the relevance of Foucault's "toolbox of concepts", employed both in his biopolitics lectures and earlier work, in facilitating an understanding of the contemporary refugee crisis in Europe, her particular concern being "the manner in which European countries have nearly unanimously decided to administer, manage, and govern these men and women whom we call migrants, for fear of giving them the status of refugees that they seek" (p. 181). While Foucault, in his lectures and earlier writings, points to the supersession of the old sovereign right "to put to death or let live" with a newer one: "to foster life or leave to die", the newer right, for Revel, does not apply to the refugee crisis, suggesting that European countries are "not fostering life and leaving to die" (p. 185).

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Foucault Studies

REVIEW

Stuart Elden, *Canguilhem*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2019. Pp. 215. ISBN: 9781509528783.

Samuel Talcott, *Georges Canguilhem and the Problem of Error*. Cham: Palgrave MacMillan, 2019. Pp. 294. ISBN: 9783030007782.

It has become a commonly-accepted academic ritual for any mention of Georges Canguilhem to be directly linked to Michel Foucault's latest text – 'Life: Experience and Science'. According to Foucault, Canguilhem is part of a well-grounded French tradition of concept philosophy, which includes among its practitioners Jean Cavaillès, Gaston Bachelard and Alexandre Koyré, a tradition which opposes the philosophy of experience and subject promoted by Sartre and Merleau-Ponty. Despite an austere work, distinctly circumscribed to the particular field of the history of sciences, Foucault claims that Canguilhem's research has influenced, in a discreet but lasting manner, the post-1968 debates in France, whether we refer to political aspects, to Lacanian psychoanalysis, or to structuralism and post-structuralism. From the very moment Foucault wrote these lines, up until today, Canguilhem has increasingly become the focus of academic thought, and there has been a noticeable rise in the colloquia and volumes that have been dedicated to him. Moreover, Vrin publishing house has started the publication of a series of complete works in six volumes, each consisting of over one thousand pages.

We can anticipate that with the publication of this documentary corpus, the reception of Canguilhem's work will reach another stage, hence offering a new perspective, both on the epistemology of life sciences and on the influences exerted by Canguilhem over the French intellectual field.

The two books we will discuss here are in line with this new reception. Thus, Stuart Elden's book, simply titled *Canguilhem*, aims to work as a complete reading guide, designed for readers who wish to be better acquainted with the main arguments of the French philosopher. Alternately, Samuel Talcott's work, *Georges Canguilhem and the Problem of Error*, proposes a somewhat more speculative interpretation by following the way in which the concept of error unfolds and progressively colonizes Canguilhem's entire intellectual production.

As stated above, Stuart Elden's book is a very erudite reading guide that can lead the reader through the intricate maze of this polymorphic work, spanning over 50 years. After an introductory chapter where he points out the main milestones of Canguilhem's life, Stuart Elden moves on to a synthetic presentation of the French philosopher's first published work, namely the prominent doctoral thesis in the field of medicine, *The Normal and the Pathological*.

Without resorting to a linear reading, Elden brings forth as a reading clue the hypothesis that the book in question is a critique of a consolidated nineteenth century thesis that considers the pathological as a mere quantitative variation of normality. This medical dogma functions as a direct result of the hegemony imposed by positivism and biological mechanicism. Throughout a consistent argumentation where the names of François-Joseph-Victor Broussais, Auguste Comte, Claude Bernard, and Henri Marie René Leriche appear, Stuart Elden adopts Canguilhem's strategy of freeing the pathological from this reductionist perspective. According to Elden, this strategy is carried out in two steps, the first being to demonstrate that the norm cannot be reduced to a statistical frequency but is much more fluid, depending on the context. Similarly, unlike the norms that fulfil a function *qua* standard in various fields, biological norms are not static but productive or formative. The second step of this strategy is to demonstrate that pathological phenomena, far from being able to be analysed as *quantitative* variations of the norm, represent *alterations* in the etymological sense of the term, i.e., *trans-formations* of a certain regime of normality. Such a perspective also leads to a reversal of physiology's status, as this discipline is no longer tasked with establishing a norm in relation to which to analyse the distancing(s) of the pathological; rather, it must follow the way in which life itself represents an unfinished process of establishing norms. Therefore, Stuart Elden shows that *The Normal and the Pathological* can also be regarded as a testing laboratory in which certain ideas were outlined, ideas which will accompany Canguilhem throughout his entire work, namely: a vitalistic and anti-mechanistic perspective thrown over the life sciences, but also the hypothesis according to which medicine cannot represent a simple application of the science of physiology. The therapeutic activity and its resultant healing do not belong to the order of returning to a previous condition but to that of establishing a new order. Likewise, as reported by Elden, it is important to note that *The Normal and the Pathological* is not only an academic work but also one that reflects – even secondarily – a certain political conduct of the author, who, at the time of writing it, was already part of the Resistance. The political message of the book has a pronounced anti-Nazi component due to the very fact that life is an uninterrupted production of normative orders, rendering the single normativity promoted by the Nazis impossible.

