

FOUCAULT STUDIES

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EDITORIAL

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The editorial team is pleased to publish this issue of *Foucault Studies* containing three original articles as well as eight book reviews.

ORIGINAL ARTICLES

In the first original article, "Foucault and Brown: Disciplinary Intersections", Niki Kasumi Clements (Rice University, USA) allows us to enter into the archives of the Fond Michel Foucault at the Bibliothèque nationale de France to revisit the significant influence the work of Peter Brown, versatile historian of late antiquity and authoritative biographer of St. Augustin, had on Foucault's long-time engagement with writing the history of sexuality and his genealogy of the desiring subject. Using all available sources, not only published writings and lectures but also archival material, Foucault's personal notes, testimony from ongoing conversations between the two authors, and private correspondence, Clements shows how elements most central to Foucault's turn towards the problematization of sexual matters, uses of pleasure and desire in antiquity have provenience in Brown's work of cultural history. In particular, this concerns the reading of St. Augustin as it is now presented in Foucault's posthumous *Confessions of the Flesh*, volume four of *History of Sexuality* but, more generally, also the necessary methodological and conceptual innovations that serve as the starting point for volumes two and three. It was Brown's detailed attention to the fact that the "watershed" between the late pagan and the early Christian world was almost impossible to establish that led Foucault to write a philosophical history of subjectivity, one that did not take moral codes, interdictions and their transgressions as points of departure but instead asks how it is that we have ethically

worked upon ourselves in very different ways in response to a rather monotonous sexual morality. The historian, Clements thus shows, assisted the philosopher in truly writing a genealogy without Great Origins but with many smaller beginnings and transformations that eventually allow us to truly think differently. (See also this issue's Review Section for a review of Clements' recent book *Sites of the Ascetic Self: John Cassian and Christian Ethical Formation*.)

In "Askesis and Critique: Foucault and Benjamin", Ori Rotlevy (Tel Aviv University, Israel) reconstructs an illuminating juxtaposition between the two thinkers' conceptions of how critical work and writing relate to different forms of "exercise" in a broad and committed sense. In Walter Benjamin's case, this concerns attention to the schooling characteristic of the scholastic tractates, the exercise (*Übung*) of presentation as indirection, known from his *Origin of the German Trauerspiel*, as well as the practice of *flânerie* portrayed in his later work. In Michel Foucault's case, it concerns how critical activity relates to *askesis* in various forms over time and to the self-changing ethical work of the self upon itself well-known from his later writings. Recognizing both differences and family resemblances between the two approaches, Rotlevy is able to shed new, important light on how the "ascetic" or "spiritual" exercise for both Benjamin and Foucault embodies at once a preparation and a set of conditions for the act of truth telling and therefore also for critique. At the same time, Rotlevy clarifies how the debt to the Kantian critical project articulated by both thinkers gives way to two different modes of exercising the critical work. While Foucault emphasizes critique as exercising an attitude attentive to possibilities of self-transformation and change in the present, Benjamin gives emphasis to an exercise of critique that involves attitude-transformation and a propaedeutic formation for a modern tradition. Indeed, taking notice of this distinction will contribute to the ongoing discussion of how to understand the purpose and practice of critical work and writing in Foucault and thinkers akin to him such as Benjamin.

In "UK lockdown governmentalities: What does it mean to govern in 2020?", Seb Sander (University of Warwick, United Kingdom) present an important discussion concerning the rise of new forms of governmentality that seem to differ from the neoliberal framework within which Michel Foucault's inquiry into the art of government as a largely economic rationalization of the conduct of conduct is typically cast. Investigating a series of recent imperatives directed at the population by the UK government with reference to a human-to-human transmittable virus, Sander shows the emergence of what he, with reference to Soshana Zuboff's work on surveillance capitalism, labels "instrumentarian governmentality". Working both alongside and as an extension of "algorithmic governmentality" – that is, the more wide-ranging and general efforts to continuously manage and re-manage the population's conduct based on biometric data – this new instrumentarian form re-establishes more direct attempts to control peoples' behavior using disciplinary features of individual surveillance, exposition and cohesion, which appear to be much more authoritarian in outlook than the well-known neoliberal government at a distance. What Sander's work, very soundly, suggests is thus that the analysis of contemporary arts of government, exercise of sovereignty, and expressions of authority would ben-

efit from taking into account the mutable interaction between different types of governmentality; key among them the neoliberal but now also the algorithmic and the instrumental forms.

REVIEW SECTION

The present issue contains eight book reviews:

- Chloë Taylor, *Foucault, Feminism and Sex Crimes: An Anti-Carceral Analysis*. New York, and London: Routledge, 2019. Reviewed by Kurt Borg (University of Malta, Malta).
- Aliraza Javaid, *Masculinities, Sexualities and Love*. Abingdon & New York: Routledge, 2019. Reviewed by Andrea Colombo (University of Padua, Italy).
- Cory Wimberly, *How Propaganda Became Public Relations: Foucault and the Corporate Government of the Public*. Routledge: New York, 2020. Reviewed by Fabio Cescon (University of Amsterdam, Netherlands).
- Niki Kasumi Clements, *Sites of the Ascetic Self: John Cassian and Christian Ethical Formation*. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2020. Reviewed by William Tilleczek (Harvard University, USA).
- Thomas Lemke, *The Government of Things: Foucault and the New Materialisms*. New York: NYU Press, 2021. Reviewed by Conor Bean (John Hopkins University, USA).
- Paul Allen Miller, *Foucault's Seminars on Antiquity: Learning to Speak the Truth*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2021. Reviewed by Toon Meijaard (University of Amsterdam, Netherlands).
- Stuart Elden, *The Early Foucault*. Cambridge: Polity, 2021. Reviewed by Jasper Friedrich (University of Oxford, UK).
- Karsten Schubert, *Freiheit als Kritik. Sozialphilosophie nach Foucault*. Bielefeld: transcript. Reviewed by Jonas Lang (University of Frankfurt, Germany).

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