This perspective on life as a creative flow is extensively analysed by Elden throughout the third chapter of his book, which is dedicated to the philosophy of biology. Elden first tries to clarify Canguilhem's vitalism, showing that the French philosopher understands vitalism not as a ready-made doctrinal corpus but as an epistemic exigency that is irreducible to its totalitarian uses. The consolidation of the vitalist perspective and the rejection of mechanicism are also found within the analysis of the paper called 'Machine

and Organism', where Stuart Elden investigates the way Canguilhem deconstructs the overlap between the two terms. Unlike the machine, which is unequivocal, the body is plastic, capable of unique and unpredictable movements; or, it is precisely from this spontaneity specific to the organism that its double negative results, namely the monstrosity. It should be noted here that Canguilhem will return several times, throughout his work, to the problem of monstrosity, examining the progressive movement which turns the monstrous into a transparent figure, its contours analysed by starting from the structures of normality.

As Elden points out, Canguilhem does not stop at denouncing the mechanistic or technical perspective that illegally overlaps the machine and the body but overturns the perspective, showing that technique should not be thought of as an external element that would oppose life but rather as a universal biological phenomenon (p.49).

In addition to assimilating the body with the machine, Stuart Elden also investigates a second form of equivalence, one that is initiated between the body and society. Here, the overlap proves to be false as well. Even if in any given society there is a certain form of organization and self-regulation, no human society is able to reach a stable self-regulation.

In the fourth chapter, Stuart Elden explores Canguilhem's doctoral thesis in philosophy, *Formation of the Reflex Concept in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, which was defended under the coordination of Gaston Bachelard. Starting from the same anti-mechanistic perspective, Canguilhem rectifies the genealogy of the notion of reflex and shows that it could not have been born inside the Cartesian system, as this system did not allow the existence of a focal center that could effectively form a response to a stimulus. On the contrary, the French philosopher credits Thomas Willis as the true inventor of this concept in *De motu musculari*. It is quite interesting that Canguilhem proves that the reductionist interpretation of the reflex, i.e., 'an isolated circuit that links some stimulus to a response', is refuted by more recent research, which supports the hypothesis that the reflex engages the body in its entirety, and shows that – in certain circumstances – reflexes display adaptive intelligence, even if they remain at the level of unconscious springs. Nonetheless, despite these new acquisitions belonging to scientists such as Charles Sherrington (1857-1952), the compendia of the time reproduced a reductionist image of the reflex.

This very inadequacy between the new scientific acquisitions and the pedagogical texts leads us to the notion of *scientific ideology*, analysed by Stuart Elden in the seventh chapter. Unlike the notion of political ideology developed by Marx and reinterpreted by Althusser, scientific ideology does not belong to the order of a false consciousness. Conjointly, scientific ideology is not to be reduced to a false science, but it is an unconscious impulse towards a perspective of a totalizing knowledge of Being (p.132). This aspect is accountable for the fact that the life sciences investigated by Canguilhem, at least, do not have a linear development in which the truth is progressively revealed. Rather, the evolution of the life sciences refers to hybrid forms in which truth coexists with non-truth.

If the main approach of Elden's book is to demonstrate the diversity of Canguilhem's concerns, therefore exhibiting a scatter map, Samuel Talcott's work focuses on a single thematic strand, namely error. The fact that the notion of error is a central point in Canguilhem's work is not a new hypothesis, as it has already been advanced by Michel Foucault, Dominique Lecourt and Guillaume Le Blanc. But the merit of Samuel Talcott's book is not only related to the effort to provide a systematic reading but also to the fact that it retraces the manner in which the problem of error is articulated in the early works of Canguilhem, which are not so well-known to the general public. Additionally, the general concern of Talcott's work is to demonstrate that Canguilhem's entire intellectual endeavour possesses a strong political and practical component.

However, as pointed out in the first chapter of the book, which examines, among other things, the few texts written by Canguilhem about the Algerian war, this political component is more difficult to detect as it is somehow masked behind the influence exerted by the writings of Alain (Émile Chartier), an intellectual figure with a wide notoriety in France between the two world wars. Even if a very discreet political component is palpable both in the pacifist conduct, which will not prevent Canguilhem from being a part of the Resistance, and in his quasi-therapeutic perspective over the political field:

> Democracy would be, in this account, a perpetual effort of the governed against the abuse of power. And, as nutrition, excretion, reproduction are in a just equilibrium in a healthy individual, so would it be in a healthy society: Monarchy, Oligarchy, Democracy, in a just equilibrium.
>
> —Georges Canguilhem
> (qtd. in Talcott, p. 9)

If the first configuration of the problematic of error appears on the territory of the political, i.e., the error as part of the order of manipulation and of psychological war, its philosophical side will appear in Canguilhem's 1934 course held at Lycée de Valenciennes, only to be resumed a few years later in a paper that analyses Descartes' problematic of technique. According to Descartes, error occurs because man has an unlimited extension of will which cannot be maintained within the finite limits of his understanding of the world. The expression of this will is technique, which, according to Canguilhem's interpretation, is not a simple practical application but rather an experiment; a form of engagement in the unpredictable and the unknown. Technique can generate error, but these errors are likely to fuel thinking and science.

The next important milestone in the articulation of a philosophy of error is *The Treatise on Logic and Morals*, written together with Camille Planet. Here, the error appears as a result of the manifestation of our vital needs. What we call science consists of a retrospective operation to eliminate errors. In order to illustrate this retrospective character of science, the two authors quote Bachelard: 'There are no first truths, there are only first errors' (p. 85).

In 1943, in parallel with the elaboration of his doctoral thesis in medicine, Canguilhem held, at the University of Strasbourg (relocated to Clermont-Ferrand during the war), an academic course on error. From beginning to end, the French philosopher re-

mained true to the Cartesian tradition and revealed that error occurs whenever judgment must go beyond the limits of what is pure phenomenal appearance. In other words, the ability to fall into error has the same root as the ability to create.

In order to demonstrate the central character of the notion of error, Samuel Talcott introduces two novel lines of interpretation. The first of these lines concerns *The Normal and the Pathological*. Positivist dogma, according to which the pathological is a quantitative variation of the normal, is based on a misreading that Broussais makes of Bichat's texts. However, the consolidation of this dogma throughout the nineteenth century did not prevent Claude Bernard from reaching important discoveries regarding diabetes. The second line of thought involves Canguilhem's doctoral thesis in philosophy *Formation of the Reflex Concept in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*. Thus, as shown above, the concept of reflex, attributed by Canguilhem to Willis, is born out of an erroneous metaphor, imprinted by animism.

This optimistic perspective on error stumbles over a limit in the developments of molecular biology, where the problem of the pathological and of life is no longer dealt with in terms of vital flows but in terms of information, coding and decryption. Nevertheless, even if Canguilhem's perspective is contradicted in certain respects by the newest acquisitions of science, his approaches can still help us determine the extent to which the life sciences are about to cross a new epistemic threshold.

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Foucault Studies

REVIEW

Michael Ure, *Nietzsche's The Gay Science: An Introduction. Cambridge Introductions to Key Philosophical Texts.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019. Pp. 273. ISBN: 9780521760904 (hardback), ISBN: 9780521144834 (paperback).

Michael Ure's *Nietzsche's The Gay Science: an Introduction* is the second instalment devoted to Nietzsche, after Lawrence Hatab's *Nietzsche's On the Genealogy of Morality: an Introduction* (2008) in the series "Cambridge Introductions to Key Philosophical Texts." Ure's name will be familiar to readers interested in the influence ancient philosophies have exerted on Nietzsche's intellectual development and his very conception of philosophy and life.[1] In his new book, Ure proposes a thorough commentary of the prose material from *The Gay Science* (abbreviated afterwards GS), that is: Books I to IV from the 1882 edition, and Book V and the "Saturnalia" preface, added to the 1887 edition.

Ure approaches GS not simply as a philosophy book—albeit an important one—but also as a "deeply personal" and "philosophical autobiography" (i): quoting Nietzsche's own preface, GS is described as a "strange book of experiences" written by a decidedly "untimely and unconventional philosopher" (7). In the introductory chapter, Ure stresses two complementary aspects of GS: as a critique, it is "one of the most compelling and influential accounts of the modern crisis of values that [Nietzsche] later called nihilism," and as a project, it calls for a "new art of living" addressed to "the so-called free spirits among his readers" (4). Ure approaches GS as part of the free-spirit trilogy (with *Daybreak* and *Human All Too Human*) and as a corner stone of Nietzsche's "philosophical therapy"— a therapy through which Nietzsche "does not simply recycle the ancient model of philosophy but rather (…) develops a rival, post-classical philosophical therapy" (12). The key distinction between ancient philosophical therapies and Nietzsche's own, Ure argues, lies in "affirming rather than simply enduring life" (14). Each chapter, following GS's original order, is organized so as to reinforce this overarching interpretation. Each key moment in GS, "the death of God, the exercise of eternal recurrence, and the ideal of self-fashioning" (i) is reread through the lens of philosophical therapy—the book itself becoming a 'spiritual exercise' for free spirits. Ure's deliberate focus is well-advised, providing a fairly

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[1] See Michael Ure, *Nietzsche's Therapy: Self-Cultivation in the Middle Works* (2008).

thorough coverage of GS—as thorough as one can be when Nietzsche's texts are concerned.

Both Chapter 1 "Nietzsche's Tragicomedy" and Chapter 2 "Nietzsche's New Nobility" cover Book I. This book opens with an acerbic critique of modern science and scientists. Ure offers insights on the intellectual context informing Nietzsche's attacks on "moral teachers" (Schopenhauer, utilitarianism, but also the Stoics) and their "negative definition of happiness" (GS P 2). Political theorists will appreciate the insistence on Nietzsche's critique of expediency and utility (25-27), and the role it played in shaping his political views, against modern liberal values and equality in particular—a theme that will be taken up again in Book V.

Chapter 3 "Redeeming Art" concerns Book II of GS and starts exploring the role of 'art' and that of the 'artist' in Nietzsche's affirmation of life. Ure interprets this book as a preparation towards rebirth and a new "art of the self" (107-109): "Nietzsche now suggests that we can bear existence if we turn ourselves into aesthetic phenomenon. Free spirits must conceive their lives as tragic works of art." (111) Nietzsche's stance is explained by contrasting it to Schopenhauer's and by referring to his earlier changes of mind in *Human All Too Human,* as well as his complex relation to Wagnerian music.

Chapter 4 "Shadows of God" analyses Book III and notably the infamous passages on "the death of God" (s. 108, 125), so often misquoted and misunderstood in popular culture. Ure explains:

> (…) Nietzsche once again frames the central issue of GS. It suggests that we have arrived at [a] pivotal point in our history: we must confront the tragedy of tragedies that follows from the fact that we have created ourselves as a fantastic or metaphysical animal that has a need for morality or purpose. (144)

Reading Nietzsche still in terms of philosophical therapy, Ure places the emphasis on his prescriptions and 'life lessons'—calling upon free spirits to cultivate ever intensely joy and happiness. Book IV's devastating critique of late 19th century Christianity and European culture is also covered, focusing on the broader role of "moral errors" in late Western Judeo-Christian cultures (115).

Chapters 5 and 6 both analyze "Book IV: Sanctus Januarius." Chapter 5 focusses on artistic self-fashioning, while Chapter 6 focusses on *amor fati* and eternal recurrence. Yet, both chapters function together and provide us with the heart of Nietzsche's critical and therapeutic enterprise. Through his explanation of "artistic self-fashioning" (184), Ure manages to tie elegantly together *amor fati*, eternal recurrence, 'free-spiritedness', art, aesthetic education, the affirmation of life and higher human beings, as well as the earlier theme of Dionysian life (187-188) and the critique of all types of ascetic ideals.

Chapter 7, "Dionysian Pessimism" is devoted to "Book V: We, Fearless Ones," while the concluding chapter focusses on the Preface added to the 1887 edition. These two closing chapters remind readers of the political implications of GS. As Ure insists, Nietzsche's denunciation of "the marketplace sirens" and refusal to fall for the democratic egalitarianism of the "most humane, mildest, most righteous world" (GS 377) is not simply political in aim; this unapologetic "aristocratic radicalism" (230) is also his most vibrant call to free

spirits: "Nietzsche sees his gay wisdom, his mocking of European morality, as the opportunity for a new tragic teaching, a new purpose of existence." (232)

Overall, all chapters serve well Ure's interpretation of GS as 'affirmative philosophical therapy'. They also provide important contextual information, explaining for instance Nietzsche's 'moves' in relation to Schopenhauer or Kant, and comparing his therapeutic advice and prescriptions to ancient, more familiar, ones. Whereas, in Nietzsche's own prose, the approach is decidedly critical, undermining relentlessly all modern values (from the Christian ascetic ideal to the modern will to truth), Ure insists, expectedly so, on the positive aspects of therapy, on the work on oneself, on the various prescriptions addressed to 'would-be' free spirits. Ure often comments on Nietzsche's rhetorical strategies as well, highlighting once again his classical training and indebtedness to ancient authors.

The interpretations proposed are original and convincing, well supported, and the book overall undoubtedly provides the reader with a better, more subtle and grounded, understanding of GS. This style of 'introduction,' however, seems more fitting for graduate students and fellow academics rather than for those encountering Nietzsche's thought and ideas for the first time, or "without prior philosophical knowledge" (as suggested by the Cambridge series description). This more 'serious' approach also contrasts with Nietzsche's personal and idiosyncratic style: his irony and irreverence, stubborn contrarianism, and constant refusal to be systematized or reconciled. Commentaries more faithful in style than content, by contrast, could be exemplified by Foucault's own 'use' of Nietzsche, and, for this reason, a more specific assessment, geared towards Foucauldian readers of Nietzsche, is in order.

Ure has explored in previous publications the connections between Foucault and Nietzsche.[2] Despite Foucault being quoted only a few times, Ure's *Introduction* will be of utmost interest to Foucauldian scholars not just on the issue of Greek 'philosophical therapies' but also more unexpectedly on the issue of the aesthetic retreat from the political—a criticism often addressed to both Nietzsche and Foucault. At this level too, Ure's book, especially chapters 4 and 5, are especially instructive and thought-provoking. Using a non-specialist lexicon, faithful to Nietzsche's own wording and imagery, Ure proposes illuminating variations on proverbial injunctions to 'see beauty in this world'. Nietzsche, according to Ure, still conceives the artist as a "spectator," (140) not a disinterested one, but an engaged one, responsible for "mak[ing] necessity appear beautiful" (166). From this perspective, 'beauty' is almost equivalent to 'meaning' and both are "our own artefact(s) or creation(s)." (168) Free spirits are thus artists-spectators with a specific skill—one that requires education and repetition. This special skill must be learned: "we can learn to 'see' or make beauty." (173) In Nietzsche's own words: "Love, too, must be learned." (GS 399)

From this perspective, Nietzsche's call to "become an artist" challenges the very dichotomy aesthetics-politics often levelled against Nietzsche and Foucault. Ure shows how the

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[2] See, Michael Ure and Federico Testa, "Foucault and Nietzsche: Sisyphus and Dionysus," in *Foucault and Nietzsche: A Critical Encounter*, ed. Alan Rosenberg and Joseph Westfall (2018); see Michael Ure, "Senecan Moods: Foucault and Nietzsche on the Art of the Self," *Foucault Studies* 4 (2007), 19–52.

aestheticization of life, far from being a retreat, is a genuine socio-political engagement: the opposition between aesthetics as 'retreat' and politics as 'engagement' does not hold. Self-fashioning or even "becoming who [you] are" does not point towards promethean tasks, such as the complete making or remaking of oneself as a work of art, but rather suggest alternative and unique receptive stances. Rather than retreat away from society, this suggests a selective and imaginative engagement with society. This 'artistic living' is not necessarily reserved to a few 'gifted' artists and creators: one does not need to produce and leave an oeuvre nor narcissistically 'care for the self' to the detriment of social and political engagement —on the contrary, it is a mode of being genuinely *in* and *with* the world. This capacity and skill is fragile and rare, and may require certain innate dispositions, yet, more importantly, it requires education and cultivation. Reading through these chapters, one cannot help but think that a lot of misunderstandings and unproductive debates could be avoided in Foucauldian scholarship if one applied a similar understanding of art and politics to Foucault's "attitude to modernity," "philosophical ethos" or "elaboration of the self."[3]

Of course, Michael Ure's goal in this careful study is not to provide a Foucauldian reading of GS, nor is it to adjudicate between competing interpretations. Rather, it is to highlight the philosophical importance of GS, relatively understudied and underestimated in comparison to later texts, and its key role in establishing Nietzsche as a unique "philosophical therapist." This is indeed where the book is most successful. But, its association with a series meant for introductory texts may be misleading in terms of audience. Sufficient familiarity with ancient philosophy and 19th century German philosophy is needed to grasp the subtleties of Ure's interpretation and to benefit from his cross-textual analyses and historical contextualization of GS—within the history of philosophy and within Nietzsche's own intellectual trajectory.

In a later text, Nietzsche would mock Flaubert for suggesting that "one can't think and write unless one is seated."[4] Yet, Ure's 'introduction' to GS encourages us to sit down and think carefully with Nietzsche—against his own advice. GS's original text, for better or worse, with all its sardonic quips and *bons mots*, its carefree or rather careless *légèreté d'esprit* (both witty and superficial lightness of spirit), remains one of Nietzsche's most seductive invitation to *dance*: here is his "misunderstood song," to the music of "simple, rustic, bagpipes," offered to "impatient friends," so that *we* "hear more clearly," so that *we* also, "dance that much better"—if that is our will…[5]

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[3] Michel Foucault, "What Is Enlightenment?" in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (1984), 32–50.

[4] "*On ne peut penser et écrire qu'assis* […] (Gustave Flaubert).—Now I've got you, you nihilist! Assiduity is the *sin* against the Holy Spirit. Only thoughts that come by *walking* have any value." Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Twilight of the Idols or, How to Philosophize with the Hammer* (1997).

[5] Adapted from the epilog of Book V. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science* (1974), V 383, p. 348.

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Foucault Studies

REVIEW ESSAY

Critique in Truth: Bernard Harcourt's *Critique & Praxis*

Bernard Harcourt, *Critique & Praxis*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2020. Pp. 696. ISBN: 9780231195720 (hardback).

Bernard Harcourt's recent book is hefty. Its width catches the eye when shelved alongside the thin volumes that have become too customary in contemporary academic publishing (some of them a mere 125 pages). *Critique & Praxis* measures in at nearly 540 pages of text plus an additional 100 pages of back matter. But its heftiness is more a matter of the philosophical density and majesty that Harcourt brings to his subject: the possibilities for the practice of critical theory today.

This is a book that, by its intellectual intensity, if not also by its length, resists the summary style typical of the genre of a review. Rather than attempting to tie together all of the many threads of the book, I shall instead here attempt to articulate the frame within which the book's core arguments are placed.

In the book's introductory sections (consisting of two brief essays comprising about 50 pages) Harcourt establishes a pair of distinctions. These distinctions organize everything that follows.

The first distinction is between philosophy as contemplative thought and philosophy as a form of active engagement. Harcourt does not draw this distinction in exactly those terms (nor, for instance, in the terms offered by Hannah Arendt in *The Human Condition* with her reference to the *vita contemplativa* and the *vita activa*).[1] He offers a series of contrasts—between *theoria* and praxis (8), contemplation and practice (8), a "refuge in epistemology" and "chang[ing] the world" (9), and so on. All of these refer back to a basic distinction between a contemplative style in philosophy and active philosophical engagement. The canonical lodestone for this distinction is also the first quotation in the book—Karl Marx's famous quip about philosophers who "only" interpret the world but fail to engage in changing it (1). Placing himself in agreement with Marx (though not quite in

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[1] Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (1958).

line with all the derision that Marx's "only" implies), Harcourt argues in favor of, to quote the book's first sentence, an "ambition" for a critical philosophy that would "transform human existence" (1).

Harcourt's second central distinction is also noted in the book's first sentence, where he ties his transformative ambition specifically to what he calls "critical philosophy" (1). The contrast here, as laid out in the book's second sentence, is to the philosophies of Hobbes, Locke, and Smith. The central contrast for critical philosophy is liberal political theory. But the liberal alternative to truly critical philosophy is not merely dismissed. Harcourt registers the active thrust of liberalism as expressed by the "vocal resistance of liberal critics and organizations" such as the ACLU or Human Rights Watch (11). Liberalism makes use of "the courts and liberal institutions" (12) to advance its agenda items of liberty, property, and (only-rough) equality. By contrast to this agenda, the critical philosophy that Harcourt identifies with Marx, Rousseau, Horkheimer, Foucault, Spivak, and others is one that tactically advances the core values of "emancipation" and "liberation" (1). (I note only in passing that it is ironic to read of these particular values as connected to Foucault. There is deep suspicion in the first volume of *The History of Sexuality* toward the idea that our liberation is always what we can simply assume to be hanging in the balance.[2] Yet Harcourt here reproduces this assumption, which is so widespread in contemporary critical theory today that hardly anyone even bothers to defend it. Yet what of Foucault's central argument that liberation is hardly adequate as tactical resistance to, say, disciplinary strategies which we inculcate in ourselves?)

Harcourt's two distinctions, if put into schematic combination, allow four possible positions. The first is contemplative liberalism (which could be exemplified for Harcourt's purposes by John Rawls's own self-described "ideal theory," or even better by Rawlsiana, that is, the thousands of scholarly articles about Rawls). The second option is contemplative critical theory (exemplified for Harcourt by Axel Honneth's 2017 *The Idea of Socialism*). The third option is activist liberalism, which Harcourt identifies primarily with liberal organizations (such as ACLU, though Harcourt might also have referred to the work of some liberal political theorists, such as those in the vein of Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum). The fourth option would be an activist, or praxis-centered, critical philosophy. Set in this schema, the basic argumentative intervention of the book is clear. Harcourt barely considers the first option as a serious contender; his central concern is with the unresolvable contest between the assertedly-failed positions of the second and third options; and he argues for a fulsome form of the fourth option.

Does critical philosophy today actually militate for the achievement of its political goals in the world? Harcourt worries that it does not; at least not often enough: "The critical Left, as opposed to the liberal Left, appears disarmed" (11). Critical philosophy has taken refuge in epistemology, speculation, and contemplation. By contrast, Harcourt argues in

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[2] Michel Foucault, *The Will to Know (The History of Sexuality Volume 1)* [1976] (1978), 159.

favor of a philosophy that is both critical in content and at the same time takes the form of praxis. Hence his titular ambition: *Critique & Praxis*.

There are three reactions I suspect a reader might have to this basic framing. One reaction would be to worry about the overly-rigid contrasts presumed by the book. Why such distance between theory and practice? Why such a stark contrast between liberal political theory and the ambitions of a critical philosophy that aims to "infuse the world with the values of compassion, equality, solidarity, autonomy, and social justice" (1)? Is critical philosophy really so steadfastly opposed to core liberal values for balancing equality and autonomy or core liberal strategies like rights? Consider, for instance, how Foucault felt free to make use of liberal rights as means for advancing viable political resistance.[3]

A second reaction would be to worry about how Harcourt has framed the book in a way that raises a dogging question of priorities. Consider that Harcourt argues on behalf of a philosophy of both active political militancy and radical theoretical critique. But which of these values is higher for Harcourt where they come into conflict? It is a contemplative luxury to not have to answer that question. But in the exigencies of actual political reality, which Harcourt himself knows as an extremely-active lawyer (cf. 466-468), this is a question that cannot always be deferred. If Harcourt's deepest priorities truly lie with activist philosophy, then why all the fretting over liberalism, given the enormous amount of good that can be done by making use of liberal strategies and institutions? Everyone knows that liberalism is strikingly imperfect, but in contexts like that in the U.S. today where basic liberal goods like voting rights are being dismantled, there is obviously enormous good to be done by the liberal activist who achieves a fairer franchise without sacrificing said gains to a fully perfect justice.[4] What this suggests is that Harcourt's deepest priorities lie with critical philosophy. Indeed this has to be true, at least with respect to this book (which is published by a university press, written in academic prose, and assumes a reader who can sail through casual references to a bibliography of thinkers who will be familiar only to the graduate students and professoriate in the theoretical humanities and social sciences). Harcourt's primary argumentative foil is therefore not really the liberal activist (who is actually Harcourt himself in other work beyond the confines of this book) but rather the unengaged critical theorist (cf. 535) who long ago lost themselves in their "epistemological detour" (4, 157, 221, 318).

I have posed the first two reactions to Harcourt's framing as worries. The third reaction begins by not being overly-worried about such matters. A reader can grant that Harcourt's organizing distinctions need not be stark dichotomies but can be wielded as modest heuristic organizers. A reader can also accept that Harcourt's implicit prioritization of philosophical critique over political praxis need not be taken as harboring some secret inner ambition which undoes the whole project. Such a reader can thereby learn from this book everything it has to offer (and there is much). For such a reader is in a good position to follow the thread of Harcourt's argument concerning how critical philosophy has in

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[3] The fullest discussion of Foucault and rights is Ben Golder, *Foucault and the Politics of Rights* (2015).

[4] For an impressive contemporary example of activist liberalism about voting rights see Stacey Abrams, *Our Time is Now* (2020).

recent decades become mired in a contemplative style such that what it really needs today is to refocus its energies on a praxis that could be the tactical equal to liberalism's activisms.

What, then, of Harcourt's interventions on behalf of a praxis of critique? How successful is the book's argument in its own central terms? Here especially the book resists the style of summary that a review demands. I shall here offer an only-partial preview of some of the most important interventions that *Critique & Praxis* develops.

Of greatest importance, because the stakes here are highest, is Harcourt's discussion of the problem of truth in contemporary critical theory's challenge of navigating between the Scylla of foundationalism and the Charybdis of denormativization (177ff., 221ff.). I myself regard this as *the* central challenge facing political theory today. By framing this challenge in terms of truth, Harcourt offers a novel bid. It comes in two steps. First is his argument that critical theory must avoid "the imposition of a foundation" (184) that is already internal to any act of "claiming truth" (184). Second is Harcourt's proposal to replace reliance on truth with a "juridical model" of judgment that involves a "temporary assessment of the evidence and arguments" available to those involved (187). Think of critique less on the model of the intellectual who simply assumes a universal audience (which they never have anyway), and more on a workmanship model expressed by the litigator who in specific contexts, with great effort and preparation, wins their arguments.

Harcourt's juridical model resonates with an image he offers later in the book when he discusses the relationship between theory and praxis exhibited in Foucault's work in the early 1970s. This is when Foucault was shuttling between his manuscript for *Surveillir et punir* and his involvement with the *Groupe d'Information sur les prisons* (439-445). The model Harcourt detects here is one of theory and praxis in "confrontation" and "collision" (439). This image is more forceful than that famous metaphor upon which many of us have relied, namely Deleuze's reference to theory as a "toolbox" in his 1972 dialogue with Foucault.[5] The workmanlike advocate who deploys Harcourt's juridical model is not (or at least not only) using theory as a toolkit but is confronting the praxis of their concrete situation with the praxis of a concretizing theory.

The crucial question facing this proposal to resolve the crucial challenge is this: does Harcourt's proposed bid of a juridical model resolve the impasse between foundationalist pretense and normative abstinence? My own hunch is that Harcourt concedes too much to the relativist (he himself worries about this [188, 569n71]). Yet the perspective itself is promising. It could be amplified if given greater specificity via, for example, a genealogy of truth that would not reject claims to truth so much as situate them in their practices.

Such an approach could build on Harcourt's own rereading of Foucault as a genealogist of truth-telling. In an early chapter, Harcourt rereads the arc of Foucault's work from 1970 to 1984 through the lens of the category, prominent in his 1981 Louvain lectures, of truth-telling. Foucault's work offers "a history of truth itself" (110). This lens is deployed

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[5] Gilles Deleuze and Michel Foucault, "Intellectuals and Power" in *Desert Islands,* ed. Gilles Deleuze [1972] (2004), 208.

for a delicate revisioning of Foucault's lectures and books across these years (111-121). The interpretive insight here is, as any reader of Harcourt's prior scholarship on Foucault will expect, masterful. The value of such genealogies, especially as we are able to extend them deeper into our own present today, is in how they enable us to confront, or "counter" in Harcourt's felicitous phrase (191-202), the truths of our present.[6]

A different option for fleshing out contemporary genealogies of truth-telling is worth mentioning if only because it does not appear as such within Harcourt's book and yet is in fact not far from its orbit. This would be to build out the work of another genealogist. In *Truth & Truthfulness*, Bernard Williams fleshes out a minimalist disquotational theory of truth through a genealogy of sincerity and accuracy as contingent virtues of truthfulness.[7] Such an approach enables us to grasp how truth, as internal to practices of truthfulness, is sometimes that which we all need in order to be able to rely on one another.

We should readily admit that both Foucault's and Williams's genealogies of truth-telling remain incompletely developed in their work. But if further built out by today's (and tomorrow's) critical philosophers, they could help resituate truth-claiming outside of the impasse between foundationalism and relativism. One crucial clue to any such genealogy of truth formations, and one which Harcourt himself already endorses in outline (261-266), would be the kind of contextualism advocated by Amy Allen's critical-theoretical uptake of metaethical contextualism.[8] Allen's argument holds that one can reject second-order metaethical universalism and foundationalism without abandoning first-order normative commitment. This argument helps us glimpse the potential gains of both genealogically investigating the contexts of emergence for what is true and at the same time affirming that, within a context, truth is truth. This is precisely where critical theory can reap the greatest insights from its contemporary tendencies toward contextualism (or, better yet, pragmatism, for that is what is really at stake here).[9] This is the endpoint toward

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[6] I register in passing a methodological misfit between Harcourt's desideratum of counter critique and his claim that genealogy is primarily funded by a theory of knowledge-power according to which knowledge is "inextricably" (95) tied to power. Harcourt claims that since "that theory is what fuels his method" Foucault's genealogy is really "knowledge-power genealogy" (92), rather than, at least primarily, "problematizing" or "possibilizing" genealogy (92, 555n81). But I more clearly see how problematizing genealogy sets us up to "counter" the truths of the present than does knowledge-power genealogy, unless it is simply assumed that the imbrication of knowledge and power is always a bad thing and never to be vindicated. Such an assumption is (and for Foucauldian reasons) unwarranted.

[7] Bernard Williams, *Truth and Truthfulness* (2002).

[8] Amy Allen, *The End of Progress* (2016), 204-219.

[9] Pragmatism (and such of its key commitments as contextualism) is already implicit across a wide swath of contemporary critical theory, and yet is unfortunately underdiscussed in anglophone critical theory. The current theorist who most fully acknowledges pragmatism's importance is Rahel Jaeggi, *Critique of Forms of Life* [2014] (2018). Jaeggi, however, ultimately distances her view from pragmatism in subsuming Dewey's concept of "problems" (Ch.4) under Hegel's concept of "contradiction" (Ch. 9). Jaeggi is aware of this distancing, but I would argue that it is far greater than she takes it to be. For a focused critique of the impoverished notion of contradiction (as featured in Hegel) vis-à-vis the critically-potent concept of problems (as it resonates from Foucault and Deleuze across to Dewey and James) see my discussion in Colin Koopman, "Critical Problematization in Foucault and Deleuze: The Force of Critique without Judgment" in *Between Deleuze and Foucault,* ed. Nicolae Morar, Thomas Nail and Daniel Smith (2016), esp. 94-99.

which Harcourt is headed, though the way there gets lost in talk of turning away from truth altogether.

To return to the central question of the book, then, what genealogies of truth formation can clarify are the fields of practice upon which critique may be enacted as praxis. To get a sense of how this already looks through Harcourt's vision, consider lastly the final section of *Critique & Praxis*.

The end of *Critique & Praxis* proposes to reframe the normative question of "What is to be done?" in terms of the more personal question of "What more am I to do?" (448). Any reader impressed by Foucault's skepticism toward the great modern technique of the confessional may balk at aspects of Harcourt's discussion here. There can be no denying that the end of the book is all caught up in the memoir style in which our contemporary culture is suffused. But is our memoir moment not only simultaneous with the decay of democracy but also part of the same contemporary configuration? If critical theory expresses itself through an account of personal action, does it risk forfeiting its political claims precisely by being located in a personal space where it feels inappropriate to demand public justifications? Is an interrogation of one's unique experience the endgame that is due the critical theorist who readily quits claiming truth?

Such questions admit of no easy answer. We all know by now that the personal can be, and indeed sometimes must be countenanced as, political. But we can also know the difference between an account of one's personal activity in public matters and a conversation with oneself that is private in the sense that it is not offered as a justification to anybody other than oneself. The final part of Harcourt's book moves back and forth between these two quite different modes. This sort of ambivalent shuffling may seem the fate of any attempt to excavate the political from the personal. But it is not. There are some, though admittedly only a very important few, writers who manage to convey the politics in personal experience without it somehow retreating toward the private. James Baldwin comes to mind as one shining example—in his essay "Nothing Personal" he is intensely personal and yet there is not once even the slightest suggestion of it all being somehow, quite incredibly, private.[10] A more contemporary writer in whom we find something quite similar is Jesmyn Ward—her heartbreaking memoir *Men We Reaped* is fully situated within the uniqueness of her particular life in such a way as to make it plain to see the politics of all the dying she has been living against.[11] It would not be fair to expect Harcourt's prose to live up to the breathtaking beauty and arresting tragedy of a Baldwin or a Ward, and yet at the same time it is of course eminently appropriate to compare Harcourt's more personal approach to political questions with those who define for us today the very necessity of such public letters.

The many interventions made by *Critique & Praxis*, and I have here merely glossed only a few of them, all possess two striking qualities. First, they are interventions into crucial

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[10] James Baldwin, "Nothing Personal," *Contributions in Black Studies* 6:1 [1964] (2008), online publication.

[11] Jesmyn Ward, *Men We Reaped: A Memoir* (2013).

arguments for contemporary critical theory. Second, Harcourt intervenes into these crucial matters in a way that is capacious and compelling. Not all readers will agree with all of Harcourt's interventions. I have made it clear that I do not myself unambiguously accept all of them. But Harcourt is clearly worth disagreeing with over matters where the stakes could hardly be greater. And worthy disagreement is what one must always ask from philosophy (this is one way in which political philosophy and politics are two distinct activities). Registered thus, *Critique & Praxis* is one of the most provoking contributions to critical theory of the twenty-first century.

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